

*Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those
who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!*

The Mountain Path

VOL. 18, No. III

JULY 1981

Thou hast possessed me,
unexorcizable Spirit! and
made me mad (for Thee),
that I may cease to be a
ghost (wandering the world),
Oh Arunachala!

—The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 71

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| Rs. 125 | £ 25.00 | \$ 50 |
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Single Copy:

| | | |
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| Rs. 2.75 | £ 0.60 | \$ 1.25 |
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All letters and remittances to be sent to:

The Managing Editor,
"The Mountain Path",
Sri Ramanasramam, P.O.,
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

"Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on
Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!"

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1

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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

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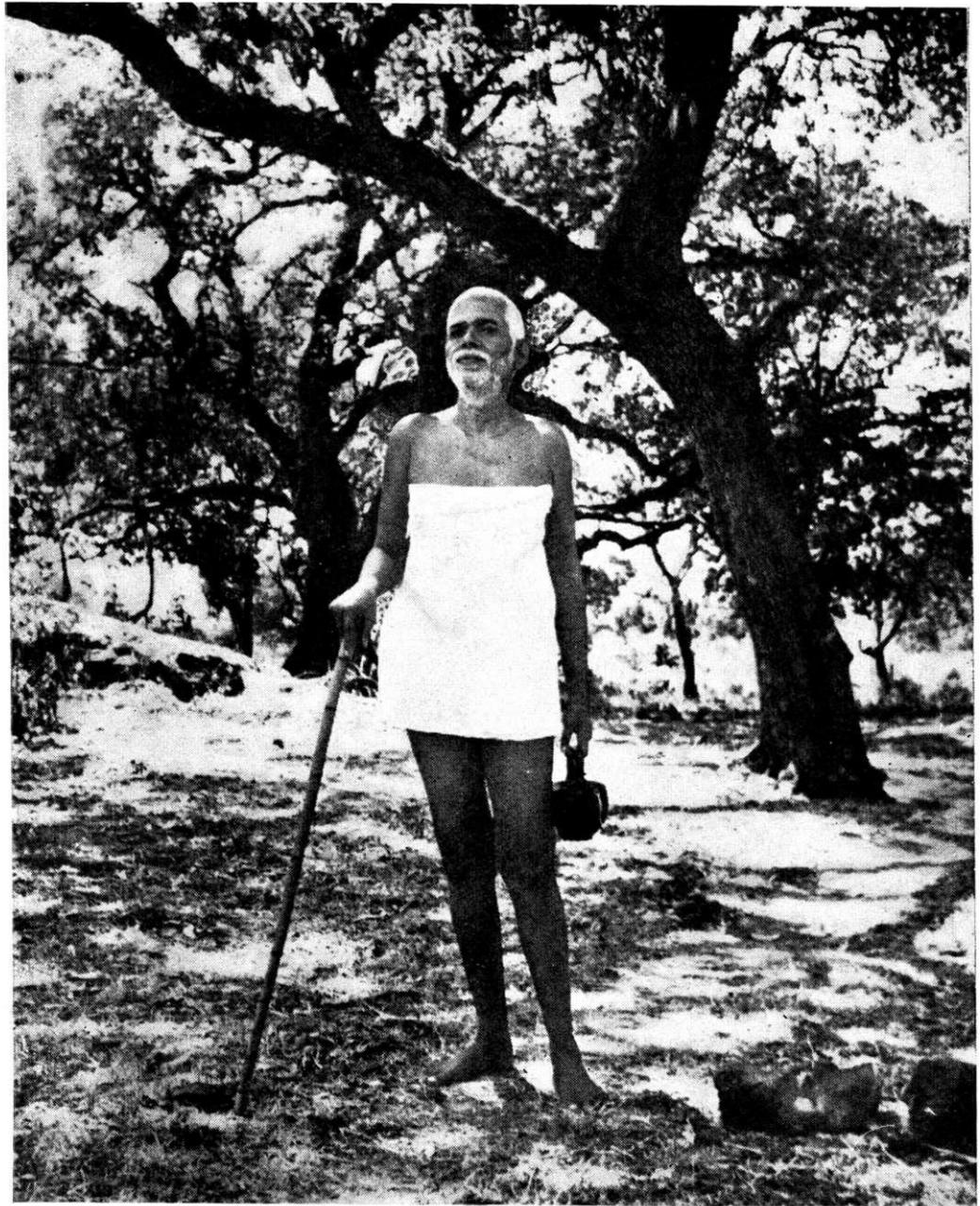
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



EDITORIAL

THE TREE OF BLISS

IN his recent work *Faith and Belief* (Princeton), Wilfred Cantwell Smith, an authority on Islam and other world religions, argues that dynamic force behind the growth of all healthy men and women is the active presence of the dimension of self-transcendence in all human beings in all human communities. This recognition of the essentially spiritual nature of mankind is not a divine revelation, but the sober conclusion of historians and anthropologists who study religion as a part of human culture and social behaviour within the framework of time and space. People all over the world, whenever they attempt to live authentically human lives, have had to come to terms not only with their material circumstances but with their own spiritual essence and the spiritual nature of the entire universe.

The universality of this spiritual element in human life is nowhere so apparent as in India where *Sanatana Dharma*, the faith that foreigners have termed Hinduism, has evolved naturally, collectively and anonymously. People in ancient India did not think of themselves as Hindus; no one tried to be a Hindu. One tried simply to be human, to live properly, adequately, truly, as an individual, as member of a family, as practitioner of a profession, as a citizen of the world. The Indian faith, which sustained, and was in turn sustained by, the twin values of *moksha* and *dharma* and which can still ensure the

happiness of individuals in a well-ordered society, has been defined by Professor D.S. Sarma as a firm faith "in the inherent divinity of every soul and the unity of all life"

While like other religious traditions *Sanatana Dharma* grew in its own geographical and historical milieu, it has an in-built mechanism for self-transcendence in the concept and the occasional occurrence of the *Jivanmukta*, who fits into no category and can be an agnostic like Lord Buddha or a devotee of Shiva like Shri Bhagavan. The *Jivanmukta* embodies pure transcendence, infinitude, the ideally absolute; but his followers, however earnest, are limited by psychological, sociological and other contingent factors, by their knowledge, temperament and situation. "Every person is the child of his or her times and this truth applies even to persons of faith, even though one's faith opens one to what is timeless".

This elaborate explanation is called for by the failure of some of our readers to understand the real purpose of the Editorial in our April issue, 'Pitfalls on the Path' which made a strictly mathematical and impersonal approach to the phenomenon called Shri Ramana and the impact he could have on the followers of any traditional faith. What Hindu devotees of Shri Bhagavan tend to forget is that he was, in Shri Aurobindo's words, the greatest impersonality of our times. He represents a ripe fruit on the human tree,

not merely the Indian tree. Buddhists, Christians, Muslims, historians and mathematicians, all are equally competent and eligible to taste the sweetness of this fruit. In fact, he represents the meeting point of the traditional religious and the contemporary sciences of quantum physics, existentialist psychology and social anthropology. As Lucy Cornwellson indicates in "Hunting the 'I'", man's identity with Awareness which the race has been struggling to discover through thousands of years, young Venkataraman realized in one courageous, clear-eyed half-hour of conscious self-enquiry.

One may say that the traditional religions correspond to the decimal system, admirable in itself and useful in its way, while Bhagavan's teaching introduces the binary system where the base or radix is two instead of ten. Here the zero experience comes quite early, and egoless power is available for *karma* as for *jnana*, for the performance of *dharma* as for the enjoyment of *moksha*. For breaking down the barrier between oneself and one's neighbour, one need not wait till one has got and gone through *samadhi*. Bhagavan's whole teaching is summed up in *Upadesa Sara*, where disinterested action is first prescribed as a preliminary step to some new, imagined *moksha*, but means and ends are intermixed and egoless living is exalted as the final fruit and natural consequence of the grand discovery that one is ever-free Self and that both the ego and the bondage were imagined entities.

This growth from identity with the ego to identity with the Self can and in most cases does proceed gradually through "Self-actualization" or sustained ego-less living in one's own given circumstances. We all use the decimal or the binary system without either having discovered it or having quite understood what it is all about. Why not then follow *Upadesa Sara* for daily practice of *swadharma*, instead of merely chanting it in daily *parayana*? The social order is a help for growth in self-transcendence. To accept humbly and discharge faithfully one's social obligations is *sanmarga*, the right path, the path to *sat*, to the bliss of

Brahman. Chapter 10 of *Ramana Gita* and verses 26 and 27 of the *Supplement to the Forty* enjoin *samanya dharma*, while Bhagavan never encouraged special life-styles for his followers.

He made no distinction between religious and secular; he brought all life, social as well as individual, under the sovereignty of the spirit, and thus saved us from the "piety-fringed worldliness" which has been the bane of all societies professing without practising the higher religions. He also saved us from that longing for individual salvation and those private marks of grace like sounds and visions which mislead the unwary from the goal of egoless *ananda* in the performance of *dharma*. The grace or guidance of the *sadguru* operates freely in the *vyavahara* or the empirical sphere which is only a manifestation of the ultimate reality.

It is good for all of us, editors, contributors and readers, to keep constantly in mind the aims of this journal as formulated by its founder, Arthur Osborne; namely, (1) setting forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and of all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics and (2) clarifying the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

The Indian branch of the human tree still luckily retains its spritual sap and traffics gaily with the eternal sun and yields fine fruit to meet the stern demands of the current intellectual season. In Vishnu land avatars still keep coming who manage to preserve and renew the spirit and substance, while gently changing the letter and outer forms, of humanity's most precious heritage, *parampara-praptam*, handed down from generation to generation, its faith in perpetual self-transcendence.

When Gandhiji said, "Because I am a *Sanatani* Hindu, I claim to be a Christian, a Buddhist and a Musalman", he was speaking for many others like Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Shri Ramana. When Ananda Coomaraswamy in an essay written forty years ago blessed and commended the holy wedlock between spiritual authority and temporal power

in the Indian tradition, the wise man gave his reading not only of India's past but also of her probable future near and remote.

The goodness of any faith, its *sattvik* strength and continuity, lives in the common people who lack *rajas* and the sages who enjoy the heavenly bliss of *ananda*. Intellectuals in whom *rajas* predominates are *asuric* if they exploit the *tamas* of the common people and reject the *ananda* of the sages. All history and all mythologies proclaim that *asuric* empires are short-lived. It is *dharma* which rules the universe, whether embodied as the dark impenetrable mystery of Shri Krishna or the transparent justice of Shri Rama or the heroic humanism of Lord Buddha.

Shri Bhagavan's life and teachings mark not merely the culmination of the great Indian tradition, but also the renewal and the possible fulfilment of all the great human traditions, religious and scientific. The role of intellectuals in social transformation is clearly expounded in book 2 of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* and recognised in Verses 22 to 29 of Bhagavan's *Gita Sara*. Whether *moksha* is an inherent ever-present state waiting only to be discovered or a goal to be attained, the thesis of these two classical texts is that there is no difference in outward behaviour between the *mumukshu* and the *mukta* and there is no conflict between abidance in the Self and active concern for the food of the world. The seeker of Brahman finds all his desires fulfilled, not merely the desire for the bliss of Brahman. What Shri Bhagavan emphasises, what is original and intellectually challenging in his teaching, is the call to *dharma*, not as a mere moral imperative, but as a scientific procedure for the discovery and enjoyment of the bliss inherent in all human life and vividly present in intellectual pursuits. Shri Bhagavan re-inforces the findings of the best contemporary psychology and sociology that the beauty in religion and the power in politics can be harnessed to the highest human purpose when the seeker searches for the bliss of the Self not only in his own heart but in inter-personal relations.

Shri Bhagavan was no doubt a *Sadguru* whose

grace guided and continue to guide his many "devotees". But the significance of his advent and the influence of his teachings extend far beyond the circle of those who declare direct allegiance to him. If Shri Bhagavan confirms, corrects and clarifies many modern intellectual movements and rejuvenates many ancient traditions, it is only part of the Creator's Plan for the universe. Was it not part of this plan that in the year 1893 Swami Vivekananda should go to America, Gandhiji should go to South Africa, and Annie Besant and Shri Aurobindo should come to India?

As Rohit Mehta says in the Chapter "Bliss Eternal" in his *Call of the Upanishad*, Brahman is the manifestation of the unity behind diversity. The human intellect rejoices in the discovery of this unity, this unifying field (*Kshetra*) where not only gravitation and electro-magnetism, but psychic drives and social forces dance in unison and make harmonious music which only a few now hear and all may one day hear.

It is not beyond the human intellect, if it combines the courage and the humility of the monkey god, to build a common future where all mankind can live in harmony. But this cannot be built on the basis of fossilized thoughts and petrified customs, by blind reliance on a dead past. It can only grow out of ideas and values wisely chosen and lovingly and patiently nourished by those who know the bliss of knowledge (*Vijnana*) and are guided by those who know the bliss of Brahman, the Being at the heart of every living creature and at the core of the entire universe.

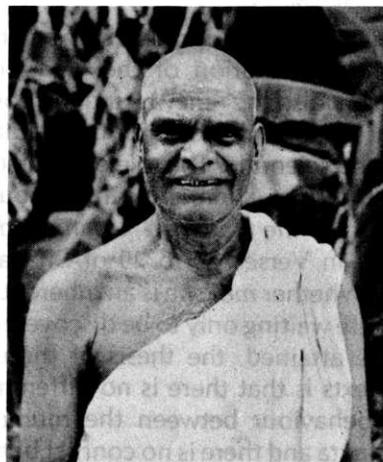
The Timeless flows into time as and when people are ready and prepared to receive it. Gandhiji (who never met Shri Aurobindo or Shri Bhagavan face to face, but had the highest regard for them) once truly observed: "It is not as if one sees a saint and becomes a saint. It is rather that when one becomes a saint one sees a saint". The *Zeitgeist* will guide millions to see Shri Bhagavan as he truly is, a fully ripe, natural fruit on the human tree, the forerunner of many such in the ages to come. The bliss of becoming ripens into the bliss of Being if only one clings to the Tree and plays with the Sun. □

KUNJU SWAMI'S REMINISCENCES

Earlier this year, Sri Ramanasramam published a book containing Kunju Swami's reminiscences in Tamil ("**Yenadu Ninaivugal**"). Dr. K. Subramanian, one of **The Mountain Path** editors, has already translated the book into English, and we hope that his version will be on sale later this year. The following article contains paraphrased extracts from his version, and in our next issue, we shall be printing a long account by Kunju Swami of the death of Bhagavan's mother and the birth of Sri Ramanasramam.

A VISION OF ARUNACHALA

WHEN Bhagavan was staying in Virupaksha cave, he had some kind of vision in which he saw himself going into a wonderful cave filled with beautiful parks, lovely lakes and trees and plants and creepers full of flowers and fruits. Somehow, it did not appear new to Bhagavan, and he said that he felt as if he had been there before. Some time later, when the Adiannamalai temple was being renovated, a tunnel from the eastern side of the temple leading into the hill was noticed. Sri Bhagavan was informed of this. When Sri Bhagavan went round the hill the next day, he had a look at the tunnel. He was surprised to discover a similarity between the tunnel he was shown and the tunnel of his vision, but he told no one there about the similarities which he had noticed. When the temple authorities asked him what they should do about the tunnel, Sri Bhagavan asked them not to examine it any further, but to close it up immediately. They followed his instructions and closed the tunnel. Subsequently he read in the *Arunachala Mahatmyam*, a Sanskrit verse which described what he had seen in his vision. He was surprised at this similarity, and translated the verse into Tamil, and the translation is now included in the *Collected Works of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*



Sri Kunju Swami

SRI BHAGAVAN'S BODYGUARD

Soldier Swami was a soldier who had retired from the army. After his retirement he became village officer at Vaniambadi. He had been coming to visit Sri Bhagavan even before my arrival at Skandashram. After some time he decided to stay at Skandashram permanently. He felt that he was the bodyguard of Sri Bhagavan, and he would get up every morning, take his bath, dress up as a soldier and stand guard at the entrance to Skandashram. He would even carry a stick as if it was a gun. He would not eat with the others for his feeling was that

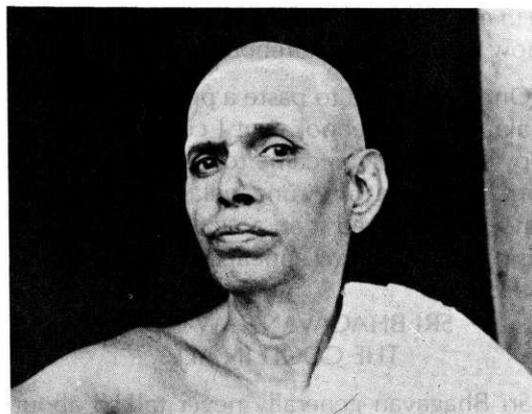
one should not eat with one's master! He would receive his food on a leaf and then go away and eat by himself.

After Sri Bhagavan's mother attained *nirvana*, it occurred to Soldier Swami that Sri Bhagavan might go on a world tour. In preparation for this, he bought ten horses with all the money he had and then brought them up the hill. When we learned of the reason, we told Sri Bhagavan why the horses were on the hill. Sri Bhagavan, realising the hardship the horses must have undergone in climbing the rocks suggested that they could be kept near his mother's *samadhi*. Soldier Swami took them there and ate sometimes with Sri Chinnaswamy who lived in a shed near the *samadhi* and sometimes in Skandashram. In time owing to lack of proper care, the number of horses dwindled. As he could not properly feed the remaining ones, he sold them all. His health also deteriorated and his son came and took him back to Vaniambadi where he passed away. When Sri Bhagavan heard the news, he spoke in glowing terms of his virtues and his utter devotion.

GIRIPRAKSHINA AND "MEDITATION-IN-MOVEMENT"

A sadhu used to go round the hill every day, but apart from that, never did any meditation or *japa*. One day he asked Sri Bhagavan for a particular book, and Sri Bhagavan asked me to get it for him. Later he asked me whether I had given the book to him and I replied that I had. I asked Bhagavan gently why the sadhu wanted the book when his only interest was *giri-pradakshina* (walking round the mountain).

Sri Bhagavan said: "There is nothing better than *giri-pradakshina*. That alone is enough. If you do *japa* or meditation sitting in one place, the mind may wander. But during *giri-pradakshina* the limbs move but the mind will be still. Doing *japa* or meditation without any other thought while walking is called *sanchara samadhi*, "meditation-in-movement." That is why in former times walking was considered to be so important. *Giri-pradakshina* is particularly important. As



there are several medicinal herbs on the hill, its breeze will be good for health. There are several *siddhas* and sages on the hill even now though we cannot see them. They also go round the hill unseen by us. When we go round the hill, we should walk on the left side of the road so that we will not obstruct their movement. We will also have the benefit of walking round them and will get their blessings".

SRI BHAGAVAN'S COMPASSION

The residents of Palakothu used to return to Palakothu from the Ashram every day around 11 a.m. Sri Bhagavan used to come to Palakothu around 11.30 after finishing his lunch, and we used to wait for his *darshan* there. He would come and ask about our welfare like a mother, and we used to be overjoyed at his kind words.

Everyday I used to participate in the Tamil chanting done in his presence. There was hardly a day when I didn't have the opportunity of talking to him. However, when the ashram expanded and the visitors increased, there were occasions when I would have no opportunity to speak to Bhagavan. On those days, I would deliberately leave out a line while chanting in his presence. Sri Bhagavan would immediately complete it for me and I would feel happy that I had talked to him.

If I copied something in my notebook, I would deliberately leave out a line. I knew that Bhagavan would make the correction in his own hand and I wanted Bhagavan's writing to

be in my notebook. I did this several times and I now treasure that notebook.

Once, I wanted to paste a picture of Arunachala in the notebook, but I could not find a copy. Sri Bhagavan came to know of this and drew a picture of Arunachala with his own hand. I considered it an act of grace, and it is this picture that now appears in *The Mountain Path*.

SRI BHAGAVAN SAW ONLY THE GOOD IN ALL

Sri Bhagavan generally never talked about either the good or the bad qualities of others, but if he ever heard of the death of someone he knew, he would praise his good qualities. It was amazing how he knew what others did not. Sometimes we used to feel that we should have to die in order to hear good words from Bhagavan about us. Except of course, in such circumstances, we would be unable to appreciate them. The moment we heard the news of the death of someone, we would immediately go and sit before Sri Bhagavan in order to listen to

his comments on the departed soul. There was a rich man called Kandaswami in Tiruvannamalai whose conduct was not particularly good and the local people detested him. He used to come and see Bhagavan occasionally, and in his last days, he suffered from poverty. He spent his last days in a dilapidated temple opposite the ashram, and Bhagavan arranged for gruel to be sent to him. This was sent on three successive days, and on the fourth day, Kandaswami passed away. We informed Bhagavan of this and sat in the hall thinking that Bhagavan could not possibly have anything good to say about this man. What a disappointment! Sri Bhagavan said: "Nobody can keep his body and clothes as cleanly as Kandaswami. He is next to Injikolli Dikshitar in cleanliness. He used neither oil nor soap. He would come to the tank at eight in the morning and would start washing his dhoti and towel. By the time he finished his bath it would be 12 noon. His hair and beard were spotlessly clean". We were really ashamed of ourselves! Sri Bhagavan was unique in seeing only the good in others. □

| FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS | | |
|---|-----------|----------|
| GURU POORNIMA (Vyasa Puja) | Friday | 17.7.81 |
| KRISHNA JAYANTHI (GOKULASHTAMI) | Saturday | 22.8.81 |
| DAY OF BHAGAVAN'S ADVENT TO ARUNACHALA | Tuesday | 1.9.81 |
| VINAYAKA CHATURTHI | Wednesday | 2.9.81 |
| NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL (Commences on) | Tuesday | 29.9.81 |
| SARASWATHI PUJA | Wednesday | 7.10.81 |
| VIJAYADASAMI | Thursday | 8.10.81 |
| DEEPAVALI | Monday | 26.10.81 |
| SKANDA SASHTI | Tuesday | 3.11.81 |
| KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (Commences on) | Monday | 30.11.81 |
| KARTHIGAI DEEPAM | Wednesday | 9.12.81 |
| SRI BHAGAVAN'S JAYANTHI | Sunday | 10.1.82 |
| PONGAL | Thursday | 14.1.82 |
| CHINNASWAMIGAL ARADHANA | Monday | 8.2.82 |
| MAHA SIVARATRI | Monday | 22.2.82 |
| TELUGU NEW YEAR'S DAY | Friday | 26.3.82 |
| TAMIL NEW YEAR DAY | Wednesday | 14.4.82 |

SRI RAMANA SANDARSANAMU

By
Panthalu Lakshmi Narayana Sastri

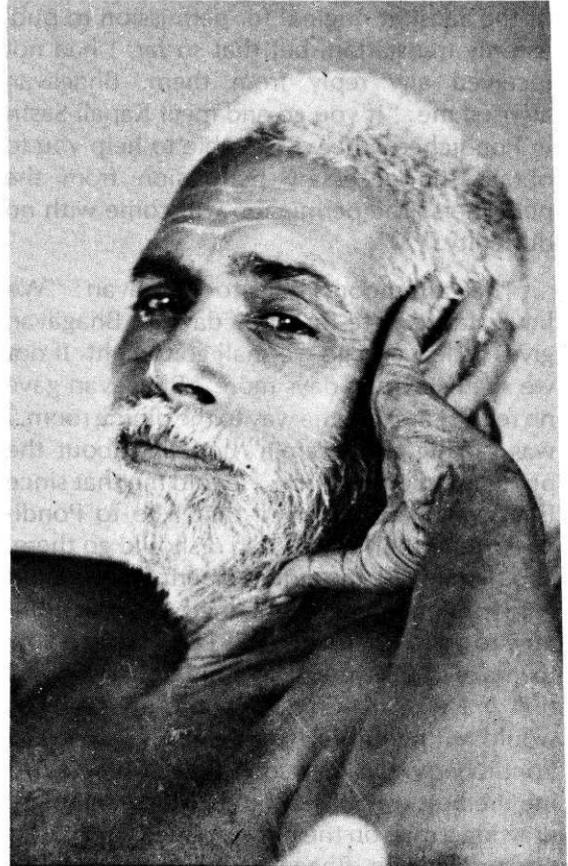
The author of this article was a great scholar and an adept in composing extempore poetry. His experiences during his visit to Bhagavan were recorded by Devaraja Mudaliar in his diary "Day by Day with Bhagavan". Sri Sastri described his visit in a booklet in Telugu entitled "Sri Ramana Sandarsanamu", and this article is an abridged translation of his booklet. (EDITOR)

IN 1943, a close relative of mine, Brahamasri Vedula Ramamurthy handed me a copy of Ganapati Muni's Sanskrit work *Uma Sahasram* and asked me to translate it into Telugu. This was the first time that I had seen Bhagavan's picture and it drew me to him like a magnet. I at once agreed to translate the work, feeling that the offer was divinely prompted.

When the college where I was lecturing closed for the summer vacation in 1946, my wife and I set out on a pilgrimage to Tiruvannamalai, visiting Kalahasti and Tirupati en route. As we entered the hall on May 5th, 1946, the morning *Veda Parayana* was going on in Bhagavan's presence. Bhagavan was seated majestically on the sofa, and even the first sight of him evoked great faith and ineffable bliss in my heart. I was so moved by my emotions that I could not restrain myself, and as Bhagavan rose for breakfast, I fell prostrate at his feet, and I was so unconscious of my surroundings that all the copies of my books which I had brought to present to Bhagavan fell all over the floor. One of the devotees picked up the books and helped me to go to the dining room, and after breakfast I went to my lodging and composed twenty verses in Sanskrit in praise of Sri Bhagavan under the title "*Atmabhista Nivedanam*".

When I entered the hall again, I introduced myself to Sri Bhagavan in Sanskrit, not knowing

that he spoke Telugu. When I said to him, "*Umasahasram maya Andhri kritham*". (I have rendered *Uma Sahasram* into Telugu), he



replied "Oh, you are translating *Uma Sahasram* into Telugu" in pure Telugu, and even corrected my use of the word *Andhri kritham* which means "completed translating". Bhagavan somehow knew that I had not actually finished the work, and when he enquired how far I had gone with my translation, I confessed that I had only so far translated a hundred *slokas* along with their commentary.

At the conclusion of this conversation, I requested Bhagavan to permit me to read out the poem I had just composed in my room. Bhagavan nodded his head and I recited the verses with a strong emotional fervour.

On the third day of my visit, I had the good fortune of reading out to Sri Bhagavan that part of *Uma Sahasram* which I had already translated. After the reading was over, I informed Bhagavan that I had written to the publishers of the Sanskrit original for permission to publish my translation, but that so far, I had not received any reply from them. Bhagavan advised me: "If you go and meet Kapali Sastri in Pondicherry, he will be able to help you to obtain the necessary permission from the publishers. The permission will come with no difficulty."

That afternoon I said to Bhagavan: "We have stayed here for three days. If Bhagavan gives us leave to go we shall go tonight. If not we shall stay two days more." Bhagavan gave no reply. Later, on the way to the dining room, I was talking to Devaraja Mudaliar about the publication of my book. He told me that since Bhagavan had suggested that I go to Pondicherry and see Kapali Sastri, I should go there, and that if I did, the required permission would easily be obtained. I explained that I was unable to go to Pondicherry as I had taken a vow to make a pilgrimage to Chidambaram, and that if I went to Chidambaram, my finances would not permit me to extend my journey to Pondicherry. On my request, he explained to me the best way of reaching Chidambaram by drawing a map on the floor. As the explanation was proceeding, Bhagavan passed by, and he stopped and asked Devaraja Mudaliar if he was

explaining the route to me. Devaraja Mudaliar said yes, and added that I was asking for instructions on how to get to Chidambaram as it was not possible for me to go to Pondicherry. "Is that so?" replied Bhagavan, "Won't Sastriji go to Pondicherry?" and after this brief comment, he passed on his way.

That night we left the ashram and reached Chidambaram the next morning. We accommodated ourselves in a pilgrim's lodge and had the *darshan* of Lord Nataraja in the temple. All the time, I was spending my money very thriftily in view of my meagre finances. In the evening I was talking to the steward of the *chatram* (the pilgrim's lodge), and I told him of my visit to Bhagavan, and how I was unable to follow his instructions to go to Pondicherry. The steward told me that it would not cost much to go to Pondicherry, and he eventually convinced us to extend our journey. He even accompanied us to the bus station and voluntarily purchased a ticket for us out of his own pocket.

We arrived at Pondicherry on 10.5.1946, and when I went to see Sri Kapali Sastri he was teaching some lessons to a student. I introduced myself in Sanskrit and presented him with a copy of my *Andhra Dhvanyalokam*. Kapali stared at me with surprise and said to me in fluent Telugu, pointing to his student: "He is the son of Ganapati Muni's intimate disciple, Sri M.P. Pandit. As he is preparing for his M.A. degree examination in Sanskrit, I am teaching him "*Dhvanyalokam*" in Sanskrit as it is prescribed for their study. Now you arrive here with a Telugu translation of the same work. I think your book will help me a lot in teaching the lessons."

In the afternoon I read out to him my translation of *Uma Sahasram*, along with his commentary on it. He listened to it carefully and commended my translation by saying that it was faithful and lucid. He promised me that he would do whatever was necessary to publish my book as early as possible. When he was about to leave he gently said to me: "As I am staying here alone without my family, I am not able to offer my hospitality to you, so you must

kindly accept at least this." As he was saying this, he was forcing five rupees into my hands.

In retrospect, when I calculated the additional expenditure I had incurred on my trip to Pondicherry, I found to my surprise that it had cost me only five rupees extra!

Before leaving, Kapali Sastri told me that I would have to travel through Tiruvannamalai on my way back to Vijayanagaram, and he asked me if I would again break my journey at Tiruvannamalai. I had not realised this before, and I was elated at the prospect of being able to see Bhagavan again.

I reached the gates of Sri Ramanasramam on the morning of the 11th. As I was about to enter the ashram, I saw some devotees standing near the gate, and I heard one of them telling the others: "Sastriji is now coming from Pondicherry." I was so surprised that they knew of my unexpected change of route, that I went up to them and asked them how they knew that I had been to Pondicherry. One of them informed me that after I had left for Chidambaram, one of the devotees told Bhagavan about my departure. Bhagavan had replied: "He will go to Chidambaram, from there to Pondicherry, and then he will come back here. He will leave for Vijayanagaram only after giving us a performance of his extempore poetry."

When I entered the hall and prostrated before Bhagavan, he immediately asked me: "Did you go to Pondicherry from Chidambaram?" I replied with great devotion and excitement that only Bhagavan's grace had taken us to Pondicherry and that that same grace had brought us back for Bhagavan's *darshan*.

Later the devotees asked me to give them a performance of my extempore poetry, and when I humbly asked what subject I should compose on, they at once chose Bhagavan himself as the subject. As I started composing my extempore poems, I felt that some divine force had taken possession of me and was composing the poems. I remembered only the

beginning and the end and I did not know what I was reciting. Sri Sambasiva Rao, an advocate from Guntur, had jotted down the poems, twenty in all, on a piece of paper while the recitation was going on, but as he could not keep pace with my fast recitation, he had left some blanks to be filled in later. When the recitation was over, he gave me the paper and requested me to fill in the blank spaces. I told him that the poems had come to my lips quite spontaneously by Bhagavan's grace, and that I did not myself remember what I had said. Bhagavan then remarked: "Those poems cannot be filled in. Even if he tries, the original form cannot be recaptured."

Later I was told that after I had left for Chidambaram, Devaraja Mudaliar had said to Bhagavan: "It seems that this L.N. Sastry is a great poet. Nagamma is all praise for his poems and tells me that he is the best Telugu poet to come to Bhagavan for at least five years." G. Subba Rao who was also present apparently agreed with him. After listening to these comments Bhagavan remarked: "Yes I agree, he is a great poet. He is a Pandit in the Raja's college at Vijayanagaram. Nobody would take him for such a great poet, he looks like a very ordinary man, but he wants to become an *avadhani* (one who can compose extempore poems on any subject). But all this is only activity of the mind. The more you exercise the mind and the more success you have in composing verses or doing *satavadanam* (giving attention to many things at once) the less peace you have. What use is it to acquire such accomplishments if you don't acquire peace? But if you tell people this, it does not appeal to them. They cannot keep quiet and they must be composing songs. As Nayana (Ganapati Muni) used to say, 'In going forward one can run any distance at any speed, but when it is a question of going backwards, that is, running inwards, even one step is hard to take.'"

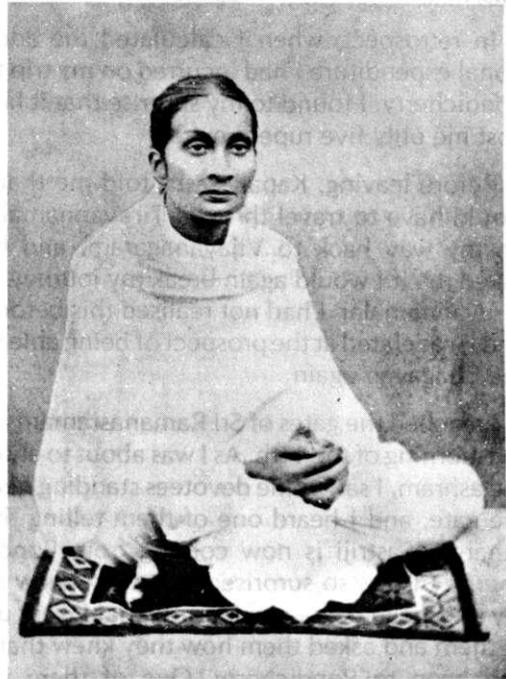
When I came to hear of Bhagavan's opinions on the composition of extempore poetry, I followed his advice and greatly curtailed my poetic ambitions. □

The Teachings of Bramagna Ma

By
David Godman

BRAMAGNA MA, like Ramana Maharshi, can be included in that rare group of spiritual figures who have attained Self-Realisation without any external Guru. She achieved her goal by devoting herself completely to self-enquiry over a period of twenty years, and after realisation she repeatedly told all who came to her that self-enquiry was the only means by which realisation could be attained. She was an early contemporary of Ramana Maharshi and taught from 1912 until her death in 1934, but her life and teachings are little known in the English-speaking world. She lived and taught mostly in Bengal, but even there, she never achieved any great fame or popularity. What little is known of her has come to us through the efforts of Major Chadwick, who, with the cooperation of Swami Prabuddhananda, edited a typewritten manuscript of her life and teachings in 1940 and presented it to Ramana Maharshi. The original manuscript is now in the Ramanasramam library and twenty years ago it was published under the title, "Life and teachings of Bramagna Ma". It is from this work that all the following quotations have been taken.

She was born in Bengal in 1880, was married at eight and widowed at ten. From early childhood she showed an aversion to traditional forms of worship and religion and quite spontaneously took up the practice of self-enquiry. After twenty years of continuous practice, unaided by any teachers, she finally realised



Bramagna Ma

the Self at the age of thirty two. In a foreword to a small Bengali book on her teachings she gave a terse summary, written in the third person, of all her years of *sadhana*. She wrote: "She was naturally given to discrimination and was engaged in the search for spiritual truth. From her childhood she used to think: where does a human being go and in what state does he remain after death, and where does he come from? In nothing can peace be found in this world—'what then is real peace?' Such thoughts as 'who am I?', 'what is this body, mind or Atman?' used to engage her. These are the three stages of her *sadhana*. Without the help of books or gurus, by pure discrimination and search for truth, she tore away the veils of *maya*, overcame all doubts and attained Self-Realisation."

Little else is known of her *sadhana*, except that on another occasion she told her disciples that during her years of self-enquiry she acquired several *siddhis* and often found herself in

blissful trance-like states. These states had no attraction for her, and with the aid of discrimination, separating the real from the unreal, she ignored them both and went beyond them.

After her realisation she attracted many disciples, but she was strongly opposed to forming an organisation around herself and she spent many of her later years in privacy away from her disciples.

She was a completely uneducated woman, but after her realisation she spoke on spiritual matters with a fluency and an authority which astonished many of her listeners. Her words were pure advaita and her teachings so closely resembled the teachings of Ramana Maharshi that her words might easily have been spoken by Ramana himself. On one occasion she told a disciple: "Always you think 'I exist'. Every moment your body and mind are changing, but in the middle of all these changes the unchangeable notion 'I exist' persists. You never think 'I do not exist'. This awareness of 'I exist' is the reflection of the real 'I am'. When you realise, you will understand that there is nothing to give up or to get hold of; what exists always exists. Only one 'Grand I' exists."

Like Ramana, she permitted her disciples to follow different spiritual paths, according to their levels of understanding, but she always emphasised and gave prominence to the path of self-enquiry. Few people have ever been willing to follow this path and so by consistently advocating it, she ensured that she would have few followers. One of her disciples once questioned her on this topic saying: "Mother, your standard is very high, this will attract very few, you are not likely to have many followers." Her reply was, "If anyone asks me, I tell them the truth unalloyed. I don't care if I have a following or not. I know this much, that if anyone is desirous of peace, he has no other alternative but to follow the path chalked out by me."

Extracts from her letters reveal just how insistent she was in advising disciples to enquire "who am I?" She writes: "who dies and who is

born, who . . . works? . . . who suffers? . . . who are you? . . . give me your identity, tell me." In another letter she wrote: "If a man can meditate on 'what am I?' then he can go beyond the darkness of ignorance and know the root cause."

Another trait which she shared with Ramana Maharshi was an unwillingness to discuss theoretical questions, preferring always to direct her questioner's attention to more practical matters. A typical answer she gave was when someone asked her about free will and pre-determination. She replied: "All questions relate to and are only possible in the domain of ignorance. The world is no better than a dream, so what can be the standard of truth here? direct your energies to knowing and finding yourself." All theoretical questions would be answered in a similar way.

Ramana Maharshi never tired of telling questioners to find out who they were, but almost as frequently he would tell his listeners that they were already realised here and now, that self-realisation was nothing to be attained because we are always the Self whether we realise it or not. Bramagna Ma echoed this approach, sometimes telling disciples to practice self-enquiry, at other times telling them; "You are all Self-Realised, only a veil is obstructing the view." This is clearly brought out in a song she wrote in reply to a disciple who complained about his personal sufferings. She wrote:

"You exist ever free, you are never bound
you are always fully conscious, look at
your true nature.

You have no desire, anger, avarice, hate,
shame, or even fear of death, you are pure
Atma, full of knowledge.

You have lost knowledge of Self in duality
your ignorance is your own creation
you are in it."

From these few quotations, it might be that the teachings of Ramana Maharshi and Bramagna Ma were identical, particularly the theory and practice of self-enquiry. A closer study of her style of teaching

several minor but important differences. Unlike Ramana Maharshi who maintained that Self-Realisation was the easiest thing to achieve because we already are the Self, Bramagna Ma maintained that Realisation could only come after long years of strenuous effort and practice. She believed that seekers after truth should give up all other pursuits and devote themselves full-time to *sadhana*. With this in mind, she advised all serious seekers to become *sannyasis* so that they might pursue their spiritual goals free from all attachments to the world and its pleasures. It is this strong emphasis on detachment that supplies the key to the differences between the approach of Bramagna Ma and that of Ramana Maharshi. Reading Bramagna Ma's words, it is clear that she is very much in favour of the traditional Hindu approach to *Jnana Yoga*, with its strong emphasis on morality, discrimination between the real and the unreal, and detachment from pleasures and pains. She seems to give equal emphasis to discrimination and to self-enquiry, and although she never gives explicit instructions on how to practice self-enquiry, it is clear on many occasions that she is advocating the traditional "*neti-neti*" (not this, not this) approach to the problem. In one song she wrote,

"Ascertain who you are.
Always you are speaking of yourself as
"I", "I", "I",
Are you the five elements, including the
akasha (The ether, or space), or
mind, intellect or the vital force?
What is your name, what is your form
and where do you reside?"

Statements like this would seem to imply that self-enquiry should proceed by discarding what one is not, whereas with Ramana Maharshi, enquiry proceeds by holding on to the "I-consciousness". This change of emphasis was the Maharshi's greatest innovation in the realm of spiritual technique. Before his appearance, self-enquiry was generally understood to be a negative technique of discrimination reserved for those who had already achieved a high degree of mind control. Although

THE EARTHEN GOBLET

(A conversation between the poet and the goblet)

"O silent goblet! red from head to heel,
How did you feel
When you were being twirled
Upon the Potter's wheel
Before the Potter gave you to the
world"

I felt a conscious impulse in my clay
To break away
From the great Potter's hand
That burned so warm.

I felt a vast
Feeling of sorrow to be cast
Into my present form.

Before that fatal hour
That saw me captive on the Potter's
wheel

And cast into this crimson goblet-
sleep,

I used to feel
The fragrant friendship of a little
flower
Whose root was in my bosom buried
deep.

The Potter has drawn out the living
breath of me,

And given me a form which is the
death of me;

My past unshapely natural state was
best,

With just one flower flaming through
my breast.

— HARINDRANATH
CHATTOPADHYAYA

Bramagna Ma departed from tradition by encouraging all sincere seekers to take up self-enquiry, there is no indication in her written works that she is advocating anything other than the traditional approach of enquiry through elimination of what one is not.

Although Bramagna Ma consistently advocated self-enquiry, like Ramana Maharshi, she accepted the validity and usefulness of other paths. She upheld all of the traditional teachings, and put a high emphasis on the importance of faith, devotion, and the necessity of the Guru to guide spiritual aspirants. This is interesting, for like the Maharshi, she had no Guru herself. Her attitude to the Guru is best summarised in the following quotation: "He alone can realise the Self without a Guru's help in whose mind queries like 'Who am I?' 'What is the world?' arise from his very birth and the thought of the futility and the transitoriness of the world clearly manifests and awakens keen dispassion, and leads him to self-enquiry. Such men are very rare."

Bramagna Ma was a strict disciplinarian who expected her few disciples to devote themselves full-time to self-enquiry. She was so strict that she would not even allow her fol-

lowers to read a book or a newspaper. For her, hard practice and experience were the only routes to spiritual progress since they transcended the delusory world of words. Her statement that "The final Truth is neither *dvaita* nor *advaita*, but is devoid of both" is similar to a remark that Devaraja Mudaliar once elicited from Ramana Maharshi, and it illustrates her profound distaste for both the spoken and the written word.

She was asked on many occasions by her followers to write a book, but her standard uncompromising answer was that many people wrote spiritual books, few people read them, and since no one followed their instructions, why should she write another? She was even opposed to other people writing about her and she vetoed all plans to write a biography during her lifetime. It is only since her death that information about her life and teachings has percolated through to the outside world. We should be grateful that one or two of her "weak-willed" devotees went against her wishes and after her death published a little information about her, otherwise the life and teachings of a great modern saint would have disappeared without trace. □

Farid Al-Din Attar, a Sufi Mystic, had a call to follow the religious life while he was engaged in selling perfumes and drugs. One day a dervish, who was far advanced in the spiritual life came to Attar's door and cast curious glances upon the treasures displayed there in such profusion; then his eyes were seen to fill with tears, while he gave vent to deep sighs. The Attar disturbed by this unwanted visitor bade him pass on his way and begone. The dervish in response said: 'Sir, that is easily done. My baggage is light, for it consists only of this patched robe that I wear, but for you, with these sacks full of precious drugs, when the time comes for you to depart hence, how will you take them with you? As for myself, I can depart quickly enough from the bazaar of this transient world, but as for you, you will need to occupy yourself well in advance with the arrangement of your packages and your baggage: it would be wise to ponder a little on your situation.' The Attar was profoundly affected by these words of the dervish. He gave up his shop, abandoned his profession, and entirely renounced all worldly affairs.

BEYOND THE MIND¹

By
Dada

The following article is an extract from a conversation which Dada, an Indian spiritual teacher, had in the United States in 1975. His words arose out of the question of an American lady who was seeking clarification on the way to attain liberation.

“ **T**HERE is nothing like a positive start which the mind can make toward the discovery of the spirit.

You start when you begin to see within yourself the constant pursuit of various desires, fears and hopes.

You start when you become conscious of these subtle desires working all the time without stopping.

You start when you see how your actions are the reactions of a biased and wishful mind, and that there is never a fresh action from life within.

You start when you realise how you spend your entire life energy trying to fulfill the unending ambitions of the mind in all directions

You start when you recognise that you are never reaching a point where you remain fulfilled.

You start when you see that you never attain these imaginary goals created by the mind.

You start when you discover that you do not really know what you want in life beyond food, shelter, and a few necessities.

You start when you see that the mind is no interested in peace, but only in its own pursuits.

You start when you perceive and recognise that the mind is nothing but the burden of bygone memories.

You start when you see and understand clearly how this so-called mind is an imposition of unfulfilled experiences of the past.

You make a real clean start when you begin to watch every incoming thought and understand how the past is trying to continue at the cost of the present, calling itself “I”.

Discovery of the deceptions of I, the mind, is the beginning of a journey toward the spirit. Look into yourself calmly, with sharp attention. To see what is happening in oneself is important. Watch every idea and desire that comes into the mind. Such observation is the beginning of quieting down this activity. Then you discover that you can look at yourself without any motive or expectation. Usually, the mind immediately starts to name, describe, moralise and compare whatever it sees. But through unmotivated and unbiased looking within, you can step out of the field of thought. Just keep watching, and you will discover a new quality of sensitivity which is not a thought activity, because there are no desires, motives, hopes or fears involved in that watchfulness. Be conscious of the thoughts coming again and again. See that it is so, that is all. This attention becomes a new vital point, an imper-

¹Taken from “Beyond the Mind” by Dada; distributed by Dada Center Publication, 148, M. Karve Road, Flat 1, Bombay 400 020, and reprinted with the publishers’ permission.

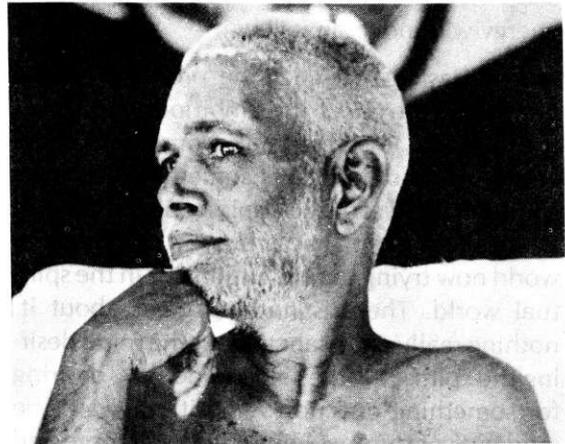
sonal flow of energy. Mind is a personalised and conditioned energy. You have to discover the unbiased and unconditioned energy.

Proceed quietly, and then you will discover what meditation is. Attention without thought is meditation. Slowly through watchful attention you step out of the field of the mind without any struggle. As your sensitivity increases, you will be able to act without the promptings of thought and desire.

Consciousness is not familiar with this kind of watchfulness. The nervous system is not trained to do this. The brain cells are not accustomed to looking back on themselves. The real challenge of life is to change one's dimension. It is not a matter of just altering a few habits or thoughts here and there. I am only concerned with the radical change, which is the discovery of a new consciousness.

We have to see how the mind itself is working and causing problems. We have to discover a sane and pure consciousness that can give us peace, quietude and happiness, and not merely indulge in thought/desire activity. The discovery of something much more fundamental is very important. Therefore, work with all your understanding senses and whole energy, and not with thought/desire activity alone.

Now, how do we begin to bring about an end to this exclusive and biased mechanical thought process? Start from where you are and begin by simply watching this activity. See what it is all about. Just watch. This watchfulness will bring about a quietude and will slow down this thought current. Then you will not be carried away so easily. The intensity of watchful attention diminishes the flight of ideas. As you move along this watchfulness will broaden and intensify, gathering all the energy that the mind is now using. The more energy you will have for this watchfulness, the less there will be for thought activity. See the beauty of gathering this energy in watchfulness and attention without a thought. Then that



MAGICIAN RAMANA

Both male and female, far yet near,
Mountain-huge and atom-small
Pure Spirit He, whose sidelong glance
Had made me see
The Truth invisible
And hear
The dancing music of His feet.
For He has caught within His heart
And carries in His cosmic dance
This Midget. What extravagance
Of grace, to hold me in this bliss,
Both mine and His,
Together and apart!

Your Grace it was I stumbled
To your feet,
Your love that raised me up
And made me yours,
Chosen to serve,
Though not for service meet,
Untutored save by Grace
That from you pours.
I too have seen all creatures
Live and move
Not of themselves but Self,
All living prove
That I am nothing and can nothing do;
So all my duties I have cast on you.

—SRI MURUGANAR

energy will move on its own.

One has to see what the problem is. The problem is the mind. It is ambitious and craves for so much. It wants things from the material world. And now it wants something from the spiritual world too. It is aspiring all the time. It is the same mind that is busy in the material world now trying to find fulfillment in the spiritual world. There is nothing great about it, nothing really sacrosanct about the mind desiring the spirit. It is the same mind only desiring for something else now. And it is always the tendency of this mechanism to want more and more of everything. We listen to some spiritual talks, read a few books, and come across the ideas of bliss, *nirvana*, peace, happiness and so on, and the mind gets intoxicated, "Oh, let me have something of that world also."

All searching is a projection of the mind through its desires and ambitions. All this projected activity must come to an end because it is a waste of time and energy. For this kind of search and penetration, you will have to stop this energy dissipation and fall back upon yourself to keep it within. We must not scatter it. This is what is happening in the pattern of daily living. We are scattering our energy through thoughts and desires of the mind. We are also desiring this very inner quality through thought. So we have to see this energy dissipation and drop it.

We have to work with ourselves and go directly to that core, to that centre, to that root wherein lies the whole secret and mystery of life. You need not depend upon anyone, or on any book, or in fact, not on anything that is outside. Just be quiet into yourself. There will not be any thought to imagine or demand a thing. Simply be quiet with the total fund of energy within, and in such quietude you are going to discover something new. You will then experience what humility is, and what innocence is. The mind which is quiet into itself is innocent, humble, transparent and open to discover that which is the real.

Then you will know what meditation is. Meditation is not the chanting or singing of devotional songs, nor the repetition of any word or phrase. You will then be in a state of total surrender, alone with yourself. To be in such silence within is the highest form of prayer. The quietude which we are pondering over is not a dull or docile activity but a vibrant state of inner being. That quietude is in itself very active and dynamic because it is a momentum of the whole energy.

When you make a focus of your energy by gathering it, it becomes potent. In that potency, thought, which is the product of lower vibrations cannot operate. Then you will see all your desires as mere fanciful, lazy activities of mind and thought. You will know the difference between the two levels. The free and dynamic flow of inner energy is the real pulse of life.

Disquietude is nothing but ceaseless thought activity. We try to quieten one thought with another idea, which then becomes a fight between two opposing thoughts. This way we remain in the same field of mind. This creates seeking which is nothing but a struggle and conflict. We may hang onto some words, pictures, *mantras*, but again it is an idea, a seeking of the mind. Mind will never lead us to quietude. We start chanting mechanically, and again it becomes a habit of the mind. So we are never free from thought. The spirit is a quality of a new dimension, and thought has to resign for the spirit to come in. You have to see the fallacy of this thought activity, which is not the way to the spirit. The thought process blocks the incoming of the spirit. Not seeing this fact clearly, and ignorance about oneself are the difficulties in realising the spirit.

The more attentive you are, the more you will be able to understand the mind. You will be able to see it very clearly. The mind is constantly catching you and making you act according to its own moods sentiments and idiosyncrasies. Your life is nothing but all this

activity. You can capture the movements of your mind through watchful attention. Then it will not be able to catch you unaware. To use the mind to understand the mind is the greatest illusion of life. Now it is time for you to see this fallacy. You have been deceived all the time through the mind. It is the mind that wants to know God, to know the spirit. But now we must be able to tell it: "That is not your business, dear mind. It is simply not your business. You are incapable of understanding and contacting the spirit. You had better be quiet."

The quietude that comes after realising the limitations and ignorance of the mind begins to show the symptoms of a new intelligence. This inner silence is not enforced by the will. It is the outcome of deep insight and understanding the realities of life. Therefore this silence is intelligent and eloquent. And out of this silence of inner space emerges the whisper of truth through an intuitive flash.

Silence is a state of aloneness, which is absolute. It is a state of surrender to life, the unknown. To face the unknown is to be free from all the reactions of the known, which is the mind. In facing the unknown, the energy becomes pure and sensitive to capture the new

wavelength that flashes from beyond the frontiers of the mind.

When energy becomes sensitive, highly volatile and effervescent, it transcends the idea/emotion level of the mind. Mind becomes the mindless. This mindless energy is dynamic, virtuous and holy. It is pure and transparent to reflect the will and glory of the divine. With humility the energy becomes capable of meeting every moment and event of relationship intuitively, without the thought process of mind.

This sensitive and humble energy becomes free from all ideas, desires and rigid mechanical drives born out of the past. The cumulative effect of the whole past is the image of "I", the mind which seeks the spirit. Elimination of this past is the freedom from mind, who is the seeker. Therefore all seeking comes to an end, as the seeker himself is dissolved. Living becomes the experiencing of the total moment. With the discovery of living in the fullness of the moment, time merges into the timeless, and past as well as future are eliminated.

To discover this eternal moment, and to live in it anonymously, is the beginning and end of all human search. □

You never enjoy the world aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with the heavens and crowned with the stars: and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so because men are in it who are every one sole heirs as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and delight in God, as men do in gold and kings in sceptres, you never enjoy the world.

Till your spirit filleth the whole world, and the stars are your jewels; till you are so familiar with the ways of God in all ages as with your walk and table; till you are intimately acquainted with that shady nothing out of which the world was made; till you love men so as to desire their happiness, with a thirst equal to the zeal of your own; till you delight in God for being good to all, you never enjoy the world.

— THOMAS TRAHERNE

On Concepts

By
Wolter A. Keers

THE "path" of self-discovery or self-realisation could be described as the successive removal of concepts about what we *think* we are.

The dialogue between an authentic Guru and someone in search of self-knowledge always begins in one way or the other, with what the questioner believes that he is. As this is different for all persons, the teaching is always different, even though this may not appear so on the outside. It is one reason why sages may sometimes seem to contradict themselves. In reality they do not: they are merely guiding a person from one level to the other. To the sage, the statements 'you are the body' and 'you are not the body' are equally true, but they are true on different levels. This particular example is clearly explained by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, when he says, "Both to the sage and the ignorant man, the body is the Self. But the ignorant man is limited by it, the sage is not" (*Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 17). What he tells us, is that the ignorant man is in his own, uncritical experience, a body, born so many years ago, and bound to die a few years later. When such a person tells us that he is a body, he is not lying, but is deeply convinced that he is telling us what is too obvious to be doubted. Even so, when we examine his standpoint, it is not difficult to discover that it is blatant, outrageous, schizophrenic nonsense to believe that you are a number of perceptions that come and go—for what we call "my body" is nothing but a series of perceptions, i.e. movements in consciousness, and that is what we call thoughts. When we sit still and watch the body, we find that to a human being all that exists at a given moment is a perception, that is to say, a thought.

Perceived things have the characteristic of coming and going. In the course of one single day we perceive millions of things—in other words, there are uncounted movements in consciousness. The movements disappear in a few seconds' time (much quicker, in fact) but the consciousness remains untouched and is ever ready to receive new perceptions which in turn will also depart in no time, and so on.

So this consciousness, that which remains when the perception is gone, is something like space in which bodies, houses, trees, clouds and many other things appear and disappear, without affecting space as such. Even after the appearance of millions of houses, trees and clouds, space is there to receive new perceptions, more perceived thoughts. Sri Ramana Maharshi was fond of using a similar example, that of the screen in a cinema. Houses may have burnt down, bombs may have exploded, bullets may have flown, but however violent the film may be, when it is over, there are no traces of bullets, bombs or fire on the screen. It has remained completely untouched by the events in the film, projected on it. Zen Masters have often used the parable of the mirror. Imagine that you hold a mirror in front of you with the reflecting side turned towards "the world". The objects that appear in your eye also appear in the mirror, whichever way you turn. The difference is that the mirror does not retain a single image, nor does it try to do so, whereas human beings do retain the images in their memory: at least they believe so.

But consciousness as such is like the mirror; no traces are left in it. Memory also comes and goes. When at the end of the day the waking

state leaves us, so does memory. In the dream state we may have a different memory, and remember things, with the greatest certainty, that could never have happened, not even in the story of that very dream. And in deep sleep, there is no waking state, nor the waking 'I', no dream state, nor dreamer—there is not even sleeping 'me' in deep sleep. Yet, somehow, I know that I am, even in deep, dreamless sleep. There was no lapse in being during the night, even though memory cannot tell me anything about dreamless sleep. There was a lapse in thought, feeling, perception, memory; in short, a lapse in the sum-total of appearances, but there was no lapse in being.

When the waking state appears, in less than no time that marvellous juggler called Mr. Memory jumps up and immediately creates a world of past and future, by creating present thoughts that tell us that they are in fact past or future.

All this, this entire creation, time-space-and-causality, is created by memory and is therefore conceptual. In other words: the sum-total of the waking state, or, for that matter, the dream state, is a concept, a world of ideas, a show, produced by the Universal Champion Juggler, Mr. Memory, out of the raw material which is the consciousness that I am.

Bondage is the belief in the reality of this show as something independent of the consciousness that I am. Liberation is the sudden discovery of the fact that the entire waking state, *including the I that is awake and considers itself a doer or enjoyer*, is nothing but a mental appearance, so that in reality I am not a 'me', part of the waking state, but the entire waking state, including that 'me' is a temporary state and no less mental than a dream. The entire waking state is a mental show, a movement of energy, added onto me and appearing within me as that consciousness which remains after the show is over; and was there, of course, before the show started "at 6.30 this morning."

What did I look like, before 6.30? Before time came into being?

I was that consciousness, in which forms appeared, but which cannot have a form itself, just like space may be thought to assume the form of a jar or of the world that we perceive, but does not in itself have any form or shape or colour or odour or taste or hardness or softness, cold or heat.

And just as space is not influenced by things that appear, happen or do not happen within it, so consciousness is not in any way touched by the presence (or absence) of the mental show called 'the world', alias the 'waking state'.

Just as it was there, formless, before forms appeared "at 6.30", it will be there when forms disappear at "12 p.m." Before a thought appears, I am there as the Raw Material in which it can manifest itself, out of which it is made and into which it will dissolve again. And when this thought disappears, I remain as that Raw Material out of which new thoughts (or feelings or sense-perceptions) will spontaneously arise. Just as space does not disappear when the jar is broken or taken away, consciousness does not disappear when a perception has come to its end; neither does it leave us when the waking or dream states have disappeared. It remains over, timelessly, for time and space to arise out of it again "the next morning".

I said that the discovery of what we are dawns suddenly. But in two issues of this magazine in 1980, Arthur Millar has argued that enlightenment does not come suddenly, and that a lot of work has to be done before you are ripe enough for it to occur (I repeat from memory, if he said it somewhat differently, I am the one to be blamed).

Who is right?

As long as 'I' think that I am a poor and vulnerable little human animal, in search of liberation, there is a lot of work to be done, and the insight I am looking for is not likely to drop from the sky.

The seeking 'I' is a concept, an idea, an "image in my head", and an image can never

become free or liberated. An image is a thing, like a chair or a jar, and chairs and jars cannot be bound or liberated.

Put differently: as long as the conviction is there that I am a person in search of freedom or peace or happiness, *that belief itself is the obstacle*. My Guru hammered it into my head again and again: "You are in search of freedom for the ego instead of freedom from the ego."

To see what he meant, really and profoundly, will cost a lot of work, if you like to call it so. It is most likely that a lot of words will have to be employed to unmask the illusion created by the words in which we have learnt to believe. As Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj says somewhere: "Precisely the most obvious things must be questioned and distrusted; am I really a person? Was I really born at a certain date and a certain place?"

Looking deeply into ourselves, we shall find that this is a world of lies. It is not so that I was ever born; the truth is that time-and-space, name and form, appear(ed) in me. It is not so that I live in a world and a society, but what we call world and society are a series of perceptions appearing in us. Everyone of us will have to discover that Jesus was not merely talking for himself when he said that he was the light of the world. Everyone of us is the light, the consciousness, "knowingness", presence, in every perception and therefore also in the totalizing image that we call 'the world'.

The superstition of early Christians that the ego is a real thing, existing outside of God, half-way as it were between God and the devil, led them to believe that something like a "Mr." Jesus was in that unique case the one spiritual, nay divine sun that enlightened the entire world. Had they listened a little better, for instance to his invitation to be like him, one with "the Father" (a Jewish symbol for the Source of all things), they would have easily come to the conclusion that the divine ego they projected on Jesus was just as illusory as the all too human ego they projected upon themselves. And they would easily have discovered that an ego cannot be saved to play a

harp forever and ever in a divine place called heaven. Liberation, in Jesus' words, is the discovery of the Kingdom of Heaven with us, eternally, and therefore always here and now, not after the death of the body in the divine music hall called Heaven, never in past or future, but eternally now.

All this misunderstanding can happen easily if one does not have a living Master as a guide to explain what is what. Fights and wars have scorched the earth, merely for the sake of words that no one understood. Even in this century, one church in this country has split into two over the question whether the souls of babies who died before being baptised could go to heaven. On my personal investigation, none of the learned theologians waging this battle could explain what a soul is (the word had meanwhile been scrapped virtually from Christian theology, when it was discovered, after centuries, that no one really knew what the word meant).

All this is not meant to be a smear against Christianity—we all sin against the same fogginess, lack of interest and consequently lack of the desire to be clear. Hindus have their mouths full of Ishwara and Ram, but not one in ten thousand has realised what these words really stand for; and the same goes for Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and what-have-you. If we are not brothers in the sense that we love each other as children of one Father, at least we are, and most certainly so, brothers in ignorance, warring about words that we do not understand ourselves.

As long as we feel that we are persons, concepts, we create a world of concepts, and we read our own level into our holy books—*Bible, Koran, Dhammapada* or *Gita*, it makes no difference.

Sri Nisargadatta, quoted already, once said: "You collect words from everywhere and then organize a fight between them." Like this: I am a person, born in year x at place y; I am partly good but mostly bad; I want to continue as this (projected) person, and a little happier than so

far; therefore I am going to live a spiritual life which will make me into a happy person, just like the sage so-and-so or the saint such-and-such.

And then the battle really begins, for there is the fight between the good in me and the bad in me, and so on. In this vicious circle there is no solution. The good will never win because there is too much bad, and the bad will never win because there is too much good. And why all this?

Because I consider myself a person, a creature half-way between heaven and hell, bondage and salvation—in short, a concept.

If it is true that we incarnate and re-incarnate again and again, until we solve the riddle of life, then anyone talking about work to be done can only produce understatements. Work will go on, year after year, perhaps, life after life, as long as we seek happiness for the 'I' that we are not. For there is no such thing as a free or happy ego. Egoism, even the holiest kind that seeks salvation or wants to serve humanity, seeks happiness for a thing that comes and goes, an object. I might as well seek liberation or happiness for a bicycle.

Psychology, the twentieth century religion, labours under the same superstition that we are persons, observed, perceived things, and it tries to improve these perceived things. There is nothing against this, and it may well succeed in removing a lot of pain, but in the end it will leave me with my old superstition of being an ego, and this belief is precisely the source of all suffering. Repairing the person is as useful or more as repairing a bicycle, but it does not set me free.

Freedom begins with the discovery, suddenly, after years of seeking, that I am no ego and that I have no ego. It is always sudden, in the sense of unexpected, for, as long as 'I', as a projected person, am here, sitting and waiting, this 'I' itself is, of course, the obstacle for freedom which is by its very nature egolessness.

Even after this sudden discovery, there is work to be done, but it is not really work.

Automatically, when thought returns, one of them will say that "Now, I have understood," or even: "Now, I am enlightened." (I can think of quite a number of people who got stuck there, and really *think* (!!!) that "they" are enlightened).

But the ego-less ego has not yet been invented.

In the Vedantic jargon, some people distinguish between being enlightened and being established in the Absolute Reality.

If I may borrow this terminology, it may be said that after this unexpected enlightenment, when, for a timeless moment I was present only as that One, Indivisible Consciousness that is the light of all perceptions, old habits are likely to come back and old concepts will still present themselves as realities. The "work" to be done then, is to examine the lot of them and unmask them. After the realisation of Brahman, consciousness in its manifested form, there is the realisation of consciousness in its unmanifested nature, known in Sanskrit as '*Parabrahman*'. Others call it 'Pure Consciousness', the 'Ultimate Reality', and so on.

Traditionally it is said that one cannot be established in this Absolute Reality without the guidance of a Sat-Guru. Whatever be the case, it seems obvious that the Formless cannot be realised by form. As long as there is the slightest trace of the feeling that I am a person seeking freedom, there seems to be a closed door, or an abyss that I cannot cross.

Only when, in the light of "my" illumination, it has been seen very clearly that there is no concept that can cover what I am, and no idea that can contain the sought, concepts and ideas will get exhausted. No idea will be used any more. Words like 'progress' or 'finding' belong to the realm of the person, which we have already left behind. There is no-one beyond the person who could progress or find anything whatsoever.

Then, it dawns in one, that one cannot even merge into the Absolute Reality:

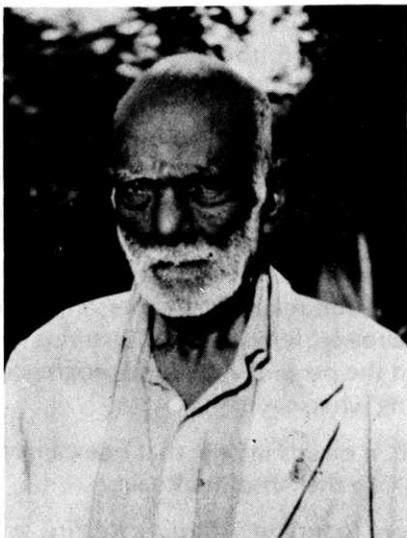
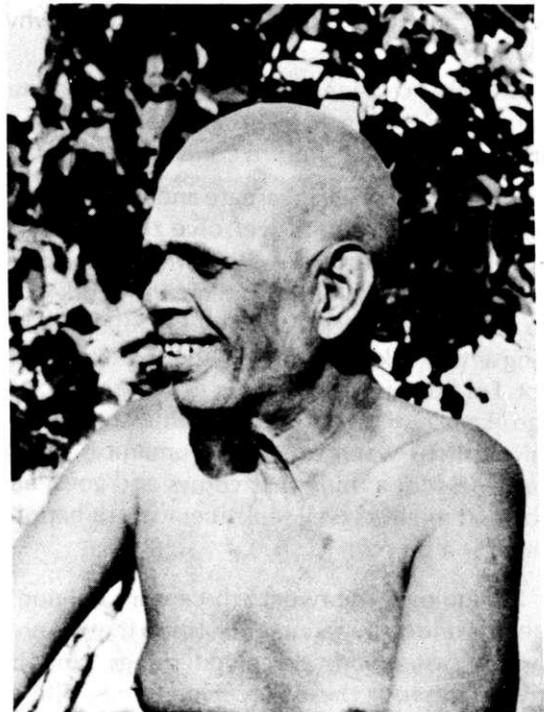
We are that One, Absolute Reality, and you can never merge into what you already are. □

How I Came to Bhagavan

By
Ramaswami Pillai¹

I first came to the Maharshi in March 1917, immediately after my final school examinations were completed, and I saw him at Skandashram. At this time, I used to think a lot of my mother, my father, and Bhagavan, and I was doing *japa* by chanting the name of God.

The first time I saw Bhagavan, I fancied I saw a royal hunter in the forest; his personality was striking and I thought of him as a hunter hunting down the senses. On my first visit I stayed for one or two days, but no conversation passed between us; our eyes alone met. Directly I saw him, I gave up my previous "Narayana" *japa*. On this visit I met Narayana Reddiar, and he gave me a copy of *The Marital Garland*. After leaving the Maharshi, I used to recite it loudly, or occasionally within the mind, identifying Arunachala with the Maharshi. I kept in touch with the Maharshi by



Ramaswami Pillai

writing occasional letters to Narayana Reddiar, and he would reply giving me details of the Maharshi and the Ashram.

After my initial visit, I did not return for one or two years. When I eventually returned, I went around the mountain several times with the Maharshi. Each time we went, all of us would sing *The Marital Garland*. We also used to sing the *Song of the Poppadum*, and on our slow walk around the hill, or when he halted at Gautama ashram, we would ask him for explanations about the words in the song.

¹Written in January 1930.

About this time, my mother committed suicide owing to a disagreement with my father, and I felt the loss very deeply.

I went to Pachiappa's College from 1917-1921, losing one year because of a failure in my intermediate year. In February 1921, I joined the non-co-operation movement against the British. I was still feeling very depressed about the death of my mother, and I remember writing to Narayana Reddiar to try and find out her condition as a spirit. I never received a reply to that particular letter, but in the course of time, my grief lessened and disappeared. During this time, I was feeling very guilty about my sexual defects, although they did not amount to anything like a crime or a serious sin. Narayana Reddiar gave me some advice in his letters, but the problem did not disappear until I visited Bhagavan in 1919 and confessed my failings to him. From this point on, I was never troubled by such desires again.

I was still very much attracted to *The Marital Garland*, and in addition to memorising it, I used to write it out again and again. I was still involved with the non-co-operation movement, and while I was still at the Ashram, I cast lots, thinking of Bhagavan, trying to decide whether I should continue to "non-co-operate" and stay at the Ashram with the Maharshi, or whether I should "co-operate" and return to college. The decision was non-co-operation and I stayed at the Ashram for fifteen days. I did not consult my father, but I informed him of my decision about quitting college again.

During this visit I met Sivaprakasam Pillai and Ganapati Muni for the first time. After some time, my father came to see what was detaining me, and after taking advice in the Ashram, I went back to my village where I got married in 1921. I found married life very disagreeable, and in June 1922, I returned to the

Ashram. I arrived at 6 a.m. and found Bhagavan, Dandapani Swami and Chinna Swami. On this occasion, I stayed for one or two months doing all kinds of odd jobs. Dandapani Swami wanted me to go on a trip with him to raise funds for the Ashram, but I declined because I preferred doing service in the Ashram. I remained in the Ashram during his absence for one year, looking after the management with Chinna Swami, and keeping the accounts. During this period, over Rs 2,000 were spent on clearing and levelling the ground in and around the Ashram.

That year was the best so far in my spiritual life; ten months at a stretch in Bhagavan's company with frequent opportunities to walk around the mountain with him. It was a period of intense activity, for we were working night and day to clear the stones, and Bhagavan often used to join us and give us a hand.

After ten months I left for my village, but I have been visiting him frequently ever since. Sometimes, during my visits, I used to concentrate on Bhagavan's face in the middle of the night, and usually I would see a halo of flowing glorious light in all the seven colours of the rainbow. On these occasions, he reminded me of a royal figure from the time of the Moguls. This happened to me several times, but mostly, they were during my early visits, in 1921 or before.

Bhagavan's personality used to manifest on important occasions like Kartika Deepam, Jayanti, Mahasivaratri and his mother's Mahapuja; also when old and staunch devotees used to come and see him. It was on such occasions that we saw his light especially shining on us. On these occasions he would be all love, mercy and grace. He would be our model and exemplar, a shining light for us to be guided by. On the first Sivaratri that I was with him in 1923, Bhagavan did not start out to walk

around the mountain, as was his usual custom. Everyone else went around the hill, and only four of us stayed with him. Dandapani, Viswanathan, myself and one other devotee sat with him all through the night. We were all awake throughout the night in a blissful state which is impossible to express in words.

From my experience, the best way to communicate with Bhagavan is to gaze into his eyes when he is in the silent *samadhi* state. Then peace of mind comes spontaneously, and the inward search is made much easier. When he is in such a state, merely to be near him is to experience pure happiness.

Even in his absence, or even when I was away from the Ashram, I used to think of his person and of his name, and I would experience the sinking of all thoughts into the Self. During my stay of ten months at the Ashram, we often used to read the *Ribhu Gita*. There would usually be six or seven of us, including Bhagavan, and we would each read a few verses in turn, going all the way through the book until we had finished it. Bhagavan used to tell us, and on occasions we used to feel and experience it, that to read the *Ribhu Gita* is to be in *samadhi*. Viswanathan, Muruganar, Chinna Swami, and anyone else who was present would all squat together in a ring with Bhagavan and take it in turns to read: No other book was read so often, but sometimes we would vary our reading by going through the *Tiruvachakam* and Thayamanavar. Sometimes Bhagavan himself would read out three or four stanzas from a book, and then explain the meaning to us. In addition to the readings, we would often chant certain works in his presence. Apart from the hymns to Arunachala, we frequently recited the *Dakshinamurti Ashtakam* in his presence. As soon as he composed his new works, *Upadesa Saram* and *Reality in Forty Verses*, we all learned them by heart; in the case of *Upadesa Saram*, we memorised it in all the four languages he had

SHEDDING LIGHT UPON THE WAY

**A student of the Way
Seeks the truth of life and death;
For, else, he longs in vain
To win immortal state.
But he who knows, life's source
Discerns death's meaning, too,
And thenceforth is set free
To live spontaneously.**

**From first to last there is
No dying or being born;
From a flash of thought a myriad
False distinctions spring to mind.
But when you know just where
Those thoughts arise and vanish,
In the temple of the mind.**

**Then before you lies the truth
That's there's nothing to be sought.
Of 'themselves' the hills are green;
Of 'themselves' the waters flow.
Let the mind by night and day
Embrace this single thought—
By thought wherein there's no thought
Must one cultivate the Way.**

— WANG CHING-YANG

composed it in. On other occasions we would recite stanzas written in praise of him, usually by Muruganar, Sivaprakasam Pillai and the Tamil pandit, T.R. Ramachandra Iyer.

To me he is more than father, mother, king, country, guru and God! □

Nataraja, Science and The Dance of Creation

By
S.A. Naimpally

INTRODUCTION: The central theme of Vedanta is that there is only one Reality, (*Satyam*) and that any experience of separateness is merely apparent, (*Mithya*). As a consequence, discussions about creation have only secondary importance. However, since some seekers have curiosity about such topics, our scriptures do try to satisfy this curiosity but maintain the emphasis on the central theme. Our *puranas*, on the other hand, satisfy this curiosity by narrating stories and legends. One of the most interesting and popular descriptions of the universe and its various movements is the cosmic dance of Nataraja given in *Shiva Purana*—the story behind this dance is the genesis of Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram*. In this description, a unified account of this material world is given.

Our own daily experiences give us a picture of the world as an entity separate from ourselves and this was also the conclusion of science up to the beginning of this century. Scientists of the previous century accepted the fundamental laws of nature as invariable and eternal as well as independent of the investigating scientists. This led to the mechanistic view of the world, by which the scientists surmised that if only they knew the state of the world at a given moment, then they could predict the



The Dancing Siva—Nataraja

precise state of the world at all future times provided all the laws of nature were known. Then around 1900, in several investigations which were mainly concerned with the sub-atomic world, physicists encountered phenomena that shattered the above fragmented view of the world. This led to a revolution in Physics primarily due to the Theory of Relativity which showed that all motions in the universe are relative and that there is no absolute motion and Quantum Mechanics which made the scientist a part and parcel of his experiment.¹ The way in which the universe appears to a modern physicist is remarkably similar to the puranic description of Shiva's cosmic dance. The purpose of this article is to give a brief introduction to both.

SHIVA'S COSMIC DANCE. We begin with a legend about Shiva's dance². Long ago, in the forest of Taragam, there lived ten thousand

¹For a discussion of Bhagavan's views in relation to modern science see *Maharshi's Gospel* (Sri Ramanasramam, 1969), pp. 66-67.

²For further details see *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists* by A.K. Coomaraswamy and Sister Nivedita (Dover Publications, 1967), pp. 310-313 and *Elephanta*, Amar Chitra Katha no. 149 (India Book House).

rishis (ascetics) who believed in the performance of rituals for the attainment of salvation. By virtue of their penances, they had become quite powerful and therefore imagined themselves to be greater than God. Not being satisfied with the powers already acquired, the *rishis* were bent upon acquiring more powers through rituals. At Kailasa, Shiva decided to teach them the truth that salvation can be attained by knowledge alone. He persuaded Vishnu to accompany him in the form of a beautiful woman while he disguised himself as a wandering Yogi. The *rishis*, who were in the midst of a sacrificial ritual, lost their concentration when they saw the enchanting form of Vishnu. Meanwhile their wives followed the captively handsome young Yogi. Soon there was an uproar in the whole establishment. After drawing the attention of the *rishis* away from the ritual and thus spoiling it, Vishnu disappeared from their sight. Suddenly the *rishis* came to their senses and became angry at the Yogi. They set upon the Yogi a terrible tiger which was produced by their powers. Shiva merely smiled, gently picked up the tiger, peeled off its skin with his little finger and wrapped it around himself. Then the *rishis* produced a venomous snake which Shiva calmly picked up and wore around his neck as a garland. Then there appeared a fierce looking dwarf with a mighty club but Shiva dashed the evil creature to the ground. Shiva then assumed the form of Nataraja, set his foot on the back of the dwarf and began to dance. This dance represents the source of all movements within the universe, especially the five acts of creation, preservation, destruction, embodiment and *moksha* (liberation).

The upper right hand of Nataraja holds aloft the *damaru* (drum), producing the primordial sound from which the universe evolves³. From this sound came all languages, music, arts etc. The drum is in the form of two cones with a common vertex, representing pure consciousness and energy that combine together for all creation. Everything seems to evolve from the vertex and merge into the vertex. The upper left hand, in half-moon gesture, holds a tongue of flame. Thus creation and destruction are counter-

parts of Shiva's own being. The right hand, held in front of the wondrous gesture of protection and peace, assures the seeker: "God's Grace is eternally with you". The left hand points the way; it lies across the body, directing the gaze to the foot. The hand is in the sign of the elephant, (*gajamudra*), signifying discrimination because the trunk of an elephant can pick up heavy objects as well as delicate ones. The left foot is raised, telling the seeker that just as the dancer raises his foot, so too can the seeker raise himself and be liberated. When one foot is raised, the right foot, upon which balances the whole body of the universe, is not on firm ground but on the body of a struggling dwarf, representing false ego. When this ego is stamped out, we get supreme joy. While the body moves in a frenzy, like the world with its tumult, Shiva himself is undisturbed by the activity of creation and destruction.

This extraordinary spectacle of Shiva's dance was watched not only by the *rishis* and their wives but also by Parvati, Ganesha, Kumara, Tandu (who later taught the dance to the sage Bharatha, the author of *Natya Shastra*), Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and other Gods. The *rishis*, overwhelmed by the splendour and swiftness of the dance and the vision, prostrated to Shiva and begged him to teach them. Shiva then taught the *rishis* the traditional wisdom, which is the subject matter of Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram*.

MODERN SCIENCE. Until Albert Einstein came along, the view of the scientists was that space is three dimensional and that time flows independently. It is a basic premise of the Special Theory of Relativity that space and time are not separate entities but are inextricably interwoven to form a four-dimensional continuum. Moreover, the observer with his own frame of reference, also enters the picture. Distances in space and time intervals are not independent of the observers as earlier scientists thought. Thus if two observers are moving with respect to each

³The message of the dance of Nataraja by Mrinalini Sarabhai, 101st Geeta Gnana Yagna Souvenir (H.H. Swami Dayananda Saraswati) (1977), pp. 58-59.

other, carrying identical measuring sticks and clocks, then to each observer it appears that the measuring stick of the other has shrunk and that his clock is running slower. This does not surprise a Vedantin, because in Vedanta, "I" is pure awareness and the entire universe, including space and time, exist in awareness. Also each individual experiences the world according to his/her own frame of reference namely, likes, dislikes conditioning etc.

Another important conclusion that emerged from Einstein's theory is the interchangeability of matter and energy. There is only one entity in the world which appears sometimes as matter and sometimes as energy. This depends upon the speed of the entity relative to the observer as well as his instruments of observation. At lower speeds, an entity appears as matter whereas at higher speeds approaching the speed of light, which none can exceed, it appears as energy.⁴ The old separate laws of conservation of matter, mass and energy have disappeared because the first one is not true at all and the other two have fused into one. Thus relativity presents a unified picture of the world, a picture that is consistent with the Vedantic view. The only difference is that in Vedanta, consciousness alone is real and all differences are apparent.

Besides, the Theory of Relativity, Quantum Mechanics has made a tremendous impact on the scientists' view of the world. One of its major constituents is Werner Heisenberg's Principle of Uncertainty, according to which, it is impossible to specify or determine simultaneously both the position and velocity of a particle with full accuracy.⁵ To be sure, it is possible to fix either of these quantities as precisely as desired, but the more exactness in one implies the increasing uncertainty in the other. This is of little consequence in most ordinary experience but of great interest and importance in the interpretation of subatomic experiments.

In observing the properties of a system, it is necessary to bring in an instrument. This very act alters the original properties of the system resulting in the lack of precision with which the original properties can be measured. Thus there are inherent limitations to the precision with which properties of a system can be observed. These findings are consistent with the Vedantic dictum that no object in the universe is as it appears to our sense perceptions.

In Classical Mechanics, if initial position and velocity of a particle are known, together with the forces acting on it, its path can be computed for all future time. On the other hand, the Uncertainty Principle prevents specification of the initial conditions in Quantum Mechanics and as a result, the future of a particle cannot be definitely predicted. Because of this, the law of cause and effect, ceases to apply, though such an ambiguity is apparent only on the subatomic scale. Instead the future of a particle can be predicted only statistically in Quantum Mechanics. Thus probability and statistics have become essential ingredients of modern science.

Another interesting phenomenon that scientists observed was that photons sometimes behave as waves and sometimes as particles. Although they appear at first to be contradictory, they turn out to be complementary aspects of the same phenomenon. Not only do light and electromagnetic radiations exhibit this duality (of particles and waves) but also it has been found to be a general property of all elementary particles of nature, a universal duality applicable to all forms of energy-matter. This can be used as an illustration of one appearing as many—the traditional example in Vedanta being that of a dream.

⁴For more details see *The cyclic universe of matter, energy, man and God* by V.M. Srikumaran Nayar (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, 1979).

⁵*Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Any object, such as a stone, may appear to us to be something tangible and stationary—a true picture if we don't go beyond the atoms. But once we cross the atomic barrier, we find a fascinating world of particles rotating at very high speeds.⁶ These particles are not isolated but integral parts of an inseparable network of interactions. These interactions involve a continuous flow of energy manifesting itself as the exchange of particles; a dynamic interplay in which particles are continually created and annihilated and there is a constant change of energy patterns. Just as a rotating fan, at certain speeds, appears to be stationary, similarly, in spite of all these high speeds and exchanges of energy, creation and destruction of particles, the universe appears as a stable structure.⁷ This is akin to the serene face of Nataraja in the midst of his exciting dance. In Vedanta when *maya* is explained it is stressed that anything is not as it appears.

As stated above, the entire universe is engaged in endless motion and activity which can be conceived as a continual dance of energy. Although this dance involves many and varied patterns, yet they can be classified into a few distinct categories. Thus in spite of a large number of interactions, it reveals a great deal of order. For the most part, in the ordinary observable phenomena, atoms appear as hard and solid particles. But experiments show that inside the atoms there are vast regions of space in which extremely small electrically charged as well as neutral particles move around the nucleus, bound to it by electric and other forces. This is similar to the motion of planets round the sun due to gravitational forces. The nucleus, which makes up most of the mass of an atom, is extremely small compared to the atom and is itself made up of many other elementary particles. Thus some of the constituents of an atom are massive, some are massless; some carry electric charges, others are electrically neutral; some are unstable whereas others, such as nucleus, are stable unless they are involved in a collision process wherein they

get annihilated. Radical changes in nucleus occur rarely on earth but are essential and routine for the great variety of stellar phenomena observed in astronomy. In particular, the nuclear processes in the centre of the sun are of prime importance inasmuch as they furnish the energy needed to sustain life on earth.

From the point of view of a modern physicist, there is essentially no difference between, say, lead and gold because when one goes beyond the atoms, one comes across the same fundamental particles. The differences in lead and gold are brought about by the number of such particles and their arrangements. However, this view does not confuse the physicist when he wants to present an ornament to his wife because then he'll choose gold. Similarly, the sage sees the whole universe as himself but this does not make him confused when dealing with the world.

Normally the fundamental particles rotate in stable orbits and are at certain energy levels. But when they are subjected to radio-activity or high speed collisions, many interesting changes take place. Some particles get destroyed and some new ones are created. Some absorb energy, others give out energy and change their orbits. We cannot say with certainty what will happen to a particular particle; the behaviour of particles can only be predicted statistically.

Thus movement and rhythm, constant exchange of energy with creation and destruction of particles, are essential properties of the material world and the whole universe is involved in a continual cosmic dance. This view of the scientists resembles the mythological picture of the universe as Shiva's cosmic dance—*Nataraja Thandava*.

⁶ See *The Tao of Physics* by Fritjof Capra (Shambala, 1975).

⁷ Cf. A sage may appear to sit at one place and do nothing. But by his very abidance in the self, which is a kind of dynamic equilibrium, he helps the world. He attracts seekers and his teachings begin to spread far and wide, as we know from Bhagavan's life.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

PART III EXPERIENCE OF REALITY

By Sri Muruganar

Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

912

Since only the old *vasanas* should
Be deemed the real bondage, they
Deserve destruction. The great ones
Who have destroyed the mind, the home
Of *vasanas*, may guiltless live
The life appropriate to any
Varna or *ashrama*.

OF "DESTRUCTION OF MIND"

913

Unsteady and wavering minds find only
Failure and frustration everywhere.

914

The restless mind moves with a speed
That shames the god of wind. To starve it
So that it like a cripple stays
Totally immobile is to attain
Actual immortality.

(Note: The seer's mind like a cripple sees but does not move. To observe death, birth and all the movements of the world while one remains unmoved and aloof amounts to tasting immortality that is identification with spirit instead of matter).

915

It is true wisdom to pluck out
Before they grow too strong the weeds
Of lust and anger and greed, and keep
The mind serene and self contained
Like a vast ocean deep and calm
Untroubled by a single ripple
Raised by any wind.

916

It is true wisdom to restrain
the mind from flowing out into
Any of the senses five,

The home of every sorrow and pain
And contain and keep it still
Like a once-roaring ocean lying
Now Becalmed and tranquil.

917

As in the sky with thick clouds covered
No eye can see the glorious sun,
One fails to see one's own true Self
When the mind's ferment is darkened
By a dense cloud of thoughts.

918

He who has vanquished thought, he only
Sits like an emperor on the neck
Of the mighty elephant *Jnana*.
Know for certain that the mind's
Movements alone give rise to birth
And every cruel pain and sorrow.

919

The calm and clear awareness where
There is no movement of the mind
Is firm *samadhi moksha*-like.
Try earnestly to free the mind
From traitor thoughts and so experience
Calm and clear Awareness, purity
Of heart.

920

Even as the ego knows no death
Unless the Self's glance falls on it,
The painful dream of this phenomenal
World will never disappear
Unless the mind meets glorious death.

(Note: This glorious death of the ego occurs through confrontation with the Self).

921

None can confront and overcome
The mind. As something false, unreal
Ignore it. Know the Self alone
As the real around and stand firm-rooted
In it. Then the mind's movements
Will gradually subside.

(Vali gained from every opponent half the latter's strength. Hence Rama had to slay him without confronting him face to face. Even so, the mind should not be treated as "you", a second person. It should be simply ignored while attention is fixed on the Self, the first and indeed the only real person.)

922

Ye who are totally ignorant,
How to still and kill the mind,
And try and fail and feel frustrated,
Know the way is to recognize,
That the world seen and he who sees it
Are but the Self alone.

923

As bracelet in gold, as water in a mirage
Or as a city's ramparts in a dream
All things that are perceived exist
Only in the Self. To deem them
As alien from the Seer is folly.

"OF THE DEFUNCT MIND"

924

I shall with certainty assert
That even when the mind as thoughts
Has ceased to move, it still remains
A temple of Awareness—Bliss
Hidden till then behind the veil of Time.

(The Self, the *atman*, is eternal Being as Awareness—Bliss. When the stream of thoughts beginning with the thought 'I am the body' has ceased and the mind is dead, Being is no more identified with the body and is experienced as the universal Awareness—Bliss. The body lives in time which veils eternity. Compare *Upadesa Sara*, 20, and *Forty Verses*, 12. The *atman* is fulness, not the void. This contradicts the Buddhist doctrine of *anatta*, the non-existence of the *atman*.)

925

What is pure Siva-hood? It is the one
Eternal Being ours already which shines
As plenitude of bliss unbroken
Without a trace of false duality
Like now, then, here, there, being and
non-being.

"OF TRUE OMNISCIENCE"

926

Since save the Self, there is no real being
Supreme Omniscience is the pure awareness
Which shines as one unbroken wholeness,
Not knowledge of what occurs in time
Past, present and to come.

(Relative knowledge, knowledge of objects and events, all the knowledge contained in the 64 *Kalas*, popularly known as "science"; should be regarded as "inferior". Supreme knowledge is pure awareness. As stated in *Forty Verses* No. 26 relative knowledge is the product of the ego, which is the source of primal ignorance. Real omniscience is *being* everything and knowing nothing beside itself.)

927

For those whose minds have not completely
Subsided the false knowledge theirs already
Has only served to pile up sorrows.
Gaining more such so-called knowledge
Only deepens illusions darkness
And helps life not at all.

(Being the Self and knowing all things as the Self is real omniscience, not "knowing" more and more about things.)

928

Only the man who fondly thinks he sees
The world that falsely seems to be there,
While the Self alone as I exists,
Only to him the flood of relative knowledge
Is omniscience. To the *jnani*,
Beyond illusion all such knowledge
Is mere hallucination.

929

Only he who deems himself a "knower"
Feels depressed he knows so little.
But even so-called omniscience must
No less than little knowledge perish
(In the light of true Self-knowledge).

Conversations with Bhagavan

BY

BY

Swami Madhava Thirtha

SWAMI Madhava Thirtha: It is said by some that God has created various kinds of worlds and is still going to create a new world.

Sri Bhagavan: Our present world itself is not true. Each one sees a different imaginary world according to his imagination, and so where is the guarantee that the new world will be real? The *jiva* (individual person), the world and God, all of these are dependent on the True State. As long as there is the individual sense of 'I', these are also there. From this individual sense of 'I', from the mind, these three have arisen. If you destroy the mind, the three will not remain, but Brahman alone will remain, as it remains and abides even now. We see something incorrectly. This misperception will be rectified by enquiring into the real nature of this *jiva*. Even if the *jiva* enters super-mind, it will remain in mind; but after surrendering the mind, there will be nothing remaining but Brahman. Whether this world is real or unreal, *chetana* or *jada*, (conscious or inert), a place of happiness or a place of misery, all these states arise in the state of ignorance. They are not useful after Realisation. The state of *Atma Nishta* (being fixed in the Self), devoid of the individual feeling of 'I' is the Supreme State. In this state, there is no room for objective thinking, nor for this feeling of individual being. There is no doubt of any kind in this natural state of Being-Consciousness-Bliss. So long as there is the perception of name and form in oneself, God will appear with form, but when the vision of the formless Reality (*arupa drishti*) is achieved there will be no modifications of seer, seeing and seen. That vision is the nature of consciousness itself non-dual and undivided. It is limitless infinite and perfect.

When the individual sense of 'I' arises in the body, then the waking state appears. If this sense is absent, who then will see the world?

Q. It is believed by some that just as we can subdue the material nature residing in our body, the sage, in the same way, must have such power in himself that he can change other's material nature, because the Self is common to all.

A. The *jnani* does not believe that there are others, and so there is no question of changing anyone's material nature. When others are seen, that is ignorance.

Q. Though Janaka was a *jnani*, he was a ruling monarch, but his Guru, Yajnavalkya, who was also a *jnani* renounced the world and went to the forest. Why was this so?

A. All happens according to the *prarabdha* (destiny) of each *jnani*. Krishna was an enjoyer of pleasures (*bhogi*) whereas Sukadeva was an ascetic (*tyagi*). Janaka and Rama were kings, but all of them were *jnanis*. Their inner experience was the same, and their external life was in accordance with their *prarabdha*.

Q. Some see a serpent in the rope, some a stick, some a garland, and some a flow of water, but the one who sees the rope as the rope has the true knowledge. The knowledge of the other seers is not true.

A. It is not necessary to think of the view of other seers. Those others are only in your imagination. Know the one seer, and all will be well.

¹These conversations were originally printed in the author's Gujarati books. "Ramana Maharshi, introduction and teaching" and this is the first time that they have been printed in English. We have already printed two extracts in our October 1980 issue, and one lengthy conversation in our January 1981 issue. Apart from the material we have published in this issue, there is one further conversation which we hope to print in our October 1981 issue. (EDITOR)

Q. How?

A. In a dream, many are seen, but they are all in the imagination of the one seer. When you wake up from the dream, the dream and those seen in the dream will take care of their own *prarabdha*.

Q. Then there will be no others?

A. It is the same with the world. In *Aparokshanubhuti*, (an advaitic work attributed to Sankara), the author says, "In the state where there is no existence of seer, seeing and seen, the sight should be fixed there (in that state) and not on the tip of the nose."

Q. A question arises from this, How can daily life go on if the sight is fixed in this way?

A. *Jnanis* fix their sight in the substratum (*adhishtana*) even during *vyavahara* (wordly activities) because nothing else becomes the truth except *adhishtana*. To feel that there is earth in the pot is the proper attitude (i.e. see the essence and not the form).

Q. A pot can be filled with water, but one cannot achieve the same result by pouring water on earth.

A. I do not tell you to see earth after breaking the pot. Even when the pot is whole, you can see it in the form of earth. In the same way, the world can be seen as the form of Brahman. To have the knowledge of Brahman in the waking state is similar to having the knowledge of clay in the pot.

Q. Are the name and form real?

A. You won't find them separate from *adhishtana* (the substratum). When you try to get at name and form, you will find Reality only. Therefore attain the knowledge of that which is real for all time.

Q. Is it a fact that dreams arise because of the impressions received during the waking state?

A. No, it is not true. In your dream you see many new things and many new people whom you have never seen before in your waking

state. You may even see a second dream within the dream. After waking up from the second dream, you feel that you have woken up, but that is the waking state of the first dream. In the same way, man wakes up daily, but it is not to a real waking state.

Q. Why does the waking state look so real?

A. We see so much on the cinema screen, but it is not real; nothing is real there except the screen. In the same way, in the waking state, there is nothing but *adhishtana*. *Jagrat-prama* (knowledge of the world) is the *prama* of *jagrat-pramata*. (knowledge of the knower of the world). Both go away in sleep.

Q. Why do we see such permanency and constancy in the world?

A. It is seen on account of wrong ideas. When someone says that he took a bath in the same river twice, he is wrong because when he bathed for the second time, the river was not the same as it was when he bathed for the first time. On seeing the brightness of a flame, a man says that he sees the same flame, but this flame is changing every moment. The waking state is like this. The stationary appearance is an error of perception.

Q. Whose is the error?

A. *Pramata* (the knower).

Q. How did the knower come?

A. On account of the error of perception. In

If one would but seek God or the Guru, one will find that all the while they have been seeking the seeker with a solicitude greater than one can ever imagine.

The Master is within; meditation is meant to remove the ignorant idea that he is only outside. When the wrong identification of oneself with the body ceases, the Master will be found as none other than the Self.

—SRI BHAGAVAN.

fact, the knower and his misperceptions appear simultaneously, and when knowledge of the Self is obtained, they disappear simultaneously.

Q. From where did the knower and his misperceptions come?

A. Who is asking this question?

Q. I.

A. Find out that 'I' and all your doubts will be solved. Just as in a dream, a false knower, knowledge and known rise up, in the waking state, the same process operates. In both states, on knowing this 'I', you know everything, and nothing remains to be known. In deep sleep, knower, knowledge and known are absent; in the same way, at the time of experiencing the true 'I', they will not exist. Whatever you see happening in the waking state happens only to the knower, and since the knower is unreal, nothing in fact ever happens.

Q. After waking from sleep, why does the world of the previous day appear the same?

A. The world seen on the previous day was not real. It was the knowledge of an unreal knower; similarly, the world of the next day is also the knowledge of an unreal knower. Truly, there is no real world. What appears separate from us is called by us "the world". It appears separate to us due to ego-consciousness (*ahamkara*). When *ahamkara* goes there is nothing separate and then there is no world. Time also arises from *pramata* (the knower). Because *pramata* is not real, time is also not real. Prof. Einstein has also stated this in his theory of relativity.

Q. How then do the affairs of daily life go on?

A. At present the government has changed the time by putting it an hour in advance. Though the time is wrong, daily life still continues.

Q. In *Panchadasi* there is an example that if you wish to hear the music of your son who is singing along with all the boys attending the

same school, you have to ask the other boys to be quiet. Similarly, to hear the voice of the Self, you have to stop all other activities.

A. In this particular example, even if your son is not present, you will hear the music of the other boys, so the analogy does not fit well. Truly speaking, if there is no Self, no other work can be done. According to another example, if we fix our attention on the main tune of the harmonium, then there will be no difficulty in listening to that tune, even if many other tunes were going on along with it.

Q. Just as a mirage, though believed to be unreal, appears again, similarly, though the world is believed to be unreal, it reappears.

A. Just as the knowledge of water in the mirage is not true, similarly, the knowledge of the world in Brahman is not true. All is one *Brahma rupa* (form of Brahma). That alone is true knowledge.

Q. According to the old system of Vedanta, it seems that ignorance arises first, and then arises the idea of individual existence, but according to the new system, there seems to be no before or after. The idea of individual existence, ignorance and the world arise simultaneously, and on attaining knowledge, all these three disappear.

A. It is true. "See the world as consisting of Brahma after making your vision *jnanamaya*" (consisting of knowledge) (*Yoga Vasishtha*).

Q. Such a state can only be obtained by *sat sang* (association with holy men).

A. Do not think that *sat sang* means only talks and conversations. It means abidance in being as the form of the Self.

Q. What is the meaning of 'Atma is *Swayam Prakasa*'? (The Self shines by its own light.)

A. Just as the sun has never seen darkness, similarly, the Self has never seen ignorance. The Self is unknowable, but it can be experienced by *aparoksha anubhava* (knowledge of the Self by direct perception). This is called *swayam prakasatwa* (self illumination). □

THE TREATISE ON SINGLENES¹

By **Moyhiddin Ibn Arabi**

THE interest in knowing your selfhood lies in the understanding and the utter certainty it gives that your existence is neither a reality nor a void, but that you are not, that you have not been and never will be. You will clearly understand the meaning of the formula "*La ilaha ill' Allah*" (there is no Divīne but the Divinity), that there is no God but Him, there is no existence other than Him, and there is no God if it be not He.

If someone objects "You abolish His Lordship" I reply: "I do not abolish His Lordship, for He is both Lord and worshipper. He no more ceases to be Creator than He ceases to be Created. 'He is now as He was. Before the creation of created things, He possessed all His attributes. There is no difference in His singleness between creation and prior to creation. With Him there is no thing and no day as prior to creation there is no thing or no day, for the existence of things or their nothingness is all one. If it were not so, something new must have been created that was not comprised in His Oneness, which would be absurd. His title, 'The Unique' is too glorious for such a supposition to be true."

When you see your selfhood without qualification, without coupling the Supreme existence with any adversary, partner, equivalent or associate whatever, then you know it as it is. This is why the prophet has said: "He who knows his selfhood knows his Lord." He did not say: "He who extinguishes his selfhood knows his Lord." He knew and he saw that no thing is other than Allah. Therefore he said that knowledge of one's selfhood is Gnosis or Knowledge of Allah. Recognise what is your selfhood, that is your existence. Recognise that ultimately you are not you, but that you do not know. Know that your existence is neither your exist-

tence nor your non-existence. Know that you are neither existant nor nothingness. Your existence and your nothingness make up His existence. The substance of your being or of your nothingness is His existence. When therefore you see that things are not other than your existence and His, and when you see that the substance of His being is your being and your nothingness in things, without seeing anything whatever with Him, or in Him, then you see your true selfhood. To know oneself in this way is Gnosis, Knowledge of Allah, beyond all equivocation and doubt.

If someone asks: "How then does union take place since you affirm that other than Him does not exist? A thing that is unique cannot unite with itself," the reply is: "In Reality there is neither union nor separation, as there is neither withdrawal nor approach. One can speak of union only between two and not in the case of something that is single. The idea of union or arrival implies the existence of two things. Now Allah (May He be exalted) is exempt from all like as from all rival, contrast or opponent. What are ordinarily called union, nearness and farness are not such. There is union without unification, approach without proximity, and distance with no idea of near or far."

If someone asks: "What is joining without junction, nearness without proximity, absence without distance?" the reply is: "I mean that in the state you call nearness, you were not other than Him, but you did not recognise your selfhood, you did not know that you were He and not you. When you arrive at Allah, that is, when you know yourself 'without the letters of knowledge', you know that you are He and that you did not know before whether you were He or

¹Continued from April '81 issue.

not. When recognition has come to you, you will know that you have known Allah by Allah and not by yourself. Let us take an example. Suppose that you do not know that your name is Mahud, but you think that you are called Mohammad, and further suppose that after some time being in error, you finally discover that you are Mahud and that you have never been Mohammad. Your existence continues as in the past, only the name Mohammad has been removed. This happened because you discovered that you were Mahud and you then knew that you had never been Mohammad. You did not cease to be Mohammad by an extinction of yourself, for to cease to exist supposes affirmation of a previous existence. In our example, Mahud has never lost anything. Mohammad has never lived in, entered or left Mohammad. As soon as Mahud has known that he is Mahud and not Mohammad, he knows himself, that is, he knows his selfhood. He also knows that the discovery of his true existence was made by Mahud, for Mohammad did not exist. How could Mohammad have given information about anything?"

"He who knows" and "that which is known" are identical, just as "he who arrives" and "that at which one arrives", "he who sees" and "what is seen" are identical. "He who knows" is His attribute, "that which is known" is His substance or inmost nature. "He who arrives" is His attribute, "that at which one arrives" is His substance. Now quality and that which possesses it are identical. This is the explanation of the formula "He who knows his selfhood knows his Lord." Whoever seizes the meaning of this similitude understands that there is neither union nor separation. He understands that "he who knows" is Allah and also that "that which is known" is Allah. "He who sees" is Allah and "that which is seen" is Allah. "He who arrives" is Allah, and "that at which one arrives" is still Allah. Nothing other than Allah can join himself to Him or arrive at Him. No other than Him separates himself from Him. Whoever can fully understand this is exempt from the idolatry of idolatry.

Most initiates who think that they know their

selfhood, as also their Lord, say that the Way is practical or visible only by extinction of existence, and by extinction of that extinction. They dogmatise in this way because they have not at all understood the word of the prophet (Allah pray over him and greet him). Wishing to remedy idolatry, which results from contradiction, they have spoken of extinction, that is, of existence, of extinction of that extinction, of effacement and of disappearance. But all these explanations amount to idolatry pure and simple, for whoever advances that there exists anything whatever other than Allah, which thing is afterwards extinguished, or who speaks of the extinction of the extinction of that thing, such a man, we say, makes himself guilty of idolatry by his affirmation of the existence, past or present, of something other than Allah. May Allah (His name be exalted) lead them and us also on the true path.

"You thought that you were you.
 But you are not and have never existed.
 If you were you, you would be the Lord,
 the second of two.
 Abandon this idea,
 For in existence there is no difference
 between you two.
 He does not differ from you and you do
 not differ from Him.
 If out of ignorance you say that you are
 other than Him,
 then you are of an undeveloped mind.
 When your ignorance ceases you
 become mature,
 For your union is your separation and
 your separation is your union.
 Your distance is an approach and your
 approach is a departure.
 It is thus that you become better.
 Stop your reasonings and understand by
 the light of intuition,
 Otherwise what comes forth from Him
 escapes you.
 Take good care to give no partner
 whatever to Allah,
 For then you make yourself vile with the
 shame of the idolatrous."

“RAMANA-ARUNACHALA”

The very simplicity of Bhagavan's teaching makes it easy to repeat or expound, but it was only his tremendous power that could open it up as a living path to mankind. It was only the silent impregnation with his Grace that could enable any to follow him. This was given by a concentrated look of eyes shining with love and power to one who had the immense fortune of coming before him, and by silent transmission to all who turned to him in their heart from a distance.

All knew that they were the disciples and he the Guru. In private he spoke to them as the Guru and sometimes gave instructions for their *sadhana*. In each case the *sadhana* under his guidance dated from some act or word of initiation, usually concealed. When asked whether he was a Guru and gave initiation he always avoided a direct reply. Had the reply been 'no', he would most have certainly said 'no'. But had he said 'yes' he would immediately have been besieged by demands for initiation and would have been driven to make a distinction between true devotees and those who visited him without submitting in their heart and seeking his guidance. And his compassionate love was too great and his wisdom too shrewd to act in a way that would lead some to think that he ranked them higher than others. Indeed, he did not, since he saw the Self in all.

—Arthur Osborne.

If someone says: "You assert that knowledge of your selfhood is Gnosis, that is, Knowledge of Allah (His name be exalted). Though he knows his selfhood, man is other than Allah, how can he know Him, how can he arrive at Him?" The reply is: "He who knows his selfhood knows his Lord." Know that the existence of such a man is neither his own existence, nor the existence of another, but that of Allah. His

existence has not entered into God, come out of Him, been in parallel existence with Him, or resided in Him. He sees his existence as it is. Nothing has come into being that did not exist before and nothing has ceased to exist by an effacement, extinction, or extinction of extinction. You should note well that a man who knows his selfhood possesses the same knowledge that Allah possesses of His selfhood, of Himself, for Allah's selfhood is not other than Allah. The prophet, (Allah pray over him and greet him) meant by selfhood existence itself. Whoever has come to this state of soul, his outward and his inward are not other than the being of Allah, His word is the word of Allah, his action is Allah's, and his claim to know his selfhood is the claim of Allah to know Himself. You hear his claim, you see his acts, and your gaze meets a man who is other than Allah, but this comes only from the fact that you do not possess knowledge of your selfhood. A man who knows his selfhood cannot be judged by normal vision, learning or opinion. If he says, "I am Allah" listen to him attentively, for it is not he but Allah Himself who pronounces the words. But you have not arrived at the same stage of mental development as he. If you had, you would understand his word, you would speak as he does and see what he sees.

To resume; the existence of things is His existence, without those things having separate being. Do not let yourself be led astray by the subtlety or the ambiguity of words so that you think that Allah is created.

Finally, know that "He who sees" and "that which is seen" are both Allah. He sees existence by His existence. He knows it by itself and attains it by itself, without any qualification, outside conditioned understanding, vision or knowledge. As His existence is unconditioned, His vision of Himself, and His acquaintance with Himself are equally unconditioned.

If someone asks: "How do you regard what is repulsive or attractive? If you see filth or carrion, do you say that it is Allah?" The reply is: "Allah is sublime and pure, He cannot be these things. We speak with him who does not

see carrion as carrion or ordure as ordure. We speak to those who see and not to the blind. He who does not know himself is blind, born blind. Until his natural or acquired blindness cease, he cannot understand what we means. Our discourse is with Allah and not with other than Him or with men born blind. He who has arrived at the spiritual stage that he must have attained to understand, he knows that there is nothing that exists except Allah. Our discourse is with him who seeks with firm intention and perfect sincerity to know his selfhood, in the name of the knowledge of Allah (may He be exalted), and who, in his heart, keeps fresh his desire to arrive at Allah. Our discourse is not addressed to those who have neither intention nor aim."

If someone objects: "Allah (may He be blessed and hallowed) has said, "Vision perceives Him not, but He perceives vision" but you say the contrary, where is the Truth?" The reply is: "All that we have said comes back to the Divine word; "Vision perceives Him not", that is to say that no one nor any gaze can reach Him. If you say that what exists represents something other than Him, you must agree that this something else can perceive Him. But in "Vision perceives Him not" Allah gives warning that there is nothing other than Him. I mean that something other than Allah cannot perceive Allah, but he who perceives Him is He, Allah and no other. He alone perceives and grasps His veritable "inmost nature", not another. Vision perceives Him not, for it is not other than His being.

With regard to him who says that vision cannot perceive Him because it is created, and the created cannot reach the uncreated or the eternal, we say that this man does not yet know his selfhood. There is absolutely nothing, vision or anything else, that exists beside Him, not even understanding of this existence. Allah grasps His own existence without understanding this existence in any way whatever.

"I have known my Lord by my Lord
without confusion or doubt.
My inmost nature is effectively His,
without lack or fault.

Between us there is no movement;
my soul is the place where the
invisible is displayed.
Since I knew my soul without fusion
or separation,
I have reached a union with the object
of my love in which there is no more
distance between us, long or short.
I receive graces without anything
descending from above, without
reproaches, even without motive.
I have not effaced my soul because of
Him, and it had no duration to be
afterwards destroyed."

If someone asks: "You affirm the existence of Allah and you deny the existence of anything else whatever. What, then, are the things we see?" The answer is: "These discussions are addressed to him who sees nothing besides Allah. For him who sees something beside Allah, there can be neither objection nor reply, for he sees only what he sees, whereas he who knows his selfhood sees nothing other than Allah. He who does not see his selfhood does not see Allah, for a vessel can only give what it contains."

We have already much enlarged upon our subject. To go further would be useless, for he who is not made for seeing will see no better for it. He will not understand and will not be able to attain the Truth. He who can see sees, understands and attains the Truth. For one who has arrived, a slender indication is enough for him to find by its light the true way, to go forward with all his energy and by the grace of Allah to reach the goal of his desire.

May Allah prepare us for that which He loves and accepts; by words, acts, learning, intelligence, light and true guidance! He is all-powerful and grants to every prayer the fitting answer. There is no means or power but with Allah, the Exalted, the Immense. May He pray over the best of His creatures, over the prophet, and all the members of His family Amen. □

AT THE FEET OF BHAGAVAN

By
T.K.S.



At His tender feet, that trod the rough hill path for so long, our grateful love and undying memory we lay. May He accept these poor gifts of our hearts, and pour His grace on all who wander in the darkness of the unknown tracts of primal ignornace.

THE PONTIFF AND SRI BHAGAVAN

ABOUT the year 1948, the Ashram received a letter from His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Puri, expressing his desire to pay a visit to Bhagavan to get certain doubts cleared. Incidentally the letter categorically mentioned the doubts and asked that they might be resolved in a written reply. The chief of these referred to a certain Agamic Text: "*Hara gauri samogat... avacchaya yogaha*" and asked the teacher what this "*avacchaya yogaha*" is.

I placed this letter at the feet of Bhagavan, and asked what answer should be sent to him. Bhagavan simply laughed and said that the questioner knew it all himself and needed no fresh light, but that he would know it better when he came in person. A reply was accordingly sent on these lines.

After some days the Acharya visited the Ashram. Bhagavan gave instructions for him to be received and attended to with all care and respect for his exalted position; the Ashram spared no pains in arranging for his reception and accommodation.

Sri Bhagavan was seated in the Golden Jubilee Hall on the granite sofa, and eager

¹These two articles are extracts from a forthcoming publication under this title. One article has already been published in the April issue of *The Mountain Path*.

spectators had gathered in their hundreds. Quite near to Bhagavan's sofa a small dais was arranged, with a deer skin for the Pontiff to sit on, and then he was escorted to the presence of Bhagavan. On coming before the Maharshi, the teacher greeted him with his staff, as is the custom of sannyasis, and was shown the seat arranged for him. He was surprised that so prominent a seat had been allocated. He asked the dais to be removed, spread the deer skin on the ground and sat on that.

After a little preliminary talk, the teacher repeated the main question of his letter and asked Bhagavan to enlighten him on the meaning of this phrase. Bhagavan gave him his look of Grace and was silent, no words were exchanged and the silence lasted over half an hour.

Then Bhagavan smiled and remarked, "What is there? You know it already; this text represents the very essence of Divine Knowledge. When nature unites with the person, then the visible becomes all shadows. It is as meaningful as pictures on the cinema screen, and then will be experienced the state of all Self as seen. The one Being Consciousness which projects all this out of itself, sustains and then withdraws it again into Itself. Having swallowed all the shadows of this world, Itself dances as the ocean of bliss, the Reality or substratum of all that is, was and shall be. And then it is 'I-I.'"

The teacher seemed to have received new light and life; he was all joy. He said that in all his wandering through the country he had tried to be enlightened upon this mystery, but it was only here that he got the secret and the truth of light as explained in the texts of the vedanta.

So pleased was he with the answer that he repeated his visit to Bhagavan when the Matrubhuteswara shrine was consecrated, and he personally supervised all the rituals in the Yagasalas (sacrifice halls) to ensure that everything was done properly.

WALK WITH BHAGAVAN TO THE LAKE

THE Samudram lake at the foot of the Arunachala hill and near Sri Ramanasramam is very extensive; neither summer rains nor winter monsoons in Tiruvannamalai fill this lake, except on very rare occasions.

It overflowed once many years ago. It was a spectacular sight for the overflow was as wide as a river. The tank really seemed that day like the ocean of its name (*samudram* is Tamil for ocean). Bhagavan told us that it held this name because a certain local ruler had this tank constructed as a miniature sea to give his queen an idea of what a sea would look like; for she had never seen the sea and wished to do so.

People thronged to look at the overflowing lake, and then came to Bhagavan to talk about it. One morning the devotees in the hall expressed to Bhagavan a desire to visit the lake, and He was kind enough to accept the invitation; so we all went for a stroll to see it. The tank bund (dam) is about a mile long; we walked about a mile from the Ashram to the tank, and then the whole length of the bund. The presence of Bhagavan with us, and His words, were more interesting to us than the brimming tank and the grand view of the wide waters at the foot of holy Arunachala.

Bhagavan talked of many things on that talk with us, but at this distance of time (the lake overflowed in 1931, and this article was written in 1963) I remember only two topics that interested me.

At one place he pointed out a palmyra tree which had decayed in the embrace of a parasitic banyan tree; some bird had dropped the banyan seed into the palmyra, and as it began to grow, the palmyra became stunted in its own growth. Drawing our attention to this phenomenon, Bhagavan remarked that this is just

what the look of grace from a *jnani* does. One look into a soul, and the whole tree of past tendencies and prejudices (*vasanas*), gathered up through long cycles of past births, is burned up and decays away. Thus he explained to us the effect with contact with the great, and he said that the supreme *jnana* obtained with the touch of the saint can never be won through the study of any number of scriptures, or by any store of good deeds, or by any other spiritual practices and efforts. Later on returning to the Ashram I put this in verse form as below:

"A bird drops seed upon a tree and causes its decay; so the Guru's grace beams knowledge into the seeking mind, replacing ego's shadows with resplendant *jnana's* light." (translation from the original Tamil).

Then when we actually came to the overflowing outlet at the end of the lake, we all marvelled at its width. We stayed there for some time and then returned.

On the return walk, we happened to pass the sluice at the centre of the bund. Pointing to this Bhagavan remarked: "Look at this small outlet, as compared to the big one at the other end. But for this small hole, through which the

stream of water trickles, the vast contents of the lake would not be helpful to vegetation. If the bund breaks, it will be a regular deluge, and the entire crop will be destroyed. Only if the water is properly regulated through this sluice are plants helped to grow. So too is it with Divine Consciousness. Unless the bliss of this consciousness is gifted through the grace of the Guru in controlled outlets, the soul cannot be helped to the destruction of its tendencies of the past. In this way, the Self, abiding as such in its oneness with the Divine, is established in the Guru's State of Being. Holding on to its Being-Consciousness, the work of destroying the past proceeds as and when thoughts arise to push the mind into action. This work becomes possible only in the proximity of the Guru. Hence the Guru is himself like the sluice and irrigates souls with Grace from his ocean of kindness so that the Self may abide and the old tendencies be withered away. But if the bund is broken, the full force of the whole lake rushes through and sweeps everything before it. This resembles a spiritual aspirant receiving the full force of Divine Consciousness without the intervening and mitigating grace of the Guru's sluice; he dies without the benefit of having his tendencies destroyed." □

SILENCE, SELF-IMPOSED OR IMPOSED BY THE SELF?

That which is Real (*sat*) is variously termed as Light, Supreme or Primal Consciousness, Fullness, Heaven, Silence, Grace in positive terms, or negatively as Nirvana, the Release (*nisreyasa*), and so on. Its aspects of Consciousness, Knowledge and Bliss are expressed as the Heart of all that appears as existence; in its aspect as Grace its one effort is to express itself through all that exists. This expression of joy is the eternal Dance behind all the wakefulness, the dreams and peaceful sleep of life—though these three alone appear as our normal experience.

From time immemorial the effort of humanity has been to discover this eternal joy, and this effort has been termed *tapas*. The result of such an effort is not the attaining of something new, but only making the vehicle fit to be overtaken by the ever-present Grace and to be in It, and then to find that there is nothing else but It. Wherever there is a perfect vehicle, the overtaking and the expressing of Grace are immediate and perfect, and such a one is termed a *Maharshi*, a perfect *siddha*, one liberated while in the body (*jivanmukta*), and so on.

— T.K.S.

Do You See What I see?

A MESSAGE FROM A MYSTIC

By

Jae Jah Noh¹

ENLIGHTENMENT: The event of enlightenment is of a generally intellectual nature, unlike realisation which transcends intellect completely. It is like a great light suddenly bursting in upon your mind, your awareness, illuminating all the dark recesses. It is beyond words or concepts, yet you can think and conceptualise. You have a euphoric feeling of knowing everything while also knowing you know nothing. You have a delicious sense of power.

Anything can "trigger" the event. For me it was the reading of a book, which somehow seemed appropriate for both the event and for me. Suddenly, a connection was made, something happened, and immediately "everything" made "sense". I was privy to an almost comic sense of the incredibility of the world and myself. I was dumbfounded. All I could do was to witness things in stunned silence.

I saw myself as a single, finite being, standing upon a "field" of some infinite dark surface which I "recognised" as infinite knowledge. The feeling that I knew everything was more accurately revealed, in this experience, as the *potential* for knowing everything. I could stand upon any spot of the surface, and each point represented some bit of knowledge. Nothing inhibited my travel upon this surface. There were no obstructions or obstacles of any sort. There was simply me and the field of knowledge upon which I stood. I saw that at any single moment I would never "know it all". Knowledge of this sort which I thought would probably be experienced as an infinite "buzz", was not like a personal possession retained within the mind. Rather, I saw that at each and every moment I could and would be standing

upon its surface and the knowledge available there would be completely appropriate and sufficient for the moment. In some other moment, I would be elsewhere, and I would know what I needed to know.

I do not think I can adequately convey the sensation of non-obstruction here. Before, the pursuit of knowledge and the understanding of the relationships between various "facts" had always been accomplished with a great amount of effort. It was very much like walking through knee-deep mud. I could think and make various connections, but it was difficult. Yet now, I was like a skater upon a surface of ice. There was a tremendous feeling of release from the effort I had known before. It was as though knowledge existed as a totality of open passages which had visited my mind. Now I could walk through these passages, make any sort of connections without thought or effort because I was always being guided by knowledge itself. It was not like marching through unexplored territory, but like walking through places I had always known, places with which I was familiar. I knew that I could never make a bad "connection" because all knowledge related to itself. Everything related to everything else. It was truly all one.

I had no specific realisation of knowledge, yet I knew that I had gained the capacity to perceive *truth*. I did not need to know anything specific because it was all before me. It was like being emptied of all knowledge, all memory,

¹Extracts from "Do you see what I see?" by Jae Jah Noh, published by the Theosophical Society Publishing House, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A. and reprinted with their permission.

and at the same time being filled with knowledge which only needed to "surface" in the conscious mind for it to take form as some specific insight. I thought of the Bible. I knew that while I could think of no specific passage from it at the moment, when I did read a passage I would know exactly what it meant in a way I could not have known before. What was obscure before, would now be "obvious". I was free. I was powerful. I was intoxicated.

The *truth* realised in this fashion is beyond all consideration of reason or logic. It can be expounded in a logical and reasonable fashion, yet *truth* itself has its own reason and logic completely unfamiliar to a mind used to functioning in a linear mode. There are corridors of insight which seem as "leaps of illogic" to others. While I have offered a two dimensional explanation in the analogy of the infinite dark surface, this hardly covers the multi-dimensional characteristics of the experience. All I can say is there is an intense knowledge of dimensions which absolutely defy description or conception, yet, in these "leaps of illogic" you experience those dimensions.

The validity of the experience and of the knowledge, its absolute authenticity and authority, is beyond any doubt. It conveys a sense of absoluteness which defies questioning. While previously, especially in my academic study of philosophy, there was always an undercurrent of scepticism, doubt, a certain inability to really believe *anything* as true, there was now an absolute assurance whose power emboldened me to the point of self-terror

The experience began suddenly, unexpectedly, and was undeniable, overwhelming and uncontrollable. I did not want the experience, or my euphoric reaction to it, to stop and I, consciously attempted to "remain" wherever I was for as long as possible. My "high" lasted for several days. There was an incredible clarity of mind, crystalline percep-

tions, and a feeling of awesomeness. After a few days, either the super-phenomenal aspects of the experience began to wear off or I was becoming accustomed to it. I believe the latter is the most accurate and honest description of what happened.

I began to notice small but definite changes in my understanding of things. I knew things I did not know before. From within my own depths came wisdom which taught me as it came. In a class, or a lecture, I would pass on information which was startlingly new to me, yet I knew it to be true. I soon realised that a basic alteration in my mind, my intelligence, my mode of thinking and my access to wisdom, had occurred, and was continuing. The experience was not a singular event, but a living, on-going process, which I was currently participating in. Here was the gift of a new "tool", and I was only slowly beginning to realise its potential.

This experience has slowly matured into a living reality, an on-going experience of the transcendental. I am never without it. I am never outside this living presence. I may fluctuate in the degree of my conscious awareness of it, but it is there whenever I wish to focus upon it. I can never lose it. For a while, this was a fundamental concern of mine. I felt that if I did anything "too much" if I was not very cautious, this fragile thing, this gift I had been given, might be destroyed. Soon, however, I realised its indestructable nature. I could do nothing to lose it. It was me.

REALISATION: From a personal point of view, and apart from all the intellectualisations Realisation is experienced very much like a deep meditation. There is an initial feeling of being whisked away, being suddenly and dramatically released from something, and only upon release do you realise how it was previously binding you. You are immediately non-existent, in the sense that you transcend

the realm of objectified experiences and enter the Void of the Absolute, Non-Existence. Thus you transcend *all* forms of being, you are totally unconditioned. You exist beyond any form of awareness or self consciousness. There is nothing left which can be identified as "I"; everything that *is* "winks out", ceases to be, radically stops. There is no sensation of time; it is an eternal moment.

Now you come back into the world of form, you are recreated, re-born after this moment. You re-enter the universe level by level, form by form, slowly. You "sink" into layer after layer of conditions, putting them on like clothing. At the moment there is a paradoxical feeling that all of this is beyond your control, and yet at the same time it is entirely a voluntary event, and that you are really "deciding" to come "back" of your own volition (what else is there to do?) Finally, you come back into the realm of reality we call the world, back into your own body, you see the world for the first time, with "new eyes". Whoever you were when you "left" is not who you are now. You have, again, a paradoxical feeling of *being* and *not being* the same person you were before. You feel you are finally alive, as though all that existed before were so many forms of death. You feel "in touch". The entire event is one of absolute paradox. You feel a sense of calm and simultaneous urgency, a feeling of infinity and finiteness, of wisdom and ignorance, of form and formlessness. And you simultaneously dare, yet refrain from daring to utter the blasphemy of "I am That Which Is".

There is a feeling of awe and humour. Realisation brings with it a sense of the laughable stupidity you have been engaged in, and will continue to engage in. You see the entirety of existence as a fantasy which beguiles and has no significance other than love. Existence itself is but a world of incredible experiences created for the sense of experience. It is all manifested love, the experience of which is divine delight.

At the same time there is a feeling of awe bordering on terror, for you see the inevitability

of your own non-existence, literal death. You see the fulfillment of the evolution of consciousness as consummation and obliteration. You see the cosmic wheel of life. You see literally beyond infinity and eternity by following the cycle of existence until you meet yourself again from behind, only it is not you, it is someone else. It is an insight which could drive one not previously prepared completely mad, insane. You look and ask, "Why?" Is all of this a joke? It is a cosmic shock, a jolt of incredulity that reverberates throughout the cosmos.

Then, the answer comes as quietly and simply as mid-winter snow: Love. Life and its attendant experiences is but a gift of the divine for its own sake. It has no purpose outside itself. There is nothing else to point to, to justify or explain it. It is love, pure and simple. Its purpose is simply and only enjoyment, life, wonder and awe. If you cannot enjoy life for its own sake, enjoy your experiences as they are and for what they are, then you have learned nothing, you have accepted nothing. This is the ultimate crisis of love. Enjoyment is a form of love, and if you cannot enjoy, then you cannot love. There is nothing to do and no purpose to fulfil. There is nothing for which one must sacrifice himself, now or ever. There is only love.

And if there were a purpose to be served other than mere enjoyment, we could then justify all of the misery and insanity we all shrink from in horror. There would then be a reason for it. But there is no reason, and thus misery and insanity are exposed radically for what they are: pathetic, unnecessary, and infinitely sad.

So you are left where you "started", with what is both a blessing and a challenge: the ability and the opportunity to live a truly human life of wisdom, love and joy. What greater thing could one ask for, hope or attain? □

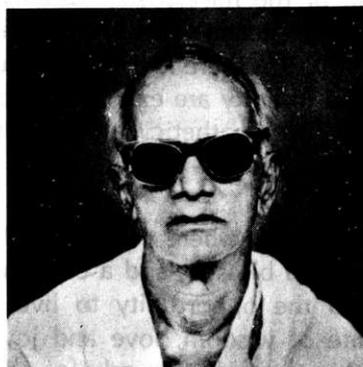
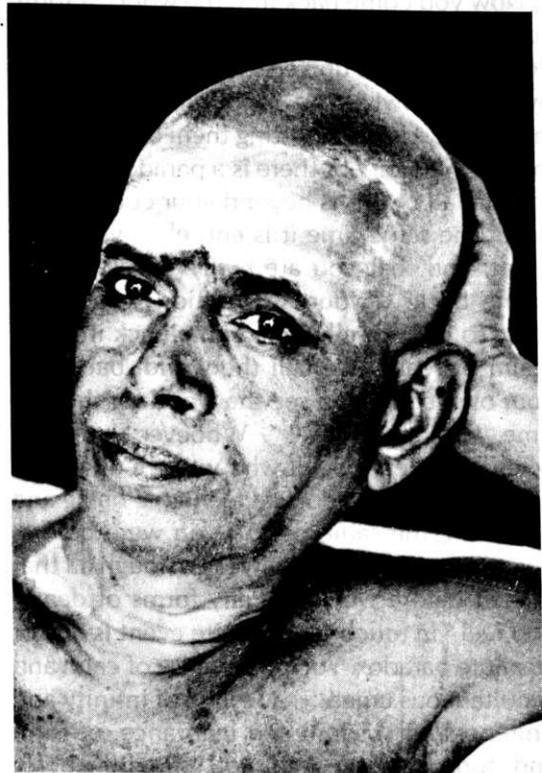
Introducing....

... Sri NATESAN, Bhagavan's Barber

SRI Natesan, a staunch old devotee of Sri Bhagavan, had the unique privilege of shaving Bhagavan for an uninterrupted period of twenty-five years.

Sri Natesan is a native of Polur, a small village to the north of Tiruvannamalai. His father, a staunch devotee of Lord Arunachaleswara (the deity in the Tiruvannamalai temple) used to visit Tiruvannamalai walking the distance of twenty miles on the first day of each Tamil month in order to do a *pradakshina* of Arunachala. After reaching a ripe old age, his father eventually died during one of his walks around the mountain, and Sri Natesan considers that it was the merit earned by his father which eventually earned him the privilege of serving Bhagavan.

After his father's death, Natesan was adopted by his uncle, Subbarayan. His uncle first saw Bhagavan at Gurumurtam, the period when he had long matted hair. On seeing Sri Bhagavan, Subbarayan asked for permission to give him a shave. Bhagavan remained silent and Subbarayan took this to be a negative answer, but later,



Sri Natesan

when some of the devotees wanted to give Bhagavan a shave, he was approached by them and he happily accepted their invitation. From that time on, he shaved Bhagavan regularly, and when he became too old to continue the work, he advised his nephew, Natesan, to continue the service. Natesan gladly accepted the honour, and he shaved Sri Bhagavan on the morning of each full-moon day.

On the mornings when he was due to shave Bhagavan, Natesan would first have a bath, smear *vibhuti* (sacred ash) on himself and then

respectfully approach Bhagavan at exactly 9 a.m. At this time of day, Bhagavan would normally have just returned from his morning walk and on seeing Natesan, Bhagavan would apply oil to the rheumatic swelling in his joints and then slowly walk to the *gosala* (cow shed). A special place was set aside in the *gosala* for shaving and on the days when Bhagavan had his shave it would be specially cleaned and decorated with *rangoli* (floor patterns). Natesan would prostrate before starting the shave, and then complete the shave in silence; only when it was completed would he say a few words to Bhagavan.

On one occasion, Sri Niranjanananda Swami called Natesan and asked him to start the work an hour earlier. Niranjanananda Swami thought that in the heat of the summer this would be more convenient for Bhagavan. Natesan turned up at the newly appointed hour, and in response to Bhagavan's questioning gaze, he narrated Niranjanananda Swami's new plan. Bhagavan said that the heat was of no importance, and the former timetable was restored.

Natesan also used to play pipe-music for weddings and other festivities, and once when he was shaving Bhagavan, his uncle Subbarayan came to see him and told him that he was required in town to play some music as soon as he had finished shaving Bhagavan. On hearing this Bhagavan remarked: "It seems that Natesan has to go to town by 12 noon, and he has not taken any food since this morning". His attendants who were standing nearby took the hint and brought him some lunch from the kitchen. Barbers are normally treated as outcastes, and caste Hindus would normally only offer them food after they themselves had finished eating. Natesan was overwhelmed by this show of compassion by Bhagavan and felt that only Bhagavan could love like this. Recalling this incident in later years, Natesan was moved to tears and pointed out that Bhagavan always treated devotees equally, and was particular that none went without food.

Natesan considered his service to Bhagavan to be his highest priority, and never failed to

appear for the monthly shave. On one occasion, on the day before full-moon, Natesan's brother who was living in a village nearby fell sick and his life appeared to be in danger. Natesan explained his position to his relatives and they wisely advised him to go at once to Tiruvannamalai and do his sacred duty.

Soon after concluding the shave the following day, one of his relatives appeared to inform him that his brother had died and that he was required immediately for the last rites. Bhagavan heard this information being passed on and remarked: "It seems that Natesan's brother has passed away and he has to go at once to Polur. He could not have taken his food yet and it is not known whether he has money to travel." On hearing this, one of Bhagavan's attendants, Ramakrishna Swami went to the kitchen and brought some food. Natesan had little appetite for food, but he took three cups of coffee and was given five rupees for his journey home.

Natesan once prostrated to Bhagavan when he met him walking on the hill. "Why here?" questioned Bhagavan, and Natesan took this to mean that his prostration in the *gosala* was a sufficient expression of devotion and that he need not do it elsewhere.

Natesan always used to spend a few minutes with Bhagavan after his monthly work had been completed. In those few minutes he would have Bhagavan's uninterrupted and undivided attention. Natesan now considers these short sessions listening to the compassionate words of Bhagavan to be the happiest moments of his life.

Although he is now 76, he still continues to serve devotees in the Ashram, and many of them consider it a privilege to be shaved by the same hands which shaved Bhagavan. Natesan still comes to the Ashram every day to pay his respects to Sri Bhagavan, and he is passing a quiet and contented old age in the proximity and the presence of the Master whom he served and worshipped for a quarter of a century. □



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BOOK REVIEWS

THE GRAND EPIC OF SAIVISM: Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati.

Pub.: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society, Tinnevely, Madras-1. Price Rs. 8.00.

Periapuranam deals with the lives of Saivite saints who lived, moved and had their being in Siva. All of them treated the devotees of Siva as Siva Himself and did not in the least mind the sacrifices they sometimes had to make in the performance of their duty as hosts. Every line of Sekkizar, the author of this work, oozes with bhakthi.

It is not easy to translate a book like this into English. Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati has done his best but it has not caught the devotional rapture of the original. However, as stories, they are reasonably well told. This book is a good introduction to anyone who wants to make a deeper study of it.

GOD REALISATION: Bhag Singh Lamba. Pub.: Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Safdarjang Enclave, New Delhi. Price Rs. 35.00

God Realisation is an interesting book written by Sri Lamba who retired from the Indian Salt Service in 1961. His main objective in writing this book is to supply 'a dose of spiritual initiation to those seeking peace of mind.' The author who seems to have been profoundly influenced by the Sikh Gurus, Sri Aurobindo and the Upanishads is said to have realised God about 24 years ago.

"Twenty fifth April 1957, is a red-letter day in my life. As I sat for meditation in the morning, colours, moon and visions of deities came and passed. Then a Golden light with rays emanating appeared at a distance of about six inches in front of the eye brow centre (*Ajna*). My forehead was as if tied up with the light for about 10 minutes; mind became calm and steady as a flame without flicker. I had to give it up to my official duties at Madras, where I was posted Dy. Salt Commissioner. Later I found that the Golden Light had transformed me; it was as if I had touched a thousand volt cable. All the senses (*Indriyas*) came under control and mind became steady. For three days after this my body used to shiver, the brain was hazy and I felt feverish. I had read that the Absolute gives a glimpse in this manner to affect the transformation and several mystics had similar experience though there are wide variations. The haziness, was due to change of consciousness from physical to higher planes and thus out of tune. The meditation, hereafter became more and more interesting and more time was devoted daily. Another

after effect of the vision of Golden light was that recitation of 'Shabad', and remembrance of God "*Waheguru*" became automatic even when I was doing office work. This transformation after the vision of Golden light and also slow awakening of Kundalini, I regard my spiritual birth after only two months of practice of Integral yoga."

He believes that even for God Realisation the first essential is a healthy body and he cures diseases through spiritual healing. According to him, spiritual healing is infallible. If this were true, spiritual healers and those in their presence should be immortal. A real Guru will transform one's attitude to the body and disease. The zeal of the author, however, is commendable.

GITOPASANA: Swami Ishwarananda Giri. Pub.: Samvit Sadhanayana, Santasarovar, Mount Abu, Rajasthan. Price Rs. 8.00

This is a very good introduction to the Gita by Swami Ishwarananda Giri. Whatever is said, is said lucidly and crisply. The second section of the book contains the entire Gita printed neatly and well.

'The Gita is therefore, *Advaitamrtavarsini*, the one that showers the nectar of oneness. The analogy of the rain-cloud introduces a host of ideas about the Gita. It is apt that the Gita, Sri Krishna's spiritual creation, should also appear to have the likeness of a rain-cloud. Moreover, the cloud has always been a symbol of grace and compassion. It carries the life-giving essence from the seas over great distances to thirsty souls who should perish without it. More significantly, the cloud has the power to transform the undrinkable saline content of the sea into sweet waters fit for the consumption of living beings. It has no preferences or reservations and it showers the nourishing waters on hills and dales, deserts and cities. Equally universal is the beneficence of the Gita whose doors flung wide open for all. "All those who come to Me—holy or sinful, men or women, wealthy or poor, learned or unlearned—surely will attain to the highest goal.'" (*Bg. 9.32*)

The above extract should give the reader some idea of the simple but interesting way in which the subject is dealt with. It is unbelievable that such a well-produced book should cost as little as eight rupees.

Dr. K. SUBRAMANIAN

THE HINDU VIEW OF LIFE: S. Radhakrishnan. Pub: Unwin Paperbacks, London. Pp. 92 Price £1.95

The material for this book was originally delivered in the form of lectures, the Upton Lectures, as far back as

1926 at Manchester College Oxford. However, none of the ideas have dated with the passage of time, and they are as fresh and fascinating today as they were when they were first spoken. Radhakrishnan was one of the great humanists of our time, but it was a humanism derived from his own Hindu heritage, and rooted in and supported by a deep and genuine faith that the true nature of man is Divine. It contrasted sharply with European humanism which despite having an idealist view of life, ultimately declared the sovereignty of man.

"The Hindu attitude to religion is interesting. While fixed intellectual beliefs mark off one religion from another, Hinduism sets itself no such limits. Intellect is subordinated to intuition, dogma to experience, outer expression to inward realisation. Religion is not the acceptance of academic abstractions or the celebration of ceremonies, but a kind of life or experience. It is insight into the nature of reality (*darsana*), or experience of reality (*anubhava*). This experience is not an emotional thrill or a subjective fancy, but is the response of the whole personality, the integrated self, to the whole reality. Religion is a specific attitude of the self, itself and no other, though it is mixed up generally with intellectual views, aesthetic forms and moral values."

Again and again the author points out that to Hindus, religion is not a set of concepts about a dim beyond, but a reality of everyday life which has to be lived and not learned intellectually. In his chapters on *Hindu Dharma* he gives a beautiful picture of a perfectly balanced society, and although the ideal he expounds is some way from the current reality of Hindu life, it is nonetheless an incisive summary of the ideals of Hindu society. Although it is a little utopian in outlook, it is a lucid and convincing exposition, and it deserves the attention of all those who still value the traditional Hindu way of life and who seek to re-examine and re-evaluate their concepts about what society is, and what it could or ought to be.

HARA, THE VITAL CENTRE OF MAN: By Karlfried Graf Von Durckeim. Pub.: Unwin Paperbacks, London. Pp. 208 Price £2.25

"Hara" is a distinctively Japanese concept meaning "vital culture", or more generally, the vital centre of man, and the focus of his existence. It is said to be situated two inches below the navel, and according to the Japanese, emotional and mental instability is caused by losing one's centre of gravity, or *hara* as a result of dissipating one's energy, and failing to remain attuned to this vital centre.

The author is a well-known expert on both psychotherapy and philosophy, and after a lengthy period of training under Zen Masters in Japan, he returned to Europe fully convinced of the value of this theory as a means of healing and harmonising the chronic imbalance of the western mind. He was so convinced of its utility, that he saw it not

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merely as a psychotherapeutic technique, but also as a way and a vehicle to full spiritual realisation.

The original Japanese teaching is quite simple and straightforward, but in translating the theory to the west, Durckheim seems to incorporate esoteric overtones for which there appears to be very little justification. The practice of stabilising one's vital centre is a simple enough technique, and in the second half of the book the author gives easily understood instructions on how to achieve it. However, although it is easy to see how practitioners of his ideas can achieve a degree of mental harmony and stability, its value as a spiritual technique is open to doubt. Throughout his exposition it is clear that the aim of the exercises are not to eliminate the ego, or the idea of the self, but it is to change the ego into a harmonious, intelligent, emotionally stable super-ego.

Although the claims which Durckheim makes, and the adaptations he suggests are of doubtful value, there is still much useful information to be gleaned on the general principles and nature of *hara*, and there is a particularly useful appendix which gives three original Japanese texts on the subject which give a much needed reminder of the original spirit and practice of *hara*.

LUCY CORNELSSEN

DATTATREYA, GLORY OF THE DIVINE IN MAN: Edited by S. Sarath Babu. Pub. : Shirdi Sai Mandir, Vidyanagar, 524413, Andhra Pradesh. Pp. 170 Price Rs. 15

For many years, a small group of spiritual aspirants centered around Acharya Bharadwaja, a well-known teacher and author, dreamt of building a *mandir* dedicated to Shirdi Sai Baba in Vidyanagar, A.P. Their dream has finally materialised, and this souvenir is both a celebration and a chronicle of the astonishing sequence of seemingly miraculous incidents which enabled the dream to be turned into a reality.

The group follows the *bhakti* tradition and they place great emphasis on *satsang* by meeting regularly and by actively seeking the company of famous spiritual figures. This predilection for holy company is reflected in the contents of the souvenir, which, apart from accounts of the construction of the *mandir* consist mainly of a series of articles on the lives and teachings of modern Indian saints. Some like the retired Sankaracharya of Kanchi, Ramana Maharshi, and Shirdi Sai Baba are well-known, but it is refreshing to see lesser known spiritual figures such as Dhuniwala Dada, Hazrat Tajuddin Baba and Gajanon Maharaj resurrected from their undeserved obscurity.

Like most publications associated with Acharya Bharadwaja, the emphasis is on the spectacular, and the miracles attributed to each saint are prominently featured. Nonetheless, it is a well-produced and well-edited souvenir which should appeal to all those who have an interest in holy company or in the lives of Indian saints.

D.G.

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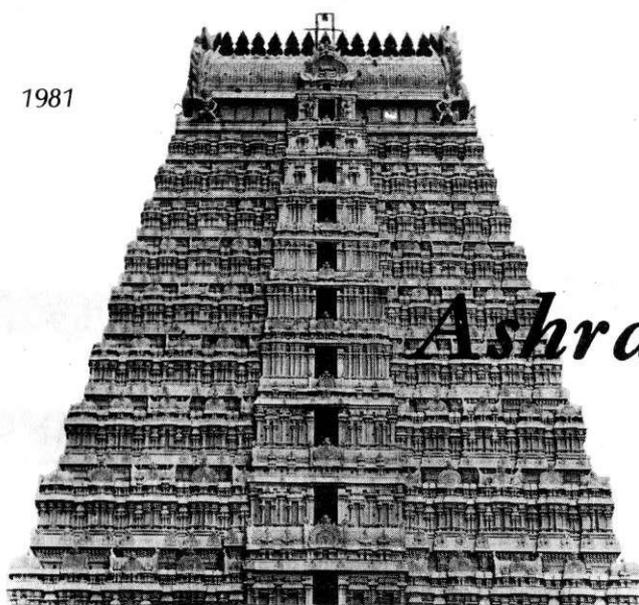
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1981

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Ashram Bulletin

RAMANANJALI'S GRAND MUSICAL OFFERING TO BHAGAVAN RAMANA

SRI ARUNACHALESWARA TEMPLE: *The eastern entrance*

ARADHANA DAY CELEBRATIONS

The glorious Birth Centenary of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated in all grandeur all over the world. We even now continue to receive reports of it being joyously observed from some part of the globe.

Thirty-one years ago, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi withdrew His physical form, but only after assuring His devotees: "Where can I go? I AM here." The truth of this statement is proved by the endless stream of new visitors to the Ashram who discover the power of this continuing presence for themselves. Although this presence can be felt by anyone who turns within to find the ever-flowing stream of Grace that is Sri Bhagavan, it is nonetheless true that His presence is felt especially strongly in those places which are associated with Sri Bhagavan's physical form.

The Samadhi Shrine and the Meditation Hall are usually the places where devotees feel this Presence most strongly, and it is particularly noticeable that this feeling is enhanced when devotees gather together in these places to celebrate either His birth anniversary or His *Brahma Nirvana* Day.

On May 2, 1981, the 31st *Brahma Nirvana* celebrations commenced early in the morning with the chanting of hymns on and by Sri Bhagavan in Tamil by the old devotees and inmates of the Ashram. This was followed by *puja* with milk-offering at His shrine and special *parayana*.



RAMANANJALI' offering 'Ramana Music' in front of Sri Arunachaleswara Temple on May 2, 1981.



An arch welcoming the 'Ramananjali' on one of the main streets of Tiruvannamalai

from the Upanishads with *Ekadas Mahanyasa Japa*. The *Ramana Abhisheka* was accompanied by Vedic chants and completed with *arati*. A large number of people attended the celebrations and four separate lunch sittings were needed to feed everyone who came. The Ashram also undertook a large-scale feeding of the local poor people, an event which has become a standard feature of major Ashram celebrations.

This year, the 'Ramananjali' group performed in two special concerts to mark the occasion. In the morning, there was an intimate concert for visitors and devotees in the *mantapam* hall. In the evening, a scintillating 'Ramana Music' concert was given for nearly two-and-a-half hours in front of the eastern main entrance to Sri Arunachaleswara Temple, which was attended by thousands of music-lovers of Tiruvannamalai. There were arches on the important streets of the town, welcoming the 'Ramananjali' group all success in their sacred attempts of carrying the performance!

During the morning concert, a new cassette, brought out by the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore, and entitled "*Ramana Stuti*", was released by Sri T.N.

Venkataraman, President of Sri Ramanasramam. The cassette contains in full the Sanskrit original of **Ganapati Muni's** *Chatvarimsat* (Forty Verses in Praise of Sri Ramana) and **Sri Viswanatha Swami's** *Ramana Ashtotara*.

During the performance, two new books were released: the first *Ramana Varnangal* (in Tamil) which comprises special songs on Sri Bhagavan composed and set to music by **Sri Sadhu Om**, and the second, *New Songs from Muruganar* in Tamil and English contains verses from **Sri Muruganar** set to music by **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan**.

AT KOLHAPUR

The *Ramana Satsang Mandal* at Kolhapur celebrated the 31st Brama Nirvana of Sri Bhagavan on May 2, with all solemnity seriousness and reverence. In addition to the usual *Puja*, *Abhisheka*, Lectures, symposium, *arathi* and Prasad, a new feature of this year was to show a 22 minutes Marathi Documentary Film in Bhagavan's life (produced by the Films Division, Government of India) at a local Cinema Theatre specially arranged for the devotees.



Release of *New Songs from Muruganar*: Sri P.S. Vaikundavasar, Trustee of the Ashram receives the copy from Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Ashram President.



Ramana Varnangal: The author, Sri Sadhu Om receives the first copy, marking the release of this unique book on 'Ramana Music'

1981

**Sri Ramana
Centenary
Library
Declared
Open**



Sri Ramana Centenary Library declared open on May 2, 1981—Sri Bhagavan's Aradhana Day.

On the evening of May 2nd, the *Brahma Nirvana* anniversary, the new Ramanasramam Library, which is to be called "*Sri Ramana Centenary Library*", was declared open by **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, the President of Sri Ramanasramam. Situated in the South-West corner of the Morvi Compound, the new library will house all the books which were formerly contained in *The Mountain Path* Library and the Ashram general library. These two libraries grew up in a rather haphazard fashion as a result of donations made by visitors, devotees and publishers. Over the last sixty years, this has amounted to a considerable collection, and we now have approximately 10,000 books, primarily on philosophy and religion, in all the major Indian and European languages. Such a random acquisition of books has inevitably resulted in imbalances and gaps in our collection, and so we have embarked on a major programme to purchase new books and bring our collection up-to-date. We have received a grant from the Central Government of India, and with their assistance, we shall have purchased about 1,500 new books by the end of this year.

Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Ashram President declares open the Sri Ramana Centenary Library. To his right is Sri David Godman and to his left: Sri A.R. Natarajan, Sri Krishna Iyer, Sri K. Natesan and Sri K. Venkataraman



The library and reading room is located on the first floor of the new building and has a glorious uninterrupted view of Arunachala. On the ground floor, we have assembled a large archival collection of all the material we possess on Sri Ramana Maharshi. In addition to all the books which have been published on Bhagavan, there are a large number of manuscripts, including several of Bhagavan's own works in his own handwriting. Altogether, there are nearly 2,000 items in this collection, and they will be available to any scholars who wish to do research on Bhagavan's life and teachings. Many of the items in this collection are in a very fragile condition, and we are actively seeking funds and special assistance to preserve our more valuable items for future generations of devotees and students.

We would like to thank *Sri Ramachandra Khoday* of Bangalore for collecting and donating most of the funds required for the construction of this new building, and we would also like to thank the *Ramana Kendra, New Delhi* for contributing the balance required to complete the project.

The amalgamation of the two libraries has involved a major recataloguing operation, and over the last six months, a large number of devotees and visitors have been assisting the librarian to complete the task. Of these, special mention should be made of **Ian Martin** and **Christine Lemieux** of Canada, **Smt. Sarojini Devi** of Bangalore, and **Robert Butler** from England, all of whom have contributed several months of full-time work to ensure that the job was completed on time. Finally, the acknowledgements would not be complete without a special mention of **Sri R. Anjaneyalu**, our Contractor-devotee from Bangalore, who has supervised the construction in his usual efficient manner. **Sri David Godman**, our Ashram Librarian and member of the Editorial Board of *The Mountain Path*, will be the Librarian of the Centenary Library.

RAMANA LIBRARY, BANGALORE

The ever active *Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore*, achieved another landmark in the 'Ramana Movement' by opening its first free RAMANA LIBRARY in Bangalore. The garage of **Sri A.R. Natarajan** 40/41, Second Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore, has been converted into a beautiful library, thanks to the architectural efficiency of Sri Murthy of Murthy Associates.

In a simple but impressive function, **Sri A.R. Natarajan**, President of the Centre, assured that by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan the Centre would have 82 more such 'Ramana Libraries' in Bangalore, thus throwing the literature of Sri Bhagavan by taking it to every nook and corner of the city, literally. **Sri Swami Adidevananda**, President of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, blessed the Centre's effective measures to spread the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

The 'Ramana Library' will contain, in addition to the entire set of "Ramana Literature", useful books representative of the best in Vedanta.



Sri Swami Adidevananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bangalore opening the Ramana Library.

A Correction:

On page 66 of our April issue we featured a short extract from the diary of N.N. Rajan. The author has written to inform us that the last line was incorrectly printed. Instead of "Ishwara himself is under the beck and call of His devotees" the final sentence should be: "But Ishwara Himself is under the control of the *jnani*." This obviously gives an entirely different meaning to the whole passage. We have been unable to trace the source of this error, and we apologise to the author and to the readers for misrepresenting Bhagavan's words in this way.

MINISTER VISITS THE ASHRAM

The Central Deputy Minister for Industries, **Sri Purno A. Sangma**, paid a visit to the Ashram on May 31. He was accompanied by **Sri Kudandai Ramalingam**, M.P. and **Pattusami**, M.P.

The Minister was received by **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, Ashram President and Ashram Trustees, **Sri P. Thandavarayan** and **Sri P.S. Vaikundavasar**. **Sri Purno Sangma** showed keen interest, while being shown round the Ashram, in knowing details about the running of the Ashram and its activities.

Before leaving the Ashram he remarked: "My visit to this Ashram has been a source of joy, inspiration and peace."



Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Ashram President presenting Ashram books to Sri Purno A. Sangma

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GOLDEN JUBILEE-50th 'Ramananjali' performance at Bangalore prayerfully led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan.

THE 50TH PERFORMANCE OF

RAMANA MUSIC BY "RAMANANJALI"

The musicians of the 'Ramananjali' group passed a major milestone on April 5th when they presented their 50th public concert in Bangalore. The concert was graced by the presence of His Excellency **Sri Govind Narain**, the Governor of Karnataka and **Smt Chandra Govind Narain**, his wife. In his presidential address, **Sri Govind Narain** observed:

"My wife and I are delighted to participate in this sacred function organised by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore. We have had the privilege to associate ourselves with the release of the L.P. record: 'Ramana Vaibhavam' organised by Sri Bhagavan's Centenary Celebrations Committee in October, 1979. Again in February, 1980, we were fortunate enough to take part in the august celebrations relating to the release of the pre-recorded cassettes containing 'Ramana Bhajans' (Hindi) and 'Ramana Amudam' (Tamil). Those compositions were chanted so melodiously with profound religious fervour by **Smt.**

Sulochana Natarajan and her associates of the 'Ramananjali' group. We deem it a privilege, once again to have the pleasure of associating ourselves with this evening's devotional function and to release a cassette of the latest performance of the 'Ramananjali' group—'Ramananjali in Canada'—in commemoration of the Golden Jubilee performance of the 'Ramananjali' group. My wife joins me, at the outset, to convey our heartiest felicitations for the devotional and benign services being rendered by the 'Ramananjali' group in general and **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan** in particular and we wish the 'Ramananjali' group all success in their sacred attempts of carrying the blessings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana in various communicable forms to every nook and corner of the world."

"Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore, under the very able guidance of **Sri A.R. Natarajan** has been rendering yeoman service to refine our 'perception' and to elevate the moral tone of our society".

H.E. The Governor of Karnataka, Sri Govind Narain and Smt. Chandra Narain listen with interest to Sri A.R. Natarajan giving details about the 'Ramana Movement'.



A VIVID RESUME

Hereunder a descriptive report submitted by **Kumari Ambika** is published about the Golden Jubilee Performance of 'Ramananjali' group:

"The curtain opened, revealing to the audience a most beautiful stage setting, Sri Bhagavan's majestic picture adorning the middle of the stage, lighted lamps—a mark of our tradition (beneath the picture and 'Ramananjali 50', written in flowers on either side) and the instrumentalists seated in a neat order on the left. On our right, were the singers... ready, eager to begin the performance, their Golden Jubilee offering at the Feet of their Master.

"Many melodious, captivating and elevating songs followed the title 'Ramananjali' song in Sanskrit and the Ganesha Stuthi in Kannada. Of course, there are some



RAMANA STUTI: Cassette released on May 2, 1981 Stottaras entirely in Sanskrit, rendered into melodious music by "Ramananjali" group.



Kumari
Ambika

which stood out prominently and deserve special mention, they were, 'Jnana Kuzhandai' in Tamil, 'Ramana Sri Padava', 'Jaya Ramanane' and 'Jaya Giri' in Kannada, 'Dharti Jal' in Hindi and 'Ramanam Gurum Namami' in Sanskrit.

"The engrossed, enthralled audience were faced with a great problem when asked to select the song of the evening, since many of the songs were equally thrilling. Ultimately, 'Jnana Kuzhandai' was nominated the song of the evening by majority vote.

"On that evening the 'Ramananjali' group placed at Sri Ramana's holy feet two very special offerings. The first being a multi-lingual garland—*Ramana Suprabhata*—**Sathyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer's Arunanudhittanan**, in five languages 'Dawn Hymn on Bhagavan Ramana'. The beauty of these lyrics seemed to retain a charm of their own even when translated. The five 'flowers' of this garland were in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Marathi and English.

"The introduction of a new song in each language was the other special feature: 'Neeperu' in Telugu, 'Dawn Hymn' in Marathi, 'Venkatan Thal' in Tamil, 'Arunachala Siva' in Kannada, 'Ramanaya Loka Gurave' in Sanskrit and 'O Ramana' in English. All of them were equally beautiful and were presented with perfection, even though the group was presenting them for the first time.

"Perfect synchronisation and total involvement of artistes, characteristic of the 'Ramananjali' group were manifested in greater fashion in the Golden Jubilee performance as the instrumentalists and the singers seemed to put their heart and soul into it. The leader, **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan**, the male-leader **Sri H.K. Narayana**, the core singers **Kumaris Sarada, Ambika** and **Sri Keshav Kumar** and the singers **Smt. Hema Srinivasan** and **Sri H.S. Thiagaraja** were at their best.

"Members of the 'Ramananjali' group were happy to introduce **Sri H.S. Thiagaraja** as a new member of their group. **Sri B.R. Shivaramayya** compered the programme extremely well.

"May Sri Bhagavan's Grace be on them always.

RAMANA
MOVEMENT
ABROAD

Switzerland

Daniel Uhlmann who stayed here for two months this winter is a friend of **Henri Hartung** who has written several French books on Bhagavan and his teachings. **M. Hartung** has started a centre in Fleurier, Switzerland, and **M. Uhlmann** has given us the following description of it.

there are a large number of people who are following other spiritual traditions. The centre does not restrict itself to any specific religious tradition, and it gives out no religious instruction. However, it places at the disposal of spiritual seekers information on the possibilities that are available to them. Discussions, encounters, retreats, studies of texts and exchanges with members of all religions are organised in an attempt to clarify and to bring into focus the various spiritual paths. In addition to these activities, a formal meditation retreat is held at Fleurier every three months and is attended by most of the members.

M.Hartung has been greatly influenced by both Rene Guenon, the French Philosopher, and by Sri Ramana Maharshi. Rene Guenon's interest in rehabilitating the



The Centre in Fleurier, Switzerland.

"The centre was started five or six years ago in Fleurier, at the home of Henri Hartung. The group now has about fifty members, several of whom have already visited Sri Ramanasramam, and ten more are due to come here in October this year. The members are scattered throughout Switzerland, making it difficult for them to come regularly to Fleurier. Because of this, branches have been established in several regional centres, and each Sunday, the members attend their nearest branch for group meditation.

The members of the group have widely differing spiritual interests. In addition to devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi,

western esoteric spiritual tradition and Bhagavan's universality and simplicity of approach are providing a background and cohesion to a group which is attempting to set up a small island of resistance to the materialism of the modern world by providing a source of brotherly support to all those who embark upon the path of self-discovery.

For further information contact:

Centre for Spiritual Encounters and Meditation,
Le Pasquier 10,
2114 Fleurier,
Switzerland."

ASHRAM AT SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

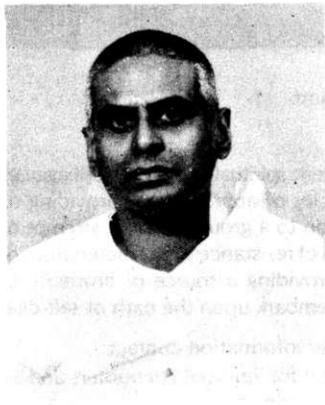
In Sao Paulo, Brazil, South America, there is an institution dedicated to Sri Bhagavan, called 'BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANASHRAM'¹, by Sri Mahakrishna Swami and his friends and disciples. The following is extracts from a report sent by the Ashram.

At this Ashram, regular classes are given to all in the practice of self-enquiry-Maha Yoga—as taught by Ramana, and Maha-Bhakti. Also, daily, those in search of solutions to physical, mental spiritual problems, offer flowers and fruits at the Lotus-feet of Sri Ramana. In addition to the regular classes, there are weekly meetings for the disciples, who devote themselves fully to Maha-Yoga, and who are responsible for the upkeep of the Ashram.

Each member of the Ashram is assigned a specific task according to his abilities along with giving time to his own professional activities. Work is thus integrated with spiritual practice, and at all times activities are carried out with devotion. In this way work becomes another means to gain the Natural State sought by self-enquiry. Several Pujas are held during the year, which are open to all.

Sri Mahakrishna Swami from his boyhood had one single interest in life—to discover the Self. At the suggestion of Mahatma Gandhi, he came to Bhagavan Ramana. During the few years he spent with Sri Bhagavan he was able to absorb the Silent Force which the *Sadguru* transmitted through his *upadesa*. He became a great adept of Maha-Yoga. After imparting this teaching of Mahayoga in several South American countries, he took up residence in Sao Paulo where to this day for over 20 years he has dedicated himself to spreading this Universal Truth.

Mother **Sutra Maha Devi** and **Gauri Mata**, belonging to the *Sao Paulo Ashram* visited Sri Ramanasramam recently



Sri Maha Krishna Swami



Mother Sutra Maha Devi

and we were happy to have them here between 8th and 15th April '81. We give hereunder Mother Sutra Maha Devi's impressions on her stay.

"Finally, we were in Tiruvannamalai it was a great joy for us, to know firsthand the place where Sadguru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana taught the Path of Self-Realization through the technique of self-enquiry.

"We have dedicated ourselves for quite some time now to the spiritual practices taught by Bhagavan, but from the moment we arrived at Sri Ramanasramam, we could feel that our devotion to Ramana began to grow even more in our hearts: In all places of the Ashram, we could feel the continuing Presence of Ramana. Surely we were before one of the greatest spiritual forces ever. Bhagavan's Upadesa can be felt by all, for the Ashram is impregnated with the living force of the Master.

"It is as if we might meet him at any instant, walking slowly on the hillside or reclining on his couch!

"The invisible force of the holy mountain, Arunachala, gives the whole environment a high spiritual emanation. Even the simplest utterance of the name, Arunachala, brings peace to the aspirant.

"Presently Sri Ramanasramam is maintained by a group of devotees of Ramana, who very selflessly assist those who go there in search of peace and spiritual comfort. At the Ashram we were received very kindly by the members, who keep the discipline and see to the work, rituals and organization of the Ashram. The organization of Sri Ramanasramam is remarkable. So many are always arriving and leaving and the necessities of all are attended to."

¹The full address:—

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANASHRAM
Rua Toneleros 1276,
Vila Ipojuca (Alto da Lapa)
05056 Sao Paulo—SP
Brazil—South America.
Tel. : 262-2683

A JOYFUL ANNOUNCEMENT

In our issue of April '81, p.101, we had the pleasure of writing about the forthcoming Deluxe publication *Bhagavan Sri Ramana: A Pictorial Biography*. Thanks to the dedicated services of **Smt. Joan** and **Sri Matthew Greenblatt**, the book is now being printed at Prasad Process, Madras, whose reputation for excellence in printing is well-known all over India.

The book which will be 8½" × 11" in size will contain:

- ... 38 colour photos
- ... 162 black and white photos
- ... 11" × 14" colour poster of Arunachala Hill
- ... previously unpublished and rare photos of Sri Bhagavan.

The bulk of the narrative is in Sri Bhagavan's own words, and the pictures and the text have been arranged to give a chronological view of all the major events of Sri Bhagavan's life. Many new and interesting incidents from Bhagavan's life have been gathered from senior devotees. The book will be printed entirely on imported art paper and no efforts have been spared to make this unique endeavour a publication of the highest quality.



Only a limited number of copies are being printed and devotees are requested to reserve their copies in advance. For further information please write to:

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[for subscribers of the *Mountain Path*, Life Members of the Ashram and devotees Rs. 40.]

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RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI (REGD.)

The Brahmanirvana of Sri Maharshi was observed with vedaparayan, meditation and devotional songs, on April, 14 as well as on the actual *tithi* on May, 2.

The Seva Samiti of the Kendra was very active in its welfare work in Shakurpur Resettlement Colony, where a Community Centre is being constructed. The Temple festival on April, 9 was very well attended with **Dr. M.S. Swaminathan**, Member-Planning Commission and Vice-President of the Kendra, as the Chief Guest.

Members of the Kendra Seva Samiti visit on Sundays the leprosy patients in Shadhara, and distribute food and other gifts like clothes, books and spectacles.

Smt. Uma Swaminathan, assisted by **Smt. Bhama Natarajan** and **Smt. Prema Narayanan**, gave a delectable musical discourse on Saint Tyagaraja on April, 12.

On April 20, **Shri A.R. Natarajan** gave an inspiring talk on 'Bhagavan Ramana, some New Dimensions'.

On May 3, **Kandamangalam Sri Balasubramania Raman** gave a musical discourse on 'Acharya Bhakti'.

Shri S. Ramakrishnan, Secretary represented the Kendra in a National Convention on 'Moral & Spiritual Values', held at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New Delhi on April, 11 & 12.

The memorial service for the eminent scientist, **Dr. K. Venkataraman**, held on May, 24 at the Kendra auditorium drew a large and distinguished audience. **Shri G. Parthasarathy** spoke on the occasion.

Visitors:

- (i) **Shri N.S. Varadhachari**, Freedom Fighter, on April 14.
- (ii) **Madame Benedicta Gomez Serafim Martinez** (Sutra Maha Devi) and **Madame Alice Gama Salgueiro** from Bhagavan Sri Ramanashram, Sao Paulo, Brazil—April—May.
- (iii) **Brahmarshi Devapalan** and **Swami Satyapalan** of Sanatana Dharmasramam, Kazhani (Kerala)—on May, 17.

RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS

The Annual Report of *Ramana Kendra, Madras* says that its governing body has unanimously elected the following office bearers:—

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Chairman | : Sri K.K. Nambiar |
| Vice-Chairman | : Sri K.S. Venkataraman Sri B. Ananthaswamy Dr. Ramanakumar. |
| Hon. Secretary | : Sri R. Venkatakrishnan. |
| Hon. Jt. Secretaries | : Sri K. Kalyanasundaram Sri K. Ramamurti |
| Hon. Treasurer | : Sri K. Ramanathan |

The report also gives details of how Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary was celebrated in Madras in a grand scale for four days and also how the weekly *Satsangs* are being regularly conducted, inviting eminent speakers to give talks. The increase in the list of Donors, Life Members and Members of the Kendra is impressive.

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Sri Bhagavan's Aradhana Day was celebrated at the Ramana Kendra, Madras on 3rd May 1981. The programme started with *Sahasranama Archana* to Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Pithukuli Murugadas rendered a musical discourse to a large gathering of devotees. Old devotees gave reminiscences of their association with Sri Bhagavan. Sri K.K. Nambiar, Chairman of the Kendra presided.

UPANAYANAM

Chi. Viswanath

Sri V.R. Lakshminarayanan's grandson—**Chi Viswanath** (son of Sri L.R.S. Mani) had his *Upanayanam*—thread ceremony—performed at the Ashram on May 24. Sri Lakshminarayanan is the Joint Secretary and Treasurer of the Ramana Kendra, Calcutta. His whole family is dedicated to Sri Bhagavan.

MARRIAGE

Sow. Usha with Chi. G. Rajagopal

Sri S. Govindarajan and Sri. S. Gurumurthi—two staunch devotees of Bhagavan—were very happy to conduct the marriage of their daughter and son, respectively, **Sow Usha** and **Chi. G. Rajagopal**, on May 24, at the Ashram.

Donations in kind and in cash are invited from philanthropists and devotees for running Sri Ramanasramam Free Dispensary.

Cash Donations are exempt from Income Tax. Please send them to:

The President,
Sri Ramanasramam Charities,
Sri Ramanasramam P.O.,
Tiruvannamalai-606 603, Tamil Nadu.

S.S. COHEN DAY

S.S. Cohen was a devotee who was blessed with both a keen intellect and an intense devotion to his GURU RAMANA. He spent his last years at the Ashram, giving the spiritual instructions of Sri Bhagavan to visitors and devotees, though in his last days he was fully confined in his room.

On May 27, his first death anniversary day was solemnly observed at his Samadhi, adjacent to that of Major Chadwick's, within the premises of the Ashram. One of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan **Sri N.R. Krishnamurthy Iyer**, in spite of his old age, participated in this function and spoke highly of **Sri Cohen**.

ARTHUR OSBORNE DAY

May 8th is a memorable day—this day eleven years ago our founder-editor, **Arthur Osborne** was absorbed in Arunachala. This great devotee, totally devoted and dedicated to Sri Bhagavan, has done yeoman service by paving the way for the modern minds to reach Sri Bhagavan and His teachings through his lucid yet powerful writing.

His death anniversary day was observed at his Samadhi with the chanting of 'Arunachala Siva' on May 8th.

THE MOTHER'S DAY

Sri Bhagavan's Mother has a unique place in the history of this illustrious Sage. Though reputed sages, like Sankara and Pattinathar, have greatly adored their mothers, yet it was Sri Bhagavan alone who gave Liberation to His Mother. This happened in 1922. Henceforth, every year *Maha Puja* is being observed in a grand way at the Ashram.

This year, the Mother's Day—*Maha Puja*—was solemnly celebrated on May 27, in the midst of earnest devotees, at the Mathrubutheswarar Temple at the Ashram.

NOTIFICATION

Recently it has come to our notice that one Mr. Akella Jamadagni Sarma is claiming to be Sri Ramanasramam's authorised representative in Andhra Pradesh for spreading Bhagavan's teachings. He is pretending to collect funds for the Ashram and is promising different kinds of *prasad* from the Ashram including grants.

We hereby notify all devotees that Sri Ramanasramam has not authorised anyone either to propagate Bhagavan's teachings or to collect funds on behalf of the Ashram. Devotees are requested to ignore any person who claims to represent the Ashram and who collects funds on our behalf.

The only legitimate appeals for donations are those which appear in the columns of *The Mountain Path* or come directly from the office of Sri Ramanasramam by way of a personal letter. In either of these cases, donations should be sent directly to 'SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNA-MALAI' and should not be entrusted to any intermediaries who claim to represent the Ashram.