



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

The Mountain Path

VOL. 18, No. IV

OCTOBER 1981

Be Thou my stay and my
support lest I droop helpless
like a tender Creeper,
Oh Arunachala!

—The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 72

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!"

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1

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CONTENTS

	Page
EDITORIAL: Images and Impact	183
The Death of the Mother and the Birth of Sri Ramanasramam— <i>Kunju Swami</i>	187
I am the Fire—A Vedic Hymn of Self Realisation— <i>David Frawley</i>	191
Paul Brunton and The Maharshi — <i>Swami Rajeswarananda</i>	195
The Nature of Mauna and Language in Ramana Maharshi— <i>Ralph M. Steinmann</i>	199
An Unusual Visit to the Ashram— <i>B.M. Deo</i>	206
On waking up— <i>Wolter A. Keers</i>	207
How I Came to Bhagavan— <i>Chandra Pillai</i>	211
Fundamental Buddhism— <i>Garry Thomson</i>	214
Ulladu Narpadu— <i>Kalivenba</i> —Tr. by <i>Sadhu Om</i>	217
A Visit to the Maharshi — <i>Swami Madhava Thirtha</i>	223
Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga— <i>M.P. Pandit</i>	228
Garland of Guru's Sayings— <i>Sri Muruganar</i> —Tr. by <i>Prof. K. Swaminathan</i>	231
Homage to Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj —A Tribute by <i>V. Ganesan</i>	233
Sadhu Natanananda—Comp. by <i>Tyagarajan</i>	234
A Humble Tribute to a Great Scholar-Devotee — <i>V. Ganesan</i>	236
Introducing Sri Annamalai Swami	237
Book Reviews	239
Ashram Bulletin	245

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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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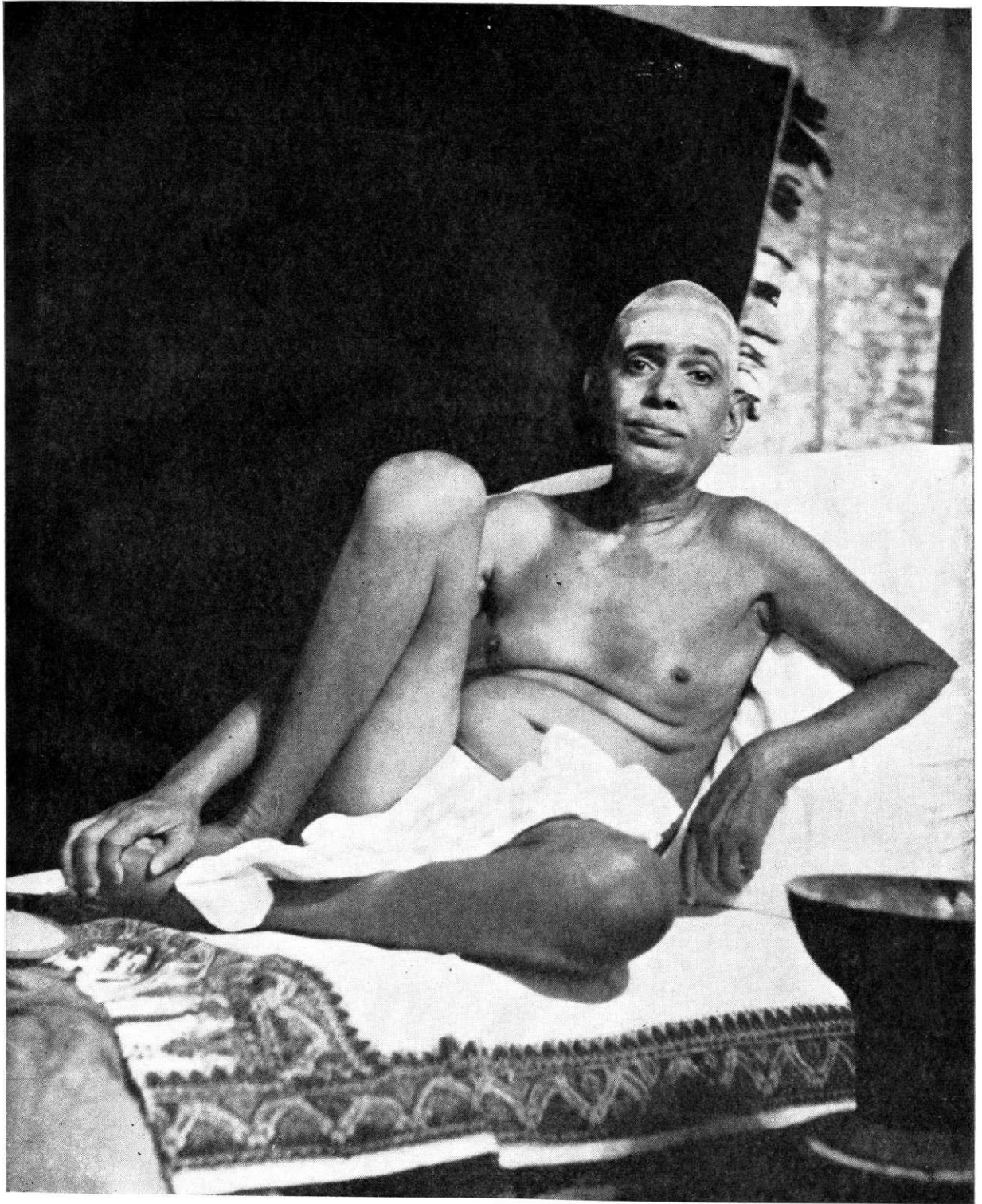
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



EDITORIAL

IMAGES AND IMPACT

THERE is an old Hindu fable recounting how several blind men were placed near an elephant and asked to work out what the creature was. They could only use the sense of touch and none of them had been told prior to the experiment what an elephant was, and so not surprisingly, their guesses were inaccurate and amusing. The first man touched the elephant's hide and thought that it must be some sort of living wall. The second touched a tusk and thought that the elephant was like a spear. The one who touched the trunk thought that it was a snake, while the others, who, in turn, touched an ear, the tail and a knee, came up with the widely differing conclusions that the object of their attention was a fan, a rope and a tree. The whole story has been versified in a most entertaining way by John Godfrey Saxe in a manner which not only brings out the humour of the situation, but also retains in a striking manner the spiritual import of the fable. Part of his version runs as follows:

"It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant
Though all of them were blind,
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.
And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,

Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
All were in the wrong!"

The limitations of the poor blind men are similar to those of many devotees who attempt to unravel the mystery of the phenomenon they call Sri Ramana Maharshi. Since Sri Ramana ultimately is the Self or the Absolute Reality, and since that state can only be understood and appreciated by one constantly abiding in it, the vast majority of us who spend our lives pretending that we are something other than Self approach the problem not with mere physical blindness, but with the self-inflicted blindness of spiritual ignorance. The result is the same. Because we feel that we have no knowledge or experience of the object we are studying, we tend to make ill-informed guesses by extrapolating our everyday knowledge and experience into a spiritual realm where its conclusions are wholly invalid. The blind men in the fable had at least the advantage over us in that they had a sense organ with which they could contact the object of their study. We, on the other hand, have only the mind at our disposal, and since the mind can neither understand nor even approach the Self and survive, it is not surprising that our images of Sri Ramana tend to be fantasies constructed from inadequate knowledge and

incorrect assumptions. Sri Ramana himself was once asked to describe the nature of the Self and the experience of Realisation and he pointed out that it is impossible for the mind either to explain or to comprehend it. He said: "How can the intellect which can never reach the Self be competent to ascertain and much less decide the nature of the final state of Realisation? It is like trying to measure the sunlight at its source by the standard of the light given by a candle. The wax will melt down before the candle comes anywhere near the sun." (*Maharshi's Gospel*, 2 p. 60)

While most of us can accept intellectually the inherent limitations of the mind, somehow, it does not prevent us from having our own ideas about Sri Ramana, and, worse still, from offering these ideas as being a true and accurate picture of something which is beyond both description and analysis.

The methods by which we normally acquire our knowledge of the world have no validity when we try to understand the nature of Sri Ramana. We understand an object through its appearance, its components and its functions. A clock, for example, is a collection of cogs, springs, weights etc., assembled in such a way as to give a visual presentation of the passage of time. This empirical approach seems to be so universally valid that most of us fall into the trap of trying to study Sri Ramana in the same way. We read accounts of his life and study his teachings and then, by utilising our mental processes, we arrive at conclusions based on the words we have read, the impressions they created in us and our past experience which includes all sorts of beliefs, ideas and expectations. Unfortunately the whole procedure by which the conclusions are arrived at is invalid because it is based on the erroneous notion that we are subjects who can study Sri Ramana as an object separate from us.

Sri Ramana often emphasised that the primary and original cause of all our wrong ideas is the idea, itself mistaken, that one is not the Self,

but an individual person inhabiting a body, a subject which sees the world outside as an object. In formulating images and descriptions of Sri Ramana, we project some ideas we have about ourselves onto the apparent "person" of Sri Ramana whom we see before us. When we do this we are unconsciously turning the Self that is Sri Ramana into a superior and exalted version of the person we imagine ourselves to be, and we then judge this image according to our own mentally derived standards of conventional morality. Sri Ramana is not a person who can be judged in this manner; he is the Self, and as such, he is merely witnessing a body which is manifesting certain actions. The Self which is Sri Ramana is not doing the actions, nor is he choosing them in preference to alternative courses of action; he just is.

For Sri Ramana and in Sri Ramana the Self alone exists; everything else one may postulate or infer about him is imagination. Sri Ramana never does anything because the Self is not an agent of doership, nor does he cause anything to happen. He just is.

Sri Ramana once used the English phrase "automatic divine activity" to describe the process by which devotees' needs are met by the Guru. It is an expression which could be applied equally well to all his activities. There is no individual 'I' in him orchestrating actions, feelings and reactions; there is no personality there deciding and choosing. When we see Sri Ramana, we are not seeing a person in any sense of the word, all we are seeing is an automatic impersonal process which responds spontaneously to the needs of the moment.

Let us take another example. One of our most deeply-rooted and treasured images of Sri Ramana is that he was and is a spiritual giant, a once-in-an-epoch occurrence who attained Self-Realisation almost spontaneously at an early age and subsequently spent the greater part of his life trying to help others to discover the Self for themselves. To achieve this aim he encouraged all who came to him to take up the

practice of self-enquiry or surrender completely to the Self. If one accepts that Sri Ramana is the Self, and that nothing exists apart from the Self, this particular view contains several contradictions.

The assumption behind this particular image is that Sri Ramana, the object of our study, is a great Realised Sage, whereas we, the subjects, are unrealised ordinary people who must devote all our time and energy to following a path which may eventually lead us to the state which we assume Sri Ramana to be in. Sri Ramana himself never endorsed this point of view. Sri Ramana never missed an opportunity to tell us that we are the Self here and now, and that all talk of attaining or realising the Self springs from the wrong ideas which we refuse to give up. However, because we are unable to give up the image we have of ourselves as separate subjects, we ignore this basic message and concentrate our attention on the methods, techniques and practices which we hope will lead us to a discovery of the Self. There is a passage in *Talks* in which a visitor asks Sri Ramana for a brief summary of his teachings. Sri Ramana remained silent, but when a devotee explained that according to Sri Ramana the Self alone exists and that nothing exists apart from it, Ramana's face lit up and he congratulated the devotee on giving such an accurate and succinct summary. There was no mention of spiritual practices by which one could discover the Truth, there was just a simple statement of the Truth experienced by all of us.

This point is confirmed and the parallel between the *Gita* story and Sri Ramana's own teaching experience is brought out clearly by Muruganar in verses 100 and 101 of *The Garland of Guru's Sayings*. Referring to Chap. 2, verse 16 of the *Gita*, where the world of becoming is declared as "non-existent" but strictly phenomenal, Muruganar compares Sri Ramana's plight to Sri Krishna's and says,

"To meet the needs of various minds
The Master spoke of various doctrines.
Ajata is the only doctrine
He taught as from his own experience.

This Truth supreme is what at first
The Lord revealed to Arjuna.
But finding his friend's mind bewildered,
Reeling, Krishna later spoke
Of other doctrines."

This is not to deny or decry the limited knowledge that the senses and the mind give us. This is only to point out that such knowledge pertains to the order of the relative, the manifest, the manifold, the empirical, not to the Timeless Reality which is Absolute, unmanifest, one without a second.

Of this one eternal Being and of its many fleeting images in the world of becoming, the poet Shelley sings:

"The One remains, the Many change and pass.
Heaven's light for ever shines;
Earth's shadows fly.
Life like a dome of many-coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of Eternity."

Clinging to the essential teaching, but only when thus firmly clinging to it, the aspirant grows in Awareness and the power of Being by pursuing the methods of self-enquiry and self-surrender. And for pursuing these methods, Sri Ramana prescribes no special ritual or lifestyle, but regards all one's natural obligations as the *kshetra*, the field, where one gains Self-knowledge through disinterested or egoless behaviour. Holding forth the examples of King Janaka and Sri Rama, he assures us, in verses 26 and 27 of the *Supplement to the Forty Verses* and in Chap. 10 of *Ramana Gita*, that *dharma* or right conduct in all the situations of life, whether public or private, is the outward expression, the natural flowering, of our now normal human nature.

To enjoy, exercise, express in spontaneous activity and thus exemplify our essential and inherent nature as *sat-chid-ananda*, to be and behave as *That*, to regard shadows as shadows, images as images, games as games, roles as rôles, this and nothing less was Sri Ramana's

message to mankind. It is not a new Truth but an ancient Truth known to many seers in many lands, though long neglected, and now felt and stated widely and convincingly by poets and thinkers alike. Man's identity with relative awareness, with *vijnana* and poetic experience, has now to mature into the ultimate identity with pure Being. The first, last and only step needed for this transformation is to turn the mind firmly inward. As Browning declares in *Paracelsus*:

"Truth lies within ourselves; it takes no rise -
From outside things, whate'er you may believe.
There is an inmost centre in us all
Where Truth abides in fullness; and to know
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendour may
escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without."

We are the Truth and the light of every kind of knowledge proceeds from within us. To love our neighbour as ourselves, to know and handle all things rightly, the only way is to be ourselves, our own divine selves, not mental images of *asuric* selves. End alienation from Reality, and the phenomenal becomes manageable. A famous Sufi Master, Bayazid al-Bistami, neatly summarized this problem when he said, "The people most separated from God are the ascetics by their asceticism, the devotees by their devotion and the knowers by their knowledge."

Sufism and Vedanta are the quintessence of common sense. The *asuric* power of unbridled *vijnana* repudiated and almost destroyed Christianity. But only mankind can destroy humanity. Bertrand Russel opposes a return to organised religion as a means of solving our international problems. "What the world needs is reasonableness, tolerance and a realization of the interdependence of the branches of the human family. The purely mundane arguments for a kindly attitude to our neighbours are much stronger than obscurantist myths. Intelligence has caused our troubles, but it is not unintelligence that will cure them. Only more and wiser intelligence can make a happier world."

**Back in the primal origin from which
I came, I had no God, and merely was,
myself. I did not will or desire anything,
for I was pure being, a knower of myself
by divine truth.**

**MEISTER ECKHART
(Christian Mystic)**

Perseverance in the pursuit of our human *dharm*a was the path to reach the goal of *moksha*. This was the ancient teaching and it still holds true for most people. But those few trained and gifted minds that form the growing-edge of present day humanity perceive in the current world-crisis the Second Coming, the next great leap forward in evolution, the fusion of *vijnana* in *jnana* and the return to Paradise. It is the Existentialist Albert Camus who warns us, "Let us not wait for the last judgement. It takes place every day." The historian Arthur Toynbee, anxious for the race's survival, sees the urgent need to develop the spiritual dimension of man. He says, "The cause of sin, suffering and sorrow is the separation of sentient beings, in their brief passage through the phenomenal world, from the Timeless Reality behind the phenomenon. The reunion with this Reality behind the phenomena is the sole and sovereign cure for all the ills of the ailing world".

Centuries ago the Tamil poet, Tirumular, looking at a wooden elephant in a toy-shop said,

"Like this elephant rampant which
Hides the wood, the universe
Conceals the Self".

Images and forms are mental reflections and, like moonlight, useful and pleasant to play with. Impact of Reality, like the Sun's warmth, touches our total being and enriches our life. We are already the Truth and the light and need not go in search of them. It is the errors and shadows that should learn to see as such and play with and live with, unafraid ourselves and comforting the children that fear them. □

THE DEATH OF THE MOTHER AND THE BIRTH OF SRI RAMANASRAMAM

By
Kunju Swami

BHAGAVAN'S mother became very ill soon after my arrival. She was bedridden when I arrived, and Sri Niranjanananda Swami, Bhagavan's brother, used to wash her saris for her. On occasions, I too had the good fortune of washing her clothes. Despite the medicines which she was taking, her health, instead of improving, deteriorated, and she spent all her days lying in the room to the south of the one in which Bhagavan used to stay.

Since the morning of 19-5-1922 her condition had been critical. After his morning walk, Sri Bhagavan went into the mother's room and sat beside her. He ate his lunch there and was sitting beside her all the time. When he noticed that she was struggling for breath, he put his right hand on her chest, and after a little while she became restful again.

The time of the Mother's liberation was drawing near. Sri Bhagavan put one of his hands on her head and another on her chest and sat quietly. Considering the seriousness of the situation, it was felt that supper should be served by 6 p.m. and Sri Bhagavan too was invited to eat. Sri Bhagavan, however, asked the others to eat first, saying he would eat later. Sri Niranjanananda Swami, Sri Ramakrishna Swami and I stayed with Bhagavan and the Mother, while the others went away and finished their supper. Sri Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni was also sitting nearby. Later, Raju Sastri, Vaidyanatha Sastri, Sundaresha Iyer and others recited the

Vedas, and Saranagathi Ramaswamy Iyer and others did *Ramajapa*. Those of us who were near Sri Bhagavan started to recite *Aksharagamanamalai* and at eight that night, the saintly Mother who gave birth to Sri Bhagavan attained *Samadhi*.

Bhagavan sat silently for a while before rising. The Mother's body was draped in a new ochre sari; we then applied *vibhuti* to her forehead, garlanded her and sat her on the veranda of Skandashram. When these ceremonies had been completed, Sri Bhagavan said "Let us eat now," and sat down to eat. Where is pollution or sorrow for a realised soul?

After the meal it was decided to bury the body at the foot of the hill as it was prohibited to burn or bury bodies on the hill itself. It was also decided to go down to the foot of the hill before 5 a.m. to avoid inconveniencing the devotees. After these arrangements had been made, Nayana and others left, promising to be at Pali Thirtham at 5 a.m. the next morning while Perumal Swami, Ramakrishna Swami and others went into the town to collect the materials for the burial.

Bhagavan, Arunachala Swami and I sat beside the Mother's body. Bhagavan wanted us to read the *Tiruvachakam*, and so we proceeded

This is a paraphrased account of incidents recorded by Kunju Swami in his recent book of reminiscences, published in Tamil as "*Yenadu Ninaivugal*".

to read it, with all of us including Bhagavan, taking it in turns to do the reading. Bhagavan would correct us whenever we made mistakes and the reading proceeded throughout the whole night, finishing at 4 a.m. the next morning. While the reading was in progress, those who had gone to collect the materials for the burial returned with all the requisite equipment.

The bamboos which were to carry the Mother's body had been acquired four days before in an accidental fashion. Sri Ramaswami Pillai and I had gone to the top of the hill and discovered that someone had left some bamboo poles there. We brought them back to the Ashram without any particular use in mind but when the Mother died, we realised that we could use them to transport her body to the base of the hill.

When the Mother's condition had become critical, a telegram had been sent to Bhagavan's sister, Alamelu Ammal. It was felt that she and some other devotees might come to the Ashram. In addition, provisions from town were being received at the Ashram everyday, and so because of these matters, I was asked to stay behind at the Ashram so that I could take delivery of the provisions and escort the visitors to Pali Thirtham. Perumal Swami, Ramakrishna Swami and others carried the sacred body of the Mother to Pali Thirtham, and since Bhagavan and the others had also left, I was a little afraid to stay there alone, but despite my fears, I stayed until about 7 a.m. before following the others down the hill.

The Mother's body had been seated under a big peepul tree on the bank of the tank, and Bhagavan and the others were sitting around it. A lot of cactus and brushwood had been cleared to accommodate the people. Alamelu Ammal and her husband Pichu Iyer had already arrived, and hundreds of devotees from the town were also streaming in. A large quantity of fruits and flowers had been brought by these devotees, and when I arrived music was being played and devotional songs were being sung.

The *samadhi* work was being carried out according to the instructions of Tirumular in

his *Tirumandiram*. The *abishekham* with milk, curd and coconut milk started at 10 a.m. and when it was over, the body was taken to the place of burial. Sacred ash and sacred grass were put inside the *samadhi* and the Mother's body was lowered into it. Sri Bhagavan and others put in a handful of sacred ashes and camphor each. It was then covered with a stone slab, and on top of it was placed a Siva linga. The linga was then worshipped in the traditional manner, and when it was 12 noon all of us left for Palakothu. Bhagavan walked very slowly, and the *nadaswara vidwan* played on his instrument with great enthusiasm. The distance from the *samadhi* to Palakothu was not much more than a hundred yards, but it took the procession an hour to cover the distance. It was a beautiful scene as the musician played on his instrument with great gusto, looking to Bhagavan who was setting the slow pace at the head of the procession and slightly swaying in time to the rhythm of the music.

Devotees had prepared food in Palakothu, and more than a hundred people were fed. We stayed there until the evening, and after offering worship to the *samadhi*, we returned to Skandashram for the night. It was decided that for nine days, an offering should be made at the *samadhi* and on the tenth day, *samadhi* puja should be done. During those nine days Chinnaswami and Yoganatha's son, Ramanathan used to take cooked rice to the Mother's *samadhi*, and after offering it there, they would return to Skandashram for lunch.

For the tenth day of the function, Bhagavan and I came down the night before and stayed in the Ganapati Temple in Palakothu; Alamelu Ammal and Meenakshi Ammal returned from Tiruchuzi the same night. They had prepared and brought with them some "Tiruchuzi dosa" for the tenth day ceremony.

Next day, *abhisheka* was performed on a grand scale at the *samadhi*. Kumbakonam Iyengar Swami had prepared a lot of food for *prasad*, and under the supervision of Chatram Narayanaswami Iyer, a big pandal was put up near the Ganapati temple for cooking, and



Bhagavan and Mother (taken during Mother's illness.)

about a thousand people were fed. We returned to Skandashram in the evening with Bhagavan after lighting the *moksha deepam* (light of liberation).

It was felt that there should be a *mandala puja* after 48 days, and until then daily puja had to be performed at the shrine. For this, cooked rice was taken from Skandashram every day.

Water for the *abhishekam* was brought from the tank in Palakothu. One day it rained very hard, and after the rain, a small pit close to the *samadhi* was full of water. Even after a few days without rain, the water did not dry up, but stayed at the same level, and remained very clear. When this was noticed by Chinnaswami and Ramanathan's son, they tried to drain all the water from the hole, but the water from the spring which was replenishing the pool continued to flow. They decided to use the water for *abhishekam* and took some water to Skandashram to show to Bhagavan. In the evening when Bhagavan came down from the hill, he looked at the oozing water and said that a pit should be dug three feet wide and three feet deep around the spring. Once this had been done, there was plenty of water for the *samadhi*. In the course of time this spring was deepened

and it eventually became the big perennial well in the Ashram, situated between Bhagavan's *Samadhi* and the dining room. Its water is still used for the *abhishekam* of Sri Bhagavan's *samadhi* and Sri Mathrubhutheswara in the Mother's temple.

Sri Bhagavan would visit the Mother's *samadhi* daily either in the morning or in the evening. One day Chinnaswami said to me: "I shall prepare *dosas* tomorrow and you can take them to Sri Bhagavan and the others." I agreed, and after asking Ramakrishna Swami to look after Bhagavan, I came down to the Mother's *samadhi*. Early in the morning as I was washing the dishes in the stream near Palakothu, I suddenly heard a voice; "Any food for an *Athithi* (guest)." Startled, I looked up and was thrilled to see Bhagavan standing with a towel wrapped round his head and a stick in his hand; it was a rare *darshan*. In the meantime, Chinnaswami and Dandapani Swami had come and they were overjoyed to see Bhagavan there. They requested him to eat the *dosa*, but at first he refused. However, after their persistent requests, he agreed to eat. Bhagavan ate some *dosa*, drank some coffee and goat's milk and after brushing his teeth with a neem twig and washing his face in the stream he looked at me and said; "Everyone comes here because of the nice food they get here", and laughed heartily.

One day, after finishing our breakfast at Skandashram, Sadiappa Chettiar, Trustee of the Draupadi Amman temple, who was on a visit to the temple, heard that Bhagavan was at the Mother's *samadhi*. He immediately went home, and after collecting provisions for cooking, he came to the Mother's *samadhi* and requested Bhagavan to accept his *bhiksha*. It would be a great opportunity for his elderly sister and his other relatives to have his *darshan*. He explained that his sister was too weak to climb the hill, and Bhagavan agreed to his proposal. Ramakrishna Swami, noticing that Bhagavan had not returned to Skandashram, came down to the Mother's *samadhi*, and the others joined a little later. The news spread to town, and as more and more devotees came to the proceedings,

the event turned into a great feast. When the festivities were finally concluded it was after 6 p.m. and it was too dark for Bhagavan to return to Skandashram. The townsfolk returned to their homes and Bhagavan and the Skandashram inmates stayed on at the Mother's *samadhi*.

The next day, another devotee pressed Bhagavan to accept his *bhiksha* and Bhagavan had to spend that day too at the *samadhi*. From that time on, some one would request to feed him every day, and he could never say 'no' to their loving requests. Because of this, Skandashram was becoming deserted, and Gopal Rao and I were asked to go to Skandashram to look after it as there was nobody there.

We were sent food from the Mother's shrine, and we waited there over a week without receiving any sign of Bhagavan's return. People were vying with each other to offer food to Bhagavan, and since we were unable to bear the absence of Bhagavan any longer, after a week we went to see him. On seeing us Chinna-swami asked us why we had come. "We could not stay away from Sri Bhagavan" we said, and no one criticised our behaviour.

Bhagavan decided to stay at the Mother's shrine in a most unexpected fashion. A few days after we rejoined him at the Mother's *samadhi*, it was reported that some items from Skandashram had been stolen; among them were a clock and a wooden plank used by Bhagavan. Hearing of the theft Bhagavan said: "It is good. Nobody need go there to look after the property any more!" We all felt that Bhagavan had decided to stay at the Mother's *samadhi* out of compassion for elderly devotees like Sadiappa Chettiar's sister.

After settling down at the *samadhi* we used to go daily to the Pandava tank at the foot of the hill along with Sri Bhagavan. We would go after we had finished our morning ablutions about 4 a.m. and Ishwara Swami and others from town would join us. Bhagavan and Ishwara Swami would float on the waters in the full-lotus posture, and occasionally Sama Grandpa

would also do it. The rest of us tried to practice it with less success.

It was very cold during the winter, and there was no building or bed for us. Bhagavan slept on a platform which had a sheet and pillow, and the rest of us used palm leaves and bricks. We used to sleep on the same platform as Bhagavan and we managed to obtain a charcoal stove which we placed near him. If there was not enough charcoal, we would peel the bark off the tamarind trees and put some pieces in the stove. Sri Bhagavan never slept much even at night, and we rarely slept because of the cold. Instead we would sit around the charcoal stove, and at that quiet time, pearls of wisdom used to fall from the lips of Bhagavan. If devotees came from outside, we would leave the platform to them and go and sleep in some temple or *mantapam* nearby. During the summer months when it was not so cold, we used to sleep under the banyan trees.

If anyone came from outside Tiruvannamalai, a *bhiksha* would be arranged for Sri Bhagavan. In those days there were very few ashramites and Rs. 5 was usually sufficient to feed everyone. The person who offered the *bhiksha* generally liked to go round the hill with Sri Bhagavan the same evening, and Bhagavan always complied with their request. On such occasions, we used to meditate or recite verses on our trip round the hill, and sometimes we would not return until early the next morning. We never used to feel tired on these occasions because of Bhagavan's company. On the following day, the devotees used to doze for a while in the afternoon, but Bhagavan could never take a rest as devotees were continually pouring in to see him. If there was a *bhiksha* on that same afternoon, the benefactor might ask Bhagavan to go round the hill with him, and Bhagavan would always oblige even though he might have had no sleep the previous night. He would indicate by a gesture that we should not tell the new benefactor that he had been round the hill the previous night. Because of the large number of people wishing to feed Sri Bhagavan, there were occasions when Bhagavan did not sleep for two or three consecutive days. □

I AM THE FIRE

A VEDIC HYMN OF SELF-REALISATION

By

David Frawley

THE Rig Veda is the most ancient and extensive of the Hindu books of revelation (*sruti*), upon which all the other later teachings were based. However the teaching of the Rig Veda is given in symbolic *mantras* of an earlier Sanskrit, the inner meaning of most of which was generally forgotten in later times. Hence the Vedic teaching was passed on through the Upanishads, the last addition, a kind of semi-philosophical summary and appendix to the Veda in later Sanskrit. The major difference between the Veda and the Upanishads or between Veda and Vedanta is one of the language. The latter has its teaching of Self-realization in the garb of philosophy, the former in ancient symbol and poetry. The only other major difference is that the Vedic symbols can be taken in an outer sense as setting forth rituals, as well as in an inner sense setting forth Self-realization. We are using this particular hymn here as an example of how these Vedic mantras related not to ritual but to Self-realization. Our particular hymn is a little more transparent in this regard than most of the hymns of the Rig Veda but it should be noted that such an interpretation can be given to nearly all the hymns, if we follow out the inner meaning of the mantras.

Rig Veda III 26. Deity—Agni, Seer—Visvamitra.

1. Having discerned within by the mind the Universal God, the Fire who follows the Truth, the finder of the Sun-World, we of owl-like vision who bear the offering, yearning for the fullness of light, with the Goddess powers of speech, invoke that God, the perfect giver, the rapturous guide of the vehicle.

The Vedic Fire¹ is above all the Fire of Consciousness², the Self in the aspect of pure awareness and its force³. He is the ever-wakeful flame of pure consciousness that abides in the hearts of all as their true Self. Thus he is the Universal God⁴, the Cosmic Man or the Supreme Person⁵, the universal Being or Entity. This Fire follows the Truth or exists according to the Real⁶. He is the finder of the Sun-World⁷, that is, he who reveals the Sunlight of the unity of all creation in the Self, or he is the knower of the Self⁸, *Svar*, the Sun-World, meaning also the Self-World, as the Self is the Sun of all. He is the rapturous guide of the vehicle⁹, the vehicle being our inner intelligence which is the vehicle for the spiritual path, which the Fire, in the bliss of Consciousness, guides. Having discerned him within by the mind¹⁰, the wise worship him as their own Self. These wise men are those of owl-like vision¹¹, *kusi* meaning an owl, *Kusika* meaning perhaps squint-eyed, that is men with very subtle powers of vision, who are able to discern the flame of Self-knowledge in the dark night of the Ignorance of the material worlds. They are those who bear the offering¹², or those who have surrendered¹³ to their own Self. They are yearning for the fullness of light¹⁴; Vedic Vasu being the plenary light of Divine Reality. They invoke that God, discerned within as their

¹Agni

²Cidagni

³Cit-Sakti

⁴Vaisvanara, i.e. Visva-Nara

⁵Purusottama Narayana

⁶anusatyam

⁷Svarvidam

⁸Svavidam

⁹rathiram ranvam

¹⁰manasa nicayya

¹¹Kusikas

¹²havismento

¹³namasvino

¹⁴vasuyavo

own Self, by the Goddess powers of speech¹⁵ and by the knowledge powers¹⁶ of the Divine Word, *Om*.

2. Him the luminous Fire we invoke for his grace, the Universal God, the laudable Spirit that grows within the Mother, the Lord of the Word for man's extension of the Divine, the inspired hearer, the swiftly moving guest.

That Fire of Consciousness is the Spirit that grows within the Mother¹⁷, the Mother being the Measurer¹⁸ who is *Maya*. That *Maya* is two-fold: In the lower sense she is the womb of Ignorance, made by the deluded intellect which divides up the world into separate egos and things, which our Soul or Fire must burst out of. In the higher sense she is the womb of Knowledge constituted by the laws or vibrations of the Divine Word, which increases the Fire, and is ultimately identical with the Supreme Mother¹⁹, Consciousness herself, whose primary son is the Fire. That Fire is the Lord of the Divine Word²⁰, also called *Brahmanaspati*; this *Brahman* or *Brhat* being the supreme Word in the Veda, the Speech²¹ in the Supreme Ether²². Such must be the priest for man's extension of the Divine, the manifestation of the Godhead in man²³. He is the inspired hearer²⁴, the sage who hears truly, who hears only *Om*.

3. As a neighing horse the Universal God is enkindled by the mothers, by men of owl-like vision in every age. May that Fire, the wakeful one among the immortals, found for us the ecstasy, the perfect heroic force and swift energy.

The Fire of Consciousness is the horse that conveys us to the gods, to the Divine. His neighing is *Om*. He is enkindled by the seers who are his mothers²⁵ as they give birth to him within themselves as their Divine Child of Self-knowledge. It is that same flame of mindfulness and awareness that men of wisdom enkindle or foster in every world-age²⁶. That Vedic Fire of Consciousness was the Buddha's mindfulness whereby he carried on that same noble truth, the Aryan Dharma, the tradition of Consciousness of the Aryan seers. Wherever there is Seeing

there is the Vedic Fire, the Fire of wisdom and revelation (*Veda*). Wherever there is Self-inquiry, there the Vedic ritual of maintaining the Divine Fire of Awareness is practised. Spiritual practice is not just a matter of speculation or imagination. It is giving birth to the Fire in our own hearts. That Fire is the wakeful one among the immortals²⁷, being the Flame of Consciousness that can never be extinguished at any time or in any state of mind, enduring immutable through all the long cycles of cosmic existence. That Fire gives the ecstasy, '*ratham*' (which never means jewel in Rig Veda), the delight in the Self²⁸. He gives the perfect heroic force²⁹, that energy of the Hero³⁰, who conquers the world of Ignorance³¹, the *lina*. He gives the swift energy³², the Self-spontaneous³³ power of conveyance beyond all sorrow, the energy of the Divine Horse.

4. Let the vigorous Fires go forth with their consort Powers. The spotted deer have been yoked, mingled together for beauty. The Gods of Flashing Power, who rain the vast, the undecivable knowers of all, make the mountains tremble.

The Gods of Flashing Power, mentioned in the next three verses, are the *Maruts*, from a lost root '*mar*' meaning to flash or to shine³⁴. These Godheads represent the manifold illuminations and realizations of power brought on by Self-knowledge, the great lightnings, thunderings and rains of inner Truth. They are the flames of the Fire of Consciousness. As such they are also the sages, the men of spiritual realization, not just in their outwardness but in their inwardness as they arise within us in our search for truth and aid in its unfoldment. They come together

¹⁵Gibhir

¹⁶Prajnabhir

¹⁷Matarisvanam

¹⁸Matar

¹⁹Aditi

²⁰Brhaspati

²¹Vak

²²Parame Vyoman

²³manuso Devatati

²⁴vipram srotaram

²⁵janibhir

²⁶yuge-yuge

²⁷amrtesu jagrvih

²⁸Atma-rati

²⁹suviryam

³⁰Vira

³¹Samsara

³²Svasvyam

³³Sva-asu

³⁴as in marici

with their consort-power³⁵; *Tavasi*, meaning Power being synonymous with *Sakti*, the Goddess. They are the sages who possess and manifest this *Sakti*, called elsewhere their *Svapati*, their knowledge, *mati*, of the Self, *Sva*. Their spotted deer³⁶ are their free powers of movement in all the worlds through this *Sakti*, the Upanishadic *kamacara*. They rain the vast³⁷, that is, they rain *Brahman* or its realization. These undeceivable knowers of all³⁸ make all the massive and firm mountains of Ignorance tremble, that is move like clouds.

5. The Gods of Flashing Power, the glories of the Fire, the Universal Workers we implore their awesome brilliant grace, the thundering gods of terrible power, whose raiment is the rain, the perfect givers, like lions of impelling will.

They are the glories of the Fire³⁹, the Universal Workers⁴⁰. They are the seers, the seer powers both inside of us and outside as the sages, who are the accomplishees of everything⁴¹, they are those who bring about through knowledge the unity of the Self and the world. They are the sons of that most terrible supreme Godhead⁴² Rudra-Siva, the thunderers⁴³, '*svanino*' the *svana*, thunder, being *Sva-na*, like the Self. Like lions⁴⁴ they have the impelling will to Truth⁴⁵.

6. Army upon army, host upon host, with their perfect annunciations of the Fire we implore, the intense energy of the Gods of Flashing Power, who are conveyed by inquiry, whose abundance does not falter, they who frequent the Sacrifice, the wise knowers in the sessions of knowledge.

The seer thus invokes all the armies of the Maruts, all the infinite powers of spiritual knowledge, to facilitate the full unfoldment. He invokes all the teachings, the perfect annunciations of the Fire⁴⁶, the direct pointings to that Consciousness which constitutes all the actions of the sages. Their intense energy⁴⁷ is energy of transcendence⁴⁸ into the Supreme. These sagely powers are conveyed by inquiry⁴⁹. The outer meaning is multicoloured⁵⁰ horse⁵¹, the multicoloured horse being symbolic in the

Veda for the many-sided question that has the great power to convey to us the truth. Their abundance does not falter, that is, they grant true fulfillment⁵². They frequent the Sacrifice⁵³, that being the Self-sacrifice⁵⁴, knowledge always being a sacrifice of the ego into the Self. They are the wise knowers⁵⁵, the sages in the sessions of knowledge⁵⁶.

7. I am the Fire, from birth the Knower of all things born. My eye is the clarified light. In my mouth is immortality. I am the threefold Solar Word that measures out all the realm the unceasing transforming heat, I am the offering, the Name.

I am the Fire⁵⁷, I am the Fire of Consciousness, the Self. That Divine Self is called the Fire because it is the ultimate heat, light and energy, the supreme power of purification and transformation. The Self is from birth the Knower of all things born⁵⁸, being the Knower who cognizes all births, who is the Unborn and the first born as the life-giving Consciousness in all. Or that Fire is from birth the Knower of all the births of the Gods, of the Divine, being itself the Self-birth wherein all the Gods are born. The clarified light⁵⁹, is the liquid light, the unity of light and water, of fire and water. Fire and water are the subject and the object, the self and the world, which in ignorance are contradictory but which in the knowledge are one. In the vision of oneness, the external world, the waters, being seen within, no longer serve to put out our Fire (our sense of Self) but serve as fuel for that Fire. The vision of the clarified light then is

³⁵*tavisibhir*

³⁶*prsatir*

³⁷*Brhad-ukso*

³⁸*visvavedasah adabhyah*

³⁹*Agnisriyo*

⁴⁰*Visvakrstayah*

⁴¹*Sarvakarah*

⁴²*Rudra-Siva*

⁴³*Rudriyah*

⁴⁴*simha na*

⁴⁵*hesakratavah*

⁴⁶*susastibhir Agner*

⁴⁷*Oja*

⁴⁸*abhibhutiros*

⁴⁹*prasadvaso*

pranesito,

impelled by inquiry

⁵⁰*prasad*

⁵¹*asvaso*

⁵²*radhas, siddhi*

⁵³*Yagna*

⁵⁴*Atma-yajna*

⁵⁵*dhirah*

⁵⁶*vidathesu*

Vidhyasattresu, sadhanesu

⁵⁷*Agnir asmi*

⁵⁸*janmana Jataveda*

⁵⁹*ghrtam*

seeing all things as a medium for Consciousness, the enkindling of the Fire in the waters. The threefold Solar Word⁶⁰ is *Om*, the Supreme Word⁶¹, which is threefold as Being-Consciousness-Bliss and is called in the Upanishads the sound of the Sun. It measures out all the world in its laws of truth, the rhythms of its vibrations. The unceasing transforming heat⁶² is the ultimate transformative power of Consciousness, the supreme *Tapas* that it is to be aware. The offering⁶³ is the unbounded nature of giving which constitutes *Brahman*. All this is the Name⁶⁴, that Divine Word which is the Self, I am All.

8. Through the three purification filters he has purified out the Solar Word, foreknowing by the Heart the intuition according to the light. He made the most invigorating ecstasy by the powers of the Self-Nature, then he saw all around Heaven and Earth.

Through the power of this inner Fire that portion of the Divine Word which is our soul is purified by three purification filters⁶⁵, which is holding to the awareness of the Self throughout the three states of consciousness of waking, dream and deep sleep. All this is accomplished naturally, foreknowing by the Heart⁶⁶, the intuition according to the light⁶⁷ as that Heart knows all. Thus the seer has made by the powers of the Self-Nature⁶⁸ the most invigorating ecstasy⁶⁹ the supreme delight. If there is any doubt to the inner meaning of some of these terms the last statement of this verse is unequivocal. Then he saw all around Heaven and Earth⁷⁰, then he saw all the world in his own Self⁷¹, which is the Vedic vision of the clarified light that is the home of the Fire.

9. He is a fountain with a hundred streams that is never being diminished, the Father, the illumined consciousness of all that must be said, the roaring delight in the bosom of the parents, him Heaven and Earth pervade whose Word is Truth.

He is a fountain with a hundred, that is with infinite streams which constitute all the worlds, an overflowing plenitude of Being that is never

Work is for the purification of the mind, not for the perception of Reality. The Realisation of Truth is brought about by discrimination and not in the least by ten millions of acts.

SANKARA

being diminished⁷²; in Truth to give is only to gain. He is the supreme Father who generates even his own parents, the illumined consciousness⁷³ of all that must be said⁷⁴, all the declarations of the Real. He is the child of all whom all the worlds attend to and delight in. For he is the Word of Truth⁷⁵ being both the Absolute, *Satya*, and its creative power, the Word, *Vak*, the Goddess. That Word of Truth can be no other than I am the Self, though it should be noted that the Vedic seers prefer a more indirect and poetic expression, some of which we could hardly imagine at first sight.

We see therefore in this Vedic hymn a great subtlety and orchestration of language towards the revelation of the Self. Its language is obscure but it reflects a primal power of expression, raw energy and direct experience before and beyond any mere rationalization, that give it a value of its own. Hopefully we can at this point begin to sense the great teaching that the Rig Veda is, how many of its hymns are equal, if not greater, than the Upanishads; how we have even here just scratched the surface of the language and teaching, which must contain many other great secrets befitting the spiritual teaching of the ancient age of light

⁶⁰Arkastridhatu

⁶⁹varsistam ratnam

⁶¹utamma rk

⁷⁰adid Dyava-prthivi paryapasyat

⁶²ajasro gharmo

⁷¹visvam bhuvanam Atmani apasyat

⁶³havir

⁷²aksiyamanam

⁶⁴Nama

⁷³vipascitam

⁶⁵tribhiv pavitrair

⁷⁴vaktvanam

⁶⁶prajanan Hrda

⁷⁵Satyavaccam

⁶⁷matim jyotir anu

⁶⁸Svadhahir (Svadhathubhir)

PAUL BRUNTON AND THE MAHARSHI

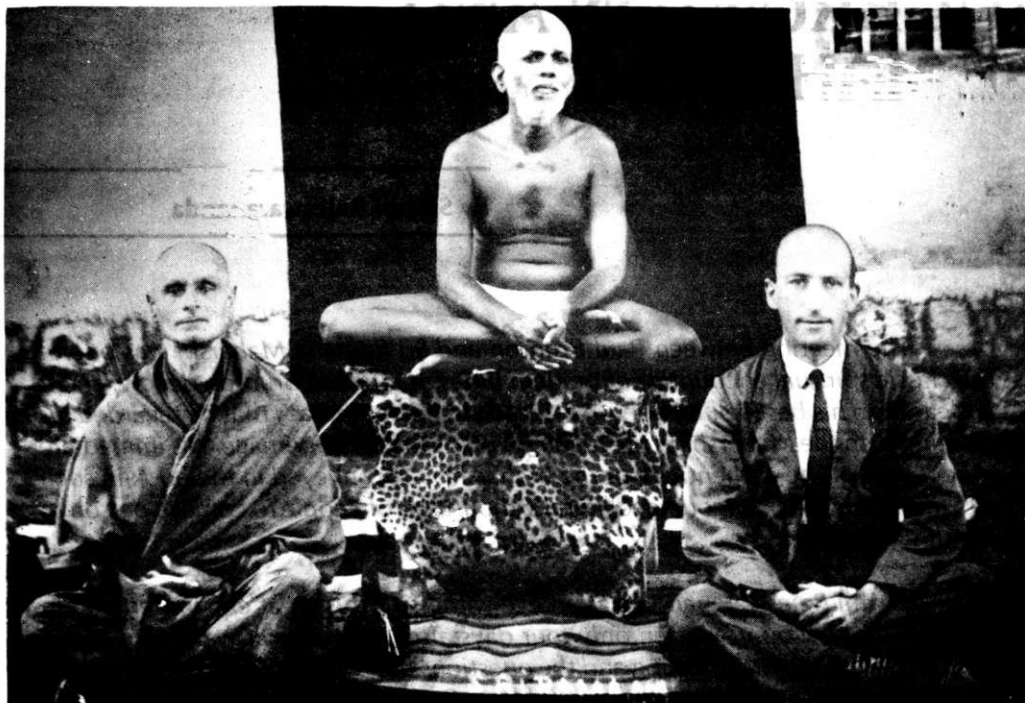
By Swami Rajeswarananda

The meeting between Paul Brunton and Sri Ramana Maharshi was one of the classic spiritual encounters of modern times. It affected Brunton deeply, and it is clear from his best-selling book, "A Search in Secret India", that he regarded his meeting with the Maharshi as the highlight of his Indian pilgrimage. His immediate acceptance of the authenticity of the Maharshi was conveyed in the book in such glowing terms that it encouraged literally thousands of people to come in person to see the Maharshi.

Swami Rajeswarananda was an eye-witness to this great encounter, and in the following account, written only four days after Brunton's arrival, he gives his own version of the first meeting and the questions that were asked. A large number of questions reported here were omitted from Brunton's account, and some of the questions which appear later in Brunton's book appear to have been asked at this first interview. However, on the whole, Brunton's version is amply corroborated by this previously unpublished account. (Editor)

IT was half past four in the evening and the disciples were all sitting before the Master in the Hall and were talking about a notification published in the dailies to the effect that Mr. Hurst (*Paul Brunton* was his pen name) and a Buddhist monk were intending to visit this Ashram. The clock struck five, and a man in European costume entered the Hall, carrying a plate of sweets. He was accompanied by a Buddhist monk. The visitors offered the sweets to the Master, and after making obeisance in the characteristic oriental manner, they both squatted on the floor before him. These were the visitors about whom the disciples had been talking a few minutes before. The one in the English costume was Mr. Raphael Hurst, a London journalist, who is now on a visit to India. He is keenly interested in the spiritual ideas of the east and thinks that by intelligent study and appreciation of these ideals, the cause

of co-operation between the east and the west may be vigorously promoted. He has now come to Ramanasramam after visiting several other ashrams in India. The monk who came along with him is an Irishman by birth. He was formerly a military officer, but now he is known as Swami Prajnananda, the founder of the English Ashram, Rangoon. Both the visitors sat spell-bound before the Master and there was a pin-drop silence in the Hall. The master was sitting with his characteristic inward sight and his face bespoke the radiance of his soul. The visitors sat in deep meditation experiencing the divine influence of the great Master. All forgot the consciousness of their bodily selves and of the material objects around. The calm was disturbed by the one who brought the visitors when he asked them if they would like to put any questions. The visitors did not seem to be in a mood to ask questions; it seemed that the mere presence of



Swami Prajnananda (left) and Paul Brunton (right). The Photo was taken during their visit in 1930.

the Master was transforming their souls. Thus an hour and half passed, and finally Mr. Hurst began by expressing the object of his visit. In a voice that revealed the intent earnestness of the heart and the keen longing of the soul, he said that he had come to India for spiritual enlightenment. "Not only for myself," said Mr. Hurst, "but many others in the west are longing for the Light from the east." When asked whether they had come to the east for a comparative study of religions, the Bhikshu replied: "No, we can have that better in Europe. We want to find Truth; we want light. Can we know Truth? Is it possible to get enlightenment at all?" The Master was still remaining in a God-conscious state, and as the visitors desired to take a walk outside, the discussions were brought to a close and all dispersed.

Early next morning, the visitors entered the Hall with a volley of questions which were put to the Master with an earnestness of the heart and a deep desire to know. The conversation re-

produced below is from rough notes taken on the spot.

The Bhikshu: We have travelled far and wide to get some enlightenment. How can we get it?

The Master: Through deep reflection and constant meditation.

Mr. Hurst: Many people in the west do meditate but they show no signs of progress.

The Master: How do you know that they do not make progress? Self-progression in the spiritual realm is not easily discernible.

Mr. Hurst: Some years ago I got some glimpses of the bliss, but in the years that followed I lost sight of the bliss, and then last year I got it again. Why was it so?

The Master: You lost sight of the bliss because your meditative attitude had not become natural. When you become habitually reflective, the enjoyment of spiritual beatitude becomes a matter of natural experience.

Mr. Hurst: Might it be due to the absence of a Guru?

The Master: Yes, but the Guru is within, and the Guru who is within is identical with your own Self.

Mr. Hurst: Which is the way to God Realisation?

The Master: Self enquiry, the solving of the great problem "Who am I?" by enquiry into the nature of one's own self.

The Bhikshu: The world is starting to degenerate; it is going down and down each day, spiritually, morally, intellectually, materially and in all other ways. Will a spiritual leader come to save it from chaos?

The Master: He will necessarily come. As the *Bhagavad Gita* says, whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, a great teacher will come to reinstate virtue. The world is neither too good nor too bad; it is a mixture of both good and bad. Unmixed happiness and unqualified sorrow will never be found.

The Bhikshu: Will he be born in the East or in the West? (The Master had a merry laugh over this question and left it unanswered.)

Mr. Hurst: Does the Maharshi know whether the Avatar is now in the physical body?

The Master: He might be.

Mr. Hurst: Will there be a world war preceeding the birth of an Avatar?

The Master: When you do not know properly about the present, why should you trouble yourself about the future? Take care of the present, the future will take care of itself.

Mr. Hurst: What is the best path that we can follow to attain Godhead?

The Master: Self-analysis leads to Self-Realisation.

Mr. Hurst: Is a Guru needed for spiritual progress?

The Master: Yes.

Mr. Hurst: Is it possible for a Guru to push the disciple up the spiritual path?

The Master: Yes.

Mr. Hurst: What are the conditions for discipleship?

Shortly before going to press we were informed that Dr. Paul Brunton died of a cerebral haemorrhage on July 27th. He was 83 and had spent the last few years of his life as a semi-secular in Switzerland. Dr. Brunton was responsible for bringing a whole generation of new devotees to Sri Bhagavan in the 1930s and 1940s primarily through his book "A Search in Secret India" but also through his later book, "The Secret Path" which outlined the Maharshi's technique of self-enquiry. Although Dr. Brunton has not visited Sri Ramanasramam for over forty years, he frequently sent spiritual seekers here and he occasionally corresponded with the Ashram. His respect and admiration for the Maharshi survived a life-time of dabbling in strange occult phenomena and his passing will be much regretted, particularly by an older generation of devotees who had their first glimpse of the Maharshi through Dr. Brunton's words.

The Master: An intense desire for God-Realisation, earnestness of heart and purity of mind.

Mr. Hurst: Is it necessary that one should surrender his life to the Guru?

The Master: Yes, He should surrender his all to the dispeller of his darkness. He should surrender the ego that binds man to this mundane earth. Giving up the body-consciousness is the true renunciation.

Mr. Hurst: Does a Guru want to take charge of the disciples' worldly affairs also?

The Master: Yes, all.

Mr. Hurst: Can he give the disciple the spiritual spark that he needs?

The Master: He can give him all that he needs. It can be well perceived through experience.

Mr. Hurst: Is it necessary to be in physical contact with the Guru, and if so, how long?

The Master: It all depends on the maturity of the mind. The gunpowder catches fire in an instant, while much time is needed to ignite coal.

Mr. Hurst: Is it possible to develop along the path of the spirit while leading a life of work?

The Master: There is no conflict between work and wisdom. On the other hand, selfless work leads to Self Knowledge.

Mr. Hurst: If a person is engaged in work, there will be little time left for him to meditate.

The Master: Setting time apart for meditation is only for spiritual novices. A man who is advanced always enjoys the divine beatitude, whether he is employed in work or not. While his hand is in society, he keeps his head cool in solitude.

The Bhikshu: Have you heard of Meher Baba?

The Master: Yes.

The Bhikshu: He says that he will be born as an Avatar in a few years. Is this true?

The Master: Everyone is an Avatar of God. "Behold ye, the Kingdom of God is within." Jesus, Mohammad, Buddha, Krishna, all are in you. One who knows the Truth sees everyone else as a manifestation of God. Those who have eyes can alone see; and to the pure, everything is pure.

The Bhikshu: Will the Maharshi express anything about Meher Baba?

The Master: What have I to say? This is a question that seekers after Truth need not consider. People that are on the lower rungs of the ladder waste their energies by being pre-occupied with such questions.

The Bhikshu: Will the world be rejuvenated?

The Master: There is one who governs the world, and it is his look out to look after the world. He who has given life to the world knows how to protect it also.

The Bhikshu: Does the world progress?

The Master: If we progress, the world progresses. As you are, so is the world. Without understanding the Self, what is the use of understanding the world? Without Self Knowledge, the knowledge of the world is of no use. Dive within and see the treasures that are locked up there. Cut open your heart and see the world through the eyes of your Supreme Self. Tear down the veils and you will see the divine majesty of your own Self. □

What constitutes self-realisation of Noble Wisdom is not comparable to the perceptions attained by the sense-mind, neither is it comparable to the cognition of the discriminating and intellectual mind. Both of these presuppose a difference between self and not-self and the knowledge so attained is characterised by individuality and generality. Self realisation is based on identity and oneness; there is nothing to be discriminated or predicated concerning it. But to enter into it, the Bodhisattva must be free from all presuppositions and attachments to things, ideas and selfness.

Lankavatara Sutra, Section VII

Time is an unwholesome physician, for it deceives the patient daily with the expectation of the future, and before expelling old pains, it adds new ones to the old and accumulates daily so many evils that through the fallacious hope of life it leads to death. If you want to live today, live for God in whom yesterday and tomorrow are naught but today.

**MARSILIO FICINO
(Christian Mystic)**

THE NATURE OF MAUNA AND LANGUAGE IN RAMANA MAHARSHI

By **Ralph M. Steinmann**

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I. INTRODUCTION

THE phenomenon of mauna in Ramana Maharshi¹ is a most complex one and can be discussed from different points of view. This stems from the variety in terms of different levels and ontological categories, in terms of function, notion and context where it is found in his teachings. As to classification in terms of ontological categories Ramana Maharshi distinguished in the advaitic sense of the term between real and unreal mauna². While the former, due to its advaitic or non-dual nature is but of one form, the latter is mentioned³ to be of three forms and levels, which are mauna of action or body, mauna of words or tongue and mauna of thoughts or mind. To these three forms of mauna, with which we are not primarily concerned here, correspond three equally dualistic forms of language, i.e. the language of body, word and thought respectively. It was to this language in thought and speech in particular that Ramana Maharshi referred when comparing mauna with language.

As mauna in its advaitic sense is, strictly speaking, not further classifiable, it is only for the sake of a didactic survey and interpretation on the level of dualistic understanding that here it is classified under two main-aspects and various sub-aspects, Real mauna, though being equated in Ramana Maharshi with the Self, the sole reality, it is referred to in his teachings in terms and contexts which indicate a twofold nature or quality. These may be termed dynamic and

static, absorbing and quiescent, or immanent and transcendent.

In its dynamic aspect, mauna is declared to be the most intense, the most potent form of activity possible. In terms of language it constitutes the primary and best means of communication, as shown by way of comparison and contrast to ordinary communication. In relation to the world and society the universal language of mauna benefits the whole of humanity. With regard to the *guru-shishya* relationship in particular, mauna constitutes the highest medium on the part of the guru to bestow *anugraha*, 'grace', in the form of *diksha* (initiation) and *upadesa* (teaching). In *sadhana*, mauna is referred to as discipline or means as well as its highest stage or end.

To mauna in its static, quiescent aspect, on the other hand, varied notions may be attributed, which describe its unparalleled, incommensurable state, transcendent, e.g. *turiya*, 'the fourth (transcendent State)', *atmasvarupa*, 'the nature of the Self' or *sat-cit-ananda*, 'Existence-awareness-bliss'.

This variety of aspects is found in various contexts. In support of his exposition of one or another aspect of mauna Ramana Maharshi

¹Abridged version of a paper which was read at the "International Seminar on the Teachings and Message of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi" in New Delhi, November 1980.

²*Ekatmapanchakam*, V.2. This verse is quoted at the end of the article.

³See fn. 2 and *Atmavidya* v. 4.

often used to refer to the Tamil poets Tayumanavar and Tattuvarayar, or illustrate it by some incident from the *puranas*. Most often, however, he did so by reference to Dakshinamurti, a benevolent form of Shiva teaching through *mauna*, and on a smaller scale, yet not of less import, to Arunachala. A few of these references to Dakshinamurti and Arunachala are most significant for the sage's identity and understanding. In fact each of the mentioned aspects of *mauna* referred to in his teachings, correspond with and are rooted in the sage's biography and way of life as much as saying and being in him prove to be identical.

In consideration of the aspects surveyed we will restrict ourselves here⁴, as far as possible, to *mauna* as language in comparison with common language.

If the term *mauna* has not been translated so far, it is so for want of an adequate expression to connote it in all its aspects. The term 'silence', by which it is commonly rendered, is almost exclusively interpreted in modern society in negative terms, in antithesis to articulated speech and audible sound, and therefore denotes in the light of Ramana Maharshi's teachings *mauna* in one of its unreal forms. By origin, however, the Sanskrit term *mauna* had a positive meaning denoting in the Rig-Veda (X.136.3) the muni's state of ecstasy. Besides the term *mauna*, which the sage mostly used when speaking of one or another of its aspects, he also employed the synonymous Tamil phrases *cumma viruttal* and *cumma virukkai*, 'being still' or 'stillness', as its equivalent.

Before interpreting the particular aspect of *mauna* as language in comparison to ordinary means of communication in Ramana Maharshi, I have to point to specific difficulties in dealing with his teachings, which hold true for any aspect⁵. One difficulty consists in the absence of any systematic teaching or treatise as well as of uniform terminology, for he neither claimed any system of philosophy for himself nor proclaimed himself to be anybody's guru. Another difficulty is connected with his being confronted with the task of expressing the advaitic truth in

terms of relative knowledge. It is further complicated by having to explain it to people thinking and communicating in such terms. With reference to seekers in general, the sage once put it thus⁶:

"They require words explaining the Truth, but the Truth is beyond words. It does not admit of explanation. All that can be done is to *indicate* it."

Elsewhere⁷ he refers to a twofold meaning of knowledge with regard to the level of language which is fundamental to the understanding of his teachings given through language. One is referred to by *vacyartha*, 'the utterable meaning', i.e. the literal meaning of words. It is opposed to *lakshyartha*, 'the meaning which is to be indicated', i.e. the esoteric meaning, which cannot be communicated as such by way of thoughts and words. Knowledge based on *vacyartha*, i.e. on the description of objects, is dualistic or relative in nature, for it is always knowledge of an object by a subject. Knowledge of *lakshyam*, 'the object aimed at' on the other hand, is referred to as *jnana* or 'absolute knowledge'. In the context of Ramana Maharshi's teachings *lakshyartha* is realised only by way of *atmajnana* or 'Self-awareness'. It is to these epistemological categories, the advaitic awareness of *lakshyartha* on one side and the dualistic perception of *vacyartha* on the other, that the ontological categories of real and unreal *mauna* apply. It then goes without saying that the 'indication' of advaitic truth in terms of relative knowledge by dualistic means of expression necessarily results in apparent contradictions and distortions of its *lakshyam* or aim, to say nothing of the amount of misunderstandings on the part of the common man, who interprets

⁴The remaining aspects are treated in the author's thesis on the *guru-shishya* relationship referring to Ramana Maharshi, which is under preparation.

⁵The question of authenticity of the sage's works and other sources available is treated in a bibliography of the works on and by Ramana Maharshi, which is also under preparation.

⁶T.M.P. Mahadevan, *Ramana Maharshi—The Sage of Arunachala*, Unwin Paperbacks (Mandala), London, 1977, p. III.

⁷*Talks With Sri Ramana Maharshi (Talks)*, Sri Ramanasramam (S.R.), 5th ed., 1972, p. 75 (no. 68).

this kind of indication from the point of view of relative knowledge. It was most probable for this reason that Ramana Maharshi in his conversations often used to assume the relative standpoint also, making mutual use of both points of view according to circumstances.

II. TEACHINGS

According to the possibilities of ordinary language and dualistic thinking, mauna as language is described in his teachings both in a positive and negative way, as well as by apparently contradictory phrases:

In a negative way it is referred to by the terms *maunabashai*, 'language of mauna' or 'mute language', by *amattirai corupam*, 'of syllable-free nature' and *maunakshara*, 'mute letter'⁸. In positive terms it is described as *eppolutum pecikkontiruttal*, 'ever-speaking', *nirantarap-peccu*, 'uninterrupted speech' or 'eternal speech' as *oyamarkoshippatu*, 'unceasing sound', as *colvanmai*, 'eloquence' and as *mikacciranta bashai*, 'best language'.⁹ Whereas the former notions obviously refer to mauna as language in contrast to the literary and spoken language, emphasizing its unarticulated, mute nature, the latter suggest it to be comparable to other means of communication. One may further interpret that the negative description refers to mauna from the relative, common point of view, which, by equating mauna with silence, describes it in only a negative way as if opposed to ordinary language and sound. The positive description, however, obviously not really understandable nor to be understood in the literal sense, indicates its esoteric connotation, which remains concealed in the former description. Ramana Maharshi used apparently contradictory expressions, for instance with reference to Arunachala and Dakshinamurti, indicating their particular way of teaching by the phrases *collatu coli*¹⁰ and *ceppatu ceppi*¹¹ respectively. These would be translated literally as 'saying without saying' and 'speaking without speaking' respectively. The twofold meaning of knowledge and the corresponding twofold interpretation

language admits, suggest that these phrases may be viewed as positive statements: Following our interpretation regarding the negative and positive description before, the positive terms *coli* and *ceppi* respectively are to be interpreted from the point of view of *lakshyartha* or *jnana*, indicating that 'saying' and 'speaking' respectively, which is an active expression of the Self. The negative terms *collatu* and *ceppatu* on the other hand are to be taken in their literal sense, qualifying the esoteric meaning of *coli* and *ceppi* from the relative point of view of *vacyartha*, as not to be equated with ordinary speech. Though actually not translatable without commentary the phrases then might be freely rendered by 'instructing in silence' and 'silent eloquence' according to their respective context.

In describing the way by which the language of mauna and the common means of communication by speech are related to one another, Ramana Maharshi gives a practical illustration:¹²

"Language is like the glow of the filament in the electric lamp; but Silence is like the current in the wire."

With regard to their respective power and efficiency, the simile indicates the relative and limited nature of language as compared to the infinitely and universally flowing energy, which is mauna. It also suggests the aspect of dissipating energy by speaking, particularly when we look at its effect, unlike mauna, the current in the wire, which remains unaffected and undiminished in its ever-flowing power, regardless of the amount of energy which is drawn from it, e.g. by speech; it is *purnam* or totality. The consuming nature of language in contrast to mauna moreover points to their different nature in terms of ontology: language as such exists but in and by mauna, its source of energy,

⁸Shri Ramana Nutrirattu, S.R., 2nd ed., 1934, p. 194 (Vicaracankirakam 28).

⁹Maharshi Vaymoli (M.V.), S.R., 3rd ed., 1949, p. 17.

¹⁰Arunachala-Ahshramanamalai, v. 36.

¹¹Ekatmapancakam v. 5, for quotation of which see fn. 32.

¹²"Who", Maha Yoga or the Upanishadic Lore, S.R., 6th ed., 1967, p. 126.

without which it has neither shape nor life; even its form and life seen apart from its source, have no reality whatsoever.

The purport of this simile coincides in substance with a few other accounts, which approach the subject from a more psychological and philosophical point of view. For easier reference it may be pointed out beforehand that the two ontological categories mentioned are referred to in the teachings also by *aham* and *vritti*, among other terms. *Aham*, 'I', designates the existential, real 'I' that is to say the Self or *atman*, whereas *vritti*, '(mental) modification', denotes the phenomenal world as mental states or *vrittis* in a collective sense. Ramana Maharshi mostly used to refer to *vritti* only in its primary form called *atma* or *aham-vritti*, 'Self or 'I'-modification', i.e. the subjective, individual, psychological 'I' or ego, because it is the *ahamvritti* which give rise to all other *vrittis*, the innumerable *vishayavrittis*, 'objective modifications'. He also denoted *ahamvritti* by the term *nan ennam*, 'I-thought', the very first thought, from which all other thoughts are derived.

To a questioner wondering why the sage did not preach the truth to people at large, he explained, among other things:¹³

"... how does speech arise? There is abstract Knowledge, whence arises the ego, which in turn gives rise to thought, and thought to the spoken word. So the word is the great-grandson of the original Source. If the word can produce effect, judge for yourself how much more powerful must be the Preaching through Silence!"

Here the relative value and power of the spoken language is attributed to its being a derivation of the ego or I-thought by way of a twofold mental modification or *vritti*. This aetiological explanation is corroborated and further elucidated in the light of Abhinavagupta's philosophy of *vak* or speech,¹⁴ which describes four levels of speech, as well as in the light of the four classical *avasthas* or states of the Mandukya Upanishad, to which they correspond. Ramana Maharshi made reference to both classifications

in connection with *mauna*, as well as other subjects. According to all three classifications, the original source in Ramana Maharshi, which is equated with *mauna*, truth and the Self, corresponds then to *para vak* of Abhinavagupta, 'the highest word' or silence, as well as to *turya-avastha*, 'the fourth (transcendent) state'. The ego or I-thought corresponds to *pashyanti vak*, 'the seeing word', the unarticulated word, and also to *sushupti-avastha*, 'the sleeping state'. The level of thoughts then corresponds to *madhyama vak*, the word which is formed in thought, and to *svapna-avastha*, 'the dreaming state'. The spoken word finally corresponds to *vaikhari vak*, the commonly articulated word, and to *jagrat-avastha*, 'the waking state'.

From this comparison it becomes clear that actually there are but three levels of speech: The I-thought gives rise to thoughts and these in turn to the spoken word, these latter two comprising articulated language. The fourth level of *para vak* is not comparable to any of these levels of speech. For the three forms of speech, which are only mental states and levels of graded consciousness, are each derived from the preceding state, unlike the fourth, which alone is autonomous and sovereign. Says Ramana Maharshi:¹⁵

"For vocal speech, organs of speech are necessary and they precede speech. But the other speech lies even beyond thought. It is in short transcendent speech or unspoken word, *para vak*."

Though of a transcendent, absolute nature, the state of *mauna* at the same time includes all other states and *vrittis*:¹⁶

¹³Maharshi's Gospel (M.G.), S.R., 8th ed., 1969, p. 15; also in: *Talks*, p. 244 (no. 285).

¹⁴The corresponding description and interpretation is based on: Baumer, Bettina, Die Unvermitteltheit der Höchsten Erfahrung bei Abhinavagupta, in: Oberhammer, Gerhard (ed.), *Transzendenzenerfahrung, Vollzugshorizont des Heils*, Wien, 1978, p. 70f.

¹⁵*Talks*, p. 75 (no. 68).

¹⁶A Devaraja Mudaliar, *Day By Day With Bhagavan*, S.R., 1968, p. 233.

"If we have real mauna, that state in which the mind is merged into its source and has no more separate existence, then all other kinds of mauna will come of their own accord, i.e. the mauna of words, of action and of the mind or *chitta*."

The dynamic aspect of mauna as language is, however, not fully understood by comparison to common language alone, i.e. without reference to mauna in its latent, static aspect. For this purpose reference may be made to the corresponding most categorical definitions in Ramana Maharshi's teachings. In 'Who am I?' it is declared:¹⁷

"The Self is that where there is absolutely no 'I' thought. That is called 'Silence'. The Self itself is the world; the Self itself is 'I'; the Self itself is God; all is Shiva, the Self."

Mauna is defined here as complete absence of the I-thought and therefore also of all thoughts, a characteristic which is more often expressed by the term *manonacam* or 'complete annihilation of the mind'. In this definition, obviously from the absolute point of view, mauna defining the state of Self and in turn being defined itself in negative terms, indicates the Reality by way of negation, unlike the Self, which stands for its positive aspect. In contrast to this definition it is stated in 'Maha Yoga':¹⁸

"Silence is the language of the Self, and it is the most perfect teaching."

Here on the other hand mauna is defined in positive terms, again in connection with the Self, as its expression and medium. Interpreted in the light of the twofold nature of mauna, the former definition refers to mauna in terms of its static or quiescent aspect as a *state*, whereas the latter defines it in terms of its active, dynamic aspect. In the former definition mauna is equated with *the Self*, whereas in the latter it is defined as *manifestation* and *medium* of the Self.

Elsewhere¹⁹ teaching in silence is understood as sending out *atmashakti*, 'the (dynamic) power (or energy) of the Self'. It may be due to this all-pervading, all-uniting aspect of the Self, i.e. of mauna, that it is referred to by Ramana Maharshi as language in spite of the misunderstandings implied in the term:

"When one remains without thinking one understands another by means of the universal of silence."²⁰

And elsewhere²¹ the sage says:

"In silence one is in intimate contact with the surroundings."

Reason and need for communication of thought by speech, on the other hand, was pointed out by him; when asked for the means to communicate our thoughts when mauna prevails he said:²²

"That becomes necessary if the sense of duality exists . . ."

Only when there is the ego or I-thought, which perceives the world as apart from itself, does the necessity for communication in terms of subject-object relationship arise. The I-thought is therefore declared to be "the root of all conversation".²³ The I-thought being its agent, language in speech and thought is but expression and means of communication of the ego, i.e. objective and mental in nature.

We then ascertain, in the light of Ramana Maharshi's teachings, that the dualistic nature of language is accessible to reason in accordance with its mental origin. Even on the level of the I-thought, corresponding to *pash-yanti vak*, there is thought, though single: 'I see'. Unlike that, real mauna, in both its immanent and transcendent aspects, by its very nature beyond *vritti* and duality, eludes any mental approach. For reason and intellect, *buddhi* and *manas* respectively, are mere modifications of the *ahamvritti* or ego, and therefore in their application limited to the sphere of *vritti*, i.e. to objectifiable entities.

¹⁷Who am I?, trsl. by T.M.P. Mahadevan, S.R., 11th ed., 1968, p.8.

¹⁸"Who", *op.cit.*, p. 126

¹⁹See the quotation referring to fn. 29.

²⁰Talks, p. 200 (no. 246).

²¹Talks, p. 75 (no. 68).

²²M.G., p. 15.

²³Talks, p. 200 (no. 246).

III. LIFE

Turning to Ramana Maharshi's *life* and its salient features relevant to our subject, we have to start with the cardinal event of his life, which took place at the age of sixteen. It was then, released by the acute fear and consequent experience of death, which turned his mind forever to its source, that the awareness of the Self, i.e. the state of *mauna*, became permanent, regardless of any mental or physical activity. With regard to the *jnani's* or *jivanmukta's* state, he explained much later, that in them there is mind too, yet by ever having its *lakshyam* or aim focussed on its source, the Self, this kind of mind is inoperative by itself and actually dead. The sage compared it with the skeleton of a burnt rope, with which nothing can be tied. In the light of this evidence, *his existence as an individual came to a final end in his sixteenth year*. That is to say that whatever activity has been attributed to him as individual thereafter has actually to be viewed as impersonal in character, as an expression of the universal Self; for such activity was only connected with the body-mind-complex, which he categorically rejected and disregarded in his teachings and way of life, and was without any bearing on the state with which he identified himself. It was *in consequence* of the realization of this state, that the youth, hitherto fully integrated into society, turned into a taciturn, introverted outsider, and, when a few weeks later he was drawn to Arunachala, into a silent ascetic in the true sense of the term. Apart from being a natural expression of his state of Self or *inner mauna*, the sage, as he explained later,²⁴ availed himself of the *outer practice* of *mauna* as a means of protection from the ever-increasing crowd as well as his own family, almost until the end of his stay at Virupaksha cave in 1916. Having actually no personal need for language in thought and speech, he gradually adjusted to the environment also in this respect, though outer silence remained predominant throughout his life. His *Upadesa* in speech and writing arose almost exclusively in response to outer requests, for he made it clear that there is no

real alternative to teaching by *mauna*. After repeatedly sitting in his silent presence a devotee asked him for his *anugraha*, (grace), to which the sage replied:²⁵

"I am always giving my *Anugraham*. If you can not apprehend it, what am I to do?"

As he, however, felt that other than the most advanced seekers "are not able to draw full inspiration from" teaching through *mauna*,²⁶ he generally complied with requests for oral instruction. Yet he often intertwined speech with silence, or rather silence with speech, as indicated by many dialogues, which suggest that he admitted conversation only to *dissolve* it in silence. Questioners were often rendered introverted and subsequently exposed to the sage's teaching through *mauna* by systematic counter-questioning with regard to their real identity. A rare incident²⁷ may illustrate the sage's teaching in silence. In 1924, which was many years after he had reassumed normal use of speech, on the occasion of Shivaratri, he was requested after dinner by one of the devotees gathered near his couch to explain the meaning of Shankara's Dakshinamurti-stotra. After a few minutes elapsed in silence the devotee repeated his request. The sage remained silent as before and for the rest of the night. So did the devotees, until the sage got up at dawn and went out with his *kamandalu* (water pot) for his usual morning walk. Twenty-three years later, when asked about the incident and its real meaning, he explicitly affirmed²⁸ that it had been a silent commentary on the stotra.

It was due to the concealed nature of this kind of communication that Ramana Maharshi openly replied to the questioner who asked

²⁴A. Devaraja Mudaliar, *op.cit.*, p. 32. See also: Sadhu Arunachala, *A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi*, S.R., 2nd ed., 1966, p. 16f.

²⁵B.V. Narasimha Swami, *Self-Realization*, S.R., 2nd ed., 1935, p. 251.

²⁶Mahadevan, *op. cit.*, p. 110f.

²⁷*The Mountain Path*, S.R., vol. IX, p. 129f.

²⁸Suri Nagamma, *Letters From Sri Ramanasramam*, S.R., 1975, p. 235f.

why he would not preach the truth to people at large²⁹:

"How do you know I am not doing it? Does preaching consist in mounting a platform and haranguing the people around? . . . it can really be done in Silence only. . . . Which is the better, to preach loudly without effect or to sit silently sending out Inner Force (*atmashakti*)?"

The answer points to his being active *in* silence, *in* keeping outer silence, as well as *by* silence, i.e. through the *atmashakti*, which is real or inner mauna in its dynamic, absorbing aspect.

Besides many indications, there are not very many explicit *autobiographical* statements to confirm his actual use of mauna for imparting *Upadesa*, like the just quoted ones, or for his identification with mauna, which we have inferred so far from his teachings and life. In 1947, when told of a broadcasting company's project to record his voice, Ramana Maharshi laughingly said:³⁰

"Oho! You don't say so! But my voice is Silence, isn't it? How can they record Silence? That which Is, is Silence. Who could record it?"

In outspoken opposition to the prevailing concepts about his personality, the sage pointed to his voice *being* mauna as well to his voice being an *expression* of mauna, of that mauna which he in turn declares to be 'that which Is', the sole Reality or Self. By *saying* so he made it clear that he identified himself with a kind of voice, which is neither the ordinary, recordable one nor the means of expression of thoughts, but also that the voice of mauna is *not* to be misunderstood as *incongruous* with ordinary speech.

With regard to his literary activity on the other hand we can refer to a detailed *autobiographical* account of 1946, which leaves no room for doubt that he never took any initiative in this respect.³¹

"Somehow it never occurs to me to write any book or compose poems. All the songs I have made were made at the request of some one or other in connection with some particular

event. . . . The only poems that came to me *spontaneously* and *compelled* me, as it were, to compose them, without any one urging me to do so, are the 'Eight Verses to Arunachala' and the 'Eleven Verses to Arunachala'. The first day the opening words of the 'Eleven Verses' suddenly came to me one morning, and *even if I tried to suppress them*, saying: 'What have I to do with these words?' they would not be suppressed till I composed a song beginning with them, and all the words flowed easily without any effort."

IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

From the point of view of Ramana Maharshi's teachings we then may sum up that the language of mauna is autonomous, absolute in nature and a direct expression of the Self through the *atma-shakti*, unlike common language, which is derived, relative in nature and the mediate expression and means of communication of the ego through thoughts. Compared to ordinary communication, the language of mauna excels it in every respect, especially so in origin, sovereignty, universality in time and space, in power, efficacy, eloquence and immediacy. It is only from the dualistic point of view mauna appears as if *incongruous* to common speech and vice versa.

From the point of view of the sage's life and *autobiographical* evidence, outer mauna appears as a spontaneous, natural expression of his 'Being mauna', in the absolute sense of the term. On the other hand, his use of language in speech and writing, in daily life and *upadesha*, was a *concession* to the level of understanding of his environment. It is only a practical illustration of his pertinent teaching, that, being a *master of mauna*, a *maunaguru* in the true, inner sense of the term, Ramana Maharshi at the same time proved to be a *master* over the use of speech, in conversation as well as by his distinguished poetry in four languages.

²⁹M.G., p. 15.

³⁰Suri Nagamma, *op. cit.*, p. 236.

³¹Devaraja Mudaliar, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

In the light of the extraordinary *identity of teaching and living*, of saying and being in Ramana Maharshi, as shown here with regard to the aspects of mauna and language, as well as in the light of his living teachings on these subjects, the conclusions concerning our epistemological question are quite far-reaching: For any facet of Ramana Maharshi's teachings or life, since they are mere 'indications' of a reality to be realised *beyond* the reach of mind, any approach to his teachings and person by way of intellect and reason is restricted by force to their unreal, unessential aspect. I therefore make no attempt to define the Reality indicated by the term mauna other than by itself, being

aware that here I have discussed the arrow yet not its *lakshyam* or the target it aims at.

The fifth verse of the *Ekatmapancakam*,³² the last stanza Ramana Maharshi composed in his life, provides both a summary and a conclusion to this paper:

"The Self alone, the Sole Reality, exists forever.

If of yore the First of Teachers³³

Revealed It through unbroken silence

Say who can reveal It in spoken words?" □

³²Five Hymns to Arunachala and Other Poems of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, trsl. by K. Swaminathan, New Delhi, 1977, p. 147.

³³viz. Dakshinamurti.

AN UNUSUAL VISIT TO THE ASHRAM

By B.M. Deo

In the early 1940s I was a devotee of Sri Narayan Maharaj of Kedgaon who lived about 40 miles from Poona. A fellow devotee of his was so much interested in Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi that he often used to read passage from Bhagavan's works to me, so that ultimately I became soaked in Bhagavan's personality and greatness. I voraciously read everything I could find about him, and I always felt very strongly that a time would come when I should be able to go to Tiruvannamalai and fall prostrate at Bhagavan's feet. Unfortunately the opportunity never presented itself, and one day in 1950 I heard the news that Bhagavan had passed away. My sorrow was intense, and the thought that I would never be able to see him on this earth oppressed me.

However, the compassion of the great is limitless, and that night, as I slept, a miracle took place. It was not a dream; Bhagavan, in his infinite mercy took me in my astral body and brought me to Tiruvannamalai. On my journey to the ashram, I observed several of the railway stations along the route, and when I reached Sri Ramanasramam I found the beloved devotees of the Maharshi stricken with grief. Knowing that he was dead, I felt that I would only find a corpse in the ashram, but to my intense surprise, I found him sitting in his characteristic position with his two hands resting on his knees. He looked at me, laughed, and then spoke to me in Marathi saying: "Those who understand me as dead and gone are mistaken. I am beyond birth and death."

I then went out into the open where he was to be buried. It was a square pit several feet deep and in the bottom of the pit a silk cloth was spread strewn with a layer of precious stones. Suddenly the whole scene vanished, and I found myself back on my bed in Poona.

After some days had elapsed, I talked about my visit to a friend of mine who had been in contact with Bhagavan for seven years. He had been present at the *Mahasamdh* of the great sage and faultlessly corroborated the facts I recounted to him. My friend was quite convinced that I had been present in person during the events I described. At the time, I could not satisfactorily explain to him how my knowledge had been acquired, for it was not until later that another friend of mine introduced me to the possibility that it was my "astral body" which had visited the ashram.

On Waking up

By

Wolter A. Keers

THOSE who, in religion as in philosophy, seek for a solution to their problems and for answers to their questions, usually start from a point that is overcrowded with pre-suppositions, even though they are not aware of it. We are often pre-occupied with X, Y and Z, seldom with A, B or C. And that is one reason why so few people find the Ultimate Solution.

This morning, I woke up at 6 o' clock.

Is there anyone who ever questions such a statement? Did I really wake up, and was it really six o' clock? Or seven, or eight?

Where was the 'I' that woke up, five minutes before waking up?

If we question our experience, we are bound to find that, in the case of this example, there was no 'I' at five to six. It is only *after waking up* that something appears, called 'I', and says that it is six o' clock and that it has woken up.

So, once the waking state has appeared, there is an 'I', and the same thing goes for the dream. In the waking state we note an 'I' saying that it is awake and active, or, in traditional terminology, that it is a 'doer and an enjoyer'. In the waking state there is a waking 'I', and in dream there is a dreamer; but there is no sleeper in deep sleep.

Let us suppose that the 24 hours that make up one of our days, are divided into 16 hours of waking state, six hours of dream state, and two hours of deep, dreamless sleep.

On the surface, these three sections may be called states. Talking to questioners, such great men as Sri Ramana Maharshi and Sri Shankaracharya spoke of three states. That is because

the Guru usually, if not always begins his explaining on the level where the questioner believes that he is. But if the Guru is an authentic Master, to him there are no states.

A state refers to a something in that state. H₂O is usually in a liquid state as water; it may be in a solid state as ice, and it may become a gas as vapour. But without the H₂O in this example, there can be no question of states.

In the waking state, there is an 'I' that considers itself to be awake. In the dream state there is an 'I' that we later call the dreamer. But, looking more closely, we find no person in deep sleep. So, on a deeper level, we find that deep sleep is not really a state. The 'casual body' that tradition attributes to deep sleep really refers to the waking state. For any kind of casuality depends on time, cause preceding effect, and in deep sleep we cannot discover even a trace of time or any other perception. Neither the body of the waking state, nor that of the dream state, appears in deep sleep.

Yet somehow we know that deep sleep is something very peaceful, and we take all kinds of precautions to prevent being disturbed whilst sleeping.

Since there is no time in deep sleep, we cannot remember it — better: thought, mind cannot remember it. Thought was not present in deep sleep, and memory has got nothing to get hold of. That is why we usually make an idea of deep sleep: a vague image of perhaps something like a dark, black grotto. When in day-time mental consciousness disappears for a while, we call it a *black-out*. In other words

we project upon this unknowable non-state an image fabricated in the waking state. (And when the word unknowable is used here, this means: unknowable for thought, for memory).

To mind, that which remains when mind itself is not there, must be nothing. But in deep sleep, there is not even the thought or feeling that other things are absent and that now there is nothingness.

Yet there is some kind of consciousness in deep sleep, otherwise it would be impossible to wake somebody up.

The only conclusion is, that in deep sleep, there is consciousness, but no 'I', no time, no name or form of any kind, no conditioning.

From this unconditioned consciousness springs the dream state and the waking state. At five minutes to six—no 'I', no thoughts, no feeling, the I-thought, I-as-something-conditioned, embodied. That is the moment when misery begins: the moment the feeling that I am this body occurs, the rest of the illusory world is spun out of it with lightning speed, and we begin our days as if it were a continuation of yesterday and the days, weeks and years before. As we have now projected a past and a future upon ourselves, we cannot but do so upon the things perceived by us as well.

So now we are awake. We get up, have a wash and then breakfast.

Sri Ramana Maharshi said that the notion I-am-the-body is like a string on which other illusions are strung like beads on a thread.

This very point, the idea that I woke up, is one of those beads.

In reality, no-one woke up.

What happened is, that, quite spontaneously, a state of consciousness appeared that we call the waking state, and that one of the multiple products of that state is an 'I' that is part of it.

Perhaps it is easier to see how this happens in the dream (dream-state, ultimately, is also not an apt word, as we shall see later on).

The Master Shen-tsu asked Shen-hui:
"You say that our original nature has the characteristics of the Absolute. In that case, it has no colour, blue, yellow or the like, that the eye can see. How then can one perceive one's Original Nature?" Shen-hui answered: **"Our Original Nature is void and still. If we have not experienced enlightenment erroneous ideas arise. But if we awaken to the erroneous nature of these ideas, both the awakening and the wrong ideas simultaneously vanish. That is what I mean by perceiving one's Original Nature."** Shen-tsu asked again: **"Despite the light that comes from the awakening, one is still on the plane of birth and destruction. Tell me by what method one can get clear of birth and destruction?"** Shen-hui answered: **"It is only because you put into play the ideas of birth and destruction that birth and destruction arise. Rid yourself of these ideas, and there will be no substance to which you can even distantly apply these names. When the light that comes from the awakening is quenched, we pass automatically into Non-being, and there is no question of birth or destruction."**

SHEN—HUI
(Zen Master)

If you would spend all your time—walking, standing, sitting, or lying down—learning to halt the concept-forming activities of your own mind, you could be sure of ultimately attaining the goal.

HUANG PO
(Chinese Zen Master)

When am I hunting lions in Africa or have a discussion with my late grandfather? Once the dream-state has appeared.

Before the dream, there is no dreamer, evidently. The dreamer, the I in the dream, is alive only as long as the dream lasts. When the dream-state disappears, gone also is the dreamer, and in deep sleep no trace is left, either of the dreamer or of the doer-and-enjoyer of the waking state. As Ashtavakra puts it: "You are that one pure consciousness. Nothing can leave a mark on you."

As I said: the word dream-state is not apt either, for there is no I in a particular state: that 'I' is a product of that state. Pots and pans in a dream are not dreaming: they are products of the dream. Exactly so are I-s in a dream not 'dreaming' not to be inset, but they are objects, produced by the dream, without any existence before or after the dream. So there is no 'I' in a waking state that produces dreams during the night, waking state and dream state appear and then produce different I-s.

It is reported that Zen Masters have asked disciples to find out what their face looked like before they were born. We may take the question a little nearer and wonder what we looked like before the waking state or the dream state appeared. What was there, this morning, at five to six?

Not nothing, even if this may be true, perfectly true, as far as thought and memory can tell us. But the waking state cannot be born out of really nothing.

Perhaps this is a key question: why does mind tend to say that there was nothing? What does this mean, and how it is possible to say that there was some period of time when there was nothing?

My Guru used to give us this example: Suppose I ask you to go to some particular deserted spot in the middle of the forest, and I ask you to come back and report to me whom you have seen. What will you say? That there was nobody.

The one Mind alone is the Buddha and there is no distinction between the Buddha and sentient beings, but that sentient beings are attached to forms and so seek externally for Buddhahood. By their very seeking they lose it, for that is using the Buddha to seek the Buddha and using mind to grasp Mind.

**HUANG PO
(Chinese Zen Master)**

But what does this statement mean? That there was nobody but you!

This examples requires deep reflection before it can be understood.

In deep sleep, we say that there was nothing! And we are quite sure of it! How can we know?

So, in deep sleep there is deep peace, which means *that we are there as deep peace*.

From that peace, quite spontaneously, arises the dream and waking states. But even they are no states, for there is no 'I' that is dressed in one of either states, like water may be "dressed" in hardness, liquidity or gaseousness, but the 'I's that appear from time to time in waking and dreaming are products of the dream and products of the waking.

These states are, as it were, added onto us: they come and go.

When they appear, the Absolute assumes its form of the effortless witness of all 'states'. When they have gone, we remain as deep peace, called *ananda*.

From it, no-one ever wakes up. The 'I' is merely an added apparition. Part of the dream.

We are the stuff that dreams are made of.¹

¹Apologies, Father William, for adopting your eternal words to my frivolous phrases. □

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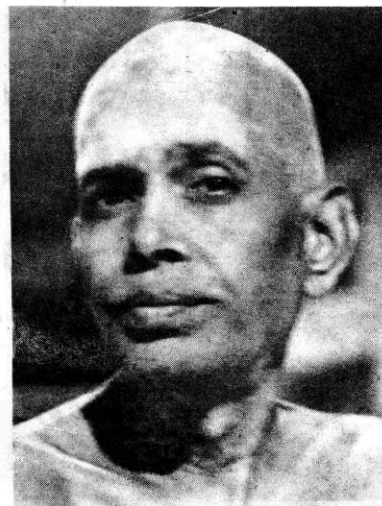
How I Came to Bhagavan

By
Chandra Pillai

I first went to India in November 1935 from the Fiji Islands in the South Pacific Ocean to study for a medical degree at Madras University. Unfortunately, after arriving in India, I was informed that the Madras University had ruled that I would have to take the whole Intermediate examination to qualify me for admission to a medical degree course. Because of the additional financial strain it would have placed on my father, I decided to abandon my plans to take a University degree and for the next two years, I travelled extensively in India. It was on my father's advice that I visited Tiruvannamalai, a place of holy pilgrimage.

It was a dry, hot and dusty day in June, 1937 when I caught a train from Tiruchirapalli town. I was bound for Tiruvannamalai and had to change trains at Villupuram Junction. I reached Tiruvannamalai in the middle of the afternoon. I hired a tonga to take me to Sri Ramana Ashram, nestling at the foot of the holy hill of Arunachala. It was my first visit to the abode of a living saint, sage and philosopher of his time—Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. I was naturally awe-stricken, nervous and apprehensive. My inner feelings were in a turmoil. I was tempted to order the tonga back and catch the next train to return to Tiruchi. By the time I had made up my mind, I had already reached my destination. It was too late to turn back.

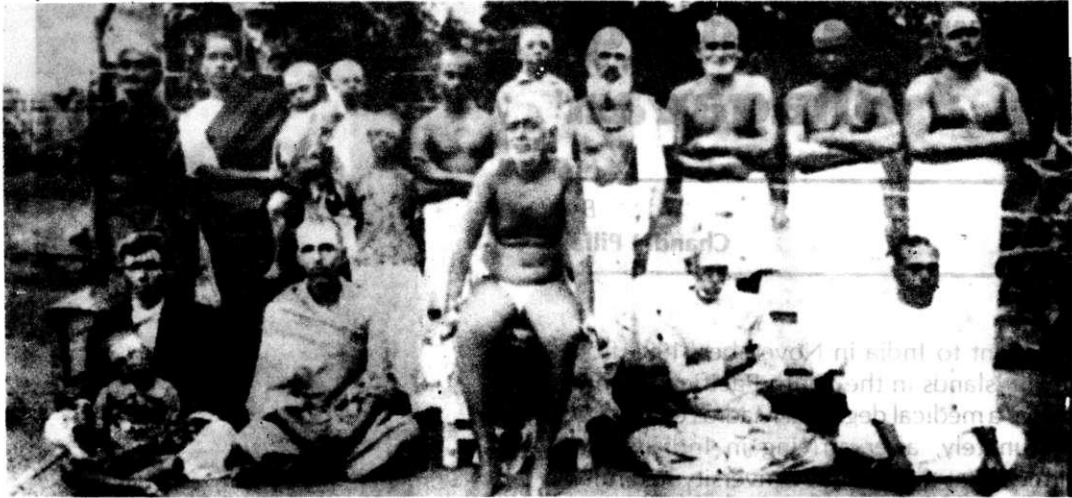
My first sight of the Ashram left an indelible impression on my memory. The peace, tranquility and sanctity of the location and its surroundings, the serenity and calm on the faces of the devotees and visitors alike, the simplicity of the buildings, the homely atmosphere, the cool, shady trees—these striking features and many



more contributed to the indescribable beauty of the place. The visitor who arrives there for the first time stands speechless in awe and wonder. No better spot could have been found on earth.

Having overcome my initial feeling of fear and apprehension, I sought the help of one of the devotees. To my pleasant surprise, I discovered later that he was none other than Sri Omandur Ramaswami Reddiar, ex-Chief Minister of Madras. He took me to the Ashram office and introduced me to Sri Niranjanananda Swami, Manager of the Ashram and younger brother of the Maharshi. I was not unexpected; my father had already written to the Ashram of my intended arrival and I was made welcome.

After a bath and some refreshments, one of the devotees was asked to escort me into the prayer hall where the Maharshi gave his daily *darshan*. My knees shook as I entered his holy presence. The hall was packed with devotees and visitors, all sitting cross-legged on the floor. Some were in deep meditation, others were chanting prayers, while the majority just sat and gazed starry-eyed at the benign countenance of the Maharshi. I dared not look but was thrilled when I heard a soft voice address me, "Chandra, so you have come. Why have you taken so long? Your father said you would be coming much earlier. We were expecting you." It was Maharshi speaking to me. I could not



A group photo taken during the author's father's visit to the Ashram. Sri T.A.J. Pillai is seated on the bottom left of the photo with Chandra, the author of this article, on his knee.

believe my ears. I looked up and saw his piercing eyes which held me spellbound for a few seconds. I prostrated myself, then sat down. My mind was in a whirl. My astonishment arose from the fact that, before I entered the hall, Maharshi had no means of knowing that I had arrived at the Ashram. No one had announced me. Even if he did know, I had not been identified to him. I was a complete stranger to him, yet he had recognised me and called me by name. This remains a mystery to me to this day.

I cannot forget those five memorable days I spent with the Maharshi. He exerted a beneficial influence on my state of mind. Sitting at the feet of the great master I enjoyed many hours of bliss during which a feeling of almost joyous well-being overcame me. I used to watch His godlike eyes everyday sipping a few drops of joy and hope from that peaceful face. When it was time for me to depart, indescribable feelings of the pain of separation overwhelmed me. I could never understand the secret of the mysterious bond of love that was so solidly established between me and one of the outstanding figures among India's living saints within such a short space of time. This spiritual kinship outlasted many a more idealistic and impetuous pact of friendship. Glory to the Bhagavan!

All partings in life are sad. But it was the sad-

dest of all when the time neared for me to bid farewell to the Maharshi. The Hall in the Ashram was full of devotees, disciples, important personalities and learned visitors from abroad. I felt a non-entity in that august assembly. I waited in a corner with bated breath for the final blessings of the Bhagavan. The Maharshi, who had the rare gift of entering into an affectionate relationship with everyone, had already known, possibly by his inexplicable spiritual insight, the stirrings of my veneration and love for him in my heart. To the surprise of all he called me near him and in the most touching words asked me, whether I had eaten my meal and with a sharp, penetrating look and all-conquering smile blessed me with these parting words: "Dear Chandra, now go in PEACE — remember me to your good father, T.A. Jambulingam Pillai." I was dissolved in Bhagavan's aura of benevolence. Words failed me. I shed tears of gratitude. It was a great experience and a delicious gift. That was a promise-filled moment. Even after nearly thirty years the memory of that single event comes back to me with all vividness. As I write these words I relive those happy memories with no less intensity and passion than I had experienced them in reality before. From then onwards Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was the guardian angel and guiding spirit of my destiny.

Before embarking for the Fiji Islands I stopped with a prominent official of a reputed bank in India, whom I had never met or known before. I was introduced to him by one of the Ashramites at Tiruvannamalai through correspondence. The moment I arrived in Calcutta, I was splendidly looked after by this kindly soul and his entire family. This was how the Grace of Bhagavan had started working. There was no doubt that I had come into the spiritual orbit of the *Jeevan-Muktha*.

When I was returning to Fiji I looked back on those years I had spent in far-off India. Sometimes ominous thoughts crossed my mind and I asked myself, "What have I achieved in India? Have I squandered time and money? Am I the prodigal son returning home? Will my dear father be cross with me?" But at the same time I was full of zest, hope and cheerfulness. The future held no fears and uncertainties for me. So like a knight-errant from the army of God, armed with the divine grace of Bhagavan, I met my father with supreme confidence and joy.

My father greeted me with solicitude and parental affection. His happiness was consummated when I presented to him a beautiful full-size photograph of Bhagavan with arms akimbo radiating goodwill, love and bliss. My father considered this gift from Bhagavan as a precious treasure because it was the same photograph which he had seen at the entrance of the Ashram book-store during his pilgrimage to Ramana Ashram years ago. My father was much fascinated by this particular life-like photograph of Bhagavan and had requested Swami Niranjanananda to give it to him as a token of the Maharshi's infinite love. Swami Niranjanananda could not immediately accede to his request since it was the photograph specially blessed by the sage himself to be installed at the book-store entrance. Swami Niranjanananda, therefore, approached Bhagavan and conveyed to him my father's wish. Without hesitation Bhagavan granted this request. Such was the cosmic love of this *Mahapurusha*. And I was the most fortunate instrument to carry this divine gift with me to

Fiji. What greater or more valuable thing in the world could I have taken with me? I may add that significantly enough this very same picture of Bhagavan has become the permanent possession of the human race. Even today, whenever and wherever Bhagavan's message is spread through books or periodicals or his birthday celebrated, it is this gracious picture of the Maharshi that occupies pride of place.

Though I had not succeeded in taking a university degree from India I was filled with the pride, god-intoxication and certainty of victory. I felt that I had transcended all worldly ambitions, university education and success in examinations, and had joined the elect circle of higher beings. Bhagavan had transformed me into a different being. I heard in the silence of my heart celestial music and saw the dancing image of the Lord of Arunachala. When my father saw me in this state of consciousness, he seemed totally paralyzed with surprise and joy. With tears in his eyes he welcomed me home with these comforting words:

"My beloved son, I feel a proud and happy man today. I am not at all sorry because you have come back without qualifying yourself for the medical profession. That is only an external and accidental event. God has a master plan for each and every soul and leads it along a path of His choosing. You may not know to minister to a diseased body. But Bhagavan has given you a panacea for the illnesses of the human mind. Glory to the Lord. I am blessed."

Exactly twenty five years later, my late wife Shanti and I revisited the Ashram and spent three blissful days there. The face of the Ashram had completely changed. There were two new shrines, a larger and more elaborate assembly hall, guest houses for foreign visitors and all modern facilities. Although Maharshi was no longer there and his mortal body not visible, his spiritual presence could be felt everywhere. Nothing else had changed. For the devotees, life continues as if Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is still with them. It will continue for generations to come. □

FUNDAMENTAL BUDDHISM

By
Garry Thomson

ALL religions are true insofar as they follow the core of those perennial teachings revealed by the Buddha, Sri Ramana Maharshi and many, many others. They become false or misleading to the extent that they depart from the universal message, as all religions inevitably do in time.

The Buddha, as he frequently affirmed, was but a new messenger carrying an age-old message. One of the first things to understand when approaching his teaching is that he imposed no beliefs or doctrines of any kind on his followers, warning them indeed to test, not only what others said but his own words as well. How test? By practice. The Buddha taught, not a doctrine but a practice by which anybody may "come and see for himself". It is a stunning revelation to discover, in one great teacher after another, that, whatever the words chosen, the practice reveals itself as universal in essence. From this point onwards a sturdy confidence grows in the seeker as he comes to find out that, to the mind that has become a little more lucid, words which previously seemed to mean little, now shine brightly.

Because the Buddha left no creed, one of the first difficulties facing a new Buddhist is how to answer the question everybody asks him: "What is Buddhism? What makes it different from other religions?" To answer in terms immediately understood by everybody is to answer superficially. A westerner might say that the Buddha taught *karma* and reincarnation, because they are novel in the West. But *karma* and reincarnation are a universal background to all Indian thought—or used to be. So an easterner would have a different approach, and might fasten on the Buddhist "doctrine" of *Anatta* (*An-Atman*

or no *Atman*). Surely the Buddha's teaching of *Anatta* could not be more opposed to the whole of the Vedanta tradition, including that taught by Sri Ramana Maharshi? We must explore this carefully. But first we should try quite briefly to put the Buddha's teaching into its contemporary setting.

The Buddha lived and taught in northern India, in an area roughly defined by the upper Ganges and its tributaries, about 2500 years ago. At that time orthodox religion was already in the hands of the brahmins, who were responsible for administering all ceremonies and rituals, and who were also in powerful positions as advisers to kings and governments. This official religion was by then old enough to be showing signs of rigidity. When ceremony and belief become rigid they become empty. The caste system, though not yet fully developed, was certainly an essential support for the brahmin's hereditary power.

The Buddha created a *Sangha*, a monastic order, upon to everybody irrespective of his caste, wherein the monk could quieten his mind and open himself to the universal by simple and direct practice, unobstructed by traditional ritual. Gods were not denied, but were certainly not regarded as of any great importance on the path to enlightenment, freedom or *nirvana*. This was a path which each must tread by his own effort.

Anatta was an essential part of the practice, and so it is important to understand what *Anatta* implies. We have already noted that it is not a doctrine. When asked "Is there an *Atman*?" the Buddha did the only thing possible to a

wise man : he refused to say yes or no. He said in effect : "If I tell you there is *no* Atman you will take me for a nihilist. If I tell you there *is* an Atman you will think I'm just giving you the brahminical doctrine again." He might well have added that this is a mystery too deep for the human mind to fathom. Instead of uselessly puzzling, one is to follow the *practice* of *Anatta*, as described by the Buddha in a famous *sutta*, the *Satipatthana Sutta (Sutra)*.

Therein he first talks of how to quieten the mind by watching the breathing without attempting to control it in any way. This simple act of attention is to be extended right through life so that one is, as far as possible, fully aware that one is walking, sitting, lying down—whatever the action of the body. Is this me? Is this mine? Next the practice turns to that feeling of attraction or repulsion that arises very quickly—quicker than thought—with every perception. Whatever we see we tend to label pleasant or unpleasant for "me", and then to act accordingly. Is this "me" that reacts real? What about the mood, of anger or happiness, energy or lethargy? Is there a separate angry "me"? Or am I observing anger? Finally the Buddha tells us to observe the objects of the mental world in the same way as we examine those of the external world. A quiet and open examination shows in every case that "I" am not here. I am not to be found in any observable substance or action of the body or the mind. So much can be examined in the stillness of meditation : that which "I", Atman am not. Then what or who am I? That great present-day Vedanta sage Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj answers in words the Buddha might have used : "You need not know what you are. Enough to know what you are not. What you are, you will never know, for every discovery reveals new dimensions to conquer." (*I am That*, Vol. II, p. 126) Until, as Ramana Maharshi has said, all thoughts are stilled in pure Consciousness.

The Buddha said his teaching was like a raft. A man travelling through dangerous country comes to a deep river. He sees that the country on the far side is good, but he cannot get across

Suppose a boat is crossing a river, and another boat, an empty one, is about to collide with it. Even an irritable man would not lose his temper. But suppose there was someone in the second boat. Then the occupant of the boat would shout to him to keep clear. And if he did not heed the first time, nor even when he called three times bad language would inevitably follow. In the first case there was no anger, in the second there was, because in the first case the boat was empty and in the second it was occupied. And so it is with man. If he could only pass empty through life, who would be able to injure him.

* * *

A drunken man who falls out of a cart, though he may suffer, does not die. His bones are the same as other people's, but he meets his accident in a different way. His spirit is in a condition of security. He is not conscious of riding in the cart, neither is he conscious of falling out of it. Ideas of life death fear etc. cannot penetrate his breast and so he does not suffer from contact with objective existence. If such security is to be got from wine, how much more is to be got from God?

**CHUANG TZU
(Taoist Sage)**

to it. There is no ford or bridge or boat. So he sets to work to build himself a raft from the materials at hand just to keep himself afloat. This raft is as simple as possible. There is nothing

superfluous and no decoration. It is just for crossing the river. And so he paddles across, using his hands. Once on the other side, should he keep his raft, perhaps walking off with it on the top of his head? No! He leaves it behind and walks on unburdened. "My teaching is a raft," said the Buddha. "Use it to get across the river of *samsara*. Once over, you will see and understand for yourself and so you can leave my teaching-raft behind. It will have served its purpose."

But his instructions, so simple in essence, are not easy to carry out. They are for the fully dedicated and not for the lazy. What about the man in the street? I think the Buddha expected only the few, those "with little dust in their eyes" to follow his teaching with all their heart. But he spoke often to ordinary people, telling them to lead honest, honorable lives, and to look up to those monks who had gone "from home to homelessness" in order that their whole life could be bent towards clarity, awareness and compassion, and that they in their turn might spread the message to others.

Unfortunately most people demand a good deal more than admonitions. They demand explanation and beliefs, the very things the Buddha warned us not to waste our time on. In a famous parable he told of the man shot by a poisoned arrow who, when his friends gathered round and sent for a doctor, said: "Stop, I won't have this arrow taken out until I know who shot it and all about him." He died of course. This was the Buddha's warning that first things must come first: "One thing I teach—suffering and the ending of suffering."

However, as has been said, people will cling to beliefs. And so, by the time of the great Buddhist King Asoka (d. 232 B.C.) the ordinary Buddhist would have said, if asked, that the purpose of Buddhism for priests was to attain release from the endless round of rebirth, and for himself it was to be reborn in happier circumstances. The overriding importance of the quiet mind open to the present moment became obscured by the hope of future benefits.

So it remains to this day for the most part, in most of the Buddhist world.

As well as beliefs, people need worship. The Buddha never denied the existence of deities and other supernatural beings of a more or less exalted nature. He never spoke of one God: this is a mystery altogether beyond words. In the spirit of his teaching no effigy was made of the Buddha for worship until some centuries after his death. But, as we know, things took their usual course, and now such images exist in all Buddhist countries. Indeed in Tibet before the Chinese invasion there was a complex pantheon of deities, though the more spiritual among the Tibetans would recognize the truth of John Blofeld's "wisdom to reconcile deep devotion to a deity with the knowledge that deities are not!" (*Compassion Yoga*, p. 27).

Almost every kind of religious belief is to be found somewhere under the umbrella of Buddhism. Behind so much detail the message of the *Satipatthana Sutta*, the raft and the poisoned arrow are often forgotten.

That simple teaching, bringing those who hear to inner stillness, has been repeated so many times since, in so many places. Yet it is still heard by so few. □

A CORRECTION

In our April issue we published two articles, one on the death experience of Sri Bhagavan and another in which he described some of the illnesses which afflicted him during his early days on the hill. In the introduction to both these articles we claimed that neither of them had ever been published before. Professor O. Ramachandriah has written to us to inform us that most of the material has already appeared in Krishna Bhikshu's Telugu biography, '*Ramana Leela*'. We were aware that the early editions of '*Ramana Leela*' depended heavily on B.V. Narasimha Swamy's biography '*Self-Realisation*', but we were not aware that Krishna Bhikshu had consulted the unpublished papers of B.V. Narasimha Swamy, which were the source of these two articles. We shall, therefore, retract our claim that this is the first time that this material has appeared in print and merely say that it is the first time that it has appeared in English. (Editor)

ULLADU NARPADU—KALIVENBA

Translated By **Sadhu Om**

Bhagavan Sri Ramana wrote many of His Tamil works, such as Ulladu Narpadu, Ekatma Panchakam, Devikalottaram, Atma Sakshatkara Prakaranam, Bhagavad Gita Saram, and Atma Bodham, in venba metre, a four line metre which contains four feet in each of the first three lines and three feet in the fourth line. Since in the days of Sri Bhagavan devotees used to do regular recitation (parayana) of His works in the Ashram, He Himself converted all the above-mentioned works (that is, all His works in venba metre except Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam) into kalivenba metre by lengthening the third foot and adding a fourth foot to the fourth line of each verse, thus linking it to the next verse and making it easy to remember the continuity while reciting. These works in kalivenba metre were published in the lifetime of Sri Bhagavan as small separate books or pamphlets, and they have now been collected together and are soon to be published by the Ashram in Tamil in a single volume entitled Kalivenba Nunmalai.

Since the portions that Sri Bhagavan thus added to the fourth line of each verse may contain one or more words, known as the 'link words', they not only facilitate recitation but also enrich the meaning of either the preceding or the following verse. A literal English rendering by Sri Sadhu Om of the Kalivenba form of Ulladu Narpadu (The Forty Verses on Reality) is given below, in which the link words are indicated in bold type.

*Payiram—Introductory Verses
(composed by Sri Muruganar)*

1. When Muruganar entreated, "Graciously reveal to us the nature of Reality and the means of attaining it so that we may be saved", the great Sri Ramana, being free from the delusion of this unreal world, joyously and authoritatively revealed *Ulladu Narpadu* (The Forty Verses on Reality).

2. Know that Sri Ramana, who had composed in *venba* metre those Forty Verses on Reality proclaiming that Reality is only one, linked them fittingly and thus converted them into one perfect *kalivenba*, so that those who say that Reality is not one but many, may understand (the oneness of Reality).

Mangalam—Benedictory Verses

1. Could there be the consciousness 'am'

(*chit*) if there did not exist the reality ('I', *sat*)? Since that reality exists in the heart, beyond thought, who can and how to meditate upon that reality, which is called the Heart? To abide in the Heart as it is (that is, without thought, as 'I am') is truly meditating (upon It). Know thus.

**Alternatively: Can there be a consciousness (chit) other than existence (sat) to meditate (upon existence)? . . . (Refer also to verse 23 of Upadesa Undiyar.)*

2. Mature souls who have an intense **inner** fear of death reach the Feet of the birthless and deathless Supreme Lord as their refuge. Through this surrender of theirs, they (the ego) are dead. Being now deathless, **the Eternal**, can they again have the thought of death?

Nul—Text

1. Because we (the ego), **whose nature is to see** (objects other than ourself), see the world,

the acceptance of a first principle having a power (*sakti*) which can make it appear as many, is unanimous. The picture of names and forms (the world which is seen), the seer, the screen and the light—all these are He (that first principle), who is Self.

2. All religions first postulate three principles, **the world, soul and God**. To say that one principle alone appears as the three principles, or that the three principles are always three principles is possible only so long as the ego (*ahankara*) exists. To abide in one's own state, 'I' (the ego) having been annihilated, **is** the highest.

3. "The world is real", "No, it is an unreal appearance"; "The world is sentient", "It is not"; "The world is happiness", "It is not" (in other words, "The world is *sat-chit-ananda*", "No, it is not")—what is the use of arguing thus **in vain**? That state in which, by giving up (knowing) the world and by knowing oneself, 'I' (the ego) is lost and thereby (the notions of) oneness and duality themselves are lost, is loved by all.

4. If oneself is a form **of flesh** (a body), the world and God will also be likewise (i.e. will also be forms); if oneself is not a form, who can see their forms, and how? Can the sight (the seen) be otherwise than the eye (the seer)? Verily, **Self is the Eye, the unlimited (and therefore formless) Eye.**

Note: Hence, being formless, Self can never see forms. On the other hand, since the ego or mind can come into existence only by identifying itself as a form (a body), it can only see forms and can never see Self, the formless Reality.

5. **If we scrutinize**, the body is a form composed of five sheaths. Therefore, the five sheaths are all included in the term 'body' (that is, any of the five sheaths may be denoted when we use the term 'body'). Does the world exist apart from the body? Say, is there anyone who without a body has seen a world?

6. The world **we see** is nothing other than the form of the five sense-knowledges (sight, sound, smell, taste and touch). Those five sense-knowledges are known through the five sense-

organs. Since the one mind perceives the world through the five sense-organs, say, can there be a world apart from the mind?

7. Although the world (the seen) **which is in front of us** and the mind (the seer) rise and set together, it is by the mind alone that the world shines. The Whole (*purnam*) which is the base for the world and the mind to rise from and set in, but which Itself shines without rising or setting—that alone **is** the Reality.

8. Whoever worships (the Supreme Reality) in whatever form giving it whatever name, that is the way to see that Reality in (that) name and form, **since it is possible** (to see It thus). Yet, knowing one's own truth in the truth of that Supreme Reality, subsiding (into It) and being one (with It), is the true seeing. Know thus.

9. The dyads (the pairs of opposites such as knowledge and ignorance, pleasure and pain, etc.) and the triads (the three factors of objective knowledge such as the knower, the knowing and the object known, the seer, the seeing and the object seen, etc.)—(which are unreal appearances like) **the blueness of the sky**—always depend for their existence upon the one (the ego or mind, the thought 'I am the body'). If looked within 'What is that one?' (in other words, 'Who am I, that ego?'), the dyads and triads will disappear (since their base, the ego, will be found to be non-existent). Only those who have thus seen (the non-existence of the ego) are the Seers of Truth. Hence they will not be deluded (by the unreal appearance of the dyads and triads). See thus.

10. Without ignorance (about objects), **which is dense and abundant like darkness**, knowledge (about objects) cannot exist, and without knowledge (about objects) that ignorance cannot exist. Only the knowledge which knows (the non-existence of) that self (the ego-self) which is the base (of knowledge and ignorance), (by enquiring) 'To whom are that knowledge and ignorance?' **is** (true) knowledge.

11. Knowing all else without knowing oneself (the ego), the knower **of the objects known**, is

nothing but ignorance; how instead can it be knowledge? When (the non-existence of) oneself (the knowing ego), who is the base of knowledge and ignorance, is known (through enquiry), both knowledge and ignorance will cease to exist.

12. That which is **completely** devoid of knowledge and ignorance (about objects) is (true) knowledge. That which knows (objects) cannot be true knowledge. Since Self shines without another to know or to be known by, It is the (true) knowledge; It is not a void (though devoid of both objective knowledge and ignorance). Know thus.

13. Self ('I am'), which is **clear** knowledge (*jnana*), alone is real. Knowledge of multiplicity is ignorance (*ajnana*). Even this ignorance, which is unreal, cannot exist apart from Self, which is knowledge. The numerous ornaments are unreal; say, do they exist apart from the gold, which is real?

14. Only if **that** first person (the ego or subject, 'I') **in the form 'I am the body'** exists, will the second and third persons (the objects, 'you', 'he', 'she', 'it', 'this', 'that', etc.) exist. If, by one's scrutinizing the truth of the first person, the first person is destroyed, the second and third persons will cease to exist and one's own nature which will then shine as one (and not as the three persons) will verily be the state of Self.*

*Alternatively: ... the second and third persons will cease to exist and the (real) first person which will then shine as the only one will indeed be Self, one's own state.

15. The past and future exist depending upon the present, **which one daily experiences**; they too, while occurring, were and will be the present. Therefore, (among the three times) the present alone exists. Trying to know the past and future without knowing the truth of the present (i.e. its non-existence) is like trying to count without (knowing the value of the unit) one.

16. On scrutiny, where is time and where is space, (where is anything) except 'we' (Self), **the clearly known existing Reality?** If we are

the body, we shall be involved in time and space; but are we the body? Since we are (the same) one now, then and ever, (the same) one in space here, there and everywhere, we, the timeless and spaceless 'we' (Self), alone are.

17. To those who have not known Self and to those who have known (Self), **this body of flesh** is 'I'; but to those who have not known Self, 'I' is limited to the measure of the body, whereas to those who have known Self within the body (i.e. In the lifetime of the body), 'I' shines as the limitless Self. Know that this indeed is the difference between these two.

18. To those who have not known (Self) and to those who have known (Self), the world **in front of us** is real; but to those who have not known (Self), the reality is limited to the measure of the world (i.e. to its names and forms), whereas to those who have known (Self), the reality shines devoid of (name and) form as the substratum of the world. Know that this is the difference between these two.

19. The argument as to which wins, fate or free-will, **which are different from each other**, is only for those who do not have knowledge of the root of fate and free-will (namely the ego, which is itself unreal). Those who have known (the non-existence of) the self (the ego-self), which is the one base of fate and free-will, have given them up (i.e. have given up both fate and free-will, and also the argument about them). Say, will they get entangled in them again?

20. One's seeing God without seeing oneself, the seer **of the objects seen**, is but seeing a mental image. He who, by losing the base (the ego), sees Self, the source of himself, alone truly sees God, because Self is not other than God.

21. If it be asked, "What is the truth behind the many scriptures which speak of 'oneself seeing oneself, **whom one thinks to be an individual soul**' and 'seeing God'?" (the reply will be) "Since oneself is one (and not two) and hence impossible to be seen, how is oneself to see oneself? And how to see God? To become a prey (to Him) is seeing (Him)"

Note : Many scriptures speak of 'Self-realization' and 'God-realization' as the goals to be attained. However, those who comment upon such scriptures often misunderstand and misinterpret these terms, thereby creating confusion in the minds of aspirants. For instance, those who comment upon *Kaivalya Navanitam* generally misinterpret verse 13 of chapter one by saying that one must first realize oneself (the individual soul) and then after that one must realize God. Therefore, in order to remove all the confusion that is created when the terms 'Self-realization' and 'God-realization' are thus misunderstood, Sri Bhagavan explains their true import in this verse by saying that the ego cannot realize itself, nor can it realize God; all that it can do is to become a prey to God, in other words, to be destroyed. Hence, what is called 'realization' or 'seeing' is in fact nothing but the destruction of the ego, and this alone is the real goal that aspirants should seek. Then in the next verse Sri Bhagavan teaches that the sole means to attain such realization is to turn the mind inwards (through the enquiry 'Who am I?') and thus drown it in God, who shines within the mind as the light of consciousness.

22. Except by turning the mind inwards and drowning it in the Lord, who shines within that mind (as its substratum) lending light to the mind, **which sees everything**, how is it possible for the mind to know (or to meditate upon) the Lord? Consider thus.

23. **Since it is insentient**, this body cannot (of its own accord) say 'I'. No one will say, "In sleep (where the body does not exist) I do not exist". After an 'I' rises (as 'I am the body'), all rises. Enquire with a keen mind 'Whence does this 'I' rise?' **When enquired thus, it will disappear** (being found to be non-existent).

Note : In this verse Sri Bhagavan speaks about three distinct things, namely (1) the body, which, being insentient, has no 'I'-consciousness, (2) the consciousness 'I' (Self) which exists even in sleep, where the body and all else do not exist, and (3) another 'I', after whose rising all else rises. Since this rising 'I' is clearly distinct from the body and from the 'I' which exists in sleep, Sri Bhagavan instructs us to enquire whence it rises, and in the link words He explains what will happen when we require thus. Then in the next two verses He reveals more about the nature of this rising 'I' and explains how it is distinct from the body and from Self, and yet at the same time assumes the properties of both. Being 'I'-consciousness, it is distinct from the body, which is insentient, and having the nature of rising and setting, it is distinct from Self, which neither rises nor sets. Nevertheless, it assumes the properties both of the body (namely rising and setting, being limited by time and space, etc.) and of Self (namely shining as 'I'). Thus this rising 'I', whose form is the feeling 'I

am the body', is described as a knot (*granthi*) between Self, which consciousness (*chit*) and the body, which is insentient (*jada*). This knot, which is known by various names such as mind, ego, individual soul and so on, can rise and endure only by grasping a body as 'I', and having grasped a body as 'I' it will wax more by feeding upon other forms, that is, by attending to second and third person objects. However, if it is sought for (attended to), it will take to flight, that is, it will be found to be non-existent. These properties of the ego are illustrated by the analogy given by Sri Bhagavan of the wayfarer who played a prominent part in a marriage celebration. Though he belonged neither to the bride's party nor to the bridegroom's, he pretended to each party that he was an important member of the other. Thus for several days he feasted well, until finally both the parties began to make enquiries about him, whereupon he took to flight.

24. (Though) this insentient body cannot say 'I', (and though) existence-consciousness (*sat-chit*, Self) does not rise (or set), between these two rises an 'I' limited to the measure of the body (the 'I am the body'-consciousness). Know that this is the knot between consciousness and the insentient (*chit-jada-granthi*), and also bondage (*bandha*), the individual soul (*jiva*), subtle body (*sukshma sarira*), ego (*ahankara*) this mundane state of activity (*samsara*) and mind (*manas*).

25. **What a wonder it is!** This ghostly ego which is devoid of form (i.e. which has no form of its own) comes into existence by grasping a form (a body); grasping a form, it endures; feeding upon forms (second and third person objects) which it grasps (through the five senses), it waxes more; leaving one form, it grasps another form; (but) when sought for, it takes to flight (i.e. it disappears, being found to be non-existent)! Know thus.

26. If the ego, **the root**, comes into existence, all else (the world, God, bondage and liberation, pain and pleasure, etc.) will come into existence. If the ego does not exist, all else will not exist. Verily, the ego is all! Hence, scrutinizing 'What is it?' (in other words, 'Who am I, this ego?') is indeed giving up all. Know thus.

Note : In the previous verse Sri Bhagavan said that the ego will take to flight (cease to exist) when it is enquired into, and in this verse He says that the ego is all. Hence, enquiring into the ego is truly renouncing all.

27. The state in which **this 'I'** (the ego), **which rises as if the first**, does not rise, is the state (indicated by the *mahavakya*) 'We are That'. Unless one scrutinizes the source (Self) whence 'I' rises, how to attain the loss of oneself, (the state) in which 'I' does not rise? And unless one attains (that non-rising of 'I'), say how to abide in one's own state, in which one is That?

Note: In this verse Sri Bhagavan emphatically asserts the truth that scrutinizing the source of the ego (in other words, attending to Self) is the sole means by which one can destroy the ego and thereby abide as Self, the Reality.

28. Just as one should dive in order to find something that has fallen into the water, so one should dive within with a keen (introverted) mind, (thus) controlling breath and speech, and how the rising-place of the ego, which rises **first**. Know thus.

29. **Discarding the body as if a corpse**, not uttering the word 'I' by mouth, but scrutinizing with the mind diving inwards, 'Whence does this 'I' rise?', alone is the path of knowledge (*jnana marga*). Other than this, meditating 'I am not this (body), I am That (*Brahman*)' may be (in some way) an aid, but can it itself be the enquiry (*vichara*)?

30. **Therefore**, when the mind reaches the Heart by scrutinizing within **in this manner**, 'Who am I?' he, 'I' (the ego or mind), bows its head in shame (i.e. it dies) and the One (the Reality) appears of its own accord as 'I-I' (I am I). Although it appears, it is not 'I' (the ego); it is the perfect Reality (*purna vastu*), the Reality which is Self.

31. (After that Reality) **has surged up and appeared** (as 'I-I'), what single thing remains for Him who thus enjoys the bliss of Self, which has risen on the destruction of himself (the ego), to do? Since He does not know anything other than Self, who can and how to conceive what His state is?

32. When the holy scriptures proclaim, "Thou art That, **which is declared to be the Supreme**", instead of one's knowing and being oneself (through the enquiry) 'What am I?', to meditate 'I am That (the Supreme) and not this (the

body, etc.)' is due to lack of strength (i.e. due to lack of maturity of mind). For That indeed always shines as oneself.

33. **Besides that**, it is a matter of ridicule to say either, "I have not realized myself", or, "I have realized myself". Why? Are there two selves, one self to become an object known (by the other)? For 'I am one' is the truth which is the experience of everyone.

34. Instead of knowing—with the mind merging within—the Reality, which ever exists as the nature of everyone **and which is devoid of even a single thought**, and instead of firmly abiding (as that Reality), to dispute thus, "It exists", "It does not exist", "It has form", "It is formless", "It is one", "It is two", "It is neither (one nor two)", is ignorance born of illusion (*maya*). **Give up** (all such disputes)!

35. To know and to be—**with the mind subsided**—the Reality which is ever-attained, is the (true) attainment (*siddhi*). All other *siddhis* are *siddhis* that are acquired in a dream; when one wakes up from sleep, will they be real? Will they who, by abiding in the true state, are rid of the false (state), be deluded (by *siddhis*)? Know **and be you** (the Reality)

Note: Our present life in this world, our so-called waking state, is truly nothing but a dream occurring in the long sleep of Self-forgetfulness. Therefore, any occult powers (*siddhis*) that we may acquire in this dream will be found to be unreal when, by abiding in the true state of Self-knowledge, we wake up from the false state, the sleep of Self-forgetfulness.

36. It is only if we think, **having illusion**, that we are the body, that meditating 'No (we are not the body), we are That (the Supreme)' may be a good aid for (reminding) us to abide as That. (However) since we are That, why should we for ever be meditating that we are That? Does (a man need to) meditate 'I am a man'?

37. Even the contention held that there is duality (*dvaita*) during practice (*sadhana*)—**which one attempts on account of ignorance**—and non-duality (*advaita*) after attainment, is not true. Who else is one but the tenth man*, both while one is anxiously searching (for the

tenth man) and when one finds oneself (to be the tenth man)?

*Refer to the parable of the tenth man told by Sri Bhagavan in *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book Two, chapter one.

38. If we are the doer of actions, **which are like seeds**, we shall have to experience the resulting fruit. But when, by enquiring 'Who is the doer of actions?' oneself* is known, the sense of doership will disappear and the three *karmas* (*agamyā, sanchita and prarabdha*) will also fall away (since the ego, the doer of the actions and the experiencer of their fruit, will no longer exist). **This indeed is** the state of liberation (*mukti*), which is eternal.

*oneself' may here be taken to mean either the ego or Self, for if the ego (the doer) is known it will be found to be non-existent, while if Self is known it will be found to be the sole existence. In either case, the sense of doership (and of experiencership) will necessarily cease to exist.

39. Only so long as one thinks **like a madman** 'I am a bound one', will thoughts of bondage and liberation remain. But when seeing oneself, 'Who is this bound one?' the eternally liberated and ever-attained Self alone will (be found to) exist. When the thought of bondage cannot remain, can the thought of liberation still remain?

40. If it is said, **according to the maturity of the mind**, that the liberation which is attained may be of three kinds, with form, without form, or with or without form, then I will say that liberation is (in truth only) the annihilation of the form of the ego which distinguishes (liberation) with form, without form, or with or without form. Know thus.

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A VISIT TO THE MAHARSHI

By
Swami Madhava Thirtha

IN the year 1944 Sri Manu Subedar invited me to accompany him to Sri Ramanasramam. We met in Bombay, but circumstances did not permit him to keep up the programme and therefore I decided to proceed by myself to the abode of the Sage of Arunachala, since I had already read and heard much about him.

I reached the Ashram on the 14th August. My first darshan of Sri Maharshi, which happened to be in the dining hall, was so entirely free from sanctimonious conventions that I was at once put at ease and in perfect tune with the Sage's surroundings. The Sage's benign look of welcome made me feel at home and conveyed to me a sense of ineffable happiness which remained with me throughout my stay at Sri Ramanasramam.

It has always been my habit to note down my impressions during such visits to important places and make a record of them for the benefit of other aspirants. The notes I took at Sri Ramanasramam formed the basis of my Gujarati book on Sri Ramana Maharshi, published at the instance of Sri Manu Subedar by the Sasthu Sahitya.¹

At an early stage of my visit I asked the Sage about the verse in Ramana Gita which he wrote himself (all the other verses were written by Ganapati Muni), which gives a synopsis of spiritual sadhana with a categorical declaration concerning the absolute identity of *Brahman* with the Self. The verse is as follows:

"In the interior of the cavity of the heart, the one Supreme Being shines as 'I-I', verily the *Atman*. Entering into the Heart with one-pointed mind either through self-enquiry, or by diving within, or by breath control, abide thou in *Atmanishta*."

On reading this description, a small doubt arose in me as to whether the Self or *Brahman* could reside in the Heart. I asked the Maharshi if, as the verse declares, a fixed place in the body is assigned to the Self, would it not predicate finitude to That which is infinite and all-pervading? If the Self is located in the Heart within the physical body, would not the categories of time and space, which are necessarily applicable to the physical body, apply also to the Self Absolute? Sri Maharshi graciously referred me to a very similar question put by Sri Rama to Sri Vasishtha. This is contained in the passage of Yoga Vasishtha Ch. V Canto 78, Verse 32. Vasishtha says that there are two kinds of hearts, the one which is all-pervading and which should be "accepted" and the other which is limited by time and which should be "rejected". The all-pervading Heart is within as well as without, and when the "I am the body" idea disappears, it is neither within nor without. That is the real Heart. In that, all things appear as images in a mirror. When the mind gets rid of all desires, the vital breath quietsens down, and the all-pervading Heart is experienced as such.

On a subsequent day I asked Sri Maharshi for his views on my book *Maya*, a copy of which I had sent to him some time ago. He said that he had seen the book and read it. He was gracious enough to point out a mistake in my treatment of the subject and how I based my arguments on a wrong presumption. He explained to me the correct view point at some length. My purpose in writing that book was to prove that the concept of *maya* as propounded by Sri Sankara is fully borne out by the modern theory of relativity. This theory, as is well known,

¹ Ramana Maharshi; Introduction and Teaching'

maintains that time and space are purely relative notions dependant entirely on the conditions governing the observer and the thing observed, and that there is no such thing as objective time and space. When two observers, taking different positions in space observe a particular event, they obtain different space-time measures which will conflict with each other and will necessarily vitiate any conclusion they may arrive at concerning the particular event. Sri Maharshi pointed out to me that the presumption of two observers being situated at two given points is itself an unwarranted one. He said that there cannot be more than one real observer. I at once realised my error in the treatment of the concept *maya*. I should have shown in my book how the presumption, taken for granted by all, that there can be two observers is itself subject to all the imperfections inherent in our perceptions as established by the theory of relativity. It was a revelation to me that Sri Maharshi could judge off-hand, as it were, such modern theories as that of relativity, proceeding entirely from the basis of his own experience of the Absolute.

One day during the second week of my stay, I was standing near the northern gate of the Ashram leading to the hill path. With me was a devotee who had returned the previous day from Sri Aurobindo Ashram. It was evening time, and Sri Maharshi came by that way after his usual evening stroll. I wanted to ask him about his theories about creation, and the presence of the devotee who had returned from Sri Aurobindo Ashram prompted me to refer to Sri Aurobindo's views on the subject. I may say here that I am well acquainted with Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, and during my earlier visits to him some twenty five years ago I used to discuss with him freely about these spiritual subjects. I mentioned Sri Aurobindo's views and incidentally referred to Sankara's views which relegate creation theories to the level of being mere aids to understanding for less advanced souls. I asked Sri Maharshi his opinion on the subject and he replied by quoting the following verse from the Karika of the Mandukya Upanishad.

"There is neither dissolution nor creation, neither destiny nor free will, neither path nor achievement; this is the final Truth." I concluded that the Maharshi attached no importance to any of the theories of creation or evolution. He invariably emphasises the oneness and unchangeability of the Self of Brahman, which is the one and only Reality, in which there can be no progress, and in which there is no duality or difference.

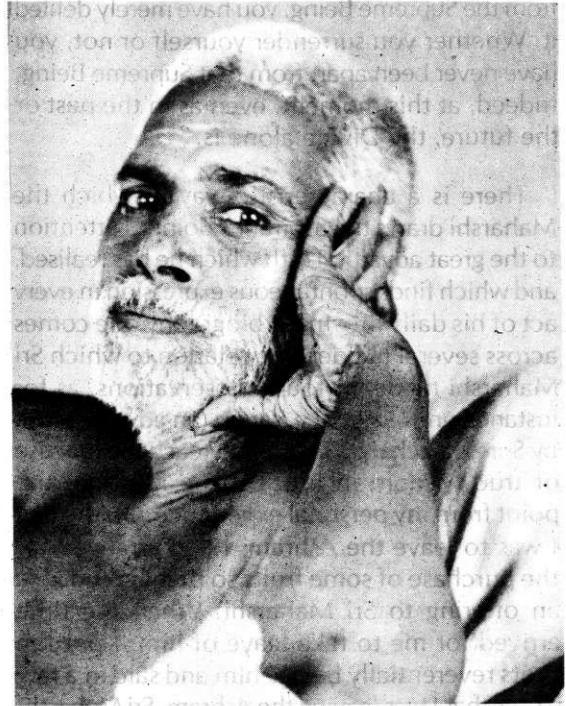
On another day I referred to some other aspects of Sri Aurobindo's philosophy, such as the theory of *Bheda-abheda* or unity in difference, the higher and lower natures in man, evolution in time, descent of the Spirit etc. With regard to the theory of *Bheda-abheda* Sri Maharshi remarked that where there is the least difference, there is also the ego, and if difference is conceded, unity would merely be a theoretical proposition. He said: "It is accepted on all sides that in the Absolute there can be no ego. The transition from the ego to the egoless state, if it can at all be called a transition, is not through change or evolution from lower to the higher nature in man, but through the total denial of the ego. It is like a man waking up from a dream; this transition from the dreaming state to the waking state cannot be called an evolution from a lower to a higher state, it is the total negation of the one state in the other."

Towards the end of my stay, I was privileged to listen to a profound discourse by the Maharshi on surrender. The question arose this way. Referring to the contradiction between the two lines of the first verse of the *Isavasyopanishad*, I asked Sri Maharshi for the correct interpretation. The first line of the verse declares that the one Supreme Being, Eternal and Immutable is the basis of everything changeable. In other words this line maintains that the mutable world is only a Divine manifestation. Nevertheless it is this world which the second line of the verse enjoins us to renounce in order to gain true happiness. The contradiction between the two lines is thus very obvious. If the world is nothing but the Divine, why should the aspirant be asked to renounce it? With these ideas in my

mind, I asked Sri Bhagavan how renunciation is at all possible if the entire manifested existence is nothing but the one Divine Substance? What is it that should be renounced? "One must renounce wrong knowledge" replied the Maharshi, "that anything but the Divine exists. That is one must give up the notion that there is any duality or multiplicity, whatever the manifested appearance may appear to be. The Supreme Being is the only Reality. It alone is and sustains the apparent multiplicity. Therefore renounce the knowledge that anything except the Divine exists. In other words, renounce the sense of duality or multiplicity."

At this point another visitor joined the discussion and said: "It is no doubt good that the Sastras should admonish the layman and make him give up the notion of duality, but how are we to reconcile this teaching of the Sastras with no less important injunction, namely, that of self surrender to the Divine? If there is no duality whatsoever, where is the necessity or possibility of self surrender? In view of Sri Maharshi's exposition of the inner meaning of the first verse of the Isavasyopanishad as inculcating the absolute oneness of the Reality, the visitor's question on self surrender to the Divine involving a duality roused the interest of the other visitors who eagerly awaited a reply. I was no exception. Not only was Sri Maharshi's reply very cogent, but also every word he spoke seemed to have a force that made disputation entirely out of place. At first he appeared to have completely ignored the visitor's question; for a minute or two he was silent, thus arousing even more our curiosity to know how he would tackle the question. Eventually he spoke and I shall try to give Sri Maharshi's reply briefly, and as far as possible, in his own words.

"We are familiar with a custom among some people in these parts based on deep sentiments of devotion to Lord Ganesha. Daily worship to his image, which is found installed in all the temples of the locality, is an indispensable ritual for these people before their daily meal. A certain poor traveller of this persuasion was passing through a sparsely inhabited country.



Not finding a temple of Ganesha anywhere nearby where he could perform his daily worship to the image before his mid-day meal, he resolved to make an idol of the deity out of the small quantity of jaggery (brown sugar) he was carrying with him for his meal. Having made the idol out of jaggery, he proceeded earnestly with the ritual. However, when it came to the point in the ceremony where he had to make a small food offering to the deity, he discovered that he had nothing left in his baggage since he had used all the jaggery he had to make the idol. But since no worship can be complete without the customary *naivedya* (food offering), the simple minded wayfarer pinched out a small bit of jaggery from the idol itself and offered the bit as *naivedya* to the deity. It did not occur to him that in the very act of pinching out a bit of jaggery he had defiled the very idol that he wanted to worship and had therefore made both the worship and the offering worthless. Your idea of self surrender is nothing better than the offering made by the wayfarer. By presuming your existence as something apart

from the Supreme Being, you have merely defiled it. Whether you surrender yourself or not, you have never been apart from that Supreme Being. Indeed, at this moment, even as in the past or the future, the Divine alone is."

There is a characteristic way in which the Maharshi draws the aspirant's pointed attention to the great advaitic Truth which he has realised, and which finds spontaneous expression in every act of his daily life. In his biography one comes across several incidents in relation to which Sri Maharshi made profound observations, as for instance on *Nishkamya Karma* (an advaitic work by Suresvaracharya) in order to teach the practise of true wisdom in life. Let me illustrate the point from my personal experience. On the day I was to leave the Ashram, I had arranged for the purchase of some fruits so that I could give an offering to Sri Maharshi. When the time arrived for me to take leave of him, I put the fruits reverentially before him and said in a few words that I was leaving the Ashram. Sri Maharshi smiled benignly and remarked with a twinkle in his eye: "So you are offering jaggery to Lord Ganesha." I understood that he was referring to the parable he had related the other day in answering the question on self surrender, and I realised how aptly he had found the occasion to drive home in a very practical way, the moral of the parable, that nothing exists outside the Self.

The following conversations were recorded by the author and they were later printed in the book which he mentioned in the third paragraph of his article.

Question. Can Sadhana of self-enquiry be carried on while remaining in the house or outside the house?

Answer. Are you in the house or is the house in you? Be where you are.

Question. Then I can remain in the house.

Answer. It does not mean that. What I mean is that you should abide in your *swarupa*. You are not in the house, but the house as well as the whole world is in you.

Question. Worries of worldly life trouble me much and I do not find happiness anywhere.

Answer. Do those worries trouble you in sleep?

Question. No.

Answer. Are you the same person as you were in sleep, or not?

Question. Yes.

Answer. So, it proves that worries do not belong to you. Those who believe the mind to be real will not be able to subdue it. In the state wherein the mind appears to be real, the thief cheats by putting on the dress of the policeman. Hence, we must know how to destroy the mind by knowing its real nature. People ask me as to how to control the mind. It is but a bundle of thoughts. How will the mind which is a collection of thoughts come under control by a thought of controlling it? Reach its source, therefore. Seek the *Atman*. All misery will come to an end if you introvert your mind. If you feel that *Jagat* (the world) is created by the imagination of the *Jiva*, then that imagination must be given up. If you think that God has created the *Jagat* (world), then surrender to Him all your responsibilities and leave the burden of the whole world to Him.

Question. Are the fruits of *Karmas* (actions) done in one birth to be undergone in the next birth or not?

Answer. Have you been born now? If really you have not been born now, then why think of the next birth? Truly, *Karmas* (actions) do not trouble us, it is only the sense of doership that does. The idea of doing the *Karmas* or leaving them is false. Think who is the doer of *Karma*.

Question. If sadhus mingle with people and reform them, it will be very good.

Answer. In the eye of the *jnani* there are no others so there is nothing like mingling with others for him.

Question. Should we not have patriotism and should we not serve our country?

Answer. First be what you are. Therein lies all truth and happiness. While trying to become someone else, the ego gets in. You think that the

world will be conquered by your power, but when you turn inwards towards the Self, you will know that a higher power is working everywhere.

Question. The Isopanishad says that whatever there is in the world is pervaded by God, and so one is asked to enjoy it by renunciation and not to cover anything. What is the meaning of renunciation here? If all is the form of God, what is to be abandoned?

Answer. It means that one should give up all except the knowledge that everything is *Iswara rupa* (the form of God). That is, one should give up ignorance or differentiation.¹

Question. What appears separate from us is called the world. When it does not appear separate it is called Brahman.

Answer. It is so.

Question. *Swagata bheda* (Self-differentiation) is accepted by some; i.e., just as there are leaves, flowers, fruits etc. on one tree, the world also abides in Brahman as *swagata bheda* (different selves). However, we do not find the original seed after a tree has grown from it. Similarly also, we cannot get God after the creation of the world.

Answer. The world is not created from Brahman in the same way that a tree grows from a seed. The power of the seed is seen in the form of the tree, but the form of the seed remains the same.

Question. Even so, there will be self-differentiation (*swagata bheda*).

Answer. Really there is no self-differentiation. All objects are in the seer. In a dream, just as all objects are in the seer, so in the waking state, state, all the objects are also in the seer. When the seer is found out, there will be nothing seen. In dreamless sleep there is no self-differentiation. If it is real, it must be felt in dreamless sleep also. □

¹This is probably the same question referred to in the author's narrative account. The narrative account is taken from a manuscript which the author submitted to the Ashram and the questions and answers are translated from his Gujarati book, "Ramana Maharshi, Introduction and teaching."

ON SELF KNOWLEDGE

Self knowledge is the shortest road to the knowledge of God. When 'Ali asked Mohammad: "What am I to do that I may not waste my time?" the prophet answered; "Learn to know yourself."

**Aziz ibn Muhammad al-Nasafi
(Sufi Saint)**

* * * * *

Who knoweth Him, knoweth himself, and is not afraid to die.

Atharva Veda X.8.44

* * * * *

I say no man knows God who knows not himself.

Eckhart (Christian Mystic)

* * * * *

To understand others is to have knowledge; to understand oneself is to be illumined.

Lao Tsu (Taoist Sage)

* * * * *

The soul which is attempting to rise to the height of knowledge must make self-knowledge its first and chief concern. The high peak of knowledge is perfect self-knowledge.

Richard of St Victor (Christian saint)

* * * * *

Jesus said: "Whoever knows the All but fails to know himself lacks everything."

**The Gospel according to Thomas,
Log. 67**

* * * * *

To understand everything except oneself is very comical.

**Kierkegaard
(Danish philosopher)**

SRI AUROBINDO'S INTEGRAL YOGA

By M.P. Pandit

Sri Aurobindo was a famous contemporary of Sri Ramana Maharshi who lived at Pondicherry, less than 100 miles from Sri Ramanasramam. Although his teachings were very different from the Maharshi's, the Maharshi always stressed the common feature of total surrender if devotees questioned him on the matter.

M.P. Pandit, a prolific writer on spiritual topics, has been residing at Sri Aurobindo Ashram for many years. He is an internationally acknowledged authority on yoga and tantra, and in the following article he has given us a succinct summary of the practical aspects of Sri Aurobindo's Teachings. (Editor)

THE Yoga developed by Sri Aurobindo under the lead of his inner Guide and on the basis of his realisations is termed integral for two reasons. It takes up the human individual in his entirety—in all his parts of being—for effecting a change from his human nature into a divine nature. It seeks to embrace the Divine Reality in all its aspects: transcendent, universal, individual; personal and impersonal; static and dynamic. It is integral in its scope and integral in its process. Further, it proceeds upon a continued integration of the individual, integration of each higher state as it develops with the rest of his being. It recognises that the individual does not live alone but in a collectivity of beings; and it seeks to relate the individual seeker with the environment all through. In a word it aims at building a complete, integrated person in whom nature and soul, man and God find their harmonised fulfilment.

Necessarily, it is primarily a yoga of consciousness. For consciousness is the key to life, to progress, to real change. The superficial, limited and fragmented consciousness in which one normally lives in this world is sought to be deepened, widened, heightened. While this process does not actually develop in successive steps but goes on simultaneously, for the purpose

of study it may be analysed in three broad movements.

This culturing of consciousness is facilitated by the fact that there are two systems organised in the human being, functioning at the same time: a series of concentric formations of consciousness with the soul at the centre; a series of vertical ascensions of consciousness rising from the material to the highest spiritual. Working with these two organisations, Nature in her evolution develops the emerging consciousness inward, outward and upward. This yoga seeks to expedite this process, intensify the pace and precipitate Nature towards a rapid fulfilment of her purpose. And that purpose is to arrive at a perfection of consciousness, a plenary manifestation of the Divine Reality, individually and collectively, a transformation of human life into a life divine.

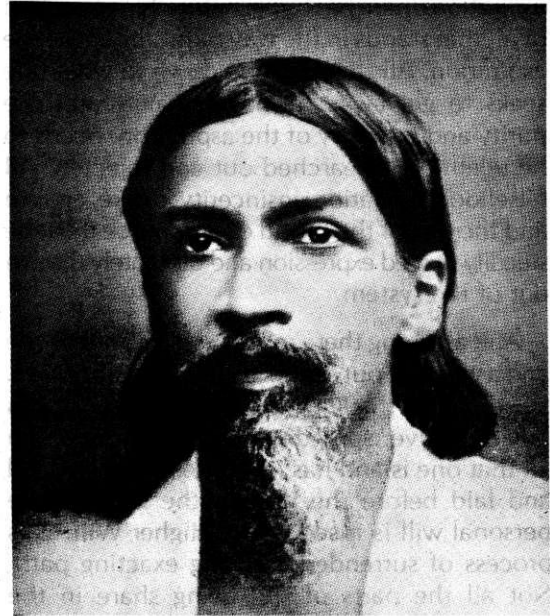
II

The effort is to reach levels of consciousness that are less and less subject to the limitations and deformations of nature in ignorance and more and more open to the action of the freedom and truth of the Divine Reality. In its essence consciousness is divine; as one approaches this essential basis, the character of cons-

consciousness reflects and shares more and more of the nature of the Reality. One may start at any point. He who feels more awake in the heart sets out in quest of the Indweller, the Divine Presence at the core of his being—be it as the Self or the individualised Purusha, the Lord and Master of one's nature. The way is to interiorise the awareness, draw the extrovert mind away from its preoccupations and turn it inward. Meditation, concentration, constant orientation of thought and feeling towards the divine Entity within are the means to achieve this purpose. As he practises this indrawing discipline—which develops into an all-time background to everyday life—he becomes gradually free from the compulsions of external nature and breathes the equanimity and autonomy of the Spirit. The culmination is a fixed status in the soul which is a portion of the Divine. This results in the realisation of the Individual Divine.

The aspirant may begin in his mind. He feels it easier to understand the nature of the problem and seek its solution with the aid of his mental faculties. He begins by quieting the mind and its restless activity, and opening to the Calm of the Spirit. Finding a plank of peace at the back of his active mind or above it, he learns to centre the mental energies around the main objective of fusing the mind with the Reality above it. He creates in himself a state of receptivity in which the higher quietude, calm, peace, light begin to form. This action of the Higher Consciousness is termed the descent which takes place in response to the call and the ascent of the human consciousness. There are several planes of consciousness above the mind which are thus opened up and their action naturalised in the being. They are: Higher Mind, Illumined Mind, Intuitive Mind, Overmind and the Truth-Mind. Each step of ascent-descent is followed by a process of integration in terms of the new consciousness realised. It is thus that the seeker grows from state to higher state of consciousness leading to the Divine Truth, the Divine Consciousness.

As part of this transmutation of the mind, there is an effortless widening of the consciousness. Each ingression of the higher grades of



Sri Aurobindo

Consciousness results in an enlargement of the mind and heart; this process leads to what is known as universalisation or cosmicisation. This is helped if there is already a fixed poise in the soul—the psychic being as it is called in this thought—for there is a spontaneous realisation of unity with All.

Whatever the line of discipline that is chosen—in keeping with one's nature—an enabling *sadhana* is necessary. The role of Grace, the help of the Guide, are of course recognised. But personal effort is a must and that consists of aspiration, rejection and surrender. Aspiration for the Divine, a ceaseless flaming of the mind, heart, life and body towards the Divine, is the first requirement. Dissatisfaction with things as they are is accompanied by an intense movement to acquire contact, relation and unity with the Divine and what expresses the Divine. This burning of aspiration is likened to the tongue of Agni in the Veda. It is not enough to have this aspiration generally. It must be built in all the movements of the being expressed in all activities of life.

Side by side with this positive movement of aspiration, there has to be, naturally, a rejection of all that stands in the way of fulfilment of the aspiration. All that ties one down to what one seeks to get away from, all that dilutes the purity and intensity of the aspiration, needs to be relentlessly searched out and rejected. All falsehood, deviation, insincerity, desire, egoism and the rest of the brood of Ignorance must be steadily denied expression and ultimately thrown out of the system.

And all along there must develop an attitude and a working out of the principle of surrender. Surrender to the Divine is not a passive status but an active, spreading movement in which all that one is and has is progressively attuned and laid before the Will of the Divine. The personal will is fused in the Higher Will. This process of surrender is a long exacting path. Not all the parts of the being share in the central aspiration. They may lag behind or protest

or non-cooperate. One has to work upon each part, as it is exposed in its willingness or otherwise, to fall in line with the aspiring soul.

It is not enough to have an attitude or a determination of surrender. It must be organised into an effective life-movement. And vigilance is needed to see that the surrender is kept an active, collaborative and joyous operation.

There is of course an insistence on the integration of the inner consciousness and the outer mode of life. Nature has to be recast into the mould of the soul. In this Yoga, this process is called psychicisation of nature. That is, all the activities of nature are organised around the psychic centre which is the fount of all purity, harmony, unity and love.

All is to be taken up, purified, elevated and transmuted into its divine term. All life becomes Yoga. □

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Garland of Guru's Sayings

By **Sri Muruganar**

Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

PART III EXPERIENCE OF REALITY

930

Only for those who fondly think
They know something the Vedas praise
The Lord as all-knowing. For those who have
Realized the truth, the Lord who is
The plenitude and wholeness of all being
"Knows" nothing.

931

"The *mukta* like the rest of us perceives
The world in all its vast variety
And yet he sees non-difference in it
So they say. This is not true.

932

Those who mistakenly perceive
This variegated universe believe
The *mukta* too is like them a perceiver;
But he is no perceiver.

(Compare verse 119 above which runs as follows:—

Ascribing individuality
To realized *muktas* is only
Learned folly. In the pure sky
Of being their separateness is but
The shadow cast by the separateness
Of lookers-on still bound.

The sage is the universal Being—Awareness and is not to
be identified with the body which perceives the world or
the witnessing mind which perceives the perceiver.)

933

Because one thinks that knowledge is
Knowledge of objects there in front,
One feels one knows so little. When
One quests within for the true Self
Knowledge is sublated
By whole, bright, pure Awareness.

934

The one Self we mistakenly perceive
As this vast multitudinous universe.

True Omniscience is direct experience
Of this non-dual Self and nothing else.

935

All things seen by us in a dream
Appear within our mind alone.
In Self-experience while awake
Seeing the unity of all
in oneself is true Omniscience.

936

When one shunning delights delusive,
Free from desire for worldly knowledge,
Destroys the difference between
Siva and *jiva*, there shines forth
In blissful brightness the true meaning
Of Siva-awareness.

937

The sage whose ego is extinct
Is freed from the three seeming states
Of waking, dreaming and deep sleep.
All that remains for such a sage
Is *turiya*, the most noble state
First, last and all-transcendent.

938

The one true state, pure Being—Awareness,
Is *turiya* which is all-transcending
And non-dual. The three transient
States are mere appearances
Whose sole ground is the Self.

939

If the three other states were real
Then indeed would pure Awareness,
Waking sleep, become the "Fourth"
Since in *turiya* those three states
Are seen as false appearances,
Turiya is alone the real
And all-transcendent state.

18.
(Counting waking, dreaming and deep sleep
as real, one speaks of Waking Sleep
As turiya, the Fourth. But this
Is the sole real state of being.
The three are false appearances.
The Fourth is also that beyond
The Fourth, turiyatita, —BHAGAVAN).

940
 This true and laudable Awareness,
 Turiya, may be aptly named
 Grand sleep that knows no waking,
 Or eternal wakefulness untouched
 By slippery sleep.

MOVEMENT AS SEPARATENESS

941
 With *vritti*¹ must come separateness.
 Brahman, Pure Being, the state transcendent,
 Is perfect stillness; and to call it
*Brahmakara-vritti*² is like calling
 A river in the ocean lost
 A river still.

(1. *Vritti*—movement giving rise to form and so a sense of separateness.

2. *Brahmakara Vritti*—movement in the form of Brahma).

SEVERANCE OF THE KNOT

942
 The severance of the Knot is proved
 By this one bright, clear mark: the mind
 In perfect equanimity,
 Lifted above the blows of pain
 And blandishments of pleasure, shines
 A limpid lake serene

943
 Unmindful of what is past and what
 Is yet to come, a mere spectator
 Of what goes on before one's eyes,
 One recognizes in such joy
 Serene the severance of the Knot.

944
 No matter what thoughts may arise
 None can exist without the Self.
 Knowing this for certain, the wise man

Is free for ever from the fear
 Of lapsing from his natural state
 Of oneness with the Self.

TRANSCENDENCE OF ACTION

945
 Whatever experiences are gained
 By anyone from any object
 Anywhere, what are they all,
 when truly understood, but fragments
 Of one sole self-experience?

946
 When the Self is realized, the mind
 Unable now to raise its head
 Is swept into and joins the Heart.
 Since thus the Self is pure Awareness
 Transcending thought, to call it "bliss"
 The opposite of pain, would be
 Wrong and quite misleading

947
 When through enquiry one has thus
 Known and enjoyed the Self as true
 Being transcending even bliss,
 How, for whose sake, and for what pleasure
 Can this great Master entertain
 The least distraction of desire?

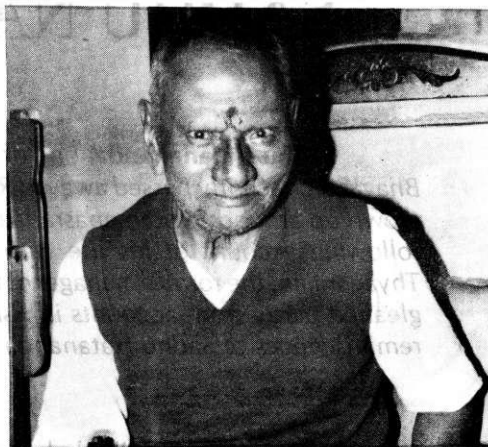
948
 No scriptural injunction binds
 The seer who has destroyed the dark
 Illusion of doership. And yet
 If jnanis too perform some acts
 Prescribed, they do so only
 To preserve the Vaidik dharma.

949
 Those who with ego extinct have gained
 Being transcending bliss have nothing
 Further to attain, no effort
 To be made, no deed to do.
 They have reached the other shore.

950
 When one abides in one's true state
 As effortless Eternal Goodness
 One has no further work to do;
 All deeds accomplished, such a one
 Enjoys the perfect peace of bliss.

HOMAGE TO SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ

A tribute by **V. Ganesan**,
our *Managing Editor*.



Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ'S message is simple and direct: 'You ARE the Self *here and now*. Stop imagining yourself to be 'this' or 'that'. Let go your attachment to the unreal.' This simplicity and directness in his teaching drew seekers from all parts of the world to his small upstairs room in a by-lane of Bombay. Wisdom poured from his very Presence and his elucidations and explanations on intricate spiritual problems had remarkable clarity, and his answers to questions went straight into the hearts of the listeners.

He was born in Bombay, on the auspicious day of Hanuman's Jayanthi, in March 1897, and he was named 'Maruthi'. His parents were deeply religious and brought up the son in a farm in a village called Kandalgoan, near Bombay. He moved to Bombay in 1918 and married Sumathi-bai in 1924; a son and three daughters were born to them. He opened a small 'beedi' shop in Bombay and expanded his business quickly. Yet, there was in him throughout, a growing hunger for Truth. He approached the great saint, Sri Siddharameshwar Maharaj and was initiated by him. To quote Maharaj Himself; "When I met my Guru he told me, 'You are not what you take yourself to be. Find out who you are. Watch the sense 'I AM', find your real self. . . 'I did as he told me. All my spare time I would spend looking at myself in silence. And what a difference it made, and how soon! It took me only three years to realize my true

nature." His house, which is also his Ashram in Khetwadi, Bombay, soon became a focal point for many earnest seekers after Truth. Maurice Frydman, a former resident of Sri Ramanasramam, performed a great service by bringing out the first volume of 'I AM THAT' in English. This book has made Sri Maharaj well-known to seekers all over the world, and the two volumes of 'I AM THAT' have now become treasured possessions of true seekers everywhere.

Sri Maharaj was ill and in the last months of his life the body experienced great pain, though he utterly disowned any pain for himself. In spite of a severe illness, he was very particular in giving audience to the questing seekers and he was meticulous with the timings of his routine. When devotees found his bodily health fast deteriorating and worriedly expressed their deep concern over his body, he was firm in his reaction to such sympathetic utterances: "You attach too much importance to the body. Is this all you have learned from me, after listening to my teachings for so many years? Am I this body?"

On Tuesday, September 8, 1981, at 7.30 p.m., Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj chose to drop his bodily existence; and merged with the Eternal, which he always was and *is*. As it is in the case of all *Mahatmas*, the end was very peaceful; Maharaj was fully conscious.

Sri Maharaj, the Wisdom, never dies but remains ever as a fresh Spring.... □

SADHU NATANANANDA

Sadhu Natanananda, one of the oldest and most respected devotees of Sri Bhagavan, recently passed away in Ramana Nagar, the small community which has grown up around Sri Ramanasramam. To mark his passing, we are presenting the following account of his life with Sri Bhagavan. It has been compiled by Sri Thyagarajan, the former manager of the Ashram book-depot. The material has been gleaned partly from accounts in Ashram publications and partly from the verbal reminiscences of Sadhu Natanananda himself. (Editor)

SRI Natesa Mudaliar, more familiarly known as Sadhu Natanananda, was by profession an elementary school teacher. In his youth he was inspired by Swami Vivekananda's lectures on *Jnana Yoga*, and he was eagerly looking for a Master of the calibre of Sri Ramakrishna, a teacher he greatly admired. In 1918, on his first visit to Skandashram, the Maharshi remained silent, and since Sadhu Natanananda did not presume to speak first, he came away disappointed. He visited the Maharshi a few more times, but on each occasion the Maharshi remained silent. Having failed to perceive the silent teachings of the Maharshi, he decided instead to go on pilgrimage to Kasi. He travelled on foot, and on the way at Sriperumpudur, a Vaishnava *sadhu* advised him to return to the presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The mysterious *sadhu* affirmed that the Maharshi alone would be his saviour, and he physically stopped Sadhu Natanananda and would not allow him to advance a step further on his proposed pilgrimage!

Sadhu Natanananda went back to his home and wrote a letter to the Maharshi praying for Grace and *Upadesa* (teaching). He waited for a month but no reply came. Undaunted, he wrote again a letter and sent it by registered post.

A few days after this, the Maharshi appeared in his dream and said: "Do not think constantly of me: you have first to secure the favour of God Maheshwara. First meditate on Him and

secure His grace and my help will follow as a matter of course." Sadhu Natanananda followed these instructions and meditated on the form of Siva, and after a few days he received an answer to his letter. "The Maharshi does not reply to letters; you can come and see him in person."

Following the instructions he had received in his dream, he went first to the Arunachaleswara temple to secure Maheshwara's Grace, and he then decided to meet the Maharshi the following day. A brahmin whom he met in the temple tried to dissuade him from going, but without success. On the other hand, Seshadri Swami, whom he met the next day, was far more encouraging, and gaining confidence from this interview, he proceeded up the hill to Skandashram. On this occasion he sat for five or six hours before the Maharshi, but no words passed between them. Disappointed, he left again, but thereafter each month he came back for a day and sat there, mutely imploring, but the Maharshi never spoke to him and he himself did not presume to speak first. After a full year had elapsed in this way, he could endure it no longer and at last he said: "I wish to learn and experience what your Grace is, as people differ in their accounts of it." Sri Bhagavan replied: "I am always giving my Grace. If you cannot apprehend it what am I to do?"

Even now he did not understand the silent *upadesa*, but after this exchange had taken

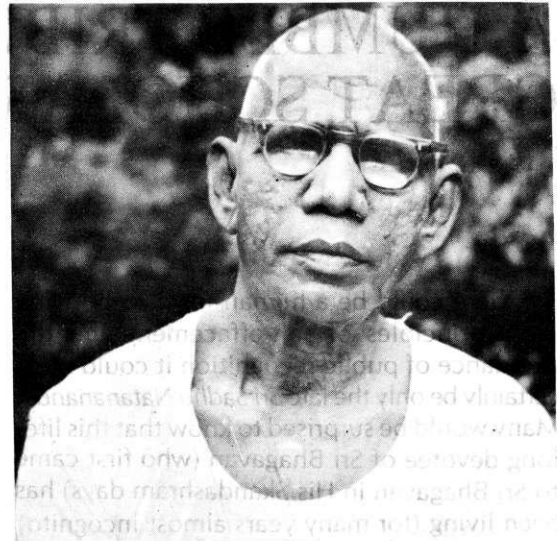
place he began to receive instructions from Sri Bhagavan in his dreams. After this his devotion developed and he began to compose Tamil poems in praise of Sri Bhagavan. After this he finally received, more fully than most others, the verbal instructions that he had so longed for, which are contained in the small booklet "*Spiritual Instruction*", first published as "*A Catechism of Instruction*."

The thirty two years contact which Sadhu Natanananda eventually had with the Maharshi brought many interesting experiences. One of the more interesting ones was related by him in the following terms :

"On one *Vyasapoornima* day, Ganapati Muni, Kapali Sastri, along with a group of Sanskrit scholars, were walking around the mountain, and they stepped off at the Ashram to pay their respects to the Maharshi. When they were seated in the Old Hall they started discussing philosophy in Sanskrit. I was listening to the discussion and I knew that they were discussing philosophy but I could not follow the meaning. Because of this my mind began to wander and I became quite agitated wondering when the day would dawn when I would have the experiences which they were talking about. My longing for these experiences was so intense that I lost all consciousness of the body. I was not sure how long I remained in that state, but suddenly a voice brought back my normal consciousness. All the others had left and only Bhagavan remained in the Hall.

"Why are you dejected?" said the voice, "If you were really unfit to realise the Self in this life then you could not have come to this place at all. That power which drew you here will make you realise the Self. If not today, it is bound to fulfil its commitment. There is no reason why you should feel dejected."

"It was these gracious words which brought me back to life, and peace entered my soul immediately."



Sadhu Natanananda

Sadhu Natanananda continued to stay in Ramana Nagar after Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana*. He preferred to remain silent and never engaged in idle conversation. Curious visitors and miracle-mongers would find him quite dumb and when scholars came for intellectual discussions or to test his knowledge, he would conceal his sharp intellect and pose as an ignorant layman. During this period he compiled a Tamil Book "*Ramana Darshanam*", which contains selected incidents from Bhagavan's life, some of his own experiences, and many comments on Bhagavan's teachings. He also wrote a commentary in Tamil on the "*Five Hymns to Arunachala*". Despite his reclusive habits, he always welcomed spiritual seekers who came for advice or for explanations on Bhagavan's teachings. He restricted his activities to the compound in which he lived; his rare visits to the Ashram were usually in response to requests from the Ashram President who wanted him to attend special functions.

His passing has left an irreplaceable gap in the ranks of that small body of devotees who have moved intimately with Sri Bhagavan and who have fully absorbed the import of His teachings. □

A HUMBLE TRIBUTE TO A GREAT SCHOLAR - DEVOTEE

By **V. Ganesan** (Managing Editor)

If there could be a human form embodying the principles of self-effacement and the avoidance of public-recognition it could most certainly be only the late *Sri Sadhu Natanananda*. Many would be surprised to know that this life-long devotee of Sri Bhagavan (who first came to Sri Bhagavan in His Skandashram days) has been living (for many years almost incognito) in a cottage opposite to and very near the Ashram. Only very recently I started taking staunch devotees to Sri Sadhu Natanananda and none ever returned empty-handed, so full were they spiritually in their hearts after meeting him.

In 1978 I took such a group of earnest seekers and introduced them to him. They requested Sri Natanananda to give them some spiritual instructions regarding the path of Sri Ramana. The following are a few of the gems that fell from his lips that day:

"To have come to Sri Bhagavan is proof enough that one is positively going to end the cycle of births and deaths in this life itself."

"If one swerves from *Atma vichara*, one gets engrossed in *loka vichara*. *Atma vichara* needs strenuous effort and the moment one swerves from it one gets drowned in the *loka vichara*. It is like this: to have light alone one has to make the effort of lighting a lamp—to have darkness no effort is necessary! The absence of light is darkness."

"The spiritual aspirant flies with the two wings of *viveka* and *vairagya*. With one wing alone one cannot fly. To be aware of one's *vasanas* (limitations) is *viveka* and to get rid of them by constant enquiry 'to whom are the limitations' (*vasanas*) is *vairagya*. Thus *Viveka* reinforced by *vairagya* alone can lead

one on to the Truth. Watchful effort with total dedication (attention) is essential."

"With other *sadhanas*, like the devotional approach, one can progress steadily and take another birth to a better life. But, why postpone the realisation? When one knows fully that even this body is not one's own and that in fact one has not taken a body at all, where is the question of next birth. To whom?"

It has been my great fortune to have had contact and association with many senior Ramana-devotees, few of whom are now still alive. Sri Sadhu Natanananda must be ranked alongside the greatest of those devotees such as Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni, Muruganar, Lakshmana Sarma and Arthur Osborne. His devotion to Bhagavan was total and complete.

He wrote hundreds of verses on Sri Bhagavan and some prose works also. Immediately after completing them, he would pass them on to the Ashram and subsequently he would never once enquire whether they had been printed or not. He once told me: "Ganesan, you will not find even a scrap of paper with my writing on Sri Bhagavan in my room. The moment I write on my Master, I dedicate it to Him in my heart and pass it on to the Ashram, since I feel from that very minute it becomes the property of the Ashram!" I was amazed at this unique mode of total surrender as I have read that '*sastra vasana*' (attachment to one's writing) is the strongest and last to leave a learned man.

I should like to place on record my respect for and my obeisance to this most illustrious of devotees. May this '*Ramana Sevakan*'—servant of Ramana—as he is known among the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, live long in the hearts of Ramana-*bhaktas*! □

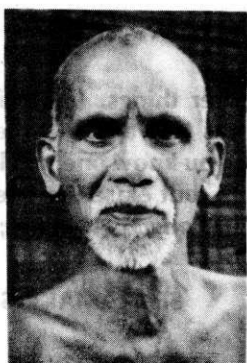
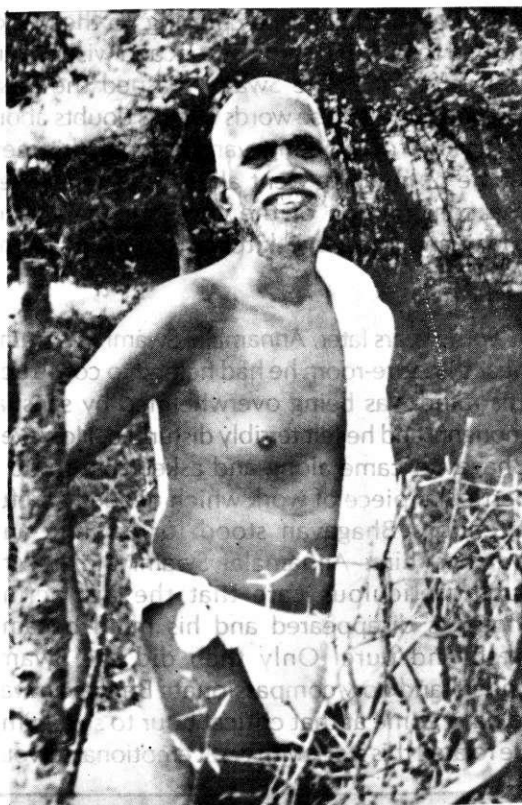
Introducing....

... Sri Annamalai Swami

SRI Annamalai Swami is one of the senior-most devotees of Sri Bhagavan who is still living among us; he came to Sri Ramanasramam as a boy in 1928, and with a few minor interruptions, he has been here ever since.

Even during his childhood he was deeply interested in God and he loved the company of *sadhus*. One of the *sadhus* whom he met gave him a copy of *Upadesa Saram* and Annamalai Swami was so impressed by a photo of Bhagavan in the book that he left the next day to come to the Ashram.

When he arrived at the Ashram, he went straight to the Meditation Hall, sat before Bhagavan, and felt a great peace which he had never experienced before. He decided to stay at the Ashram, and since he was a mason by profession, he found himself supervising the building construction. However, this facet of his life disturbed him. He felt that he had come to Sri Bhagavan's presence to meditate and not to work! One night, without telling anyone, he left the Ashram on foot, and by the following



Sri Annamalai Swami

morning he had reached Polur, a village twenty miles to the north of Tiruvannamalai. The exertions of the previous night left him very hungry, but when he tried to beg for food, he was refused everywhere he went. After these unsuccessful attempts were concluded, he sat down under a tree to contemplate his future. He decided to return to the Ashram, and almost immediately after this decision had been reached, a hotel owner invited him to lunch and even gave him the money to return to Tiruvannamalai. When he returned to the Ashram, Bhagavan

gazed at him intently and Annamalai Swami felt Him silently conveying the question "Where could you go?" He sat before Bhagavan again and felt a deep peace entering his heart. From that day onwards his devotion to Bhagavan has been complete and unswerving.

Annamalai Swami returned to his work in the Ashram, and soon after, when he was constructing the *samadhi* shrine of Valli the deer, Bhagavan, who was helping him by picking up the bricks, turned to him and said: "Work and wisdom are not different." The Swami grasped the great import behind these words and his doubts about the value of working vanished. In this new frame of mind he went ahead and supervised the construction of the cow-shed, the store-room and the huge kitchen buildings at the Ashram.

Some years later, Annamalai Swami was sitting near the store-room he had helped to construct. His mind was being overwhelmed by sensual thoughts and he felt terribly disturbed. However, Bhagavan came along and asked him to do a particular piece of work which needed careful attention. Bhagavan stood for a while and watched him. Annamalai Swami did it with such meticulous care that the distracting thoughts disappeared and his mind became fresh and pure. Only then did the Swami understand how compassionate Bhagavan was to have come at that critical hour to save him! He related this story with great emotional fervour

and said that Bhagavan in his own inimitable way took intimate care of all devotees who had completely surrendered to Him.

On the another occasion the Swami was cementing the floor below a tap. After the work was over, he stood up and the metal tap struck his shaven head so hard that a big lump immediately came up. The Swami was temporarily stunned by the blow, but Bhagavan, who happened to be passing by, applied an ointment gently on the lump and rubbed the affected part for a few minutes. The Swami was struck by the intense motherly affection of Bhagavan and tears rolled down his cheeks!

In 1938, the Swami left the Ashram and moved to Palakothu, the *sadhu*-settlement just outside the Ashram, and dedicated himself full-time to contemplation. In those days Bhagavan passed through Palakothu every day on his afternoon walk, and Annamalai Swami would wait eagerly for Him in the hope of having a few minutes conversation. The conversations between them were recorded by the Swami in his diary, and a portion of them were included in "Talks" (pp 511-15, 519-20, 555). Some of the others were published in the October 1979 issue of "The Mountain Path" (pp. 220-222).

Today, the Swami continues to reside in the small Ashram which he built in Palakothu; he welcomes all spiritual aspirants, and he is always ready to encourage them by speaking about Bhagavan's life and teachings. □

First realise God, then think of creation and other things. Valmiki was given the name of Rama to repeat as his mantra, but was told at first to repeat "Mara". "Ma" means God and "Ra" means the world. If you know one you know all. If you put fifty zeros after a one you have a large sum, but erase the one and nothing remains. It is the one that makes the many. First one then many; first God, then His creatures and the world.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA



BOOK REVIEWS

NEW DIMENSIONS IN VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY PART I : BHAGAVAN SWAMINARAYANAN BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION VOLUME Pub. Bochasanwasi Shri Akshapurushattam Santhu, Sahibag, Ahmedabad 380 004 Pp. 383. Price Rs. 90/-

New Dimensions in Vedanta Philosophy is a compilation of articles, contributed by about 80 eminent authors and philosophers of India and abroad, on the new light given in philosophy by Sri Swaminarayana with reference to Eastern philosophy and Western thought. Unique with respect to Swaminarayana Sect, it also includes social, moral and spiritual aspects. The book is edited by great scholars of philosophy.

The Swaminarayana movement has a substantial amount of literature which is in the process of being translated into different Indian languages. This First Volume containing 46 articles was released on the occasion of Swaminarayana's Bicentenary celebrations which were held in April 1981, and it provides considerable insight into the theology and ethics of the Swaminarayana movement. Those who would like to understand Swaminarayana's philosophy and religious thought will find in the works written by H.T. Dave an admirable introduction to the renowned Saint. The present volume presents and analyses the essentials of spiritual life with remarkable insight and lucidity by using the different works of the Saint which have been published from time to time.

The book is divided into two parts (Part II has yet to come): Part I includes Reflections on Swaminarayana philosophy, whereas Part 2 will consist of a critical appraisal and evaluation of Swaminarayan Philosophy in Eastern Perspectives. Part I has been divided into four sub-sections, namely: 1. Philosophical foundations of Swaminarayan Thought—2. Ethics and Social Philosophy—3. Religion and 4. Swaminarayan Philosophy its Perennial Relevance. Part II is sub-divided into three sections: 1. Swaminarayan in the light of Eastern Philosophy and Western Thought. 2. Comparative Studies in Ethical Ideas and Social Philosophy and 3. Religion. Swaminarayana's revelations about the servitor-mentor relationship between *Akshara* and *Parabrahman* have escaped the attention of almost all contributors and philosophers. Hence his contribution is unique.

It is not possible to give a short review on such a Great Saint who deals with the five realities viz *Jiva*, *Ishwar*, *Maya*, *Brahman* and *Parabrahman* as eternal and distinct from one another. The contributors have to be commended for their learned articles and the book deserves serious consideration by those who wish to know the highest philosophy taught by Shri Swaminarayana.

THE PURPORT OF THE GITA : By Sri D. Arunachala Sastrigal, rendered into English by K.N. Subramanian. Pub. Sannyasins, Sri Gnananda Thapovanam, Thapovanam-605 756. Pp. xv+112. Price. Rs. 5/-

Sri D. Arunachala Sastrigal was an erudite scholar and an authentic and lucid exponent of Advaita Vedanta. His lectures in Tamil on Sankara's interpretation of the Bhagavad-gita were collected in a book form and published in 1973 with the title *Srimat Bhagavad Gita Tatparya Nirnayam*.

Now, the same book has been rendered into English by Sri K.N. Subramanian in simple and chaste language but reflecting the original. The author brings out clearly the traditional view that Gita teaches *jnana-marga* as the supreme means for liberation and it only reveals what is eternally there. The Reality which is the Self is the determinant of *jnana* while *karma* depends upon the agent. But it does not follow that *karma-yoga* is of no use at all. It is helpful in making the aspirant ready for *jnana-yoga* by cleansing his mind.

The commentator maintains that following *jnana marga* (for example, the method of self-enquiry taught by Sri Ramana Maharshi) with a pure mind will lead to the destruction of the mind and its cause, ignorance and the Self alone will remain as the Self-luminous Reality. The commentator concludes that *jnana* and *jnana* alone can lead one to *Moksha*.

The book carries original and relevant passages at the end of the book pointing out the quintessence of the Gita teachings that runs through all of them. The publishers have to be congratulated in presenting this small but a scholarly book to the reading public.

MAYA IN SANKARA—Measuring the Immeasurable. By L. Thomas O'Neil Pub. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, New Delhi Pp. 222. Price Rs. 60/-

The book under review is an instructive treatise on the concept of *Maya*. In the first part the author L. Thomas O'Neil has analysed and tried to treat the concept *Maya* from the earliest Vedic material upto and including its Post-Sankara expression. In the second part the author reviews the philosophical and religious meaning of the *Maya* concept with special reference to Sankara's commentary on the Vedanta Sutras. What is revealed in these two parts is the specific context within which Sankara developed his understanding of the knowledge of Truth and the subsequent status of all else. The book provides the reader with access into the thinking of one of the pivotal giants of Indian Spirituality.

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Every philosophical system is based on one or more key concepts. Substance-attribute relation is the basic concept in *Nyaya vaisesika*. While *Aprithak-siddhi* relation is a key concept in *Visistadvaita*, *Viseha* and *bheda* are the key concepts in *Dvaita-Vedanta*. *Avidya* which is also called *Maya*, is the basic concept through which *Advaita* works out its metaphysics, epistemology and ethical discipline. The distinction between Brahman as *nirguna* and Brahman as *saguna*, the apparent difference between Brahman and individual soul and the seeming problem of the One and Many which are important issues in the metaphysics of *Advaita* have been well discussed. While the author has completed a research work which puts together all the relevant appropriate statements of *Sankara* and many of the commentators and interpreters of his thought, in the process the originality of the author's own views are lost.

The book carries a partial chart of Post-Sankara *Advaita Vedanta*, an appendix and a long bibliography. The book is a must for all students of philosophy and Indology.

PROF. K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

MODERN INDIAN MYSTICISM: By K.P.S. Choudhary.
Pub. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Rd., Jawahar Nagar,
Delhi: 110 007 Pp. 302. Price: Rs. 75/-

"A deep spiritual aspiration has been the governing idea of India's rich cultural history, its guiding spirit and shaping force right from the Vedic beginnings." With this affirmation the author proceeds to point out that the current of spirituality in India is still flowing and the answer to the present crisis comes from the mystics of the modern age—*Ramakrishna*, *Vivekananda*, *Ramana Maharshi*, *Rabindranath Tagore* and *Sri Aurobindo* whose "ideas have brought solace to mankind and revealed life's meaning and mystery"

The first chapter of the book deals exhaustively with what mysticism is and what it is not. "The word 'mysticism' stands for the intuitive experience of direct union with the Supreme Being here and now." The second chapter stresses the spiritual background of the modern Hindu renaissance and traces its evolving history in the emergence of the *Brahmo Samaj*, the *Arya Samaj*, the *Prarthana Samaj* and the *Theosophical Society* that "have contributed largely to the regeneration, reanimation and reaffirmation of the ancient ideals of Hinduism in the light of modern thought". The subsequent chapters embody a critical and scintillating study of the mysticism of the Indian sages of the modern age.

Drawing from the vast published literature available on *Sri Ramakrishna*, *Vivekananda*, *Tagore* and *Sri Aurobindo*, the author, by his well-documented and comprehensive study, is able to put forth before the reader the individual characteristics and the nice distinctions amongst the teachings

of these master mystics. It is quite heartening to note that even with the relatively scarce literature available on the *Maharshi*, the author is able to appraise his teachings in a very satisfying manner.

The author refers to *Sri Ramana's* first mystic experience, the experience of death which drove him to self enquiry and instantaneous Self Realisation. The True "I" or the Self is untouched by death as it is the deathless spirit. Self-enquiry, as taught by the *Maharshi*, is to track down to its very source the I thought. Relentless self-enquiry causes the false 'I' to vanish. Reality immediately manifests itself spontaneously as the 'I-I' ever sparkling in the deep of the heart. The author draws attention to the difference between self-enquiry of the *Maharshi* and the meditation on 'I am Brahman' (page 151-152) and points out that the *Maharshi's* method is not a mental or thought process. Discussing with circumspection some noticeable features of *Ramana's* *Sadhana* (pages 157-167), the author draws the attention of the reader to the following:

Sanyasa means renouncing one's egoity and a householder is not debarred from attaining self realisation. Metaphysical discussion or mere reasoning is useless for self-realisation. There is no conflict between *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, in fact they are both the same. *Ramana's* mysticism is undoubtedly *advaitic* in nature; for him there is no world of duality. For him "being absorbed in the Reality, the world also is real" (page 278). "The *sadhana* *Ramana* brought to meet the needs of the modern age, in which there is much talk of the synthesis of the East and the West, is open to the aspirants of all sects and of all faiths and religions; for self-enquiry is the ultimate truth behind every religion".

The author writes with remarkable clarity, understanding and insight. These studies are a rewarding experience.

S. SANKARANARAYANAN.

THE RAIN OF WISDOM: THE ESSENCE OF THE OCEAN OF TRUE MEANING. Pub. Shambhala Publications, 1920, 13th St, Boulder, Colorado 80302 U.S.A. Pp. 384 Price \$ 9.95

The Rain of Wisdom is a highly interesting book. It is a collection of spontaneous songs of spiritual understanding, presenting clear portraits of some of the most eminent teachers of the *Kagy* tradition known as the Practice Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. It has been prepared under the direction of a fifteen-member translation committee under the direction of *Chogyam Trungpa* whose Foreword sets the tone for a direct entry into the spirit of these songs. The Preface by *Osel Tendzin* explains the nature of these songs:

...we see how the great lineage holders dedicated their lives . . . Their songs are spontaneous expressions of luminous mind, a great treasure, and a source of constant inspiration for our practice."

The longing for truth and the heartfelt devotion is the key element in these songs. Milarepa's experience reminds us of the *Nirvan-shatak* of Srimad Shankaracharya—

My father is the all-good.
My mother is the good being.
My elder brother is the king of learning.
My aunt is the luminous torch.
My sister is the lady of faith.
My friend is the self-existing wisdom.
My son is the little child of insight.

These teachers are quite aware of the *sunyata* of the self and the world. And yet in practice, both the self and the world become very sacred due to the very element of compassion. That is why these poems share a beauty and intensity and the cheer of the sunshine. The meaning of Gampopa's dream explained by his guru reminds us throughout of the view of Sri Aurobindo:

"The pair of boots you wore
Are the sign of the journey of ascending and
descending actions."

The songs produce a definite spark; they utter the truth of the path, they show the place of the Guru in *sadhana*, and reveal that both confusion and anxiety are part of the process of the journey to the ultimate realization as *Mahamudra*.

VEDIC SOCIALISM: By Nitya Narayan Banerjee. Pub. Hindutva Pub. U-36 Green Park, New Delhi. Pp. 274. Price not indicated.

In this modern age of science and technology, humanity is in search of a better socio-political order in which people can enjoy equality, fraternity and freedom. The author brings us the message of Vedic socialism which indicates for us the way to move ahead, *charaveti*. "Do not be stagnant, as stagnation is death and progress is life." (*Aiteraya Brahman*: VII. 15). The Vedic social theory is not Utopian, for it was put into practice for thousands of years that every man should get according to his need and give the society according to his ability.

The author has discussed the origin and evolution of the Vedic society, how it can be implemented in the modern society, and he has also given the social views envisaged by Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo and others. A special chapter is devoted to Manu Smriti in which he has discussed the four *Ashramas*, *chaturvarnas*, state-craft and administration and also the status of women and *shudras*. It is shown how the Western world looks to the Vedic way of life for inspiration. He also mentions why Indian Hindus are discarding the Vedic way of life. The author had occasion to meet all sections of Hindus in many of the Asian countries and Africa and his observations are very interesting.

Vedic Socialism teaches the basic oneness of all souls,

but distinguishes many different levels of obligations. For example:

"The king himself is punishable with a thousand times the penalty prescribed for the ordinary persons, for the same offense." (Ch. VIII, 336)

"Acceptance of any money from the groom by the bride's father has been termed as a heinous crime which is equated to selling the daughter." (Ch III, 53)

The author has successfully presented the broad and universal outlook of the Vedic society based on spiritual principles.

NANDA

LIVING TIME AND THE INTEGRATION OF THE LIFE: By Maurice Nicoll. Pub. Watkins, 21, Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London WC2N 4HB. Pp. 252. Price not indicated.

The reviewer is sometimes blessed to come across writers who introduce us to subtleties we have missed out, which are living facts, not collections of inert items. They grow and lead to perception of other subtleties. The work of such writers is "seminal"; for as we read, our minds come alive and leap to octaves above and below. Even as we are increased by such reading, we may also be burdened by it; but the tasks set by stimulation are partly defined by ourselves, and we do not feel put upon. Only as we make the tasks our own, does anything of importance happen. These reflections occur after reading Nicoll's book, which although first published in 1952 has been reprinted several times, as it deserves to be; for the author asks such perennial questions as: "What is nature? What is Time? What is space? What are we? etc. etc.," and answers that a different view of time opens up a continuum of more dimensions than the three that our senses record.

The author is constantly emphasising the fact that the method of science is not the sole mode of experiencing or understanding life and that the quality of our ordinary consciousness is so crude and gross that further and finer states of consciousness alone can open us to the understanding of the complexities and contradictions that have arisen today in the realm of physics; he adds:

"Man must not only overcome the sensual view of life by theoretical thinking but he must look within—away from the senses—and become an object of study to himself. And he must get beyond merely sensible knowledge and even rational knowledge". (p.39)

The idea is that we are not awake but asleep in life and hence not at a level of consciousness where we can understand anything rightly is age-old in Upanishadic, Platonic and Buddhist thought, Self-knowledge is the eternal doctrine taught to man, whether from the days of Delphic oracle or now from the sage of Arunachala. Only

when we realise that we have no self can we seek ourselves. Socrates found the first step in self-knowledge when he affirmed that he did not know anything. In realising our ignorance and in ceasing to believe in opinions, slogans, words and theories, we begin to awaken out of dream. The sages have been ever stressing the truth that man has fallen asleep in matter, and in time and in himself. He has to be re-born, a *Dwija*, by regenerating himself, raising his entire nature to another level of psychological space and time, to discover his real existence.

Such is the lofty theme dealt with in this book; but it is regrettable that occasionally the author deplures

"the loss of the inner sense of existence, the effacement of individual differences, and a gradual obliteration of all the rich diversity of custom and local distinction which belongs to normal life" (p. 18)

which is only an expression of egoism; for is not Reality one and indivisible: "There is neither first nor last. All is One: Number issued from No number?"

However, it would be ungenerous to harp on this, for this is a majestic survey of Time and any effort to become its spectator, to quote Plato, is a cure for meanness of soul. The pages are studded with a number of quotations, notes and observations from the teachings of Plato, Swedenborg, Eckhart and Ouspensky, to affirm the invisible nature of man and the corresponding invisible side of Nature. In short, Maurice Nicoll has produced a work which in learning, penetration and insight, is altogether worthy of its great theme, the diverse mental structure deployed by man to understand Time, "which lies asleep in the infinite bosom of Duration", the Eternal Now.

ARGUS

GLIMPSES OF PHILOSOPHY AND MYSTICISM: By John Spiers. Pub: C.S. Gupta, Satsanga Seva Samithi, Gandhi Bazar, Bangalore 560 006 Pp. 322. Price Rs. 12/-

John Spiers, a young Scot, was drawn to India at the age of 23 and became Swami John Spiers in 1952 and attained

samadhi in 1979 near Kaggalipura, thirteen miles from Bangalore. The book under review is a collection of articles by him. To him India was not a geographical region but a state of mind. "Do you know what the Romans used to say in referring to India? *Ex Oriente lux: ex occidente lex*. Out of the east, light, out of the west, laws. And from the time of the ancient world of Greece and Rome, this state of mind that is India has persisted." He feels that the wisdom of the country is enshrined in the South: "On a contemplative's map of the world, the place of South India would be at the hub." In the section "Wisdom's Antique Home", he discusses the role of the South. His remarks on the Guru-Sishya-parampara in the West make very interesting reading.

"But prior to Christianity and up to the sixth century, in what the Church anathematizes as Paganism, there certainly was *guru-sishya-parampara* in the exact Indian meaning of the phrase. The Greek word for this is *diadokhe* (what is received across time-succession) ... Diogenes Laertius gives biographical information about eighty-two gurus and mentions over two hundred of their disciples. Among the various lines of teachers, the *guru-sishya sampradaya* (stupidly called "Schools" by writers on the History of Western Philosophy, who are totally ignorant of the principle involved), Diogenes deals with the Pythagorean, the Eleatic, the Miletus, the Platonic, the Aristotelian, the Socratic-Phaedo, the Cynic, the Zeno-Stoic, the Zeno-Poseidonis, the Zeno-Metocles, the Cyreniac, the Socratic-Olympian and the Pythonic."

The articles are the result of wide reading, deep thinking and genuine experience. Those who seek 'freedom' will find this book a valuable guide. The author is eclectic in his approach and free from all dogmas.

In a well-got up and printed book, it is a pity there are many printer's errors. On p. 135, the author says that the Maharshi loved coffee. This is patently wrong. On several occasions he said that he did not like it at all! It would have been helpful if a brief biography of John Spiers had been included.

Dr. K. SUBRAHMANYAN

RAMANA MAHARSHI CONTACT LETTER

Seekers interested in contacting other seekers on the path or who would like to receive books about Sri Ramana Maharshi may write to the address given below.

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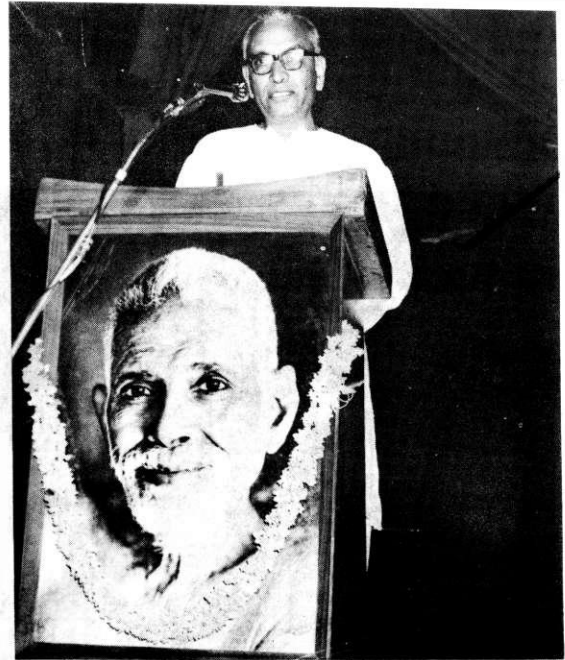
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Ashram Bulletin

SEMINAR ON TEACHINGS AND MESSAGE OF BHAGAVAN

Three day Ramana Feast at Bangalore

The three-day National Seminar on the Teachings and Message of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi held in Bangalore on July 18, 19, 20, 1981, was a great event from start to finish! Right from the time of the inauguration at 11.45 a.m. on the 18th to end of the last Cultural Programme at 8.30 p.m. on 20th, the presence of Sri Bhagavan was felt by all. They were receiving the full grace of our glorious Bhagavan, standing there, smiling, staff and kamandalu in hand.



Professor K.B. Ramakrishna Rao, talks at the National Seminar on the Teachings and Message of Bhagavan Sri Ramana at Bangalore.

The seminar was inaugurated by **Sri R. Gundu Rao**, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka. The Chief Minister was received by **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, the President of Sri Ramanasramam.

The function began with a devout invocation by **Sri K. Natesan** of Sri Ramanasramam, followed by the welcome address by **Sri A.R. Natarajan**, President, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore. **Sri Natarajan**, in his address, emphasised that the aim of the Centre was to make vedanta known to all through Bhagavan's Life and Teachings.





Karnataka Chief Minister, Sri R. Gundu Rao inaugurates the Seminar. (l to r) Sri K.K. Nambiar, Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras; Sri A.R. Natarajan, President, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore; Chief Minister Sri Gundu Rao and Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Ashram President.

The Chief Minister, in the course of his inaugural address, stressed the fact that Sri Bhagavan is the most beautiful star shining in the annals of the history of *vedanta*, the teacher of the purest path of *advaita* through the simple and direct path of self enquiry. He mentioned that ours is the country with the richest culture, and that the *Ramana Maharshi centre for learning*, Bangalore was doing very good work. As early as possible, he said, a beautiful site would be given to the Centre for constructing a building, a focal point for radiating the divine teachings of Bhagavan.

Sri S. Krishnaswamy, Secretary, *Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning*, proposed the vote of thanks.

Prof. K.B. Ramakrishna Rao's talk on 'The *Vichara Marga* of Bhagavan Sri Ramana', was most thought provoking. He expounded Sri Bhagavan's teachings very well and, in his own words, "*Vichara* is not a simple methodology but also the ideal ... Bhagavan has given us in *Vichara Marga* both the beginning and the end of spiritual *sadhana*." The speech was a fitting beginning for the three day Seminar.

The afternoon session consisted of three very knowledgeable speakers sharing their ideas with us. In the session, we had Sri K.K. Nambiar, Chairman of Ramana Kendra, Madras, who spoke with authority and in depth on Bhagavan's '*Upadesa Saram*'. The erudition of Dr. K. Krishnamurthy of the University of Dharwar was evident in his paper on Advaitic thought and Maharshi's Teachings. Swami

Poornananda on Bhagavan's '*Sat Darshana*' was at his best. Being a commentator on '*Sat Darshana*' he explained the verses with absolute clarity. The Presidents were Smt. Anasuya Subramanian, Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao and Dr. K. Subrahmanian.

Lucid Report by Kumari Sarada

The highlight of the evening's Cultural Programme was a dance recital by Kumari Sarada and Ambika—a feature choreographed by Kumari Meenakshi of Veena Visalakshi Art Centre. "The sisters displayed commendable agility and presented the items with a sure stage presence, confidence and gay abandon"—*Deccan Herald* (July 21, 1981).

After this, there was a 'Ramana Music' concert by Sri Maharajapuram Santhanam. His powerful full-throated rendering kept the audience engrossed. He was accompanied by Tirupparkadal Veeraraghavan on the violin, and Sri Vellore Ramabhadran on Mridangam while Smt. Rajeswari gave vocal support. Items which deserve special mention are '*Arunachala Siva*' and '*Pal Pal Chintan*'. The special care taken by Sri Santhanam for the programme made it a rare treat.



Sri S. Sankaranarayanan
expounding **Sat Darshana**.
(left) Dr. K. Subrahmanian

The tone of the Seminar had been set, and the second day's proceedings began with great fervour. The students of *Ramana Bala Kendra* gave the Invocation. It was simply thrilling to see the sixty students coming on to the stage and chanting a *Dhyana Sloka* on Sri Bhagavan and four verses from *Upadesa Saram*, in unison and with great enthusiasm.

The session began with a very impressive speech on *Sat Darshanam* by Sri S. Shankaranarayanan. He managed to convey in a very eloquent manner, the whole substance of the *Forty Verses on Reality* within a short span of time. Justice G.K. Govind Bhat chaired the Session.

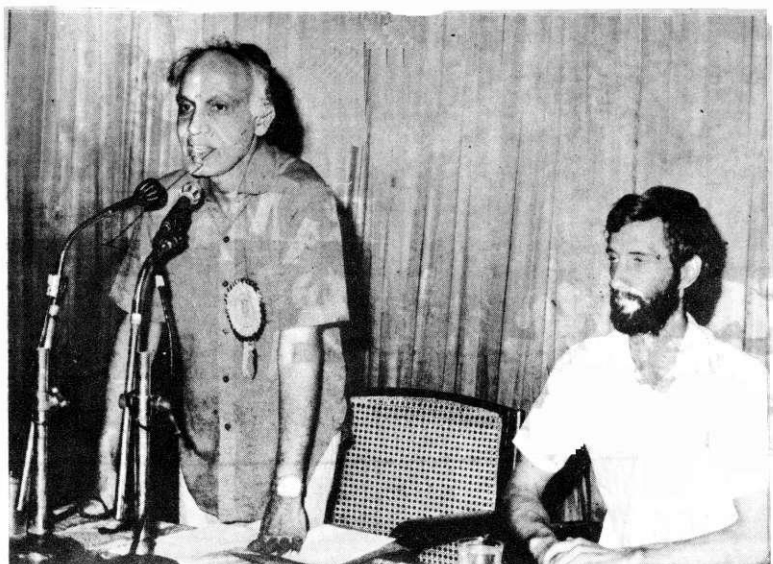
Sri K.C. Subbaiah was the second speaker of the day. He spoke lucidly and well on each of the eighteen chapters of '*Ramana Geetha*' laying particular emphasis on Chapter 2. The president Justice K.S. Venkataraman's remarks were very impressive being based on his personal experience of *sadhana*.

The last speaker of the morning session was a speaker with great depth of experience, who could convey, simply and very effectively, the treasure which our Bhagavan has given us. The topic was "Self Enquiry—The Great Adventure", and the speaker was V. Ganesan, dear to all devotees of Bhagavan.

"It was not physical solitude, it was not cessation of the activity of the tongue, but Sri Bhagavan was the embodiment of Silence, for the chatter of the mind was not there." He taught us everything we need to know—he showed us the way to the supreme reality, but how? Through the 'Language of Silence', for this was the topic of the first speaker of the afternoon session—Dr. K. Subrahmanian, whose speech was very much appreciated. A scholarly exposition by Prof. L.S. Seshagiri Rao on "God's Will and Man's Freedom" followed. The session was chaired by Sri Pranatharthiharan.

This method is direct. Whatever other paths one may pursue in search of Truth, ultimately one has to face the

Sri A.R. Natarajan emphasising
"the Easy Path of Sri Bhagavan".
(right) Sri David Goldman.



question about the nature of one's ego or the 'I'-Thought which individualises and separates us from others. In Maharshi's teachings, we deal with the issue from the beginning itself by straight away tackling the core thought by repeatedly enquiring into its nature", said Sri A.R. Natarajan in the last speech of the Session; Sri David Godman presided. This speech was one which held the audience spell-bound. He spoke with great emphasis on "Self Enquiry—the easy and Direct Path" conveying in each word the deep understanding of Bhagavan's teachings that he possessed. Actually, a few were surprised at his clear exposition of the Maharshi's message, but, is it a wonder? Of course, not, for he did not speak by himself—something made him speak. What but the Divine grace of our Bhagavan!

The Cultural Programme of the evening was a multi-lingual musical extravaganza by the "Ramananjali" group led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan. The concert followed the release of "Ramana-Geethalu," a Telugu cassette; Sri H.G. Mirchandani of *India Book House*, Bombay presented the first copy to Sri T.N. Venkataraman.

Words do not suffice to describe the 'Simple-Grandeur' of the rest of the evening. The audience listened completely enthralled by the rich and devotional renderings of the group. "Annamalayina" and "Nath-Ramana" were songs which transported the whole audience to a new world of joy and ecstasy!

And it was in the same elevated mood that the audience walked in the next morning for the third day of the Seminar. It was moving to hear the students of *Ramana Maharshi Academy for the Blind* sing songs by and on Sri Ramana so

beautifully. After this wonderful prayer, we had the Kannada Session. The learned speakers Bhadrugiri Achutadas and Vidyalankar M.P.L. Sastry spoke on the Life of Sri Bhagavan and Sri Rangachari spoke in simple Kannada on His Teachings. The Sessions were chaired by Brahmachari Brahma Chaitanya and Sri Vesudev.

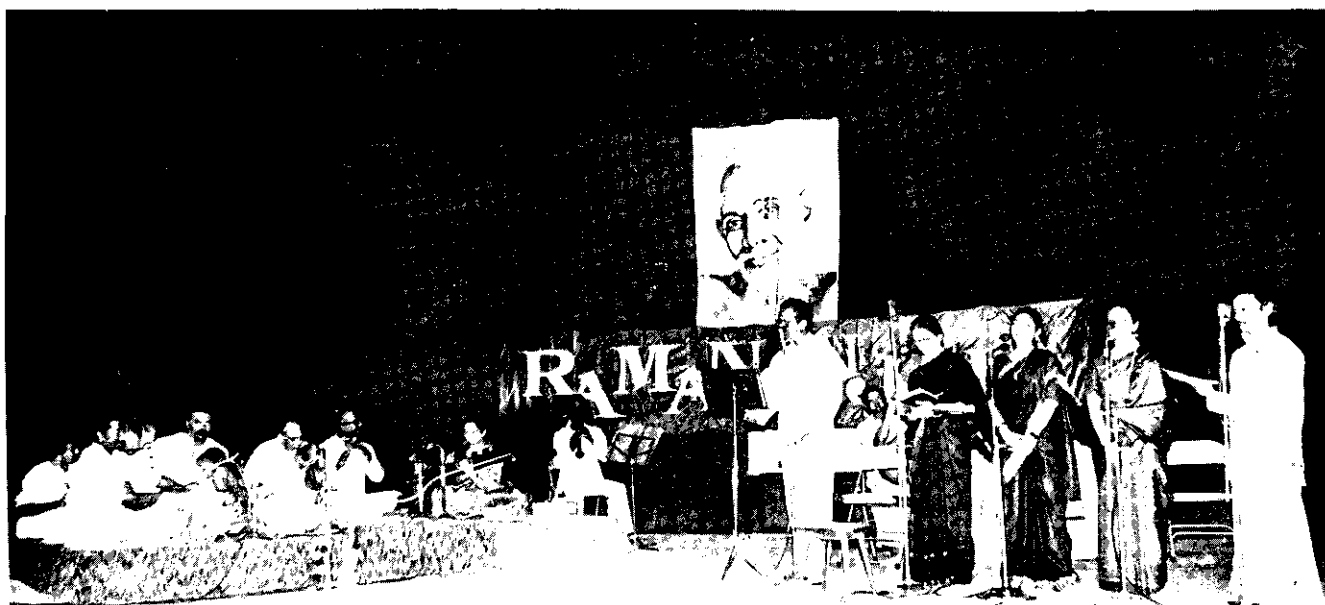
The afternoon session was again in English. Sri S. Krishnaswamy spoke with great erudition on "Surrender in Maharshi's Teachings" and illustrated his paper with many interesting incidents and stories. The role and importance of surrender in the context of self-enquiry was dealt with great clarity and appropriateness by Sri R. Shankaranarayanan in his presidential remarks.

From 3 p.m to 4 p.m. we had a wonderful treat, for many devotees spoke of their experiences. In his session Dr. Balasundaram spoke on the significance of the Seminar and its role in clarifying Bhagavan's teachings.

Smt. Sulochana Natarajan spoke very movingly, calling us to partake of His love, grace and teachings. She simply said, "He is everything, That is all I can say."

At 4 p.m. Kumari Sarada, the youngest of the speakers, spoke to us about her Sadguru Sri Ramana in a moving talk entitled "Grandfather Ramana".

*The Ramananjali group
giving elevating
'Ramana Music'
at the Seminar.* ↓



The valedictory address was delivered by Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao. He clearly and precisely explained: "According to neuropsychology and neurophysiology, one part of the brain is directed towards the Self and the other towards the world. We must shut out the latter channel and open the one directed towards the Self". He summed up by explaining Sri Bhagavan's Teachings—The direct path.

The evening's cultural programme was a *Bharata Natyam* feature choreographed by Sri Kaushik presented by Kumari Mala of *Santana Kalakshetra*. We owe our thanks to the Directorate of Kannada and Culture, Govt. of Karnataka for this treat.

The Seminar has ended, but each time we think of our Bhagavan's smiling face and beaming, bright eyes, we are reminded of those three days when Sri Bhagavan manifested himself in His complete glory and splendour—the three days of the Seminar. He is our Father, Mother, Guru and indeed our EVERYTHING !!

A section of the vast audience
attending the
Cultural Programme.



'Ramananjali' Group 75th Performance

25th of September seems to have some special significance for the '*Ramananjali*' group. The Silver Jubilee performance was given at Vivekananda Auditorium, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Bangalore, on the 25th of September, 1980. One year later, on that very day, on the Sept. 25, 1981, the seventy-fifth performance took place at the same place, evidencing the special grace of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, on this group, dedicated to singing Sri Ramana's glory! In the holy atmosphere of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, there was something special in the rendering of the songs which transported the audience of nearly one thousand to a new dimension.

Many new Kannada and Tamil songs which had been recorded recently for '*Ramana Vani*' (Kannada) and '*Ramana Vaibhavam*' (Tamil), which are to come out as cassettes, were rendered feelingly.

The '*Ramananjali*' group is grateful to Swami Adidevananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Bangalore, for his continued support and encouragement.



Smt. and Sri Govind Narain Pay Homage to Sri Bhagavan

The Governor of Karnataka *Sri Govind Narain*, together with his wife *Smt. Chandra Narain*, visited the Ashram on September 12 and spent an hour visiting the places associated with Sri Bhagavan and meditating in the Old Hall where Sri Bhagavan showered His Grace for over 25 years.

The distinguished guests were received by *Sri V. Ganesan*, our *Managing Editor* and the Ashram Trustees, *Sri P. Thandavarayan*, *Sri P.S. Vaikuntavasar* and the *Tahsildar*. A *puja* was specially arranged at the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan and *prasad* presented to them, along with new publications of the Ashram. *Sri & Smt. Govind Narain*, together with their party, had their lunch at the Ashram. They considered it a great privilege to have had *prasad* and to have been seated in the dining room next to the place where Sri Bhagavan Himself ate.

Smt. Chandra Narain recalled how her parents, **Smt. and Sri Panna Lal**, I.C.S., visited the Ashram in 1938 and spent ten days, in the Spiritual Presence of Sri Bhagavan.



Smt. and Sri Govind Narain are being shown round the Ashram.

Before he left, the Governor wrote the following comments in our *Visitors Book*:

"For me and my wife, it has been like a dream fulfilled when we are here in Ramanasramam. My father-in-law and my mother-in-law came and stayed here for 10 days in 1938 and had Bhagavan's Divine grace. When we sat in Bhagavan's meditation room we could feel his radiations with full strength. For spiritual sadhana this undoubtedly is the blessed place and Bhagavan is still here. We offer our devout *pranams* to Bhagavan and seek his eternal grace".

Govind Narain
Governor of Karnataka
12.9.81

"I am very happy to be here".
Chandra Govind Narain.



Karnataka Governor Sri Govind Narain and Smt. Chandra Narain are deeply absorbed in meditation at the Old Hall.

Pondicherry Lt. Governor Visits Ashram

The Lt. Governor of Pondicherry, **Sri R.N. Haldipur**, and **Smt. Krishna Haldipur** paid their Homage to **Sri Rameshwara Mahalingam** on August 16 on their way to Bangalore. They were received by the Ashram President, **Sri T.N. Venkataraman** and the Ashram Trustee, the *Tahsildar*, at Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri Haldipur showed keen interest in visiting the various holy places inside the Ashram hallowed by the Presence of Bhagavan. At the shrine of Grace of Sri Bhagavan he observed: "It is a great privilege indeed to be here where the great Ramana Maharshi spent all His life, inspiring and kindling the Divinity within amongst those who came in touch with Him and were at His Feet."

Sri R.N. Haldipur, Lt. Governor of Pondicherry with Sri B. D. Jatti and Sri T. N. Venkataraman.



Sri B.D. Jatti (Ex. Vice President of India), who happened to be at the Ashram, at the same time, was pleased to remark: "Sri Ramanasramam is the spiritual Centre. The moment we see the *Samadhi* of Sri Ramana Maharshi we enter into Silence!"

The Lt. Governor and his wife returned to the Ashram five days later on their way to Pondicherry. On this particular occasion, they were anxious to receive *prasad* from Sri Bhagavan, and so they were served curd-rice which had been offered to the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan.

THE RAMANA MAHARSHI ESSAY COMPETITION

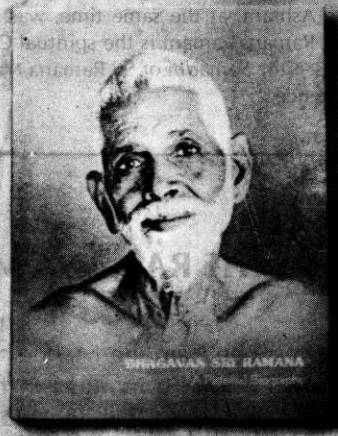
The Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning, Bangalore, is sponsoring an Essay Competition and is offering **Rs. 1,000** as a **first prize**, **Rs. 500** as a **second prize**, and up to **five consolation prizes** of **Rs. 200** each.

The rules of the competition are as follows:

1. The submitted essay should consist of a discussion on, or an analysis of, any aspect of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings. We are also prepared to accept entries consisting of a comparative study of the teachings of Sri Ramana and the teachings of any other major spiritual figure or religious tradition. In either case, the judges will be looking for essays which show a deep understanding of Sri Ramana's basic message, or which give new insights into the fundamental tenets of his teachings.
2. All essays must be typed in English and must reach the judges by **31st December, 1981**.
3. Essays must be between 3,000 and 3,500 words in length, and they should be submitted to the following address:
**The Ramana Maharshi Essay Competition,
 The Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning,
 40/41, First Floor, II Cross Road,
 Lower Palace Orchards,
 Bangalore 560 003.**
4. The sources of all quotations used must be given in full either in the text itself or as footnotes. In all cases, the title of the work, the edition and the page number must be given.
5. The results of the competition will be published in the April 1982 issue of *The Mountain Path*, and at least two of the prize-winning essays will be printed in the same issue. The editors of *The Mountain Path* have undertaken to publish all the submitted essays which they deem to be worthy of publication whether they win prizes or not.

Just Released!

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA: A Pictorial Biography



It gives us great joy to announce that the Pictorial Biography of Sri Bhagavan has just been released.

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 is printed entirely on imported art paper and no efforts have been spared to make this unique endeavour a publication of the highest quality.

The book is 8½" × 11" in size, containing:

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

Price: India: Rs. 60/- (not including postage)

(for subscribers of 'The Mountain Path', Life members of the Ashram and devotees, **only Rs. 40/-**)

Foreign: By surface mail: **£ 10.00 or**

\$ 20.00

(Postage FREE)

Available at: **Sri Ramanasramam Book Depot**

Sri Ramanasramam P.O.

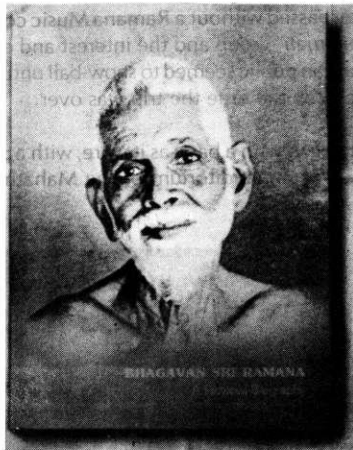
Tiruyannamalai 606 603. S. India

RELEASE OF

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA: A Pictorial Biography

September 1, the day on which Bhagavan Sri Ramana arrived at Arunachala eighty-five years ago, was chosen as the most auspicious day to release the recently published 'Pictorial Biography'.

In a ceremony in front of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine, Sri Kunju Swami, who had the unique privilege of serving Sri Bhagavan from His Skandashram days, was requested to accept the first copy from the hands of the Ashram President, Sri T.N. Venkataraman.



Sri Kunju Swami then presented copies of the book to the following people: Sri Matthew and Smt. Joan Greenblatt, the compilers of the book, Sri G. Ramaswami Pillai, Sri N. Balarama Reddi, Lucy Cornelissen and Sri P. Thandavarayan. Token presentations were also made to the following people who had done much to ensure the successful completion of the book, but who were unable to attend the ceremony: Sri A.R. Natarajan, Robin Laggemann, Florizoone Roger, and Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata.

Sri V. Ganesan, our Managing Editor, gave a summary of how the book was conceived and finally produced by Sri Matthew and Smt. Joan Greenblatt and he thanked everyone who had assisted in fulfilling the unique project. He particularly mentioned the Government of India, Sri Robin Lageman and Sri Florizoone Roger, each of whom had made a significant financial contribution to the project. These subsidies, he said, had ensured that the book would not be beyond the means of most Bhagavan devotees.

On the evening of September 1, Sri Matthew and Smt. Joan Greenblatt left for New York after a stay of two years in the Ashram. During his speech, Sri V. Ganesan thanked them for all the work they had put in on the *Pictorial Biography* and for all the assistance they had offered during the Centenary Celebrations.

Full details of the 'Pictorial Biography' can be found in the July '81 issue p. 181



BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA: A Pictorial Biography was released on Sept. 1 at the shrine of Grace of Sri Bhagavan. Smt. Joan and Sri Matthew Greenblatt, compilers of the book, receiving a copy from Sri Kunju Swami. (left) Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Ashram President.

AN AVALANCHE OF 'RAMANA MUSIC'

'Ramananjali' in Mauritius

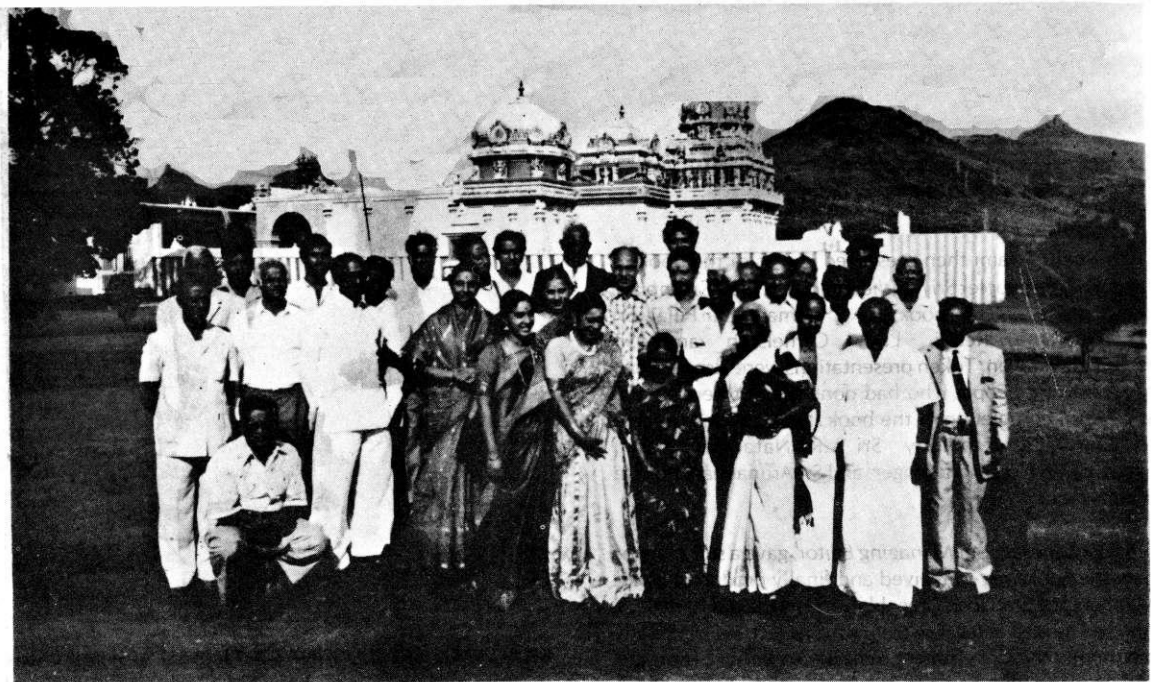
1980 marked the beginning of a new era in the "Ramana Movement". The Birth Centenary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated all over the world with great enthusiasm. The Birth Centenary Year also saw the birth of a new group of dedicated singers whose sole purpose is to offer musical 'Anjali' to Sri Ramana. This 'Ramananjali' group led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan has become a special channel for Bhagavan's grace. It has been blessed with opportunities to sing His glory all over the world, in Europe, USA, Canada, South-East Asia, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka.

The soul-stirring and elevating compositions of Bhagavan Sri Ramana and the compositions of poet-saints like Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni, Muruganar, Sadhu Om and others have become increasingly popular, thanks to the music and leadership of Smt. Sulochana Natarajan who has been able to evoke great devotional fervour in the hearts of audiences everywhere.

Sri Thancanamootoo of Piton was largely instrumental in organising the visit of the 'Ramananjali' group to Mauritius in the second fortnight of June this year. His intense devotion to Sri Bhagavan and his great capacity for organisation were evident from the beginning. Thanks mainly to his efforts, the Mauritian branch of UNESCO took a special interest in the 'Ramananjali' group and gave invaluable help throughout. The Prime Minister of Mauritius, Sir Ram Goolam, was exceedingly kind, and the Indian Ambassador, Dr. Upadhyaya, showered great affection and encouraged the group as "true representatives of all that is the best in Indian Culture".

Not a day passed without a Ramana Music concert from the 'Ramananjali' group and the interest and enthusiasm of the Mauritian public seemed to snow-ball until it became an avalanche by the time the trip was over.

The tour began with a bang as it were, with a prestigious performance at the auditorium of the Mahatma Gandhi



The **Ramananjali** group with the hosts in Chockalinga Meenakshi Temple. The hill in the background looks like a mini-Arunachala.



Sri M. Thancanamootoo

Institute of Culture. After this a long series of performances were given, one at Port Louis Theatre, in the heart of the City, two at Drowpathi Amman Temple, one each at Kali Amman Temple, Chockalinga Meenakshi Temple, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Sri Sivananda Ashrama, Chinmaya Mission and in the devotees' houses as well. The Mauritian Broadcasting Corporation recorded one programme in Tamil and one multi-lingual programme, and both were widely appreciated. There were also many opportunities to speak to different groups about the unique life and message of Bhagavan Ramana and this was effectively done by Sri A.R. Natarajan and Sri V. Ganesan. They were also interviewed on the M.B.C.

Ramananjali at Shivananda Ashram, Mauritius. Sri Swami Venkateshananda is seated under the statue of Swami Sivananda, (seated 1 to r) Smt. Alamelu, Kumari Sarada, Sri Sundera Murti, Sri V. Ganesan, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Sri Swami Venkatesananda, Kumari Ambika, Sri A.R. Natarajan, Sri Murthy and Sri Chandrasekhariah. (standing 1 to r) Sri H.K. Narayana and Sri Nagendra.



Ramana Kendra at Mauritius

We congratulate Sri M. Thancanamootoo for having succeeded in his efforts to form 'RAMANA MAHARSHI SABAY' in Mauritius, thanks to the inspiration infused by the visit of 'Ramananjali' group to Mauritius!

Sri Thancanamootoo writes:

"The *Ramana Maharshi Sabay* has been registered at the Registry of the Registrar of Friendly Societies. The Government of Mauritius is officially aware of its existence.

The Baby is born!"

May Sri Bhagavan bless RAMANA MAHARSHI SABAY Profusely.

The highlight of the visit was the presentation of the picture of the Maharshi with sacred stones from holy Arunachala to the biggest temple in Mauritius, Chockalinga Meenakshi Temple, thus cementing for ever a new link between Mauritius and Arunachala-Ramana.

In many ways the trip to Mauritius was the most satisfying of the 'Ramananjali' tours because of the warmth and hospitality shown by the people of Mauritius and the knowledgeable interest which they showed in the dedicated singing of the 'Ramananjali' group. Literally hundreds joined in the chanting of "Arunachala Siva" and 'Ramana, Ramana, Bolo re' and other group songs.



Smt. Savitri Cuttaree

Special mention has to be made also to the unfailing kindness and affection shown by *Smt. Savitri Cuttaree*, who spared no efforts to make the group's stay in Mauritius a memorable one. A happy result of the tour is that she had decided to forge the links with Arunachala by starting a Ramana Study circle.

There is a long list of persons to whom thanks are due. Dr. C.M. Pillai, Sri Goordayal, Sri Sookhna, Sri E. Chinappen, Sri Mayavan, Sri Ratnam, Sri Anandache, Sri Inder Dev, Smt. Prabha, Mr. Claudio, Sri Bala are but a few of them. The impressions left by the 'Ramananjali' group is best stated in the letter written by Dr. C.M. Pillai, in "*La Luminere*", Mauritius, thus:

"They came . . . They sang . . . They conquered our hearts . . . Mauritius has the rare privilege and pleasure of listening to the *RAMANANJALI group*. We were entertained, we were enthralled, we were purified. For a few hours, too few alas, we were able to forget our worldly cares, to shed our day to day worries and soar high on the wings of *Ramananjali* music.

Completely unknown to the Mauritian Public except for one or two contacts, Sri Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi and the *Ramananjali* group became, overnight, household words. The sheer professionalism coupled with the intense devotion of the music, the wise management of Sri Natarajan, the soul-stirring voices of Smt. S. Natarajan and Sri H.K. Narayanan, the humility and faith of Sri Ganesan, the gentleness and grace of Kumari Sarada and the angelic smile of Ambika, the divine melody that poured forth from the well-knit instrumental team, all these conquered our hearts.

If the music was so rich, how much richer the message of the Sage who inspired the creation of such music."



Ramananjali group with hosts enjoying the richness of Nature's gift to Mauritius.

SRI RAMANA CENTENARY LIBRARY APPEAL

In our July issue (p. 175) we announced the successful completion of the first floor of our new library building and its opening by the President of Sri Ramanasramam, Sri. T.N. Venkataraman. The new library, known as the *Sri Ramana Centenary Library*, is proving to be a great success and it is being well-patronised by visitors, devotees, and local people. In addition to having thousands of books in all the major Indian and European languages on all aspects of religion and philosophy, we regularly receive about 85 magazines and periodicals, most of which are given to us in exchange for copies of *The Mountain Path*. Because of a generous grant given by the Government of India, we have been able to purchase over a thousand new books this year. We have also utilised a portion of the Government grant to buy a substantial number of children's books and to rebind a large number of books which were donated to the Ashram in the days of Bhagavan. We have been lucky to recruit a master book-binder who was trained by a French expatriate in Pondicherry, and his expertise has proved invaluable in restoring some of our fragile, valuable, but out of print books.

Because the library is expanding at such a rapid rate, we are planning to build a second floor to accommodate our growth in the next few years. We have already drawn up the plans, and we would like to complete the construction sometime next year. We have made a further application for funds to the Government of India, and since we have already received the endorsement of the Government District Library Officer, we are expecting to receive a 40% subsidy on the building costs and a 60% subsidy on the furniture and equipment. However, the rest of the money will have to be raised by the Ashram. We have already spent a large amount of money on building and equipping the first floor and in purchasing new books, and this has nearly exhausted the funds which we have been able to earmark for his project. We should like to appeal to devotees to donate the money which is required to meet the expenditure on the project. All donations will be gratefully accepted and should be addressed to "The President, Sri Ramana Centenary Library, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, 606 603."

"AT THE FEET OF BHAGAVAN", a new publication

Readers of 'The Mountain Path' will be aware that we have recently been printing a series of reminiscences by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer. The author's association with Sri Bhagavan goes back to the early Virupaksha days, and in the decades that followed, he amassed a huge fund of anecdotes and reminiscences concerning Sri Bhagavan. Twenty years ago he compiled a manuscript containing

an entertaining selection of his memories of Sri Bhagavan, and it was edited for publication by Duncan Greenlees. For some inexplicable reason, the book was never published, and the manuscript disappeared for almost twenty years. It was only rediscovered last year in the Ashram archives, thanks to Sri Jim Grant and Sri David Godman, our Librarians.

We have recently published these reminiscences under the title "At the Feet of Bhagavan", and copies can be obtained from the Ashram Book Depot. (Price Rs. 5/- postage extra)

A NEW ENGLISH JOURNAL ON BHAGAVAN

It is with great pleasure that we announce the publication of a new journal dedicated to spreading information on the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan. The journal, a English monthly, will be published in Andhra Pradesh by Sri M.R. Nageswara Rao. The magazine will be called "*Arunachala Ramana*" and it will consist entirely of material on Sri Ramana Maharshi. Sri Nageswara Rao has been successfully editing a Telugu Magazine on Sri Bhagavan for eighteen years, and during this time he has amassed a large collection of material in Telugu which has never appeared in English before. He informs us that the first few issues will consist largely of reminiscences translated from his Telugu journal.

If any devotees would like further information, or would like to subscribe to this journal, they should write to: "Sri M.R. Nageswara Rao, *Arunachala Ramana*, Gudivada 521 301, Krishna Dt., Andhra Pradesh". The first issue will be appearing in October.

(See the advertisement on page 210 for the subscription rates.)

ASHRAM PRESIDENT VISITS PASUMAPATHINATH SHRINE

Sri Lahtan Choudhary, Minister for Revenue, Bihar, fulfilled a long cherished desire of T.N. Venkataraman, our President by arranging for his visit to the Pasumapathinath Temple in Kathmandu, on September 9. Sri Lahtan Choudhary himself was to accompany our President to Kathmandu but had to cancel his trip as he had to attend to some very urgent work.

In Kathmandu our President was the guest of Sri Kunj Bihari Prasad Singh, a senior advocate and also M.P. The Chief Priest of the temple happily told our President that he had the *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan and had the privilege of knowing Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni and Sri Daivarata.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

At a well-attended function held on September 13, "Ramana Kirtan Manjari", a book of songs in praise of Ramana Maharshi published by the Kendra was released by Shrimati Madhuri Sondhi. The first copy was presented to the author, Shrimati Alamelu Narasimha, a staunch devotee of Bhagavan, who had composed these songs in Sanskrit, Hindi and Kannada. The Kendra is deeply indebted to Shri Satya Narayan Tandon and the City Press, Kanpur for their kind assistance in bringing out the book. Before the release of the book, a Batik portrait of Bhagavan done by Shrimati Lochana Vasudevan was unveiled by Prof. M.L. Sondhi.



Professor M.L. Sondhi unveiling a portrait of Bhagavan. Smt. Lochana Vasudevan and Sri Vasudevan are on the right.

Shri Sondhi in his address emphasized the importance of the valuable work being done at the Kendra in the field of service to the needy, dissemination of Maharshi's teachings, and cultural activities.



Smt. Madhuri Sondhi presenting the first copy of **Ramana Kirtan Manjari** to Smt. Alamelu Narasimha.



Smt. Visalakshi Swaminathan presenting a shawl to Smt. Alamelu Narasimha.

Kumari Bharati and Kumari Shyamala, daughters of Smt. Narasimha, then sang a few of the songs accompanied by a vina. Afterwards, there was a delightful dance performance by children trained by Shrimati Kala Rani Rengaswamy. The song selected for the dance were from "Ramana Kirtan Manjari and Ramana Geetham" of Sri Sadhu Om. The function came to a close with a vote of thanks by Sri K.C. Subbaiah, mangalam in chorus and distribution of prasad.



Professor K. Swaminathan along with **Ramana Nrityanjali** troupe.

Ramana Kendra lost a dedicated and selfless worker by the sudden demise of its Secretary, Sri. S. Ramakrishnan on the evening of August 19. At the memorial service held on the 30th, Prof. K. Swaminathan, Vice-President, Shri B. Ananthaswami, Vice-Chairman of the Ramana Kendra, Madras, Shri R. Chakravarthy, Vice-President of the S.I. Workers Welfare Association, Dr. K. Arumugham of Delhi University, Shri S.N. Tripathi and Shri K.C. Subbiah spoke highly of the qualities of Shri S. Ramakrishnan and the valuable service rendered by him.

A number of deserving poor school children were given gifts of note-books, stationery and satchels on the occasion. The gifts were given away by Shri Sundrara Rajan and Kumari Uma, son and daughter of the late Shri S. Ramakrishna to whom service of the poor was his life-breath.

July 19 was observed as Vidyodaya Day, i.e., the anniversary of the day in July 1896 on which Maharshi Ramana attained illumination in Madurai..

The series of lectures on Bhagavad Gita and Kailyopanishad delivered by Swami Purushottamnanda of the Chinmaya Mission at the Kendra Auditorium from August 3rd to 10th were well attended and highly appreciated.

Regular classes in Tiruppugazh are being conducted at the Kendra by Shri A.S. Raghavan on Sunday mornings. The classes were inaugurated on July 19.

On July 5, Prof. T.K. Narayanan, M.Sc., M.Phil. of American College, Madurai, gave an interesting talk in English on the Message of the Maharshi.

Arunachala Ashrama Celebrations

On the September 6, 1981, Bhagavan's arrival at Arunachala (September 1, 1896) was celebrated in the **Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram**, 'Arunachala Ashrama', Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, Canada.

Despite the forecast of bad weather, more people attended the ceremony than in any previous year, many of them driving hundreds of miles to be present. Mr. Dennis Hartel presided over the festivities, which included enthusiastic *bhajans* and speeches by Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawat, Mr. Babubhai Parekh of New Jersey, Mr. Matthew Greenblatt and Mr. B.K. Raju who has been associated with the Ashram since it started.

"*Bhagavan Sri Ramana—A Pictorial Biography*", which was compiled by Mr & Mrs Greenblatt was shown to Bhagavan's North American devotees for the first time.

Over 200 guests attended the ceremonies, which coincidentally also marked the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Ashrama at Nova Scotia.

Sri Matthew Greenblatt speaks; to his left Sri Dennis Hartel (standing) and Arunachala Bhakta Bhagavata (sitting).



RAMANA KENDRA, HYDERABAD

The following have been elected as office-bearers of the Kendra for 1981-82.

President : Sri G.V. Rajeswara Rao
 Secretary and Treasurer : Sri P. Mohan Rao
 Vice President : Sri R.J. Doshi

Members of the Executive Committee

1. Smt. Lalitha Murthy
2. Sri K.R. Subrahmanyam
3. Sri K. Ramkishan
4. Sri K. Subrahmanian
5. Sri G. Narayanaswamy
6. Sri J. Krishnamurti
7. Sri P. Hanumantha Rao

The Registered Office of the Kendram is :
 1-9-34/A/7, Ramnagar, Hyderabad 500 048, Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI RAMANA BHAKTA MANDALI, HYDERABAD

Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandali celebrated the anniversary of Bhagavan's arrival at Arunachala with great devotion on September 1, this year. Sri M. Narasimham, Convenor of the Mandali, presided over the occasion. To celebrate the occasion, a model Arunachala was created and devotees walked around it in a token *giripradakshina*.

Mr. T. Bheemasena Rao, Mr. Seeta Ramaiah and Venkatachari spoke about their experiences on their pilgrimage to Arunachala. Bhagavan's picture was garlanded during *Vedaparayanam*, *puja* was performed, and at the conclusion of the meeting, *prasadam* was distributed to all the devotees.

SRI MURUGANAR'S DAY

"Let us meditate on Ramana
 The teacher of Reality
 Who dwells within my inmost Self
 As 'I', as 'I',
 Bringing in full measure
 The joy of silence
 Ending the delusive pride
 Of a divided self's self-love."

So sang Sri Muruganar, the poet-saint who devoted his whole adult life to singing the praise of his Master. His samadhi day this year was solemnly observed by the singing of his songs on his Master, with *abhisheka*, and with *puja* to his samadhi which is situated within the Ashram premises at the foot of Arunachala. A large gathering of Ramana *Bhaktas* assembled to pay their respects to one of the most well-loved and respected devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

Memories of such great devotees enliven our hearts and urge us forward on the path shown to us by the Master Himself.

OBITUARY

HER MAJESTY QUEEN FREDERIKA, QUEEN-MOTHER OF GREECE

Her Majesty Queen Frederika, Queen-Mother of Greece needs no introduction to our readers of 'Ashram Bulletin', since she had been a regular visitor to the Ashram almost every year, together with members of her Royal Family. She was drawn to Sri Bhagavan by the purity of His teachings, having been introduced by Paul Brunton. Her devotion was such that she paid a visit to Tiruchuzhi, the birthplace of Sri Bhagavan and expressed: "If I were to settle down in my last days in a place it would be only Tiruchuzhi!" She derived great inspiration from the Kanchi Sankaracharya. Her knowledge of Hinduism was enriched by Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, her teacher in Advaita.



Queen Mother of Greece.

It is with a heavy heart that we have to record the death of the Queen-Mother of Greece at Madrid, Spain. We convey our heartfelt condolences to every member of the Royal Family.

SRI S. RAMAKRISHNAN

Born into a family of distinguished scholars and philanthropists, Sri S. Ramakrishnan was only 48 when he passed away suddenly on the evening of August 19, while presiding at a Lions Club meeting at the Ashoka Hotel, New Delhi. This austere and simple man, this humble servant of God, shunned publicity as he went about doing a thousand golden deeds without fuss or fanfare.



Sri S. Ramakrishnan

With high managerial ability, he was always leading in relief work, whether it was a devastating flood in Bengal or a cyclone in Bihar. He expanded the meaning of *swadharma* to include selfless, sustained and unstinted service to poor students, leprosy patients, bereaved families and anyone and everyone who needed help. As Secretary and for years before he accepted this office, he bore the main burden of Delhi Ramana Kendra's Seva *Samiti* activities, cheerfully and with enthusiasm. The philosophy behind his work of service was derived from Vivekananda and Gandhiji; it was that our poor and abandoned people should be taught and trained to stand upright on their own feet, relying more on their own inherent strength of body, mind and spirit than on others. For all its tragic brevity, Sri Ramakrishnan's life was rich, happy and instructive. With the energy of a giant and the heart of a child, Sri Ramakrishnan accepted and put into practice Ramana's essential teaching in the last two verses of *Upadesa Saram*—selfless behaviour is both the cause and consequence of happiness, and happiness is both the cause and consequence of *dharmā*. At the International Seminar held in Nov. '80 at Delhi many friends noticed and commented on his quiet efficiency and unflinching good humour.

His friends and admirers should learn from Sri Ramakrishnan the lesson his whole life taught:

"I sought by soul, my soul I could not see
I sought my god, my God eluded me.
I sought my brother, and I found all three."

SRI DAVID MACIVER

Sri David Maciver belongs to the very early group of western devotees who came under the powerful influence of Sri Bhagavan. He was with Rene Guenon and was drawn to the spiritual path very early in his life. He was, perhaps, the first westerner to build a house in Ramana Nagar. During his stay with Sri Bhagavan he helped Munagala



Sri David Maciver

Venkataramaiah (later known as Swami Ramananda Saraswathi, compiler of 'Talks') to translate into English many of the works of Sri Bhagavan. Later, even in the days of Sri Bhagavan, he went to Malakara, Kerala and lived with Swami Atmananda. He passed away there on September 19, after a prolonged illness. We convey our condolences

to his wife Mrs. Roda Maciver, who lives in Ramana Nagar. The devotees of Sri Bhagavan will remember him with gratitude.

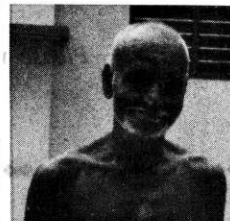
Dr. K. VISWANATHAN

Dr. K. Viswanathan was a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan and a regular visitor, helping the Ashram in an all-round way. The older generation of Sri Bhagavan's devotees know him very well. He passed away on August 24 in Madras at his residence named 'Sri Ramana'.

In him we have lost a gem of a devotee of Sri Bhagavan!

SRI NATESA IYER

Visitors to the Ashram, old and new, have nothing but affection and admiration for Sri Natesa Iyer, who was looking after the maintenance of the Old Hall and Nirvana Room for many years. He passed away peacefully on September 30, after a very brief illness, at the age of 79 years.



Sri Natesa Iyer

His association with Sri Bhagavan goes back to the 1920s. He was serving in the Ashram kitchen and was always ready to meet the food-needs of anyone who came to Sri Bhagavan, even at odd times. He was a seeker of a very high order and a source of great inspiration to young seekers. His selfless service and dedication to his Master will be long remembered.

May he rest at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan, who was his all!

SRI RAM BATRA

Sri Ram Batra, the Chairman of *Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Centre*, Bombay, passed away in Bombay at the age of 54 years.

He was a successful industrialist and was deeply interested in serving spiritual causes, with zeal and devotion. His great endeavour was to serve his fellow-men. He did this by being associated in several capacities with various Public Institutions, Charitable Trusts, Hospitals and Relief Committees, whose prime objects were to improve the life of the less-fortunate.

We convey our deep condolences to his family and friends. □

New Edition

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