

The Mountain Path

Editorial

SECRET OPERATION OF RAMANA'S GRACE

by A. R. Natarajan

Ramana Lives

by Sadhu Arunachala (Major Chadwick)

The Ascent

by Arthur Osborne

Beloved Ramana

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What's in a Name? - Ramana Replies

by Ra. Ganapati

Bhagavan Ramana and Zen

by Jyotsna Nageswaran

Garland of Guru's Sayings

by Professor K. Swaminathan

VOL. 19 No. IV

October 1982

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Letters and remittances should
be sent to :

The Managing Editor,
"THE MOUNTAIN PATH",
Sri Ramanasramam, P.O.,
Tiruvannamalai—606 603
S. India.

Annual Subscription :

INDIA		Rs. 15
FOREIGN	£ 4.00	\$ 8.00

Life Subscription

Rs.150	£ 35.00	\$ 70
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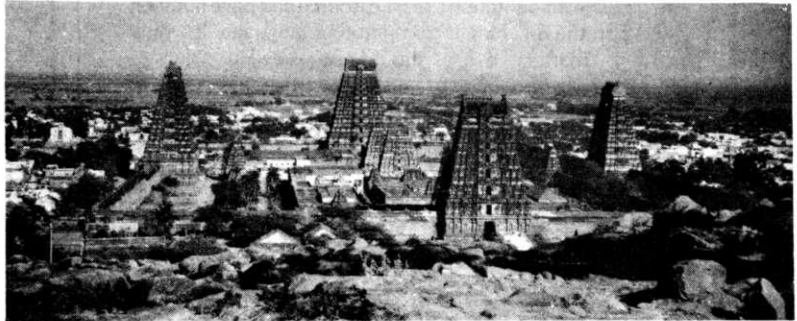
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Rs.4.00	£ 1.20	\$ 2.50
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Thou hast adminis-
tered the medicine of
confusion to me, so
must I be confound-
ed! Shine Thou as
Grace, the cure of all
confusion, Oh Aruna-
chala!

— *The Marital
Garland of Letters,*
verse 76

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH (A QUARTERLY)

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

— *The Marital Garland of Letters,*
verse 1

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**Cover Design by
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Contributors are requested to give the exact data as far as possible for quotation used, i.e. source and page number, and also the meaning if from another language. It would simplify matters. Articles should not exceed 10 pages.

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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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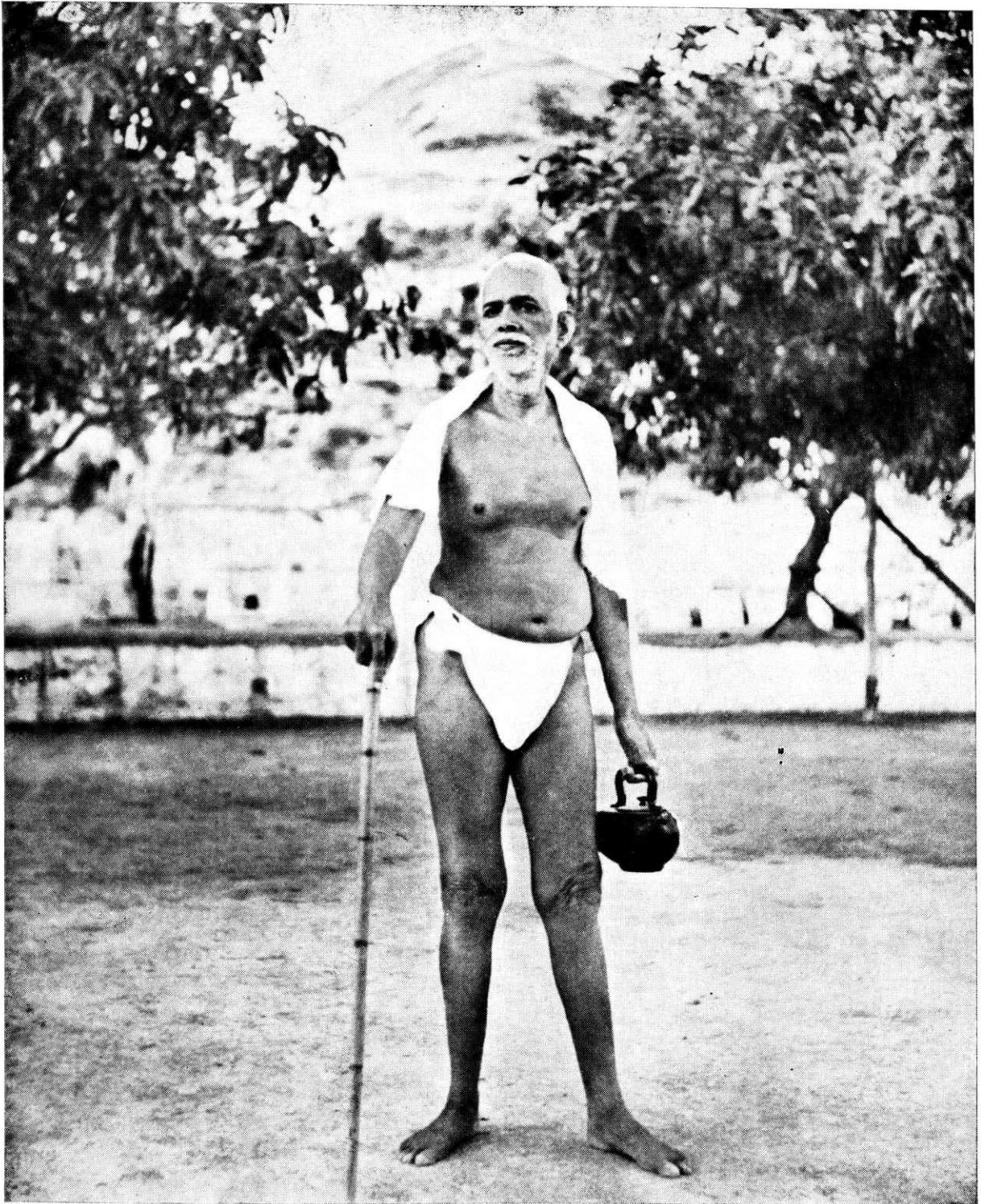
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**THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to**

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi





RAMANA would always remind the visitors and devotees seeking assurance of His Grace that it is there all along, that it is synonymous with God and the Self. Ramana was emphatic about the "Self revealing immediacy of divine grace"¹ and would compare failure to perceive it to the poor vision of the "owl which cannot see the Sun" or to those buds "which do not blossom on sunrise". He once remarked, "People come and tell me that I must grant Grace. They seem to think that I keep it under lock and key. I am always giving it. If it cannot be comprehended what can I do?"²

How then is His Grace vouchsafed? What does it mean to be 'clothed' and 'ornamented' by His Grace? Ramana's Grace means different things to different people. It is ordinarily taken to mean His intervention for altering the course of events. The following illustrations are typical: a devotee suggested to her friend to keep Ramana's picture with her in order that her husband might return to her, and reported after some time in the hall that her prayers had been answered. Another devotee present in the hall asked, "What is

SECRET OPERATION OF RAMANA'S GRACE

EDITORIAL

By

A.R. Natarajan

The Mountain Path

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impossible for Bhagavan?" adding that he had advised a friend that he could continue in Madras, for physical proximity of Bhagavan, if only he prayed to Him for that. Devotees would send telegrams and letters to Sri Ramanasramam to be placed before Ramana for curing ailments of their dear ones.

¹Words of Grace — p. 49

²His grace — Devaraja Mudaliar

'Maharshi Ramana and His relevance To-day'

Even as the telegram or letter was being despatched there would be relief and miraculous cure which would be attributed to His grace. Many instances are narrated in *Day by Day with Bhagavan* and *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* of persons turning to Him in their hour of need, and invariably getting succour. Ramana Himself would, however, dismiss these visible signs of His Grace as being only the automatic intervention of a higher power when matters are brought to the notice of a *Jnani*. The following conversation which Ramana had with Sri Subbaramayya is germane: "Bhagavan, did you not think that you must do something to save the child?" Straight came His answer, "Even the thought of saving the child is a *sankalpa* and one who has any *sankalpa* is not a *Jnani*. In fact, such thinking is unnecessary. The moment the *jnani's* eye falls upon a thing, there starts a divine, automatic action which itself leads to the highest good"³. Such instances are no doubt important in kindling and sustaining faith in Ramana's divinity and the inspired nature of His teachings. The first overt act of grace, however, is the awakening of interest in the search for Truth and for finding the meaning of Life. To be saved from the quagmire and quicksand of a life of identification with the body, centred on sensate pulls, is truly Ramana's Grace. For millions are lost in worldliness. "Remembrance is the forerunner of Grace. That is the response, that is the stimulus, that is Grace"⁴.

To be exposed to the simple and direct path of Ramana for returning to the source, to our natural state of happiness, is the next step, as it were, in the chain of his 'directed Grace' for one could lose oneself in the labyrinth of purely mental, spiritual practices. For the search into the source of the ego, the vital sustenance and support is His Grace, for that pushes the mind inward.

Till one becomes established in the divine milieu one undergoes the torture of "one suspended between life and death". We are often in a half-way house, having neither

anchorage in the Self nor in the body. Old tendencies lash at us, as it were, forcing the mind outward and the joy of Self-abidance is far too weak or intermittent to act as a countervailing force to pull the mind inward. At this juncture, grace is needed most.

Ramana Himself once quoted Nayana (Ganapati Muni) as saying: "In going forward one can run any distance at any speed, but when it is a question of going backward, that is, turning inward, even one step is hard to take". The capacity of the mind to be fully focussed on the 'I' thought is not strong enough on many an occasion. Ramana Himself puts this situation very clearly in *The Marital garland*, when He says, "seeking you with my weak mind I have come back empty-handed. Aid me O Arunachala!"⁵

In the inward journey too one could be lost by mistaking 'lulling of the mind' as being the end of the journey. The case of Sankaranada, a devotee saved by Ramana, would serve to bring out this point. Sankaranada would sit for long hours in the hall. While meditating he would be overtaken by spells of 'stillness of thought'. To get him out of this state, Ramana would request Sri Kunju Swami and Sri Viswanatha Swami to take him out to the temple or for a walk to the lake so as to draw himself out for no further progress would be possible. Otherwise⁶ it is Ramana's Grace alone which enables one to cross this stage and push inward, deeper, to the zone of the self by giving the strength for persisting in the enquiry upto the point where it is required before 'letting go' to be 'swallowed alive' and becoming 'inundated' by the sea of bliss of the Self. "Grace is thus the beginning and end. Introversion is due to Grace; perseverance is Grace and realisation is Grace."⁷ So important

³*Sri Ramana Reminiscences* — p.21

⁴*Talks* — p. 208

⁵*The Marital Garland* v. 45

⁶*The Mountain Path*, July '82, p. 195

⁷*Talks* — p. 284

is grace for the search and for self-abidance that Ramana uses the expression as many as fifty-one times in the *Marital Garland of Letters*.

Again, it is the Grace of Ramana which enables us to be aware where exactly our true freedom lies. The first instruction which he gave to His mother was that events are preordained according to the divine law. In response to questions put to Him, he would emphasise this fact. years later, Ramana told Paul Brunton, "He who has given life to the world knows how to look after it also. He bears the burden of the world, not you."⁸ He would at the same time point out that "the pathway to freedom" "lies in not identifying oneself with the body and by not being affected by pleasures and pains consequent on the body's activities."⁹

The feeling that we are utterly helpless and incapable of shaping events and circumstances according to our choice increases and the ability to cast the 'burden of care' on the supreme power who 'sustains all things' comes about as one learns to "let go" and "lose" oneself in the flood tide of Ramana's Grace.

Self-enquiry and surrender is possible only by His Grace which operates unnoticed like the morning dew, cleansing the mind both of its self-regarding activity and its laziness. Borrowing His words, we often wonder who it is that has "secretly" entered the mind and stolen our heart".¹⁰ He is 'the sacred treasure of Grace' coming to us uninvited, without notice, biding His time to reach and destroy the vitals of our ego.

The secret of this alchemy of Grace is not known for, like a spider, Ramana holds us tight in his gracious orbit to consume us at His hour. But one thing is certain. He is like 'the mighty Aruna Hill', 'the life-destroyer' and He too has 'raised the flag vowing the death of the ego of his devotees'.¹¹

It is for this reason that he would generally not encourage evaluation of one's spiritual progress. Once we have entrusted ourselves to

VISIONARY

**There are wings about the temples and a flight
about the feet**

That is swifter than the wind:

**There is beauty in the being and the single-
mooded beat**

Of a glow above the mind!

**There are ecstasies of ages that are brimming
in the soul,**

That are dancing in a gyre

**Of a crowded resurrection in the mystical
control**

Of Thy white-rose-fire.

**There visionary unguents in my eyes which
would anoint**

The rose-marriage-dream of cloud;

**I am filled with separation that is now the
meeting-point**

Of a lost, ancestral crowd.

**All colours seek the Colourless within my equal
gaze,**

And in the silent Me.

**Beyond the desert-solitudes of footfalled nights
and days**

Time seeks Eternity.

— Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

His care. care he will and it would be His concern to look after us.

What indeed would have been our lot had He contended Himself with just enjoying the Bliss of Self abidance! But. Ramana graciously accepts the responsibility and becomes our 'helmsmen', our 'staff and life in the spiritual journey. This is illustrated by two instances :

⁸Maharshi and His Message — p. 20

⁹Day by day with Bhagavan — p. 78

¹⁰Marital Garland — v. 89

¹¹Marital Garland — v. 24

Balarama Reddy would pay obeisance, along with a loving offering, to the Maharshi early every morning and pursue self-enquiry in the privacy of his own apartment. He was not yet aware of the transforming influence of the physical proximity of Ramana. Ramana noticed this. When His broad hint failed, he literally thrust His grace on Reddy by a mock anger, which made him realise the immeasurable advantage of 'questing within' in Ramana's presence.

A leaf from Sri T.K. Sundaresa Iyer's diary¹² is also worth extracting in this context. "One day I wondered why I was visiting Him at all. What was the use? There seemed to be no inner advancement. Going up to the Hill was meaningless toil. I decided to end my visits on the hill. For one hundred days exactly I did not see Bhagavan. On the hundred and first day, I could suffer no longer and I ran to

Skandasram above Virupaksha cave. Bhagavan saw me climbing, got up and came forward to meet me. When I fell at His feet, I could not restrain myself and burst out in tears. I clung to them and would not get up. Bhagavan lifted me up and asked: 'It is over three months since I saw you. Where were you?' I told him how I thought that seeing Him was of no use. 'All right' he said, 'May be it is of no use, so what? You felt the loss, did you not?' Then I understood that we did not go to him for profit, but because away from him there was no life for us."

The steady light of Ramana's Grace will do its work shining like the golden rays of the rising Sun, enabling us to abide, for ever, sunk deep in the Ocean of Bliss.¹³

¹²At the Feet of Sri Bhagavan, p. 3

¹³Adapted from Necklet of Nine Gems — verse 3

On the occasion, pointing out to the mantra: 'Brahmanaya Namah' which comes in the Sivashtotram (the 108 Names of Lord Siva), a non-brahmin devotee asked Sri Bhagavan, "Why should Lord Siva be referred to only as a brahmin?" "Why should you think you are a sudra?" replied Sri Bhagavan. "The different bhavas (attitudes) such as brahmin and sudra come into existence only through ignorance. But in the natural state of a man, there are no such differences".

— Sri Sadhu Natanananda's *Sri Ramana Darsanam*.

Bhagavan was reading an English translation of a French letter received from one Zikovsky and family, of Czechoslovakia, to this effect: "I and my family are grateful to Bhagavan for all his blessings so far. I hope to go and see Bhagavan, God willing. Meanwhile I pray Bhagavan may send such instructions or directions as he may deem fit." Bhagavan is not able to recognise the writer, but says he must be one of those who wrote from Europe (about the time Brunton first wrote about Bhagavan), that they knew long ago, i.e., long before Brunton's writing, about Bhagavan and his teaching and that they had been practising what Bhagavan taught. Bhagavan thinks the writer of the letter must be one of those who read about him and his teachings from what appeared from the pen of Humphreys (who became a devotee of Bhagavan about 1910-11) in some journals at that time.

— *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p.30

RAMANA LIVES

By Sadhu Arunachala (Major Chadwick)



*Nearly 20 years ago some questions were raised about the continuous presence of Sri Bhagavan in the Ashram. The tangible and convincing answer has been the steadily increasing stream of devotees who have found what they longed for in the Ashram during all these years. Nevertheless, since Sadhu Arunachala's logic only re-inforces the experience of many others, we have pleasure in re-producing the following article from the **Call Divine** of January 1953.*

— Editor

UNDOUBTEDLY the same peace is to be found at Tiruvannamalai as in the old days when Bhagavan's physical body was still with us. Some people declare that they find it is stronger now than formerly, they had been distracted by his form, and now that that distraction is no longer there they enjoy, undisturbed, the bliss of his amazing aura. Did he not himself say during those last sad days: "You say I am going to die. Die! I shall be more alive than ever". And so it is.

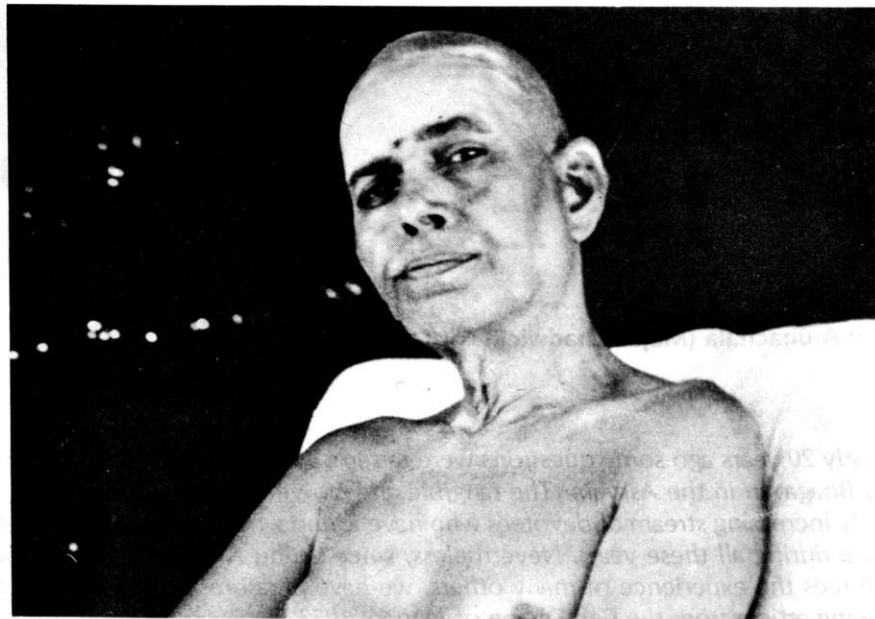
But there are still a number who declare that he is dead, that there is no use coming to the Ashram and sitting besides an empty tomb. "No doubt there are psychic vibrations", they admit reluctantly, "but those you can find in any holy place. No, it is no use remaining there, the initial impetus having been given you, you must go off in search of a living guru. Living guru, indeed! Is he not now and ever most living?

But let us examine their argument. It is something like this. Bhagavan having left his

body has become absorbed in the Infinite. (You don't mean to pretend that he is still bound to a corpse, do you?) So, except for certain sentimental attachments there is no use remaining in the Ashram or even visiting it. If you do go you may feel certain vibrations, the back-wash, so to speak, of the past, but these are useless for *Sadhana*, or useful only as a preliminary step which will lead you on to a "living guru". But for anybody with any pretense to advancement, it is useless. There's an end of it.

But like so many plausible arguments it is entirely false, for even these people have admitted Bhagavan to be a *Jivan-Mukta*, one who is already and finally released from ego. And how often did he not say: "You think I am the body, this corpse that I have to bear about. That is where you are wrong. I am universal" You see, he was "universal", even before he apparently left the body.

The whole mistake simply lies, in the interpretation they put on the word *Jivan-*



Mukta; or in what they think a *Jnani* really is and how he functions. When it is found that a *Jivan-Mukta* is already absorbed in the Infinite and that, for him, the apparent change he undergoes is no change at all, there should be no more misapprehension. There is no further step for a *Jnani* to take, he lost all sense of doership or association with a particular body when he finally knew himself to be a *Jnani*. The physical death is only just a happening in the myriad strange happenings in *Maya*. He was in no way limited to a body while it was functioning. It was there, one might almost say, for us. We needed something that we could see, somebody who could speak to us. Now we must get along without the comfort of the physical presence, but it does not mean that Bhagavan has gone anywhere. Indeed, as he said himself: "Where could I go? I am always here".

While he was in the body his body acted as a visible centre for concentration, as a point to focus at, something tangible, which drew the disciples to it. Yet he never was the body even then, he was and knew he was the eternal *Atman alone*. So now what is more appropriate than that the place in which he

lived so long and which is so permeated with his presence should now serve as this centre for concentration? But to think for one moment that Bhagavan Ramana has been dispersed, just blown away in thin air, is stupidity. How could anybody who knew him talk like this? "He has become absorbed in the Infinite, become in fact, the Infinite," they would reply, "for now he is everywhere, not just at a point, in Madras". But as I said above, this is no argument. He was always the Infinite and denied his being in the body. The situation is exactly the same, except that now we no longer have his embodied form before us. But there is still his Ashram and the *Samadhi* where that sacred body is enshrined.

Theoretically, I suppose, there never was any need to seek him in Tiruvannamalai, even when he was functioning through a body, except for the well-known rule that a Guru is necessary. Yet, we felt the need, and flocking there knew the benefit. To-day we can still do the same.

But in the old days he spoke, gave verbal instructions. Now that can happen no more. But to how few did he actually ever speak?

How many thousands just came and sat before him silently and went away without a word? How many came with their minds bursting with questions and in his presence found all the questions self-answered? All this is still possible.

Still, too, can we sit in front of the *Samadhi* and receive the most potent vibrations, get answers to our unasked questions, comfort and encouragement when needed.

To what after all did all his spoken instructions amount? "There is only one Self. You are that".

Amplifying slightly it becomes: there is nothing to do, nothing to seek. There is only a false identification with limitation to discard and that is done by concentration on the Eternal Witness, the One behind all phenomena. Know who you are and there is no more to know. You cannot be the eternally changing body, you witness that; you cannot be the senses that observe and contact, you use them; you cannot be the mind which reasons, that is only a tool; you cannot even be the named individual, because that has its changes of childhood, youth and old age, it is

born and it dies, it ceases in deep sleep, it takes entirely new forms and names in various births, you are a witness of that too. But we know, each one of us, that there is a permanent "I" behind all these fun functions and changes. If we would only concentrate on that instead of on the apparent world, we should have no more worries or problems.

Any further additions to these teachings were purely given as a sop to the ever-inquisitive mind which wants to know, to probe into the future, but is never satisfied, for as soon as one doubt is cleared there is another waiting to pop up and take its place. Moreover, how is it ever possible to clear doubts intellectually? For the moment we may be satisfied, then we forget the arguments, or remember another on our side of the question which we forgot to pose. Bhagavan knowing this spoke little. "Silence is best!" he would say. And here once more are we led back to the Ashram where the same silence can be found, the same presence, the same inspiration, and the same all-absorbing peace. □

BHAGAVAN'S ARRIVAL IN TIRUVANNAMALAI

By B.V. Narasimha Swami

Today (a day in June 1929) there was some talk in the hall about the Maharshi's arrival in Tiruvannamalai, during the course of which Kapali Sastri asked, "Bhagavan came straight to the temple, did he not?"

Maharshi: "Yes. The doors were all open at that time and I went straight into the innermost shrine (*garbhagraham*). There was no one else present."

Kapali Sastri: "And Bhagavan then reported his arrival to Arunachaleswara, did he not?"

Maharshi (smiling): "As though Arunachala would not have known it otherwise!"

The Ascent¹

By Arthur Osborne

THERE is one flank of the mountain where the ascent is sheer with no pleasant groves to rest in on the way, where however, to compensate for this, the path is direct and the crest already visible from the plains below and throughout the ascent. This is the direct path as taught by Bhagavan. There are no stages on this path. Indeed, followers of Bhagavan are apt to be impatient when they hear of stages or degrees of Realisation upon some indirect path and to say: "What does all this mean? Either a man has realised the Self or he has not." This attitude is right as regards their own path but not necessarily as regards others, for there are paths on which the wayfarer does not aim at realisation of the Self, the ultimate and supreme Truth, or at any rate not directly and the term 'realisation' is used with a different meaning, to signify merely the attainment of some higher state which, however, is equally transient and illusory within the ultimate reality of the Self.

However, although the wayfarer on the direct path does not attain to any higher states along the way, he may be blessed with glimpses of pure Self-realisation, beyond all states, which will suffuse and irradiate his whole life. Speaking of pure Self-realisation and the direct path to it, Bhagavan affirmed quite definitely both that there are no stages in Realisation and that realisation is not normally permanent when first attained except in very



rare cases. It may come in occasional flashes but cannot be permanent until the *vasanas* (inherent tendencies impelling one to desire one thing and shun another) have been eradicated.

Two modes of conscious planned ascent are indicated whatever name one may give them (apart from the occasional transportation of the mystic and the uncharted elevation of certain saints); that of the man who ascends in stages, becoming stabilized in this lifetime in some higher state, possibly with some higher posers, but with no direct,

¹A short excerpt from the forthcoming publication of Arthur Osborne's Autobiography

and often even no theoretical knowledge of the supreme state of Self-realisation; and that of the man who envisages the supreme truth of Identity, strives towards it, perhaps has occasional glimpses of its Realisation but, until attaining it, is not established in any higher state. Which is preferable? The question is unrealistic, since each aspirant will follow the path that accords with his temperament and that his destiny makes available.

Another question that may be raised at this point is that of the benefit of those below. reverting to the symbol of the mountain; should the hill-dweller who is facing downwards, having established a homestead not too high up from which he can supply the sufferers in the plains below, not be considered preferable to one who has turned his back on them and struggled up on his lone path to the summit? He might be if the symbol held good, but it does not. It is cancelled out by Christ's saying that to him who attains the kingdom of heaven all else is added. It is therefore he who has the greatest power to help others.

Not many are there with discrimination who take the direct royal road and who can follow the ever-present living inner Guru in the Heart, who is the core of their being. When expedient he may appear in a human form. Embodied or not makes no difference for He is not the body as Bhagavan kept on reminding us. Once a devotee, Miss Merston, intercepted Him on Arunachala to ask whether she should return to England after several years of absence or stay on and Bhagavan replied: "Remember, wherever you go or stay Bhagavan is always with you watching over you."

Many there are whose complicated minds make them seek byways. More often than not they become attached to self-styled gurus misguided and misguiding others, and thus genuinely deluded. It is a sign of the times — the time of false Christs and false prophets of which Christ warned his followers. Some such are widely known and publicized, others

CORRECTION: I

In the Poem by **Dr. M.B. Bhaskaran** published on p.162 of our July '82 issue, the following corrections have to be made:

"The line 10 should read as 'And the known future' and the last line should read as 'Enigmatic Void'"

— Editor.

almost unknown. They make the highest possible claims for themselves or allow their disciples to make them; this one is Christ at his second coming, that one God incarnate. How far are they self-deluded and how far consciously deluding others is usually hard to say. A man may spend years in solitude, practising yogic discipline, as a result of which various powers may develop, both internal powers such as vision and audition, and outward directed powers such as telepathy and hypnotism. Then the ego, forgetting that its own immolation is the ultimate goal of the process, may pride itself on what it has acquired, regarding this as realisation. In some cases this capital, accumulated during the time of training, may be gradually exhausted, like an overdrawn bank account, and the guru survive on his former reputation if at all; but in other cases it may continue or even grow with the growth of the ego. For the ego will grow; there is no food on which it flourishes more than the adulation of disciples. The seeker needs to use great caution in estimating not only the guru but the purity of his own motives, for any impure motive may be reflected outwardly in an imperfect guide. And then not only will he not be led forward into greater purity but will be infected by the imperfections of the guide, drifting into a worse state than before; for qualities of the ego are as infections through psychic contact as a disease is through physical.

□

beloved ramana

I record in this column another instalment of un-published anecdotes gathered from talks with old devotees.

By His grace I have had, ever since 1956, the proud privilege of attending on and listening to the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan. I deem it a duty and find it a pleasure to share with friends what I have heard from time to time from these elder devotees.

V.G.

SRI Sadhu Natanananda, the author of *Spiritual Instructions*, is little known to the outside world, even though he had for decades been living in the vicinity of the Ashram, till, his passing away last year. He was content to practise and live Bhagavan's teachings totally withdrawn from active life and free from all desire for recognition or reputation. He was gracious enough to enlighten seekers and help them on in the path of *Atma Vichara*.

When I asked him what was the last talk he had with the Master, he gave the following as the most important, though not the last, instruction that he had received from Bhagavan before His *Mahasamadhi*.

"When I approached Bhagavan to clarify in what state of being we lived, He quoted these two verses from *Kaivalya Navanita*:

'By the Lord under sacred banyan tree,
I speak the truth: You are the unchanging
Witness of the gross, subtle and (causal)
ignorance, the waking, dream and
sleep states,
and the passage of time — past, present
and future.

which endlessly rise and fall, like waves in the ocean of bliss.

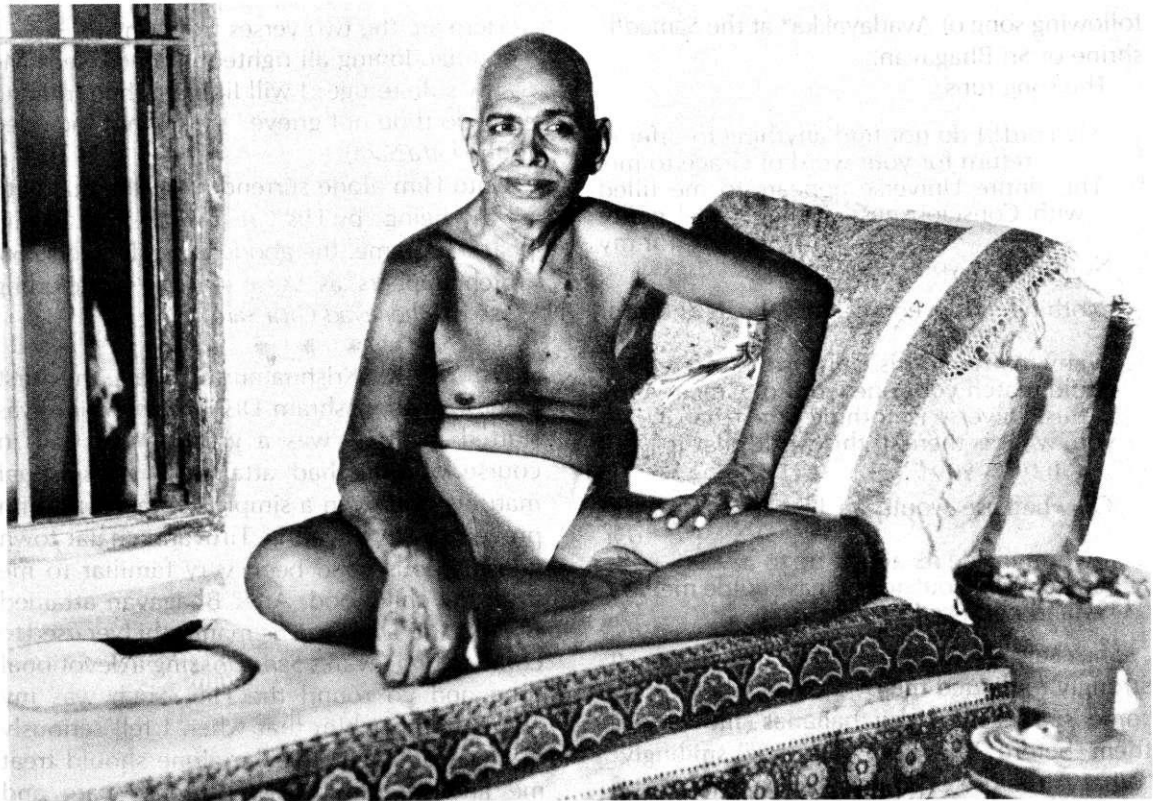
I had in my countless past incarnations mistaken the body for the Self.

High or low, seeing all as a mirage, I have by the grace of My Master realised the Self as 'I' and been liberated.

"These verses clear the deep-rooted doubt even of advanced *sadhaks*, whether we live as the *Atma* or as *ahankara*."

On another day, Sadhu Natanananda gave me the gist of Sri Bhagavan's teachings, as follows:

"The Truth is only One and this Truth was passed on by Saint Uddhalakha to Swetaketu; by Yamadharmas to Nachiketas, by Yagnavalkya to Gargi, to Maitreyi, to Janaka; by Vyasa to Sukha, by Vasishtha to Rama, by Rama to Anjaneya, by Krishna to Arjuna, by Sankara to Mandanamisra, and by Sri Ramakrishna to Vivekananda. This same Truth, the essence of all the Upanishads, and the direct perception of our Master, He has passed on to us in His abundant compassion and Grace! It is: 'Man's original state is Awareness alone. He is not either the body or the senses or the mind. The



Awareness is as subtle as the *akash*, ether. Even though the Awareness seems to be within the body, yet like the lotus-leaf on the water and the insect in the mire, it is not bound by it. Also, just as ether is the basic element which pervades earth, water, fire and air, this Awareness pervades the body and the mind and yet is not in any way affected by them. For this Awareness there is no birth nor death, no bondage nor release. That Awareness is your real nature.' This is what Bhagavan tells us emphatically."

He continued, "On one occasion, I asked Sri Bhagavan, the right method for *Atma Vichara* and He replied: 'At any time and under all circumstances one should unfailingly remember one's real nature (I AM). (ii) While remembering this one fulfils one's obligations in the world, one will do it without the least attachment to actions done, or to their results. When this attitude is strengthened the

aspirant feels assured that he is making progress in his *sadhana*. (iii) This attitude should be practised by all.

For instance Bhagavan Himself was very active and did all sorts of work. He stitched leaves, He made *kamandalams*, He perfected staffs, He assisted in the kitchen, grinding, preparing pasters, cutting vegetables and actual cooking. He acted as a mid-wife to dogs and monkeys. And He did all this without the least attachment and did it all perfectly. The proof of one's doing the actions without attachment is that one feels that it is the Lord who uses one to get things done and done so well. His whole being says: 'The Supreme has done these things through me'. Such humility is the mark of spiritual maturity."

* * * * *

Sampoornammal who had for many years served as kitchen-assistant to Bhagavan, came running to me one day after singing the

following song of Avadayakka* at the *Samadhi* shrine of Sri Bhagavan.

The song runs:

'My Lord! I do not find anything to offer in return for your word of Grace to me. This entire Universe appears to me filled with Consciousness. Hence I feel guilty for my

Not offering you anything.

'Nothing, not even my body, heart and soul nor

any matter in this Universe, if offered could match your one word of Grace. As this Universe is nothing other than you, what is there in this world that I can offer you?'

'Of what use would an Upadesa imparted to a

worm inside its abode be to a bee humming outside? Please guide me, as I stand confused.'

She said: "While singing this song, it strongly reminded me of the day when I took some sugar-candy and bananas and placed them before Bhagavan. He said smilingly: 'What is the use of offering these to me? You should surrender your mind!'"

* * * * *

Sri N. Balarama Reddiar, an old scholarly devotee, fortunately still with us and ever ready to speak to us about Bhagavan, narrated the following to me:

"A Vaishnava-devotee went and stood by the couch of Sri Bhagavan most reverentially and asked: "Bhagavan! Why have you not chosen the verse "*Sarvadharmā parityajā*" (Ch. 18 v. 66) which has been cited by great sages as the most important *śloka* of *Sri Bhagavad Gita* and which is the *charama śloka* of Vaishnavites"? Bhagavan replied: "You will see that I have chosen instead an earlier verse of the same chapter (Ch. 18 v.62)"

Sri Balarama Reddiar clarified this cryptic statement as follows: In v.66 a negative aspect, 'abandoning all righteous deeds seek Me as thy sole refuge', is stressed; but in v.62, 'Unto Him alone surrender, O Bharata, with all thy being', the positive method is given.

Here are the two verses from Ch. 18

"Abandoning all righteous deeds, seek Me as thy sole refuge; I will liberate thee from all sins; do thou not grieve." (v. 66, not included in the *Gita-Sara*)

"Unto Him alone surrender, O Bharata, with all thy being; by His Grace shalt thou obtain peace Supreme, the abode eternal." (verse 66, which appears as verse 42, the concluding verse of *Bhagavad Gita Sara*)

* * * * *

Dr. M. R. Krishnamurthi Iyer, the first Doctor of the Ashram Dispensary which was started in 1929, was a great seeker and in course of time had attained high spiritual maturity and even a simple contact with him proved it. He stayed in Tiruvannamalai town and his house had been very familiar to me from my childhood. After Bhagavan attained *Brahma Nirvana*, Dr. Krishnamurthi Iyer used to come to Bhagavan's *Samadhi* sing a devotional song and go round the Hill. Such was my admiration for him that when I fell seriously ill I was adamant that he alone should treat me and he did so with intense care and affection. During that period I came to know of his intense spiritual fervour and I asked him to tell me more about Bhagavan.

He said: "In the later 30's Bhagavan was gripped by continuous hiccups and I was treating him. Days passed and I had tried all the medicines known to the profession; all in vain. Bhagavan's condition was fast deteriorating. One day I checked His pulse and found it very feeble and I feared that His days were numbered. I got thoroughly upset. I spoke no words to Him, but standing in His presence, I prayed mentally that He should show me a way to cure Him.

"I returned home, grief-stricken, and cried and cried like a child till I fell asleep. In the early hours of the morning, Bhagavan appeared to me in my dream and said, 'Why are you weeping?' I replied sobbing, 'Bhagavan,

(*This lady-saint from the far south had composed many songs full of Vedantic meaning which Bhagavan's mother used to sing in His presence when He was living up the Hill).

you know why. I don't know how to save you from hiccups. What am I to do?' 'Don't cry. In the courtyard of your house there is a 'Seendhikodi'. Pluck some leaves from it, fry them in ghee and then pound them along with dried ginger and jaggery, make a ball of it and bring it to me. Don't worry!' I woke up, delighted, and my wife and I went out with a hurricane lamp and searched for the herb in the courtyard. Except for a small strip, the courtyard was plastered in cement. In the small strip many bushes had grown. There among these, we did find the herb — only one of it. And we made the preparation accordingly and almost ran to the Ashram. When we entered the Hall very early in the morning, Sri Bhagavan was seated on His couch. With a smiling face, He greeted us and extended His hand with these words: "Give me what you have brought!" He swallowed the medicine. When I spoke to Him about the dream He looked innocent as if He knew nothing about it! Needless to say, the hiccup stopped within a few days. He was restored to normal health."

* * * * *

Smt. Lakshmi Ranganadham was a fortunate devotee whom Bhagavan referred to as "our Lakshmi" and who was fondly known as "Oor Athai" ('Aunt coming from town').

Oor Athai was kind enough to tell me the following: "Through my brother Naravana Rao I came to Bhagavan. With my mother I stayed in town and visited the Ashram. Chinnaswami was then doing the Ashram cooking all alone. I was asked to assist in the kitchen. One day I was grinding for the next day's *iddlis*. Suddenly Bhagavan came there and asked me 'Why are you doing it all alone?' Then He also sat with me and completed the grinding before He left. Even now my hairs stand on end when I think of it!"

Oor Athai continued: "Bhagavan could be stern when we made mistakes. Once I made some *puris* for being served in the afternoon. I fried them in oil, but also made a few in ghee. I placed the specially made ones on top, so that I could quietly serve these to Bhagavan.

Everything was distributed. When all was over, Bhagavan called me and said: 'Lakshmi'. Don't do this again. If you try to differentiate, I will never touch any of your preparations". How did He know what I had done? I never repeated this mistake. Bhagavan's words are so powerful that the entire being gets changed with a single word of His. He is not only the Fountain of Compassion, but the Lord of Power as well"

* * * * *

It was well known that Bhagavan's head would shake continuously and that without the staff he could not walk or even stand aright. These were not symptoms of old age. Sri Kunju Swami says that both the shaking of the head and His holding on to a staff were with Him from very early days. These were the marks left on Him from very early days. These were the marks left on Him by the stupendous experience of *Atmanubhuthi* in Madurai! When asked about this condition, Sri Bhagavan remarked: "What do you think would happen to a small thatched hut inside which a big elephant is kept tied up? Wouldn't it be shattered? It is the same case here!"

* * * * *

Vilacheri Ranga Iyer was a classmate of Sri Bhagavan. His was one of the rare cases where Bhagavan was known to have interfered and changed the course of one's life. He made him stay along with Him for months and did not allow him to go away though he repeatedly asked permission to go. (The story is given in A. Devaraja Mudaliar's *My Recollections*, pp.103-4) When Bhagavan did permit him to go home, most of Ranga Iyer's problems had been solved.

His daughter, Smt. Alagammal, came to the Ashram in June this year. She is deeply devoted to Bhagavan. She got her name Alagammal from Bhagavan Himself. She narrated a few interesting incidents that took place in the presence of Bhagavan as told by her father.

"When first Ranga Iyer met Bhagavan, up the Hill, he asked Him: "What Bhagavan! Even

the previous evening before you left for Arunachala, we were together playing football. You were so normal, then. How is it you did not inform me, who was so close a friend of yours?" Bhagavan smiled and replied: "Ranga! Did I undertake the journey in the normal course, packing up things and so on? It was some Great Force that pushed me and brought me to Arunachala. Where is room then for anything else?" The immensity of the 'Great Force' was proved by the fact that Bhagavan had been quite normal 24 hours before!"

"Ranga Iyer's wife, Chellamma, was also deeply devoted to Bhagavan. During one of their visits, Ranga Iyer and family took permission from Bhagavan and went round the Hill (*giripradakshina*). Chellamma was having a swollen leg and hence could not go

along with others. She, however, went round the Ashram premises once and a few times around the Old Hall in which Bhagavan was seated. When she entered the Hall Bhagavan was surprised and asked her how she had made the *giripradakshina* so quickly. She replied: "I could not go with them; but I went round the Ashram and the Hall, which for me is Arunachala *pradakshina*. Did not Lord Ganesa once go round His parents, Siva and Parvati, and win the prize for going round the universe? For me Bhagavan is my father and mother and going round Him is more than *pradakshina* of the Hill". Bhagavan laughed and said: "I hope Chellamma will not ask me for a reward like the golden mango which Ganesa got?" Chellamma replied: "I do want a reward, Bhagavan. I want your 'grace'". Bhagavan benignly looked at her! □

RAMANA MARGA: A Marvel of Simplicity

By T.S. Narayanaswami

Ramana Marga consists of two processes: i. the seeker of Reality tracing logically, by the elimination of the unreal, the answer to the query *Who Am I?*, ii. contemplating incessantly the Reality shining in the cavity of the heart in everyone, the Self in the *hridaya-guha*.

The process of seeking the answer to the query *Who Am I?* is Jnana Marga, the act of self-enquiry is Karma Yoga (the path of Action), remaining poised in the Self is Dhyana Marga (the path of Meditation), and the attitude of unqualified acceptance of the supremacy of the Self, while being poised in the Self is Bhakti (the path of Devotion). Thus Ramana Marga is a synthesis of all the four main yogas, any one of them being sufficient for God-realisation.

Ramana Marga also resembles the teaching of Brother Lawrence who gave the people the inspiring message "Practise the Presence of God." He tells us that by being aware of the fact that God is always with us and seeking His Grace, everyone can lead a happy and successful life.

It demands from us no complicated rituals; it can, therefore, be practiced by us at any time of the day, even during intense activity or during leisure.

It is suited for prince and pauper alike. It requires no special austerities like baths in holy river, or observances of fasts or all-night vigils. It requires no secluded place or hermitage. It can be practised right in the midst of the marketplace. What matters in Ramana Marga is our intense awareness of the Self in us — ever present reality.

Lord Krishna also says in the *Gita* (Ch. VI. v.47); "And among all Yogis, he, who, full of faith, with his inner self merged in Me, worships me, he is My greatest devotee."

SRI MURUGANAR

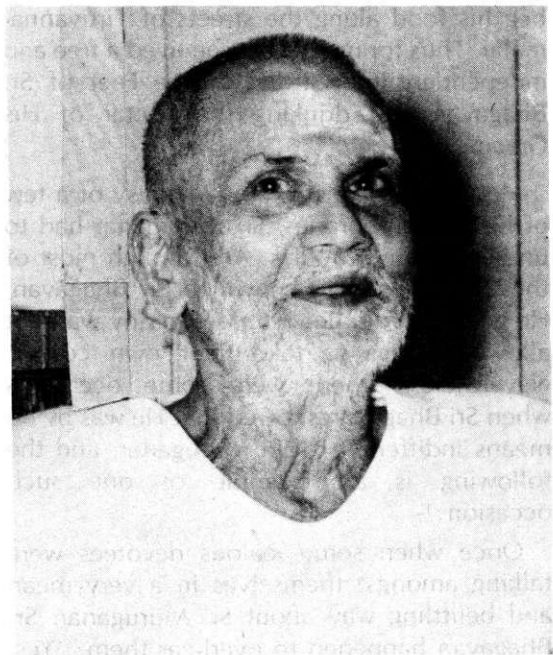
By Michael James

SRI Muruganar was one of those devotees who received in full measure the Grace of Sri Bhagavan and who thereby attained the supreme experience, *Brahmanubhava*. Countless verses in his great work *Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham* give clear expression to his rich and perfect experience of Sri Bhagavan's Grace and leave the reader convinced that he was not only an inspired poet of unsurpassed excellence but also an *Atma-Jnani*. On understanding the meaning of these verses one is filled with the greatest hope and encouragement, for Sri Muruganar never tires of affirming again and again the greatness and power of our *Sadguru*, Bhagavan Sri Ramana. Indeed, he repeatedly asserts that all that he attained was a pure gift of Sri Bhagavan's Grace and that he himself never did anything. In one verse, for example, he says that without ever making him close his eyes or do any meditation, Sri Bhagavan made him realize the Truth.

It was Sri Muruganar's overwhelming love for Sri Bhagavan that made him a fit vessel for His Grace. In *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* he has sung nearly two thousand heart-melting verses in praise of Sri Bhagavan and praying for His Grace to root out the ego. From the day he came to Sri Bhagavan, his love for Him was whole-hearted and one-pointed, and never again did he turn towards any other God or *Guru*, nor did he care for any other thing in this world.

He once told Sri Sadhu Om:

"I had not only heard of Sri Bhagavan before coming to Him, I had also read some of



His works. Therefore I had already decided that he alone should be my *Guru*. I was simply sitting in His presence. I did not see any vision or such things at that time, nor did I like to have any such experience. I was confident that even the mere Presence of this great *Sadguru* would do everything for me.

Sri Muruganar continued: "Be not disheartened. No mediator is necessary for us in order to obtain the light of his Grace. It is certain that Sri Bhagavan, the Ocean of Grace, of his own accord and without the intercession or interference of anyone else, directly contacts the heart of each one who comes to him."

It was always the nature of Sri Muruganar to rely upon no one and nothing except Sri Bhagavan. In 1926 he left home and came to settle permanently at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan, and with him he brought all his worldly wealth and possessions, which he gave to the Asramam as his *Guru-dakshina*. For a while he lived in the Asramam, but being a free bird by nature he did not like to depend upon anyone or to be bound by anything, so after six months he found it more congenial to stay outside the Asramam and to beg his food along the streets of Tiruvannamalai. Thus for many years he lived a free and independent life, sitting at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan and drinking the nectar of His Grace.

However, because of the jealousy of a few of his contemporaries, Sri Muruganar had to undergo many troubles. And though most of these troubles were known to Sri Bhagavan, He generally did not interfere in any way but allowed things to take their own course. Nevertheless, there were some occasions when Sri Bhagavan showed that He was by no means indifferent to Sri Muruganar, and the following is an example of one such occasion:¹

Once when some jealous devotees were talking amongst themselves in a very mean and belittling way about Sri Muruganar, Sri Bhagavan happened to overhear them. "Yes, yes, they may belittle Muruganar as much as they like. But when *Sannidhi Murai* and *Guru Vachaka Kovai* came out, his position among the very foremost devotees became firmly established. Whatever they now say about him, they cannot shake him down", remarked Sri Bhagavan.²

From this remark we can understand how much love and regard Sri Bhagavan had for Sri Muruganar. Though Sri Bhagavan generally spoke kindly of everyone, it was very rarely that He ever used superlatives in this manner. And when He thus spoke of Sri Muruganar as one among "the very foremost devotees" it was far from being an ordinary compliment,

for it ranked him on a par with such eminent devotees as Manikkavachakar and other great saints of yore.

Moreover, in the path of Sri Ramana love and knowledge, *bhakti* and *jnana*, are inseparable; hence, being a great devotee, Sri Muruganar was *ipso facto* a great disciple also. Indeed, he may very well be regarded as the most eminent disciple of Sri Bhagavan, for it was through him that many of the principal works of Sri Bhagavan came into existence. Within five years of his coming to Sri Bhagavan he had become instrumental in bringing into existence *Atmavidya Kirtanam*, *Upadesa Undiyar* and *Ulladu Narpadu*, and during the twenty-eight years of his association with Him he collected and recorded most of His important *upadesas* in the form of more than one thousand two hundred Tamil verses, which now make up the priceless work *Guru Vachaka Kovai* (The Garland of Guru's Sayings). The indispensable role that he played in the genesis of *Ulladu Narpadu* — namely, his collecting the stray verses of Sri Bhagavan, selecting the essential ones, arranging them in a coherent order and requesting Sri Bhagavan to compose the links necessary to form a complete though terse revelation of the truth — itself proves what a profound insight he had into the heart of Sri Bhagavan's teachings.

Though Sri Muruganar thus played such an important role in making the pure teachings of Sri Bhagavan available to the world, for many years his true greatness remained known to only a very few of the more discerning devotees of Sri Bhagavan — so self-effacing and unobtrusive was he. But real greatness cannot remain hidden forever. The pre-eminence of Sri Muruganar is nowadays becoming known to an ever wider public and devotees are able to appreciate now more than ever before that he was indeed a perfect

¹Another example of Sri Bhagavan's concern for Sri Muruganar can be found in *The Mountain Path*, October 1979, pp. 234 to 235.

²This remark of Sri Bhagavan is referred to by Sri Natananandar in his foreword to *The Path of Sri Ramana*.

disciple of Sri Bhagavan. Hence it may be worthy in this context to relate one more incident³ which illustrates what great esteem Sri Bhagavan had for Sri Muruganar.

Though Sri Muruganar renounced his family and all worldly ties in 1926 and came and settled permanently at the feet of Sri Bhagavan, for many years he did not bear the outward signs of renunciation. He continued to have long hair, to wear a sacred thread and to observe some useful *acharas* (orthodox practices). His was primarily an inward renunciation, for he knew well that outward signs are immaterial to true renunciation. Indeed, according to Sri Bhagavan, the outward signs of renunciation such as a shaven head and *kashaya* cloth come according to *prarabdha*, and hence they can neither help nor hinder true, inner renunciation. One morning, however, sometime in the year 1947, when Sri Muruganar entered the Hall as usual and prostrated himself before Sri Bhagavan, his long hair was not to be seen. His head was clean-shaven, and his sacred thread had also vanished.

Peering down at the prostrate figure lying before Him, Sri Bhagavan smilingly remarked, "Oho, even that has gone!"

What is to be inferred from these gracious words of Sri Bhagavan? Do they not mean that Sri Muruganar's inner attachments and tendencies (*vasanas*) had already been renounced, and that now even his long hair and outward *acharas* had gone?

From this remark of Sri Bhagavan and from His remark about Sri Muruganar being one among "the very foremost devotees", is it not clear that Sri Bhagavan recognized and openly approved the supreme devotion and the complete renunciation of Sri Muruganar? And since supreme devotion and complete renunciation are both but other names for true knowledge, can we not infer from these remarks of Sri Bhagavan that Sri Muruganar had indeed realized the Truth?

However, what gives Sri Muruganar his unique position among the devotees of Sri Bhagavan is not only his Self-realization, for

countless must be the devotees who have realized the Truth through the Grace of Sri Bhagavan. "Because the ever-unborn (self) has taken birth (in the form of Sri Ramana), many of the ever-undying (egos) have died", sings Sri Muruganar in one verse of *Sri Ramana Anubhuti*. Indeed, when Sri Bhagavan gave Liberation even to Cow Lakshmi, how can we doubt that He would also have given Liberation to many human beings? However, most of those who thus attained Liberation by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan will remain ever unknown to the world, for the death of the ego is an inward change and can seldom be noticed outwardly. To explain this point, Sri Bhagavan sometimes used a simile given in the scriptures, namely that of the *vilambazham*, a hard-shelled, wood-apple fruit which is swallowed by an elephant. When the fruit comes out in the elephant's dung it is seemingly unchanged. Its shell remains unbroken, and not even a crack can be seen from outside. However, if one breaks the shell one will find it to be empty, all its contents having been digested by the elephant. Similarly, though the ego of a ripe soul will be completely destroyed by the *Sadguru* when he comes and sits for even a few moments in His presence, he will nevertheless go away as if unchanged and will never show any outward mark to indicate to others what a tremendous change has taken place within. In this way many devotees would have realized the Truth in the Presence of Sri Bhagavan without ever being noticed by others.

Therefore, it is not only the fact that Sri Muruganar realized the Truth that gives him his unique place among the foremost disciples of Sri Bhagavan. What makes him infinitely important to us, the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, and what makes us revere him so highly is the fact that we too can derive actual benefit from him and from his Realization. Though many devotees have realized the

³This incident was narrated to the present writer by Sri Sadhu Om, who was present in Sri Bhagavan's Hall when it took place.

Truth through the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, only a few rare souls like Sri Muruganar have been chosen by Him as instruments for the bestowal of His Grace on others.

The Grace of the *Sadguru* functions in ever so many ways. It functions through His Silence, it functions through His having assumed a human name and form which we can adore and glorify, it functions through the example of His life, it functions through His teachings, and it also functions through His devotees. The *Sadguru* uses the mind, speech and body of His egoless devotees as the pure instruments of His Grace. At the instance of such devotees He bestows His true teachings upon the world, through them He afterwards expounds and makes clear those teachings, through them He reveals the greatness and power of His Grace, and through them He sets a pure example of devotion and self-effacing conduct which can be seen and followed by less mature devotees.

In all these ways, Sri Bhagavan's Grace has functioned through Sri Muruganar. At the instance of Sri Muruganar Sri Bhagavan bestowed upon the world such precious works as *Upadesa Undiyar*, *Ulladu Narpadu* and *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, which enable us nowadays to know the true teachings of Sri Bhagavan in their authentic, unalloyed and undiluted form. Through Sri Muruganar Sri Bhagavan has given us a rich, profound and authoritative commentary upon *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanamai*, the moving hymn through which He teaches the path of pure devotion and self-surrender. Through the works of Sri Muruganar such as *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai* and *Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham* Sri Bhagavan has revealed the greatness and power of His Grace. He has set a shining example of dedicated and one-pointed devotion. He has demonstrated how the paths of *bhakti* and *jnana* are inseparably interrelated, and He has thereby shown the true and practical spiritual path to be followed by all of us who aspire for egolessness. And above all, through the humble and self-effacing life lived by Sri

Muruganar Sri Bhagavan has exemplified how a true devotee should live his life in this world: unattached to the world, unknown to the world, and uncaring for the appreciation of the world — *in the world but not of the world!*

It is because the Grace of the Lord thus works through His true, egoless devotees, helping to uplift us less mature souls, that devotion to the devotees is so highly prized in the Indian tradition. Indeed, in the Saivite tradition of Tamil Nadu, which provided the cultural background for both Sri Bhagavan and Sri Muruganar, one is taught to revere the devotee as God Himself, and the greatness of the devotion to the devotees is one of the principal themes of the *Periya Puranam*, the great poem which recounts the lives of the sixty-three Saivite Saints and which moved Sri Bhagavan so deeply when, as a fifteen-year-old schoolboy, He first read it. This ancient custom of revering the devotees of the Lord so highly has also been approved and sanctioned by Sri Bhagavan in verse 104 of *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanamai*, in which He sings.

“Oh Arunachala, bless me so that I may become the devotee of the devotees of the devotees who hear Your name with love!”

Let us therefore become the devotees of the devotees of Sri Muruganar, the great devotee who always heard the name of Sri Arunachala-Ramana with heart-melting love! □

CORRECTION: II

At the bottom of page 179 of our last issue it was mentioned that the concluding verse to the Tamil version of *Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam* was composed by Sri Easwara Swami. However, Sri Sadhu Om and Sri Kunju Swami have both informed us that it was in fact Sri Bhagavan Himself who composed this Tamil verse. The reason why in this verse Sri Bhagavan refers to Himself in the third person as 'Arunagiri-Ramanan' is that He was adapting into Tamil the idea expressed by Daivarata in his concluding verse to the original Sanskrit version of *Sri Arunachala Pancharatna*.

— Editor

A DIALOGUE WITH THE MAHARSHI – II*

By B.V. Narasimha Swami

Maharshi: Why do you doubt again?

Devotee: Because dreamless sleep looks so vague a state to me and is not clear and convincing like the truths that I perceive now in the waking state.

M. As you said, you have had dreams also, have you not?

D. Yes.

M. When you had dream experiences, did they not appear to you to be true and real?

D. Yes, as a rule they did, though with occasional exceptions.

M. Leaving aside exceptions for the present, you found reality in the dream state. Then why do you say that dreams are unreal?

D. Dreams are often such a jumble of impossible, improbable and absurd circumstances, as for example, being on land, suddenly rising into the air, then suddenly finding oneself old or young, and so on.

M. These dream experiences are impossible or absurd if you judge them by waking standards. But judging them by dream standards, you did not deem them impossible or absurd while undergoing the dream.

D. That is true.

M. What is your next reason for maintaining that dreams are unreal?

D. Because they are not confirmed in my waking state. For example, I dream of swimming and sinking, but I wake up and find no water on me or on my bed.

M. Your waking experiences were not confirmed in your dream state either, were they?

D. No, as a rule each state has its own independent existence.

M. Then why do you prefer to say that waking experiences alone are real, and not dream experiences?

D. I spend much more of my time in waking, it is a longer experience. I can now consciously discuss reality. The light of consciousness now appears stronger and clearer. I can go on endlessly corroborating these experiences with innumerable people. All agree that waking is the real state and dreams are unreal.

M. All, or almost all, agree in saying that the sun rises every morning and sets every evening. Do you for this reason agree that it is the sun that moves around the earth?

D. No.

M. Why not?

D. Because geographical, astronomical and scientific enquiry disproves the primary impression on the mind.

M. Then why do you not pursue a similar scientific enquiry about the dream state and about dreamless sleep?

D. Yes, I agree that I should.

M. Let us go into the facts then. You said that there were exceptions to the feeling of reality experienced in dreams. What are they?

D. Sometimes in dreams we dream that we dream, and that suggests the unreality of dreams.

* Continued from our last issue, pp. 189 to 192.



M. Is it not just the other way round? If in the primary dream a dream interlude or secondary dream intervenes, the feeling about the primary dream when it prevails is that it is true and real, while the secondary dream is felt to be unreal. Is it not so?

D. It seems so.

M. Any other exception?

D. In dreams there is occasionally a vague and confused feeling of uncertainty.

M. Do people in the waking state never experience a sense of the unreality of things, especially after great sorrow or after a deep reverie?

D. Yes, sometimes they do.

M. Do these exceptions in the waking state convince you that waking state is unreal?

D. No, they are exceptional experiences, and my conclusions must be based on regular and reliable data.

M. All right, but the dream state is not just now so relevant or important for consideration of the question in hand as dreamless sleep. Why not investigate that?

D. How can I?

M. Well, when you are in deep sleep, are you conscious of your body, your breath and your mind or intellect?

D. No.

M. Are you yourself absent then?

D. It seems so

M. Did you not admit that you had enjoyed the bliss of dreamless sleep every night?

D. Yes.

M. If you enjoyed it, you must have existed then to undergo the experience of bliss — the bliss of being free from all extraneous things and rambling thoughts, even the thoughts about your body, breath or mind.

D. Yes, it seems so.

M. Why do you say 'seems'? Who enjoyed that bliss? Was it you or someone else?

D. It was I, not anyone else.

M. Could you have had that experience if you yourself were not present?

D. No.

M. You also said that you had no idea then of your body, breath or mind. Who had no idea?

D. I.

M. To be able to say that none of these things were present in dreamless sleep, you must have been present there, must you not?

D. It appears so. But everything is so vague about that state. I cannot definitely examine it as I can now examine this waking state.

M. You have not been to Siberia, have you?

D. No.

M. Yet do you not believe in its existence?

D. Yes.

M. Why?

D. Because I accept the statements of credible witnesses who say that there is such a land and that it has the peculiarities which they say they noted in it when they went there.

M. If there are those who have seen this Siberia of dreamless sleep with better equipment than yourself, and if you regard them as credible witnesses, can you not accept their statements?

D. Yes. But where are such witnesses?

M. What do you take the sages who gave the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* to be? Do you doubt their capacity or veracity?

D. I doubt neither.

M. Well then, hear what they say in the *Upanishads*. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* (2.1.17), for example, they say that in deep sleep the individual remains absorbed in the *Atmakasa* (the space of self). Again, in the *Chandogya Upanishad* (6.8.1) they say that when a man is said to be sleeping, he has in fact become united with the reality and he has attained his own nature.

D. This is getting deeper and deeper into philosophy and metaphysics, which is very perplexing and troublesome. Why should I trouble myself with the solution of these problems?

M. Why should you, you ask. Because you wished to obtain *upadesa*, *siddhis* and so on as a means to happiness, and therefore you needed to understand all these matters. However, never mind about metaphysics or philosophy. Do you want happiness or not?

D. Certainly I want it.

M. Do you understand what gives happiness?

D. Yes, so many things give it. But what I wanted to discover is how to get it unmixed with sorrow and how to get it permanently.

M. Are there degrees or kinds of happiness?

D. Some things are more pleasant than others. Some give more enduring pleasure. Some give pleasure, but mixed with or followed by sorrow.

M. Then which kind or degree do you want?

D. I want the highest and most permanent kind, that kind which has no trace of sorrow mixed with it.

M. Have you ever seen light without some darkness or shadow contrasted with it?

D. No.

M. If a man had experience of only one taste and not of various tastes, could he say whether it is sweet, sour or bitter? If all colours but one had never come before a

man's eye, would he have the notion of colour? Is it not by contrast that you know and have experience of touch, taste, colour, smell and so on?

D. Yes.

M. Similarly, is it not because of the prior experience of pain that pleasure is recognised as pleasure?

D. Yes.

M. If a man continued to have the taste of sugar on his tongue every second or minute for a week or month, would he recognise its sweetness?

D. No, he would become cloyed with it much sooner.

M. That is, what was pleasure would be viewed as pain, and any variety would be welcomed as pleasure, would it not?

D. Yes.

M. But you said you want pleasure always, unmixed with pain, did you not?

D. Yes.

M. Then the pleasure you desire cannot be relative pleasure, can it?

D. No, it cannot.

M. So you want absolute pleasure or happiness. If a thing is viewed as happiness by one and misery by another, then it is not absolute happiness, is it?

D. No, it is not.

M. All right, but in any case it is best for you to begin with an analysis of happiness from your own standpoint. So you can begin with the question, "What will give me happiness?"

D. All right.

M. But the answer to the question, "What will give me happiness?" depends upon the answer to the further question, "What am I?", does it not?

D. Why? Whatever I am, happiness must be happiness.

M. Take the case of a tiger seizing a lamb which was tied by a huntsman, who is watching on an adjoining tree waiting to shoot the tiger. Is the seizure of the lamb happiness to the lamb, to the huntsman or to the tiger?

D. It is happiness to the tiger only momentarily, to the huntsman ultimately, and not at all to the lamb.

M. Therefore, before deciding whether some-

thing will be happiness to a person, you must first ascertain who that person is. So before finding out what will give you happiness, you must first enquire and find out 'Who am I?'. □

(To be Continued)

THE LIGHT FROM WHICH ALL THINGS EMERGE

The Light from which all things emerge
will lead thee on ... into the depths submerge
the sense of I and thine no more
will gently take thee to the 'other shore'.

The 'other shore' in Buddhic terms 'Nirvana blest'
will cease to bother thee, no rest
nor need of rest for thee
for thou art happy now to BE.

To BE and yet to be no more
is blessedness indeed, the other shore
is when no sense of seperateness remains
the other shore is open, yes — no pains!

No pains; pain is the sense of being two
but when no more, the mystery is through
for thou wert never two and yet
and yet it seems that way — forget!

Forget the tricks that thought doth play
forget the many paths and STAY
stay where thou art, no need of movement, nay
thou art, thou art, be still, pray.

Be still pray, be still and know
thy being is the heart, the glow
thy being IS, no doubt no more
that's where thou art — the 'other shore'!

— Martin Leo

WHAT IS IN A NAME? —

Ramana Replies

By Ra. Ganapati

EVERYBODY knows that the Ramana Way (of Wayless Awareness) pertains to that (THAT) which is beyond name and form. Yet it is wonderfully heart-warming to see how he accommodates the *upasana* of Name and Form in the *sadhana-krama* of those who are unable to follow his Direct "Path" directly. This is, of course, as it should be since there is nothing left unaccommodated, including names and forms, in the Self.

Of the two, name and form, let us here confine ourselves to the study of the former as advocated by Ramana. Yes, it is almost advocacy — i.e., something superior to the accommodative condescension usually shown by a Jnani to a lesser path. By and by we shall find that he has advocated the Name with no less ardour and fervour than a Nama-siddhantin when the person he addressed was found by him to be an *adhikari* for this path.

An advaitin with his realisation of the Unnameable espousing and expounding the path of Nama! But that exactly is the mark of the real and realised advaitin.

Did not the Parrot of yore, Suka, the image of advaita, warble in ecstasy the glories of the Nama in the *Bhagavata*?

The great Sankara himself was a "victim" to the power of the Name. In his *bhashya* to the *Vishnu Sahasranama* he accords to Nama-japa a status superior to *yajna* and *puja*, because it eschews the violence inevitable in yagna and eliminates all the external materials required

in puja. He also points out that Nama-japa excels other *sadhanas* in that it has no restrictions regarding time and place.

In the great Acharya's *Prasnottara-ratnamalika* ("The Gemgarland of Catechism") one of the questions is: *kim smartavyam purushaih?* (What is to be reflected upon by the embodied soul!) Curiously enough, the reply of the Master of advaita does not touch the impersonal atman, but runs: *Hari nama sada* (The Name of Hari at all times)!

In the line of these advaitins came the Brahmanendra Sri Sadasiva, who counselled his tongue to be constantly repeating the names Mukunda, Kesava, Madhava, Govinda, Krishna, Radharamana, Hare Rama — "*Broohi Mukundeti ...*"

The greatest proponent of the Nama-marga in the south, the one who is remembered by the appellation of Bhagavan-nama-bodha, "Knowledged in the Name of the Lord", was himself a pontiff presiding over Sankara's advaitic *peeta* at Kanchi.

All this is not to say (or even suggest) that these advaita luminaries would allow the aspirants to lose sight of the ultimate goal of realising the Unnameable through the path of knowledge. But what they unequivocally stress is that this Nama-upasana, which incidentally is a by-path of the main road of devotion, did not distract the aspirant away from the path of knowledge, but reached him to that higher path gradually and naturally.

It must be remembered that Bhagavan-nama Bodhendra has said categorically: *Jnanam vina kirtanasya mukti hetutvam nastyeva* "Bereft of Jnana, Nama-samkirtana (alone) is not liberation-causative." But it must also be remembered that he (as well as the other advaitins) categorically recommended this Bhakti-path (and its Nama-by-path) as leading on spontaneously to the Jnana-path.

Bhagavan Ramana has in our century held their banner aloft in his own lofty inconspicuousness.

One knows Ramana as untiring in hurling his "Brahmastra" of Self-enquiry towards the countless questioners and silencing them thereby. At the same time he was not blind but very much alive to the fact that all are not cut out or ready for that Path of paths. Again and again he is on record to have provided or permitted the other paths, including that of the Name to those who could not practice Enquiry.

Let us now see instances, first where he admits and accepts the necessity for different paths; second — where he shows that these paths also ultimately lead the aspirant to the Direct Path, and third — where he extols the Nama-path in particular.

We have this in the "Abhyasa Prakarana" of his *Upadesa Manjari*:

The interlocutor asks whether all people are authorised to practise the Path of Enquiry. Ramana replies that Enquiry is possible only for the *pakvi* — (the ripened ones) and that the rest must practice the sadhana that suits their mental state.

Question: What are these other sadhanas?

Answer: Prayer, Japa, dhyana, yoga, jnana etc. Japa: *muttering either audibly or within oneself the names of Lord's forms or mantras like the sacred pranava.* (Italics mine)

Elsewhere referring to himself as Maharshi he says: "Maharshi does not criticise any of the existing methods. All are good for the purification of the mind."¹

Visitor: *Nirguna upasana* is said to be difficult and risky — *Saguna upasana* seems easier.

Maharshi: Do what is easy for you.²

Devotee: Which method is the best?

Maharshi: It depends upon the temperament of the individual. Every person is born with the *Samskaras* of past lives. One of the methods will be found easy for one person and another method for another. There is no definiteness about it.³

D: Is there any particular *upasana* which is more efficacious than others?

M: All *upasanas* are equally efficacious. But each-one takes easily to some kind of *upasana* which suits his previous *vasanas*.⁴

Suri Nagamma's immortal *Letters* are an instance of a more pronounced slant towards dualistic sadhana.

Maharshi has pointed out that, "in the *Vasishtam* it is mentioned that Vasishta told Rama that the path of Self-enquiry should not be shown to anyone who is not sufficiently qualified... If a person is told that he is the Godhead, Brahman itself and that he is already liberated he may not do any spiritual practices, thinking that he already has that which is required and does not want anything more. That is why these vedantic matters should not be told to spiritually undeveloped people (anadhikaris)"⁵

We shall pass on to his assurance that the other paths also join the Direct Path in the end.

M: Enquiry is not the only way. If one does spiritual practice (sadhana) with name and form, *repetition of holy names* (japa) or any of these methods with grim determination and perseverance, one becomes THAT.⁶

¹TALKS: Entry dated 19th May, 1936

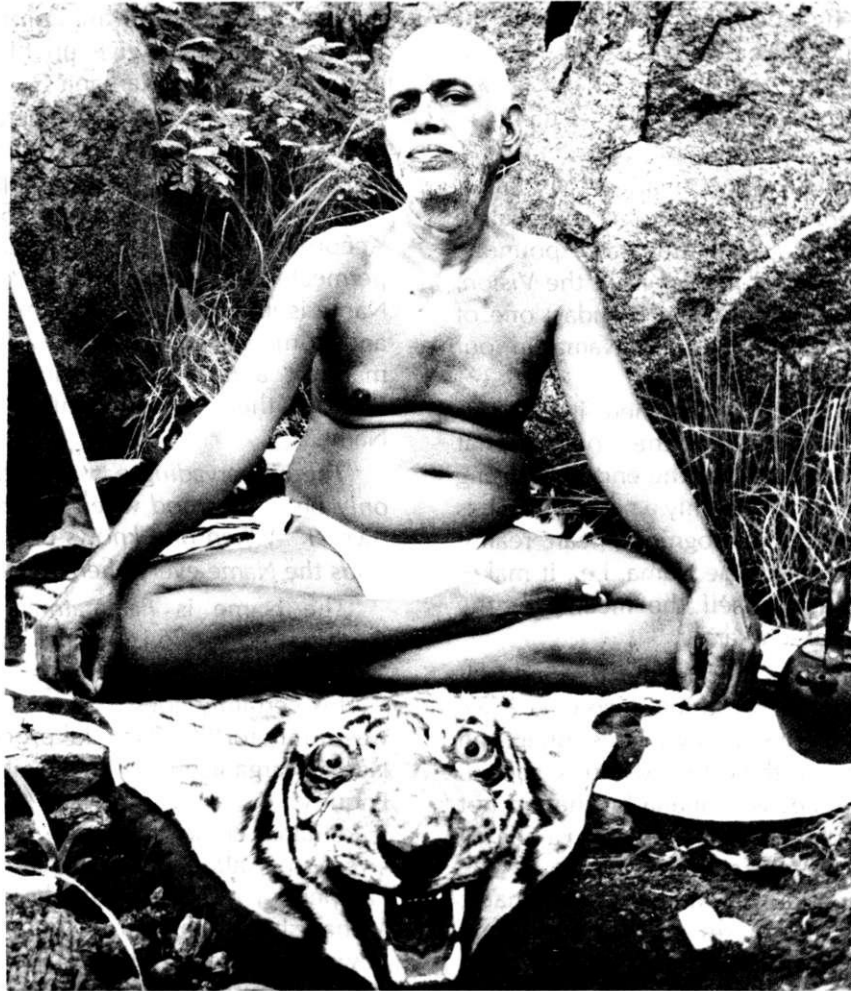
²Ibid. Dt. 7th Nov., 1938.

³TALKS: dt. 17th Nov., 1938

⁴Ibid. Dt. 23rd Nov. 1938

⁵Letters from Sri Ramanasramam: Dated 21st Nov. 1947

⁶Ibid. dt. 29th Nov. 1947



“The oral repetition of *nama* leads one to mental repetition which finally resolves itself into the eternal vibration”, (14th December, 1938, *Talks.*)

D: Can advaita be realised by japa of holy names, say Rama, Krishna etc.?

M: Yes

D: Is it not a means of an inferior order?

M: Have you been told to do japa or to discuss its order in the scheme of things?⁷

In Maharashi's original works also we have, though not often, his commendation of the Nama. For example:

The *Upadesa Saram* (6) says: “The repetition aloud of His name is better than praise. Better

still is its faint murmur. But the best is repetition within the mind — and that is meditation...”

Sad Vidya (8) has this: “Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute reality, it is only a means for realizing It without name and form...”

Because of his conviction that the Name itself will gradually lead one to the Nameless, he has actually tried to anchor certain types of sadhaks in this path, though their own preference would have been for that of Enquiry. Here is what he said to a devotee on 30th April, 1938, as recorded in the TALKS.

⁷TALKS: dt. 18th June, 1935

D: While engaged in *Atma Vichara*, the investigation of the Self, I fall asleep. What is the remedy for it?

M: Do *nama-sankirtana* (sing the name of God)

According to Sri Devaraja Mudaliar⁸ Bhagavan frequently refers with approval to an article on Nama-Mahatmya as expounded by Namadeva, which appeared in the *Vision*, the Asram-journal of Swami Ramdas, one of the greatest apostles of the Nama in our century.

The salient point to note here is that this philosophy goes beyond the concept that Nama is also a means for the end of realising the I — and asserts that only a person who has already achieved 'I-recognition' can realise the omnipresence of the Nama, i.e., it makes *atma-sakshatkaram* itself the means for the end of *Nama-sakshatkara*.

And Ramana has "frequently" referred to it with "approval"! If we think deep over it we shall find no inconsistency in this. Bhagavan has, in the line of the other advaitins, spoken of bhakti as a means of jnana but he did not stop with this. He has also pointed to a bhakti-effusion after self-realisation, above the duality of devotion, sublated and sublimated into a wonderful efflorescence of Love. This he termed *Jnanottarabhakti* — devotion transcending knowledge. So perhaps Namadeva's Name is transcending the Self.

Let us see an instance of Ramana's reference to this *Namasiddhanta* as unfolded in the entry dated 3rd January, 1938 in the *TALKS*:

Mr. Pannalal was in a dilemmatic plight. His Guru, "a great sage" had given him the name of Hari saying that "it is all in all; no effort is necessary for concentrating the mind. Concentration will come of itself if *Harinam* is persisted in". So he took to the *nam*. But before he attained perfection in the *sadhana* the Guru passed away, and so he "felt like a rudderless ship in mid-ocean". Then he heard of Ramana and came to his Ashram. Thus he found that the path prescribed by Ramana was

atma-vichara. That put him on the horns of a dilemma; must he give up his own Guru's method and adopt Ramana's?

When Pannalal put this in detail to Ramana himself, the Master referred him to that article in the *Vision*. It set forth the "philosophy of the Divine Name according to St. Namadev." According to this philosophy, "The Name permeates the entire universe directly... The Name is immortal ... The Name itself is form and form itself is Name ... God became manifest and assumed Name and form ... Beware, there is no mantram beyond the Name...

"The all-pervading nature of the Name can only be understood when one recognises his own 'I' When one knows one self then one finds the Name everywhere. (Italics mine)

"The Name is *Paramatman* Itself where there is no action arising out of *dvaita* (duality)".

This certainly goes to show that Bhagavan was firmly for Mr. Pannalal proceeding in the *Nama Marga* itself, without switching over to *Enquiry*.

Ramana could move us with his short, sweet story about Tukaram, showing how the "all-pervasive" Name simply pervaded this Maharashtrian saint from pore to core, and how his assertion that the "oral repetition of *nama* ... (ultimately) resolves itself into the eternal vibration" is bodied forth by that saint.

Says Bhagavan: "Tukaram, the great Maharashtra saint, ... always used to utter the name of "Sri Rama". Once he was answering calls of nature and also saying "Ram, Ram". An orthodox priest was shocked, and so reprimanded him and told him to be silent when he answered calls of nature. Tukaram said, "All right!" and remained mute. But at once there arose the name of Rama from every pore of Tukaram and the priest was horrified by the din..."

Again, Sri Ramana dispelled the doubt of a visitor who asked, "People give some names

⁸Day by Day — entry dt. 7-12-45

to God and they say that the name is sacred and repetition of the name bestows merit on the individual. Can it be true?"

Bhagavan replied in both serious and jovial veins, the jovial too as meaningful as the serious. Says he: "Why not? You bear a name to which you answer. But your body was not born with that name written on it, nor did it say to anyone that it bore such and such a name. And yet a name is given to you and you answer to that name, because you have identified yourself with the name. Therefore, the name signifies something and it is not a mere fiction. Similarly, God's name is effective. Repetition of the name is remembrance of what it signifies. Hence its merit."

This entry under date October 3, 1938 in the TALKS continues:

"But the man did not look satisfied. Finally he wanted to retire and prayed for Sri Bhagavan's Grace.

"Sri Bhagavan now asked how were sounds assuring of Grace would satisfy him unless he had faith.

"Both laughed and the visitor retired".

The point driven home here is that Nama-upasana done with faith will surely elicit His Grace.

It may also be incidentally inferred that Bhagavan also accepts the contention of the Nama-siddhantin that even as "mere sounds", that is, even when the sadhak just goes on muttering the Name without knowing its meaning and without feeling, but with a general faith in its efficacy, it proves effective.

Instances are there of Ramana recommending the japa of the namas Siva and Rama to some seekers.

Apart from the assonance in the "Ramana and Rama-nama", we have his spirited acclamation of that Taraka.⁹

"As and when the mind goes astray, it should be turned and made to steady itself in the thought of the Self.."

Questioner: "To do so, the repeating of the name of Rama is good, is it not?"

"Certainly, it is good", said Bhagavan. "What could be better? The greatness of the Japa (repeating) of the name of Rama is extraordinary".

He also quotes Rama-nama mahima as glorified by Hanuman in *Adhyatma Ramayana*: "With a pure mind and with the Bliss (Ananda) generated by a firm knowledge of the Self, the two letters 'Ra' 'Ma' which are like Mantras, will repeat themselves within you automatically. What more is required for a person who has this knowledge?"

Here too the nama-uttara-jnana seems to be adumbrated.

As the culmination to his similar acclamations may be cited his proclamation, "The Name is God" and his citing the Bible: "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God".

Many are the occasions when he encouraged Bhajan-singers to sing namavalis in his presence in the Ashram.

When, for example, the two girls who accompanied a Gujarati lady to his holy presence on the afternoon of December 8, 1945 started bhajans and the lady fell into a trance, Bhagavan was, according to the author of *Day by Day* "enjoying the tune, keeping time by beating his knee with his hand." He adds: "I had never before noticed Bhagavan so interested in any song."

Gajanan, known to Ramana-devotees as 'Daivarata', had been with him as early as 1914 in the Virupaksha-days. Even then Sri Ramana had encouraged him to do bhajan with the utmost gusto he was capable of, whenever they undertook the *giriparikrama*. Reminiscing on those days Ramana used to say with child-like glee: "Oh, he would do his bhajans while walking. He would jump from one side of the road to the another. He was so full of life and enthusiasm."

⁹Letters: entry dt. 2nd May, 1948

¹⁰Day by Day: entry dt. 6-12-45 (Night)

When this Gajanan turned up at the Ashram decades later, on the 13th February 1946, and submitted that he still had the nerve and verve to do his zestful *bhajans* Ramana at once approved of arranging for the performance, taking care to see that all the accessories were provided: "He must have some *sruti* like harmonium, some accompaniment like *mridangam* or *kanjira* and some *cymbals* (*Jalara*)".¹¹

Subsequently, on the night following, Gajanan gave a bhajan for about an hour, with Bhagavan himself among his audience.

How sweetly absorbed and absorbingly sweet he must have looked when watching the *kummi* of the Srivilliputhur party as they clapped and gamboled to the singing of songs, mainly nama kirtan, for an hour and a half on that blessed afternoon of the 3rd August 1946.¹²

Now we launch into deeper waters.

Strange it may seem, but true it is, Sri Ramana not only recommended Nama to others, but was himself one who took it, or rather, was taken in by it, in all intensity. He is unique in many ways and as a Nama-upasaka also he is unique. He was devoted not only to Name of the Personal God, but ... here I touch something as enigmatic and paradoxical as the "Parabrahma-mahishi" (Royal Spouse of the Absolute) of Sankara's *Soundarya Lahari* ...

We fell in love with the Name of the Unnameable Impersonal Self also! Something *sui generis*!

First to the Personal:

Tirunavukkarasar sings in the bridal idiom:

First the Name she heard

Then of the comeliness of His Form,

Thereafter the place of His abode ...

This can be adapted and applied to the love-lorn maiden, Ramana:

First the Name she heard

Which also was His Form and place,

And in His formless being was lost.

How can we, the devotees of Ramana, forget the spell that the Name "Arunachala"

itself the Bridegroom and His Home, cast upon young Ramana, before he showed any signs of spirituality?

Like any confirmed Nama-siddhantin, we see him, splitting up his chosen name into syllables and assigning vedantic connotations to each of them:

"'A' 'Ru', and 'Na' signify *Sat Chit* and *Ananda* (Being, Consciousness and Bliss), and again the Supreme Self, the individual self and their union as the One absolute, expressed in the *mahavakya* 'That thou art'; 'Achala' signifies Perfection"¹³

The Name was so much after his heart that whenever he had to test his quill he scribbled with it, not 'Om' (said to be the nearest approximation to the Self), but 'Arunachala'.

How touching it is to remember that at the very last minute of his earthly sojourn he was moved to tears, pearls of bhakti from his oceanic jnana, as the nectarine words 'Arunachala Siva' uttered by his devotees filled his ears!

So we can surely include him among the *nama-premi-s* lovers of the Name.

Now to the intriguing "Nama" of the Unnameable Impersonal.

"I" (or "*Aham*") is the Name of names for him, as Jnani. Time and again he speaks of the "I" — vibrations emanating from the heart like water from a fountain. As sounds are nothing but vibrations, I or *aham* becomes a Name. He has said clearly: "*The one Infinite Unbroken Whole (plenum) becomes aware of itself as 'I'. This is its original name. All other names, e.g., OM, are later growths.*"¹⁴

But this is a *nama* not to be repeated in *japa*, but reflected upon in *smarana*. See how he recommends this unique nama-smarana: "Think 'I' 'I' and hold to that one thought to the exclusion of all others."¹⁵

Analogous to the constant *smarana* of other names resulting in the *sakshatkara* of that

¹¹Day by day — 12-2-1946

¹²Ibid. — 3-8-46

¹³The *Neklet of Nine Gems* (*Arunachala Nava Mani Malai* — St. 2)

¹⁴TALKS : dt. 7th Nov. 1935

¹⁵Ibid. dt. 21st October, 1936

deity, this I-smarana bestows on one its sakshatkara, i.e., self-realisation.

He asserted that a great *mahavakya* was the biblical name *Jehovah*, meaning, "I am that I-AM" adding "I-am' is truth, *another name for Self*"¹⁶ (Italics mine).

He used to quote the authority of the 'sruti' itself in support of this view:

"Talking of all mantras, the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says 'AHAM' is the first name of God. The first letter in Sanskrit is A and the last letter 'Ha' and 'Aha' thus includes everything from beginning to end".¹⁷

All this goes to show that Ramana's answer to the Shakespearian query, "What's in a name?" is: "Why, What is not in a name? THAT itself is (in) it."

It is appropriate to conclude with the Ramana-devotees' devotion to his name. As he drank deep of the nama of Arunachala, they use his name for worship. However advaitic his followers be, they cannot resist the exhilarating thrill of the Ramana-nama.

In the preceding issue of *The Mountain Path* one such instance is related in the article by V.G. — "Ambrosial Ramana". Muruganar

was adamant in anchoring seekers to the Enquiry — Path *pur sang* and would not allow V.G., who had some difficulty, to swerve from it. To quote from the article: "The same Muruganar, when I spoke to him a few days later about the fascination of His (Ramana's) Form and the music of His Name, he burst out, with tears welling up in his eyes 'Yes, yes Bhagavan's Name is enough for us . . .'"

To strike a personal note (the personal and impersonal are so thoroughly blended here) the present writer, at the risk of appearing irreverential, prefers the ambrosial Name Ramana to Bhagavan or Maharshi.

And so until we lose ourselves in union with the Unnamed, let us joyously sing with Ramana and to Ramana:

*Anbodu—(u)n namam kel —
anbar — tam anbarukku(u)
Anban ayida arul Arunachala.*¹⁸

"Shed Thy Grace on me to become a bhakta of the bhaktas of those who hear Thy name with bhakti, Oh Arunachala!"

¹⁶Day by Day — dt. 22-3-46 (afternoon)

¹⁷Day by Day — dt. 22-11-45 (afternoon)

¹⁸Aksharamana Malai — St. 104.

THE WONDER OF SILENCE

By Sri Sadhu Om

**It was a wonder certainly
That happened under the banyan tree,
The Teacher young, the pupils old,
And Silence was the speech He told,
Yet at one stroke their doubts were cleared
And all their ignorance disappeared!
The same strong light is found to shine
Now in Sri Ramana's Presence divine!**

— adapted from the Sanskrit sloka beginning 'Chitram
vatatarormule', a concluding verse to the *Dakshinamurti Stotra*.



GARLAND

By Sri Muruganar

Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

1012

When the false notion "I am the body"
Dies, what abides is what's worth having,
The vast, bright, silent void, the Self.
Why is it so? Because in truth
The only state free from all pain
And all desire is pure self-Being.

1013

Without the guru's grace which kills
The root of all defects, the ego,
None can know the unsurpassed
Opulence of the spacious, bright
Firmament of Being-awareness.

1014

Those who have seen the opulence
Of jnana's blissful firmament
Shine in silence like Siva Himself
Having left behind the endless births
That follow the false identity
With "me" and "mine".

1015

This void immense, the firmament
Of jnana is the marvellous ground
And source of the dynamic Power

Supreme whose function is creating
And sustaining the whole world of objects
For us to taste, smell, see, hear, touch.

THE INNER SPACE

1016

The inner light self-luminous
Shines all the time as I, as I.
To go from place to place in search
Of that is looking at mid-noon
Torch in hand for the bright Sun
Which hides the full-moon from our sight.

1017

The "I" is false; "this world" is false,
The seeing of "this world" by "I"
Is false. The primal ignorance
Of *maya* which creates the triad
Is also false. The sole reality
Is the marvellous inner light
Of Being-Awareness.

1018

The final fruit of life lies far
Beyond the reach of those for whom
The Self-Awareness which sustains
These moving, vast and varied worlds
Seems non-existent. They are bewildered
By what the senses five perceive
And what they deem as real.

(The white screen is hidden by the pictures projected on it.)

OF GURU'S SAYINGS

1019

Who can experience and enjoy
The perfect, flawless glory bright
Of Inner Self-Awareness, who
Save sages shining Siva-like
With pure, transparent mind?

MAKING THAT KNOWN

1020

This being so, Inner Awareness
Being Siva supreme, the Truth
Beyond all human speech, the great
Sage, godlike Ramana, made known
To me the Self being Siva Himself.

1021

At one self-movement and in one
Self-place the self well-pleased to meet
The self revealed the self to self
And recognized the self as self.

(The jiva can never know the self. When jiva disappears, the Self abides as Pure Awareness. Bhagavan made the Truth known to Muruganar by destroying the distinction between time, place guru and disciple and revealing shiva or Pure Awareness as the ultimate Reality.)

THE ATMAN

1022

When the ego, which hiding itself
Reveals the world, turns inward questing
For its own source, the awareness which
Shines brightly in the heart as I
Is our eternal Being.

1023

When the villainous mind, instead
Of being bewildered by the objects

Appearing there without, looks inward
Questing "Who am I?" and rests
Firmly in its ground, the self,
This is our true, authentic Being.

1024

Whatever varna he is born in,
Whatever asram he is found in,
The jnani is in one self-Being.
Self-Being is the only true state.
All other states are false.

(Caste and stage of life have nothing to do with the jnani, who is an *atiyasrami*)

1025

Self-Being alone is the state of love.
The truth is love and love is truth.
All other states like god-like life
In heaven above are mere illusion
Like mirage-water made by the mind
For more and more beguiling.

(The last four lines may also mean:
All other states are lotuses
In heaven, mind-made like mirage-water
For ever more beguiling)

1026

Being is by its nature Bliss
Supreme. It is the treacherous mind's
Fond, eager search all day for pleasure
In alien objects which ensures
The loss of our inherent bliss.

(In thought-free sleep we are happy. If while awake we are egoless and thought-free we shall enjoy the Bliss which is our very Being)

1027

Having found that self-relish is
The highest bliss, the wise abide
As Self alone. But those who know not
That the sole certain bliss supreme
And unsurpassed is but the Self
Stay for ever worldly-minded.

HOW I CAME TO SRI BHAGAVAN

By B. Kuppuswamy

MY father, a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a devotee of Bhagavan Ramana too and I had the good fortune to accompany him in 1917 during one of his visits to have Sri Bhagavan's darshan, when Sri Bhagavan stayed at Skandasram. I was then about ten years old.

I visited the ashram again in 1934, at its present location. I was married then. When I had Sri Bhagavan's darshan, I felt enveloped by His Grace and enjoyed such Peace in His presence that I visited the ashram more frequently thereafter.

Between 1934 and 1950, when I was serving as a teacher in a school at a nearby place, Pudur, I came to the ashram very often during school vacations. I used to stay at the nearby Pilakottu in the good company of devotees like Sri Muruganar, Sri Kunjuswami, Sri Viswanatha Swami and Sri Annamalai Swami.

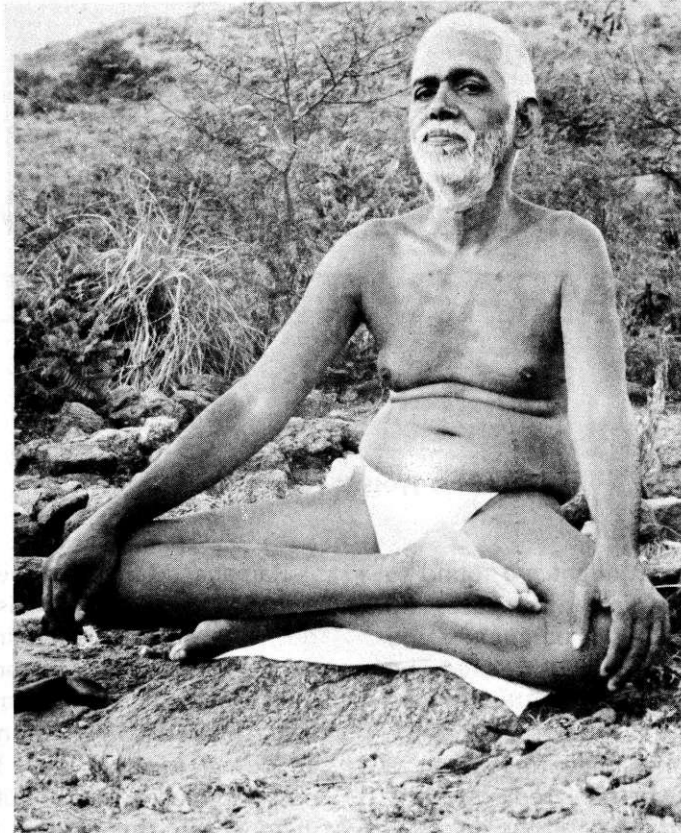
On one such early occasion, I happened to see Sri Bhagavan walking alone near Pilakkottu, when I was feeling sad at having to return to my place at the end of the vacation. I expressed my painful feelings to Sri Bhagavan, who compared my state to that of a newly-wed bride sobbing at the first separation from her loving parents and kin on the eve of her departure for her new home. Then he added how the same daughter visiting her parents after a few years would turn down the entreaties



B. Kuppuswamy

of her parents for her to stay longer with them, saying that she had to return to her husband's place soon.

I used to chant *Panchakshara mantra* and found that during such repetitions I had to pass through a few blank moments, unable to proceed with the *japa*. As soon as I realised that *japa* had stopped, I would resume it. Such stoppages and resumptions occurred almost at regular intervals, but quite often. I placed my difficulties before Sri Bhagavan and sought His guidance, mentioning such breaks and also the deep peace and happiness during such moments. Sri Bhagavan told me that the peace and happiness experienced during these interruptions signified the real nature of Self



and that practice of *japa* with such breaks was no impediment to one's goal.

Once, a mendicant who used to frequent the ashram for food, went to Sri Bhagavan and complained to Him that he was refused food that day. Sri Bhagavan told him that the management was strict and saw to it that even He had to complete various items of work such as looking into daily correspondence, answering visitors' questions, binding books, cutting vegetables and so on before He had a meal and that the complainant was mistaken if he thought that He was being fed free. On hearing this, the lazy fellow slipped away unnoticed.

One day, Sri Bhagavan remarked that food was only to satisfy hunger and that one should not attach much importance to the nature of

taste. To fortify this advice, He gave the illustration of a cart-driver taking goods to a distant market-place. On the way he stops at a place, cooks his rice first in a mud-pot, empties the pot by transferring the cooked rice on to a piece of cloth, cooks some vegetables in the same pot, mixes the rice cooked earlier with the cooked vegetables in the pot, retains one half of the mixed rice in the pot itself for the night, and eats the other half during the day. We too should take our food to satisfy hunger, not to pamper the palate. (In fact, Sri Bhagavan often mixed all the items served on his leaf and ate the mixture.)

I now live in Ramana Nagar, visiting the Ashram every day and dwelling ever in the Ramana-Presence. □

BHAGAVAN RAMANA AND ZEN — A COMPARATIVE STUDY*

By Miss Jyotsna Nageswaran

PARALLEL streams of thought are found to exist in cultures separated by space and time. Each tradition retains its uniqueness and yet has much in common with the other. The differences cannot be denied for these make up the individuality, the distinctive nature of a system. A study of the similarities helps the understanding of the two. Increased awareness of the oneness that underlies all the diversity in living helps the progress of man; and more so when the parallels concern man's ultimate concern, his striving to understand his very essence.

Several points for comparison may be found in the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and the Zen Buddhist masters. A fundamental similarity pertains to the vital experience of reality as one without a second.

Bhagavan Ramana stands before us as one who actually lived the experience of non-duality or *advaita*. He was teacher, friend, philosopher and guide to those who sought him. His total involvement was with the all-embracing Self, his metaphysical discussions were directed towards the Self. He was a man of few words, but every syllable that he uttered came out of his wisdom. Thus it is He who brought people into awareness, into the immediate realisation of their Selfhood.

Ramana Maharshi's very presence is a reminder that the truth is not to be sought outside. Yet the average individual finds this very hard to accept. The primeval tendency of man is that of material acquisition, so blinded is he by his own ignorance. As if he were acquiring a jewel that he would like to possess, man reaches out, here, there and everywhere, in endless pursuit of inner quietude. Here is an incident indicating both his inimitable way of making a point through a situation in everyday living.

At 8 a.m. the pet squirrel was watching for an opportunity to run out. The master remarked: All wish to rush out. There is no limit to going out. Happiness lies within and not without.¹

Ramana Maharshi was not acquainted with any school of thought when he had the integral experience of truth. He had undergone no formal training. He had read no esoteric literature. True, as a boy he read the *Periapuranam* or the life-stories of the sixty-three Tamil saints and this must have spurred

*Article highly commended by the judges in the competition held by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore.

¹Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, vols. I to III, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, S. India, 1968, pg. 188.

on the spirituality in him. He had not come into contact with any person said to be a sage, ascetic, or saint. Only later, at Tiruvannamalai he learnt that what he had "felt intuitively without analysis or name"² was being analysed in classical treatises; but then, he himself did not feel the need to go into intellectual discussions on what was direct experience. The illusoriness of the mind-body complex and the inadequacy of words to express Reality were realizations that arose from within, effortlessly.

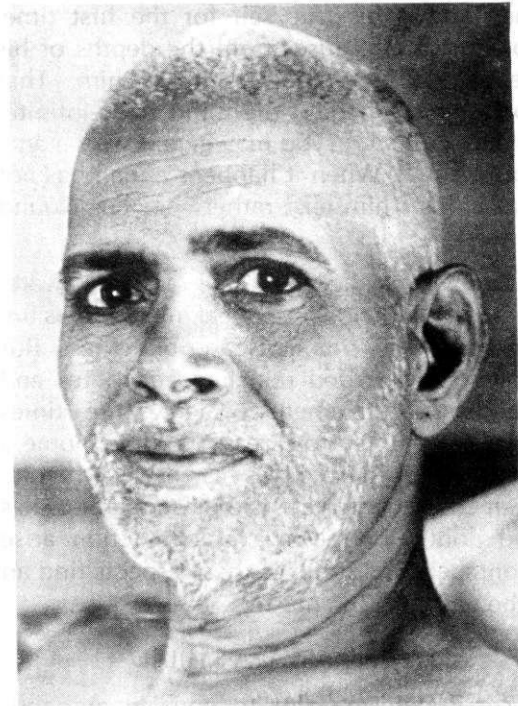
TO KNOW THE SELF IS TO KNOW ONESELF

Ramana Maharshi, the teacher, knew just as naturally that while external aids such as breath control and meditation certainly help to bring the mind to rest on one point, they cannot by themselves lead to the grasping of the essence which is the sole reality, the Universal Self. The Self is beyond all thought and categorization. It transcends the body, the senses, the ego and the mind. Any kind of description limits this illimitable Absolute. To know This is to know Oneself. This is Self-realization.

In this state, the day-to-day activities of life go on as usual but with the major difference that everything takes place within a state of pure blissful awareness — an awareness free from interruptions and totally devoid of any sense of ego, attachment or individuality. The following extract from one of the Maharshi's conversations with a westerner will make this clear:

P.B. What exactly is this self of which you speak? If what you say is true, then there must be another self in man.

R.M. Can a man be possessed of two identities, two selves? To understand this matter it is first necessary for a man to analyse himself. But it has long been his habit to think as others think, he has never faced his 'I' in the true manner. He has not a correct picture of himself; he has too long identified himself with the body and the brain. Therefore, I tell you to pursue this enquiry: Who am I? You



ask me to describe this true self to you. What can be said? It is That out of which the sense of the personal 'I' arises, and into which it shall have to disappear.

P.B. Disappear? How can one lose the feeling of one's personality?

R.M. ...If you could mentally follow the I thread until it leads you back to its source, you would discover that, just as it is the first thought to appear, so it is the last to disappear. This is a matter which can be experienced.

P.B. ...What is left? Will a man then become quite unconscious, or will he become an idiot?

R.M. Not so. On the contrary, he will attain that consciousness which is immortal and he will become truly wise, when he has awakened to his true self, which is the real nature of man ... The sense of 'I' pertains to the person, the body and the brain. When a

²Arthur Osborne, *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge*, Rider and Co., London, 1970, pg. 24.

man knows his true self for the first time, something else arises from the depths of his being and takes possession of him. That something is behind the mind; it is infinite, divine, eternal... you may give it what name you wish... When it happens a man has not really lost himself, rather he has found himself.³

Ramana Maharshi's way of inducing awareness in an individual by speaking to him is unequalled in its simplicity and directness. But he also often used puzzling anecdotes and paradoxical statements. There were times when he resorted to sarcasm to drive home a point. Again, silence was his answer when he deemed it appropriate. He prescribed no do's and don't's but always let conviction arise spontaneously. Some of these aspects find an echo with the Zen masters.

WHEN KASYAPA SMILED.....

Zen Buddhism claims to represent authentically the teachings of the Buddha. It is said that Kasyapa, one of the Buddha's closest disciples, was the First Patriarch of Zen Buddhism. This is based on an ancient story from the Buddha's life, a story that may well be fact. A large gathering had assembled before the Buddha to hear him preach 'the Law'. He remained silent and, taking up a flower, held it quietly in his hand. Only one individual, out of the hundreds there, understood the significance of the Buddha's silent but deliberate gesture. This disciple, Kasyapa, smiled.

The meaning of this story is clear. 'The Law' that the people were waiting to listen to was not the civil code of the day. It was the Buddha's practical prescription to eradicate ignorance from daily living and realise the essential nature of the self. The silence of the Buddha was, to Kasyapa, more eloquent than words. *The truth is here, to be grasped now, if only you will open your eyes and see ... if only you will shut out what is superficial*

The above incident also reveals that the Buddha was above all a teacher involved in

practical considerations. Mere discussion of questions such as what comes after death is a sheer waste of precious time and energy. One's efforts should be directed towards knowing oneself by going beyond what is presented as the self. For it is this wrong attachment to the body and mind that breeds evil and prevents one from reaching permanent happiness.

FROM DUALITY TO REALITY

To cross the realm of duality and reach oneness is the goal of Zen. The starting point is the sense-world and thence back to reality. Direct appeal is made to concrete experience. The contradictions of day-to-day existence are revealed. Verbosity is shunned as anathema. The limits of the intellect are to be traversed in one flash of enlightenment called in Zen terminology, *satori*. *Satori* is a total transformation, a complete alteration of perspective. Even though the world of the 'I' still has the same references, in some mysterious way neither the world nor the 'I' are the same.

What has been said so far about Zen Buddhism can be said to be almost repetitive in the sense that much of it has already been said about the *advaita* experience of Ramana Maharshi. A consideration of passages taken from the two traditions bring out this parallelism. Often, it is hard to distinguish one from the other.

When the mind rests serene in the oneness of things; ... dualism vanishes by itself.⁴

... unity is the reality and the variety is false⁵

Other than the Self who is there? What if anyone says anything about the Self? What if one extols or denounces oneself? Without differentiating as oneself and others and

³Paul Brunton, *A Search in Secret India*, B. I. Publications, India, 1970, Pgs. 151-153.

⁴Nancy Wilson Ross, *Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen*, Faber and Faber, London, 1966, pg. 137. (From: Hsin-hsin-ming by Sengstan — tr. by Suzuki in essays in *Zen Buddhism*, first series.)

⁵Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, Vols. I to II, pg. 322.

without swerving from one's natural state, one should abide even as the self.⁶

Transformations going on in an empty world which confronts us

Appear real all because of ignorance.

Try not to seek after the true

Only cease to cherish opinions⁷

The use of meditation (Zazen) to discipline the mind and remove thought is present as much in Zen as with the Maharshi. In both, the limited role of meditation is equally recognised. It can only go so far and no further. Zen masters use basically the *mondo* and the *koan* techniques to aid the efficient stilling of the mind. *Mondo* is the question and answer form and *koan* is the usage of conundrums which require to be solved.

MORE THAN, JUST WORDS.. WORDS

... WORDS

Here is a typical *mondo* :

What is Zen?

— Zen.

What is Buddha?

— Buddha.

What is Reality?

— Reality.

Master, I don't understand what you say.

— I don't understand any better than you.

... Ask the wall, ask the table, ask within yourself and you will find the answer awaiting you.⁸

The *koan* is a sort of problem given to the student, to be solved. One of the most famous koans is the following one, by the Zen master Hakuin.

You can make the sound of two hands clapping. Now what is the sound of one hand.⁹

The *Koan*, presenting a situation that is logically unsupportable, forces the student to transcend the confines of the intellect. *Satori* or "seeing into one's own nature" results. Zen masters specialise in paradoxes. The Zen master Joshu Jushin was asked a question by a monk :

Monk — How is it when I come to you with nothing?

J.J. — Cast it down!

Monk — What shall I cast down when I have nothing?

J.J. — If so, take it away!¹⁰

Conversations that Ramana Maharshi had with his innumerable devotees and admirers reveal instances that have subtle or overt parallels in the techniques of the Zen masters, as described above. Consider, for instance, these issues; Firstly, the uselessness of abstract speculation :

Why do you want to know what you will be when you die before you know what you are now? First find out what you are now.¹¹

Monk : How can I get away from the triple world?

Master : Where are you now?¹²

Secondly, the rejection of words :

M. There is a state where words cease and silence prevails.

D. How to communicate thought to one another?

M. That is only when there is a notion of two.¹³

The Way is beyond language for in it there is no yesterday, no tomorrow, no today.¹⁴

⁶T.M.P. Mahadevan, Ramana Maharshi and His Philosophy of Existence, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, S. India, 1976, pg. 140.

(A translation of Ulladu Narpadu and its supplement).

⁷Bernard Phillips (editor), The Essentials of Zen Buddhism, An Anthology of the Writings of D.T. Suzuki, Rider and Co., London 1963, pg. 125.

(From Hsin-hsin-ming of Sengstan — translator, Suzuki).

⁸Ibid. pg. 58.

⁹Nancy Wilson Ross, Hinduism Buddhism, Zen, Faber and Faber, London, 1966, pg. 178.

¹⁰D.T. Suzuki, Living By Zen, Rider and Co., London, 1950, pg. 99.

¹¹Arthur Osborne, Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge, Rider and Co., 1970, pg. 83.

¹²D.T. Suzuki, Living By Zen, Rider and Co., London, 1950, pg. 139.

¹³Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, vols I to III, pg. 189.

¹⁴The Mountain Path', January 1982, pg. 40.

(from Hsin-hsin-ming of Sengstan — tr. by an American Zen master).

Thirdly, the illusoriness of the mind-body dualism:

The mind is an organ of thought and objects are set against it. The two are like marks on the surface of the mirror; when the dirt is removed, the light begins to shine. Both mind and objects being forgotten, ultimate Nature reveals itself true.¹⁵

D. How may one destroy the mind?

M. Is there a mind in the first place? What you call mind is an illusion.

D. Is the body consciousness an impediment to realization?

M. We are always beyond the body or the mind. If, however, you feel the body as the Self, then it is of course an impediment.¹⁶

Fourthly, the discovery of truth here and now:

How marvelous, how miraculous. I draw water. I gather fuel. The water fowl lays its beak in its breast and sleep as it floats.¹⁷

You are neck-deep in water and yet cry for water. It is as good as saying that one neck-deep in water feels thirsty or a fish in water feels thirsty or that water feels thirsty.¹⁸

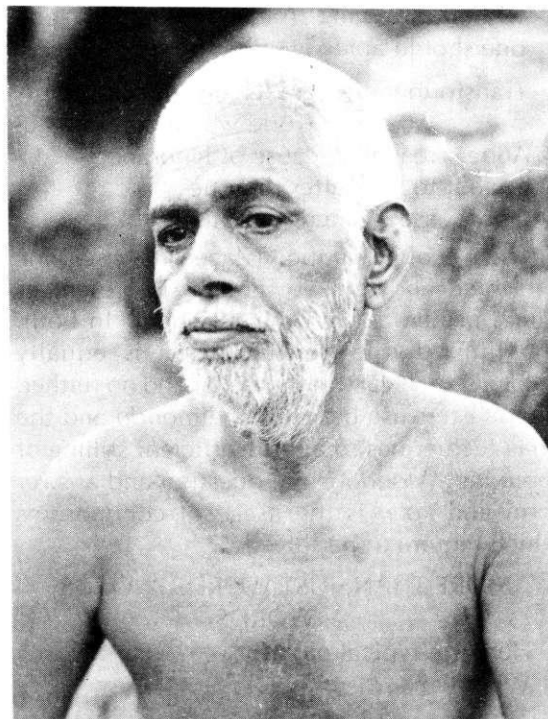
Fifthly, the play of a sense of humour:

Mind that onion! It is a great obstacle to Deliverance.¹⁹

(A monk once asked a master, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's coming from the west?" For an answer he received a swift kick. He was enlightened and subsequently said to one and all)

'Since I received that kick from Ma Tsu I haven't been able to stop laughing.'²⁰

This last point is specially significant since the use of humour to bring on the dawn of awareness is rarely to be found in the realm of spirituality although it is a fact that a realised man is ever alive to the comic side of life. Humour helps infiltrate the intellectual barrier and removes egocentricity.



One could go on adding aspects that are common to the two traditions; the silence of the Buddha referred to earlier and the silence of Dakshinamurti, and so on.

THE DIFFERENCES

But an objective outlook calls for an appreciation of the inherent differences between the traditions. One major contrast lies in the attitude towards scriptural authority. Zen Buddhism goes to the extreme end of the scale in rejecting all authority in order to stress direct and personal experience as the

¹⁵Bernard Phillips (Editor), *The essentials of Zen Buddhism, An Anthology of the Writings of D.T. Suzuki*, Rider and Co., London, 1963, pg. 236.

¹⁶Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, vols. I to III, pg. 181.

¹⁷Nancy Wilson Ross, *Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen*, pg. 148.

¹⁸Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, vols. I to III, pg. 181.

¹⁹Arthur Osborne, *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge*, pg. 77.

²⁰Nancy Wilson Ross, *Hinduism, Buddhism, Zen*, pg. 185.

only means of knowing reality. Thus one hears anecdotes such as how a Zen master tore up scriptural Scrolls. This is portrayed in a thirteenth century painting by Liang Kai.

On the other hand, even though Ramana Maharshi had his vision of non-duality without any formal instruction through books, he did not reject them in the ruthless manner of the Zen masters. The veneration of the eternal Vedas, for instance, is ingrained in the Indian tradition. Ramana Maharshi too held books in high regard although he recognised the fact that book-knowledge of itself does not bring release. Throughout his life, he took no extreme views of any matter, this being indeed the soul of his philosophy.

Possibly the most fundamental difference between the two traditions concerned the role of reason in the path to liberation or self-realization. The Zen Buddhist stand in this regard is a categorical 'no'. The Zen master seeks to suppress the notion of the mind in the aspirant and, hence, a mental function such as reasoning is denied outright. To indulge in logical enquiry is to remain forever in the realm of duality. At no stage in the progress of the individual is reasoning warranted.

In the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, reason definitely has an important, though limited, role. In his work *Ulladu Narpadu*, he systematically sets out a logical analysis of reality leading to the establishment of the truth of non-duality. The *Ulladu Narpadu* or 'Forty verses on Existence' is a succinct and complete exposition of the philosophy of Ramana Maharshi.

The aspirant is exhorted to undertake an enquiry into the different states of being. A logical investigation reveals that the Self is the substratum of all these states. For instance, considering the states of waking, dream, and deep sleep, it is clear that what is common to these three states is the Self. The World of the waking state is absent in the dream state. The dream World in its turn is totally absent in

deep sleep. Yet on waking, one is aware of having slept well. The 'I' that has persisted through the different states is the Self.

Ramana Maharshi speaks of the fourth state, *turiya* and that which is beyond even the fourth state, *turiyatita*. The last one alone is the state where the Self shines as itself, secondless. The Self persists through all the states as a witness. This is understood by reasoning. The 'I' is traced back to its source. Now the mind has prepared the way for the intuitive grasp of Self-hood which is to follow. Although reason alone cannot bring self-realisation, by virtue of its belonging to the illusory realm of duality, it is an invaluable aid to liberation. Here, Ramana Maharshi and the Zen masters "agree to differ".

Earlier, a reference was made to Kasyapa, Buddha's disciple, as being the first Patriarch of Zen Buddhism. There is a more common view according to which the first Patriarch of Zen Buddhism is Bodhidharma — a Buddhist monk from the south of India who travelled east to China in 520 A.D. The word 'Zen' is said to have come from the Chinese *Ch'an* which in turn originated from the Sanskrit word *dhyana*. Ramana Maharshi and Bodhidharma were sons of the same soil!

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A VISIT TO THE MAHARSHI

Anonymous

*The following article appeared as an appendix in the first edition (1937) of **Maha Yoga**, in which it was prefaced by the remark: "The following passages are extracts from a letter written by a critically minded visitor, which once appeared in the **Vedanta Kesari** (Mylapore, Madras)".*

THE Maharshi impressed me as a rare type of man. I do not know whether he is a *Jnani*, or what he is. For as the Vedanta says, a *Jnani* can be known only by a *Jnani*, and I am certainly not one. But this person, anyone can feel, is not of the ordinary run of men. We nowadays come across men everywhere whose one thought is world-reform and things of that kind. But here is a man who is *perfectly aware*, as one can see from his conduct and movements, who has no such idea, who has in his opinion nothing to add to the sum-total of human happiness. He simply seems to exist, without waiting for anything, without being anxious about anything. On watching him I was powerfully reminded of the Gita passage beginning with '*Udasinavad*' (Like one that is unconcerned)¹. He seems to take, as far as I can see, no interest even in the Ashram that has sprung up around him. He simply sits there; things are going on as events and other men shape them. The only activity of the Ashram in which he seems to take

active interest is cooking. He cuts vegetables in the kitchen, and if there is any special cooking any day he is sure to try his hand at preparing some of the dishes for that day. Spicing and other processes of the culinary art are performed there under his directions.

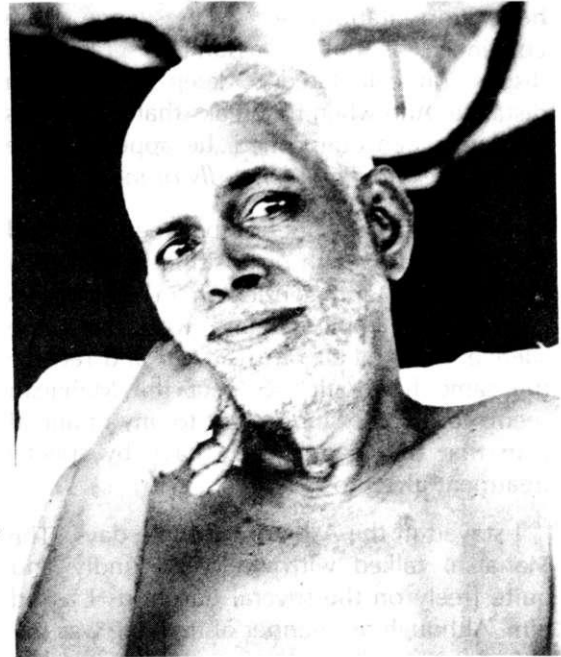
Another point that struck me is his *silence*. We used to ask in fun among ourselves why eminent professors who crossed the seas did not deliver their Vedantic lectures through silence. But here is a person who actually does this as far as his teaching of the Vedanta is concerned. When I asked him to tell me something of spirituality, the first thing he said was that silence is the highest teaching! The beauty of the man is that he remains faithful to that idea to the utmost extent

¹ "Nor do these actions bind me, O Dhananjaya; like one unconcerned, I remain unattached to these actions" — *Bhagavad Gita* 9.9; "Like one unconcerned, he remains unmoved by the *gunas*; knowing the *gunas* operate, he abides firm and moves not" — *Bhagavad Gita* 14.23 (Ed.)

possible. His idea is that *the Advaitin has no position to state, no siddhanta to propound*. He regrets that in these days even *Advaita* has become a *Siddhanta*, whereas it is really not meant to be so. The reason for the existence of so much Vedantic literature is this: When doubts arise in the mind as our intellects are quickened, such literature is helpful in dispelling them. In other words, the *Advaitin* speaks only to dispel a doubt that might have arisen in himself or in another. Our saint remains faithful to this idea. He is mostly silent, and speaks but a little if questioned on any point. Of course he jokes and speaks occasionally on other things, but he has no dogmatic teaching on Vedanta to deliver. He told me he says 'yes, yes' to everyone who interprets *Advaita*, even to some of his followers who interpret his ideas in the books published under his name. When I asked, regarding a book that I purchased in the depot there, how far the ideas stated therein were his teachings, he said that it was very difficult to say that, as he had no definite teaching.² As people have understood they have written, and they may be right from certain points of view. He himself, he says, has absolutely no idea or inclination to write a book; but due to the entreaties of some people about him he has written some verses, and he adds that he is often troubled by men who take a fancy to translate them into this language and that, and ask him about the faithfulness of the translation.

So, mostly, the Maharshi remains silent, and people come, make prostrations, sit before him for some minutes or hours and then go away, perhaps without exchanging even a single word! I have got my own doubts as to whether people benefit by this teaching through silence. But yet people come from long distances to hear this dumb eloquence and go back *satisfied*.

Though he speaks but little, it is very instructive to watch his face and eyes. There is nothing very prepossessing about his personality, but there is a beam of intelligence and



unruffled calmness in his eyes that are unique. His body is almost motionless except when he occasionally changes his position or wipes his sweat in that hot place. I was carefully observing his face; I found him seldom winking and never yawning. I say this to show that I am sufficiently satisfied that the absence of activity in him is *not due to inertness*.

The third point that struck me was the absolute absence of vanity or self-importance in him. Except for his dress confined only to a *kaupinam* a visitor may not find it possible to make out Ramana Maharshi. He eats the same food as everyone else there; there is not even a single extra item or special dish for him, I specially noticed that in conversation he is not averse to using the first personal pronoun, unlike some other Vedantins who use 'he' and things of that kind. I point out this to show

²Refer to *Talks* No. 107 (p. 103), where Sri Bhagavan says that teachings or instructions must "differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds. There cannot be any instruction *en masse*". (Ed.)

how unostentatious he is. His silence, I am convinced, is not to assume a gravity of disposition calculated to keep people at a distance. And when he breaks that silence, as he does when questioned, he appears to be *the sweetest and most friendly of men*.

He makes no distinction between man and man for their wealth or position in society. I saw peasants and gentlemen in motor cars coming and being greeted with the same silence. They all sit on the floor and receive the same hospitality. In fact the Maharshi seems to be quite indifferent to any financial gain that the Ashram may have by special treatment given to rich men.

I stayed in the Ashram for three days. The Maharshi talked with me very kindly and quite freely on the several questions I asked him. Although his manner of replying was not

so impressive as I expected, *his thoughts are always clear, concise and free from all ideas of narrowness*. Though he has not read much, as he himself told me in some context, he has a good grasp of all the difficult points in Vedanta. My impression is this: Whether he is a *Jnani* or anything else I do not positively know. But I am convinced that *he is a sweet and lovable person who is indifferent to all things about him, who has no end of his own to gain, who is always alert even when he seems to be most deeply absorbed, and who may be said to be perfectly free from greed and vanity*. In seeing him I do believe I have seen a unique personage.³ □

³The author of *Maha Yoga* concluded this article with the following comment of his own: "These very characteristics are according to the ancient lore, the distinguishing marks of a *Jnani* — a perfect sage." (Ed.)

SRI BHAGAVAN'S CART-RIDE

By S.S. Cohen

During an after-dinner chat in 1942, the conversation drifted to modern scientific discoveries — talkies, radio, television, etc. — whereupon Bhagavan remarked: "Speaking of radio, etc., reminds me that in my young days there were no buses even; I, for instance, have never in my life ridden in a bus or car ...". Someone asked, "What about a cart? How many times has Bhagavan used a cart since he came to Tiruvannamalai?" Bhagavan answered, "Only once — it was I think in 1906. There was a feast in Ishania Mutt, in the north end of the town. The Head of the Mutt came with some of his followers and invited me to it. He insisted so much that I had to accept the invitation. On reaching the road I saw a cart waiting, which they asked me to mount, but I said they could use it themselves if they so chose and I would follow on foot. Without saying a word three of them lifted me up and bundled me into the cart".

— from *Guru Ramana*, first edition, p. 8.

ESSENCE OF SAHAJA SAMADHI

By Prof. N.R. Krishnamurthi Aiyar

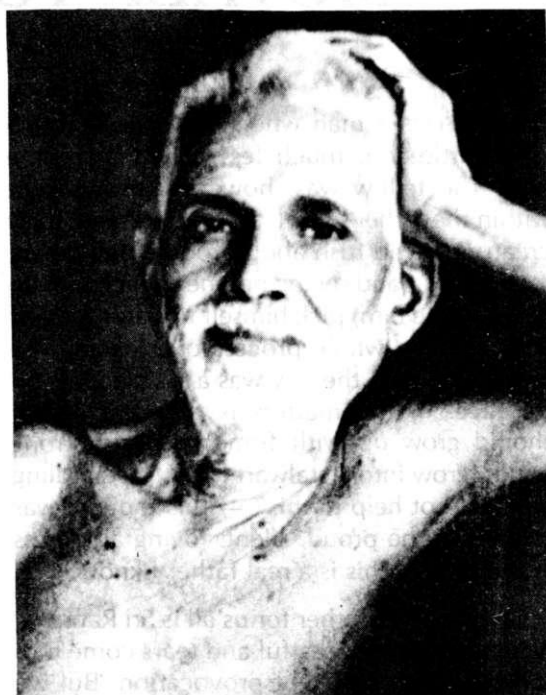
NESCIENCE of sleep is banished for ever. The continuous experience of I AM is established firmly, uninterrupted by thoughts and black-outs of unawareness. This goes on without effort.

This results from rigorous practice. An unremitting vigilance must be steadily maintained in regard to one's experience of 'I', the ego.

The ego is a compendium of *sattva*, *rajo*, *tamo gunas*. The *tamo guna* aspect is found in spells, long or short, of awareness during the periods of sleep or wakefulness. The *rajo guna* aspect is found during the phases of thought. These two aspects are rooted out effectively by the continued vigilance and grip on the ego, in terms of firm uninterrupted abidance in its *sattva* aspect of pure being experienced as I AM. One simply abides as pure AM.

For this, the enquiry "Who am I" is prescribed by our Lord and Master. This relentless enquiry nips in the bud the onset of thoughts and nescience alike. Thoughts are chased away. Nescience is wiped out. One is ultimately left in the state of awareness in its pristine purity. Sri Bhagavan's Grace is ever with us to attain this condition. Abiding faith in His Word and devotion to the Blessed Feet of Lord-Guru-Ramana-Arunachala is the sole requisite.

One has no need to bother about, what for most people, appear to be obstacles to realisation, namely body and world. They are mere shadows which are bound to fade out in due course. For this Sri Bhagavan's word of guarantee is with us. The efforts to banish the appearance of body and world by Hata yoga



are totally unnecessary. To an extent they are obstacles to the attainment of *Sahaja Samadhi*. Why start with undesirable *bhavana* that body and world exist and then try to destroy that *bhavana* by *Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi* obtained by the practice of *hata yoga*? This line is certainly not for us, children of Blessed Guru Ramana!

Let us 'be still' as our Master has ordained. Let us merge in the continuous experience of the Pure-Ramana-Atma-Jyoti that we are! Appearance or disappearance of the shadows of body and world are quite immaterial!

(From a letter to the Late Sri. T.K. Sundaresa Iyer dated 21-1-63) □

FATHER AND MOTHER TOO

By Prof. K. Subrahmanyam¹

THERE was a man who would never touch his little son, much less caress or fondle him. The fellow was, however, always kept within the father's sight. The robust and noisy creature would rush about, toddle, fall down, look round, (and seeing no one to pick him up and console him) pick himself up, dust himself and start the whole process over again. The father's pride in the boy was a visible glow on his face. "What matters is that the urchin should grow up with firm flesh and strong bones, grow into a stalwart man. My cuddling him will not help in this" — this thought was evident in the proud, silent, loving aloofness of the father. This is a real father I know.

Such another father for us all is Sri Ramana. We are feeble and fearful and tears come into our eyes even on slight provocation. But we know our father and that he will be pained if we cannot bear pain and he will feel let down if we shed tears.

So with his manner of teaching. Any frippery of verbiage would be out of keeping with his naked dignity. A loin-cloth with lace-frills!

"That Thou art". This is blasphemous when I am very much of a "thou". This is of no use when I shall have attained to the thou-less That. A pragmatic interpretation (no authority is claimed; but quite useful for my own self) is: For each one of us the That must-grow out of every single idiosyncrasy of our particular nature and every detail of our particular circumstances, our particular "thou".

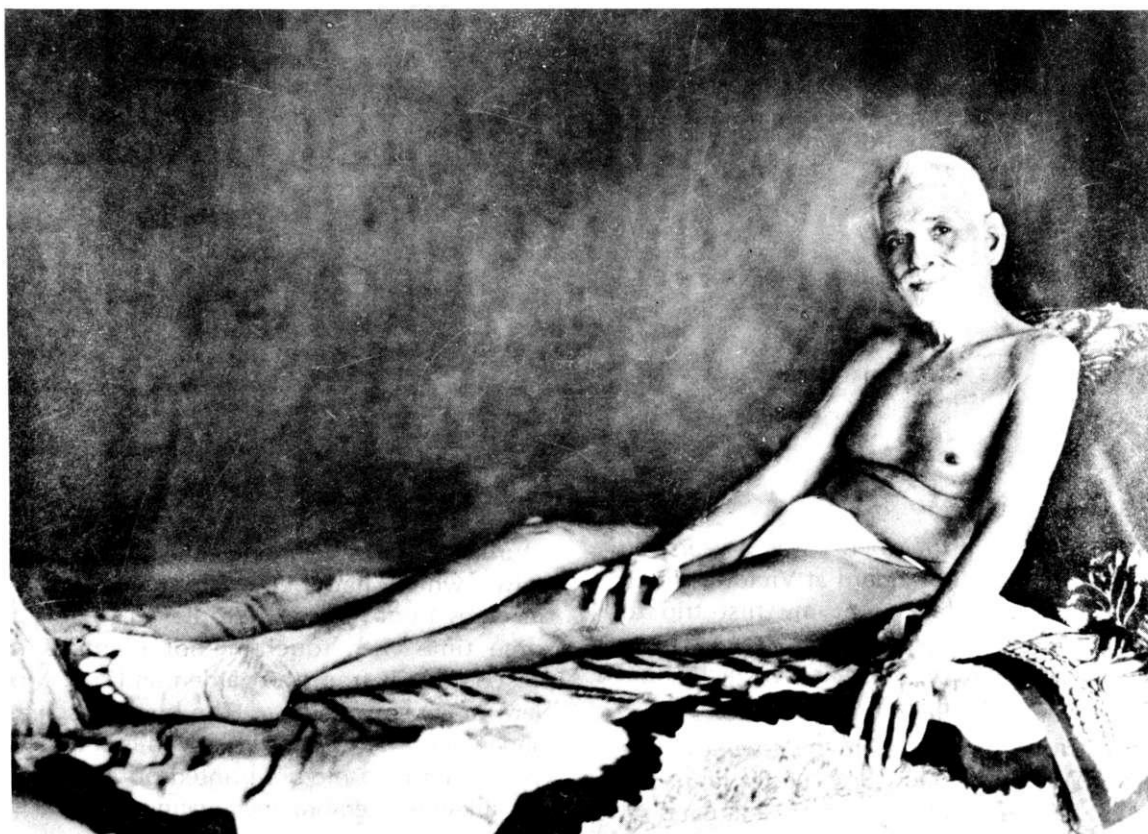
No spiritual life is genuine which is not unique, like finger-prints. We want to fit ourselves into known classes, recognized stages and so on. This is timidity (fear of standing alone), or avidity for recognition, or craze for diploma-collection. Hardy plants grow on bouldery hillsides, skirting the stones with their roots, piercing available crevices, converting rock into soil. What the plants encounter decides the manner of their growth; but they "never say 'die'".

The Father, with all his sternness and strength, hides within himself the tenderest of mothers.

The second verse of the *Forty verses* provides an easy-seeing stepping stone to believers in a personal God and victims of fear of death, that is, extinction. This fear is nothing to be ashamed of. By identification with Mahesa, we shed our mortal selves and live in Him. Hereafter, it is for the joy of immortality, not fear of death. The personal God transforms fear of death into love of immortality. Father is in Mother, as Mother in Father. Devotion to God is only another name for our latent, unacknowledged love for the Impersonal Immortal.

Thus Bhagavan at many stages translates his Advaitic teaching into the language of traditional, quite genuine piety. Here is an

¹Extracted from a letter dated 9-10-1963 addressed to a fellow devotee. (for a note on the late Professor, see *Mountain Path*, April 1968.)



incident narrated to me by Dr. Raja Savarirayan of Christukula Ashram, Tirupattur, North Arcot District:

In 1943 (or 1944) Dr. Jesudasan, known as Peria Annan (the Chinna Annan being Dr. Paton), accompanied by Dr. Raja went to Ramanashram. Periannan who was a highly qualified doctor who had done his medical studies at Edinburgh, wanted to do medical service to the poor. At the same time, he had deep spiritual longings, and spent long hours in prayer, meditation, and reading the

scriptures. Some accused this odd sanyasi doctor of not giving his full-time attention to medical work and wasting his expert talents. He himself was disturbed about this seeming dichotomy in his life. He went to Ramanashram and sat in silence before the Maharshi amidst several devotees. Solemn silence prevailed, and after some fifteen minutes, Periannan ventured to speak out and seek Bhagavan's guidance. Smiling, the Maharshi said, "Some call me also a lazy fellow. Do what you feel like doing." Periannan realized in a flash that there was no real dichotomy in his life.



V. Mallikarjunan

It was during 1913, when I was 7 years old and reading in II Standard at Victoria Hindu School at this place, that my first trip to Virupaksha Cave was undertaken to have darshan of Brahmana Samiyar, by which name Bhagavan was then known.

With four or five classmates I went to the cave. We each had the quarter anna to purchase the book 'Aksharamana-malai' a small booklet. We had heard about this book which was available at Virupaksha Cave at one quarter anna a copy. We had also hopes of getting copies gratis

One intelligent boy in our group, by name Thiagarajan, whose father was a well-to-do man suggested that some fruits should be offered to Swamiji and he duly purchased about a dozen fruits for 1 anna. We went to the cave and offered the fruits to Bhagavan, who in turn handed over one fruit to each of us and the rest to the attendant, by name Madhavaswamy. Fortunately, Bhagavan was not in Mounam. He smiled and jokingly asked whether we had contributed one pie each for buying the fruits. The joke was not understood by any of us immediately except Thiagarajan, who smiled without replying. Then we asked for the book. As instructed by Bhagavan the attendant searched for the book, but no copy was available. Then we were asked to contact one Narayanaswamy Reddiar residing at

REMINISCENCES

By V. Mallikarjunan

Rettai Pilliar Koil street to get the book. While returning we went to Sadai Samiyar asram. The swamiji from Malabar was a gigantic figure with *vibuthi* and *kumkum* on his forehead and with a bundle of knotted hair on his head like a turban. He was very kind to us and offered halwa which had been brought by some devotees from Madras. We played there for some time with touch-me-not plants and picked flowers from the garden and met Mr. Narayanaswamy Reddiar. The book Aksharamanamalai was not available with him either. We purchased a picture printed on art paper of Markandeya embracing Sivalingam.

When a small branch post office was opened to serve the Ashram and its devotees, Chinnaswamy asked my brother Raja Iyer, to take up the work, besides assisting in the kitchen (preparing iddli and coffee). Thus he served for more than three decades.

Chinnaswamy was very affectionate whenever I came to Ashram during my leave.

In 1947 when I was transferred against my will to Trichy from Madras, I came to Bhagavan. My brother told Bhagavan about my transfer and about my unwillingness to go to Trichy. Bhagavan blessed me and nodded his head.

At Trichy the work load was very heavy. One day I delivered a cloth-covered parcel containing personal registers of an officer to a bogus person, who collected it thinking that it contained new clothes.

Meanwhile a police complaint was made and a departmental enquiry was held. I was in



despair. The next day, however, the parcel, which had been thrown near the railway line somewhere between Golden Rock and Trichy town, was brought by a railway police constable. Thus both myself and the concerned official and real consignee were saved by Bhagavan's grace. I escaped punishment.

When I retired from Railway service in 1965 the President Mr. T.N. Venkataraman asked me to assist in running the Book Stall and I am serving there for the past 16 years.

Bhagavan's Jayanti was celebrated even at Virupaksha cave by the town officials in a very grand manner with poojas and feeding. I never missed the celebrations. When Bhagavan moved to Skandasramam, I used to go there along with my brother Sri Raja Iyer. On a couple of occasions in the morning time Bhagavan's mother compelled us to take breakfast (cold rice with tender mango pickles). Bhagavan used to do some work or other, polishing coconut shells, making nice walking sticks and so on. In 1916 during the Jayanti function, a photographer came and took a group photo where my brother and I appear, with Bhagavan sitting in the centre.

On many of my trips to and from Skandasramam I would meet Echammal either carrying meals to Bhagavan or returning from Skandasramam.

My brother Sri Raja Iyer after completing his middle school at this place went to Chidambaram for further studies. It was at Pachiappa High School there that Sri G. Ramaswamy Pillai was his classmate. After discontinuing his studies, my brother joined and served sadhus visiting holy places and singing Bhajan songs. He would also come to the Ashram and stay for some time and do pooja at mother's shrine. Any work given by Chinnaswamy was cheerfully done by him.

The tradition of kindness and affection shown to one and all continues from Chinnaswamy's days. Sri Ganesan took special care of my brother during his last days. Sri. V. Raja Iyer was absorbed at the feet of Arunachala Ramana on 24-7-82 in his 86th year after nearly 50 years of continuous service.

I too hope to continue to work as long as Bhagavan gives me strength. □

Introducing....

Brahmasri Krishna Sastrigal

Sri Krishna Sastrigal learnt Veda from the Chatram Veda Patasala of Tiruvannamalai for seven years from 1930 to 1937. In his student days he had the rare privilege of participating in the Vedic chanting conducted before the sacred presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. When it was decided to start a Veda Patasala in the Ashram, he was selected as its first teacher and took up the assignment in the august presence of Sri Bhagavan. Since that time, he has been teaching the Vedas to students for over forty years. Thus, he is chiefly responsible for the steady growth of the Patasala. Apart from this, he also taught the Vedas to others interested in Sri Ramana-nagar. Due to old age, he retired from the service only a few years ago. Yet, he participates on special occasions like Bhagavan's Jayanti, Aradhana and Sri Vidya Havan. Calm and contented by nature and austere in his life, he has been a model Vedic teacher to earnest students.

We wish him many long years of health and happiness.

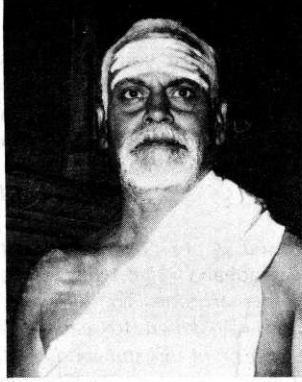


Sri Krishna Sastrigal



Sri Ramu Sastrigal

Sri Ramu Sastrigal comes from a family dedicated to Vedic learning and learnt the Vedic lessons from Brahmasri Manalurpettai Sundara Ganapatigal at the Chatram Veda-patasala in Tiruvannamalai. He also learnt lessons in "Kavya" from Manalurpettai Vaidyanatha Sastrigal. Right from his student days, along with Raju Sastry and Vaidyanatha Sastry he had the great good fortune of participating in the Veda Parayana conducted in the Presence Sri Bhagavan. Apart from this he also used to serve the Ashram in its day to day activities. Later, he spent twenty years in the service of Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt.



Sri Ramu Sastrigal

He is now settled in Ramanagar and regularly participates in the Sri Chakra Pooja at Mother's shrine and also in all important functions. His son, Sri R. Srinivasan, who served in the Ashram for a few years, is now conducting poojas at Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore.

Sri Ramu Sastrigal is devoted to his parents and is looking after his aged mother with great care. We wish him a long and healthy life.

Sri Panchu Sastrigal

Like Sri Ramu Sastrigal, Panchu Sastrigal too learnt Vedas from the Chatram Veda-patasala and was regularly participating in the Veda Parayana before Sri Bhagavan.



Sri Panchu Sastrigal

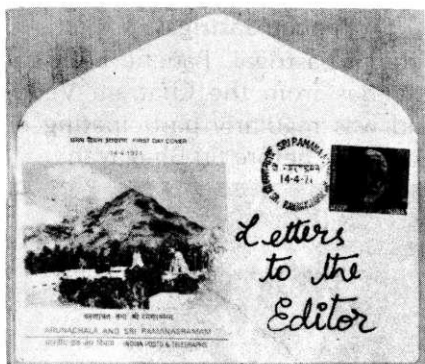
He is a regular participant in Sri Chakra Pooja at Mother's Shrine. Though he is over seventy years, he looks quite young and takes part with enthusiasm in all special functions. He is a prominent figure in important functions in the town also. May he serve our Master for a long time.

Bhagavan said, "Ask Muruganar, who is here. He has sung a song where he says Ramanasramam is not simply here for him, but everywhere. Thereupon Muruganar read out the following stanza from 'Ramana Devamalai': —

ஆண்டெனவே யாண்டு மடங்கிமன நின்றலால்
ஈண்டு புனல் சூழலக மெங்கணுமே—வேண்டி
அமரர் பலரு மடையும் பெரிய
ரமணதே வாச்சிரமம்

which means, 'Because (by His grace) the mind has attained quiescence and remains calm everywhere as it used to remain at Ramanasramam, wherever I may go in this world it is to me Ramanasramam, to which even devas go with keen desire.' In other words, Ramanasramam is *chid akasa* which is everywhere and to which we gain access by killing the mind.

— *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p. 35



RELY ON RAMANA'S GRACE

It is really true that *japa*, *dhyana* and *paja* done with a restless mind are quite useless. But it is also a fact that we, householders, busy with our own duties and worried financial problems — cannot always avoid the restlessness. Now by the Grace of God, I can ignore the distractions. Whenever I enter my shrine room and see the photo of Bhagavan, I forget all my anxieties and worries. For a pretty long time, I have made it a practice to go to the shrine room and to do *japa* and *dhyana* regularly for a certain period. But I am still uninitiated. I have a feeling that without initiation by a realised Guru with a suitable *mantra*, one cannot advance in spiritual *sadhana*. Unfortunately, I have not come in direct contact with any *Mahatma*, though religious books of so many *Mahatmas* are my constant companion. This is the main reason for my lack of concentration.

— Ashok Coomar Maiti, Barbaria.

It seems you have no actual problem as long as you are in your shrine, regularly for your sadhana. Why then are you complaining that you need guidance from a personal guru? Do you expect someone to hand out to you results which can only come from patient, prolonged, personal sadhana? Looking out impatiently for results only spoils what your sadhana is slowly but steadily building up in you.

Many devotees of Bhagavan Ramana who never met Him during His life in the body have testified over the years that they get His guidance still; they never look out for any 'living' guru nor for initiation. On the other hand, there is the tradition — confirmed by the experience of many seekers — that we do not need to go in search of a personal guru because when he is needed, he will turn up of his own accord, when our sadhana is ripened. So, surrender once for all to Sri Ramana and rely on His Grace.

THE PATH OF JNANA — I

It seems the time has come when I have to leave the objective meditation and the system of Raja Yoga under the guidance of an Illustrious Master who has been very

kind to me hitherto. I find that Bhagavan's Self-Enquiry approach can help me to reach the ultimate Goal and it suits me. Hence I request you to kindly write to me whether I have to do something else in addition to sitting for sometime in early morning and at evening for Self-Enquiry. For how much time should I sit? Are there some prescribed timings for Self-enquiry?

— Raghukul Tilak, Roorkee

Having followed up to now a different path — a particular Yoga sadhana —, it will take some time to change your inner attitude. To follow a Yoga, there must be somebody who does it; to tread the Path of Jnana means to try to get rid of this somebody — the 'personal I'. (Please read the Supplement "The Liberating Question" in this issue for a clear exposition on Sri Bhagavan's Self-enquiry).

THE PATH OF JNANA — II

(1) When I am without any worry and seek 'Who am I?', I do not get any response or result.

(2) I read in some article in *The Mountain Path*, 'Attention without any thought' in meditation or self-awareness brings the same result. I have passed moments of 'attention without thought' and self-awareness but have not made any progress in the path.

(3) I also note that it is foolish to attempt to kill the mind by means of the mind and that the only way to do it is to find its source and to hold on to it. But, does this also not require the presence of the mind?

— Rudra Sain Khanna, Delhi

(1) It is quite right and the only result that 'you' can reach. Imagine being in the theatre. There is the signal of a bell ringing before the curtain goes up. The sound of this bell puts you, the witness of the coming show, in a state of mind which is sheer void. It is sheer expectancy, nothing less, nothing more. Exactly the same state of mind has to be attained by the question 'Whom am I?' And it is not in your power, to raise the curtain. You have simply to wait. If you can keep your mind in this state of abeyance, it is enough. The curtain will rise, by the intensity of your longing after Truth, or by the Grace of a Higher Power, as the bhakta prefers to think.

(2) 'Attention without any thought or self-awareness' are only two different ways of expressing the same state of mind. Have you not accepted that 'moments' of a proper attitude of mind can undo a lifetime of wrong thinking and feeling due to ignorance? Have patience, unlimited patience, and confidence in your Inner Light.

Moreover, revise your attitude to sadhana. Now it is still meant to attain something; turn this intention by 180 degrees and try getting rid of all that might be an obstacle in your path. Realisation is there, but there is also our everyday thinking and feeling to veil it.

(3) *Mind has no independent existence apart from the Self and hence the attempt to kill it is erroneous.*

When sadhana is performed with the aid of mind, name and form are perceived. In the sadhana prescribed by Bhagavan, the mind is turned inward seeking its origin; and name and form are not perceived. Hence, the sadhana is not mental.

The inturning of mind and its abidance is due to the grace of Bhagavan which is beyond the realm of mind. Surrender to Him and He will reveal the Truth in silence.

AN EXPERIENCE

It all happened in October, 1953, before Diwali day.

Looking at a picture of Sri Janaki Matha, who was an ardent devotee of Bhagavan Ramana, I had prayed to Her to show me too Her divine power.

Earlier, a series of supernatural happenings had taken place in the house of my neighbour, who is a devotee of Mathaji and Bhagavan. I shall dwell only on my own experience that day in 1953 in Calcutta.

From the day I made my prayer to Sri Mathaji, I found that my mind was gradually undergoing some change. I had become more silent than usual. It was as though some power was preparing me for something out of the ordinary.

It was about 7 p.m. All of a sudden I experienced the tremendous impact of Blazing Light within and without. At the same time, in front of me on the wall, I saw three white, parallel, horizontal lines about 3" each in length. Later, during my visit to Sri Janaki Nilayam, Tanjore, I was to see the same three white lines of sacred ash, being applied on the forehead of Sri Bhagavan's picture, which Mathaji used to worship regularly.

I am a regular reader of 'The Mountain Path'. The editorials and other articles in *The Mountain Path* are very helpful. Sri V. Ganesan's article on Arthur Osborne at the time of Osborne's demise, was highly illuminating. Recent, the editorial of Michael James on 'The Power of Arunachala' in the April, 1982 issue of *The Mountain Path* was helpful to me and to my family members, especially the tips on Arunachala-Pradakshina. No wonder Sri Janaki Matha had asked all her devotees to subscribe to *The Mountain Path* without fail!

— K.N. Viswanath, Bangalore

We were so overwhelmed — one and all — with the latest *The Mountain Path*. The article on Arunachala Bhakta Bhagavata was written in such an elevated spirit. Truly, at close hand one tends to "miss the forest for the trees". Your fresh perspective has only refreshed our own appreciation of the gem with whose association Bhagavan has blessed us.

— Evelyn Caselow, New York

The July issue of *The Mountain Path* is very nice. I enjoyed 'Ambrosial Ramana' — the anecdotes on Sri Bhagavan thrill children and elders alike.

— Mrs Krishna Khosla, Faridabad

We enjoyed your article 'Ambrosial Ramana'. A devotee spoke about it in the last Sunday meeting of our Kendram.

— G.V. Rajeswara Rao, President,
Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad.

"The colour and the 'get-up' of the cover page is most artistic and beautiful. BHAGAVAN RAMANA LOOKS HANDSOMELY GRAND WITH HIS MELLOW EYES. This time the articles which have appeared in the magazine are appropriate and enhance the beauty. The Master is really great. I do receive the magazine regularly; I do not only thank you, but love to do so."

— H.H. Sri Sai Mirchandani, Gurughar

"Just as a sculptor when engrossed in his creative work is not aware of the environments, time, etc., when I took up the July '82 issue I totally got absorbed in the contents and for a long time I was unaware of myself, dissolved in Bhagavan Ramana. Sri A.R. Natarajan's Editorial is not only superb but will make many a devotee to plunge into 'Ramana' — the Way and the Goal too!"

— S. Ganapathiraman, Karaikudi

Best congratulations for the fine performance in Mountain Path July issue. The editorial in particular which scintillates with Bhakti and Jnana both in one. The other sections of the journal are also very good. All these augur a very bright future for the Ashram journal.

— Professor N.R. Krishnamurti Aiyer, Madras

ATMA VICHARA

First of all I would like to thank you for starting again the *Letters to the Editor* section; I believe the readers value it.

A few comments, on the letter under the heading "Atma Vichara" on pp. 201-2 of the July '82 issue. My experience is as follows. After asking the question intently *Who am I?* and other thoughts begin to arise, the question is asked: 'whose is this other thought'. This stops the other thought and concentrates attention on the owner, producer, source of the thought. The realisation dawns that I am the owner, I the producer, I the source of the thought. Next comes the realisation that this "I" is the body, the personality etc. is but another thought, a very frequent thought maybe; but still, only a thought (that thought, in fact, is the ego). What then is permanent, real and not just a thought? By and by, the realisation comes that it is the source, the centre, the spiritual heart which is present always and everywhere and the essence or material of all thoughts and sensations."

— Hans Heimer, Sale, England

BOOK REVIEWS

BHAGAVAN RAMANA AND MOTHER: By A.R. Natarajan. Pub.: Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore-560 003 (Copies available from Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai-606 603). Pp. 60- Fully Illustrated-Price: Rs. 20/-.

Sri Bhagavan's spontaneous love for the fellow-beings is unique; no less was His love for the animals and trees. His beautiful relationship with His mother, Azhagammal, is known only to a few; much less is known of His role as her *Sat Guru* who gave her Liberation.

In 1898, Azhagammal came to Arunachala to fetch her dear Venkataraman back home to Tiruchuzhi. Little could she realise that he had become one with His Father and that he had found His true home. Such was the divine plan that Bhagavan Ramana's first spiritual instruction, about the inevitability of the fruits of action, was given to His mother on this occasion.

It was only years later that they met. Then it was Ramana's turn to become the mother to save her from the delirium of typhoid fever and of worldliness. The time came soon after for her to come to stay with Him and receive the full measure of His grace, to evolve spiritually. Liberation too came through His sacred hands.

The Liberator Ramana and liberated mother had become one, and from 1922 the mother's *Samadhi* became *Sri Ramanasramam*. In order that the world may know of His mother's stature, Bhagavan not only permitted the construction of a temple for her but took active and continuous interest for its completion and consecration. The temple of Grace over Bhagavan's *Samadhi* and the mother's are adjacent highlighting the fact that they are inseparable.

Reading the story of the mother and Sri Bhagavan's wonderful relationship with her is a moving experience. This beautiful story is told in this book with such tenderness and affection that one is moved to his very depths. The photographic memory of Bhagavan is used in the fullest measure and one is able to relive those wonderful years in Virupaksha cave, Skandashram, savouring the sweetness of this unique relationship.

It is difficult to exaggerate the impact of the profusion of illustrations in the book which visually brings to our

mind's eye the scenes of the great human, or should I say superhuman, drama.

Sri A.R. Natarajan the author, has already acquired for himself the great honour and privilege of spreading Sri Bhagavan's teachings through his illuminating speeches on Him and by conducting absorbing Seminars on the Teachings of Bhagavan. His translation (into English) and commentary on *Sat Darshana* (reviewed in our previous issue) is very popular among Ramana-devotees. His *Bhagavan Ramana and Mother* now published has a unique place in Ramana-literature.

Every Ramana-bhakta should necessarily possess a copy of this precious pictorial presentation.

— "SEIN"



SEEDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS — The Wisdom of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj. Ed. by Jean Dunn, Pub: Grove Press Inc., 196, West Houston Street, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10014, U.S.A. Pp. 215 — Price: \$ 9.95

There are some modern gurus who go to the extent of assuming responsibility for the entire sadhana of the disciples — that is, the disciples need do no sadhana and the guru would do everything for them. Sri Ramana Maharshi, on the other hand, insisted that the aspirant was fully responsible for his spiritual sadhana, while, of course, Grace would 'help those who help themselves'.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj repeats this lesson in unequivocal terms. "I do not want to teach anything to anybody; I only hold up a mirror to those who come here. I will make you stand before the mirror and look at yourself. You have to get the vision of yourself in the light that is emanating from your own Self." (p.64)

An outstanding feature in Maharaj's teachings is his stress on the need for seekers to recognize that they are bound by the bodymind complex and that they can and should grow out of this bondage. "Understand clearly 'you are' and 'I am': these feelings are the products of this gross earth. Out of the earth comes vegetation and the essence of 'I Amness'. That 'I Amness' disappears when the body drops off, because essentially it is only a product of the food essence." (p.82) For shaking off this

bondage, Maharaj says: "By your identification with the manifest body you have lost sight of your real nature. You must always be conscious of That. That state of Consciousness is a natural thing, only don't break away from it." (p.65) And, again: "Consciousness is present everywhere, but knowledge of Consciousness is dependent on the form." (p.206) Repeatedly Maharaj stresses that 'You are the Truth and that you have nothing else to do but to awake to the Truth within'.

Jean Dunn is an exceptionally fortunate person, who has not only drenched herself in the nectar of Maharaj's Wisdom but has also out of love for us recorded his words of wisdom and brought them out in this book. Seekers all over the world owe a deep debt to this pious lady. The following potent saying of Maharaj applies to all of us who are exposed to the Maharaj through this attractively printed 'Book of Wisdom'.

"When you have come thousands of miles from your country and have listened to this great knowledge are you going to die as an individual of a particular country, caste and colour? Understand that what is going around as your body and name is of the nature of the all-pervading Consciousness. When you travel in a car are you the car?"

Sages like Sri Maharaj live in their teachings.

We wish that Jean Dunn preserves and presents more such precious pearls uttered by this illustrious 'holy man' of our age.

— 'SEIN'

IN MY OWN WAY: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY 1915-1965.
By Alan Watts. Pub. Jonathan Cape, London. Pp. xii + 400, plus photographs.

Alan Watts, born at Chisleworth, Kent, England on 6 January 1915, was educated at Kings School, Canterbury — situated next door to the premier Anglian cathedral. He embraced Buddhism while still in his teens; married at 23 and went to California, where he was ordained a minister of the Episcopal (Anglican) sect of Christianity. After five years he quitted the Church, reverted to (Zen) Buddhism, and became a 'teacher at the American Academy of Asian Studies in San Francisco, and thereafter philosopher-at-large, free lance, gyrovagus, unaffiliated' (page 218).

Watts was meaningfully influenced by Taoism from the age of 30 until his death in 1973, an experience which reached a positive philosophical apotheosis in Japan, which he movingly describes in the final chapter, "The sound of Rain".

'I simply, and even humbly know,' he wrote (p.47), 'that I am The Eternal, even though such supremely enlightened people as Jesus, Buddha ... and Sri Ramana

Maharshi may have manifested this knowledge in a more forceful and authoritative style.' Watts never ceased to revere 'that amazing sun-god Sri Ramana Maharshi of Arunachala.'

Much of the first third of the book relates the young man's increasing disappointment, with the Christian church and the English establishment. 'As everyone knows,' he wrote (28), 'the main reason for England's imperial exploits was that its more imaginative natives wanted to escape from its climate and its cooking.'

Too many of his heartfelt cynicisms were, in fact, home truths. While still at his English cathedral school he observed, 'a man who uses brains against brawn is, by the brawny, considered a sneak, a cheater, and a coward — almost a criminal.' 'I detested cricket' he admitted (94), and consoled himself with quoting Bernard Shaw's famous lament: "Anything but sport!"

Watts noted elsewhere (p.103): 'England has a climate so dismal, an educational system so antiquated, a social system so rigid, a diet so lugubrious, and business operations so boring and conducted in such miserable surroundings that it shoots off its more sensitive sons to other places.'

'I was brought up,' he explains (46), 'in a culture that for more than a thousand years had been smothered in and diseased with religion ... it had initiated ... the subjection and cultural destruction of India, Africa, China, and the native civilizations of North and South America... There are esoteric or underground aspects of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam which, though usually persecuted, are of surpassing interest. But in their exoteric and official aspects they are a repression of all ecstasies except those of righteous indignation, violence, and military pomp.'

'I do not consider it intellectually respectable to be a partisan in matters of religion' he declared (63) in his early twenties. Already influenced by Buddhist free thought, he affirmed: 'I deplore missionary zeal, and consider exclusive dedication to and advocacy of any particular religion, as either the best or the only true way, an almost irreligious arrogance.'

By this time, to the young Watts, 'the Christian God ... was a bombastic bore' (74); 'the bombastic father-God of the uptight Christians and Jews' (282). Moreover, he 'felt it utterly silly to speak of God as "He" ... God was "IT" or "That" (182).

'I didn't like Christian love as I saw it exemplified in the lives of those who preached it,' he continued (79). 'They were always going to war with other people to save them.' Nor had Watts any time for 'the antics of the Salvation Army'. In fact, he 'could not stand the atmosphere of church and churchy people' (159), nor

'the imperious claims of the church' (198). '... Church religion,' he discovered, 'is all talk — plus a certain amount of indifferent musical entertainment. ... When Christians go to church they leave their bodies at the door' (187). While inside the building these worshippers 'are apologizing to Jesus, or God the father, for their sins, and asking him not to spank them, and telling him how great and glorious he is' ... 'I felt like a fool' he confessed (195). '... religion becomes demonically destructive ... the God worshipped in Church could no more have designed nature than Euclid could have written "Finnegan's Wake"' (206). '... the church's claim to be the best of all ways to God is not only a mistake, but also a symptom of anxiety' (209).

It is important and essential that the reviewer of this book devotes a fair percentage of space to its author's opinions of the Christian religion in which he was educated from childhood, and which he actually represented for five years as an ordained minister: for he wrote from bitter experience and felt exasperation.

'Fortunately for me,' Watts confessed (345), 'my God was not so much the Hebrew-Christian autocrat as the Chinese Tao, "which loves and nourishes all things, but does not lord it over them"' ("*Tao Te Ching*").

Having resigned from the offices of the Episcopal Church in California, Watts admitted publicly that the Christian 'Gospels never appealed to me so deeply as the *Tao Te Ching* or the *Chung-tzu* books' (163).

At the same time he deplored the fact that 'people in the west, with their heavily overloaded ideas of God, easily confuse the Buddhist and Taoist feeling for cosmic emptiness with nihilism' (369).

He likewise deplored (185) 'the Christian atmosphere of preoccupation with sin'; 'the Church continues to give the impression that sexual sins are by far the naughtiest' (200). He points out that 'Buddha had taken a dim view of wenching and boozing, but he never called it *sin*' (81).

Watts asks: 'Can you be enlightened, realized, a liberated being and still engage in sexual intercourse?' (257). He continues: 'What I later found out to be the real reason for this contretemps — the question of spirituality and sexuality —, never came to the surface ... Hindus never question the superstition that emission of semen is equivalent to loss of blood. They believe that "loss" of semen wastes *ojas* or psychic energy which should, instead, be pumped up the subtle *sushumna* channel in the spine to flower as a thousand-petalled lotus in the brain' (240).

Buddhists, the author notes (377), 'are not troubled by the notion of sin and everlasting damnation'. As we know, neither the Pali nor the Sinhala languages contain a word meaning "sin"; sin was imported or introduced into Sri Lanka by the Christian proselytizing missionaries.

And Buddha *dhamma* remains wholly innocent of such horrifically cruel inventions as the Christian theory of "original sin".

But Watts' reading extended far beyond that of comparative religion and philosophy, and a third of his book relates to his married life in California and that state's very varied human society. He remarried, and for a time lived outside Los Angeles, which city he describes as that 'man-made disaster' (235), deploring too (205) 'the oppressive white anglo-saxon Protestant subculture' which he found to exist there.

In California though, Watts met a host of friendly and congenial intellectuals and artists. But Billy Graham, he notes (353), 'attracts an enormous following of dangerously serious and humorless people'.

'Billy Graham and Ronald Reagan,' he thought (258), 'who may be very charming in private life, but... represent and exploit a vulgar multitude of Bible-bewitched prudes, bluenoses, and all-American boys who, despite the legal separation of Church and state, pay the police to be their armed clergymen.

'These barbarians,' he continues, '... will drink beer and whiskey rather than wine, but always with a vague sense of guilt, so as to become nasty-drunk rather than happy-drunk...'

'What troubles me' he confesses (259), 'is that I come from the same white Protestant milieu, and must therefore have, in my predisposition of life, some vestige of this barbarism!

'Unlike the Americans,' he observed (371), 'the Japanese have no sense of guilt whatsoever about drinking, and this goes for priests as well as laymen. ... I do wonder if this attitude to alcohol accounts for the fact that I have never seen anyone nasty drunk, as distinct from happy-drunk, on sake' (the Japanese wine, which is about as strong as sherry).

'... to be drunk in Japan, and old China' he explains (372), 'is not considered a disgrace... The Japanese also observe the interesting and salutary social rule that nothing counts which is said in a bar.'

And of the large colony of Chinese living in California, Watts deplores the fact that (268): 'These lovable and generous people ... had forgotten the taste of Chinese culture.'

Also met Jiddu Krishnamurti, of whom he states (117): 'Krishnamurti doesn't drink booze, eat meat, or ... have any genital sex life because he is polymorphously erotic and gets the ecstasy through every nerve-end of his skin.'

Watts enjoyed studying and discussing the many religions and pseudo-religious movements and sects that

thrive along the western American coast, including the teachings of what he described (126) as the 'phenomenal rascal-masters (like Gurdjieff, Mitrinovic, and Aleister Crowley)'. In similar milieu he examined magical objects, 'all of which,' he declared (299), 'as is somehow not the case in museums, retain their powers.'

'But oddly,' he admitted (344), 'considering my absorption in Zen at the time, the flavour of these experiences was Hindu rather than Chinese. Somehow the atmosphere of Hindu mythology and imagery slid into them, suggesting at the same time that Hindu philosophy was a local form of a sort of undercover wisdom, inconceivably ancient, which everyone knows in the back of his mind but will not admit.'

Having thoroughly explored and enjoyed the true compassion and sweet reasonableness of both Taoism and Buddhism, Watts realized that the goal of his personal spiritual search was to be found in Zen. 'Zen is basically Taoism' he averred (265). Whereas, he notes (196), 'the Christian kneels in prayer before his Lord and King, the Buddhist sits in meditation along with the sitting image of the Buddha'.

'Zen meditation,' he observed (367), 'consists only in watching everything that is happening, including your own thoughts and your breathing, without comment ... with the rapt attention of a child ... The trick — which cannot be forced — is to be in this state of consciousness all the time ... Experiences move through this consciousness as tracklessly as the reflections of flying birds on water, and, as a Zen poem says —

The bamboo shadows
sweep the stairs,
but raise no dust.'

Simply listen! Have you listened to the sound of rain? — it has no meaning such as words have. 'When you have really heard the sound of rain,' Watts explains (388), 'you can hear, and see and feel, everything else in the same way — as needing no translation, as being just that which it is, though it may be impossible to say what. ... life is a perfectly and absolutely meaningless happening — nothing but a display of endlessly variegated vibrations, neither good nor evil, right nor wrong.'

Whatever your religion or your philosophy of life, whether you be man, woman, or unisex teenager of whatever nationality, whether you can read or not — you require no testimonial nor qualification to practice this Zen form of meditation. I recommend it — as I do this book for those who can read — to all, and especially to those brought up in the Semitic faiths but who now look to India and the Far East for their personal spiritual salvation.

— G.F. ALLEN.

THE BIBLE, THE QURAN AND SCIENCE: By Maurice Bucaille — The Crescent Publishing Company, Jail Road, Aligarh. Price Rs. 75/-

ISLAM IN FOCUS By Hammudah Abdalati — The Crescent Publishing Company. Price Rs. 40/-

In these days of easy judgment about the character and intentions of other peoples, the sources of information on which we rely assume great importance. Do we know anything about the Iranians, the Iraqis, the Afghans — or the Falklanders for that matter — about whom we are reading a lot in the newspapers today, excepting the propaganda material dished out? It is interesting to read in the *Harper* magazine recently: "Islam is only what holds the west's oil reserves; little else counts; little else deserves attention." Much more than oil is at stake, when we look at the general unrest today among the Muslims the world over, where a number of conservative Muslim states have decided to establish Islamic republics in their respective countries. It was in the seventh century that Prophet Mohammed united the utterly backward Bedouins and raised them to the heights of civilisation and in less than a century later, Islam spread like wild fire from Spain in the west to China in the East. And today there are again signs of resurgence towards a search for their roots to recapture their glorious heritage.

But much more than the rise and fall and resurgence again of the world of Islam, the word "Islam" itself has several different meanings. It connotes primarily the one TRUE divine religion, taught to mankind by a series of prophets, each of whom brought a revealed book. Such were the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel and to crown them all the Quran, which completes and supersedes all previous revelations. But Islam is not really a religion in the conventional sense of the word, nor a mere philosophy but an attitude towards life, and as Iqbal put it aptly: "It is a world life, which intuitively sees its own needs and at critical moments defines its own direction." The dichotomy between science and religion, noticeable in other religions, has never been in Islam; for from the beginning they were considered as twin sisters. People were directed to cultivate science and the application of this precept brought with it the prodigious strides in science taken during the great era of Islamic civilisation, from which, before the renaissance, the west itself benefited.

Maurice Bucaille's book, translated from the French by the author and A.D. Pannell, is especially important, as he proves, with authentic documentation, that in the confrontation between the Scriptures and science, a high point of understanding has been reached owing to the light thrown on Quranic passages by modern scientific knowledge. The author convincingly argues that it is perfectly legitimate, not only to regard the Quran as the expression of a Revelation, but also to award it a very

special place, on account of the guarantee of authenticity it provides and the presence in it of scientific statements which, when studied today, appear as a challenge to explanation in human terms.

The purpose of Hammudah Abdalati's book on the other hand, is more simple than Maurice Bucalle's as it provides the layman with a proper insight into the basic teachings of Islam and is written primarily for the Muslims of the Western hemisphere, residing in remote areas and facing complex problems, in surroundings particularly hostile to Islamic culture. In this sense, therefore, it makes a new introduction to Islam acquainting Muslims, especially those in the New World, with the truth of Islam and providing them with a spiritual insight into the universe and a moral approach to the human condition. Both these books are brought out with the assistance of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, the Muslim Students Association of United States and Canada and the North American Islamic Trust.

— ARGUS.

THE WAY OF SPLENDOUR: Jewish Mysticism and Psychology. By Edward Hoffman. Pub. Shambhala Publications, 1920 13th St., Boulder, Colorado 80302 U.S.A. Pp. 248. Price: \$ 7.95

The author's contention in the 'Way of Splendour' is firstly that, at a time when there is a growing recognition of man's spiritual dimension by psychologists, psychotherapists and all those who take a holistic view of man in the world, there is a need for an all-encompassing framework capable of integrating the scattered insights of these modern disciplines, and thus guiding and fostering man's spiritual quest for union with the Divine; secondly, the author goes on to argue, this is a need which can be met by the ancient Judaistic way of esoteric knowledge known as the Kabbala.

After a brief but lucid sketch of the history of the Kabbala, including fascinating accounts of such figures as Moses de Lion, presumed author of the 13th Century Key Kabbalistic text the "Zohar" ("The Book of Splendour"), and Israel ben Eliezer, 18th, century founder of the Hasidic movement, a movement of spiritual renewal deeply inspired by Kabbalistic doctrines, the author returns to his principal thesis.

Paradoxically, the Kabbala, a term which for many evokes images of abstruse mysticism and magic, embodies an extremely practical approach to the question of spirituality, the author tells us. Utilising such concepts as the 'Tree of Life', a schematic representation of how the Divine will descend through the four realms of being ("Emanation", "Formation", "Creation" and

"Action"), to manifest in the physical sphere, the Kabbalistic system makes it clear that the first step towards the Divine is the ability to handle our existence on the material plane, and is highly wary of such sudden leaps into the realms of higher awareness as those afforded for example by arduous meditation techniques and prolonged fasting.

The Kabbala abounds in techniques for balancing and refining the psychosomatic organism, many of which mirror very closely the most recent developments in our approach to man's psychological make-up: interpretation of dreams, the release of emotional blockages, ways of dealing with disruptive thoughts in meditation, the treatment of mental disorders, the question of death and the process of dying, all these are dealt with by Kabbalism, never as ends in themselves, but always in the context of man's spiritual growth. Peculiarly relevant to our times is the Kabbalistic approach to sexuality which, the author says, "has always been viewed as a basic quality in the Universe."; love-making within marriage and performed "with the correct attitude and desire" is regarded as "one of the most powerful spiritual practices we can engage in." So much so that marriage and child-rearing has always been a prerequisite for aspirants to the Kabbalistic path. In general our physical and sensual urges are not to be denied but honestly acknowledged and recognized, at which point, by the application of our higher will power, or "Kavannah", they can be transformed into tools of enlightenment.

Subsequent chapters deal with the mystical experience itself, the question of life after death, and the hidden dimensions suggested by paranormal phenomena such as telepathy and mediumship.

In the final chapter the author envisages a new 'Kabbalistic' psychology which would incorporate the current psychological perspectives in a fully unitive vision of man in the Universe.

"... it seems evident that the Jewish esoteric system offers a remarkably comprehensive, lucid, and consistent picture of the human mind. It is striking that in nearly all respects, the new psychology has converged on the exact portrayal of our inner make up that the Kabbalists have for centuries espoused."

Interestingly, as the author points out, many of the elaborators of the new psychology, like Freud, Erich Fromm, Wilhelm Reich, and Fritz Perls, were of Jewish ancestry, 'yet eager to shed their religious and ethnic identity.' The Kabbala held no interest for them whatsoever, yet many of their insights and orientations closely paralleled, albeit in modern garb, the ideas of a system which they expressly repudiated. Quite a coincidence, if it is one.

— R

ashram Bulletin



SRI RAMANASRAMAM TODAY - IV

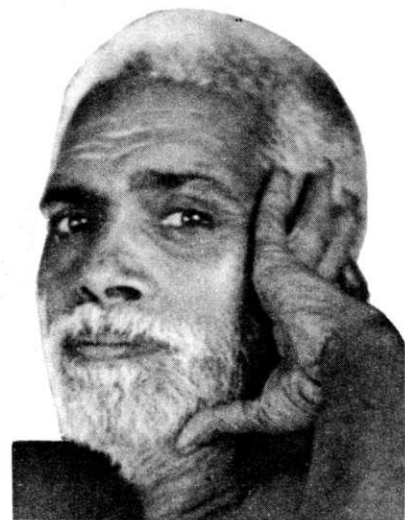
More Than Mother's Love

KITCHEN

In the early years of Sri Ramanasramam, Bhagavan would be the cynosure of all the eyes of the devotees fortunate to be given the task of helping Him in the kitchen. Ramana was a past-master in the culinary art having learnt it from His mother Azhagammal who was excellent in cooking. Bhagavan would clean the grain, grind the seeds, stitch the leaves and give detailed instructions as to how each dish was to be prepared. Santhamma, Lokamma, Sundaram, Raja Iyer and Sampooramma — only to name a few — used to vie with each other for a glance of approval from the Bhagavan and cherish those early morning hours as the most precious in their lives.

DINING HALL

No visitor was allowed to go without taking food. Everyone knew of Bhagavan's motherly love and he would invariably enquire whether the visitors had taken food. So the kitchen and dining hall grew in size and the present Hall was built in 1938.





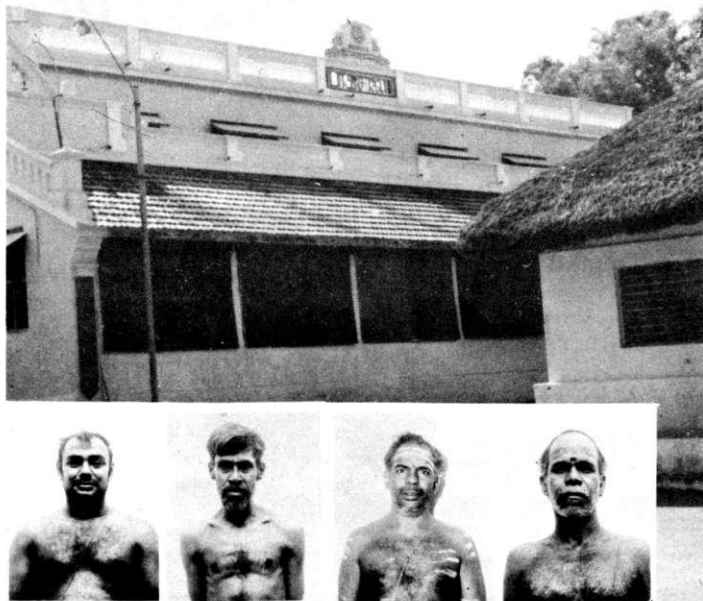
Shantamma



Sundaram



Thenamma



Ramesh



Bhairavan



Balu



Subramanian (Head-cook)

“... Bhagavan used to work in the kitchen as a background for spiritual training. He taught us that work is love for others, for ourselves. By his very presence he taught us that we are always in the presence of God and that all work is his.....”



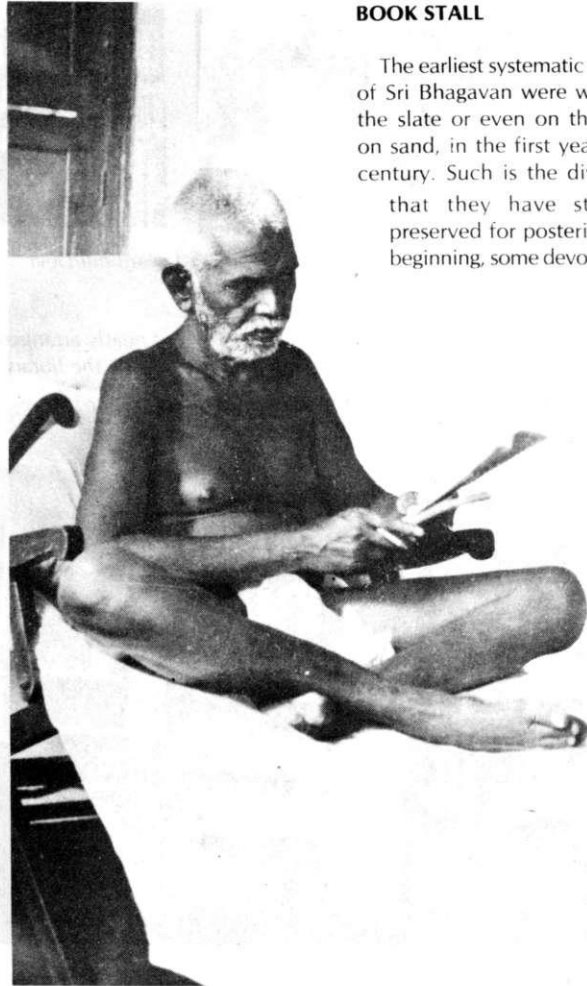
Store

Bhagavan would sit in the center and the persons serving food knew that nothing would escape His watchful eyes, and that the slightest favour would be frowned upon. For those in the kitchen Bhagavan was God incarnate, their Sad Guru on whom they wanted to shower their feeling by giving extra shares of the dishes. But they had to steel their hearts against it for they were aware that even the slightest preference would be met with his disapproval. Sometimes they would transgress resulting in Bhagavan giving up things which He seemed to prefer, like rasam, to drive home the lesson of equality.

The Ashram President and Ganesan, as all those responsible ensured that Bhagavan's days are still with us. Food at Sri Ramanasramam is truly manna from Heaven, wholesome, simple, and sattvic. It is given to all comers, willingly. Never a 'No' for 'Prasadam' is the Ashram's policy which has endeared the management to the visitors. Also, as in the days prior to 1950 the timings are strictly observed.



The Dining Hall: “In daily life Bhagavan avoided all distinction. At work and at food, he was one of us...”



BOOK STALL

The earliest systematic teachings of Sri Bhagavan were written on the slate or even on the ground on sand, in the first years of this century. Such is the divine plan that they have still been preserved for posterity. In the beginning, some devotee would



Vijaya Chaitanya



Sri Thiagarajan



Sri Ramaswamy



Sri Arumugam

come forward and publish them. Bhagavan would correct the proofs with meticulous care and would suggest that the price should be kept as low as possible to reach many. Sri Ramanasramam has continued this practice of pricing these priceless books very low. Quality has been kept up from the first publication to the latest publication, 'Bhagavan Sri Ramana: Pictorial Biography'.

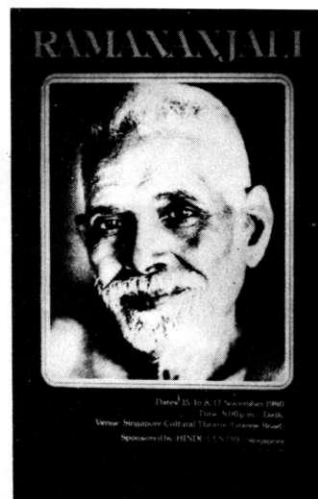
There are as many as 108 books in different languages — a feast indeed of the essence of spiritual wisdom. The Book Stall has always been served by totally dedicated persons —

Somasundaraswamy, Kalyana Sundaram, Ramanatha Iyer, Sivarama Reddiar, Vijaya Chaitanya, Thiagarajan, Ramaswamy and Arumugam.

The book stall also houses the rich 'World of Ramana Music': Beginning with *Ramananjali* each of the 12 Cassettes in different languages provides elevating and soul-stirring music, comprising of Bhagavan's own compositions and on Him by Ganapathi Muni, Satyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer, Sri Muruganar and Sadhu Om.

LIBRARY

Sri Ramana Centenary Library holds an important place. There are more than ten thousand books — truly a research scholar's and *sadhakas'* delight! Some of these books are very precious, having





Ghislaine



Robert Butler

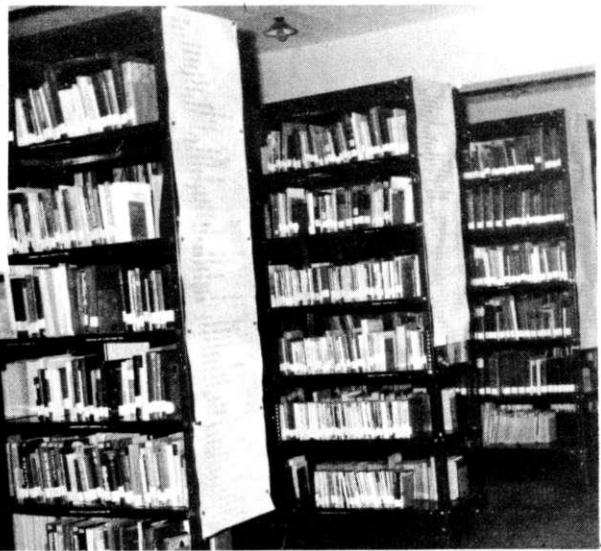


Sarojini Devi

Below: Rows and rows of neatly arranged valuable literature inside the library.



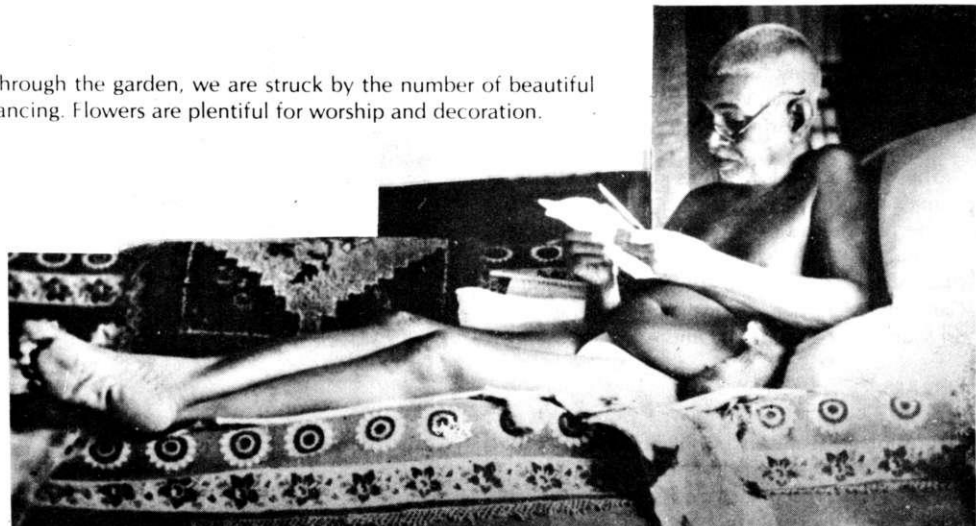
David Godman



been handled by Bhagavan Himself who used to keep the Ashram Publications and other books in a revolving shelf nearby, as a ready reference library. The present excellent shape of the Library is due a lot to David Godman. The archives section has been put in order by Jim Grant. The present team of Librarians Robert, Sarojini, and Ghislaine Bergeron are totally involved. Such is the growth of the Library that the first floor is overflowing and a second floor has become an urgent need!

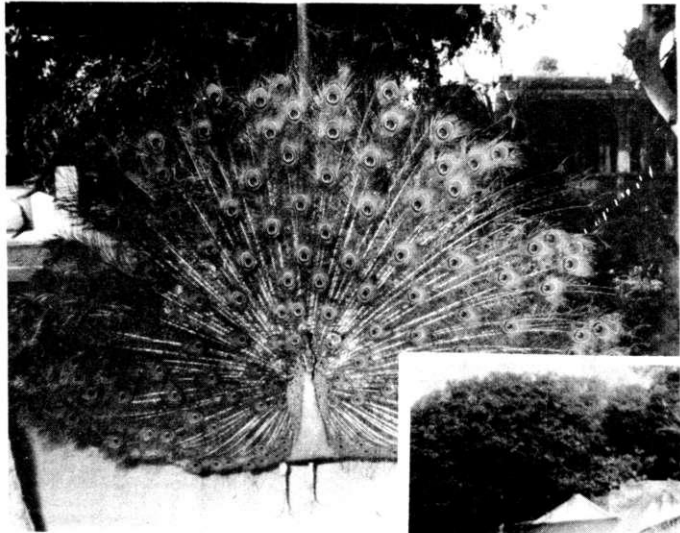
GARDEN:

As we wander through the garden, we are struck by the number of beautiful peacocks, often dancing. Flowers are plentiful for worship and decoration.

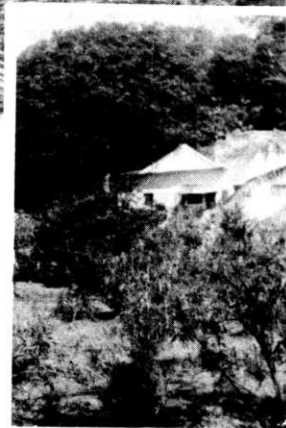




Making flower garlands



"... numerous peacocks, often dance here ..."



Inset: a portion of the flower garden.

POOR FEEDING

'Poor-Feeding' is a daily feature coming down from the very beginning. Bhagavan was well aware of the human weakness of not giving the best for the less fortunate. He would see to it that they were served first and he would himself eat only in the end. Watching the poor-eat with relish one would get the impression that Bhagavan was showering special grace on them.

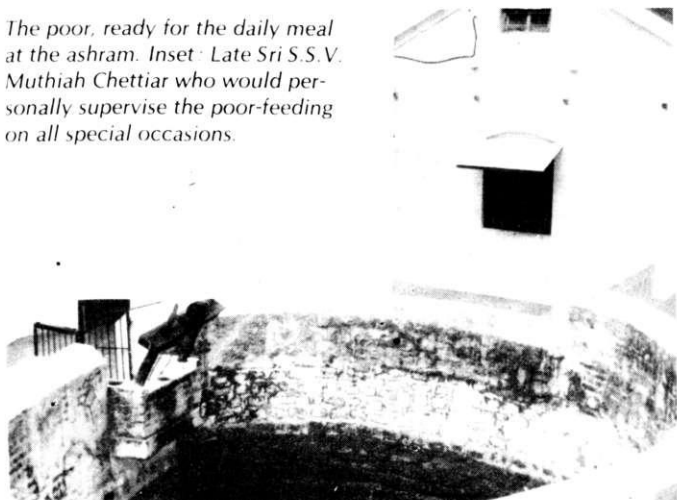
WELL

Water from the holy well near the shrine of Bhagavan, and Mother is used for daily worship. The well itself had been dug on Bhagavan's suggestion in 1922 and has been the source of perennial and most tasty water supply, symbolising, as it were,

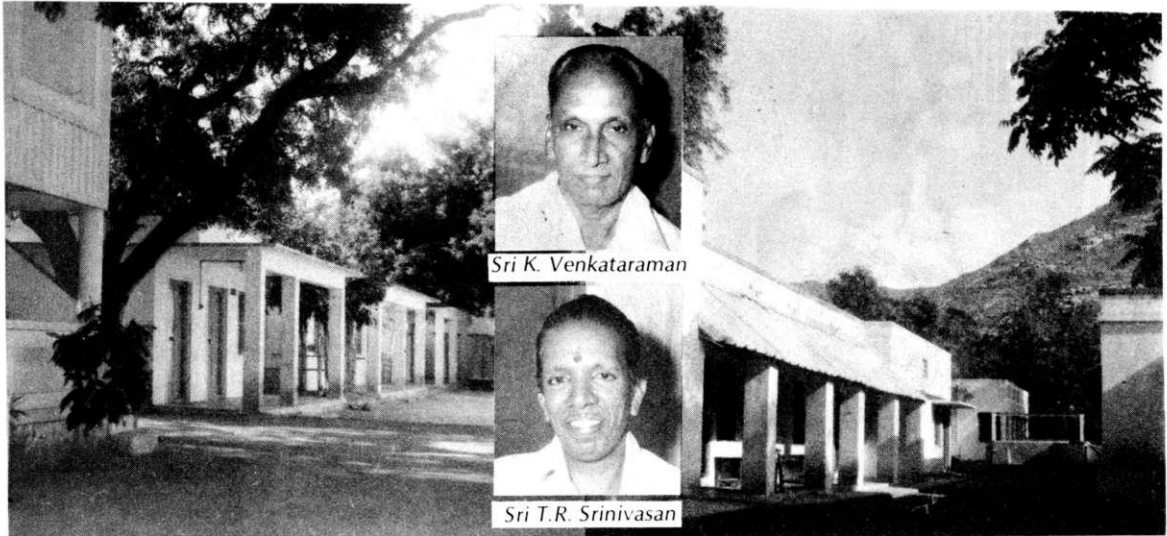
Below: The well near Bhagavan's Samadhi.



The poor, ready for the daily meal at the ashram. Inset: Late Sri S.S.V. Muthiah Chettiar who would personally supervise the poor-feeding on all special occasions.



Below: The well near Bhagavan's Samadhi.



Views of Morvi Guest House complex

the fact that Ramana and Azhagammal are truly the springs of life.

GUESTS

A warm welcome has always awaited the devotees coming to Sri Ramanasramam. Upto 1950, the Morvi Guest House and the few rooms within the Ashram

precincts were always full. Now, there are eighty rooms with reasonable comforts. T.R. Srinivasan greets everyone with a ready smile and checks on their needs. So does K. Venkataraman. Though ordinarily there are restrictions on staying more than a week, genuine seekers can stay on as long as they wish pursuing Bhagavan's unique method of Self-enquiry.



Lucy Ma and her daughter Heike — Becker — Foss

"There is really a strange magic about this place. Two years back I came to see my mother, and discovered after leaving, that I had been caught in a net, a very fine and very strong net. This way I was

drawn back only to find, this time consciously, the same magic at work: The wild and overwhelming holy loneliness of Arunachala, the sacred silence and deep Peace of Skandashram, the warm smile of the Ashramites, welcoming the foreign bird as if to its own nest. And everywhere all over the place the living Presence of the Master.....

It is another world than we are used to live in; strange and yet, as if it were the real world of the Soul, seemingly lost since centuries, yet never forgotten!

Thanks, unlimited thanks for kindness and hospitality, spent unlimitedly to tired bodies and Souls!"

— Heike Becker-Foss, Germany



Sri M.S. Patel

Sri Maganbhai Shankerbhai Patel of Surat, has seen Sri Bhagavan as early as in 1935. Coming from a pious family, he

was educated in England. He had visited Sri Bhagavan many times afterwards; but this stay of his for a month at the Ashram in June '82, has taken place after many years. He felt the Presence of Sri Bhagavan very strongly during his stay. He said: "Bhagavan solved all my difficulties, both *adhyatmic* and materialistic. I became very light, all worries gone. Bhagavan took over the burden of my living also!"

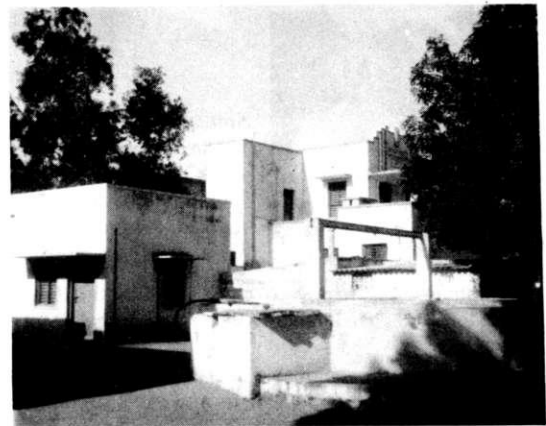
For the last few months, devotees paying homage at Sri Bhagavan's Shrine would have noticed a silent person going round and round the *Samadhi*. It is **Christopher** from Australia. He shares with us the following:

"On being asked to write some comments concerning my stay at Sri Ramanasramam the last 5 months, I evaluated the period and found, surprisingly, an underlying thread growing stronger through both the light and hard experiences one normally has in such a place. The word which most adequately describes that thread would be care. It is an attitude that comes to respect the various people who partake in the life here at the Ashram. There is nothing dramatic about this as the various inmates perform their duties in a quiet and unobtrusive manner. Everyone has an individual responsibility, be it in the kitchen, office or temple that simply allows them to be as they are. The very normality of it all engenders a certain peace which is refreshing. And for that I am indeed grateful for being given an opportunity of living in such an environment for the practise of inner stillness.

It is also with fondness that the various animals such as the monkeys, dogs, squirrels and peacocks who inhabit the ashram are remembered. Daily observing them one can easily see that they too as members are able to offer insights and companionship in their inimitable behaviour.

Most important of all one's contacts here is of course with the divine hill, Arunachala. Its perpetual presence is a source of wonder and mystery that constantly deepens the understanding.

Lastly a small thank-you to Sri Ganesan whose gracious manner welcomed me to stay here, and also to T.R.S. who patiently listened whenever I was in need of his help."



Another view of the Morvi Guest House Complex.



Sri G. Venkata subramaniam
(The Ashram Cashier)

高尾 MIND通信 11



Sri Sozo Hashimoto, founder of the 'Nippon Ramana Kendra', Tokyo a report about which appeared in our issue of April '82, p.140, brought nine Ramana-devotees from Japan and they spent 3 glorious days at the Ashram. They were shown round the sacred places hallowed by the Presence of Sri Bhagavan, up and around the hill, by our *Managing Editor*. These staunch Ramana-bhaktas from Japan, when asked to give their impression on their stay, gave in writing the following:

"Arunachalla,
Oh Arunachala,
Arunachala!
Sri Bhagavan,
Oh Bhagavan,
Sri Bhagavan!"

— Nippon Ramana Kendra, Tokyo



Sri and Smt. Navaratna

Smt. & Sri Navaratnam of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, stayed at the Ashram for one week in July, giving joy to the inmates. They have basked themselves in the Ramana-Presence several times when the Master was in the body. Smt. Ratna

Navaratnam was happy to participate in the National seminar at Bangalore and gave a lucid talk on 'The Mother'. She has written from Srin Lanka:

"Our stay was an enjoyable one. Time winged its way with lightening speed at the Ashram giving us refreshing strength and awareness of the 'Seeing Self' especially during the hours of a Silence spent in the Meditation Hall, morning and evening. We both send you all 'Ramana-Anbu' (Ramana-Love)."



Samadhi of Sri Chinmaswami

The Samadhis of Lakshmi, the Cow, Valli the deer, Jackie the dog and the Crow, inside Sri Ramanasramam and those of Swami Rajeswarananda, Sri Muruganar and Sri Viswanatha Swami just outside, bring home the tender and loving relationship between Bhagavan and His devotees. Standing in front of the memorial to Cow Lakshmi one's mind is bound to travel to her historic liberation at the hands of Bhagavan and as we move down we are struck by His love for all humanity and His equimindedness. Thinking of Sri Muruganar and his Ramana Sannadhi Murai, we relive those historic days when Sri Muruganar would just sit in Bhagavan's presence, always like a shadow, enjoying to the brim, the bliss, of

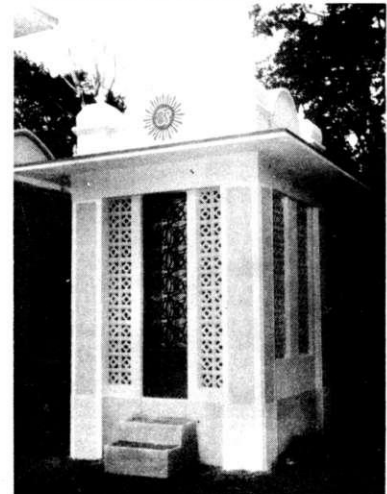
Ramana Union. We go down, the memory lane and recall how frequently Bhagavan would suggest that Viswanatha Swami should note down in the master book every new Tamil or Sanskrit poem composed by a devotee.

The temple of Niranjananda Swami is at the entrance. It is indeed its right place for he guarded so zealously the interest of Sri Ramanasramam and worked so dedicatedly for its growth. We miss the samadhi of Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni whom fate had taken away to a far off place near Kharagpur. His letters from Sirsi negating time and space for his relationship with Bhagavan, gives us the feeling that he too is enshrined near Sri Ramanasramam.

Inside Sri Muruganar's Samadhi



Samadhi of Sri Viswanatha Swami





The 100th Jayanthi.



Puranahuti at Sri Vidya Haven



Tiruvannamalai 'Ramana Music' students celebrated Purnavasau at the Ashram on 17th August with Ramana Music, and Ramana gummi by children. The programme was greatly enjoyed.

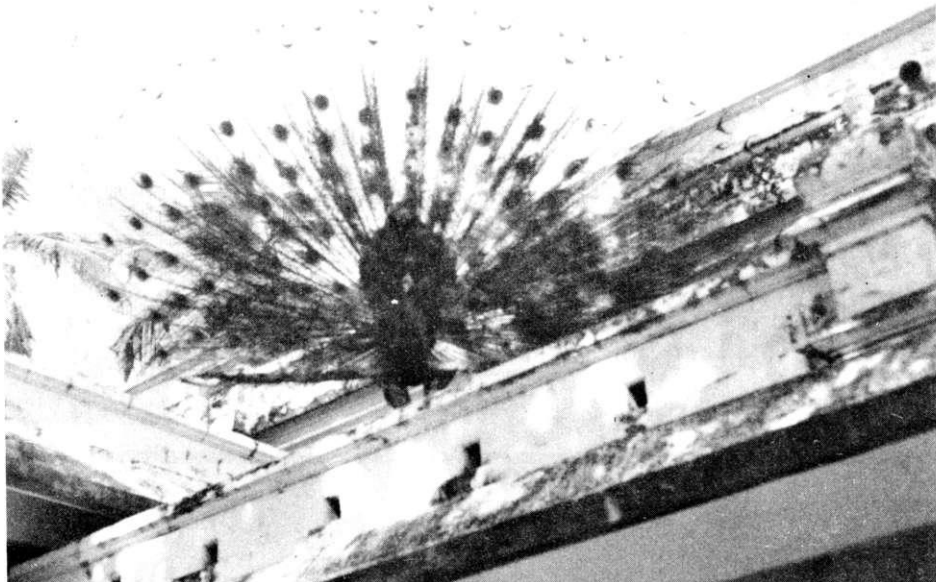


CELEBRATIONS:

The *Jayanthi* of Sri Bhagavan was first celebrated in Virupaksha Cave in 1912 — a concession permitted by Bhagavan considering the fervour and ardour of the devotees. The first *Jayanthi* at Sri Ramanaasramam was celebrated on the 3rd of January, 1923. With the Birth centenary Year, the beginning of the Ramana era, there is a new wave of enthusiasm and joy for celebrating *Jayanthi*. The presence of Sri Bhagavan is felt more keenly. *Aradhana* of Bhagavan is yet another event devotees look forward to. *Maha Puja*, Sri Vidya Haven connected with Mother's shrine are also drawing many to their true home Sri Ramanasramam.



ARADHANA CELEBRATIONS.



GOOD NEWS!

You will be happy to know that within the past few months as many as ten 'Ramana Satsangs' have been started in various places all over the world — Brazil, Argentina, Switzerland, Mauritius, Japan and many in India. Where many gather together with devotion to Bhagavan, there His presence is more tangible. Hence, the starting of Ramana Satsangs is a matter of great joy.

As Bhagavan's Presence is more and more keenly felt by people the need arises to share this joy with others — a need fulfilled by Satsangs.

To create a common link between devotees, a basic pattern for the Satsangs has been formulated. The following of a common pattern integrates the devotees as a 'Ramana Family'.

The pattern would be:

- 1. Pooja by Ashtottara**
- 2. Upadesa Saram chanting**
- 3. Silence-Enquiry**
- 4. Reading**
(Suggested from Osborne's book, *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge*,
Narasimha Swami's *Self Realisation, Talks, Day by Day, Letters*)
- 5. Ramana Music**
(concludes with 'Arunachala Siva' chanting)

For further details, you may please contact:

**Smt. Sulochana Natarajan,
Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning,
40/41, Second Cross,
Lower Palace Orchards,
BANGALORE. 560 003.**

NOTICE

Suche Kontakt zu Verehrern von Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Meine Adresse: Thomas Muller, Kleinalbis 20, CH-8045-ZURICH, Schweiz.



Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandali, Hyderabad

From the President of **Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandali**, Hyderabad, **Sri M. Narasimhan**, we are happy to receive the details of their activities which are interesting. We request the devotees in and around Hyderabad to take advantage of these and thus be the recipients of Bhagavan's Grace.

MONTHLY PROGRAMME

TUESDAY

6.30 to 8.00 p.m.

— Chanting of *Arunachala Siva*, observing silence. Chanting of *Upadesa Saram*, *Vedaparayana*, Recitation of *Bhagavad Gita*. Discourses on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, *Puja*, Mangala arti and distribution of Prasad.

EVERY LAST SUNDAY

i) 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

ii) 12.30 to 2.00 p.m.

— Puja, and discourses on Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
— Feeding the poor

PUNARVASU DAY

6.30 to 7.30 p.m.

— *Puja*, *Vedaparayana* and talk on Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

SUNDAYS

i) At 3.45 p.m.

ii) 9.00 to 10.00 a.m.

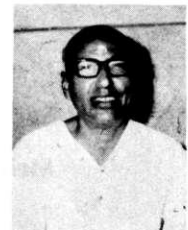
— Distribution of *prasad* to the patients of Sharff Memorial Hospital, Kachiguda, Hyderabad
— Sri Ramana Bala Kendram

Sri S. Krishnaswamy, Secretary, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore celebrated the *Sahasra Chandra Darshana Shanthi* (a function commemorating of a person having seen one thousand full-moons) of his respected father, Sri H.R. Srikanta Iyer (and his wife), for three days culminating in *Satabhishekham* on June 21, 1982 at Shankara Mutt, Bangalore. Sri Srikanta Iyer and his family are deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan, as to H.H. Sankaracharyas of Sringeri Mutt for about a century. Many Ramana devotees at Bangalore attended the happy function to receive the blessings of this devout elderly couple.

The entire family visited the Ashram on June 26, and performed *Giripradakshina* late in the night. They sang *Aksharamana Mala* led by Sri H.S. Tyagarajan (of *Ramananjali*) at Bhagavan's Shrine.

We pray to Sri Bhagavan that this devout couple should celebrate their Centenary in all joy!

Following on the heels of his elder brother, late Sri S.P. Mukherjee, Sri S.B. Mukherjee of Salkia, has bought a house in Ramana Nagar — 'Sadhana' — and proposes to bring his family to stay for good. His son, Sri Saumen Mukherjee — 'Somu' for all of us — and other members of his family are deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan. Sri Mukherjee enthusiastically takes part in all the Ashram activities and is a great admirer of ever-increasing 'Ramana-Movement' so ably taken up by Ramana-devotees, particularly the remarkable work done by the Bangalore Ramana Centre. He adores the 'Ramana Music' by the 'Ramananjali'. No moment passes without his saying: 'Bhagavan is my all'.



S.B. Mukherjee

RAMANANJALI IN MAURITIUS



Listen for the first time to the English tunes in praise of Bhagavan which caught Mauritius by storm. Also listen to a number of new Tamil songs by Sri Muruganan and Sri Sadhu Om on Sri Bhagavan.

RAMANA GEETH

Melodious and Lulling "Ramana Music" in Hindi by the Ramananjali led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan. Beautiful translation by Saraswathi Kumar Deepak. Tuned to music by renowned Music Director P.S. Dixit.



RAMANA DHWANI



*Enchanting Ramana Music in Kannada by Ramananjali group music - C. Aswath
orchestration - H. K. Narayana
Lyrics translation - M. S. Laxminarayana
Bhatta.*

A MUST FOR EVERY HOME!

When Kumari Sarada was asked for a report on the Seminar, she felt that she could not bring herself to write a formal report on it. However, she was with great joy and exuberance writing about 'these wonderful three days' to all her friends and members of the Ramana Family. It seemed most apt to take one of her letters and share this experience with other Ramana brethren too.

A LETTER

My dear Ramana-sister Kala,

I could hardly contain my joy at the Ramana *Anubhava* of this Third National Seminar on Bhagavan's teachings and the Ramana Music and Dance Festival. I wonder if it was really for three days, time had stopped in contemplating and enjoying eternal Ramana. Naturally, the eagerness to share this joy with all of you. Were you not sorry too at not being able to be physically present?

Do you know the great good news? The Chief Minister, Sri Gundu Rao, who inaugurated the Seminar, was extremely kind. He has promised to give more land for Bhagavan's shrine for the *Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning*, and that within a month!

Ramana Vaibhavam, the Bharatanatyam miscellany on Bhagavan, the first evening, was a sheer rapture.



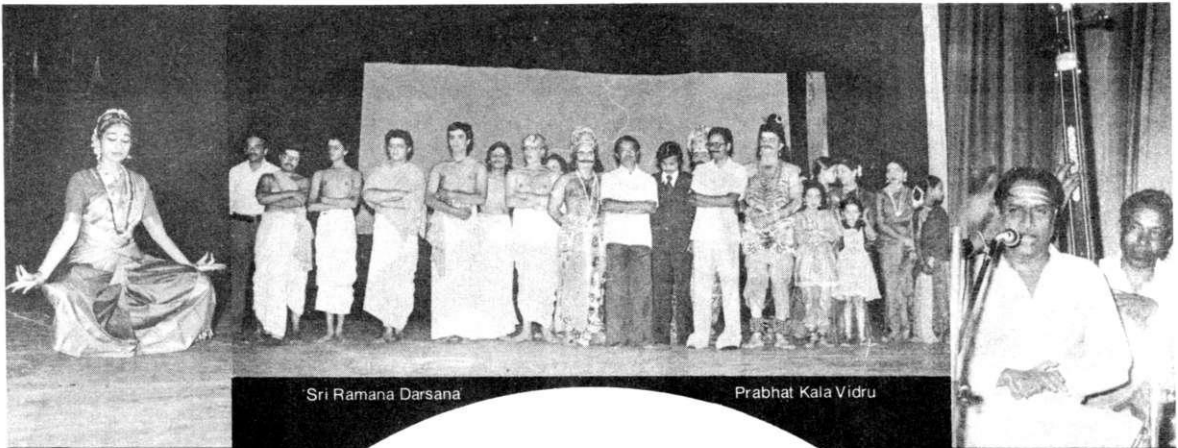
Kala

Veena Visalakshi Art Centre's **Kumari Meenakshi** was truly inspired in choreographing the compositions of Bhagavan. The *Sabdam*, the *Thillana*, as the other dances, all provided opportunities for us, the dancers to offer our worships to darling Ramana in so many expressive ways. It was a transporting experience for us as for the audience.

I know the very moment I mention '*Ramananjali*' you will start humming tunes of '*Annamalayani*' or beating your feet to the rhythm of *Arunachala Siva*, because '*Ramananjali*' brings before your mind the world of 'Ramana Music'. 'Ramana Music' is so melodious, so enchanting that 'the more we hear, the more we wish to hear more and more'. And for us who sing, 'the more we sing, the more the desire arises in us to sing more and more'. So sweet is Ramana *Nama* and so delicious His words! This '*Ramananjali*', on the second evening of the seminar, was special. Special because the atmosphere was already vibrant with Ramana for two days, naturally '*Ramananjali*' was even more enthralling than is wont.

Prayer at the Seminar: by the children of 'Ramana Maharshi Academy for the blind'; Ramana Music by students of Malleswaram and Ramana Bala Kendra





Sri Ramana Darsana

Prabhat Kala Vidru

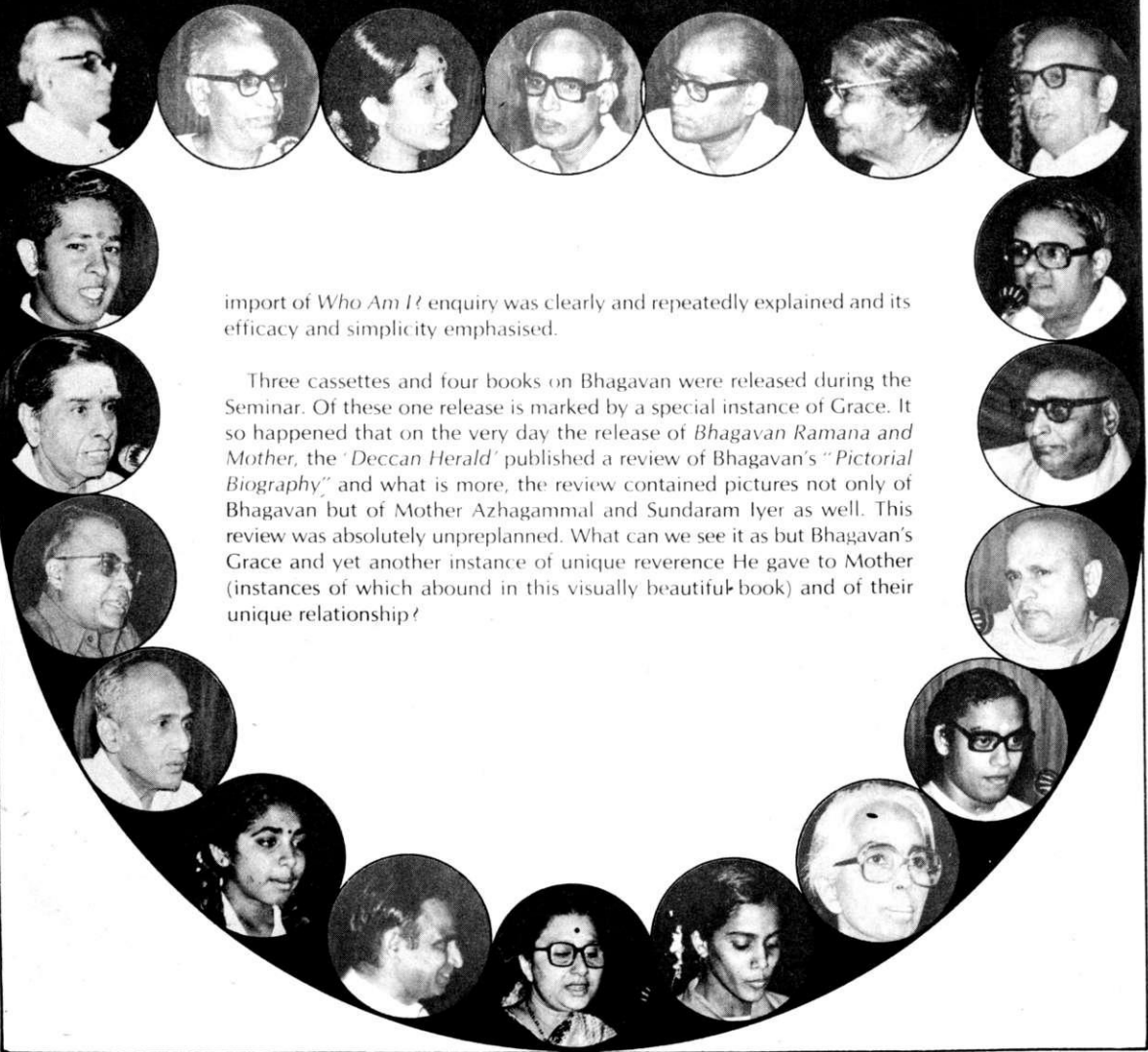
Ramana Dance
Ramana Vaibhavam

Ramana Music
D.K. Jayaraman

On the afternoon of the final day Bhagavan was there walking on the stage, smiling, petting the tender calves of the Ashram *goshala*. Yes, we had a wonderful 'darshan' of Bhagavan in Dr. 'A. Bose's film of Him. And later that very evening we had yet another 'darshan' in 'Sri Ramana Darsana'. After the Karnatik classical 'Ramana Music' by D. K. Jayaraman came Prabhat Kala Vidru's 'Sri Ramana Darsana'. A dance-drama on Bhagavan as Siva incarnate, born on the Ardra Darsana day as a festival to the whole world; as the conqueror of Death in line with Nachiketas and Markandeya, a true Saviour. 'Terrific', 'Fantastic', 'Superb' are but few of the adjectives heard in the lobby of Ravindra Kalakshetra. The close of the drama, when Bhagavan's smiling face filled the entire stage and He looked graciously upon us to, the chanting of *Sat Darsana*, is unforgettable indeed.

Now about the Seminar. Of course, I cannot summarise all the papers for you and some of the papers you will yourself be reading in the next issue of *The Mountain Path*. But what you will be really thrilled to know is this, that the emphasis and focus remained wholly on Bhagavan's unique and direct-path of Self-Enquiry. The true

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import of *Who Am I?* enquiry was clearly and repeatedly explained and its efficacy and simplicity emphasised.

Three cassettes and four books on Bhagavan were released during the Seminar. Of these one release is marked by a special instance of Grace. It so happened that on the very day the release of *Bhagavan Ramana and Mother*, the 'Deccan Herald' published a review of Bhagavan's "Pictorial Biography" and what is more, the review contained pictures not only of Bhagavan but of Mother Azhagammal and Sundaram Iyer as well. This review was absolutely unpreplanned. What can we see it as but Bhagavan's Grace and yet another instance of unique reverence He gave to Mother (instances of which abound in this visually beautiful book) and of their unique relationship?



Release of Ramana Thatha
by the Chief Minister of Kerala
Sri R. Gundu Rao



The President of Sri Ramanasramam,
Sri T.N. Venkataraman releasing the cassette
Ramananjali in Mauritius

In every way this Seminar and Festival have left an indelible impression on our minds and I am sure even hearing about it must be a Ramana Experience!

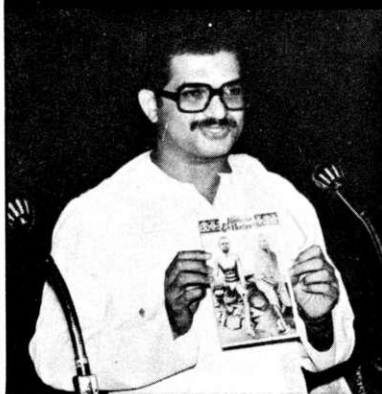
Yours Affectionately,
Your Ramana-sister

SARADA

Release of "Bhagavan Ramana and Mother" by Sri Veerendre Heggade of Dharmasthala

Centre: Release of the cassette "Ramana Dhvani" by the Finance Minister of Karnataka, Sri Veerappa Moily

Below: Release of "Ramana Maharshigalu Mattu Avara Sandesha" by Vidyalankara Sri M. P. L. Sastri



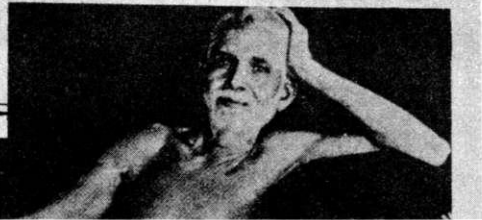
Books • Poem

Below left: Ramana's parents, Sunderam Iyer and Alagammal. Right: The young Ramana.



store by rigorous practices, self-mortification, fasts, etc. One day a fasting young girl brought food for Sri Ramana. Bhagwan thought, "How can I take food when she is not taking any?" So he told her that she should not indulge in such fasts and somehow prevailed upon her to eat. "If association with sages is obtained, of what purpose are the various methods of self-discipline?"

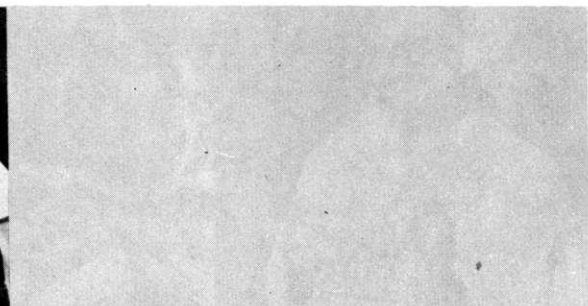
For one who insisted on pursuit of Jnana marga, which really means shedding of individuality, Ramana was no dry ascetic devoid of human feelings. When Chelammal, the girl whom he had persuaded to desist from fasting, died in child-birth, Ramana could not contain his grief. Tears welled up in the Bhagwan's eyes when he



miraculous book review in Deccan Herald



The Chief Minister of Karnataka Sri Gundu Rao inaugurating the Seminar.





Indian President, **Sri Zail Singh**, attending the puja to Sri Bhagavan at the Ramana Kendra, Madras.

(l to r) **Sri K. S. Venkataraman**, **Sri Zail Singh**, **Sri C. Ponnaiyan**, **Sri T. N. Venkataraman**.

PRESIDENT OF INDIA PAYS HOMAGE TO BHAGAVAN RAMANA

On August 22, **Sri Zail Singh**, President of India, was in Madras, and he paid a visit to the **Ramana Kendra**, Madras (11, Sir C.P. Ramaswamai Aiyer Road, Alwarpet, Madras-600 018). He was accompanied by his daughter, **Dr. Manjit Kaur**. **Sri C. Ponnaiyan**, Minister for Law, Government of Tamil Nadu, was with the President.

Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, received the President with traditional *Poorna Kumbha* honours at the Ramana Kendra.

President Zail Singh sat for meditation for about twenty minutes when the *Ashtottara* puja was being performed to the large portrait of Sri Bhagavan. Prasad was distributed then.

Justice (Retd.) **K.S. Venkataraman**, Vice President of Ramana Kendra garlanded the President. **Sri B. Ananthaswami**, Co-Vice President of the Kendra, honoured the Indian President with a gold-laced cloth.

A set of publications on Sri Ramana was presented to Sri Zail Singh.

SRI PRANAB MUKERJI'S VISIT TO RAMANA KENDRA

The Indian Finance Minister, **Sri Pranab Mukerji**, visited the Ramana Kendra, Madras. He was received by **Sri K.K.**



Sri Pranab Mukerji, Finance Minister of India, seen absorbed in meditation in front of Sri Bhagavan's portrait. (l to r) **Sri B. Ananthaswami**, **Sri K. K. Nambiar**, **Sri K. S. Venkataraman** and **Sri C. R. Pattabhiraman**.

Nambiar, Chairman of the Kendra. Sri Mukerji meditated in front of the beautiful picture of Sri Bhagavan. **Sri B. Ananthaswami**, Vice President of the Kendra, paid a rich tribute to the dedication and devotion of Sri Mukerji.

**THE LIGHT MERGEST INTO THE LIGHT
SREE SREE MA ANANDAMAYEE MA**



Ma Anandamayee

"Here is the Sun, we are all the stars in daytime", were the spontaneous words uttered by **Sree Sree Ma Anandamayee Ma**, when she stood solemnly in front of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi shrine in 1952. Ma had come specially to Sri Ramanasramam to lay the foundation stone for the construction over the Samadhi of Sri Bhagavan. Those who were present on that occasion still remember and recollect the meticulous and measured way she handed over brick after brick to lay the foundation! Even the traditional *purna kumbha* was offered to her at the entrance of the Ashram, Ma graciously remarked: "Why all this? Do you do all these when a daughter comes to her father's house!"

India abounds in sages and saints. Ma Anandamayee occupies a special place in the spiritual hoary of India. Genuine seekers from the west and east flocked to her for spiritual enlightenment. Her gracious motherly love captivated the hearts of millions. She shed light, since she was the great Light Itself. Ma dropped her body only to live in the hearts of devotees eternally.

We pay our humble homage to this Light of Lights.
Sree Sree Ma Anandamayee Ma!

**86th ANNIVERSARY OF SRI BHAGAVAN'S ADVENT AT
ARUNACHALA**

**Celebration at Bridgetown, Nova Scotia,
Sri Arunachala Ashrama**

Arunachala Ashrama, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Centre of Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, Canada, celebrated the **86th Anniversary of Sri Bhagavan's 'Advent at Arunachala'** on September 5.

On September 3, the regular Friday *Sri Chakra Puja* was conducted in **Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram**. A number of families attended this, as it was also *Purnima*. Some

remained in the Ashrama through Sunday to assist in preparations for our annual function. Of those who spared nothing in making this, our tenth annual celebration, a success, **Mr. and Mrs. B.K. Raju** must be given special appreciation. Their enthusiasm and support has been constant and encouraging throughout the last ten years.

The program of Sunday, 5th September began with *slokas* in praise of *Ganesha*. **Dennis Hartel** welcomed all and explained that with the completion of ten years in Bridgetown, Nova Scotia, he wished to invite them to make use of the Ashrama facilities at any time. He spoke on Sri Bhagavan's *Upadesa Sara* and read a selection of translated verses. Copies were distributed among the 100 visitors who recited in unison.

Mr. Yashwant Rai of Dartmouth, Nova Scotia conducted the *bhajans* and many participants poured out their hearts in devotional song, joined at times by the whole congregation.

Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawat, Mr. Yashwant Raj and **Antoun Majess** shared their experiences with the participants during the two-hour celebration.

Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawat narrated briefly the story of Sri Bhagavan's coming to Arunachala. He made mention of the two major operations he underwent this year, describing how Sri Bhagavan had made use of them to infuse him with a new perspective on life. As usual, his talk was surcharged with devotion. He quoted from the *Ramayana* of Goswami Tulsidas, extracting the essence and likening it to Sri Bhagavan's teaching.

Mr. Yashwant Raj reminisced about his meetings at Arunachala with **Sri Viswanatha Swami** and his own experiences of Sri Bhagavan. He elaborated on the joys and struggles of the spiritual quest, and all listened attentively to the spontaneous, open-hearted flow of his words.

Antoun Majess, a young man from Lebanon especially near and dear to the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, poured out his heart before all. His loyalty and devotion to the Ashrama's high ideals touched everyone's heart.

Following *arati* the congregation enjoyed a grand feast, much of which had been brought by devotees.

At New York City

The celebration of Sri Bhagavan's "Advent at Arunachala", at Arunachala Ashrama in New York City, was on a small scale. It lasted from mid-afternoon to late evening, beginning with *Sri Chakra Puja* which was followed by a feast for all. In the evening there was Sanskrit recitations, *bhajans* and a reading of **Arthur Osborne's** account of Sri Bhagavan's journey to arunachala. The *highlight* of the celebration was the rendering of the evening *parayana* of the family of **Sri Babubhai Parekh** of Verona, New Jersey, who sang devotional prayers in melodious unison. The hearts of everyone was especially grateful for the grace of Sri Bhagavan... "One with His Father", Sri Arunachala!

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

August 29 was observed as Muruganar's Day. A number of school children were given gifts of notebooks and study material. The gifts were given away by **Shri. Sundar Rajan** and **Kumari Uma**, children of late **Shri. S. Ramakrishnan**. **Shri M. Sivaramakrishnan**, Principal, D.T.E.A. Senior Secondary School, Mandir Marg, New Delhi blessed the children.

On September 5, the Kendra celebrated the Aruna Vijaya Day which is the anniversary of the day Maharshi arrived at Arunachala in 1896 and also the anniversary of the inauguration the Kendra's building.

There were talks on Bhagavan's Vichara Marga by **Shri. B. Ananthaswami**, Vice-Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras on June 20, and on Srimad Bhagavatam by **Shri. D. Sankaranarayanan**, Consultant, Hindustan Levers Ltd., Mangalore on August 1.

Bhagavan's "108 Names" formed the subject of the discourse by **Prof. K. Swaminathan** and **Shri K. C. Subbaiah** on Sunday Satsangs.

OBITUARY

Ramana Kendra, Delhi regrets to report with deep sorrow the sudden demise of **Shri. R.G. Anand**, the eminent architect and playwright on August 27. **Shri. Anand** was the partner in M/s Anand, Aptay and Jhabvala, the well-known firm of architects and Town Planners, who designed the beautiful building Ramanachala purely as a labour of love.

"RAMANA IN MAURITIUS"

Smt. Savitri Cuttaree (Reduit, Mauritius) is jubilant in sharing with us the happy news of Ramana-devotees celebrating the *Arunodaya* day.

She writes: "We met at Reduit, at home, on Sunday Sept. 5th, in memory of the auspicious day, the **1st September** when Sri Bhagavan arrived in Arunachala. When I approached **Br. Pranavaji** of Chinmaya Mission to grace the auspicious occasion, with all reverence for Sri Bhagavan, he gladly accepted to perform the function. The beautiful picture of Sri Bhagavan, given to me when you were in Mauritius, was used for *pooja* — it conquered the hearts of all. 'Arunachala Shiva' was sung with intense devotion and Sri Bhagavan's presence filled the whole place. The function started with *Pooja*, then *bhajan*, a talk by **Br. Pranavaji** on Sri Bhagavan and *aarti* to Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan's *prasad* was distributed. Our special issue "*Ramana in Mauritius*" was also released on this sacred day. It was a day of Ramana-filled joy!"

SRI RAMANA KENDRAM**HYDERABAD**

The following were elected as office-bearers of the Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad for the year 1982-83:

President : Sri R.J.Doshi
Vice President : Sri Bh. Venkateshwara Rao
Secretary & Treasurer : Sri. J. Krishnamoorthy

Members of the Executive Committee:

Smt. C. Lalitha Murthy
 Smt. S. Indira Devi
 Sri G.V. Rajeswara Rao
 Sri P. Mohan Rao
 Sri V. Krithivasan
 Sri A.V. Ramaniah
 Sri. M. Krishna Murthy
 Sri Raja Rao

The registered office of the Kendram continues to be at :

Sri Ramana Kendram,
 No. 1-9-34/A/7, Ramnagar,
 HYDERABAD-500 048, A.P.

OBITUARY**Sri T.S. Rajagopala Iyer**

Sri T. S. Rajagopala Iyer

Sri T.S. Rajagopala Iyer came under the powerful influence of Sri Bhagavan in the 1930s. He prayed to Bhagavan to accept his services as an attendant. Bhagavan graciously granted his prayer and taught him how to massage and to rub the ointment on His feet. Thus he had the rare privilege to be in close proximity with Bhagavan serving him till 1949. Later, he lived with his son, Ramanan. He passed away peacefully on June 1, after a brief illness.

May he rest in eternal peace at the Feet of his Master, Sri Bhagavan!

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