

# The Mountain Path



VOL. 22 No. 1 JANUARY 1985

## 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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Thou didst shave clean  
my head (and I was lost  
to the world), then Thou  
didst (show Thyself)  
dancing in Transcendent  
Space, Oh Arunachala!

— *The Marital  
Garland of Letters*,  
Verse. 84

Vol.22

JANUARY 1985

No.1

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—Editor.

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## The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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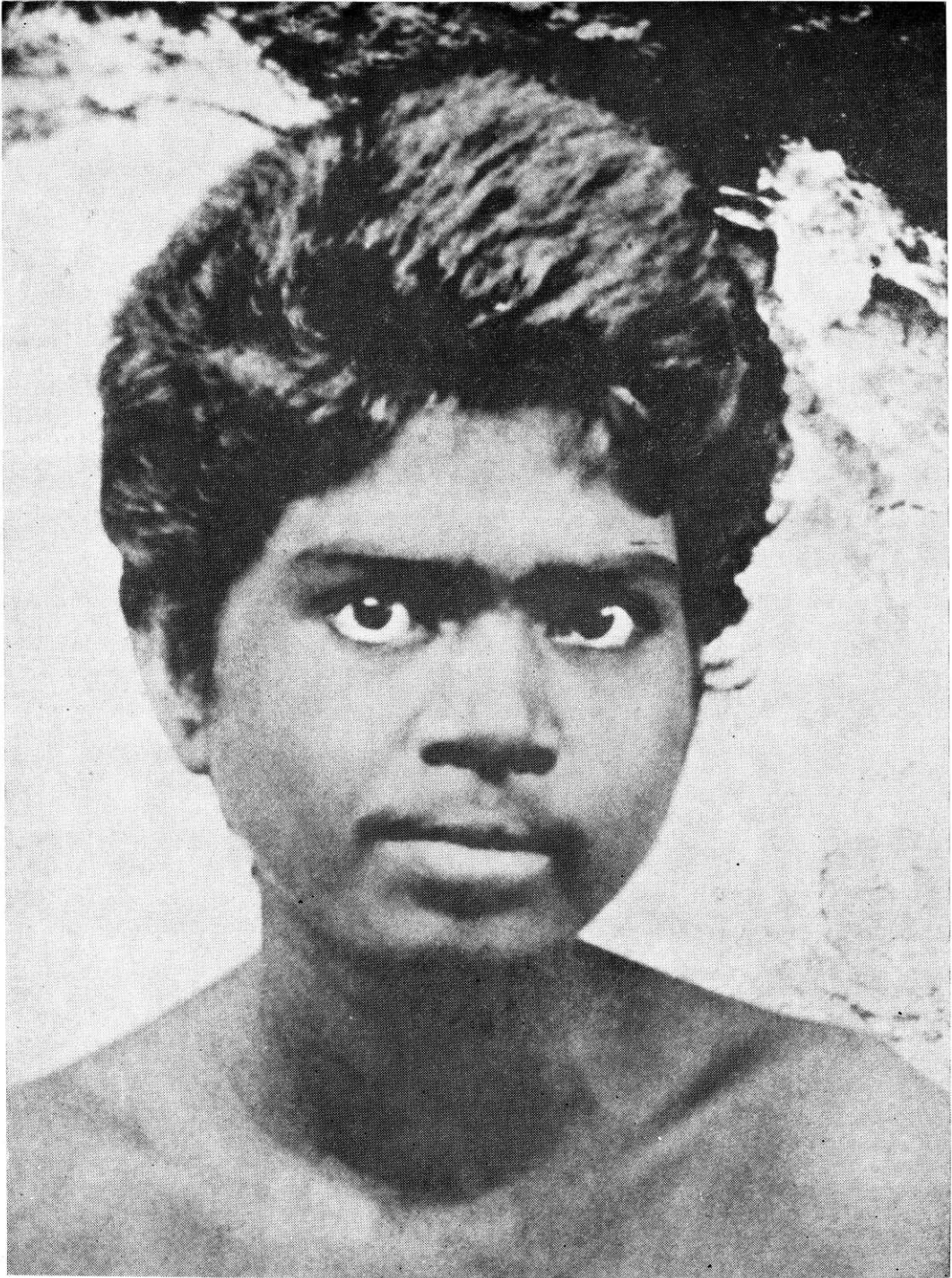
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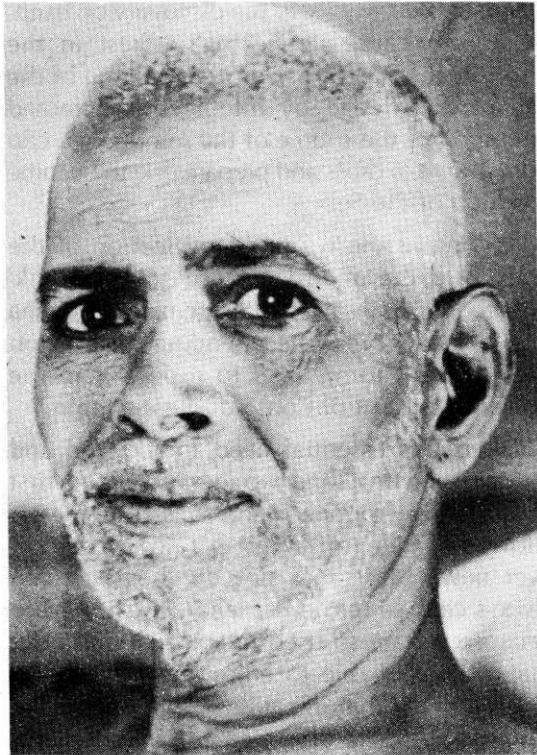
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi





MANY ARE called, but it is given to a few to persevere, to remain steadfast. A thousand distractions on the way dilute and set at naught the keen edge of single-minded pursuit of Self-knowledge. The human opportunity is wasted. Can there be a greater tragedy to come to the Ramana Way and let go a life chance, to be free from the whirl of fate?

What then is the human opportunity? Where does our freedom lie? Each human life seems to have a double purpose. The first is an automatic one, the operation of the divine law, of exhausting the ethical balance sheet. The other, contradictory as it may seem, the use of the power inherent in each one to use the discriminative faculty to break this very cycle, to cut the *karmic* knot. This is where effort comes in. Ramana recognised that unless one is vigilant, sloth and laziness in *sadhana*, in spiritual practice, might put on the garb of surrender, the garb of leaving everything to the care of Ramana. Hence one finds the emphasis on the need for effort. Effort to turn the mind inward, through self-enquiry, is some-

## A TIDE IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN

EDITORIAL

By

A.R. Natarajan

***The Mountain Path***

Vol. 22, No. 1, January, 1985.

thing as necessary as it is to breathe. So long as the sense of separate individuality lasts, so long as conceptualisation of the mind takes place, it is a must. For, till such time as the 'I'-thought rises and sinks, the activity of the 'I' is inevitable. Activity being a must, it must be directed right, which can only mean, directed towards such activity as would push the mind inward.

One finds Ramana emphasising time and again the imperative necessity for earnestness in pursuit of self-enquiry. One has to perform this paramount duty, then other things would fall in their place. Performance of what are termed as worldly duties is often an excuse for neglect of seriousness in the quest. So, when asked about duties Ramana was categorical in affirming that 'for those who desire the highest

discovery one's own true nature is most important'.<sup>1</sup> Of course, the infallible instrument for this is the search for one's true identity. While Ramana would always reassure one about the Guru's grace being as unfailing as the tiger's jaws He would at the same time say, 'nevertheless, the disciple, for his part, must unswervingly follow the path shown by the Master'.<sup>2</sup> Human endeavour and the Satguru's grace act and react on each other. One cannot rest content with half-hearted, insipid and weak pursuit of effort to turn within but should "look within, ever seeking the Self with inner eye".<sup>3</sup>

A superficial reader of Ramana's works might be under a misconception. Since effort is to merge the one who makes the effort into the Heart, he might feel that there is no room for or necessity of exercising freewill. Or, worse still, that it would be wrong to think in terms of it. But this is not so. As mentioned by Ramana, "the will is the purposive force of 'I' which determines and implies an act. It is inherent in the 'I'".<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that one should cultivate a strong will but only to suggest that this 'purposive force' must be channelised firmly to withdraw from ceaseless conceptualisations of the mind and push it within. "No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not your birthright . . . Effort is necessary upto the state of Realisation."<sup>5</sup>

One finds in Ramana's teachings the same refrain, the same persistent insistence on attentive and involved effort in finding out the unknown 'I'. Be it the *Appalam* song composed for His mother, the advice to Sadhu Arunachala, or even to a casual visitor to Sri Ramanasramam, Ramana would tell 'make an effort to be without effort'.<sup>6</sup>

Steadfastness in self-enquiry waxes and wanes like the moon, flickers like the wick of lamp exposed to wind. The ardour cools off, the passion wears off. There is need to remember Ramana's advice to Ganapati Mufi, "to place one's burden at the feet of the Lord of Universe and to remain all the time steadfast in the Heart".<sup>7</sup> The total commitment to 'That', to

giving oneself wholly to the discovery of Truth, alone can cause unflagging interest in the effort necessary for it. Constant stoking of the fire of knowledge by intelligently directed enquiry into the source of the mind alone can burn away the dross and prepare one to become the food of the Self.

As long as the wrong identification of the body with the mind lasts, the 'formless link' between the body and the Self remains. Sadhana is needed to break its unending association with thought forms, and to expose it to the powerful current of Consciousness, within.<sup>8</sup>

Given this essential need for dogged and thoughtful effort one wonders why the first flush of love for the Maharshi's teachings is allowed to taper off? Why is it not ever fresh, ever new? Why does not our heart remain always captive to the Ramana way. It may be because we are so used to spiritual authority that we are unable to enjoy the fresh air of direct inner communication with Ramana, the Sadguru. Apparently, Ramana's statement 'Where can I go, I am here' has fallen on deaf ears. We cannot afford to forget the fact that He left the body only after 'establishing the certainty of His existence',<sup>9</sup> of His eternal Presence. Faith in this is cardinal.

Also this listlessness, this creeping paralysis of lack of sustained vigour may be because one is used to seeking instant, or quick results. A result oriented mind is baffled by the seeming lack of rewards. What better reward can there be than to tap the fountain of joy! But then one has to push on.

Each day there is time to ponder, if we are given to resting on our oars. A life of recollectiveness of our true nature demands, does it not,

<sup>1</sup> *Selections from Ramana Gita*, P. 7

<sup>2</sup> 'Who am I?' — *Collected works*, P. 44

<sup>3</sup> *The Marital Garland of Letters* v. 44 — *Collected works* p. 87

<sup>4</sup> *Curu Ramana*, P. 50

<sup>5</sup> *The Teachings*, p. 86

<sup>6</sup> *A Sadhu's Reminiscences* P. 63

<sup>7</sup> *Bhagavan and Nayana* P. 14

<sup>8</sup> Refer *Sat Darshanam* v. 24 — (revised and enlarged) P. 27

<sup>9</sup> *A Sadhu's Reminiscences* P. 67

that we cease to be driftwoods. The entry of Ramana into one's life is like being lashed by a tidal wave which will smash the narrow walls of separative existence. The great force is bound to do its work but this does not mean that one can lead a shallow life of surface dalliance. That would be to negate the teachings, be a failure to recognise where effort is needed and when passivity would take over.

Self-knowledge is discovered by the truly

courageous, the brave ones who are not deterred by the obstacles brought about by the play of *Karmic* forces. Events good, bad and indifferent keep coming and going. But they remain unaffected, ceaselessly working away, letting in the 'cool southern breeze' of the inner current of Consciousness. They take full advantage of the tide in their affairs, Ramana, and are led to the greatest of good fortune, to the limitless joy of Self-abidance.

**Everyone is the Self and indeed, is infinite. Yet each person mistakes his body for his Self. In order to know anything, illumination is necessary. This can only be of the nature of Light; however, it lights up both physical light and physical darkness. That is to say, that it lies beyond apparent light and darkness. It is itself neither, but it is said to be light because it illumines both. It is infinite and is Consciousness. Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware. No one is ever away from his Self and therefore everyone is in fact Self-realized; only—and this is the great mystery—people do not know this and want to realize the Self. Realization consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realized. It is not anything new to be acquired. It must already exist or it would not be eternal and only what is eternal is worth striving for.**

Once the false notion 'I am the body' or 'I am not realized' has been removed, Supreme Consciousness or the Self alone remains and in people's present state of knowledge they call this 'Realization.' But the truth is that Realization is eternal and already exists, here and now.

—Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

## TWO DECADES OF

### HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

"Maharaj, here stands before thee a humble slave. Have pity on him. His only prayer to thee is to give him thy blessing."

The Maharshi turned his beautiful eyes towards Ramdas and looked intently for a few minutes into his eyes as though he was pouring into Ramdas his blessing through those orbs, then shook his head to say he had blessed. A thrill of inexpressible joy coursed through the frame of Ramdas, his whole body quivering like a leaf in the breeze.

SWAMI RAMDAS

\*\*\*\*\*

### ACCESS TO INFINITY

The secret of the spiritual life is to know that you have access to Infinity through your own consciousness, to go within sufficiently often to let the flow appear, to let the imprisoned splendour escape — and then to be careful not to personalize it and think you have become "good" or that you have become "spiritual". Remember you have become an instrument or transparency for an infinite, universal Grace. You choke it and shut it off immediately if you personalize it, but you can increase the flow by realizing it as an infinite Grace flowing universally.

OEL S. GOLDSMITH



# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

## ANANDA MAYI MA

There are two types of pilgrims on life's journey: one like a tourist keen on sight-seeing, wandering from place to place, fitting from one experience to another for the fun of it; the other treads the path that is consistent with man's true being and leads to his real home.

So long as one remains enslaved by time there will be birth and death. . .  
In reality there is nothing but the One Moment all along.

MADAN MOHAN VARMA

\* \* \* \* \*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The October number of *THE MOUNTAIN PATH* is extraordinarily good. The Marital Garland of Letters is one of the most moving things I have ever read: almost every word finds an echo in my heart. But when I go on to the 'Forty Verses', I begin to ask questions! Yet I know that there is deep truth in it.

FR. GRIFFITHS,  
Kurismala Ashram, Kerala

# THE THREE WISHES

By Douglas E. Harding

ONCE UPON a time there was a poor woodman and his wife who lived a lonely life in the forest. One day, when he was cutting logs by a stream, he was startled to hear someone crying; and even more startled to find it was a fairy seated at the edge of the water, bemoaning the fact that he couldn't get across. Lifting him onto his shoulder, the woodman waded the stream and set the little fellow gently down on the other bank. "As a reward for your kindness", said the fairy gratefully, "I grant you three wishes". And instantly he vanished. That evening, over their humble meal, the woodman told his wife all about the fairy and the three wishes, and they debated at length what boons to ask for. "While we're making up our minds", said the woodman, "I certainly could do with a nice sausage to go with this dry bread." And immediately a big one landed on the table. His wife, furious with him for wasting a wish on something so ridiculously trivial instead of a sack of gold, couldn't help blurting out: "You stupid old man: you deserve to have this miserable sausage growing at the end of your miserable nose!" And at once there it was, dangling from the poor man's nose. Well, after much further argument and mutual recrimination, they agreed that their third and last wish must be to get rid of the sausage, and restore the situation to normal. And so, it happened: the three wishes were indeed carried out as the good fairy had promised, yet in the end they left everything unchanged. The man and his wife got what they finally decided on, which was what they already had. The routine of life went on as before — with this difference: *it was their choice.*

What a wasted opportunity! Or was it? Was all lost by that foolish couple? Or could there have been more to that third wish than just repairing a desperate situation? Was it, after

all, and in spite of their silliness, the most rewarding and wisest wish they could have made, the true sack of gold? The one we all need to make, as well as (rather obviously) the one we are all granted?

Various lessons can be drawn from this well-known folktale. The one offered here is as follows. We are indeed granted three wishes. The first and overt one is that we get things we consciously want. The second and hidden wish is that, along with these, we get their shadows — their negative consequences or antitheses — which we don't *consciously* want. The third and even more hidden wish is that we get all of the things — both "good" and "bad" — that we do in fact get, everything that happens anyway, the whole cosmic drama, much of which our surface mind vaguely resents and some of which it rejects vehemently. Evidently this third and last wish is the only one that is always granted in full; and, not at all evidently, it is (whether we ever come to admit it or not) the one that is our deepest desire. The truth is that we have already chosen that the world shall be exactly as it is at this moment, but are unaware of having made that momentous choice. We *repress it*, and the symptoms of repression afflict us. We disclaim responsibility and wash our hands of the whole tragi-comic scene — and pay the heavy price. And so it comes about that our healing and our true life's work is to end that repression, raising to consciousness our heartfelt acceptance of the world just as it impinges on us. That, in brief is our interpretation of the story of the woodman's three wishes.

It may seem a rather far-fetched interpretation, but it is one that the masters of the spiritual life would endorse. "God is telling you," says Jean-Pierre de Caussade, "that if you abandon all restraint, *carry your wishes to their furthest limits*, open your heart bound-

lessly, there is not a single moment when you will not find all you could possibly desire. The present moment holds infinite riches beyond your wildest dreams”.

On the face of it, this is extravagant talk, pious nonsense that is far too good to be true. God, most of us are sure, is telling us a very different story. Such wild optimism, apparently so contrary to common sense and to our experience of life itself, certainly isn't to be taken on trust. It demands rigorous testing and proof, if it is to be credited at all. And most of us, desperately floundering — if not yet drowning — in a raging sea of disappointments and frustrations, are going to take a lot of convincing.

The rest of this article offers reasons for concluding that, amazingly, de Caussade was altogether right to claim that, when we let ourselves go — repeat: let ourselves go — and push our wishes beyond our surface consciousness to their as-yet-unconscious limit, we shall find them at once perfectly fulfilled. That, in fact, the reason we don't get what we want is that we don't want enough, that our demands are infinitely too modest!

#### *Space accepts its contents*

Whatever your problem, the only real answer to it, according to Ramana Maharshi, is to see whose problem it is. The answer to the problem of your will — of what you want and how to get it — is no exception. *Who* is the one who demands this and refuses that? Solve that riddle and you have solved the riddle of what you *really* wish for, and how to make *really* sure of getting it.

*In appearance*, as you are seen by other people (looking at you from a distance), you certainly are a something — something shaped, confined within distinct boundaries, perfectly opaque, multi-coloured, stationed here and not over there, hugely complex, moving around, going for this and avoiding that, and moreover just one of countless similarly limited and self-perpetuating creatures. But in *reality*, as you see yourself (looking at yourself from

no distance) you are . . . . .? Well, why not just look and see, right now? Isn't it a fact that in your own present experience you are the very *opposite* of how you strike others, and in all respects? That, for yourself and centrally, you aren't a thing at all, but Space containing all sorts of things — including, just now, these printed words, this page, the hands holding it, their shadowy background, and various thoughts and feelings about this and that? Only *you* are in a position to answer the all-important question of what's *your* side of this page and hand, *your* side of whatever's occurring to you. If, in all honesty, you observe yourself to be a *something* here confronting a something there, why of course you should stick to your guns: *you* are the authority on your experience of you. Only, in that case, there's not much point in your continuing to read this article. Instead, you would do better to go on examining the spot you occupy, just in case you find that in fact it's occupied by other things, and not by you at all.

But if you do indeed find that you are Nothing where you are, if you agree that you are Space, making Room for whatever you are occupied with, why then the problem of your will — of getting your own way — is instantly solved, whether you acknowledge the fact or not. *In reality* you have no will, because you have no needs. You are Space which is self-sufficient; whereas the people, the bodies, the limited objects coming and going in that Space are anything but self-sufficient. *Their* needs are insatiable: they must continually pursue what makes for their survival and resist what makes for their destruction. All this purposive behaviour of course characterizes you also as one of those limited objects, but never you as the unlimited Subject. As the Void, you are void of all characteristics. As Space for taking in objects, you the Subject are free of them all, forever the same, unstained, unaffected. This Aware-Emptiness, which you clearly perceive yourself to be, obviously doesn't prefer some of its contents to others. It has no favourites, no preferences, no opinions, no complaints, no plots or plans, no comments

to make at all. Like a mirror, it accepts dirty things as readily as clean ones, ugly things as uncritically as beautiful ones, tragic things as coolly as joyful ones, and none of them leaves any trace. As your true Self you have no likes and dislikes, which is only another way of saying that all happens to your liking. Naturally so, seeing that *Who you are arranges what is*. There's a paradox here, of course: one which Angelus Silesius noted when he wrote: "We pray: *Thy will be done*. But He has no will, He is stillness alone." As Him, you have it both ways. Because you want what you get you get what you want. And there is no other will than yours — You who are without will!

*There is only one will*

Let us look more closely into the question of how many wills there really are. Consider the human body. It is made up of billions of quasi-autonomous animals called cells, each of which is born and flourishes and dies independently of the life of the body as a whole. Each little creature competes with the other for the available nourishment; each follows unswervingly its characteristic behaviour pattern; each strives for its own survival regardless of the others. And the result of all this unbridled individualism? Wonder of wonders; in spite of themselves, these myriads of separate lives add up to a single life of a higher order — that of the whole man! When he walks and talks and minds his own business, it is thanks to his countless subordinates (cells comprising his vocal cords, tongue, lips, leg muscles, etc., etc.) minding *their* own business, which is nothing at all like his. Nor does this astonishing business enterprise begin and end here. The process of integration starts off far below the cellular level — each cell is already a unitary organism reconciling the behaviour of its constituent molecules, each of which similarly integrates its atoms, and so on down. And the same process continues upwards far beyond the level of the human individual: so that in the end the entire hierarchy of parts and wholes culminates in the Whole. The Universe itself constitutes a single Super-

organism, the only true Individual, compounded of and reconciling and unifying the hugely divergent activities and intentions of its components at every level, including the human.

So what is a man, ultimately? Viewing him from within as Subject, we have already found him to be the No-thing that includes everything. And now, viewing him from outside as an object, as the thing provisionally called a human being, we find that thing isn't itself without the backing of the rest of things, belonging to all levels. What is the man, indeed, without the world of cells, molecules, atoms, and particles that comprise him from within and below, and without the world of other organisms, of Earth and Sun and stars that sustain him from without and above? He isn't himself without them. The *whole* man is the Whole: nothing less is viable. However you look at him, then, whether from inside or from outside, he is (in the last resort) that all-inclusive One which organizes the diverse wills of all its members into One will, which we call God's will — which is none other than your will when you know Who you really are and what you really want, when you are all there and wholly yourself. Seeming to yourself and others to be a part of the Universe, you intend that part; being all of it, you intend it all. Strictly speaking, will is indivisible, and it is all yours. Your will up against my will, ours against theirs — all this is illusion and mere wilfulness. *As what you really are, you really will, and get what you really want.*

*What it is we really want*

We want to *win*. At least those of us who are at all alive and well, and sufficiently honest with ourselves, have to admit that it is success we crave — whether that success is material, psychological, or spiritual. But honesty also compels us to add that this is by no means the whole truth. There is something in us that does *not* want more possessions, power, reputation, creative energy, sanctity, or whatever, without limit. In fact, (absurdly self-

contradicting creatures that we are!) we discover sooner or later that we also crave the opposite of all this — less and less as well as more and more. While clutching them more compulsively than ever, we yearn to be relieved of all these mounting goods, and the responsibilities and anxieties that go with them. Our achievements and acquisitions become fetters that increasingly restrict our movement, burdens that increasingly weigh us down, but we make little effort to break free. Addicts, gluttons for punishment, we are all-too-apt to take on more and more. And more and more we tear ourselves apart inside. A civil war is going on, with no prospect of peace.

Peace will not come by moderating the conflict or declaring some kind of armistice, but only by seeing the conflict through to the very end — to outright victory for both sides! Our urge to grow will never be satisfied till we become All; and our urge to ungrow will never be satisfied till we become Nothing. And — happy outcome! — it turns out that extremes meet and in the end these opposite goals are found to be one and the same; and moreover that one goal is already achieved. Our ever-present Nature is Nothing — Everything. Our trouble wasn't the growth-ungrowth contradiction, but our unwillingness to take it to the limit where it is suddenly and absolutely resolved. Here at last our very own joy is discovered waiting patiently for us, because here we have what we wanted all along. We wanted Everything — Everything to be as it is — and we wanted Nothing — Nothing to be different from what it is. How right de Caussade was, and how blessed we are!

With one voice the world's saints and sages and seers confirm this precious truth. "His will is our peace," says Dante. Conversely, our will — our wilfulness — is what ruins our peace: it is precisely, according to William Law, "what separates us from God." "In *sahaja* one sees the only Self and sees the world as a form assumed by the Self," says Ramana Maharshi; and then one realizes that "everything is being done by something with which one is in conscious union." Within is the Source of all

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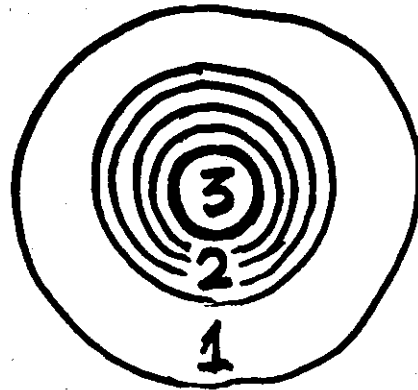
things, for Whom they are exactly as they should be. An incredulous person complained that, if he was indeed Who Nisargadatta assured him he was, why then he could have anything he wanted! The sage readily agreed: "All will happen as you want, *provided you really want it!*"

But it's no good just taking anyone else's word for it. Your own repeated experience of how life treats you provides the real evidence. Think of one of your notable successes. Yes, of course, there was some joy at the time, but how long did it last? Has the long-term result come up to your expectations? Is it free from suffering? Alexander the Great didn't spend long relishing his conquest of the known world: he *wept*, because there were no more countries to conquer! The cynics who say that nothing fails like success are realists — up to a point. That point is *total* success, the success which alone is real and entirely satisfying. When at last we have the grace to say YES! to all those mixtures of success and failure that have been ours, the grace to concur in everything that life is now dishing up for us, then a quite unique happiness, a peace like no other, steals over us. Whenever we wish for what actually is, our heart says we have wished well and made the right choice. This is what we really, really want. This alone is true success.

*Deeply repressed desires make us deeply sick*

There is nothing unrealistic or merely speculative about our conclusions so far. On the contrary, they line up with the clinical findings of modern psychotherapy, which sees our symptoms — depression and irrational anxieties and fears, along with their bodily manifestations — as danger signals indicating that an enlargement of consciousness is required. These neurotic symptoms arise from concealed inner conflict, from unrecognized and unexpressed and unfulfilled wishes that are incompatible with our surface intentions. We repress these unconscious desires which nevertheless belong to our totality, and which stand ready to compensate for the one-sidedness of the conscious mind. For the un-

conscious is not the monster some take it to be. "Such a view," says Carl Jung, "arises from fear of nature and life as it actually is . . . . The unconscious is dangerous only when our conscious attitude towards it becomes hopelessly false. And this danger grows in the measure that we practise repressions. But as soon as the patient begins to assimilate the contents that were previously unconscious, the danger from the side of the unconscious diminishes. As the process of assimilation goes on, it puts an end to the dissociation of the personality and to the anxiety that attends and inspires the separation of the two realms of the psyche."



It's not difficult to see how these well-known and widely accepted principles apply to our own topic here, to what we may call *the third realm, beyond the psyche* — the realm of our third-level wish, our ultimate and most deeply buried desire — that everything shall be as it is. Just as our acute psychological symptoms arise from the repression of our second-level but still human desires (both individual and collective), so our chronic "existential" symptoms arise from the repression of this third-level and truly divine and universal desire. These "existential" symptoms are a global sadness, a resentment directed at nothing in particular, a deep dissatisfaction with life as it is, a wanting that doesn't know what it wants. Our cure — following Freud himself — is to shine the light of consciousness down into the unconscious: this time into the deepest layer

of all — the living Core itself, our Source and true Nature. There is no other relief from our deep suffering. *We are well when we know what we want. And we know what we want because we know What we are — namely, the One who wants nothing and has everything.*

And then (to use Christian language) we are clean out of hell and into heaven. "For there is no hell but where the will of the creature is turned from God, nor any heaven but where the will of the creature worketh with God." — William Law, again.

*Sophie's three wishes*

The foregoing is rather abstract and generalized, so let's give it substance by ending this article as it began, with a tale — a thoroughly modern one this time.

Sophie had a beautiful voice and ambitions to become a singing star. She tried and tried to get a studio audition, and at last — to her delight — succeeded. Then everything went wrong. She had great difficulty in finding the studio, and turned up late. Another date was arranged, but this time she developed a last-minute attack of laryngitis, which ruined her performance. On the third and last occasion there was a mix-up about the songs she was to sing: her accompanist took along the wrong music. This was too much! She grew depressed and nervous, and her behaviour became erratic. Sensibly, she consulted a psychiatrist. With his help, she discovered that her deeper and unconscious wish was quite different from her superficial and conscious one: she didn't want a show-business career at all, but to marry and devote herself to raising a family. Repressing her real desire, she was suffering the sort of symptoms that repression gives rise to. She herself (without being aware of it) had cleverly fixed things so that the studio audition never came off. And, as it turned out, this second and much deeper wish of Sophie's didn't come off either. The possible husbands she fancied didn't fancy her, and she either disliked or quarrelled with the men who did make advances. Again, she made sure of failure — unconsciously. Again, frustration bordering on desperation —

**ARUNACHALA AT DUSK**

**By Joan Greenblatt**

**Low clouds spread across  
the wide expanse of sky  
and filter ray's of sun  
as yonder hillocks sigh.**

**Soft voices and music  
float in the wind  
yet they do not penetrate  
the stillness within.**

**The vastness of the landscape  
draws the mind to halt  
its ever-persistent  
whirlpool, of thought.**

**Arunachala at dusk  
utterly simple and plain  
one returns empty each eve  
to be refilled again.**

and a new crop of psychosomatic symptoms, including migraine and ulcers. This time, however, instead of going back to her psychiatrist, she went to a teacher who helped her to probe still deeper, into her *real* intentions, and to cease suppressing them. She showed her Who she really was, and what that Who really wanted. She discovered that her third and bottom-line wish wasn't that she should one day become a famous singing star, or a happy wife and mother of three, or anything different from what she was to be: already and always she had all she desired. A silent song of thankfulness went up from her heart, and she knew that all the children in the world — and all the grown-ups too — were her children. And so the granting of this third and final wish of hers — that all shall be as it is — took care of her other wishes also.

Sophie's story — given a few adjustments in detail — is our own story, *directly we want it to be.*

## The Story of An Unknown Devotee

*The following is taken from **The Secret of Arunachala**, a book of reminiscences by a Christian **sannyasi**. In the early 1950s he met a sadhu on the slopes of Arunachala. A friendship immediately developed between the two of them and the sadhu related how he had come to hear about Sri Ramana Maharshi. Swami Abhishiktananda, the author of the book calls him Harilal, but his real identity is unknown. The book is published by the I.S.P.C.K., Post Box 1585, Kashmere Gate, Delhi 100 006 and the extract is reprinted with their permission.*

**H**ARILAL WAS born in Western Punjab, the part which was torn away from India in 1947 and was the scene of many atrocities at that time. His mother was the younger sister of a sage who at the beginning of the century was very well-known as Ramatirtha and spent his last years among the Himalayas. When he felt that the hour for the great departure had come, although he was only about thirty years of age, he simply went down to the Ganga and disappeared, not far from Tehri.

Harilal joined the army as an officer. However he soon wearied of a calling which allowed him neither the time nor the freedom of spirit that were necessary for the pious practices to which he had become accustomed since his earliest childhood. Since his earliest years the thought of God was what more than anything else possessed his soul. He was only about six or seven years old when he went off about 20 kilometres into the jungle to look for some sadhus who had opened an ashram there; when his parents finally discovered him there he gave them this answer, without of course having any idea that it was an echo of the Gospel: "Why have you come to look for me instead of leaving me with God?" His devotion to Krishna became so intense as he grew older, that it bordered on hysteria. He went so far as to wear women's clothing, so that Krishna might take him for his beloved Radha and might take pity on him and show him his face. Everywhere he went he repeated the name of his Lord, and if in the street he happened to hear the adorable name, he had to use every ounce of his strength to prevent himself falling



down in ecstasy in the middle of the crowd. Obviously it was impossible for him as a soldier to keep up his life of prayer, meditation and puja; in addition it was wartime, and the discipline was naturally very strict.

He asked to be relieved of his duties. His superiors pointed out to him the madness of such a request, as his reports were excellent, his promotion assured and a splendid career lay before him. In fact, his companions, all young officers in those days, were to fill the highest posts in the Indian army after 1947. However, he stood his ground and explained his reasons to his commanding officer, who finally understood the position, supported his request and saw that his resignation was accepted.

When he returned home, his father gave him an unsympathetic welcome. He was



already married and already had three young children. How was he going to bring them up if he refused to make his career? He himself had in fact never wanted the marriage; but since it was the tradition and his father wanted it, and since in any case, apart from his passion for Krishna, he was perfectly indifferent about anything else, he allowed it to happen.

Only his mother understood him, and he certainly needed the support of her affection to get through that difficult period. At the same time he devoted himself more fervently than ever to his pious practices with a view to obtaining Krishna's darshan. Whenever he heard mention of some 'saint' visiting the neighbourhood he used at once to run and throw himself at his feet, beseeching him to enable him to see God. Likewise to the sadhus who came to the house begging for a little food he would address the same unchanging request, but alas, always in vain.

One morning he happened to be sitting in the veranda of the house. When a sadhu appeared who had the complexion and bearing of a South Indian. Harilal brought him some fruit and asked him to be seated while waiting for his mother to prepare the food.

"Swamiji, I have a desire to see God," Harilal said to him. "To that end I have left my career in the army, and so incurred my father's wrath. I pass my time in reciting mantras, singing bhajans, and offering puja; I wait on the saints with whole-hearted devotion. I have asked goodness knows how many mahatmas for the secret of obtaining the darshan of Krishna, but it was always in vain. None of them could help me. Krishna seems to care nothing for my distress and shows me no pity at all. Do you yourself by any chance know of anyone who would be able to make me see God?"

"Certainly," replied the sadhu without the least hesitation. "Go and see Ramana, and all your desires will be fulfilled."

"Where is he to be found," said Harilal leaping up, "so that I can run to see him immediately?"

"He lives in South India, at Tiruvannamalai, one night's travel by train from Madras. Don't waste a moment. Your hopes will be more than fulfilled."

Harilal at once noted down the name, the address, the place and the way to get there; then he informed his family that he was setting off for Tamil Nadu.

His father took it badly. "What about your wife and children? Is this how you understand your duty? Was it not enough to leave the army that you must now rush off to the other end of India, indulging your mad search for spiritual adventures?"

But the Lord is kind to those who hope in him. The very next day a friend showed him in the newspaper a totally unforeseen offer of employment at Madras, which suited him exactly. He borrowed Rs. 300 and set off.

Some days later he dismounted from the train in Tiruvannamalai Station. Like all pilgrims he hired a bullock cart to carry him the three or four kilometres which separated the station from the ashram.

He found the Maharshi seated on his couch in the little hall, very unimpressive with its tinsel decorations, where at that time he lived with his devotees. Harilal bowed to him and sat down; after some time, evidently gripped by some strong emotion, he went outside. He would not speak to anyone but merely asked the time of the next train to Madras and ordered a bullock cart to take him to the station.

He was already seated in the cart when someone stopped him: "How is it that you are leaving already? You have only just arrived."

"I am not interested in so-called sadhus who make fun of people," he replied sharply.

His questioner looked at him with some bewilderment.

"Yes," he went on, "your Bhagavan, I have seen him just two weeks ago in my own home in the Punjab near Peshawar. I myself gave him bhiksha. I asked him if he knew anyone

who could open my eyes and make me see God. He had the nerve to send me more than 2000 kilometers from my home. If he was really able to make me see Krishna, why couldn't he have used his miraculous powers up there, in our house, or at least in the jungle nearby? But let that be. I arrived here, but he did not speak a word to me, or show a single sign of recognition. It would not be so bad if he was a real 'saint'; but there is no sign of a rosary round his neck or in his hand. During the whole hour that I have spent with him not once did I see him telling his tulasi beads, not once have I heard him murmur the names of Krishna or Radha. He is a complete charlatan. What is the use of staying here any longer?"

"What" replied the other; "you must be dreaming. Ramana came from Madurai to Tiruvannamalai forty odd years ago, and everyone knows that he has never once left this place."

"But even so, I have seen him myself, with my own eyes, in my father's house in the Punjab, at the beginning of this month."

"Two weeks ago Bhagavan was here. You can ask anyone you like in the ashram. Listen to me; be reasonable. After making a journey like yours there is no sense in going away after half a day. You don't have to hurry. Stay here and rest for at least two or three days. Then you can see. Now come with me and I will introduce you to the sarvadhikari, Swami Niranjanananda".

Harilal no longer felt able to understand a thing. Had he been dreaming then? Was he dreaming now? But he allowed himself to be persuaded; paid off the driver and stayed at the ashram.

He spent several days there, then returned to Madras to take up his duties. In Madras he so arranged his time that he could devote the greatest possible number of hours to his devotional exercises. On the other hand, he went back every week, or at least every fortnight to Tiruvannamalai, for clearly the Maharshi was making an ever deeper impression on him.

One day he was in his puja room, engaged in singing or praying before the picture of his beloved Krishna, when suddenly he found Ramana at his side.

"If you want to see Krishna, take this mantra and use it constantly," he seemed to hear him saying; and a mantra was whispered in his ear.

He at once repeated the mantra, and began to recite it habitually. However, he still had some doubts and so on the following Sunday he appeared in Tiruvannamalai.

"Bhagavan, was it really you who came to teach me this mantra?" As was his wont, the Maharshi's only reply was an indistinct Hmm-hmm.

"Bhagavan, should I go on using it?"

"If your heart tells you to . . . ."

As Harilal told me after this he set himself to repeat the famous mantra with such diligence and fervour that he even took to running away when he saw anyone coming up to speak to him, such was his fear of allowing his lips to stop even for a moment the recital of the formula on which all his hopes depended.

At last, one day the miracle happened. Whenever Harilal spoke of it, one could not help seeing how his eyes still shone with the joy which that marvellous vision had brought. Krishna was there in front of him, "as truly present as you are before me at this moment" — a lad of about fifteen, whose body no words of ours could possibly describe. "And in my soul I experienced a joy," he added, "such as I had never never felt before."

His lifelong hope was now realized. At long last Krishna had now come to him.

On his next visit to Tiruvannamalai Harilal prostrated before the Maharshi with deep feeling.

"By your grace Bhagavan I have seen Krishna."

"Oh, so Krishna came then?"

"Yes, he came and graciously revealed himself to me. What bliss."

"Then he went away?"

"Yes, of course," replied Harilal, somewhat surprised.

"Oh, oh," was all that Ramana would say, but he smiled.

Harilal continued to repeat his mantra and to offer his customary worship to Krishna with even greater fervour than before. Who knows? Perhaps Krishna might come again.

And indeed, once again in the same place, while he was offering flowers and incense to Krishna Harilal beheld a figure standing before him. But what had happened? He did not see Krishna with his flute or even Radha, Krishna's beloved. Before him was Rama, bow in hand, accompanied by Lakshmana.

Harilal was utterly at a loss. He consulted the most learned Swamis in Madras, but none of them could explain why it was Rama that came, when all the time he had been inviting and calling upon Krishna. He did not want to have anything to do with Rama; it was Krishna alone who enthralled him. So why should Krishna play with him in this way and make fun of him?

As soon as he could, he returned to Tiruvannamalai.

"Bhagavan, can you explain what has happened to me?" Then he told him the whole story.

Ramana simply smiled and said gently: "Krishna came to visit you and then went away. Rama has done the same. Why are you concerned with gods who come and go?"

"Don't you see, japa, mantras, puja, prayer and ritual, are all excellent up to a certain point. But the time comes when all that has to be left aside. You have to take a leap into the beyond. . . . in the beyond you find the Real. Only when everything has been left behind, devas along with everything else, can you find the vision which has no beginning and no ending, the vision of Being, of the Self."

When Harilal stood up, the devotee of Krishna was no more. In the depth of his heart there was now shining the vision "which neither comes nor goes forever." He had desired to see God; and God had finally revealed himself so near to him that henceforth it was impossible ever again to address him as 'Thou', for the unique light was now shining in his own deepest centre.

**Do not be bound by imagination or ideas, keep aloof from them, let everything happen according to its own nature. Just as you are bound now by the body-mind sense, you are also bound by the relationship in this objective world, and that binding is very serious indeed. The true perspective of the Self within is the freedom that is yours.**

— Nisargadatta Maharaj

**Pitiful is thy state, O man, the day dawneth and soon followeth the evening; comes the spring and soon it is laid waste by autumn. Ye see the tale of mutability and readeth it in vain, for you do not give up desires and hopes, in spite of watching the wave of change engulfing them from all round. Remember it, nothing can save thee at the last moment except the shelter of the Lord. So sing thou His sweet Name Govinda! Govinda! Govinda!**

— Sankaracharya



## GURU'S SAYINGS

223

That you, the Self, ethered Being,  
 Pure Awareness, should become  
 A body with hands and feet and,  
deeming  
 It eternal, should dance about  
 This in deed, and nothing else,  
 Is the great miracle.

224

Mukti's splendour, the attainment  
 Of our true Being as Awareness,  
 This alone is real *siddhi*,  
 Attainment. So-called *siddhis*,  
eightfold  
 Powers miraculous, all belong  
 To the bewildered realm conceptual  
 Of foolish minds.

235

For minds enlightened and mature  
 This life of ours is false, conceptual.  
 Prolonging it seems meaningless  
 And without purpose.

238

Knowing well that bliss serene  
 Is found in Being the Self alone,  
 And not in this illusory life,  
 Seek and attain the final heaven  
 Of grace, the state of *mouna*, pure  
 Awareness.

244

Even as a piece of glass acquires  
 Redness from a red flower near it,  
*Chit*, awareness pure, becomes

*Chitta*, the mind by imposition  
 Of sense-impressions.

Remove this *ta*  
 And *Chitta* becomes *chit* again,  
 Awareness pure. This *ta* then stands  
 For *maya*, mere illusion.

258

The mind's subsidence in the Self,  
 The ocean of Awareness, this is  
 peace eternal. The Heart's vast space,  
 The love-filled ocean of Bliss  
supreme,  
 Is the true I.

259

You cannot know or measure That  
 One without a second, perfect,  
whole.  
 This Heart thought-free and bright  
with bliss  
 Is Annamalai, myself.

262

Within us is the body. The fool  
 Who thinks that he is in the body  
 Makes the same mistake as he  
 Who takes the screen on which the  
picture  
 Is projected for a piece  
 of cloth shown in the film.

(8) Within us is the body. He  
 Who thinks that he is in the body  
 Makes the same mistake as he  
 Who takes a piece of cloth shown in  
 The picture for the screen on which  
 The picture is projected.

— Bhagavan.)

264

The Heart which shines with silent  
grace  
 Divine is That, *Kaivalya*, which  
 Subhates as trivial all the various  
 States of bliss once deemed so dear.

269

Know well that the strong, steady  
stream  
 Of *bhakti* issuing from the state  
 Supreme of egoless stillness bright,  
 Which marks the true disciple also  
 Makes the perfect guru.

271

The guru who tells his disciple  
 "Do this or that" becomes for him  
 Yama, Lord of Death, or Brahma,  
 Lord of birth. He who declares  
 "You have done enough" is the true  
guru  
 Bringing grace divine.

(The true guru prescribes no discipline, but the enquiry 'Who am I?')

272

Why does one need an outer guru?  
 Because the mind with maddening  
thoughts  
 Darts out and does not willingly.  
 Listen to the truth proclaimed  
 Eternally within the heart  
 By Being-Awareness, one's own Self.

273

The Self, the Being-Awareness,  
shining  
 As all things and in all things  
 Is the true Guru.

275

To those who suffer samsara's pain,  
 The grievous fruit of former deeds

Done in delusion, dark, the cure  
 That kills all grief is joy, the joy  
 That flows from the good guru's  
grace.

277

The alchemy of the Guru's glance  
 of grace transmutes the *jiva's* nested  
 Iron into the purest gold  
 of true Awareness. Look within  
 Remove your doubts  
 Gain and cherish his darshan.

279

The firmament of grace, the guru;  
 Embodied, steady Awareness, rids  
 The suffering *jiva* of its ego,  
 The poor thing of its poverty,  
 And firmly plants it in its own  
 True state of Infinite Awareness.

(There is a play on the two words, *laghu* (light, trivial, poor) and *guru* (heavy, substantial, strong.)

280

The infinite and almighty Self  
 Shines as the Master of Awareness  
 And through Prime silence silences  
 The vulgar arguments of the poor,  
 Bewildered worldly-wise.

282

The guru heroic with his sword  
 Of knowledge slays the demon, mind  
 Unless his grace ends once for all  
 The monkey-tricks of our truant mind  
 We cannot see the wondrous dance  
 Of true Awareness in the Heart.

285

The mind that has received the  
blazing  
 Sunlight of the guru's feet will never  
 More be troubled by triadic

Differences which now are seen  
To be conceptual merely.

(Triadic differences are like

- (a) Waking, dreaming and deep sleep;
- (b) *Sattva, rajas, tamas*;
- (c) Perceiver, thing perceived, perception.)

**287**

The sages say that, by the Master's  
Grace, true Being shining pure,  
The Veda's end beyond all knowing,  
That Itself springs of its own  
Accord, bright as the I of I.

**289**

By enquiring "Who am I?" or else  
By unremitting and heart-melting  
Thought of God, destroying the false,  
Decaptive ego is to gain  
The heart of radiant awareness.

**290**

By guru's grace and this alone  
And by no other means can one  
Hope to gain coveted peace and  
bliss.  
Therefore with single-minded zeal  
Ever seek such grace.

**292**

Take this to heart. Your own true  
Being,  
The Self within you shining bright  
And steady, That alone is real,  
If without a shadow of doubt  
You see and love God as this Self,  
The plenitude of bliss is yours  
As your own Being.

**294**

Dwelling on the Self supreme, sole,  
whole,  
In alienable, eternal, this  
Alone is for the body-bound *jiva*  
The vessel to cross the ocean of  
births.

**295**

The pure Awareness shining in us  
Ever from of yore as I, the Ore  
Without another, this alone  
Is real. Unless the *jiva* knows this  
There is no release from false illusion

**300**

Only be seeking and submitting  
To Grace can we with our false ego  
Ever hope to find release  
From *Samsara's* fearful whirl.  
Hard, hard it is to overcome  
The force of former deeds.

**306**

Those who live humbly dedicated  
To the good guru's feet are blessed.  
Devotion wells up in them. True  
Devotion to Siva becomes itself.  
The fire of pure Awareness, burning  
up all false desires

**307**

The ocean of compassion, Krishna,  
Through Arjuna assures us thus:  
"Come to me. If to me you come  
I shall release you from all bondage  
To deeds both good and evil."

(Krishna is the Self Returning to Him is *moksha*.)

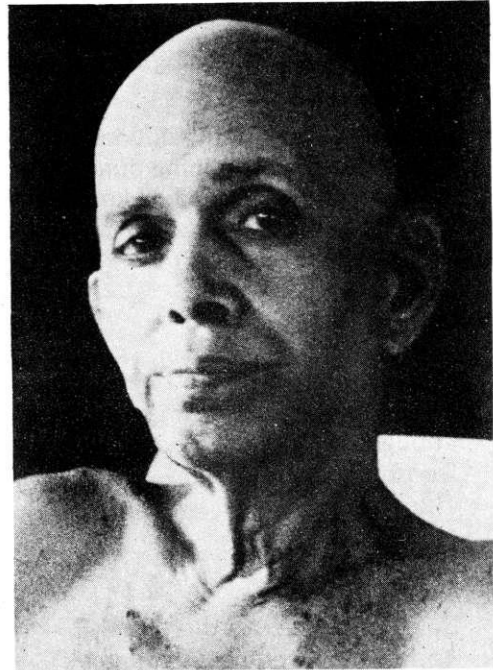
# GURU

By Non-Entity

**G**URU IS Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Maheswara, Guru is Parabrahman, the Supreme" — so goes on the prayer. 'God, Guru and the Self are identical' says Bhagavan Sri Ramana. "Guru is only one and He is not physical". Nevertheless, a personal Guru in flesh and blood appears in the world in the form of a *Jivanmukta*. *Brahmasutras*, stated to be the digest of all Upanishads and Gita, asserts that only a *Jivanmukta* can divulge true *Jnana* and that only a liberated person can liberate others. To a questioner who wished to know whether any one can meet the appointed Guru, Sri Ramana replied that "intense meditation brings it about."

Sri Ramana had no Guru. Sri J. Krishnamurthi considered that no Guru is necessary; Sri Ramana however added the clause that "one can say so only after realising and not before". Guru is a powerful aid to a seeker. Bhagavan asks, "Can spectacles and the sun see for you? You yourself have to see your true nature". Guru can therefore be an aid only. A true Guru "does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom" but "leaves you at the threshold of your own mind". A person's *prarabdha* has a great influence on one's quest for liberation. In rare cases a Guru showers his abundant grace on a sincere deserving disciple. Sri Ramana has explained that "the cosmic mind manifesting in some rare being is able to effect the linkage in others of the individual (weak) mind with the universal (strong) mind of the inner recess. Such a rare being is called the Guru, or god in manifestation."

"All Gurus are one", said the great Sai Baba of Shirdi. This is an axiomatic truth because Guru is one who has found his identity with the All. Some feel that to follow more than one Guru is not correct; but Bhagavan has mentioned that the ancient Avadhuta had more than 24 masters and that one of them was an



inanimate Guru! Loyalty to one Guru is beneficial though one should regard all masters as divine.

To an earnest seeker a Guru is essential. In the words of the Master of the Bahai sect, "A mediator is necessary between man and the creator — one who receives the full light of the divine splendour — to radiate it over the human world. If a man wishes to know God he must find Him in the perfect mirror — GURU".

**Blessed are those eyes, who at a very  
tender age  
Have gone a-seeking for His vision,  
Offering their life as the price.**

— Bullah Shah



# THREE PILLARS OF ZEN<sup>1</sup>

By Philip Kapleau

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In the year 1327 . . . . The Rinzai Zen Master Bassui Tokusho was born . . . . At seven . . . . at a memorial service for his late father, he suddenly asked the officiating priest: "For whom are those offerings of rice and cakes and fruit?" "For your father, of course," replied the priest. "But Father has no shape or body now (having been cremated), so how can he eat them?" To this the priest answered: "Though he has no visible body, his soul will receive these offerings." "If there is such a thing as a soul . . . . I must have one in my body. What is it like?" . . . . For Bassui . . . . (this was) the beginning of an intense, unremitting self-enquiry which was to continue . . . until . . . . he has achieved full enlightenment.

. . . . Again and again he questioned himself: "If after death the soul suffers the agonies of hell or enjoys the delights of paradise, what is the nature of this soul? But if there is no soul, what is it within me which this very moment is seeing and hearing?"

. . . . Bassui would then sit for hours "stewing" over his question in a state of such utter self-forgetfulness that he no longer knew he had a body or a mind. On one such occasion . . . . (he) suddenly directly realized that the substratum of all things is a viable Emptiness, and that there is in essence nothing which can be called a soul, a body, or a mind . . . . "I have seen that the foundation of the universe is Voidness; still what is this *something* within me which can see and hear? . . . . Who is the Master?" . . . .

. . . . One day Koho (Bassui's Master), sensing the ripeness of Bassui's mind, asked him: "Tell me, what is Joshu's *Mu*?" Bassui started to reply: "Mountains and rivers, grass and trees, are equally *Mu*." (*Mu* is a word literally meaning "no" or "nothing" but is used as the expression

of the living, functioning, dynamic Buddha-nature or underlying One Reality of the Universe), and Koho stopped him with: "Don't use your mind!"

All at once . . . . Bassui felt as though he had "lost his life root, like a barrel whose bottom had been smashed open." . . . . In the intense combustion of this overwhelming experience Bassui's previously held conceptions and beliefs . . . . were utterly annihilated . . . . at length . . . . his enlightenment having ripened and feeling himself capable of leading others to emancipation, he no longer turned away from . . . . seekers but willingly accepted all who came . . . . Just before he passed away, at the age of 60, Bassui sat up in the lotus posture and, to those gathered around him, said: "Don't be misled! Look directly! What is this?" He repeated this loudly and then calmly died . . . .

## THE TALK

If you would free yourself of the sufferings of *samsara*, you must learn the direct way to become a Buddha. This way is no other than the realization of your own Mind. Now what is this Mind? It is the true nature of all sentient beings, that which existed before our parents were born and hence before our own birth, and which presently exists, unchangeable and eternal. So it is called one's Face before one's parents were born. This Mind is intrinsically pure. When we are born it is not newly created, and when we die it does not perish. It has no distinction of male or female, nor has it any colouration of good or bad. It cannot be compared with anything, so it is called Buddha-nature. Yet countless thoughts issue from this

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpts from *The Three Pillars of Zen* Ch. IV: Bassui's Dharma Talk on one mind and letters to His Disciples Pp. 163-195

Self-nature as waves arise in the ocean or as images are reflected in a mirror.

To realize your own Mind you must first of all look into the source from which thoughts flow. Sleeping and working, standing and sitting, profoundly ask yourself, "What is my own Mind?" with an intense yearning to resolve this question. This is called "training" or "practice" or "Desire for truth" or "thirst for realization". What is termed *zazen* is no more than looking into one's own Mind. It is better to search your own Mind devotedly than to read and recite innumerable *sutras* and *dharani* (*mantrams*) every day for countless years. Such endeavours, which are but formalities, produce some merit, but this merit expires . . . .

Imagine a child sleeping next to its parents and dreaming it is being beaten or is painfully sick. The parents cannot help the child no matter how much it suffers, for no one can enter the dreaming mind of another. If the child could awaken itself, it could be freed of this suffering automatically. In the same way, one who realizes that his own Mind is Buddha frees himself instantly from the sufferings arising from (ignorance of the law of ) ceaseless change of birth-and-death . . . .

What kind of master is it that this very moment sees colours with the eyes and hears voices with the ears, that now raises the hands and moves the hands and moves the feet? We know these are functions of our own mind, but no one knows precisely how they are performed. It may be asserted that behind these actions there is no entity, yet it is obvious they are being performed spontaneously. Conversely, it may be maintained that these are the acts of some entity; still the entity is invisible. If one regards this question as unfathomable, all attempts to reason (out an answer) will cease and one will be at a loss to know what to do. In this propitious state deepen and deepen the yearning, tirelessly, to the extreme. When the profound questioning penetrates to the very bottom, and that bottom is broken open, not the slightest doubt will remain that your own Mind is itself Buddha,

### SELF-REALISATION

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

Inside opens —  
Sweetly from the bliss-framed Heart  
Where the wizard mind sleeps  
Happily, all past sweeps  
Stilled through egolessness; glows  
"I-AM", "I-AM", gently flows  
From Consciousness clear sweet song;  
Noises, noises, dying mute —  
Play the *only* Flute.

As dawn silvers  
All the cave-dwellers,  
Behind the dark shadows shine  
Light divine;  
Brain's false imaging falls!

And I heard  
One pure awareness sweep  
Music from Heart's inner string  
And through things, stars, pulsars fling  
Hymns of love to the one King.  
"I-AM", "I-AM", gently flows,  
Death dies, and Consciousness glows,  
Noises faint, imagings fade,  
Just the silent "I".  
And all those "things"

Are they mine? are they yours?  
Strange with change —  
Were they the cave-dweller's dreams?  
Do the "I" range  
Over "things" and all?  
Just *one* song, sinking, soaring  
Into ALL-THAT-IS, pouring  
Low and high,  
Filling far and wide —  
At last the mind is dying —  
I AM THAT I AM —  
Strangely beyond the dead mind  
Inside opens —

the Void-universe. There will then be no anxiety about life or death, no truth to search for.

In a dream you may stray and lose your way home. You ask someone to show you how to return or you pray to God or Buddhas to help you, but still you can't get home. Once you rouse yourself from your dream-state, however, you find yourself in your own bed and realize that the only way you could have gotten home was to awaken yourself . . . .

Upon such realization question yourself even more intensely in this wise: "My body is like a phantom, like bubbles on a stream. My mind, looking into itself, is as formless as empty-space, yet somewhere within sounds are perceived. Who is hearing?" Should you question yourself in this wise with profound absorption, never slackening the intensity of your effort, your rational mind eventually will exhaust itself and only questioning at the deepest level will remain. Finally you will lose awareness of your own body. Your long-held conceptions and notions will perish after absolute questioning, in the way that every drop of water vanishes from a tub broken open at the bottom, and perfect enlightenment will follow . . . .

With such realization you achieve true emancipation. But even now repeatedly cast off what has been realized, turning back to the subject that realizes, that is, to the root bottom, and resolutely go on. Your Self-nature will then grow brighter and more transparent as your delusive feelings perish, like a gem gaining lustre under repeated polishing, until at last it positively illumines the entire universe . . . .

Neither despise nor cherish the thoughts that arise; only search your own Mind, the very source of these thoughts. You must understand that anything appearing in your consciousness or seen by your eyes is an illusion, of no enduring reality. Hence you should neither fear nor be fascinated by such phenomena . . . . You must only become the question "What is this Mind?" or "What is it that hears these sounds?" When you realize this Mind you will know that it is the very source of all Buddhas and sentient beings . . . .

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## THE LETTERS

## 1 — TO A MAN FROM KUMASAKA

You ask me to write you how to practice Zen on your sickbed. Who is he that is sick? Who is he that is practicing Zen? Do you know who you are? One's whole being is Buddha-nature. One's being is the Great Way. The substance of this Way is inherently immaculate and transcends all forms. Is there any sickness in it? Man's own Mind is the essential substance of all Buddhas, his face before his parents' birth. It is the matter of seeing and hearing, of all the senses. One who fully realizes this is a Buddha, one who does not is an ordinary human being. Hence all Buddhas and patriarchs point directly to the human mind so man can see his own Self-nature and thereby attain Buddhahood. For the best relief for one perplexed by shadows is to see the real thing.

\* \* \* \*

Once a man was invited to the home of a friend. As he was about to drink a cup of wine offered to him, he believed he saw a baby snake inside his cup. Not wishing to embarrass his host by drawing attention to it, he bravely swallowed it. Upon returning home he felt severe pains in his stomach. Many remedies were applied but in vain, and the man, now grievously ill, felt he was about to die. His friend, hearing of his condition, asked him once more to his home. Seating his friend in the same place, he again offered him a cup of wine, telling him it was a medicine. As the ailing man raised his cup to drink, once again he saw a baby snake in it. This time he drew his host's attention to it. Without a word the host pointed to the ceiling above his guest, where a bow hung. Suddenly the sick man realized that the "baby snake" was the reflection of the hanging bow. Both men looked at each other and laughed. The pain of the sick man vanished instantly and he recovered his health.

Becoming a Buddha is analogous to this. The Patriarch Yoka said: "When you realize the true nature of the universe you know there

**WHO**

**By Frederick Beck**

**everything i see  
is me  
and that am i  
who am i  
why, no-body**

is neither subjective nor objective reality. At that very moment karmic formations which would carry you to the lowest hell are wiped out." This true nature is the root-substance of every sentient being. Man, however, can't bring himself to believe that his own Mind is itself the Great Completeness realized by the Buddha, so he clings to superficial forms and looks for truth outside this Mind, striving to become a Buddha through ascetic practices. But as the illusion of an ego-self does not vanish, man must undergo intense suffering in the Three Worlds. He is like the one who became sick believing he had swallowed a baby snake. Various remedies were of no avail, but he recovered instantly upon realizing the basic truth.

So just look into your own Mind — no one can help you with nostrums. In a *sutra* the Buddha said: "If you would get rid of your foe, you have only to realize that that foe is delusion." All phenomena in the world are illusory, they have no abiding substance. Sentient beings no less than Buddhas are like images reflected in water. One who does not see the true nature of things mistakes shadow for substance. . . . You must advance beyond the stage where your reason is of any avail. In this extremity of not knowing what to think or do, ask yourself: "Who is the Master?" He will become your intimate only after you have broken a walking stick made of a rabbit's horn or crushed a chunk of ice in fire. Tell me now, who is this most intimate of yours?

*(To be concluded in the next issue)*

Moments Remembered  
by Managing Editor

## Kinder far than One's own Mother-Ramana

*I am happy to record another instalment of unpublished anecdotes about our Master.*

V.G.

THOSE WHO live in the Ashram and those who flock to Arunachala should constantly remember the words of Bhagavan on Arunachala. Looking at the Holy Hill, He once said: "What do you think it is? Is it just a hill of rocks? How can it be? Arunachala is the Self Itself. It stands as the Form, full of Grace. Of all the saints who adored Arunachala in many hymns, the child-saint, Jnanasambandar's songs are remarkable. In one of them he succeeded admirably to bring out the reality about Arunachala's *swarupa* (form). He saw the Holy Hill only as: " *ஞானத்திரள் உரு*" — the 'manifestation of Knowledge (*Jnana*) inundation'. It is the correct description about this Knowledge Mountain!"

Bhagavan's adoration of the Hill was not merely verbal and poetical; He expressed it in action by going round it any number of times. If emphasising the importance of self-enquiry is His first nature, His second nature is unmistakably going round the Hill — He not only did it by way of example, but asked others as well to do it!

During His life up on the Hill and in the early years of His stay at the present Sri Ramanasramam, there existed a practice that if anyone offered *bhiksha* (feast) to Bhagavan that day, Bhagavan gave the donor the privilege of going round the Holy Hill along with Him. In those days, *bhiksha* at the Ashram meant that Bhagavan was doing *giri pradakshina*! Thus, sometimes, Bhagavan had to do it for three or more successive days. The *pradakshina* was done mostly only at night, throughout the night. It is also well-known that Bhagavan would never sleep or take rest during the day time. So, three days *pradakshina* meant, three full days and nights with no rest for Bhagavan.

It would happen, sometimes, that not knowing Bhagavan had gone round the Hill the previous days, a donor would come forward to offer *bhiksha*. The inmates would rush to tell him about how Bhagavan had had no rest the previous nights; but, Bhagavan would act quicker, and sternly make a gesture not to inform him of that fact. Later, He would explain: "Poor man! He had come all the way from a long distance to do *giri pradakshina* with me. That is why he offered *bhiksha*. If you told him that I had gone round the Hill for three days, he would definitely not allow me to do so again. Yet, in his heart of hearts he would be disappointed. That is why I silenced you!"

When asked whether sleeplessness for three nights did not affect Him at all, He would say: "What is sleep? It means resting the mind. But it is only when you have a mind. However, to be awake all night will bring eye-strain and eye-ache, naturally. But, if you close the eyes and remain quiet for some time, the eye-strain will go; that is all! Then, where is the problem?" Here we get a glimpse into the state in which Bhagavan was.

Instances are many where Bhagavan encouraged and made those who could not walk short distances, to go round the entire eight miles of the Hill-route! The wife of D.S. Sastri (brother of Suri Nagamma) would accompany her husband whenever he visited Bhagavan. Invariably Sastri, along with others, would go round the Hill, leaving his wife at the Ashram, since due to her very stout body, she could not walk even a few steps without gasping. Once, she wept bitterly and addressed Bhagavan thus: "Bhagavan! Why did you give me this uncouth body; because of this alone I am not able to do *giri pradakshina*." She cried to her



heart's content. Next day, when D.S. Sastri wanted to go round the Hill, Bhagavan directed him: "Take your wife also for the *pradakshina*." He laughed thinking that Bhagavan was joking. When he saw that Bhagavan was serious, he said: "Bhagavan, you are joking; she can't walk even from the guest-house to the Ashram. How can she walk 8 miles? It is impossible to take her." Bhagavan did not leave it at that. He pleaded with Sastri: "Take her. Also take a cart. Let the cart follow her at a distance. If she can not walk, let her get into it. Don't stand in the way of her doing *giri pradakshina*." The party left for *pradakshina*, along with Mrs. Sastri, of course, the cart following. It took them unusually long to complete the circumambulation. But Mrs. Sastri walked the entire distance and did not use the cart at all! Bhagavan gave her a gracious smile when she staggered into the Hall. Is not Ramana 'kinder far than one's own mother'?

\*\*\*\*\*

Ammani Ammal, a lovely person, of ripe old age with bent-back, in white saree, lives at Ramana Nagar. She was serving the Ashram by lighting lamps in the temple, etc., but due to old age preferred to live all by herself — such is her astute *vairagya*! (She has now agreed

to receive food from the Ashram). I succeeded in making her talk about her first conversation with Bhagavan. This is what she said

"In the thirties I had *darshan* of Bhagavan, when I visited Him along with my mother. After that I could not stay at home any longer. Without informing my parents I ran away from home and arrived at the Ashram. I was very young then. I prostrated to Bhagavan and asked: 'Bhagavan! Give me *upadesam* (ஸ்வாமி, உபதேசம் குடுங்க) Bhagavan gave a beautiful smile and said: 'கொண்டு போக பெரிய பாத்திரம் கொண்டு வந்திருக்கியா! 'Have you brought a big vessel to take the *upadesam* with you?' He stretched both His hands wide open to symbolise a big vessel! I was standing still. Then, for a full fifteen minutes Bhagavan looked at me with intense compassion and grace. I experienced wave after wave of bliss; I was thrilled! This experience I never had in my life, either before or after. Summoning all my courage, I again asked Him: 'Swami! May I stay here, for good?' Bhagavan replied: 'I do not ask anyone to come here, neither stay here nor go out. Things happen according to one's *praptam* (destiny).' I did not understand then what it all meant; now I know that it was that look of Grace which made me stick to Him and stay at His lotus feet till today

Bhagavan is God. He is Compassion Supreme. His reply would appear as if He did not take up the responsibility of my stay here. But see, without His Grace could I have stayed here for the rest of my life till today, all alone?"

When I asked her: "If Bhagavan did not recommend your stay at the Ashram, what did you do?" She replied: "What do you mean? Bhagavan's one look was enough. The Grace started working. Immediately, Echamma took me to her house and I began living there. Then I moved to a cottage in front of the Ashram. To stay near Bhagavan, to look at His bliss-filled face and to listen to His exquisitely sweet voice was all I wanted and that I got in abundance!" I saw in her eyes the light of life's fulfilment.

\*\*\*\*\*

Tapas Swami — Bhagavan's old devotee, Sri Toppayya Mudaliar, was so named by Sri Ma Anandamayee Ma when he was introduced to her — is now very old and is confined to his house at Naduvakkalappal village. He is a very staunch devotee having come to Bhagavan in the thirties. Bhagavan showed visible approval when he was chosen to supervise the *Kumbhabhishekam* (of Mother's Shrine) ceremonies in 1948. After repeated requests, he sent me these reminiscences of the Master.

"In 1930, one afternoon, when I entered the Hall I found Bhagavan all alone. Those were days when I was disgusted with life as I had to face too many family problems. In addition, I was entrusted with the supervision of a temple renovation which was a very tedious job. I was depressed and miserable, and had a longing to renounce the world and lead the life of a recluse. Summoning my courage, I approached Bhagavan and said: 'Bhagavan, to pursue spiritual *sadhana* one has to renounce worldly links, hasn't one?' His answer was a motionless silence!

After some time I broached the subject again and said: 'I am not yet blessed with a reply by Bhagavan!' Bhagavan looked stern

and said: 'What do you mean by 'giving up' (something) and 'taking up' (something) else விடரதாங், எடுத்துக் கற்றதாங்? Where to go, what to take? Everywhere, everything is only the 'I'. Who is to give up what and who is to go where?'

He uttered these words with such sternness that I took it as a reprimand and went out and started crying. After 15 minutes, when I had calmed down, I became aware of the surroundings and wondered whether Bhagavan would have watched my crying. I was unnerved to see that Bhagavan was looking at me without any change in His stern face. When I went into His presence again, Bhagavan turned to Muruganar and said: 'Look at him! He wants to give up everything and run away. From where have we come to think of going elsewhere? What *is* always exists. Where to go and who goes?' But, then, suddenly, Bhagavan's face changed into one of love and compassion. He looked at me with tender affection and asked me in a sweet voice: 'Who are you? Tell me'. Again, I gathered courage and said: 'I know, Bhagavan, that I am the Self alone.' Then, full of Grace, He uttered the following words: 'That is all that is to be understood. This intellectual conviction now is *athida jnana* (infirm knowledge). In due course, you will be established in *thida jnana* (firm abidance). That is the Final Truth — to be what you ARE!' I was fortunate indeed to get these words of assurance from the Master. What more do I want?"

\*\*\*\*\*

Maurice Frydman, who was a regular visitor to the Ashram in the forties, was instrumental in compiling *Maharshi's Gospel*. Most of the questions raised therein were his. Once, he wrote a few verses in English and submitted them to Bhagavan. Of these, I quote here verses 8 and 9 alone:

"So long have I been on the stage to please  
thee,  
My eyes are blinded by the lights of thy  
play,





own lips. I told Him spontaneously: 'Bhagavan, the Name of Arunachala flashed in you even as a child and that dragged you here. But, look at me and my family. We lived in a far off village. We never thought of you. Yet, in your boundless Grace, you drew us and made us stick to your lotus Feet, permanently. Is this not a greater wonder?' In approval, Bhagavan gave me a benevolent smile!"

"When batches of final proofs of any book came for correction, Bhagavan would preserve one set apart and bind them and keep them with Himself in the revolving shelf near Him. He would give such bound-books (of final proofs) to devotees, under the strict condition that they be returned safely to Him. Once, Bhagavan gave a few small Telugu books, just bound, to my wife. She took a few days to read them; after reading she would keep them in the Ashram kitchen. That day, when she came to the Hall, Bhagavan asked her for the books. She told Him the truth that she had kept them in the kitchen. Bhagavan, strangely, appeared disturbed and stated in a loud voice: 'Oho, you have kept them in the kitchen! Why? Can't you bring them here and take them back as and when you need them for reading? What will I do if I want to refer to them? Can I afford to buy them? Do I have money?'

"My wife, very young at that time, ran to the kitchen, brought them and placed them on the stool before Bhagavan. She was in tears, but Bhagavan remained unmoved and silent. She was really very much shaken up. However, my wife was pleasantly surprised,

when in the afternoon the office staff handed over to her the newly printed books and said: 'Bhagavan directed me to present these books to you'. In no time the tears of anguish turned into tears of ecstasy — Bhagavan having such great compassion on her! The stern Bhagavan who insisted on discipline and order was also the compassionate Bhagavan who knew the needs of His children!"

\* \* \*

In the roof of the Old Hall, squirrels would build nests. Once, some new born-squirrels dropped from there on to Bhagavan's sofa. Their eyes remained yet unopened and the size of each baby may not have been more than an inch; they were very red in colour with fresh flesh, absolutely tender to touch. The mother squirrel ignored them. Now what to do? How to feed and attend to such tender things?

The baby squirrels were in the palm of Bhagavan. Bhagavan's face glowed with love and affection for them. While there was a question mark in the faces of those who surrounded Bhagavan, He Himself was happy and cheerful. He asked for some cotton to be brought. He made a soft bed for them. He also took a bit of cotton and squeezed it to such a tiny end, the end portion looked like a sharp pin. He dipped it in milk and squeezed milk into the tiny mouths. At regular intervals, Bhagavan repeated this act of compassion. He tended them with great care and love till they grew well and ran around. They did not run away, only ran round their 'mother'. Yes, the fortunate creatures grew with Bhagavan as 'mother'!

**There can be no spiritual demonstration while we hold to human opinions of good and evil. When we look at the world with no opinion, no judgement, no label — not even a good one — but with the realisation God is, we set up a sort of a vacuum within. In to that vacuum, surges the spiritual wisdom defining and evaluating that which is before us, and this we find to be entirely different from our human estimates. Into your consciousness there comes a warmth, a feeling of love for mankind, and the realisation that God is the allness of being.**

— Joel S. Goldsmith

# Sadhu Om's Sadanai Saram<sup>1</sup>

(Selections translated by the author and  
Michael James)

## 37. Sat-Sanga

164. Our association (*sanga*) with the reality (*sat*) alone is true *sat-sanga*. Since Self alone is the reality, abiding in Self alone is the best *sat-sanga*. Moreover, since those great *Sadhus* who have realised Self, the reality, cannot be other than Self, they too are the reality itself. Therefore, approach such *Sadhus* and remain with them as their devoted slave.<sup>2</sup>

165. If you do not have the power to abide in Self, the reality, remain with love in the constant company of *Sadhus* who have known the reality. If you do not have even the good fortune to be in their company, have contact at least with the teachings of such *Sadhus* by constantly studying those books which contain the words they have spoken. Studying such books is also *sat-sanga*.

166. What are the books, the study of which is to be considered as *sat-sanga*? They are only those books which will clearly impress upon you, "Self alone is the reality, so always abide in Self. In order to abide in Self, practise only self-enquiry and do not follow any other path. Practise self-enquiry now itself; turn and dive within".

167. If in the name of *sat-sanga* you gather together all kinds of people, that holy gathering will consist only of a crowd of people who are skilled in oratory, or who have studied innumerable books, or who have mastered the sixty-four mundane arts (*apara-vidyas*), all of which are unreal products of the mind's power of imagination. Reject all such gatherings, knowing that they are not at all true *sat-sanga*.

168. Rather than associating with such people, thinking their company to be *sat-sanga*,

it is better for you to remain alone without associating with anyone, because such solitude or non-association (*nis-sanga*) will help you at least gradually to gain more and more detachment.

169. For those who have been blessed with the rare and great good fortune of gaining true *sat-sanga*, all the heaps of gold in the seven worlds cannot be compared with that treasure called *sat-sanga*, because by such *sat-sanga* they will cross the ocean of ignorance or *ajnana*, which is so difficult to cross, and thus they will attain in this very life the unequalled state of liberation, which is so difficult to attain.<sup>3</sup>

170. When we gain association with a *Sat-purusha* (a person who knows and abides as the reality), we will be able to know very clearly that real devotion to God and steadfast discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral are steadily rising up and increasing in our hearts automatically and without our own effort.

171. We should not believe that we have by our own efforts and *sadhana* brought about the rising of such pure devotion and clear discrimination which we are thus able to experience in our hearts. This true devotion and discrimina-

<sup>1</sup> Continued from our last issue, pp. 234—8.

<sup>2</sup> Refer to *Talks* p. 242 and *Day by Day* p. 236 (16-7-46), where the ideas given in this verse have been expressed by Sri Bhagavan.

<sup>3</sup> Compare verse 2 of *Ulladu Nairpadu Anubandham*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, "That supreme state (of liberation) which is praised (by all the scriptures) and which is attained here (in this very life) by the clear *vichara* which arises in the heart when one gains association with a *Sadhu*, is impossible to attain by (listening to) preachers, by (studying and learning) the meaning of the scriptures, by (doing) virtuous deeds or by any other means."



tion are spontaneously and naturally kindled in our hearts not by our own efforts but only by the power of the Grace of that *Sat-purusha*, who is living close to us but who appears as if He is someone other than us.

172. Just like a mother who feeds her sleeping child even without the child knowing that he is being fed, the Grace of the *Sat-purusha* enters our hearts in a manner which cannot be known by us even if we have the most subtle and powerful of intellects, and thereby His Grace reforms us and brings about the destruction of our mind. Ah! His Grace is beyond all limits and cannot be gauged by anyone.

173. Having understood the greatness of *sat-sanga*, which is revealed by the true words uttered by our *Sadguru*, Sri Ramana, who is the Lord of the universe, "When the excellent cool southern breeze itself is blowing, say, what is the use of holding a hand-fan?"<sup>4</sup> let us live taking refuge in Arunachala, the Hill of *sat-sanga*.<sup>5</sup>

### 39. The Destruction of Our Rising

179. Seeing the world, which appears only due to our error of not knowing that the rising

'I' or ego is unreal, and thinking the world to be a very great and attractive thing, the persistently mischievous mind runs after it with great desire, hoping to enjoy all the seeming pleasures which it sees in it. But instead of running thus after the world, if the mind turns its attention towards itself in order to scrutinize and know the truth of the rising ego, it will subside with great love and will thus become one with God, who is the real Self.

180. If the mind clearly knows that being as it really is, having subsided and become one with Self, alone is real happiness, and that rising as 'I', a separate individual or ego, is nothing but misery, it will gain the liking to subside in Self without ever rising again, having completely destroyed the duality of likes and dislikes.

<sup>4</sup> See *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* verse 3.

<sup>5</sup> Sri Bhagavan has revealed that Arunachala is the reality or *sat* itself embodied in the visible and tangible form of a Hill. Therefore, taking refuge at the Feet of Arunachala is the highest form of *sat-sanga* which is available on the physical plane, and thinking of Arunachala with love is the highest form of *sat-sanga* which is available on the mental plane.

#### 40. Spiritual Maturity or Pakva

181. For people whose madness of desire for the pleasures of this world has not yet subsided, who have not become disgusted with all the efforts they have been making to obtain those pleasures, and whose minds have not therefore completely withdrawn from all such extroverted desires and efforts, it will not be easy to enquire 'Who am I?' and to know the true state of Self, just as a reflection of one's face will not be formed clearly in swiftly running water.<sup>6</sup> Know that a reflection can be seen clearly only when the water stops running and collects itself calmly together in one place.

182. The mind will not be willing to come and follow the spiritual path until it has been repeatedly stung and afflicted by the miseries which lie hidden like poisonous honey-bees in all the worldly pleasures which are sought and attained through the five senses, and until it has thereby gained *vairagya* or desirelessness towards all such pleasures. This alone is the reason why God gives all the sense-pleasure which people ask Him to bestow, and is also the reason why the Vedas mainly recommend the path of *kamyā karmas* (actions performed for the fulfilment of temporal desires).<sup>7</sup>

183. Self-knowledge will shine forth spontaneously only when the mind subsides. But if the mind which subsides is full of wicked and inauspicious tendencies (*asubha vasanas*), Self-knowledge will not shine forth and hence the mind will once again rise and become extroverted. If on the other hand the mind which subsides is pure, being endowed with good qualities (*sattva gunas*) and the tendency to be (*sat-vasana*), it will merge within with one-pointed Self-attention and unsleeping vigilance, and hence it will not rise again but will attain unwavering abidance in the state of Self-knowledge.

184. If the liking to attain true knowledge really rises within one, it will be easy for one to experience Self-knowledge, the state of perfect emancipation, as clearly as an *amalaka*

fruit in the hand. But so long as even an iota of the liking to enjoy the pleasures of this unreal world remains unsubsidied in one's heart, the real thirst to know Self will not rise within one.

185. Know that he who likes to remain steadfastly attending to Self, knowing that Self-attention is far more important than any action which he has to do, than any word which he has to speak, or than any thought which he has to think, alone is a true *pakvi* or mature spiritual aspirant.

186. Though many crores of very very important thoughts rise in one's heart, bliss can be enjoyed only when one rejects all of them and remains still, knowing that to be still is far more important than to continue attending to any thought whatsoever. Only by those earnest aspirants who have clearly understood this truth, can real *tapas* be performed.

#### 41. Denying the Ego

187. Your appearance as an ego, an individual soul who rises in the form 'I am this body',

<sup>6</sup> Compare *Vichara Sangraham*, ch. 8, paragraph 3, where Sri Bhagavan says, "Just as it is impossible to separate the threads of a fine silk-cloth with a very gross (and blunt) crow-bar, and just as it is impossible to determine the nature of very subtle objects with a lamp which is very much wavering due to the wind, so it is impossible to experience the reality with a mind which, being under the sway of *tamo-guna* and *rajo-guna*, is gross and wavering, because the reality is extremely subtle and motionless."

<sup>7</sup> When God bestows worldly pleasures upon those people who pray for them, and when the Vedas recommend people to follow the path of *kamyā karmas*, their inner aim is only to create desirelessness or *vairagya* in the hearts of people by making them experience all the miseries which will inevitably accompany the enjoyment of sense-pleasures. Compare verse 681 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, "The injunction 'Marry a girl' is (given in the Vedas) in order to make one give up the desire for that petty pleasure (of sexual enjoyment), is it not? (Similarly) the injunctions which extol (the performance of) ritual sacrifices are (given) by the words of the Vedas in order to make one gain aversion for all the pleasures of heaven and so on; say, is it not so?" Refer also to *Sri Ramana Pada Malai* verse 31 (a translation of which is given on p. 91 of *The Mountain Path*, April 1972) and to *Kaivalya Navanitham* 2.72-76.

alone is the root-cause for the appearance of this unreal world. If this root-appearance, the rising of yourself as an individual soul, does not rise even in the least, that state will be the state of liberation, which is completely devoid of the imaginary appearances of the world and God.

188. If one has the ability to deny oneself and thereby to destroy the rising of the ego in its very source, what other *tapas* need one perform? The real Self, the source in which the ego thus subsides and dies, alone is the state which is worthy to purchase and attain by selling (or renouncing) all the three worlds.

#### 42. Being an Instrument of God

189. If you perform any action thinking 'I am an instrument in the hands of God', God will not take you to be His instrument. Whoever is really being used by God as His instrument will never feel 'I am an instrument of God'.<sup>8</sup>

#### 43. Gaining One-Pointedness in Self

190. For whatever thing a liking or love arises in you, upon that thing your mind will certainly gain one-pointedness, because such is the nature of the mind. Unless a real love for Self arises in you, you will not turn within and attend to it one-pointedly; instead you will always be telling some excuse or other for not doing so.

191. (When will a real love for Self arise in you?) Whatever your intellect decides to be

<sup>8</sup> Since God will not use a person as His instrument so long as that person retains even a trace of his ego or sense of individuality, and since the thought 'I am an instrument in the hands of God' is just another subtle form which is proudly assumed by the ego, a person who thinks himself to be an instrument of God is not really His instrument. If a person is really being used by God as His instrument, not even a trace of the thought 'I am an instrument of God' or 'God is using me to do His work' will rise in his heart. Compare verse 471 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, in which Sri Bhagavan says, "Know that even the yoga-practice of performing pure austerities (*tapas*) with the desire 'May I become an instrument of Siva' is a blemish upon self-surrender, which is the highest form of service to God."

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the greatest and most worthy thing, for that thing alone a love will arise in you. The intellect of a mature spiritual aspirant will decide that Self alone is the greatest and most worthy thing, and hence he will have real love for Self. But to the intellects of immature people, the objects of this world alone will appear to be great and worthy to be attained, and hence their desire for those objects will be constantly increasing.

192. (When will the intellect decide that Self alone is the greatest thing?) The intellect will esteem something as the greatest according to its decision as to what is eternal and what is ephemeral. What can be correctly decided by the intellect to be eternal? Only that thing which can be decided to be real, is unquestionably eternal; other things are only ephemeral objects which are fit to be discarded.

193. (How to decide what is real?) Whatever exists always and unceasingly, whatever exists without ever undergoing any change, and whatever shines by its own light of consciousness without depending upon the aid of any other thing either to know it or to make it known — that alone is to be decided as real, is it not?<sup>9</sup>

194. Existing always and unceasingly means to be deathless and indestructible; existing without ever undergoing any change means to be *achala* or devoid of movement either in time or in space; shining by its own light means to be the consciousness which itself clearly knows its own existence, and not to be an insentient object which is known only by the aid of some other thing. Knowing that the definition of reality is thus, scrutinize and decide what is real.

195. Whatever satisfies this definition of reality, having all the abovesaid three characteristics, alone is to be accepted as real. Therefore scrutinize and see whether there is anything in this world which can satisfy this definition. If you scrutinize carefully, you will find that every object exists for some time and

then disappears, that every object undergoes change and is devoid of stability, and that every object is known only by the aid of some other thing.

196. Therefore none of the objects which are known through the five senses can satisfy the abovesaid definition of reality, and hence none of them can be said to be real. But consider yourself in the light of the three characteristics mentioned above, and decide whether or not you, who know those objects, can satisfy this definition of reality.

197. The body and world are ever changing. But your own existence is the consciousness 'I am' which always exists unceasingly and without undergoing any change, is it not? Did you not exist without any deficiency even in sleep, where everything else had become non-existent? Therefore how can there be any other thing which is more real than you? Consider well and say.

198. All the four inner organs or *antahkaranas*, namely the mind, intellect, *chitta* and ego, are ever undergoing change, and they cease to exist in sleep. But you are always the same 'you', are you not? Did any second 'you' exist in your sleep to know you, who know all the objects which appear in waking and dream? You, who are the one and only 'you', alone existed in sleep, did you not?

199. Since you alone knew your existence in sleep, and since you who knew thus are only one and not two, you alone are the self-shining entity or *swayam-prakasa vastu*. Therefore know that you, who are the consciousness 'I am' which always exists and shines without undergoing any change and without the aid of any other thing, alone can be said to be real.

200. Do not all human beings have love for sleep, the state in which one abides as Self

<sup>9</sup> Compare *Maharshi's Gospel*, 8th ed., p. 63, where Sri Bhagavan says, "What is the standard of reality? That alone is real which exists by itself, which reveals itself by itself, and which is eternal and unchanging."

alone, having left aside everything else? If that state of Self were not blissful, would anyone have love for sleep? Moreover, is any feeling of misery experienced there in sleep? Consider well and say.

201. Therefore, knowing that you, the Self, alone are real, drown in your own non-dual blissful existence-consciousness and experience the state of Self-abidance, which is completely devoid of the unreal body and mind. To experience this state is alone the real duty of all good and cultured people.

202. Know that those people who have discriminated and understood that Self is thus greater and more real than any other thing, will surely gain true love for Self, and even

through forgetfulness they will never have desire for any other thing.

203. Those people who have a clear and unshakable understanding of their own reality, having thus discriminated and concluded that Self, the existence-consciousness 'I am', alone is real and eternal, will gain unlimited love to abide as Self and will thus attain the state of one-pointed Self-attention.

204. When you attain the non-dual state of Self-abidance by gaining such one-pointedness and such unequalled love for Self, you will experience the state of true *tapas* in which you alone blissfully exist as the direct knowledge of Self.

*(To be continued)*

### THE 'BURQUA' REMOVED

By A Parsi Devotee

There he was, again,  
This time, on a visit to a relative's house,  
Talking about spiritual awakening,  
When someone asked him,  
"Why does it happen only to some people?  
Why did it happen to you and not to me,  
And not to Mr. so-and-so and Miss so-and-so?"

And by way of answer, he said,  
"You all know how orthodox Muslim women  
Hide their bodies  
Under the 'burqua', the big flowing robe,  
Which covers them from head to foot.  
The woman's identity is a secret,  
And you don't know who is  
Inside the 'burqua'.  
But the secret is revealed  
When she reaches home  
And removes her 'burqua'.

In the same way,  
All earthly names and forms are 'burquas',  
Hiding the Sole Reality,  
Especially, the human form,  
Is a very good 'burqua' indeed!  
In the drama of spiritual evolution,

This 'burqua' is worn through many lives,  
Until the hour of Revelation,  
When the Light within shines forth  
So brightly and clearly,  
Through some particular human form,  
That the 'burqua' is  
As good as removed!

Then people call him  
A Sage, a Siddha, a Jivanmukta.  
Such a one was Ramana,  
The Sweet One,  
Known to His devotees  
Simply as Bhagavan.  
Under the 'burqua' of  
The boy named Venkataraman,  
He stealthily stepped into Tiruvannamalai,  
Into the waiting arms of Arunachala.

No! It wasn't Venkataraman  
Who came to Arunachala.  
It was Arunachala coming to Arunachala;  
The Ultimate Reality, Arunachala,  
In human form,  
Coming to that same Reality  
In mountain form."

## How I Came to Sri Bhagavan

By L.R. Murthy

I WAS SERVING in the Indian Army at Imphal, the capital of Manipur State, during 1942. I had a bosom friend who came from Agra who was working in an office adjacent to mine; we were very close. One night Japanese war planes came to bombard Imphal, since there was an ammunition dump there. At midnight, on hearing the siren I woke my friend in order to go to a trench to cover ourselves against machine gun fire. As my friend was fast asleep, I carried him to a trench where there were four other persons taking shelter. The Japanese planes opened machine gun fire which hit all the persons including my friend who was sleeping on my shoulders. I escaped unhurt. At the very moment an idea flashed through my mind that I was not protecting myself, that some Supreme Power was protecting me. From that time onwards I started making enquiries about that Power and finally I decided to make a pilgrimage so that I could meet some holy men who would explain and convince me of the mystical phenomena of the event.

I then went to Dakshineswar Temple, Calcutta, where Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa worshipped Mother Kali, and also to Benaras, Gaya, Haridwar etc. looking for a person who



L.R. Murthy

would explain and make me understand about the event which took place at Imphal. Meeting various people and hearing the explanations given by them did not convince me. I then decided to go and see my aged mother who was living in South India before returning to the battle front.

It was 1946. I came to Madras and boarded a train for Tanjavur. I met a rare personality in my compartment who told me about Tiruvannamalai and Sri Bhagavan. He was going to Tiruvannamalai to have *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan. I decided to follow him and reached Tiruvannamalai the following day.

My companion ascertained information that Sri Bhagavan was at Skandasramam. It was really very rare that Sri Bhagavan visited Skandasramam since He left this abode in 1922. It was about 3 p.m. when we reached Skandasramam where we were informed that Sri Bhagavan went for a stroll. After sometime Sri Bhagavan returned and took his seat on a mounted platform from where he was looking at the Temple of Sri Arunachaleswar. I was seated in front of Him and looked directly at Sri Bhagavan's face. After sometime Sri Bhagavan turned His sight from the Temple, as He turned His face His eyes directly looked into mine. Immediately I became still and felt that I was somewhere in outer space, unaware of everything. I did not know how long I remained in that state. On regaining my consciousness I saw Bhagavan smiling at me with penetrating eyes! I have not forgotten this experience all my life. (When I enquired about the duration of my sitting motionless, my companion informed me that it was about 40 minutes).

I pray and prostrate to Sri Bhagavan that this experience will ever remain with me.



# SINFULNESS IS NO BAR

By H.S. Spencer

WHAT IS 'sinfulness'? It is merely the exhibition of certain 'vasanas' or tendencies of human character which are against the Divine Moral Order. They are all acquired traits and what is acquired can always be disowned and thrown aside, because it is not inherent and germane but foreign to one's nature. In the words of Sri Ramana it might be said: "Countless *vasanas* or tendencies caused by past *Karma* reside in the mind. These have accumulated from time immemorial, through untold past lives". (Cf. Who Am I?, page 9). Such accumulations being foreign to our true nature, have at one time or another to be cast aside in our progress towards freedom which is our true nature. This, I submit, is Bhagavan's special message to the world.

It is a message of brightness, and hope that has reverberated through the ages from Zarathushtra, Sri Krishna, Jesus and Mohammed. It is based upon the essential Divinity of the human soul, however, much it may be besmirched by non-human tendencies. The smudges the personality bears are a mere veneer that appears on the surface. They cannot permanently affect the Real Self Within.

The more vigorous and determined the search for the Real Self Within, the more rapidly

does this tarnish of sin fall away. The search cleanses the Soul's vehicle. It is the impure state of the vehicle that is responsible for the persistence of *vasanas*. Once the vehicle is cleansed these *vasanas* die a natural death.

Sri Ramana has given to the world the easiest and most practicable method of *Atma-Vichara* for Self Realisation. As he says "all scriptures, with one voice, declare that control of the mind is absolutely necessary for the attainment of salvation. Hence control of the mind is the goal to be aimed at." (Cf. Who Am I? Page 13). What easier and more practicable way can any one think of, for the purpose, than going to the very source of the mind through the simplest of simple inquiries, 'WHO AM I?'

The Mind in the ultimate analysis is nothing but Consciousness. This consciousness can only reside in some permanent part of the constitution of man, and there is no other permanent part except the Soul, the individualised *Atma*, which is itself a particle of the *Paramatma* or Absolute Spirit. Sri Ramana's method of *Atma-Vichara* for reaching the Real Self Within is the easiest, shortest and most practicable path for reaching the goal of Self-realisation.

**When the mind brought under control does not get resolved in sleep nor again get dissipated among objects, when it becomes still like the flame of a lamp kept in a windless place, when it does not appear in the form of any imagined object, when the mind is of such nature, then it merges in the form of *Brahman*.**

— Sankaracharya

## A MEMORABLE VISIT

By M.R. Rao

**H**IS HOLINESS Sri Parijnanashram Swamiji of Sri Chitrapur Mutt, Shirali, North Kanara, visited the Ashram on Thursday the October 11, 1984, along with devotees belonging to Chitrapur Saraswati community; Sri Swamiji is its religious head.

The party came from Madras, where His Holiness was camping at that time. The Swamiji's car, followed by the bus in which the devotees came, arrived at the entrance of Sri Arunachaleshwara temple by about 11 a.m. I, together with the temple authorities, received them and took them round the temple. Special *pujas* were performed at the *sanctum sanctorum* of Lord Arunachaleshwara and His consort, Sri Apeethakuchambal. Then they visited the Pathala Lingam, in the thousand-pillared *mantapam*, where Bhagavan Ramana remained absorbed in *samadhi* for some months, oblivious of the outward mundane world. The temple authorities honoured the Swamiji by garlanding him and offering prasada.

Thereafter, His Holiness and party drove to Sri Ramanasramam, where they were received by the Ashram authorities. They were taken round the Ashram and His Holiness sat in meditation in the Old meditation Hall, where Sri Maharshi sat on a couch and radiated His benevolent Grace for nearly 25 years on all who came to Him. At about 1 O'clock in the afternoon, the Ashram authorities served lunch. Since Swamiji was on diet under medical advice, I served Him lunch in the Morvi guest house, specially prepared at my residence. After lunch, His Holiness spent some more time at the Ashram premises. I am happy to say that thereafter Sri Swamiji (and party) paid a brief visit to my house, where my wife and I had the rare privilege of receiving the guests; and we felt blessed by Swamiji's visit. At about 4 p.m. His Holiness and party left for Madras after circumambulating the Holy Hill of



H.H. Sri Parijnanashram Swamiji

Arunachala, in their vehicles, as they had no time to walk round the Hill.

The Swamiji's visit, though brief, was very inspiring. The party had to be back in Madras the same evening, in time for "Deepa Namaskar", a ritual which is observed every evening after sunset, where the Swamiji is camping. Sri Swamiji, however, has assured us of a longer stay next time.

His Holiness Sri Anandashram Swamiji (Guru of the present Swamiji) had visited Sri Ramanasramam during Sri Ramana Maharshi's time. An article about his visit, written by Dr. K. Shiva Rao, appeared in 'The Mountain Path', January 1966 issue, p. 94. My father, late Dr. M. Anant Narayan Rao, had the privilege of receiving His Holiness Sri Anandashram Swamiji and arranging His meeting with Sri Bhagavan. I now had the unique privilege of receiving Swami Sri Parijnanashram at Arunachala.

# Home-Coming or De-Babelization

Professor K. Swaminathan <sup>1</sup>

JUST AS mathematics as an abstract language commands a universality denied to the commonly spoken languages, so does *advaita* (non-duality) vis-a-vis the traditional religions. And like mathematics, non-duality too can be mastered by anyone through sustained personal effort and its truth verified by repeated practical application in the ordinary concerns of life. There is nothing mysterious or inaccessible, no magic or "mysticism", about the highest Indian value of "moksha" or freedom from phenomenal existence. It is available to any earnest seeker for enjoyment and exercise, here and now, in this very life, on this very planet. Tagore expresses the prevailing Indian view when he says that divinity is not a descent from above but the fulfilment of humanity. "As science is the liberation of our knowledge in the universal reason, which is human reason, religion is the liberation of our individual personality in the universal Person who is human all the same." A long line of Indian sages from Buddha through Sankara to Ramana Maharshi bears witness to the validity of this belief.

## Egoless Awareness

Little good can come or has come from the so-called comparative study of religions, for this study is concerned more with the past, the letter which killeth, than with the present, the spirit which giveth life. The open mind, the only right mind, seeks no guidance from the past, but sees the living present and creates the future. A deliberately unhistorical and strictly scientific study of the Emptiness, the egoless awareness, the experience of pure Being, is no threat to the truth and spirit of any religion. It is in fact as necessary and helpful to the spiritual seeker as understanding of zero is in the study of mathematics and in using it for our common dealings. Such an analysis and exposition of the experience of freedom, unity and bliss at the heart of all

religions is attempted by Dr. Robert Powell in his latest book.

A scientist by profession and a well-known writer on Zen and J. Krishnamurti, the author offers in this volume a master-key to egoless living through his bold, clear and convincing exposition of *advaita* (the negation of duality) as it has been expounded by its acknowledged modern master, Sri Ramana Maharshi.

The outstanding merit of this admirable work is its cool, clear, impersonal method of exposition, its courageous commonsense, its heuristic approach to the fulness through the void. The insistence on the Emptiness is uncompromising and sanative. The practice of my absence has a certitude, clarity and power, while practising the presence of God is the pursuit of a Protean phantom. There is a precision and purity about Zero, which is well indicated by the Indian terms for it "purna" (plentitude) and "pujya" (adorable). The man living with the Emptiness plays, and enjoys playing, the game of life nobly for the fun of it, regardless of his fellow-players. He has achieved in real life the "negative capability", the strength of self-effacement, which gave Shakespeare and Keats their poetic power.

## Spiritual Existentialism

The ego is a tyrannical if false construct which binds us, while the self which is universal awareness is the sole reality and total freedom. Mistaken identity, the attachment to the separate individual ego, a forgetfulness of the one self which is the self of all, is our basic ignorance, the origin of all personal suffering and social evil. Freedom is not some remote *post-mortem* possibility, but immediate and

<sup>1</sup> This is a review published in *Indian and Foreign Review* in 1979, on the book: *Return to Meaningfulness* by Robert Powell published by Arnold-Heinemann.

direct self-determination, in both senses, recognizing who or what I am and deciding what I should be and what I shall do with myself. Atheistic existentialism makes self-alienated heroes for whom other selves are hell. Spiritual existentialism, the Vaishnava faith of Gandhiji, accepts the oneness of all selves as a working hypothesis and practises from moment to moment a dharma of mutual responsibility which moulds heroes out of common clay.

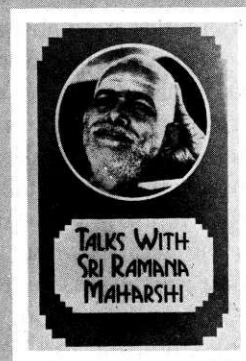
So far from there being any conflict between science and spirituality, experiments with *sat* (pure Being) and *satya* (relative reality) are as reliable and rewarding as experiments with matter and energy; for awareness, whether shared or private, is much more real than matter or energy. Dr. Powell's logic based on commonsense and "thought-experiments" should appeal to all serious-minded psychologists and sociologists regardless of their religious or ideological affiliations.

#### Harmony of Religions

For a radical transformation or true conversion (*metanoia*) of individuals and through them of societies, while preserving the integrity both of the human person and of the human race, the first condition is the replacement of an absolutist, fanatical or polemical world-view by a relativistic, pluralistic and irenic world-view. *Anekantavada*, the principle of pluralism, is not a Jain fad, but a scientific and social imperative. The harmony of religions (*sarva-dharma samanvaya*) which Gandhiji dreamed of can only be brought about by a personal and heuristic approach to religion, by directly experiencing its spiritual or transcendental element as distinct from its empirical manifestations at other times and places.

The great change that has come over modern science with the discovery of relativity and the exploration of consciousness has now to be extended to the realm of religion. Militancy and massive organization should give place to "turning the searchlight inwards." Religions in this age of enlightenment should spread free-

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dom rather than authority and prove their validity by present experience rather than blind faith in some future state of being. In the Emptiness there is no room for comparison or conflict. And the immortality promised by all religions is to be won only through the death of the ego-mind.

The aim of all religions is the restoration of meaning to life by taking humanity back to its pristine state of being-awareness-bliss. The sage has a mind matured and reintegrated into the happy wholeness of the child. Regaining the lost paradise is as natural as the seed after growing into a tree becoming fruit. Is there any need for so many schools, books, creeds, institutions, for all this Babel of cults and creeds in order to bring about this normal development of the child into the sage? Elaboration and complexity lead only to dispute. The Kingdom of heaven is already within us, right in our midst, when we are ready to reduce ourselves to zero, to let go of the ego and gain the self. But only a mature mind can achieve this Emptiness and use it in practical life. Instead of being the self and behaving as the self and beginning a new life, people cling to their ego which wants to know all about heaven, hell, reincarnation and other mysteries, and the so-called religions pamper and re-inforce their collective ego. After all these wanderings you must return only to the self. Then why not return to it right now here and abide in it? As Ramana Maharshi says, "Leave off all this verbiage and be as you are. See who you are and remain as the self, as awareness, free-from birth, free from coming, going and returning. Why so many efforts to eradicate the illusory ego?"

The change, which brooks no postponement, has to begin with the recognition and acceptance of "what is" in oneself and in one's milieu, without justification or condemnation of "what has been" and without passionate attachment to "what should be". All religions, theistic as well as non-theistic, have their origin and their end in Man; their root is Man and their fruit a new and better world. They deserve to survive only in so far as they add to the sum total of

### GRACE

By Frederick Beck

**ramana maharshi  
i don't know why i love you  
or perhaps i haven't thought about it  
i haven't met you, this lifetime  
perhaps not in other lifetimes also  
but to me there's kindness  
and sweetness and love  
when i look through your eyes  
blessed am i  
blessed am i**

### HOUSE OF DREAMS

By Harindranath Chatopadhyaya

**I've built a house of dreams to dwell in,  
A house of inarticulate prayer  
Wherein no one would ever dare  
To gain access — to buy and sell on!**

**I've built a house of dreams to dwell in  
Charged with the spirit's shining air  
Wherein no one would ever dare  
To gain access — to buy and sell on!**

human knowledge and human happiness and keep intact the integrity of human persons, for it is only persons who can have knowledge and happiness.

Gandhiji's choice of the word *satyagraha* for his way of cleansing and correcting the course of our lives is most significant. While *Sat* (Reality) is pure awareness and bliss, *satya* (the truth relative to a frame of reference) is valid and should be sought and found only in the given time, place and circumstances. But no reference system has ultimate validity. Any one can be a hero through becoming a Zero.

This work describes in a competent and convincing manner the meeting point of Advaita, Zen and modern science, which may well mark a crucial stage in human evolution.

# The Christa Prema Seva Ashram

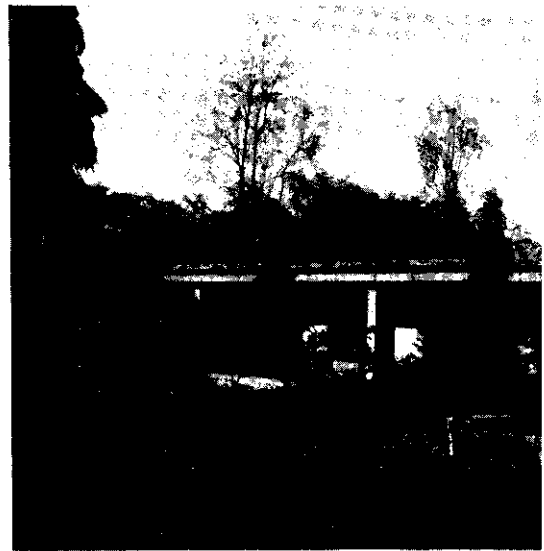
By Sara Grant

*Sister Sara Grant (see p. 275 of our Oct. 84 issue) is a regular pilgrim to Arunachala. Sadhana and service are emphasised at the Chrita Prema Seva Ashram, Shivajinagar, Pune-411 005, where she stays.*

FEW READERS of *The Mountain Path* can have heard of the Christa Prema Seva Ashram, but they would feel at home here, for in the library, prominent among the holy men and women whose lives have touched and enriched ours, is the serene and kindly presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Even before any of us had visited Tiruvannamalai, his inspiration had reached us through the satsangs of Swami Abhishiktananda who owed so much to him.

The CPS Ashram came into being in 1927. Father Jack Winslow, an Anglican priest and personal friend of Mahatma Gandhi, who had lived and worked in Maharashtra for some twelve years, was greatly disturbed by the alienation from their own culture and traditions that Christianity seemed to entail for Indians who embraced it. He felt very strongly that this was not necessary: the teaching of Christ was of universal relevance, and should be livable in terms of any age or culture. He prayed and reflected for a long time, seeking some small way in which he could help to change things, until one day he suddenly felt he had been given the answer — an Ashram community of both Indians and Englishmen, lived in the normal life-style of any ashram, simple, vegetarian, open to all comers of whatever community, caste or class, provided they had a spiritual purpose, and open too to the whole vast spiritual inheritance of India.

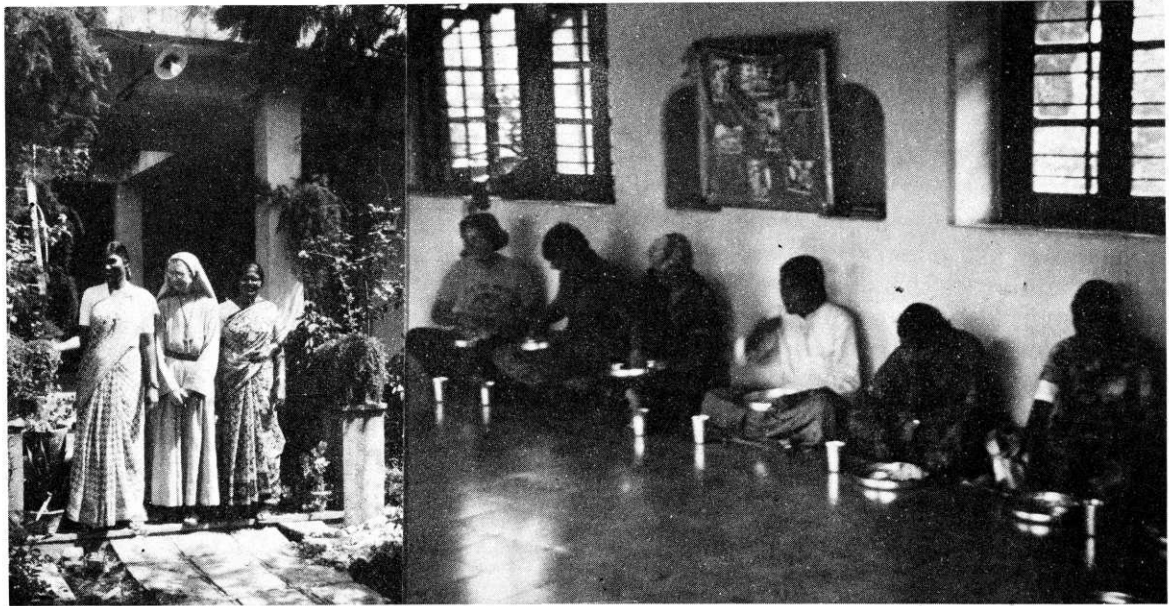
The original community built the ashram themselves, and also a hostel for less well-off university students on the same campus, but independent of the ashram. This hostel still exists, with about fifty students who pride themselves on keeping up the tradition of universal brotherhood; they are vegetarian, so that all can eat together, and are on principle



Main buildings of the Christa Prema Seva Ashram, Pune

chosen from as many different communities and states as possible, to foster national and human integration. Gandhiji himself visited the ashram at least twice, and Fr. Jack and the rest of the community were deeply involved in the freedom movement, as contemporary police records amply testify!

CPS Ashram was only the second Christian ashram to come into existence (the first was the Christukul Ashram at Tirupattur, founded in 1921), so it was something of a pioneering venture. After some twenty-five years of fruitful service in the spirit of its origins, the first community gradually died out. In the sixties the Trustee of the property invited the Anglican Community of Sisters of St. Mary the Virgin and the Roman Catholic Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to reopen it jointly as an



Sisters of the Ashram with visitors

ecumenical venture of Christians of different Churches, and, as it happily turned out members of different religions, for we were joined for almost ten years, until just before her death, by a deeply spiritual and cultured elderly Brahmin lady who greatly enriched us by her insights, her wit, and her practical understanding of all areas of life from the way of welcoming guests to the secrets of a well-balanced vegetarian diet!

At present the core community numbers eleven — seven sisters, one minister of the Church of North India who knew the ashram in its “previous incarnation” and three lay women. We have also two married couples on a long-term basis, one with two small daughters. We greatly value their presence and the enrichment that comes to us from their complementary insights, Hindu and Christian. The household normally numbers from 25 to 30 in all. Sri. B.K.S. Iyengar usually sends us some of his yoga students every month, and together with other visitors of all castes and creeds from India and all over the world this makes us a real “crossroads of the Spirit” as one visitor observed. While they are here, all become part of the wider ashram family, helping with

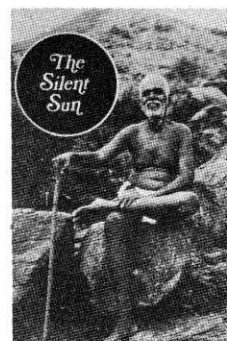
household tasks such as rice-cleaning, vegetable cutting and house-cleaning, and taking as much part as they wish in the spiritual life of the community, including the daily *satsang* and the twice or thrice weekly “meeting-point” where a basic text—Patanjali, and Upanishad, a Gospel — is taken for study and shared reflection, often very wide-ranging. The spirit of the ashram is expressed in a poster in the open verandah where we have meals, which can be seen by all visitors: “The Guru of this ashram is the risen Christ, present among us by his Spirit and in word and sacrament. A central concern of the community is to reflect on and enter more deeply into the mystery of his relation to the Self-communication of God in and through the other great spiritual traditions of man. High points of this endeavour are the daily Eucharist, the evening meditation and *arati* and *satsang*. Visitors are invited to collaborate in this shared search which is of such significance, for the world of our time, and so help to make this place a true ‘Cross-roads of the spirit.’ ”

In this spirit the personal convictions of each one are fully respected, and each one is expected to have the same tolerance for others.

So, though all are welcome to attend the three *aratis* and the daily celebration of the Eucharist, no one is pressurized to do so. In fact, many who come are in more or less active revolt against any form of organized religion, or at least the one they were brought up in, and often for reasons with which one cannot help sympathizing. We ourselves try to make the Gospel the practical handbook for our daily lives, welcoming all, rich and poor or whatever, in the name of the Lord'our Guru. Our *sadhana* is summed up in the name of the ashram-being totally at the service of His love, and therefore ready at any hour of the day or night to share whatever we have or are with those whom He brings here. We have felt from the beginning that we should have no institutional work here — school or organised social work though some of us do have different forms of part-time service outside, our ministry as a community should simply be *being an ashram community centred in the Presence and open to all who come whatever their nationality, background, religious affiliation or lack of one with friendly invitation also with other ashrams, Hindu or Christian, and indeed with anyone with whom we come into contact.* It is now twelve years since this "second incarnation" of CPS began, and the letters and verbal assurances of departing guests suggest that in spite of its smallness and insignificance and our own personal weaknesses, of which we are only too well aware, there is a Presence and action in this place that does somehow draw all who come here into a deeper understanding of the fundamental unity of all men in "the Love that move the sun and the other stars" and in such widely differing ways draws us all strongly and gently to Itself.

**Silence is the most potent form of work. However vast and emphatic the Scriptures may be, they fail in their effect. The Guru is Quiet and Grace prevails in all. The Silence is more vast and more emphatic than all the Scriptures put together.**

— Maharshi's Gospel



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# SILENCE

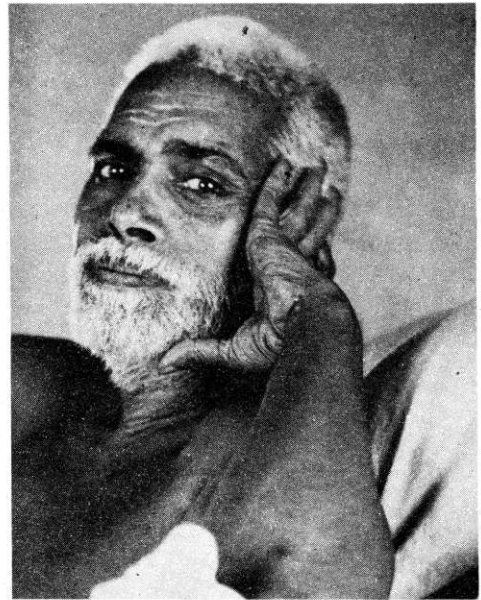
By K. Subrahmanian

LANGUAGE IS for communication.

Communication is between two or more people. We use language to communicate with others. It is debatable whether we can think without language. Anyway, what we think we tell others through language. Language is used to communicate our knowledge of men and things. But we cannot adequately describe all our experiences through language. 'Experiencing' and 'explaining' are different. We can never hope to explain through language how a sweet tastes. To know how a sweet tastes, one has to taste it. There is no substitute for it. When we cannot describe how a sweet tastes, how can we describe the state which is beyond the mind? When we go beyond the mind, we go beyond language.

Reality can only be experienced, it cannot be explained. It cannot be caught in the web of words. Words are at best pointers to Reality. When we see Tiruvannamalai on a map, we see a dot. It tells us something about the location of the place with reference to other places. But it is not the real place. We must go to Tiruvannamalai in order to experience it. Experiencing Tiruvannamalai is different from explanations about Tiruvannamalai. We may read a lot of books about Tiruvannamalai but it is different from 'experiencing' the place. Knowledge is helpful but it is not experience. Words are indicators. They give us a clue to the experience, but they can't describe the experience. Words are rungs in a ladder. They help one to get to the top of a building. But they are not the building.

We are forever talking and talking. A writer says: "Like a turnstile, the talkative man is in everybody's way, but stops nobody; he talks a great deal, but says little; looks into everything, but sees nothing; and has a hundred irons in the fire, but very few of them are hot, and with the few that are, he burns his fingers."



We are all terribly active, busy, preoccupied. Our diaries are full of appointments. We don't have time to make an appointment with ourselves. We are all the time doing something or other without bothering to find out why we are doing what we are doing. Walter Lippman, the great American journalist, once said: "For more than twenty years, I have found myself writing about critical events with no better guide to their meaning than the hastily improvised generalisations of a rather bewildered man . . . . Many a time I have wanted to stop talking and find out what I really believed." Week after week, he wrote for many years and his writings influenced thousands of people. But this is what he *himself* says about the need for silence and reflection.

We reflect, meditate, contemplate, think, listen and pray in silence. Speech comes out of silence and returns to silence. Real understanding takes place only in silence. Even in

### THE MANIAC

By Harindranath Chatopadhyaya

Have you seen the maniac with an empty  
cup,  
Vacancy in his eyes — pass by?  
Those eyes are thirsts aching to swallow up  
Liquor of landscape, sea and cloud and sky!  
Are you desirous of keeping track  
Of him? Well then!  
You must become a maniac!

ordinary life, we feel that speech is essential when we are introduced to another for the first time. We keep on asking and answering questions. But when we are in the company of a person we know very well, there is understanding and hence minimum talk. Silence becomes companionable when there is understanding. Where there is perfect understanding, there is perfect Silence.

Language implies a subject and an object, a knower and a known. When the subject and the object become one, there is no *other* to communicate with. There is only stillness, silence.

Sri Bhagavan wants us to turn the searchlight within and find out who the seeker is. He has assured us that the enquiry 'Who am I?' would eventually silence the mind by merging it in the Self. Of the Silence of Sri Dakshinamurti, Sri Bhagavan says: "Dakshinamurti observed silence when the disciples approached him. That is the highest form of initiation. It includes the other forms. There must be subject-object relationship in other *dikshas*. First the subject must emanate and then the object. Unless these two are there, how is the one to look at the other and touch him? *Mowna diksha* is the most perfect; it comprises looking, touching and teaching. It will purify the individual in every way and establish him in the Reality.

**AWAIT RELEASE!**

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# Introducing....

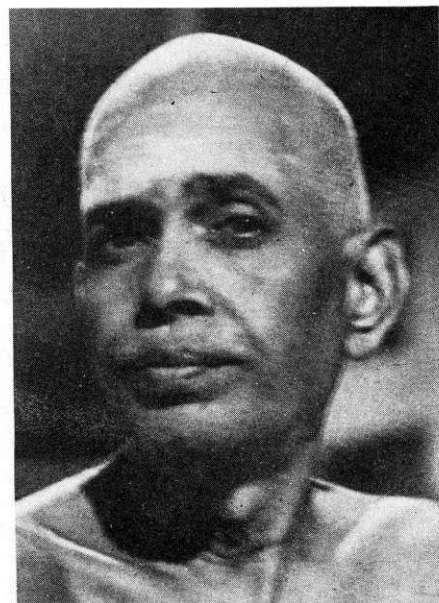
## Smt. Ramani Ammal

ONE is fortunate to be born in a family solely devoted to Sri Bhagavan. In 1912, Ramani was born to Manavasi Ramaswami Iyer, who wrote the famous wish-fulfilling "*Saranagati*" song. This child had thus the blessed privilege of having constant *darshan* of Bhagavan at Skandashram and talking to Him and playing with Him; and of being fondled by Bhagavan's mother!

Even in childhood, she took advantage of the musical genius of her father and learnt classical Karnatic music from him. She later had other illustrious music teachers to develop her proficiency in *Vina* and singing and was invited to give public music performances. She was at that time forced into a marriage, which proved a failure. At the most difficult period of her life, her only thought was to seek and find refuge in Bhagavan. She was helped by her sister, Smt. Lalitha Venkataraman, who was herself a reputed musician. Under her advice, Ramani moved to Bombay in 1954



Smt. Ramani Ammal



and settled there. Her residence was always crowded with young and enthusiastic music-learners.

In her leisure time she studied Vedantic texts. One retired engineer named Venkataraman, himself a great adept, taught her the Upanishads. *Mandukya Karika* became her favourite study. She also acquired deep knowledge of other texts like *Srimad Bhagavad Gita*. Yet her mind lingered all the time on Bhagavan only. Her house became a school for girls and ladies to study and sing the works of Sri Bhagavan. They all felt happy to do *bhajans* and meditation in the company of Ramani Ammal. She longed to settle down at Arunachala permanently, but circumstances prevented her from doing so. During her sojourn to Rishikesh she was happy to play *Vina* in

front of Sri Swami Sivananda. The Swami was so pleased with her playing that he straightaway conferred on her the title 'Vina Jyoti'!

At that time she was initiated into the *Shodasakshari mantra*, and acquired certain occult powers, like hearing divine music and seeing visions. She, however, succeeded in withdrawing her mind from these *siddhis*.

At long last, she was able to come to Aruna-

chala in 1981. Her life's ambition is thus achieved. She now stays happily at Ramana Nagar, dedicating her life to contemplation at the feet of her Master. Her proud occupation now is to teach children, songs by and on Bhagavan; the rest of the time she does service to *sadhus* and thus partakes of their *sat sangh*.

May Sri Bhagavan shower His blessings on Ramani Ammal!

### SUNSET SONG ON THE MOUNTAIN

By Noona Osborne

The silence on the mountain  
And the light within the light; —  
There is love O Ramana;

The silence on the mountain  
And eternity within — —  
What? Yet there is love O Ram —  
ana — which means the love of Ram;

Yet there is love in the warmth  
Of the rocks — where is it — what  
Is it (My love in your love  
Ramana!!!)

In the noise on the mountain  
There is silence,  
In the silence there is love,  
There is beauty in the rocks,  
Rugged chunks of granite, brown and  
Ochre in the midday sun,  
— Grey and black at night,  
There is love and love is gentle,  
Love is eternity,  
That is your love Ramana,,

And then I think of little things,  
Pebbles in a mountain stream,  
Fire stones that you can see through,  
And something else, something else  
Is God, and on the mountain — there —  
You held me in your arms,

And I think I think I think!  
The grass on the mountain — is  
Pretty, and insects — colours —  
Butterflies, grasshoppers; ants  
And pretty looking things, see  
The praying mantis! blue green  
Deep on the Peak there is infin —  
ity, that is eternity,  
And the silence on the mountain  
And the light within the light;  
There is love O Ramana,,, —

O, but, think — not at all,  
I am at peace!!  
And the silence on the mountain,  
And the light!! And the light,  
Ramana



## BOOK REVIEWS

PRABODHASUDHAKARA: Translation and notes by Samvid. Pub. Samata Books, 10, Kamraj Bhavan, 573 Mount Road, Madras 6. Pp xi + 94. Price: Rs. 25/-.

*Prabodhasudhakara* is one of the innumerable minor works or *prakarana-granthas* ascribed to the great Sankaracharya on *advaita vedanta*. Scholars today very much doubt its authenticity because the style is pedestrian, the thought is compiled from secondary sources and supreme importance is accorded to the *Bhagavata* as a scripture on *bhakti*, a work not mentioned even once in the genuine *bhashyas*. In the text Haridasas are mentioned in glowing terms but historians think that Haridasas did not exist until the post-Madhva period (13th Century).

Leaving aside these scholarly issues, if we turn to the actual sections constituting this small work of 257 verses, it shows how the body and mind, always in the net of worldly pursuits, deserve to be curbed by a spiritual seeker since they block the dawn of Self-realization, the supreme value to be achieved by man. The section on *vairagya* or dispassion leads to a description of the subtle and causal bodies forming the knot of nescience or *avidya*. The self-luminosity of *atman* and its direct realisation through various methods like the annihilation of the mind or *Hari-bhakti* are next lucidly set forth. Throughout, the text leans heavily on key citations from the great *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Bhagavata*. There is a special defence of Hari's ostensibly incredible *lilas*; his being a *Purnavatara* is also emphasized.

Samvid has done a laudable job in giving the Sanskrit text along with a running English translation and notes, but one feels that the translation could have been better in places. Instances are not rare where the spirit of the Sanskrit has been twisted beyond recognition. For example, the third verse, "*yadyapyevam viditam ...*" is rendered as:

"Even though known thus, He can certainly be taught conventionally by the essential parts of the scriptures."

In the translation the adverbial clause "though this is well known" is mistranslated as an adjectival phrase "even though known thus" qualifying "He", and "conventionally" is a pointless addition to the text. Even the title itself might mean, like *Prabodhacandrodaya*, "moon causing the high tide of the ocean of enlightenment" rather than the "Nectar-Ocean" as rendered by the author. However, though there is room for improvement in the English version, the accompanying notes are useful, concise and informative.

Despite its defects, the book deserves commendation as a useful introduction to *advaita vedanta*. On reading it one would be reminded of the poet's words:

"How little do we know that which we are!  
How less what we may be!"

— Dr. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY

NAMA JAPA, PRAYER OF THE NAME IN THE HINDU AND CHRISTIAN TRADITIONS. By Sister Vandana. Pub Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati K.M. Munshi Marg, Bombay 7. Pp. 308. Price: Rs. 40/-.

This book is a good example of the new ecumenical relationship which is being established today. The authoress is a Sacred Heart Sister who has been living for several years in a small ashram in Rishikesh. The book is dedicated to Swami Krishnananda and has a foreword by Swami Chidananda in which he says that it will "benefit innumerable seekers upon the Path of God all over the world." Sister Vandana herself in the preface speaks of it as a way to bring together Hindus and Christians in a form of prayer which is familiar to both traditions. The secret of this prayer is that though it is addressed to God under a hundred or a thousand different names, it is ultimately addressed to the One, who is beyond all names.

The book is divided into three parts. The first is a very thorough study of the different methods of using the divine name, whether by visualization, with a *mala*, a pen, with music or attention to the breath. The second part is on the theory of *nama japa*, both in the Hindu and Christian traditions. The practice has long been familiar among Hindus, but among Christians there is a growing interest in the prayer of Jesus, which originated in the Orthodox Church but now has spread all over the western world. This western interest was stimulated through the beautiful little book *The Way of the Pilgrim* which describes how a Russian peasant in the last century had his life transformed by the constant repetition of the Jesus Prayer; the prayer was taught to him by a *Staretz*, a spiritual elder in a Russian monastery. It is a reminder of the fact that Russia was once known as Holy Russia and was a land of monks and pilgrims such as India is today.

The last part of the book broadens the perspective and gives examples of the prayer of the name from Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, Buddhist, Jewish and Christian sources. It is a reminder of the bond which unites all religions which, under such a diversity of names and forms, pay honour and worship to the one reality and find their joy and peace in it. Perhaps it is worth remarking that nowhere

does one find such devotion to the name — not under any particular form, but just as the name — as among the Sikhs. At a time when Hindus and Sikhs are so divided and so many conflicts exist among other religions, this book may open our eyes to the deep unity in diversity which underlies all religions.

— Bede Griffiths

MODERN INDIAN THOUGHT, By D.R. Bali. Pub. Sterling Publishers, L-10, Green Park Extension, New Delhi 16. Pp. 262. Price: Rs. 100/-.

Here is an excellent survey of the contributions of leading Indian figures from Ram Mohan Roy to Jayaprakash Narayan to the renaissance of the country. The discussion covers a wide range: Ram Mohan Roy, Dayanand Saraswati, Vivekananda, Ram Tirtha, Annie Besant, Tagore, Tilak, Gokhale, Lajpatrai, Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo, leading Muslim personalities like Syed Ahmed Khan and Maulana Azad, M.N. Roy, Jawaharlal and Jayaprakash Narayan. The author takes a positive, objective view of the work of each of these men of consequence and emphasises their humanism which is in keeping with the traditional values of the Indian spirit.

In the course of his narration Dr Bali mentions certain little-known incidents, for example, "Ram Tirth (Swami) refused to travel with Lord Curzon who was then the Viceroy of India in the same ship from Port Said, saying, 'Two kings cannot travel in the same boat'". The monk lived as a sovereign in the empire of the Self.

There will be general agreement on the author's observations on the wrong judgement of Jayaprakash Narayan in parting from the Congress and as a result losing the opportunity to influence the course of events from a vantage point in the Government: "By leaving the Congress they not only left the field free for the vested interests but also isolated themselves from the people." (p. 243).

The book reads well as a history of the last hundred years and assesses the contributions of the main personalities in the social, cultural, religious and political fields.

VEDANTA ESTABLISHED IN ITS OWN LIGHT. By Sri Malayalaswamulavaru. Pub. Sri Vyasaashramam, Sri Vyasashram P.O., Chittoor Dt., 517621, A.P. Pp. 288. Price: Rs. 15/-.

Maharshi Sadguru Sri Malayalaswamy (1885-1962) was a well-known spiritual figure in Andhra Pradesh and the Vyasasramam founded by him has been a source of solace and inspiration to many. The present publication is an English translation of the first three chapters of his popular Telugu treatise *Sushka Vedanta Tamo Bhaskaram*. The text indicates that the Swamiji has no patience with those who talk philosophy nor does he bear lightly those who in the name of *advaita vedanta* advocate abandoning all social and religious inhibitions.

In these conversations with his disciples he touches upon several topics of interest to *sadhakas* and takes pains to remove the slightest doubt that may lurk in the mind of a seeker. A few examples will illustrate his style. There are, he says, three types of aspirants. The highest are like soft and purified cotton which catches fire instantaneously, burning away all impurities. The second type are like dry wood which needs a little effort before fire can inflame it. The third type are like green wood which must be first dried in the sun. For aspirants in this category a good deal of preparation is needed. Speaking of food Swamiji points out that though it is true that there is life in plants, still they are not evolved as much as animals are and one incurs no sin in using them as food. He emphasises that women have full rights to practise spiritual disciplines and that drugs such as ganja have a deleterious effect on the mind and nerves and should be discouraged. The chapter on *Bhakti* is full of inspiring quotations from *Bhagavata* and *Narada Sutras*. Falling from yoga, he says, is due to six causes: immoderate food, too much worldly activity, too much talking, waste of time in routine matters, company of worldly men and contemplating worldly pleasures. (*Hathayoga Pradipika*).

Though pitched in extremes the advice is all well meant.

PASSAGE TO DIVINITY, THE EARLY LIFE OF SWAMI RAMDAS. Pub. Anandashram, Anandashram P.O., Dt. Cannanore, Kerala. Pp. 137. Price: Rs. 9/-.

Swami Ramdas always exuded love and joy but his early life was anything but happy. For over thirty years he struggled against the pulls of society and the pressures of relatives. The author of this little book gives an exhaustive account of the early life of the saint, beginning with his ancestry. Despite trials of all kinds, Ramdas never lost his sense of humour. It appears that when he was four years old a famous astrologer predicted to his grandparents that the boy would attain a very high position in life and would even become a Deputy Collector! His grandfather asked 'Vittu' (Ramdas) what he would give to his grandparents when he became that high dignitary. The reply sent the house into roars of laughter. He promised grandpa a pair of earrings and grandpa a pair of anklets with silver bells!

It is a long journey: student, artist, actor, technician, itinerant *sannyasin* and finally ambassador of Ram with a perpetual smile on his face. Well he could exclaim:

"My life burns like a flame  
At the shrine of my Lord.  
My Lord I found within,  
My heart His temple of light."

— M.P. PANDIT

THE HOLY ADVENT, A SHORT PROFILE OF THE SAGE OF KANCHI. By R. Sankaranarayanan. Pub. Bhavani

Book Centre, West Mambalam, Madras 33. Pp. 115. Price: Rs. 9/-.

It is a remarkable feature of Hindu society that it has been reconciling the imperatives of modern progress (with their stress on efficiency and rationality) with a continuing tradition which has maintained the identity of Indian culture for thousands of years. Unable to understand this unique feature, many western minds, including Koestler, one of the admirers of the sage of Kanchi, bemoan that Indian culture is inhibitive of democratic institutions. For, as he observes:

"India can only become a working democracy in the western sense after a revolution which strikes at the very roots of Hindu society and Hindu traditions." (*The Lotus and the Robot*)

In times such as the present, truly disjointed, when life is no longer held sacred and values deflated, India is fortunate to have in her midst sages and saints like the one whose profile Sankaranarayanan has given us in this excellent book. Such sages have ever urged us to aspire for ultimate values, which are rooted in the ideals based on *Dharma*, and which are independent of contemporary political and social values; it is these eternal values which should regulate the conduct not only of individuals but of nations as well.

The author's account of Chandrasekharendra Saraswathy, the 68th *acharya* of Kanchi, from his birth in 1894 in Villupuram in an orthodox family of erudite scholars up to the present day, reveals full well that he is a true democrat; for he was always reaching out to the people, speaking to them on every possible occasion. From 1919 he was travelling on foot all over India for twenty years, putting his message across to the simple people of the land by using parables and uncomplicated allusions. This was a renaissance period when major political and social upheavals were shaking the land. The *acharya's* moral involvement with the non-cooperation movement of Gandhi and his association with South Indian leaders like Rajaji and Satyamurthy were welcome features, minimising to some extent the attacks against Hindu orthodoxy which were launched by the Self Respect movement and its diverse allotropic modifications such as the Justice Party, the D.K. and the D.M.K.

This biography detailing the activities of the *acharya* during his long life of ninety years will, as the late Dr Mahadevan observes in the introduction, "inspire increasing numbers of devotees and make them follow the Path to the Divine."

— ARGUS

THE MARRIAGE OF EAST AND WEST. By Bede Griffiths. Pub. Fount Paperbacks, William Collins and Co., London Pp. 224. Price: £ 2.50.

The central theme of this book is the great value to be achieved in a correct, harmonious blending of Eastern

and Western traditions. Western man, with his strong concrete mind has much to re-learn from his Eastern brothers, one of the most important things being the value of intuition. He must realize that the over-emphasis and use of the logical reasoning mind has thrown his inner being into disharmony. It is only through the cultivation of the intuitive part of his being that man can achieve a balance in his own personality and, in the greater extrapolation of this idea, preserve the world from the disastrous results of large-scale imbalance. Moreover, it is a path by which he may even gain a foretaste of his bliss of ultimate reality.

Father Griffiths approaches this theme through a knowledgeable study of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* and makes a fine analysis of the doctrine of non-duality.

In his subtle interpretation of the Biblical myths of Paradise Lost, Exodus, the Promised Land, the Messiah and the New Jerusalem, Father Griffiths stresses that these constitute a universal message, not one confined to the Jewish people. In comparing Hindu and Christian revelation the author points out that whereas Christian revelation is acting in time and history, Hindu revelation is timeless — a cosmic myth. In his conception, the final meeting point can be in the mystical experience which underlines both the Hindu and Christian revelations.

The author goes on to discuss the Cosmic Church which has been present in humanity from the beginning of history. Every genuine religion bears witness to the holy spirit and has something to contribute to the Universal Church. The institutional Christian Church, with its roots in the Graeco-Roman and Judaic traditions, has to open itself to other cultures, and even to other revelations, in order to appreciate fully the message of Christ.

This meeting of all religions can be brought about when it is understood that all rites and ceremonies are symbols of the Divine Reality. The task of the individual is to grasp the meaning which lies behind them.

— H.C.

SPARKS OF LIGHT, COUNSELING IN THE HASIDIC TRADITION By Zalman M. Schachter and Edward Hoffman. Pub. Shambhala Publications, 1920, 13th Street, Boulder Colorado, 80302, USA. Pp. 189. Price: \$9. 95.

In the late 18th century there was a sudden and unexpected flowering of mysticism among the Jews of Eastern Europe. The movement, founded by Baal Shem Tov, came to be known as Hasidism (coming from the word *hasid* meaning pious) and within half a century it came to be accepted and practised by over the half the Jews of Eastern Europe. Its emphasis was on simplicity, joy and love of God and it contrasted sharply with the previous Jewish emphasis on scriptural learning.

As the movement progressed it began to develop a striking similarity to several aspects of Hinduism:-

1) There was an implicit belief in *karma* and rebirth. The Hasids believed that the soul temporarily went to a heavenly world after death before returning to earth in a new body. They believed that rebirth was necessary to rectify past mistakes and to experience the consequences of previous acts.

2) The social structure of the Hasids resembled the four *asramas* of orthodox Hinduism: a period of celibate study was followed by marriage and, when all the family commitments had been fulfilled, the Hasid was expected to devote himself more or less full-time to spiritual practice.

3) The Hasidic tradition emphasised that a Guru (called a *rebbe* in Hasidism) was essential for spiritual progress. In all communities the *rebbe* was held in high esteem as a preacher, healer, community leader and spiritual guide.

The book is primarily concerned with the relationship between the *rebbe* and his disciples. All Hasids met their *rebbe* at regular intervals in a formal interview known as a *yehidut*. Often these were little more than family counselling sessions but when spiritually-minded aspirants attended there would be a true *Guru-sishya* encounter. On such occasions the *rebbe* would ascertain the progress that the disciple was making, offer both temporal and spiritual advice and recommend meditation techniques such as tracing thoughts back to their origin in consciousness.

Although the emphasis is on the type of advice that the *rebbe*s gave to their followers, there are also good accounts of the historical background of the Hasidic movement, the various schools of Hasidism and the ways in which *rebbe*s were trained and selected. Overall, a very useful and well-researched text.

— D.C.

**TRANSCENDENCE AND TRANSFORMATION** Writings from the California Institute of Integral Studies. Edited by Vern Haddick. University Press of America, Boston, 4720 Boston Way Lanham MD 20706 USA. Price not indicated. Pp.132

"Throughout the ages, in many different settings, a few individuals have experienced heightened, more-centred states of consciousness than those the average person has in typical waking life". This sentence, picked out from one of the articles, conveys admirably the tone of the Studies brought out by the California Institute. One is reminded of such exceptional persons as Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, who have reported a state of awareness in which the usual boundaries have collapsed or become transparent, so that they are immersed in infinity, indefinability and transcendence of all limitations. However, this experience of the sages and saints of our land is combined with a conviction that essential Being is full—in terms of the Upanishadic verse:

"Purnamadah purnamidam".

Further, this personal transformation, which is at once process and goal, is supremely real, being devoid of the

#### D. Is God personal?

**M. Yes. He is always the first person, the I, ever standing before you, God appears to have receded to the background. If you give up all else and seek Him alone, He alone will remain as the I, the Self.**

— Maharshi's Gospel

barriers encountered in the ordinary, egocentric human state.

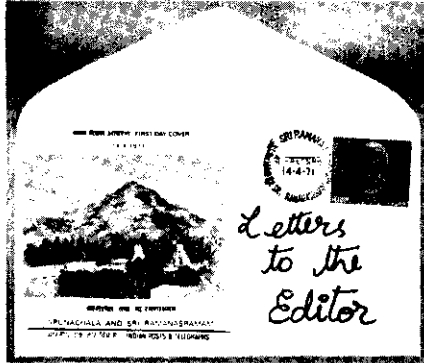
The editor, quoting from Marilyn Ferguson's "The Aquarian Conspiracy", refers to such individuals as Swedenborg, Huxley, Blake and other explorers of the inner realm who have verified results in a change in the shape of the world itself through a cleansing of the windows of perception. But such a transformation, shattering all particular identifications, can, at times, in the words of Paul Herman (another contributor to the Studies) "become very disruptive of one's outer life, leading to a tendency to withdraw from social interactions, and to drop out of the world, even to embrace physical or emotional death". Not so are our Rishis who, experiencing Infinite Consciousness, have integrated that state with waking consciousness. Such are the *liberated* or enlightened *Sthita-ranas*, who stand like watch-towers ever ready to lead others toward similar experiences.

Only rarely is done one come across such an excellent collection of essays where the issue of transformation and transcendence is discussed in a variety of perspectives. The four poems on transcendence and transformation add to the value of this collection. Haridas Chaudri and John Welwood, have given a larger meaning to the Subject by concluding that

"beyond both the linear, surface communication and the holistic body/mind communication are even subtler levels of communication shared by all beings, which is related to the timeless glory of being".

Mention must also be made of Michael Flanagan's article on "Putrefactio", which discusses the significance of the alchemical imagination, pointing to both the transmutation of minerals in the furnace and the transmutation of the psyche of man, which have the parallel aims of "making gold" and ennobling the alchemist's "base nature" of lead. There is no doubt that the California Institute of Integral Studies forms a key link in the integration of Eastern and Western thought, contributing so much transformative energy to individual and collective lives during recent years. — ARGUS





### TRUE SPIRITUALITY

I would like to ask you a few questions:

(1) What is true spirituality?

(2) I have tried for years and years to be 'simply aware'. Sometimes this state can be maintained. But at times there seems to be a 'fight' inside between the ego and Self. As you say, true *vairagya* is a state of thoughtlessness. This conflict lasts a day or two, then dies down. Physically I suffer too. At such times I feel, what is the purpose of life? Are such conflicts normal? Do they happen to all human beings?

(3) Breath-control (whenever I can practise it) and tracing the breath lead to peace but also sleep. Is breath-tracing making me sleep? Of course this sleep is very deep and refreshing. What should I do about this?

— Dr. (Mrs.) B. Shobha D. Baliga, Bangalore

What is true spirituality? This 'simple' question may need a whole book for an answer, the core of it would be: true spirituality is following your **dharm**a quietly and conscientiously day by day, without worrying much whether you like it or not. That sounds drab and boresome? It does, for your ego. But it is just the purpose (and the result) of living our **dharm**a, to overcome the ego! Your exercises in breath-control help to calm the mind. But if you look for some **sadhana** which will transform your life or at least its circumstances; which will change as if by some magic power your ego-troubled life into permanent ego-free happiness, it is but a wishful illusion. The one formula to help you is: accept cheerfully what comes, let go what will go. Day by day. Every morning anew. The magic wand which opens the gate into the invisible world of real happiness is not yogic will power, but quiet patience. Patience, daily and hourly

It is a blessed secret this way of living by the day. Anyone can carry his burden, however heavy, until nightfall. Anyone can do his work, however hard, for a day. Anyone can live sweetly, patiently, lovingly and purely until the sun goes down. And this is all life ever really means to us — just one day and then another. Sufficient unto the day is the burden thereof.

This is only an indirect answer to your questions, but believe me, it works like a miracle. Try it. Yogic **sadhanas** are not for a householder. A yogic **sadhana** demands much time and sustained concentration. How will you manage it? You mention **vairagya**, but **vairagya** has many faces. Your **vairagya** should be to renounce all and everything which is not your **dharm**a as a faithful wife, a loving mother and a compassionate physician for your patients. The special Ramana Path, egoless concern for and service of your little circle, will purify and prepare the mind and transform life, inner and outer.

Take the whole bunch of your many-sided trouble, make a parcel of it and put it at the Feet of Bhagavan — and leave it there! Don't take it back again. And if you can find a quiet half an hour, then use it regularly to sit quietly, relaxed and repeat **this** act of **vairagya**, daily. If you can keep this up as your sincere **sadhana** you will be pursuing true spirituality.

\*\*\*\*\*

### PRECIOUS LIFETIMES

Has the Maharshi ever revealed some of his previous lifetimes. I cannot recall reading any mention of these other than the rather abstract inferences such as Dakshinamurti or some appearances 'seen' by unlightened on-lookers. As a Buddhist meditator I accept that knowledge of other lifetimes is not important and that neither the Maharshi's teaching nor Buddhism supports the concept of a permanent individual soul, but it has nevertheless seemed to me odd that Sri Ramana did not refer to his own past experiences when giving guidance where such a reference might have helped. If there were some rare occasions when he did so, I would be interested to know about them and so would, doubtless, your other readers.

— L.H. Ewels, Bury St. Edmunds, U.K.

The Maharshi never mentioned previous lifetimes. He kept on reminding us that He was not this body of 6 feet. References to past incarnations do not help in **sadhana**. On the relative plane or as a poetic fancy Sri Ramana spoke of incarnation. He once said Major Chadwick (a staunch devotee) was a Hindu in a previous incarnation with a desire to be a Westerner; hence his present form. The Major certainly looked the part!

\*\*\*\*\*

### TRUE RENUNCIATION

I am a Canadian citizen, aged 21, living in Winnipeg, Manitoba. My intention is to move to India, and live there permanently. I intend to become a permanent resident in an Ashram or Math where the philosophy of the Vedanta is followed. This letter is an enquiry into becoming a permanent member of your Ashram.

— Paul M. Sawh, Winnipeg, Canada

*Sri Ramanasramam did not in the Maharshi's lifetime and now have permanent inmates. It was the teaching of the Master that the life of the householder and normal citizen is as conducive to spiritual growth as the life of sannyasa.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### BREATH-CONTROL

My meditation practice for the last few years has been counting the rise and fall of the abdomen. I had previously read that watching the breath is a practice only for beginners to gain concentration of the mind. Is this so? Would it be better now to work with a **mantra**, or can one attain liberation through watching the breath, without doing any other practice such as **mantra** or self-enquiry?

— Howard Lawman, Workshop, U.K.

*Regulating and watching the breath only help to calm the mind. It is a means to still the wandering mind. This can be done for five minutes at the beginning of the period of meditation by quietly observing the coming and going of the breath at the nostrils, leaving it quite naturally without trying to influence its flow and that is all. Whether one follows the Path of self-enquiry — Who am I? — or surrender to God or the Guru, the goal is to remove the ego-self, whereas yogic **sadhanas (pranayama, mantra yoga)** are the work of the ego and strengthen it.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### GUIDANCE FROM WITHIN

The Sat guru as Arunachala Himself has come in human form to lead every one. The question I have for the Sat Guru is to know the systematic activities to be done and *Upadesa Saram* to be explained, to attain the ultimate aim of human life.

— V. Mahalingam, Madras

*Upadesa Saram is the only writing where Bhagavan has given a comprehensive and systematic account of spiritual practice. Each aspirant has to use it to work on his individual gifts, needs and opportunities. These are different in each case. Disinterested action, service of all beings, worship of God within, mind and breath-control, self-enquiry, self-surrender — all are there. You have to find and work out your own personal way to the goal of ego-less living. And wherever one feels lost, just there the Sat Guru will take over and guide the sincere aspirant, either by some inner light or by some call of circumstance.*

### APPRECIATIONS

(1)

Let me offer you my most profound felicitations and appreciations over your serialised articles in the Bangalore magazine: *RAMANA, Purushothama Ramana* and *The Mountain Path* series 'Moments Remembered'. They are

superb and very attractive and arrest the heart in ecstatic grip. I want to translate the *Purushothama Ramana* series and arrange their publication in Delhi journals. I seek your kind permission.

— Dharm Paul, New Delhi

Go ahead.

(2)

On behalf of Justice Shri Jaswant Singh, Chairman of the Commission appointed by the Government of India to consider the question of having permanent Benches of High Court and my own behalf, I take the earliest opportunity of conveying to you our grateful thanks and appreciation for unstinted cooperation, prompt response and warm courtesy extended to us during our stay in your Ashram on 27th November, 1984. The Chairman and I are particularly grateful to your goodself for making our stay at Tiruvannamalai comfortable. The pleasant memories of the visit and abundant hospitality gratefully received at your Ashram will linger in our hearts for several years.

— Prem Kumar, Secretary,  
Jaswant Singh Commission, New Delhi

(3)

The October '84 issue is very interesting. Bhagavan's rendering of Arunachala as *a-runa-achala* in the 4th verse of *Arunachala Mahatmyam* is ever so significant. It enriches further the other associations with *aruna-achala*.

— Dr. V.A. Devasenapathi, Madras.

\*\*\*\*\*

### A BEAUTIFUL PERSON!

I received my *Mountain Path* only yesterday and I was shocked and stunned to learn about respected Amma's (Smt. Nagalakshmi Ammal) passing away. I didn't believe the words that I read!

At the first shot I was just pleased to see the photo of Amma, Mama with Bhagavan, thinking that it would be Amma telling her experiences etc., but it wasn't. I convey my deepest heartfelt sympathies to you, Mama brothers and sisters. It really is a big loss to the Ashram, as well. She will be missed by so many devotees including me — we won't be able to see that charming, loving, serene, calm face again around the Ashram. Amma is really fortunate, she had the Name of Ramana on her lips, her family beside her, chanting the 'Arunachala Siva' and she left the body in full consciousness. Not many can be so lucky.

One day when I had returned from *pradakshina* in the morning at about 10.30, I met her in front of the Samadhi Hall. She asked me if I was okay, and I informed her I had been round the Hill. The next thing she asked me was if I was hungry and that if she could get me some *iddlis* (she thought I must have left without

breakfast). How much like a mother! Her compassion and consideration, I will never forget this. I will always cherish her sweet memory. As I write this I visualise her making those wonderful patterns (*kolams*) with white powder in and around the Ashram — specially during the Jayanthi celebrations, with such devotion. She always struck me as a simple, pure person at heart. Bhagavan loves such people!

— Champa Patel, London, U.K.

This is to congratulate you for publishing an interesting letter from Professor K. Swaminathan to Shree Arthur Osborne. Very few people are aware that there was an inner relationship between Mahatma Gandhi, Maharshi Ramana and Brahmashri Vinoba. Practically every year some one like Dr. Rajendra Prasad or Shree Jamnalal Bajaj used to visit Sri Ramanasramam to seek Maharshi's spiritual support for the freedom movement. Gandhiji's private secretary, Shree Mahadev Desai, stayed at Ramanasramam for several weeks.

I always keenly read your serious "Moments Remembered". The greatness of the Sage really shines in

such moments. A really great personality never makes you feel that he is a great one in the common behaviour of life.

— Ramnandan Mishra, Dharbanga, Bihar

I came across an article in "Theosophist" where the learned author has used a term "direct disciples" (of Sri Ramana Maharshi). Lest the readers should be misled, kindly permit me to reproduce a conversation between a visitor and Sri Bhagavan:

Q: Have you disciples?

M: X X X X X

The person may call himself my disciple or devotee. I do not consider anyone to be my disciple. I have never sought upadesh from anyone nor do I give ceremonial upadesh. If the people call themselves my disciples, I do not approve or disapprove. In my view all are alike. They consider themselves fit for being called disciples. What can I say to them? I do not call myself a disciple or a Guru".

— R. Venkataraman, Madras

### AN APPEAL "MOUNTAIN PATH FUND"

With hesitation we bring to the notice of our readers an *urgent need* of ours.

For the past few years *The Mountain Path* is working at a loss which is steadily increasing due to the high cost of paper, printing charges and heavy postal charges. We are keen that the excellent quality maintained by us should continue.

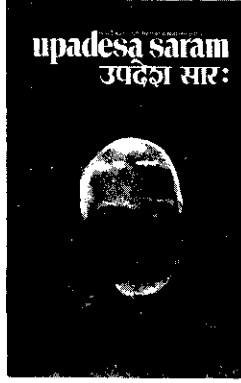
We are, therefore, announcing "The Mountain Path Capital Fund". Please contribute liberally to it. Donations to this Fund will be earmarked and kept in Fixed Deposit with Banks so that interest from it would go to augment our funds. Even though there is no obligation on the part of any life-member to subscribe any more amount, in view of the altered circumstances, we would like to request them also to kindly remit any additional amount which they may desire to meet the situation.

Subscribers and readers who are in business or having business connections may please secure at least one advertisement each per year. The cost of such advertisement is only Rs.500/- per page. We are confident that your ready help in a big way would be available.

Sri Ramanasramam,  
Tiruvannamalai-606 603.  
October 1, 1983.

V. Ganesan,  
Managing Editor,  
THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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Sri K. Sivaraj delivering the welcome address. Seated (from left): Sri Shambhu Maharaj, Swami Manuvarayaji, Swami Vyomanandji, Mayor of Ahmedabad Sri Jethalal Parmar, Home and Education Minister Sri Prabhodbhai Raval, Minister of State Smt. Kokilaben Vyas, Sri T.N. Venkataraman and Sri Hirajal Bhagwati.

## RAMANA TEMPLE AT AHMEDABAD A GRAND FOUNDATION-LAYING CEREMONY

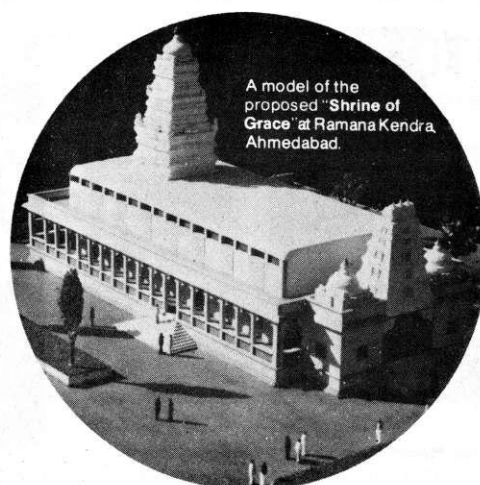
*Through the tireless services of Sri K. Sivaraj, a vast land at Ahmedabad was acquired, 'Ramana Bhoomi' is born! On it, a Ramana Shrine is coming up there!*

Though the heart of the devotee is the real 'Ramana Shrine', soon the devotees of Ahmedabad will rejoice in having a 'Ramana Temple' erected at their 'Ramana Bhoomi'. Ramana is enshrined in Gujarat!

November 28 is, and will ever remain as, an important day in the annals of Ahmedabad. It is on that day the foundation stone for the 'Ramana Temple' was laid, to the accompaniment of Vedic chantings and traditional rituals.

Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, specially went to participate in the function and his presence added fragrance to the three-day celebrations. Other luminaries who graced the occasion were Swami Vyomanandaji, President, Ramakrishna Mission, Rajkot, Swami Manuvarayaji, President, Yoga Sadan Ashram, Shambhu Maharaj, Pramukh Swamiji, Head of the Akshay Purshottam Trust of Swaminarayan Mandir.

Renowned purohits and pundits in Gujarat, like Sri Narhari Shastri of Sidhpur, were invited for performing the Vedic rites for three days beginning on November 26.





Home and Education Minister **Prabhodbhai Raval** laying the foundation stone. Next to him are **Sri K. Sivaraj**, **Sri Shambhu Maharaj** and Minister of State for Health **Mrs. Kokilaben Vyas**.

Maha Gayatri Yagna, Durga Sapta Sati, Rudhrabhisheka and other rites were religiously observed. On the 28th, Bhoomi Puja was performed with kalasa puja etc.

**Shri Prabhodbhai Raval**, Minister for Home and Education, Government of Gujarat, who laid the foundation stone, extolled the practicability of Sri Bhagavan's unique teachings, stressing the point that it could be put into practice even while engaged in day-to-day activities. He applauded that the proposed Ramana Shrine would not be merely a temple but would serve many purposes of public interest. He also exhorted the people to take full advantage of the activities of the Ramana Kendra.

**Smt. Kokilaben Vyas**, Minister of State for Health, released the Souvenir.

Earlier, welcoming the distinguished guests and invitees, **Sri K. Sivaraj**, President of Ahmedabad Ramana Kendra, outlined the activities of the Kendra and said that to enshrine Ramana in Gujarat it proposed to build a huge

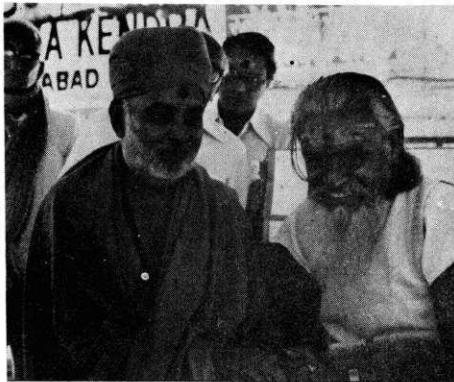


**Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, **Sri K. Sivaraj** and **Smt. Vimala Sivaraj** performing gayatri Mahayagna Puja.

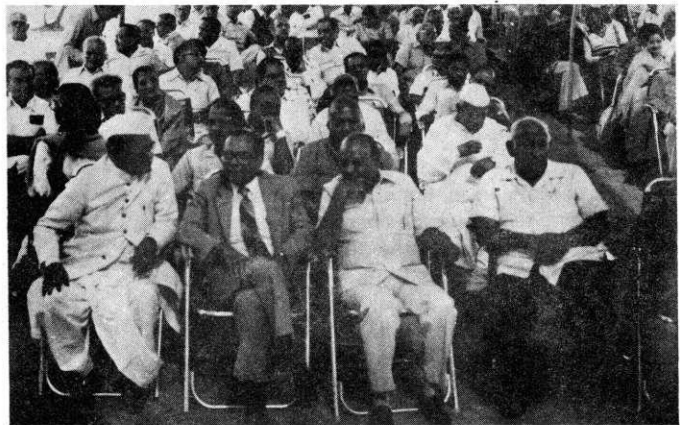
and beautiful shrine dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. A library and a *swadhyaya* hall for the public to imbibe the teachings of Bhagavan and a dispensary were also proposed to be constructed.

Swami Vyomanandaji elaborated the essence of the teachings of Bhagavan by bringing out the significance contained in the four words used by Him — *deham* (body), *naham* (I am not), *koham* (who am I?), *soham* (I AM). **Shri Shambhu Maharaj** praised the organisers for proposing to build such a beautiful shrine for such an exalted sage. Mayor, **Shri Jethalal Parmar** spoke at length about the greatness of Bhagavan and commended the Kendra for building the shrine, for, he stressed that it would be beneficial not only to those who lived in Ahmedabad but to the entire people of Gujarat.

More than five hundred people attended the function. **Shri Hiralal Bhagwati**, **Shri Rohitbhai C. Metha** of Rohit Mills, **Shri Ramnikhbhai Ambani** of 'Vimal', **Shri Navnitbhai**



His Holiness **Pramukh Swami** with **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, **Sri K.M. Parikh**, Vice-President of the Kendra is at far left.



View of the Gathering. Front Row (from left): **Sri Hiralal Bhagwati**, **Sri Rohit Metha**, **Sri Ramnikhbhai Ambani** and **Sri Chinubhai**.

**Gordhandas** and **Shri Vipinbhai Shantilal** were among the distinguished invitees.

**Shri K.M. Parikh**, Vice President of the Kendra, appealed to the people to contribute liberally, **Shri N.S. Sundaram**, Secretary proposed a vote of thanks.

#### RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Children's Day was celebrated on September 30, when gifts of books and study materials were presented to a number of deserving poor school children. **Shri M. Sivaramakrishnan**, Principal, DTEA Senior Secondary School, Mandir Marg, gave away the awards and blessed the children.

\*\*\*\*\*

On December 6, *Karthigai Deepam* festival was celebrated with great enthusiasm. The entire Kendra premises were gaily illuminated by innumerable lamps and candles and the devotees went round the shrine singing "*Arunachala Siva*" in chorus, as if they were doing *Giri-pradakshina*. The function came to a close with the distribution of *prasad*.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Shri Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha** of Narayanasrama Tapovanam, Trichur, gave five discourses from 18 to 22nd October, on *Kenopanishad*. Five discourses on *Vedanta Vakya Vichara* were given from 13th to 17th November by **Shri Swami Dayananda**. On November 21, Revered **Chote Ma** of Arpana Trust, Madhuban, Karnal, conducted a *bhajan* followed by a discourse in Hindi on Sri Ramana's teachings. All the functions were largely attended.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Shri V. Ganesan**, our *Managing Editor*, gave in September two interesting talks — in the first he elucidated the unique teaching of *Atma Vichara* of Sri Bhagavan and in the second came out with absorbing anecdotes that took place in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. At the weekly *satsangs* **Sri A.R. Natarajan**, **Sri K.C. Subbiah**, **Sri M.S. Nagarajan**, **Professor Swaminathan** and **Sri M.S. Ramaswami** gave brief talks after the usual *puja parayana* and before devotional music.

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Delhi Tiruppugazh Anbargal conducted a full-scale *Tiruppugazh Bhajan* on Vijaya Dasami, October 4

#### SRI RAMANA JNANA KENDRA MYSORE

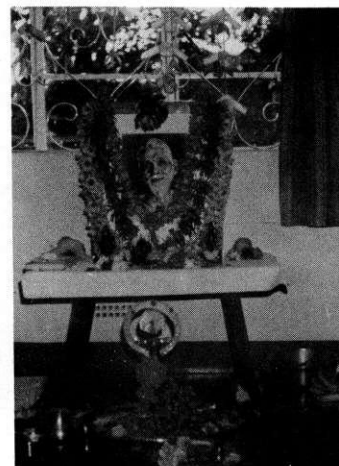
The Honorary Secretary of 'Sri Ramana Jnana Kendra' Mysore, gives us the happy news that the building of a *Ramana Shrine* at Mysore is coming up and progressing well, thanks to the cooperation of the devotees. In our issue of July '82, p. 223, we published a drawing of the proposed Ramana Shrine. We appeal to devotees, particularly in Karnataka, to help complete this laudable project. Please contact:

Sri R.S. Govindappa Setty  
Honorary Secretary,  
SRI RAMANA JNANA KENDRA  
K.M. Puram,  
Mysore 570 004.

### ARUNA VIJAYA DAY AT MAURITIUS



AT MAURITIUS: On 16th Sept. the *Aruna Vijaya Day* was celebrated at **Smt. Savitri Cuttaree's** house. "Many more could sing *Arunachala Siva* as the interest has grown recently through listening to Sri Bhavan's life and teachings."





Sri Janaki Matha was one of the most important devotees of Sri Bhagavan. She proved to be the channel for so many people to come to the Ramana-fold. On December 18, a biography of the Matha in Tamil, entitled "Sri Janaki Matha Saritham" written by Smt. Padma Seethapathi, was released at the Ashram. Copies were placed on the sacred Samadhi Shrine of Sri Bhagavan. Special Pujas, prayers and chantings were offered to Sri Bhagavan before the book was solemnly released. (Copies can be had from Sri Janaki Nilayam, 15, Ganapati Nagar, Tanjore-612 001). Devotees from Sri Janaki Nilayam were at the Ashram for four days immersing themselves in Ramana-singing and Ramana-meditation!

#### ARUNACHALA ASHRAMA — NOVA SCOTIA, CANADA

About 150 people gathered in Arunachala Ashramta, Nova Scotia Canada on Sunday September 2, to celebrate the 88th anniversary of Sri Bhagavan's arrival at Arunachala in 1896. The programme began with *Veda parayana* at 4.30 a.m. followed by *Sri Lalitha Sa'asranam Stotram*, and silence. *Bhajan* continued with sincere fervour all morning till the function began at 11.00 a.m. Ganesh *puja* was solemnly conducted by Dr. V. Sastry of Halifax. Dennis Hartel welcomed the gathering and then led the devotees in the recitation of *Upadesha Saram*. Many *bhajans* continued till 1.00 p.m. interrupted only by a brief talk by Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawat and Mrs. Nijhawan. Sri Bhagawat in an emotionally charged talk

spoke of the necessity of prayer and practice and of Sri Bhagavan's glorious life.

After the function all the devotees gathered on the spacious Mandiram lawn, and in the pleasant warmth of the afternoon sun all sat on blanket and were served *prasad* — a full meal.

Special offering of gratitude is given to the family of Antoun Majaess who arrived at the Ashram from the war-torn country of Lebanon on July 4th. The whole family has become devoted to Sri Bhagavan and His Ashrama and their presence will be an ever-increasing asset. Our sincere gratitude also goes to Dr. Anil Sharma who has been coming regularly to the Ashram and has been a shining inspiration to all.



Prasad being served after the function.



Devotees in Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram.



## KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL "LIGHT OF LIGHTS"

"Getting rid of the 'I-am-the-body' idea and merging the mind into the heart to realise the Self as non-dual Being and the Light of all is the real significance of *darshan* of the beacon of light on Arunachala, the centre of the universe." — Sri Bhagavan.

*Karthikai Deepam* is the renowned festival when the Holy Beacon is lit on Arunachala. This year it was celebrated on December 6. Thousands throng to the Arunachaleswara temple for the ten day festivities which culminates with the lighting of a huge cauldron of ghee on the summit of the Holy Hill. On Deepam\* day the whole *pradakshina* road is full to overflowing with pilgrims; it indeed looks like a garland strung at the feet of Arunachala.

The presence of Sri Bhagavan is heightened on such

occasions as we feel His Grace enveloping the vast amount of pilgrims who come to pay homage to Him. At dusk the ashramites sit before Bhagavan's photo and with Veda Parayana filling the surcharged air all gaze expectantly at the peak of Arunachala. As a few stars and the near full moon become visible and with the firing of crackers at the temple the first sparks of the Deepam are seen. Soon the full Deepam glows as the 'Light of all' to remind us of the significance of Arunachala — the uninterrupted light in the Heart. Simultaneously the *mantra* 'Na Karmana' is recited as the Deepam in front of Bhagavan's photo is lit. The three-fold light of — Bhagavan's photo, the  *jyoti* in front of His photo and the orange glowing Deepam on the summit sends a thrill through the entire gathering of devotees as the chanting of hymns of Arunachala begins.

Ramana Sat Sang meeting at Bombay.

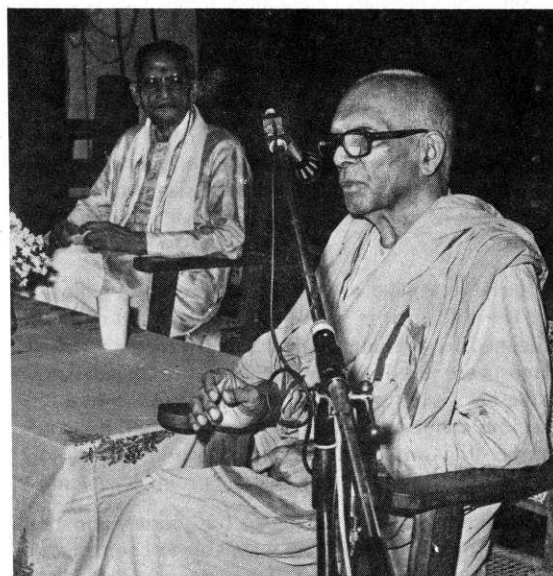


RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS

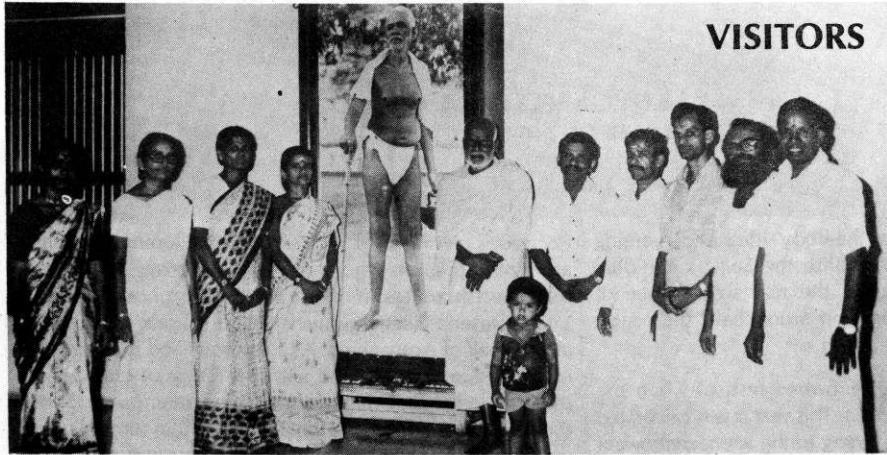
Under the auspices of the Ramana Kendra, Madras, **Sri Swami Ranganathananda** spoke on the message of *Vivekachudamani* on July 31, '84 at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan auditorium. In a brilliant and lucid talk of about 75 minutes the Swamiji showed how the *Vivekachudamani* gives the very quintessence of spiritual knowledge and that all the troubles and ills of life arise from the failure to discriminate between the *nitya* and the *anitya* — the eternal and the ephemeral. Mistaking the non-*atman* for the *atman*, one wastes this precious life in pursuit of *vishayas* which are non-*atman*. Thus, discrimination between *atman* and *anatman* is the essential pre-

requisite for the entire spiritual process leading to *atma sakshatkara* (Self Realisation).

\* \* \* \* \*



Sri K.K. Nambiar and Swami Ranganathananda



Standing left to right:  
**Mrs. Meena Madhavanunni, Mrs P. Indira, Miss P. Komalam, Miss A. Sulochana, Srimad Kunju Swamikal, Master Mukundan, Mr. Pazhaniappen, A. Swaminathan, Raghupathy Rao, K. Mahavanunni.**

Through his holy company and writings and talks our revered teacher, Sri Swami Sureshanandaji Maharaj had already initiated us into the teachings of Bhagavan. Though we were quite familiar through pictures and picturesque descriptions (by Swamiji) with Sri Bhagavan, the Holy Hill and Sri Ramanasramam, it was a rare experience of inexpressible ecstasy and peace that our visit to Sri Ramanasramam during the first week of Sept. presented to us. Indeed it is a mark of Bhagavan's Grace that enabled us to realise our long-cherished desire to sit in front of Bhagavan's Holy Samadhi Shrine.

Since the Centenary Celebrations some of the devotees of our Vijnana Ramaneeya Ashram were fortunate to visit this sacred Ashram of Bhagavan. But now it was a matter of great joy that other devotees too with their families could visit the Ashram. While sitting in front of the Old Hall we recollected the words of our Swamiji and his experience on his first visit to Bhagavan. Swamiji was absorbed in a state of effortless *samadhi* by the mere look of Bhagavan; he was in that state for three hours!

We were thrilled to visit the various spots hallowed by the foot-prints of Bhagavan and were overwhelmed by the unique peace permeating the whole atmosphere. Sri Kunju Swami, whom we already know as he has visited our Ashram many times, spent a few precious minutes with us in the Samadhi Hall; his words on the glory and greatness of Bhagavan and the Holy Hill are still reverberating in our bosom. It was most incredible that after a full night's bus journey and after strolling on the Holy Hill we were able to complete the *giripradakshina* at dead of night on the same day! It was nothing short of Bhagavan's Grace on us.

The Ashram took special care that every need of ours was met and that too with a smiling face! May Bhagavan

bless us all and help us to charge our spiritual batteries by enabling us to pay frequent visits to Sri Ramanasramam!

— *Members of Vijnana Ramaneeya Ashram, Koppam, Palghat.*



**Mrs. and Mrs. Henri Hartung**

What a splendid journey and essential time. This new pilgrimage was perfect and I am happy to thank you for a hearty welcome. We felt "at home" in Ramanasramam, always in Sri Bhagavan, and it is very important for us to meet a spiritual family.

— *Henri Hartung*

July 1984 was the occasion of my first visit to Ramanasramam. Twenty eight years had passed since my first encounter with the life and teachings of Ramana Maharshi, (via Arthur Osborne's book borrowed from a public library), and during this time there has been a growing respect for, and devotion to, Sri Bhagavan. This had been enriched by exposure to the clarity of insight of Jiddu Krishnamurti and the intensely practical mysticism of Joel S. Goldsmith.

The visit to the Ashram proved to be a powerfully moving experience, the extent of its effect still reverberating in consciousness. Initially, it was a bewildering experience — an acclimatisation to the climate, food and local culture proving to be annoying distraction to

what was happening at the deeper levels of the mind. In fact, very little seemed to be happening at the superficial levels of consciousness for the first few days, except for the awareness of a sweet and comforting peace in the Ashram, most intensely felt in the old hall, especially in the evenings.

Some of the senior devotees at the Ashram were a great help being instrumental in my discarding the non-essentials and getting through to the core of the teachings. "Practise! Practise! Practise!" a devotee used to say — "there are only two places for you here, the old hall and the Hill. Spend your time at one or at the other — it will give you peace." I'd already found that these two places were the most potent environments, and it was good to have this confirmed by him, and to be encouraged by his steady devotion and good will.

My wife and I would like to take this opportunity to express our love and gratitude to the devotees, and also to TRS and the helpers at the Ashram who made our stay so enjoyable and fruitful.

All too soon our ten days arranged stay was drawing to a close, and with it the growing feeling that there were mysteries here that I'd not tapped — even superficially, and one could not help feeling a failure. Had my devotion been not strong enough? Could I have spent more time in meditation? Had I let too many distractions swerve my intent to probe as deeply as possible?

Our talk with Sri Ganesan on the day before we left was a wonderful experience. His gentle sincerity and total commitment to his work, together with his love for those on the path and his insight into the teachings, all combined to release an energy that invigorated us and intensified our determination to bring to realisation the One Self — which has no second. He stressed to us the importance of our visit to Ramanasramam, and that its significance would grow with us long after we'd left. As the weeks have gone by, this is proving to be so.

It was with intense sadness that, early next morning, we watched Arunachala receding into the distance, and finally vanishing from sight. There was also a feeling of frustration at apparently failing to achieve the level of insight hoped for during our stay, but this was a growing determination to intensify the work on the inner plane, whatever the external circumstances.

The journey to Madras airport followed, and although externally disturbing (due to the recent bomb attack) — suddenly — one felt a growing detachment from it all. There was an awareness of a deepening inner peace.

This mood of detachment persisted while going through the formalities of customs and immigration etc. By the time we were waiting for boarding the inner peace had become an inner awareness of Selfhood — expansive and inclusive, an awareness of existence prior to physical birth — independent of any physical or structural process. Accompanying this was an intense feeling of security

and "rightness", i.e. that all was as it should be, without struggle, without judgement, without comparison, and indeed without mental processing of any kind. This state deepened for the first hour or so of the flight, and with it came the realisation that it was the fruit of our stay at the Ashram, and that, although geographically distanced from the place, inwardly the links were intact — and always will be.

— Alan Owen, S. Wales UK



Marye and David Tonnaire

**Marye and Jacques Tonnaire**, ardent devotees, first came to Sri Ramanasramam for three weeks in 1982. This year Marye and her twelve year old son David spent a joyful and meditative six week stay in the Ashram. They write:

"I really liked staying in the Ashram. I liked all the animals and I thought that everyone was very nice. The caves and Arunachala were very powerful. My favourite cave was Virupaksha Cave. I like the temple in Tiruvannamalai very much. I used to go often in the Hall for ten minutes and I would feel Bhagavan's presence. I liked the chanting of Vedas and the pujas. When I left I knew that I wasn't really leaving."

— David Tonnaire

"Sri Ramanasramam, abode of perennial peace;  
Arunachala, Firey hill of Liberation;  
I feel myself swept up in a current  
which surpasses me —  
Who am I?  
The blazing sky at dusk,  
the rocks aglow,  
Kindle a vibrant Flame in the heart.  
Reverently approaching the *samadhi*,  
like bees, devotees circumambulate,  
drawing out precious nectar.  
Resonances of Veda Parayana  
and pujas,  
an echo of the primordial sound — OM  
Seeps into the deepest layers of being.  
Who am I?  
Bells resound in Mother's temple.  
Odours of camphor and incense mingle,  
The mind hearkens to the call within.

Plunging into Silence,  
A sense of timeless awareness  
embodied in Aruna Hill,  
pouring out from his gracious look,  
Melts away the sense of ego.  
Stillness permeates the Old Hall.  
Sitting in solitude,  
there arises,  
Surging up from an indefinable source,  
a great wave of surrender."

— Marye Tonnaire, Par Chalabre, France.



(from left to right) Alan Jacob, Gillian Lewis and Alan Lewis.

In our issue of April '84, p. 1271, we were happy to announce that the UK Ramana devotees could meet at Mr. Alan Jacob's residence for sat sangh. This devotee person arrived at the Ashram on December 15, along with Dr. Yilhan Lewis and Mr. Alan Lewis and stayed for four days. They say:

"We never thought it would be possible for us to visit Sri Ramanasramam, but circumstances through Bhagavan's Grace made it happen. We deeply felt the stillness and silence of the atmosphere, and the magic of Arunachala. We are most grateful to the Ashram authorities for the considerate way they received us and looked after all our needs. Our main impression is one of gratitude. We received silent guidance to arise us in our Sadhana, and the fact of having visited the Ashram and seeing where Bhagavan dwelled, gives an extra living dimension to the teaching as it unfolds for us."

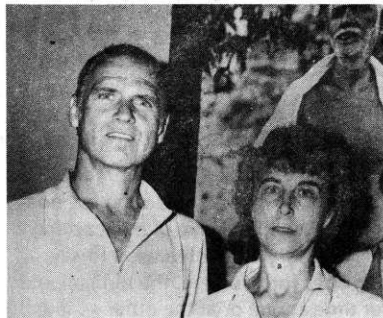
— Alan Jacob, Dr. Yilhan Lewis,  
London, U.K.

You can contact him at:

ALAN JACOB, 2, Boade's Mews, Flask Walk,  
Hampstead NW 3 1DB, U.K. (Tel: 01-435 0151)

**Mrs. and Mr. Hale Sherland** of Canada, spent a month at the Ashram. They share the following with our readers:

"Though our first contact with Sri Ramanasramam was by letter 24 years ago, only now has Bhagavan seen to it



Mr & Mrs. Hale  
Sherland

that we are here in person. What a precious place! Though we came all the way from Canada, the long wait was more than worth it.

The beautiful setting of the Ashram, the enchanting Hill, Arunachala, and lodging facilities that are available, meals, book-store, Library, kind and thoughtful individuals who help run the Ashram, are more than one can ask for. We met an old friend of ours here and made some wonderful new ones.

On Dec. 6, we witnessed the 'Festival of Light' — Deepam — and were flabbergasted as approximately a million people did giri pradakshina, walking around Arunachala Mountain, as the climax of the festival. On several occasions we went round the Holy Hill which was enjoyable, especially at night. Countless times we climbed up Arunachala to Skandashram and Virupaksha Cave. What a beautiful view, and meditation comes easy here. But most rewarding of all is the time spent in the 'Old Meditation Hall'. How fulfilling it is! One seems to drink from it — it seems to fill one! How beautiful!

We also saw some films of and about Bhagavan Himself, and we met Mrs. Arthur Osborne and Kunju Swami. Yes! Devotees of Bhagavan! It is all here. Come and drink your fill!"

— Hale and Winn Sherland, Grand Forks,  
Canada

"Though I was born in poor circumstances, by my hard work I was able to raise myself to affluent circumstances. Throughout my life of strife and success an undercurrent of dissatisfaction was there, though there was no particular outward reason for it. I tried to fill this vacuum by reading words of wisdom of ancient sages. This did help me to a large extent.

Once I recited some scriptural sayings that I was fond of to a pious *sadhu*. He was surprised and said that such spiritual texts were usually shunned by men of the world and it was efficacious that I was fond of them. He encouraged me in my quest for Truth and guided me properly in my efforts — thus I stuck to them. Continued thirst for the experiential knowledge of the Truth slowly but surely, ultimately led me to Satguru Ramana. I rushed to Sri Ramanasramam and surrendered myself at

the Samadhi of Sri Bhagavan. His presence radiates from it. Though I was not fortunate to have *darshan* of His physical body, yet I feel His Grace and Presence strongly at the Ashram. Since my first visit I have been coming to the Ashram again and again. However many times I come to His Lotus Feet that many times my mind longs to be at His Shrine again. To come to His abode is joy; to leave His Presence is an untold sorrow of separation. To live at the Ashram, devoid of the mechanism of the vacillating mind, is nothing but an experience of living in paradise!

It is true — Ramana is the magnet who draws to Himself *jivas*, like iron-filings! My only prayer to the Master is that He binds me permanently to His Lotus Feet, never again to be lost in the mire of worldly entanglements

— R. Lakshmipathy Naidu, Madras



Swami Paramarthananda of Vedanta Vidarthi Sangha & Party

Swami Paramarthananda of the Vedanta Vidarthi Sangha, Madras, visited the Ashram for two days in September, along with more than fifty devotees. As a number of them were visiting the Ashram for the first time, they were taken round it and told about the various facets of Sri Bhagavan's life. They also did *giri pradakshina* of the Holy Hill and visited Skandashram and Virupaksha Cave. During their spiritual retreat at the Ashram they performed *abhishekam* and puja to the shrine of Sri Bhagavan in addition to meditation and *sat sangh*. Swami Paramarthananda who is a disciple of Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswathi had earlier given a series of talks on Bhagavan's *Sat Darsanam* at the Ramana Kendra, Madras.

Sri Ashok Mehta, Bombay, a sincere seeker, stayed at the Ashram for two months, spending all his time in meditation and contemplation. This is his second visit, he hopes to visit every year:

"As soon as I entered the Ashram, indescribable peace was felt within. Sometimes this feeling waxed and waned in moments. When it waned, the freedom of the environment permitted me to use my time in reading wholesome books and *sat sang* until grace dawned again.

I value my stay at the Ashram due to the courtesy of

the staff, clean environment and most of all, the freedom to be.

I don't want to go!"

— Ashok Mehta, Bombay

### RAMANA STUDY CENTRE, COCHIN

Our long cherished desire to visit Bhagavan's Abode has been fulfilled. What Mr. Richard Warner said in his article: 'A Unique Experience' published in *The Mountain Path* (July '84) is absolutely true. "Those who have never come here, even if they have read every possible publication about Bhagavan and Sri Arunachala can have no idea what it is to be here — only physical proximity with Bhagavan's abode will reveal the true experience." This fact has been experienced by us. We did not feel the absence of Bhagavan anywhere in the Ashram. In fact, we felt the living presence of Bhagavan especially in the Old Meditation Hall, Nirvana Room, Skandashram, Virupaksha Cave, and the new auditorium.

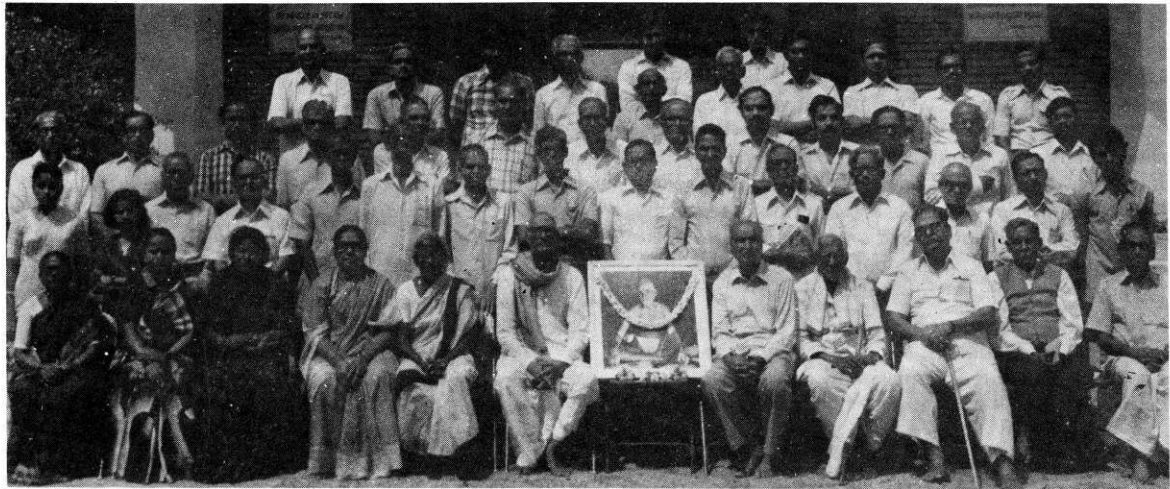
The most thrilling experience were that of *pradakshina* and meeting Sri Kunju Swami, who narrated various events in Sri Bhagavan's life.

We left the Ashram only physically but not mentally, in our mind only one thought prevailed — to come back and stay for a longer period in order to drink the nectar of Bhagavan's presence.

— S. Hariharan, Cochin

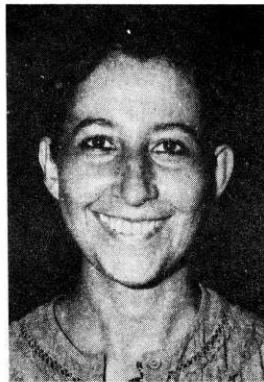
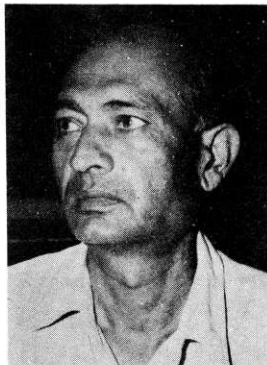


Standing left to right  
Sri A.K. Manoharan — Member (Cochin Port Trust) Sri K.M. Ravindran, Treasurer (Cochin Port Trust) Sri P.K. Bhaskaran, Member — Dy. Secretary (Tax Assistant, Income-tax Commissioner's Office, Ernakulam) Sri S. Hariharan, Secretary. (Sr. Acctt., Cochin Port Trust) Kunju Swami, Sri T.N. Venkataraman President, Sri Ramanasramam, Sri M.G. Umamaheswaran, Vice President (Retd. Financial Adviser & Chief Accounts Officer, Cochin Port Trust). Mrs. Ammini Bhattathiripad, Member Dr. T.N.N. Bhattathiripad, President, (Rtd Director of Health Service (ESI), Kerala State), Sri T.M. Pratap Singh, Member (Manager, Secretariate, Cochin Port Trust), Mrs. Santha Pratap Singh.



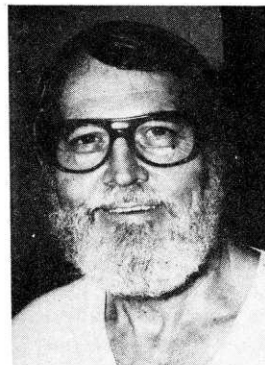
Office Bearers for the year 84-85.  
 President: Sri T. Sriramamoorthy; Vice-President: Sri K.V.N. Murthy; Secretary & Treasurer Sri V. Krithivesan; Executive Members: Sarvasri G.C. Narayanaswamy, Chandra Prabhakar, R.J. Doshi, K.V. Acharya, B. Buchi Ramaiah, V. Balaraman, K. Balakrishnan, N. Venkatraman, K. Ramakishen, S.V. Tandon, A.V. Ramaiah, Sarvasrimati Lalitha Murthy, Indira, Annapurna

Parmar S. Kabal, Canada



Calderon Antorieta, Mexico

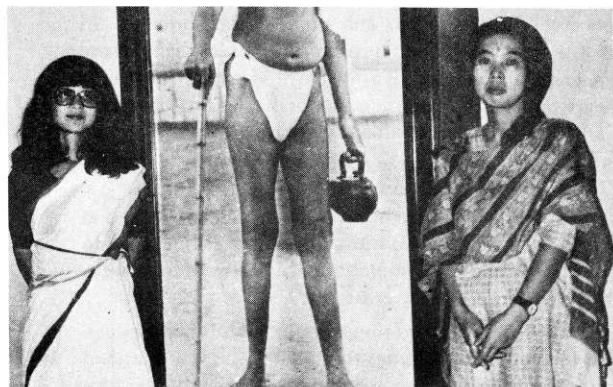
Mr. Raman, U.S.A.



Doris Zimmermann, Switzerland



Sri K.S. Reddy & family, Guntur.



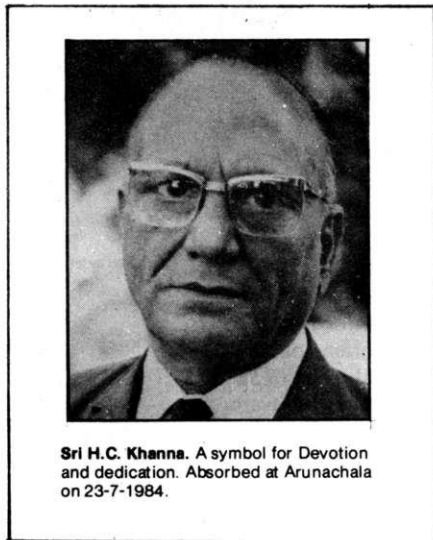
Mito Kikuchi and Yoka Suda, Japan



Devotees from  
Lakshmana Ashram.  
(Left inset):  
Lakshmana Swami.  
(Right inset):  
Sri Sarada

Dr. M.D. Naik and party, Kumta

Annie Alt, Austria.



Sri H.C. Khanna. A symbol for Devotion and dedication. Absorbed at Arunachala on 23-7-1984.



Remi Ballieux, Marlis Hemmi, Marie Molette, Vittorio Porchia, Switzerland.



Members of the Ramana Kendra on a visit to the Ashram.

### RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING BANGALORE

In July, August Guru Poonima Day and Jnanodaya Day were celebrated. **Dr. Balarama Reddy** gave a lucid talk on the former occasion. Secretary **Krishnaswami** spoke nicely on the latter one.

Ramananjali gave a few performances all over Bangalore in connection with Ganesa festival.

On Aruna Vijaya Day Ramananjali as usual offered special homage to Bhagavan at Ramana Shrine.

Dasserrah Pooja was performed in a befitting manner at the RMCL office. Various Music groups have been giving Ramana Music performances periodically at Ramana Shrine.

Last but not the last came the Karthikai Deepam celebration crowning all the events of this year. **Muralidhar Hegde** had made a beautiful model of Arunachala with Deepam on top. About seventy five people belonging to various music groups organised by **Veena Alamelu** sang Bhagavan's Aksharamanamalai. The entire audience joined in the refrain after every two couplets. The whole hall was reverberating with Arunachala Siva. It was a thrilling experience.

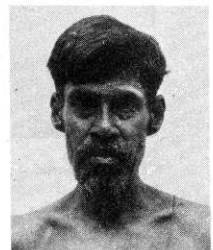
Two books, Upadesa Saram with English commentary by **A.R. Natarajan** and Atma Sakshatkara (Kanada Version of Self Realisation) were released by **Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao** who gave a very nice talk marking the occasion.



### OBITUARY

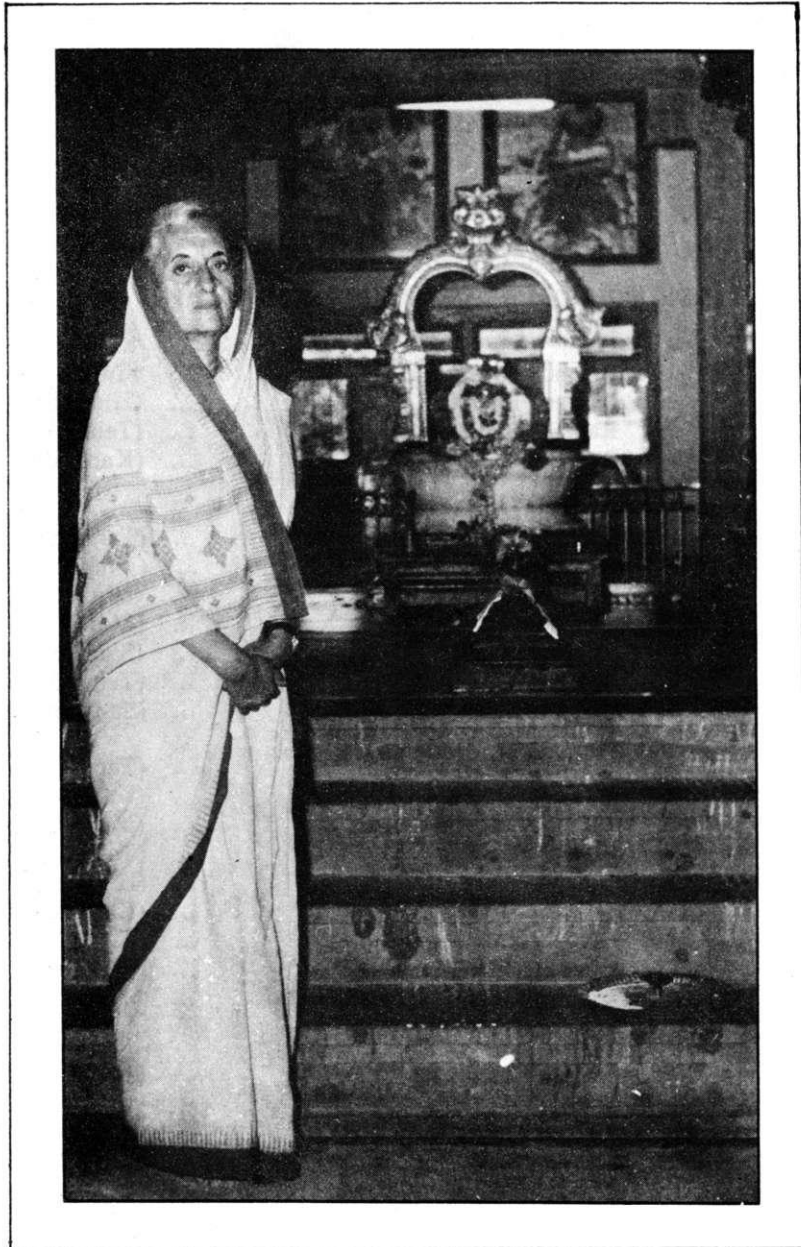
Sri Bairavan

**Sri Bairavan**, who was doing appreciable service for nearly a decade in the Ashram, passed away on Oct.8, at the age of 52 years. His devotion to Bhagavan was deep. May his soul rest in peace!





**Srimati  
INDIRA  
GANDHI  
PASSES  
AWAY**



The Prime Minister of India, **Smt. Indira Gandhi**, is no more. Her devotion to spiritual causes was known mostly only to her close friends. At times of crisis she sought spiritual help and blessings from sages and saints. Recently, while praying for Sri Bhagavan's blessings, she wrote to the Ashram President in her letter (Aug. 10, '84): "These are difficult days for us all. It is a pity that our democratic system is being misused to propagate different types of separatist tendencies. In their dislike for me, many newspapers also do not project problems in their true perspective.

Can unity amongst disparate political parties uphold the unity of the country?"

Smt. Indira Gandhi paid homage to Sri Bhagavan during her two visits to the Ashram in 1977 and 1980. Her lofty ideals were clearly revealed when she arranged for a *Koti Archana* to be performed at the shrine of Bhagavan Ramana with a specific *sankalpa*: "Praying for the prosperity of Mother India and the welfare of people all over the world."

We pray to Sri Bhagavan that Smt. Indira Gandhi be absorbed at His Lotus Feet!