

The Mountain Path



VOL. 22 No. IV OCTOBER 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

Vol. 22

OCTOBER 1985

No. 4

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Is it true Silence to rest
like a stone, inert and
unexpansive, Oh Aruna-
chala!

— *The Marital
Garland of Letters*
Verse. 87

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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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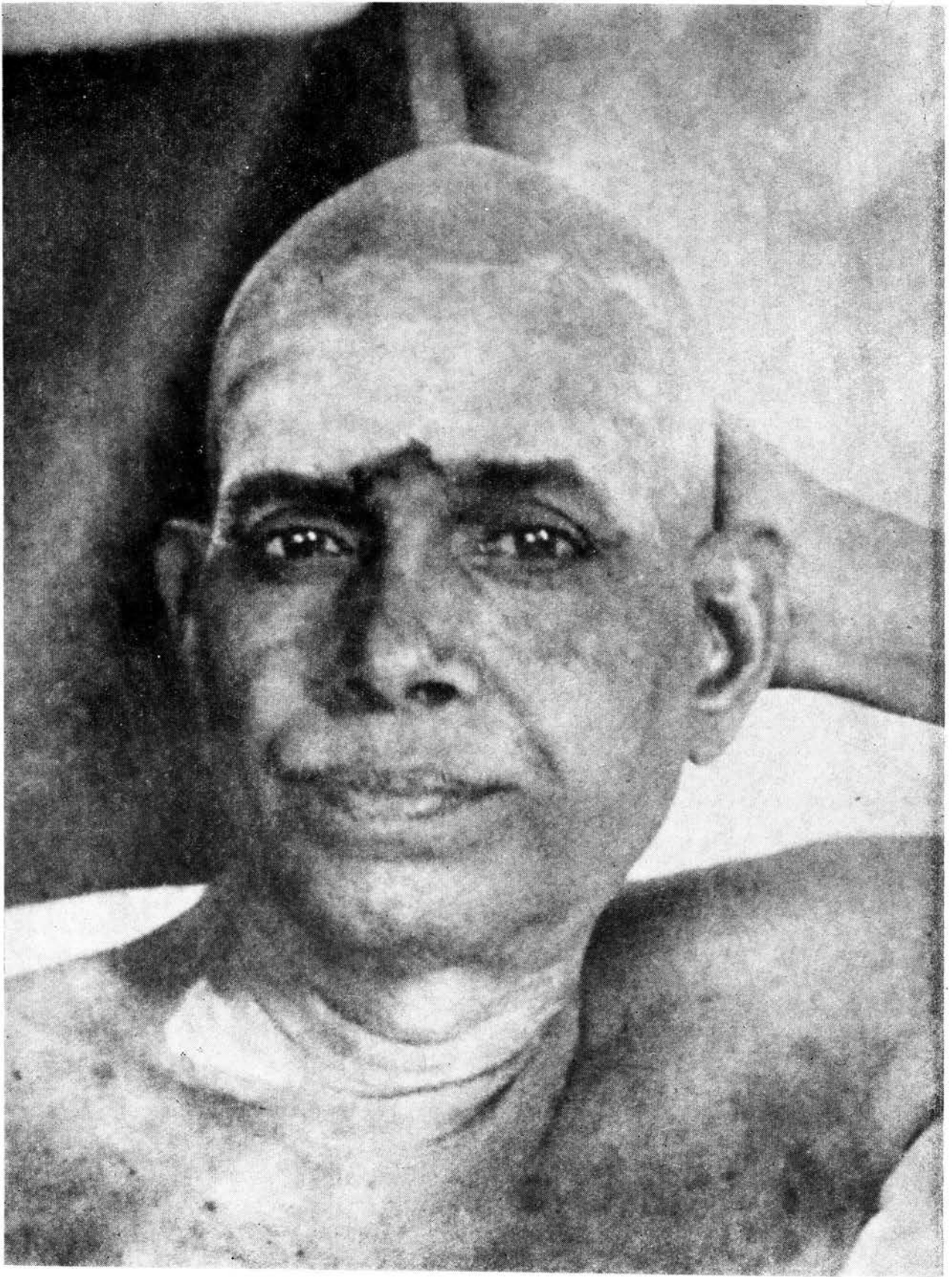
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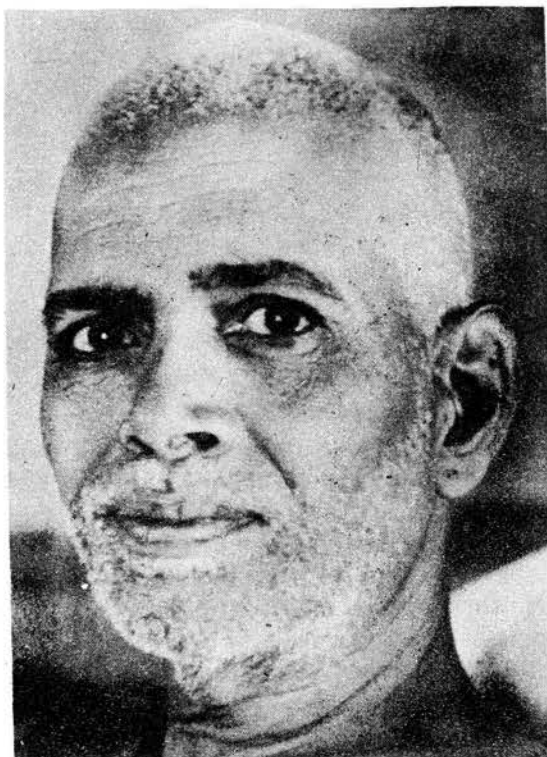
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**THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to**

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi





RAMANA'S FATE? What does it mean? Is he not the eternal one untouched by fate? Can the bestower of freedom be bound by fate? True. Yet he seems fated to take on himself the Karmas, of those to whom he is the refuge. His universal love gives him no choice except to protect regardless of multitudinous sins of those who come.

The human reality is that while devotees are earnest about their search for truth for which they turn to Ramana they cannot help seeking his protection for their material well being also. They see in him not only the unflinching doctor for curing the malady of birth and death but also the omnipotent God who can save them from fate's inevitable course. Devaraja Mudaliar, Subbaramayya were like children before a father referring every problem of theirs to Ramana for solace and help. In this they typify the attitude of other devotees who too regard Ramana as a boon-giver and protector who would deflect Karma's course. Requests would be made for a daughter's

RAMANA'S FATE

EDITORIAL

By

A.R. Natarajan

The Mountain Path

Vol. 23, No. 4, October, 1985

marriage, for employment, for warding off pecuniary calamity and so on in the certain faith that they would be solved, and solved they would be.¹ The devotees with large families would have a long list of prayers for curing the illness of their children and wife and there would be sure response.² Request would be made for a suitable match for the daughter, then for a child for her and later for safe delivery.³ A lady devotee praying hard while

¹ My recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana by A. Devaraja Mulaliar P 5, 20, 24, 80, 81.

² Sri Ramana Reminiscences by Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya P 5, 19, 38, 95.

³ Ramana Smrti — Sri Bhagavan's Grace by Gouriammal

stranded would receive help from some good samaritans.⁴ Ramana Himself would never admit of his role of saviour and his help would be always covert. For, his position was that the divine law should take its own course. Once Devaraja Mudaliar specifically questioned Ramana why the all powerful God should not protect the devotees from the consequences of their karma. Ramana would either remain silent or reply, "What can we say? That is the plan."⁵ Sometimes Ramana would point out the futility of this endless seeking of only 'good' and 'happiness'. He would say "these terms have no meaning at all without their opposites, they are inevitable until you transcend the pairs of opposites and reach the Absolute."⁶

But Ramana could never let down the devotees who had cast their burden on Him. The cases of Jagadisa Sastri and Rangayyar are worth recalling on this point. From his death bed Jagadisa Sastri, 'the Sanskrit pandit of Bhagavan's Court' wrote a final appeal in poem that "he would not accept any plea that *prarabdha* must follow its course and if only Bhagavan willed it His grace could cancel *prarabdha* and save him."⁷ Certain death was warded off. Rangayyar, a playmate of Ramana at Tiruchuzhi and later a staunch devotee, was stricken in a certain period, by a series of calamities. Astrologers saw no hope for him. Ramana not only made him stay with him but also insisted on his not leaving his presence for a long time. Once when Rangayyar sought permission to go to the railway station and see off his relative, Ramana warned him to come back straight "without loitering any where or spending the night in town."⁸ He was thus saved from evil from which there would have been no escape otherwise.

It is not that a specific prayer should always be addressed to Ramana. For, fate's blows are quick, sudden and totally unpredictable. Then unasked Ramana would be there with his helping hand. How else can one explain the case of a lady devotee who while in Mauritius happily gripped the mike to sing on Bhagavan little realising that death by electrocution was waiting for her through electrical leak in the

mike. But then death was humbled thanks to Ramana making everyone's intelligence razor sharp for timely counteraction.⁹ While seeing the palm of another devotee, an eminent palmist wondered how this devotee was still alive. 'Could all his vast knowledge be wrong?' wondered the palmist. Then it dawned on him that Ramana had saved the life of his devotee even without the devotee's knowledge. Whether one prays or not, Ramana knows what to do when and does it, but would never accept credit for it.

Strange paradox, that this 'spiritual colossus' totally detached, utterly impartial, should concern himself with important and even small details of his devotees lives. Kunju Swami has to go to his native place and does not have money to buy himself eats, on the way so Ramana packs for him pooris for the journey.¹⁰ Narayana Iyer is returning home, the cooks are tired, asleep and Ramana roasts almonds for him to take back.¹¹ A devotee G.R. Subbaramayya passes away and Ramana patiently cuts all the articles on Ramana in 'Federated India' written by this devotee makes a book of it and remarks "he was very keen that his articles should appear in the form of a book, now I have made a book of them."¹² We have the most touching scenes of his insistence of giving *darshan* in the last one year before his *Maha Samadhi* even when the body was tortured by pain and diverse medical treatment which he put up with only

4 Unfailing Guidance — Zulice Nakhhoodu *The Mountain Path* July 1970.

5-6 My recollections — A. Devaraja Mudaliar Pp. 101, to 102.

7-8 My recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana P. 103, 104 by A. Devaraja Mudaliar.

9 Ramananjali in Mauritius.

10 My Reminiscences — Kunju Swami.

11 Is it not divine Love? Narayana Iyer, *The Mountain Path* — Oct. 1968.

12 My recollections by A. Devaraja Mudaliar P. 56-57 (These articles were later published by Ramanasramam under the title 'Sri Ramana, Sage of Arunagiri by 'Aksharaja')

to make different groups of devotees happy. Even on the last day of his earthly existence 14th April 1950, Ramana gave *darshan* in the morning and the evening as well. In his infinite compassion he kept his face turned towards the devotees the whole time the darsan lasted unmindful of the excruciating pain caused by it.¹³ Kinder than the mother who cannot sleep at night lest the child should miss its feed he fulfils every need of all who turn to him with His all embracing love which was at once particular as it was universal.

For those who care enough for the search for truth, his firm grip, the inner and outer guidance is always there. He never would force the pace, but the change would be there, though not obvious. When someone complained that he had not progressed promptly came Ramana's reply 'how do you know?' When another devotee remarked that while others were meditating well and got *samadhi*, he had remained where he was, Ramana chided "Look to yourself, Wherever the mind goes astray bring it back to quest."¹⁴ When the first European lady visitor, after keenly questioning Ramana about self-enquiry wanted to know what one would find, He said "It is not for one to say what an individual experience would be. It would reveal itself. Hold on to it."¹⁵ When some devotees developed an inferiority complex thinking they lacked scriptural knowledge Ramana would boost their morale by stating that the purpose of the scriptures was only to point the way to

the Realisation and book knowledge without practice was only husk.¹⁶ He would add: "Mere book learning and discussions are comparable to a man shaving his image in a mirror."

Perhaps it is unnecessary to debate how Ramana's help is invariably there. When specifically questioned on this point Ramana said "the Jnani does save his devotees, not by his *sankalpa* which is non-existent in Him, but through his Presence, *Sannidhi*", Karma is warded off and boons granted involuntarily, saving all 'by nature not by choice.' He takes on himself the burden of devotees' material, spiritual care, and one reaps the fruits of spiritual effort in growing goodness thanks to Ramana's inner guidance. As one reads the vast panorama of stranger than fiction rescue acts of Ramana one recalls his prayer to Arunachala 'You asked me to come did you not? Very well I have come. Assume my burden. Curse your fate if you must.'¹⁸

¹³ Guru Ramana by S.S. Cohen — P. 158.

¹⁴ Is it not divine Love? R. Narayana Iyer *The Mountain Path* Oct. 1968.

¹⁵ The Way of the Spirit — by M.A. Piggot *The Mountain Path* — 1970.

¹⁶ Divine Glimpses — by Vishnu — *The Mountain Path* Jan 66.

¹⁷ No mirror can ever shave, C.K. Anavema Reddy *The Mountain Path* Jan 1972.

¹⁸ Marital Garland of Letters, Verse 94.

The Lord bears the burden of the world. Know that the spurious ego which presumes to bear that burden is like a sculptured figure at the foot of a temple tower which appears to sustain the tower's weight. Whose fault is it if the traveller instead of putting his luggage in the cart which bears the load anyway, carries it on his head, to his own inconvenience?

— SRI BHAGAVAN

TWO DECADES OF

ABOVE ORTHODOXY AND UNORTHODOXY

Returning to the question of the Maharshi, it is true that he did not personally follow all that is laid down in the scriptures regarding food, but he did not need to, since he was not a sadhaka but a Mukta, having already achieved the Goal. It is true also that he allowed a good deal of licence to his followers, but that does not necessarily mean that he approved of it; simply that his way was rather to influence than to command. The true command should come from within, leading to voluntary, not enforced, right action.

— Krishna Bikshu

CONTEMPLATED LIFE IN MODERN WORLD

Contemplative wisdom is then not simply an aesthetic extrapolation of certain intellectual or dogmatic principles, but a living contact with the Infinite Source of all being, a contact not only of minds and hearts, not only of "I and Thou", but a transcendent union of consciousness in which man and God become, according to the expression of St. Paul, "one spirit"

One need not be a monk to turn this way. It is sufficient to be a child of God, a human person. It is enough that one has in oneself the instinct for truth, the desire of that freedom from limitation and from servitude to external things.

— Father Thomas Merton

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

THE CONTEMPLATIVE WAY OF LIFE

Once you are consciously one with God, you are no longer living your own life. Your life is being lived for you, in you, through you, by the Life itself. The Life is your life, the infinite Life, the immortal Life, the eternal Life. That is why to "know Him aright" is life eternal. You now understand God to be the Invisible which is operating in the ground, in the branch, in the trunk, the Invisible which is operating upon a seed and making it a tree, the Invisible which is operating upon a seed and bringing forth another human life. And once you know that the Invisible is the very Being of you, the presence, the power, the wisdom, the intelligence and the love, you are then consciously one with It and It can fulfil Itself in your experience.

— Joel Goldsmith

* * * * *

MOTHER'S LAMENT

From all and sundry oft my child had heard
Of the dear might of Ramana. Much concerned,
I warned her to have naught with him. But she,
Brushing aside my fears as fancies, sought
To grasp and hold, clear, firm within her heart
His heavenly form. The world laughs now at her,
For she has tasted maddening bread, glimpsed Truth,
The poison whose sole antidote is more
And more of It, till one has eaten all.

— Sri Muruganar — translated by Professor K. Swaminathan

from *The Mountain Path*, October, 1965.

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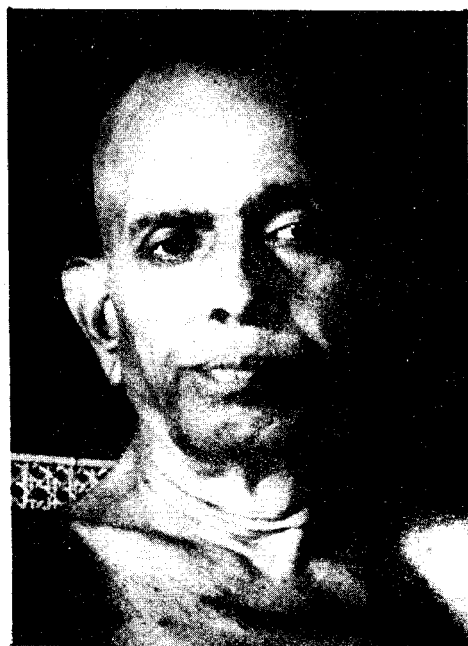
*In the last two issues of **The Mountain Path** we published extracts from a new book on Bhagavan's teachings called **Be as You are*** The following extract, dealing with Bhagavan's teachings on surrender, is also taken from the book. The concluding portion will be printed in our next issue.*

MANY OF the world's religious traditions advocate surrender to God as a means of transcending the individual self. Sri Ramana accepted the validity of such an approach and often said that this method was equally as effective as self-enquiry. Traditionally the path of surrender is associated with dualistic devotional practices, but such activities were only of secondary importance to Sri Ramana. Instead he stressed that true surrender transcended worshipping God in a subject-object relationship since it could only be successfully accomplished when the one who imagined that he was separate from God has ceased to exist. To achieve this goal he recommended the two distinctive practices:

1. Holding on to the 'I'-thought until the one who imagines that he is separate from God disappears.
2. Completely surrendering all responsibility for one's life to God or the Self. For such surrender to be effective one must have no will or desire of one's own and one must be completely free of the idea that there is an individual person who is capable of acting independently of God.

The first method is clearly self-enquiry masquerading under a different name. Sri Ramana often equated the practices of surrender and enquiry either by saying that they were different names for the same process or that they were the only two effective means by which Self-realisation could be achieved. This is quite consistent with his view that any practice which involved awareness of the 'I'-thought was a valid and direct route to the

* Full details about the book can be found in our book review section.



Self whereas all practices which didn't were not.

This insistence of the subjective awareness of 'I' as the only means of reaching the Self coloured his attitude towards the traditional practices of devotion (*bhakti*) and worship which are usually associated with surrender to God. He never discouraged his devotees from following such practices but he pointed out that any relationship with God (devotee, worshipper, servant etc.) was an illusory one since God alone exists. True devotion, he said, is to remain as one really is, in the state of being in which all ideas about relationships with God have ceased to exist.

The second method, of surrendering responsibility for one's life to God, is also related to self-enquiry since it aims to eliminate the 'I'-thought by separating it from the objects and actions that it constantly identifies with. In following this practice there should be a constant awareness that there is no individual "I" who acts or desires, that only the Self exists and that there is nothing apart from the Self that is capable of acting independently of it. When following this practice, whenever one becomes aware that one is assuming responsibility for thoughts and actions — for example, 'I want' or 'I am doing this' — one should try to withdraw the mind from its external contacts and fix it in the Self. This is analogous to the transfer of attention which takes place when one realises that self-attention has been lost. In both cases the aim is to isolate the 'I'-thought and make it disappear in its source.

Sri Ramana himself admitted that spontaneous and complete surrender of the 'I' by this method was an impossible goal for many people and so he sometimes advised his followers to undertake preliminary exercises which would cultivate their devotion and control their minds. Most of these practices involved thinking of or meditating on God or the Guru either by constantly repeating his name or by visualising his form. He told his devotees that if this was done regularly with love and devotion then the mind would become effortlessly absorbed in the objects of meditation.

Once this has been achieved complete surrender becomes much easier. The constant awareness of God prevents the mind from identifying with other objects and enhances the conviction that God alone exists. It also produces a reciprocal flow of power or grace from the Self which weakens the hold of the 'I'-thought and destroys the *vasanas* which perpetuate and reinforce its existence. Eventually 'I'-thought is reduced to manageable proportions and with a little self-attention it can be made to sink temporarily into the Self.

As with self-enquiry final realisation is brought about automatically by the power of the Self. When all the outgoing tendencies of

the mind have been dissolved in the repeated experiences of being, the Self destroys the vestigial 'I'-thought so completely that it never rises again. This final destruction of the 'I' only takes place if the self-surrender has been completely motiveless. If it is done with a desire for grace or Self-realisation it can never be more than partial surrender, a business transaction in which the 'I'-thought makes an effort in the expectation of receiving a reward.

Q: What is unconditional surrender?

A: If one surrenders oneself there will be no one to ask questions or to be thought of. Either the thoughts are eliminated by holding on to the root-thought 'I' or one surrenders oneself unconditionally to the higher power. These are the only two ways for realisation.¹

Q: Does not total or complete surrender require that one should not have left even the desire for liberation or God?

A: Complete surrender does require that you have no desire of your own. You must be satisfied with whatever God gives you, and that means having no desires of one's own.

Q: Now that I am satisfied on that point, I want to know what are the steps by which I could achieve surrender.

A: There are two ways. One is looking into the source of 'I' and merging into that source. The other is feeling 'I am helpless by myself, God alone is all powerful and except by throwing myself completely on him, there is no other means of safety for me.' By this method one gradually develops the conviction that God alone exists and that the ego does not count. Both methods lead to the same goal. Complete surrender is another name for *jnana* or liberation.²

Q: I find surrender is easier. I want to adopt that path.

A: By whatever path you go, you will have to lose yourself in the end. Surrender is only

¹ *Talks* (1978 ed.) p. 285.

² *Day By Day* (1970 ed.) p. 140.

complete when you reach the stage 'Thou art all' and 'Thy will be done'.

The state is not different from *jnana*. In *soham* (the repetition of 'I am He') there is *dvaita* (dualism). In surrender there is *advaita* (non-dualism). In the reality there is neither *dvaita* nor *advaita*, but that which is. Surrender appears easy because people imagine that, once they say with their lips 'I surrender' and put their burdens on the Lord, they can be free and do what they like. But the fact is that you can have no likes or dislikes after your surrender; your will should be completely non-existent, the Lord's will taking its place. The death of the ego in this way brings about a state which is not different from *jnana*. So by whatever path you may go, you must come to *jnana* or oneness.³

Q: What is the best way of killing the ego?

A: To each person that way is the best which appears easiest or appeals most. All the ways are equally good as they lead to the same goal, which is the merging of the ego in the Self. What the *bhakta* (devotee) calls surrender, the man who does *vichara* calls *jnana*. Both are only trying to take the ego back to the source from which it sprang and make it merge there.⁴

Q: Cannot grace hasten such competence in a seeker?

A: Leave it to Him. Surrender unreservedly. One of two things must be done. Either surrender because you admit your inability and require a higher power to help you, or, investigate the cause of misery by going to the source and merging in the Self. Either way you will be free from misery. God never forsakes one who has surrendered.

Q: What is the drift of the mind after surrender?

A: Is the surrendered mind raising the question?⁵

Q: By constantly desiring to surrender hope that increasing grace is experienced.

THE ETERNAL PRESENCE

By Frederick Beck

when there is a thought
 the content of which
 is called god
 or a thought
 which is called a flower
 or a thought
 which is called a rock
 or a thought
 which is called memory
 all these arise
 in consciousness, the glorified lord
 and that which is observed
 is the lit-upness of light
 which is called a thought
 and the lit-upness is the same
 the very same
 for all that we call thoughts
 between which there is no difference
 and the lit-upness
 is self luminous
 beyond all notions
 of beauty and delight

A: Surrender once and for all and be done with the desire. So long as the sense of doership is retained there is the desire. That is also personality. If this goes the Self is found to shine forth pure. The sense of doership is the bondage and not the actions themselves.

'Be still and know that I am God'. Here stillness is total surrender without a vestige of

³ Day by Day p. 72

⁴ Day By Day p. 30.

⁵ Talks p. 234.

individuality. Stillness will prevail and there will be no agitation of mind. Agitation of mind is the cause of desire, the sense of doership and personality. If that is stopped there is quiet. There 'knowing' means 'being'. It is not the relative knowledge involving the triads knowledge, knowing and known.

Q: Is the thought 'I am God' or 'I am the supreme being' helpful?

A: 'I am that I am'. 'I am' is God, not thinking 'I am God'. Realise 'I am' and do not think 'I am'. 'Know I am God' it is said, and not 'think I am God'.⁶

All talk of surrender is like pinching jaggery from a jaggery image of Lord Ganesa and offering it as *naivedya* (food offering) to the same Lord Ganesa. You say you offer your body, soul and all possessions to God. Were they yours that you could offer them? At best you can say, 'I falsely imagined till now that all these which are yours were mine. Now I realise that they are yours. I shall no more act as if they are mine.' This knowledge that there is nothing but God or Self, that I and mine don't exist and that only the Self exists, is *jnana*. Thus there is no difference between *bhakti* and *jnana*. *Bhakti* is *jnana mata* or the mother of *jnana*.⁷

Q: Men of the world that we are, we have some kind of grief or another and do not know how to get over it. We pray to God and still are not satisfied. What can we do?

A: Trust God.

Q: We surrender; but still there is no help.

A: Yes. If you have surrendered, you must abide by the will of God and not make a grievance of what may not please you. Things may turn out differently from the way they look apparently. Distress often leads to faith in God.

Q: But we are worldly. There is the wife, there are the children, friends and relatives. We cannot ignore their existence and resign ourselves to divine will, without retaining some little of the personality in us.

**Dear God, be good to me;
The sea is so wide,
And my boat is so small.**

— Breton fisherman's prayer

A: That means you have not surrendered as professed by you. You must only trust God.⁸

Surrender to God and abide by his will whether he appears or vanishes. Await his pleasure. If you ask him to do as you please, it is not surrender but command to him. You cannot have him obey you and yet think that you have surrendered. He knows what is best and when and how to do it. Leave everything entirely to him. His is the burden, you no longer have any cares. All your cares are his. Such is surrender. This is *bhakti*.

Or enquire to whom these questions arise. Dive deep in the Heart and remain as the Self. One of these two ways is open to the aspirant.⁹

Q: Surrender is impossible

A: Yes. Complete surrender is impossible in the beginning. Partial surrender is certainly possible for all. In the course of time that will lead to complete surrender. Well, if surrender is impossible, what can be done? There is no peace of mind. You are helpless to bring it about. It can only be done by surrender.¹⁰

Q: Is surrender, by itself, sufficient to reach the Self?

A: It is enough that one surrenders oneself. Surrender is to give oneself up to the original cause of one's being. Do not delude yourself by imagining such a source to be some God outside you. Your source is within yourself. Give yourself up to it. That means that you should seek the source and merge in it.¹¹

⁶ Talks pp. 322-333.

⁷ Day by Day p. 42.

⁸ Talks p. 49.

⁹ Talks p. 425.

¹⁰ Talks p. 195.

¹¹ Talks p. 175.

A GUIDED TOUR OF HEAVEN

Part II

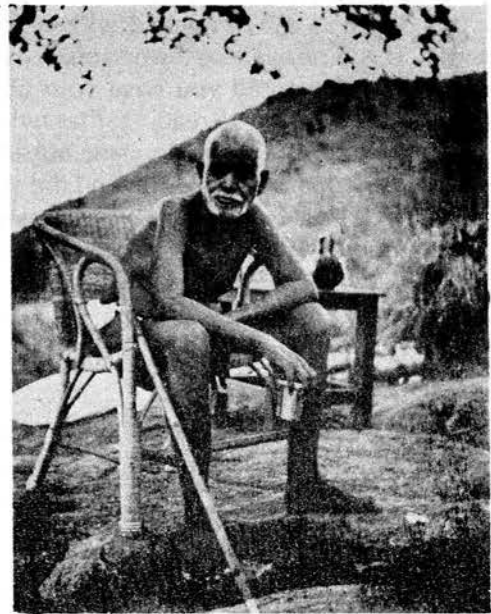
By Douglas E. Harding

THE FIRST half of our tour of Heaven, appearing in our last issue, consisted of observing the mandatory conditions of entry, making the journey, and getting to know the topography and the people of the place. It should be gone through again, before setting out on this concluding half of the tour.

(iii) Economics

Nothing whatever goes on in Heaven-as-empty, and certainly not economics. On the other hand (as we have seen) everything whatever goes on in Heaven-as-filled, and that includes all of economics — whether those of the planet, or of your particular country, or of yourself as an individual. Heaven embraces but doesn't interfere with these mundane goings-on. And yet — piling paradox on paradox — it interferes most drastically. Seen from Heaven's side — which is to say as they really are, and no longer as society's well-cooked books account for them — they are revolutionized. In other words, the economics of the country you are now exploring are radically different from those of the old country. And the difference works out to your huge advantage. Arriving here in Heaven, you are instantly and immeasurably rich, as we shall presently see.

But first let's assess your out-of-Heaven circumstances. Look around you, at the extent of your property now on display. For sure, you claim to those hands and sleeves and what they are attached to, plus as much of that furniture and walls and floors as you have paid for, plus (if you're lucky) that grass-patch and those flowers outside the window. But that's more-or-less your outside limit. Beyond these (let's say) lie the street and its passers-by, the houses opposite and that stand of trees, those remote hills and remoter clouds and Sun and sky — and none of them



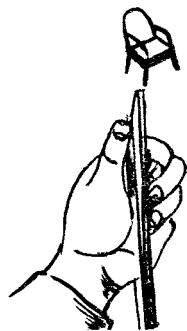
is yours. Your property of sphere of ownership is microscopic (no matter if you're a multi-multi-millionaire) compared with its setting — the sphere of your non-ownership or deprivation. Practically all the goods you altogether depend on lie way out there, inaccessible and alien: you have no right to them or rights over them. As for those bits and pieces you have managed to accumulate around you, it's a question of whether you own them or they own you — making all the demands that they do.¹ And what (outside Heaven) is ownership, anyway? Does the arm own the hand, or the hand the coin it holds? How can a something possess another something? A limited body, it must exclude all others from the volume it occupies, must push them off and disclaim them. All goes to show that, in the country you come from, everyone is very poor. And nothing much can be done about it.

¹ What is that higher happiness? To be free from anxieties. Possessions create anxieties. — Ramana Maharshi

Now look around Heaven, and see how in every way it corrects and reverses this state of affairs. Observe again how empty this new country is, how there's no-thing at all where you are, nothing to keep things out with; and how nevertheless this emptiness is its filling how this Space is truly enriched with all its contents. *This alone is true ownership.* Look and see; how else could you *have* your arm and hand, this page you're reading, that furniture (paid for or not), the whole scene outside your window — including the Sun and the sky itself — how else but by *being* them? In Heaven you incorporate the universe, precisely because you are incorporeal.

In that case (you may ask) why is so much of this universe so far off, so outlying, that I can hardly feel it to be mine?

Well, for a start, just how far off is that piece of furniture "over there"?



Measure its distance with the spine of this magazine, hold end-on and up to your eye . . .

Doesn't that distance reduce to zero inches, on present evidence . . . ?

Using the same make-shift measuring-rod, read off the distance of the furthest object outside your window²

In reality (which means in Heaven) "distance is nothing but a fantasy" — as William Blake, a frequent visitor, observed. And that is why, as a young child in Heaven without noticing it, you confidently reached for the Moon and the stars. Of course it will take time and practice to regain that innocence of Heart and eye and reclaim your property in full, but meantime you can hardly doubt your title to it.

Probably your chief difficulty is the feeling that truly to own anything you must have full control over it. Which obviously you don't have — not even in Heaven, it seems. However, let's see

(iv) Government

The laws of all countries are arbitrary and uncertain, highly complex, and frequently broken: all countries, that is except Heaven, whose decrees fit the facts, and are simple, clear, and absolutely unbreakable. Heaven's will is always carried out because (here comes the paradox!) Heaven has no will. It governs by not governing, say some of our best guides. We can see what they mean: as Space, Heaven accepts and underwrites and indeed *is* whatever's now going on in it.

So, if we tourists want to know exactly what Heaven's law decrees, what Heaven's will is for you and me at this moment, why it's what's actually happening — including your present reading of this page, the colours and shapes and arrangement of the objects around you, your state of health, *all* your current circumstances — "good" and "bad" and "indifferent". Your stay in Heaven is conditional upon your observing the law of the land, which is that whatever happens to you, moment by moment, you accept so whole-heartedly that you actually *intend* it. Here, say our guides, you get what you *really* want, because you want what you get. Upon this profound and active surrender of your partial and earth-bound will, in favour of your total and truly heavenly will, rests your employment of the peace and happiness that pervade this place.³ A great expert on Heaven's law (Pierre de Cassade) writes: "If you abandon all restraint, carry your wishes to their furthest limits, open your heart boundlessly, there is not a single moment when you will not be shown everything you could possibly wish for. The present

² An astronomer discovers a new star at an immense distance Well, where is the star in fact? Is it not the observer? — Ramana Maharshi

³ Self-surrender is synonymous with eternal happiness. — Ramana Maharshi

moment holds infinite riches beyond your wildest dreams."

"But," he adds, "you will only enjoy them to the extent of your faith and your love." Or, in our terminology, to the extent that you are willing to test — again and again, in the teeth of recurring doubts and discouragements — what all reliable explorers report of this country: namely, that here, and here alone, our sorrows are transmuted by the alchemy of *total* acknowledgement and acceptance. Not ameliorated, but cured by that synthesis of complete detachment and complete involvement which is Heaven's medicine for all Earth's sickness.

4. THE KING

Most of our seer-guides report that the government of Heaven is headed by an absolute Monarch. As our crowning experience on this tour, we have actually been granted an audience with His Majesty! But how and where are we to track down One who (they agree) is invisible, bodiless, pure Spirit?

His name — which is I AM, or THE ONE WHO IS — gives the clue. Haven't you already, in fact, been enjoying a long-standing and most intimate relationship with Him? Or not so much relationship as identity? Unabashed, with complete confidence, you take to yourself his august name every time you start a sentence with I AM — "*I am something or other*" — and one of our best qualified guides (Meister Eckhart) insists that only His Majesty can use that name!⁴ Draw your own awesome conclusion! Again, can you doubt that you *are*, that you are *one who is*? And where do you find this isness or sense of being — this deepest and most certain of certainties — but nearer than those hands and feet, nearer than breathing itself, in the very place your finger indicated at the start of the tour?

Please point once more to this Space — to check that, while it is evidently no-thing whatever, it is nevertheless wide and awake and keenly aware of itself as such, as Awareness itself

DARK MUSICIAN

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

**Yield yourself unto his hands.
Leave it to His sole decision.
He, the dark divine Musician
understands.
It will hurt you very much
While He tunes your incompleteness.
But that pain is just the sweetness
of His touch.
Once the tuning is entire
You will in yourself discover
Trembled music of the Lover
Wire by wire.**

You haven't merely interviewed the King of Heaven: you have consciously merged your being in His Being, where it always was anyway! And this, as you can see, without in any way diminishing the uniqueness of your particular "resurrection" body, currently on display within that Being, that Aware Space.

As the King Himself, the intolerable burden of your separate individuality is dropped at last, while as one of His subjects it is made acceptable and preserved and cherished for ever. You can see for yourself, right now, just how this impossibility becomes possible.

5. CONCLUSION OF TOUR

Before we set out, it seemed that our own country — this familiar and comon-sensible earthly realm — was entirely real, and that our heavenly destination was nebulous and doubtful. But our tour has surely reversed this impression. It was Earth, experienced as apart from Heaven, which turned out to be shadowy and misperceived, the very homeland of lies.⁵

⁴ You say: "I am", "I am going", "I am speaking", "I am working", etc "I AM" is God.

⁵ What we are all doing is to regard as real what is unreal. This habit has to be given up. All spiritual effort under all systems is directed only to this end.

Heaven, on the other hand turned out to be none other than this same Earth clearly and honestly seen for what is, and taken to heart. Really there aren't two realms at all, but only one — call it Heaven filled-earth or Earth-filled Heaven, or (as the Zen men say) the Nirvana which *is* Sangsara, or what you please.⁶ And our peace lies in consciously taking up the citizenship that is our birthright.

Of course our visit was a brief one, covering little of the scene, and not too much should be expected of it. Nor too little either, for this country lies in the Timeless Zone, and really no stay here is either short or long. All the same, it's impossible to exaggerate the pull of the other place, the hypnotic fascination of its make-believe, the dense cloud of fear that hides Heaven's realism; and impossible to exaggerate the need for patience and persistence as we seek to break free. More and more frequent visits, and longer and longer stop-overs, can never establish us in Heaven more securely than we already are; but they are indispensable to remove the deep-seated delusion that we could ever be anywhere else. In this sense, though all Heaven is ours now and eternally, it has still to be won. Yet another paradox, and one which we should have been prepared for all along!

But is it worth winning? you may ask. Has your tour, then, beginning with eager with hope, ended in disappointment? If so, it could be because you failed to comply with the conditions of entry, and in particular just read about the experiments instead of carrying them out. The remedy is obvious!

Another reason could be that you expect to take on the joy of Heaven without beginning to pay its price — namely, that you take on the will of Heaven. Here, to be happy is to be happy with everything that Heaven decrees, actually to *intend* whatever's going on. Which isn't quite so hard as may seem: the secret is to *attend* to it. Turning your attention around, come back again and again to the ever-new discovery that right here you have nothing whatever with which to resist what's presented.⁷

But it's more than likely that, inspite of our growing habit of *dis-appearing in favour of* what's appearing, we still find Heaven sadly lacking in heavenly bliss. At this point our guides urge us to take heart: this continuing sense of gloom is normal and indeed a good sign: it goes to demonstrate and establish our sincerity! We are now in Heaven for Heaven's sake, for the sake of the bare truth however sombre, and no longer for the pay-off: and truly the place *is* disappointing, *is* commonplace and neutral, *is* grey and overcast or even black as night, no less than blazing with joy! Heaven's realism forbids us to pretend otherwise. Here, in fact, is our concluding paradox. Just *how* Heaven can be radiant bliss itself yet so dull, just *how* it can be laughter-filled infant's playground yet a blood-soaked arena. just *how* its air can be so bright and clear and carefree yet heavy with all Earth's tears and groans — this mystery is revealed only to experience, and then defies description. The perfect resolution of this most poignant of all Heaven's contradictions will become more evident as we grow acclimatized.⁸ Meanwhile, let's enjoy what glimpses come our way. And let's go bald-headed for what's so, for Heaven as truth rather than Heaven as joy, and the joy will surprise in its own good time and in all its fullness.⁹ It's quite safe here, stored up eternally in this its own place, for us to claim as we will.¹⁰

⁶ The realised being does not see the world as different from himself.

⁷ Complete surrender is impossible in the beginning but partial surrender is possible for all. In course of time it will lead to complete surrender.

— Ramana Maharshi

⁸ If there is pain, let it be; it is also part of Self and the Self is perfect.

⁹ One must be ready to sacrifice everything for the Truth.

¹⁰ Happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realise Oneself in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness.

— Ramana Maharshi

A STATION PASSED THROUGH

(Chapter II)

By Arthur Osborne

In our issue of January 1983, we had published the first instalment of the autobiography of the founder-editor, Sri Arthur Osborne, and we now have the pleasure to continue the series, with the second instalment in this issue.

THE NEXT powerful influence on my life was the Yorkshire Moors. Perhaps it could be described as a vision of beauty — the long sweep of the hills, the heather glowing purple in the distance and springy underfoot, the profusion of wild flowers — marsh orchids and meadowsweet in the valley, tall mauve thistles on the hills, and many others — the wild strawberries growing by the roadside and above all, the sombre pine-woods with the wind moaning through them. And yet I have known beautiful country before and have known it since, and never had it such power over me. I loved it in rain and mist as well as in sunshine. It became connected in my mind with the Norse legends and the vital power of the Northlands. It seemed too sacred to speak about.

The last time we spent our summer holidays there, it must have been when I was about fifteen. The spell was as strong as ever. It was then that I wrote my first sonnet. I was sitting alone on a hillside and took out a new notebook that I happened to have in my breast pocket and wrote a sonnet about the moors on the first page. I decided to write one on each page and give it to my mother for a birthday present when the notebook was full. I don't know whether I ever wrote another poem in it; I certainly never gave it to any one. In the same holiday I wrote a lyric on the moors and pine-trees which I long regarded as a great poem. Juvenile as it was, it was written with genuine inspiration. I have long since forgotten it.

The same holiday we made friends with a local farmer, whom I will call Bob Thorpe, an

uncouth-looking fellow, unshaven, with a broad North Riding accent, and yet a great lover of beauty and reader of poetry. When he sat on the hillside beside me, reciting Tennyson and Milton, there was much less of an accent in his speech. He too loved the moorlands. Instead of a compact farm in the valley around his farm house he had his fields scattered on the various hills because he loved walking from hill to hill. There were those who said that it was also because it gave him an excuse for walking over the squire's ground and that he left a trail of rabbit snares as he went, in fact that poaching was as much a business with him as farming.

I never liked games, neither cricket nor football nor the lighter games such as tennis and badminton. I played as much as was inescapable at school and no more. On the other hand I loved gardening. We had an orchard behind the house and a garden for growing flowers and vegetables, and my father and I did all the work of it. Whether it was the heavy work of digging and manuring or sowing seeds, pruning fruit trees, even weeding, I loved the very contact with the earth and the growing things. When, therefore, harvest started and Bob Thrope let me work for him as an unpaid labourer it was he who was doing me a favour. We worked from first daylight to dusk, taking time off at midday to rest in the shade and eat the cold meal that the womenfolk brought to the field for us. It was an old-fashioned, simple reaper and we bound the sheaves by hand and arranged them in stooks. I had never spent so enjoyable a holiday.

Farming appealed to me and might have fulfilled my nature but my father had other

plans for me and would not consider such a possibility.

When I say, that working on the land, supposing it to have been possible, would have been the only fulfilment of my life, that does not mean the missing it was any cause for regret; indeed, it was a cause for rejoicing. The only real measure of success in life is the state of mind and character one has attained when the time comes to leave it. The only full success is spiritual enlightenment, realization of the Self. The life in a man is returning ineluctably to its Source, to Oneness with the Self, like a river to the ocean. This lifetime is an episode on the path, and all that matters is the distance from the goal when the episode ends. This depends on two things: first on the position from which this lifetime begins, that is to say the stage of the road already attained in past existences, whether human or not; secondly on the wisdom and determination with which one presses forward in this lifetime. There is no injustice in the different stages from which men begin their life's course or in the different degrees of understanding and determination with which they are endowed, for that concerns only speed, and impatience is a purely human disease. The difference does not affect the universal order of the final outcome. Indeed from the viewpoint of the universal order the courses men follow can be compared rather to rivers flowing into the ocean than to men trudging the road on a pilgrimage — a lifetime representing not the whole course of the river but only a certain stretch of it. Even though some meander or stagnate or even turn backwards, while others flow swift and strong, all plunge finally into the same ocean. There is not even any question of earlier or later, since time does not come into it when the rivers, courses are viewed as a whole from the air. But for the individual time does make a difference. So long as he feels himself to be an individual, the striving is real and it is the symbol of the pilgrims that applies, not that of rivers. And for the pilgrim wasted time is wasted opportunity. A whole lifetime, a whole day's journey

SEARCH

By S.M. Kaul

**About which path to choose they fight
With arguments hot and erudite.
Some would scale the mountain high
Or torture their bodies; others repeat
A sacred Name a million times.
In deeds of charity others invest.
All, all are in search of Him who dwells
Here in the Heart. Look, find Him there.**

on the pilgrimage, may be wasted, idling by the roadside, wandering afield, or even going back; and then the next day's journey will be more arduous and its starting point less advantageous.

It is true that by no means all envisage life as a purposeful journey. Happy are those who do and who act on the knowledge; but even those who do not are advancing or regressing according to whether they weaken or strengthen the grip of the ego, cutting some of its tentacles or putting out new ones. Fundamentally, the weakening and final dissolution of the ego is the purpose of all religions; and it is religion which is most efficacious for accomplishing this task, although selfless service of others, and even of animals and plants, can also be effective to some extent. Whatever weakens the ego is good, whatever strengthens it bad. Thus, it may be advantageous for a person to be uprooted rather than to strike root. Certainly it was for me. If destiny had closed the circle, leading me to contentment on a Yorkshire farm, the journey might have ended there and this lifetime been wasted. As it happened, this episode was like a station that the train stops at long enough to look out of the window and then travels on.

(To be continued)

The Speciality of Ramana and His Teachings

By Prof. N.R. Krishnamurti Aiyer

RAMANA THE MAN

MAHARSHI RAMANA is a *jnani* of Himalayan stature. At first sight one sees in him the simplest among the ordinary run of men. His simplicity conceals his real grandeur. He is a playful child among children, a common man among common men, an unassuming beggar among the begging fraternity, perfectly at home among men, women, children, animals and birds as well.

He is a most rational scientist of the soul, strictly conforming to the canons of modern science in his probing research of the most secret aspects of man, life and the universe. Without breathing a word about God, he leads men to live a godly life. An atheist or agnostic who comes to have a verbal bout with him is floored at the very first attack, and gets transformed into a staunch believer in God.

RAMANA'S TEACHING

The technique of his teaching is thoroughly modern, and scientific to the core. Teachers of science put their pupils to practical work before leading them on to theory. The pupil gets a practical knowledge of the electron by experimental work with the cloud-chamber and the electron-microscope before delving in the literature dealing with them. This is like taking one in aeroplane and circling over Mount Everest before the novice is taught the technique of climbing the Himalayas to reach Mount Everest.

The Maharshi directs a steady piercing look into the eyes of the devotee. Two pairs of eyes are inter-locked in tight embrace. The spiritual energy of the sage grips the ego of the disciple and plunges into the *SELF* in his *HEART*. The disciple thus gets a foretaste of the *SELF*. Later on, by studying the theoretical aspect and practising the technique of *SELF-ENQUIRY* and assiduous introspective probing,



the pupil reaches the end point already shown to him by the Master.

In the naked form of the Maharshi one finds a most charming figure overflowing with the milk of human kindness, and spreading around the sweet aroma of peace impregnated with bliss inexpressible. We find in him the great Rishi of ancient India, besides a most rationalistic scientist of the modern age.

Whereas men of science die after a life period this great scientist of the soul lives as an eternal Master in the *Maha-lingam* (Effigy of *SHIVA*) installed over his Samadhi in Sri Ramanasramam at Tiruvannamalai. From that *Lingam* the energy of the Maharshi is gushing forth as from a perennial fountain giving a foretaste of the *SELF* to the devotee who sits in meditation in the neighbourhood of the Samadhi. The Maharshi shines as the eternal Master in Sri Ramanasramam as also in any part of this wide world and the devotees also feel Him here, there and everywhere.

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Morality and Self-Knowledge

in the light of the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana

By Michael James

The following article was written in response to an invitation from the Editors of *The American Theosophist*, and was published in a condensed form under the title 'The Ethical Teachings of Sri Ramana' in their 1984 Fall Special Issue (vol. 72, No 10). Since the article is quite lengthy, we are publishing it here in *The Mountain Path* in two separate instalments.

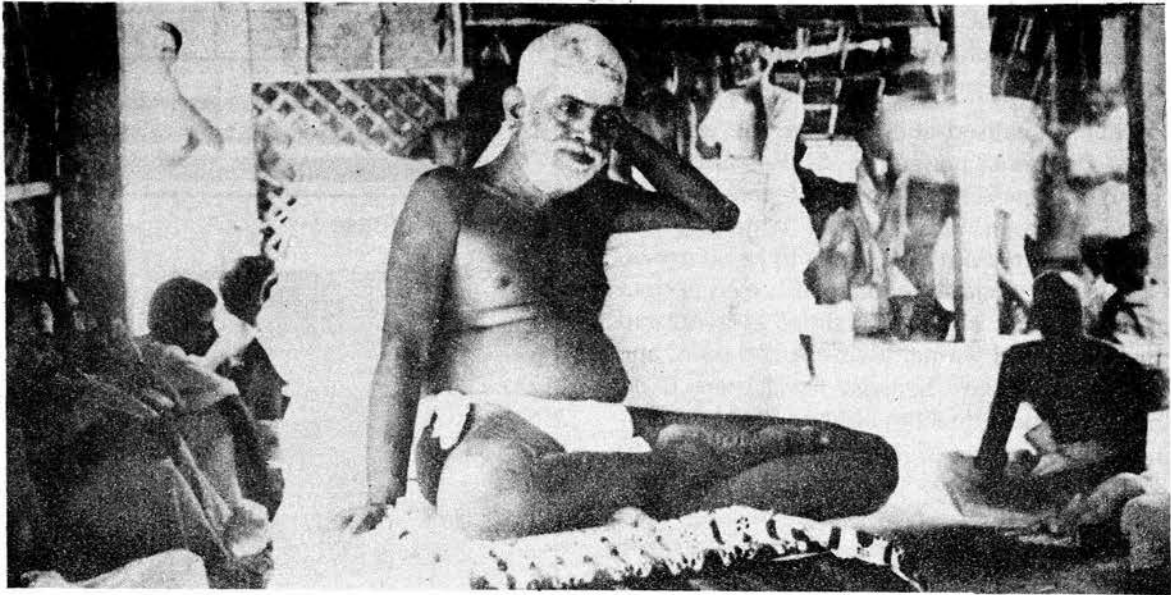
THE LIFE and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi offer a radical and complete solution to the problem of morality and right conduct. His teachings are born not from mere intellectual understanding of the problems of life, not from speculative thinking, nor even from study of scriptures and holy books, but from his own direct experience of reality, and there lies their true value and authenticity.

The experience of reality dawned in Sri Ramana in July 1896, when he was a sixteen year-old school boy. Prior to the dawning of this experience he was a seemingly ordinary child. He was born in a middle-class and hitherto undistinguished brahmin family, and he was studying in a Christian missionary high school in the temple-town of Madurai in South India. He showed the normal piety which was to be expected of a child born in the inherently religious atmosphere of India, but there were no outward signs in him by which his elders or his friends could recognise the great spirituality which lay in a potential form within him. He had attended the normal Bible classes at school, but had taken no special interest in them. The only religious book which had made a profound impression upon him was the *Periya Puranam*, which relates the lives of sixty-three Saivite saints and which he had happened to come across and read in the fall of 1895. But the impact which this book made upon him was apparently not noticed by others, and he continued to lead the normal day-to-day life of a school boy. Other than the *Periya Puranam* and portions of the Bible, he had probably not read or listened to any other religious works, and he certainly

had not read or heard any works on philosophy or Vedanta. In later years, while writing the life of Sri Ramana in a long Tamil verse, a disciple of his referred to him as "the Sage who attained the knowledge of *Brahman* (the absolute reality) without even knowing the word *Brahman*."¹

So it was with no philosophical training or prior spiritual practices that Sri Ramana all of a sudden realised the truth. It happened (if at all such a profound spiritual experience can be called a 'happening') one day in July 1896 when he was sitting alone in an upstairs room of his uncle's small house in a sidelane of the bustling centre of Madurai. While he was sitting there, probably attending to his studies, an intense fear of death arose in him. This was not the first time he had thought about death. In fact, it seems that the thought of death had been lingering in the back of his mind for the past four and half years, since the day in February 1892 when his father passed away. At that time, when all his relatives began weeping, the young Sri Ramana remarked, "Father himself is lying here. Why do they say he has gone?" Someone who was present then told him, "If this body were your father, would he not show affection and speak to you with love? Therefore your father has gone". This answer prompted Sri Ramana to begin thinking, 'What is death?' While his relatives were all weeping, he was quietly pondering over this question, and after the corpse was cremated he arrived at the understanding, "That which sees and

¹ *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* by M. Sivaprakasam Pillai, lines 3 & 4.



hears through the senses and that which makes the body walk, talk and act, is only 'I'. Whereas I now know this 'I' in me, my father's 'I' has left the body".²

On that day, the fear of death made Sri Ramana's mind take an altogether new turn. He had already understood by reasoning that the 'I' is something different from the body, but until that day he had not made any intense effort to find out what the real nature of this 'I' is. Now when the great fear of death arose in him, and across in him with such intensity that the physical symptoms of death began to manifest in his body, he turned his attention keenly towards the mere feeling 'I' in order to find out 'Who am I?' As a result of this spontaneous turning of his attention towards the 'I' the knowledge of the true nature of 'I' dawned on him in a flash, and he thus came to know by direct experience that the 'I' is not only different from the body, but is also the unchanging and ever-perfect reality which is the source and base of the whole universe.

In short, on that day Sri Ramana realised himself to be none other than the real Self, which all Vedantic scriptures declare to be

Brahman, the absolute reality, and whose nature is described as existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). That real Self is ever pure and adjunctless, it is unlimited by time and space and unbound by names and forms, it is undivided and one without a second, it is the base upon which the entire world-manifestation appears, it is the light by which all things are known, and it exists and shines in every sentient being as the consciousness 'I am'. Though nothing could exist without this real Self, it nevertheless remains unaffected and unchanging in spite of any amount of changes which may appear to take place within it.

What then is the connection between the perfect experience of Self-knowledge which thus dawned upon Sri Ramana, and the problem of morality, of right and wrong action, with which all of us are faced in our day-to-

² This important incident in the early life of Sri Bhagavan is not mentioned in most of his biographies, but was related by him to Sri Ranganatha Aiyar, one of his staunch devotees and a childhood friend, who in turn related to Sri Sadhu Om, from whom the present writer heard it. A reference which Sri Bhagavan once made to this incident is also recorded by Paul Brunton in *Conscious Immortality*, p. 68

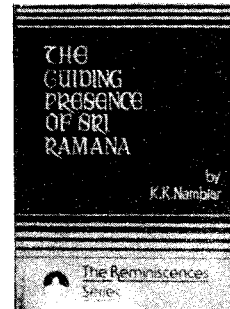
day lives? What can we learn from his experience and teachings, and how will they help us to solve the problem of morality?

Having realised and become one with the state of eternal perfection, Sri Ramana automatically understood the root-cause of the appearance of imperfection, which to our normal limited outlook seems to be so prevalent in this world. The real Self is ever perfect and devoid of all such dualities as good and bad, right and wrong, pleasure and pain, and likes and dislikes, because for it there is no other. All these dualities arise only when otherness seems to exist, and otherness seems to exist only when we limit our true nature of existence-consciousness-bliss by feeling 'I am this body'. 'I am so-and-so', 'I am a finite individual and the rest of the world is different from me'. Only to this limited 'I' do all problems, both moral and otherwise, arise.

What is it that prompts a man to do immoral actions, to do what is wrong and what harms other creatures? All immoral actions are rooted only in desire, and in the inevitable counterpart of desire, namely fear. That is why great religions such as Buddhism point out that desire is the cause of all evil and suffering. But why is it that we have desire? If we know by true experience that our real nature is unlimited existence-consciousness-bliss, and that therefore nothing is other than us, then for what could we have any desire? But because we limit ourself as an individual by feeling 'I am this body', 'I am so-and-so', we see the whole world as something other than us, and we desire those things which we feel will be beneficial to us, the limited individual, and we fear those things which we feel will be detrimental to us. Then, prompted by desire and fear, by likes and dislikes, we begin to do actions to achieve what we desire or like and to ward off what we fear or dislike.

If our minds are gross and unrefined, like those of many people, the actions which we do to achieve our desired ends will be harmful to other creatures. But when by the grace of God our minds become a little more pure, we

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begin to feel that we should not do such actions as will bring harm to others. Such actions, we begin to feel, are wrong or immoral actions, while those actions which do good to others, or which at least do not do harm to others, are right or moral actions. But because we are weak, and because our desires and fears are strong, we are often unable to do the actions which we know to be right or to avoid doing the actions which we know to be wrong. Moreover, with our poor power of discrimination, which is usually clouded or coloured by our likes and dislikes, we are often unable to know correctly which action is right and which is wrong. Indeed, there can never be any perfect definition of right and wrong action. An action which is felt to be right under one circumstance, will appear to be wrong under another circumstance. Moreover, any one action may have many repercussions, some of which may be good and some of which may be bad. How is the limited human intellect to judge what is right and what is wrong? So long as we perform actions, we have to try to judge whether each action is right or wrong, but our judgement can never be perfect.

What is right and wrong? There is no standard by which to judge something to be right and another to be wrong. Opinions differ according to the nature of the individuals and according to the surroundings.³

Who is to judge what is right and what is wrong? According to previous *samskaras* (tendencies of mind), each one regards something or other as right. It is only when the reality is known, what is right can be known.⁴

Until we know the true nature of our own Self, which is the reality, even if we have the best of intentions we will sometimes decide to do an action which will later turn out to have wrong consequences. Since we can never be sure of the consequences and repercussions of our actions, moral philosophers generally tell us that we should always be sure that our intentions are pure, and that it is the intention

with which an action is done that ultimately decides whether it is a right or wrong action. This is no doubt a good guide to action, but it is not a real solution to the question of right and wrong, because we can never really be sure how pure our intentions are. We may feel that we are doing good actions only for the benefit of others, but lurking in the back of our minds will be some desire for appreciation or at least for the self-satisfaction of feeling that we are good people. Indeed, if we are truly impartial with ourselves, we will be able to perceive that there is a subtly selfish motive behind even our most unselfish actions. It is in fact impossible for us to avoid selfishness in some subtle form or other so long as we limit ourselves as a separate individual. In order to overcome selfishness, we must overcome the sense of individual selfhood; in other words, we must overcome the feeling that we are finite individuals and that the world and all the creatures in it are something separate from us.

It is clear, therefore, that there can be no perfect or ultimate solution to the problem of morality so long as we continue to feel ourselves to be limited individuals. And we cannot in actual experience give up the feeling that we are limited individuals until we attain true and direct knowledge of our own real Self.

When we attain direct knowledge of the real Self, as Sri Ramana did at the age of sixteen, we will realise that the whole universe and all the living beings in it are not separate from ourselves. Then what harm will we do to anyone? Just as no man in his right mind will do any harm to his own body, so a person who has attained Self-knowledge will never do any harm to anyone in the world. Therefore whatever action is done by such a person will automatically be a right action. Since a person in the state of Self-knowledge has realised that he is not a limited individual self but is

³ *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, 1984 ed., p. 428. All portions in this article which are indented are sayings of Sri Bhagavan which have been recorded in various books or are translation of his own writings in Tamil.

⁴ *Day by day with Bhagavan*, 1977 ed., p. 304.

the real Self of all creatures, all his actions will necessarily be free from even the least taint of selfishness. This is what Sri Ramana meant when he once said, "An *Atma-jnani* (one who has attained Self-knowledge) alone can be a good *karma-yogi* (one who performs actions without any selfish motive)."⁵

The fact that this teaching given by Sri Ramana is not mere theoretical doctrine but the practical truth, is clear from his own life, which was characterised by all the highest virtues and qualities which man could aspire for — humility, patience, forbearance, compassion, freedom from desire and fear, and a love which was equal to all creatures. These and other virtues were not cultivated by him, but blossomed in him effortlessly and naturally as a result of his Self knowledge. Numerous incidents can be told from his life which illustrate these qualities, but possibly we can understand his state of perfection more clearly from the way in which others reacted towards him rather than from his own actions. Firstly and most tellingly, there is the reactions of animals: monkeys, squirrels, dogs, cows, crows, deer, snakes, leopards and other animals were all attracted to him and felt no fear in his presence. Indeed, they almost seemed to look upon him as one of their own kind. What was it that made them react towards him in this manner? It was his universal love. Instinctively animals were able to recognise in him a love which they could not find elsewhere, a love which was equal to all and which was devoid of both desire and fear.

Similar was the case with human beings. People of all countries and all religions were attracted to him. Indians, Europeans and Americans, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Parsis and Buddhists, the educated and the uneducated, the rich and the poor, the believer and the agnostics — all alike felt drawn to him. A few were no doubt attracted by his rational and convincingly authentic teachings, but most were probably not much interested in any teaching or philosophy. They felt attracted by him as a person. They felt in his presence

a peace, a consolation and a joy which they could not understand, but which they could not help being drawn by. And his mysterious power of attraction is not a phenomena which existed only during the lifetime of his body. Indeed, it is possibly experienced even more now that it was then. More than thirty-four years have now passed since his body passed away, but still more and more people are attracted to him, by reading his teachings, by hearing about his life, or merely seeing his photograph; somehow they feel bound to him by strong ties of love, and they instinctively look upon him as their God and *Sadguru*.

What is the nature of Sri Ramana's love, that it is thus able to attract the minds of men and beasts so gently, yet so impellingly? It is a love which is both universal and divine. It is not the love of one individual who loves all other individuals, but the love of the Self of all who loves itself. In this lies its special quality. Any love which we have for others is only a partial love and not a complete one, because in some subtle way or other we always reserve some love for ourself. Only that love which sees no creature and no object as other than itself, is perfect and complete love. Such otherless love is the love of an *Atma-jnani*, one who has known and become one with the real Self. Such is the love referred to by Sri Ramana in the following verse:

O Arunachala (the real Self), he who with a mind surrendered to You and seeing You always, without a sense of otherness loves everything as Your form, triumphs having drowned in You, who are the form of bliss.⁶

Only when we experience all things as ourself, can we truly love all as ourself. And only he who loves all as himself, is a truly unselfish person; he alone is a person whose actions are perfectly moral.

How then can we attain such a love in which we experience and love all creatures as our own Self? Truly such a love is not some-

⁵ *Maharshi's Gospel*, 1969, ed., p. 22.

⁶ *Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam*, verse 5.

thing to be newly attained. It is ever inherent in us, indeed, it is our own very nature. But it appears to be hidden because of our having limited ourself as a separate individual by feeling 'I am this body', 'I am so-and-so'. There is no wrong in self-love. In fact, it is unavoidable, because it is our true nature. The wrong lies only in our having limited ourself. We are truly the unlimited and undivided Self which is the sole reality of all things and all creatures, so by loving ourself we are loving all. But when we wrongly limit ourself as an individual, our natural self-love also becomes limited and takes the form of desires and fears.

Desire and fear are both only thoughts which arise in the mind, and like all thoughts they depend for their existence upon the first and root thought, the feeling 'I am the body.'

The thought 'This fleshy body alone is I' is indeed the one thread on which the various other thoughts are strung⁷

If we did not identify the body as 'I', we would not feel anything to be other than us, and hence we would not have desire for anything or fear of anything. So in order to put an end to desire and fear, which are the cause of all immoral actions, we must put an end to the sense of separate individuality which arises when we feel 'I am this body', 'I am so-and-so'. For putting an end to the sense of individuality, Sri Ramana taught two methods, the path of Self-enquiry and the path of self-surrender.

In the path of Self-enquiry the sense of individuality is destroyed by knowledge, while in the path of self-surrender it is destroyed by love. In Self-enquiry our power of attention is turned towards the feeling 'I' in order to find out 'Who am I? What is the true nature of this I-feeling?' If we turn our attention towards the feeling 'I' as keenly and as vigilantly as Sri Ramana did at the age of sixteen, then the knowledge of its true nature will dawn spontaneously and all the limitations which are at present mixed with it will automatically drop off. In the path of self-surrender, on the other hand, the individual 'I' is erased by one's surrendering

all one's likes and dislikes to God and by one's denying oneself with the feeling. 'Thy will be done, not my will; Thou alone art, not I'. In the advanced state of practice, these two paths actually merge into one, because knowledge and love are like the two sides of one piece of paper. In one of his stray verses Sri Ramana says:

Attention to Self is supreme devotion to God, because God exists as Self.⁸

To go more deeply into the subject of the practice of Self-enquiry and Self-surrender would take us too far away from the subject on hand. Suffice it to say, therefore, that if either of these paths is followed to its end, the sense of individuality will be completely destroyed and the knowledge of the real Self alone will shine. When Self-knowledge thus dawns, all things will be experienced as not other than one's real Self, and hence one will have love for everything as oneself.

However, for most of us it is not possible to attain Self-knowledge immediately. Even after we come to know about the paths of Self-enquiry and self-surrender, our desires and attachments are too strong for us to succeed all at once in attaining the goal of Self-knowledge. Even for earnest aspirants, some time will usually elapse between their first embarking upon the path and their attaining the

⁷ *Atma-Vidya Kirtanam*, verse 2. Some people whose understanding about themselves is purely intellectual, believe that they do not identify the gross body of flesh as 'I', and they maintain that they identify as 'I' some more subtle part of their being, such as the mind, intellect or soul. But if we scrutinise ourself deeply, we will understand that our whole life as an individual is centred only round the subtle but strong feeling 'I am this body'. When this feeling is totally absent, as in deep sleep no thoughts arise and there is no objective experience or awareness. Only when we identify a body as 'I', as in waking and dream, do other thoughts arise and do we experience the world we see around us as an object other than 'I'. That is why Sri Ramana always taught that the mind, ego, soul or sense of individuality is in essence nothing but the feeling 'I am this body', which is the root of all thoughts and all objective experience.

⁸ *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, verse B-13.

goal. Few of us indeed are as spiritually ripe as Sri Ramana was at the age of sixteen, and hence few of us can attain the goal as he did upon the very first attempt at Self-enquiry. Therefore, in the period which elapses between our embarking upon the path and our attaining the goal, we remain as individuals and hence we continue to be faced with the problem of right and wrong action.

Knowing that the problem of morality will be solved perfectly only when we attain Self-knowledge, can we afford to ignore all questions of right and wrong? Obviously not. The question of right and wrong action cannot be ignored until we actually attain Self-knowledge. When Self-knowledge is attained, we will no longer identify the body or mind as 'I' and hence we will experience no sense of doership. But until then we will continue to identify the body and mind as 'I', and hence we will continue to feel that all the actions of the body and mind are done by us. So long as we have this sense of doership, we will have to experience the results of our actions.

If you are not the body and do not have the idea 'I am the doer', the consequences of your good and bad actions will not affect you. Why do you say about the actions the body performs 'I do this' or 'I did that'? As long as you identify yourself with the body like that, you are affected by the consequences of the actions.⁹

So long as the feeling 'I am doing' is there, one must experience the result of one's acts, whether they are good or bad When the feeling that 'I am doing' is lost, nothing affects a man. Unless one realises the Self, the feeling 'I am doing' will never vanish.¹⁰

If we are the doer of actions (*karmas*) which are like seeds, we shall experience the resulting fruits. But when one knows oneself by enquiring 'Who is the doer of actions?' the sense of doership will disappear and hence the three *karmas* will slip away. This is the state of liberation, which is eternal.¹¹

**THE MAHESWARA
THE VEIL, THE VEIL, I.**

By Noona Osborne

**All the birds have joined my plea,
They call and cry for gifts of love,
Earth is not enough, and tell
Me how to love a bird? Let
Him be, let him be free to dance
The dance of the silken veil,
And earth is not enough, the stars
They love, the love of Ram. Some fly —
They fly in solitude, in soli-
tude, yet not alone, within
The glory of the universe,
Within the fire of love from all
— the sun on all the earth,
Unspoilt by the concrete there;
Consciousness in all the air,
And everywhere and everywhere,
"" And I love "" whispered the light,
Shining through the floating leaves,
The wind dances — wind — dancing wind —
Starlight whispered: "" All your treasures
Have been stole away, all your
Treasures turned to ashes, while you
Danced the dance of the silken veil, ""
"" Still I love, "" whispered the breeze,
"" I love, "" whispered the silence.**

All actions are like seeds. Good actions will yield good fruit, which will be experienced by the individual in the form of pleasure, while bad actions will yield bad fruit, which will be experienced by him in the form of sufferings. But that is not an end of the matter.

⁹ *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p. 222.

¹⁰ *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, 1973 ed., p. 65.

¹¹ *Ulladu Narpadu*, verse 38. The three *karmas* referred to in this verse are (1) *agamyā karma*, that is, the actions that the individual newly performs in this life, (2) *sanchita karma*, that is, all the results of his past *agamyā karmas* which are now stored up and which are yet to be experienced by him, and (3) *prarabdha karma*, that is, the portion of the results of his past *agamyā karmas* which God has selected from his *sanchita* and ordained for him to experience in this lifetime.

The fruit of action having perished (by being experienced in the form of pleasure or pain), will as seeds make one fall into the ocean of action and hence will not give liberation.¹²

When a seed is planted, it grows into a tree, and the tree yields fruit. But the fruit consists of two parts, the edible part and the seeds. Though the edible part of the fruit is eaten, the seeds remain to develop into new trees and to yield more fruit. Similar is the case with the fruit of actions (*karma-phala*). If we do a bad action, its fruit will in due course be experienced by us in the form of pain or suffering. But even after experiencing the fruit of that action, its seed will remain in the form of a tendency (*vasana*) to do such an action again. Therefore by doing a wrong action, we are creating tendencies to do more wrong actions, which will obviously lead us more and more into bondage.

Then what about good actions? Will they not help us to overcome bondage? If good actions are done with a desire to enjoy their fruit, they will also bind us, though possibly in a more pleasant bondage than that which is created by bad actions. Then how can good actions help us to attain liberation? They can only help us if we do them without desire for enjoying their fruit, and with the attitude of offering their fruit to God.

Desireless action (*nishkama karma*) dedicated to God will purify the mind and thereby show the way to liberation.¹³

If we perform good actions in a spirit of desirelessness, they will purify our minds and will thereby enable us to understand and practise the true path to liberation, namely the twin paths of Self-enquiry and self-surrender. But if we perform even good actions with the desire to enjoy their fruit, they may enable us to enjoy a heavenly after-life for some time, but they will not purify our minds and hence they will not help us to attain liberation, the state of Self-knowledge.

Therefore if we aspire for Self-knowledge, we should not only do good actions but should do them in a spirit of desirelessness and with

**I who perceive
appear to perceive myself
but truly
I do not perceive
I have not left my abode
I am crystal purity
consciousness**

By **Frederick Beck**

the attitude of offering their fruit to God. Any aspirant who feels that he is aiming for the highest goal and that he can therefore afford to ignore all moral injunctions is very much confused in his understanding.

A heavy building raised on a foundation which is not firmly built, will shamefully collapse and be ruined. Therefore aspirants who strive hard on the spiritual path should from the very outset adhere strictly and in every way to the prescribed observances such as devotion and desirelessness.¹⁴

If those whose moral conduct is unbecoming even to the life of an ordinary God-believer, take to the study of Vedantic scriptures, they will be defiling the renowned and extremely pure Vedanta.¹⁵

The experience of Vedanta can be attained only by those who have completely given up desire. For those who have desire it is very far away. Therefore those who have desire should strive to put an end to the delusion of desire for other objects by having desire for God, who is free from desire.¹⁶

(to be continued)

¹² *Upadesa Undiyar*, verse 2.

¹³ *Ibid.*, verse 3.

¹⁴ *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, verse 826.

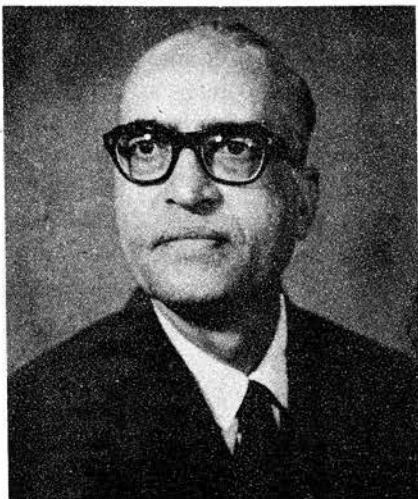
¹⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 142.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, v. 149.

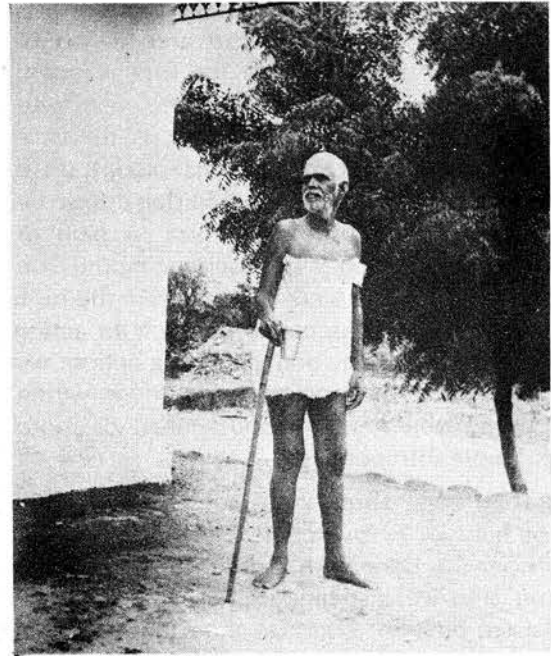
How I Came to Bhagavan Sri Ramana

By Gobindram H. Daswani

RIGHT FROM the age of 14, I had an inclination towards spiritual matters. In our house the atmosphere was religious. My respected Father Bhai Harchandrai A. Daswani was highly spiritual with profound faith in and devotion to his Guru. He used to get up at 4 in the morning meditate and sing *slokas* in praise of Guru and God. He used to encourage me on the divine path and I started reading the *Bhagavat Gita*, *Sri Grantsahib*, lives of saints and sages later on I got greater interest in the Vedanta. My devoted father was a Managing Trustee of a trust "Wadhymal Assanand Sadh-bella Ashram" at Gandhi Garden, Karachi (Sind). He was serving saints by looking after their needs. He expired in 1943 and as per his instructions, other Trustees appointed me in his place. This gave me a good opportunity to come in contact with many saints some of whom had a very high spiritual status. I used to ask them several questions. I went to Haridwar, Kashi, Jagannathpuri, Amritsar, Mathura, Gokul Brindavan, Panja-Sahib in search of a perfect Master (Guru) but I could not find one. Prayed to the Almighty to show me such a perfect



Gobindram H. Daswani



Master who would end my doubts (questions) and give me Liberation i.e. *Jivan-Mukti*.

After sometime, I met a relative of mine who was a devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. He told me "In these days there is no sage, a perfect Being like Sri Ramana Maharshi who has totally renounced the world after realising the Supreme-Being at the age of 16. His mere presence is enough to remove your doubts. He can be your true Master". Saying this he shed tears of devotion. In 1948, I was transferred from Standard Vacuum Oil Co (India) Karachi, to their New Delhi Office due to partition.

In December 1948, I went from New Delhi to Sri Ramana Maharshi. I contacted *Sarvadhikari* Sri Niranjanananda Swami on 1.12.1948, who told me that any one could see Ramana without any appointment whatsoever and ask questions. I entered the Hall and saw

Bhagavan Ramana seated on a simple wooden cot with Indians and many foreigners sitting on a clean floor. I bowed down to Maharshi Ramana and quietly sat down. There was absolute silence. I had my doubts written down. Ten minutes passed and my mind got a little impatient asking "What is the speciality about this place?" When this thought arose within me, Bhagavan Ramana looked graciously at me and removed all my doubts, with His merciful penetrating look. I shed tears. His look cleared all my doubts. I cannot forget those luminous eyes. The burden of my mind was removed in His Presence and the mind was immersed in the bliss of Self for sometime. The inner voice rose to tell me 'Study the

Upanishads and Bhagavan Ramana will guide you. Don't worry. You will have no spritual problem'. The peace of mind was limitless which made me to cancel my plan to go to places of pilgrimage like Rameshwar etc.,

At the very moment when Sri Ramana looked at me graciously, I accepted Him as my perfect spiritual Guru. After 10 days I left Sri Ramana Ashram. The force of His divine Grace is still working even today though He has left his body. He is present everywhere as the "Self" though his physical body has disappeared. He has not gone. Did he not say, "where can I go? I am always here". True are His words, even now. He is still a beacon Light. Light of Lights!

THE CITY

By C. Kavafis

You said: 'I shall go to another land, I shall go to another sea. Another city shall be founded better than this. All I have tried to do was doomed to fail, and my heart is like a body dead and buried. For how long will my thoughts stay in this state of desolation? Wherever I turn my eyes, no matter where I look, I see the black ruins of my life, here, where I have spent so many years and wasted and ruined them.'

You will not find new places, you will not find other seas. The city will follow you. And you will grow old in the same streets, in the same neighbourhoods; in these same houses your hair will grow white.

It is always this city that you will reach. Do not hope that you will ever get anywhere else; for you there is no ship, no road. As you have ruined your life here in this small corner, so you have ruined it in the whole world.

Any path is only a path, and there is no affront, to oneself or to others, in dropping it if that is what your heart tells you Look at every path closely and deliberately. Try it as many times as you think necessary. Then ask yourself, and yourself alone, one question Does this path have a heart? If it does, the path is good; if it doesn't it is of no use.

— Carlos, The Teachings of Don Juan

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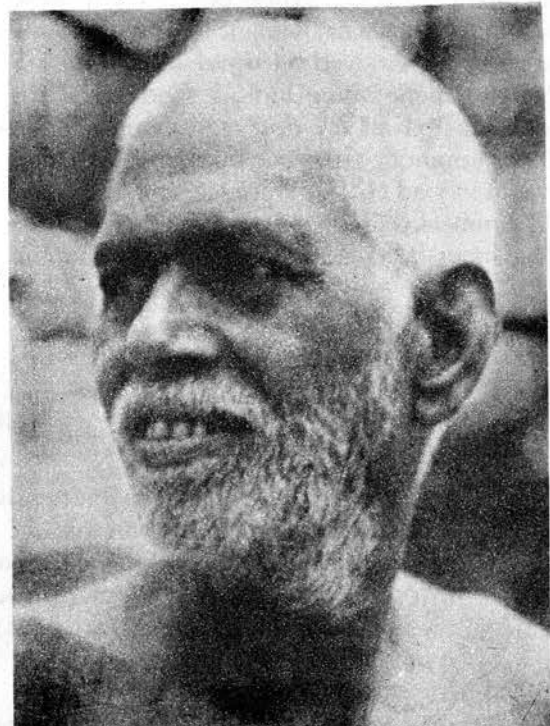
Sri Bhagavan's Introduction to Vivekachudamani

Translated by Sadhu Om and Michael James

FROM THE very early days of Sri Bhagavan's stay in Tiruvannamalai, devotees were able to recognize in Him the highest spiritual attainment, and hence those devotees who were earnest seekers of truth used to come and place their doubts before Him. Since many of their doubts arose from the books which they had read but which they had not been able to understand fully, they used to bring their books to Him and ask Him to explain the points which they were unable to comprehend.

Probably the first devotee who thus began to bring spiritual books to Sri Bhagavan for clarification was Sri Palaniswamy, who in the years 1897 or 1898, when Sri Bhagavan was living in Curumurtham and the adjoining mango grove, started to bring Him works in Tamil and Malayalam, the import of which Sri Bhagavan would effortlessly explain. Another devotee who soon followed suit was Sri Gambhiram Seshayyar, who between the years 1900 and 1902, when Sri Bhagavan was living on the Hill at Virupaksha cave, used to bring Him the English lectures of Swami Vivekananda on *Raja yoga* and *Jnana yoga* and other books in order to have his doubts about them cleared.

During the same period, a Sastri from Chidambaram used to visit Sri Bhagavan, and he occasionally brought with him spiritual books in Sanskrit. Among the books which he thus brought was the *Vivekachudamani* of Sri Adi Sankara, which he left with Sri Bhagavan in the cave. On perusing this work, Sri Bhagavan not only found that it was in perfect accord with His own experience, but also found that it would be very useful for any sincere aspirant who came to Him. He therefore recommended it to Gambhiram Seshayyar. However, Seshayyar knew little or no Sanskrit, so he was unable to read the original Sanskrit



text. But in the meanwhile Palaniswami managed to borrow a copy of the Tamil verse-rendering of *Vivekachudamani* composed by Brahmasri Bhikshu Sastrigal (also known as Ulahanatha Swamigal). After seeing this Tamil version, Seshayyar wrote to the publishers in order to acquire a copy of it for himself, but for some time he received no reply. Therefore he requested Sri Bhagavan to translate the original Sanskrit text into Tamil prose so that he could easily study it.

Sri Bhagavan therefore began to write a free and explanatory paraphrase of the Sanskrit text in Tamil prose, but before He could complete it Seshayyar received a letter from the publishers of the Tamil verse-rendering saying that they were sending him a copy of it. When Seshayyar received his copy of the

verse-rendering, Sri Bhagavan felt no need to complete His prose-rendering and so laid it aside.

At about the same time, that is, in the year 1904 or thereabouts, Uddandi Nayinar, who had been serving Sri Bhagavan at Gurumurtham but who had been called back to his *math* in 1897, returned to see Sri Bhagavan. Before coming he had disposed of all his possessions, mostly for charity, and with him he brought a sum of one hundred rupees which he wished to offer to Sri Bhagavan. However, Sri Bhagavan refused to accept any money, so without His knowledge Nayinar left the amount with Gambhiram Seshayyar, requesting him to use it in any way he thought fit either for Sri Bhagavan or for any purpose of which Sri Bhagavan would approve. But for some years this sum remained idle.

One day, however, while cleaning Virupaksha cave, Krishnayyar, the nephew of Gambhiram Seshayyar, happened to come across Sri Bhagavan's incomplete translation of *Vivekachudamani*, and it occurred to him that if he could persuade Sri Bhagavan to complete it, he could use the money given by Uddandi Nayinar to have it printed. Therefore, without telling his plan to Sri Bhagavan, he missed no opportunity to request Him again and again to complete the translation which He had begun some years earlier, and his insistence was such that Sri Bhagavan finally took up the work and completed it within a few days. Only after He had completed it did Krishnayyar tell Him of his intention to have it printed. At first Sri Bhagavan demurred to the idea, saying that one Tamil translation was already available in print, but when he found that Krishnayyar could not be dissuaded, He decided to write a brief introduction (*avatarika*) in order to express the idea that such an alternative translation may also be found acceptable in the same way that a sweetmeat made from the same sweet substance but in a different form and colour is found acceptable to people of discrimination, who will enjoy the taste of the sweet substance without minding the qualities and defects of its form and colour.¹

The first edition of Sri Bhagavan's Tamil translation of *Vivekachudamani* was published in 1908 by Krishnayyar, and needless to say Uddandi Nayinar was overjoyed to see the good use to which his pious offering had been put. A second edition was published in 1916 by S. Narayana Reddiar, a third edition in 1921 by Tiruvenkata Mudaliar, and a fourth edition in 1926 by Sri Ramaniyavani Pustakalayam. Finally in 1931 a fifth edition was published by Sri Ramanasramam, and in the same year it was incorporated in the first edition of *Sri Ramana Nutrirattu* (the Tamil Collected Works of Sri Ramana).

Sri Bhagavan's Tamil rendering of *Vivekachudamani* is not a literal verse-by-verse translation. It follows the original text quite closely, but in many places the order in which the ideas are presented within each paragraph is slightly rearranged, and the ideas are often somewhat paraphrased in order to make their import more clear and precise. Indeed, devotees who know both Sanskrit and Tamil say that Sri Bhagavan's translation throws a flood of light upon the meaning of the original text and brings to the surface many of the subtle points which are merely implied but not expressly stated in Sanskrit.

However, possibly the most remarkable point to be noted about Sri Bhagavan's Tamil translation is that before He started to write it (which was probably sometime around the years 1903 or 1904), He had never studied any Sanskrit, nor had He at that time had any contact with any great Sanskrit scholars like Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni. Therefore, the fact that He was able to understand those Sanskrit verses so effortlessly and so perfectly that He could not only translate them but could also bring out all the wealth of implied meaning which lay hidden in them, can be by the fact that He was ever abiding in the real Self, which is the source of all knowledge, and that all knowledge was consequently available to

¹ This account of how Sri Bhagavan came to translate *Vivekachudamani* is based largely upon the detailed account given in *Self-Realization*, 4th edition (1944), pp.88 to 92. A briefer account of the same is also given in the 7th edition (1968), pp.70 to 71.

Him from within. His ability to translate *Vivekachudamani* without having previously studied any Sanskrit is a clear illustration of what He says in verse 29 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham* :

Know that lustre and power of intellect will automatically increase in those who have known the reality, just as the trees on this earth shine forth with all qualities such as beauty as soon as spring comes.

Moreover, the deep insight which Sri Bhagavan had into the inner meaning of the text is explained very aptly by what He Himself says in His benedictory verse to His Tamil translation of *Atma-Bodha* :

Can Sankara, the *Guru* who graciously composed *Atma-Bodha* (or who graciously revealed the knowledge of Self), be other than that Self? (Therefore) who else but He is the one who, abiding in my heart, as Self, has composed it today in Tamil?

In His introduction to *Vivekachudamani*, Sri Bhagavan not only expressed the idea that such an alternative translation may be found acceptable, but also gave a concise summary of the contents of the whole text. In fact, nearly two thirds of the introduction is one long sentence in which all the main topics dealt with in *Vivekachudamani* are enumerated.

In *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pages 315 to 318, a freely paraphrased translation by Mr. S. Krishna of Sri Bhagavan's introduction to *Vivekachudamani* is given, and a modified form of the same translation is also given in *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*. However, in this already existing translation the whole text of the introduction has been split up into many small sentences and paragraphs, and each clause has been freely expanded and paraphrased. Thus, though most of the ideas in Tamil have been conveyed in English, the exact connection between each of the ideas has to a large extent been lost.

Therefore, in the new translation of Sri Bhagavan's introduction which is given below, we have attempted to follow as closely as possible the style and manner of presentation which is found in the original. This translation

'Lord, enfold me in the depths of your heart, and there hold me, refine, purge, and set me on fire, raise me aloft, until my own self Knows utter annihilation'

— Teilhard de Chardin
1881-1955

is a literal word-for-word rendering, and as far as possible it retains the same punctuation, the same paragraphing and the same type of sentence-formation as is found in the original. Wherever we have had to split any sentence or clause which is not split in the original, or wherever we have had to deviate in any other way from the general manner of presentation found in the original, we have given a note explaining our reason for doing so. And wherever we have had to expand the sentences by using our own words in order to make the sense more clear, we have put our own words in brackets.²

Though this new literal translation may be a little more difficult to read than the old paraphrased translation, I hope that it may prove useful to those devotees who wish to know exactly what Sri Bhagavan wrote in the original Tamil. Anyway, when one translation is already available in print, the most appropriate excuse we can give for offering this new translation is the excuse which Sri Bhagavan Himself so humbly gave for His new translation of *Vivekachudamani*, namely that since it is made of the same sweet substance, people of discrimination may enjoy the taste of the substance of which it is made without minding the qualities and defects of the form and colour in which it is newly presented.

Michael James

* * * * *

² In the original Tamil text of the introduction no brackets are used, so wherever words are given within brackets in this translation it means either that they are not in the original text or, in the cases where only Sanskrit words are put between two brackets, that they are the exact words used in the original.

AVATARIKA

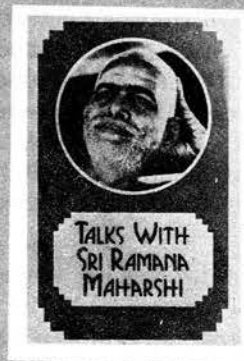
Since all living beings in the world desire that they should be happy always without misery, just as (they desire) that they should be happy as always having removed diseases and so on, which are not their own nature³, since in everyone love exists without limit only for oneself, since love does not arise except from happiness, and since there is the experience of being happy without anything in sleep, what is called happiness is only oneself⁴; when it is so, only due to the ignorance of not knowing Self, they engage in activity (*pravritti*) thinking that attaining the pleasures of this and the other world is alone the path to happiness, and whirl in boundless *samsara* having forsaken the path which (truly) bestows happiness.⁵ But (by their thus engaging in activity) happiness which is free from misery is not obtained. In order to show the direct path to this (true and perfect happiness), Sri Sankara (Lord Siva) Himself assumed the guise of Sankara (Sri Adi Sankaracharya),

³ Here Sri Bhagavan gives an important simile, but expresses it very tersely. We desire to be free from disease and to be happy and healthy as always only because disease is not natural to the body; similarly, we desire to be free from misery and to be happy as always only because misery is not natural to us. Hence our liking to be free from misery is itself a proof of the fact that free from misery is our real and natural state.

⁴ The first half of this first sentence was later adapted by Sri Bhagavan as the first sentence of the introductory paragraph which He wrote for the essay version of *Who am I?*, in which He says: "Since all living beings desire to be happy always, without misery, since in everyone supreme love exists only for oneself, and since happiness alone is the cause of love, in order to attain that happiness, which is one's own nature and which is experienced daily in sleep, where there is no mind, it is necessary for one to know oneself"

⁵ The entire matter up to this point forms one sentence in Tamil, but in this translation the sentence has been split in the middle by a semi-colon in order to make the idea clear and in order to form a comprehensible English sentence. If the sentence were not split but were translated exactly as it is in Tamil, the words ". . . what is called happiness is only oneself; when it is so . . ." would read ". . . when what is called happiness is only oneself . . ."

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wrote commentaries upon the *Prasthanatraya*⁶ of Vedanta, which extols the greatness of this happiness, and not only showed the path but also taught it by example. Since they (those commentaries) are not useful for aspirants (*mumukshus*) who most ardently desire happiness but who (due to lack of scholarship) are not capable of studying (or understanding) them, He revealed the inner essence of them through this treatise. *Vivekachudamani*, elaborately explained the matters necessary for *mumukshus*, and thereby showed the direct path.

In this (treatise), having begun by saying that to obtain a human birth is rare, saying that it is therefore necessary to make effort to attain the bliss of liberation, which is one's own nature, saying that only by knowledge (*jnana*) can there be liberation (*moksha*), saying that knowledge will come only by enquiry (*vichara*), saying that for that (for knowing the method of practising *vichara* or Self-enquiry) it is necessary to attain a *Guru*, describing the characteristics of a *Guru*, the characteristics of a disciple and (the nature of) *Guru-seva* (service to or adoration of the *Guru*), then saying that in order to attain happiness one's own effort is essential, saying that happiness will not be obtained by mere knowledge of words, and saying that the means for liberation (*moksha-sadhana*) is only enquiry beginning with learning (*sravana-adi vichara*)⁷, in the form of a conversation between a *Guru* and a disciple He has explained many matters concerning these (the points that follow)⁸: learning (*sravana*) that all the three bodies are non-Self (*anatma*) and unreal (*asatyam*), that Self, 'I', is different from them (the three bodies), that the sense of selfhood (*atma-buddhi*) in the non-Self is bondage⁹, and that, having come by ignorance (*ajnana*), it (bondage) will be destroyed (only) by knowledge (*jnana*); reflection (*manana*), which is knowing Self, the import of the word 'thou' (*tvam*), which exists in the heart as 'I' having rejected as not 'I' all the five sheaths (*pancha-kosas*) which constitute those three bodies through the subtle enquiry 'Who am I?' which is done in the heart¹⁰, and having (thereby) separated it (Self) as one and as

different from them (the five sheaths) like (separating) the spike within the sedge-grass (from all the layers which cover it); the removal of the world of names and forms, which is an adjunct to the word 'that' (*tat*), (by knowing) that that adjunct is only *Brahman*¹¹; the import of the word 'that' (*tat*); the teaching of the *mahavakya* 'That thou art' (*tat-tvam-asi*), which reveals the oneness of Self and the

⁶ *Prasthanatraya* literally means the 'three starting-points' or 'three sources', and is a word used to denote the three sets of works which are considered to be the authoritative source-books of Vedanta, namely the *Upanishads*, *Brahma Sutras* and *Bhagavad Gita*.

⁷ 'Enquiry beginning with learning' (*sravana-adi vichara*) means the process of enquiry which traditionally consists of three closely interrelated parts, namely learning (*sravana*), reflection (*manana*) and contemplation (*nididhyasana*), each of which is described later in this long sentence.

⁸ In the original Tamil text this clause, "in the form of a conversation between a *Guru* and a disciple He has explained many matters concerning these", comes right at the end of this very long sentence, the word *kuriyiruk-kindranar* (He has explained) being the subject and main verb of the whole sentence, and the words 'learning', 'reflection', 'the removal', 'the import', 'the teaching', 'the fact', 'the powers', 'contemplation', 'practice and attainment', 'the fact' and 'realisation' being all the objects governed by that main verb. However, in order to form a coherent English sentence, this clause had to be brought here near the beginning of the sentence in this translation.

⁹ The clause 'the sense of selfhood in the non-Self is bondage' (*anatmavil atma-buddhi bandham*) means that the feeling 'I am this body' (*dehatma-buddhi*), whereby the non-Self is identified as oneself, is bondage.

¹⁰ Here Sri Bhagavan reveals that the correct means by which the five sheaths or three bodies can be rejected as not 'I' is not the negative method of thinking 'I am not this, not this' (*neti-neti*) but only the positive method of inwardly enquiring 'Who am I?' By thus enquiring 'Who am I?' the power of attention is fixed only on the feeling 'I', and hence all that is not 'I' will automatically drop off, leaving the real 'I' or Self shining alone in all its pristine purity.

¹¹ The removal of the world of names and forms, which is an adjunct to *Brahman*, can be effected only by knowing through direct experience that the world is nothing other than *Brahman*, just as the removal of the superimposed snake, which is an adjunct to the real rope, can be effected only by seeing that the snake is nothing other than the real rope.

Supreme, which are the import of those two words ('thou' and 'that' respectively); the fact that it is necessary to abide as this 'I am Brahman'; (the fact) that, though one abides thus, former tendencies (*purva vasanas*) will rise very forcibly and create an obstacle (to such abidance)¹²; the powers of dissipation (*vikshepa*) and veiling (*avarana*), which are the cause of them (the tendencies), (namely) the three tendencies¹³, the ego-tendency¹⁴, which is the root (of all tendencies), and the tendencies pertaining to external differences (*bheda-bahya-vasanas*), which are the cause of its (the ego's) flourishing; contemplation (*nididhyasana*), which is Self-attention (*atma-anusandhana*), which is called devotion (*bhakti*), yoga and meditation (*dhyana*), which gives rise to the *sajatiya-satya-atmakara-vritti* (the cognate and true *vritti* which is of the form of Self)¹⁵, which is expressed (by the words) 'I am Brahman', 'Brahman alone is I'¹⁶, and which is done uninterruptedly and without forgetfulness (*pramada*) by fixing the mind in the heart until they (the tendencies or *vasanas*) are dispelled; practice (*sadhana*) and attainment (*samadhi*), (which He describes by) saying thus, "The experience of *Jnana*, the unobstructed and direct realisation of *Brahman*, which shines as one everywhere, within and without, and at all times, will be effortlessly attained in *sahajanirvikalpa samadhi* (the natural and unchanging state of mere being), which manifests due to the churning power of spiritual practice (*brahma-abhyasa*), which is done uninterruptedly like a flow of oil and without forgetfulness (*pramada*), just like extracting fire from an *arani*¹⁷ or butter from curd, by fixing the churning-rod called mind in the heart thus¹⁸. The destruction of the heart-knot (*hridaya-granathi*), (which is) the tendency of ignorance (*ajnana-vasana*), of doubts and of *karmas* will thereby be achieved. Liberation, (which is) unbroken bliss, will be attained"¹⁹; the fact that there will not be even an iota of differences

¹² In the Tamil original, this clause and the next one are one, but in this translation they have been split into two by a semi-colon so that the ideas may be presented in English in their proper order and so that the connection with the previous clause may be made clear.

**I am not eager, bold
Or strong--all that is past.
I am ready not to do,
At last, at last!**

— Peter Canesius, 1521-97

¹³ The three tendencies (*vasana-trayam*) mentioned in verses 270 to 272 of *Vivekachudamani* are (1) the *loka-vasana* or tendency to take interest in the external world and the happenings therein, (2) the *deha-vasana* or tendency to care about the health and appearance of the body, and (3) the *sastra-vasana* or tendency to read and study more and more books.

¹⁴ The ego-tendency (*ahankara-vasana*) is the tendency to identify a body as 'I', which is the root of all tendencies.

¹⁵ Though the term *vritti*, which means a thought or activity of the mind, is applied to the state which is called *atmakara-vritti* (a *vritti* which is of the form of Self), that state is not really a *vritti* but is the state of pure consciousness in which, as a result of Self-attention (*atma-anusandhana*), all *vrittis* have merged and become one with the real Self. Therefore, to use the term *atmakara-vritti* to denote that state is like using the term *samudrakarandi* (a river in the form of the ocean) to denote the state of a river which has merged and become one with the ocean. Refer to *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, v. 941, *Day by Day*, p.163, *Letters*, p.116, and *Talks*, pp.173 and 267, where this idea is expressed by Sri Bhagavan.

¹⁶ Here Sri Bhagavan makes clear that the actual method of contemplation (*nididhyasana*) taught by Sri Adi Sankara in *Vivekachudamani* is not the practice of meditating 'I am Brahman' but is only the practice of Self-attention (*atma-anusandhana*), which gives rise to the state of *atmakara-vritti*, the state of pure consciousness which is expressed by the words 'I am Brahman' or 'Brahman alone is I'.

¹⁷ An *arani* is an instrument consisting of two pieces of wood which are used for kindling fire by attrition.

¹⁸ The word 'thus' (*inganam*) here refers to the practice of contemplation (*nididhyasana*) or Self-attention (*atma-anusandhana*) described in the previous clause.

¹⁹ These double inverted commas are not given in the original Tamil text, but their sense is implied by the word *endru* (saying thus).

and changes (*bheda-vikalpas*) in this (the state of liberation); and realization (*sakshatkarā*), which is liberation of two kinds²⁰, (about which He comments) by saying that to attain this (the state of liberation) is alone the *puru-shartha* (the aim of human life), and that the *Jivan-mukta* (the person liberated while living in the body) is only he who has attained this (state) and not the *paroksha-jnani* (the person who has indirect or intellectual knowledge of it), and by describing the characteristics of the *Jivan-mukta*, the cessation of his three *karmas*²¹, the personal experience (*sva-anubhava*) of the disciple who has attained this state, the *yathecchacarana* of the *Jivan-mukta* (that is, his freedom to act as he pleases), and the bodiless emancipation (*videha-kaivalya*) and the re-birthlessness which he attains. This (treatise) has been previously translated as Tamil verses by Brahmasri Bhikshu Sastrigal. Having purchased from (a selection of sweetmeats which are all) only one sweet substance which has been made into many forms with various colours, that (particular form and colour of sweetmeat) which is to their individual liking,

people of discrimination experience and enjoy the taste of that one sweet substance, eating it without seeing the *guna-dosha* (the qualities and defects of its form and colour), do they not!

²⁰ The two kinds of liberation are (1) *jivan-mukti* or the liberation attained during the lifetime of the body, and (2) *videha-kaivalya* or the liberation attained at the time of the body's death. However, as Sri Bhagavan used to explain, the difference between these two kinds of liberation is real only in the outlook of others and not in the outlook of the one who has attained liberation, because in his outlook the body itself is unreal.

²¹ The three *karmas* mentioned here are (1) *agamyā karma* or the actions that the individual newly performs in this life, (2) *sanchita karma* or all the results of his past *agamyā karmas* which are now stored up and which are yet to be experienced by him, and (3) *prarabdha karma* or the portion of the results of his past *agamyā karmas* which God has selected from his *sanchita* and ordained for him to experience in this lifetime. For one who attains liberation, all these three *karmas* cease to exist, because the ego or individual 'I', who was the doer of the actions and the experiencer of their fruits, is itself found to be non-existent. Refer to verse 38 of *Ulladu Narpadu* and verse 33 of *Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham*.

TWO SHOOTING STARS

April 14, 1950

By Lucy Cornelssen¹

**This is what happened:
When the eye-lids for the last time
closed your eyes,
Those powerful, radiant eyes
Whose glance had opened
For so many aching hearts
The wondrous vastness of a higher world . . .**

**Yes. This happened. A bright star
Burst out of Nataraja's cosmic dance,
Glided in a wide, wide bend
Over all Deccan, sank and died away.
Many seeing it remembered
Your body's year-long suffering
And understood the message
The star was writing on the sky.**

**You had shaken off the flesh
And returned to where we all come from,
T'is that pure, changeless, timeless Being
Known only in your holy Silence.**

**From Shiva's fiery dance
Fell off a glowing star.
Where could it go?
To that pure, changeless Being,
Alone again to the Alone,
Light to Light restored.**

¹ A German poem translated into English
by Prof. K. Swaminathan.

SUBRAMANIA BHARATI: A God-Centred Poet

By Dr. K. Subrahmanian¹

WHEN SOMEONE asked Sri Bhagavan whether Subramania Bharati had ever met him, he said: "I think he did once. It was when we were on the hill. One evening when only Sivayya was with me, someone came and sat nearly for an hour before me and then went away without saying a word. Later, when I saw pictures of Bharati, I thought it must have been he". Perhaps Bharati had Sri Bhagavan in mind when he wrote the last paragraph of his essay in English on 'The *Siddha* and the Superman'. "Firmly established in *mauna* (the silence internal), fearless of death, disease, and the devil, serene in the strength of God, and happy in the knowledge of immortality, resplendent in his energy, irresistible in his action, tireless in labour, and full-souled in service, the *Siddha* lives amidst men, a representative of the will Divine, a veritable messenger from Heaven, protector of men — loving, elevating, immortalising."

Subramania Bharati (1882-1921) was an outstanding Tamil poet. Before his time, Tamil poetry walked on stilts. He snatched them away and made it run and romp and dance. He wrote enchanting poems on a variety of themes. As Prof. K. Swaminathan says in his introduction, "The range of Bharati's poetic inspiration is amazingly vast. There are his poems on patriotism and national regeneration, hymns to the various deities of the Indian pantheon, philosophical poems which make a direct descent from the great Upanishads, poems on nature, ecstatic outpourings on Sakti, emotional songs on Krishna and narrative poetry."

With fire in his eyes and fever in his blood, Bharati wrote stirring patriotic songs which



sustained the freedom fighters of Tamil Nadu during the freedom struggle. The energy in these patriotic songs has a truly physical quality. He is universal in the mode of his expression and the passion of his mind.

Bharati is at his best and finest in his devotional poetry. He has written moving poems on the several gods and goddesses of Hindu pantheon, keeping always in view that these represent *Sakti*, the one Supreme Power. The poem 'I' is the quintessence of Vedanta. Prof. K. Swaminathan has done a fine translation of the poem. The following are the last two stanzas of the poem:

The activator of a myriad *mantras*,
The movement in all moving things,
Maker of a myriad *tantras*
And the proclaimer of *Shastras* and *Vedas*
Am I.

The ruler of the phantom 'I' and I,
The wanderer in the flaming heaven of *jnana*
The one light of Awareness shining
In everything that is.

¹ SUBRAMANIA BHARATI: Chosen poems and prose: General Editor: K. Swaminathan: All India Subramania Bharati Centenary Celebrations Committee: Sole Distributors: Publications Division, Patiala House, New Delhi-110 001. Rs. 40/-

"The Flood is Siva Supreme' is again a powerful poem whose emotion has been brought vividly into focus in the translation.

Bharati's preface to the *Bhagavad Gita* reveals his masterly understanding of the *Gita*. He was passionately devoted to a variety of causes and fought for them. But all the time, he was conscious that everything is God. This is what he says in the preface:

"All that exists without is to be worshipped as God. Only the enemy within-*ajnana* or the feeling of difference-is to be destroyed. When we shed our feelings of separateness, of difference, and realise that all actions that take place around us are God's action and all appearance are manifestations of God, then fear is destroyed."

When we were children, Sri Viswanatha Swami used to teach us Bharati's songs. He considered Bharati a great Advaitin. Often he used to sing the following lines from the 'The Drum of Victory' with great feeling:

Whichever side we turn, nothing
And no one but ourselves, we see,
And bliss and bliss alone enjoy.

He used to say that one could hear the voice of Sri Bhagavan in these lines.

Subramania Bharati touched life at several points and whatever he touched, he set ablaze with the fire of his genius. He worked at several things but all the time considered himself a humble instrument in the hands of God. His attitude was one of surrender to Siva-Sakti. That's why even his patriotic songs have a religious fervour about them. In the last stanza of one of the most moving poems 'The Pallu Dance of Freedom', Bharati says:

Now we know the land we live in
Is our own; it is ours and only ours!
To none on earth shall we henceforth
Be slaves; in servitude to God
Alone we shall live for ever!

He was not a mere patriotic poet but a God-centred poet.

SRI RAMANA'S GRACE

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

**I have come to the borders of mind,
Behind which goes on world-show of a kind,
Beyond which I seem to find
The Hill of Awareness,
The Self's Pure Light.**

**The track
which seems to wind
To the Summit, and steeply back
To the vale of ego,
Holds many who drift and slack
Trapped in transient glow,
Oblivious of Light Divine.**

**The Summit Beacon,
The vale's ego-glow,
The World-show,
All, all are the Heart's 'I'-'I' flow,
The stream for Sri Ramana's Grace.**

The book which is a homage to Bharati has been compiled and published by the All-India Subramania Bharati Centenary Celebrations Committee sponsored by the Union Ministry of Education and Culture. Translation is difficult and translation of poetry is most difficult. Poetry is like dancing. In a good dance, you cannot distinguish the dancer from the dance. The dancer is the dance and the dance is the dancer. In great poetry, the medium itself is the message. All the same, the translators here have done a good job of communicating the spirit of Bharati's poems and prose pieces. They have tried to follow the contour of Bharati's poetic emotion and reflect the reflections of his inner voice. The public must be indebted to the translators, Prof. K. Swaminathan, Mr. K.S. Sundaram, Prof. P. Mahadevan, Dr. James Cousins, Prof. A. Srinivasaraghavan, Prof. A.K. Ramanujam, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mrs. J. Jesudasan, Dr. Prema Nandakumar, Prof. P.S. Sundaram, Mr. M. Ramaswami, Mr. M. Srinivasan and Mr. N. Balasubramanian.

A fine book attractively got-up and absurdly low-priced.

NOBLE RAMANA

I am happy to record and another instalment of anectodes about our Master.

— V.G.

THE LATE Sri M.G. Shanmugam, one of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, refused out of modesty to be drawn into the lime light! His Tamil biography of Bhagavan concluded with the early days at the present Ashram, that is, with the thirties. It is a pity he did not complete it, particularly because Sri Sivarama Reddiar told me that Bhagavan liked it.

Fortunately M.G. Shanmugam has left a few notes in Tamil on Bhagavan, His teachings and his own observations on spiritual *sadhana*. I translate here a few passages.

“During my 24 years of personal association with Bhagavan I have noted that He seldom preached elaborately. He would give hints which keen seekers had to absorb carefully and follow faithfully in their *sadhana*. By close observation of Him and His actions and from occasional words and terse expressions, one could definitely learn and safely follow His teachings.

“He once said categorically: ‘For practising *atma vichara* every day is auspicious and every moment is good — no discipline is prescribed at all. Any time, anywhere it can be done, even without others noticing that you are doing it. All other *sadhanas* require external objects and congenial environment, but for *atma vichara* nothing external to oneself is required. Turning the mind within is all that is necessary. While one is engaged in *atma vichara* one can with ease simultaneously attend to other activities also. Being a purely internal movement one does not also distract others around; otherwise, in *sadhanas* like *puja*, others do notice you. One-pointed perseverance alone is essential in Self-enquiry and

that is done purely inwardly, all the time. Your attention on the Self within alone is essential.’

“Some of Bhagavan’s personal instructions to me:

(i) If you observe the breathing one-pointedly such attention will lead you spontaneously into *kumbhaka* (retention) — this is *jnana pranayama*.

(ii) The more you humble yourself, the better it is for you, in all ways.

(iii) By withdrawing the mind within, you can live anywhere and under any circumstances.

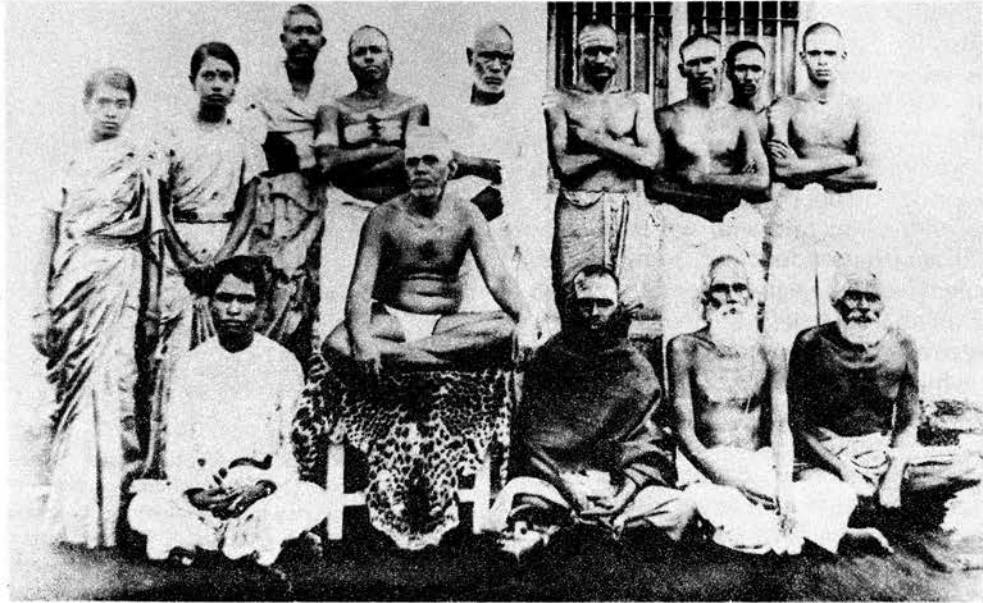
(iv) You should look upon the world only as a dream.

(v) Do not allow your mind to be distracted by objective things and by thoughts. Except attending to your allotted duty — work in life, the rest of your time should be spent in *atma nishta*; do not waste even a second in inattention, lethargy.

(vi) Do not cause even the slightest hindrance or disturbance to others. Also, do all your work yourself.

(vii) Both likes and dislikes should be equally discarded and eschewed.

(viii) With attention focussed on the first person and on the heart within, one should relentlessly practice *Who am I?* When this is done one-pointedly, one’s breathing will subside of itself. Perhaps, the mind during such controlled practice, might suddenly spring up; yet with vigilance you have to pursue the *vichara*, *Who am I?*



Sri M.G. Shanmugam is seated to the right of Sri Bhagavan. To the left are seated Sri Niranjanananda Swami and Sri B.V. Narasimha Swami. Behind M.G. Shanmugam is his wife and to her right his sister.

To remain silent without thoughts is the
Whole;

To remain without thoughts is *Nishta*;
To remain without thoughts is *Jnana*
To remain without thoughts is *Moksha*
To remain without thoughts is *Sahaja*.

Therefore, the state without any trace of thoughts is the Final State of Fullness, indeed!"

From M.G. Shanmugam's personal diary (in Tamil) the following interesting incidents are gathered:

"When we were living at Darapuram and I was seven years old, I was initiated into *linga puja*. Such traditional bringing up gradually involved me in the study of *sastras*, doing *japa*, *bhajan*, *saguna* and *nirguna dhyana* and regular *puja* three times a day. During this period I also had three gurus. All this gave me the conviction that the highest human attainment was the state of *jivan mukti*. I was at Tiruchengode between 1921-1925 and was studying in the College. When I was 18 years old, I fervently prayed that I should meet a *jivanmukta* and receive his blessings.

"My prayers were soon answered! My father, a police officer, was transferred to Tiruvannamalai. I came to know of Bhagavan Ramana living there. I gave up my studies and rushed to Arunachala. While travelling in the train towards Tiruvannamalai, I had at Katpadi a remarkable vision of Bhagavan: thus my *sat-guru* came to me and absorbed me even before I could have His physical *darshan*!

"I arrived at the Ashram. Bhagavan gave me a warm welcome with a benign smile. Though it was the first time He was seeing me, His two spontaneous utterances surprised me: (i) Like an affectionate mother, He asked me 'When did you come' and (ii) 'How is your right hand?' My right hand was badly fractured when I was 14 years old and though after treatment it was mended, it remained bent and short; I used to cover it up with full sleeves and even my friends did not know this serious deformity in me. How did Bhagavan come to know about it? Moreover, what affectionate concern on His part to enquire about what I thought as a life-long defect in me. (After Bhagavan enquired about it, the sense of inferiority had disappeared in me, to

my surprise!). More than all these, He asked me to be seated in front of Him. Gazing at Him I sat down and I do not know what happened to me then. When I got up two hours had elapsed. This was an experience I had never had before and the one I have always cherished as the first and foremost *prasad* and blessing received from my *satguru*. That day I understood the purport of the statement: 'The *Satguru* ever gives unasked!' That moment I knew I had been accepted into His Fold. This strong bond He allowed me to enjoy till His *Mahasamadhi* and even after.

"Daily I would go to him by 2 in the afternoon and return home only at 8 p.m. My father, who was a staunch devotee, was instrumental in constructing in a remarkably short time the Old Hall where Bhagavan was to stay for more than twenty years. Bhagavan would quote from *Ribhu Gita*, *Kaivalya Navaneeta*, *Inana Vasistha* and other *advaitic* texts and explain to me their greatness. All the while I was aware I was in the blissful presence of a *Brahmajnani*, so highly extolled in all our scriptures. He was a *sarvanja* (all-knower) also.

"He gave glimpses to prove that He was the all-knower, though I never demanded them. A daily pocket-money of three annas was given to me by my father. I bought for that amount *sambrani* which burnt in the presence of Bhagavan. One day I did not get the amount, so could not buy the *sambrani*; I refrained from going to Bhagavan. The next day when I went, Bhagavan remarked, graciously: 'Yesterday you did not come because you could not get *sambrani*. Veneration in the heart is enough.'

"My father was suddenly transferred to Vellore. None of us, particularly myself, wanted to leave Tiruvannamalai since *darshan* of Bhagavan would be denied. We ventilated our grievance to Bhagavan, He gave me a benign smile. A few days after, strangely, the transfer order was cancelled! Apart from greatness of Bhagavan's Presence and the tremendous power of His silence, I noticed the strange way the doubts in one's mind got answered through some one else present in



Circle Inspector Gopala Pillai, father of M.G. Shanmugam

the Hall. The doubt you had, somebody in the Hall would express to Bhagavan and Bhagavan would not only give the answer but look at you with a smile, as if to indicate and say 'Has your doubt been cleared?' Bhagavan would be seated like a rock with eyes open for hours together and silence would pervade the Hall; and everyone's heart would be filled with peace and stillness. This silence was His real teaching!

"After getting the approval of Sri-Bhagavan (in the form of a nod as assent), I was married in 1930. I came straight to Bhagavan with my wife and Bhagavan arranged for a feast for the wedded couple — this was an extraordinary act of grace! We stayed for two weeks. Bhagavan also was gracious enough to be in a group photograph with my family. He was compassion incarnate. He knew I would be immensely pleased to be photographed, along with my newly wedded wife, with Him! Such a great *Brahma Nishta* coming down to my level of craving and arranging for a photo being taken. What Grace!"

Dr. K. Subrahmanian was kind enough to share the following thoughts, during his recent visit to the Ashram:

"My father, Sri Krishnaswamy Iyer, was a tutor to the children of the Raja of Nabha who were staying in Kodaikanal. My father was very deeply devoted to Bhagavan. He never went to any temples; he said everything holy was contained in Sri Ramanasramam, the abode of his Master and nothing else was more sacred for him. It was my mother who first had *darshan* of Bhagavan; my father had it later. My father in his very first visit to Bhagavan asked Him: 'There are so many *sadhus*; how to know who is a genuine *siddha*?' Bhagavan, after sometime, replied in clear terms: 'In whose mere presence, one, even without effort, gets spontaneous peace of mind (*Shanti*), that one is the real *siddha*.'

"From my childhood I was soaked in Bhagavan since my father, mother and paternal uncle, Vayalamur Srinivasa Iyer, would all the time be talking only about Bhagavan. Added to this, devotees like Visvanatha Swami would often visit our house and tell thrilling stories about what happened in the presence of Bhagavan. So, for me too there existed no God other than Bhagavan.

"I was admitted in a boarding school for my eighth standard. Father used to send money every month for my studies, board and lodging expenses. Somehow, I had an urge to write letters to Bhagavan; what I wrote I do not remember now. I would receive immediately a reply from Sri Niranjanananda Swami that my letter was placed before Bhagavan who had gone through it and would send *prasad*. I had written a few such letters with great enthusiasm. After a few years, it might be 1940, I accompanied my uncle to the Ashram and we both sat in front of Bhagavan. Before this I had visited Bhagavan several times but had not the courage to go in front of Him. I would prostrate to Him from outside the Hall and go away. But on this visit I was forced to sit next

to my uncle in the Hall itself. Bhagavan noticed me and pointing me, asked my uncle: 'Who is this?' He said 'My brother's son, My brother who lives at Kodaikanal'. Bhagavan graciously turned to me and addressed me: 'Oh! you are the one who writes letters to me'. I was thrilled with joy, but perspired profusely due to a feeling of awe. However, what He next spoke sounded humorous: 'Does your father send you money only to write letters to me?' Saying so, Bhagavan laughed. All of us also joined."

Dr. Subrahmanian continued "In *Talks* and other books the questions put by devotees and answers given by the Master are scrupulously recorded. Yet, the mode and manner of how Bhagavan answered them could not be brought out in such books. For instance, once a *bhakta* who had come from a long distance asked Bhagavan: 'I have been following methods of mind-control but I have not had any marked success. Will I ever get mastery over my mind?' Bhagavan kept quiet. After sometime he continued: 'Scriptures say without mind-control no progress could be achieved spiritually. I am very sincere in my efforts. Have I any hope?' Again there was only silence from Bhagavan. He pursued with his questions and said that he was really worried that he was not progressing, and wanted Bhagavan to bless him with a categorical reply. Bhagavan was unmoved. After nearly an hour and a half Bhagavan got up. While crossing over the door step He was gracious enough to turn back to the questioner and said: 'By and by you will know" (போகப் போகத் தெரியும்) What would have transpired in the mind of the questioner during this 1½ hours could never be brought out in words by any one in any books. Also, in between how Bhagavan would have worked with the questioner's efforts to maturity is a secret known only to the *bhakta* and the Master! The final glorious words of Bhagavan were not only an encouraging answer but a real blessing to the questioner."

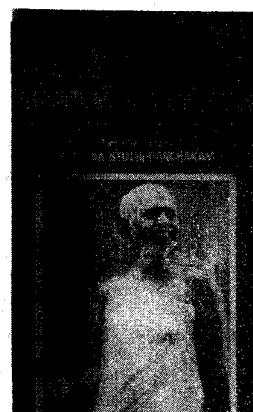
Smt. Kanakammal, who lives in quietude in the vicinity of the Ashram, is kind enough to narrate the following:

"When Bhagavan came to the New Hall, in front of the Mother's Shrine a few rigid restrictions had been imposed that *darshan* could be had only between fixed periods, that no one should sleep in the Hall except the attendants, and that even such attendants should go to sleep in the night at certain hours etc. So, Kodur Venkatratnam, Sub Registrar Narayana Iyer and T.P. Ramachandra Iyer used to offer to be the attendants at night since they would be in the company of Bhagavan. Bhagavan also in those days talked a lot, irrespective of whether it was day or night. Particularly if He was narrating a story Bhagavan would enact the entire drama with lively gesticulations. Sri Niranjanananda Swami was very particular that the attendants did not engage Bhagavan in conversation and that they lay down quietly. So, he would go round the Hall at regular intervals, peeping through the window in between to check. Venkatratnam and Narayana Iyer would sit erect and be gaping at Bhagavan while He dramatised the story. They would entirely forget the environment. Bhagavan would know the incoming danger (!). So, suddenly He would stop telling the story or talking and make signs with His hands at them to lie down; they would obey. After some time when the *Sarvadhikari* had left, Bhagavan would again make signs without a whisper of a sound and the avid listeners would get up! How childlike Bhagavan was!

"During one such night session Bhagavan was telling the story of a saint very picturesquely. Venkatratnam was massaging Bhagavan's leg. Since Bhagavan was having pain in the legs, it was customary to massage His legs from thigh to toe every night. That day it was the good fortune of Venkatratnam to do it. He was transfixed in listening to Bhagavan; yet he did massage His leg. After sometime Bhagavan stopped the narration and looked at him. Thinking that Bhagavan wanted more strength to be used, he massaged with added

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force. After some time Bhagavan looked again at him, again he pressed the leg very hard. This happened again. Then suddenly Bhagavan told Venkatratnam: 'What are you doing? You want to massage something, do you? Go and massage that stone pillar.' Venkatratnam was flabbergasted! Then only Venkatratnam understood his mistake. Instead of massaging the whole leg, absorbed in listening to Bhagavan's story-telling, he was massaging the same place again and again! When Bhagavan looked at him thrice to make him understand his mistake, he pressed only with greater vehemance, so much so the spot had swollen. How much Bhagavan must have felt the pain! Next morning he could not face Bhagavan. He avoided coming into the presence of Bhagavan feeling guilty and ashamed. Then Bhagavan went out of the way and called him in and said: 'Why are you avoiding me? Anyone else in your position would have also committed the same mistake. You were absorbed in the story. It is alright'. These soothing words of Bhagavan relieved Venkatratnam. Here, one should notice not only the forgiving nature of Bhagavan but His rushing to rescue a devotee from mental suffering."

Smt. Kanakammal continued:

"Once it happened in the Jubilee Hall — this was a beautiful thatched extension to the Old Hall towards the Hill side. It was raised so that more people could be accommodated and Bhagavan could have fresh air, particularly, in summer.

"It was Bhagavan's *Jayanthi* day. Bhagavan had gone behind the *goshala* and was retur-

ning to the Jubilee Hall. At the entrance to the men's guest room (next to the stores) a lady had drawn *kolam* (design with flour) of a peacock. The peacock design had come out so well and life-like that the white peacock who happened to be there was stunned looking at the design for he took it to be another one of the same species. Bhagavan reached there and observed this unique scene. Bhagavan stood there. Cereals were brought, and were placed in an open tin next to the white peacock. The peacock who would otherwise have rushed to eat it did not even look at it; he was still continuing to stare at his 'image' on the floor!

"Bhagavan said: 'What (*Yennada*)! Are you feeling that a competitor has come to confront you?' After Bhagavan said this, the white peacock, as if understanding His retort, gave up his staring and started eating the cereals. Bhagavan was kind enough to comment: 'The greatness of a piece of art lies in another artist of the same calibre appreciating it wholeheartedly. If a cobbler really appreciated the shoe made by a commoner then it has real worth. If you stitch a cloth and if a tailor appreciates it then it must be really first rate. Likewise, if a peacock looks at and appreciates a drawing of a peacock it proves the excellence of the art work. The artist is to be very much appreciated!'

After a pause Bhagavan continued: 'For such exceedingly gifted artists, *Brahma Vidya* (highest spiritual attainment) is very easy. But they will not pursue spiritual perfection. Their mind will go only after further fame!' These words of Bhagavan apply to all talented people."

Chuang Izu: "Look how the minnows dart hither and thither at will. Such is the pleasure fish enjoy."

Hui Tzu: "You are not a fish. How do you know what gives pleasure to fish?"

Chuang Tzu: "You are not I. How do you know I do not know what gives pleasure to fish?"

Chuang Tzu was a Taoist and Hui Tzu, a Confucianist.

Some Impressions of Sri Ramana Maharshi

By Swami Ritajananda

Swami Ritajananda is the leader of the Centre Vedantique, Gretz in France, The talk in French first appeared in Issue 75 of Vedanta of the centre, and the present translation was done by John Philips for VEDANTA FOR EAST AND WEST.

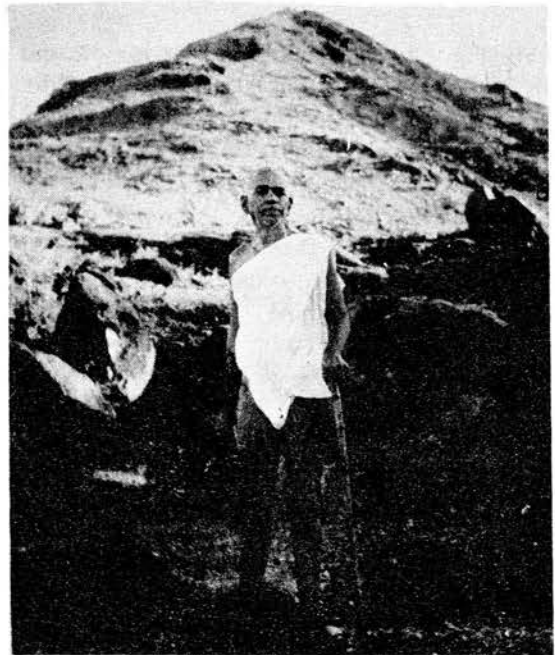
I SAW RAMANA Maharshi but, with my temperament, it was impossible for me to put any question to him. How can we put a question when we are not recognised as individuals, with a life in the world, surrounded by a family and occupied by duties?

When we were in the presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi we entered into another environment. No worldly impression could be distinguished. So to put a question was just not possible. I had heard people talk of him at our home even in 1931. But at that time I had no curiosity to go and visit him and that was not even possible.

An American friend had come to Madras where I lived at that time. He wanted to see some important and holy places, and, as we were not far from Tiruvannamalai, we went and spent some time there.

What was my experience in the presence of the Maharshi? I was seated near him. He had a broad smile, I shall remember it always, and I had a very good visit. He was ill, it was in 1949, during the last part of his life. He had *Mahasamadhi* in April 1950.

I had a friend who was a surgeon. He used to go to see the Maharshi every week and had the habit of telling us the latest news about him. My American friend and I visited Tiruvannamalai. It was in December. He showed no signs of illness. He was normal and seemed very happy with everything happening around him. As soon as we arrived, he asked his assistant to look after our food and accommodation. He was seated with other persons around him. There was no question, no conversation, not even music. It was perfect silence. That is the teaching of the Maharshi. What questions one could



ask? Questions are asked at the intellectual level, they are only mental gymnastics. As long as we live at the intellectual level we shall always be dissatisfied.

In India people do not believe much in conversation with a saint. For them to be in the presence of a saint is enough. Communication will take place without speech, at a spiritual level. So there were always visitors at the Ashram who had no special questions to put.

In his youth the Maharshi had had an experience which had totally convinced him that he was not the "I", that neither the body nor the mind was the "I". This was certainly some discovery for a boy of seventeen, but it was not a new discovery. We have heard the same teachings

for centuries. The whole religion of Hindus had been completely changed by Vedanta. Until then the Hindu religion, like other religions, consisted of rituals, ceremonies and chants. To whom were they addressed? To a divinity, divinities, so that they should bring man all they desired. But when Vedanta spread, the spirit changed. Many persons were convinced that it was absurd to identify oneself with the body and the mind.

You have to discover your true nature and this is the most important thing to do in life. Once the mind changes, everything else changes. It is certainly difficult. If I talked about these truths in the street, in Greta, people would think me mad, because for them the object in life is to be well-dressed, make plenty of money, have a beautiful car, live in comfort. The ordinary man thinks he must have so many things in order to be well established in body and mind. This is why for centuries Hindu thought, Hindu religion, and particularly Vedanta, were condemned, because this causes a shock and destroys all hopes for a comfortable and worldly life.

It was then that our Ramana Maharshi appeared. He speaks out of his own personal experience and tells us that one passes one's life identifying oneself totally with one's body and mind, one really does not find great joy, although this is what we are looking for. Ramana Maharshi only wore a loin-cloth, but he was very happy; in all his photographs right from the very beginning we see him with a smiling face. Ah, he had found It! He teaches us that we need not look for a master or a being gifted with heavenly qualities to help us. Quite the reverse, we must try and see everything from a different angle, using our own intellect and reasoning capacity. India thus leads us in a new direction and everything is going to change if we have the patience and capacity to analyse. We have a great fund of literature and the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. They are interesting because each one of his words has its own measure and its own place.

TO REALISE

By Haridranath Chattopadyaya

**Now shall you learn to tread above
Desire that led your feet before;
You must renounce the things you love
If love would grow from more to more;
Nor shall your precious flame of breath
Bend to the blowing winds of strife;
It is the darkening hour of death,
which is the burning hour of life.
My Master's golden Presence now
Surcharges all the earth and sky.
With vision bright He seals the brow
Of one whose lips have said goodbye!**

This universal witness applies not only to Hindus; it has a value for everyone. The first phase is perhaps very difficult but, once one has begun, one finds joy in the search. Reason cannot suffice, there must be an explosion. The explosion is necessary for one to be convinced, for one to be certain of having found the truth. Up to that time one says, "Me, me, me." Never again afterwards. Follow the example of Ramana Maharshi and, without any external aid, do your work constantly, *atma vichara*, as he says. Make the necessary effort to discover who this "I" is. That is the purpose of life.

There is of course one last question. Of what use is all this? This use can be defined quite simply; you can be a very rich man or a very poor one, but that will make no difference hereafter and you can thus accept any experience with a smile. We repeat this every day here with the last para of the second chapter of Bhagavad Gita, to remind ourselves that the goal of life is there. When you reach it, the outside world can no longer upset you. You have become very strong, you can put up with anything, because you have no fear of any unpleasant experience. This is the witness which the life of Sri Ramana Maharshi provides.

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A PRECIOUS RELIC

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About 1945 Sri Jagadisa Sastri, compiler of *Ramana Sahasranamam*, a great Sanskrit scholar, was very seriously ill and bed-ridden. All had lost hope of his survival. Bhagavan's special intervention to save him was sought.

This is what A. Devaraja Mudaliar writes about this happening: "Jagadisa Sastri whom I used to call the Sanskrit Poet of Bhagavan's Court, wrote the stanzas called *Prapatti Ashtakam*. He was on his death bed, and wrote this his final appeal in his poem (*Prapatti Ashtakam*) declaring that he would not accept any plea by Bhagavan that *prarabdha* must follow its course, and that if only Bhagavan willed it His Grace could cancel *prarabdha* and save him. Bhagavan took such compassion on him that he was pulled out of the jaws of death". (*My Recollections*, p. 103)

To show how much importance Bhagavan gave to this special prayer, we shall quote Devaraja Mudaliar again: "These (*Prapatti Ashtakam*) were translated into Tamil with the approval and encouragement of Bhagavan by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer. I got a tiny note-book stitched and wanted to have the Sanskrit and Tamil versions on alternate pages in it. The Sanskrit I wanted to have written in Tamil script. I wrote the Tamil verses first, leaving the alternate pages blank for the Sanskrit. I was on the look out for somebody who would be able and willing to transliterate them for me. I certainly did not intend to trouble Bhagavan to do such a job for me, but, as usual with me, in the course of a talk, I told Bhagavan of my desire and he, brushing aside all objections, took the note-book from me and copied the Sanskrit verses into it in Tamil script, neatly and beautifully as was his wont, and gave it back to me. The note-book is with me and will go to my sons as an heirloom".

(*My Recollections*, p. 86)

We are very happy to reproduce below the original Sanskrit verses by Jagadisa Sastri and its Tamil translation by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, both in the handwriting of Sri Bhagavan, for preservation by devotees as a precious relic.

(1)

आकर्तं पुयीं जनितं प्रपद्ये
या एड्येशदेशे विहृतं प्रपद्ये ।
शोणाचलप्रस्थ-चरं प्रपद्ये
शिक्षुं तपःकेश सहं प्रपद्ये ॥१॥

TO HIM born in Tiruchuli I surrender; to Him who sported in Pandya country, I surrender; to the dweller on Arunachala slopes, I surrender; to the *bikshu* unaffected by the rigours of *tapas* I surrender."

(2)

आब्रह्मकीटान्त समं प्रपद्ये
जितारिषड्वर्ग महं प्रपद्ये ।
सर्वज्ञतासार भृतं प्रपद्ये
निस्सीम कारुण्य निधिं प्रपद्ये ॥२॥

"To Him who is alike to all, from the Creator to the worm, I surrender; to the subduer of the six passions, I surrender; to the bearer of the essence of Knowledge I surrender; to the store of unbounded mercy, I surrender."

(3)

अस्मात्प्रपञ्चादधिकं प्रपद्ये
त्रिश्चाधिकोक्तेर्विषयं प्रपद्ये ।
कालग्रहग्राह भयापन्नृत्त्यै
कृतान्तशिक्षाकृतिनं प्रपद्ये ॥३॥

"To Him who surpasses the universe I surrender; to Him — whom the Vedas say to be the universe and more, I surrender; to the chastiser of death in order to be rid of fear of the all-devouring alligator Time, I surrender."

(4)

विनेतु मर्तिं विषयादवजन्त्यां
विज्ञानमूर्तिं दधतं प्रपद्ये ।
कन्दर्पदर्पिष्वरवारणाय
कामारिक्तीलावतरं प्रपद्ये ॥४॥

"To the embodiment of Knowledge which conquers the pain of sensual life, I surrender; to the enemy of Kama come down in sport to prevent the fevers caused by proud Cupid, I surrender."

(5)

आजन्मवर्णित्रतिनं प्रपद्ये
कुण्डीभृतं दण्डधरं प्रपद्ये ।
ब्रह्मासनध्यानरतं प्रपद्ये
ब्रह्मात्मभूयं यतिनं प्रपद्ये ॥५॥

"To the strictly life-long celibate, I surrender; to the holder of kamandalu and staff, I surrender; to Him that rests in Dhyana on Brahmasana, I surrender; to the Hermit at one with Brahman I surrender."

(6)

हरं प्रपद्ये विजरं प्रपद्ये
स्वतन्त्रतायाः स्थादनं प्रपद्ये ।
अमेयसामर्थ्यवहं प्रपद्ये
विशुद्धविज्ञानिवरं प्रपद्ये ॥६॥

"To Hara I surrender; to the never-decaying I surrender; to the abode of Independence I surrender; to Him of immeasurable skill I surrender; to the foremost of spotless Knowers I surrender."

(7)

दौर्भाग्यतापत्रयकर्ममोह
सन्तापहन्तारमहं प्रपद्ये ।
अथार्थसङ्कल्पमपेतपाप
मवाप्तकामं विशुचं प्रपद्ये ॥७॥

"To the dispeller of fever caused by ill luck, three-fold ills, delusion, and karma, I surrender; to Him of true resolve, no taint, perfect contentment and bliss, I surrender."

(8)

मनःप्रसादं भजतां ददानं
मुग्धस्मितोल्लासिमुखं प्रपद्ये ।
व्यथामशेषां व्यपनीयमोद
प्रदेन नाम्ना रमणं प्रपद्ये ॥८॥

"To the face of gentle smile that brings peace to devotees, I surrender; to RAMANA — (Blessing) so named because removing all pain He brings in joy, I surrender."

'TURIYA' – the Natural State

By N.N. Rajan

THE ABSOLUTE State of pure Consciousness is called *Turiya* in Vedantic parlance. It is generally called the fourth state, because it runs through all the three states – waking, dream and sleep.

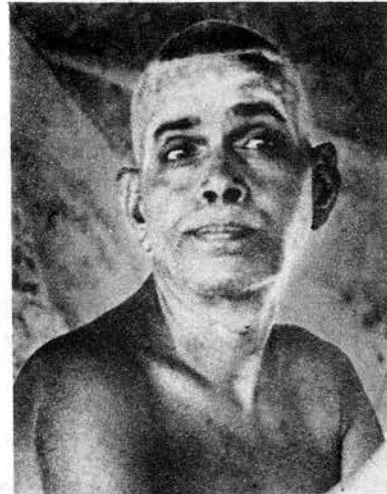
According to Bhagavan Sri Ramana, it cannot be called the fourth state. It is the natural state. It is ever present and is identical with the existence itself. It is not acquired afresh. It is not realised due to ignorance. Only for the sake of analysis when referring to the three states – waking, dream and deep sleep, it is termed as the fourth state. It should not be taken literally so and cannot be strictly called as such.

This uninvolved Consciousness is the ever present witness which never undergoes any change as against the changing states of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is the substratum beneath the three states. *Turiya* is only another name for the Self. A Self – realised sage is ever established in the *Turiya* state. The three states are changing and appear as passing show and finally merge into *Turiya* alone.

Mind is only a bundle of thoughts. In *Turiya*, there is no mind. In deep sleep also, there is no mind, but due to nescience, we do not realise the bliss as in *Turiya*. In *Turiya*, the three states are wiped out and there are no seeds left to cause birth and death.

The moon derives its light from the sun. In the same way, the mind derives its light from the Self. When the sun begins to shine, only a pale disc of the moon is visible and becomes useless in the light of the Sun. So also there is no need for the mind and it becomes useless when the Self is realised.

Within the common husk of all creations there exists a transcendental substratum, the pure consciousness. In sleep we enjoy the cosmic Bliss without understanding it. If it is



consciously experienced it is *Turiya*, the natural state.

Due to the light of the reflected Consciousness the *jiva* experiences the states of waking, dream and deep sleep, but the Self remains unmoved and unchanged as the only entity, which remains as a silent witness and persists throughout.

Awareness of the body, mind and intellect fades away in deep sleep, yet the *jiva* exists and the Bliss is there though without cognition.

Once to a questioner who feared about his experience if he lost his mind. Bhagavan replied – "Everyday you go to sleep wherein you lose your mind and you are not afraid of it. On the other hand, you court sleep and subsequently say 'I slept happily.' By *Vichara* (Enquiry) the mind gets crystal pure and in the advanced state merges in the Self. In supreme Consciousness which manifests distinctly after extinction of the mind is beyond ordinary human understanding. The individuality is supported by the Self which is a continuous process unrelated to the mind. Still a more real and natural state of Conscious-

BEING IS SEEING



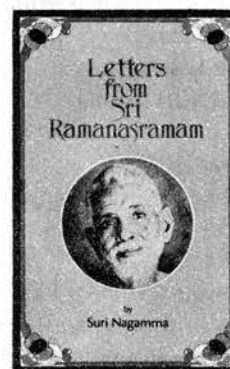
By Rohita Dalal

They gave me a name
 And showed me a mirror,
 And said 'You are that'
 They taught me all about
 The earth, the galaxy and other things,
 All this was believed and followed.
 This knowledge grew wider and thicker,
 Forming a barrier, binding and blinding.
 And then one morning,
 From a crack in the mirror
 Sprang a flood of light —
 Shattering, churning
 The eyes opened to gaze
 At the twinkling stars,
 That were the eyes of a Mother,
 A Child and God Himself,
 All in one.
 The unlearning then began.
 Bhagavan leads me to the Light
 Beyond the shadow miscalled knowledge
 To Being which is true Seeing.

ness (*Turiya*) bereft of the 'I-am-the-body-thought' emerges after the extinction of the mind. The mind projects itself only by the reflected light of the Self. When the original, the Self Itself, is realised, why care for the unreal shadow? Directions for actions and speech spring forth as a flash direct from the Self (*Sphuranam*) which shines by Itself without any intermediary. Further there is no fabrication, confusion or distortion which is caused generally by the mischief of the mind. The Self alone remains and this is the final and natural state."

How can one believe the mind? If the mind can have ideas and can create and project things in dream without corresponding external objects, why can it not create objects which are unreal during the waking state also? It follows that the waking experience also is as real as dream experience.

As a result of the Realisation of Truth all duality will vanish. Then the mind loses itself in the Self and the Self alone shines.


**Letters from
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The Seeker and the Sought

By A Parsee Devotee

IF YOU take one step towards Him,
 He takes seven towards you;
 If you walk, He runs.
 If you run, He flies.."
 So runs an old Sufi saying.
 But, in truth, even the taking of
 One step towards Him,
 Depends, not on you, but on Him.
 Whoever walks towards Him,
 Walks with His feet;
 Unless the tender touch of His Love
 Awakens the slumbering soul,
 In search of Him, can it set out?
 Is it you, seeking Him,
 Or is it He, seeking you?
 Are you the seeker, or the sought?
 Seeker, you aren't,
 But the sought.

As a hound, relentlessly pursuing
 His prey is everyone pursuing
 The priceless Treasure of
 Love-Peace-Happiness;
 But, quite inaccessible, is this Treasure,
 For most of humanity,
 So deep within the Heart, is It hidden.
 To fill the void,
 Into the realms of art, literature, music, Nature,
 Science, Philosophy, Human love,
 Some flee,
 While others try escapist avenues,
 Such as sex, drink, drugs,
 But, remains unfilled,
 The aching emptiness in their hearts.
 Yet not in vain,
 Is all this seeking and striving;
 Indeed, a blessed restlessness, it is,
 Implanted by Him,
 To make you turn to Him,
 A sure sign, it is,
 The Great Seeker,
 Is seeking you,

The Hound of Heaven,
 Is after you.
 Ultimately, dawns the day,
 For the few, who are ripe and ready,
 When, catches up with them,
 The Hound of Heaven,
 When, in the shape of the Master,
 Comes the Treasurer,
 The bestow His imperishable Treasure;
 Whether embodied or disembodied,
is the Master,
 To Him surrender.
 The direct path, this is,
 The safest, and the surest;
 Good as a mother taking care
 Of her new-born babe.

With surrender,
 Opens wide, the door of the disciple's heart;
 In silence, stealthily flows in
 The torrent of the Master's Love-Grace,
 Digging in deeper and deeper,
 As day follows day.
 From without, pushed in, is the disciple,
 From within, pulled in, is he,
 And, when arrives, the appointed moment,
 Uncovered, is the hidden Treasure,
 In the disciple's very heart,
 Entered, is the Kingdom of Heaven within.

Now, who is Master,
 And, who is disciple?
 Who is the Seeker,
 And, who is the sought?
 As Jesus put it —
 "My Father and I are one."

N.B:

The above poem is partly inspired by 'The Hound of Heaven', a poem by Francis Thompson, a 19 century English poet.

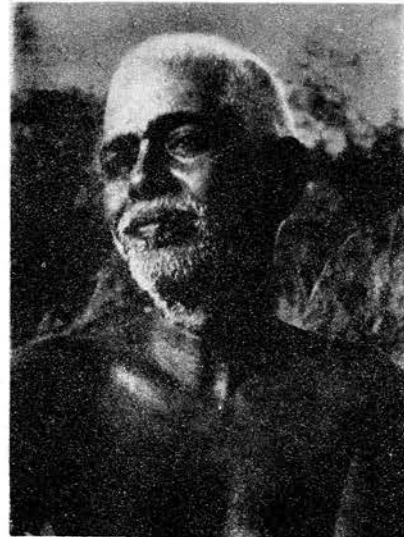
A PILGRIMAGE TO TIRUCHUZHAI

By Smt. Vitobai Natesa Mudaliar

OUR FAMILY is deeply devoted to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and I can narrate many incidents of His helping us at need. I recollect here one such incident.

This incident happened many years ago when my husband, my daughter and myself had been on a pilgrimage to Rameswaram. We decided to go to Tiruchizhi, the birth place of Bhagavan. It was only recently that rail traffic from Madurai to Tiruchuzhi had begun. We got into the train. There was absolutely no rush. There were only a few labourers who were getting in and getting out. When we arrived at Tiruchuzhi at 6 p.m. it was already dark. To make matters worse the sky was cloudy and it started raining. There was no one who could guide us to Ramana's house. We were standing all by ourselves in pitch darkness in silence but for rain drops. We did not know where to go and whom to ask. Just then, some person, came to us and assured us that he would guide us to the place. He told us that his father was Ramana's master in school. By then, it was 7 p.m. He took us by a short route through the paddy fields, till we reached the town. We were so surprised that an unknown person could take so much of trouble to go out of his way to help us. Then we reached the house where Sri Ramana was born, where the priest welcomed us.

There, Sri Ramana's large portrait is installed. We offered prayers. The priest kindly volunteered to take us to the Shiva temple where Sri Ramana spent, many, many days, particularly, the Shrine of Mother Sahayavalli.



By then it was 8 p.m. We wanted to get back the purpose of our visit having been fulfilled. The bus from Madurai didn't arrive owing to a break down. The people there and the priest insisted that we should stay the night there and we agreed. We were thrilled to stay in the room in which sage Ramana was actually born. What a blessing! We had a peaceful night. The next morning at 5 a.m. after bath we meditated at the shrine of Sri Ramana and caught the bus for Madurai, from where we returned to our place, Panruti in South Arcot District.

"Lord of lords, grant us the good whether we pray for it or not, but evil keep from us, even though we pray for it."

— Plato

Introducing....

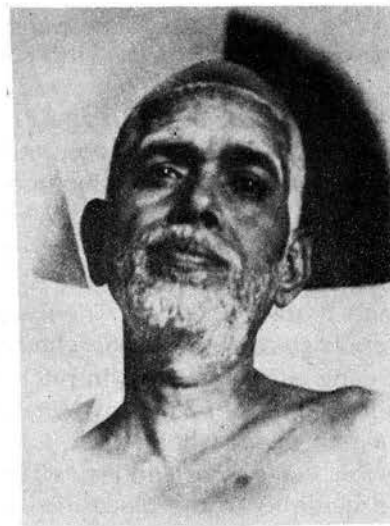
Smt. Saraswati Ammal

Lifelong devotees of Bhagavan are broadly of two categories — those well known to the Ramana circle either by their outstanding contribution to Ramana-literature or notable services in His cause, and those who prefer to remain outside the glare of public recognition. Smt. Saraswati Ammal belongs to the latter group.

In 1926, she and her husband, Sri Krishnaswami Aiyer, were in Tiruvannamalai. One day her neighbour informed her: "There is a *Brahmana Swami* here. We are going to him today". She had a great urge to see Him too and so, she accompanied them. At the time of this first *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan, she was only 14 years old. Her first experience in His presence was only of absolute Peace such as she had never known before. She was very happy; she conveyed this to her husband. He went to Ramana; he too was captivated totally. Then, Sri Krishnaswamy Aiyer had to shift to Kodaikanal, along with his family.



Smt. Saraswati Ammal



The entire family could visit Bhagavan next only during His *Jayanthi* in 1933. Thereafter every year invariably they made it a point to be with the Master on His *Jayanthi* Day. Though Sri Krishnaswami Aiyer used to put many pertinent questions to Bhagavan, Saraswati Ammal never felt the need to talk to Him, since His mere Presence plunged her into a profound silence and tranquility of mind. She boldly went near Him only when she had to take leave of Him and return to her town. On such occasions Bhagavan would graciously look at her and give His assent, either saying 'yes' or nodding His head. These precious moments Saraswati Ammal now recollects with a sense of fulfilment.

Sri Viswanatha Swami used often to visit her house at Kodaikanal for the sole purpose

of narrating the happenings at the Ashram in the Presence of Bhagavan. He would describe in picturesque detail Bhagavan's skill in cutting vegetables, binding books and correcting proofs. Bhagavan's love for animals was another fascinating theme in these talks with Swami. In studying Bhagavan's works too he was a paramount help to her. She is ever devoted to the Ashram, its inmates and *sadhus*.

She has no other God than Sri Bhagavan. She spends her time either in meditation or in

reciting the verses of Sri Bhagavan. She rarely speaks and never demands anything for herself. She is kind, self-effacing and quietly helpful. This is her way of following the teachings of Sri Bhagavan, the *sadhana* of selflessness in daily life.

Saraswati Ammal now lives in Hyderabad along with her son, Dr. K. Subramanian. We pray to Sri Bhagavan to bless her with sound health and length of life!

Take, Lord, all my liberty. Receive my memory, my understanding and my whole will. Whatever I have and posses thou hast given me; to thee I restore it wholly, and to thy will I utterly surrender it for thy direction. Give me the love of thee only, with thy grace, and I am rich enough; nor ask I anything beside.

— St. Ignatius Loyola, 1491-1556

O God, I am Mustafah the tailor and I work at the shop of Muhamad Ali. The whole day long I sit and pull the needle and the thread through the cloth. O God, you are the needle and I am the thread. I am attached to you and I follow you. When the thread tries to slip away from the needle it becomes tangled and must be cut so that it can be put back in the right place. O God, help me to follow you wherever you lead me. For I am really only Mustafah the tailor, and I work at the shop of Muhammad Ali on the great square.

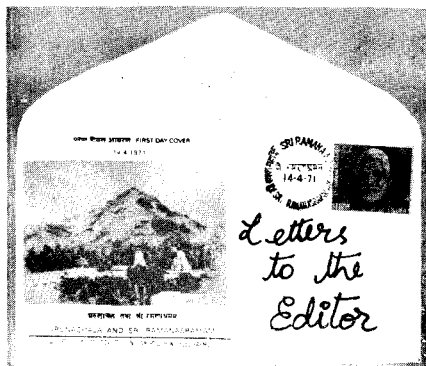
— A Muslim's first prayer as a Christian

God in heaven, you have helped my life to grow like a tree. Now something has happened. Satan, like a bird, has carried in one twig of his own choosing after another. Before I knew it he had built a dwelling place and was living in it. Tonight, my Father, I am throwing out both the bird and the nest.

— Prayer of Nigerian Christian

**From the cowardice that dare not face new truth
From the laziness that is contented with half truth
From the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth,
Good Lord, deliver me.**

— Prayer from Kenya



We reproduce selections of letters and the editor, ARTHUR OSBORNE'S replies from the four issues of 1965.

January, 1965

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 on Reality' I begin to ask questions! Yet I know that there is deep truth in it.

— Fr. Griffiths,
Kurismala Ashram, Kerala

One night I had a dream in which Sri Ramana appeared and showed me what I believe was his radiant Life. He appeared before a screen of brilliant Light. The Light was not stationary, however; it appeared to pulsate with the very life of Life! And all that time he was smiling, the smile that has already won so many hearts and will continue to win many more in the days to come. Throughout the dream not a word was said on either side.

I write this in the hope that others may benefit from it, and also because I would like to know what others who are more qualified to judge think of it.

— Thong Yin Yeow,
Kedah, Malaysia

All will think that it was a sign of Grace.

I dreamed that the Maharshi said to me that twenty years ago he might have known something about psychology. The dream lasted no longer than this. It seems to me that the point might have been not to be too concerned with psychological speculation or questions but to concentrate on the real business,

— John Carey,
Napa, California, U.S.A

A good interpretation — that psychology is something you should have outgrown. Psychology studies the qualities of the ego, whereas Self-enquiry challenges its very existence. As Bhagavan says in the book: Who Am I? it would be foolish to examine the rubbish that you sweep up in order to throw away.

Thank you very much for the space you allow for questions and your wonderfully helpful answers. This correspondence tends to bring with it a sense of togetherness on what J. Wispelwey describes as the road that can be "lonesome at times"; for indeed many of us would have chosen very different members of our household and quite a different environment, but it is good to be fully convinced that our station is appointed by the wisdom of the Eternal.

Is there an answer as to why the body of Sri Ramana was so sorely afflicted in his illness? 'The Infinite Way' (Joel Goldsmith) teaches that "there is only one reason why healings do not come through; there is a barrier or lack of receptivity". I am puzzled because it seemed as though in Pure Consciousness the cells of the body were glorified and that a disease could not affect them unless perhaps it is absorbed from another person.

Viroa Gummer,
Auckland, New Zealand.

The suffering of Spiritual Masters — Christ, Ramakrishna, Milarepa, as well as Ramana Maharshi — is a difficult question. From one point of view the answer may be that they take on themselves the evil karma of their followers: "He that taketh on himself the sins of the world".

Even apart from that, the attitude of the Maharshi towards sickness is different from that of Joel Goldsmith. It is that birth and death, growth and decay, health and sickness, creation and dissolution, are equally phases of the process of nature and it would be illogical to want one phase without the other. The spiritual man accepts what comes, decay no less than growth, sickness no less than health. Therefore he did not encourage his followers to engage in spiritual healing. When asked about his illness he said: "The body itself is a disease". This meant that the entire process of nature, both growth and decay, has to be transcended. This is more profound and ultimate viewpoint, but the other also is legitimate and can therefore be effective, as many healers and healed have found. It is enough to ask here whether there was any individual being in the form of the Maharshi who could desire health rather than sickness or want to change the course of nature.

April, 1965

The problem for me is this: I have been conditioned since childhood to do everything I can first and then

surrender. Somewhere I am confused: We seem to be able to do something about our problems, Krishnamurthi notwithstanding, but then he perplexes me. He is opposed to meditation and at the same time friends who have known him over the years say he is the product of meditation. All very confusing.

— June L. Heath,
Menlo Park, California, U.S.A.

To do what you can first and then leave it to God when you can do no more means that you are using God as a last instrument for furthering your interests; but how do you know that they ought to be furthered? In the editorial of Jan. 1965 issue of The Mountain Path you will have seen the quotation from the Bhagavad Gita: "Do not be motivated by the fruit of action, but also do not cling to inaction". That answers your problem. You should act in the way that seems to you right, simply because it is right, and leave the outcome to God.

I have been interested in the published account of Sri Ramana Maharshi's sayings and answers for over ten years now. Soon after reading the first volume of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* I had a dream in which he sat quite unperturbed while outside the room in which he sat and just behind his back there occurred the most violent earthquakes and storms. He seemed not to know fear at all, and I then realised that this is what realisation is, a rebirth into a new life where there is fear no longer but only serenity.

Perhaps one day I may be able to visit you in the Ashram. Whether a visit would help me to follow the so hard yet so simple precepts of the Maharshi I do not know. I rather think that we stay with the same thoughts wherever we are and it is these thoughts, the mind, that are the impediment is it not?

Will you write an article giving us who never met the Maharshi some idea of the silences and the sort of length of time they lasted for instance, I often wonder whether the Maharshi always answered immediately the questions put to him in the *Talks*? Was there a pause? How long did it last? Did any questioner ever leave without an answer? Or was it more conversational in style and for the most part rapid?

Thank you for including all religions and faiths in your net — a truly wonderful attitude — and most refreshingly new — the spirit of the age to come.

— Mark Wilding,
Bournemouth, England.

It is, of course, one's own mind that is the impediment. Nevertheless, the pervading Presence of Bhagavan at

Tiruvannamalai can be a great help in mastering it. It varies from case to case whether and for how long such help is needed.

The Maharshi's replies to questions also varied from case to case. Usually they were quick and conversational, but when the motive behind them was not right or when silence was called for he might delay or withhold a verbal reply. Typical illustrations of this are given in the "Letters" of Nagamma in our first three issues.

July, 1965

The Letters to the Editor section is a great boon to *The Mountain Path* readers in that they can express their doubts and difficulties and get them solved. I wish also to claim the same privilege. There are two short sentences in the book *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi* in his own Words which defy my understanding. If you will kindly explain their significance I shall be ever grateful to you. They are:

"Be still and know that I am God" and
"I am that I am"

— R. Balasubramaniam

It so happens that neither of these two sentences is original to the Maharshi. Both are quoted by him from the Bible, Old Testament, the first from the Psalms and the second from Genesis.

"Be still and know that I am God" means: "Keep the mind still without thoughts, and know that the 'I am', the sense of being, in you is God."

"I am that I am" or "Being is" is the reply that God gave to Moses when Moses asked what he should say if the Israelites in Egypt asked him who had sent him to them and authorised him to act as their leader and deliverer. "Say that 'I am' sent you, that the Being or the Self sent you." Moses was asking the Name of God and was told that 'I am' is the Name. Moses is the mind or spirit of aspiration in a man that makes him undertake the quest: the Israelites and Egyptians are the down-trodden-good tendencies and triumphant evil tendencies in him when the quest or sadhana starts. 'I am' is the consciousness of Being in the heart that illumines and inspires him.

I would like to know:

- If there is any difference between the technique of 'whence am I?' and that of 'what am I' or 'Who am I'?
- The technique of 'whence am I'?
- The technique of 'what am I?' (or 'Who am I'?)

I have puzzled over this for a very long time. May I know whether the Maharshi used to say 'what am I' or 'Who am I' 'Whence am I?' seems to seek the source of the 'I' without bothering about its nature.

'What am I?' and 'who am I?' seem to analyse the nature of 'I'.

— Dr. Krishan
Chandigarh

Bhagavan did sometimes tell a devotee to find out where the I-thought arises in the body. This was a way of teaching concentration on the heart at the right side.

More often he told enquirers to ask 'who am I?'. As explained on page 194 of our issue of July 1964, the cryptic Tamil form is 'Nan-Yar' (I-Who), not distinguishing between who and 'what'. There is no real difference and the question is not analytical. It is a spiritual, not a mental, exercise, and therefore Bhagavan insisted that no answer the mind can give can be right. It is rather an attempt to suspend thought and feel the pure being of I-ness of you. That comes to feeling the being-consciousness that survives when thinking stops.

October, 1965

In the July Number Dr. Krishnan asked about the proper approach to the enquiry 'Who am I?' It is interesting in that connection to recall how the Buddha showed his disciples the voidness of the five aggregates. The *Anatta Lakkhana Sutta* says: "What do you think, bhikkhus, is the form permanent or impermanent?"

"It is impermanent, O Lord?"

"And that which is impermanent, is it painful or joyful?"

"Painful O Lord,"

"And should one consider of that which is painful, impermanent and subject to change: 'This is mine, This I am, This is my self?'"

"One should not, O Lord,"

The same is then repeated of feeling, perception, tendencies, consciousness.

— Bhikshu Gnanaramita,
Dondanduwa, Ceylon.

This illustrates beautifully the theoretical discarding of the impermanent, but you must remember that Self-enquiry was taught by Bhagavan not as doctrine or theory but as a spiritual exercise.

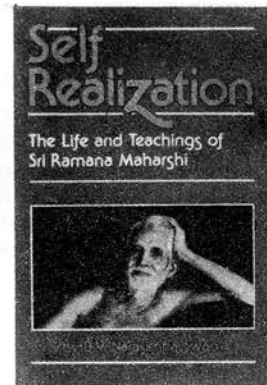
Heaven knows we need never be ashamed of our tears, for they are rain upon the blinding dust of earth, overlying our hard hearts.

— Charles Dickens

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BOOK REVIEWS

BE AS YOU ARE; THE TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI. Edited by David Godman. Pub. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 14, Leicester Square, London WC 2, England. Pp. 251. Price £ 4.95.

This is a new collection of Bhagavan's teachings, in his own words, arranged by subject. The editor, who has been residing at Sri Ramanasramam for several years, has taken passages from various sources and has arranged them in the form of long conversations, each devoted to a different aspect of Bhagavan's teachings. All the main aspects of the teachings are covered and each section is preceded by helpful introductory or explanatory remarks. References to the sources are given at the end of the book. There are some interesting extracts from Sadhu Om's unpublished translation of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* (the collection of Bhagavan's sayings compiled by Muruganar), but most of the rest of the material will probably be familiar to devotees who have read all the published works on Bhagavan.

While there have been collections of Ramana's teachings to date, this book has several new interesting features to recommend it. What makes the book specially useful is that the teachings are given in the order that Bhagavan himself preferred. When visitors questioned Bhagavan he would usually try to convince them that all Self alone exists, that it is already realised, and that one merely has to give up the false idea that is not. If the questioner wanted to know a method by which this could be achieved he would generally prescribe self-enquiry or surrender. If this did not appeal he would give advice on other methods. The same order has been followed in the book: the highest teachings have been given first, then the teachings on enquiry and surrender and then the conversations which give advice on other methods. Bhagavan was least inclined to give discourses on theoretical subjects and this is also reflected in the book: conversations about God, creation, reincarnation, *karma* etc. are all relegated to the final section of the book.

Bhagavan often gave different and seemingly contradictory answers to different people. When the teachings are arranged in this way, that is, in order of absoluteness, it soon becomes clear that Bhagavan taught on many different levels and that the higher teachings transcended rather than contradicted the lower or more relative ones.

The book has been primarily written for foreigners and the compiler's well-written introductions provide brief jargon-free summaries of Bhagavan's teachings for those who have never come across them before. However, the book should also be helpful to old devotees since it will provide them with extensive and well-arranged conversations on every major aspect of Bhagavan's teachings. It is a noteworthy addition to Ramana literature and it is likely to remain a standard for years to come.

— NADHIA SUTARA

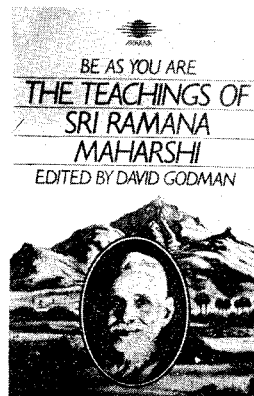
THE DIVINE CONSORT, RADHA AND THE GODDESSES OF INDIA. Edited by John Stratton Hawley and Donna Marie Wulff. Pub. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 7. Pp. 414 + xviii. Rs. 250.

This collection of papers, written by some of today's top-ranking researchers, originated at a conference held by

the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University in 1978. It has now been issued in an Indian edition for the benefit of those interested in Indian religions and cultural studies. The sub-title 'Radha and the goddesses of India', reflects the scope of the papers presented at the conference. In addition to the contributions made by the editors there are papers on Radha by specialists such as Charlotte Vaudeville, Barbara Stoller Miller and C. Mackenzie Brown. Wendy Doniger O' Flaherty, David Kinsley and others have written on goddesses such as Parvati and Sakti, and Cornelia Dimmit, Dennis Hudson and Glen E. Yocum have contributed papers on the divine con-

sorts of South India. The various themes are summarised by A.K. Ramanujam and others in a section entitled 'Concluding Perspectives'. The treatment is interdisciplinary throughout and there is a good balance between contributors who favour the methods of Western critical analysis and those who still follow traditional Eastern methods.

The contributors explore the theme of the Divine Consort in areas such as theology, psychology, religion, philosophy, culture, literature and anthropology. The scholars who chaired the different sessions of the conference and the editors who compiled the book have tried to synthesize the various views, but no coherent overall picture emerges. One thing which does emerge clearly is the fact that the conceptual evolution of goddesses in India in general, and of Radha in particular, touches



areas not fully explored so far. Evidence from classical literature is not enough to explain this evolution; it has to be supplemented by evidence from folklore as well as from cult rituals and living practices.

In spite of the multidimensional probe evidenced in the volume, one feels that the conclusion reached by the different contributors hardly ever come into a single focus. What one sadly misses is the absence of a full-length study of Indian aestheticians on the subject of love in its various aspects, and especially in its aspect of *bhakti*. Only incidental references have been made to a few valued judgements of writers who were talking of its treatment in literary works, and not about its essential nature as such. Whether mere intellectual exercises on the depiction of love and devotion in literature, art and life can take us to a realisation of spiritual *ananda*, or bliss *per se*, is an open question. At the experimental level, the divine ecstasy of the mystic with a totally obliterated ego is contrasted by great masters like Abhinavagupta with the joy one gets in contemplating art and poetry. The former transcends time and space, the latter does not. The former has no *vishaya*, or object, inner or outer, while the latter has one's own mental states as object. An exposition of this non-dual *atmananda* would have better illustrated the inner significance of the polarities introduced by literary and visual artists as a step towards reaching out to the infinite. The female principle distinguished from the male only explains the dynamic flux of *samsara*; how it can be sublimated to reach non-dual consciousness in one's own lifetime is the spiritual goal of all Indian religion and art. There are quite a few insights of this sort in the book, but one is also flooded by the canards of sex fantasies, the dichotomies of South Indian and North Indian ethos and so forth.

Over all, the book is well-documented. It is a scholarly achievement, but it is also a challenge for further studies.

DR. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY

LIVES OF ANCIENT INDIAN SAINTS. By Vidvan Bulusu Venkateswarulu. Pub. The author, 8-22-14 Gandhinagar, Kakinada 533 004, A.P. Vol. 1 Pp. 165, Vol. 2, Pp. 196, Vol. 3, Pp. 202, Vol. 4, Pp. 192. Price, Rs. 10 each volume.

The author who is well-known for his prolific writings in Telugu, has already brought out eight volumes on the lives of ancient Indian saints, all in Telugu. He is presently engaged in bringing out an English version of these volumes of which these are the first four. They cover the illustrious line of Rishis from Agastya to Mrukandu. As he himself notes, these saints are 'beyond history and chronology'. The accounts he relates are mostly from the Puranas, though he has also drawn upon legendary lore from the Vedas and the *Upanishads*. The reader must always keep in mind this aspect of the presentation before he partakes of the sumptuous fare served by the author. The entries are in alphabetical order. All told, they provide an interesting commentary on the Indian tradition of saints. Rea-

sonably priced, the volumes will surely be acquired by every spiritual library.

YOGA VASISHTHA VOLUME I. Translated by Vidvan Bulusu Venkateswarulu. Pub. The translator, 8-22-14, Gandhinagar, Kakinada, 533004, A.P. Pp. 190. Price. Rs.20

Yoga Vasishtha is a well-known treatise on yoga and *advaita*. Sri Ramana Maharshi repeatedly referred to it and many authors have translated parts of it or commented on it. But, as the author of the present volume says, most of the publications are either prefatory or limited in scope. This is because it is a very large book: its colophons indicate that it has 674 sections which contain 32,000 verses. However, only 27,687 verses are to be found in the extant editions. Vidvan Venkateswarulu is now making a valiant attempt to translate the entire surviving text into English. He has, it appears, already translated it into Telugu in both prose and poetry.

This first volume contains the first two chapters which he has rendered in English prose with a glossary and a note on allusions at the end. The translator has brought out the spirit and the purport of the original; the style is both fluent and earnest.

We look forward to the subsequent volumes with interest.

DEVOTIONAL SONGS OF NARSI MEHTA. Translated by Swami Mahadevananda. Pub. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 7. Pp. 146. Price Rs. 80.

Cherished as the foremost saint-poet of Gujarat, Narsi Mehta (AD 1414-80) towers above all other minstrels of God in that region. Apart from his God-intoxication he was also a social reformer and this brought him more than his fair share of troubles in an orthodoxy-ridden society. His poetry is largely centered around the legendary love of Radha and Krishna, though in his later days his outpourings acquired a more or less *vedantic* flavour. The story goes that once, driven by persecution, he had taken refuge in a Siva temple in order to fast himself to death. Inside the temple he had a glorious vision of the *rasa* dance of the divine pair and that changed the character of his life.

In the course of his informative introduction, Swami Mahadevananda (an Englishman) lists the nine aids to union with the deity that are sanctioned by tradition: hearing (*sravana*), singing (*kirtana*), remembering (*smarana*), serving (*padasevana*), worship (*archana*), bowing (*vandana*), servitude (*dasya*), intimacy (*sakhya*), and absolute surrender (*atma-nivedana*). He also enumerates the various emotional relationships that one may have with God: servant to his master (*dasya*), friend (*sakhya*), parent to a child (*vatsalya*), child to a parent (*santa*), wife to a husband (*kanta*), beloved to her lover (*rati* or *madhurya*) and enmity (*dvehsa*).

A hundred songs of the poet have been rendered in poetic English and they all carry their own atmosphere. Listen:

'Last night I heard the music of the flute;
 it woke me from sleep.
 Lost was my heart in that sweet sound,
 its flawless purity
 Led me through waking state and dream,
 and even yet beyond.
 Past dreamless sleep my mind went
 my heart is full of joy.

The explanatory notes are very helpful in explaining the esoteric significance of many of the passages. A book that purifies.

M.P. PANDIT

THE GOSPEL OF SRI KRISHNA. By Swami Gabhirananda. Sri Ramakrishna Math, Trichur, 680 551. Pp. xxiv + 232. Price Rs. 18.

In a brief and brilliant foreword Swami Vimalananda Maharaj commends this new bilingual *Bhagavad Gita* as 'quite practical, simple and highly useful to those who are not scholars in Sanskrit and can follow English' and feels certain that it will 'rank with other standard translations of the great text.'

Apart from the freshness of the English rendering, the most attractive feature of this sumptuously produced and reasonably priced book is the Loeb-type presentation of the Sanskrit text on the left-hand pages and of the corresponding English version on the right-hand pages. This refusal to dismember the poem and mar its music as literature enables the ordinary reader to follow at will either the original or the translations as a continuous stream, with an occasional sideways glance when he feels the need for clarity or confirmation.

Appendix I quotes 54 sayings of the Paramahansa echoing the *Gita's* utterances. Appendix II reproduces Swami Vivekananda's *Song of the Sannyasin* which describes in modern English the *Gita* ideal of spiritual perfection. These appendices proclaim the fact that the perennial message of the ancient scripture has been rediscovered and restated in recent times by Guru Maharaj. It is through this new window that the translator views the universal Form of Sri Krishna and renders his message in terms bold and free and not slavishly literal. For example, in chapter 9 verse 32, 'women, Vaisyas and Sudras' become the 'ignorant, the worldly and the poor'. In an earlier work, Zachner's Clarendon Press edition, they had already become 'women, artisans and serfs'. However, the liberty of interpretation is kept well within bounds and the spirit of the Gospel is faithfully preserved and forcefully brought out.

— K.S.

THE DEDICATED, A BIOGRAPHY OF NIVEDITA. By Lizelle Raymond. Pub. Samata Books. 10 Kamraj Bhavan, 573 Mount Road, Madras 600 006 Pp. 374. Price Rs. 45.

It was Henry Nevinson who described Sister Nivedita as 'being drunk with India' with regard to her daily life and political thought. Like Annie Besant and Mira Behn (Madelaine Slade) Nivedita (Margaret Noble) was yet another exotic bloom which only Victorian England could have offered as a gift to India. She was initiated into the order of Ramakrishna in her thirtieth year by Swami Vivekananda and given the name of Nivedita — 'she who had been dedicated'. The author wonders whether God in some mysterious way revealed to the Swamiji 'that Margaret's mother, in the travail of her baby's birth, had already "dedicated" to God this child who was today dedicating herself to Him through Swamiji's intermediary.'

Like Annie Besant, Nivedita adopted India as her Motherland and in all her speeches she struck the same key notes:

'Shame on my country of origin! But we shall continue to struggle until the sacrifice and heroism of the children of India compel the English to get out of India leaving the people to breathe the air of freedom.'

Her determination towards action was so strong that she was closely associated with the Swadeshi movement and even with the terrorist activities of Birendra Ghose, brother of Sri Aurobindo, in the early decades of this century.

Her religious views, if they can be so called, were equally militant. She believed the Mother India was a manifestation of *shakti*, the divine energy, and that is manifested in the form of the sea, the red dust of Malabar, the mud of the Ganges, the sands of the Punjab and the snows of Kashmir.

'Instead of being the slaves of an unknowable *Brahman*, let us be Mother India's slaves', cried Nivedita. 'In place of altars, build factories and universities. Instead of bringing offerings, take care of the people and educate them. Instead of giving ourselves up to passive adoration, let us struggle to acquire knowledge, and to establish cooperation and organisation.'

It is noteworthy that Swami Vivekananda had recognised this missionary zeal in her early enough, for even before her arrival in India the Swamiji had in a letter told her:

'Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you have a great future in the work for India. What is wanted is not a man but a woman, a real lioness, to work for the Indians, women especially. India cannot yet produce great women; she must borrow from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination, and above all, the Celtic blood, make you just the woman wanted.'

This valuable book, translated from the French, is more than a biography, it is a page from the history of India. What is more, it gives the yogi's secret of a balanced life, that spiritual mystery which India has carefully treasured in her bosom for thousands of years. The reader is beholden to Samata Books for this edition of the book which had previously been out of print for three decades.

BRAHMA JNANA AND THE BHAGAVAD GITA. By Paramanand Patel. Pub. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati K.M. Munshi Marg, Bombay 7. Pp. 202 Price Rs. 42.

This is yet another commentary on the *Gita*, commended by such eminent personalities as the Jagadguru Sankaracharya of Sringeri, the former Vice-President of India, Hidayatullah and Nani Palkhivala. It is excellent in its own way, though the *Gita* has been commented on by many other writers. Countless indeed are the commentaries on the *Gita*, and countless are the differing interpretations of it. Gandhi believed that its main teaching was *anasakti*, 'the central Sun round which revolve the three planets, *jnana*, *bhakti* and *karma*'. Tilak thought that it was a Gospel of work, Ramanuja that it was a book of devotion, Sankara that it was a manual for wisdom, and so on. The present author, as indicated in the title, attempts to show that the underlying teachings of the *Gita* is *brahma jnana* or *atma-jnana*, as the phrase *brahma-vidya* occurs in the colophon at the end of each chapter of the scripture.

Atma-jnana, affirms the author, is the divesting of the ego or the Self from the mind, which is only possible when one understands oneself. This, it is stated, 'is a psychological revolution in which there is neither continuity with the past nor its memory'. Such a mutation is a 'virgin experience which cannot be planned and executed or talked about'. The ideas remind of Krishnamurthi's teachings, which the author admits 'had the profoundest influence on me'.

Emphasising the theory that in the *Gita* Lord Krishna is a symbol and personification of *brahman* and Arjuna of *atman*, he argues that in Vyasa's poem that *brahman* and *atman* are having a dialogue about their relationship, and come to the conclusion that they are identical. Hence Paramanand Patel supports Sankara's non-dualistic interpretation of the *Gita*, with apt quotations and illustrations, which reveals his profound scholarship and intuitive insight. The author was at one time the Education Minister of the Madhya Pradesh Government, and later Minister of Education and Commerce. With the advent of the

Janata Government he resigned and plunged himself into the study of religion and philosophy.

I AM THOU. By Ramachandra Gandhi. Pub. Indian Philosophical Quarterly Publications, University of Poona, Poona, Maharashtra. Pp. 311. Price Rs. 70.

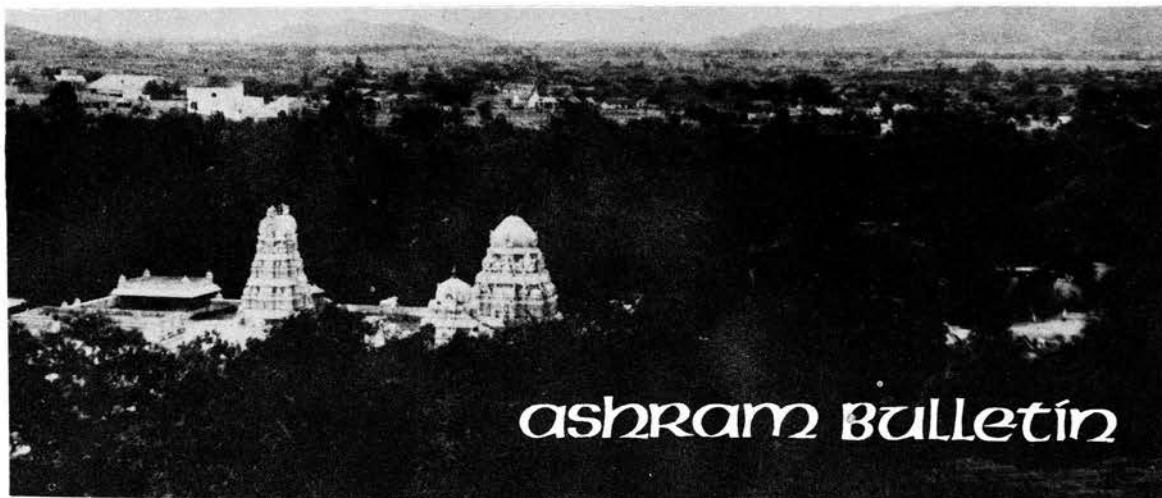
Here is one more exposition of *advaitin* orthodoxy which affirms *atman*, the Self, as the ultimate and sole reality, and repudiates otherness and all its shackles. It is written by Ramchandra Gandhi who is the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and C. Rajagopalachari. He is currently professor of comparative religion at Visva-Bharati. The book takes the form of 79. 'Meditations on the truth of India'. 'Can *advaita*, which is at the base of India's spirituality and civilisation, save her and the world from anarchy and impending annihilation?', asks the author. This and many other allied questions are explored under various headings in the idiom of theological and metaphysical enquiry. The answers are in the form of a reconstruction of the spiritual history of India, set against the background of a recurrent homage to Sri Ramana Maharshi, who is described 'as the chief exemplar in our age of the truth of oneness and the very soul of India, contemporary of Gandhi, who survived the Mahatma by three years, almost symbolically to show that the *satya* of India exceeds its own *satyagraha*'

Special mention should be made of the author's interpretation of Bhagavan's insistence that the heart, the *atman*'s seat in the human body, is on the right side of the chest. Regarding the biological heart on the left as the original sin, the leftward deviation fixing all our attention on physical survival, the author affirms that even the *anahata* centre (the heart *chakra*), located in the centre of the body, does not suffice to bring us back to the centre of things, 'the truth of incorruptible *saccidananda*'. Only the powerful symbolism of the spiritual heart on the right can redeem us and annul the error of our *samsaric* leftward shift. The sage of Arunachala, according to this interpretation, calls on us to reverse the inverted order of our physical existence by turning from left to right, from an attachment to the physical to an immersion in the spiritual light. Does this not rival the image of the Aswattha tree in chapter 15 of the *Gita*? Many more such gems are to be found in this enlightening and innovative work.

— ARCUS

Grace does not replace nature, it perfects nature, transmutes something that belongs to earth and makes it grow with the radiance of heaven.

— Ronald A. Knox.



Sri Bhagavan translated into Tamil verse from the Sanskrit original the ordinance of Lord Siva.

"I ordain that residence within a radius of three *yojanas* (30 miles) of this Hill shall by itself suffice to burn off all defects and effect union with the Supreme, even in the absence of initiation."

— *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi, p. 81*

It is also of paramount significance that our Master, after reaching Arunachala at the age of 16 years, on Sept. 1, 1896, never left it till his *Mahasamadhi* in April 14, 1950 — 54 years of continuous stay in Arunachala!

Devotees even from the days of Bhagavan had constructed houses on the sites opposite the Ashram, which later on came to be known as 'Ramana Nagar'. As the message of Bhagavan Ramana spread, more and more earnest seekers flock to Arunachala, particularly the vicinity of Sri Ramanasramam. It is also noteworthy that on the way to *giripradakshina* a colony of houses has come up, built by foreigners, exclusively.

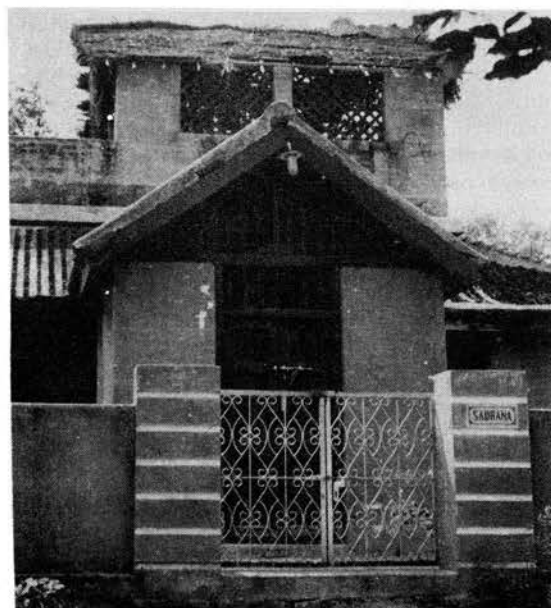
Years back, Marleen Boers, a staunch devotee of Bhagavan, built her beautiful house, a little away from the Ashram and she comes daily to the Ashram to pursue her spiritual sadhana at Sri Bhagavan's Old Hall. So too, the late S.P. Mukherjee, had built a house next to the Ashram; but this noble devotee was absorbed in Arunachala a few years back.

The pull of Arunachala is so strong that two remarkable devotees have come here for good, leaving their lucrative profession, comforts and conveniences, exclusively for the purpose of doing sadhana, as enjoined by Sri Bhagavan.

"SADHANA"

Sri S.B. Mukherjee is the younger brother of late S.P. Mukherjee. After his brother's passing away his house,

'Upasana', was sold. This taunted him. His only son, Sri Saumen Mukherjee, was doing roaring business in cosmetics in Howrah. 'Somu' is a deep devotee of Sri Bhagavan in his own right. His wife, Smt. Aruna Mukherjee and



Sadhana, the house of the Mukherjees



Smt. Aruna Mukherjee,
Sri S.B. Mukherjee, 'darling'
Muniya, Smt. S.B. Mukherjee and
Sri Saumen Mukherjee

their lovely daughter, Muniya, of five years old only, are also totally devoted to Bhagavan. The little Muniya it is who was actually instrumental in the entire family shifting from far off Howrah to heavenly Arunachala. She urged that she would learn Tamil and study in the local school itself. She insisted that she would stay and live

only at Arunachala. With the help of another staunch devotee, the Mukherjees bought a house and 'Sadhana' was born. Smt. and Sri S.B. Mukherjee, Smt. and Sri Saumen Mukherjee and darling Muniya bask themselves in the Ramana-Sun and drench themselves in Arunachala-proximity.

"KRUPA"

'Krishna' is the *ishta-devata* of this glorious person, Sri V.Dwaraknath Reddy, who is full of life, knowledge in Vedanta, mirth and optimism. His devotion to Sri Bha-



Sri V. Dwaraknath Reddy

gavan is quite transparent. Anyone coming in contact with him cannot but return with greater faith in life, and revelation of joy in spiritual effort. If his spiritual understanding is so deep and vast, his material prosperity is very high too — a rare combination of wealth and wisdom! He is the Managing Director of a very big confectionery company in South India. Though he has not completely cut off from active business-life, yet he has come for good to Arunachala, building a small but

attractive house, 'Krupa', in Ramana Nagar. There is a beautiful shrine for Lord Krishna within his residential compound.

Sandhya, his adopted daughter, is there always with a smile to welcome you and to make you instantaneously feel at home at 'Krupa'. Sri Dwaraknath Reddy is a studious *sadhaka* and as such spends his time usefully in serious study and meditation. Sandhya helps him in his efforts to pursue his sadhana in undeterred concentration. He has been very helpful to the Ashram in its varied activities; he continues to help it with his expert advice, constructive criticism and all possible help.



Brahmacharini Sandhya



"Krupa" at Ramana Nagar.
(Inset) The beautiful shrine
in 'Krupa'

SEPTEMBER 1ST CELEBRATIONS

Sri Bhagavan's Advent at Arunachala Anniversary Day was celebrated on September 1, 1985, with great devotion and enthusiasm at *Arunachala Ashrama*, Nova Scotia, Canada, in the midst of hundreds of devotees. It was a great privilege that the head of the Chicago Vivekananda Vedanta Society, Sri Swami Bhashyananda, graced the occasion. The day Venkataraman, a boy of sixteen reached Holy Arunachala, Sept. 1, 1896, is the holiest day for the entire spiritual world since on that day the Son merging with the Father created the epoch-making Ramana Maharshi Era!!!

Sri Swami Bhashyananda described how in 1945 he had the good fortune of having *darshan* of Sri Ramana Maharshi. He paid rich tributes to the Maharshi and extolled the importance of His teachings.

On August 31 itself the Ashrama brimmed with activity since a large number of devotees had arrived then and the whole day was spent with *bhajans*, Vedic chanting and *pujas*. Vegetables grown in the Ashrama garden were picked and lady-devotees like Bala Durvasula, Sushila Sastry, Lalitha Sreenivasan, Mrs. Parekh, Yogamaya and Hena Singh were in full swing in organising food and other preparations. Oliver Cutler, a devotee from New York City, prepared a large picture of Lord Ganesh for being used in the next day's drama.

The next day — the sacred September 1st — the devotees gathered at 4.30 a.m. in 'Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram'. *Veda Parayana* and *Sri Lalitha Sahasranama Stotra* were chanted and by 11 a.m. Sri V.V.R.N. Sastry of Halifax conducted the programme with Ganesha Puja and this was followed by *bhajan* in praise of Lord Ganesha. Dennis Hartel, a resident Ashramite, welcomed and thanked the guests and enumerated how 'Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram' was raised and how for the past ten years they have been celebrating with great eclat and



Smt. and Sri Vayalamur Srinivasa Iyer

THE 1000-MOON CEREMONY

Sri Vayalamur Srinivasa Iyer, introduced to our readers in our January, 1977 issue, p. 55, has had the distinction of having 'seen one thousand moons', viz., he celebrated his 80th birthday, Satabhishekam, on July 3, 1985, at the Ashram (a man living 80 years passes through 1000 full moon days). A staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan and a very close associate of old devotees, Sri Srinivasa Iyer, is a regular pilgrim to the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan. It is thus only befitting that his Satabhishekam took place at his Master's place. All the rituals connected with this function were meticulously performed by his son, Dr. S. Venkataraman. The celebration was attended by a large number of his relatives and devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

ecstasy Sri Bhagavan's Advent at Arunachala Day. This was followed by *Upadesa Saram* recital by all, led by Bhavana Parekh of New Jersey, U.S.A. After group *bhajan*, *Aarti* was performed

AT NEW YORK CITY

A modest but devoted group of friends and devotees gathered to celebrate Sri Bhagavan's Advent Day at *Arunachala Ashrama*, New York City. In the afternoon *Sri Chakra Puja* was performed. The evening programme consisted of recitations, chanting and silence.

Arunachala Ashrama, Nova Scotia, Canada: Sri Swami Bhashyananda extolling the greatness of Sri Bhagavan.



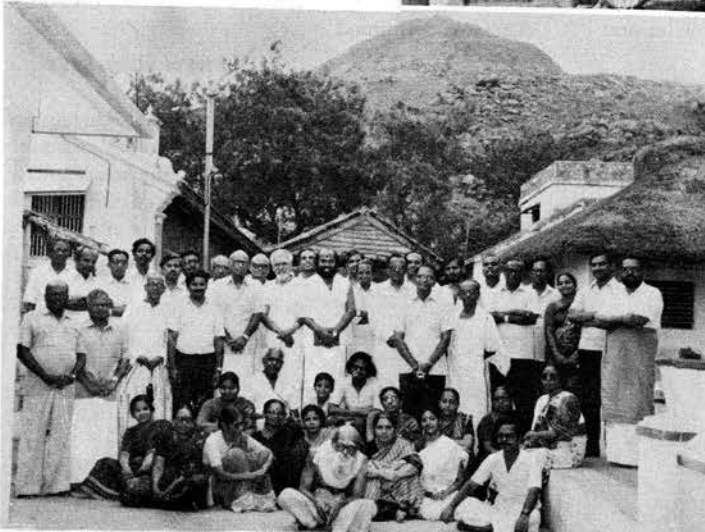


Girdalur Family: Daughter, Smt. Ramana Rao, Smt. Subba Rao, Sri Subba Rao, Dr. Ramana Rao (Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Ashram President and Sri V.Subramanian)

Italian group of devotees, led by Mr. Peterlini Sergio



Sri Swami Chidananda

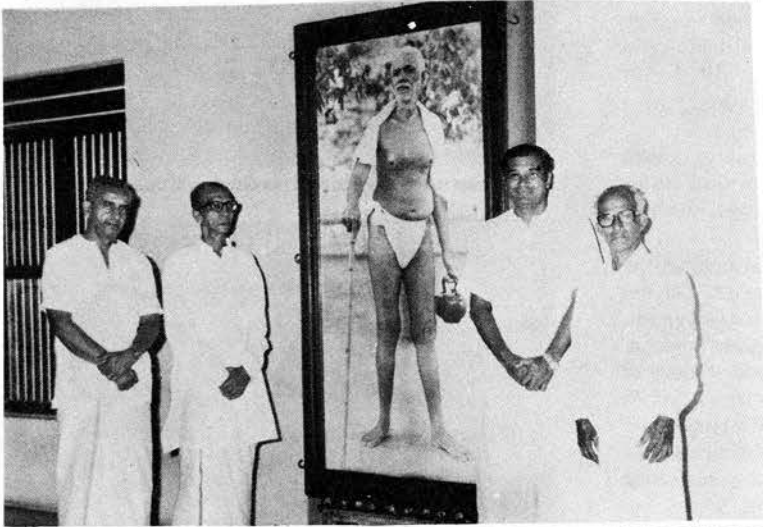


Sri Swami Suddha Chaitanya, with devotees from Madras.

Smt. Gayatri Devi Vasudev (with her son) and to her right Sri C. Vasudev and family.



Sri P.V. Somsundaram (extreme right) and devotees from Bombay



Margo Martin from Arunachala Ashrama, New York

Ramana-bhaktas from Warangal.



**RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING,
BANGALORE**

Bhagavan's presence was fully evoked in the week-long 'Ramana Jnana Yagna', *Saptaaha* of 'Ramana-Katha-Sankirtan' by Bhadrhiri Sri Achyuta Dasji. Karnataka Minister for Youth and Information, Sri Jeevaraj Alva, inaugurated the *Saptaaha*. He released *Ramananjali's* 20th pre-recorded cassette : *Ramana Vandana* (Kannada) by giving the first copy to Smt. Sulochana Natarajan and copies to Sri H.K. Narayana and Sri B.R. Shivaram. The 'Ramana Jnana Yagna' was so deeply enjoyed that the people of Hubli arranged a similar *yagna* the very next month which was also very well attended and appreciated.

'Ramana Music' group singing concerts were given at the Ramana Shrine, Ramana Bhoomi, by Smt. Gayathri Sunder Rao and party and by Triveni Kala Sangha.

A three-day exhibition-cum-sale of Ramana books and cassettes was held at the Institute of World Culture. The exhibition was beautifully planned and laid out by the Centre's artist, Sri Muralidhara Hegde. The Centre was happy that the exhibition was well attended.

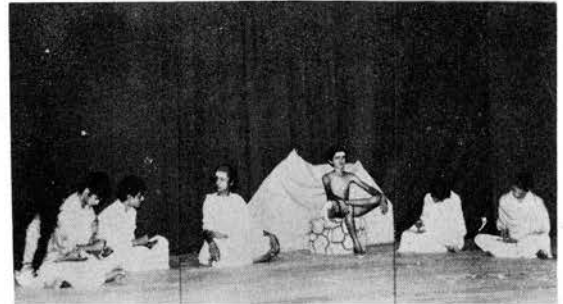
Independence day was celebrated on August 15 with flag-hoisting, singing of National Anthem and distribution of sweets to the children of Ramana Bala Kendra.

The Centre organised a Cultural Festival held at the Ravindra Kalashetra on August 31 and Sept.1. On the 31st was presented a unique *Bharatanatyam Arangetram*, completely of compositions by and on Bhagavan Ramana, by Smt. Ambika Kameshwar and Kumari Sarada, students of Kum. Meenakshi. Kum. Meenakshi, of Veena Visalakshi Art Centre, had specifically set the music for the programme and choreographed all the items. The programme was brisk, vigorous, yet graceful and at the same time sustaining a deep mood of devotion to Bhagavan. Smt. Bama Visweswaran gave a melodious vocal support for the music.

Exhibition on Bhagavan's life.



Ramananjali'



Skanda Ramana — Nayana', the dictation of *Uma Sahasram*.



"O Ramana! Don't push me aside, angrily" — Kumari Sarada and Smt. Ambika Kameshwar — in *abhinaya*.

The 1st of September saw the elevating, though brief *Ramananjali* followed by 'Skanda Ramana — Nayana' a drama-ballet spectacle by Ramana Nritya Kala Ranga, presented for the first time in Bangalore. All the programmes were witnessed by a packed and rapt audience. It gave the performers great joy that Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, and other devotees from Tiruvannamalai and Madras came specially for participating in these programmes.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Professor Ramchandra Gandhi, grandson of Mahatma Gandhi and Rajaji, gave an illuminating talk on Bhagavan Ramana on July 14. Professor Gandhi has made a deep study of Bhagavan's philosophy as is evident from his recent book, 'I am Thou'.

Talks were given by Sri K.V. Iyer on 'Bhagavan's Teachings & the Upanishads', 'Vivekachudamani' and 'Self Realisation' on June 16, August 18 and 25.

Classes on Bhagavan's *Sat Darshan* were regularly conducted by Sri K.C. Subbaiah on Wednesdays.

Discourses on 'Who Am I?' and *bhajans* in Hindi by Revered Chote Ma of Arpana Trust, Madhuban, were held on July 24, August 14 and September 11.

Arsha Vidya Mandir, under whose auspices classes on *Bhagavad Gita*, *Upanishads* and other Vedantic texts are being held regularly at the Kendra, conducted a largely attended programme of *Sampoorna Gita Parayana* led by Swami Prabuddhananda on *Janmashtami*, September 7.

The Annual poor feeding was held at the Shakurpur Resettlement Colony on September 14.

Children's Day was celebrated on a grand scale on September 15. A special feature of this year's programme was presentation of school uniforms to as many as 55 poor school children. The Kendra is grateful to Sri S.K. Sachdeva, Editor, Competition Review Pvt. Ltd., and his devoted wife, Smt. Vijay Lakshmi Sachdeva, for financing the entire project and also actively participating in the programme of poor feeding and giving away the awards to the children.

Muruganar's Day was observed on September 15 when Homage was paid to the great poet-devotee.

A REQUEST

At the request of old devotees and those who visit the Ashram for a short stay, the management has decided not to entertain any more requests for celebrations, like marriages etc, at the Ashram, particularly in front of Sri Bhagavan's *Samadhi* shrine. We solicit the cooperation of devotees and request them not to embarrass us by making such specific demands.

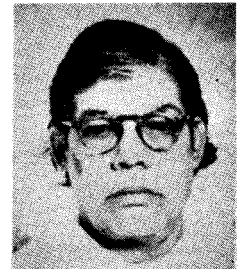
PILGRIM-TOUR

Though it was purely a private visit to his brother, Sri V.S. Ramanan at Baroda, our *Managing Editor* made use of it to give a talk on Sri Bhagavan on September 1st — Sri Bhagavan's Advent day at Arunachala — to Baroda Ramana Sat Sang members. He gave a vivid and picturesque description of the first day of Bhagavan at Arunachala on September 1st, 1896 — from the time of His arrival at Arunachala till that first night. He also enunciated the four types of *jivanmuktas* — *Brahma-vid*, *Brahmavaran*, *Brahmavariyan* and *Brahma Vari-shtan* — and how all these four stages were blended in the life of Sri Bhagavan and how by living so He had exemplified the importance of these states.

Our *Managing Editor*, during his stay in Baroda, had the rare privilege of meeting a 93-year old devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He is Sri Subrahmania Iyer staying with his son, Sri Raghunath. Sri Subrahmania Iyer had seen Bhagavan even at His Virupaksha Cave days. The house where he lives at Baroda is named 'Sri Ramana Nilayam'!

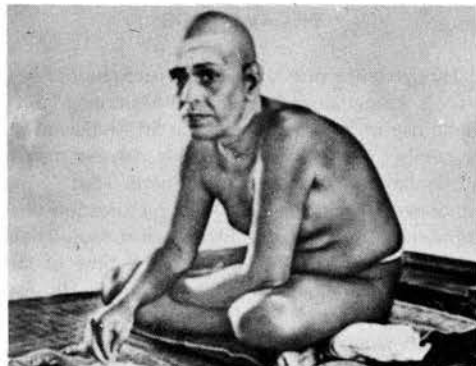
KAPALI SASTRIAR

The Birth Centenary of Sri T.V. Kapali Sastriar ('K') will be held in September 1986. In fact, the celebrations committee has been arranging for his centenary lectures for the past three years as if to gather momentum to the finale — Sri S. Sankaranarayanan in 1983. Sri Swami Dayananda in 1984 and in 1985 Prof. K.B. Ramakrishna Rao and Dr. Raja Ramanna gave talks on the importance of Sri Sastriar's scholarly contribution in the field of Vedas, particularly Rig Veda. His collected works will be brought out, next year, in addition to arranging for Seminar and lectures.



Sri Kapali Sastriar

Sri Sastriar was a born scholar, master of four languages — Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and English. He received inspiration from spiritual, yogic and tantric giants like Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni. His deep understanding of Vedas threw light in revealing their secrets. He has written commentaries on Bhagavan's *Sat Darshan*, *Sri Ramana Gita* and *Arunachala Pancha Ratna*. His book, *The Maharshi*, offers absorbing reading. Scholar-seekers like Sri Sastriar are the pillars holding aloft the greatness of our *Sanatana Dharma*.



My dear President,

Yesterday evening I had a talk with Mani and Ganesan about a fund of Rs. 25,000/-. I wish to institute in memory of my late mother. The interest of this amount is to be used exclusively for feeding the devotees. The Corpus should not be transferred to other items of Ashram expenditure.

You know that Bhagavan sat at only two places in the Ashram, the Old Hall, and the dining hall. These two have acquired a sanctity, which will endure as long as the Ashram exists. He evinced as much interest in feeding the bodies of devotees as in feeding their souls. This is in perfect consonance with Indian spiritual tradition that the Guru is *bhukti mukti pradata* (the giver of food and liberation). He was more than a mother when He fed us. Occupying luckily the first seat to His left in the dining hall I could closely observe the serene delight manifest in His divine face as He watched the devotees, sometimes running into hundreds, being served. It was a sight for the gods! If His father and mother kept an open kitchen at Tiruchuzhi for limited purposes, He kept an open kitchen for the whole world. Prince and peasant, scholar and saint — all sat with Him and accepted His food as a physical symbol of His Grace.

The Ashram has built up a reputation for its good and homely food. May this reputation endure! I take this opportunity to congratulate you and record that by your able management you have placed the Ashram finances on a sound footing. I believe you have made your successors not worry over much about money.

I have enclosed a cheque for this amount.

Sri Ramanasramam,
15-9-1985

Affectionately,
N. BALARAMA REDDY

August 18, 1985
Chithurst Forest Monastery
Peterfield, Hants, England

Dear Friend,

I am writing to thank you for the photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi that you kindly sent me. It arrived in the first post after my ordination as a Buddhist monk which seemed rather auspicious. The monastery I am in has roots in the forests of north east Thailand and adheres to the monastic rule taught by the Buddha and is used as a means to develop mindfulness around ones daily activities.

I feel that Bhagavan's influence and example is of benefit to all who are searching showing that there is a peaceful abiding. As I write this I look at his picture which reminds me of limited value of words to one who doesn't see clearly.

Metta Citena
Sihanado Bhikkhu

Smt. Gayatri Devi Vasudev, a great astrologer in Bangalore, after her visit to Ashram, along with her husband and friends, in July, writes:

"Our visit to Tiruvannamalai and the Ashram was particularly significant to me this time. I was able to do this *Giripradakshina* on two consecutive days without the least sign of fatigue. Considering the fact I rarely walk more than half a kilometre a day, the 13 km. circumambulation round the holy hill was a miracle. It is purely Sri Bhagavan's Grace. My greatest wish is to sit in the meditation hall undisturbed but this my four-and-half year old son Om Prakash will not let me do. So I console myself sitting in the corridors of the Ashram office, nevertheless in the still but magnetic presence of Bhagavan Ramana with which the whole place is pervaded.

"The Ramana family at the Ashram, which includes, not only His blood relations but the staff and all others seeking the Sage's Grace, was extremely friendly with all of us. I can never forget the warmth and homely feeling they exude. I know I will come to Tiruvannamalai again and again until Bhagavan lets me bask in His Silent Love in the room He occupied during His life-time."

A CORRECTION

In our last issue, p. 183 col. 1, "The feeling of 'I' will vanish neither by" should read " either by"



Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad — 'the joy of Ramana-presence'.

SRI RAMANA KENDRAM, HYDERABAD
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Bh. Venkateswara Rao

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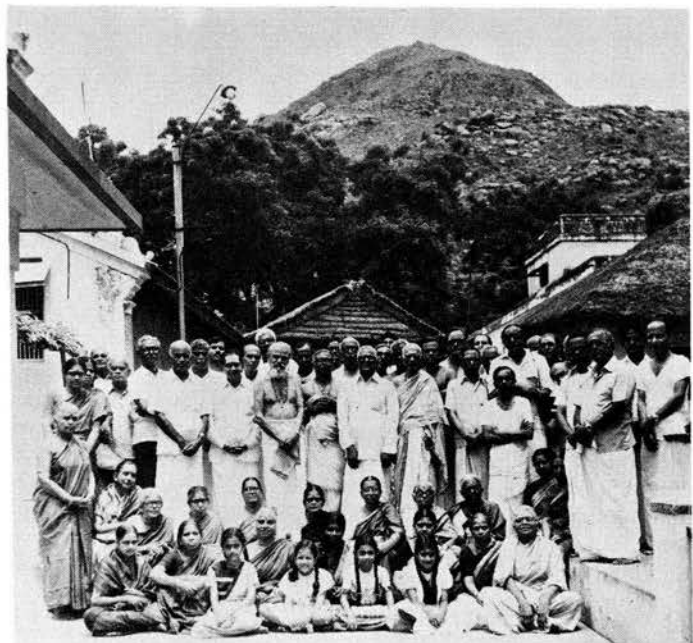
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Smt. Tripura Sundari

Smt. C. Annapurna

Smt. S. Indera

Members of Ramana Kendra,
Madras





Members of
Travancore Royal Family:
Smt. Gouri Lakshmi Bai,
Smt. Sarojani Thampurathy
Sri R.R. Varma,
and **Sri Haridas K. Varma.**



Sri Rengaswamy, Smt. Kala Rengaswamy, Smt. Guruswamy and Sri S. Guruswamy (with his grand-daughter, darling **Aruna**) of the Delhi Ramana Kendra.

MURUGANAR DAY

The Shadow of Bhagavan' as Sri Muruganar was called, had sung thousands and thousands of chaste Tamil verses on Sri Bhagavan, illuminating the magnitude of the richness in His teachings. His death anniversary was observed on Sept. 14 at his samadhi, constructed at the foot of Arunachala, within the precincts of the Ashram. Devotees gathered in solemnity and paid homage to this poet-saint.



Happy Marriage at *Arunachala Ashrama*, Nova Scotia, Canada: **Darlone**, a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, weds **Sri Nicholas**

KHANNA DAY

Harichand Khanna of Kanpur was a very staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He was absorbed by Arunachala two years ago and his ashes were interred in a *samadhi*, situated next to those of Major Chadwick's and S.S. Cohen's within the Ashram premises. This year, his death anniversary was observed at his *samadhi*, with chantings from Bhagavan's works on July 23. Sri Pavan Khanna, grandson of H.C. Khanna, specially came to the Ashram to be present on this solemn occasion.

"As ever, I found much beautiful and inspiring reading; the editorial is as always a thought-provoking introduction to this spiritual magazine. The following articles: 'Two Decades of The Mountain Path', 'The Three Wishes' written by Douglas E. Harding with his usual lucid blending of wisdom, logic and intuitive understanding and 'The Story of an Unknown Devotee' gave me a deep joy and sense of peaceful belonging.

"Of course, the *Letters to the Editor* are so often of timely help with the simple direct responses given in answer to questions, while *Ashram Bulletin* brings to me a nostalgia to return once more to Sri Ramanasramam, the sacred mountain of Arunachala which I climbed, to do *pradakshina* around it as I did once before, to surrender to the silent continuous message of the Old Hall, beautiful Skandashram and the still call of Vriupaksha Cave"

— Pat L. Sullavan, Auckland
New Zealand

"After a lapse of more than fourteen years I was able to return to Tiruvannamalai only by God's Grace and fortunately for a longer stay with Sri Ramanasramam. Graciously Arunachala-Siva-Ramana enfolded me in His Presence and His Peace. It was my seventh visit, and seven times He lead me around the Mountain. I also went up to Skandashram for several times and was very much drawn to His Mighty Arunachalewara Temple where I was blessed by a very deep experience, and not only once!

"The hearty welcome in Sri Ramanasramam, the nice independent room you gave me, the pure and well prepared food you offered and last not least the heart-felt friendship I received everywhere, made my stay extremely happy. Again and again I remember those many happy hours and I thank you all for your kindness! On the day before my departure I received from you the beautiful colour portrait of Sri Bhagavan, nicely framed, which I like very much, and I thank you for the same"

— Mrs. Ingrid Guha, West Germany

OBITUARY

Sri P.S. VAIKUNTAVASAR

Sri Vaikuntavasara came to Bhagavan, captivated by His spiritual excellence and tremendous human compassion. He had the rare privilege of doing physical *kainkary*



Sri Bhagavan holding the hand of Sri P.S. Vaikuntavasara.

(service) to Sri Bhagavan in the last years. He was very observant and as such very correct in knowing what next should be done to Bhagavan, from morning till night. Bhagavan holding his hand in the picture is evidence enough for the privilege Bhagavan allowed him to enjoy in His proximity.

He was helpful to the Ashram management after the *Mahanirvana* of Sri Bhagavan. He served as a Trustee of Sri Ramanasramam Trust Board from 1970 to 1985. He passed away at Pondicherry on Sept. 12, after a prolonged illness.

In him the devotees of Bhagavan have lost a gem of a Ramana-sevaka. His soul now rests at the Holy Feet of his chosen God, Bhagavan Ramana!

SRI PAVAN KHANNA

This grandson of late H.C. Khanna was a frequent visitor to the Ashram, his last visit being in July '85, to observe the death anniversary of his grandfather at his *samadhi*, situated within the Ashram premises. A few years back his parents, sister and brother were killed in a

car accident. Pavan's passing away so early in life is a great tragedy. He died in Bombay on Aug. 20. He was a keen student of Bhagavan's teaching and was very fond of meeting old devotees of Bhagavan whenever he stayed at the Ashram and learning from them more about the Master.

We convey our condolences to the members of Khanna family.

SMT. ALAMELU NARASIMHA

A staunch devotee of Bhagavan and an active member of Ramana Kendra, Delhi, Smt. Alamelu Narasimha attained the lotus feet of Sri Bhagavan on the morning of June 27. Smt. Narasimha was an accomplished scholar in Sanskrit Hindi and Kannada. Her book of songs published by the Delhi Kendra under the title, 'Ramana Kirtan Manjari', express her intense devotion to Bhagavan. Her English translation of 'Ramanopanishat', written in Kannada by Swami Pranananda, reveals not only her scholarship but also her deep understanding of Maharshi's teachings.



Smt. Alamelu Narasimha, with her daughters, Bharati and Shayamala and son, Jaisimha.

'Ramanopanishat', written in Kannada by Swami Pranananda, reveals not only her scholarship but also her deep understanding of Maharshi's teachings.

SRI C.R. GOVINDARAJAN

Ramana Kendra, Delhi regrets to report the passing away of Sri C.R. Govindarajan, on June 28. He was a staunch devotee and a source of great strength to the Delhi Kendra. May his Soul rest in peace at the lotus feet of Sri Bhagavan