
THE MOUNTAIN PATH



VOL. 23 No. IV OCTOBER 1986

"If the ego is, all else is. If the ego is not, all else is not. The ego, verily, is all. Therefore, the inquiry as to what it is, is but the giving up of all. Thus should you know."

—Sri Bhagavan's FORTY VERSES ON EXISTENCE, verse 26
(Translation by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan)

"அகந்தையுண் டாயி னனைத்துமுண் டாகு
மகந்தையின் றேலின் றனைத்து — மகந்தையே
யாவுமா மாதலால் யாதிதென்று நாடலே
யோவுதல் யாவுமென வோர்."

—பகவான் ஸ்ரீரமணரின் உள்ளது நாற்பது-26

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May the Grace of
Sri Ramana Maharshi

be with

"THE MOUNTAIN PATH"

The Spiritual Journal

published from Sri Ramanasramam

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Let us enjoy one
another in the House of
Open Space, where there
is neither night nor day,
Oh Arunachala!

*The Marital
Garland of Letters
Verse 91*

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. 23 **OCTOBER 1986** **No.4**

CONTENTS		Page
EDITORIAL : Silent Language	...	209
Sri Ramana, the Divine Sage		
— Swami Sivananda	...	211
Gita Sara Taalaattu		
— Namaraya:	...	213
Self Observation		
— J.B.	...	216
Two Decades of The Mountain Path	...	218
The Birth of an Upanishad		
— Masti Venkatesa Iyengar	...	220
Prisoner of His Love — A Sufi	...	229
The Sage of Vasisthaguha :		
Swami Purushottamananda		
— S.N.	...	230
Krishnamurti and Religion		
— G.N.	...	233
Sri K.K. Nambiar : In Memoriam	...	237
Oxford Rejected (Chapter IV Contd.)		
— Arthur Osborne	...	240
Design — Paul Reys	...	243
Leaves from Devotees' Diaries : With me in Kitchen	...	244
How I Came to Bhagavan		
— V. Ramachandra Rao	...	248
The Hound of Heaven		
— A.R. Natarajan	...	250
Resplendent Ramana		
— V. Ganesan	...	252
Meditation in front of Sri Bhagavan's		
Samadhi during Veda-Parayana		
— Prof. N.R. Krishnamurthy Aiyer	...	259
What Sri Ramanasramam is to us	...	260
— Non-entity		
Home Coming — Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan	...	261
Introducing . . . Dr. M. B. Bhaskaran	...	262
Letters to the Editor	...	264
Book Reviews	...	266
Ashram Bulletin	...	271

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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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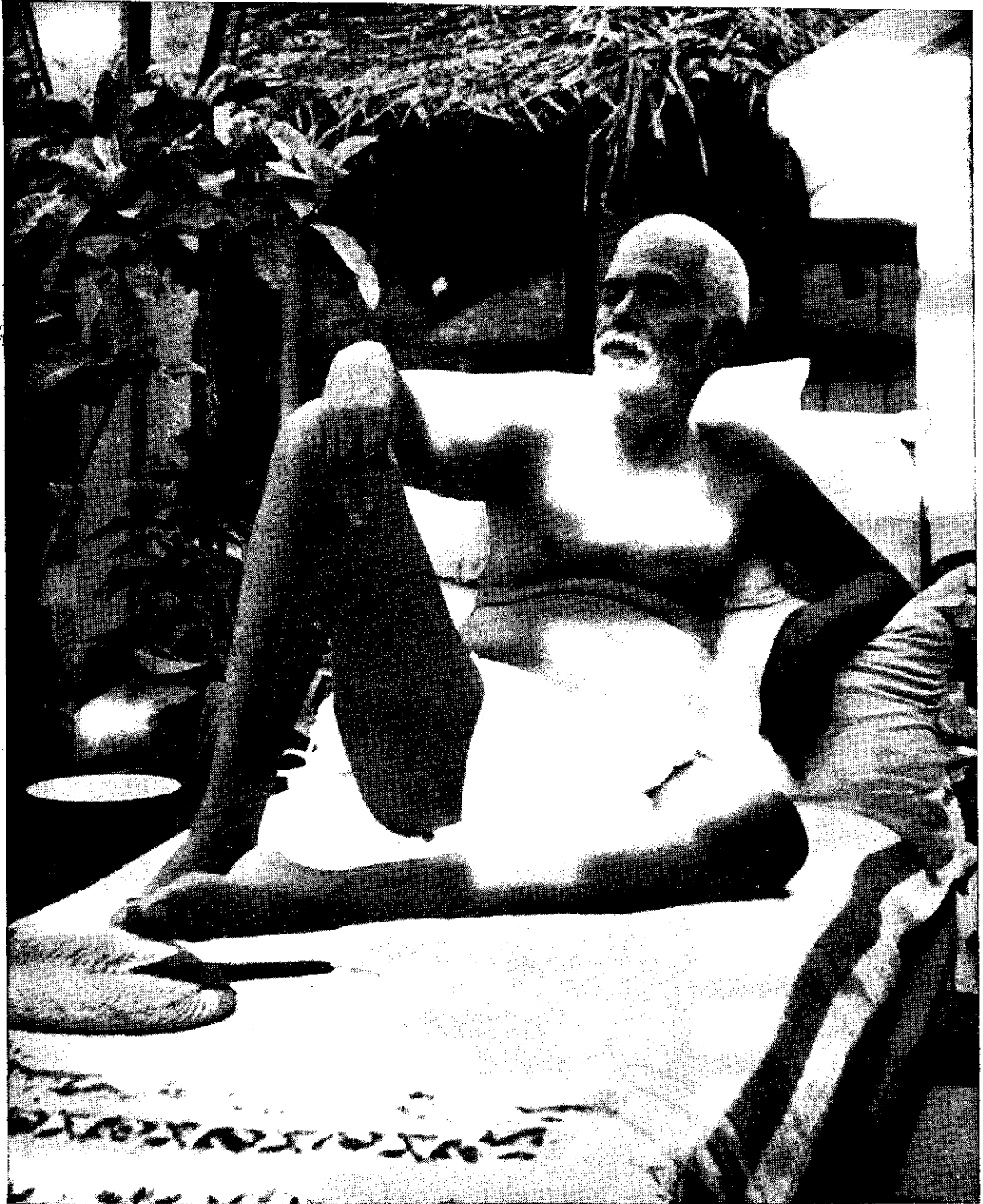
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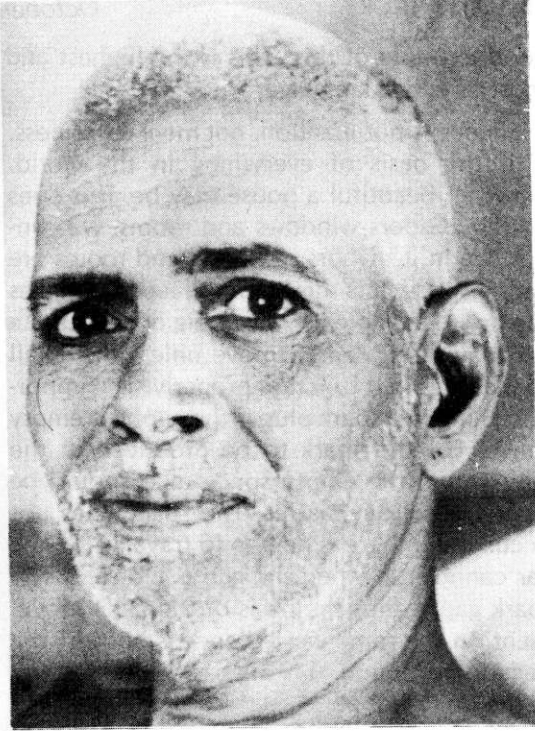
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is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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SPEECH springs from silence and sinks back into silence. We all think that we have control over language but in fact language seems to have control over us. We are not sure of what we are likely to say till we have actually said it. Sometimes we are most surprised at what we have said.

Words are symbols and are not things. However beautifully they may describe truth, they are not the truth. One has to go beyond words to understand truth. Meister Eckhart says: "The man who stops with the enjoyment of a symbol never comes to the inward truth." Words are fingers that point to truth and not truth itself. Language implies a knower and a known, a subject and an object. To realise the state where the subject and the object become one, one has to go beyond words.

Silence is not the negation of sound and is not subordinate to speech. The English word 'silence' has negative connotations. It is considered the opposite of 'sound'. 'Mouna' in

SILENT LANGUAGE

Editorial

Sanskrit is a positive concept. The word *Mouna* is derived from *Muni*, just as *soukhya* (well-being) is derived from *sukha* (happiness). It is the characteristic of a *muni* or a sage. It is not physical silence that is referred to but mental silence. A *muni* is one whose mind is merged in the Self. The speech of a *muni* is a refraction of his silence. His is not an individual point of view as he speaks from the source of everything, the Self. As he speaks without any sense of doership, what is said by him has neither antecedents nor consequences for him.

In his *The Prose of the World*, Moreleau-Ponty says: "We should consider speech before it has been pronounced against the ground of silence which precedes it, which never ceases to accompany it, and without which it would say nothing. Moreover, we should be sensitive to the thread of silence from which the tissue of speech is woven" The more sensitive we are to the thread of silence, the more alert we shall be to what we would say. But when we

The Mountain Path

Vol. 23, No. 4, October, 1986

are totally bound by the thread of silence, we shall have no desire to say anything. Speech is an advocate of desire. Where there is no desire, there is only silence.

When we are introduced to someone, we ask and answer several questions. When we get to know the person a little more, we do not talk that much. When we know him very well, he won't mistake us if we are occasionally silent in his company. A little gesture, a little smile will do. Silence becomes companionable where there is understanding. Greater the understanding, less the need for speech. Where there is perfect understanding, speech is not essential. Silence will do. Communication takes place without the medium of language. Speech distances man from himself. It is silence that brings him to himself. In speech there is 'otherness', in Silence there is oneness. Of speech and silence, Sri Bhagavan says: "Language is only a medium for communicating one's thoughts to another. It is called in only after thoughts arise. Other thoughts arise after the 'I'-thought arises and so the 'I'-thought is the root of all conversation. When one remains without thinking one understands another by means of the universal language of silence".

"Silence is ever-speaking. It is a perennial flow of language which is interrupted by speaking. These words I am speaking obstruct that mute language. For example, there is electricity flowing in a wire. With resistance to its passage, it glows as a lamp or revolves as a fan. In the wire it remains as electric energy. Similarly also, silence is the eternal flow of language, obstructed by words".

"What one fails to know by conversation extending to several years can be known instantly in silence, or in front of silence..... Dakshinamurti and his four disciples are a

good example of this. This is the highest and most effective language."

Silence is not inaction, not mere emptiness. It is the basis of everything in the world. However beautiful a house may be, if it does not have doors, windows and rooms, we cannot live in it. Doors, windows and rooms are empty space. It is this empty space that makes the house liveable. However big or beautiful a car may be, it cannot move unless the small spark plugs in it function properly. The important thing in a spark plug is the gap, the empty space. For the spark to be produced in the spark plug, the empty space in it should be clean, free from matter. The spark does not occur when there is no gap to traverse. So the car cannot run when the gap is blocked. The spark gap is thus the basis of the car's movement. In the same way, silence is not just the negation of sound. It is the basis of everything in the universe.

Silence, according to Sri Bhagavan, is inner silence. "The inner silence is self-surrender. And that means living without the sense of the ego." Silence comes into being when the individual is completely free from ego, when he surrenders himself totally to the Lord; he enjoys freedom where he becomes the captive of the Lord; he becomes a conqueror when he throws away the sword of his will.

The highest form of Grace, Sri Bhagavan says, is silence and it is also the highest *upadesa*. Speech is co-existent with the body. Silence is eternal. Though Sri Bhagavan is not physically alive now, his Silence is omnipotent and omnipresent. But the *Mouna*, embodied once as the *Muni*, continues resplendent. The Silence that is Bhagavan Ramana is felt and heard by the earnest seeker. The *Muni* resides as a deathless presence.

"They say that I am dying; but I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here".

— Bhagavan Ramana

SRI RAMANA THE DIVINE SAGE

By Swami Sivananda

Sri Swami Sivananda was a colossus who strode the Indian spiritual tradition. This is the year of his birth centenary and we take great pleasure publishing Sri Swami Sivananda's homage to Sri Ramana Maharshi.

BEAUTIFUL beyond all dreams the most enthralling inner life of the divine sage Sri Ramana, its spiritual adventures and its divine achievements quicken higher aspirations and upward urges in the depths of our being, impart to us a sense of the significance of our life, give our existence a profound meaning and a great purpose, show its divine possibilities, illustrate its grand Goal, and, what is more, point out the royal path reaching it even here on the terrestrial plane and in this very clay tenement. The heavenly beauties and the ethereal glories of his transcendent life, the Divine Life, are revealed only to those who have "eyes to see"; those who have faith in him, pray to him, adore him in thought and spirit can sense and feel them and those who are absolutely pure and ripe enough to live his life can experience them. The very thought of Sri Ramana in a noble heart induces an attitude of adoration and beckons it his view and way of life. Sri Ramana is an eternal invitation to consummate Perfection: he is the Call Divine.

For a realisation of the Self, a becoming like him, the greatest message Sri Ramana gave to the aspiring and enlightened mankind, is an individual enquiry of 'Who am I?'. Self-Realisation or an Experience of the Omnipresent Reality must always precede a preparatory peeping into the inner regions of our deeps, a heroic battling up our way to the very meaning and source of all life, a burning love and a consuming zeal for the attainment of the Divine Light and Grace; otherwise one is sure to lose one's way in false paths, and face defeat, disillusion and madness. So an enquiry into the subjective Centre, the Real Man, the meta-physical Entity that is lurking dormant in the heart of the intellectual, vital and physical encasements of every individual, is the First Step.



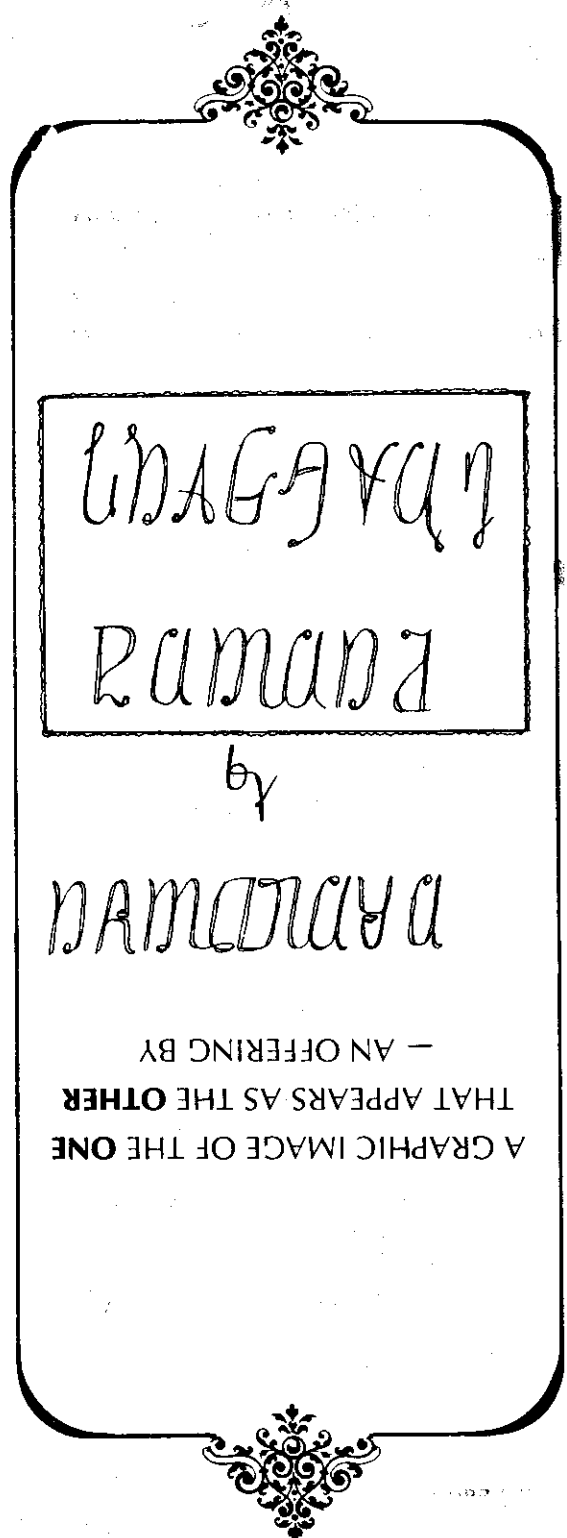
Swami Sivananda

But the introspective cognition of the Self by the self becomes possible and flowers into the most effective operative power only after a certain necessary period of successful psychological training and discipline of the entire man. By conscious exercise of the power of the will, in the light of knowledge acquired after a profound study of *Prasthanathraya* and of experience, one has to throw out secret thoughts, eliminate inner hankerings, overcome subtle desires, abandon selfish interests, and lift the soul out of all human passions and prejudices, predilections and cross-purposes: this *sadhana* engenders in the aspirant an 'emptiness' of the heart: the stillness of the mind, a philosophic poise and a spiritual vision.

Vichara, the ever-present reflection on the why and wherefore of life and things, *Viveka*, ever-present discrimination between the perishable and the Imperishable, the unreal and the Real, and *Vairagya*, the passionate revolt from selfishness and sensuality—these three constitute the life-belt, the wings and the eyes of every earnest seeker after Truth. The characteristic pose of Sri Ramana, the 'madman' who lost himself in the transcendent joy of the Divine Self, is a perpetual challenge to the pomp, glories and blisses of earthly kings and emperors. The extreme indifference of Sri Ramana to the thrills and wonders of the world, gives us a measure of his empyrean greatness. A simple reflection of his philosophic poise, his perpetual peace, his inner spiritual joy, thrilled one into a possession of a new mind, a new heart and new eyes. The heights of discernment, the religious indifference, the profundity, the fullness, the grace his life exhibited, are comparable to those of Lord Dattatreya and Sri Dakshinamurti.

For contemporary humanity, the life of Sri Ramana made the Unseen a living Reality, the unknown a conscious Experience. In him God became flesh; the Truth found its fullest expressions; the Self manifested itself in all its completeness: this great End is awaiting every breathing being. Sri Ramana is the spiritual Destiny of every man. Self-expression by Self-enquiry, Self-knowledge and Self-finding is the meaning and goal of all conscious life. Sri Ramana is the Call Divine. He calls every aspirant unto Himself, unto His Perfection, upto His Realization. As a seeker he struck the Path, trod it, reached the Divine destination; became what he beheld at that End; brought its beauties into earthly life and shared his infinite peace and joy with millions of souls groping in phenomenal ignorance, sorrow and sickness.

May Sri Ramana's Divine Grace descend upon every one, more and yet more abundantly, to effect Self-Knowledge and Self-illumination, here and now!



GITA SAARA TAALAATTU

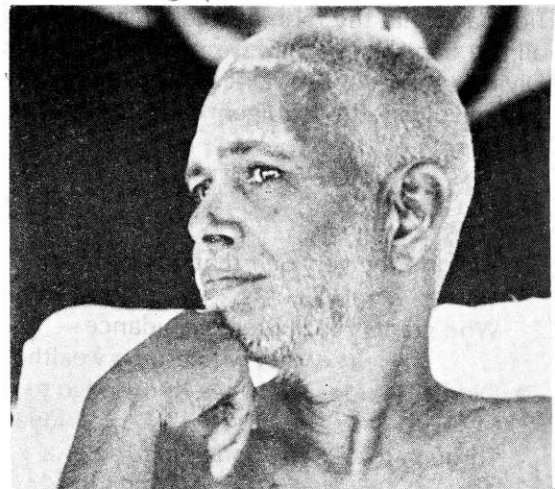
(The Lullaby of Gita Essence)

By Namaraya:

BHAGAVAN Krishna began his *upadesa* to a nonplussed Arjuna in terms of Supreme jnana. *The Lullaby of Gita Essence*, composed in Tamil by the Saintly Tiruvengadanathar for the delight of his daughter, contains the very essence of this Jnana Yoga. It is told in delightfully pithy couplets in the form of a brisk unambiguous dialogue, between Sri Krishna and Arjuna. The English translation preserves the metre of the original Tamil couplets, to facilitate identical recitation.

It appears Tiruvengadanathar's daughter was widowed soon after marriage and so returned to her father's home. Her neighbour, friend and playmate had also been married about the same time and had just then delivered a baby. The strains of lullaby would waft from the neighbouring house and plunge the young widow into despair at her own childlessness. Her saintly father once returned home earlier than usual and saw her with tears streaming down her cheeks. He consoled her saying she need not have grieved over a minor matter and gave her an idol of baby-Krishna to put in a swing and sing lullaby to. He composed for her the *Gita Sara, a Jnana Upadesa*, as a lullaby of 104 couplets. The young 'mother' used to rock the 'baby' with such tenderness and devotion singing the lullaby that the idol came to life and Sri Krishna pranced about to the great and continued delights of the mother and those all around!

This *Gita Sara Lullaby* was oft quoted by the Maharshi along with other pure Advaitic Tamil works like *Kaivalya Navaneetham*, *Sasivarna Bodham*, *Jnana Vasishtam* etc. In addition, it happens to be the only work Bhagavan taught as a guru to a group of young *sadhaks* in a class room! It happened in the early days, some time before 1920, when Bhagavan was in Skandashram. While on a *pradakshina* of



the Holy Hill, Sri Bhagavan rested awhile at *Esanya Mutt* by the north-eastern side of the Hill. The *Mathadhipati* was all smiles as he welcomed the young and beloved Maharshi and informed Him that he had been in the midst of a lecture to the young *sadhaks* and that it would be a great honour if Sri Bhagavan took up the instruction from thereon.

Sri Bhagavan was left with little choice. He entered the lecture hall and accepted the high seat proffered by the *Mathadhipati* himself. Finding that the lecture was on the *Gita-Saara Lullaby*, Sri Bhagavan went ahead with it. We can only wonder at the great fortune of those young *sadhaks*, the splendour of the Guru (who refused to consider himself as any special incarnation) and the grandeur of his *upadesa* that day; the *upadesa* that he nevertheless gave in an earlier incarnation!

"GEETA SAARA TAALAATTU"

(Lullaby of Geeta Essence)

A question-answer dialogue between Arjuna and Sri Krishna in the midst of the battle field with the kinsmen arrayed against each other.

INVOCATION

SINCE WE DESIRE that the five substances¹ and the four instruments², the three qualities and the two kinds of fruits of action be nullified; and that the false darkness mesmerizing all, be banished; — may we meditate on that Divinity of the dazzling Discus, who as a charioteer divulged the effulgence of the Eternal Wisdom:

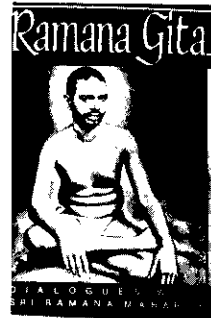
Text

- (1) Isn't He the very Self that has come as
the Guru
Who grants His Supreme Abidance —
that wholesome wealth!
- (2) Didn't He impart all True Knowledge to
Arjuna
Through the Divine Song, in guise of a
charioteer?
- (3) Didn't He exhort him to rise, banishing
the fright
Of him that fear'd loss of kin on the eve
of war —
- (4) "While they ne'er falter - those Seers
who intuit:
You lament loss of kin like one of partial
wit!"
- (5) "If death doth not disturb those fixed in
wisdom, then
Show me!", he stammered; "sweet
freedom sans frustration."
- (6) "Ne'er birth nor death for you or for me
or for aught
Nor for those kings! such is this know-
ledge when self-sought."
- (7) "Both birth and death, you say apply to
no one here
To whom are these two then, prithee,
enlighten me."

¹The five elements that find representation in the quintets (of *Jana-indriyas*, *Karma-indriyas* and *pranas*) that makes up the body.

²The internal organs (mind, associative memory, discrimination and doership) that constitute the knot between body and self.

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(Dialogues with Sri Ramana
Maharshi)

By A.R. Natarajan

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- (8) "'Tis acquired body and senses that fall
their prey;
Atman-eternal, thy Self — is beyond
their sway."
- (9) "Naught do I feel as ME save limb, life
and sense-mind;
If I be else than these, help me towards
that Blind."
- (10) To him that could see naught else than
life-body-mind,
He spake — "You are that THAT which
none of these can find!"
- (11) "Whence this connection, if I'm not
this body? Yes?"
"By Karma's ancient chain, sole cause of
all distress."
- (12) "Then how began Karma before a body
grew?"
"Know them as tree and seed, one in
one ; where then two?"
- (13) "If I be not body, whose is the Karma
then?"
"'Tis all wretched body's: Where's
action for Atman?"
- (14) "If body acts then whose are the fruits,
Krishna dear?"
"The fruits — the body's: none for the
knower, Seer."
- (15) "If Karma be for body when that body's
felled,
Why then does Atman go doubtless to
Heav'n or hell?"
- (16) "All that's sheer fancy — illusion of
'Body-I'
Ascribed to Self by mistaken identity."
- (17) "How does Self suffer such super-
imposition?"
"Incomplete enquiry extends this
illusion!"
- (18) "Whose awareness is it? Body's? or of
Atman?"
"Body's inert! see; awareness itself's
Brahman."
- (19) "If body be inert how does it act, though
lame?"
"Just by the proximity to the mystic
Flame."
- (20) "Does that alone ensure body's nervous
twitching?"
"A needle near magnet — a dance that's
bewitching!"
- (21) "(If) action be body's, for whom are
pain and pleasure?"
"(The) inseparable two are the body's
in full measure."
- (22) "When Atman — pure Chit — remains
e'er untouched by these
How do the two taint the 'nert body
with such ease?"
- (23) "Elements five, pranas five, indryas ten
mind four-fold.
Form twin bodies where mind tastes
bitter-sweet untold."
- (24) When asked as to the cause of these two
bodies, He
Said: "These two with their cause make
up the bodies three."
- (25) "You said it's mind that undergoes
pleasure and pain,
"When enquired mind's but jada —
Krishna please explain."
- (26) "The Self appears reflected in mentality,
Thus the mind partakes of all this
duality."
(To be continued)

Sri Bhagavan relating some stories of the bhaktas told how Sri Krishna served Eknath for twelve years, how Panduranga relieved Sakku Bai from her home prison and enabled her to visit Pandharpur.

"Then He recollected the appearance of a mysterious Moulvi on his way from Madurai to Tiruvannamalai in 1986, how he appeared, spoke and disappeared suddenly."

— TALKS (p.85)- 16th Oct. 1935

SELF-OBSERVATION

By J.B.

THE reluctance to observe to get to know oneself is caused by our close identification with body and mind; they constitute the personality, and the personality we believe to be the self. Therefore, we like to present this personality as pleasant and acceptable, not only to others, but to ourselves also.

In the Vedanta philosophy we learn that the perishable body and mind are not the self, the real Self is pure spirit, undying and immutable. Consciously or unconsciously, the soul of man seeks unity, identity. Not knowing that his real identity is one and the same as the universal, cosmic consciousness, he seeks for it in the things he can feel, see and hear.

Although man believes that he is an independent, self-existing entity, he nevertheless seeks to have things in common with those he likes to belong to, often to the exclusion of others. The finite ego likes to think he is rather different, perhaps in some ways even a bit special. If he cannot convince himself that he is, he may like to think that his family or his country, or his group, or whatever he believes in, is special. Or else he may think that all that applies to others does not apply to him, and then that makes him special — to entirely dismiss and disbelieve what his forebears have believed in, to throw it all out just for the sake of it, for the desire to be different.

If he cannot be special in so far that he is competent or has some ability, accomplishment or other achievement, he seeks compensation and goes in the opposite direction, revolting against all that is normally held to be decent and orderly, and sees himself as being different by holding in disdain all these things; he then gets satisfaction out of that — for satisfaction is what everyone is after, everyone is in need of it. Everyone strives after physical and physiological satisfaction; hunger and thirst, desire for sleep, for rest, desire for entertainment, for culture, or its substitute,

all clamour for satisfaction. There is also the need for psychological satisfaction — sympathy, appreciation, companionship, love.

But over and above these natural desires there is, in man, a craving for more. There is not only demand for more and more possession, there is also greater emotional greed. There was never a time when there were so many possibilities for the gratification of the senses. Advertisements are taking care that the pleasure drive is kept at full speed. We are told what to eat and why, what to drink and when, what to buy and where to go to borrow money. If we allow ourselves to be taken along with those who tell us what to do, how to behave, what drug to take, where to go and when to demonstrate dissatisfaction, we really surrender what little liberty we may have.

In the exuberance of youth people believe that excitement alone gives pleasure, that they must lose themselves in extrovert activities. Though they suffer the aftermath, the staleness and the following emptiness, yet they delude themselves in thinking that the solution is a repeat performance and that the heightening of the pleasures experienced will give further and greater pleasure.

I may be free to select my friends, my hobbies, how to spend my leisure hours, and within certain limitations I am free to do so. But am I free to select my thoughts, my feelings, my reactions, am I free to determine the course of my inner life? Can I make a choice by saying: "I shall not get upset, I shall not get overjoyed, nor disturbed in adversity, I shall not react unpleasantly!" But are my feelings and reactions up to me? and if not, why not? Is it not strange that when it comes to my very own, most intimate life, I am not free at all? This kind of self-questioning is the beginning of self-observation, leading to self-awareness, self-realization.

The identification with the personality-including feelings and emotion-produces all kinds of obstacles, such as pride and the sense of prestige arising from the idea of 'otherness'. The sense of prestige is said to be the most cherished of all human prejudices, and man is ever at pains to protect and preserve his prestige.

To observe the inner life with its urges and desires seems to be designed for those who are already of a temperate nature and are able to lead a quiet life, away from provocation and worldly concerns. In such a life it may be easier to develop the spirit of detachment which is advocated in all religions, but a worldly life gives more opportunity for practice. Detachment means to look at the inner fluctuations as something not belonging to the Self. It demands the practice of disidentification from the personality, from mind, body and feelings.

But if I am not this compound of body and mind, what then am I?

To develop the habit of self-observation is a better and easier way to control or at least subdue unwanted emotions. To begin with one could start with one of the milder ones, such as irritation, which is a forerunner of other, stronger passions and emotions, and which besets everyone almost daily.

In this practice we do not look for the 'cause'. We forget about 'he insulted me', 'she ignored me', etc. and concentrate on the uprising reaction. We may insist that he or she 'caused' the irritation, but it is the ego who produces it. Nothing and nobody can compel me to react in any particular manner; it is myself alone who responds, and the nature of my response is of my own decision.

When taking up the position of the observer, we do not comment on what is being observed, nor do we argue with it. The observer remains entirely neutral and without judgement. If there is reluctance to even make an attempt to observe, then this reluctance would in itself be an excellent first exercise. Disidentification

demands awareness of all reactions, whether it is resentment when being criticised or pleasure when being praised.

This attitude is not achieved all at once, but when persisted with, it becomes an effortless habit. A similar attitude should prevail when we experience a sense of failure in our meditation or maintain that 'I am unable to meditate'. This thought of failure or any doubt about one's abilities should be looked at as outsiders, they are the real 'others', they are the not-self.

The mind links itself involuntarily with whatever presents itself to it at the moment, and is forever busy. Only when watching a play or a film are we handing over our feelings voluntarily, and even then the mind identifies with one or other of the characters, if only to a mild degree.

It is not claimed that there will be no emotional reactions, but they will lose their power and influence. What is gained by self-observation is not only detachment from reactions to 'causes' but also to one's own shortcomings; we realize that none are exempt from egoistic tendencies-neither 'they' nor 'me'. We look at them in quietness and give full attention to what really matters.

But it must be stressed that the ability to practice this kind of self-observation rests on the maturity of the conviction: "I am not this body-mind compound. I am not the emotional fluctuations, which come and go. I am the infinite, imperishable Self."

Courtesy, *SELF KNOWLEDGE*
— Winter, 1986

Excellence in any department can be attained only by the labour of a lifetime. It is not to be purchased at a lesser price.

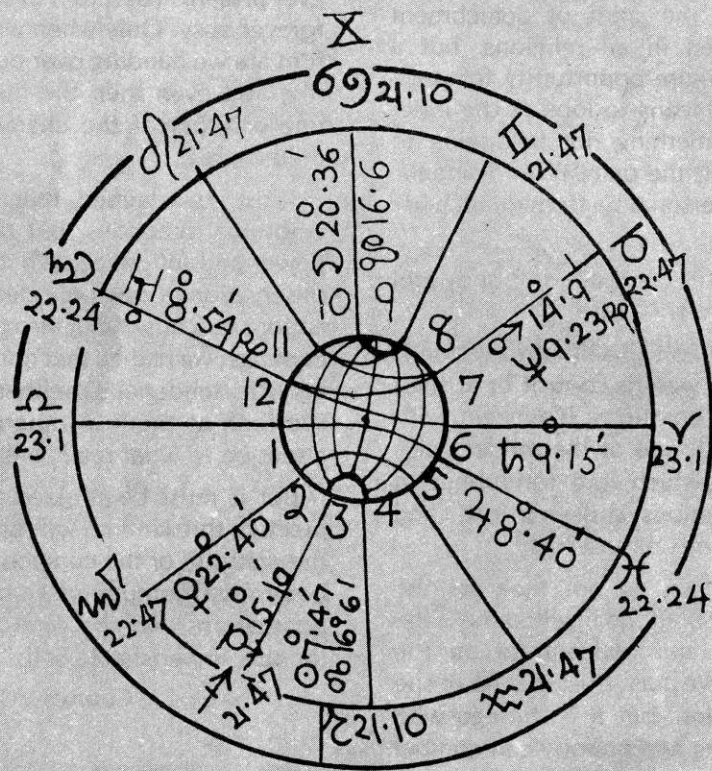
— Dr. Samuel Johnson

TWO DECADES OF

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI'S HOROSCOPE (Western Style)

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Born on 29/30-12-1879 at 1-00 a.m./L.M.T. (1.17 a.m./I.S.T.)
at 78°-15'E — 9°-50'N
(TIRUCHUZHAI near Madurai, S. India)



IV
ASCEND

CONSCIOUSNESS

By T.P. Ramachandra Iyer

My special subject in college was philosophy and so I had some knowledge of both Eastern and Western systems of thought and to some extent I was

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

conscious of this. My first appearance in the Old Hall set me free from any such ridiculous feeling. When I entered the Hall there was a discussion going on about the nature of self and consciousness and unconsciousness. Book-learning being fresh in my mind, I began to express that I had read about the various grades of consciousness in Western systems, and particularly mentioned and explained the super-conscious and sub-conscious. Sri Bhagavan listened and reacted sharply and remarked: "What *is* is only Consciousness. It is only with reference to something that *is* that you can postulate a super or sub state to it. Only to that which exists can you postulate higher or lower grades; you never talk of adding to or subtracting from a non-existent. Consciousness is Existence and every living being agrees that it exists; so that which IS is Consciousness."

* * * * *

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By Arthur Osborne

Sri Bhagavan sat up, facing me, and his narrowed eyes pierced into me, penetrating, intimate, with an intensity I cannot describe. It was as though they said: "You have been told; why have you not realized?" And then quietness, a depth of peace, an indescribable lightness and happiness. Thereafter love for Bhagavan began to grow in my heart and I felt his power and beauty. Next morning, for the first time, sitting before him in the hall, I tried to follow his teaching by using the *Vichara*: 'Who am I?' I thought it was I who had decided. I did not at first realize that it was the initiation by look that had vitalized me and changed my attitude of mind.

A NOTE ON VEDIC SYMBOLISM

By M.P. Pandit

Sacrifice, *yajna*, an important feature of the Vedic society, is itself a spectacular symbol of the inner effort of the seer at self-transcendence in which he consecrates himself, all that he is and has, to the Gods. This sacrifice is aptly spoken of as a journey — going from the finite to the infinite.

from **The Mountain Path**, October 1966

The Birth of an Upanishad

(A Short Story)

By Masti Venkatesa Ivengar

The great Kannada author, playwright and scholar, Masti Venkatesa Ivengar granted us permission to publish his thought-provoking short story, 'The Birth of An Upanishat'. A perfect gem, the narration recreates movingly before the reader, the way of the wise Seer, the Maharshi. This great savant passed away recently. His reply-letter to our request to grant his permission is worth reproducing here:

dt. 26.1.86

"I thank you for sending copies of your journal and the Prasad from the shrine.

I am a disciple of the Maharshi who did not know me and whom I worshipped from a distance. So, this communication from you is truly a sign of the Guru's grace to a disciple.

Your proposal to publish my story in your journal is a singular honour to me. By all means reproduce it but do not, I beg of you, change anything in it. Addition, omission, change, will affect my meaning or purpose. Kindly forgive the restriction.

If there is no objection kindly indicate in the number of the magazine which publishes the story that it is an English rendering by the author himself of the Kannada original.

Yours Sincerely

Sd. Masti.

SAGE Vamadeva, his nephew says, will end his earthly life on the night of the next full-moon." This news spread from the hermitage of the Dwaipayana Aruneyas, orally through all and sundry, to other hermitages big and small, both far and near.

The sage, it was added, would complete his hundred years on that day.

As the sun rose on that full-moon day a regular stream of visitors began to come to the hermitage of the sage. Some of them came out of genuine respect for the old man; some from a sense of curiosity; some from no great love: those to wait on the sage the last time and take his blessing, the others to have an idea of the way he lived; these others questioning in their hearts if this Vamadeva was such a sage that he could will the hour of his

death. They kept coming into the Ashram throughout the day, singly or in groups of two or more.

Many people had the feeling that Vamadeva was a great sage, a great seer and a man of realisation, a man of great wisdom. But it was only a feeling; for the man had never spoken four words together to express any views; much less spoken to impart instruction to any one, at any time.

The elder son of a previous head of the hermitage of the Dwaipayana Aruneyas, Vamadeva received knowledge from his father as a boy and young man and became well known in early life as a man of learning. When that father died, everyone expected that he would assume the headship. He did not. He

left the headship to his younger brother and gave himself up to a life of self-discipline.

A great part of this self-discipline consisted of looking after the activities of the hermitage: such as, supervising the arrangements in the place of the assembly in which his brother taught the disciples, and seeing to the comfort of the people, the cattle, the deer and the birds which lived in the hermitage. He would rest when all others had gone for rest and be up before any one else and wake up the other workers so that everyone was ready in time for his duty. Very soon he became the chief person on whom depended the regular working of the hermitage in all its activities.

When he had rendered this service for ever so many years Vamadeva told his brother that he felt a desire to go to Vasishthasrama and would be starting shortly. The brother proposed to send two young disciples with him. Vamadeva did not agree. "Your idea is that they will look after me. The position will be just the reverse. I shall have to look after them instead. I need no assistants."

He left a few days later and was away for many years. How long he stayed in Vasishthasrama and where else he had gone no one knew. He had been away for close to twelve years when he came back and quietly resumed his round of duties as before.

There were some now who remembered this return; and the detail they remembered best was the brightness as of the rising sun with which his face shone. It had always been a bright face but now it had acquired a new lustre. The zest with which he attended to the hermitage seemed also to have gained in vigour.

Years after this, the younger brother died. The inmates of the hermitage thought that then at least Vamadeva might assume the headship. He did not. He installed his brother's son as head. He stayed with the new head for a year rendering the usual service. At the end of the year he built himself a small hut, beside a big banyan tree in the wood nearby and with



the consent of his nephew went there and began to live a new kind of life.

This was an occurrence of long years ago. There were not many now in the neighbourhood who remembered when the sage began this new life. A very few remembered the younger brother. Some two or three persons remembered having seen the father. There was no one who remembered the sage as a child.

The sage's new life was an unusual kind of life. He lived in the hut alone. He kept only two companions, who lived in another hut which he put up for them. They could not be called his disciples, for the sage did not utter one word of teaching to them at any time. They could not be called servants because in all the work of the new hermitage the sage laboured with them even as they laboured. The only tasks in which he did not take a share were personal service to the ascetics who passed through the hermitage in their journeys and accompanying them some dis-

tance on their further journey if they needed guidance. The reason why he did not share in these was that the visitors would not agree to an elder serving them in these ways.

It was well-known in all the neighbourhood that the ground round the new hut was just a wilderness when Vamadeva began life there and that the sage had worked hard to make it what it was now. And what was it now? A garden that could vie with any god's. The great old banyan tree was the centre of the garden. Starting from it were four avenues of younger trees in the four directions. Some of them were fruit trees. Some just flower trees. Each of these trees had been planted by the sage and watered by him and brought up by him. Touching the trunk of the banyan tree all round was a square platform; each face of the platform looked down one of the avenues. At the four corners of the garden were four large ponds with plenty of water and some water-flower creepers. On the ground round the ponds at short distances were stone benches on which one could sit or rest.

The sage could tell the story of every one of the trees, and the shrubs, and the creepers.

The fruits and flowers of the hermitage were free for the use of the inmates of the old hermitage and the residents of the villages in the neighbourhood. Those who could take the trouble to walk to Vamadeva's hermitage need never be in want of flower or fruit.

There always were four milch-cows in this hermitage. The arrangement was that some of the residents of the neighbouring villages would leave these cows soon after they had calved with their young in the hermitage. When a cow went dry its owner would come and take away the cow and the grown-up calf. This was how they acknowledged the favour done to them by the sage in letting them use the fruit and flower and the grass of the garden all through the year.

As the sage grew old there was an increase in the number of people who came to meet him. They came mostly for discussion on spiritual topics; and to discussion Vamadeva was

intensely averse. He would listen carefully to all that any one had to say. He would not express agreement. He would say at the end: "This that you have been expounding to me so well so far, please keep this as the starting point and yourself meditate further: You will see the Truth."

This determined refusal to express his personal views which looked like the observance as it were of a vow of silence caused widespread dissatisfaction. Persons so dissatisfied sometimes said: "He did not learn the texts in youth. He does not wish to betray his ignorance of them." But those of another way of thinking looked at the man's blameless life, his universal love, and his tireless service and said: "Whether he has learnt texts or no, the sage has learnt a lot from life. Texts cannot equal this wisdom that his way of life has brought him."

When talk of this came up before his nephew once he said: "Uncle's intelligence is keener than ours, and his memory is excellent. He never had to listen to any argument twice. He knows all that we can say on all sides of any topic. My father used to say that he gave up the process of learning in which he had been engaged like others and began to attend to the management of the hermitage because he was weary of argument."

The sage had told his nephew ten years ago: "I have completed ninety years of life today." A year after: "I am ninety-one today." And so on each year thereafter. It was obvious that he had kept count. In these years there was no one in the hermitage or the vicinity as old as he. Yet this very old man was active every day working in his own hermitage as he had worked in the other hermitage in the days of his brother and the years with his nephew. The years passed but he did not grow old or he grew old but his strength did not diminish or if his strength did diminish some-what, he retained his will to work without the slightest diminution.

One day when the nephew came to him the sage said to him: "You will not find me here much longer. I shall leave to join our fathers."

The younger man felt heart-broken, and asked, "Why so, uncle?"

The old man said: "My father commanded me to live full one hundred years working in the world. That command has been with me so far as a blessing guiding me in service. I need not stay here when the hundred years are over."

"And when will they be over?"

"The first full-moon day next spring."

The nephew was overcome by grief. He cried out "Ah me, are you leaving us so soon?" And embraced the old man and rested his head on his chest and wept. The old man clasped the nephew to his breast, passed his hand over his curls and kissed him on the cheek and said: "This body disappears, but I shall mingle in you as our elders have done. The head of the hermitage should not lose his balance and cry. What he teaches in the course of his lessons should appear in his conduct in life."

The nephew held himself together. He got up and fell prostrate on his uncle's feet and prayed: "You have never done any man the favour to call him a disciple. You should make up your mind now to accept me as your disciple and save me."

The sage said: "A man who can see the worth of an elder and bend before him in this way is already saved. Be at ease. You are continuing the service performed by our elders. Keep it through life and it will save you."

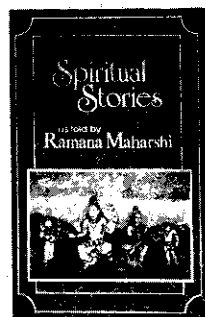
"Would it be wrong if I followed the way of life that you chose?"

"Not if you feel the doubt that I felt and choose that way in consequence."

"What was the doubt?"

"It should not be told to the man who has not felt it. The way of the sages is to help in the processes of thought, not to sow doubt and unsettle conviction."

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"Even this you did not tell us in these words. Your way was new. Should not the future know what it was?"

"Many are the great sages who saw the truth and spoke out the truth they saw. They are receiving worship as teachers. Quite enough truth has been stated already. Let man follow it. There is nothing new that I should teach mankind."

"Your life has been lived in a peculiar way. What was the principle that guided that life? Should you not tell us what it was?"

"What is there to tell? If this way seems good, live in this way."

"That at least has to be told."

"It should be told by one who feels he should tell."

The nephew did not pursue the matter further. He said instead: "I did not serve you as my elder with sufficient zeal. In the month that remains I shall come to you as often as I can. You should hold me by the hand and guide me."

The sage thought for a moment and said: "Certainly. Come whenever you wish."

"You must permit me to be near you all the time on the last day."

The sage thought again for a moment and said: "Very well."

Two days later the nephew said to him: "If persons visiting you on the last day ask you any questions you should be gracious and give answers which will be clear to them and they can understand."

To this also the sage agreed.

The month has ended and the full-moon day has come; and people are coming in to see the sage.

The sage had got up at his usual hour, finished his ablutions and prayer and meditation, and was sitting beside the jasmine bush near the door of his hut and digging the ground near the roots and levelling it.

Two persons came and after salutation said to him: "Should you do this work yourself?"

The sage said: "Yes, friends. It is my task. As the mother should look after her child herself, I must look after all my plants myself."

"We have heard it said that it is wrong to be so attached to what belongs to one and that such attachment comes in the way of liberation."

"Attachment is wrong. Love is not. Serve because you love. You reach liberation. There is no other means of liberation.(2)

"Have rest at least today. One of us will attend to these."

"No, friends. This is no trouble to me."

"The mud stains the hand. It cannot stain the spirit. Work does not."(2)

Others arrived and found the sage seated under the banyan tree and looking at the young sun. A calf belonging to the hermitage came near. The sage plucked some grass from the ground nearby and gave it to the calf. The visitors made obeisance and sat on the ground near him. One of them said: "Sir, our people have discussed the question endlessly, yet we still cannot say if God exists. We require your wise counsel in this matter."

The sage said: "Friend, this creation we are seeing with its moving and unmoving things, all this is God, and nothing else. This light of the sun clothes the world we see. The light of the Supreme clothes the world we see and cannot see. Does this world exist? Does something exist? Well, all that exists is the Supreme.(1a)

"All that there is in front of us is the Supreme?"

"Past the question. All in front within, anywhere: all is the Supreme."

"This makes it difficult for us to have any relation with the Supreme."

"It should not. Steep your mind with the feeling that all is the Supreme. Your relation

with it becomes simple. You do not have disputes with anyone; you will be friendly to all. you will then enjoy and will be satisfied with what the Supreme grants you. You will not grab anything."(1b)

Others came and sat near the sage and asked "Why do we men act wrongly in life?"

"Because," said the sage, "we do not realise that the life of the whole is one. He who knows that all this is one realises that when he hurts another he hurts himself. All wrong action is in essence self-slaughter.(3b)

"Is all wrong action the result of ignorance? We sometimes do the wrong thing knowing it is wrong."

"You may know that that thing is wrong, but your knowledge is defective in some other direction."

'If I blunder from ignorance should I be punished for such blunder?'"

"Blundering is itself the punishment for blundering. Right action would brighten the spirit. Wrong action darkens it. We act rightly and rise to the world of light; wrongly and go down to the world of darkness."(3a)

One came who was searching after truth. and asked to be instructed about the nature of the Brahman.

The sage asked him some questions and said "You are qualified to hear the truth about this. Listen and get hold of what I say. The text of the fathers that says, "All this verily is Brahman" is absolute truth, indubitable truth. Every single particle within the Brahman should not think it can comprehend what the Brahman is. To describe the Brahman you have to combine opposite statements. It moves, yet is still. It is far, yet near. It is in everything and outside everything(5). It stays where it is, yet is flying at a speed that the mind cannot achieve.

THE MOTH

By Anbumalai

**Anbumalai, in his room at Ramanashram,
Heard a buzzing sound;
A moth it was, beating its wings
Against the wire-mesh on the window,
Struggling to fly out into the open,
Its exit blocked by the wire-mesh,
A prisoner it was in the room.**

**Anbumalai found a little polythene bag,
and gently maneuvered the moth
into it,
Without hurting its delicate gossamer-
thin wings,**

**Now Anbumalai's captive it was,
Confined to the polythene bag,
All for the sake of freedom.**

**Bag in hand, to the door he went,
stepping out, the bag he opened,
In a flash, out of the bag the moth
To freedom it flew.**

**What happened was a pantomime
Of surrender to the Master.
The moth stands for the seeker
Struggling to win freedom,
Trapped in the mesh of maya,
The seeker tries to escape,
But his own efforts avail not;
Then, moved by his helplessness,
The Master makes him a captive
Denies him personal freedom
Then the Master opens
The doors of heaven within
The ego surrendered
Into infinite Freedom
He flies.**

The Gods do not touch it. They cannot say when it began. The hill is there. A stone which is at the top rolls down to the bottom. The hill does not move. It remains where it is, yet is present with the stone at every stage of its journey and is present at the bottom to receive it when it finishes the journey. The Brahman is like the hill. It starts everything on its journey; staying where it is it bears them company in that journey. And when they finish the journey and reach their destination it is there to own them."(4)

Still others came. One of them said: "It seems that you were pleased to say that mercy is the essence of righteousness. How can we show mercy to evil? You should be gracious and clear this doubt."

The sage replied: "All is one spirit. Get this clear first. Then you will find that you will pity the man who is doing evil. You will not feel disgust. When your foot treads on mud you clean it of the mud without hurting it. What makes you so careful not to hurt? The knowledge that you and your foot are one. Get this same feeling about all life and that will engender the same consideration."(6)

"When I say that all is myself there is danger of the self becoming all important and leading to the neglect of others' good?"

"When the statement 'this is my self' is only a statement for discussion that danger is possible. When it is experience it is not. Your hand gets no pleasure pinching your foot; nor your mouth biting the hand. When the hand burns, the mouth blows on it to relieve the pain. The ideal is not saying 'we are one'; it is living as part of one. To him who lives like this, not only is error impossible; he is far even from sorrow."(6)

"If all is Brahman, I am Brahman. Still I suffer. Why?"

"That is why. You know the statement I am Brahman; you do not feel you are. To him who knows that Brahman has become his self that self becomes pure being. It has no body; it has no pain; no limb that can ache; it is

such pure existence that pain cannot touch it."(7)

A moment later the sage added: "To the spirit that has realised this principle Brahman grants unmingled bliss in the eternity that includes endless ages and aeons of time."(7)

The day grew to noon. The nephew held other visitors back from going to the old man in order that he may have some respite. The sage cleaned himself and took a meal of cooked grain and milk, placed a handful of the grain in four parts in four spots on the slab of stone on which he was resting and then lay down.

Four squirrels ran up to the grain and ate it all up. The sage watched them with pleasure as they made this meal.

The sun began the downward journey. The sage lay on the western side of the platform, watched the sun going down, happy in meditation.

Some persons from the hermitages on the northern bank of the river crossed the river and came to wait on the sage.

Those were days of endless discussion as to the need for worldly knowledge or supreme wisdom, the superiority of life in the world or renunciation, the here and hereafter. The discussions were endless because the disputants were none of them dunces. One of the newcomers raised the question: "What is more important, the knowledge that is needed for efficient life in the world or the wisdom that makes for salvation? Is there salvation for a man living in the world? Or should one have renounced life in the world to be saved?"

The old man took a few minutes to give the answer: "The man who talks too much about knowledge and ignorance and neglects the world sinks into the depths of darkness. He who makes too much of the world and neglects higher knowledge goes into the darkness within him. The knowledge required for living well in the world should be acquired and life lived well. The wisdom required for realising the hereafter should be acquired and that here-

after secured. Live the life of the world without undue attachment. That amounts to renunciation. That leads to liberation. We make opposites of two kinds of knowledge which should supplement each other and get into wrangling. We should avoid this. The teacher who taught me the path was a great man. He had reached peace. He taught me this."(9-11)

The old man's voice had become feeble. He was perhaps feeling weak. He did not seem to attend to what was said by one or two others after this.

The sun was approaching the horizon clothed in the glory of many coloured light. The evening breeze was flowing slow and soft. The birds gathered on the trees of the hermitage and made their evening music of countless notes. Half as remembering ancient wisdom and half as stating his own realisation the sage said: "Opening the earth to man's wondering vision the golden platter of the sun shuts off from his view all the contents of the firmament. This side of the threshold the householder has the house but loses the outside. To cross the threshold of life is not a case of losing but of gaining. This life is as the day: we see a half of the truth in it. Crossing the threshold of evening we gain the manifold wealth of the empyrean." A moment later he folded his hands in reverence and prayed: "Lord of light, remove this veil of yours and vouchsafe to me the vision of the whole of truth; my spirit longs for it."(15)

Ten minutes passed; the sage raised his voice and said in clear utterance: "Sustainer of all! Going your lonely journey in the empyrean and controlling all, bright child of the Supreme, withdraw your rays and gather the lights. Be gracious to me and grant me the view of it."(16a)

The nephew came and sat before the old man. In spite of himself he shed a few tears. The sage noticed this and placed his hand in the nephew's hand and said: "The person who is that, that very person it is I am."(16c) He then directed him by gestures to take him to the eastern side of the platform.

The nephew and four others lifted the old body gently and carried it to the other side. The sage lay on his right side, supporting his head on his arm.

All were weeping now. The sage noticed this and spoke words of consolation. "This spirit of mine, it is wealth and immortal. It is the body that perishes and burns to ashes."(17) A little later he cried: "Om" and then said to himself: "Remember the task set for you, remember the performance, mark the ideal and note how near it you reached." He repeated this.(17)

The nephew bent down to the old man asked: "What is the task set?" The sage replied: "The whole earth should be made into a garden like this; and like it the life within each should become beautiful and fruitful."

A little later he told the nephew to bring the container holding his sacrificial fire and keep it near him.

The nephew knew what this meant. He broke down in sorrow, but did what he was told to do.

The sun had now fully set. In the east the full orb of the rising moon showed up effulgent. It looked as if the ball of fire that went down on the other side reappeared here as a ball of fresh butter. The sage folded his hands to the fire in the container and chanted the words of the bards of the Veda:

"Father Fire, lead us by the auspicious path to the abode of bliss. There is nothing of our deeds that you do not know. Forgive all our failures and iniquities, we pray you, offering our salutations to you again and again."(18)

Chanting the words the sage shut his eyes. When he did not open them for quite some time the nephew came and touched his feet.

The old man opened his eyes and saw him. He turned to the moon and filled his eyes, as it were, with its resplendent glory. He turned to the sky and seemed to feast his sight with the vision of the firmament softly bright with its countless stars. "I see your form at its

most auspicious; I see your form at its most auspicious: "he muttered several times and then shut his eyes again. (16b)

Those eyes stayed shut. The breath stopped about the middle of the night. Before dawn the body was cold.

Everyone realised that this man who had died as he had willed that night was a very great sage. Many felt sad that a sage so wise had left no record of his wisdom. There ought to have been an Upanishat in his name, they felt.

Those who did not approve of the sage's way of life said: "This man could have said something about the way of looking after cows or raising a garden. What kind of Upanishat could he have produced?"

A clever man among those that had waited on the sage on the last day suggested that they should put together the statements he had made to the visitors that day and declare that collection was the sage's Upanishat.

When the nephew heard this he said: "It was with the idea that something like this may be possible that I had requested my uncle to express his view on any matters which visitors might submit to him on the last day."

It was also stated that some friend had asked the sage: "Should there not be an Upanishat in your name?" and he had pointed to his garden and said: "This is my Upanishat."

On another occasion it was reported he had said, "Why should there be an Upanishat in words? You have God's Upanishat in creation"

All this was learnt later. The wise men of the generation thought over these matters and came to the conclusion that sage Vamadeva had realised the Brahman in action. The zealous among them came to the nephew and submitted to him the sentences that they and others had heard from the sage. He and they and others of like mind sat together and compiled the words and shaped the verses of what after a phrase which had been used by the sage was named *Isopanishat**

Part of the light which sage Vamadeva Dwaipayana Aruneya lit by the way he had lived is found embodied in the verses thus shaped by his admirers and is still lighting the path for the race of man.

*The numbers indicated alongside the English text refer to the verse numbers of the *Isaavaasyopanishad*

— Editor's Note

MY WORKING DAY

**From ten to eleven, ate breakfast for seven;
From eleven to noon, to begin was too soon;
From twelve to one, asked: 'What's to be done?';
From one to two, found nothing to do;
From two to three, began to foresee
That from three to four, would be a damned bore!**

— Thomas Love Peacock, a distinguished literary figure of the 19th century, employed by the East India Company in its London office.

PRISONER OF HIS LOVE

By A Sufi

There he was again, the 'mad' lover at
Ramanashram,

Drawn to his Beloved's 'samadhi',
As irresistibly as a bear to honey,
Circumambulating the shrine
at noon-time
All alone he was with his Beloved;

Love with Love, Heart with Heart,
Oblivious of the world without
Round after round, moved the 'mad' lover,
In solitary stillness,
Until he heard the sound
Of the 'Samadhi'-hall doors being locked
For the usual afternoon siesta.
To him it seemed the Beloved said,
"O 'mad' lover! who want to be alone
with me.
Now you are locked in with me
For the whole afternoon, a prisoner of
my Love."

In silence the 'mad' lover said,
"No, Beloved! Not just for this afternoon,
But through eternity, this lover
is a prisoner of your Love;
The prey can never from the tiger's jaws
Escape nor this 'mad' lover from your Love."

From his cheeks the tears of ecstasy,
This time, there was no need to wipe away,
No prying eyes were there to stare;

Flew past the hours, and before he knew it,
The doors were opened.
Now time it was to go,
So out walked lover-Beloved.

Oh yes! Lover-Beloved!
As said by a Sufi poet,
"Lover and Beloved are two words;
THAT which they denote is one;
Like the petals and the flower."

N.B. In the Sufi spiritual tradition Love is supreme, the very essence of all spirituality, the Way as well as the Goal. The madness of romantic Love is the most prized ideal which the Sufi aspires to in his relationship with the Supreme. Hence Sufis call themselves 'lovers' not 'devotees', and use often the lover-Beloved symbolism in their poems.

Nonetheless Sufism is based on the unalterable truth of 'Advaita' or Non-duality. Just as ice and water differ in form but not in substance, both 'lover' and 'Beloved' are in essence one and the same, though they appear in different forms. Sufism sticks to the pure truth that there is only One without a second.

ON HAVING NO HEAD

Here, WHAT reality is loses all importance; THAT reality is becomes all important.

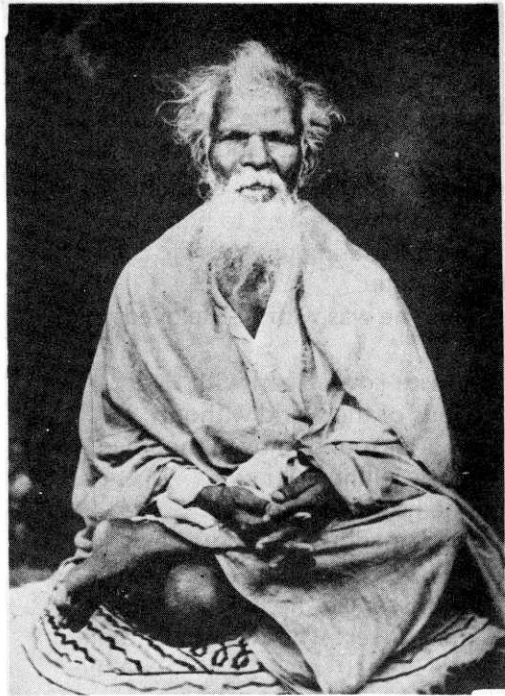
— Douglas E. Harding.

The Sage of Vasishthaguha: Swami Purushottamananda

By S.N.

VASISHTHA-GUHA — a cave associated with the name of Muni Vasishtha! Fourteen miles from Rishikesh, on the motor road to Badrinath, lies this cave. One gets down from the bus and descends a hundred and fifty feet along a rugged path and a flight of steps to reach this ancient place full of vibrations felt by those whose hearts are attuned. As one gets down the steps and walks about a hundred yards through the Ashram garden, one comes face to face with the renowned cave, Vasishtha-Guha. It is a natural cave having a depth of about fifty-five feet, with two compartments, the front one being about twenty feet by twelve feet. There are a few small buildings and a temple in the vicinity of the cave. Not far from the cave flows the celestial river, Ganga. The cave lies on the right bank, facing the river. The natural setting of the cave in the midst of austere nature, steep hills and overhanging trees, and the rippling waters of the Ganga on one side, fill the mind with thoughts sublime.

Our subject, Swami Purushottamananda, made this *Guha* his abode of *tapas* more than half a century ago. (The place was not so easily accessible in those days.) Born on 23rd November 1879 at Tiruvalla in Kerala State, to a pious couple, Narayanan Nair and Parvati Amma, many years after their marriage, he was named Neelakanthan by his parents. He was deeply religious even when he was a boy; and at studies brilliant. When he was in the sixth form (Matriculation) his studies were interrupted by a severe attack of rheumatism. Repeated attacks of the illness only redoubled his religious fervour. He mastered the Sanskrit language and studied the *Gita* and other texts during the long period of illness. His religious bent of mind brought him under the influence of Swami Nirmalananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, then taking roots in Kerala. Neelakanthan worked under Swami Nirmalananda for



swami Purushottamananda

more than twelve years. When Swami Brahma-nanda, the first President of Ramakrishna Math and Mission, visited Kerala, he gave *mantra-deeksha* (initiation) to Neelakanthan. That was in the year 1916. And, the second President, Swami Shivananda (Mahapurush Maharaj), ordained him a *Sannyasin* on *Sarat-Purnima* day in the year 1923 at Belur Math and gave him the monastic name, Swami Purushottama-nanda.

A few days after the *sannyasa* ceremony Swami Purushottamananda left for Varanasi, Haridwar and other sacred *tirthas*. After a few years' pilgrimage in the Himalayas, he settled in Vasishtha-Guha in the year 1929 to spend his life in prayer and meditation in the solitary cave in the midst of a dense forest. A man of courage and inner strength and extreme dispassion, he chose this cave for his *tapasya*. During those days there was no motor road,

not even a regular foot-path, from Rishikesh to the cave. One had to walk along the river Ganga, sometimes ascending up-hill. Yet he preferred the place as the very name, "Vasishtha-Guha" had a charm irresistible. He had to undergo great hardships during those days. The nearest place of human habitation was a hamlet three miles away and he had to trek uphill and downdale to reach it and obtain the bare necessities of life. The rheumatic attacks had left his right leg emaciated and weak. He had to limp all the way, which made it all the more painful.

Once, when his fire had gone out, he had to walk the whole distance to the village to get fire! But he did not give up the cave or his austerities. Help came to him in various ways. On another occasion when he was in need of fire and was reluctant to walk all the way to the village and waste four precious morning hours, a stranger came on a raft from the other bank of Ganga, gave him a box of matches of his own accord, and went away. The same evening Swamiji received half-a-dozen match boxes sent by a Mahatma of Rishikesh, through somebody. And, when the season of harvest came round, one day he was getting ready to go to some villages for collecting food-grains. Just at that moment, a former acquaintance, Swami Narayana Giri, came from Rishikesh. He accompanied Swamiji to the villages, and carried the load single-handed, not allowing our subject to carry anything. Swami Purushottamananda at first protested as he did not like the visitor doing such services. Only after coming to an understanding that the visitor would stay with Swamiji during the *chaturmasya* period (rainy season) and share whatever they collected, did he allow him to do this *seva* (service). Such instances increased Swamiji's faith in God. His perseverance, intense *tapasya* and complete surrender to the Lord resulted in the fulfilment of his aim in life namely, Self-realisation. He was a true Vedantin, a happy blend of *Jnana* and *Bhakti*, who exhorted his disciples to meditate. On hearing good devotional music (*kirtans*) he would go into ecstasy and become unconscious of

the surroundings. Tears would trickle down his cheeks while reading or hearing certain portions of *Srimad-Bhagavatam*. He advised spiritual aspirants to "feel, feel for others", "be sincere and true", and "surrender completely to the Lord" He also stressed the importance of *brahmacharya* (continence), and said, "If you have *brahmacharya* you have everything; if not, you have nothing."

"Anumodaamahe brahmacharyam-ekaanta
nirmalam
Dharmyam yasasyam-aayushyam loka-
dvaya-rasaayanam"

was one of his oft-quoted *slokas*. The meaning is simple:

"We admire *brahmacharya* of 'purest ray' which is conducive to virtue, fame and longevity, and is a panacea for all the ailments here and hereafter."¹

Swamiji was averse to publicity. Yet many and varied were the people that flocked to him for solace and guidance. His mere *darshan* gave peace. Sometimes, people went to him with a long list of questions, and without their uttering a word, the answers came to their mind after sitting in his Presence or Swamiji himself raised the topic and gave the answer directly to them or to someone else. His child-like laughter was something one could never forget. Yes, his love, compassion, subtle humour, and advice on spiritual matters in homely words — all these made even a newcomer or a shy person feel quite at home, with him.

Gradually an *ashrama* sprang up and a few monastic disciples stayed with him. It was like his children and served him. He was father, mother, guru — everything to his monastic as well as lay disciples.

Swami Purushottamananda did not go on lecture tours; seldom did he speak in large

¹ i) *Spiritual Talks*, ii) *Peep into the Gita*, iii) *Spiritual Aspirants* and iv) *Upadeshamrit* (Hindi) are some of the publications that contain the Sage's lofty teachings. These can be had from *Vasishtha-Guha Ashram, P.O. Coolar-Dogi, Pin code 249303, (Dist. Tehri-Garhwal), U.P.*

gatherings. But wherever he went he held *satsanga*, cleared the doubts of *sadhakas* and gave them spiritual instructions.

More than three decades Swamiji lived in Vasishtha-Guha and attained *mahasamadhi* at the age of 82, after a brief illness. He spoke at length to his disciples two days before the event and attained *mahanirvana* on the night of Mahasivaratri, Monday the 13th February 1961. In the place sanctified by him a temple has been erected and a marble statue of the sage has been installed. Swami Purushottama-nanda of Vasishtha-Guha was esteemed in the Haridwar-Rishikesh region as one of the three 'Spiritual giants' — *Trimurtis* — of the Himalayas, who all hailed from South India, the other two being Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and Swami Tapovanam of Uttar-

kashi. This is what Dr. K.M. Munshi, wrote after paying a visit to the Sage at Visishtha-Guha in 1953:

"Such knights-errant of the Spirit are to be found in all countries, but perhaps more in India than anywhere else. Whatever the modern world may say, such men will continue to be found in all ages, men who, not content with their everyday life, will insist on climbing the Everest of the Spirit with Cheerful confidence. While we search for the mirage of Happiness, they seek the Holy Grail with courage and faith; and they are the men who convert the rose of the world into the mystic rose that Dante Sang of."²

²City of Paradise & Other Kulapati's Letters (1955)-P.69
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

ON HAVING NO HEAD

... Then Life itself — if only we will learn its infallibly wise but often agonizing lesson — is always demonstrating that the gaining of our separate and personal goals yields only the briefer satisfaction, and after that disillusion and boredom, if not disgust; whereas whenever we have the grace to say 'YES' to our circumstances and actively to will (rather than passively to acquiesce in) whatever happens: Why then there springs up that real and lasting joy which Eastern tradition calls *ananda*.

— Douglas E. Harding.

* * * * *

ATTENTION

"Attention has no limitation, no resistance, so it is limitless. To attend implies vast energy: it is not pinned down to a point. In this attention there is no repetitive movement; it is not mechanical. There is no question of how to maintain this attention, and when one has learned the art of seeing and hearing, this attention can focus itself on a page, a word. In this there is no resistance which is the activity of concentration. Inattention cannot be refined into attention. To be aware of inattention is the ending of it: not that it becomes attentive. The ending has no continuity. The past modifying itself is the future — a continuity of what has been — and we find security in continuity, not in endings. So attention has no quality of continuity. Anything that continues is mechanical. The becoming is mechanical and implies time. Attention has no quality of time."

— J. Krishnamurti in

Letters to the Schools - Vol. II p.31

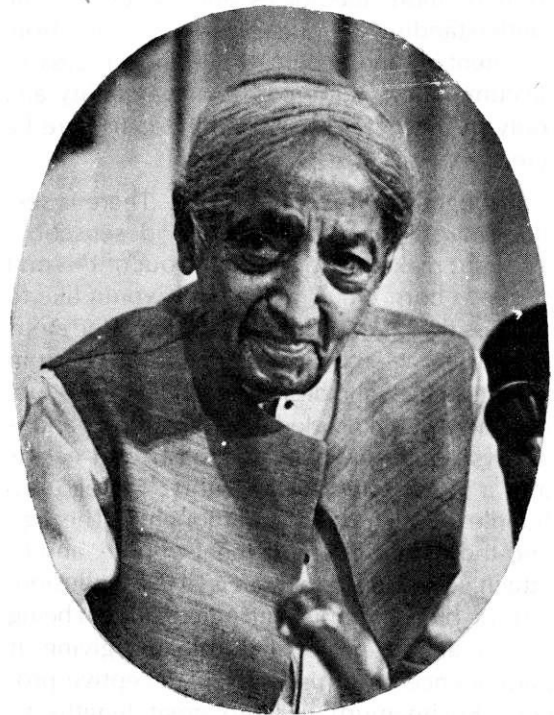
Krishnamurti and Religion

By G.N.

WHEREVER we may live there is confrontation with Reality. There are three aspects to reality. The first aspect is Nature which is extensive and subtly related. This includes the earth and the sky, the sun and stars, birds and trees, animals and man. All matter is part of nature. Nature is not the product of man's thought and has its own independent existence. To appreciate the order and rhythm in nature and to be sensitive to its living quality is the beginning of wakefulness.

The second aspect of reality is put together by the thought of man whether it be in science, mathematics, technology, medicine, history, logic, etc. This is efficient reality, and if properly used, leads to civilized existence. They are the tools of culture and refinement in any society. The third aspect of reality is illusory but all the same is established and maintained whether it be in the political or religious spheres. Artificial divisions due to nationality, belief and dogma are very common, frequently leading to hatred and violence. There can also be a great deal of illusory reality in the make up of a person leading him to neurotic states. The pain, anxiety and depression it causes is real and requires all the skills of the educator and psychologist to pull one out of this state of mind.

To understand the three main aspects of reality in its wide range and depth, and to be free of illusory reality is the beginning of learning. This leads to insight and clarity. If one's understanding of reality and one's insight flow together, then one has the means to approach the deeper realms of Truth. Truth cannot be put together by the thought of man, and is beyond the projections of thought however subtle they may be. Thought has to come to an end, for free observation to take place. Such observation is anonymous and without



J. Krishnamurthi

choice. For Krishnamurti this is the beginning of meditation.

To be is to be related, and life is a movement in relationship. We are related to Nature, to people, to ideas and to things. Even a hermit living in a cave or forest cannot escape from this relationship. It is only in the mirror of relationship that there is understanding of oneself from moment to moment. One can see clearly one's motives, hopes and fears. This requires an alert mind, sensitive to people and environment. As this is arduous, people will prefer to follow a method and to dull their minds by accepting authorities and gratifying theories. In spiritual matters, for Krishnamurti, there is no authority. One has to be a teacher and a student at the same time, learning from

relationship and from life. This is a dynamic and creative process. In order to transform the world about us with its misery, wars, unemployment and suffering, there must be a transformation in ourselves. That is the only solution to all our problems, not the projection of more ideologies and beliefs. In the understanding of ourselves as we are from moment to moment without the process of accumulation, there comes a tranquillity and only in that state of tranquillity can there be creativeness.

Thought is a material process. There is seeing (of an object), contact and sensation. Thought makes a mental image out of this and desire is born. You say that you would like to possess the object. Is it possible that one stops at sensation, and thought does not come in with its images and desire? Thought is a product of experience, knowledge and memory, and is always conditioned by the past. The ego is also a process and not an entity. The ego is a bundle of memories and thoughts. The ego and thoughts are a movement in time, and to attach permanence to them is to live in illusion. Illusion breeds conflict and pain. Thought being impermanent, projects a thinker, giving it permanence and this is a self-deceptive process. Krishnamurti goes to great lengths to explain that the experiencer is the experienced, that the thinker is the thought. There is no duality, and in this penetrating insight conflict comes to an end. To see the whole movement of thought and the time it creates requires self-recollected awareness, and this is meditation.

There is time measured by the clock indicating the movement of the sun. There is morning and evening, day and night, recorded in hours,

REFLECTION

The single moon is imaged as many in the numerous pots below. So too the ego has existence only because of reflection.

minutes and seconds. This is chronological time. There is another kind of time, which is duration, biologically built-in by nature. It takes some years for a mango seed to mature into a full grown tree yielding fruit. After conception, a period of 9 months has to pass for the human baby to be born. In temperate climate during autumn the leaves on the trees change colour, an extraordinary sight and an annual event. Nature is replete with such incidents and let us call it biological time. There is a third variety of time which is the creation of thought. During a period of time the clerk hopes to become the manager, the priest hopes to become a bishop. I am ignoble now, and give me time I will become noble. This becoming is always concerned with a psychological future and in this gap of time there is anxiety, conflict and suffering. This is a movement away from 'what is' to 'what should be' which is a mere projection of thought. There is only 'what is' which is swift and dynamic and is entirely in the present. A mind that is trapped in the psychological time of becoming cannot have the energy and pliability to be with 'what is', the eternal present. Living with 'what is' gives a new intelligence to the mind, an awakened purpose of existence. That which is immeasurable cannot be caught in the net of time.

When one observes closely the psychological structure of oneself, one finds that as one suffers, so all mankind suffers in various degrees, whether one lives in America, Russia, India or any other country. If you are lonely, the whole of humankind knows this loneliness. Anxiety, jealousy, hope and fear are our common lot. Though there may be some biological and physical differences which are superficial, psychologically one is like another human being. A human being not only represents another but is psychologically the whole of mankind. In this realisation there is freedom from self-pity, and the birth of compassion. Compassion implies equal energy for all and is the highest form of intelligence. Compassion and clarity go together. It is one of the basic teachings of Krishnamurti that 'you are the world'.

"As the representative of the whole human race, your response is whole and not partial. So responsibility has a totally different meaning. One has to learn the art of this responsibility. If one grasps the full significance that one is psychologically the world, then responsibility becomes overpowering love".

Another equally important teaching of Krishnamurti is 'The observer is the observed'. This is a psychological fact. The observer himself has been put together by the various images of thought and thinks himself permanent, and tries to control, suppress other images which he does not like and cling to such images as are pleasant. This creates division and conflict and a time-interval where the observer wants to end the conflict. But when the observer realises that the thing about which he is acting is himself, then there is no conflict between himself and the image. It is only division that causes conflict. When you are angry, you are anger at that moment; when you are frightened, you are fear. When something is you, what can you do? You cannot run away from it. It is there, and you are that. So all action that is the outcome of reaction to like and dislike comes to an end. "Then you will find there is an awareness that has become tremendously alive. It is not bound to any central issue or to any image — and from that intensity of awareness there is a different quality of attention and therefore the mind — because the mind is this awareness — has become extraordinarily sensitive and highly intelligent."

Is there an observation without the observer? The observer is the result of the past and is conditioned by his likes and dislikes, by his prejudices, fears and hopes. In ancient China an artist before he began to paint anything — a tree, for instance — would sit before it for days and months together until he was the tree. He did not identify himself with the tree, but there was no space between him and the tree, no space between the observer and the observed. He was totally the tree, and in that state only he could paint. A great motor racing driver had no accidents though he won in

many international meets. When asked to explain the reason for this by a sports interviewer, the racing champion said that it was because 'he was the car'. The total energy of attention was so focussed on driving the automobile that there was no energy left for thinking and the reflex action of observation was far quicker than thought. Yet there is another interesting example in 'Zen and Archery' where the warmth of complete attention has taken over and the master hits the bull's-eye with one arrow after another, in the stream of total attention where the marksmen has ceased to be as a separate entity.

Thought by its very nature is limited and divisive. It has created nationalism, dogma and beliefs, leading to wars and terrible suffering in the course of man's history on earth. Thought has also achieved great discoveries in science and medicine, has accomplished wonders in architecture, technology, mathematics, etc. A great teacher like Krishnamurti, not only paints the predicament of man, without distortion, to indicate that man creates all his problems but also gently points a way to freedom and understanding. More than twenty years ago at Varanasi, I was listening to a talk of Krishnamurti and next to me in the back row was seated a venerable looking *sannyasi*. The hall was beautiful with a sense of proportion and a low roof that gave you a sense of being together. After an hour's talk, the *sannyasi* got up and asked Krishnamurti what he thought of the three-fold path of the *Gita*. Krishnamurti replied "What I do is my love and that is my knowledge". The answer came in a stunning minute before the *sannyasi* sat down. Karma, Bhakti and Jnana is a living flow and a unitary movement. The synthesis is not brought about by

NON-REFLECTION

The impostor at the wedding had a jolly time only as long as either marriage party failed to reflect on his presence. So too the ego has existence only because of absence of reflection.

thought but is a living reality without any fragmentation.

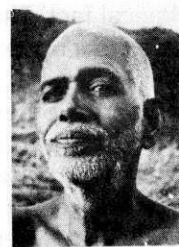
Krishnamurti was an embodiment of his teachings. And for over sixty years he went round the world talking to people and exhorting them to be a light unto themselves. There are a great number of tapes and books published by the Krishnamurti Foundation, covering the wide range and depth of his teachings. The religious mind is completely alone. It is a mind that has seen through the falsity of dogmas, beliefs and traditions. Not being nationalistic, not being conditioned by its environment, such a mind has no horizons, no limits. It is explosive, new, young, innocent. It is only this true religious spirit that can bring about a new culture where there are both freedom and order.

Love and meditation go together. Meditation is not concentration, nor is it the control of thought. Meditation is to be aware of every thought and of every feeling without justification or condemnation, and just to watch it and move with it. In the watchfulness you begin to understand the whole movement of thought and feeling, and out of this awareness comes silence. "Silence put together by thought is stagnation, is dead, but the silence that comes when thought has understood its own beginning, the nature of itself, understood how all thought is never new but always old — this silence is meditation in which the meditator is entirely absent, for the mind has emptied itself of the past". In the understanding of meditation there is love, and love cannot be cultivated by thought or by following systems. "Total negation is the essence of the positive. When there is negation of all those things which are not love — desire, pleasure — then love *is* with compassion and intelligence".

"Nine out of ten things I did were failures, while I wanted success ten times. So I worked ten times more."

— George Bernard Shaw.

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by

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SRI K.K. NAMBIAR : IN MEMORIAM

OUR Editor-in-Chief is no more. His services to the Ashram from 1936, were varied, precise and continuous; the only field he did not serve during Sri Bhagavan's life time was in editing our publications and he joyously rendered this service too during the last two years (1985-1986)! He attained the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan on August 7, 1986.

Sri Nambiar came first to Sri Bhagavan in 1933. He could then stay only for an hour, but in that brief hour he was totally captivated and knew he had come to his Master, the *Sat-Guru*! Sri Nambiar's life exemplified the pattern which Bhagavan repeatedly stressed that one living and working in the world could simultaneously, and without losing vigour, do *sadhana*. He had risen to the very top of his profession, both in Government service and in industry, but remained a staunch and ardent devotee throughout. Thus, he was a standing example of the thesis: "There is no contradiction between work and wisdom."

During his official career he had to go to USA. The separation from the Master was too much for him and on landing he was almost in tears. When he reached the hotel room, lo! there on the table, on top of a pile of magazines, his eye fell on a magazine bearing the photo of Sri Bhagavan on the cover! This thrilled him and reassured to him that the Master was ever with him.

Sri Nambiar was among the few devotees blessed with Sri Bhagavan's *upadesa* through dreams. The following incident is related by him in the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* of 1946:

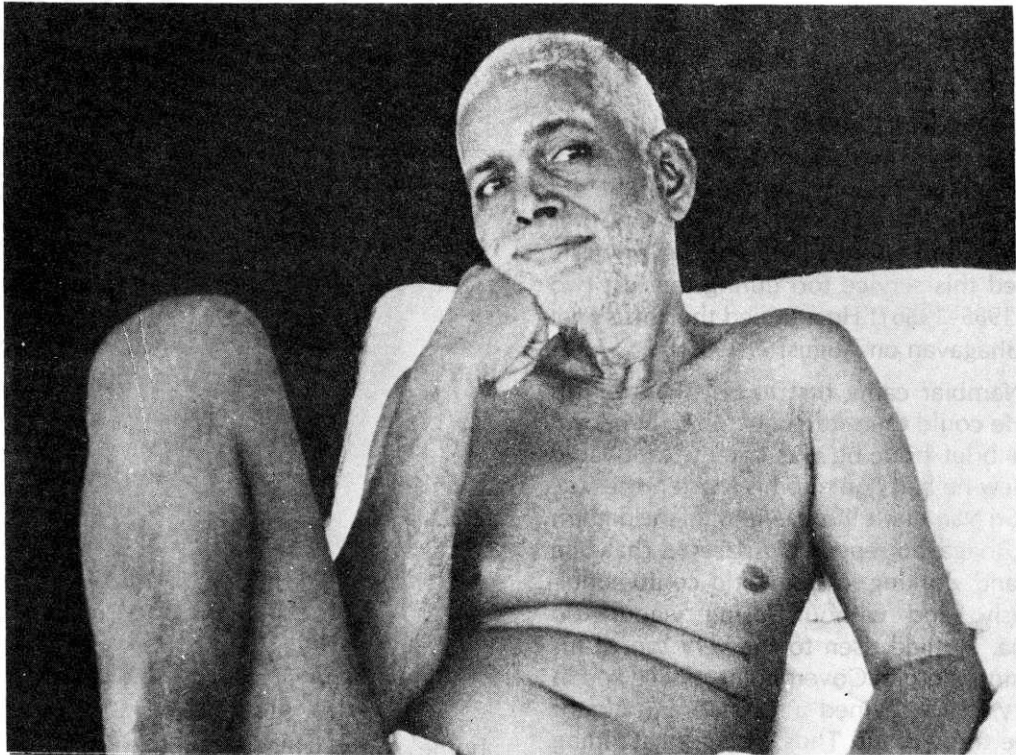
"One evening in the year 1936 when I visited the Ashram I decided to ask an important question of Sri Bhagavan concerning certain spiritual practices. But amidst the solemn hours of *Veda Paravana* in the evening and during the meditation that followed, I could not make up my mind to ask the question and returned



Sri K.K. Nambiar

home some what disappointed. Early next morning, when I was lying half awake, Sri Bhagavan appeared before me in a dream and answered the very question which I had failed to put him the previous evening. And before he vanished he also told me that he wanted a note-book.

"I said that I had one readily available and that it was of octavo pocket-size. He said that would do. I woke up with a pleasant thrill. The dream or vision, whichever one may call it, had made such a deep impression on my mind that I could not delay carrying out the behest, however, strange it might seem. After an early bath and ablutions I traced out the note-book and hurried to the Ashram. Prostrating myself before Bhagavan as usual, I handed over the note-book to him. He received it with a smile and asked me why I had brought it to him. So I told him in a whisper all about my dream. He immediately called his personal attendant, the late Madhavaswami and remarked to him: 'Didn't I ask you yesterday evening to get a good note-book to write out a Malayalam translation of the Sanskrit text of



the *Sri Rama Gita* in? You didn't bring one. Well, here is Nambiar who has brought it for me. It seems he had a dream in which I asked for the note-book and he has brought it."

In the same article he has recorded another interesting dream which shows how Bhagavan would sometimes instruct one devotee through another:

"On another occasion in the same year I dreamt of the Maharshi seated on his couch with a number of devotees seated on the floor and in meditation. Among them, I recognised a young devotee from Goa, seated in *padmasana* and doing *pranayama* (breath-control). I saw sparks rising from the base of his spine up to his head. Bhagavan who was watching him, said: 'There is no need for all this gymnastics with breath-control. It is easier and safer to follow the method of Self-Enquiry as enunciated by me'. Next morning when I went to the Ashram I sought out this young Goanese Swami. I had no previous acquaintance with him and had had no occasion to speak to him before, I

gave him a full account of the dream I had had. He was visibly moved and somewhat to my embarrassment embraced me with delight in the North Indian fashion. He said 'Brother, I was all the while waiting for an opportunity to ask Bhagavan whether I should continue or give up this practice of *pranayama* which I have been steadily carrying on for several years past. Indeed last night, while sitting in the presence of Bhagavan, I was eagerly waiting for an opportunity to put the question to him but could not find a suitable occasion. Now there is no need to ask him about it, since he has answered me through you'."

Sri Nambiar took an active part in the construction of Sri Bhagavan's Mother's Shrine — *Sri Matrubhuteswara Temple*. The work was entrusted to one Vaidyanatha Sthapati, traditional architect and sculptor. Sri Nambiar worked along with *Sthapati*. Seeing them both together, Bhagavan jokingly named Nambiar: "The English *Sthapati*"!

GOD

Thou who pervadest all the worlds
 below,
 Yet sitst above,
 Master of all who work and know,
 Servant of Love!

Thou who disdainest not the
 worm to be
 Nor even the clod,
 Therefore we know by that humility
 That thou art God.

— Sri Aurobindo
 from 'Sri Aurobindo Action'
 August '86

In the planning and construction of Sri Bhagavan's *Samadhi-Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam*-Ramana Auditorium, Sri Nambiar willingly bore the responsibility of detailed guidance and sustained help.

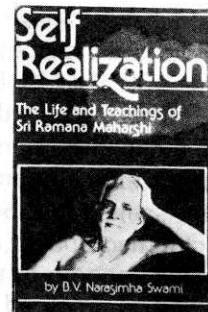
He took keen interest in Ramana Kendra, Delhi, and spoke at the Sunday meetings, whenever he was in Delhi. He was the Chairman of Ramana Kendra, Madras, from its very inception and gave many talks on Sri Bhagavan's works and in *Ramana Gita*. His reminiscences, as recorded in his diary, have been brought out in the book *The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana* published by Sri Ramanasramam, and it thrills all Ramana-bhaktas.

The entire family of Sri Nambiar are staunch bhaktas of Sri Bhagavan, especially his wife Smt. Janaki Nambiar, as his sister, the late Smt. Madhavi Ammal, was throughout her life.

In the passing away of Sri K.K. Nambiar the ever-increasing family of Ramana-bhaktas has lost one of its oldest and most valued members!

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SELF-REALIZATION

(Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi)

By

B.V. Narasimha Swami

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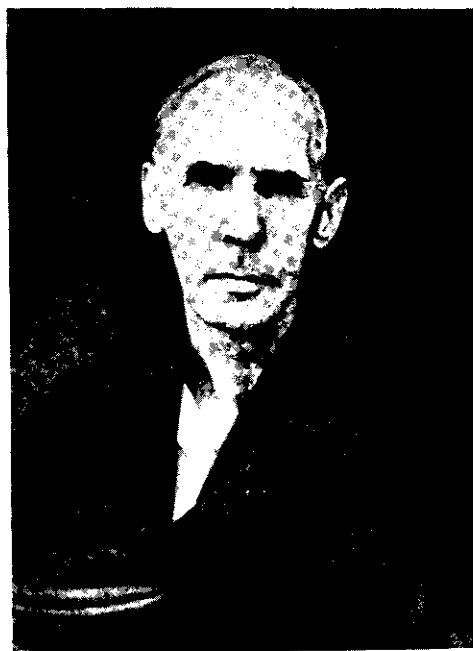
OXFORD REJECTED¹

(Chapter Four contd.)

By Arthur Osborne

MOST Indians abroad either reject their spiritual heritage or are reticent about it, fearful of not being considered modern. I joined a mystic society which was to have weekly meetings with talks on various branches of mysticism. The first meeting was held at Balliol in the rooms of Antony Matthew, one of the few friends I had at Oxford, a delightful person, heavy in build, light and graceful in manner, sociable and aloof at the same time. Some wealthy member of the club had bought a gong with a deep, mellow tone to announce the beginning of the meeting. Antony provided mulled claret and Turkish and Egyptian cigarettes. The gong was struck and the talk started. A South African Rhodes scholar, a few years older than the rest of us and said to be immensely learned in such matters, was giving a talk on the Buddha. It was entirely made up of trivialities and contained nothing whatever of spiritual interest. And that was the end. The club never met again because it turned out that none of us knew anything to talk about. I never heard what happened to the gong. In distress I wrote to Morgan to ask him what he had done about spiritual thinking when he was at Oxford, and he wrote back that he hadn't done any. A chill overcame me as I read that. It seemed a betrayal. Even Rosamond offered no help in this direction. I wrote to her that I was determined to understand Christ's miracles and she ignored that part of my letter in her reply. Perhaps, as a devout Catholic, she felt that faith was enough and that it was sacrilegious to want to understand.

Rosamond was a serene and gracious person, reminiscent of green lawns and summer flowers, far from the sombre pine-woods of the North. Scholarly, interested in art and poetry, she was at the same time normal and sensible —



Shri Arthur Osborne

all that I was not. We were old friends as soon as we met. I felt that I had known her always. Yet I never thought of asking her to marry me. Looking back, I can see that there were several occasions when my mind might at a touch have turned in that direction, but the touch was never given. In fact, all might-have-beens are an illusion; what did not happen never really lay within the bounds of possibility. Rosamond's conviction that I should become a great poet was bracing.

The frustration that I met with on every side in seeking spiritual guidance led me to turn the more enthusiastically to poetry. In my second year Denzil Batchelor came up and we immediately became close friends. He was a young man with shining brown eyes and a glowing voice, full of glory and tragedy. His energy was prodigious — poetry, football, drink, work, social life, and always tragically in love.

¹Continued from our last issue

I never doubted that he was one of the world's great poets; and this also made it easier for me to believe that I was another. I even followed suit in persuading myself that I was a tragic lover, choosing for the purpose an actress ten years my senior whom I had scarcely spoken to. Only many years later, going over such scraps of Denzil's poem as had stuck in my memory, did I realise that they were just melodious words saying nothing. My own were not even that.

Even apart from personal ability there was the question of the spirit of the age, a force as impalpable but almost as binding as the law of averages. If you toss a coin it is equally likely to come down heads or tails; and if you toss it a hundred times this applies equally each single time. Therefore, in theory, it should be equally likely to come down heads all the hundred times. But in fact the law of averages is so rigorous that it will not vary more than two or three times either side of fifty. Similarly, it should theoretically be possible for a Tennyson to flourish in the age of Pope or a Pope in the age of Tennyson, but it does not happen so. Even when a writer seems to be out of touch with the spirit of the age or violently hostile to it, he will usually be found to represent either an underground current of opposition or the rising tide of tomorrow beating on the crumbling cliffs of yesterday. In the twenties of this century, in the disillusionment following the first world war, cacophony was a desideratum of style and sophisticated superficiality of content. We neither of us had the cast of mind or the approach to poetry that was then called modern. There were indeed two directions in which some living aspiration was being canalized, but neither of them affected us or, so far as I was aware, the Oxford of our time. One was Communism. It was the age when some enthusiasts turned hopefully to Communism as a blue-print for a new utopia, only to be disillusioned later by the stark reality. The other was the spiritual revolt against materialist, mechanized modern civilization which was already flowing in many streams,

for which I was searching half unwittingly and wholly in vain. After leaving Oxford I was isolated from the trend of things, at first of necessity and later from choice; and when, in the fifties, I was ready to write my books the streams had swollen to torrents; the development in myself had to some extent been reflected in the world, so that I found myself expressing the spirit of a new age and the books that I was then in a condition to write were such as the publishers were looking for. This does not mean, of course, that the world of to-day can be called spiritual — the very idea is ludicrous — but it does not mean that the anti-spiritual trend that set in with the Renaissance has run its course, terminating in the total denial of the age of Darwin, Marx and Freud, which Communism seeks to perpetuate, and that an opposite current is now flowing, back to a sense of spiritual reality. It is still a minority movement, as every Renaissance must be, but if these were normal times one might regard it as the wave of the future. However, they are not, and it may be that the world as we know it has no future, that this is the time of separation which Christ foretold long ago, between those who reject all wisdom and guidance, clinging only to the superficialities of life, and those who turn back with renewed energy in quest of meaning.

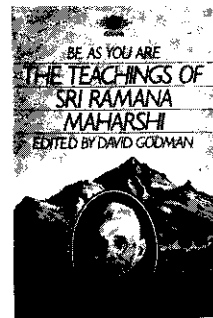
I had a contemporary at Christ Church who had real skill in writing verse and who was, moreover, in accord with the spirit of the age, and he therefore became famous as a poet. That was W.H. Auden. I knew him by sight but I do not recollect ever speaking to him.

Writer or not, Oxford was not my destiny. It would have been as great a tragedy, as much the waste of a lifetime, if the circle had closed there as if it had closed earlier on a Yorkshire farm. It was an intuitive recognition that it would have been evading the fight of whose existence I did not yet know and accepting instead an easy establishment. However, I could not explain this to any one at the time because I did not know it myself.

To say that some one's destiny is not in a certain port does not absolve him from responsibility for the navigation. In spiritual things, statements which appear contradictory can both be true, expressing different aspects or levels of truth. For instance, Christ could say, from one standpoint, that evil must needs come, but he could immediately follow it up from another with a denunciation of those through whom it comes — which would be illogical and unjust if both statements were made from the same standpoint. Similarly, the *Quran* states that evil-doors can act as they do only by the divine will, and yet in another place it denounces them for putting forward this very plea in their own defence. The former viewpoint is cosmic and the latter individual, and each is valid on its own plane. (Actually, there is also a third standpoint, higher than either, the metaphysical; but from that the question of responsibility does not arise). To revert to a symbol used earlier in this book, the former is like viewing a landscape from the air, when the entire course of the rivers exists simultaneously in the eternal present, the timeless now; the latter is like a man in a boat, for whom the part of the river already navigated is past and that ahead is future. The course that lies ahead of him may be already marked on the map, but he has not access to the map and does not know what it is; also it is not drawn by any arbitrary whim but is due to the lie of the land, the force of the current and the obstacles interposed to its flow.

Had I possessed spiritual understanding at this time I could have remained at Oxford without betrayal, or sought a position elsewhere or simply left everything to take its course. As it was, my staying on would have been a betrayal but my making no other provision was an act not of faith but improvidence. It is the motive that makes an act right or wrong. Unfortunately a man can seldom mismanage his own life without hurting others also.

(To be continued)



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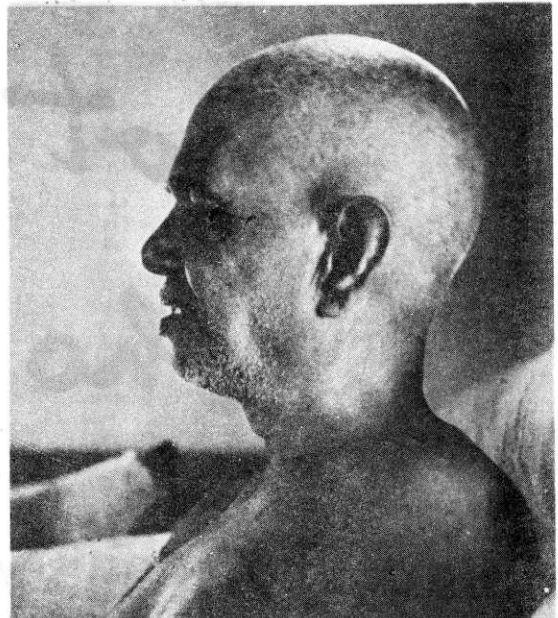
WITH ME IN KITCHEN

In the last issue we saw how Sri Bhagavan graced the Grihapravesam (house-warming) ceremony of various devotees, as culled from their diaries and reminiscences. We present this time the joy and sadhana of being with Sri Bhagavan in the kitchen, collected from various publications.

AFTER I finished high school I had nothing in particular to do and used to roam about the town and the hill. Whenever I felt like it, I would stay with Bhagavan, and eat and sleep there. By the time He had left the cave, which was too small for all the crowd that came to see Him, and moved a little higher to Skandashram, where the devotees had built some terraces and huts. Some elderly ladies, Echammal, the Mudaliar lady, and a few others, made it their duty to bring cooked food up the hill regularly for Bhagavan, which enabled some of us to stay with him permanently. The food was meant for him, but there was enough for all. He would not allow any discrimination in matters of food; it was shared equally and what remained was consumed the next morning. Nor were there regular hours for food. We would sit down for food when there was food and when we felt the need. I used to collect firewood and run down to the bazaar for salt and such things. I was *handy* and did everything quickly, which gave me a chance to be working often with Bhagavan.

"Then Bhagavan's mother came and his younger brother, Chinnaswami, as we used to call him. The mother started a regular household with the daily rounds of meals and tiffins. The devotees were bringing rice and other provisions, and all partook of the very frugal meals, more often than not consisting of some rice, pickles and buttermilk.

"At that time I was not staying at any particular place but moving from place to place according to my fancy, whether invited or not, and helping myself to whatever was offered.



red. But however far I wandered, as soon as I returned to Tiruvannamalai I would climb Arunachala and reappear at Skandashram. The plain food there tasted heavenly to me. Sometimes I was asked to go to town to fetch something; like Hanuman I would fly down and back. Cooking was done once a day, in the morning, and I helped Bhagavan in slicing vegetables and such small jobs. The main meal was about midday and if no food was left for the night, well, we all had to fast.

"One day Bhagavan's younger brother, Chinnaswami, who was managing the Ashram — the present Sri Ramanasramam — asked me to take up the preparation of the morning *iddlies*, the steamed rice and pulse cakes which are so common in South India. This would give me the chance to become a permanent inmate of

the Ashram. I was very reluctant to accept this job, but it stuck to me ever since. In making these cakes I achieved such excellence that visitors were telling that nowhere had they tasted *iddlies* comparable to the Ashram cakes! Yet I was sure to go tramping whenever there was a chance or my fancy took me.

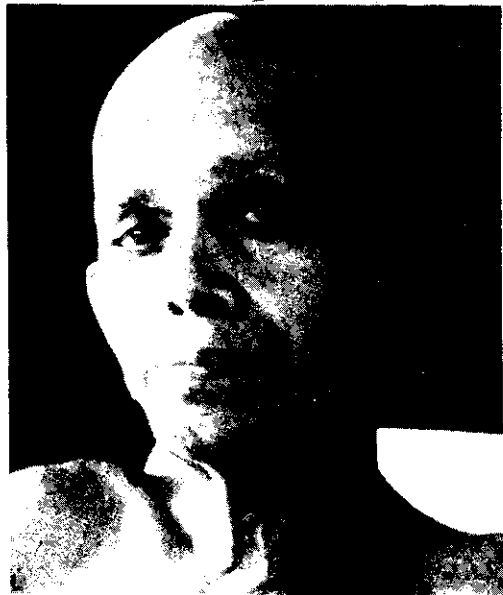
"The workers in the Kitchen asked me one day to grind some pulses to a paste. Try as I would, I could not do it. Tired and angry, I said, 'I would rather climb the hill up and down than to do this kind of work'. I was told not to leave the kitchen without finishing the work, but I just refused to go on with it. Bhagavan heard the quarrel and advised me to add some salt. When I did so the grinding became easy, and since that day my dislike of grinding has left me completely.

"Sometimes when the work became too difficult or unpleasant, I would walk round Bhagavan at least once and the trouble would vanish. Very often we worked side by side, he cutting vegetables at one end of the straw mat on which we were sitting, and I making rice cakes at the other. He kept a watchful eye on me and taught me the right way of doing everything. He was very particular about avoiding all waste. He showed me how to use a ladle so that not even a drop of food would fall on the ground, how to avoid spilling while pouring, how to start a fire with just a few drops of kerosene. If all this were not a part of my spiritual discipline, why should he have bothered? When we prepared *iddlies* early in the morning, we would eat one and give the



other to the people present. At breakfast everybody would get two *iddlies* and a cup of coffee, but Bhagavan would take only one *iddlie*, counting as his second the one he took earlier."

— Raja Iyer in
Ramana Smrti



||

"In the early days, I joined the Ashram, Bhagavan used to help in grinding lentils, peeling vegetables and even lending a hand in cooking. He would get up long before daybreak to join the kitchen staff at their work. We ladies would arrive by sunrise, and Bhagavan would see that all was ready for our arrival and we would often find a part of our work already done. To forestall him we would come by five; he would come at four; we would come then at three. When he saw that we were left without sleep, he stopped entering the kitchen before sunrise and gave us time to sleep.

"One day I saw him grinding black gram. We always felt ashamed when we saw him working, but when we offered to take over he would get cross and stop coming to the kitchen, which would make us sad, for while in the Hall, Bhagavan was everybody's, but in the kitchen he was our own. That day I had the courage to ask him to let me grind the gram. To my astonishment he got up from the grinding stone and said: 'Yes, finish it. I was waiting for you to come'. When I finished grinding and went back to the kitchen, I saw him boiling pumpkin curry in a huge cauldron over a big fire. It was nearing noon, the day was hot, the fire was hot, and the steam rising from the

pot was very hot. Bhagavan was bathed in perspiration. So it was to save me from this tiresome work that he invited me to grind for him! How I regretted offering my help! The stew was boiling vigorously and a piece of pumpkin fell on Bhagavan's finger. The next day we saw a big blister and when somebody asked about it, he replied: 'Oh, it is only a ring. I wanted some jewellery'. Thus I learned not to interfere."

—By Varanasi Subbalakshmiamma
in *Ramana Smrti*

III

"At this time I was blessed with the rare good fortune of working with Sri Bhagavan in the kitchen. The hours of duty were between 2.30 a.m. and 4 a.m. Sri Bhagavan would come punctually at 2.30 a.m. and first spend some time in cutting vegetables with the workers and devotees. Then He would enter the kitchen and prepare *sambar* or *chutney* for breakfast, and occasionally some extra dishes also. Sri R. Narayana Iyer, Sub-Registrar, Sri Kalyana Sundaram Iyer, the book-stall officer, and I used to assist Sri Bhagavan. At first I was an ignoramus in the work. As I saw Sri Bhagavan perspiring profusely near the oven, I tried to fan Him, but Sri Bhagavan objected. He would not allow any special distinction to be shown to Him. I stopped, but as Sri Bhagavan's attention was engrossed in work, I gently repeated the fanning. Sri Bhagavan turning to me, laughed and said: 'You want to do it on sly. But you do not even know how to do it effectively. Let me teach you.' So saying, He held me by the hand and taught me the proper way of waving the fan. Oh! How I thrilled at this touch and thanked my ignorance! From the kitchen we would adjourn to another room for grinding the mixture. I did not know at first how to hold the pestle and grind. Sri Bhagavan placed His hand upon mine and turned the pestle in the proper way. Again a thrill! How blessed was my ignorance! After the work was finished, Sri Bhagavan would take out a bit from the dish, taste a little of it and give us the remainder to taste, and sometimes when our hands were unwashed, he would Himself throw it into our mouths



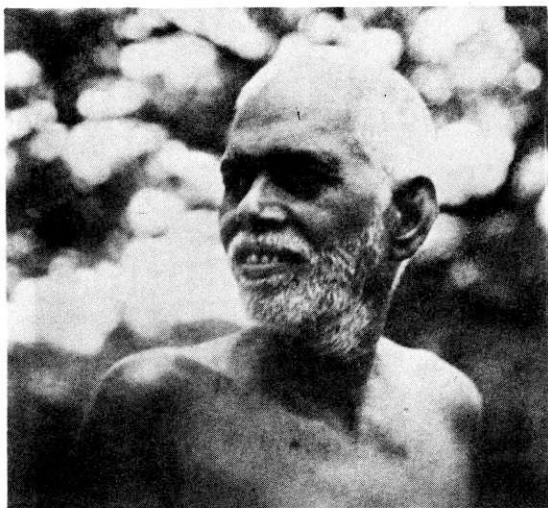
with His own hand. That would be the climax of our happiness! Then He would hasten back to the Hall and lie reclining on the couch and appear dozing as the Brahmins arrived for *Parayana*. Squatting so close to Sri Bhagavan, chatting and joking with Him and partaking of the fruit of His gracious labours, what a privilege and good fortune! That was indeed the most blessed period in the lives of us three. Its very recollection will thrill us throughout our lives."

—By Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya
in *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*, pp.71-72

IV

"A good object-lesson in obedience was Bhagavan's strict instructions that no food should ever go to waste. In the good old days on the hill, all food collected during the day would be distributed among those present and consumed then and there, and nothing would be left for the next day, not even uncooked provisions. It was a beggar's life, pure and simple. When the number of devotees increased and Bhagavan's mother came to live with her son, she started a kitchen for the sake of the devotees, whom she wanted to serve. This led to a Ramanasramam with a store room and a kitchen and regular cooking.

"Bhagavan himself was an excellent cook and made a point of teaching us to cook properly. Cooking is the least rewarding work,



for good cooks are usually poor eaters, and all profit goes to others. That is probably why Bhagavan selected cooking as a training ground for some of his most devoted disciples.

"It would sometimes happen that some soup or vegetables would remain after serving everybody, and it was Bhagavan's order that such leftovers should be used as stock for the next day's breakfast *sambar* (vegetables sauce). Rice cakes with *sambar* being our standard breakfast. We needed *sambar* every morning and the leftovers from the day before would come in handy. But the order created a serious problem, for custom demands that no leftover can be used the next day! Food cooked the day before was considered polluted and polluting. It was a matter of custom only, because fried food was excluded from the rule and sweets and *vada*i (fried savouries) were kept for days. Bhagavan would come to the kitchen in the early hours of the morning, see what was left from the night before warm it up, dilute it and add some more ingredients for the morning's sauce. He would sometimes use a pot, black from the previous days' cooking, when custom demanded that it should be washed and smeared with a paste of mud.

"The injunction against food from the previous day is very much respected in the higher castes of South India and no doubt it is a very salutary custom; but Bhagavan insisted that

avoidance of waste overrules everything else, and he would never permit God's gifts to be thrown away. As to giving left-overs to beggars, it was not practicable, for he insisted that beggars be given the same food as everybody else and not some inferior stuff. Even dogs had to be fed from the common meal, and first, too!

"The ladies would come in the morning to clean the kitchen and make it ready for the day's cooking. When they found Bhagavan there brewing the morning *sambar* from the previous day's leftovers, they would be deeply distressed, but would not, of course, dare to admonish Bhagavan. Bhagavan watched them and waited. Their distress was real and deep for they were risking loss of caste. On the other hand, Bhagavan's instructions were clear—no waste of food in the Ashram, and the same food for all. It was a tug-of-war between the wisdom of the guru and the mental habits of his followers.

"The ladies tried to be in the kitchen very early, but he was always there first, cooking the *sambar*. One day some of the *sambar* was taken to a devotee's house, and when it was realised that it was a 'leftover' *sambar* a special ceremony was ordered to purify the house. On hearing that, Bhagavan told the ladies: 'Call the purifiers and get your kitchen purified. I shall never more enter your kitchen.' The women, for the sake of their orthodox customs, lost Bhagavan's constant presence, company and guidance. It was a real tragedy. Each devotee in the Ashram believed that Bhagavan was God Himself Incarnate, who came to purify and bless him and put his feet firmly on the path to liberation. Yet when God Himself went against their religious customs, they would rather cling to their customs than to God. Thus again and again we drive God out of our midst. A disciple is expected to choose between life and form, between truth and convention. Blessed were those who had no other rule but obedience to Bhagavan."

— By Sundaram (later known as *Sadhu Trivenigiri Swami*)
in *Ramana Smriti*

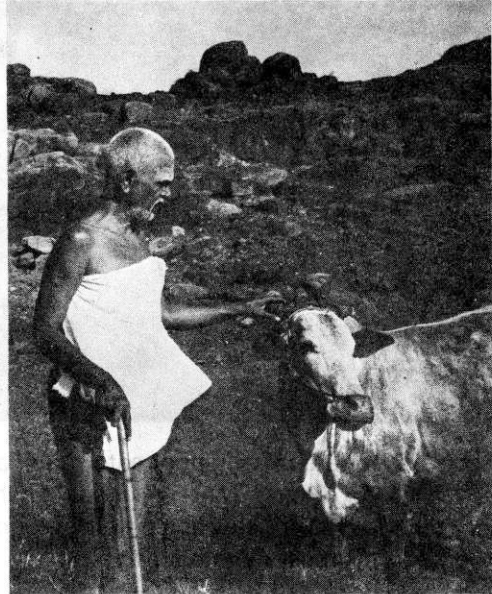
How I Came to Bhagavan

By V. Ramachandra Rao

PRIOR to narrating the circumstances that culminated in my visit to the Abode of the Sage of Arunachala, I would like to describe the state of my mind all these days. After the death of my wife, three years ago, due to heart trouble and much suffering for a period of one year, there came a complete change in my attitude to life. I lost interest in everything and my mind became restless. Prior to her death I was just religious and God-fearing like any other individual.

I started the daily *parayana* (recitation) of *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* after the completion of the obsequies of my late wife. Even here, I found that as long as I did the *parayana* I felt very happy. The moment I reverted to the daily routine my mind became restless again. This state of affairs went on for three years.

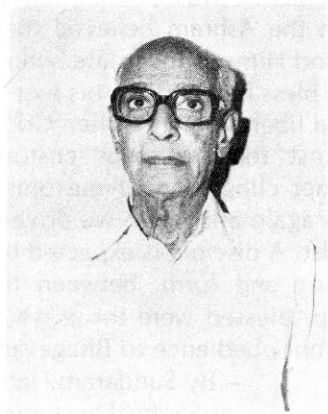
Come December 1985, I had a strange experience. The memory of a family friend of ours, Sri. O. Venkatakrishniah (Krishna Bhikshu) who was an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan, crossed my mind very often. I began to think of his frequent visits to Sri Ramanasramam and I felt very sorry that I did not think of visiting the Holy of holies even once. My knowledge of Sri Bhagavan was very limited. I only knew that he was a great Saint and that many great men were his devotees. I could not understand why I began to think of Krishna Bhikshu so



late in my life, whom I did not see since the last fifty years or so.

At this stage a significant thing happened. One evening, while watching the T.V. at my home in Hyderabad, I heard an announcement that Dr. K. Subrahmanian of the Institute of Linguistics, Osmania University would interview V. Ganesan, grand-son of the younger brother of Sri Bhagavan. My excitement knew no bounds. I watched the interview attentively and when it was over I felt that it could have gone on for some more time. Now I could understand the meaning of my thoughts turning to Krishna Bhikshu and the Maharshi for a fortnight intermittently. The message was clear. I felt the magnetic pull of Arunachala Ramana. I realised that I belonged to Sri Bhagavan and decided that I should go to Sri Ramanasramam and feel the Cosmic Presence of Bhagavan. Inscrutable are the ways of Providence!

Next day my search for a person who knew of the Maharshi and Sri Ramanasramam led me to one N. Perraju, an aged and ardent devotee of Bhagavan. On my request he wrote a letter to V. Ganesan, *Managing Editor* of the *The Mountain Path*, whom he knew, mention-



Sri V. Ramachandra Rao

ing therein all about my experiences and my desire to visit the Ashram. A very prompt reply was received from Ganesan in which he expressed warm sentiments about me and extended a warm welcome 'Home'. Did not Bhagavan say that those who belonged to him, whoever they may be and wherever they are, would come to him one day? I am no exception. I felt happy that I joined the ranks of the fortunate band of devotees who belonged to the fold of Bhagavan.

I left Hyderabad chanting '*Ramanam Sharanam Gachchami*' and after a few days stay at Madras started on my pilgrimage to the abode of Arunachala Ramana on 10th April, the Telugu New Year Day and entered Sri Ramanasramam repeating the above mentioned *mantra*. The sight of the Holy Ashram with Arunachala in the background overwhelmed me!

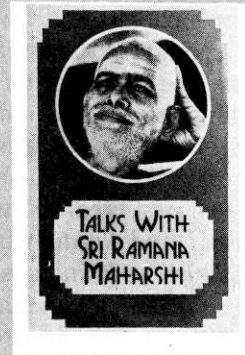
Every day when I enter the Ashram and pray at the Nirvana Room, Mathrubhootheshwara Alayam and the Bhagavan's Shrine and sit in the Meditation Hall, I feel the hallowed Presence of the sage of Arunachala. All other thoughts are blotted out of my mind and I feel that I am in a *Bhookailasa* (Heaven on Earth).

I performed the *Giripradakshinam* (going round the hill) of sacred Arunachala on the auspicious Tamil New Year Day and also the pilgrimage to Skandashram, and Virupaksha Guha where the Maharshi lived for a long time. I also visited other holy places on my return journey down the Hill. It is an experience of a life-time to visit Skandashram and Virupaksha Guha. Especially at the Virupaksha Guha, while the *puja* was performed and *Pranava* (the monosyllabic AUM) was pronounced, the echo was soul-stirring.

Bhagavan! I do not find words to describe my joy at my Home-coming and clinging to your feet. I feel your Holy Presence everywhere and feel Liberated. When I talk to those elders, who served you the *Avatara Purusha* (God Incarnate), I feel as though I am talking to you. My surrender to you, *Curudeva* is total!

"Lead kindly light."

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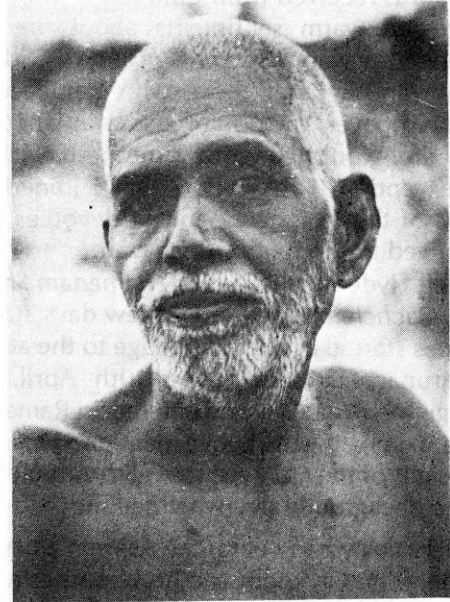
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THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

By A.R. Natarajan

SUNDARESA Iyer is terribly hungry and sulking at an imagined insult. Ramana coaxes him to eat saying, "Come, I have prepared a special *sambar* for breakfast and I would like you to taste it", spreads a leaf, heaps *iddlis* and pours *sambar*. He then sits by his side, cutting jokes, telling stories and making him forget his worries.¹ Devaraja Mudaliar goes in the morning for *pradakshina* of Arunachala and comes back well past breakfast time, only to be served *dosas* and *kootu* which have been reserved for him at Ramana's behest.² Ramana thinks of Subbaramayya's family while tasting a special dish, *aviyal*, prepared in the Ashram.³ Humphreys is tired and hungry after a long and tiring drive on motor cycle, but would not like to say it. Ramana knows and makes a coconut spoon for him to eat and keeps chatting with him while he eats.⁴ More than a mother's care! Who has not tasted Ramana's solicitude? From the basic need, food, He takes over.

Manavasi Ramaswamy Iyer, a chronic gastric ulcer patient, can only stomach gruel and nothing more till Ramana ended his practical fasting with a feast which he could digest.⁵ Mudaliar is having severe diarrhoea and is cured by an extra breakfast and a heavier lunch in the Ashram in Ramana's presence.⁶ Subbramayya is eagerly visiting Sri Ramanasramam only to be bed-ridden. Bhagavan visits him, suggests some simple remedies which make him all right. Ramana Himself vomits that night, the illness is taken on as it were, but the devotee is protected.⁷ Innumerable petitions for some remedy or the other for the devotee or his family were answered by letters or telegrams issued with Bhagavan's blessings. How many miracles for each person! The recipient alone knows. It was not Ramana's way to admit, for it might distract one from life's true purpose, the search, the quest and discovery of the Self. But this hound of heaven is there, almost at the beck and call of the devotees shouldering their daily woes and cares. "Human love needs human meriting," not His.



For it is His nature to give, asked or unasked in the fullness of love.

The whistle of the train blows and Ramana has ears only for the devotee who is due to come by the train.⁸ Bose, a heart patient, weak and infirm, enters and at once Ramana notices and gently suggests to another devotee to shift a little and give him a seat against the pillar.⁹ Nothing escapes His loving attention.

What can one say about His spiritual ministration? Where was the barrier of time or space for it? Paul Brunton tired and sick from the 'Search in Secret India' is ready to sail back. He is summoned to the jungle hermitage 'in a most vivid manner by the Maharshi's irresistible eyes.'¹⁰ What a blissful home-coming it was for Eleanor Pauline Noye to travel back to Tiruvannamalai instead of sailing to America, impelled by Ramana's love.¹¹ The spiritual guidance would be tuned to the need, the maturity of the person. The journey, the process of unveiling, would be firm and gentle. The light would be thrown step by step, not racing, not even accelerating. If visions pleased, it would be given, be it of 'Rama' to Sundaresa Iyer, 'Krishna' to Krishna Prem, 'Dakshina-

murti' to Ragavachari. At the same time, the need to enquire, to find out the seer, would be emphasised all the time as basic tune, a fundamental truth. An attempt to condemn oneself, to confess to weakness or to speak of difficulties in the path, would be countered by Ramana's invigorating reminder about one's true nature, its divinity, and the fact that it is only 'our habits and desires which are weak'.

Should one ask for specific assurances of protection and help in the path, that too would be given. We have a poignant instance of it. Ramana's last breath is about to come. A devotee tearfully asks for blessing, for protection from fear and gets the reply, 'Yes, I have given it'.¹² The case of Chadwick too is apposite. Having travelled thousands of miles, and settled down in the Ashram, he wanted to be secure in the thought that His Sadguru had accepted him. Ramana remarked, "Has he any doubt about it? Ask him, does he want me to give him a written document? Go to Narayana Iyer, Sub-Registrar and tell him to make one out for him".¹³

Almost early in this century, Ramana had indicated that He is the intelligence shining in the Heart of all. This assurance of His shining presence within, His wondrous play, is seen by the chain of events recorded by some of the devotees over the years. Once Ramana sent a message to young Lalitha, who wanted Him to be present at her wedding, that 'He would be present with her not only at the function, but always'.¹⁴ 'His strong feet follow and follow, caressing with outstretched hands' ready to go even into hell to pull us out.

¹ *At the Feet of Bhagavan* by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, p. 27

² & ⁶ *My Recollections* by A. Devaraja Mudalia, pp.25 & 24

^{3, 7, 8, 9, 12, 14} *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* by Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya, pp. 38,174,126,173,215,134

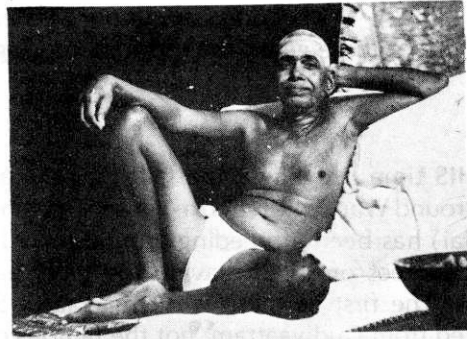
⁴ *Glimpses* by Frank Humphreys, p.16

⁵ *Self Realisation* by B.V. Narasimha Swamy, p.98

¹⁰ *Maharshi and His Message*, by Paul Branton, p. 11.

¹¹ *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, p.363

¹³ *A Sadhu's Reminiscences* by Sadhu Arunachala, pp.73 & 74



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Moments Remembered
by Managing Editor

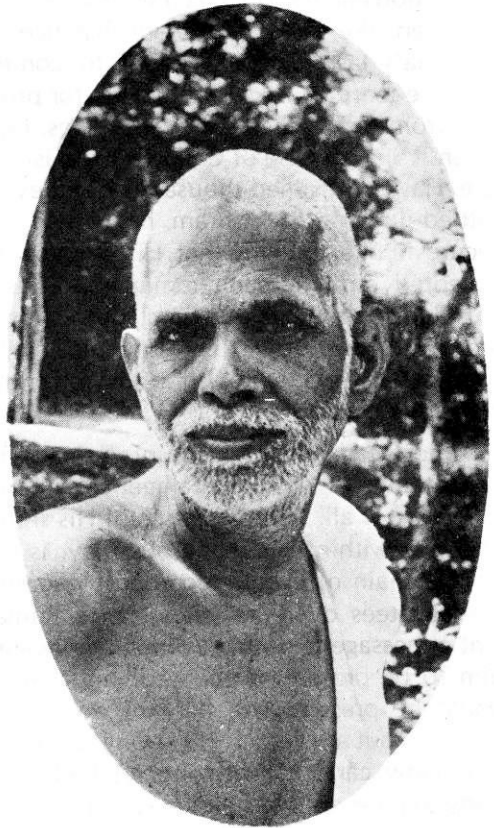
RESPLENDENT RAMANA

Anecdotes about our Master are innumerable. The more we come to know of these gems, the more we are eager to collect them from old devotees.

V.G.

THIS time I highlight the fact that the area around Wandavasi (north-east of Tiruvannamalai) has been a breeding ground for a line of devotees of Sri Bhagavan from very early days. The first of these is *Keerai Paatti*. She hailed from Gudiyaattam, not the famous one near Vellore, but a village close to Thesur near Wandavasi. It is not known when exactly she moved to Tiruvannamalai, but even when Bhagavan was staying in Arunachaleswara Temple in 1896-7, she was staying on the Hill and visiting Him occasionally. Sri Bhagavan was then staying in the Subrahmanya Temple. She used to provide food to *sadhus* in the temple. A *Kammala* (blacksmith) lady began sending food to Bhagavan through Keerai Paatti for a while. In those days Keerai Paatti used to have a big *jata* of matted locks.

By the time Bhagavan moved to Virupaksha Cave (i.e., 1900) Keerai Paatti had begun to stay in the *Mantap* of the Guhainamasivaaya temple and had removed all her hair. She used to worship the image carved on the walls and pillars of the *Mantap* and offered food to the images as part of her daily *puja*. As Virupaksha Cave was close to her place, she visited Bhagavan frequently and at least once every day. She would get up in the morning, go out for a stroll on the small hill south of Virupaksha Cave, proceed towards the place where the present Ashram stands and go round to where Skandashram is and return to her place. By that time she would have collected fuel, cowdung, etc., bundling them up behind her back. In her lap she would have gathered plenty of green leaves (*Keerai*) of all sorts for cooking. Even when eighty years old she used to wander



about all over the Hill! She had only one pot in which she would first boil water to bathe. In the same pot she later cooked her rice, made sauce, prepared side dishes from the leaves, each by turns and offer the food to the images in the *Mantap*. She would then take a handful to Bhagavan at Virupaksha Cave and persuade Him to eat, after which she would return to have her own meal. She *never failed* in this even once!

In the evening she would go into town. There was not a house in the town which she did not know. She would go and ask for various things and get them and store the rice, flour and dhal thus obtained in a big open-mouthed earthen jar. Once in a while she would prepare gruel with that and bring it with the green curry, saying: "Sami, Sami! Yesterday one good lady gave me a little flour. I have made some gruel, Sami!".

Sri Bhagavan relates: "She believed that I knew nothing. When she was not there, I used to open the door of that *Mantap* and find a variety of food provisions in the big jar. But then she had absolute confidence in me. She did not allow anyone else into that *Mantap*. That was the sort of woman she was. When she could not find any vegetables she used to sit there depressed. On such occasions I used to climb the tamarind tree, pluck some tender leaves, or help her gather green leaves from a drumstick tree. I would also help her some times in cleaning and plucking the leaves preparatory to their being cooked. Some times I used to stay there and eat with her. She was somehow supplying me food every day. She never used to take anything herself. She had great devotion and attention." 1

The *Mantap* was not very well maintained in those days. It had only a wooden door and wooden latch. Considering her selflessness and concern for unfailing service to *sadhus*, especially Sri Bhagavan, it is not surprising that she should have kept the provisions a secret and prevented anybody from entering her quarters!

It is well-known that for a few months after Skandashram had been completed, Bhagavan spent the nights sometimes in Virupaksha Cave and sometimes up at Skandashram. One day he went to Skandashram and stayed there for the night. Palani Swami was in the Virupaksha Cave. At midnight a thief got into the Guhainamasivaaya *Mantap*. He was making off with some things when Patti woke up and cried out. The thief tried to muffle her but she somehow managed to shout at the top of her

voice: "Oh, Annamalai! Thief! Thief!!" Her shouts were even heard by Bhagavan way up at Skandashram. He shouted back: "Here I am! I'm coming. Who is that?" and ran down in hot haste. Isn't it wonderful that Bhagavan who calls Annamalai as the 'Thief' (in *Marital Garland of Letters*) should rush down crying: "Here I am!" when Keerai Paatti called out to Annamalai!

Hearing Bhagavan's shouts the thief ran away. On the way down at Virupaksha Cave, Palani Swami joined Bhagavan and upon reaching the *Mantap* found the Paatti alone, as usual. Bhagavan and Palani Swami teased her saying it was all her imagination, particularly since those living nearby at the Mango and Jataswami Caves had not heard anything unusual! She however maintained her stand and when they then lit up a piece of firewood and searched the whole place they found the big jar and around it several odds and ends scattered about, and realised that there had indeed been a brazen attempt at theft.

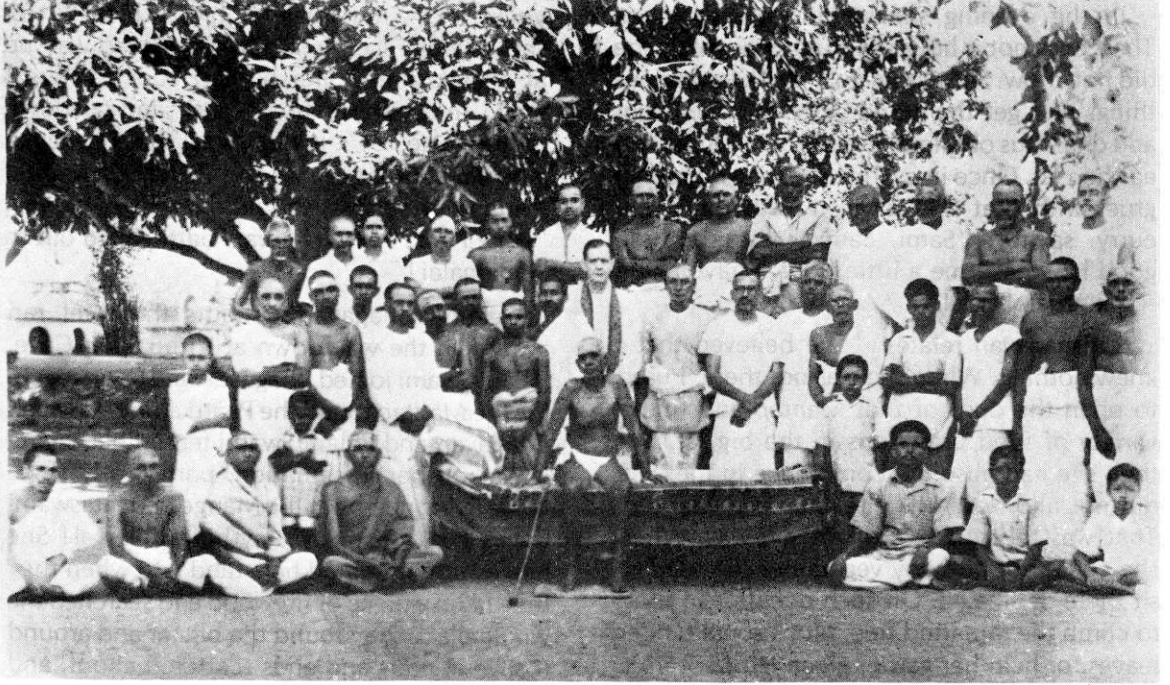
Keerai Paatti died before Bhagavan moved down from Skandashram (i.e. before 1922) and was buried under a tamarind tree in front of the Dakshinamurti temple, south of the present Ashram.

Many believed that Keerai Paatti reincarnated as the Cow Lakshmi in order to attain *mukti* by Bhagavan's own hand. Sri Bhagavan in His characteristic way remained silent whenever this topic was brought up. It is however interesting that when someone remarked: "Cow Lakshmi seems to have been brought by Arunachalam Pillai from Gudiyatham and not Kannamangalam as earlier supposed," Sri Bhagavan added: "Oh! That's the same place from which Keerai Paatti came to Arunachala."

I hope to relate next time the story of Bhagavan's very first attendant who also hails from around the same area.

* * * *

Dr. Shivmohan Lal of Hyderabad would be found often at the Ashram, particularly if it



were vacation for his College. He was very dedicated and attached to Sri Bhagavan. Once, a telegram was received from him around 11 a.m. which was taken to Sri Bhagavan and read out to Him. It read, "My wife is suffering intensely due to labour pains. I seek Bhagavan's blessings." After some time Bhagavan remarked :

"என் கிட்டே சொன்னு மட்டும் ஆயிருமா?"

"Will it be done merely by reporting it to me?" Muruganar and others were then in His Presence.

Again at 3 p.m., another telegram was received from Dr. Shivmohan Lal stating that his wife had given birth and that the delivery had been very smooth. Bhagavan simply acknowledged it with His usual 'Um Um!' Muruganar who was there asked Him: "Bhagavan, you said in the morning, 'Will it be done by merely reporting it to me?' But was it not because you were informed and your blessings were sought that there was an easy delivery there for Mrs. Shivmohan Lal?" Bhagavan gave an understanding smile but did not reply. He

resumed His usual serene gaze, and stern silence.

* * * *

Sri Ramaswami Pillai narrated this moving incident:

"Miracles did take place in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. Strangely people like me, very close to Sri Bhagavan, never cared to notice anything *happening*, as we were all so thoroughly absorbed in Him, in His Presence!

"However, I am able to recollect a 'Miracle' that took place. But, please don't expect a display of spectacular *siddhi*. Yet, for me, this happenings was a perfect *siddhi*, spontaneously performed by Bhagavan.

"A person from a town near Tiruvannamalai lost the sight of both eyes owing to small pox or severe fever. He was advised that if he went to Sri Ramanasramam, Ramana Maharshi would give him back his eyesight. With an assistant he arrived at the Ashram and was enquiring his way to Sri Bhagavan's Hall.

"A few days back two young doctors had arrived for *darshan* of Bhagavan. They were

totally captivated by Him. They were about to leave for Madras in their car. They had taken leave of Him and had just gone upto their car when they had an urge to have one more glimpse of Sri Bhagavan and so returned to the Old Hall. Meanwhile the blind man had entered the Hall and was praying that his eyesight be somehow restored by His Grace. Bhagavan was listening to everything, but kept absolutely silent. The doctors who had witnessed this, on their own accord, volunteered to take the blind man in their car to Madras and treat him. So the blind man went with them eventually to Madras.

"After some months when I was one day in Bhagavan's Hall a man came and prostrated to Him. He happily expressed great gratitude to Bhagavan for having restored his sight in one eye. The doctors so he reported, took special care of him and did their best but could restore sight only in one eye. Bhagavan, again, listened to him unmoved, as if He had nothing to do with it!

"This is the natural way Bhagavan performed miracles. Rather, in His Presence plenty of miracles occurred daily, but who cared to pay any attention to *siddhis*, which, after all, are only fleeting experiences?"

* * * *

Sri Janaki Mata of Tanjore was one of the great devotees of Sri Bhagavan, herself being an evolved soul. Her daughter, Padma Sitapati, had a son, Janakiramanan. Owing to some illness he lost his eye-sight at the age of three. Padma sought her mother Janaki Mata's help. Mata advised her daughter to appeal to Sri Bhagavan, the *Sat-Guru* of all. In the meanwhile Padma's father, Dr. Ganapati Iyer, was treating the boy with care and attention. In response to Padma's appeal through a letter to Sri Bhagavan, a reply came:

"பகவானின் அருளால் குழந்தை ஜானகி ரமணன் பூரண கண் ஒளி பெறுவான்"

"By the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, child, Janakiramanan's eyesight will be fully restored." On receipt of such blessings from Bhagavan everyone felt relieved and very happy.

For forty days the boy could not open his eyes. On *Karthigai* day, Janakiramanan was taken to the temple (at Tanjore). Suddenly he began to see the images in the temple. He was brought home. He started seeing well and shouted: "I am seeing Bhagavan". "I am seeing Mataji"!

Padma was overjoyed. Janaki Mata told her to go to Arunachala and prostrate before Sri Bhagavan.

When Padma along with her son, Janakiramanan, reached the Ashram, entering the Hall she could not control her tears. She prostrated before Bhagavan and burst out that it was entirely due to Bhagavan's Grace that her son got back his eyesight. Bhagavan gave a gracious smile and remarked: "See, she says her son got back his eyesight because of Bhagavan!"

Smt. Padma Sitapati was at the Ashram recently and related to me these incidents.

Their family deity is the Lord Venkateswara at Tirupati. On that occasion there was a vow of going to Tirupati also which Padma had to fulfil. Janaki Mata, in spite of her daughter's advanced pregnancy, had urged her to go to Sri Bhagavan and then to Tirupati. Padma expressed to Bhagavan her fear about her ability to go to Tirupati also. Bhagavan said: "It is all right. You go to Tirupati." There were no buses then to Tirupati. Just then, some family friends who were returning to Tirupati happened to step in. They promised to take care of Padma!

In the evening the child Janakiramanan and Padma were seated very near Bhagavan's sofa, when the child said aloud to his mother, "I am not able to see the head." Though he had got back his eyesight Janakiramanan still had night blindness. Now Bhagavan wanted to know what the child had uttered. Padma said that he was unable to see the head and face of Sri Bhagavan. Bhagavan then looked steadily at the boy and said: "Look intently here! Now, are you not able to see Bhagavan's head? Look, Look!" The boy could see Him. The boy's night blindness had gone for ever!

* * * *

Smt. Kanakamma related the following touching incident.

It happened during Sri Bhagavan's serious illness when He was laid up in the Nirvana Room. Bhagavan's sister, Alamelu Ammal, very hesitantly went near Him and with tears in her eyes pleaded with Him, thus: "Bhagavan! Once when you were in Virupaksha Cave, while trying to move a big rock from one place to another your hand was suddenly caught under it and when the hand was taken out one of the fingers was dislocated and found hanging down limp. Vasudeva Sastri, who noticed it, was alarmed and started crying aloud. You silenced him saying: 'Why cry? Nothing has happened!' Then with the other hand you placed the drooping finger back in its place and lo! it regained its proper position. No trace of any mishap could be noticed! Likewise, Why can't you now touch this painful sarcoma on your left shoulder-arm with your 'golden' right hand, Bhagavan? It will become cured if you will do it. All our anxieties will be at an end. Just as you relieved the anguish of Vasudeva Sastri, please bless us now by turning your mind to the arm and curing it".

Bhagavan looked at His sister intently with love and sympathy. After some time He replied:

"ஆமாங்! எனக்கு ஒரு உடம்புன்னு ஒண்ணு இருக்கு. அதுலெ என்னோடு கைன்னு ஒண்ணு இருக்கு. அதுக்கு வியாதின்னு ஒண்ணு இருக்கு. அது எந்த வைத்தியத்துங்குங் கட்டுப்படாம இருக்கு. அதெ நாங் மனசு வச்சி சரிபடுத்திக் கணும். இத்தனைக்குங் எனக்கு மனசு எங்க வச்சு வாழறது?!"

"Yes, Yes! I have a body; and that has a hand; the hand has a disease that defies any treatment and I must apply my mind to it to make it disappear. But, where is a 'mind' to do all this?"

* * * * *

Lakshmi Ammal was a playmate of Bhagavan in Tiruchuzhi in His boyhood days. She was totally devoted to Him. Her sons, Dr. Ramakrishna Iyer, Dr. Narayana Iyer, Guruswami

Iyer and Dr. Mahadeva Iyer had no other God except Bhagavan. She visited the Ashram very often.

Bhagavan used to address her affectionately 'Lakshmi', as He had done in His childhood. On one of her visits, in the early days, Bhagavan and others went round the Hill, *giri pradakshina*. Lakshmi Ammal also accompanied them. On the way near Sona Tirtham, the entire party halted for rest. Nearby there was a Laburnam tree filled with lustrous golden-yellow flowers. Lakshmi Ammal started plucking the flowers and collecting them in a cloth spread on the ground. After some time, the party was preparing to resume their walk; Bhagavan too got up. Noticing Lakshmi Ammal engaged busily, He went near her and enquired; "Lakshmi! What are you doing?" She replied: "I am plucking flowers". Bhagavan pointed the heap of flowers already lying on the cloth and said: "You already have enough, why are you plucking more?" She replied boldly: "All these flowers, if left unplucked, would go waste. That is why I am plucking as many of these as possible". Bhagavan was visibly annoyed and said curtly:

"ஆமாமாங்! நீ தானே நட்டு, தண்ணி விட்டு வளர்த்திருக்கே! அது வீணப் போகாதா? அதங் அழகையெல்லாங் நீ பார்த்திட்டோல்யோ, வேறே யாருங் பார்க்க வேண்டாமில்லையா? அந்த செடியெ மொட்டெ அடிச்சிடு!!"

"Yes, Yes! It was you, wasn't it, who planted it, watered it and reared it? Is not all that going waste? Now that you have seen it and enjoyed its beauty, is there any need for any one else to appreciate it? Have the tree shorn of all its flowers. Do it!"

Lakshmi Ammal was shaken by Bhagavan's reproach. She realised fully her fault and deeply repented for it. The result of this confrontation was that when she saw flower-laden plants and trees, she would fold palms together in reverential homage to them and utter: "Oh Bhagavan! I offer them all to your Lotus Feet!" She never plucked flowers again in her life!²

* * * * *

Sub-Registrar Narayana Iyer was very kind to me. He always obliged me when I pestered him to tell me or give me in writing his reminiscences of Sri Bhagavan. Many instances that bring out the relationship between him and Sri Bhagavan, have already been published in earlier issues of *The Mountain Path*.

The following is the moving appeal that he wrote after the first anniversary of Sri Bhagavan's *Brahma Nirvana*.

"Bhagavan, Bhagavan! Oh! Dear Bhagavan!

"Is this the day when you are said to have left us? I vividly remember the day when Sri Muruganar and I were last in the queue that saw you on the evening of the 14th April, 1950. Can I, like saint Manickavachakar or Tayumanavar exclaim:" "மெய் சிலர்த்தேன்" (hair on end) "கதறினேன்" (I cried unashamedly) "விதிர் விதிர்ந்தேன்" (wept in spasms of uncontrollable grief). My friend, Sri Muruganar and I were the only ones there when I saw your prostrate body with closed eyes and upturned face. Lo! Then you turned and cast your look on us — grief-stricken and weeping before you and then you turned and closed your eyes. After a while, we were still lingering there — Lo! You turned towards us and looked again on us — was it a farewell look of Grace! Last? the last one!

"But the recollection of your words of consolation which actually are words of Eternal Wisdom, saying: 'Where can I go? I AM here!' have sustained us! How can I ever forget the thousand instances of Your Love! The almonds that you specially fried by lighting the oven yourself and gave me: and the groundnut *koottu* that you asked Venkataratnam to reserve for me, is still sweet on my tongue!

"When my friend, Prof. G.V. Subbaramiah, pleaded with you for me for relief in my official trouble: 'Poor Narayana Iyer! Could not Bhagavan do anything for him?', did you not say: '*vadiki Yemi Thakkuva?*' ('What is wanting for him?') and when on one of the last days he implored '*Abhayam*' ('Give me protection'), Bhagavan! you unequivocally and in

SADGURU BHAGAVAN

By V.S. Rajkumar

**O! King among Sages,
I shall write pages,
That speak your grace,
I know not your ways.**

**Mysterious as the dark,
That comes with the night,
More beautiful than the lark,
Show me what is right.**

**Many a wandering soul,
You turned into whole,
With your crimson sun-rise,
Make me truly wise.**

**Your beautiful face,
Your eyes! That gaze!
Radiant as the moon,
Take me Home soon.**

one word said: '*Yichchinamu*' ('Given'). At that time you also saw me linking my elbow into his to indicate that I join in his request!

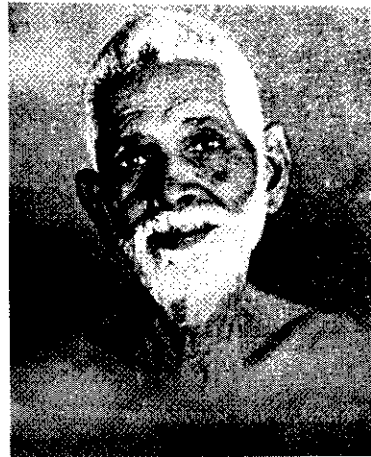
"Countless are the instances of your Grace to me. Could they go in vain? How many pages have I smudged with my tears in writing! My obeisance to you! Ever at your Holy Feet with loving thoughts! My heart throbs with the beating of the hearts of those that have assembled here to offer their Eternal Love!"

¹Refer index to *Day by Day* and *Letters* under Keerai Paatti.

²Also, narrated in *LETTERS*, entry dt. 30-6-47

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Meditation in front of Sri Bhagavan's 'Samadhi' during Veda-Parayana

By Prof. N.R. Krishnamoorthy Aiyer

I AM the *sadhaka* practising meditation. I approach the *samadhi* with the following conviction:

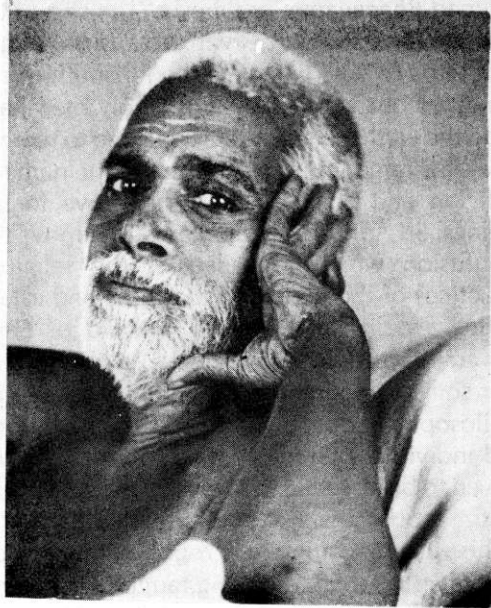
Here, before me, is my own SELF in a visible form (Siva Lingam) manifested out of ITS own merciful Grace which I have known as Bhagavan Sri Ramana. By my Bhagavan's Grace protecting me as Master Ramana, all my mundane needs are so fully met that I need no more entertain any desire for anything in this life or after. Without my asking my Bhagavan has always been providing for all my needs. I am totally thought-free! My sole business is to follow His commands given in the stanza in *Atma Vidya*, beginning *Kanmaadi Kattu Avizha* by reducing my body, speech, and mind to perfect *MOUNAM* with the unspoken prayer in the Heart.

Now I prostrate before Sri Bhagavan in a spirit of perfect self-surrender, and reduce the body to rest and so the speech, and so also the mind (with a slight holding of the breath, if necessary) and Lo! the Experience has made its gentle and silent entry into me.

"I-AM" Sat-SELF-BEING
 "I-AM" Chit-SELF-CONSCIOUS-
 NESS.
 "I-AM" Ananda-SELF-PEACE-
 SIVAM.

Oh! My Lord Arunachala Ramana has, out of His gracious mercy revealed Himself in me as "I-AM-SELF". Fool I should be if I lose hold of this experience by any sleepy drowsiness in which consciousness is lost.

I raise the body in prostration and in a comfortable posture (not in any hard hata yogic



posture which will make me wince). I shall sit blissfully unconcerned in the state of Awareness only. No matter if the eyes are open fully drinking the *Siva-Swarupa* (no longer objects) all round, and ears fully open, drinking with conscious bliss the *Vedaparayana* (sound form of the SELF) and forget the *kalpanas* (imaginings) of non-existent body and world and time as well.

Even as the red dye at the borders of a white cloth seeps into the whole of the middle portion of a white cloth, in due course, the *samadhi* current enjoyed both in the morning and evening will spread itself into the whole day and bloom into *SAHAJA NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI*. Even thiswise I pray to my Bhagavan to protect me, a supplicant at His feet! With this prayer, I resume my daily chores after meditation.

What Sri Ramanasramam is to us

By Non-entity

IN the *Gita*, Sri Krishna says "Whenever there is decay of *dharma* I come down on earth".... "For the protection of the good and the destruction of the evil, I am born from age to age". *Srimad Bhagavatam* prophesies, the end of the present age, *Kaliyuga*, with the birth of the Lord in a remote village in the far south of our land. To our knowledge, great holy men have trod the earth. Lord Buddha appeared to remove the evils rampant in the country in the name of religion and established *ahimsa*, love for all beings. Sri Adi Sankara appeared to remove the confusion which prevailed in the religious practices of the people of that time and established six divisions for the worship of God. Several sages and mystics have taken birth in our soil, roamed about the country preaching philosophy and relieving the suffering of afflicted individuals. Some of these mystics are believed to be alive still in the inaccessible regions of the mountains. For example Sri Yogananda, in his *Autobiography of a Yogi*, has mentioned Mahavatar Babaji as having taught Kriya Yoga to Sri Govindapada, Guru of Adi Sankara and that this yogi is still alive in a youthful body, visiting Allahabad during *Kumbamela*, unknown to everybody. Guru Raghavendra of the Madhwas, who was entombed alive, assured his devotees that he would appear in his familiar physical frame for 700 years after his *samadhi*. The Mother of the Aurobindo Ashram stated that Sri Aurobindo would live for 300 years in a subtle body. Theosophists believe in life after death in astral bodies and call the good souls who help people in distress as invisible angels. We are told that around Arunachala 'five *siddha purushas* ever live'; some times visible to eyes and some times invisible.

The purpose of Bhagavan's birth is not known. Apparently he had no mission in life but he was like the sun, accessible to all universally, in whose presence every body can bask.

What did our Master Sri Ramana say on his deathbed, to console the bewildered devotees? "Where can I go? I AM HERE".

Sri Ramana lost his body consciousness ever since he had his experience of Death. This is evident from the fact that a boy of sixteen could not otherwise have undergone the difficulties arising out of the absence of creature comforts during his wanderings on the Hill from 1896. When he was fully established in the Self and appeared before us as a *Jivan-mukta* there was never any confusion about his being the Self only. He had often corrected his devotees when he found them identifying him with his body.

Sri Ramana who is Brahman is every where. A pilgrimage to Sri Ramanasramam forcibly immerses one in Bhagavan's presence and he/she enjoys peace and is blessed by the grace which flows in abundance.

To get this spiritual experience what is necessary is the proper mental attitude (which is the same as the *bhava* which converts a stone image into a god). An yearning devotee sees Siva in the Mt. Kailas, after his long strenuous travel and a true devotee of Sri Ramana experiences His presence when his mind is properly attuned to the atmosphere of the Ashram. Bhagavan has said I AM HERE. As he never felt different from Brahman, is HERE (in the Ashram) and Now (which is eternal).

"The objects of the senses come and go. The point to remember is that when they leave us, we feel miserable; but when we ourselves renounce them, we feel happy and joyful."

— Mahatma Gandhi

HOME COMING

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

The show is over-
I am coming Home
Where Pure Awareness glows;
Its reflected light outward flows
As mind, imaging with all its flaws,
A world in which I got lost
Mistaking pleasures for Happiness.

I am coming Home
Where the wizard mind built a magic shrine
Within which Consciousness shine
As Self Divine;
And I could in realisation sing
A song Devotion with a blissful fling.

I am coming Home
The space-less timeless AS-IT-IS-NESS.
Do I miss this world,
With "things" furled,
Beautiful maidens curled,
Transient friendship played.

And I see
The only key
To open the front door,
Inquire "Who am I?"
And "Where" this Home IS.

I am coming Home —
So far away from Home
Where sorrows' and pleasures' norm
Left imprints in mental form.
I see the main door
I can glimpse the inner Core.
I am reaching Home —
I have a last prayer, my Lord.
I have to leave my "vehicle"
—the body — outside the door.

Please make this parting
Peaceful, calm and blissful,
Bless me to leave dispassionately,
Bless me to leave lovingly
Established in Pure Consciousness firmly.

Atlast I AM AT HOME
Am become one with YOU
Ramana, Pure Awareness — Love.

INTRODUCING...

DR. M.B. Bhaskaran

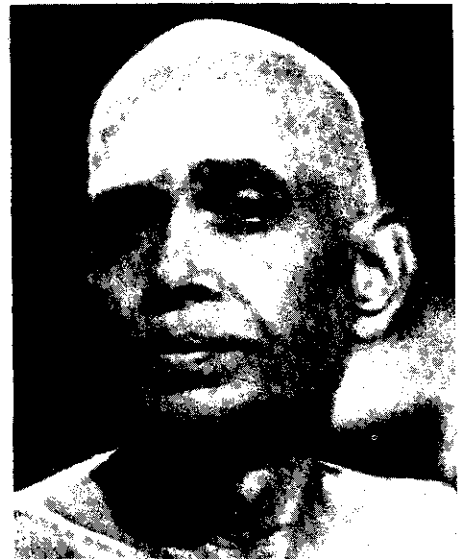
OLD residents of Sri Ramanasramam recollect with joy that three enthusiastic visitors used to come from Pondicherry at night, spend the whole night in the old Hall in the presence of Sri Bhagavan and disappear the next morning! This happened very often. These young men were identified only after Sri Bhagavan's *Brahma Nirvana*, as Dr. M.S. Bhaskaran, the late Dr. Pierre and the late Sri R.L. Purushothama Reddiar! Their devotion to Sri Bhagavan was deeprooted, and made them avoid any public recognition.

Dr. Bhaskaran, who completed 75 years of age recently, may therefore be not known to many of the younger devotees or the present inmates of the Ashram, though he does visit the Ashram frequently, particularly during Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanti*, *Aradhana* or *Karthigai Deepam*. Professionally acclaimed in Pondicherry, he is humble to the point of being unnoticed, while visiting the Ashram!

Dr. Bhaskaran's father, A.V. Muthayan, who was serving the French Government at Pondicherry, was strongly drawn to Sri Bhagavan, a year prior to his retirement and used to spend every week-end with Him. Muthayan wanted to prepare Bhaskaran from his very childhood for a spiritual life. So he made Bhaskaran



Dr. M.B. Bhaskaran



study sacred works like *Thevaram*, *Thiruvachagam*, *Thiruppugazh* and *Thiruarutpa* and *Thayumanavar* and also books on Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ramtirtha and Sri Aurobindo.

Sometime in 1934, when Bhaskaran was 23 years old, his father took him to Sri Bhagavan. The first *darshan* took place in a thatched shed. Bhagavan was already at His seat for lunch, and giving young Bhaskaran a benevolent, enchanting smile, bade him sit very near to Him. It was a thrilling moment for Bhaskaran, who sat with his hands folded in reverence. Bhagavan was looking at him, now and then, while they all ate. This first encounter, in which Sri Ramana's Grace fully flowed to him, made Bhaskaran for ever His.

Dr. Bhaskaran was even then a keen student of Carnatic music. He had been playing on the violin for ten years already and was very eager to "perform" in the presence of his "chosen God". The way Sri Ramana fulfilled his desire is best related in his own words.

"I approached Niranjanananda Swami, who showed special interest and affection to me

ARUNACHALA ACROSTICA

By J.A. Champneys

A round your head the clouds are thinning out
R evolving in my mind. Now thoughts are clear
U pon your grassy hill; knowledge is near.
N ot leaving me, or causing me to shout
A song of final ecstasy, to meet
C hildren of the mountain-remove all doubt, and
H eave my tears aloft. Old tendencies sprout
A nd with each stickly birth usurp my seat.
L uring me to bowls of burning blue
A nd robbing my desires, you stole my sense.
S unshine yellow, crimson, pink-all was you;
I ndigo seared, and withered my defense.
V iolet passed, then waters broke the bank
A nd dissolution with the ego sank.

and my father, for permission to play which was readily given. The lunch was over. Bhagavan entered the hall and sat in His usual reclining position. Many visitors were there and silence prevailed. I was nervous and sat before Bhagavan and played two Tyagaraja *kirtanas* for half an hour. Now and then I turned my eyes towards Him. He was keenly looking at me playing on the violin, some time even beating the measure with His fingers, with His smile and overpowering love. That sacred event is still fresh in my memory. While playing then before Sri Bhagavan, I imagined myself to be Ravana who through the melody of music could obtain the grace of Siva, at Kailas. For me, Kailas was Arunachala and Siva, Bhagavan Ramana."

Dr. Bhaskaran used to go round the Hill, *giripradakshina*, whenever he visited Arunachala, particularly when Bhagavan was in the body. He says: "I was eager to go round the Hill because I could go to Him, seek His permission which He would give with His disarming smile and a nod of His head. I valued receiving His assent more than actually going round the sacred Hill!" Again, "My friends and myself used to come with many questions to be put to the Maharshi, but soon we realised how silly those queries were, after being overwhel-

med by the Silence pervading the Hall in His glorious Presence."

Dr. Bhaskaran had his last *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan two days before His *Brahma Nirvana* on the 14th of April, 1950. Sitting on the terrace of his house in Pondicherry, he like many others elsewhere, saw the luminous star shooting up northward in the sky.

Since 1947, he was regular in listening every year to the talks of J. Krishnamurti who had a powerful influence on him. Bhagavan and J. Krishnamurti are like his two eyes.

Dr. Bhaskaran is very helpful to the sick and poor; especially to devotees sent to Pondicherry from Sri Ramanasramam.

Dr. Bhaskaran says: "If there was any purpose for my birth, it was just to be seen by Bhagavan Ramana through the holy Silence emanating from His Presence. I can only implore that Silence thus:

Silence sacred
 Come
 Come near me
 Touch me
 Let thy benediction
 Be with me."

We wish this "Young" doctor-devotee more years of *sadhana* and service!

Letters to the Editor

HUNTING THE GURU

I am a Sri Lankan (Ceylonese) living in Canada. A Christian, 26 years old, I would like to join your Ashram to achieve *samadhi*, or illumination which is my goal. So please help me. I speak Tamil (which is my mother tongue) and English. I will follow the rules and regulations of the Ashram. I am willing to give up all worldly things or belongings and make a small donation if you are willing to accept me, no matter how long it takes me to achieve *samadhi*. Could you please send me a letter addressed to Indian Immigration saying that I will be coming there only to learn under a guru and once I have finished my learning I will leave India. But what I would like to say to you, Sir, is that I would like to serve India and my country, if India wants me, after achieving my goal.

— Antony F.R. Bastampillai, Ontario, Canada.

Your ideas about a spiritual life, its way and goal, are not very clear. Your plan that you would gain one day a true knowledge of yourself and the world, is a grand idea; only it is not just child's play! It means change of your whole attitude to life. You mention 'samadhi' as your goal, which shows that your ideas are rather misty. You have to begin at the beginning according to the teachings of a Master. For that you need no guru, since you can read English as well as Tamil.

Don't be hunting after a guru: if you hunt, you may get a wrong one. When you need a guru, he will find you, and only then he will be truly your guru. You may begin by reading the main works of Sri Bhagavan. Write to us again then; in case you have doubts, we shall try to clear them.

An Ashram is neither a school nor a kind of university to be admitted to. This Ashram at the foot of the Holy Arunachala is where our Master spent His life, and many of His devotees still find His Living Presence here. Thus they come here, some for longer stay, when their visa allow, others for shorter periods and regularly. May be you too want to come. You will be welcome to our Ashram as every sincere sadhaka is. You will perhaps see that things are a little different than what your ideas suggest. Learn to look at them through the teachings of

Sri Ramana, and it will be easy to find your way through the jungle of the mind into the crystal clear Truth which is 'samadhi', being nothing other than the condition of a pure mind.

This is our advice for now. Don't expect quick results: to purify the mind-body one needs time. May Bhagavan's Grace bless your sincere intentions!

For you, the shortest way to get the works of Bhagavan is to order them from U.S.A. from the address of:

**Ramana Publications,
PO Box 77, Victor,
New York 14564, U.S.A.
Tel. (716) 924-5087**

(persons in charge: Mrs. Joan and Mr. Matthew Greenblatt)

You may also contact:

**ARUNACHALA ASHRAMA,
R.R.1 Bridgetown,
Nova Scotia Canada BOS ICD
Tele. (912) 665-2090**

*(person to be contacted:
Mr. Dennis Hartel)*

**Sri Sekhar Raman,
2421, Nikanna Road,
Mississauga, Ontario
L5C 2WB
Canada.**

ON BREATH-CONTROL

Whole-hearted pranams to Sri Bhagavan and to you and all devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

I wish to know whether I am doing *sadhana* in the right way and in accordance with the teachings of Sri Bhagavan.

As a first step for meditation, I watch the in-coming and out-going breath, when breathing becomes gentler and I feel as if breathing is suspended. Then I experience a state of coolness and happiness at *sahasrara*. But at the same time I also have body-consciousness: that means, I do not forget the body.

Should I proceed further with this way of practice ?

— M.V.R. Murti
Bardol, Orissa.

You are in the right direction. Yes, watching the breath, going in and out, leads to quietening of mind and one may then find oneself with breathing suspended after a full intake. But one should not watch the breath in order to achieve kumbhaka.

If you experience a state of coolness at any body-centre, say the head, do not get involved in that experience, but seek, "who is it that has this experience?"

Be indifferent to the presence or absence of body-sense and attend only to the one who has this idea during your dhyana.

"THE" REALITY

A keen reader of *The Mountain Path* almost since its inception, I seldom write to you, though I always appre-

ciate the many articles about the Maharshi and his words of wisdom. There is, however, one point that I want cleared namely, the frequent use of the phrase 'The Reality' in the article 'The Thundering Silence' by John A. Grimes, on Page. 139, of the July issue.

Apart from the excellent essay by Mr. Grimes, the same mis-use of the definite article 'the' in this context occurs in the books published by the Ashram. REALITY is REALITY and does not need 'the' unless it is meant to imply some particular kind of reality. Ultimate Reality can helpfully be spelt with a capital 'R' to distinguish it from phenomena perceived as real, but calling it 'the Reality' seems to the native English reader an example of 'foreign English'. I submit that lines 20 onwards on page 143 (end column) should read:

Reality is within individual Reality
is not therefore a bare nothing.... Reality
exists.....

With best wishes for the great work you and the Ashram staff are keeping up, I remain

— Lawrence H. Ewels,
Bury St. Edmunds, U.K.

With regard to the definite article 'THE' is used to denote a thing already identified or a thing which is unique. Reality is. It is therefore not made limited when referred to as the Reality. As for how it 'sounds', what about: "Remain as the Self; inhere in the Self. The Self knows no other," as against "Remain as Self" "Inhere in Self", "Self knows no other"?

BHAGAVAN'S PRESENCE

I had been attracted to the very rational and logical "Self-Enquiry" (Naan Yaar) method of Sri Ramana Maharshi through books by Paul Brunton and others. I visited India a few months back and stayed in your Ashram for 5 days.

I returned from India a couple of day back. I am writing this letter to you, Sir, to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for your kind arrangements and the efficient manner of running the Ashram. I arrived at your Ashram on 5.4.86 at about 12.45 p.m. and you took me for lunch immediately; only after that you recorded my particulars etc., for office purposes. The atmosphere there is very conducive for meditation, with the holy and silent vibrations still emanating from Sri Ramana. You have a very spiritually-informative Library across the road. It is indeed a most blessed thing to sit in the meditation hall or in the room where Sri Ramana attained *Brahma Nirvana*. Normally the efficiency fades away slowly after 20, 30 years of the passing away of a *Mahatma*, but you are carrying on very well, with the indirect (or direct) guidance of Sri Ramana. Hope this spirit prevails for many more years to come!

— Ramana Muthiah, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

A REQUEST

Will you please renew my subscription to *The Mountain Path* for 1987? An International Money Order follows. May I ask you, by the same opportunity, if there is a way to get connected to other French readers of *The Mountain Path*? May be you have got a list of people having the same desire!

M. Jennewein Aidier, 3, Rambla de Verte Fenille,
66000 Perpignan, FRANCE.

LAURELS

The contents of the July '86 issue are wonderful! I somehow sense the editorial is written by Dr. K. Subrahmanian and not by Sri A.R. Natarajan since 'Sri Bhagavan' and not 'Ramana' is used! Both the editorial and Mr. Natarajan's article are very good. Of course, we always look forward to VG's article and that of Arthur Osborne's. We were happy to see Ramani Ammal's story and a picture of Thanapal and family. Please give our regards to both of them. If the Mukherjees are in Arunachala please also give them our regards. John Champney's *How I came to Bhagavan* was exceptionally moving. We were sad to learn of the passing of Jagdish Swami. It will be strange not to see him when we return! Ratna Navaratnam has written very nicely.

— Mrs. Joan Greenblatt,
Ramana Publications, New York.

II

Seeing the magnificent Cover Page of July '86 issue I was thrilled since I felt as if Sri Bhagavan was walking straight into my house! Dear Joan has done a wonderful piece of artwork. The Editorial on 'Meditation' is simple (even I could understand the whole of it!) and profound:

— Smt. Lakshmi Venkataraman, Madras.

III

Please accept our heartiest congratulations for the excellent cover design you have adopted for the current issue of *The Mountain Path*. Kindly convey our appreciation to Mrs. Greenblatt also.

— C.G. Balasubramanyan
Ramana Kendra, New Delhi.

IV

With heartiest compliments I wish to give you praise for the contents of the July issue of *The Mountain Path*. It is really a wonderful garland of flowers at the feet of Sri Bhagavan!

Beside the Editorial I am much fascinated by the following articles, which I am going to translate into Urdu and arrange their publication in Delhi:

1. GRAHAPRAVESAM
2. SRI YOGI RAMSURATKUMAR
3. IN MEMORIAM — SRI JAGDISH SWAMI

— Dharm Paul, New Delhi



SPIRITUAL STORIES AS TOLD BY RAMANA MAHARSHI:
 Pub.: Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603.
 Pp.134 Price: Rs.15/-

Philosophy leaves most people cold and some frozen. But every one warms to stories and spiritual stories melt the hearts of readers and hearers. Stories narrated by sages and saints silence our thoughts and cleanse our minds.

The book under review is a collection of simple but elevating stories narrated by Sri Bhagavan. He didn't just narrate them but acted them out naturally and beautifully. Sri Kunjuswami says: "Such was the attraction of these stories that when we heard Sri Bhagavan beginning a story, even if we had heard it numerous times before,

we would literally stop whatever we were doing and run to His side to hear it again." Sri Bhagavan used to enact each story in such a masterly way. "Sri Bhagavan became transformed while relating incidents from his vast collection of stories and tales. On one occasion while describing Gautama's joy at Goddess Parvati's coming to his Ashram, Sri Bhagavan could not go on, for tears filled his eyes and emotion choked his voice. Trying to hide his plight from others, he remarked, 'I don't know how people who perform *Hari Katha* and explain such passages to audiences manage to do it without breaking down, I suppose they must make their hearts hard like stone before starting their work."

He would identify himself with every character totally and effortlessly as he had no identity of his own. Once he said "What to do I identify myself with whosoever is before me. I have no separate identity. I am universal".

These stories can't be read and 'finished'. We can read them any number of times. Every time we go to them, we get a new meaning, a new perspective, a new illumination, a new conviction. Here is a sample story:

When asked about the characteristics of a Jnani, Bhagavan said, "They are described in books, such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, but we must bear in mind that the Jnani's state is one which transcends the mind. It cannot be described by the mind. Only Silence can correctly describe this state and its characteristics. Silence is more effective than speech. From Silence came the ego, from the ego came thought, and from

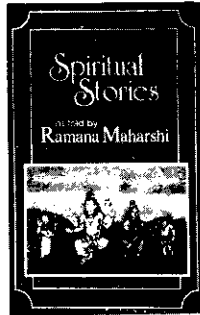
thought came speech. So if speech is effective, how much more effective must be its original source!" Then, in this connection Sri Bhagavan related the following story:

Tattvaraya composed a 'Bharani' (a kind of poetic composition in Tamil) in honour of his Guru Swarupanda and convened an assembly of learned Pandits to hear the work and assess its value. The Pandits raised the objection that a 'Bharani' was only composed in honour of great heroes capable of killing a thousand elephants, and that it was not in order to compose such a work in honour of an ascetic. Thereupon the author said, 'Let us all go to my Guru and we shall have this matter settled there'. They went to the Guru and, after all had taken their seats, the author told his Guru the purpose of their coming there. The Guru sat silent and all the others also remained in *mauna*. The whole day passed, night came, and some more days and nights, and yet all sat there silently, no thought at all occurring to any of them and nobody asked why they had come there. After three or four days like this, the Guru moved his mind a bit, and thereupon the assembly regained their thought-activity. They then declared, "Conquering a thousand elephants is nothing compared to the Guru's power to conquer the rutting elephants of all our egos put together. So certainly he deserves the 'Bharani' in his honour!"

Every story drives the reader inward. A story a day will keep the mind at bay.

The book is beautifully printed and elegantly got up.

— DR. K. SUBRAHMANYAN



YOGA VASISHTA SARA: The Essences of Yoga Vasishtha; An English Translation from the Sanskrit original: Pub.: Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai Pp. 30 Price Rs.3.

Yoga Vasishtha is one of the greatest books on Vedanta. Said to have been written by Valmiki, it contains 32,000 *slokas*. It is also called *Vasishtha Ramayana* or *Maha Ramayana*. A fine abridgement of it running to 6,000 *slokas* was prepared by Abhinanda and is called *Laghu Yoga Vasishtha*.

Yoga Vasishtha contains the dialogue between Vasishtha and Sri Rama on man and his purpose in life. The story goes that when Sri Rama at the age of sixteen was overcome by despondency on seeing sorrow and suffering in the world, Vasishtha explained to him the nature of the phenomenal world and Atman. This is the genesis of *Yoga Vasishtha*.

Sri Bhagavan used to quote frequently from *Yoga Vasishtha*. He selected ten *slokas* (17-26) from the eighteenth chapter of 'Upasama Prakaranam' of *Yoga Vasishtha*. These describe the state of a *Jivanmuktha*. These are found on

page 68 of K.K. Nambiar's book *The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana* published by Sri Ramanasramam.

The book under review is a collection of some of the important verses translated into English by Swami Sureshanda and published in *The Mountain Path* between 1969-71. The translation is clear and simple. The following are extracts from the book:

The knowledge of the Self is the fire that burns up the dry grass of desire. This indeed is what is called samadhi, not mere abstention from speech.

The yogi who has attained the state which is beyond everything and remains always cool as the full moon is truly the Supreme Lord.

Just as a crystal is not stained by what is reflected in it, so also a knower of truth is not really affected by the result of his acts.

Yoga Vasishtha Sara is a tonic to the world-weary. Every reading purifies the mind and opens up the heart. A tiny book of 29 pages, it is powerful in its impact.

— Dr. K. SUBRAHMANYAN

ON HAVING NO HEAD — ZEN AND THE RE-DISCOVERY OF THE OBVIOUS by Douglas E. Harding, 1986 Ed. Pub.: Arkana Paperbacks, Routledge & Kegan Paul plc, 14, Leicester Square, London WC2H 7 PH, England — Pp. 81, Price £ 3.50

Douglas Edison Harding is well-known to our readers as a regular contributor to *THE MOUNTAIN PATH*. Since its initial publication in 1964, "On Having No Head" has become something of a modern classic of the life of the spirit. The book has its scope widened in this edition to include parallels in traditions other than Buddhism. Also a concluding chapter on the "headless way" has been added to relate the central Insight to the daily round.

It was while walking once in the Himalayas that the authors' mind stopped and past and future dropped away. "It was as if I had been born that instant, brand new, mindless, innocent of all memories. There existed only the Now, that present moment and what was clearly given in it. To look was enough. And what I found was khaki trouserlegs terminating downwards in a pair of brown shoes, khaki sleeves terminating in a pair of pink hands, and a khaki shirt front terminating upwards in — absolutely nothing whatever! Certainly not in a head..... It took me no time at all to notice that this nothing..... was no ordinary vacancy. On the contrary, it was very much occupied. It was a vast emptiness...that found room for everything — room for grass, trees, snowy distant hills I had lost a head and gained a world — a revelation at long last, of the perfectly obvious."

With startling simplicity, the author drives home the point that he (like the reader) is a headless nobody. It is an immediately verifiable fact that we are, each one of us, really headless! Somehow or other, everyone thinks of himself as inhabiting this house which is his body, and

looking out through its two little round windows, at a world outside. Calm consideration reveals that we have never seen a head above our shoulders and certainly not two eyes, but only one window" that is wide open and frameless and immense, with nobody looking out of it. It is always the other fellow who has eyes and a face to frame them; never this one."

"There exist, then, two sorts... of human being. The first, of which I note countless specimens, evidently carries a head on its shoulders (and by 'head' I mean an opaque and coloured and hairy eight-inch ball with various holes in it), while the second, of which I note only one specimen, evidently carries no such thing on its shoulders." But that is not all, for on the other hand "I have more heads than I know what to do with. Concealed in my human observers and in cameras, on display in picture frames, making faces behind shaving mirrors, peering out of door-knobs and spoons and coffee-pots, and anything which will take a high polish, my heads are always turning up.... shrunken, distorted, twisted...and multiplied to infinity. But there is one place no head of mine can ever turn up, and that is here on my shoulders."

Harding takes a hard line to stop philosophizing and to just — "LOOK — WHO'S — HERE instead of IMAGINE — WHO'S — HERE or TAKE — EVERY BODY — ELSE'S — WORD — FOR — WHO'S — HERE."

He outlines in the form of an essential autobiography the eight stages towards being a stable headless void from "the fiction of egocentricity to the fact of zero-centricity."

The first stage has a 'headless' infant living from his source, relying simply on the Given. All arrows of attention were aimed outwards, overlooking his presence. In stage two, an occasional arrow was turned inward, and hit the mark. One then saw one's Absence — of — anybody. But even these gradually begin to fall short of their mark. Soon a false peripheral some-body is apprehended (stage three) submerging the earlier insights. Stages four and five mark the conscious inward journey, with increasing capability to penetrate the false appearances and "rest in what they are appearance of." One becomes an adept at *two-way looking* — at once looking in at Nothing and out at everything. "You are turning out to be one of the mutants in our species." However, after the initial thrill and novelty of this head-less seeing wears off, there may well be a growing sense of something more needed, in addition to bare seeing. The sixth stage is one relating the headlessness to daily life, to behaviour, relationships and role in society.

The next stage is "a dark and dangerous country, inhabited by monsters, and it cannot be bypassed." It is the coming to terms with one's personal and separative will or ego. It is as if "one's eye (Perception) and head (thinking) had been opened and flooded with light, while one's heart and entrails remained at least partially closed and dark." The reactions to this are many: move away

from Direct seeing to "one of the many guided spiritual tours that are on offer!", or cultivate *siddhis* that begin to rear their heads with headless in-seeing and thus exploit one's contact with What-one-is, in order to promote what one is not. At worst, this is a road to spiritual suicide; at best, a tempting, temporary diversion. The true route lies straight through the barrier, taking it head-on, as it were. The eighth and last stage, the Breakthrough, is actually the abandonment of the false belief that there is anyone here to abandon. This is the *ananda* which constitutes perfect merger of will and circumstance.

The spotlight thrown continually by the author on the 'no-head' region could mislead a reader into imagining, there, above the shoulders, the centre of Being. A reference to the Heart would definitely help here.

All told, this is a short, sweet and serious book, bubbling with lively humour, and told in enchanting language of experience. Here are a few samples:

"In appearance I am a thing moving about in space. In reality, I am the unmoving space itself."

"As something, I am merely that thing; as no-thing I am all things."

"As this immense, vacant or No-thing or space, I let all things in; I take delivery of the Universe."

"What reality is loses all importance; That reality is becomes all-important."

The cover is a brilliant idea — with the reader made to peer through an aperture from within a dense white cloud, the aperture having the exact outline of one's head (no-head), out into a lush-green flowering valley with the snow-clad Himalayan summits far away.

More than a very readable book, this is a practical course to self-inhering itself. Proof that one doesn't lose face losing one's head; one gains a whole instead!

— NAMARAYA :

A Synoptic Version of World Religion: *TITLE OF THE BOOK: RELEVATION IN THE WILDERNESS*: Second Edition; Volume I. The Book of Signs Volume II. The Book of Battles (The Key to Genesis, Evolution Paradise and the Fall) Supplement to the Book of Signs, The Book of Battles, Volume III Book of Stars. By Dr. G.H. Mees, Pub.: Kanvashrama Trust, Tiruvannamalai, India. 'VAK' the Spiritual Book-Shop, Sri Aurobindo Ashram P.O., Pondicherry-605 002. Retail Price in India Rs. 300/- Concessional Price for a limited period Rs. 200/- 1985. Pp. 1300.

It is difficult to summarise the contents of this vast Trilogy by Dr. G.H.Mees, which was seen and appreciated by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in 1947. The author, a devotee of the Sage of Arunachala, had made an in-depth study of World Religions in comparison with Vedas or Vedic Religion/Hinduism. This Trilogy has to be carefully and patiently studied to see where Dr. Mees

has exactly caught the glimpse of Reality/Spirituality/Divinity.

In these three volumes the author rediscovers the essential meaning of the Myths and Symbols of the ancient religious traditions. He makes a novel approach and explores the foundations of the old myths of the world, the rituals, rites, symbols, gods, animals, hierarchy of heaven, prophets, powers of the element of air, solar plexus centre and innumerable Zodiac signs. He has confined his research to the major religions of East and West, most of which have almost fallen into oblivion; but in the hands of this author we find a new interpretation of these ancient religions which make for "harmony and unity of aim among men". He states that the ancient ways are synoptic/syncretic/unifying, whereas modern ways are rational, divergent and water-tight compartments. Thus the author brings out a close similarity of the basic principles of world spiritual traditions and theology. The myths and symbols to which the author refers often have evolved in almost all religions of the world, as an elaborate structure of symbols which forms a distinct feature of religious phenomena. At the present time there exists a great interest among scholars from a variety of fields in the phenomenon of human symbolism. Psychologists study the symbols man forms in his dreams. Archaeologists look for the significance of human artifacts from ancient civilizations. Mathematicians and Logicians have made great advances in understanding how systems of very abstract signs operate. Linguists, philologists and semanticists have investigated the function of meaning in human language. Thus symbolism is the key to contemporary thought as a whole and to unlock the knowledge of the psychical processes of modern man even more than his ancestors because the myths, emblems and other symbolic devices used in conjunction with ritual, convey complex meanings. The hermeneutical approach of the author and his primary aim is to explain the Vedic and Western myths, symbols, sacrifice etc., indicating their points of similarity and difference, ultimately leading to unity. He introduces two new phrases "TRADITIONAL PSYCHOLOGY" and "PSYCHOLOGICAL ETYMOLOGY." By Traditional Psychology the author refers to the Psychological background of the ancient traditions and by Psychological Etymology to the popular Psychology of the common man. In the light of these two phrases he discusses the background of the myths of the ancient world and weaves a rational theology behind them, and from this vast reserve of the ancient traditional esoteric knowledge, inspired and transformed by the contact of Sri Ramana Maharshi, Dr. Mees brings out the similarities among Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Islam, Chinese, Greek, Roman and Germanic ideas and symbolism, and the interesting symbolism of the Tarot. Behind all these lies the universal cosmic symbolism, which gives an inner unity to the whole which assures peace and happiness to individuals in this world. There is one universal tradition from which all aspects of life emerge so that all traditions

are ultimately one. This ultimate Truth or Reality cannot properly be expressed in human language, though ancient psychology and theology worked as one in our consciousness. The author finds vast scope for his research in Hindu symbolism and compares it with present day scientific thinking.

In the First Volume the author gives an extensive and learned introduction dealing with the fundamental symbolism of desire and fall of man, virgin birth and beginning of the spiritual path, the symbolism of the declaration of man, silence, voice and word, vision of the Universal Form etc. . . . Then the author deals with miscellaneous symbolisms based on the five elements. Then he makes a study of the Four Stages of Life (Ashrama Dharma), Four Yogas, Four Paths, Five Sheaths and the Four States of Consciousness etc. and brings out their spiritual and social significance in the evolution of man. Then the author deals with the significance of Sacrifice. He brings out the difference between modern and traditional knowledge and establishes the superiority of Hinduism. The death of Medous (spirit of materialism) — the bondage of consciousness — teachings of teachers — the Symbolism of Life and Death/the Development of the Four Vedas, the symbolism of the Gods, animals, prophets and powers of the elements-Myths of Moses and Plagues of Egypt-Sacred Mountains-The Commandments of Moses, Jesus-Buddhism and Hinduism-I am that I am (Aham Brahmasmi)-the forms of Ahankara or Ego activity-Karma and the symbolism of ancestors-rituals and rites of final sanctification-psychical centre of yoga-Genesis and the Day of the week in comparison with Zodiacal symbolism in Jewish tradition and lastly Periods of Life. All these topics need a patient study.

In the second Volume, the Book of Batties, Dr. Mees explains the Seven Light Worlds, the seven under Worlds, the Churning of the Sea of Milk, the creative power of consciousness, functions and music, Groups of Seven and Zero numbers etc.

In the third, the Book of Stars, the author delineates the Dasavathara or the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu with some subtle details. Under the Chapter "the Twelve Adityas of the Vedas" the concept of "Ritu" is well explained, and the utility of the Mythology both for the ancients and moderns is thought-provoking and helpful for further research in the field. The Chapter, on "The Mythology of the Norse and Germanic Traditions" explains the traditions of the ancient, western world. At the conclusion of this Volume he comes to the apex of the problem, the Pranava Mantra Om which fulfills all the aspirations of man. It is the be-all and end-all of our endeavour to understand this spiritual Word, Divya-dhwani.

The supplement contains vivid diagrams which help us to understand the basis of his thesis.

I am sure that these Volumes will provide useful and interesting reading to students of philosophy; religion, sociology, theology and in particular to the students of

comparative religion. It is a scholarly thesis marked by diligent collations of material, impartial drawing of inferences and comprehensive knowledge of the subject. It can serve as a reliable guide to Vedic lore which still remains unexplored. It is laudable that Dr. Mees through his vast study of different religions could produce this solid work. This is one of the few books with a modern outlook on the ancient religions and their traditions written in this century.

— PROF. K.S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

HINDU CASTE SYSTEM AND THE RITUAL IDIOM By Samarendra Saraf. Pub.: Mittal Publishers, 1856 Trinagar, Delhi 35. Pp.203 Price: Rs.165/-

In this closely argued thesis, the author studies the role of the concept of purity and impurity in the evolution of Hindu Society. Purity is not merely an Idea, it calls for dynamic expression and this fact is articulated in the Hindu view of life, way of life, aim of life. Ritual is the mode of effecting, maintaining and fructifying the truth of purity. It has an individual aspect and a social one; it has a human and a godly significance. The writer traces the development of this key-factor from the age of the Rig Veda up to the present times.

Reflecting on the human body, he writes: "The body image in Hindu culture does not treat the human body as a mere bundle of anatomical and morphological sub-structures as governed by the psycho-physiological processes, but it regards each individual organism as a microcosmic representation of the macrocosm. And the science of yoga, a procedural or practical path that it is, only offers an opportunity to its practitioner for a communion of each microcosm with the macrocosm. Yogic view of the universe conceptualises the existence of seven worlds below and the six worlds above the earth. So also the human body, as a microcosm (*vyashti*) representing all the fourteen worlds of the macrocosm (*samashti*), is believed to represent all these worlds— seven located infra-rectally and seven supra-rectally. The infra-rectal ones, in their descending order are: *atala, vitala, sutala, talatala, mahatala, rasatala* and *patala*; the supra-rectal ones, in their ascending order are: *bhur, bhuvah, svah, mahah, janah, tapah, satya*. Hindu mysticism regards each of these seven upper worlds that make up the polar half of the universe, as represented by a mystic syllable (*vyahriti*). The seven supra-rectal worlds extend from one end to the other of the cerebro-spinal column—the stream of consciousness—and are represented each by a plexus, as the Hindu anatomy and physiology depict and as the Western medical and biological sciences confirm." (P.86) The author then goes on to point out how, in the older view, the human body has nine apertures of which those below the navel are held as impure, and those above it pure, the mouth being the purest of all.

Though not meant for the common reader, this treatise offers good deal of material for research scholars who may or may not accept all the conclusions of the author. A thought-provoking work.

— M.P. PANDIT

HEAT AND SACRIFICE IN THE VEDAS By Uma Marina Vesci. Pub.: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 110 007. Pp.339 Price: Rs.100/-

It is well known that in most religions sacrifice plays a great role in helping man to commune with the Gods. And Fire is an indispensable instrumental limb of sacrifice. The author of this elaborate thesis examines the several uses of Fire in this ritual in the major traditions of religion and pinpoints that the use of Fire for cooking the oblations to the Gods is peculiar to India. In other traditions, cooking is done only for the part that goes to men, not to the Gods. She studies the Vedas, Brahmana and the Sruta Sutras and traces the stages through which Agni, Fire, has assumed its cardinal importance in Brahmanism.

In the Veda, Fire is not merely an agent for cooking. Fire, Agni, is a God himself. He is not only the tongue of the Gods, the messenger of the Gods, the ambassador of the humans, but equally a God of primary significance. Dr. Vesci studies the gradual transformation of the character of Agni, Fire, into the incubative heat of *tapas*. She thinks this change is a landmark in the transition of the

I AM

By Sri Lilananda

I am neither god nor man
I am neither ruler nor slave
I am neither master nor disciple
I am neither aloft nor below
I am neither here nor there
I am neither this nor that
I am neither mine nor thine
I am

Veda to the Upanishad. She takes pains to document every observation of hers on scriptural references and relates myth, symbol, language in a scholarly manner. Her chapters on the main rites in which Agni plays a predominant part e.g. *pashuyajna*, *agnyadhana*, *agnichayana*, *pravargya*, are thorough in their research.

Dr. Panikkar's Foreword is a fitting introduction to this study which seeks to salvage an ancient institution from the debris of superstition and exaggeration and examine how it could be relevant to the modern world, in some aspects at least.

— M.P. PANDIT



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Sri R. Venkataraman, Vice President of India, unveiling the portrait of S. Doraiswamy Aiyer.



Vice President of India honours A senior Devotee of Sri Bhagavan

Spirituality or the love of God and patriotism or the love of one's fellow human beings compliment each other as do light and heat in fire.

Not only a famous lawyer, **Sri S. Doraiswamy Aiyer**¹ was an earnest *sadhaka* brought to the fold of Sri Bhagavan by his association with the poet and savant, Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni. A connoisseur of music he had direct ancestral links with Saint Tyagaraja. Though proficient in many fields, Doraiswamy Aiyer's dominant concern was the search for Truth through egoless living.

His portrait was unveiled by **Sri R. Venkataraman**, Vice President of India, in Madras, on July 25 under the auspices of TTK Trust. The portrait was handed over by the Vice President of India to **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, (President,

Doraiswamy Aiyer's portrait handed over by the Vice President to Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam. (first from left) Sri T.T. Vasu.



ashram bulletin

Sri Ramanasramam) for display in the Ashram's portrait gallery.

The Vice President said that Sri S. Doraiswamy Aiyer's was a life dedicated to the country and inspired by deep devotion to Sri Bhagavan and Sri Aurobindo. Through their grace he accepted with equal detachment his unparalleled success at the Bar, and the successive tragedies in his family.

Sri M.M. Ismail, former Chief Justice of Madras High Court, and **Sri T.T. Vasu** of T.T.K. Trust paid glowing tributes to this illustrious *Karma yogi*

¹Introduced to our readers, on p.212 of July 1969 issue.

ARUNACHALA ASHRAMA, NEW YORK CITY CELEBRATES THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF SRI BHAGAVAN'S ADVENT AT ARUNACHALA

Mrs. Evelyn Kaselow Saphier of Arunachala Ashrama, New York City, reports: —

"The mood was one of infectious happiness and open-hearted warmth and friendship as the devotees of Sri Bhagavan here in New York City, celebrated on September 1, 1986 His arrival in Arunachala 90 years ago. The event was marked by 'Sri Chakra Puja', grand feast and devotional *bhajans* and reading in which all participated.

"Music was provided by **Babubhai Parekh**, who sang several verses on and by Sri Bhagavan and elucidated their meaning. **Bhavana Parekh** inspired and kindled the devotional mood of all in her rendition of 'Ram Nam Sankirthanam' and other *bhajans*.



Arunachala Ashrama, New York City: The families of Mr. Babubhai and Mrs. Bhanumati Parekh.

"Margo Martin read the story of Sri Bhagavan's trip to Sri Arunachala as narrated by Arthur Osborne, who likened the pilgrimage of Sri Bhagavan to the quest we all must take in search of our Source.

"Led by Evelyn Kaselow Saphier and Paul Saphier, the group read and sang *The Marital Garland of Letters*.

"Special thanks are due to Mrs. Bhanumati Parekh and Mr. and Mrs. Virat Bhatt and family, for preparing *prasad* for the function. Thanks also are due to Fred Deitzel who worked tirelessly cleaning, organizing and decorating, for many hours prior to the celebration.

"Above and beyond, we are grateful to Sri Bhagavan for the grace of remembering Him, whose final pilgrimage and surrender to Sri Arunachala has indicated to us that, indeed, there is for us all a way Home."

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA IN LONDON

Devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana will be pleased to learn that a beautiful colour portrait (20" x 25") of our Satguru has been put up at the Sri Murugan Temple,

Evelyn Kaselow Saphier and Paul Saphier.

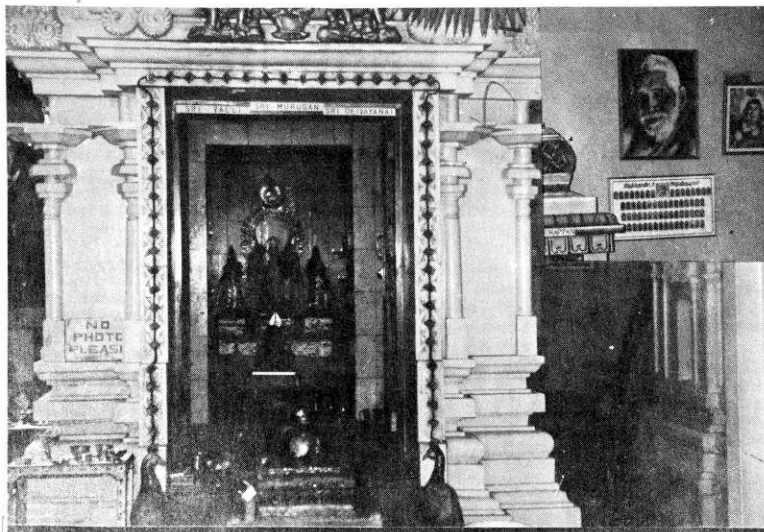
Mr. & Mrs. Virat Bhatt, with daughters, Cheta and Henaz.



(l to r) Fred Deitzel, Stepharic Pomeroy (a longtime friend and disciple of Paul Brunton), Margo Martin, Jugal Mehta, Aravind Mitra.

78, Church Road, Manor Park, London E12 6AF. The picture was sent from the Ashram and is now mounted eye level on the wall, opposite the Lingam Shrine of Lord Visvanatha (Shiva). Immediately below the portrait is a nicely framed poster of the 63 Saivite Saints whom Bhagavan greatly loved since His early childhood.

The Trustees and Management Committee of the Temple have been Bhagavan's instruments for bringing His presence and that of the 63 in London. We sincerely thank all those, including Dr. K.C. Rajah, who have installed this portrait in the Murugan Temple in London. (Tel. 01-478 8433).



Front view from the entrance to Sri Murugan Temple, London.

(Inset) Sri Bhagavan's portrait below which the collection of 63 saivite Saints' pictures.



Mr. Dennis Hartel of Arunachala Ashrama, receives Sri Ramana Gita from Sri Kunju Swami. The Ashram President looks on, happily.

A NEW BOOK RELEASED

Sri Ramana Gita is a collection of questions and answers on spiritual matter. Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni composed these exquisite and lucid Sanskrit verses. For the first time an English Commentary by **Sri A.R. Natarajan**, President, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore, has been brought out.

The first copy was placed on Sri Bhagavan Sri Ramana's *Samadhi* on August 28, and was released by **Sri Kunju Swami** by presenting it to **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, Ashram President. Copies were also given to **Dennis Hartel, J. Jayaraman, B.S. Ranganadham, Dr. O. Ramachandraiah, Smt. Ratna Navaratnam, K. Natesan** and **V. Subramanian**.

Bangaramma Cottage: In front of the new building, Sri Bhupathi Narayana Rajugaru and Sri Janardhana Raju.



SRI Y.S. HEGDE'S VISIT

Sri Y.S. Hegde, Chairman and Managing Director of Corporation Bank, Mangalore, paid a visit to the Ashram on September 29. He was accompanied by **Sri P. Karunakar Alwa**, Deputy General Manager, Corporation Bank, Mangalore and **Sri N. Subramanian**, Regional Manager, Madras.

Sri Hegde was taken round the Ashram by our **Managing Editor**. He showed keen interest in knowing details about the traditional story of how Brahma and



Sri Y.S. Hegde, Chairman and Managing Director, Corporation Bank, Mangalore and Sri P. Karunakar Alwa, Deputy General Manager, being honoured at the Ashram. Sri Hegde is applying the *tilak*.

Vishnu were subdued in the presence of Lord Siva at Arunachala, the emergence of the Linga, the merit of circumambulating Arunachala Hill and how devoted Bhagavan Ramana was to his 'father' Arunachala.

He was presented with Ashram publications in front of the shrine of Sri Bhagavan. He had his lunch at the Ashram itself. Sri P. Karunakar Alwa showed interest in knowing details about Ashram and its activities. The Regional Manager, Sri N. Subramanian who has visited the Ashram a few times already, is a staunch *bhakta* of Sri Bhagavan.

A NEW COTTAGE

Within the Ashram premises in Koranguthottam, a new building has come up, thanks to the donation from **Sri Bhupathi Rajugaru**, in memory of his late wife, **Smt. Bangaramma**. Its *Grihapravesam* was conducted on August 10, 1986. His son, **Sri Janardhana Raju** saw to it that the traditional rituals were observed meticulously.



Tamil Parayana: Sri Kunju Swami infuses enthusiasm into the participants with his unstinted guidance and assured presence.

PAARAYANAM

In our last issue, p. 207 we had reported that twice in a week Tamil *Paarayanam* was being conducted at Sri Bhagavan's *Samadhi* Hall. It is being improved and increased to three days in a week under the immediate presence of **Sri Kunju Swami**. **Smt. Anuradha**, the organiser of this *paarayana*, conducts it to the entire satisfaction of *Ramana-bhaktas*. The schedule is:

on Monday (*Somavaram*):

"Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala' (*Arunachala Stuti Panchakam*)

on Thursday (*Guruvaram*):

'Five hymns to Sri Ramana' (*Ramana Stuti Panchakam*)

on Saturday (*Sanivaram*):

'Forty Verses on Reality' (*Ulladu Narpadu*)

'Supplement to Forty Verses on Reality' (*Ulladu Narpadu Anubhandham*)

'Essence of Instruction in Thirty Verses' (*Upadesa Undhiar*)

Early morning at 6.15, Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni's moving verses of praise on Sri Bhagavan in Sanskrit, *Ramana Chatvarimsat*, is being sonorously chanted by **B. Sridhar**. Apart from these, of course, the *Veda Parayana*, at His Shrine, both in the morning and in the evening, 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., continues to be chanted by the Ashram *Veda Pathasala* boys and the teacher.

SRI RAMANA CENTENARY LIBRARY

The *Ramana Centenary Library* has been growing from year to year. From its small beginnings (by the side of Sri Bhagavan), then to the *Gosala*, and then to the New Hall in front of Mother's Shrine, it moved into the Morvi Compound, occupying a complete floor.

During March-July of this year the English and Foreign language Section was shifted to the newly constructed II floor, while the Indian languages and Bhagavan sections remain in the I floor. The I floor also houses a fairly large magazine section (nearly 200 periodicals and Children's section). There are spacious and separate reading areas for children and adults. Very attractive large size photos and paintings of Sri Bhagavan adorn the walls all around. The Library has at present over 16,000 valuable books.

Sri J. Jayaraman as Librarian, is assisted by **K. Natesan**, **S. Mani**, **Kumaraswamy** and **Geeta Bhatt**, with occasional help from a passing pilgrim.

NOTICE

ASHRAM LIFE MEMBERSHIP

The roll of **Life Membership** for the Ashram was commenced in 1963. The devotees have willingly extended their cooperation by becoming **Life Members**, thus enabling the Ashram to build up (with that amount) a Capital Fund, as well. The **Life Members** are sent intimations for the Ashram celebrations, like Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanti*, *Aradhana* etc.; after these functions, Sri Bhagavan's Prasad sent to them.

Till now the fee for such **Life Membership** has been Rs. 100/- only. From January 1, 1987 we propose enhancing it to Rs. 200/- for fresh **Life Members**. Though the old **Life Members** are not bound by this enhancement, they are welcome to send the additional amount, if they choose to do so, since the purpose and aim in enhancing the fee is only to meet the rising costs in maintaining the general upkeep of the Ashram.

Such remittance are exempt from Income-tax under section 80-G.

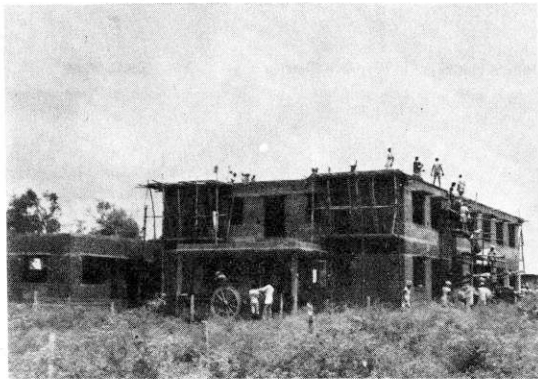
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai - 606 603.
Date: 1-10-86.

President
Board of Trustees.

RAMANA TEMPLE IN MYSORE

In continuation of a report of progress achieved in the construction of a Temple for Sri Bhagavan at Mysore (see our issue of January '86) we are happy to announce some further progress. However, financial support for this good cause is still urgently needed.

Philanthropists may send their contribution to:
The Hon. Secretary,
Sri Ramana Gnana Kendra (Reg) Mysore
1148, Vrajanivas, Railway Station Road,
Chamarajapuram, Mysore 570 004



Work going on at completion of Sri Ramana Temple at Mysore.

POOR-FEEDING YAGNA

Report from *Vignana Ramaneeya Ashram*, Palghat:

The annual poor-feeding *yagna* during the month of *Karkitaka (Tamil-Adi)* was conducted at the Ashram in a grand manner from July 17 to August 19.

The *yagna* was inaugurated by **Sri Swami Sreedharananda Saraswati** of Sivananda Ashram. More than ten thousand poverty-stricken people were fed sumptuously in this *yagna* during a period in which the poor in Kerala, are affected by acute scarcity.

Sri Vignana Ramaneeya Ashram, Palghat: Sri **Sreedharananda Saraswati Swami** inaugurating the one-month *Annadhana Yagna*.



SRI RAMANA OFFSET



Sri Ramana Offset: (r to l) Sri **P. Karunakar Alwa**, Sri **Y.S. Hegde**, our *Managing Editor* and Sri **Subramanian**, Proprietor.

Sri Y.S. Hegde, Chairman and Managing Director of Corporation Bank, Mangalore, declared open the '**Ramana Offset**' (a wing of Radha Press) by switching on the new machine installed. The Corporation Bank has given a large loan towards financing the full equipment of '**Ramana Offset**'. Thanks to the bold and positive step taken by the Deputy General Manager, **Sri P. Karunakar Alwa** and **Sri N. Subramanian**, Regional Manager, the establishment of this important Offset Press at Tiruvannamalai became a reality.

Sri Ramanasramam brings out many books every year in many languages. The erection of this Offset Press will enable the Ashram not only to have books printed in time, but in securing a good quality as well. **Sri C. Sridharan**, Manager of local branch was helpful throughout.

Our *Managing Editor* garlanded Sri Hegde and explained to him how this offset machine would best serve towards the propagation of Sri Ramana's teachings. The Chairman expressed happiness and assured that his support and cooperation would be readily extended in the cause of spreading Sri Bhagavan's teachings.



Sri N. Subramanian, Regional Manager, Corporation Bank, Madras, lighting the *Kuthu Vilakku*.



Smt. Shoba Jayaraman and Sri J. Jayaraman



Smt. & Sri I.M. Aga.



Smt. & Sri A. Sitaraman

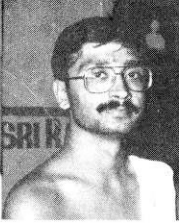


Jean Massicote and Catherine Sager.

PILGRIMS
PILGRIMS
PILGRIMS



Sri Dennis Hartel



Sri Anil Sharma



Smt. Geeta Bhatt



Sri Mathaji Savitri Devi



Sri S.G. Devraj



Mr. Michael Muirhead



Mr. John Harris



Mr. Kevan Myers



Mr. Roger Henninger



Sri T.R. Ramachandran
Smt. & Sri V. Panchapakesan.



Members of Ramana Kendra, Madurai

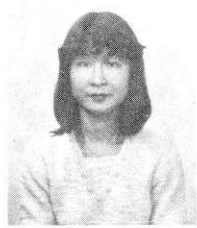


Smt. & Sri Abhayanand Singh,
Dr. (Mrs.) Meena Singh, Sri
Dhirendra Kumar Singh.

Sri Mahalakshmi Ammal



Miss Miho Kikuchi.





Our *Managing Editor* elucidates to the members of **Geeta Upanishad Adyana Sangha, Bangalore** the salient features in Sri Bhagavan's teachings. **Sri C. Vasudev** is seen to the right of our *Managing Editor*.



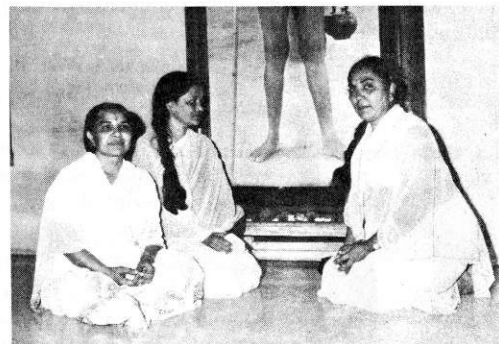
Prof. **L.R. Vagale**, the famous landscape designer offered to the Ashram his voluntary services. (l to r) Prof. **L.R. Vagale**, Sri **Ramachandra Khoday**, Sri **T.N. Venkataraman**. Sri Ramachandra Khoday is keenly interested in effecting physical improvements in the Ashram. As a first step he had the landscape of the Ashram drawn, on which Prof. Vagale will implement his useful suggestions.



Devotees of Lakshmanasramam, Gudur
(Inset) Sri **Lakshmanaswami**, Matrusri **Sarada**



Smt. and Sri **Raman Dave** and their children



Smt **Laja N. Raheja**, **Reena Shah** and Smt. **Uma Khanna**.

PILGRIMS

Dr. Vicenc Grenzner of Switzerland (referred to in our issue of January 1982, P. 64) arrived at the Ashram in July, along with his friend, **Ramon Castellort**, and spent a few weeks here. On reaching Madras, enroute to his home country, he wrote thus to our *Managing Editor*:

"Before leaving India, I feel like sharing again a few minutes with you.

"Ramon and I have found a great amount of love and kindness in the Ashram, but, what for me is also very important, is the great respect shown by you all for every individual *sadhaka*. No one is forced to do anything; so, little by little, one is forced to face oneself and keep quiet. That is the great lesson of this holy place!

"I believe that during Bhagavan's worldly life this was His policy: A great amount of love and kindness and at the same time the tremendous power of silence!

"Only by His grace we are called to His path, that is another reason for our great happiness.

"So, Ganesh, thank you very much for receiving us in such a way and to every one who was serving and helping us in a very kind way".

—VICENC GRENZNER and RAMON CASTELLORT

Sri Lakshmanaswami of Sri Lakshmanashram, Chillakur, (Gudur Tg. Nellore Dist.) visits the Ashram every year, with a batch of devout *Ramana-bhaktas*. **Matrusri Sarada**, who accompanies the Swami, is deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan.

This year they all stayed at the Ashram for ten days in the middle of August. This year too, as before, they brought things in kind for use at the Ashram.

On their return to Lakshmanashram, they write:

"Both of us LOVE Arunachala and Sri Ramanasramam very much. The atmosphere in front of Bhagavan's *Samadhi* is very calm and peaceful. The devotees who meditate there with love and faith will be benefited by Sri Ramana Bhagavan's Grace."

—SRI LAKSHMANA SWAMI AND MASTRUSRI SARADA

Sri Carla Haworth from England spent two weeks in August at the Ashram and on return to U.K., writes as follows:



Sri Carla Haworth

"August 1986" - a long cherished dream came true and by Bhagavan's grace I was, at last, to come to Ramanasramam and spend two weeks at the foot of Holy Arunachala.

"These were the most peaceful and joyous days of my life; I was

surrounded by love and Beauty and by the most treasured memories of our Lord Ramana, when he lived as a Man among us.

"It was moving to see the places where He ate, and slept, and walked and suffered and yet the more I saw the more I knew that He is always HERE, wherever I am. How could we ever feel lonely or sorrowful, since we are always in Him, our best only beloved FRIEND !

"But to be in Tiruvannamalai was a special gift granted to me; and I am writing to thank you all, brothers and sisters, for welcoming me so kindly and allowing me to share your life at the Ashram, giving me all comforts and care my body needed and the love and friendship of one's own family.

"Special thanks to the solicitous people in the office, to the people who work in the kitchen, who so lovingly prepared and served our meals and to everybody else, since you all spend your days in taking care of the Temples, Hill, and grounds keeping them so beautiful and neat.

"Every detail of my visit will always be with me; but especially cherished is the vision of the Holy Mountain Arunachala, who in silence and stillness ever draws our human hearts into the one Universal Heart: Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi."

—CARLA HAWORTH, BLACKBURN, U.K.

SRI MURUGANAR'S DAY



Sri Muruganar

The poet-saint, **Sri Muruganar**, wrote tens of thousands of moving Tamil verses on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings. These are gaining greater importance among the enthusiastic *Ramana-bhaktas*. His *samadhi* day was observed on September 3, with the usual *puja*, chanting, and *prasad*.

H.C. KHANNA DAY

A *Karma Yogi* and a great *bhakta* of Sri Bhagavan, **Sri H.C. Khanna** of Kanpur had the unique opportunity of attaining the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan in 1984 at Arunachala itself. His *Samadhi* Day was observed at his tomb on July 23. His daughter-in-law, Smt. **Uma Khanna**, came to the Ashram especially to participate in the ceremony and thus pay her homage to her father-in-law.



Swami Bhodananda



School Children singing on guru Poornima Day

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Swami Bodhananda of Chinmaya Mission gave a series of seven talks on Bhagavan's *Upadesa Sara* on Sundays beginning from June 15. The large audience on all the days were greatly benefited by Swamiji's lucid exposition. In deference to their request, Swamiji has agreed to give another series of talks on 'Sat Darsanam'.

On June 28, Professor (Mrs.) Prema Pandurangan, President, Samskriti, Madras gave a lively, and scholarly talk on Bhagavan's *Gita Sara*.

On September 7, the residents in Shakurpur Resettlement Colony were sumptuously fed. Smt. & Shri. S.K. Sachdeva took active part in the entire programme,

Swami Chinmayananda addressed a packed auditorium on August 31 at a function organised at the Kendra by the

Chinmaya Mission, New Delhi. The Mission had earlier arranged a function on July 21 to celebrate Guru Poornima.

July 20 was observed as Vidyodaya Day. Aruna Vijaya Day was celebrated on August 31. The same day was also observed as Muruganar's Day.

The study classes on Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads, Veda recitation and Tiruppugazh were conducted regularly.

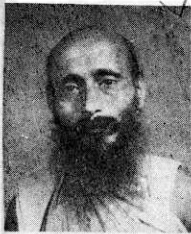
Obituary

At a meeting held on August 24, a resolution was passed to express the grief of the members of Delhi Ramana Kendra on the passing away of Shri. K.K. Nambiar, Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras, and one of the earliest devotees of Bhagavan and to convey their sympathies to the bereaved family.

OBITUARY

SRI SWAMI PRANAVANANDA

Devotees of Sri Bhagavan, particularly recent visitors to Sri Ramanasramam, would be grieved to know that this loveable and smiling *sadhu* whom they might have noticed at the Ashram is no more. **Sri Swami Pranavananda** was absorbed in the Master on July 27th at Hedge, near Kumta.



Sri Swami Pranavananda

Swami Pranavananda was born in an orthodox Brahmin family. He left home at the age of 17 and after wandering in search of a Guru, was ultimately attracted to Sri Bhagavan. He repeatedly used to say "I was unable to find any single flaw in Sri Bhagavan and He was the only such faultless personality whom I had come across." He surrendered himself totally to Sri Bhagavan.

He wrote many books in Kannada on Sri Bhagavan and was mainly instrumental in propagating the life-history and teachings of Sri Bhagavan in Karnataka. He was the founder of *Sri Ramana Seva Sangha*, Kumta and the main

spirit in the running of the Kannada quarterly '*Sri Ramana Sandesha*' from Kumta, North Kanara, Karnataka.

Though a chronic asthmatic he refused to take medicines in the belief that Sri Bhagavan would cure him of all illnesses. He was once bitten by a poisonous snake and his belief in Sri Bhagavan saved him though he took no treatment for the same.

In him we have lost a gem of a Ramana-*bhakta*!

SMT KRISHNA KISHORI TANDON

Smt. Krishna Kishori Tandon, wife of **Sri Satyanarayana Tandon**, of Kanpur, passed away on August 1, 1986. She was very orthodox and religious by nature from her early married life. She accompanied her husband in his annual pilgrimage to Sri Ramanasramam, even when she was seriously ill. During her such stay she was insistent upon attending the Ashram routine, particularly the *pujas* in Sri Bhagavan's shrine and Sri Chakra Puja.



Mrs. Tandon

We convey our condolences to Sri Satyanarayana Tandon and to his children.

DR. V.N. SHARMA

Dr. V.N. Sharma was a great devotee of Sri Bhagavan. As long as his health permitted he visited Sri Ramanasramam and walked round the Holy Hill. Our founder-editor, Arthur Osborne used to call Dr. Sharma as the 'Roving Ambassador' for Sri Ramana's teachings abroad.



Dr. V. N. Sharma

Basically an educationalist, he began his career as an assistant teacher at the National Theosophical School and College, in Adyar, Madras. Having found an opportunity to go abroad and take an active part in the progressive education movement he went to Europe and spent 7 years there till 1936. He joined the University of Heidelberg and got his doctorate in education. He married Ellen Teichmüller, came back to India and started the Children's Garden School in 1937. His contributions in the promotion of Indo-German Cultural relationship are extensive.

He passed away on April 23, 1986. We convey our condolence to his two daughters.

SRI P.S. KAILASAM

Sri P.S. Kailasam (retired Justice of the Supreme Court), who passed away on August 10, 1986, was a life-long devotee of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. A good friend also of Sri Ramanasramam, he was an active member of Ramana Kendra, Delhi, during his stay in the capital. He and his wife, **Smt. Soundaram Kailasam**, took keen interest in popularising the poems of Muruganar and in the Kendra's work for and among the poor in Delhi.

We offer our condolences to the bereaved family.

WEI WU WEI

To say 'Wei Wu Wei' is no more is ridiculous for he represents the teaching itself. The teaching can have no death! However, as we knew him personally, with a body, we feel he should find mention in this column. In his passing away, seekers all over the world, have lost an elder brother who relentlessly exuded the truth which he was ever in communion with.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

INDEX TO CONTENTS

VOL. 23 Jan. — Oct. 1986

A

AIYER :

AIYER, Prof. N.R. Krishnamoorthi — The Endless Drama, 11, Meditation in front of Sri Ramana's Samadhi during Vedaparayana, 259

AMMAL, Ramani — Introducing, 188.

ANBUMALAI — Poem, 190, 225.

ANONYMOUS — The Apocalypse of Celestial Freedom, 84.

ARGUS — Book Reviews, 114, 196.

ASHRAM BULLETIN — 55, 117, 199, 271.

B

BAKER, John W.D. — Poem, 70.

BECK, Frederick — Poem 23, 38, 93.

BHASKARAN, DR. M.B. — Introducing, 262.

BOOK REVIEWS — 51, 114, 195, 266.

BROUMOND, FRED — Poem, 45; Guru's Grace, 95.

C

CHAMPNEYS, J.A. — Poem, 138, 263; How I Came to Sri Bhagavan, 175.

CHATTOPADHYAYA, HARINDRANATH — Poem, 29, 45.

CHIDANANDA, SWAI — Obituary, 129.

CHRISTIAN, ROSALIND IRIS — Mind, Mirage, Mirror, Lake, 41.

D

DEIKMAN, A.J. — Poem, 85.

DEVASENAPATHI, Dr. V. — Tiruchuzhial, 20.

DHARMAWARA, VENERABLE — On Meditation, 107.

E

EDITORIAL — 1, 67, 131, 209.

F

FRASER, G. NORMAN — Obituary, 208.

G

GANGADHARIAH, Smt. & Sri T. — Introducing, 47.

'G.N.' — J. Krishnamurti, the Man and His Teachings, 78. Krishnamurti and Religion, 233.

GREENLESS, DUNCAN — What I saw in Sri Bhagavan, 161.

GRIMES, J.A. — Thundering Silence, 140.

GUPTA, HIRDESH — Poem, 134.

H

HARDING, DOUGLAS, E. — The Last Upanishad, 6; Thirty Questions, 158.

HODDER, CHRISTINE — Poem, 128.

HONEY BEE — Poem, 7, 105; The Dance of Shiva Nataraj, 91.

HOW I CAME TO SRI BHAGAVAN — Krishnan, Savitri Devi (Mataji) 39; Rao, M. Narasimha, 102; Champneys, John, A., 174; Rao, V. Ramachandra, 248.

I

ILAYARAJA — Sri Koti Swami, A Siddha Purusha, 28; Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar, 182.

IN MEMORIAM — Sri Jagdish Swami, 188; Sri K.K. Nambiar, 237.

INTRODUCING — Smt. & Sri T. Gangadharaiah, 47; Smt. & Sri T. Navaratnam, 108; Sri Ramani Ammal, 188; Dr. M.B. Bhaskaran, 262.

IYENGAR, MASTI VENKATESA — The Birth of an Upanishad, 220.

IYER, V. GURUSWAMY — Obituary, 208.

J

JAGDISH SWAMI — Vivekachudamani, 83; Obituary — JAMES, MICHAEL — Morality and Self Knowledge (contd.), 13.

JAYARAMAN, S. — J. KRISHNAMURTI : A Tribute, 81. JB — Self Observation, 216.

K

KAUL, S.M. — Poem, 44, 82, 144.

KIRBY, MURDOCH — The Lila, 75.

KRISHNA, SAVITHRI DEVI — How I came to Sri Ramana, 39.

'K.S.' — Poem, 19, 47; Book Reviews, 51.

KULKARNI, PROF. G.V. — Our Visit to Sri Ramana-sramam, 31.

L

- LEAVES FROM DEVOTEES DIARIES — Grahapravesam, 163;
With me in the Kitchen, 244.
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR — 48, 110, 191, 264.

M

- MANAGING EDITOR — MOMENTS REMEMBERED, 24,
97, 148, 252.
MATHAJI, MARAGATHA — Obituary, 208.
MAYILOTTI, Sri — Obituary, 208.

N

- NAMARAYA — Book Reviews, 51; From Evolution and
Other Dreams, To Ramana, 167; Geethasara Thaalattu
(Trans.), 213.
NATARAJAN A.R. — The Voice of Truth (Editorial), 1;
What is Death if Scrutinised?, 133; Hound of Heaven,
250.
NAVARATNAM RATNA — In Memoriam — Sri Jagdish
Swami, 186.
NAVARATNAM Smt. & Sri T. — Introducing, 108.
NELLA KANTAN, N.V. — Obituary, 129.
NIRAMALANANDA SWAMI — Buddha — The flower of
Hinduism, 104.
'NON-ENTITY' — What Sri Ramanasramam is to us, 260.

O

OBITUARY:

- 65: Sastrigal, Panju; Sivananda Swami.
129: Chidananda Swami; Santhananda, Sri.
Neelakantan, N.V.
208: Iyer, V. Guruswami; Mathaji, Maragatha;
Mayilotti, Sri; Fraser, George Norman;
279: Kailasam, P.S.; Smt. Tandon, Krishna Kishori;
Swami Pranavananda; Sharma, Dr. V.N.; Wei Wu
Wei;
'ONE' — The Bhagavan of the Devotees and the Real
Bhagavan, 30.
OSBORNE, ARTHUR — The Boyhood 69; Oxford Rejected,
145; Oxford Rejected (contd. .), 240.
OSBORNE, NOONA — Poem, 21, 109.

P

- PHADNIS, RAMESH V. — Poem, 172.
PANDIT, M.P. — Book Reviews, 53, 54, 114, 115, 196
and 197.

- A PARSEE DEVOTEE — Poem, 40, 45, 90, 185; Power
Surrender, 90.

R

- RAGHUNATHAN, N. — My Two Visits, 106.
RANGACHARI, R. — Book Reviews, 196.
RAO, M. NARASIMHA — How I came to Bhagavan's
Fold, 102.
RAO, DR. P. NAGARAJA — Some Aspects of Indian
Culture, 23.
RAO, V. RAMACHANDRA — How I came to Bhaga-
van, 248.
REDDY, DWARAKNATH, V. — The Great Compassion, 155.
REPS, PAUL — Nowing, 157; Light, 243.
ROBERTS, PATRICK — Poem, 129.

S

- SANTHANANDA, SRI — Obituary, 129.
SASTRI, PROF. K.C. — Swami Ramana Giri — A Tribute, 71.
SASTRIGAL, P. — Obituary, 65.
'SEIN' — Book Reviews, 116.
SIDDHESWANANDA, SWAMI — Silence Supreme, 104.
SIMHA, DR. A. RAJA — Ramana Maharshi — A Spiritual
Beacon, 43.
SIVANANDA SWAMI — Obituary, 65.
SIVANANDA SWAMI — Sri Ramana the Divine Sage, 211.
S.N. — The Sage of Vasishthaguha, Swami Purushottama-
nanda, 230.
SUBRAMANIAN, K.S. — Book Reviews, 195.
SULLIVAN PAT, L. — The Cosmic Crab, 34.
A SUFI — Poem, 229.

T

- T.P.L. — All Different, 166.
THAPOVAN, SWAMI MAHARAJ — The Soul of Silence,
135.
THOORAN — Poem, (trans. by Prof. K. Swaminathan), 147.
TWO DECADES OF THE MOUNTAIN PATH — 4, 76, 136,
218.

V

- VASUDEVAN, Sqn. ldr. N. — Poem, 15, 113, 128, 261.