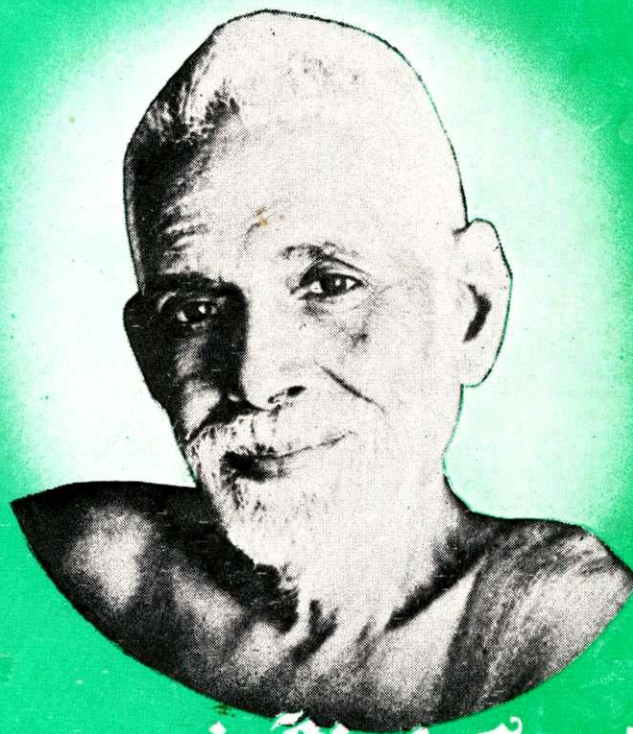




THE MOUNTAIN PATH

Vol. 16, No. II

April 1979



Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary



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

Hast Thou not bartered
cunningly Thyself for me
(for my individuality is
lost)? Oh, Thou art death
to me, Arunachala!

—*The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 62*

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THE 'MOUNTAIN' PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

—*The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1.*

Vol. 16

APRIL 1979

No. II

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The Arunachala Hill picture in the cover page was
drawn by Sri Bhagavan Himself.

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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

Contributions for publication should be addressed to The Editor, *The Mountain Path*, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

Vol. 16. No. II, April 1979

EDITORIAL

WHAT IS TAPAS?

.....

THE word *tapas* has been variously translated as austerity, penance, ascetic practice, discipline of the mind and body, and so on. The aim of the exercise may be the attainment of any end, but as a spiritual sadhana the goal can only be the realization of the inner Reality. The root meaning of the word *tapas* is melting or wholesome warmth conducive to sustained life and growth. Though the immediate aim may appear in many and various forms, like the acquisition of superhuman power or the fulfilment of a wellnigh impossible wish, the ultimate goal for the selfless aspirant can only be Self-realization, the total identity with the atman in oneself and in all beings, the transcendental bliss of Being-Awareness.

The first step in true *tapas* is detachment from obsession with the body. Hence mortification of the flesh has unfortunately been too often mistaken for *tapas*. Self-discipline certainly begins with mastery of the body and the senses, but it is doing damage to the body rather than disciplining it to stand for long periods on one leg with one arm uplifted or to lie for days together on a bed of spikes. All such mortification of the body is *tamasic*.

Yajna has been defined as restoration to Nature of what we take from her in the ordinary course of living; *dana* as the restoration to society of what we have received in ample measure from our parents, teachers and other

benefactors, and *tapas* as the restoration of normal health and power of functioning to the body, after thoughtless indulgence. Hurting and torturing the body is as much a slavery to it as pampering and indulgence. The body is a field to cultivate, an instrument of service, a temple for the spirit, a steed to train and use aright. Do not let the senses roam at will and do not flog the poor body to death. For the harmonious control of the body and the senses, of speech and mind, verses 14-17 of Chapter 17 of the *Gita* provide the clearest and most efficacious prescription :

Worship of the gods, the regenerate, the Guru and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, brahmacharya (continence), and non-injury, these constitute the external aspect of tapas.

Speech which does not cause excitement, which is truthful, agreeable and beneficial, and the study of the scriptures and the practice of japa constitute the tapas of speech.

Cheerfulness, serenity, silence, self-restraint and purity of heart constitute the tapas of the mind.

These three forms of tapas, performed with supreme faith without any desire for fruit are declared sattvic.

Tapas for mere show is rajasic and tapas which is self-mortification or intended to injure others is tamasic.

Once the programme of *sattvic tapasya* as prescribed above is undertaken, self-control becomes as easy as the regular breathing of a healthy person. The renunciation of purposeless action, of irrelevant or hurtful speech, and of distracting thoughts, becomes effortless. With mind fixed on the Light within, renunciation of outer objects springs, spontaneous like a flower, from the wholeness of one's being. Such *tapas* is not enforced suppression of desire by the exercise of will, but the sublimation of a baser into a nobler yearning. Once the mind is attuned to *buddhi*, the higher intellect, rather than to the senses, discipline becomes a natural way of life, not a deliberate exercise. The mind becomes tranquil and ceases to wander. *Mouna* then is positive, dynamic stillness, not a willed avoidance of speech. It is not only the tongue but the mind that ceases to chatter. The inner stillness, the mental *mouna*, can be so profound that even *japa*, the hypnotic rhythm of repeated *mantra*, merges in the silence of *ajapa*.

Manu defines *tapas* succinctly as concentration of the mind and senses, and recommends it as the supreme virtue, greater than all other virtues. In the *Prasnopanishad* when Bhagavan Pippalada is approached by six aspirants for instruction, he advises them to spend a year in *tapas*, *brahmacharya* and *shraddha* (austerity, purity and faith). Here it is to be noted that he agrees to enlighten them "if he knew what they wanted to know." The expression of humility here on the sage's part is indeed charming. The idea behind the injunction is that any serious enquiry can begin only when the mind has been duly prepared to frame the right question which alone can elicit the right answer, though this answer may or may not be amenable to formulation in words.

Tapas then serves to release mental energy, by sorting out the essential from the non-essential. It helps to reject, deny and cast

out entanglements and surplusage. *Brahmacharya* conserves the energy thus released and utilizes it for the spiritual quest. Faith, which is not loyalty to something known or clinging to some memory of the past, but the courage to confront the unknown, the ever-fresh, rejects in its totality the past and faces the future in its freshness. Faith creates and does not merely repeat.

In his interpretation of the third chapter of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (the dialogue between the Sage Varuna and his son Bhrigu), Rohit Mehta makes the bold suggestion that the Upanishad takes us step by step from the stage of the householder, who has to preserve the heritage of the past, through the *ashrama* of the forest-dweller, the *Vanaprastha*, who has to mediate between the freedom of *moksha* and the discipline of *dharma* and lay down the *yugadharmā*, the current version of *Sanātana dharmā*, and thence on to *sannyasa*, the stage of complete renunciation and creative awareness, which brings the light and energy of the timeless to modify while yet preserving the continuity of a great tradition. *Nadee vegena suddhyati* (Movement keeps the river pure). The *dharma* is *sanatana* because it keeps changing. It is the banks that ensure the flow of the river. The *sāstrās* may shift the banks from time to time without obstructing the flow of the river. But the *sāstrās* derive their sanction from the insights and utterances of the Sages.

The Sages are persons whose *tapas*, if any, is over and done with but who assure us of the availability of *moksha* and at the same time enjoin on us the performance of *tapas* to increase our eligibility for it. It is in this sense, indicated by Bhagavan Pippalada and Manu, that we have to understand *tapas*. When Bhrigu approached his father Varuna for *Brahmajnana* the Sage told him to realize Brahman by *tapas*, giving him the general definition of Brahman as "that from which everything is manifested, that in which all things have their existence, and that in which

they all get finally dissolved." It is worth noting that Varuna tells Bhrigu that ultimately *tapas* itself is Brahman : *Tapō Brahma*. Accepting this definition of *tapas* as itself being Brahman, Bhrigu proceeds on his quest and gradually step by step by sustained meditation he passes over the physical, vital, mental and intellectual planes and arrives at the non-dual bliss of pure awareness and reaches the final goal of his search. The Upanishad assures us that Bhrigu attained this realization by following the instruction of his father and master Varuna, *Bhargavi Vārūni vidyā*.

The idea of *tapas* pervades the whole of our culture. Perhaps the most popular of all our classics, Valmiki's *Rāmāyana*, begins with the words *tapas* and *svādhyāya*, concentration of mind and study of the scriptures. These two, meditation and study, are the twin wings on which alone any aspirant can engage in spiritual flight.

No worth-while problem could be solved without one-pointed application of all one's energies, physical, mental and moral. As Polanyi has pointed out in *Personal Knowledge*, the epoch-making discoveries of modern science have occurred when the persons concerned were completely lost to the external world and totally absorbed in the pursuit of truth along their chosen path. That is *tapas*. Gandhiji, going on his political mission to Rajkot, says that he was unaware of even where he was going and for what. It is in such a mood of complete surrender that the most intricate problems get solved spontaneously without the interference of the individual mind. One notices the same "self-abandonment to divine Providence" in Gandhiji's attitude to his work at the Round Table Conference which he attended as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress. He went to the Conference depending solely on the inspiration from within. He had no pre-arranged plan or procedure regarding what he would say or

do. On a superficial view, it may be said that Gandhiji was no match for the highly intelligent and very well prepared politicians and diplomats, both English and Indian, who surrounded him at the Conference. But he touched the hearts of the people and moved the best British minds by an appeal to their hearts rather than to facts and reason. His *tapas* was more effective than his arguments.

Tapas amounts to breaking through the thought-barrier so that the individual mind emptied of its contents functions as a channel through which the universal mind flows with its own immense power. This is how *Shanti* is converted into *Shakti* and the Karmayogi, renouncing love of power, begins to utilize the power of love.

Real greatness shines forth only on the disappearance of the petty ego and its laborious and calculated efforts. Truth revealed itself to the *rishis* (seers) only when they were totally absorbed within and oblivious of their separate individuality. One need not be a scholar. What is required is the earnest search for the Truth, for Reality, and absence of all thought concerning the insignificant individuality. In other words, the *sine qua non* of success in all endeavours, and more particularly in the spiritual realm, is total loss of one's separate individuality in the fiery aspiration not so much to know as to be the Truth. The moth is content to feed and be the flame.

In recent times we have an example of this self-immolation in Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was not a man of learning as we generally count learning. It was only sincerity and self-surrender that made him what he was. He considered life not worth living if he did not see face to face the ultimate Power moving the entire universe, which he worshipped as Kali. Great scholars and famous leaders of thought like Keshab Chandra Sen deemed it a rare privilege to sit at his feet and hear the inspired words

of wisdom that fell from the lips of this unassuming devotee of the Mother Divine. Narendranath, the young man bubbling with vitality and keen in search of ultimate Truth, was in the beginning something of a sceptic and resisted with all his might the Paramahansa's enchantment. He was on his guard not to be overpowered by some psychic power emanating from the Paramahansa. But later he recognised the real worth of the Master and became the mighty Vivekananda, his ardent admirer and humble disciple. Somewhat similar is the instance of Ganapati Muni, the scholar and genius of varied talents, accepting the *Brahmana Swami* on Arunachala as his guru and learning from him the method and meaning of real *tapas*. Watching the source of the 'I'-thought, which is the source of all thoughts, is *tapas*, according to Ramana Maharshi. Watching the source of the sound-vibration of a *mantra* also leads one to the still centre within, Sri Ramana assures us.

Even after the first three years of total Self-absorption, even after he began to talk little by little with earnest aspirants, Bhagavan Ramana was for many years mostly silent in the serene atmosphere of the Virupaksha cave on Arunachala. This silence was not deliberate restraint, but non-volitional freedom from all movements of the mind. The fragrance of this Silence of the Self spreads far and wide on the blossoming of the Heart. In the first of his *Five Verses to Arunachala*, he prays, "Be Thou the Sun, O Arunachala! for the blossoming of the Heart."

Verse 3 of *Upadesa Sara* which recommends disinterested action surrendered to the Lord as a good way leading on to *moksha*, and verse 5, which prescribes appropriate service of all living beings as forms of the Lord, are the first steps in spiritual progress under modern conditions. They release religious practices from the prison of ritualism into the wide open spaces of our ordinary

SELF IS IMMORTAL

"The idea that I am the body or the mind, is so deep that one cannot get over it even if convinced otherwise. One experiences a dream and knows it to be unreal on waking. Waking experience is unreal in other states. So each state contradicts the others. They are therefore mere changes taking place in the seer, or phenomena appearing in the Self, which is unbroken and remains unaffected by them. Just as the waking, dream and sleep states are phenomena, so also birth, growth and death are phenomena in the Self. Birth and death are only ideas. They pertain to the body or the mind. The Self exists before the birth of this body and will remain after the death of this body. The Self is immortal. The fear of death is of the body. Such fear is due to ignorance. Mortality is only an idea and cause of misery. You get rid of it by realising the Immortal nature of the Self."

— from *TALKS* p. 468.

empirical life. There need be no conflict between the *shanti* of pure awareness and the *shakti* which inspires individual action and brings about social progress. This relation between individual and society is well brought out in Chapter 10 of *Sri Ramana Gita*.

The Silence arising on the blossoming of the Heart prevails throughout even in the midst of incessant activity. The last verse of *Upadesa Sara* says that the unceasing scintillation (*sphurana*) of the Self on the annihilation of the ego is the mightiest *tapas*.

*Aham-apatakam, Nija Vibhanakam
Mahadidam Tapo Ramana-vagiyam*

That indeed is the last word on *tapas*. Egoless behaviour is both the means and the end of the good life, whether it is deliberately pursued as a discipline or spontaneously manifested as the light of the sun or the fragrance of the flower.

AT THE FEET OF BHAGAVAN RAMANA

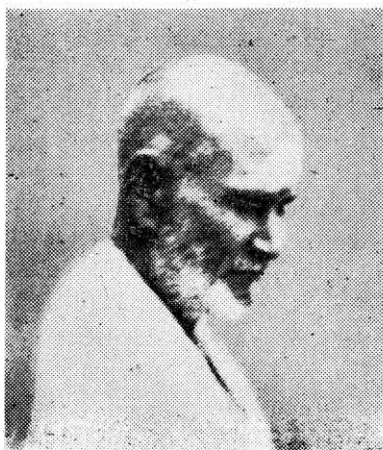
(Reminiscences—2)

By

Viswanatha Swami

MY first *darsan* of Bhagavan Sri Ramana was in January, 1921, at Skandashram, which is on the eastern slope of Arunachala and looks like the very heart of the majestic Hill. It is a beautiful quiet spot with a few cocconut and other trees and a perennial crystal-clear spring. Bhagavan was there as the very core of such natural beauty.

I saw in him something quite arresting which clearly distinguished him from all others I had seen. He seemed to live apart from the physical frame, quite detached from it. His look and smile had remarkable spiritual charm. When he spoke, the words seemed to come out of an abyss. One could see immaculate purity and non-attachment in him and his movements. I sensed something very refined, lofty and sacred about him. In his vicinity the mind's distractions were overpowered by an austere and potent



Sri Viswanatha Swami

calmness and the unique bliss of peace was directly experienced. This I would call *Ramana Lahari*, 'the blissful atmosphere of Ramana'. In this ecstasy of grace one loses one's sense of separate individuality and there remains something grand and all-pervading, all-devouring. This indeed is the spirit of

THE WIND

By
Arthur Osborne

I am a pipe the wind blows through:
Be still, it is the wind that sings!
The course of my life and the things I do
And the seeming false
and the seeming true
Are the tune of the wind that neither knows
Good and ill or joys and woes;
Yet the ultimate awe is deeper yet
Than song or pipe or storm,
For pipe and tune are the formless wind
That seemed for a while to take form,
And words are good to escape from words
And strife to escape from strife,
But Silence drinks in all the waves
Of song and death and life.

Arunachala which swallows up the whole universe by its gracious effulgence.

There were about ten devotees living with him there, including his mother and younger brother. One of them was Vallimalai Murugar, who for a while every morning sang the Tamil songs of the *Tirupugazh* with great fervour. These well-known songs, the remarkable outpourings of the famous devotee, Sri Arunagirinatha, are songs in praise of Subrahmanya. When he sang, Bhagavan used to keep time (*tāla*) by tapping with two small sticks on the two rings of an iron brazier of live coal kept in front of him. Fumes of incense spread out in rolls from the brazier, suffused with the subtle holy atmosphere of Bhagavan. While Bhagavan's hands were tapping at the brazier thus, his unfathomable look of grace gave one a glimpse of the beyond in silence. It was an unforgettable experience.

There was also a devotee from Chidambaram, Subrahmanya Iyer, who often sang with great fervour *Tiruvāchāgam*, hymns in

praise of Arunachala by Bhagavan, and songs in praise of Bhagavan also. One morning when he began a song with the refrain "*Ramana Satguru, Ramana Satguru, Ramana Satguru Rāyanē*". Bhagavan also joined in the singing. The devotee got amused and began to laugh at Bhagavan himself singing his own praise. He expressed his amusement, and Bhagavan replied, "What is extraordinary about it? Why should one limit *Ramana* to a form of six feet? Is it not the all-pervading Divinity that you adore when you sing '*Ramana Satguru, Ramana Satguru*'? Why should I not also join in the singing? We all felt lifted to Bhagavan's standpoint.

The inmates of the Ashram used to get up at dawn and sing some devotional songs in praise of Arunachala and Bhagavan Ramanā before beginning their day's work. Niranjananda Swami told Bhagavan that I could recite hymns in Sanskrit, and Bhagavan looked at me expectantly. Seeing that it was impossible to avoid it, I recited a few verses in Sanskrit. When I had finished, Bhagavan gently looked at me and said, "You have learned all this. Not so, my case. I knew nothing, had learned nothing before I came here. Some mysterious power took possession of me and effected a thorough transformation. Whoever knew then what was happening to me? Your father, who was intending in his boyhood to go to the Himalayas for tapas, has become the head of a big family. And I, who knew nothing and planned nothing, have been drawn and kept down here for good! When I left home (in my seventeenth year), I was like a speck swept on by a tremendous flood. I knew not my body or the world, whether it was day or night. It was difficult even to open my eyes — the eyelids seemed to be glued down. My body became a mere skeleton. Visitors pitied my plight as they were not aware how blissful I was. It was after years that I came across

the term '*Brahman*' when I happened to look into some books on *Vedanta* brought to me. Amused, I said to myself, 'Is this known as *Brahman*!'" One of the earliest devotees, Sivaprakasam Pillai, has referred to this at the beginning of his brief biography of Bhagavan in Tamil verse (known as *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*) as, "One who became a knower of *Brahman* without knowing even the term '*Brahman*'." Sivaprakasam Pillai used to sit in a corner in Bhagavan's presence, as the very embodiment of humility.

Finding that I knew a bit of Sanskrit, Bhagavan asked me to take down a copy of *Sri Ramana Gita* and give it to my father. I did so, and it was only after going through it that my father understood Bhagavan. Yet I myself had not studied its contents. It was only at the end of 1922 that I happened to go through the thrilling verses in praise of Bhagavan Ramana¹ and, profoundly moved, I made up my mind to return to Bhagavan for good. Thus, *Sri Ramana Gita* served to give direction to me in a critical period of my life when I was thinking of dedicating myself solely to spiritual pursuit.

As it was impossible to get the permission of my father, I left home unknown to anybody and reached Tiruvannamalai on the evening of the 2nd of January, 1923. Hearing that Bhagavan had left Skandashram and was then living in a cottage adjoining his mother's *samadhi* on the southern side of Arunachala, I made my way straight to it, after meditating for a while at sunset time. Proceeding round the Hill, I reached the cottage where Bhagavan was then living. Entering it, I saw Bhagavan reclining peacefully on an elevated dais. As I bowed and stood before him, he asked me, "Did you take the permission of your parents to come over here?" I was caught, and I replied that he need not ask me about it since he had himself

¹ in the Eighteenth Chapter of *Sri Ramana Gita*. (reproduced in this issue).

irresistibly attracted me to his feet. With a smile, Bhagavan advised me to inform my parents of my whereabouts so that they might be somewhat free from anxiety. I wrote to my father the next day and saw his letter to the Ashram enquiring about me the day after.

There was a gathering of devotees there and I came to know that it was for the forty-third birthday celebration of Bhagavan the next day. So I learned that I had come to Bhagavan on the evening of the famous *Ardra darshanam* day.

Early next morning there was a gathering of devotees — they were sitting before Bhagavan. But my attention was particularly gripped by a radiant personality amidst the gathering. He was, I came to know, Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri. At once I saw that he was not merely a *sastri*, a learned man, but a poet and a *tapaswin*. His broad forehead, bright eyes, aquiline nose, charming face

CONVERSATIONS—4

By
Darlene Delisi¹

Sri Kunju Swami said: "Once, Sri Bhagavan showed the Holy Hill, Arunachala and said: 'This is the storehouse of all spiritual Power. Going round it you benefit in all ways. Just as when you perform *japa* in Kasi, Varanasi, it is particularly beneficial, going round the Hill you get countless benefits thereby. It is called *sanchāra samādhi*. While walking round the Hill the body is active but the mind is at rest at its source. The mind is then free from distractions. Through *sanchāra samādhi* one easily gets *sahaja samadhi*. Hence our forefathers praised the value of pilgrimages; a pilgrimage (on foot) enables one to get established in *sanchāra samādhi*.'"

¹ Gathered by the writer while talking to Sri Kunju Swami.

Putting Out the Fire

By
Jeannette Kilkus

Neither accept
Nor reject
Neither excite
Nor delight
To ignite
The flames which feed on mental fuel
And suck your breath
From birth to death—
A witless duel.

But poised beside the abyss
'Twixt what seems and what is,
Abide as the pure bliss
Of the still, quiet 'I'.

Centered in the Heart
Learn the artless art
Of being what thou truly art.

and beard, and the melodious ring in his voice — all these proclaimed that he was a *rishi* to be ranked with the foremost of the Vedic Seers. There was authority, dignity and

sweetness in his talk, and his eyes sparkled as he spoke. He recited the following verse (*sloka*) in praise of Bhagavan, which he had just then composed, and explained its import:

*"It is effulgent Devi Uma sparkling in your eyes dispelling the ignorance of devotees, It is Lakshmi Devi, the consort of lotus-eyed Vishnu, alive in your lotus-face, It is Para Vak Saraswati, the consort of Brahma, dancing in your talk, Great Seer, Ramana, the Teacher of the whole world, How can mortal man praise you adequately?"*²

Those who have come in contact with Ganapati Muni would find this verse well-suited to describe him as well.

(To be continued)

² Transliteration of the verse 'Devi Sakii':

*Devi Saktiriyam drisoh Sritajana
dwhanta-kshayadhayinee
Devi Sreeriyam-ambujaksha-mahishee
Vaktre Sahasracchade,
Devi Brahma-Vadhooriyam Vijayate
Vyahara-gooda Para
Visvacharya Mahanubhava Ramana Tvam
stouthu Kah Prakritah*

"As we go through the day — we constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day 'Thy will be done'. We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient It works — it really does."

— ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.

RAMANA MAHARSHI and the Availability of Self-Realisation

By

Douglas E. Harding

This is the first of a number of articles I'm writing for The Mountain Path's celebration of Sri Maharshi's centenary. They have no pretensions to being scholarly or even objective commentaries on Maharshi's teaching. On the contrary, they are highly personal and subjective accounts of that teaching, of what it has come to mean for me after some eighteen years of bathing in Maharshi's darshan — if I may so put it. The other articles will be about such topics as the Body, the Mind, Mystical Experience, Happiness, and the World, each viewed in the light of Maharshi's teaching, from the writer's standpoint.

Self-realisation is possible only for the fit.... One must be ready to sacrifice everything for the Truth. Complete renunciation is the index of fitness.

Divine Grace is essential for Realisation.... It is vouchsafed only to him who is a true devotee or a yogin, who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom.

* * *

All are seeing God always, but they don't know it.

I see what needs to be seen.... I see only just what all do, nothing more.

The self is always self-evident.

The ever-present Self needs no effort to be realised. Realisation is already there.... The self is within each one's experience every moment.

There is nothing so simple as being the Self. It requires no effort, no aid.

WILL you please read again these two sets of quotation from Maharshi's *Talks*, and note how flagrantly they contradict each other — or so it seems.

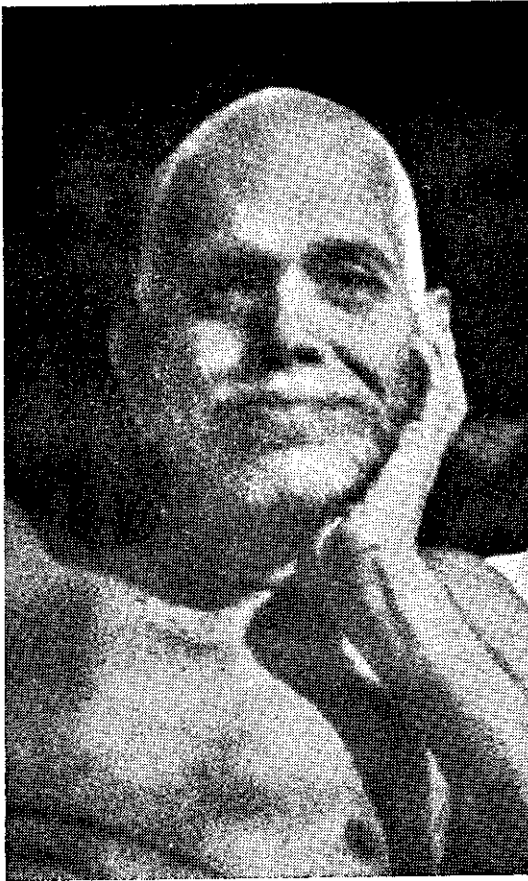
Again and again, when reading the words of the Sages, one comes across these two messages: Self-realisation is just about the easiest thing in the world — and just about the most difficult! Liberation is the reward of long, earnest, and careful work — and conversely it is nothing of the sort: it is perfectly natural and ever-present and not at all to be striven for! Who I really am is brilliantly obvious to me right now, just as I am, if only I will dare to turn my attention round and examine the spot I occupy; and (they

add) this vision is available only to the few who qualify for it!

Thus it isn't only Maharshi who confronts us again and again with this total contradiction or paradox. It appears in all the great mystical teachings of the world.

Among contemporaries, Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj tells us that Liberation is an arduous and costly work, and in the next breath that our only trouble is that we pretend that we aren't liberated.

Before going on to investigate whether and how such seemingly flagrant contradictions can be reconciled, let us notice in passing what effect they have upon readers and devotees. There are three reactions:



- (1) The first and by far the commonest reaction is to take seriously only those passages which appear to say that Enlightenment or Liberation *isn't* available, and to ignore (to be word-blind to) the other passages which insist that it *is* available here and now, however fit or unfit I may think I am. The excuse frequently given to justify this word-blindness is humility. "I'm not enlightened", pronounced rather smugly, if not proudly, and with the suggestion that not everyone is so modest! In fact it would be more honest to say: "For all sorts of reasons I'm determined to overlook, indeed deny hotly, my ever-present Enlightenment, and the words of my Master which assert it are nonsense — so far as I'm concerned."
- (2) The second kind of reaction by readers and devotees is the reverse of the first:

namely, to take seriously only those teachings which emphasise the immediacy and obviousness of the Self, and conveniently overlook those which mention the price that has to be paid. In this case the common excuse is likely to be that, since one's true Nature is Enlightenment itself anyway, there's nothing to be done about it, no on-going practice, no renewal of dedication, no spiritual work. And the result of this attitude is that, even if one has actually glimpsed one's true Nature, one is in effect still living the old deluded life of identification with one's human nature. One's occasional in-seeing is largely inoperative.

- (3) The third reaction is the genuinely humble one, the only one which shows true respect for the Teacher, the only one worthy of the real devotee, and that is to give equal weight to both sides of the teaching, acknowledging and not denying or glossing over its 'contradictions', and diligently working out their reconciliation, not in theory so much as in moment-to-moment practice. The rest of this article is about just that.

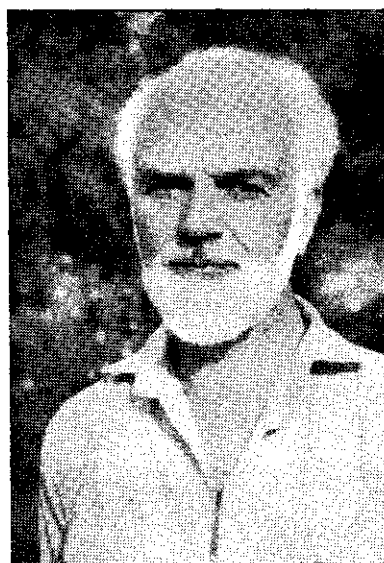
For a start, let's ask ourselves what Self-realisation is, anyway. What, in its simplest terms, is this experience which is so paradoxically described as perfectly free on request, and as costing the earth — costing everything? It is clearly seeing that I'm not my body, my mind, my past, my future, my thoughts and feelings, my hopes and fears, and so on, and on. You name it: I'm not that. Self-realisation is the perception that where I am is no thing whatever, no form, no limits, no content at all, but only this indescribable Reality which we inadequately call Consciousness, or I AM, or the Source, or the Still Centre of all things.

The fact that it takes no time at all to arrive at this Absence-Presence which I AM might suggest that it takes no work and involves no process, and that nothing has happened to enable me to see the Self. In one sense this is true; in another sense it is

entirely false. This in-seeing, instantaneous and simple though it certainly is, necessarily involves giving up everything one had ever identified with — everything. This is no ordinary self-denial, which is giving up the 'bad' and hanging onto the 'good'. And no ordinary death, which is organic matter turning into inorganic. It is total stripping and total dying, down, down, down below the last hint of matter itself to the featureless Source of all.

Now of all adventures this stripping, this many-sided death, this annihilation of all our selves, is in fact the most difficult and terrifying and lethal, whether we consciously recognise this or not. There is no terror like the fear of vanishing without a trace. And that terror (more or less unacknowledged) is the real reason why so many of us fail to register, even fail to see, those words which assure us of our ever-present Enlightenment. No wonder we are scared stiff of what we will discover when we turn our gaze from the world to its seer. It makes no difference to be assured that the terror strikes those who hover on the brink of the Abyss, and that once over that fearful edge all fear whatever is at an end. Most of us retreat hastily from the terrible Emptiness we barely glimpse.

But some are pushed, or stumble, or are gently wafted over the edge. They are the "fit ones", recipients of the Grace which Maharshi speaks of. In actual fact, whether they are aware of it or not, they are "ready to sacrifice everything for the Truth". This plunge is certain death, without remainder, and at once extremely 'easy' and extremely 'hard'. We all know in what sense it is easy to fall over a natural cliff such as Beachy Head, and in what sense it is difficult. The Precipice of our true Nature is rather similar. The Gulf is plain to see, unfenced, very near indeed, possibly fascinating. A push, and over we go: it takes no effort to penetrate that Abyss. So Ramana Maharshi rightly



Douglas E. Harding

insists that on the one hand Self-realisation is effortless, ours for the asking, ours anyway; and on the other that it takes all we've got.

I have many friends who are over the edge, who clearly see (or at least can see when they wish to) that the Spot they occupy is in fact unoccupied, and yet have so far experienced none of the terror of the Abyss, or the agony of total dying. Friends, I mean, who have tumbled over into the Void with very little effort or resistance or alarm, as soon as it was pointed out to them. Subjects of divine Grace, indeed! Are such fortunate ones, to whom Self-realisation is availability itself, then let off cheap and excused from all fear, all effort, all or much of the "hard and ceaseless strife" which Maharshi speaks of?

No! One isn't over that Precipice and dead and gone once and for all. Again and again and again that tremendous Void must be plunged into; and I suspect that, later if not sooner, in the end if not in the beginning, it will hold an agony and a terror which can only be experienced, and neither anticipated nor described. Paradoxically that ultimate

LOOK OF COMPASSION

By

Joan Greenblatt

Before we knew thy name
We looked upon thy face.
And from those eyes a glance of grace
Leapt out in love and filled
Our hearts with joy.

We had not heard
A single word
Of teaching from your lip.
Yet just that one compassionate look
Held us in its grip.

And that one moment of surprise
Still stands with us, a strange sunrise
Whose power divine
Seals us for ever thine.

Restored to our eternal Being,
We are at last at home,
The home we'd never left.

May this fresh morning-light
on our heart-lotus
Shine for ever and unite
Sun and Flower, Heaven and Earth,
As fire stands frozen, Time stands still
In this, thy Holy Hill.

fear turns out to be the recipe for ultimate fearlessness, but this doesn't mean it can be avoided or reduced. Even more certainly I doubt whether the discipline of bringing oneself, minute by minute, over the months and years and decades, to "complete renunciation", can be avoided or much reduced. Unremitting practice is indispensable so long as there remains underfoot an inch of ground, or any trace of cliff-top, to stand on.

Maharshi emphasises the need to stabilise Self-realisation. And there certainly is a world of difference between one for whom the Truth is constantly present and one for whom the Truth is for most of the time overlooked. All the same, the Abyss is the Abyss, with no degrees of emptiness. To experience This at all is to experience it exactly as all the

Sages experience it, no matter how unpractised the experiencer or how brief his experience. The Self sees to it that it cannot be mis-seen. That is its nature.

And its nature is to be always and totally available. The fallibility — the fears, doubts, blindness — of human nature cannot detract from the Perfection of who we are *already*. The ultimate truth, as Maharshi points out untiringly, is that "there is no reaching the Self. If the Self were to be reached, it would mean that the Self is not now and here. . . . You are already the Self. Therefore realisation is common to everyone. . . . This very doubt *Can I realise?* or the feeling *I have not realised* are the obstacles."

In spite of these encouraging words, you may rightly point out that Grace is needed to enable you to cease doubting your ever-present Self-realisation. Yes: but this is no excuse for standing there, well clear of the edge, idly awaiting the push of divine Grace — and fervently hoping it won't happen just yet! At least dare to take a peep over the edge of the world. Look now at what you're looking out of. Notice what's now taking in these printed words. Ramana Maharshi says "It is really like gazing into Vacancy." Aren't you now in your own first-hand experience no thing at all but the Vacancy in which these marks on paper are on display. Look and see if your Vacancy is available or hidden from you. To discover whether you are the fortunate recipient of divine Grace, just have the courage to look at yourself now without thought or belief or imagination, with the open mind of a little child.

If you see that you never were standing on that desperate cliff-edge of thingness and humanness, but were and are and always will be this immense Vacancy, this Abyss of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, why then you are no longer merely the recipient of Grace. You are Grace itself.

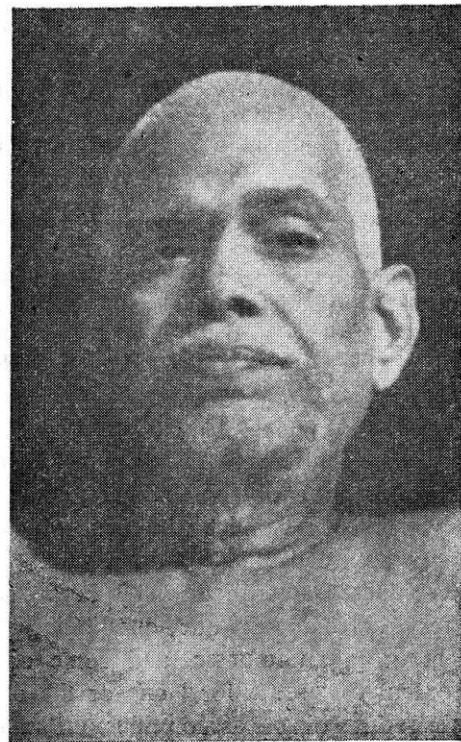
..... Holding on to the 'I AM' Consciousness

By
Ruth Toner

LET us without preamble go straight to the heart of the human condition. Throughout mankind's long journey, a few have been questioning, "Where have we come from and whither do we go?" If our reasoning faculty, philosophy or science, could have answered these questions they would have been answered long ago. But the answers they give do not satisfy that deep part in ourselves from which the questions arise, and we continue to try to find an answer which in all sincerity bears the stamp of truth.

The quest is through and for awareness, and we need to keep this faculty very alive in mind and feeling as we go along. Awareness is at the very frontier of human evolution, and we can accept that this alone will help us in our search. But awareness of *what*? Our primary awareness is the certainty, beyond doubt, that "*I am*", and not just physically. This can be our starting point. Each one knows without persuasion that he or she "*is*". Indeed, it can be said that it is the realization "*I am*" which distinguishes us from animals and makes us truly human. When the intimation in us lies buried and unrecognized, we gravitate towards action and reaction. When it is sensed, sometimes more, sometimes less, and responded to, we begin to strive towards a higher aspect of ourselves. That is, we begin to move away from reactive behaviour towards greater awareness and consciousness.

We should remain steady in awareness so far as is possible. We need to "come to ourselves" — a feeling we all recognize — as often as we may, and allow life to the



feeling "I-myself-here-now". As we are, it is inevitable that we shall drift, but with each awakening to this sense of self there will be noticed a quickening which brings us momentarily above the ordinary level on which we live.

Yet, although the *fact* of our existence is clear to us, we do not see *what* this existence *is*. We are vague about this all-important aspect of ourselves, and in a strange way we are content to remain vague. If asked, some will say they are the body; others locate the sense of existence in the mind; others in the feelings; some in a combination of all of these.

The Waning Moon

By

Arthur Osborne

**Oh never think the moon compulsive wanes:
Fate is compulsion only to the fool
Who flees eternity to seek time's gains
And, frog-like, finds his ocean in a pool.**

**Man and the moon have choice, yet it is not
Whether to go or stay; immutable
Their path and phases of their path; their lot
Written in light, most ineluctable.**

**Their choice is whether, clinging to their
place,
To stumble on, flogged by fate's iron wip,
Or, as the bride flees to her lord's embrace,
Set sail with love for breeze and faith
for ship.**

Many equate the feeling "I" with ego. Many feel there is an entity or soul inhabiting the body which is in conflict with ego, which is generally regarded as a bit of villain. We can feel uneasy at such diversity of opinion. We feel baffled that our questioning has brought us to an impasse, and some of us are content to "settle for" one or the other of the foregoing assumptions. Perhaps, afraid to go further, we remain overshadowed by a sense of loss or incompleteness. Yet to some, the sense of incompleteness becomes the mainspring behind further inquiry.

In a sense all these views have a measure of truth in them. We have fallen short in that we accept our sense of existence — inner existence — at too shallow a level. No one denies that a sense of self exists. Or, if anyone should deny this, then the question "Who is it that denies?" will immediately bring into sharp relief a sense of self behind the denial.

In falling short in our understanding of the sense of self, we remain in ignorance of the

truth of our own being, because we are unaware of the *Source of our own sense of self*. We experience a vague sense of self in our faculties but are unaware of its Source — hence our feeling of incompleteness. So long as we believe ourselves to be limited in this way, the Reality which is our essential being remains hidden.

Let us take the illustration of the snake and the rope. So long as the illusion of "snake" overlies the reality of "rope", we remain in ignorance and react to the idea "snake". In the same way, while we remain fixed in the idea that we are body, mind, emotions, ego and so on, we cannot see the underlying Reality of our own Being, which is there, constant and unchanging — even now. "Snake" and "rope" cannot both be "taken in" by the mind at the same time. The idea of one or the other has precedence. So it is with our idea of what is called "personal self". For quite understandable reasons, as we shall see, we have come to cling to the idea of "personal self", and its source, "Universal Self" is for us in eclipse.

Indeed, our sense of self has become so overlaid by all kinds of misconceptions which have formed deep thought channels, that the mere introduction of an alternative point of view would make little difference. By force of habit the mind would spring back to its accustomed channels. Not until we understand, deeply, what the incompleteness in ourselves is will we start enquiring in the right direction. What is this incompleteness? Precisely that we have forgotten *Who* we are. We have a misplaced sense of self. We live on the periphery of ourselves, as a rule quite forgetful of the Centre.

To understand how this has happened, let us consider for a moment the evolution of man. Thus far he has evolved as the result of pressures of climate, shelter, vegetation, food and water, and through his adaptation

to his surroundings. Life has become very complex for him, and the old problems of territory, sense of possession and dominance have become vast as the planet becomes more populated. All this has happened, we might say, as the result of natural causes. That is, man's evolution has not been a conscious development.

The awareness of himself as he truly is has no doubt been latent within him for thousands of years. Yet, at least through the last five thousand years, there have been individuals who have been conscious, have known reflective-consciousness, and who have made efforts to awaken their contemporaries, and who have left indications for those who follow.

But growth is slow, at least so it seems on our time scale. It is otherwise if looked at on the time-scale of our own planet. However, there are indications that man has begun to stir, to awaken, to "come to himself", in individuals here and there during recent times, and it could well be that this awakening to the possibility of greater consciousness (not to be confused with 'intellectuality') is quickening.

We can call to mind many small groups where people are "searching". Then, there are innumerable *yoga* groups, also communes where people are trying to live harmoniously with each other and with nature. And no matter what we may feel about the many *gurus* who are springing up in the West, they do so only because they have support from people, largely young people, who seek a new way of life.

Hastening this development, books, and especially translations of sacred works from the East, have become easily available to us during the past fifty years. Television has an important part to play when used, as recently in the British series "The Long Search". Travel facilitates our understand-

CONVERSATIONS—5

By
Darlene Delisi¹

Some time after he came here, Sri Muruganar, one of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, asked Bhagavan about the spiritual benefit of going round the Hill (*giri pradakshina*). Bhagavan asked him to go round it first and then come to him. Sri Muruganar followed his advice and told Bhagavan that he lost his *dehatma buddhi* (body-consciousness) after a while and regained it only after reaching Adi Annamalai. He reported to Sri Bhagavan that the experience was unexpected and unique.

Sri Bhagavan smiled and said: "Do you now understand?"

¹ Gathered by the writer while talking to Sri Kunju Swami.

ing that there have been, and still are, ways of life where awareness plays an important part. Respected and sincere thinkers, like Jung, carry weight and are widely read. And psychology has helped twentieth century man to get some release from his troubled depths, thus leaving him more free to explore in new directions.

In understanding something of how man has come up through evolution, and in understanding, too, how we have each come up through childhood, we can see how the feeling of self has become predominantly lodged in what we broadly call 'ego'. We can see how the habit-channels were formed, driving us into the 'me' and the 'mine' which life required for its purposes. We can see how all the competitiveness and striving, likes and dislikes, prejudices, negativity and conflict followed.

In pondering this, giving it our attention, we may already begin to feel that the impasse

mentioned earlier could be surmounted. Yes — “surmounted”. This means — doesn't it? — moving in a different direction. The impasse blocks our way only so long as we remain on our accustomed, habitual level.

Have you ever watched a fly, or perhaps a bee, moving left, right, up, down, on a window pane, trying vainly to get out? An inch away the window is open, and we feel, “Oh, why doesn't it move in another direction?” Yet the laws of its being inhibit it from moving at right angles to the glass and on to the wooden frame and to freedom. Sometimes we are prompted to help it out, which on the insect's level must represent what is for us a higher intervention. . . .

The wonder is that with the human faculty of awareness, inner awareness, self-awareness, we *are* able to move in another direction, at right-angles, as it were, to our accustomed plane. It is this which gives us the possibility to surmount, or rather to outgrow, the confines of our impasse. Yet this faculty has thus far remained, in general, dormant. It is there to be awakened in each of us.

As with the insect, so with ourselves. We are not left without benign help from those who see the human situation and are so placed that they can point the way for our emancipation. Accepting this guidance, each individual who so wishes must come by way of his own efforts and the Grace without which such efforts could not be made.

What do they pass on to us, those who have understood our situation? There comes first to mind the inscription over the Temple at Delphi: “Know Thy Self”. From the Upanishads: “The Self must be sought.” Jesus said, “The Kingdom of Heaven is within you,” and again, “I am the way. . .” Does it shock us to consider whether this could be, “‘I am’ *is* the way. . .” for surely Jesus did not consider himself, as a person, to be fol-

lowed, to be the way. And coming to the present day, those who viewed the recent television series, “The Long Search”, may remember the reply of the Zen Abbot to the question, “What is the most important thing for a man to do?” The reply was, “Without doubt, to know himself.” Self is indicated again and again.

Supremely important for us is the guidance of one who has lived during our own lifetime, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sage of South India. Through him the Ancient Wisdom was proved, and he brought it in the simplest possible terms within the understanding of ordinary people everywhere.

He has told us that what obscures the Real Self is simply our unquestioning acceptance of ego at its face value. Our ‘blind spot’ is our conviction that the sense of self as felt in our faculties and predominantly in ego, *is* our self. Yet this vague sense of self, just as it is, is the thin thread by means of which we can come to realize the Real Self. We are like a prisoner in a high tower. Outside is someone who has come to aid our escape. He has a stout rope in hand, but how to get one end up to us? We hit upon the idea of unravelling a stocking and lowering the slender thread to the ground. Our rescuer ties to this a length of thin string and we pull up the slender thread followed by the string. Attached to the string is the cord, and in this way finally a stout rope is pulled up which we tie firmly around some strong support and make our escape through the window.

Our silken thread is here the diffused sense of self which permeates our faculties. We have to follow this thread, this clue, which will become stronger and more sure as we go along. “Follow the sense of ‘I am’,” said Ramana Maharshi, “as a dog follows the scent of his master.”

But, we protest, how can we discriminate between the sense of ‘I’ as ego and the ‘I

am' which we are advised to follow? This may not at once be clear; it is a question of inner taste and discrimination. We must remember, also, that throughout evolution and our own life, we have been accustomed to the feeling of a 'personal I', of 'me' and 'mine', and this conviction will not change except by deep understanding and pondering.

Nevertheless, by observation, we can discriminate between the two. For example, it is customary, "second nature for me" we say, to *react* from ego. (An interesting phrase that, "second nature"... What then is first nature for me? We are dimly aware, aren't we?) "Reaction" — that shows us when the ego is functioning, which is almost all the time. Another clue is the non-stop, mechanical talking which goes on incessantly within us. Yet another clue is the perpetual day-dreaming, imagining. All such idling is a function of ego and it uses up precious energy which we need for more conscious living.

On the other hand, the quality "I am" with which we wish to become more familiar, *does not react*. It remains the constant background on which the states functioning through ego come and go. During moments of awareness you may have noticed this. You may have noticed that inner talking tended to slacken off then, and that the imagination dwindled. Not that you *tried* to make this happen. It happened because, by reason of awareness, these functions of ego became less dominant.

Ramana Maharshi points out that "No thought can arise which does not contain this 'I am'; but we must not regard this 'I am' as the *property* of the mind, for it is indeed the Light of the Real Self." It is

said that this 'I am' is not in reality the little thing we take it to be. We take it to be limited and imperfect only because we do not discriminate between the element of reality in the ego from that which is false. "We are in ignorance of the truth of our own being."

We have further guidance from Ramana Maharshi: "The belief 'I am this...' (i.e., any qualification such as 'man', 'woman') or 'I and this...' is ego. When 'I-I am' is kept up as 'I' alone, it is the Self." This is the most important clue we could be given. We remember, too, that the Buddha advised us to "dwell in awareness".

We may ask, where is this awareness located? Since awareness is consciousness, it cannot be said to reside anywhere in particular; it is universal. But as a concession to our human limitations it is said that the focus of attention can be placed inwardly and a little to the right of the centre of the chest. In fact, it is the place where we generally feel our centre of gravity.

So let us focus attention gently there for a while and try to dwell in that "I am"...

And now we come back, full circle, to our earlier questioning, "Where have we come from and whither do we go?" Through awareness we can move on out of our impasse.

With pondering, and bringing awareness to our pondering, we can come to realize that our Essential Self is far from being the bundle of reactive thoughts and feelings we have taken it to be. We can come to recognize it as infinite and eternal and then there can be no question of from whence we have come and whither we go.

"But open your eyes and the world is full of God."

— JACOB BOEHME, 1575-1624.
German mystic.

THE MAHARSHI'S MISSION

By

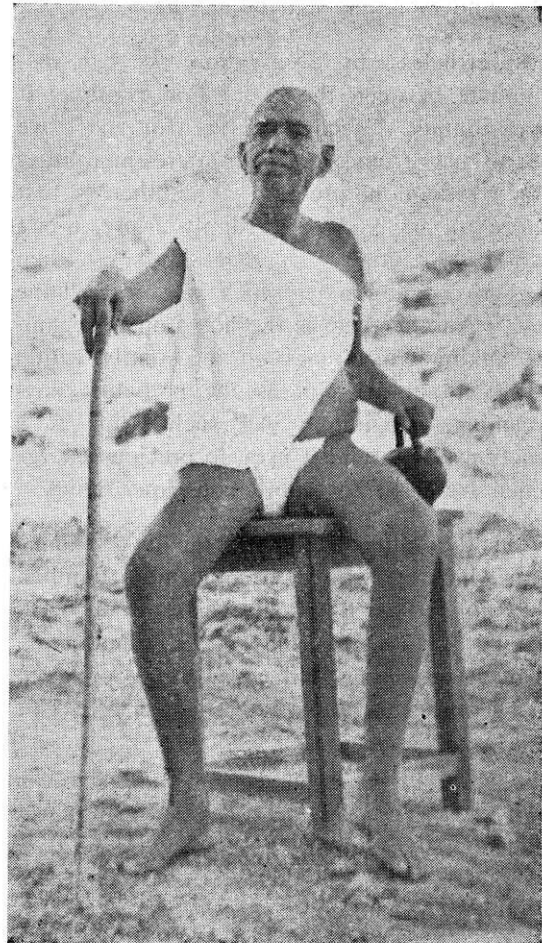
Dr. M. Sadashiva Rao

THE question 'Who is Ramana?' engaged the minds of some of the early devotees of the Maharshi who were astounded at his spiritual knowledge as a youth. They hoped that he could be identified as an incarnation of a God or a great Saint from the past. But no one dared to put the question directly to the Maharshi. The most significant answer to the question was given by the Maharshi himself in 1935 while answering a question put by Mr. Evans-Wentz, the noted translator of Tibetan scriptures. The question was: "How long did it take the Maharshi to realise the Self?"

The Maharshi explained that the question was asked because name and form were perceived. Beneath the name and form, there is the Reality of Being (the Self) in which there is neither 'I' nor 'you' nor 'he', neither present, past nor future, and which is beyond time, space and beyond expression in words. Therefore, he said, the question when the Self is realised does not arise. The Maharshi said further:

"Just as a plantain tree produces shoots at its roots before yielding fruits and perishing, and the shoots being transplanted do the same, so also the original primeval Master of antiquity, Dakshinamurti, who cleared the doubts of his Rishi-disciples in Silence, has left shoots which are ever multiplying. The Guru is a shoot of that Dakshinamurti."

The second part of the Maharshi's answer was, in all probability, prompted by a question or doubt about the identity of the Maharshi in the mind of the questioner. It explains that Dakshinamurti was the very first Guru,



and his Rishi-disciples, whom he taught in Silence (*Mouna*), became Gurus in their turn and their disciples also became Gurus in their turn, resulting in the multiplication of the number of Gurus as in the mode of multiplication of plantain (banana) trees. Finally, the Maharshi answers the doubt in the mind of the questioner by saying that the Guru (Maharshi) is a shoot (disciple) of that Dakshinamurti.

The last sentence may be taken to mean that the Maharshi is a direct disciple of Dakshinamurti. It may also be taken to mean, in a general sense, that he is one of the Gurus of that line of antiquity. It is immaterial which of the alternatives is understood, as they would all be Gurus of the highest order. Such Gurus do not come into the world of name and form except on important and specific missions as World Teachers (*Jagadgurus*) as shown by the history of the world and, in particular, by the spiritual history of India. In retrospect, there is little doubt that Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi is a Supreme Master and that he came on a specific mission as a World Teacher. An appraisal of the nature of his mission is possible by a careful study of the circumstances in the world which necessitated his coming and of the precise nature and purpose of his teachings. As a background for comparison, a brief reference is made to the time and teachings of another acknowledged World Teacher, Sri Shankaracharya, who came on a specific mission about ten centuries ago. Both Shankaracharya, and Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi taught from the standpoint of *Advaita* and the *Inana marga*, but the objects of their missions were different.

Shankaracharya's Time and Teachings

At the time of the coming of Shankaracharya in the eighth century A.D., Hindu society was in confusion regarding its fundamental spiritual beliefs. About four thousand years earlier, Krishna Dwaipayana (also known as Vyasa) had founded the school of *Vedanta darshana*¹ which since then had provided the spiritual basis of Hinduism together with the scriptures known as the *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad-gita* and *Brahmasutras*. About 500 B.C. arose Buddhism founded by Lord Buddha, who was also a World Teacher. This was an ethico-spiritual movement which developed within the Hindu fold for the uplift of the common people and followed the *Nivritti*

¹The Vision of Vedanta.



Dakshinamurti

marga (the ascetic path) of the Vedas. There was no conflict between the spiritual beliefs of Hinduism and Buddhism. However, about thirteen centuries later, there arose a gulf between the two when the Buddhist fold in India broke into several schools with diverse beliefs. Hindu society was in confusion regarding its own spiritual beliefs. It was at this time that Shankaracharya came for promoting a spiri-

THE KNOWLEDGE

By
Ira

It is only the Self that can dispel ignorance, conquer sorrow, end desire, and assuage pain.

It is none other than the Self which is knowledge, love, peace and beauty.

Any manifestation of any of these in the consciousness of any being at any time and in any place is none other than the One Self.

What remains then to be done? What wants then, to be written or spoken? Who is the darkness that light should be brought to him? And who is to carry that light?

The smallest spark of Truth that bursts in the mind of one illiterate amongst a billion in a far corner of the world is only my essential nature, existing immutably, everywhere.

If I realise then my identity with the One Self, I have done all things, I have written all scriptures, I have been given all light and I have indeed spoken every word of Truth to every ear in all space and all time.

tual revival back to the authority of *Vedanta*, *Upanishads*, *Bhagavad-gita* and *Brahmasutras*. He had to win leading scholarly opponents over with logic in order to establish that the above authoritative scriptures reveal *One Infinite Supreme Reality, Brahman, identical with the individual spirit Jiva*. He laid the firm foundations for the almost miraculous revival of the spiritual basis of Hinduism in his brief life-span of thirty-two years. He travelled by foot over the entire country and established monasteries in its four corners. In addition, he wrote lucid commentaries on the above scriptures for the benefit of the common people, he wrote brief philosophic works, and he composed a number of devotional Hymns, including one on Dakshinamurti. His teachings

have come down as the source of the spiritual beliefs of the vast majority of Hindus up to the present day.

Crisis in Fundamental Values

At the time of the coming of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi towards the close of the nineteenth century, the circumstances were entirely different. There was a fast developing world crisis, affecting almost every country, caused by the replacement of spiritual values by purely materialistic values. Science and technology began to advance from about the middle of the nineteenth century and helped most countries to develop industries and improve the economic condition of the people. Modern science brought with it a materialistic outlook. The prevailing motives for action became self-interest and material gains irrespective of social costs and consequences. Spiritual values had worn thin over a century or more, along with the reduction of religion to a mere formality so that the new material values brought by science could easily replace them. This occurred predominantly among the more advanced societies in Europe and the United States which benefited most from advances in science. As science and technology advanced at an accelerated pace in the twentieth century, full faith came to be invested in materialism as the main motivating force for advancing human welfare in the world. This faith was short-lived. It was shattered when advances in the science of atomic energy, instead of being applied for human welfare, were used for destroying entire populations. It was not a failure of science but of man and his motives. With loss of faith in material values and no permanent values for support, a deep sense of frustration is evident among the more affluent people in the West and, in particular, among the younger generations, who see no future for humanity other than a nuclear holocaust. Advanced thinkers have realised that material values should be tempered with spiritual and humane values if

humanity is to survive. But, no one has suggested how such values can be restored. Many from the West have begun to look hopefully to India and its rich spiritual heritage for a new meaning and purpose in life.

Maharshi's Teachings

The Maharshi's teachings were imparted to the people over the first five decades of the present century. His advent at this time of world crisis and the nature of his teachings are of supreme significance to the people of the whole world. His teachings are not concerned with propagation of any religion or spiritual philosophy. They go much farther and teach the people a simple spiritual practice well within the ability of everyone, for acquiring spiritual Wisdom (*Jnana*), and all that it implies, through their own efforts. No World Teacher in the past had taken up a task of such an immense magnitude. He did not undertake journeys or write treatises to spread his teachings. His teachings were imparted directly in person to individuals who were drawn to him, through his spoken words *together with the bestowing of his Silent Grace* (Mouna diksha). This is in accordance with the highest spiritual traditions of the great Gurus beginning from Dakshnamurti. The Grace of a great Guru is so powerful that sooner or later it helps every individual who receives it to understand the Guru's teachings in his life-time and take up the practice and succeed. The Grace is equally effective in the subsequent lives of the individual on the earth. The Maharshi says, in his booklet '*Who Am I?*': "*He who has earned the Grace of the Guru will undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the tiger's jaws will never be allowed to escape.*" Everyone who received the Grace will ultimately benefit. Individual devotees were drawn to the Maharshi from all parts of the world in increasing numbers. The Maharshi, while remaining in his Ashram in the shadow of the sacred Arunachala Hill

CONVERSATIONS—6

By
Darlene Delisi¹

Once Kunju Swami asked Bhagavan: "If thoughts rise up while doing *pradakshina*, what are we to do?" Bhagavan replied: "Just do nothing. Ignore them. Keep yourself away from them, as you automatically do when a donkey or dog crosses you while walking round the Hill. If you ignore them they will get away of their own accord."

Sri Bhagavan also joked at that time: "For you the problem is how to eradicate the thoughts; for us (meaning himself) the problem is how to bring forth thoughts, how to raise a thought!"

¹ Gathered by the writer while talking to Sri Kunju Swami.

in South India, was able to reach with his Grace a vast number of individuals in the span of half-a-century.

Who Am I?

The spiritual practice taught by the Maharshi is a simple *inner quest* to find out '*Who am I?*'. It demands no prior condition for adoption by an individual except a belief in his own existence, which none can deny. This belief is asserted every time one says "I" or "I am" with reference to oneself. The practice to be carried out by each one, in the quiet of his home, is to concentrate one-pointedly with his mind turned inwards on "I" (or "I am"). This amounts to a one-pointed concentration of the mind on one's own self or being. When carried out with single-minded faith, it results in the mind becoming deeply introverted, reaching deep within and sinking into the Spiritual Heart and coming into contact with the Self. This is the answer to the question: "Who am I?". It is not

a verbal answer but a direct experience with the mind of the Self or the Supreme Being dwelling in the Heart. The Maharshi describes it as "*the mind seeking its Source which is the Self*". When the individual learns to contact the Self with his mind, his lone efforts are over. The Grace of the Guru comes to his help to get rid of his 'ego', which consists of the impurities of his mind, so that the individual becomes *a perfect instrument of the Self*. This means that thereafter his every thought, word and action comes from the Self. This is commonly called *Self-realisation* and is the highest spiritual attainment possible for man.

The Parable of the Plantain Tree

The question may be asked: How can success in this simple practice by individuals help in restoring spiritual values to the people of the world?

The answer is to be found in the fact that the practice, though it may appear simple, is the highest and the most sublime of all Yogas, known as *Jnana Yoga* or *Vichara marga*. It has come from the days of Vedic rishis and has come down the ages to build the rich spiritual heritage of India. The Maharshi has simplified it to bring it within the reach of every human being. One who succeeds in this practice with the Grace of the Guru becomes a *Jnani*, one who has acquired *Jnana* or spiritual Wisdom. His very existence benefits the

HOME-COMING

By

Matthew Greenblatt

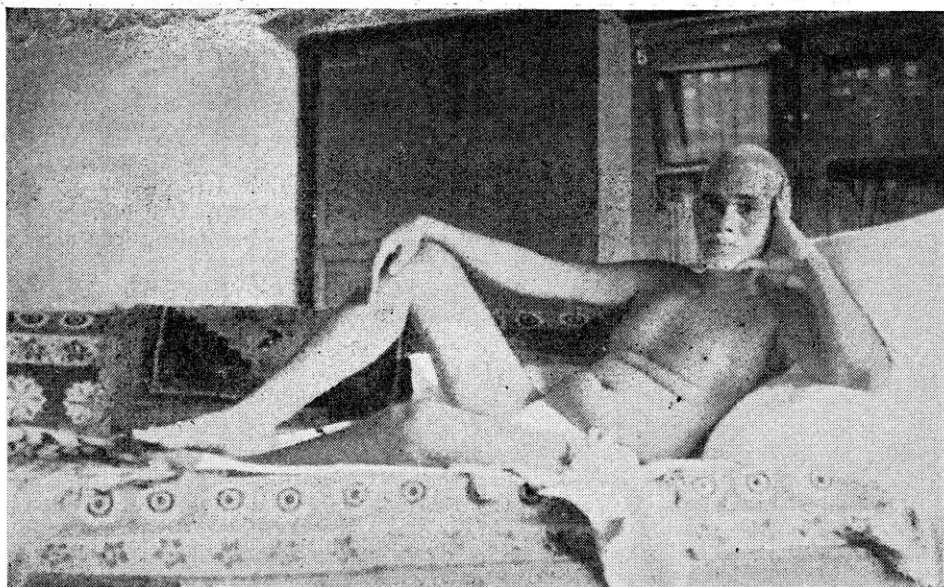
They say that HOME is where the heart
doth dwell.
HEART is the home of mind, the sages tell.
Let's always dwell within this home
Where warmth is ever flowing.
This is the house-warming true,
Very old, yet ever-new,
Its embers ever glowing.

world through those who come into contact with him. Therefore, he can set in motion the course of multiplication of Gurus, described by the Maharshi in his parable of the plantain tree.

This is the great mission for which Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the Supreme Master, came. He has laid the firm foundations of his mission by ensuring that every country will have a nucleus of Gurus who will multiply in the manner that the first Guru, Dakshinamurti, has laid down. His departure from the world of name and form does not end his mission. Like all Sadgurus, the Maharshi continues to guide everyone who has received his Grace and others who invoke his Grace to take up the *Inner Quest* for the Self.

"One must be able to strip oneself of all self deception to see oneself naked to one's own eyes before one can come to terms with the elements of oneself and know who one really is."

—FRANCES G. WICKES, 1882-
American psychotherapist.



Glory of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

A most exquisitely eloquent and inspired pen-picture of Sri Ramana Maharshi was written by Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni as the famous closing chapter of his Sanskrit work, *Sri Ramana Gita. The Mountain Path* is pleased to publish an English translation of Chapter XVIII, "On the Glory of the Siddhas", for its readers.

1. Bhagavan Ramana, born in the great line of Parasara, the son of the immaculate Sundara Pandita, with lovely eyes wide as the lotus petel, bringing renown to the earthly gods.
2. Dweller in the Asrama on Arunachala, steadfast and stainless Paramahamsa, assuming activity out of compassion while ever established in the imperishable Atman.
3. His words dispel all doubt. His glance, like an Ankusa, brings under control the mad elephant of the deluded mind. He is ever active for the happiness of others and utterly indifferent to his body's needs.
4. His body glows like a ripe mango. Absolute master of the fickle senses, he is wedded to the immortal Valli¹ who is pure awareness. In a few words he conveys the substance of all the scriptures.
5. With his pure, effulgent rays he clears, like the Sun, in due season, the dullness of his devotees. He is an inexhaustible mine of auspicious qualities.

¹ One of the two consorts of Kumara (Subrahmanya).

6. In speech he is extremely soft, in look, cool and compassionate; his face is like a full-blown lotus; his mind is a void like the moon in daylight; he shines in the heart as the Sun in the sky.
7. Pitiless to his body, strict in the observance of discipline, wholly averse to the delights of the senses, he is a sage without anger or desire, beside himself with the joy of pure awareness.
8. Free from infatuation, greed, distracting thought and envy, he is ever blissful. He is ever active helping others to cross the sea of becoming, regardless of reward.
9. When Ganapati, saying "Mother is mine," sat on the lap of Parvati, Kumara retorted, "Never mind, Father is mine," and got on to Siva's lap and was kissed by him on the head. Of this Kumara, who pierced (with his lance) the Krauncha Hill, Ramana is a glorious manifestation.
10. He is the mystic import of the mantra *Om vachad bhuv namah.*²
11. An ascetic without *danda*³, yet is he Dandapani.⁴ He is *taraka*⁵ for crossing the sea of suffering, yet is he the foe of Taraka.⁶ He has renounced *bhava*,⁷ yet is a constant worshipper of Bhava.⁸ He is *hamsa*⁹, yet without attachment to *manasa*¹⁰.
12. More imperturbable than the Hill of Gold (Meru); more unfathomable than the ocean; more patient than the immovable Earth, the Mother of all; a paragon of self-control; far removed from even the whisper of excitement.
13. Spreading grace like the friend of the blue lily (the moon); bright like the Lord of the lotus (the sun); by his abidance in Brahman (state of pure Being) he reminds one of his Father¹¹ under the banyan tree; firm like a rock is this my younger brother¹².
14. Even now in the thousand petalled lotus of his head there shines Devasena¹³, lovely in looks and mind, in the form of auspicious thoughts; and yet he is free from the faintest scent of desire. Though thus he is a householder, he is the King of ascetics.
15. A giver of boons to devotees; the guru even of the great Ganapati, master of mantras; like the celestial tree, he assuages the anguish of those who seek the shadow of his feet.

² Salutation to the Fire of Brahman whence emerges the Word !

³ Staff: An ascetic usually carries one.

⁴ Staff-holder, one of the names of Kumara.

⁵ Ferryman.

⁶ An asura killed by Kumara.

⁷ Becoming. Samsara.

⁸ Siva.

⁹ Swan: A sage is termed a *Paramahansa*.

¹⁰ (a) mind; (b) a lake in the Himalayas, a favourite home of swans.

¹¹ Siva as Dakshinamurti who through silence dispelled all the doubts of four venerable old seekers.

¹² Ganapati: the poet thinks of himself as the elder son, and Sri Ramana as the younger son of Siva.

¹³ Senior consort of Kumara.

16. He is the re-incarnation of (*Kumarila*) Bhatta, praised by assemblies of scholars, the author of 'Tantra Vartika', elixir of the Vedas, brilliant with various ingenious ideas; in this birth, however, he elucidates the teachings of Vedanta alone.
17. He is the Master who composed 'Arunachala Pancha Ratna' (Five Gems on Arunachala), the quintessence of Vedantic utterances, brief like *sutras*¹⁴, but all-comprehensive and filled with hidden meaning.
18. Though not at all trained in the language of the gods(sanskrit), and unacquainted with poetry, he is yet the author of works wherein crowds of brilliant ideas trail behind the inspired expression.
19. Again, this boundless genius is another advent¹⁵ of the Master-poet, the twice-born Tamil child who, drinking the breast milk of the Mother of the Universe, sang in dancing tunes the praises of Siva.
20. This is the third appearance here on earth of the God¹⁶ who pierced of yore the Krauncha Hill. And now he has come to quell the darkness of mere logic by providing a living example of abidance in Brahman (Pure Being.)
21. He is a poet of renown in Tamil, the language adored by Agastya and other sages. The Eternal Light Supreme he beheld with his own inner light, unaided by a guru.
22. In a boy, a dull cowherd, a monkey or dog, a knave, a scholar or a devotee, everywhere he beholds the same Being and is without the least partiality.
23. Full of power, yet full of peace; full of devotion, yet without a sense of difference; free from likes, yet loving all the world; God manifest, yet in conduct humble.
24. Writing down the message, "This goest to the presence of the Father. Let no search be made for me," he left home and arrived at the foot of Arunachala.
25. Of Bhagavan Ramana, thus happily endowed with a wealth of auspicious qualities, Amritanatha Yatindra humbly enquired concerning the boundless glory of *siddhas*.
26. To him Sri Bhagavan, dweller on the Holy Hill, replied, "The glory of *siddhas* is beyond imagination. They are equal to Siva. Indeed, they are the very forms of Siva. They have the power to grant every prayer."

This is the Eighteenth Chapter entitled, "On the Glory of the Siddhas," in *Sri Ramana Gita*, the Science of Brahman and the Scripture of Yoga, composed by Ramana's disciple Vasistha Ganapati.

¹⁴ Aphorisms.

¹⁵ Jnana-Sambandha.

¹⁶ Kumara.

REMINISCENCES

By

Sadhu Brahmaniam¹

AT about 8 p.m one day Dr. Anantanarayana Rao brought a ripe guava fruit to Bhagavan, saying it was the first produce from his garden. Bhagavan asked for a knife, a plate and some *chili* powder to be brought. He cut the fruit into small pieces, sprinkled *chili* powder over them, took a piece himself and asked the rest to be given to those around him. That was the only dish prepared by Bhagavan which I have eaten. I was not lucky enough to be with him when he participated in the cooking. It was the most delicious titbit I have tasted.

* * *

Once Bhagavan had a mild attack of jaundice. As part of the treatment, his diet was reduced to bare buttermilk and rice. Dr. Shiva Rao of the Ashram dispensary felt that Bhagavan was getting weaker. He wanted some protein foods and vitamins to be taken; but Bhagavan declined. I happened to be in the Ashram then. One day as Bhagavan came out of the bathroom, I prostrated myself before him and said, "Dr. Shiva Rao and others in the Ashram are very anxious about Bhagavan's health and want him to take some protein foods and vitamins. At least for their satisfaction I entreat Bhagavan to agree." He smiled and said, "Yes. You may arrange whatever is necessary." I came and told Dr. Shiva Rao. Vitamins were available in the dispensary, but not protein food. I returned to Madras immediately and searched in all prominent drug stores. Since it was wartime, drugs were scarce and it was available only in one shop. It was a special American preparation made out of milk protein and chocolate. I bought all the seven

bottles available and took them to the Ashram. I left six bottles in the office, took one with a spoon and went to Bhagavan. It was 8 p.m. There were a few devotees seated in front. I gave one spoonful to each first and then gave one to Bhagavan. He took it and asked what it was. I said that it was protein food and that he could mix one spoonful with the food, thrice daily. He asked me to give the bottle and the spoon to Sama Thatha with instructions. After a few days some over-zealous devotee served two spoonfuls on his leaf. He immediately stopped taking it and asked the bottles to be given to the dispensary for the use of the patients.

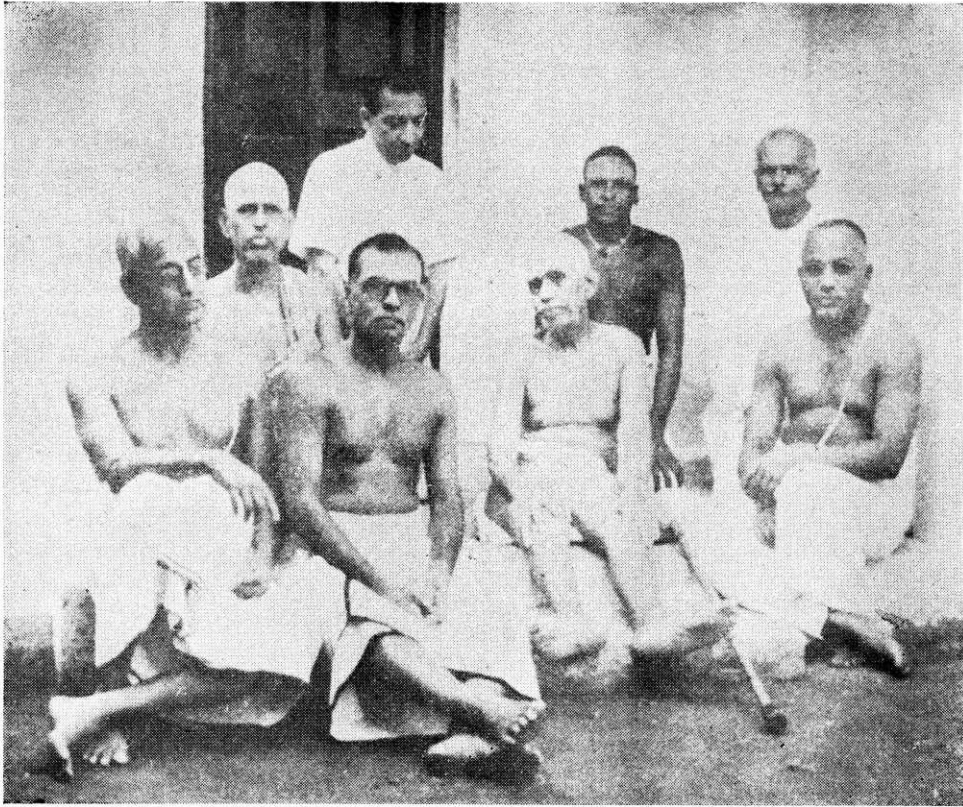
* * *

At one time some devotees used to massage the legs and feet of Bhagavan for some time every night. After a few days I joined the party with some hesitation. I continued for two days. The third day Bhagavan suddenly asked us to stop. He got up and began massaging his knee, saying, "You have all been gathering so much *Punyam* (merit) all these days. Let me also acquire some *Punyam*." That had the effect of stopping the massaging altogether.

* * *

On one of my early visits, I went on *Giri Pradakshinam* with some friends. When I returned, my feet were blistered and I entered the hall limping. Bhagavan elicited the cause of the limping and said that I should bathe the feet in warm water for a few minutes and repeat the *Pradakshinam* the next day

¹In the *purvasrama*, Dr. R. Subrahmaniam, the then Director of Public Health, introduced to our readers in our January 1974 issue, p. 61.



(Front row l to r): Sri S. Doraiswami Aiyer, Sri T. P. R., SRI BHAGAVAN, Dr. R. Subrahmaniam (now Sri Sadhu Brahmaniam). (Back row l to r): Sri Niranjananda Swami, Dr. B. Shanker Rau., Sri Sivananda Swami, Prof. Kelkar.

and the day after. I did so ; the feet gave no more trouble.

* * *

Bhagavan used to go up the hill for a short distance after mid-day meals. One day he did not return to the hall. When we found it empty at 2 p.m., we were nonplussed. T. P. R., Rajagopal, and I went up the hill towards Skandashram without telling anybody. Half way up we met his attendant coming down. He told me that Bhagavan was in Skandashram, but had warned him not to give this information to anybody. We went up and saw Bhagavan sitting on a platform in front of Skandashram. We hesitated to go to him, remembering his warning to the attendant. He noticed us and made a sign asking

us to come. We had a delightful time as Bhagavan was narrating reminiscences of early days in Skandashram.

Another trip to Skandashram, which lasted a full day, was arranged by the devotees about a month later, but I could not join it. Over 25 photos were taken during the trip by Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami. I got some copies made of all the photos and prepared four albums. I had one album to spare, and Dr. V. Srinivasa Rao wanted it. I promised to give it, if he would pay the price for it. He was prepared to pay and asked what the price was. I said that it was 17 *Thoppukaranam*² to Bhagavan. He took the album

² Genuflexion, with hands holding ears, in the presence of Ganesa.

and ran to the hall. He placed it at Bhagavan's feet and began to 'pay the price'. Bhagavan laughed and asked him why. Then he told him the joke and showed him where I had marked the price on the album cover.

* * *

After the first operation by the Madras surgeon, Bhagavan's arm was healing well. Only a plaster dressing was applied once a day for some time. This used to be done in the bathroom soon after Bhagavan had his bath. One day Dr. Shankar Rao, Dr. Srinivasa Rao and I went in with the dressings. I dipped a wad of cotton in spirit and was cleaning the wound. The excess spirit flowed down his arm to his leg and down to the feet. Bhagavan exclaimed, "That is good. Spirit *Snānam* (bath). Everybody must do Spirit *Snānam*, must be immersed in the Spirit always."

* * *

In the later days of the illness, a feeling of despair crept into everyone's mind. Many were imploring Bhagavan to cure himself. There was a small story in the jokes column of the *Sunday Times*. It ran somewhat as follows :

"A girl about 4 years old had been taught by her parents to utter a small heartfelt prayer to the Lord daily before going to bed. Once the family was travelling on board a steamer during a potent storm. The girl prayed, "Please, God, take care of yourself! If anything happens to you, we will all be left in the lurch!"

I read the story before Bhagavan the next day. He smiled in appreciation of the appropriateness of the story at that time.

* * *

In the final stages of the illness, the tumour growth was like a huge cauliflower and was in need of constant attention. Bhagavan himself used to lift his left arm on to the rubber sheet. I once asked him how he

managed to lift so easily such a large and painful arm. Bhagavan's reply was, "What is there in it? Four persons are needed to carry this body after death. I am now carrying it singlehanded." What a complete absence of the feeling 'I-am-the-body'!

* * *

Some time in early February, 1950, the correspondent of the P.T.I. interviewed me in Madras about Bhagavan's health. I indicated that the medical opinion was that the progress was bad and life might last only for 2 or 3 months more. This news, issued by the P.T.I. to all newspapers in India, caused a stir in the minds of devotees far and wide, and they all began to come to the ashram for a last Darshan of Bhagavan. Such a large influx of visitors was naturally a strain on the Ashram resources. In one of my weekly visits, Chinnaswami told me that I should not have given such news to the Press. I apologised and went to see Bhagavan. Chinnaswami came and stood at the doorstep and again took me to task. I stood listening calmly, looking at Bhagavan's face all the time. Bhagavan gave me a very gracious smile in full approval of what I had done.

* * *

The third operation was done in the dispensary room. Bhagavan took some time to get out of the anaesthesia. Visitors were prohibited. Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami alone remained with Bhagavan. Crowds of devotees gathered outside and filled the open space in front. They were all anxious to see Bhagavan and know his condition. Despite doctors' instructions, Bhagavan insisted on being helped outside to lie on a bench on the verandah. Devotees were asked to pass in a single file before him. He continued on the verandah despite a drizzle and asked devotees to be allowed to see him at any time. Bhagavan showered his Grace on his devotees profusely and gave *Darshan* till almost the last day.

Swami Ramanananda Saraswati

(Munagala Venkataramiah)

By

M. V. Krishnan

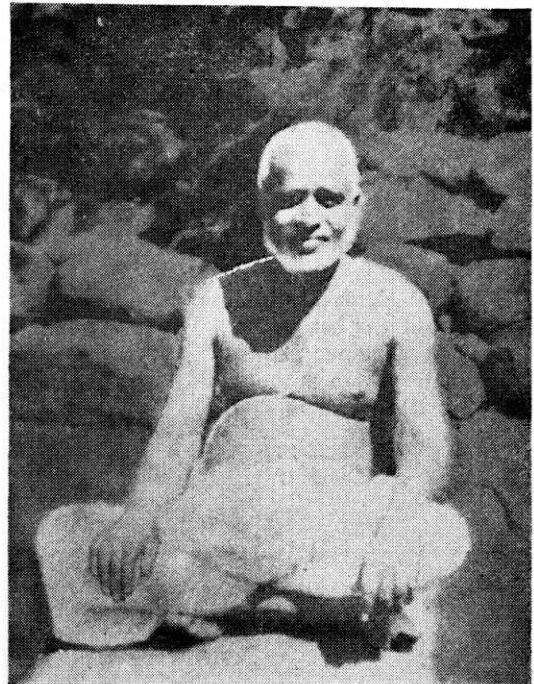
Well-acquainted both with scriptural lore and a knowledge of the English language, Swami Ramanananda Saraswati, the compiler of Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, was well-equipped to perform the duty of interpreter for Sri Bhagavan and those devotees who did not know the local languages. He was an outstanding example of devotion and total surrender to the Master.

MUNAGALA S. VENKATARAMIAH was born in the year 1882 at Sholavandan, Madurai District. His father was Sri Munagala Subramanian. He had one elder brother, three younger brothers and three sisters. All of Venkataramiah's brothers studied in the Vedapatasala of Sholavandan itself. He alone received an English education, the first in Sholavandan and then in Pasumalai.

In his thirteenth year Venkataramiah married his uncle's daughter. After studying for four years in the Madras Christian College, he moved to Bombay and joined Professor Gajjar's Laboratory. Here he maintained himself by tutoring and by translating Tamil letters received by Bombay businessmen. He and his wife were blessed with a daughter in the year 1900 while he was still a student.

In the year 1908 he returned to Madras and in 1910 he presented himself for his final examinations. When the results were known, Venkataramiah stood first among the successful candidates of the whole Madras Presidency. He was awarded the Arni Gold Medal.

In 1911, he joined the Noble College, Masulipatnam as a Chemistry Lecturer. From 1912 to 1917 he worked as a Senior Chemistry Lecturer in the Madras Christian College.



Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi

In 1918 he lectured at Madras Pachayappa's College. During these years, Venkataramiah was in contact with Sri Sai Baba Narayan Guru, a Bengali *sadhu* and a disciple of the famous Kali Kamliwala of Hardwar and Rishikesh. Under the guidance of Sri Sai Baba Narayan Guru, Venkataramiah studied the ten *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Brahma Sutras*.

THE MANTRA

In 1945/46 Sri Munagala Venkataramiah's daughter, Smt. Kamakshi,¹ came to reside with him at the Ashram for a month. They were put up in the Mac Iver's compound. In those days *Vedapārāyana* was chanted in front of Sri Bhagavan in the *Brahma Muhurta* (morning 4-30 and 6). Kamakshi regularly attended to hear the chanting.

One fine morning she entered the hall at about 4-30 a.m. There was no one else there except Sri Bhagavan. Kamakshi paid her respects to Bhagavan and when she got up, Sri Bhagavan called her and showed her a small slip on which was written ॐ नमो भगवते श्री रमणाय (*Om Namō Bhagavathe Sri Ramanāya*). Then He told her to chant it always, which she did throughout her life.

This was kept a very close secret between Kamakshi and her father. Venkataramiah told his daughter that she was the most fortunate person in the world to be blessed by Sri Bhagavan in that way!

¹ Introduced to our readers in Oct. 1974 issue p. 244.

In 1918 his daughter passed away; Venkataramiah lost all interest in life. However, thanks to the guidance of his guru, he was able to regain his former composure.

Venkataramiah's first visit to Sri Bhagavan took place at Skandasram in 1918. In 1927 he renewed contact with the Maharshi and from then on, until the time of Venkataramiah's attainment of final peace in 1963, he was a staunch devotee.

In 1919 he left Madras and began to work as a chemist with the Madras Government in the Department of Small Industries which

was located at Ootacamund. The office functioned under the direction of one Frederick Nicholson, a retired British Civilian, but Ooty was far away from Venkataramiah's guru.

As luck would have it, a regular department was formed early in 1920 and Venkataramiah was made the Superintendent of the Government Industrial Institute, Washermanpet, Madras. This was a great boon to him, as his guru's abode was the Kasi Viswanatha Temple, Krishnangulam, not far from his office. During the evening he used to spend an hour with his guru after office hours.

In August, 1922 his guru attained *Mahāsamādhi* after doing *Prayōpavesā* (not even taking water till the end). The guru told Venkataramiah that he (the guru) would pass away on the evening of a particular day which happened to be a working day. Venkataramiah wanted to take leave for that day but his guru asked him to go to the office as usual and come to him at 5-00 p.m. Venkataramiah went to work as directed and found his guru alive when he came. His guru then blessed him and breathed his last.

Between 1922 and 1927 Venkataramiah studied almost all of the published works on *Advaita Vedānta* although he had not previously studied Sanskrit. In undergraduate school he had studied Tamil and in college, Latin. As a result of his interest in *Vedānta* he took up the study of Sanskrit and gained sufficient mastery to understand the various texts.

Venkataramiah's second visit to Sri Bhagavan was in 1927. From then on he would visit Sri Bhagavan in the summer with his family and spend a month with him.

In 1932, after having put in twenty-three years of work, Venkataramiah was retrenched from service. He had no means of livelihood, so he came to reside with Sri Bhagavan. He became a regular inmate of the Ashram where

he answered English letters from devotees from India and abroad. He also interpreted Sri Bhagavan's replies in Tamil to the questions raised by devotees in English.

Under the guidance of Sri Bhagavan, Venkataramiah studied the Tamil works of the Saiva Samayacharyas. He studied all the works of Sri Sankara Bhagavadpada, the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* and *Srimad Bhagavatham*.

During his stay in the Ashram, Venkataramiah compiled the *Talks*, translated several philosophical works by Sri Bhagavan from Tamil into English and translated into English works like *Tripura Rahasya*, *Advaita Bodha Deepika*, *Kaivalya Nāranēeta*, etc., under

instruction from Sri Bhagavan. He left the Ashram in 1952 and returned in 1954. He had a heart attack and took *āpad-sannyasa*. In 1955 he went to Waltair and then to Calcutta. In 1955 he met His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya, Krishnabodhasramji Maharaj of Badrinath in Calcutta and got his *sannyasa* regularized. This guru gave him some name, although the Ashramites knew him only as *Swami Ramanananda Saraswati*.

In 1959 Venkataramiah returned to the Ashram where he remained until his *Maha-Nirvana* in February, 1963. A living example of abidance, of beatific smile and gentle ways, he aided and taught other devotees during the final years of his life more by example than by precept.

THE FLOW

By Swami Ram Tirtha¹

‘Lo, the trees of the wood are my next of kin,
 And the rocks alive with what beats in me;
 The clay is My flesh, and the fox My skin,
 I am fierce with the gadfly and sweet with the bee.
 The flower is naught but the bloom of my love,
 And the waters run down in the tune I dream.
 The Sun is My flower uphung above,
 I flash with the lightning, with falcons scream
 I cannot die though forever death
 Weaves back and fro through the wrap of me.
 I was never born, yet My bitths of breath
 Are as many as waves on the sleepless Sea.
 My eyebeams cause the Sun's bright light,
 The sunset mirrors My cheek's rose blushes,
 My aching love holds stars so tight.
 Sweet streams and rivers
 My veins and arteries,
 My beauteous hair the fresh green trees...

1. from *In the Woods of God-Realisation* Vol. III, P. 156.

STILLNESS¹

By

Wei Wu Wei

SILENCE, regarded metaphysically, is considerably different from conventional silence, dualistically defined, silence as one element in a comparison of opposites, silence as the opposite and complement of noise. The silence which the Maharshi states is more powerful than speech, a more potent medium of instruction than words, the silence in which, and by which, occurs the transmission of mind via mind in which the ultimate doctrine of the Buddha was handed down from patriarch to patriarch according to the Ch'an Masters, is rather the background of the time-illusion, the interval between thoughts that is normally imperceptible to divided mind, of infinitesimal duration, but which is in itself intemporal, of no, or of infinite duration. If we can seize it, so we are told, and hold it, the mind stays open, and we are awake at last.

What, then, is it — this metaphysical silence? Clearly it is the 'Buddha-mind' of Ch'an, the 'Witness' of Vedanta, the 'Father' of Christianity, i.e., whole-mind. The mechanism of dualism seems to be that of the escapement of a clock, which is also an instrument for recording time. One half momentarily stops the flow of time, and then the other, tic-toc, tic-toc. So does each half of split-mind, tic-toc, tic-toc and the interval between each tick is pure movement, the background, the intemporal reality which,

measured by each alternative tick, becomes time as we know it. And the tic-toc, the alternative stoppage, is the comparison of opposites, the activity of split-mind, which we know as thought and mentation.

We can now see why every one of the awakened tells us *ad nauseam* that all we need to do is to arrest the movement of thought in order to know whole-mind and find ourselves awake. It explains also why *wu* or *satori* is always precipitated by a sudden sound, anything from a clap of thunder to the snapping of a twig, or, indeed, any other sensory perception whatever. Such perception momentarily arrests the eternal tic-toc of thought and, the subject being ripe, whole-mind takes possession and is no longer split.

That the awakened continue to know divided mind, in communicating with those who remain identified, is evident, but for them that condition is the abnormal, and the state of whole-mind the normal, instead of the contrary as with the rest of us. But it is surely an error to suppose that we do not know whole mind in our daily life — for the consciousness that is aware of our having thought is certainly that, a consciousness that is ever awake, is always present, and that alone is 'real'.

¹From *Ask The Awakened*, p. 21. Published by Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

"God is bound to act, to pour Himself into thee as soon as He shall find thee ready."

— MEISTER JOHANNES ECKHART, 1260-1327.
(Sent by I. S. VARGHESE).

How I Came to Sri Bhagavan

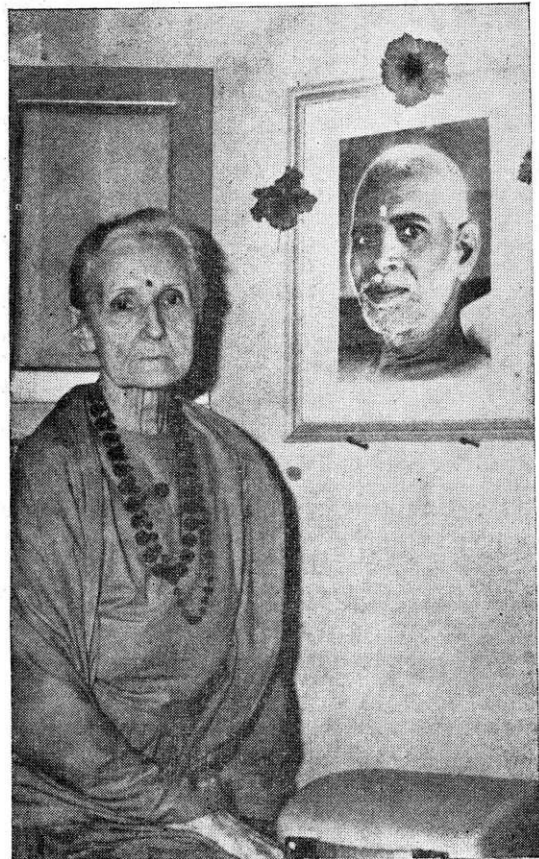
By
Lucy Cornelssen

This devotee from Germany, who has already brought out three volumes on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in German, has come to Arunachala for good and is helping visiting pilgrims with valuable guidance. She narrates to earnest devotees some of her interesting spiritual experiences as well.

MOST of Bhagavan's devotees have learned about him first through books. I also came to know of him through *Der Weg zum Selbst (The Path to the Self)* by Professor Zimmer. It somehow found its way into the deep forest solitude in which I had taken refuge after the war, because my friends knew that I was not merely an intellectual interested in Indian philosophy and tradition, but one who tried to live the spiritual life. I should say that it was my spiritual earnestness which brought about my acquaintance with Sri Ramana Maharshi through that book. I was not one prone to be swept away by superficial enthusiasm. I had already studied and was familiar with Upanishadic wisdom, and I was able to perceive that Ramana was an authentic representative of that lofty wisdom in our own days.

But that was not all. Another friend later brought the same book — and again another one. Although I felt a definite 'call', I could not understand its significance. Well, so there lived on a sacred hill, far away in the land of yogis and elephants, a sage — what did it matter? Economically, a trip there was out of the question for me; psychologically, I was not in search of a guru since the inner Guru had long since revealed himself to me. What then could be the meaning of the 'call'? So, I dropped the matter.

Then came another call, from the capital, from relatives who wanted to go abroad



Lucy Cornelssen

but without their beloved dogs. "Please come and look after our pets", they said. This idea was so funny and so completely out of my way that at once I again felt that 'call'. I wondered what it meant — apart from the dogs. There was an Oriental library



at the University and I could use the time for some studying, so I went.

And there it happened. One day, when I came across a certain professor in the library, I suddenly stopped and addressed him, "Please, professor, is there a German grammar of Tamil?" He looked a little surprised and asked, "Are you going to learn Tamil?" I was confused — not by his question but by my own. "Yes, maybe. . ." The 'call' . . . suddenly, I understood!

There was a grammar. And, to make a long story short, I learned to read Tamil and translated Bhagavan's works and talks into German with the aid of a dictionary and supported by the available English translations.

When I had almost finished, circumstances prompted me to give up my forest abode. During the work, the translator had been transformed into a blessed devotee of Bhagavan. What better could she do than to carry her scripts to Arunachala, outwardly to verify the rendering, inwardly to place them on the *samadhi* of the sage?

Five days before Christmas, at the end of 1956, I found myself sitting in the Old Meditation Hall of Sri Ramanasramam before Bhagavan's life-size portrait, half-jokingly talking with him: "Well, Bhagavan, here I am — and here is the work you gave me to do. But the real problem is unsolved, the publishing. I am not able to arrange that as there is not enough spiritual interest in Germany now. If you want your teachings published for the sake of the German seeker, you will have to find the publisher yourself!" Five days later, on Christmas Eve, a letter from a German publisher arrived at the Ashram office, asking for the copyright of Bhagavan's works!

A brief account of 'How I Came to Bhagavan' can give only the broad facts, an outline of the search and its result. The inner story will ever remain a secret between Bhagavan and his happy victim.

"In other living creatures ignorance of self is nature; in man it is vice."

— BOETHIUS, 480 ?-524.
Roman philosopher.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

By **SRI MURUGANAR**
Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

732

If one discovers who this 'I' is
 That seeks and gains the grace of God,
 The ego dies ; it merges in
 The Being which is both grace and God.
 And when the ego disappears
 No vestige of desire remains.

733

Karma and maya both alike
 Spring from, cling to, and grow with
 Ego, the first impurity.
 When ego dies, the other two
 Can by no means survive.

[According to Saiva Siddhanta, the three "impurities" that bind us are ego, *karma* and *maya*.]

734

Those whose hearts are godward turned
 As the magnetic needle to the north
 Can never lose their bearing as they sail
 The stormy ocean of desire.

735

Safe like children who embrace
 A pillar and whirl round it fast,
 Those who, holding Siva firmly
 In the heart, live in the world
 Never fall into delusion, They
 Rely on God's strength, not the ego's
 weakness.

736

Sustaining and pervading all transactions
 Stands One Being true, supreme.
 If on this the mind is fixed, one can
 Even while handling myriad problems
 Be yet free from carking care.

[The cloth screen on which a film is projected
 is not burnt by the fire or wetted by the flood
 in the picture.]

737

The rice that roams around is ground
 To fine flour in the quern. The grains
 That stay close to the axle, firm
 Fixed in the nether stone, remain
 Intact and sound.

738

Meditation is the inner
 Attitude that one is but the Self
 Supreme that shines as Being-Awareness-
 Bliss

Inquiry is fixing the mind
 Firm in the Self till the false ego,
 Illusion's seed, perishes.

739

However one conceives the Self
 One gains it in that very form.
 The meek who are content to BE,
 Free from all thought, attain the noble,
 Formless state of pure *Kaivalya*.

740

How can the ego 'I' imagine
Itself as That, when That, its source,
Can be attained only after
This 'I' has perished utterly?
The right way is, the ego gone,
Abiding in the Heart in silence.

741

Why is Siva who formless shines
As pure Awareness oft mistaken
For some poor object apprehensible
By the five senses? Because of failure
To seek the Self within the Heart
Enquiring "Who am I?"

742

In Siva, the Self, he stands firm-fixed
Who well and truly meditates
On Himself as pure Awareness.

743

Meditation on the vast
Indefinable, indivisible light
Of Self will bring within our reach
Whatever precious gifts we might
Have longed for once, those very gifts.

744

Those who after meditating
On indivisible light proceed
To mere Being without meditation
Gain the great glory of no more birth.
Others suffer endless births.

745

To say that some one practising
Sustained enquiry for the Self, the God
Who is all Awareness, suffered from
Mental derangement or illusion
Is saying that some poor fellow died,
Alas, by drinking nectar.

746

If you want glorious immortality
Untroubled by the cloud of birth and death
Think intensely of the Eternal Present
Free alike from rising and from setting.

747

Those who saying "I am time present"
Meditate on this identity
And then entirely give up even
Such meditation, they attain
Immortality, while others
Must die slain by the sword of Time.

748

Those who abide in their true being
Perceive beside themselves nothing
Like Time, much less do they perceive
In the whole seamless spread of Time
Three separate parts, three tenses.

749

The universe out there appears
When not scanned, but it disappears,
When scanned. Turning away from this,
Search keenly for the Self within the heart
And end the cycle of births for ever.

750

What we incessantly think of
That we become. Hence, if we
Keenly seek the Self and think
Of nothing else, the malady
Of birth will cease and all thoughts end.

751

The ultimate goal, the Vedas say,
Is perfect tranquil clarity.
If boundless bliss intense is marred
By some small stirring of desire,
Stop that practice straight.

A Day with the Sage of Arunachala

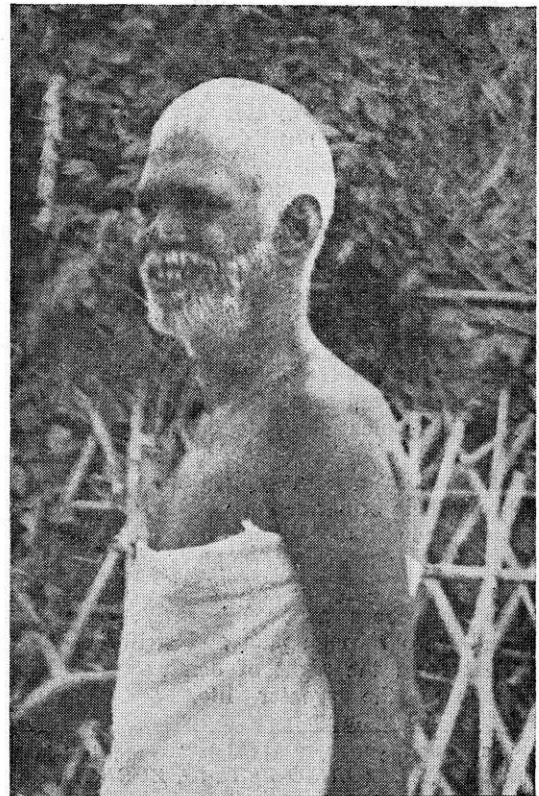
By

T. S. Narayanaswami

THERE is a familiar Sanskrit stanza which says, "Tell me not about the sacred rivers or the idols of gods in famous temples; they may cleanse our minds and hearts after many visits in this or future births, but the look of a realized saint purifies at sight." Indeed, Sri Ramana Maharshi, the sage of Arunachala, was a seer such as those born on this earth once in a millenium.

I had my first and last *darshan* of the Maharshi about two weeks before he attained *Videha Mukti* on the day after the Tamil New Year Day, the fourteenth of April, 1939. My cousin and I went to Tiruvannamalai compelled by sheer curiosity. Our aspirations were materialistic and we had no desire for spiritual advancement ourselves. But we knew that the saint drew many devotees from far and near. We had also heard that the Maharshi taught a simple method for God-realization. This was the "Who am I?" enquiry the unique *sadhana* which required no time-consuming rituals, no tortuous yogic exercises, no control of breathing, no prolonged chanting of *mantras* and no recitals of hymns, etc. What was needed was a simple and earnest enquiry within ourselves to find the Source from which all thoughts arise. This would eradicate the ego which gives rise to the feelings of 'I' and 'mine'. To be without ego was Self-realization.

Another reason prompted us to have *darshan* of the Maharshi. We had heard that he was suffering from a severe bodily affliction, a sarcoma on his left arm. Devotees and friends who had visited the Ashram had told us how the Maharshi was bearing



the excruciating pain without the least sign of suffering. Any other person, in the opinion of the doctors who attended on him, would have been crying aloud with the pain characteristic of this malady. Therefore, with a feeling of wonder and curiosity we entered the Ashram; we wanted to have a look at this remarkable man of God.

It was eight in the evening when we finished our evening ablutions at the Ashram and our guide asked us to join the other devotees at supper. Under the impression that visitors in such large numbers would have to be

THE TREE OF LIFE¹

By Lama Anagarika Govinda

The life-tree's roots
Grow from the night of death,
Embracing the dark realm
With golden nets.

The life-juice of the stars
Is rising in its trunk,
Transforming steadily
The powers of the dark.

Innumerable suns
Bloom in the life-tree's twigs,
Surrounded by their planets
As by swarming bees.

The heavens of the gods
Are in the life-tree's crown,
But in the course of time
Even their pleasures cease.

And one by one they fall
From their bright realm
And drop like falling stars
Into the earth's dark womb.

To be reborn as men
And learn through pain and strife,
That from the night of death
Is born the greater life.

¹ From the book "Mandala", published in Switzerland. (ORIGO-VERLAG, ZÜRICH)

paying guests at the Ashram, we wanted to make a contribution straight away, but the attendant told us, "You two, and the other visitors today and every day, are the Maharshi's guests and it is his wish and directive that devotees can stay here as long as they feel the urge to stay on — no payment should be insisted upon." This came as a big surprise to us, particularly in those bleak days in the South when food, particularly rice, was scarce. The guide said that the Maharshi's wish was that the convenience

and comfort of the visitors and devotees be the first things seen to in the Ashram. We already knew from this how kind and solicitous he was to visitors even before we could have a glimpse of him. We were reminded of that compassionate saint, Sri Ramalinga Swamikal of Vadalur.

We woke up early in the morning after a restful night. Our guide called on us and took us to the dining hall where we were served hot coffee at the early hour of five. My cousin and I were ushered into the meditation hall where we took our seats along with other men, women and children who were seated on a carpet on the floor. Some of them were chanting in low tones the Vedic hymns, which were followed by a recital of verses from *Aksharamanamalai* ("Marital Garland of Letters") composed by the Maharshi himself.

Precisely at seven, at the rear entrance to the meditation hall, appeared the tall, frail frame of the sage of Arunachala. Clad only in a loin cloth, with an indescribable radiance on his face, he seated himself on a raised platform. He then cast his gracious glance over every member of the audience from the oldest man or woman to the babe in arms. Seated by my side was the Chief Minister of Mysore, Mr. K. C. Reddy, who was a great devotee of the Maharshi. Cries of *Annamalaikku Harohara* (Hallowed be the Lord of Arunachala, Siva) went up in the air as the Maharshi took his seat. The entire gathering sat still for about fifteen minutes in pin-drop silence. The scene resembled a family gathering on a happy occasion, with the grey-haired grandfather of the house affectionately looking at his large family of sons, daughters, and grandchildren belonging to all age groups. Some were fondly looking at the radiant face of the Maharshi. Others in the audience had the experience of *shanti* (peace of mind) as they sat in front of the master with closed eyes.

While my cousin next to me was perhaps wondering at my emotional behaviour, something within impelled me to rise from my seat, proceed to where the Maharshi was seated, and prostrate myself for a second and a third time before I resumed my seat in the rear row of the audience. I still remember the Maharshi then turning towards me and nodding his head twice and casting his loving and gracious look at my face suffused with awe and reverence in his august presence. It was a thrilling moment for me as I was least prepared for a special look of benediction from this compassionate saint upon my humble self steeped in ignorance. To me it was like Dakshinamurti Himself sitting before me, speaking to me through his benevolent eyes in solemn silence, a silence that is truly eloquent. I could feel a thrill, an ecstasy, and the calm of the great peace that fills the Heart !

After an hour, the entire gathering slowly and silently dispersed. My cousin and I reluctantly took leave of the Ashram and its solemn atmosphere. With a wrench of the heart we made the journey to Madras where the humdrum life of cares and anxieties awaited us.

Within a fortnight of our visit the Maharshi left us all, attaining *Videha Mukti* on the night of April 14, 1950. At the time of his passing on (8 : 47 in the night) an unusually large and brilliant meteor was seen moving across the sky towards Arunachala, disappearing behind it. This was witnessed in many places and also reported in the newspapers.

"People should think less about what they ought to do and more about what they ought to be. If only their being were good, their works would shine forth brightly."

— MEISTER JOHANNES ECKHART, 1260-1327.
German scholar and mystic.

CONVERSATIONS—7

By
Darlene Delisi¹

There was once, Kunju Swami said, a great pundit, an erudite scholar in Sanskrit, who spoke to Sri Bhagavan entirely in Sanskrit for nearly ten days on spiritual matters, quoting profusely from the scriptures. Devotees around were annoyed that the pundit was disturbing Bhagavan and others all the time. On the eleventh day, the pundit entered Sri Bhagavan's Hall and sat down calmly. He did not speak a word.

Bhagavan significantly smiled and told Kunju Swami, who had been most annoyed by the pundit's torrential talk : "Hum, See, he also has become silent like us!"

¹ Gathered by the writer while talking to Sri Kunju Swami.

The vivid and solemn scene of the Maharshi seated like Sri Dakshinamurti in silence speaking to the hearts of the devotees around him and his look of grace impressed themselves indelibly on my mind. Such has been the experience of many devotees who were fortunate to have had the *darshan* of the sage who was compassion incarnate. Looking back with nostalgia, this visit of ours to Sri Ramanasramam and the *darshan* of the Maharshi turned out to be the most fortunate happening and the most momentous event of our lives.

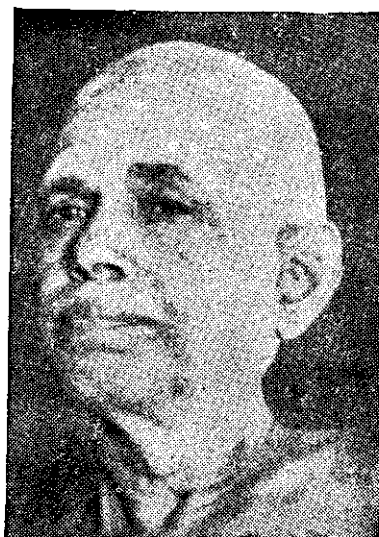
BHAGAVAN'S GRIP

By
Atyam Suryam

I FIRST heard the name of Ramana Maharshi during the summer of 1942 when I was on a vacation trip with a friend. Much against my wishes, I agreed to accompany my friend to Tiruvannamalai before we proceeded to our original destination.

When we arrived at the Ashram, we went straight to the old hall, where we found Bhagavan sitting on a sofa and looking through a window. We could see only his profile. Some of his devotees — both men and women — were there seated on the floor. There was pin-drop silence. For more than ten or fifteen minutes I waited for Bhagavan to turn his face towards us, but he didn't oblige me. I began to grow impatient. I pressed my friend to get up, but he ignored me. As I could endure it no longer, I silently walked out of the hall. A few minutes later my friend joined me and scolded me for my hurry. Grudgingly he walked along with me out of the Ashram. I never gave the meeting another thought until my friend named his new-born son Ramana and I saw what an impression Bhagavan had made on him.

During January, 1950, my wife and I started on a pilgrimage to the South from our home in Andhra Pradesh. My wife was quite orthodox, while I was not sure of my own beliefs, but I was certainly not interested in idol-worship or visiting temples. Once again, on her compulsion, I visited Sri Ramanasramam along with her. I somehow sat in front of Bhagavan until the lunch bell rang. What a relief I felt! After we took our meal, I told my wife it was time to move on to our next halt. Before doing so my wife requested me to donate Rs. 116 to the Ashram. She had already crossed the limits of



my patience by what she had made me spend in other places of pilgrimage. On this request, I nearly burst upon her and gave only ten rupees at the Ashram office. As we were leaving the Ashram, my wife was walking ahead of me while I carried our bed and baggage. Bhagavan came out from some room with a tumbler of water to wash his hands. He looked at both of us. My wife did not see him since she was already nearing the main gate. But I saw him and his gaze fell on me. It did not occur to me that I should put my luggage down and join my palms taking leave of him.

Years rolled by. On the 3rd of January, 1959, my wife passed away. I was completely upset at this most unexpected sad event. Since I had no children, all my love and affection were centered on her. I could not recover from the shock for months together. Even thereafter I could not become my old self. I retired from active life once for all. The

mystery of life and death began to haunt me. Relatives and friends became worried over my constant grief and deteriorating health and some suggested to me philosophical books. My elder brother presented me the *Bhagavad Gita*. I was not too deeply impressed the first time I read it, but as I read it again and again it began to leave a bit of its imprint upon my heart. Eventually I read hundreds of philosophical books. Those that appealed to me the most were books by and about Sri Ramana Maharshi.

During the early 60's I visited many places of pilgrimage looking for peace of mind, primarily through contact with Mahatmas. I returned to my home in Bombay safe and sound. I was not so much weighed down with grief as I had been before. It was TIME that had somewhat healed my wound rather than my study of philosophical books, visits to sacred places, or darshan of holy men.

During 1967 and 1968 I went around the world and stayed in the United States for one year. During that period I had some narrow escapes from instant death, injury, insult and even imprisonment. Each time I escaped I felt Sri Bhagavan's hand of protection, to my utter astonishment, since I never even thought of him, much less prayed to him. I wondered at the phenomenon. I remembered my having had his darshan twice. I also remembered that my wife had requested me to donate Rs. 116 to the Ashram. Then and there I decided to send that amount to the Ashram as soon as I went back to Bombay. I did so soon after my return, along with a letter in which I wrote how Bhagavan had protected me during my stay in America and that I was now only fulfilling the wish of my departed wife. I implored them to pray to Bhagavan to grant her eternal peace. In reply I received a letter from the Ashram assuring me that my wife was enjoying peace at the holy feet of Bhagavan. I felt happy for a while as I read the letter and then forgot about

it. Strangely enough I forgot him even after I pretty well knew that he had saved me many times during my stay abroad.

A little later I returned to my native place and settled down there. At long last the DAY arrived. It was the 11th of April, 1974. I was going in a taxi a distance of 14 miles to see a picture. Something happened in the taxi, and frustration started to creep upon me by leaps and bounds. When I felt I was on the verge of an emotional breakdown I reached my destination. The picture was "Kahani Kismet Ki"; only that much I remember. What I saw on the screen was nothing but the reflection of my own sad state of mind. The picture came to an end, but not my frustration. I could no longer bear the agony. I even thought of committing suicide. It was then I remembered Bhagavan and prayed to him to grant me relief.

I returned to my home. I was repeating Bhagavan's name constantly within myself, but I wished I had a photograph of him to help me in my prayers. I remembered having seen one in a journal I had read recently, and I started searching for it. Lo! the very last book had the coloured picture of Bhagavan. It was purely Bhagavan's Grace — I had no doubt about it. My heart instantly became full of joy, devotion and gratitude. Since that moment I haven't left Bhagavan — rather I should say he hasn't left me. In the same year I visited the Ashram twice and started to celebrate Bhagavan's Jayanti. I have been trying my best to completely surrender myself to his will. My experiences are many. He is full of compassion. I am now almost at peace with myself. I have no doubt he would take me to his holy feet when I leave this prison of a body. He is now my father, mother, friend, everything to me. His gracious look at me while I was leaving the Ashram in 1950 with my wife started working wonders after a quarter of a century. This is nothing but Bhagavan's grip.

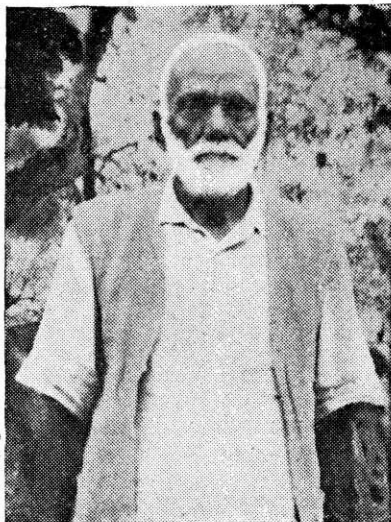
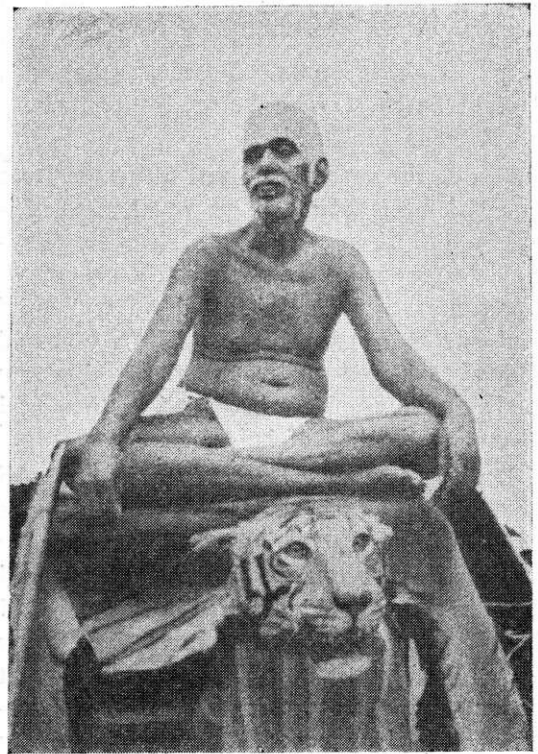
The *Sannidhi* of Sri Bhagavan

By

G. Ramaswami Pillai

IN the presence of Sri Bhagavan actions took place spontaneously of their own accord. Now when we think of them after a lapse of years we find them to be 'natural miracles'. It was as if Bhagavan himself unmoving held us as captives and allowed us all to play, as if He were the screen and we the figures on it.

Once, Sri S. Doraiswami Aiyer, Dr. Srinivasa Rao and others were going by car from Bangalore to Pondicherry and they stopped at Sri Ramanasramam to have *darshan* of Bhagavan. They were to stay only for a few hours; their car too had some minor repairs to be done and it was sent to the town. When Sri Doraiswami Aiyer was talking to Bhagavan I was present in the Hall. He was recounting how when they passed through Chengam (20 miles from Tiruvannamalai) their car had grazed an old woman who then fell down, and that this had caused some delay. Then Bha-



Sri G. Ramaswami Pillai

gavan asked with some concern: "What is her condition now? Has she been attended to?"

I, who was merely a silent listener, immediately felt that I should go to Chengam. Without telling anyone, (not that I did not want to tell, but the thought never occurred) I took my cycle and went to Chengam and, on enquiry at the hospital there, found out that there was no injury to the old woman and that she was attended to and sent home. I was satisfied. I returned cycling, came to the Ashram and reported everything to Sri Bhagavan.

The party, who could not have their car repaired, had meanwhile gone to the Railway Station to catch a train for Pondicherry. Presuming they would go only after the car came back, Sri Niranjanananda Swami had prepared *dosais* for them to eat and he was expressing disappointment that they had left without eating them. I volunteered with joy to take the eatables to the station. I had just then returned after cycling nearly 45 miles. I took the *dosais* and eatables, gave them to the party and after telling them about the satisfactory condition of the woman, returned to the Ashram.

The point to note here is this. Bhaga-

van did not ask me to do *anything*, but He impelled me from within to do all this. This is the miracle. To cycle nearly 50 miles without anyone's prompting and without any urgent need for it and even without any personal satisfaction (the party was not close to me) to do all this without thinking why, means that it was done in the *presence* (*sannidhi*) of the Master! His concern for the old woman and solicitude for his devotees made me do all this with no strain and no thought of myself.

Bhagavan used to perform many such miracles and play with His devotees, especially those close to Him!

Talks with Mr. Wu!

By

Wei Wu Wei

HERE! HERE!

Good morning, Mr. Wu!

Good morning, Madame.

Will you kindly tell me the time, Mr. Wu?

Yes, indeed, Madame, the time is Now.

But it is always 'now', Mr. Wu!

Madame, I bow.

That is charming, Mr. Wu, but I still do not know the time!

Madame, there is no other 'time'; any 'other' time could only be a game such as children play.

But, Mr. Wu, we have to live in time!

Then, Madame, are we not still 'children'?

To the grown-up, Mr. Wu, there should be no time?

To the mature, Madame, there is only 'Now'.

To the Awakened, Mr. Wu, all 'time' is just that?

All 'space', Madame, is Here, and all 'time' is Now — asleep or 'Awake'.

WELCOME

Good morning, Mr. Wu!

Good morning, Madame! To what do I owe the pleasure?

I thought you might be lonely, Mr. Wu.

Lonely, Madame, but how could that be?

You are by yourself, Mr. Wu!

By myself, Madame, when every 'thing' is what I AM?

In that way, of course, Mr. Wu, but you might need company!

Alas, Madame, there is none such!

But am I not even 'company'. Mr. Wu?

Indeed no, Madame!

Then what can I be, Mr. Wu?

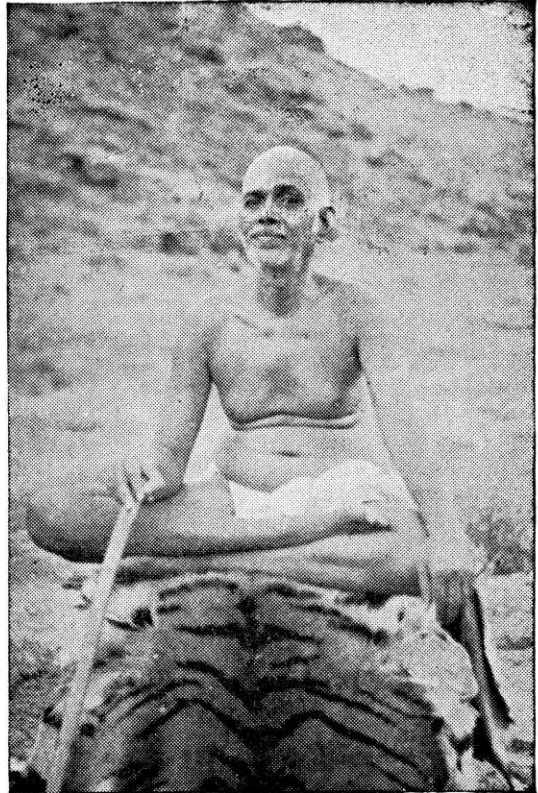
Madame, I have the honour to BE what you ARE.

Sage-Philosopher, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

By
Atmananda

THE most unique philosophy of Bhagavan Sri Ramana is an expression of his experience and his reflections thereon. Bhagavan Ramana, as a teenager, experienced a feeling of imminent death while he was in sound health. Reflecting on impermanent nature of the body and mind, he gained Self-realization and the state of self-absorption known as *Sahaja Samadhi*. Sri Ramana had not studied the scriptures or *Vedanta*, and within a few weeks of his experience he left his home and studies to lead the life of an *avadhuta* at Tiruvannamalai (Dakshina Kasi). About the year 1900, Sri Bhagavan gave his philosophy, in writing, in the form of spiritual instructions to Sivaprakasam Pillai and Gambhiram Seshayya. All of the Maharshi's writings were given at the request of devotees, and his replies to Sivaprakasam Pillai and Gambhiram Seshayya were subsequently published in two booklets entitled *Who Am I?* and *Self-Enquiry*.

Mr. M. O. Lacombe, a French savant, enquired of Sri Bhagavan, "Is Maharshi's teaching the same as Sankara's?" and Bhagavan replied to him, "Maharshi's teaching is an expression of his own experience and realization; others found that it tallied with that of Sri Sankara." (from *Talks*, p. 182). The ancient *Advaitic* doctrine was elaborated and systematized by Sri Sankaracharya. Bhagavan Ramana's philosophy is not exactly the *Advaita* philosophy of Sankara, but it leads one to the same Goal. In fact, a Hindu — be he a *smārta* or a Vaishnava, a Muslim or Christian, may feel equally at home with Bhagavan Ramana's teaching. None can question it. None need deny his belief in pursuing the spiritual path of "Who am I?"



Sri Kapali Sastri writes, "The great *advaita achārya* Sri Sankara and Sri Ramana Maharshi agree upon the central teaching of the Upanishad, the oneness of self with Brahman. But there are certain points of difference between them. Maharshi holds that the statement of the illusory nature of the world is but a means of creating disgust for what is impermanent in the world, thus driving you home in search for Thyself." (*Sat Darshana Bhashya*, p. 33)

The Upanishadic teaching of "Tatvamasi" relates to the investigation of 'Tat', or Brah-

man, and 'Tvam', or Thyself. Sri Sankaracharya emphasized the aspect 'Tat', while Bhagavan Ramana emphasized the 'Tvam' aspect. One Upanishad says that thought, though once immersed in the bliss of Brahman, may become active once again, and so Sanatkumara says that 'one has to be silently fixed on Brahman.' Sankara comments (*Sanatsujata* : II, 1), that the 'Tat' aspect will not lead us anywhere, except into rangling like the six blind men and the elephant. In the *Tatva Upadesa*, Sri Sankaracharya instructs us to investigate 'Tvam' from the beginning, and *Yati Dharma Sangraha* says that *sannyasa ashrama* is intended only for the sake of knowing one's Self.

Bhagavan Ramana discovered in his sixteenth year the true significance of the quest for one's self, *Who am I?* It is a matter of experience, and all other problems are related to it. Bhagavan Ramana systematized his philosophy of "*Who am I?*", and one may study *Ulladu Narpadu*, *Upadesa Sara*, *Talks with Sri Maharshi* and *Day by Day with Bhagavan* in order to gain a deeper understanding of his Teaching.

The philosophy and teaching of Sri Ramana is the philosophy of man wherever he may be in the world and to whatever religion he may belong. The life and teachings of the sage are a many-faceted gem which devotees, according to their inclinations, may appreciate from their different viewpoints. The late Professor Subbaramayya told me he was drawn to Sri Bhagavan after reading the Telugu verses of his *Upadesa Saram*. Sri Morarji Desai writes, "I could see an aura around his face which was glowing with peace and joy. Till today, I have not seen that aura, that peace or that joy on anyone else's face. . . I was at complete peace with myself. It was this experience which convinced me that Ramana Maharshi had realized God

SILENCE¹

By

Wei Wu Wei

When the Maharshi tells us that silence is a more potent medium than speech we tend to be incredulous, for to us silence is merely the negation of noise.

When he states that 'stillness is the sole requisite for the realisation of the Self as God', we know that he refers to stillness of the mind. So silence also means silence from thoughts, or, as we might prefer to say, absence of cerebration. The negation of noise as an aid to thought could never be in question, for thought must be a barrier to spiritual understanding.

The policy of silence, of which he sometimes speaks, as indeed do others, is to be sought in the interval between thoughts, of infinitesimal duration to split-mind but without, or of infinite, duration, in itself, since it is intemporal. To him who experiences it, it might have any conceivable duration, though to an observer it can have none. In itself it is never a momentary thing, for it is the permanent background of what we experience as time, the reality rather than the background, and in a feeble image, the screen on to which the ever-moving pictures of conceptual life are projected.

Its incalculable potency then becomes apparent, for it is no other than whole-mind.

¹ from *Ask The Awakened*, page 15 Pub. Rontledge & Kegan Paul, London.

or the Truth." (*Autobiography*) When the late Krishna Prem approached Sri Bhagavan and asked him, "Who are you?", Bhagavan remained silent like the *Pratyagatma* (inner Self).

Sri Ramana's philosophy is simple and it is the essence of all philosophies.

Delight of Sat Sanga

By

Evelyn Kaselow

Sat Sanga is essential for the spiritual progress of a *mumukshu*. Just as *japa* cleanses the mind and makes it fit to reflect the light of the Self, association with the like-minded, matured devotees helps a seeker to focus attention on the Truth that is within.

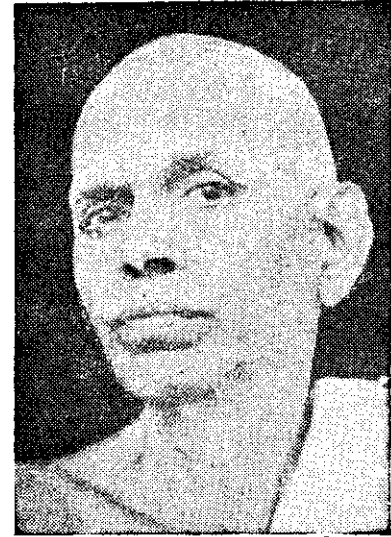
The old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, who have had the opportunity to move closely with the Master and serve him, happily provide this vital link between the Master and us, new-comers. In the company of such senior *Ramana-bhaktas*, we melt with devotion, our petty egos dissolve in the experience of His Presence as Peace.

The senior *bakthas* not only radiate peace and quietude, but bring before our mental eyes the happenings that took place in the days of Sri Bhagavan. I have pleasure in sharing with the readers a few of the reminiscences that I heard from SRI KUNJU SWAMI during my stay at the Master's abode in February/March, 1979.

I

In South India the *sadhus* and inmates of *maths* have the habit of referring to themselves in the neuter gender and the third person, as 'This', 'It' ("This went to the temple"). Bhagavan and His devotees follow the general practice of using only 'I', while Kunju Swami was on a visit to a *math*, one of the *sadhus* expressed surprise that he should use the word 'I'. Kunju Swami had no answer then. Sometime later he came to Sri Bhagavan and reported what had happened.

On hearing this Sri Bhagavan said: 'Why, where is the difficulty? You should have said that the 'I' refers only to the 'Big' I (meaning the Self). All is that only. Everyone



likes to refer to oneself as 'I'. 'I' is the first name of God. 'This', 'it', all in the neuter gender, refers to the body only, whereas 'I' refers to the Self which is what we really are".

II

We members of *Arunachala Ashrama* both at New York and Nova Scotia have, by the grace of Sri Bhagavan, got by heart '*Lalithā Sahasranāmam*' and Bhagavan's '*Upadesa Sāram*' in Sanskrit and *Akshara Mana Mālai* in Tamil, which we chant daily. When we went round the Hill I joined with other devotees in the singing of *Akshara Mana Mālai* (Tamil) and *Upadesa Sāram* (Sanskrit) though there might be mistakes in my pronunciation.

The last day before I left the Ashram, Kunju Swami was kind enough to go up the hill along with me and Ganesan and recount his reminiscences. He then asked me to



Sri Kunju Swami

chant for him a few verses from *Upadesa Sāram*. When I showed signs of hesitation owing to my faulty pronunciation, he told me a story which Bhagavan Himself had told him, when he (a Malayali) hesitated to recite Tamil and Sanskrit verses of Bhagavan.

“There was a great devotee by name Poonthanam Namboodiri at Guruvayur, the famous shrine of Sri Krishna. His devotion to the Lord was total and intense. Every one respected him as a realised sage. Poonthanam wanted nothing from others and was all the time chanting verses in praise of the Lord in some corner of the temple. To that holy city came one Narayana Bhattathiri (who later wrote *Narayaneeyam*, a great Sanskrit poem). This Narayana Bhattathiri was a great scholar and people had high admiration for him. He was taken around the Guruvayur temple. In a corner, as usual Poonthanam was reciting his prayers. The Bhattathiri listening to Poonthanam's recital remarked aloud: “You call him a saint? He does not even recite the *slokas* properly. I am ashamed of you who call him a realised man.”

“On hearing this, Poonthanam felt very depressed and addressed the Lord in anguish: ‘O Lord I have been reciting *slokas* wrongly could you not have corrected me and thus saved me from this insinuation?’ Saying so he wanted to give up his body by fasting.

“That night, Narayana Bhattathiri had a dream in which the Lord appeared and said: ‘Poonthanam is a great devotee of Mine. You are only a scholar. I prefer

CONVERSATIONS—8

By
Darlene Delisi¹

“During our stay at Skandashram,” Sri Kunju Swami said, “life was absolutely spontaneous. Sri Bhagavan's own instruction then was ‘Go to sleep when the body requires it; when awake engage yourself in *sadhana*. Do not even think whether it is day or night. Do not doze-off pretending to do meditation. Be sincere and whole-hearted in *sadhana* as well as in sleep’”.

¹ Gathered by the writer while talking to Sri Kunju Swami.

his *bhakti* to your *vibhakti* (grammatical declination). Moreover what Poonthanam was singing was also right. ‘*Amara-prabho*’ hails Me as ‘Lord of the celestial beings’, ‘*Maraprabho*’ hails Me as ‘the Lord of the vegetable kingdom’. What's wrong in it? Am I not the Lord of the whole creation? So go and apologise to Poonthanam.’ The scholar Narayana Bhattathiri now realised the pure devotion of Poonthanam transcended both ignorance and knowledge.”

After hearing this story from Bhagavan, Kunju Swami never felt shy to recite Tamil and Sanskrit *slokas*.

I was emboldened to recite a few verses from *Upadesa Sāram* which Kunju Swami listened to and appreciated.

* * *

I felt very sad to leave Arunachala and to part with other great souls like Visvanatha Swami.

Sri Kunju Swami promptly said: “You have Sri Bhagavan in your heart and He always shines there. We who live here are merely the ‘dust’ on His Lotus Feet. Since you carry Him in your heart we also live in your heart. But only as the ‘dust’ of His Feet!”

INTRODUCING....

.... Mrs. Roda Mac Iver

HAILING from a priestly Parsee family in Bombay, *Roda Kamdin* was in her childhood instructed to say her prayers, morning and evening, though she did not understand what she was praying for. She lost her mother at the tender age of eleven. Her prayers continued, but her problem was *how to see God*. When her father also passed away during her 23rd year she was left alone. Though she was free in a sense and not compelled to say her prayers, her wish to see God persisted.

A photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi drew her to Sri Ramana, though she could actually see Him only in 1942. Her very first *darshan* of the holy sage convinced her of His supreme saintliness; but more than aïl, her long cherished wish to directly see God was fulfilled then! She felt drawn to the Maharshi like a piece of iron to a magnet. Her surrender and dedication to Him became complete from her very first *darshan* of Him.



Mrs. Roda Mac Iver



Her life's ambition having been totally fulfilled, she had no other wish and no urge at all to put any question to Him.

That did not mean that she was unaffected by sorrow. One day when she was feeling some mental agony while being seated in front of Sri Bhagavan, He took out a piece of unburnt charcoal from the urn and showed it to her and said: "Do not burn your mind. Keep the mind as fresh and clean as this coal." From that time onwards she gave up worrying over any problem.

In the beginning of the forties when she saw some devotees touching Sri Bhagavan's feet, Mrs. Mac Iver had a great desire to do the same. She wanted to touch His feet before she left the Ashram. One of her friends to whom she had expressed her wish, warned her that it was against the rules of the Ashram. That day while taking their lunch at the Ashram, surprisingly that friend suddenly said in a loud voice: 'Bhagavan! Roda wants to touch your feet'. She was shocked, afraid of dire consequences to follow. All stood in a line to allow Sri Bhagavan to wash His hands. When He was near Roda He said in Tamil, making gestures showing His feet and His head while speaking: "Why do you want to touch these feet? Bhagavan's Feet are ever over your head." On listening to these words of nectar from Him, her desire to touch Him disappeared completely. She started feeling that she was always blessed by His Holy Feet on her head.

On another occasion, her husband, Mr. David Mac Iver, well-versed in scriptural lore and learning, was discussing seriously with his friends spiritual matters using high-sounding technical terms. Mrs. Roda felt sad

The Ignorance

By Ira

All utterances about the Absolute, whether verbal or scriptural are necessarily contaminated by falseness, error and contradiction. For, can the infinite be circumscribed?

It is no great feat therefore, for a disputant to find endless loopholes in statements and descriptions of the Truth. Such a disputant is simply not prepared to perceive the Truth as it is for it he were he would begin with the understanding of Truth's inexpressibility and recognize the contradictions he hears as inherent in ignorance itself.

that she could not at all follow what they were talking about. She went to Bhagavan and reported it, while He was going up the Hill and He replied in English: "Why are you sad over it? Your path (devotion) is far greater than their intellectual jargon." This confirmed her in her innocent, blind devotion to Sri Bhagavan — her God. And she stuck on to Him, in spite of adverse circumstances.

After the *Brahma Nirvana* of Sri Bhagavan, one day, when she was feeling His physical absence very much, she was thrilled to hear an inner voice vividly telling her: "I AM always with you."

Even today Mrs. Roda, who is living in her cottage opposite to the Ashram, comes to the shrine of Sri Bhagavan, both in the morning and evening to meditate on her chosen God and Guru, knowing well the value of prayer!

"It is foolish to seek for God outside of oneself. This will result either in idolatry or in scepticism."

— TOYOHICO KAGAWA, 1888-
Japanese Christian Evangelist.

BOOK REVIEWS

SECRET DOCTRINES OF THE TIBETAN BOOKS OF THE DEAD: By Dellef Ingo Lauf. Translated by Graham Parks. Pub.: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1123, Spruce Street, Boulder, Colorado, 80302, USA, 1975. Pp. 254. Price: \$ 5.95.

This book is a searching study of some of the world's most profound literature on the nature of death. Writing with the background of a European psychologist, Mr. Lauf first presents an exhaustive — but never confusing or over academic — description of the traditional Tibetan 'bardo' visions (i.e., those seen after death) as they are presented in various Tibetan Books of the Dead. His revealing account goes beyond mere description, in that it emphasises the explanation that the many 'peaceful and wrathful' deities that appear are actually *archetypal* images that spring from the deeper consciousness the 'awareness-principle' of the deceased. They are an imaging of the underlying mental and vital nature which emerges and engulfs for a time the disembodied consciousness.

In accordance with this interpretation of the nature of the Tibetan death experiences Mr. Lauf states "the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* is not confined to its country of origin, but is universal. It is a book about death, dying and rebirth whose purpose is to invest the meaning of life with the proper worth and significance." It is, he says "an outstanding guide, capable of opening the gates to transcendence." This is so largely because the ancient text encourages one to seek *in life* that heightening of awareness which, abiding after death, will enable the awareness-principle to recognise the true nature of the *bardo* visions and so, not fearing them, to avoid the snare that usually pulls one back to incarnation on earth.

To make more clear the universal nature of the experiences described in the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, and in trying to gain an even fuller picture of the after death experience, the author cites briefly many interesting ancient and recent writings on the subject from around the world. One example of striking interest is the Egyptian account wherein immediately after death one is said to enter a penultimate state called "the clear light of day" — this corresponds closely in the *Tibetan Book of*

Dead to experiencing "the primordial clear light." If one can experience this state "with a perfectly detached and karmically pure awareness", it can serve, it is said, as a direct passage to liberation from rebirth. We note that this experience of the "clear light" is familiar too to the student of modern Western studies of "near death experiences." These studies are based on accounts collected from those who have returned from the very edge of death — or even from an actual brief death — "rescued" more and more frequently by the skill of modern medical science. Such accounts, probing only the very nearest rim of death, are coming into more attention in the West, for they also often mention this splendid state of felicity experienced at the time of death. But it is true that, compared to the restricted range of such accounts, there is clearly much to be learned from the sources that Mr. Lauf mentions.

Mr. Lauf makes it clear that the messages of the most authoritative texts on death advise us in one voice to take the opportunity now, in life, to grow into an undeluded awareness, so that when the time comes we shall by the clarity of our vision be fitted to meet the challenges that lie beyond death.

Mr. Lauf has thus surely done well by universalizing the impact of the long isolated Tibetan classical works on death, dying and rebirth.

THE TORCH OF CERTAINTY: By Jamgon Kongtrul: translated by Judith Henson. Pub.: Shambhala Publications, 1123, Spruce Street, Boulder, Colorado — 80302, U.S.A. 1977. Pp. 161. Price \$ 5.95.

The Torch of Certainty is a newly published translation of an important meditation manual used in the practice of Tibetan Buddhism. The original work was written by the widely accomplished scholar, Jamgon Kongtrul, in 1844 and contains his instructive commentary on the "Four Foundations" — a set of meditative practices common to all the main Buddhist sects in Tibet. Mr. Kongtrul's systematic treatment is frank and inspiring.

As an introductory commentary on the core text, translator Judith Henson, has compiled a set of interviews with a number of prominent Lamas teaching in the West. These notes are a valuable text in themselves, describing as they do the nature

of the Four Foundations and the manner in which they should be approached by seekers in the West.

Reading *The Torch of Certainty* is a joyous and rewarding experience for any seeker. A summary of the nature of the Four Foundations will help to illustrate their universal value.

The first is called "Taking Refuge". Here, a sincere commitment to follow the path, and surrender to the protection and guidance of Buddha, the *Dharma* and the *Sangha* (the community of fully enlightened beings). "Taking Refuge" is coupled with the key movement called "Engendering the Right Attitude". One thus undertakes first to develop compassion, living in the aspiration to "attain omniscient Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings." Following compassion comes the growth of insight. Of the importance of this development Mr. Kongtrul, wrote: "Even commonplace acts become means for attaining Buddhahood."

The second of the Four Foundations is intended to purify the aspirant. The general means for this "involves the aspirant in an intense drama combining physical, verbal and mental acts." This second Foundation makes primary use of repetitions of the widely known "Hundred-syllable *mantra* of Vajrasavatta."

The third Foundation, the Mandala-Offering, is a further preparation in which the seeker aims to perfect his accumulation of such qualities as generosity, moral conduct, insight and meditative concentration. Mr. Kongtrul wrote: "The Mandala-Offering is the consummate offering because it includes all the riches of the entire universe."

The fourth Foundation, the Guru-Yoga, is the final step before one can properly begin the Mahamudra practices of Tibetan Buddhism which lead one into the realms of definitive experience. This Foundation is a process of deepening invocation to the Guru and of learning to live constantly in and by his presence. "Pray to the Guru with your hair standing on end and tears of great yearning streaming down your face. Your mind will become clear, ordinary appearances will cease, and meditative experience will arise without effort. *This is the force of great yearning.*"

These, then, are the Four Foundations: Commitment, purification, enrichment and identification with the guru through devotion.

One feels grateful that such a book, expounding in simple terms some of the basic steps of Tibetan Buddhism, has now been made available. It demonstrates clearly the world-unifying fact that, at the root, the driving force of the world's diverse religions is one.

JOHN HARPER.

BOTH SIDES OF THE CIRCLE: (Autobiography of Christmas Humphreys). Pub.: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Ruskin House, 40, Museum Street, London. Pp. 269. Price: £ 6.95.

Like Prince Siddhartha who, when confronted with the facts of old age, disease and death, was struck with the absurdity of it all and started wondering, Christmas Humphreys had the same sort of experience when brother Richard was killed in the war in 1917. Why? — he asked himself. Why? "From that hour," he writes, "I began a journey... a search for the purpose of the universe." Coomaraswamy's *Buddha and the Gospel of Buddhism* revealed to him the path on which he has kept walking ever since. From small beginnings such as founding Buddhist and Theosophical lodges in Cambridge and London and starting a *Buddhist Lodge Monthly Bulletin*, he soon rose to become the leading exponent of Buddhism in Britain, guiding the activities of the British Mahabodhi Society and hobnobbing with such eminences in the Buddhist councils as Dr. Suzuki, Anagarika Dharmapala and the Dalai Lama. At the same time he lent a hand to propagating the Secret Doctrine as revealed to Madame Blavatsky by the Tibetan Master. He spoke for Buddhism in the World Fellowship of Faiths convened by Sir Francis Younghusband in London in 1936. It will be recalled that Radhakrishnan represented Hinduism at this congress. His book *What is Buddhism?* he informs us, has sold over half a million copies to date.

But then Buddhism and Theosophy by no means exhaust his spiritual interests. He has experimented, along with his wife, who was ten years his senior, in telepathy and other forms of ESP — not to mention occult powers! He has kept up a lively interest in astrology. The crash of the British dirigible R 101 in 1931, he assures us, had been predicted by an astrologer. He has patronized therapies of osteopathy, herbalism and radionics — the last involving diagnosing disease "with a pendulum over a large chart of the human body and a spot of the patient's blood" — and has been associate member of Psionic (!) Medical Society.

Humphreys has been, of course, one of the brightest legal luminaries in England in the decades following the War. He figured in hundreds of murder trials and in such famous cases as the trial of Fuchs, the Lewisham Train Crash, and he was a member of the British team at the War Crime Trials in Japan in 1946. He has been a QC, a Commissioner and later a Judge at the Old Bailey. But his account of his legal career, remarkably successful as it has been, is rather casual. One suspects he would rather be remembered as a Buddhist leader, a writer — he has written about twenty-five books and hundreds

of articles — and a poet. Yes, he has written “verse for precisely seventy years” and the work under review is interspersed with a choice selection. What is more, he holds very strong views on poetry. He tells us he never quite appreciated T. S. Eliot’s poetry and he just does not care for modern verse. He also does not believe that Shakespeare wrote the works attributed to him. Such was his disbelief that he founded a Shakespearean Authorship Society. Who wrote the plays then? Most likely, the Earl of Oxford, — perhaps Bacon, Marlowe, Leicester, but not Will of Stratford.

Humphreys is a happy man — with a philosophy that leaves no riddles to trouble the mind, no moral dilemmas to torture the conscience. The bombing of Hiroshima or the communal riots in India might have shocked others. Not Humphreys, for “it was the karma of the Japanese to be bombed and of Hindus and Mohammedans to kill one another.” Similarly, as a prosecuting lawyer it was not necessary for him to enquire whether the prisoner in the dock was really guilty. “If it was my karma to prosecute, it was the karma of the prisoner not only to be prosecuted by me but also to have committed that crime or at least to be on trial for it.”

Humphreys therefore accepts cheerfully events as they occur. He loves the good things of life: expensive furniture, rare paintings, antiques, bric-a-brac. He frequents music concerts, theatre — he himself tried his hand at writing plays — and other such cultural entertainments. During the general strike of 1926 he volunteered his services as a constable. He is above all an Englishman, proud of the fact that “it was Englishmen who won two Wars,” and he takes comfort in the thought that, whatever happens, ‘there’ll always be an England.’

All told, a most interesting book on an illuminating life.

J. P. UNYAL.

ART AND THE OCCULT: By Paul Waldo-Schwartz. Pub.: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Ruskin House, 40, Museum Street, London-WC-1. 1977. Clothbound (168 pages, 141 black-and-white photographs). Price: £ 6.95.

The first thing I noticed while thumbing through this book is the layout of the chapters. There is not the usual break where one ends and the next begins, only a slight increase of space between the paragraphs with the new chapter title alongside in the ample margin near the binding. During the reading it became clear that this was not simply a layout designer’s successful creation of fresh effect; the writing itself had this continuity, feeling more like associations opening further associations than

the unfolding of ideas. Even central themes like that of the Tarot — which the author feels expresses “the entirety of human existence” — are not so fully explored as they are touched and held during a turn or two of the narrative, then again later; this gives the reader a much more active task than simply reading.

Mr. Waldo-Schwartz begins by redefining the word invisible in his first chapter title, “The In-visible” (what is visible inwardly), and he is well aware that the essential of *occult* means concealed. So he moves inward gradually to his paired subjects of the occult and art by discussing relevant history, contemporary movements in science, the Tarot, the Fibonacci Curve (its line can be seen, he says, in a seashell, a canary’s claws, a hurricane and a galaxy, and so on), and then he gets to the thick of art’s examples of this. Although most of the many photos are of European paintings and sculptures and photographs, some beautiful Eastern works, mostly Indian, are also used. In showing how science is opening to the mystery of what we always thought was everyday stuff, and is in fact finding itself “immersed in a cosmic tapestry of the impossible”, he says:

An electron changes from one orbit to another without ever having travelled through space; an electron fired at a screen with two holes in it goes through both apertures at once; a positron, or double-negative electron, can only be explained as moving backwards in time; a neutrino, which has no mass, no charge, and no magnetic field — and which hence cannot truly be said to exist — passes through our bodies and through the crust of the earth as if these “objects” did not exist for it — in fact, quite like a ghost.

Then, taking the phrase, “psi field”, (science’s attempt to explain all these “impossibles”) he marshals examples of artists who’ve painted such a psi field: Victor Hugo, Seurat, Mark Tobey, others.

The author fireflies himself through succeeding chapters like “The Non-Self”, with relevant experiences of celebrated people, of dreams; “The Labyrinth and the Desert”, featuring paintings that suggest the psychological visibility by human labyrinths and deserts; “The Occult Self”, where, after an electric presentation of the hidden sides of Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Miro, Goya, Ingres and El Greco, Paul Waldo-Schwartz argues for a physical (Ingres), etheric (Rembrandt, Goya) and astral¹ (El Greco) typology of artists’ work. “The Magical Self”, by which his perspective of Aleister Crowley attempts to show him as an embracer of the Divine and

¹ *Astral* is the author’s word for the soul dimension.

demonic toward oneness. "The Moon Goddess, the White Goddess", with a lot of concentration on the *moon* aspect in lunar landscapes and the Venus side of woman, but nothing noticeable on the *white* aspect. Discussions range from one on the polarity of the goddess ideal and the fleshly reality of woman, to its resolution in the author's conception of Indian Tantra which unfortunately misses the point of Tantric Yoga by fastening almost wholly upon its incidental and grossly misunderstood handling of sex, to the very significant historical change of the god Eros' function from harmonizer of existence to the Cupid of "limitless desire". "The Saint and the City" a chapter not so much about either as on the paintings of Carlo Crivelli, Braque, Leger, Duchamp, Maurice Sievan, Kandinsky, Mondrian and others, some of which are bolt-upright experiences. "Time-Future", as the closing chapter of the book, involves speculations on art and occultism of the future and yet has the old familiars of Chagall, Chirico, Dali, and a new type of anamorphic photography by Alan Fontaine. Finally there is an appendix illustrating and describing the Tarot.

Mr. Waldo-Schwartz' occult horizon apparently excludes figures like Rudolph Steiner, Annie Besant, Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and seems to focus on power and sex far more than love and, to some extent, knowledge — the selection of art reproductions fully reflects this. Also, it takes an organized mind to benefit from the sometimes rich text's runic movement. One of the richest incidents in the text is what I would like to close with; it is related by Jean Cocteau, the French filmmaker and writer:

I went yesterday to El Greco's house in order to take a walk with him in the town. The weather was very fine with delightful spring sunshine which made everyone happy. The town seemed to be *en fete*. I was astonished on entering El Greco's studio to find the curtains drawn so tightly that one could hardly see anything. El Greco was sitting on a chair neither working nor sleeping.

He did not want to come out with me, for the daylight disturbed his inner light.

RONALD JORGENSEN.

VEDANTA IN BRIEF: By Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda. Pub.: Yoga Research Foundation, 6111, S.W., 74th Ave., Miami, Florida-33143, U.S.A. Pp. 224. Price: \$ 4.99.

There is no book in English explaining the meaning of the numerous terms traditionally used in Vedantic literature. The present book by Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda, based upon an excellent work

by Sri Pitambar Maharaj (1846-1899), a Sannyasi saint of North India, called *Vichara Chandrodaya* meets the great need for such a book.

It is written in the form of questions and answers. Every possible doubt of a student is raised and answered in clear, crisp words.

The book is divided into 15 chapters, like 'Superimposition and negation of the World', 'I am the witness of the three bodies', 'beyond the five sheaths', 'I am the witness of the three States', etc. A Vedantic Glossary, which forms the third and final part of the book, is a valuable addition.

As Swamiji says in his brief introduction "Study Vedantic philosophy; Be equipped with discrimination, dispassion, self-control and aspiration for God-realisation. Turn your gaze within by the enquiry of *Who Am I?*"

L. P. K.

DEVAS AND MAN: By the Southern Centre of Theosophy, Robe, South Australia. Pub.: The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras-20. Pp. 370. Price: Rs. 35.

This book is the product of years of study devoted to one order of creation — invisible beings, conscious, semi-conscious and senseless, which are called by a variety of names in all countries of the world; but all classified under the generic term of elementals, *ganas* or gods.

The reader is introduced not only to his 'daivic neighbours', who surround him on all sides, with their different names, descriptions, realms of work, relationship with man, but also to the great Deva Kingdom as a whole, which includes life from the lowest infusoria to the highest archangel. The compilation has been made from the writings of H.P. Blavatsky, W. Q. Judge, Annie Besant, C. W. Leadbeater, Alice Bailey, Geoffrey Hodson and others who have borne testimony to the perception of forces, phenomena and beings not normally known.

The old Pagans, Egyptian, Chaldean, Greek, phoenician or others, recognised the various orders of angelic hosts, but Christianity drove them out as devils. Belief in the existence of invisible visitants from worlds better and worse than our own is still deeply rooted in men's hearts. This belief has been strengthened in recent times by spiritualists and occultists in the Western world. One doubts whether the poet Carrington has not been premature in his lament over the "Departure of the Fairies."

"... They are flown
Beautiful fictions of our fathers, wove
In Spiritualists' web when Time was young,
And fondly loved and cherished — They are
flown
Before the wand of Science."

This book stresses the role of angelic beings in guiding man's evolution, since all *Life*, whether visible or invisible, is subject to one *Law*, the Divine Will.

THE MYSTICISM OF POYGAI ALWAR : By R. Balasubramanian. Pub. : Vedanta Publications, Ashok Nagar, Madras-83. Pp. 71. Price : Rs. 5.

Dr. Balasubramanian, Reader in Philosophy in the University of Madras, has done an excellent study of Poygai Alwar's *Mudal Tiruvantadi*. Out of the hundred verses of this Tamil Classic, 51 are translated and their mystical and philosophical significance interpreted in the light of Shri Vaishnavism.

In South Indian mystic tradition, 12 *Alvars* and 63 *Nayanmars* are recognised ; and although Nammalvar is looked upon as the central luminary among the former class of saints, Poygai Alwar, Bhutattalwar and Peyalwar are hailed as *Mudal Alvars*, being chronologically prior to the others.

The essentials of Vaishnava mysticism are ably set forth in the introduction, which shows how the constitution of saintly life is much the same in all ages and climes.

ARGUS.

MEDITATION : By the Monks of the Ramakrishna Order. Pub. : Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4. Pp. 161. Price : Rs. 7.50.

This is a valuable book on Meditation which gives the experience and instructions of adepts in Yoga Vedanta. Meditation is the central *sadhana* of Raja Yoga. Bhavyananda in his introduction says that prayer and *Japam* can prepare the mind for concentration. Asokananda insists upon *chitta shuddhi* and serene tranquillity ; Ghanananda insists upon the *sadhanas* of *yama*, *niyama*, *asana*, *Pranayama*, *pratyahara* and *dharana* to attain *Dhyana* progressively. Be pure, chaste and one-pointed, repeat a *mantra*, and you will improve in meditation day by day. Easy and firm pose (*stira sukham asanam*) will do. Ganeswarananda insists upon equipoise of the mind. A disturbed mind cannot find peace and poise. You must sit firm within like a rider on the saddle. The mind must be pure before it is established in Divine consciousness. The sixth chapter of the *Gita* gives leading hints on meditation. The deeper self is visible only when the mental ripples subside. When the mind calms down, you can hear the inner *AUM*. The I-Self manifests when the non-self melts.

We recommend this book to all aspirants.

OCCULT PHILOSOPHY : By Mato Edmund Jones. Pub. : Sabian Publishing Society, Stanwood, Washington, USA. Pp. 436. Price : \$ 6.95.

The author of this mystic book has rambled widely in the woodlands of occult philosophy, Secret Doctrine, Neo-Platonism, Rosicrucianism, magic, divination, ritual, psychometry, extra sensory perception and para psychology. He comes to the conclusion that *self analysis* is the philosophical foundation for all possible occult therapeutics. Occultism arose from man's interest in healing esoterics. Divination is its very core. It was linked with ritualisation of magical practices. This has developed into a supra-physical science.

The author hails Madame Blavatsky to be the supreme occultist. He gives a new interpretation of Jesus as an Essene. He affirms that Bacon wrote Shakespeare. He elaborates the dichotomy of the subjective and the objective, the noumena and phenomena. He considers man as the fourth dimensional entity, the thinker, and presses on to the trichotomy of spiritual consciousness. It leads man to transcendent experiences and self-fulfilment.

DARSANA MALA : By Narayana Guru. Pub. : C. S. Gupta, Gandhi Bazar, Bangalore-4. Pp. 112. Price : Rs. 2.40.

Darsana Mala or *Garland of Self Vision*, is a major Sanskrit work of Sri Narayana Guru, the famous Sage of Varkala. The work has been elaborately commented on by His disciple, Swami Shakti Dhara. The concise booklet gives us ten visions — *Adhyaropa* (Superimposition), *Apavada* (Refutation), *Asatya* (Non-Truth), *Maya* (Illusion), *Bhava* (Vital awareness), *Karma* (Action), *Jnana* (Wisdom), *Bhakti* (Devotion), *Yoga* (Unification) and *Nirvana* (Emancipation). The Sanskrit couplets are mellifluous. The non-existent world emanates from the Will of Parameswara — *Parameswarah Sankalpa matrena Sasarja*. At the inception, the world was a mere mental picture, (*Mano matram idam chitram*). Cosmic emanation is like that of the tree from a seed. The world is a superimposition on the mind. To a wise man it is like water in a mirage. The Absolute Self is not coloured by name, form or causality, nor the three strands of Nature — *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. It is like painting on a canvas. If the painting is removed all is blank. Action is done by the totality of the mind-stuff and the senses. Action ceases when they are calmed. *Atman* sits like the Master in a chariot, an alert witness. There is no happiness apart from self-happiness. All conceptual structures are abandoned when the Yogin is fixed in the Self. The

realised Yogin says "I am pure *Anandam*; I'm Brahman — *Anandoham Aham Brahma*. The author atlast comes to the conclusion of *Gita* and Shankara who say "The self-fixed Yogin has no thought-wandering. Even devotion is Self-consciousness — *Swaswarupanusandhanam Bhaktiritya-bhidhiyate*". The Nirvana Darsan declares finally "He is the supreme who lives in absolute Self-consciousness, void of the movements of the distracting mind." Such is the substance of *Darsana Mala*, a work to study and contemplate and follow.

SWAMI: By Doug Boyd. Pub.: Rider & Co., 3, Fritzroy Square, London W.1. Pp. 330. Price: £ 5.50.

Mr. Douglas Boyd is a seeker and has made many interesting experiments with research apparatus, like cardiograph, Respiration gauge and electro-encephalograph. Swami Rama from the Himalayas comes to him and attracts him by his mind-body controls, like stopping heart-beat for 17 minutes and controls of inner states. Douglas Boyd and other scientists were taken aback by Rama's dramatic Yogic demonstrations at their Research Laboratory at Topeka. The American seekers visit India with Swami Rama. But Douglas was not satisfied with all these pragmatic projects. He ransacks oriental libraries and the lore of Tibet, China and India. Tired of book lore, he throws away all books and instruments and wants *Samadhi* straight away. Swami Rama makes him sit in peace for an hour and gently leads to the peace and bliss embedded in the heart. Then they all go from Swami to Swami and learn real Yoga. "Yoga is the control of the modifications of the mind. It is a system of understanding one's own nature and using mastery over nature for Self-mastery."

They visit many Swamis on the banks of the Ganges including Mahesh Yogi of TM fame. They are satisfied atlast under that "Bliss in an internal thing independent of all surroundings. Do your duty in your place. Be non-attached like water-drops on a lotus leaf. Perform your obligations. Beyond external forms, burning of incense, repeating of Sanskrit phrases, attend to the principle of right relationship, doing right actions like Mahatma Gandhi. Real Light is omnipresent. One can discover it within oneself wherever one may be." This is the common denominator between the science of the West and the Wisdom of the East—between spirituality and scientific West pragmatism. An integration of Yoga and life-expanding-science is the culmination of cosmic life.

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PRACTICAL GUIDE TO YOGA: By H.H. Swami Chidanandaji. Pub.: The Divine Life Society, Sivananda Nagar, Rishikesh. Pp. 87. Price: Rs. 12.

Swami Chidananda, President of the *Divine Life Society*, is a dynamic apostle of Yoga Vedanta. He has given in this booklet all the important poses of Hatha Yoga that can ensure health and strength. This is a boon to Yoga students seeking psychosomatic culture. From start to finish, it gives on every page well illustrated instructions on *Suryanamaskar*, select *asanas*, *Pranayama*, and meditation with apt *mantras* stimulating interest and enthusiasm. Swamiji has given in simple English even like Gurudev Sivananda, the techniques and benefits of each *Asana*. Deep breathing exercises have been clearly explained and illustrated.

MUHAMMAD THE IDEAL PROPHET: By S. Sulaiman Nadwi. Pub.: Islamic Research and Publications, P.O. Box 119, Tagore Marg, Lucknow. Pp. 191. Price: Rs. 20.00.

This is a collection of lectures delivered in the Muslim Educational Society of Madras in 1925 by

Maulana Sulaiman Nadwi, an eminent savant of *Al Quoran*. Mohiddin Ahamad has translated the Urdu lectures in simple flowing English. The book highlights vivid, convincing, and graceful terms, the model life and inspired words of the Holy Prophet. This forms a brilliant blueprint for the practical guidance of humanity. He was a living example of cardinal virtues. The words and deeds of the Prophet have been so clearly recorded that none can distort or misunderstand them. In Medina alone there were 355 companion disciples dedicated to the dissemination of the teachings of the Prophet. Equally in Mecca, Basra, Taif, Kufa, Damascus, Yemen, and Egypt there were 600 faithful followers of the Prophet who narrated the traditions of the Holy Prophet and imparted knowledge of Islam long after His demise. His teachings enjoyed recognition and patronage among the learned. "A new generation of scholars sprang up with unbounded enthusiasm to learn and live the teachings of the Prophet", says the author. His prayers in the cave of Hira and His fervent meditations, the manner of His living preaching — everything has been recorded clearly by His followers. Faith in God and righteous action — these two cover the entire teachings of the Prophet of Islam. "Every soul is a pledge for its own deeds. Do good with trust in God". This is the substance of Islam.

YOGI SUDDHANANDA BHARATI.

AUM GANESA : The Peace of God. By Ratna Ma Navarathnam. Pub.: Vidya Bhavan, 341, Columbuturai Road, Jaffna, Sri Lanka. Pp. 270. (Price not stated).

A few years ago the author of this book has written a similar book on *Kartikeya*, or Muruga, a god who is worshipped by millions of Tamilians, in India, Sri Lanka and other countries. Ganesa, or Pillaiyar, the brother of Kartikeya, is an even more popular god. In Tamil Nadu his shrine, generally small, is found in street corners, under trees by the side of the roads, as well as in the inner courtyards of Siva temples. Both Muruga and Pillaiyar are associated with *Om*, the sacred sound and symbol of the Absolute Brahman.

If Muruga is the expounder of *Om*, Pillaiyar is *Om* itself. That seems to be the reason why the author has chosen the title *Aum Ganesa* for her book, which is based on a study of practically all the material available in ancient and modern works about this deity. The most important of these is the well-known hymn of the Tamil Saint-poetess, Avvayar, named *Vinayakar Ahaval*, which describes the mystic experiences which she had while worshipping this god and his yogic and esoteric

significance. The author has analysed this work in detail and quoted in full the excellent English translation of it by Professor K. Swaminathan. She has also given detailed accounts of the god found in various other works and has appended a valuable bibliography of books on the subject.

Dr. B. Natarajan, a well-known authority on Indian Economics, has written a valuable foreword to the book. There are also some excellent illustrations of Ganesa.

The author has taken great pains to write this useful book, but one cannot help feeling that if she had left out many of the non-essential details and arranged the remaining matter properly and presented it more succinctly the result would have been much better.

SELF REALIZATION THROUGH SOHAM SADHANA : By B. G. Vellal. Pub.: Mrs. B. S. Kushalappa, 'Mount Estate', Kadagal Post, Coorg (Via. Mercara). Pp. 156. Price : Rs. 9.00.

Soham is a well-known *mantra*. A slightly modified form of it known as the *Hamsa mantra*, is *Hamsas-Soham — Soham-Hamsa*. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi suggested a new *mantra*, *Deham Naham Koham Soham* (the body, I am not, who am I? I am That). All these *mantras* signify the same thing, namely the identity of the individual and, the absolute or Brahman. The *Soham mantra*, as the author states, is to be repeated under the initiation and guidance of a competent Guru. The repetition should not be mechanical. It should be done with concentration on the significance of the *mantra*. This will in due course lead to the conviction that one is the Brahman. The author gives a detailed account of his initiation and the way in which he practised the japa repetition. He also narrates his interviews with various realized men, the significant dreams which he had, and the experiences of the men and women who had benefited from the *mantra*.

The author, a retired military officer, is extremely earnest and sincere in his desire to share his experiences with others.

THE QUINTESSENCE OF YOGAVASISTHA : By Prof. B. Kuppaswamy. Pub.: C. S. Gupta, Satsanga Seva Samithi, Gandhi Bazaar, Bangalore-4. Pp. 174. Price : Rs. 5.

The *Yoga Vasishtha* is an old and important work on the Advaita philosophy which is not as well known as it deserves to be. Its immense length of 32,000 stanzas is the main cause of this neglect. Even in its abridged form of 6000 stanzas, known as the *Laghu Yoga Vasishtha*, it is too long to be

read easily. The work is not only of great philosophical value but possesses also great literary merit. The beauty of its poetry cannot easily be brought out in translation. The author has rendered a distinct service to readers who do not know Sanskrit by writing this handy little book of less than 175 pages, aptly named *The Quintessence of Yoga-vasishtha*. He has taken great pains to summarise contents of the work without omitting anything of importance. He thinks that the teachings of the *Yoga Vasishtha* have relevance to modern times.

There is an excellent foreword written by Sri Sai Padananda Radhakrishna Swamiji of the *Sai Spiritual Centre*, Bangalore.

THE ESOTERIC GOSPEL OF GITA : By Susruva.
Pub. : Affiliated East West Press Pvt. Ltd., 8, East Spur Tank Road, Madras-600 031. Pp. 216.
Price : Rs. 15.00.

The author of this book approaches the *Gita* with the conviction that it is an esoteric work and that its teachings can be understood only by those who have been initiated into the occult lore. To support his view he quotes profusely from the *Secret Doctrine* of Madame Blavatsky. He finds no contradictions or interpolations in the text of the *Gita*. Every one of the seven hundred stanzas is, in his opinion, relevant to the development of the secret doctrine and is in its proper place. Not all will agree with him on this point.

But there is plenty of evidence to show that he is a man of wide reading and that he has taken great pains to make his views clear. Theosophists and others who believe in the occult lore will find his exposition of the *Gita* valuable.

The printing is good and the get-up attractive.

M. C. S.

HEALING THROUGH GEMS : Author : N. N. Saha. Pub. : Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi-110 016. Pp. 152. Price Rs. 6.00.

The book deals with the influence of gems on human fortunes and is a branch of "applied astrology". Certain gems are said to have great healing powers. It is claimed that gems have cured where medicines have failed to cure. In astrology people struck with misfortune are advised to wear different kinds of gems in order to counter-act the effect of malefic planets.

Having made all these suggestions, the author also says that the effects of past *karmas* can never be overcome.

One is left with the impression that the subject cannot be called "scientific" but that it rests on

tradition, personal experience and insight which are not amenable to objective analysis.

S. Y. KRISHNASWAMY.

THE NATURE OF BELIEF : By Elizabeth Maclaren. "Issues in Religious Studies" : Pub. : Sheldon Press, Marelebourne Road, London, N.W. 1. Pp. 118 Price : £ 1.60.

The general preface tells us that the series is an introduction to some of the central issues involved in religious studies. Consistent with this limited aim, the author discusses some of the important aspects of belief more to clarify the problem than to offer any definite solution. The book unfolds the several implications and view-points which arise on a mere probing of the subject. In an open-minded exploration of the subject, all arguments are very clearly stated. The two chapters on the "Question of Evidence" and the last one on the "Possibility of Belief" are written in the form of a dialogue enabling the reader to draw his own conclusions. A study of this book will enable the reader to understand the extraordinary difficulty of arriving at a precise connotation of concepts like 'belief and grace'. Simple in exposition, the book will appeal to lay readers.

ASTROLOGY AND MODERN THOUGHT : By B. V. Raman (Editor : *The Astrological Magazine*). Sixth Edition, 1972. Pub. : IBH Prakashnana, Gandhinagar, Bangalore-9. Pp. 138. Price : £ 2.00.

Astrology, though little understood by the layman, is nonetheless most vehemently criticised as being a relic of ancient superstition. The book under review is a welcome answer to such uncritical attacks. The book consists of eight well-informed chapters and discusses some very important questions. The author defines astrology as "the philosophy of discovering and analysing past impulses and future actions of both individuals and nations in the light of planetary configurations." The usual criticism that the planets are mere lumps of matter and that they are too far away to influence man is examined in detail. In the fourth chapter, the author proves scientifically and by quoting various authorities that planets do influence terrestrial affairs. This point gets reinforcement in the chapters on "Astrology and History" and "Statistical Proof". The two chapters which discuss the theory of karma as related to astrology, and whether we are committed to the doctrine of fatalism in accepting astrology as scientific, are both learned and interesting.

Prof. Raman concludes that man is not entirely determined nor entirely free. Man is determined in

his basis of physical existence but he has freedom to make or mar himself. A proper scientific study of astrology, the author feels, will give us results very useful to psychology, medicine, meteorology and other such sciences.

This book has to be read many times and the contents properly understood, if one wishes to gain a correct perspective.

PROF. S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

SILVER JUBILEE SOUVENIR

The Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion founded by the great modern saint, Dr. R. D. Ranade, in the year 1952 at Belgaum, has been doing great service by way of bringing out useful books in philosophy, in particular the teaching of its Founder, which is lauded by philosophers and the elite interested in matters spiritual. Recently they have brought out a *Silver Jubilee Souvenir* dealing with Dr. R. D. Ranade's 'Sampradaya' and his philosophy, as well as philosophy and religion in general. It is in two parts. The price of the volume is Rs. 32 and it can be had from: 'The Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum-590 011, Karnataka, India.

THE CHILDREN'S GARDEN SCHOOL

Dr. V. N. Sharma, acclaimed by Arthur Osborne, our Founder-Editor, as a 'rowing Ambassador' of our Journal, together with his dedicated wife, Mrs. Ellen Sharma, founded in 1937 the Children's Garden School in Madras with a meagre strength of 7 children only. Now it has not only 1,800 students but 120 well-trained staff too. This speaks volumes on the efficiency and dedication of Mrs. Ellen Sharma. Mrs. Sharma passed away in June 1978 and her daughter Shakuntala Sharma has now taken over this 'pleasant burden'. In memory of Mrs. Ellen Sharma the School have brought out an attractive *Souvenir*, which includes an article by Lucia Osborne, our former Editor.

YOGA LIFE

Dr. Swami Gitananda, Founder-President of Ananda Ashram, Pondicherry has written many books on YOGA. He is bringing out a monthly: YOGA LIFE. The 10th Anniversary issue of this journal is not only attractively brought out but is rich in its contents with useful technical information on Yoga. Dr. Gitananda and his wife, Meenakshi Devi deserve congratulations for the excellent get up.

A NEW PUBLICATION

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According to Sri Ramana Maharshi

By

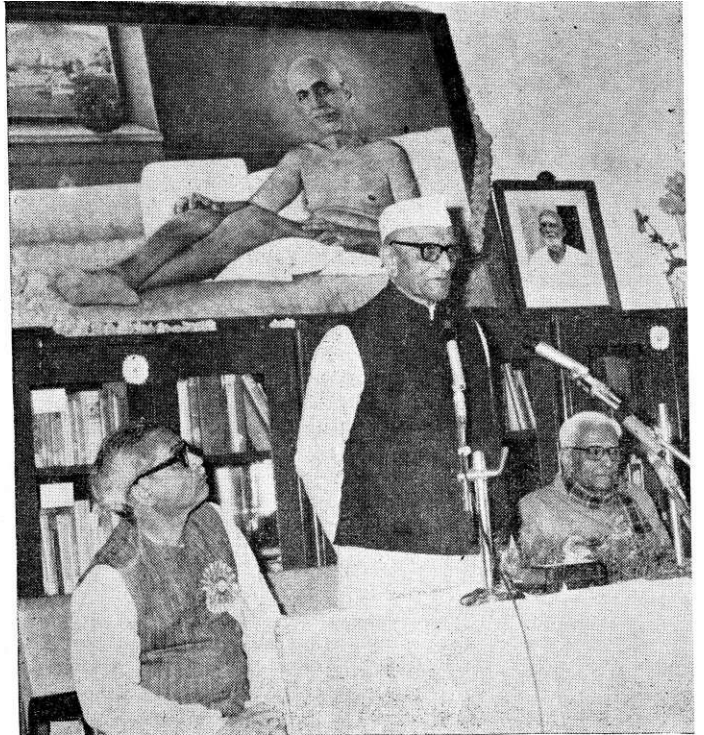
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ASHRAM BULLETIN

*“ Maharshi’s Self-Enquiry
Illumines All Paths ”*



Sri Morarji Desai delivering his presidential address at the Kendra. (l to r) Sri S. N. Tripathi, Sri Morarji Desai and Professor K. Swaminathan.

SRI MORARJI DESAI’S TRIBUTE TO THE SAGE OF ARUNACHALA

99TH JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS AT DELHI

“ Sri Ramana Maharshi regarded everybody as himself. He made no attempt to convert anybody. One got transformed spontaneously in His presence ”, said Sri Morarji Desai, Prime Minister of India.

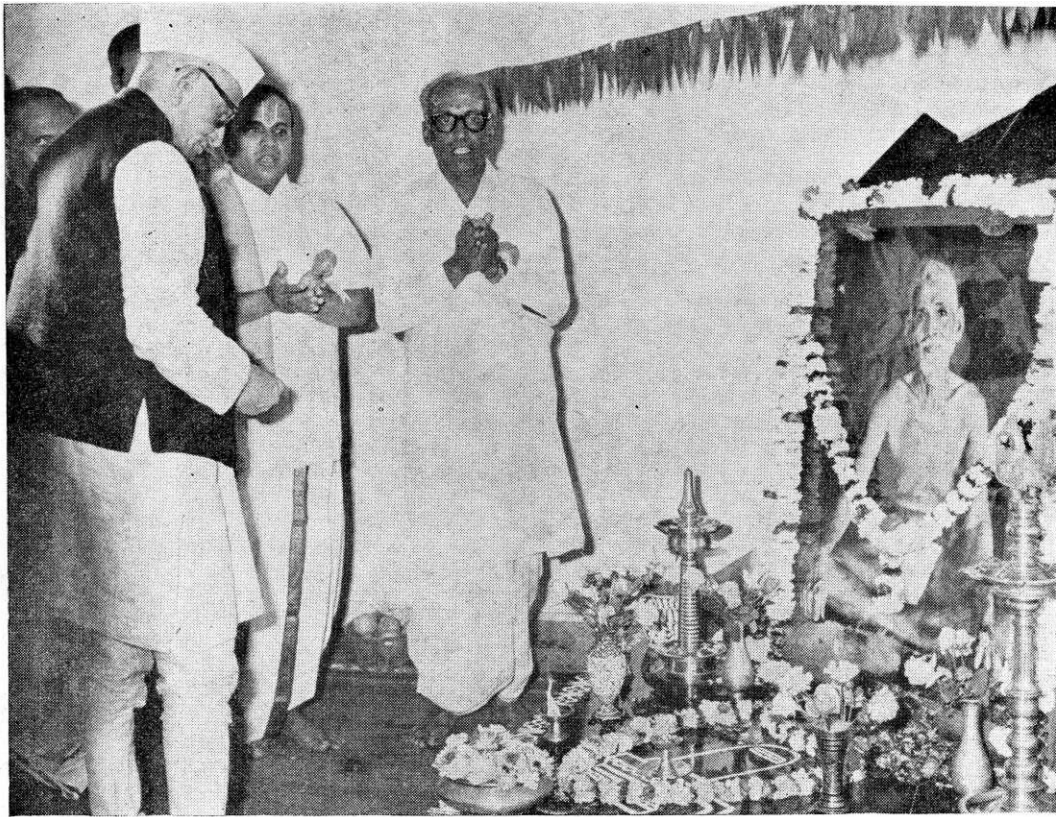
The 99th birth anniversary of Bhagavan Ramana was celebrated at the Ramana Kendra, Delhi, with due solemnity and enthusiasm. The Prime Minister presided over the function, held at the auditorium to mark the commencement of the Centenary year.

At the Kendra shrine, the religious functions were held on January 13 with *puja* and *Vedaparyana*. A *Trikala puja* was also performed at the Swaminatha Swami Temple in Uttara Swamimalai, in Delhi.

Sri Morarji Desai began his speech by recalling his visit to Sri Ramanasramam in 1935 :

“ The whole atmosphere was sacred and serene. I sat in his presence in the hall. There were a

few people around. I had no questions to ask. I had no doubts in my mind. I have never had that kind of experience elsewhere. And when I went to take leave of him, he said that I could have a meal and then go. This was all he said to me ; this was all the exchange that took place. And I sat down with him for lunch. He used to sit down with every body. Some of his disciples used to sit away separately. He



The Prime Minister paying homage to the shrine of Sri Ramana Maharshi at the Ramana Kendra, Delhi.

said nothing about it. That was the beauty. He seemed to say, 'I can only show the path, but I cannot take you there. *You* have to go there.'

"He seemed to know everything. He knew the language of the birds. He listened to their complaints. He treated every being in the same way, whether it was a cow or a dog, a crow or a monkey. All were equal in his eyes, the beggar and the millionaire. He never went out of Tiruvannamalai. He refused to go out and preach. He said, 'If I am a jnani, I consider everybody else a jnani too. What is there to give?' He regarded everybody as himself. He made no attempt to convert anybody. One got transformed by his very presence.

"Many civilizations have flourished and then disappeared. But in this country you find our old culture and the ancient religion still alive. And it is this that keeps the country alive. It is persons like the Maharshi who keep it alive. Every country produces saints. Saints are not the monopoly of India. But I think that India produces more of them than any other country. There are people like that even in ordinary life. It is dharma that keeps our country alive. We need not learn from others. All learning should come from within. That is the way the Maharshi showed. He did not criticize any other way of life. He said, 'Stick to your own religion and follow it properly'. He not only

had no intolerance of others, he had respect for others. Ramana Maharshi taught that one can do *sadhana* in one's chosen way and reach the goal. Self-enquiry brings the light of the Self to illumine every path."

Mr. Desai concluded by wishing the Kendra all success in its work of *sadhana* and service.

Earlier, a programme of *Vedapārāyana*, Tamil recitations and music was gone through and Professor K. Swaminathan in his welcome speech gave an account of the progress and the various current activities of the Kendra. Sri S. N. Tripathi proposed a vote of thanks in Hindi.

At ASHRAM

The 99th Birthday — Jayanti — of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at the Ashram in a grand manner on January 13.

Since the *Jayanti* comes off in the month of *Mārgazhi* (*Dhanurmāsam*), the function started in the early morning with *Dhanurmāsa pūja*. Devotees, led by Sri Ramaswami Pillai and Sri Kunju Swami, sang hymns on Bhagavan as well as by Him. Soon after, there was milk-offering at the shrine of Sri Bhagavan as usual. After breakfast there was an elaborate *pūja* to Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam along with Vedic chants. Special

abisheka with fruits, milk, curds, honey, panchamirtham and vibhuthi was done, after which the shrine was specially decorated with garlands and *kavacha* (silver cover). After *arathi*, guests were treated to a special lunch. *Maheswara puja* (feeding of many) took place on the lawn outside. A number of distinguished devotees, Indian and foreign, were present and partook of *prasad*.

One could feel that the Ashram atmosphere was vibrant with Sri Bhagavan's presence. In fact, such a special aura prevailed even on the Jayanti Eve.

* * *

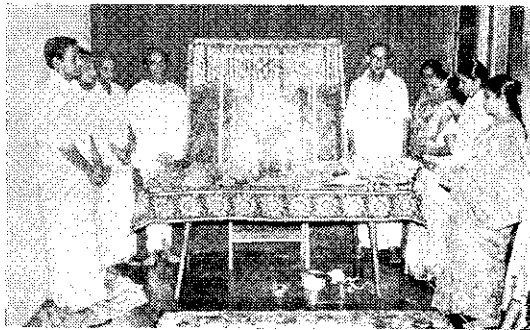
At RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS

The *Jayanti* (Bhagavan's 99th birth anniversary) was celebrated in a fitting manner on January 13 and 14. On the 13th there were daylong *pujas* and recitations and nearly 800 poor persons were given a meal at the Kendra premises. At the public meeting on the 14th Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan was the principal speaker. Sri K. K. Nambiar presided.

* * *

At SRI LANKA

The *Ramana-bhaktas* in Sri Lanka dedicatedly celebrate every year the Master's Birthday. Photos taken during this year's function are here reproduced.



(L to R) Messrs. C. S. Arunachalam, S. Sathasivam, S. Suntheralingam, T. Navaratnam, M. Navasivayam, Miss D. Ramachandra, Mrs. K. Ramachandra, Mrs. P. Arunachalam, and Mrs. Sathasivam.

Mrs. Ariamany Richard waving aarti to the portrait of Sri Bhagavan.



Reports of *Jayanti* celebrations have come from Sri *Ramana Mandiram*, Madurai, *Bhagavan Ramana Satsang Mandir*, Kolhapur, *Viswa Hindu Parishad*, Bhagalpat, *Ramana Bhakta Sabha*, Tirupati and other places.

DELHI KENDRA NEWS

The Kendra is happy to announce that Sri Morarji Desai has kindly consented to serve as its President during the year 1979-80.

* * *

On December 12, 1978 *Kartik Purnima* (Arunachala *Deepam*) was celebrated at *Ramanachala* (the Shrine in the Kendra), which was gaily lit for the occasion and was reverently circumambulated by the devotees singing *Aksharamanamalai*.

* * *

On January 28, Sri M. P. Pandit, the well-known scholar, gave an interesting talk based on his association with the illustrious Saint-poet, *Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri*.

* * *

Sivaratri was celebrated on February 25 with the chanting of *Sri Rudram* and the singing of *Siva Puranam* and the 108 verses of *Aksharamanamalai*.

* * *

Under the auspices of the Chinmaya Mission, Delhi, regular *Gita* classes are being conducted in the Kendra auditorium from February 12 onwards. The *Vedaparayana* classes have also been resumed from February 26 by Sri C. Narasimhan.

* * *

The General Body meeting held on January 28 passed the annual report and audited accounts and elected new office-bearers for the years 1979 and 1980. The meeting also carried out certain amendments to the Rules and Regulations of the Kendra.

* * *

Mr. Jim Grant, a *sadhaka* from U.S.A., spent some three months in New Delhi assisting the Kendra in all its activities and especially in classifying, arranging and cataloguing the books in the Kendra Library. His untiring efforts in organizing the library and its working are highly appreciated.

PILGRIMS

As usual in the winter season, we have been happy to have in our midst numerous pilgrims from overseas. Naturally, western devotees find the cooler half of the year better for *sadhana* in the peaceful atmosphere of sacred Arunachala.

* * *

The devotees of *Arunachala Ashrama*, New York and Nova Scotia, though small in number, are totally dedicated to our Master and in spite of their restricted financial resources jump at the first opportunity to visit the abode of Sri Bhagavan.



*Arunachala
Bhakta Bhagavata*

In our issue of October 1978, p. 272 we had the pleasure of mentioning a few such devotees visiting our Ashram, and now we are happy to report that the chief architect of that Ashrama, *Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagavata*, was here just in time to participate in Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanthi* (Jan. 13).

There were two other members too: *Mr. John Bowling* and *Miss Evelyn Kaselow*. We are pleased to reproduce hereunder an account by the latter.

"In His infinite grace and mercy, after a lapse of five-and-a-half years spent in *Sri Arunachala Ashrama* in New York City, Sri Bhagavan brought me back to Sri Ramanasramam on His Ninety-ninth *Jayanthi* Day, the beginning of the celebration of His Birth Centenary and that without any previous planning. This auspicious day was to mark the beginning of my most memorable second visit to Sri Bhagavan's abode of peace, *Sri Ramanasramam*. Sri Bhagavan's vibrant Presence pervades and permeates Sri Ramanasramam and its environs and all of us feel the unmistakable flow of His Grace. Truly, Sri Ramanasramam is a calm centre in the midst of a stormy world, offering sanctuary



Evelyn Kaselow

SURI NAGAMMA

The very word, *Nagamma* has become so popular that when she was here at the Ashram for more than 3 months, some of the Western devotees who are her staunch admirers could not even believe that she had been here. She was so simple and unassuming. Most of them could not talk to her as she could not understand English. Yet in her genial attitude and calm presence they felt at home with her. They could spiritually go back to the days of Sri Maharshi Himself, as they even today feel by reading her *magnum opus*, 'Letters from Sri Ramanasramam'.

Though she was physically weak, she continued during her stay to narrate her reminiscences of our Master which made the listeners go into rapture.

Just as during her previous stay in February—March '78 when she was able to write her reminiscences (which in Telugu has already been printed and the English translation is awaited), this time she has given us her poems (in Telugu) on Sri Maharshi, which were written during her long stay with her Master and which were perused and appreciated by Sri Bhagavan. They are getting printed now. Her health is now fairly good.

to all. The kindness of the President and all working in the Ashram has been surpassing and their solicitude has made its indelible mark on my Heart.

"While here, I have benefited immeasurably from my brief association with Viswanatha Swami, Kunju Swami, Suri Nagamma and other devotees who have had the great privilege of knowing Sri Bhagavan while He was with us. Simply to sit in silence in the presence of such as these is to receive His Teaching! I shall always remember one *pradakshina* made in the light of the full moon. As the moon brightened our path and Sri Arunachala in its light, some hymns of Bhagavan were sung out of the fulness of our hearts. During this *pradakshina* few words were spoken. Yet another unforgettable *pradakshina* was made in the company of Natesan, Arunachala Bhakta Bhagavata and Kunju Swami. During this circuit of the Hill many inspiring stories were related by Sri Kunju Swami.

"In *Sri Arunachala Ashrama* of New York City and Nova Scotia, tapes of *Veda Parayana* and *Sri Chakra Puja* prepared especially for Arunachala Ashrama here at Sri Ramanasramam, are listened to by all devotees. Thus having often listened to these tapes, we especially appreciated hearing the chanting of the *Vedas* by the *vaidiks*.

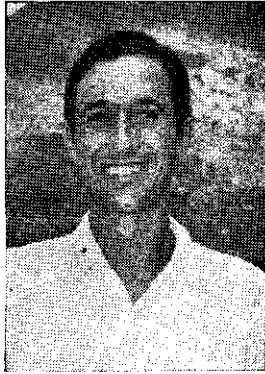
"Truly, the most outstanding feature of Sri Ramanasramam is Sri Bhagavan's Grace. Devotees of various religious faiths become silent here realizing that 'There is one Alone, and there is no second'."

EVELYN KASELOW,
Arunachala Ashrama, New York.

* * *

John Bowling, who spent six weeks at the Ashram, though silent, was very steady in his *sadhana*. He wants to share with our readers the following:

"On Friday, December 8, 1978 I was so blessed as to arrive, for the first time, at *Sri Ramanasramam* at the foot of the southern slope of Sri Arunachala. I was immediately taken into the family of Sri Bhagavan's devotees who are privileged to reside there and was made to feel completely at home. Just as Sri Bhagavan Himself would have ordered, I was first of all given His *prasad* in the dining hall. Thereafter, my first impulse was to go up a little



John Bowling

over the sacred Arunachala Hill. Walking up the path to Skandashram I stopped a little and looked about. I saw the flat plains of India stretching out beyond the reach of my vision. I felt as if I was seated on the very lap of Bhagavan. A feeling of intense joy and contentment came over me, a dream of ten long years had been realised.

"I came to know of Bhagavan Ramana just ten years back, in 1969 when I happened to find out His *Arunachala Ashrama* in New York City. There I had the precious *sat sangh* of His devotees each evening until I moved back to my home in Virginia one-and-a-half years later. When I came to Him I was overjoyed to discover that there was an ultimate Goal unknown to me before. It gave me great happiness and assurance to find out the purpose and meaning of my life. Slowly, by His Grace, I came to understand that my every action was leading me on to this Goal. Now there is no religion for me apart from my everyday life.

"Bhagavan has never shown me visions or miracles. What He has given me and continues to give is something everlasting and of far more value. That has been an ever-increasing awareness of His

Presence in my life. This is the real miracle, the vision of unity in diversity. Now, slowly, through His ever-expanding, all-encompassing Grace, I am able to see the entire universe of animate and inanimate objects as nothing but manifestation of my own Self. So there is now no room for fear in my life blessed by the presence of Bhagavan. In bringing me to His Ashram at Arunachala, Bhagavan has renewed and replenished this vision.

"As one returns home after a very long absence to a great family and friends and rests secure amidst old and familiar surroundings; as a child runs to its mother, hoping for nothing less than the complete assurance of her comforting presence; as a son comes to his father for strength and guidance, so too, I came to Arunachala."

JOHN BOWLING,
Arunachala Ashrama, New York.

* * *

Mr. & Mrs. R. H. Sainani of Montreal, Canada, came to the Ashram sometime back, for the first time. Mr. Sainani recently sent us an account of their visit and of the working of the Grace of Sri Bhagavan in bringing them to the Ashram.

She writes:

"A feeling of peace, of home-coming, of protection and of caring seemed to take possession of me there. I felt welcomed! It wasn't that I saw Bhagavan in His physical manifestation, nor felt any great spiritual vibration nor was overcome by any feeling of upliftment beyond myself. Rather it was as if I had entered an atmosphere of benediction! As if Siva in the form of Arunachala had spread His aura all through the ashram and beyond. One could not feel depressed here, even though one saw the two *samadhis* of Bhagavan and His Mother and the room where Bhagavan breathed His last in this incarnation.

"An important event occurred on our way to breakfast the second day, after the morning meditation and milk offering in Bhagavan's *Samadhi Hall*. We saw an elderly gentleman sitting in a wheel-chair dressed in white and with a white turban around his head. Someone greeted him and even before the name was uttered, I knew it was Mr. S. S. Cohen.



S. S. Cohen

Bhagavan's close disciple. We approached Mr. Cohen and told him how much we enjoyed reading his books on Bhagavan, the questions put to and the answers received from Bhagavan. Mr. Cohen, who is 84 years old and in feeble health, said 'I am hard of hearing, but I am trying to remedy that'. He is old, no doubt, but his eyes are still bright and enquiring and with a depth of wisdom that seems to pierce your every thought. We touched his feet and departed.

"It is true. Bhagavan is here and everywhere! The hall is filled with His devotees, the very air is He and all nature, too, and the beautiful peacocks, cows and overtly friendly dogs, Bhagavan pervades everything! What did we gain from this visit? Time alone can tell. It was through Bhagavan's Grace that we came to the Ashram. He alone could know and decide our gain and evolution from this enlightening and Grace-filled visit."

MRS. SAINANI,
Montreal, Canada.

* * *

An initiated *sannyasi* of the Sivananda Ashram, Rishikesh, *Swami Virajananda* stays in Killeen, Texas, U.S.A. Her



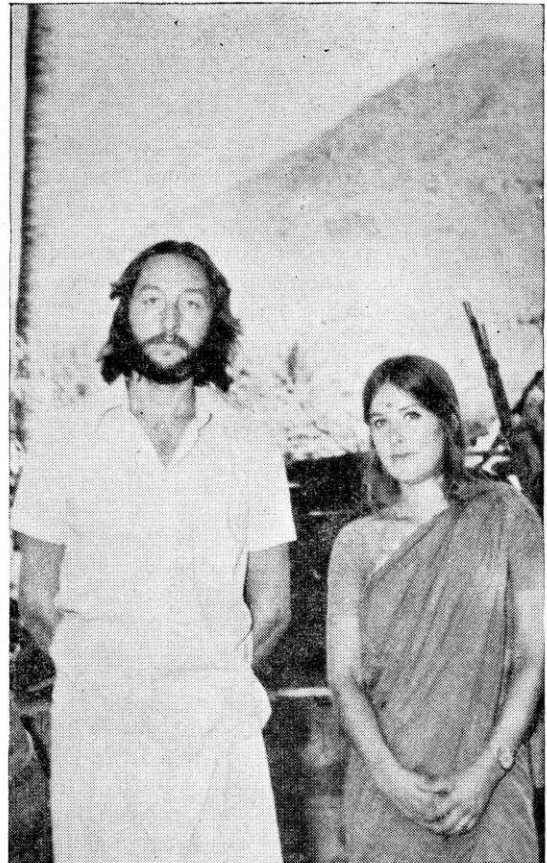
Swami Virajananda

chosen Master is Bhagavan. She was longing to make a pilgrimage to Holy Arunachala and pay homage to her Master, Bhagavan Ramana. She got a telephone instruction from Sri Swami Chidananda to go to Arunachala. With great joy she came to the Ashram on February 22 and left on March 19. She had a plan to tour farther South to pilgrim centres, but having reached Arunachala she feels that everything is Arunachala.

* * *

In our issue of July, 1975 (p. 191) we had referred to the spiritual fulfillment *Mr. Zbigniew Buday* had by coming to the Ashram. After that he bought a house in front of the Ashram and rebuilt it to suit his needs and on March 14 he performed the *grihapravesa* (house-warming ceremony), and devotees graced the occasion.

Mrs. Andrea Buday, who is a linguist (having learnt Sanskrit, she is now studying Tamil), is



Mr. and Mrs. Buday

deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan. On our request she writes :

"We first heard about Sri Ramana's teachings in America in 1972, and knew that we had found what we had been looking for. At that time there was no plan to come to Arunachala. Then my husband fell ill and was advised by doctors to avoid cold winters and so he decided to go to India and stay at Sri Ramanasramam. When he arrived he at once felt *at home* here and soon after arranged for a home for us quite near the Ashram.

"When my husband wrote to me about this, I was only pleased, although I had not yet been able to come here. Soon after we came with our son, *Gabriel*, and stayed here for about six months. *Gabriel* likes it here very much and when he and I were prevented by circumstances for the following two winters from joining my husband, he and I were both very disappointed.

"Now I have been fortunate in being able to come again with our son, who stayed here for his Christmas holidays.

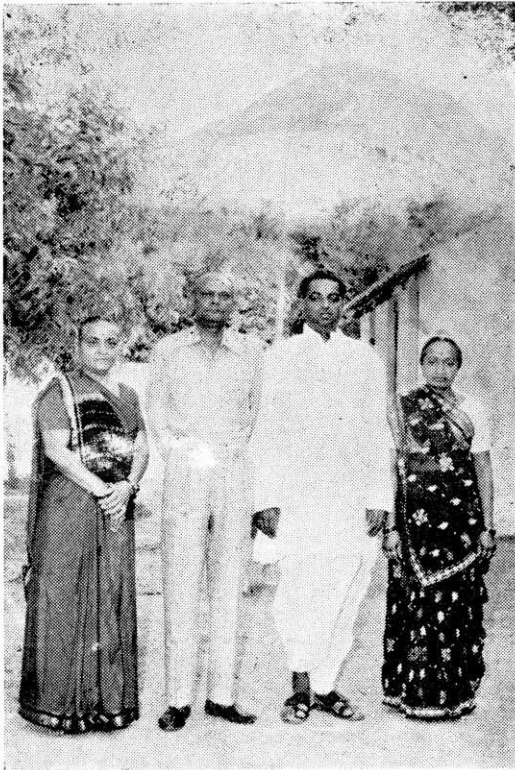
"We are thankful to Sri Ramanasramam for always being so helpful.

"In being at Arunachala I feel exceptionally fortunate. By Bhagavan's Grace, Arunachala is our home for ever."

MRS. ANDREA BUDAY, London.

* * *

Sri Ramanbhai V. Patel, is a successful businessman in Lautoka, Fiji. His philanthropic disposition is known to many but his inner, spiritual maturity is revealed only to a few. His devotion to Sri Bhagavan is deep and unique. He has visited the Ashram twice with his wife. This year he came to the Master's abode, bringing in addition to his wife, *Smt. Lilawatiben Patel*, his brother-in-law, *Sri Rangilbhai N. Patel* and his wife, *Smt. Rewaben Patel*, and spent a week in the last of March.



(l to r): *Smt. Lilawatiben Patel, Sri Ramanbhai V. Patel, Sri Rangilbhai N. Patel and Smt. Rewaben Patel.*

Sri Patel wants to share with our readers the following :

"I was introduced to Sri Maharshi through His teachings in the booklets *Who am I? Upadesa*

SRI VIDYA HOMAM

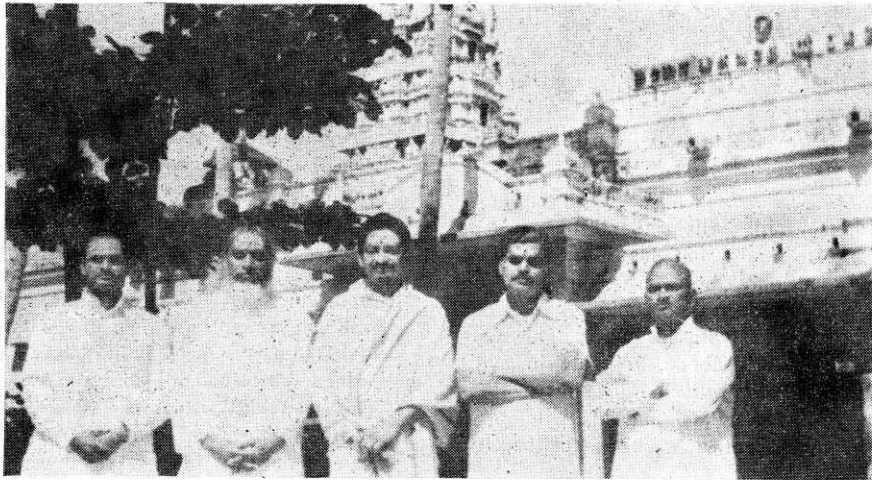
On Friday, March 16, Sri Vidya Homam was performed at the Ashram as usual in commemoration of the commencement of the worship of the *Meru-Chakra*, consecrated by the Touch of Bhagavan Ramana. The function was conducted on a grand scale with meticulous observance of all details by a band of well-versed *Vaidiks*. The proceedings commenced at 7 a.m. and concluded with *Poornahuthi* at 4 p.m. A large number of devotees participated in it. There was a *bhiksha* in the forenoon and at night *prasad* was distributed. This traditional ritual is conducted every year by the willing and generous support of many *Ramana-bhaktas*.

Saram and Spiritual Instruction by Sri T. A. J. Pillai,¹ who is himself a very ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan. It was in 1966 that I was critically ill. Mr. Pillai came to me for a small contribution for Sri Ramanasramam and asked me for \$ 2 which he refused to accept, when readily offered, without giving me the 3 booklets referred to above. The first book I was to select was *Who Am I?* and I became so drawn to it that I read all the three without touching anything else. I had from these a shower of cool elixir absorbing my inner self which sustains me to this day. I have not looked back since that day and have taken Bhagavan Ramana as my Spiritual Master from whom I seek enlightenment. Since then Sri Bhagavan has always taken care of me and I endeavour to be worthy of His care so that He will never forsake me till I have reached the final Goal.

"I have visited the holy Ashram twice — both times with my wife and my relatives who have found the Ashram's holy atmosphere perfumed with sacred vibrations of Sri Maharshi's Grace. I have found here what I have been seeking all my life, perhaps unconsciously. I am slowly coursing into the realm of the spirit where talent is useless when it turns into deep and abiding faith. I continue to strive for this flow to strengthen me. I seem to forge ahead often unaided but I remain aware of the unseen hand that keeps pushing me on and on. May Sri Bhagavan shower His Grace on me!"

SRI RAMANBHAI V. PATEL,
Lautoka, Fiji.

¹ Introduced to our readers in our July 1974 issue, page 192.



Sri B. S. Patil is seen second from left.

Sri B. S. Patil, a devotee of Sri Bhagavan from Ingleshwar, has been bringing earnest seekers to have *darshan* of Arunachala and to carry on their *sadhana* at the shrine of Sri Bhagavan. We always feel happy to see such earnest seekers at the Ashram. We give hereunder an expression of joy from some who were at the Ashram in December 1978.

"It was a great good fortune for us, Nanjundeshwar and Nijagama Siva Yogi, hailing from Karnataka to visit Sri Ramanasramam under the guidance of Sri B. S. Patil, a devotee of Sri Bhagavan and a regular visitor of Sri Ramanasramam. A pilgrimage to this sacred place was our *sankalpa* for years and we are grateful to Sri Bhagavan that it has at last been fulfilled.

"We have been breathing peace and tranquillity from the moment of our stepping into this hallowed

atmosphere and we shall carry the memory of the bliss to the end of our lives and we hope, Sri Bhagavan willing, to visit the Ashram again and again."

NANJUNDESHWAR,
NIJAGUNA SIVA YOGI.

* * *

Sri Satya Narayana Tandon, an elderly devotee of Bhagavan from Kanpur, together with his devout wife, spent more than 2 months at the Ashram and left for Kanpur on March 18 after participating in the Sri Vidya Havan. This dedicated couple give joy to the residents of the Ashram by their regularity in their *sadhana* as stated by Sri Bhagavan and participation in all the activities of the Ashram. Though Sri Tandon is past 70 his capacity to pursue his *sadhana* is not waning. He shares the following with our readers.

"As during previous years, our stay at the Ashram has been for over two months, and we are leaving Arunachala with a heavy heart. The vibrant spiritual atmosphere of the Ashram is as strong as ever before, especially of the Old Hall. By Sri Bhagavan's Grace we have had many occasions to be at the Ashram on *Maha Shivaratri* Day, but this year it had a special significance for me. From very early morning I felt something very soothing entering my heart — whether I remained in the Ramana Auditorium, during Puja at the Samadhi of Sri Bhagavan or in the Old Hall or talking with people going to the dining hall for lunch, the vibration continued till the next morning. The vibra-

KARNATAKA KENDRA

A Centre, '*Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning*' has been started in Bangalore, on March 1, 1979.

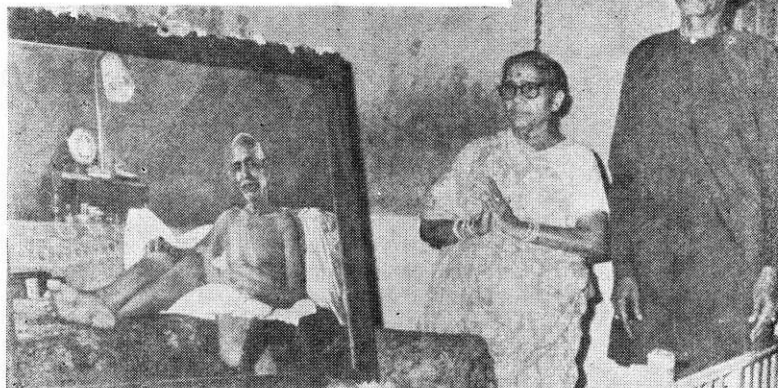
The Centre proposes to acquire a land in a central area and to construct a Meditation Hall/Reading Room/Library. It has chalked out a programme for the Ramana Centenary Year, 1980, for the Karnataka State and has already taken steps for implementing the same.

tion was at its zenith when we went round Arunachala at night, of course in a cart (as my wife and myself are not strong enough now to walk on foot).

"A few more buildings have been added to the Guest House to accommodate the growing number of devotees. Our Ashram President and those working under him are very helpful and courteous to the visiting devotees. I am glad to find Sri Tyagarajan, a sincere and devoted young man placed in charge of the Book Depot now."

SATYA NARAYANA TANDON,
Kanpur.

Smt. and Sri Satya Narayana Tandon in the Old Hall.



* * *

SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA DAY

On February 16, the anniversary of Swami Rajeswarananda's release from bodily bondage was observed at his Samadhi situated at the foot of Arunachala within the Ashram compound.

Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, who was brought up and educated by the Swami, accompanied by *Princess Irene of Greece*, came from Madras to participate in the function. They gave *biksha* (feast) to the inmates and *sadhus* of the Ashram. The function, though simple, attracted many devotees who participated in it in large numbers.



SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA ANNIVERSARY: (l to r) Smt. Padma Venkataraman, our Managing Editor, Swami Satyananda, Ashram President, Kunju Swami, K. Natesan, Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, Princess Irene, Venkataraman, Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata, Evelyn Kaselow.



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