



The Mountain Path

Editorial

FOR DEATH IN LIFE IS IN
TRUTH GLORIOUS-Bhagavan Ramana
by A. R. Natarajan

How Bhagavan Blessed Me
by Ing. Jiri Vacek

Leaves from the Autobiography
by Arthur Osborne

Self-Knowledge and Freedom
by Prof. K. B. Ramakrishna Rao

Guru Vachaka Kovai
by Michael James

My Experience at Arunachala
by Dr. S. C. Roy

Garland of Guru's Sayings
by Professor K. Swaminathan

Compassionate Ramana
by V. Ganesan

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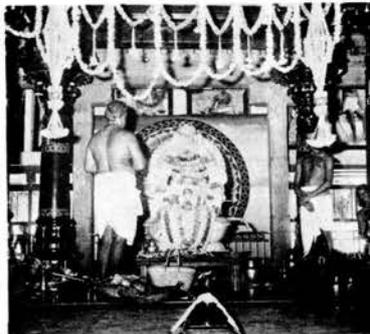
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Shine Thou Selfless,
sapping the pride of
those who boast of
their free will, Oh,
Arunachala!

— *The Marital
Garland of Letters,*
Verse.77

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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. 20 JANUARY 1983 No. 1

EDITORIAL

FOR DEATH IN LIFE IS IN TRUTH
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A. R. Natarajan

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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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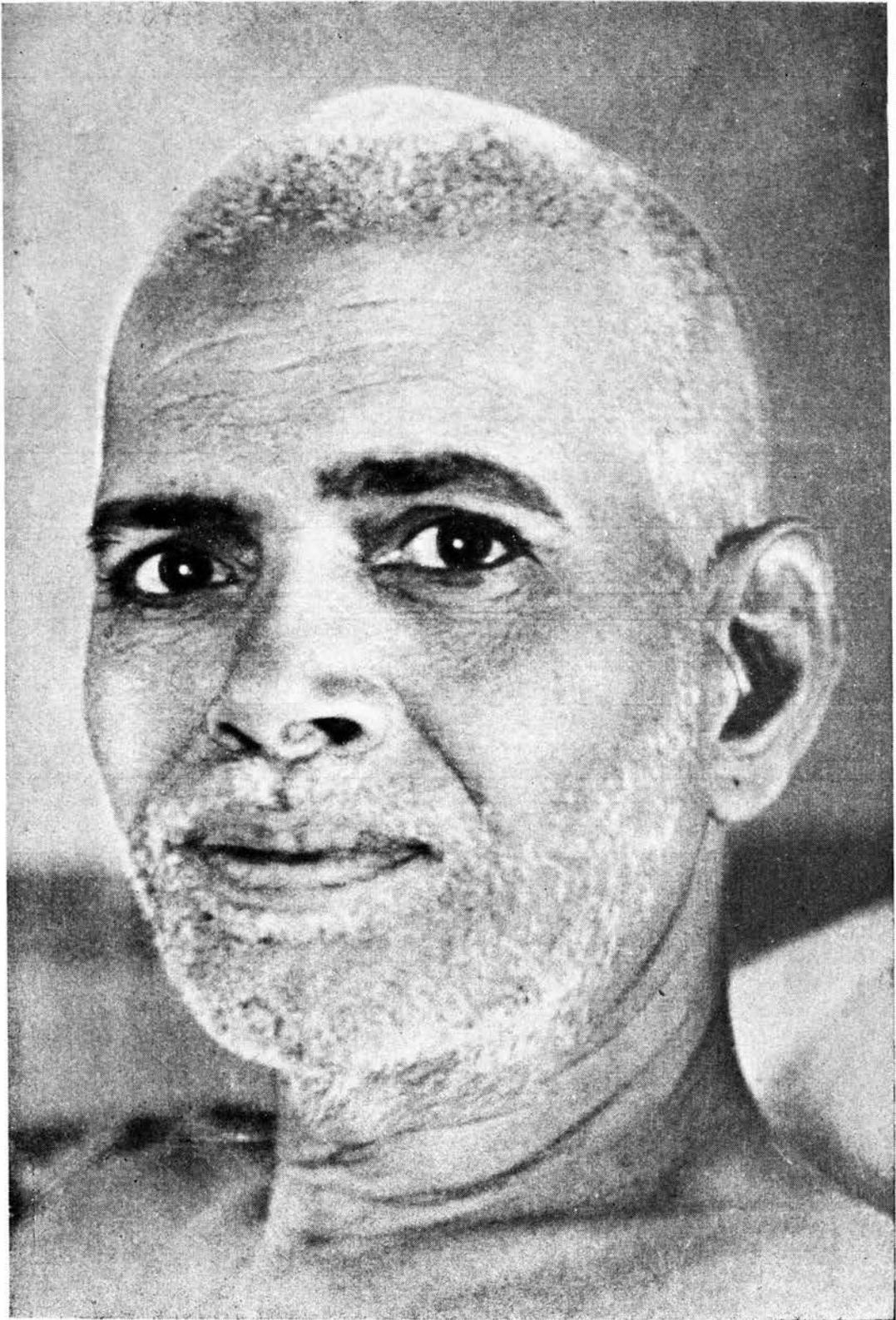
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi





WHY does Ramana say this? What is death? 'Death in life' what does it mean? Where is the glory in dying while alive? Is it not open to each one of us to make our lives 'in truth glorious'? One has to find the answers in the silence of ones own inner Being.

Often when faced with the loss of a 'dear' one we try to find out whether there is a continuity beyond. We ponder over the meaning of life. One is often gripped by the fear of death, as age advances or when seriously ill. But both 'life' and 'death' remain as unsolved riddles.

Ramana would be plied with questions about reincarnation, the interval between births and so on. In reply His 'sruti' or fundamental note would always be the same. Find out 'for whom is the birth?' and 'for whom is the death?' Some of the typical questions answered by Ramana help us to clear the mental cobwebs and focus attention on fundamental issues, the understanding of which alone can give an insight into 'death' and therefore into 'life'. When a devotee asked him, 'How long does it take a man to be reborn after death?' the reply was 'You do not know what you were before death, yet you want to know what you will be

“FOR DEATH IN LIFE IS IN TRUTH GLORIOUS”

EDITORIAL

By

A.R. Natarajan

The Mountain Path

Vol.20, No.1, January 1983

— Bhagavan Ramana

after death. Do you know what you are now?'¹ Another puts a similar question, 'What happens to a man after death?'. Ramana answers, 'Engage yourself in the living present. The future will take care of itself...Let what is born think of its birth and the remedy'².

Let us recall Ramana's confrontation with death, in July 1896. For He had faced precisely

¹Talks — p. 235

²Talks — p.192

this question 'What is death?' When He decided to enquire about death, with His total attention He intuitively felt that the cremation of the dead body was no death. The full force of life was pulsating within Him. Thereafter He remained rooted in the imperishable 'I' and was untouched by death.

Ramana would often point out that each day we have the clue for 'death' when we are overtaken by sleep. In sleep, we are dispossessed of everything. Our body is like a corpse. There is no identification with any body, no separate existence apart from 'others'. Is not such a total denudation 'death'? In that there is a bliss which we recollect and seek. But, then there is no renewal in such a death, no sprouting of a new life. One remains the same before and after sleep. So, sleep can only be half the story. We have to find out whether the solution lies in consciously achieving while awake, the same 'loss of individuality' as we know it.

Ramana shows the way step by step for this 'waking sleep', for in it lies the beauty and joy of life in all its fullness. As mentioned earlier, Ramana asks us to examine 'What is it that is born'. Death is only the other side of the coin. He points out that between the conscious source and the body, there is a link which is variously termed as 'mind', 'ego', 'I thought'. This is 'the knot of matter and spirit'.³ Severance of this link would automatically sever the limitation born of identification with the insentient body. One would remain blissful without limitations of time and space and beyond the 'torment of fate'.

The link is cut when the mind subsides and remains so subsided in its source. In His Appalam song, Ramana says that one should incessantly and joyously pursue this enquiry. 'One has to discover the real source of the mind by exploring within with keen intellect'⁴ diving inward below the surface of externalities, into the consciousness within and abiding as that, is 'the death which is in truth glorious'. For one is reborn to a true life of freedom and joy, beyond all human understanding.

'The ego's death is the play of grace, the blossoming of bliss'⁵

What are the 'pitfalls' in the path? Often temporary lulling of the mind is mistaken to be the goal. The deep inner movement of plunging the mind within is not achieved without further questing for the source. On this point, Ramana related a story of a Yogi, who asked for a glass of water before going into a long period of trance which lasted for centuries. On waking this Yogi, only asked for a cup of water. Ramana added 'If this is the case with regard to a thought which took shape immediately before he sat for meditation, there is no doubt that the thoughts which have taken deeper root earlier still remained unannihilated'.⁶

One also has to guard against being side-tracked, from one's paramount duty of enquiry into the source of one-self and abiding there, by hankering after clairvoyance, clairaudience etc. Ramana pointed out to Humphreys, 'No master ever cared a rap for occult powers ...and such things are not worth having when far greater illumination and peace are possible without them than with them'.⁷

Paul Brunton voices the fear of many as to what would happen when our separate identity is merged in its source. He asked Ramana, 'Will a man then become quite unconscious? Will he become an idiot?' To which Ramana replied, 'Not so! On the contrary, he will attain that consciousness which is truly immortal. When this happens, a man has not really lost himself; rather he has found himself'⁸

Ramana's unfailing guidance is the 'rare medicine which kills without killing' and restores the bliss of the truly immortal life. □

³Sat Darshana — Verse 24

⁴Sat Darshana — Verse 28

⁵Self knowledge (Atma Vidya) — Verse 3

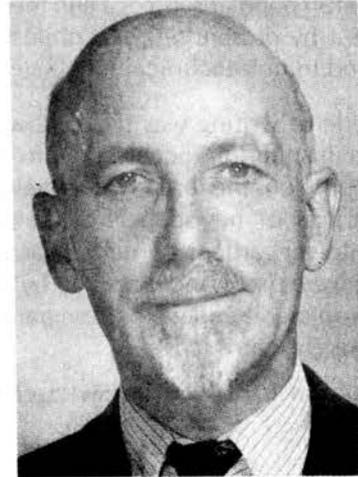
⁶Crumbs from His Table — p. 26

⁷Glimpses of Life & Teachings — p. 18, 19

⁸The Maharshi and His message — P. 41.

By Paul Brunton

A NEW BOOK BY PAUL BRUNTON



Paul Brunton

Readers of *The Mountain Path* and the general public interested in spiritual matters will be glad to know that Mr. K.T. Hurst, son of Dr. Paul Brunton (the Late Ralph Hurst) has kindly donated to Sri Ramanasramam the precious collection of Paul Brunton's hitherto unpublished notes of his private conversations with Sri Ramana Maharshi.

The Ashram proposes to publish in due course this valuable record in book form.

A PEN PORTRAIT OF "PAUL BRUNTON"

Paul Brunton was born in London in 1898. He was educated in London and Chicago and took his degree in Greek Philosophy. He contributed articles to some of the important scientific and literary journals for many years before his travels took him to India, Tibet, Japan, China, Egypt, Mexico and other countries.

He specialised in research into the subject of Yoga, which carried him all over India. He lived in the Ashrams and monasteries of holy men, studied their highest philosophy with the learned pundits, and practised meditation until he became sufficiently expert in the art to write *The Secret Path*.

The late Maharajah of Mysore put unusual facilities at his disposal to promote his research. The High Priest of Thailand presented him with a testimonial and his personal statue of the Buddha.

He introduced Sri Ramana Maharshi to the West in his book *A Search in Secret India* published in 1935. He had spent several months at Ramanasramam. His next book *The Secret Path* outlined the Maharshi's "Who Am I" technique of self-enquiry.

His subsequent works included *A Message from Arunachala*, *A Search in Secret Egypt*, *A Hermit in the Himalayas*, *Indian Philosophy and Modern Culture*, *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga*, *The Wisdom of the Overself*, and *The Spiritual Crisis of Man*.

Prince Mussooree Shum Shere Jung Bahadur Rana of Nepal wrote in his foreword to *A Hermit in the Himalayas*, "I am convinced Paul Brunton is one of the chosen instruments to reinterpret the half-lost wisdom of the East to those caught up in the mechanical life of the west."

Dr. Brunton popularised Yoga and meditation in the West by presenting their philosophical background in non-technical language.

His mode of writing was to jot down paragraphs as inspiration occurred. Often these were penned on the backs of envelopes or along margins of newspapers as he strolled amid the flower gardens bordering Lac Leman. They later were typed and classified by subject. He then would edit and weld these paragraphs into a coherent narrative.

Paul Brunton had lived in Switzerland for

twenty years. He liked the mild climate and majestic mountain scenery. Visitors and correspondence came from all over the world. He played an important role in the lives of many.

"P.B.", as he is known to his followers, was a gentle man. An aura of kindness emanated from him. His scholarly learning was forged in the crucible of life. His spirituality shone forth like a beacon. But he discouraged attempts to form a cult around him: "You must find your own P.B. within yourselves," he used to say. □

VISIONARY

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

**There are wings about the temples and a flight about the feet
That is swifter than the wind:
There is beauty in the being and the single-mooded beat
Of a glow above the mind!**

**There are ecstasies of ages that are brimming in the soul,
That are dancing in a gyre,
Of a crowded resurrection in the mystical control
Of Thy white-rose-fire.**

**There are visionary unguents in my eyes which would anoint
The rose-marriage-dream of cloud;
I am filled with separation that is now the meeting-point
Of a lost, ancestral crowd.**

**All colours seek the Colourless within my equal gaze,
And in the silent Me.
Beyond the desert-solitudes of footfalled nights and days
Time seeks Eternity.**

How Sri Bhagavan Blessed Me

By ING. JIRI VACEK

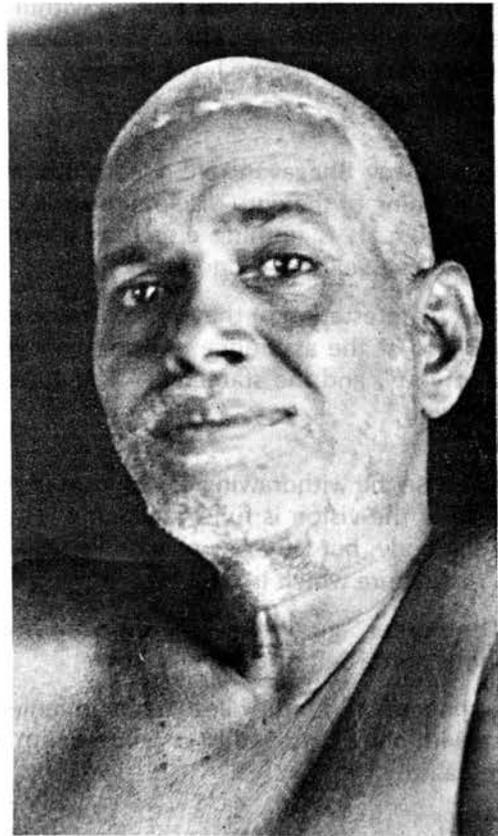
THERE are many "ups" and "downs" on our spiritual path. We do not go always upwards but, on the contrary, often through dark valleys of depression, despondency, and desolation. I went through such a period, though fortunately a short one, at the beginning of February 1981. It seemed to me that after 35 years of spiritual struggle I had achieved nothing and I doubted the effectiveness of the inner guidance of Ramana Maharshi. I reproached Him directly that, while He showered His grace on other devotees, I was neglected. I was not quite honest because I had also had similar experiences even if on a smaller scale. Most of them were quite impersonal, moments of peace and joy whose source remained unrecognized. Of course I knew that it was He, because I trod His path and practised His teaching. But I missed His personal contact and personal guidance.

After some days there was improvement. The shine of the Self became stronger again and warmed me more; my reproachful mood was over. I forgot the whole matter.

And then came February 12th. Self-awareness, which I had already experienced as a result of practising *atma-vichara*, was very clear that day since the very morning. I could rest in it permanently. I breathed through my spine and kept consciousness in it. I felt there blissful sensations. Also in my head there was something happening.

I felt that I began to disappear and became immaterial as Self-conscious void or emptiness.

I had a heavy supper and sat down to read "Letters and Recollections of Ramanashramam" by Suri Nagamma. It was about half past 8 in the evening.



All of sudden I felt very clearly that there was Ramana Maharshi in me; strictly speaking I felt his body or form in me. Simultaneously my body assumed the form of Sri Ramana.

It was as if somebody switched on a light within me and the *sat-chit-ananda* emanated in all directions. This satisfied me fully and gave me complete fulfilment. This intensive experience of the Self is perhaps *Aham-sphurana*. I witnessed this, I surrendered myself to it, but

still it was not separate from me nor was I from it. My consciousness was filled with awareness of the Self; the consciousness of the world and the body were not lost, only the Self prevailed. The body and the mind were pervaded and illuminated out of the Heart in such a way that the consciousness of the Self extended beyond the body. If my normal awareness of the Self was like a day without sunshine, now the Self was shining within as the sun in a cloudless sky. There was no want, it was a perfect state. How I wish I could stay in it permanently!

In this way Bhagavan reminded me of the true meaning of the guru-disciple relationship and its aim. It is nothing else than identity with the one Self that alone exists.

This manifestation of the master's grace is a fulfilment of the assurance: "I am with you and in you", and the statement "The guru is within you".

Likewise the withdrawing of His form in the course of the vision is full of meaning. He is not the body, but He leads us with its help of His real nature which is formless.

The "outer" guru shows us the way from without to the Self or Guru within.

Sometimes it is worthwhile to be discontented, even with one's guru and to cry out to Him in complaint.

It is the same as with an earthly mother who hurries to her child when the little one cries or is dissatisfied. When it is quiet she lets it play and she does her work. When we are discontented with our present state, the Guru or our true Self hurries to help us with the stream of the real 'I'.

Constant effort and appeals to our Guru are quite indispensable for spiritual growth.

I hope that these few lines will please and help some other seekers. Myself I am very happy whenever I read something similar about Bhagavan and I feel that we should share our experience with others. I have gained much from such records and I am very grateful to Sri Ramanashraman which enables devotees to exchange ideas and experiences in this field.

The recollection of spiritual experiences helps our progress, as stated in Patanjali's aphorism: "Samadhi is attained by remembering samadhi". This is valid for every state of meditation. We can bring out again any state of consciousness which we experienced by constant recollection of it.

That which is once given to us as a gift of grace can be made a permanent possession till it becomes our normal state. These are the "talents" which in Christian tradition we are asked to multiply.

Now more than a year has elapsed since this experience. The Self is now experienced within with a greater brightness and steadiness. The Self is perceived as pure un-differentiated consciousness, shining within as the sun in the sky. But this "within" and "without" relates only to the body, because the consciousness is not in the body but the body is in it. It envelops and permeates everything. And this I know is solely the gift of grace, the play of our master, Sri Ramana.

It is true as Sri Bhagavan says that "He who sees the vision is much more important than the vision itself". But visions have their value as an encouragement, initiation or message. Bhagavan was not against them. Only recently an article in *The Mountain Path* narrates how Sri Bhagavan bestowed God-vision on a devotee. It is not proper to desire visions, but if they come spontaneously there is no harm in recollecting and recording them and reflecting on their meaning to uncover the message that they convey to us and our sadhana.

LEAVES FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY

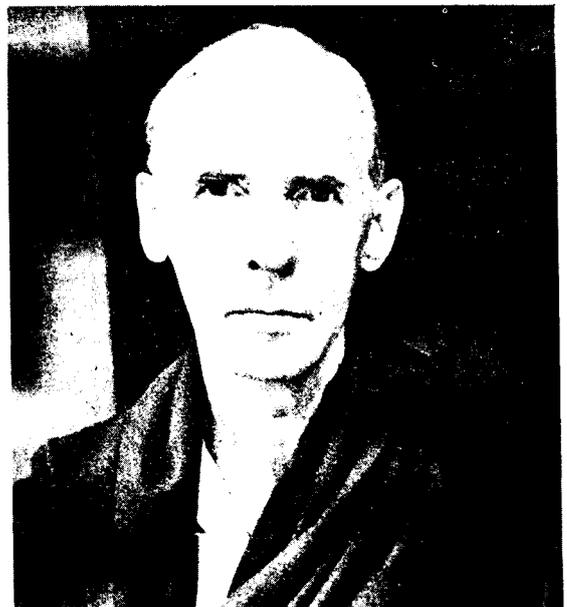
By Arthur Osborne

CHAPTER I — THE BEGINNINGS

AS a small boy there were three books that I read over and over again — *The Knights of King Arthur*, *Asgard and the Gods* and *The Arabian Nights*. It was King Arthur that was the favourite. My mother had a leather bound edition that she had acquired as a school prize, and there was not a page of it without my grubby finger marks. Next in preference came the Norse legends. The more sophisticated mythology of Greece never appealed to me, but there was a wild grandeur about that of the Norsemen that stirred me so deeply that it has remained in my memory ever since. As I grew older I began vaguely to feel the mystery of symbolism behind the stories indeed, it is remarkable that all three books should have been allegories of the universal doctrines or of the quest.

Not only did I read these stories, but I constantly made up my own, especially about King Arthur and his knights, telling them to myself while walking or doing things. This was my secret. I never told any one about it. Unknowingly, I must have been telling the stories in verse, because I remember puzzling why it was that if I added one word, that is one syllable, the sentence sounded wrong, while if I added two it sounded right again.

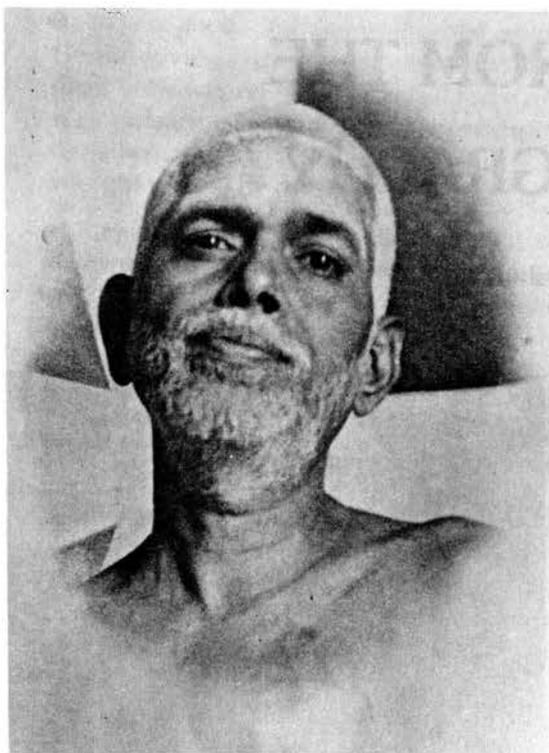
The time came when I began to consider these imaginings a sin and resolved to stop them, but try as I would I always slipped back into them. Once, as a penance and a constant reminder, I decided to wear a knotted cord round my loins, as I had read of Mediaeval monks doing. So I found an old piece of garden rope, made knots in it, and tied it



Arthur Osborne

tightly round my waist. However, this gave me stomach ache and I could not think of any other way of tying that would hold up, so I abandoned the idea.

A favourite day-dream at this time was of some mighty king in a land far off in time or space. Many people came to him, bringing all imaginable wealth and pleasures; and then I would come in a monk's robe offering him renunciation and hardship. I was to discover later that the king was the ego enthroned amid the pleasures of this world and then bidden to renounce and set forth on the lonely quest.



All this does not mean that I was a morose or gloomy child. On the contrary, I was exuberant, as a Sagittarian should be, funloving, delighted when visitors came or when we went out anywhere. Only there was this inner current of life also, and it was something I did not speak about.

Extravert or introvert? I do not believe the definitions are anywhere near so widely applicable as commonly supposed; a person of high vitality is often both, a person of low vitality neither. Certainly I was both to a high degree.

CHAPTER II — A STATION PASSED THROUGH

The next powerful influence on my life was the Yorkshire Moors. Perhaps it could be described as a vision of beauty — the long sweep of the hills, the heather glowing purple in the distance and springy underfoot, the profusion of wild flowers — marsh orchids and meadow sweet in the valley, tall mauve thistles on the hills, and many other — the wild

strawberries growing by the roadside and, above all, the sombre pine-woods with the wind moaning through them. And yet I had known beautiful country before and have known it since, and never had it such power over me. I loved it in rain and mist as well as in sunshine. It became connected in my mind with the Norse legends and the vital power of the Northlands. It seemed something too sacred to speak about, and I never did speak about it.

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

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

I never liked games, neither cricket and football nor the lighter games such as tennis and badminton. I played as much as was inescapable at school and no more. On the

other hand I loved gardening. We had an orchard behind the house and a garden for growing flowers and vegetables, and my father and I did all the work on it. Whether it was the heavy work of digging and manuring or sowing seeds, pruning fruit trees, even weeding, I loved the very contact with the earth and the growing things. When, therefore, harvest started and Bob Thorpe let me work for him as an unpaid labourer it was he who was doing me a favour. We worked from first daylight to dusk, taking time off at midday to rest in the shade and eat the cold meal that the womenfolk brought to the field for us. It was an old-fashioned, simple reaper and we bound the sheaves by hand and arranged them in stooks. I had never spent so enjoyable a holiday.

Farming appealed to me and might have fulfilled my nature but my father had other plans for me and would not consider such a possibility.

When I say that working on the land, supposing it to have been possible, would have been the only fulfilment of my life, that does not mean that missing it was any cause for regret; indeed, it was a cause for rejoicing. The only real measure of success in life is the state of mind and character one has attained when the time comes to leave it. The only full success is spiritual enlightenment, realization of the Self. The life in a man is returning ineluctably to its Source, to Oneness with the Self, like a river to the ocean: This lifetime is an episode on the path, and all that matters is the distance from the goal when the episode ends. This depends on two things; first on the position from which this lifetime begins, that is to say the stage on the road already attained in past existence, whether human or not; secondly on the wisdom and determination with which one presses forward in this lifetime. There is no injustice in the different stages from which men begin their life's course or in the different degrees of understanding and determination with which they are endowed, for that concerns only speed, and impatience

is a purely human disease. The difference does not affect the universal order or the final outcome. Indeed, from the viewpoint of the universal order the courses men follow can be compared rather to rivers flowing into the ocean than to men trudging the road on a pilgrimage — a lifetime representing not the whole course of the river but only a certain stretch of it. Even though some meander or stagnate or even turn backwards, while others flow swift and strong, all plunge finally into the same ocean. There is not even any question of earlier or later, since time does not come into it when the rivers' courses are viewed as a whole from the air. But for the individual time does make a difference. So long as he feels himself to be an individual the striving is real and it is the symbol of the pilgrim that applies, not that of the river. And for the pilgrim wasted time is wasted opportunity. A whole lifetime, a whole day's journey on the pilgrimage, may be wasted, idling by the roadside, wandering afield, or even going back; and then the next day's journey will be more arduous and its starting point less advantageous.

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

(To be Continued)

SELF KNOWLEDGE AND FREEDOM

By Prof. K.B. Ramakrishna Rao

INTRODUCTION

ONE finds the essence of the message of Bhagavan Sri Ramana, in the three significant terms: Self, Knowledge and Freedom. While these could be found, more or less, in all philosophies, the vision of them in Sri Ramana varies, even as the strength of their appeal to mankind. Perhaps, in the context of the twentieth century, with its enormous leaps in knowledge of nature and society, as with what are called the control and therapeutics of mind and body, the perspective of Sri Ramana stands unique not only for its theoretical impeccability and indubitability, but also for its practical sagacity and effectiveness. Sri Ramana is, at once, foundational and comprehensive in analysis and application. He stands as an epitome of the whole culture of India of five thousand years. To know Sri Ramana is to know the soul or the essence of the spiritual or philosophical adventure of the whole nation. To realise Sri Ramana is to realise the goal which all humanity has, and may have, before it, as its one long wish. This is to say, in Sri Ramana is the fulfilment of the human ideal free from all its fanciful mythology and theology, but with consummate reason, universality, grandeur and bliss. Sri Ramana stands for all that every human being is hoping for.

Expatriating on the key principles of Self, Knowledge and Freedom, we find the Master providing a synthesis of all religion and ethics, science and philosophy, in the most lively and pointed dialogues, and by an over-powering expression of truth working through the technique of persuasive 'silence', for truth does not make noise, it only prevails. Sri Ramana combines in himself the ancient '*rishi*' of austere discipline and the wise doctor of



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philosophy in any esteemed modern university. His experientially based logic and crystal-clear exposition so revealed the Real that in his presence yogic adepts and religious aspirants attained their goal, even as the moral, religious and social reformers found their direction, and the scientists and philosophers saw new light. Chiselled in purity of thought and bounty of kindness, this manifestation of Divinity sanctified this earth and enabled us to live, in the eternal light of love and peace, knowledge and freedom.

It is astonishing how Sri Ramana, who was no scholar in the academic sense, had all scholarship at his command. He was not a trained combatant or dialectician, yet all those who went to him bowed down to him in acceptance. Where lay this strength, this invincibility of wisdom? It was his fundamental experience of the Infinite Self, which gave

him that vantage position of knowledge from where he could clear all doubts regarding the soul, and lay bare the method of Self-inquiry. He did not expound it as a philosopher-teacher or as a traditional *acharya* would do in the form of expounding a system. He only shared his consummate experience. And so, his teaching was direct and simple and never involved or bogged down by logical difficulties. Not theory, but the practical and dynamic aspect of the Highest, gave him strength. The unmixed purity and simplicity of truth was so much practised by him in thinking and living, that those who went to him were captivated, and those who now try to know him are still being captivated. He comes into one's life never to leave it again, but to live as the very Self. May that be the benediction for all seekers.

THE SELF

The three principles which dominate Sri Ramana's dialogues and compositions, the Self, Knowledge and Freedom, are interrelated and run into each other. They have been expounded again and again, but Sri Ramana's rendering of them has been so unique that every philosophical system, ancient or modern, would wish to appropriate it for its own. But Sri Ramana belongs to none exclusively, even as he belongs to all.

Sri Ramana's thinking is easily identifiable against the background of the Indian systems, and so I wish to consider his position with reference to or against the background of two developments which have prominently come out in modern philosophy, viz., Phenomenology and Existentialism. This is done for two reasons. First, their impact is felt so much to-day that not to know their essentials and not to treat any thought in their terminology would be archaic, and so, a simple disqualification. Second, Sri Ramana's goal and the method of reaching it have such similarities with them, that one may be prone to identify Sri Ramana's thought with Phenomenology and Existentialism, without marking the distinctive features of Sri Ramana. Sri Ramana is so 'modern' in methodology and yet steers clear of the limitations that

attend the Modern Systems. He makes his own bee-line to understanding reality and the peace and freedom which is its substance.

Now, to begin with the Self. The crucial issue with Sri Ramana's philosophy is *existential*. It arose in the fear of death, but ended with the bliss of one's true self-existence or being. It is existential, in the sense that it is on the acceptance of one's existence that all theoretical and practical considerations of the being of others and of the universe rests. It is about this that all of us think we are sure, but rarely realise we are at fault. More than the generality, the modern Existentialist is sure, with his axiom! 'Existence precedes Essence'. One begins to exist, according to him, at the moment one becomes aware of one's situation or position in a spatio-temporal context. To be true to an Existentialist, it should be said: 'I am', and all values follow as built by 'me'. All essence comes in the wake of existence. This is 'existence' for an Existentialist — a being without preamble, spontaneous occurring of individuality, a happening from vacuity. If one were to call it the 'mystery of being', he is happily one with the Existentialist!

But it is evident the whole scheme is unphilosophical as it is unscientific. One cannot announce 'I am', without at the same time postulating the potentiality that makes him aware of himself and of his existence. The 'I am' is preceded logically and existentially by an 'I-I', as Sri Ramana calls it in his own simple and inimitable way. It is the 'I-I', the Self, which sets the base for the empirical awareness. We should not forget the truth that one exists before one is born; one is consciousness before one is conscious, even as the chick is not 'born' with its shell breaking; it has been there before, with a period of gestation. This is Sri Ramana's foundational Existence of the Self. What really exists is the Self, and what derives existence is all the rest. What the Existentialists unfortunately miss about their own philosophy is this prime factor, and make a theoretical postulate — a bare presupposition — the starting point of what they call a practical philosophy. For a lasting

result of practical value, even a theory will have to be corroborated by a practical reality at the base, which should be self-existing and self-evident but transcending the time-space complex which binds the individual who tries in vain to reach out for freedom. To declare, as Existentialism does, that 'an individual is condemned to be free' has a false sense of optimism or value unless that freedom is integrated with one's being. Whereas with Existentialism freedom is not existence, but a follow-up, for us Existence is identical with freedom, not a value built up in the wake of existence. Sri Ramana's position is crystal clear in this respect. He confirms the basic Indian intuition or standpoint, viz., (1) of a pre-empirical existence as real existence, and (2) of an indivisible identity of existence and essence, or of essence and existence, and of existence and value, as against any theory or philosophy which prefers one to the other, as found in the West. And so, the Indian position of the identity of *Sat*, *Chit* and *Ananda*. Self is such a state standing for the identity of the potential and the actual, essence and existence, existence and value. It stands for the fullness of being needing nothing. It is an indivisible being with nothing to hinder its being and freedom, either from outside or from inside. For, there is no outside or inside for an infinite undifferentiated continuum, which is the Self. It is infinite in being and infinite in fulfilment.

But how about the search for this? Is it purely an eliminative process, rejecting all else but the essence/existence, or is it, along with the discovery of essence/existence, a restorative one? The questions are significant from the points of view of truth as well as of life. Because, any partial discovery of the truth would result in an incomplete or imperfect experience, and if it is not restorative, actual life would be meaningless.

Sri Ramana's dynamic presentation of experience of the Highest becomes the best criterion for providing answers for the above questions, and it would be interesting to compare Sri Ramana's experience with Modern

Phenomenology, which, like Existentialism, is attracting the attention of philosophers both as feedback and support for their theories.

The attempt of Modern Phenomenology to *reduce* all to the 'irreducible' or 'unbracketable', i.e., to discover the 'eidos' or the 'essence', indicate the eliminative search for the Self or the proper Subject. In this technique of discovery, the object or the world would be 'bracketable' or 'suspended' as the Phenomenologists call it. As a method of inwardisation reaching for the 'irreducible', it is quite in line with Sri Ramana. But the purpose behind seems to be at variance. While the Phenomenologist takes the dip into subjectivity with a theoretical bias or motive, Sri Ramana is practical. One dives deep within by withdrawing the outward flow of senses, *not to reach the last in the series of thoughts, nor the last in the series of modes of being*, but to get into a state where the faculty of thinking fails to function, and one is drawn up by the source from where everything arises. It is a real pre-logical, pre-psychological, unrelational or unintentional state — an 'eidos', to use the phenomenological terminology, but without being 'intentional' or 'relational'. Phenomenology is basically a relative philosophy, beyond which it does not go. It is a subject-object philosophy and is purely dualistic and empirical with all its eliminative process aimed at the discovery of the 'presuppositionless' essence. The difference in Sri Ramana's 'Self-inquiry' is not to know the essence as an object of knowledge but to *be* that essence, which is so infinite in being that it is unrelational, for it has nothing to relate itself to, for a division in infinite being is unthinkable, and so, the essence transcends the notions of the subject and object or I and thou. It is a state where any relationship between being and consciousness is also ruled out. Fundamentally, it is a philosophy of the Infinite, which knows no bounds, and so, is all-inclusive without any sense of 'otherness'.

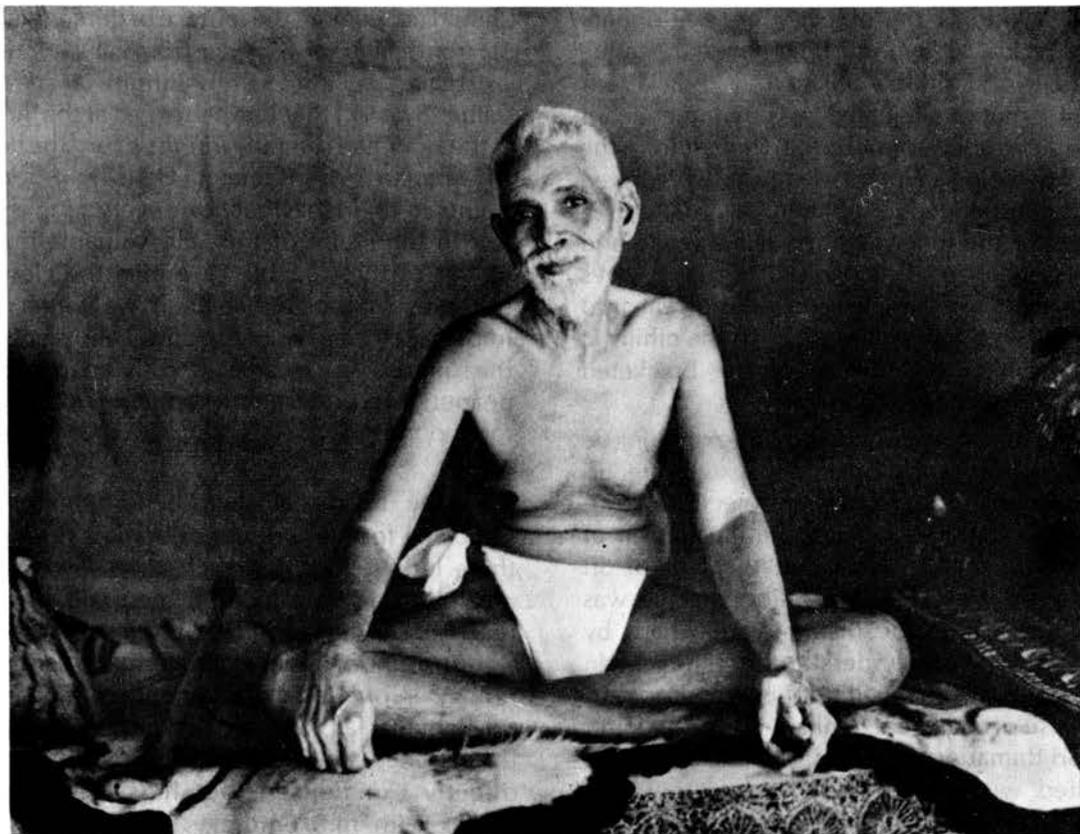
This much for the reductive method, or for the method of reducing everything to the irreducible Self. But how about the 'bracketing'

of the world or the object, from the phenomenological view? And how about the value of the world or the object thus bracketed? Should that be rejected as phenomenal, or considered good-for-nothing? Though from the phenomenological point of view, the bracketed or the suspended is not 'unreal', there is a danger, if the inner identity of the world and the essence is not recognised. Either it gives place to a bi-polar division of the real into noumenal and phenomenal, or to the nihilistic or illusionistic evaluation of the bracketed object.

The whole range of non-dualistic or monistic thinking the world-over, not excepting Sri Ramana's, is exposed to that objection. With regard to the allegation of the illusionism of the world, many who sat at the feet of Sri Ramana did get the impression that he was after all teaching advaitism of yore, which, by a tragedy of misunderstanding, has been labelled '*maya vada*' or 'illusionistic philosophy.' The case of the Great Sankara is also in point. But Sri Ramana as even Sri Sankara, should be studied with reference to a *transcending experience* implied in the technique of 'negating the negation' (*neti, neti*). In the search for the tree, one seems to miss the whole forest. The *reduction* must grow into a *gestalt*. Or the search for the Self within, beyond the sheaths or *kosas*, must lead one to the basic reality which is not localised to a point, but is the wholeness or infinity, which is its real nature. Both Sri Ramana and Sri Sankara must be grasped as a *whole*, in a *simul*, as it were. For one who is rooted in the Self, the Self is not the thing said, but everything that is. It is a way of saying that the Self is beyond fixity in time and space, in form and name. Here is the whole transformation. 'Where is not the Self? which is not the Self?' — Sri Ramana would ask! For an intuition which proclaims from house tops '*sarvam khalvidam brahma*' (every thing is Brahman), which is rejectable, and which is illusory? The question 'Who am I' does not lead you to a pigeon-hole, where you expect to discover the 'bird' (i.e. the Self) hatching! In estimating Sri Ramana, one

should not commit the mistake of differentiating *sat* from *ananda* or existence from value. Infinite existence, i.e. the Self is infinite *ananda* or value. The Self that is experienced at the 'heart' is the Brahman (literally *infinity*), for, 'the heart is brahman', says Ramana. He is right, for he points in the right direction: everything is the self in the realm of the Self, valuable in the realms of the valuable. We miss the glow in the eyes of the Maharshi, if we forget the importance he gave to the cow, Lakshmi, or to the squirrels which came up to his lap to receive peanuts. To understand Ramana the *Song of the Pappadum* is not less important than *Upadesa Saram*.

In the hearts of the Phenomenologists, searching for the 'presuppositionless essence', there lurks a fear that such an essence may, after all, be taken to be a 'neutral', neither real nor unreal, and so, attempts are not wanting among them to prove that phenomenology is ontologically committed. But with Sri Ramana, as with Sri Sankara, not only is the essence, the Self an ontological reality directly experienced, but it is the highest value. With him ontology and axiology are identical. This uniqueness is missed by the critics of Advaita who denigrate non-dualism as illusionist with regard to the world and objects. How very wrong they are, and how very right is Sri Ramana, when he introduces and interprets Sankara to a critic! The Maharshi says: 'Sankara was criticised for his view on *maya* without understanding him. He said that 1. Brahman is real, 2. the universe is unreal, and 3. Brahman is the universe. He did not stop at the second, because the third explains the other two. It signifies that the universe is real, if perceived as the Self, and unreal, if perceived apart from the Self. Hence *maya* and Reality are one and the same.' What a pity, Sankara had to wait for one thousand and two hundred years to see his co-partner in the experience of the Infinite Existence (which is Consciousness and Value, at the same time) to come to his defence. Thanks to Sri Ramana there could now be a full appreciation of *Sankara's* position. Sri Ramana's vindication



of the vedantic position that all is Brahman leads to a true appreciation of the worth of the world and all its relations. The world has value in its being linked with the Self essentially. This is exactly the denouement of all realistic philosophies and theisms which try hard to give the world a place in the realm of the real. This need not be expatiated on. But what a change it makes to discover the so-called illusory world being treated as Brahman! The strength of true non-dualism is that it is a realisation transcending the dialectics of our mundane logic (a logic of limitations) helping to sing the glory and beauty of Brahman, or the Lord, more effectively and truly than the theistic systems, which work on the theoretical satisfaction of keeping the Divine immaculate, but fail to see the practical indignity wrought on one's self and freedom. Sri Ramana's 'I'-'I' does not destroy, it does not dissolve the

individual and the world, but restores all to their real status. Because it is 'I-I', it is 'I-thou' and 'I-it'. The meanest of creatures and the meanest tinsel have now a value and existence, for they are not alienated from the realm of the self. Those who see this truth jump with joy. *'tushyanti ca ramanti ca'* as the *Gita* would say! How many had this good luck in the company of the great seer, Sri Ramana who moved about with such composure and immersed in bliss? One who enjoys the bounty and beauty of the Self, sees the bounty of the Lord everywhere and in everything, and Sri Ramana's hymn to Arunachala is his treatment of all that exists as divine.

True to his non-dualistic experience, Sri Ramana has room for religion, ethics, the Guru and other values of life. Which Advaitin says, let us be irreligious, immoral, socially unconcerned, for everything is illusion? A real

integrative outlook, which a non-dualistic experience brings about, has a dimension of its own, hardly accessible to all, but which, if shared, dispels the ignorance that causes misery in life and spreads the light of wisdom that increases reverence for all life.

KNOWLEDGE AND FREEDOM

This elaborate discussion on Self is a useful preamble for the consideration of the other two principles, viz., knowledge and freedom, a succinct treatment which follows.

Sri Ramana's approach to both of them is practical, and no theoretical exegesis is employed. This is significant. Knowledge for him is the act of being the Self, and operating from there is freedom. Being the Self is the most discriminative way of saying that none can be other than it, or outside it. This is 'realisation' for Sri Ramana. A close study of the dialogues reveals that when Sri Ramana spoke of the Self or Knowledge or Freedom, it was the natural state of the Self describing itself, not Sri Ramana, as a man, describing it. This exactly is our search for 'authenticity'. In terms of Existentialism, being in the Self is authentic, being of the world is inauthentic. Always we try to ask the question: 'what is reality?' and construct a theory or philosophy of it. But we never listen to what the real might say. Our estimation of the real may not be the estimation of the real by itself. When Sri Ramana spoke, it was different. Established in the Self, Ramana was the very expression of knowledge and freedom.

If knowledge, according to him, is being the Self, or being in the sunlight of the Self, ignorance is the demon of the ego, which is mistaken for the Self. To choose the Self is freedom, to choose the ego is ignorance and bondage. Stated otherwise, surrendering to the ego is bondage, surrendering it is knowledge and freedom.

To the question 'what is the ego?', Sri Ramana gives an answer, most direct and simple: 'It is a bundle of thoughts!' We understand this better than any theory of 'antahkarana', for, we are most familiar with

wild thoughts and their unceasing pestering activity. Thoughts are the mind, mind is the ego, the *jiva*. Order the mind or the ego, it will not obey, for it is not interested in ceasing. It is interested in its own continuity, in perpetuating itself with fresh thoughts. Does a thief, made a policeman, ever catch the thief for us, asks Sri Ramana. We walk ourselves into the trap by asking the ego to discover for us the Self, which it cannot discover, but puts itself up as the Self. It creates the bogey of the 'I' as the master of the situation, and by the very act creates all the retinue — division, multiplicity, finitude, time, space, birth, death, disharmony, discontent, avarice, hatred, and what not? It even pretends to be pious, religious, and creates a 'god' alienating all being and the Self from it! To be wary of the meanderings of the mind or the ego is wisdom or discrimination. Not to say 'yea' to it, but to say, 'Ego! begone' is knowledge and freedom.

Sri Ramana's 'Self-Inquiry', as he himself says, is the most direct or effective strategy to catch the thief of the mind or to destroy the demon of the ego. Self-Inquiry is the best therapy for the strains and stresses of the finite life. Try to kill the ego by the ego. You cannot, says Sri Ramana. But seek its source, you will find it not being there at all! To seek out the source and to stay there is being the Self. When thoughts die, it is the silence of the Self, which speaks.

When one is the Self, one communicates in silence. What is meant here is the silencing of the babble of the dichotomising agent, the creator of division, the ego. With that, one who is established in the Self really speaks the truth of the infinite in its own language. He uses a logic which unites, not one which divides and binds. This is knowledge of the Self communicated as the infinitude of being, as the purity of awareness, the bliss of all fulfilment. Established in the Self, which is infinite knowledge, he operates beyond the limiting laws of mind and body, name and form, and so is freedom itself. For him Reality is one,

and all theories of reality are but various attempts to grasp it; God is one, and all forms of Him are but different projections of the self-same real; and the goal is one, but all endeavours to reach it are just expedients depending upon varied intuitions. To such a man, all spiritual approaches have an innate rightness, and all aspirants have equal claims to the realm of grace. Such a one has no quarrels, nor raises issues, theories or systems of philosophy. He lives in peace, and spreads peace and harmony. He is bodiless while in body, mindless while employing thoughts, unchanging while moving in the changing circumstances, free in soul, while occupied with the bound. For him there is no knowledge other than being the Self, no freedom other than being the Self.

Such is the message of Sri Ramana about Self-realisation. He defined it with a precision strikingly original: realisation is making the real real! But what nonsense, he seems to ask. What makes it inane is the limitation of human language. The real being, itself the heart of one's being, he says, need not be 'made real'. Real, it ever *is*. Sri Ramana seems to tell us: the real is a noun, and need not be *made* a noun by a verb, it is ever a noun. The Self is not a becoming, it is Being. To know it is Knowledge, to abide in it is Freedom.

It is our good fortune that we had this embodiment of knowledge and freedom, Sri Ramana, beckoning us to light and joy.

A fitting tribute to the Maharshi would be a verse of the great Sankara himself in *Viveka Chudamani*:

"The great and peaceful ones live regenerating the world like the coming of spring, and after having themselves crossed the dreadful ocean of birth and death, help others also to cross the same, without any motive whatsoever."

KNOWLEDGE ALONE IS GOD

**Ye, foolish folk, who roam about
In search of myriad fancied gods,
Have you not heard the myriad scriptures
Declare knowledge alone is God?**

Why worship Bull-god, Wood-god, Hunter-god

**When you have been told that the Awareness
Which pervades the universe,
This and this alone is God?**

**Why stumble and fall into creeds insane?
Why not listen to the *Shrutis*
That say that Shiva is Pure Awareness?
The Vedas say a million forms
With a million names are manifestations
Of one sole being. But you mistake
Appearances for reality.**

**All states and moods are states and moods
Of one sole Shakti, Power supreme.
The highest vedantic state discovered
By the sages is *shanti*. Heaven is
But a good life lived here on this earth
Free from all care. Why must you think
Of rice and munch dry husk? The Self,
The light that shines within all beings,
Is the Brahman you deem inaccessible.
Why go collecting gods and stories
And spreading false beliefs? One, one
Sole Brahman is the Awareness in you.
The one eternal Brahman, the one
True Being, is the Awareness in you.**

— **By Maha-Kavi Subramania Bharati**
(English Tr. by Professor K. Swaminathan)

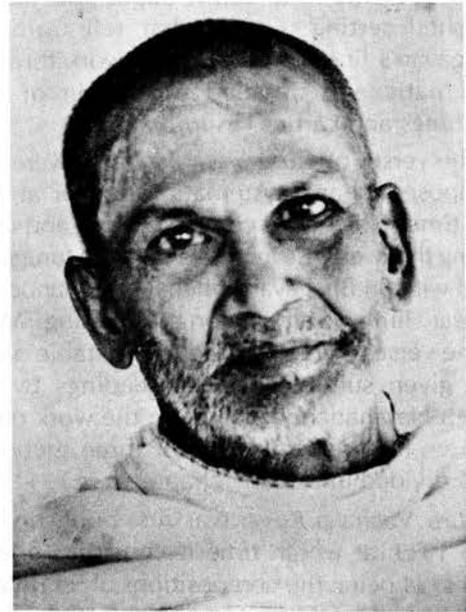
GURU VACHAKA KOVAI: A History and A Review

By Michael James

It has been rightly said by Sri Sadhu Om in his preface to *Guru Vachaka Kovai* (The Garland of Guru's Sayings) that *Upadesa Undiyar*, *Ulladu Narpadu* and *Guru Vachaka Kovai* are the true *Sri Ramana Prasthanatraya*, the three fundamental scriptures of Sri Bhagavan's revelation. And all these three great works owe their existence primarily to the inspired poetic and spiritual genius, Sri Muruganar.

It was Sri Muruganar who earnestly beseeched Sri Bhagavan to write in a few Tamil verses the *upadesa* given by Lord Siva to the *rishis* in the Daruka forest, who had been led astray from the path to Liberation by following the path of *karma karmas* prescribed in the *Purva Mimamsa*. In reply to this earnest entreaty of Sri Muruganar, Sri Bhagavan composed the Tamil work *Upadesa Undiyar*, which He afterwards wrote in Telugu, Sanskrit and Malayalam under the title *Upadesa Saram*.

It was again Sri Muruganar who elicited *Ulladu Narpadu* by praying to Sri Bhagavan, "Graciously reveal to us the nature of Reality and the means of attaining it so that we may be saved". Though *Ulladu Narpadu* began to form around a nucleus of twenty stray verses which Sri Bhagavan had composed earlier, within three weeks (that is, between 21-7-1928 and 11-8-1928) Sri Bhagavan composed more than forty new verses, and all but three of the



Sri Muruganar

earlier verses were deleted and added to the Supplement (*anubandham*). Moreover, all the verses were carefully revised and arranged in a suitable order by Sri Bhagavan with the close co-operation and assistance of Sri Muruganar.

Whereas *Upadesa Undiyar* and *Ulladu Narpadu* consist entirely of stanzas composed by Sri Bhagavan, *Guru Vachaka Kovai* — the treasure-house of Sri Bhagavan's sayings collec-

ted and strung together as a garland of Tamil verses — consists mostly of stanzas composed by Sri Muruganar. Of the 1282 stanzas, 1254 were composed by Sri Muruganar and only 28 by Sri Bhagavan. However, each of the stanzas composed by Sri Muruganar embodies one of the actual sayings of Sri Bhagavan, and all of them were shown to Sri Bhagavan, who approved them and wherever necessary corrected them. On some occasions when Sri Muruganar submitted one or more newly composed stanzas to Him, Sri Bhagavan found that He could express the same idea in a more beautiful form or in a more terse manner, and hence He would compose a new stanza of His own, which would also be included in *Guru Vachaka Kovai*¹. Thus each stanza of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* presents in a well-wrought and finely-polished setting a pearl that fell from Sri Bhagavan's lips, and the whole work forms a systematic and detailed exposition of His teachings and carries His *imprimatur*.

The verses of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* were not composed in any systematic order or at any one time. They were composed now and then during the twenty-seven years that Sri Muruganar lived with Sri Bhagavan, whenever he happened to hear Him give any important teaching. Most of the verses were arranged in a suitable order and given suitable chapter-headings by Sri Sadhu Natanananda, to whom the work owes its present form consisting of three sections, each divided into many chapters.

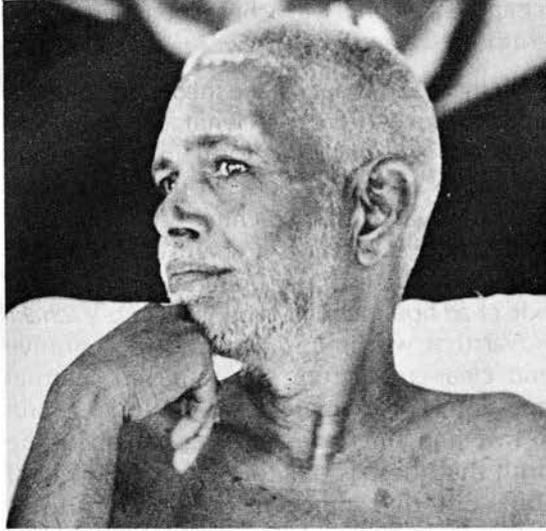
Guru Vachaka Kovai was first published in June 1939, at which time it consisted of 876 verses, 24 being the compositions of Sri Bhagavan. A bound volume of the proofs of this first edition which is preserved in the Ashram archives shows not only that the proofs were corrected by Sri Bhagavan, but also that during the time of proofcorrection some more verses were added by Him in appropriate places². And in his book *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*, pages 34 to 41 and page 62, G.V. Subbaramayya records that while correcting the proofs of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, Sri Bhagavan used to explain the meaning of the verses to the assembled devotees.

However, because the verses of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* were couched in a very high and abstruse style of classical Tamil, having an intricate syntax akin to the poetry of the ancient *Sangam* period, their profound import and beauty could be understood and relished only by a few Tamilians who were well-versed both in classical Tamil and in the teachings of Sri Bhagavan.

The first person who made an attempt to make the contents of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* available to a wider public was Sri. K. Lakshmana Sarma, who was both a wholehearted devotee of Sri Bhagavan and an ardent admirer of Sri Muruganar. Knowing the great value of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, even before it was first published in 1939 by Sri Ramana Padananda Lakshmana Sarma translated about 300 stanzas from it into Sanskrit verses. Since he was himself not familiar with classical Tamil, Lakshmana Sarma used to ask either Sri Bhagavan or Sri Muruganar to explain to him the meaning of the stanzas, which he would then frame into Sanskrit verses. Though these Sanskrit verses are not literal translations of the original Tamil, they faithfully convey the general idea of each verse. In December 1939 these 300 Sanskrit verses were published together with about 50 other verses, all embodying the teachings of Sri Bhagavan, under the title *Guru Ramana Vachana Mala*. Then in January 1940 a translation of these verses in simple Tamil prose was published, in which an index was included giving the equivalent verse numbers of *Guru Ramana Vachana Mala* and *Guru Vachaka Kovai*. Later an English translation of *Guru Ramana Vachana Mala* was also published by the Ashram. About fifty verses from this work were also added by Lakshmana Sarma in the second edition (1942) of his English book *Maha Yoga*, which is well

¹Some of the verses which Sri Bhagavan thus composed for *Guru Vachaka Kovai* were later, in June 1939, added by Him in *Ulladu Narpadu — Anubandham* (The Supplement to the Forty Verses). Refer to *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*, p.41.

²A photocopy of one such addition made in Sri Bhagavan's own handwriting can be found on page 59 of *Bhagavan Sri Ramana — A Pictorial Biography*.



known as a standard exposition of Sri Bhagavan's teachings³.

However, except for the verses which were translated in *Guru Ramana Vachana Mala*, the contents of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* remained hidden for most of the devotees of Sri Bhagavan until 1967, when, with the help of the Tamil prose-renderings given to him by Sri Sadhu Om, Professor K. Swaminathan began to translate *Guru Vachaka Kovai* into English under the title *The Garland of Guru's Sayings*. These translations have been serialized in *The Mountain Path* for the past fifteen years, and a choice selection of these "Sayings" have been included by Professor Swaminathan in chapter XIII of his English book *Ramana Maharshi*, which has now been translated into some of the major languages of India.

After these translations began to appear in *The Mountain Path*, the devotees of Sri Bhagavan naturally began to take more interest in *Guru Vachaka Kovai*. In 1971 the Ashram brought out a second edition of the original Tamil verses. Since there were more than 400 verses of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* which Sri Muruganar had composed between 1939 and 1950 and which were therefore not included in the first edition⁴, the whole work had to be re-edited and the verses renumbered. Sri Muru-

ganar therefore entrusted the work of editing the second edition to Sri Sadhu Om, who had for many years been helping him to preserve and classify his unpublished verses and who had a thorough knowledge of the contents of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*.

Even before editing the second edition of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, Sri Sadhu Om had rendered many of the verses into simple and clear Tamil prose for the sake of those who came to him wishing to know their meaning. Knowing that *Guru Vachaka Kovai* was in too difficult a style of Tamil for most Tamilians to understand, and knowing that Sri Sadhu Om had already done much and was prepared to do still more to provide a correct and authoritative interpretation for each verse, Sri Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, decided to publish his Tamil prose-rendering. This was published in 1980 under the title *Guru Vachaka Kovai — Urai*, and besides giving the meaning of each verse in simple prose and providing brief explanatory notes for many of them, it also contains some notes given by Sri Muruganar himself. Since Sri Sadhu Om had made a deep study of the meaning of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* and since he had consulted Sri Muruganar about the exact meaning of many of the verses, especially those in which there was even the least room for doubt, it is certain that in his *Urai*, he has faithfully brought out the correct import of each verse, without diminishing either the literary beauty of the original or the profundity

³In fact, all that Lakshmana Sarma learnt from his study of *Ulladu Narpadu* and *Guru Vachaka Kovai* served as the foundation of *Maha Yoga*, which is formed around a nucleus of verses from *Sri Ramana Hridayam* (a Sanskrit rendering of *Ulladu Narpadu* and its supplement) and *Guru Ramana Vachana Mala*. Once when Lakshmana Sarma was asked why he had written *Maha Yoga* and his Tamil commentary on *Ulladu Narpadu* under the pseudonym "WHO", he replied, "I wrote in those books only what I had learnt from Sri Bhagavan and Sri Muruganar, so I felt 'Who wrote it?'".

⁴Though these additional 400 verses were not published in his lifetime, like the other 876 verses, they were all seen, corrected and approved by Sri Bhagavan.

of the teachings contained therein. In his publisher's note to the *Urai*, Professor K. Swaminathan writes, "Since this work (*Guru Vachaka Kovai*) is composed in a highly classical style of Tamil poetry and since it contains very rarely used words, the subtle ideas hidden in it are difficult to understand. In order to remove this great difficulty, after making deep research into the inner meaning of this work and after consulting Sri Muruganar, Sri Sadhu Om, who edited the original text, has given this clear prose-rendering for the benefit of readers who are seeking *Jnana*. Sri Sadhu Om is an accomplished Tamil poet. In his young age he came to Sri Ramana Maharshi and took Him as his *Sadguru*. He had close association with Sri Muruganar for a long time. He is always immersed only in Sri Ramana's works. Hence it is only natural that in his *Urai* both the heart of Sri Muruganar's poetry and the richness of Sri Ramana's teachings shine without any decrease in their purity".

The value and importance of both *Guru Vachaka Kovai* and Sri Sadhu Om's *Urai* have been aptly extolled by Sri Sadhu Natanananda in his introductory verses, where he says, "Those who see the wondrous beauty both of these verses recording Lord Ramana's Sayings and of this prose version of them, will say that it is the Lord Himself who as the renunciant and accomplished Muruganar has composed these verses, and who as Sadhu Om has explained them".

Those who have read the English translations of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* in Lakshmana Sarma's *Guru Ramana Vachana Mala* and in Prof. Swaminathan's *Garland of Guru's Sayings* can easily appreciate what a profound work it is. In fact it is the most comprehensive, systematic and authoritative collection of Sri Bhagavan's sayings, expounding the full range of His teachings. The whole work is divided into three sections, the first consisting of 85 chapters forming an analysis of the truth (*tattva araychi*), the second consisting of 84 chapters dealing with the practice of the truth (*tattva anu-sandhana*), and the third consisting of 62

chapters dealing with the experience of the truth (*tattva anubhava*).

In these 231 chapters, the theory, the practice and the experience of what Sri Bhagavan teaches have been set forth in a clear and definitive manner. Though other records of Sri Bhagavan's oral teachings such as *Talks* and *Day by Day* have a charm and value of their own, they convey opinions expressed *ad hoc et ad hominem*. It is only in *Guru Vachaka Kovai* that we find Sri Bhagavan's definitive and clear-cut dictum on any given spiritual question. For example, in *Talks* Nos. 399 and 571 we find hints from Sri Bhagavan about the truth that there is only one *jiva* or individual soul, but this important spiritual truth is definitely stated by Him only in verse 534 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, in which He says, "Let the highly mature and courageous aspirant who has a bright and sharp intellect, firmly accept that there is only one *jiva* and thereby become established deep in the heart (by enquiring 'Who am I, that one *jiva*?'). It is only to suit immature minds that scriptures generally speak as if *jivas* are many".

Because many different types of people came to Him, the answers that Sri Bhagavan gave to their various questions were naturally not at all uniform. The teachings He gave were always appropriate to the special need and the apperceptive capacity of those He taught, and because of this we find considerable variations and sometimes even seeming contradictions in the replies given. Sri Bhagavan Himself says in *Talks* No. 107 that spiritual instructions "differ according to the temperaments of the individuals and according to the spiritual ripeness of their minds", and in *Talks* No. 57 He explains that the answers He gave were according to the spirit in which the questions were asked. For this reason it is often very difficult for us to discover Sri Bhagavan's firm and final opinion on any given subject by reading the various records of His talks with devotees. And it is precisely because it is much more than a record of casual conversations that *Guru Vachaka Kovai* proves

to be most valuable. Because Sri Muruganar sat for so many years at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan, because he followed His teachings with single-minded and wholehearted devotion, and because he completely surrendered himself to Him, thereby losing his separate individuality and becoming a veritable "shadow of Bhagavan", he was able to understand His teachings correctly and completely, and because of his precision and power in handling the Tamil language he was able to record His exact views and outlook upon the whole range of philosophy and spirituality.

In fact, among all the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Sri Muruganar was the one uniquely and most perfectly qualified to record His teachings. Firstly, like Sri Bhagavan, he was a Tamil poet and a master of Tamil, the language in which Sri Bhagavan expressed His ideas with natural ease, liveliness and lucidity. Secondly, he had no preconceived ideas or beliefs of his own, he had made his mind a *tabula rasa*, and thus he was ready to receive and retain the truth as it was revealed by Sri Bhagavan, without reading into it any interpretations of his own. Thirdly, he had no aim or ambition in life other than that recommended by Sri Bhagavan, namely to annihilate the ego, the false sense of individuality. Fourthly, being by nature perfectly humble and self-effacing, he was completely submissive to Sri Bhagavan. And above all, he was one who had, by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, attained *Jnana*⁵, and hence through his own practical experience he was able to understand Sri Bhagavan's teachings in the correct light. So long as our mind or individuality survives, we will always be deluded to a greater or lesser extent by *maya*, and hence we can understand the teachings of a Sage perfectly. It is only those like Sri Muruganar who have surrendered themselves completely and who have thereby lost their own individuality, who can truly serve as a pure, transparent medium through which the Guru's teachings can shine clearly and without the least distortion.

Sri Bhagavan sometimes used to say, "He alone truly knows me who knows me as I

know myself". That is to say, Sri Bhagavan's experience is that He is not the name and form of the body we see, but the nameless and formless space of *Sat-chit-ananda*, and only those who experience Him thus can be said to know Him truly. Sri Muruganar was one of those devotees who thus knew Sri Bhagavan as He knew Himself, and it was from this stance, this identity, that he composed *Guru Vachaka Kovai*. This fact is revealed in verse 6 of the prefatory verses of *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, in which Sri Muruganar says, "Being there where Sri Ramana embraced me (that is, being in the state of Self where Sri Ramana made me one with Himself), I will recount a little of the supreme truth which I have come to know in my life of divine union with Him, my Master". It is for this reason that *Guru Vachaka Kovai* ranks along with the original works of Sri Bhagavan such as *Upadesa Undiyar*, *Ulladu Narpadu*, *Atma Vidya Kirtanam* and *Ekatma Panchakam*, as a true *jnana-sastra*, a scripture teaching the path to true knowledge.

Those who have read all the various other books on Sri Bhagavan's teachings in English will find that many ideas expressed in *Guru Vachaka Kovai* are already familiar to them, but they will also find many other ideas in this work which are not expressed anywhere else. One particularly interesting feature of this work is that in many places Sri Bhagavan has given 'correction slips' to some of the ideas found in our ancient *sastras*. For example, the *sastras* often refer to Self as 'the knower of the body' (*kshetrajna*), but in verse 97 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* Sri Bhagavan declares that the body exists only in the view of the mind and not in the clear view of Self, and hence it is wrong to call Self as 'dehi' or 'kshetrajna'. The *sastras* also describe Self as 'the witness' (*sakshi*), but in verse 98 Sri Bhagavan says that otherness

⁵The fact that Sri Muruganar had attained *Jnana* is clear from the 14,000 verses of his monumental work, *Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham*, in which he describes in an infinite variety of ways how Sri Bhagavan had bestowed His Grace upon him and made him one with Himself.

can be seen or witnessed only if the body is taken to be 'I', and since otherness therefore does not exist for Self, it is wrong to call Self as 'sakshi'.

Again the *sastras* often say that God is 'all-knowing' (*sarvajna*), but in verse 930 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* Sri Bhagavan says that God, who is Self, truly knows nothing (for, since He alone is, there is no 'all' for Him to know). And some *sastras* say that the *Mukta* sees the world of multiplicity but at the same time sees the unity in that diversity; however, in verses 931 and 932 Sri Bhagavan says that this is not true, for the *Mukta* never sees any multiplicity or diversity. There are other *sastras* which describe the state of realization as '*akhandakara vritti*' (thought in an unbroken form), but in verse 941 Sri Bhagavan says that every thought (*vritti*) is a fragmentation (*khanda*) and that to talk of *akhandakara vritti* is therefore like saying that a river which has merged in the ocean is a *samudrakara nadi*, a river in the form of the ocean.

However, it should not be thought that Sri Bhagavan disagrees with or condemns the *sastras*; what was said by Sages in the *sastras* was suitable for the times in which it was said and to the people to whom it was said, but Sri Bhagavan has come nowadays to give in works like *Guru Vachaka Kovai* more accurate and refined truths. Indeed, in *Guru Vachaka Kovai* Sri Bhagavan has given such 'correction slips' even to some of His own sayings. For example, in *Who am I?* Sri Bhagavan said, "Except that waking is long and dream is short, there is no difference between these two states", but in verse 560 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* He says that even this is not strictly true, for time is merely a mental conception and hence the difference 'long' and 'short' appears to be true only because of *maya*.

Many other popular misconceptions and false beliefs are removed by Sri Bhagavan in *Guru Vachaka Kovai*. For example some well-intentioned people believe that by engaging

themselves in prayers, *japa* and worship they can gain power from God and thus do good to the world as His instrument, but in verse 471 Sri Bhagavan says that even to perform *tapas* with the intention 'I should become an instrument in the hands of God' is a blemish to complete self-surrender, for the desire to be His instrument is merely another stealthy means by which the ego seeks to retain its individuality. As Sri Bhagavan explains in *Talks*, "If the surrender is complete all sense of individuality is lost" (*Talks* No. 350), and if a person thinks that he is an intermediary or instrument of God, then "it is clear that he retains his individuality and that there is no complete surrender" (*Talks* No. 594).

As in all the other works of Sri Bhagavan, the main theme running throughout *Guru Vachaka Kovai* is the importance and greatness of Self-knowledge and the absolute necessity for Self-enquiry, which alone can solve all the problems of life. In the chapter concerning the truth in all religions, Sri Bhagavan says that the enquiry 'Who am I?' is the life-current passing through all the religions on earth (verse 338), and that if there were not in each religion at least one word revealing that the Supreme Reality exists in the heart of each person, then all the scriptures of that religion would become nothing but the hubbub of a cattle market (verse 341). And in verse 885 He says that except the effort made in enquiring into the truth of the ego, no amount of effort made in other paths can enable one to attain and enjoy Self, the treasure in the heart.

However, it is not possible in one brief article such as this to do full justice to *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, every verse of which contains rare pearls of Sri Bhagavan's wisdom. Suffice it to say, in conclusion, that it is a work which deserves to be deeply and repeatedly studied by every devotee of Sri Bhagavan and every seeker of reality, for it contains many rare and valuable spiritual treasures such as have never been found in any other scripture of the world.

Bhagavan Ramana and J. Krishnamurti *

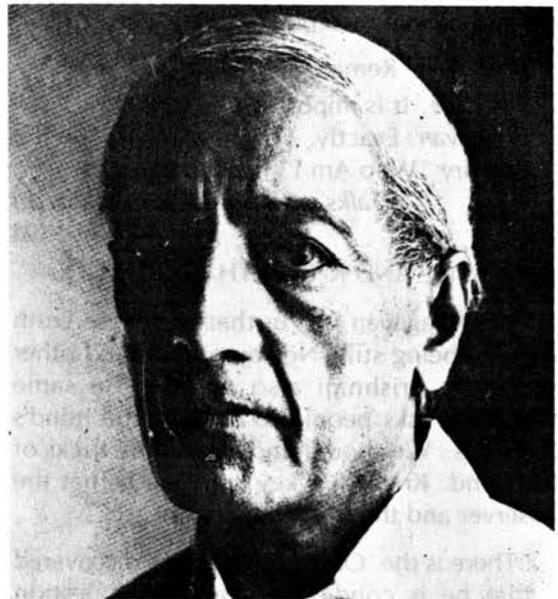
By R. Sathiamurti

BHAGAVAN Ramana and Krishnaji are great sages and their spiritual approaches are similar. They are not social reformers, but they advocate self-reformation and they give importance to realisation. Their approaches are modern and scientific.

Krishnaji was born in Madanapalli, Andhra Pradesh, in 1895. His father became a Theosophist and moved to Madras. Dr. Annie Besant recognized his promise and wanted to make him a world teacher. But Krishnaji did not accept this role. In 1929, the Order of the Star of the East, which had been formed by the Theosophists all over the world, was disbanded by Krishnaji. From that time onwards, Krishnaji travelled all over the world, met different kinds of people and spoke to them about Self-Realisation. But following a Guru, worshipping a deity, repeating a *mantra* are not enough to achieve the goal. They are only "a form of self-hypnosis". Sri Ramana also says that these are only aids; the only adequate means is Self-Enquiry.

WHO AM I?

Ramana Bhagavan says there is no 'I' or me. They are false notions. This 'I' depends upon body. the body is nothing but a composite of five elements. This thought 'I' is the root-cause of suffering, as it confers continuity on an endless series of thoughts. If thought ceases,



J. Krishnamurti

mind becomes still. How can this thought process end? "The means to still the mind is the inquiry 'Who Am I?'. The thought 'Who Am I?' will destroy all other thoughts and like the stick used for stirring the burning pyre, it will itself in the end get destroyed. Then there will arise Self-realization".

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

Great Tamil sages like, Manikkavasagar, Thayumanavar and Arunagiri also declare that there are no separate entities. Thayumanavar says 'I' is the essence of falsehood. Then what is this 'I'? If it is false, then how was it created and how does it dominate our day-to-day life? 'I' is nothing but mere thought. If we clearly and steadily observe our thought process, it naturally fades away. So, by means of close observation or by self-quest we can eliminate this thought process. In order to understand or realise this Truth, Bhagavan asks us to "Be Still". But many of us do not know what it is to 'be still'. So he advocates enquiry.

"What should one do in order to remain free from thoughts as advised by you? Is it only to pursue the enquiry "Who Am I?"

Bhagavan: Remain still. Do it and See.

Devotee: It is impossible.

Bhagavan: Exactly. For the same reason the enquiry "Who Am I" is advised.

— *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*
p. 397-398

BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD

Thus Bhagavan tells us that we realise Truth only by being still. Not by prayers and other *sadhanas*. Krishnaji also advises the same thing. He asks people to observe the mind's activities. We should understand the tricks of the mind. Krishnaji's key teaching is that the observer and the observed are one.

"There is the 'Observer' who has discovered that he is conditioned, and the question arises: is the 'observer' different from that which he has observed and discovered? Is that something separate from himself? ... Are they separate? or is the 'observer' the observed? It is tremendously important to find out for oneself; if one does, then the whole way one thinks undergoes a complete change."

When we go through this process, we realise the observer is the observed. The mind comes to a stand-still. So the observer that is 'I' is nothing but a concept. When we are aware of this, this false 'I' naturally dissolves. Here

Krishnaji's 'awareness' and Maharshi's "Self Enquiry" are the same.

"Apart from thought there is no such thing as the mind. Apart from concepts, there is no independent entity. When one persistently inquires into the nature of the mind, the mind will end."

So by means of observation of the activities of the mind, or by means of Self-enquiry the mind can be made to stand still. Then in that void Truth reveals itself. So Self-knowledge is more important, than knowledge of "other" things. What is the use of book learning for Self-knowledge? Bhagavan asks:

"What wonder can be greater than that we seek the Self in books? Can it be found there? Of course, books have given readers the sense to ask this question and to seek the Self". — *Talks*, (Vol. I, p. 160)

The same idea is echoed by Krishnamurthi! "Without reading books or listening to Professors or 'Saints' one can observe one's own mind. After all, that is the beginning of Self-knowledge".

— *Beyond Violence*, (p. 111)

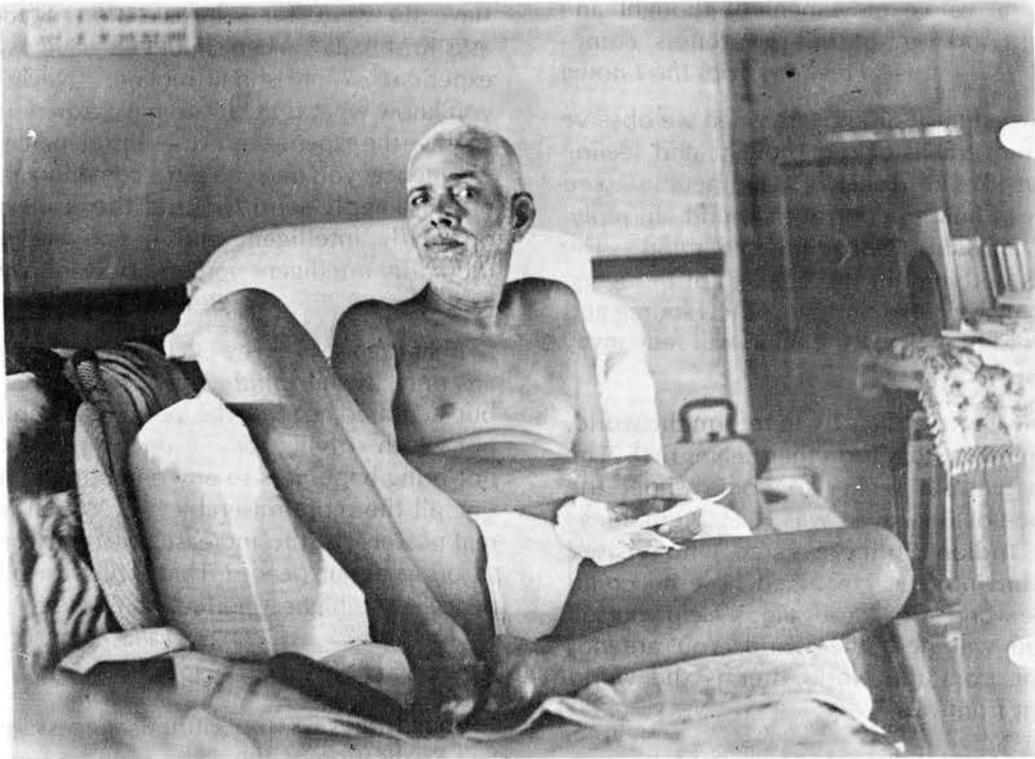
For Self-realisation, what is the place of the *time factor*? Many people think that they will attain liberation in the future. Thinking of the future, they avoid the present. Psychologically, there is no tomorrow. The present is with us. So our duty is to live truly in the present.

Someone asks Bhagavan what is the best thing to do for ensuring the future?

Bhagavan replies: "Take care of the present, the future will take care of itself."

— *Talks*, (Vol. II p.1)

Krishnaji asks: "Can you change immediately? Not change gradually or not tomorrow. Can you have this preception of a 'Whole' life in which there is love — all that we have talked about this morning — immediately"? — *Beyond Violence*, (p.45).



THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITATION

All religious teachers give importance to meditation. Without meditation Self-realisation is not possible. According to Krishnaji meditation means 'awareness'. Meditation is the total emptying of the mind.

— *Beyond Violence*, (p.125)

In meditation, there is cessation of thought brought about by choiceless observation of oneself. We must be alert and be aware of every activity of the mind. That is meditation.

Some think that meditation is concentration. In concentration, there is a doer. But in meditation there is no doer. Only the process of meditation takes place. Maharshi says:

"Meditation is your nature even now. You call it meditation because there are other thoughts distracting you. When these thoughts are dispelled you remain as alone, i.e. in the state of meditation free from thoughts; and that is the real nature which

you are now attempting to gain by keeping away other thoughts".

— *Talks*, (Vol. III p. 377)

There is no 'meditator'. "There is no doer". "There is no attainer". There is only experience. There is no experiencer. This is the direct path.

Many gurus advise us to control our thoughts. If we control or suppress our thoughts, there is a division, a conflict, between controller and the thing controlled. So Bhagavan advises us not to control or suppress the thoughts. He says "all kinds of thoughts arise in meditation. It is but right. What lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless they rise up how can they be destroyed?"

— *Talks* (Vol. II p. 377-378)

Krishnaji also advocates the same method. He says, "Meditation is to be aware of every thought and of every feeling, never to say it is right or wrong, but just to watch it and move with it. In that watching you begin to under-

stand the whole movement of thought and feeling. And out of this awareness comes silence". — *Freedom from the Known*

The meditator disappears when we observe every movement of our thought and feeling without likes or dislikes. Many people asked Bhagavan how to control the mind. In reply, Bhagavan said: "Show me the mind". The mind is nothing but the bundles of thoughts. "The only way is to find the mind's source and keep hold of it. Then the mind will fade away by itself."

Today many leaders try to reform the world, without caring to reform themselves first. The earliest western seeker to come under the influence of Bhagavan was F. H. Humphreys of the Indian Police Service who visited Bhagavan in 1911. He asked how he could help the world. Bhagavan said: "Help yourself and you will help the world. You are not different from the world, nor is the world different from you."

Again, a Bhikshu friend of Paul Brunton asked Bhagavan whether the world could progress. The Maharshi replied: "If we progress the world progresses. As you are, so is the world. Without understanding the Self what is the use of understanding the world? Without Self-knowledge, the knowledge of the world is no use".

Krishnaji's views are identical with the Maharshi's. Krishnaji says, "we are society, we are the world, and if we don't change ourselves radically, really, very very deeply, then there is no possibility of changing the social order". — *Beyond Violence*, p. 163

MIRACLES ARE OUT

Bhagavan Ramana and Krishnaji condemn cultism, occultism and miracle-making powers. They say these are nothing but the activities of the mind and have no value for attaining freedom. They emphasize awareness only. Only awareness can bring us freedom. Psychic experience may give pleasure, fame, name and power. But occult powers are curses. They

have no value for self-realisation. Someone asks Krishnaji: "When should we have psychic experiences?" Krishnaji replies: "Never! Do you know what it means to have experiences? To have the experience, extra-sensory-perceptive experience, you must be extraordinarily mature, extraordinarily sensitive, and therefore extraordinarily intelligent and if you are extraordinarily intelligent you do not want psychic experience". — *Beyond Violence*, p. 83

Bhagavan says: "The occult powers (*siddhis*) are only in the mind. They are not natural, but acquired, cannot be permanent and are not worth striving for . . . occult powers will not bring happiness to any one but will make one all the more miserable! . . . Which is the real power? Is it to increase prosperity or is it to bring about peace? That which results in peace is the highest perfection (*Siddhi*)".

— *Talks*, (Vol. I p. 26)

THE GURU

Bhagavan says the Guru is necessary for Self-Realisation at the same time he says the Guru need not be external. The Self is our Guru. Krishnaji attaches no importance to the Guru because the Guru only shows us a path towards the truth. Every form of description about bliss is no use. "All that one can do is point to the door. And if you are willing to go, take a journey to that door, then it is for you to walk beyond, nobody can describe the thing that is not nameable whether that un-nameable is nothing or everything it does not matter. Anybody who *describes* it does not know. And one who says he *knows*, does not know".

— *Beyond Violence*, p. 39-94

The function of the Gúru is to point the door only. But many people do not follow the footsteps of the Guru. They merely worship their images or sing their glories and with this they are satisfied. Their personal life goes on as usual.

Krishnaji does not condemn the Guru, but Guru worship. He says in the book *The years*

of Awakening p. 261 — "Truth is within yourself. Life itself is the guide, the master, and God I have never said there is no God. I have said that there is only God as manifested in you but I am not going to use the word God. . . . I prefer to call it Life".

He says Life is Self. Life is God. Life is Guru. Life itself the guide, the Master, and God. So Life is all. Life is everything. Bhagavan also says the same thing. Bhagavan one day: "May one have more than one spiritual master (Guru)?" Bhagavan replied: "Who is a Master? he is Self after all — God, Guru and the Self are identical."

— Talks (Vol. I p. 31)

Bhagavan also says "The Guru does not bring about Self-realisation. He simply removes the obstacles to it."

— Talks (p. 644)

On another occasion, the sage said: "A Teacher would be needed if one has to learn something new, but this is a case of un-learning".

Thus the Guru is helpful. But Guru-praising without following his teachings is harmful. Not words, but deeds only teach the world.

The Maharshi is Daskhinamurti. His main speech or *upadesa* is *mouna* (Silence). Bhagavan says: "Silence is the true *upadesa*. *Mouna* is constant speech." Bhagavan never wanted to go round the world teaching. By means of silence or by answering questions, he clears the doubts of the seekers. But Krishnaji goes round the world, removing the obstacles of the true seekers.

Both these teachers agree in giving prime importance to *Jnana*, "to awareness as wholeness of being and behaviour." Both bring to modern man the pure light which is at the heart of all religion.

Maurice Frydman drew Bhagavan's attention to the similarity between Krishnaji's teachings and Buddha's and Bhagavan agreed, "Yes. Yes. Beyond expression." — Talks, p. 239

INNOCENCE OF LIGHT

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

I stand alone on my deserted mountain,
In utter bareness, full of quiet trust.
Come, down, sweet Light! from your ethereal fountain
And spray my spirit, cleansing it of dust.

Nay, holy Light! I am no more the coward
I was of old, close-sheltered by the night,
Since now, at last within me you have flowered,
And filled me with an innocence of light.

Wake in my being and wake up the gaudy
Unending darkness that enchants the sight
With your keen magic touch transmute my body,
Into a naked spirit, holy light!

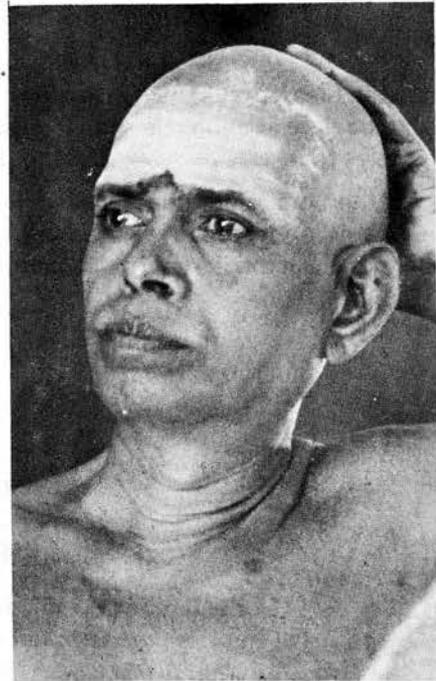
WE HAVE NO ANCESTORS

By Norman Fraser

CALL no man your father", said Jesus, adding that there was only one Father "in heaven". Here is the full quotation from Mathew 23:9: "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." Now, "in heaven" to most people means in cloud-cuckoo-land: you cannot find it on any map and you cannot find it in the sky. Therefore it is unreal, one of those religious make-believes which are due to be exposed for what they are — myths. Quite apart from this most people would say that their father is their father, just as their mother is their mother, and to say that one should not call one's father one's father is just a piece of fatuous nonsense.

And yet. . . . in the light of ancient wisdom, occult knowledge, and recent experiments by people like Dr. Helen Wambach, Jesus' injunction reveals a truth of such awesome magnitude that even believers and open-minded people will find it hard to accept, especially as it overturns all accepted and established western beliefs and procedures with regard to heredity and genealogy.

According to the old but evergreen Indian teaching we are, if the truth be known, nothing but *Brahman* or *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Being-Knowledge-Bliss), sometimes referred to as the Witness of Self. What we ordinarily refer to as "I" is only the ego or false-self masquerading as the real Self. The teaching with regard to this ego, which is also what we call mind, is



somewhat complicated and need not be gone into here, the essential point being that, when all is said and done, it simply does not exist. In other words it is part of *Maya*, the state of delusion in which we live until we are liberated. This ego is also subject to the karma-rebirth cycles of *samsara* during the incredibly lengthy period known as the Day of Brahm. What happens during the Night of Brahm does not concern us. The Sakyamuni Buddha worked out the whole of karmic cause and effect into

a fascinating and lucid chain of *nidanas* (links) which is called the *Pratitya-samutpada* (generally known in Pali as *Patikkasamuppada*). The whole of Theravada Buddhism concentrates on seeking enlightenment and liberation through the minute observance of the steps laid down in the *Patikkasamuppada*. Exactly who or what is to be finally set free by this "technique of deliverance" as the Ven. U Thittle puts it, is not at all clear, as the doctrine of *Anatman* (*anatta*) makes it quite clear that there is nobody to be liberated. "Nobody" is indeed the right word as there is certainly no 'body' to be liberated, the body as we know it being only a temporary vehicle anyhow.

And now let us consider this so-called human body. A male sperm impregnates a female cell in a woman's womb and from that moment a foetus, leading to a fully-formed baby, begins to take shape. Until the baby is born it is part of the mother's anatomy even though, after the moment of quickening, the woman knows that she is carrying another human being like herself within her. Once the umbilical cord is parted there is, indeed, another inhabitant of *samsara*.

Thousands of years ago our predecessors (and note that I do not say ancestors!) knew much more about life's mysteries than we do except for our occasional Master, like the Maharshi, and these are *rarissimae aves* indeed. Now, however, within the last few years, there has been a significant breakthrough in the West which both sheds light on our humanhood and poses one or two significant questions to answer.

It is already some years since the first case occurred of a hypnotist doctor accidentally regressing a patient beyond the womb experience into that of a former life. Since then this practice has been continuing and the results are gradually being acknowledged by all but the most stick-in-the-mud medical psychiatrists. I have myself heard tape recordings made while people were being regressed, and it is quite extraordinary — and almost rather frightening — how people's voices, manner of speech,

language, etc., change completely once they have reached the recollection of a former life. There is one famous case in England of a man — of no particular qualities or abilities — who, when regressed, recollected his life as an 18th century sailor in the British navy. Not only did his voice and manner change in a startling way but he used words that are incomprehensible today. His story of a naval battle was so vivid and gripping that the Royal Naval College at Greenwich was consulted about the unknown naval terms. After due research, the answer was that yes, these words were in common naval usage at the time. The puzzle remained, however, as to how an ordinary man of today could possibly know these nautical terms now completely forgotten even in the Navy itself. The interest of many prominent people was aroused by this case and it is known that the late Lord Louis Mountbatten asked for and obtained a copy of the tape for himself.

It would seem that the remembrance of a former life during ordinary waking consciousness is not uncommon among very small children, but this faculty usually dims and finally disappears as the child's thinking is manipulated and distorted by its elders. Most parents in the West simply take it that the child is very imaginative and making up stories. Under hypnotism, however, this lost memory can seemingly be restored and the patient can often give detailed descriptions of events and conditions during former lives. The whole subject has recently been taken a step further by Dr. Wambach who has examined hundreds of cases of people of all races, creeds and ages, being led, under hypnosis, to remember the how and why of their rebirths including choice of parents and when the foetus was taken over. In some quite astonishing cases, according to Dr. Wambach, the foetus was kept under observation but only after actual birth into this world was the baby taken over. The intended possessors of the new body were always in mental communion with the mother-to-be, reading her thoughts, sometimes with dismay when they found that the child was

unwanted, as seems quite often to have been the case. There were also strange cases where former friends decided to be born again as twins, and one very curious case indeed where one of these twins had decided towards the end of the pregnancy to opt out of the agreement and leave his disconsolate companion to be born alive alone. Now all this may sound like sheer poppycock to the average westerner but will come as no surprise to the Oriental who has known and accepted rebirth probably since prehistoric times. The westerner, however, who accepts Dr. Wambach's bafflingly uncontested findings is in for some pretty mighty shocks. Hence the title of this article. So let us ruminates a bit on the consequences of the bald statement that we have no ancestors.

First, our bodies are merely vehicles and have no abiding connection with what we are. So then the question arises what is that which takes over the foetus produced by human bodies? It cannot be *Brahman* as this is the Ether of Knowledge and is and remains utterly impersonal/incorporeal. So we must fall back on what Edgar Cayce called "the entity", in fact the *jiva* or separated individual consciousness (*sakkayaditthi*) or, to the westerner, the ego. This leads to the fact that the age-old and firmly established social system of tracing family ancestry is entirely false and meaningless. So, THE FAMILY TREE MEANS NOTHING. Have I set the cat among the pigeons? I am quite aware that this will outrage people, much concerned with *lokavasana* as well as *dehavasana*, who take great pride in their 'ancestry' and consequent social position, but in the interest of truth it has to be faced up to. Each one of us is actually a spiritual aspect of *Brahman* (Self — Christ) alone. Under the delusion of *moha* we appear to function through human bodies (*viparitavasana*) but these bodies and their begetting, though held in our human consciousness, are never part of us. When the *jiva* chooses the parent body for its forthcoming body, it cannot also choose that body but must accept what it karmically deserves. That is why some of us are landed with such vile bodies, tailored according to

ALLAH

— By Maha-Kavi Subramania Bharati

**Effulgence bright beyond the reach
Of mind or speech,
The Lord supreme who has decreed
Out of His grace
That in illimitable space
A million million worlds should roll
Unceasingly in all directions
He is Allah, Allah, Allah.**

**All, all who come and worship Him,
He saves, destroying fear of Death,
Though they may be unlearned, false
Of speech and lacking penance, wicked,
Breaking every rule of conduct
Taught by the good, all, all He saves
From fear of Death, Allah, Allah, Allah.**

our karmic 'bank balance' at the time. As all 'ancestry' is to do with physical procreation and chains of bodies, we must always remember that these bodies do not represent us any more than the cars that we get into and drive about in, represent us. This removes the sting from the startling revelation that this entity or ego that we think ourselves to be HAS NO HUMAN RELATIONS.

"While he (Jesus) yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." *Mathew 12: 46-50.* □

MY EXPERIENCE AT ARUNACHALA

By Dr. S.C. Roy

*Dr. S.C. Roy, although he went blind in his seventh year, rose to become a distinguished scholar and man of letters. Despite his disability he travelled to Japan, America and other parts of the world unaccompanied. He was lecturer in Calcutta University at Tata Sociological Institute in Bombay, and at various institutions of higher learning in America, including the Cooper Union. At present he resides in New York City where he visits the **Arunachala Ashrama.***

I arrived at Sri Ramanasramam on October 16, 1946, after a visit to Pondicherry. Mr. Dilip Kumar Roy, the famous Indian musician and a disciple of Sri Aurobindo, advised me to visit Arunachala before returning to Calcutta. He sent two telegrams to Tiruvannamalai about my arrival there, describing my physical disability, since I am blind. When I reached the station I found two ladies — Miss Bowman, a Swiss and Mrs. Taleyarkhan, a Parsi — waiting to receive me and escort me to the Ashram.

I was brought before Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. I had a brief talk with him before the evening meal. He said, "You *already* have good vision. It is blurred by obstructions. What you have to do is to remove these obstructions".¹

I was provided with a room for my rest and sleep. After awaking the next morning, one of Bhagavan's disciples escorted me to the large room where he was already seated. Several devotees, both Indian and Western, were seated all around the hall. No one spoke or put any questions to Bhagavan. I was the

only person who asked questions, and I wrote down his answers in Braille. My queries related to philosophical and religious themes. They were primarily germane to Vedanta philosophy which, as I understood it, was also his philosophy. He was very patient and agreeable to answer all my questions. Bhagavan was curious about my Braille reading and writing. He desired to keep a sheet of my Braille writing,

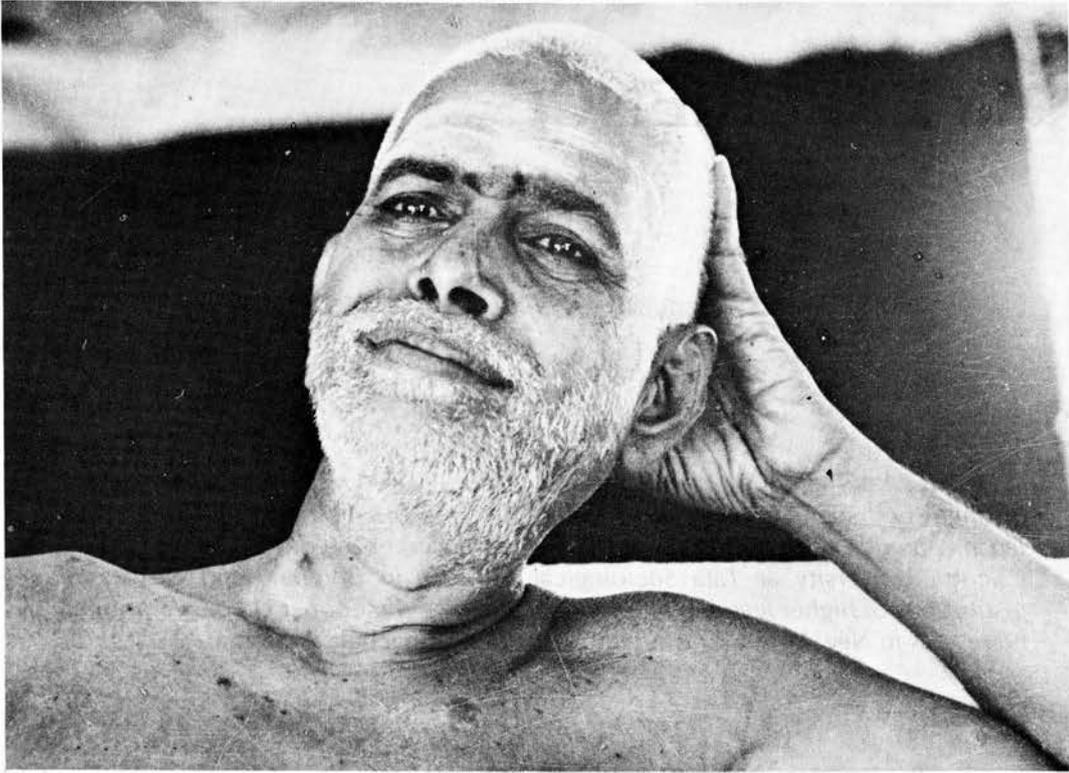
¹The visit of Dr. S.C. Roy to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is recorded in *Day by Day with Bhagavan* by A. Devaraja Mudaliar, (pp. 285-287) as follows:

16-10-46

This night Dr. Roy, a blind gentleman, arrived here from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, where it seems Dilip Kumar Roy advised him to go here. This gentleman had a private talk with Bhagavan after 8 p.m. today, when he narrated his eye-trouble and prayed for Bhagavan's mercy.

17-10-46

This morning Dr. Roy showed before Bhagavan how he writes, reads his watch, etc. I have learnt he is a M.A., B.L., of Calcutta University and has afterwards



although no one at the Ashram would be able to decipher it.

I felt a little embarrassed as I was the only speaker in the hall. The other people just inhaled the spiritual atmosphere without any interruption of speech. I was told that Bhagavan came to this room in the morning and in the afternoon in order to give his *darshan* and blessings to his followers. I presented myself to him in the afternoon to receive his blessings and asked more questions.

become a Ph.D. of an American University. In the afternoon, when I entered the hall about 3 p.m., Dr. Roy was asking Bhagavan, "In the case of persons who are not capable of long meditation, will it not be enough if they engage themselves in doing good to others?" Bhagavan replied: "Yes, it will do. The idea of good will be at their heart. That is enough. Good, God, Love, are all the same thing. If the person keeps continuously thinking of anyone of these, it will be enough. All meditation is for the purpose of keeping

I saw Sri Bhagavan again in the evening as I was leaving early the next morning. As I bowed down to touch his feet, according to the Indian custom, he moved away from me. Bhagavan did not allow anyone to touch his feet because his idea was that the same God is in everyone and no one should bow down to another. Then, a dramatic event took place. I told Bhagavan that other people could see him and need not touch his feet. But, I could not see him and, with the blind, *actuality is tactuality*. To a sightless person, an individual or a thing becomes more real and actual through his touch; hence, Bhagavan should not deprive me of the opportunity to *feel* his real existence. He melted at this and came forward near me so that I could touch his feet. He gave me his blessings and informed me that all arrangements had been made for my departure. He also said that he would not see me any more, physically. This prophecy became true, indeed, since I left the Ashram at four o'clock the

next morning and could not return before he left his mortal body in 1950. The disciple who had escorted me to receive Bhagavan's blessing saw me touch his feet and was very much amazed. After we came out of the hall, he said it was the first time Bhagavan had allowed anyone to touch his feet in twelve years.

After I came back to my room, I prepared for my departure and slept a while. At four a.m. a bullock cart took me to the bus terminal. I came to Madras where I was interviewed by the Editor of "Indian Express". After a delicious evening meal, I left for Calcutta.

For some time, a devotee of Sri Bhagavan corresponded with me from the Ashram. He wrote me in his first letter that Bhagavan had enquired about my departure on taking his seat in the hall the next morning.

I was tremendously happy that I had had the opportunity of visiting and talking to a rare being. My only regret was that I could not return to Sri Ramanasramam in time to see him again.

out all other thoughts." After some pause, Bhagavan said, "When one realises the truth and knows that there is neither the seer nor the seen, but only the Self that transcends both, that the Self, alone is the screen or the substratum on which the shadow both of the ego and all that it sees, come and go, the feeling that one has not got eyesight, and that therefore one misses the sight of various things, will vanish. The realised being, though he has normal eyesight, does not see all these things." (He sees only the Self and nothing but the Self.)

After further discussion with Dr. Roy, Bhagavan added, "There is nothing wrong in seeing anything, this body or the world. The mistake lies in thinking you are the body. There is no harm in thinking the body is in you. The body, world, all must be in the Self; or rather nothing can exist apart from the Self, as no pictures can be seen without the screen on which the shadows can be cast." In answer to a question as to what is the best way to the goal, Bhagavan said, "There is no goal to be reached. There is nothing to be attained. You

PRESENCE

— By Joan Greenblatt

**How precious and dear
it is to be
with those fortunate ones
who gazed upon those dazzling eyes,
in whose presence
body and mind were annihilated.**

**This presence invoked
an outpouring of love...
a deepening sense of humility
and loosened the strings of
attachment with sudden swiftness.**

**Be it a moment's glance
or years at His Holy Feet,
lives were changed ...
And they change still!**

**For such a presence cannot die.
It grows and deepens
as years mature,
And if we but look into
our own Heart
Those dazzling eyes hold us, us too...
...in their embrace!**

are the Self. You exist always. Nothing more can be predicated of the Self than that it exists. Seeing God or the Self is only being the Self or yourself. Seeing is being. You, being the Self, want to know how to attain the Self. It is something like a man being at Ramanasramam asking how many ways are there to reach Ramanasramam and which is the best way for him. All that is required of you is to give up the thought that you are this body and to give up all thoughts of the external things or the not-Self. As often as the mind goes out towards outward objects, prevent it and fix it in the Self or 'I'. That is all the effort required on your part. The different methods prescribed by different thinkers are all agreed on this. The *advaita*, *dvaita*, *visishtadvaita* schools and other schools all agree that the mind must give up thinking of external things and must think of the Self, or God as they may call it. That is called meditation. But meditation being our nature, you will find when you realise the Self that what was once the means is now the goal, that while once you had to make an effort, now you cannot get away from the Self even if you want."

A DIALOGUE WITH THE MAHARSHI – III

By B.R. Narasimha Swami

Devotee: Who am I?

Maharshi: What is your first impression on that matter.

D. I am the person now sitting here talking and listening.

M. It is the body that sits here with a voice organ and a sense of hearing. Are you the body then?

D. Am I not?

M. What does your body consist of but hands, legs, eyes, nose and so on. Are you your hands? Can you not exist without hands?

D. I can exist without my hands, so I am not my hands.

M. For the same reason, you are not the legs, nose, eyes and so on.

D. Just so.

M. If you are not the parts, you are not even the whole body.

D. How does that follow?

M. What belongs to you and is your property is not yourself. Is that not so?

D. It appears so.

M. "My body" you spoke of. Then the body is your property, is it not?

D. It seems so, though I cannot see who the 'I' is who owns the body.

M. Then the owner, yourself, must be invisible. Are there no invisible entities in existence?

D. Yes, there are, such as ghosts, spirits and so on.

M. Then you may be a spirit, may you not?

D. How can a living man be a spirit?

M. When can he be a spirit?

D. After his death.

M. Where was that spirit during life?

D. It must have been connected with or residing in the living body.

M. What is the distinction in nature between the spirit and the body, living or dead?

D. I suppose the fact that the spirit is subtle while the body is gross and material, and that the spirit acts upon the body.

M. Then neither the body, nor the senses, nor the *pranas* (the breath and other vital functions), constitute the spirit, which is yourself, your 'I'.

D. No, they are not 'I'.

M. When you think or talk of 'I', what else do you feel is a part of you or your spirit?

D. People say that we have both a body and a mind. If I am not the body, it follows that I am the mind.

M. What is that mind? What constitutes the mind?

D. I cannot say.

M. When you refer to your mind, what idea do you have at the back of your mind? The mind is not a trunk with limbs, head and voice, is it?

D. No.

M. You have something more subtle than this gross body which you express with your voice. Why do you talk now?

D. To express the thoughts and ideas which are in my mind.

M. Then thoughts and ideas are the contents

* Continued from our last issue, pp. 245 to 248.

of the mind, and together constitute the mind.

D. Yes.

M. Are thoughts and ideas all of the same sort, or are they the basis of each other?

D. I do not understand.

M. When you see a person, what thoughts have you?

D. I think I see a figure with some qualities such as brightness, shortness and so on.

M. How do you know that it is brightness or shortness?

D. I have known them previously.

M. So you have the primary sensations, and then you compare these with a previous stock of such impressions. Is not this power of memory, comparison and judgement of similarity or dissimilarity, a power higher than mere receptivity to impressions?

Do. Yes.

M. It is this secondary function that is called the intellect or *buddhi*. Which of these two, (1) sensations or thoughts, and (2) intellect, is superior?

D. It is the intellect that guides, arranges and controls the thoughts. So the intellect (*buddhi*) is superior to the thoughts (*manas*).

M. So the intellect (*buddhi*) may be regarded as an inner sheath, a sort of core, for this mind (*manas*). Can you discover any further inner core to which this *buddhi* is an outer sheath?

D. My mind cannot penetrate into any such mysterious region.

M. Why, even now you have penetrated, since you said "my mind"! You include your thoughts and your intellect in the term "my mind", do you not?

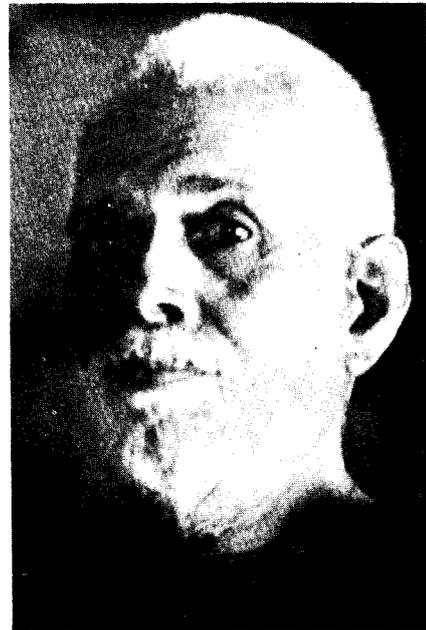
D. Yes.

M. When you say "my intellect", what is the relationship between you and the intellect? Is it not that of an owner and his property?

D. It may be so, but the matter is not clear to my intellect.

M. Is the intellect the same thing to you at all times, or to you and to all other?

D. No, my own intellect varies at times, and it



differs from that of others, especially when I do not agree with them.

M. Do all men have the same degree or quality of intellect, whatever their age, education, health and so on?

D. No. Babies have little of it. Older and educated people have more of it. Sick people have little of it. Geniuses have much of it. Fools, drunkards and insane people have little or none of it.

M. In insane people, where is the intellect?

D. It is clouded or destroyed.

M. Do they never recover it?

D. Some do.

M. Just as you recover stolen property. So the intellect is your property, capable of improvement, subject to variation, liable to destruction, and capable of being again restored to you, the possessor. Is it not so?

D. Yes.

M. Then the intellect or *buddhi* is only your property; it is not you.

D. Just so.

M. Then what are you?

D. I cannot find out what I am.

M. You mean that your intellect does not show you who you are.

D. Yes, that is what I mean.

M. Do you have no powers besides the intellect? Why do you not see if you have?

D. Where or what am I to see?

M. See within yourself, see yourself.

D. How can I see what is not visible?

M. You cannot see with these physical eyes.

D. What other eyes do I have?

M. You have your 'I'. See with it and enquire 'Who am I?'

D. How can I see my 'I'?

M. When you talk of 'I', are you not conscious of something?

D. Yes.

M. That consciousness is not a consciousness of objects, so it must be a consciousness of something else, must it not?

D. How does that follow?

M. When you think of an object, you are absorbed and transformed into that object. At that time you are not thinking of 'I' but of the object, are you not?

D. Just so.

M. Now if you drop the object, what remains?

D. Nothing remains.

M. But when you perceived the object, there was both the object perceived (the *drisya*) and yourself, the perceiver (the *drik*).

D. Yes.

M. If of these two you remove the first mentioned, namely the *drisya* or object, what should remain?

D. Logically or mathematically speaking, the *drik* or subject 'I' should remain. But in point of fact I do not find it remaining. When I stop thinking of objects, all thought ceases. The 'I' does not remain alone.

M. You are partly right. The intellectual and relative concept of 'I' as subject, does not exist apart from the other similar concept, the object. The subject and object appear together

and disappear together. The first person, second person and third person all jump into and jump out of consciousness together. But is there no consciousness apart from these intellectual concepts?

D. I see none.

M. Did you have your intellect in deep sleep? That is, were you then perceiving, comparing and contrasting, remembering and judging things or objects?

D. No, there were no objects to think of and no intellectual play at that time.

M. Yet as you already admitted, you felt happy, did you not?

D. Yes.

M. What is this general feeling, this happiness unrelated to any object or thought, this feeling or consciousness in which the intellect has no part? You have already found that the nature of 'I', the Self, is to be happy, and here you find happiness when you transcend the intellect. Can you therefore conclude that 'I', 'Self' and 'happiness' are one and the same thing, *felt* as one, though not intellectually perceived as one.

D. I am now convinced that it must be so, but I do not yet feel it clearly. I do not feel this unrelated or absolute happiness transcending the intellect.

M. That is because of the fact that it has long been your habit to think of and identify yourself with other objects and that you have never faced your 'I' in the above manner. You have always been exercising your intellect and never your intuition. If you now reverse your course and take to inward vision, shutting out all external images and falling back on intuitive feeling, in that dark chamber of your mind you will catch the true picture of yourself. This is the real, the realization, the realizer or the Self — the One which words cannot describe and the mind cannot reach, and which is merely suggested by the term often used for describing it, namely *sat-chit-ananda*, that is, existence or reality, consciousness or illumination, and bliss. □

HOW RAMANA CAME TO ME AFTER HIS MAHA NIRVANA

By A. Vaidyanathan

I remember it was the year 1968 when I was stationed in Bombay. Though I had earlier heard of the Sage of Arunachala, I was not drawn to Him. On the other hand, I was indifferent to His teachings under the impression they were abstract and not practical. The turning point came when in an issue of the *Sunday Standard*, my attention was drawn to a book "Day by Day with Bhagavan" reviewed by a good soul. I was tempted to order the book from Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, which I did.

On receipt of a copy, I started reading it avidly immediately and could not put it by for any length of time. I was so absorbed with reading it, in office, while travelling and at home. It was so enthralling that words could not adequately describe my feelings. I at once thought here was a book which gave a direct answer to all questions or enigmas agitating the minds of *sadhakas*. Shorn of all dialectics it explained the universality of Brahman. All miseries originate from the ego which, when identified, disappears. Though so many paths to realise Brahman have been set down in various religious disciplines, all these are like small canals and tributaries flowing into a big river which empties itself ultimately into the Ocean. The Big River is the Direct Path taught by Bhagavan Ramana. Put in simple words it is the quest to find out one's true source by asking "Who Am I?" or "wherefrom the thought 'I' arises in the body." It is no use trying to understand all the *objects* in the world. Try to understand the *subject* i.e. "yourself". I was convinced the book was the ultimate in spiritual matters.

I went through the book many times and I am keeping it in my office even now for perusal, now and then. I sidelined some of the passages which are of the nature of His precepts without any reference to biographical events. So much so that, whenever I felt like it, I brushed aside everything else in the entire book and concentrated my attention only on these passages. In course of time I felt like *practising* the method advocated. So I began doing it, at all odd places, even while travelling in a bus to my office which normally took an hour.

One evening at home in Bombay I ruminated over my fate which had not allowed me to have Bhagavan's personal *darshan* and to pay my respects to Him during the years 1947-1950, when I was in Madras and within easy reach of Tiruvannamalai. I was overpowered with a sense of grief and went to sleep. That night I had a vivid dream in which I was seated in a hall along with many other devotees. The great Saint Ramana suddenly appeared on the scene casting His benign glance on one and all. When my turn came I got up and asked for His *hastha diksha*. He smiled and showed His right hand in *abhaya mudra* style as if blessing me. I woke up feeling so delighted that I remember to have narrated the dream to my wife then and there. The dream is still green in my memory. I could not dismiss it as a mere dream. It looked as if Bhagavan condescended to give *Darshan* to me as I had pined for it.

He has shown me the Path and the Goal. It remains to be seen how quickly I traverse the Path and reach the Goal! □



GARLAND OF

By **Sri Muruganar**

Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

Shiva whose weapon of wisdom quelled
Proud, indefeasible Yama; he is
The Sun dispelling envy's darkness.

1028

Those who cannot see that bliss is
Their own Self-nature roam bewildered
Like the musk-deer in the forest.
Those who have known the Self aright
Instead of wandering in the world
Abide in their own natural state.

1029

Bliss is the very nature of the Self.
Self is the infinitude of bliss.
All Being is but bliss.
Knowing this firmly, in the Self
Abide, enjoying bliss for ever.

THE PUISSANCE OF THE SELF

(He who has known the Truth and stands Firm-fixt in knowledge, having killed. Through knowledge all desires, he is Himself the Fire of Knowledge, Indra, Weilder of the thunderbolt, Yama To Yama, God of Time and Siva, Death-destroying hero.

— *Bhagavan*

1030

The mighty seer whose Self-abidance
Has once for all and all at once
Destroyed desire, he is himself

1031

He who angrily confronts,
Drives back into the heart and there
Destroys the puissant and malignant
Demon who through six senses sees
And sustains the universe, he is
Kumara, the Son-God, bringer of bliss
Supreme.

(The ego is the demon, Surapadma, who through the five senses and the mind, perceives or creates and enjoys the world)

THE NATURE OF SELF

1032

You who regard the body which
Is but a picture as yourself,
Can a picture think, Jiva it is
That both thinks and refrains from thinking
Hence we are *Jiva*.

1033

The *jiva* which once thought it was
The body, and now knows it is
Something different, functions as
The body in which another *jiva*

GURU'S SAYINGS

Dances, This other *jiva* within
The *jiva* is our true Being.

1034

Not only when a world is present
(In waking and in dream), but when
No world is present (as in sleep)
You shine as bodiless Being. This
Is your true nature as the Self.

1035

Whether the world perceived is real
Or else conceptual and unreal,
You are there, the knower, are
You not as Awareness present?
And this Pure Awareness is the Self.

1036

The Being which is Pure Awareness
Beyond both knowledge and ignorance is
The Self. In this the highest jnana,
Which is the very nature of Brahman,
Ignorance has no place.

1037

Not only is That free from any
Trace of ignorance. It is all
Pure, perfect jnana and sole Being.
If it were not true Being as Awareness,
How could vijnana, the discerning
Intellect, be born of It?

1038

Awareness is not of the Self
A quality. The Self is without qualities.
Awareness is not of the Self
An action. The Self *does* nothing.
The Self, our Being, *IS* Awareness.

1039

That which unaided shines within
As 'I AM, I AM' without a break,
The strong, true Being free from all
Upadhis, this Awareness pure
Is our firm, authentic nature.

1040

The true Self is the light of pure
Awareness. How to know it as one
Knows an object? When the ego
False has disappeared and we
Abide in peace within, the Self
Shines of itself spontaneously.

1041

Without an 'I' no triad can exist.
Yet we as Self are none of all these triads.
We as Self provide the ground and basis
For all triads.

(An 'I' is present in every triad, as seer, seen and seeing.
But this 'I' is not the Self, it is the ego. But there can be
no seeing without Being. The Self is being the ground of
seeing and all other actions, the reality behind the apparent
seer, seen and seeing.)

1042

The Self eternal, perfect, whole
And sole cannot be known; it is
Non-dual. Yoga or reunion
Is Being-Awareness, and not knowing
Something. Our true being is
Itself Awareness.

1043

The ground on which appear all pairs
Of opposites like gross and subtle,
Void and full, depressed, exultant,
That sole Being, infinite Awareness,
That am I.

1044

The ego false in its multitudinous
Goings-on appears to do
Good and evil deeds and suffer
Many mind-created pains.
But the ground, the sole support,
Of all this fuss is one true Being
Which is Awareness.

1045

With the natural light 'I AM, I AM'
Attached to no particular body,
But bright and clear, self-luminous,
Like the sun, the Heart-Heaven shines.
And this is the Self eternal.

1046

The true light of Awareness pure,
Subtle, ego-less, non-objective,
Silent, which tires the mind and baffles
It till it admits "I know not;"
This is Being-Awareness, this the Self.

1047

The Self is true Awareness, ever still,
Unmoving like the screen.

1048

The world of seer, seeing and the seen
Is the moving picture thrown on it.

1049

Like the indispensable basic *sruti*
Sustaining and pervading all
The seven notes, or like the moveless
Screen on which so many movies
Move, the Self unflawed and moveless
Abides as That which is.

1050

Through all phenomena upsurging
And making what is false seem real,
The Self alone, sans names and forms
That come and go, abides for ever
Everywhere, the Being supreme.

1051

The inner Ruler who within
Each living being lives unknown,
Uses each body as his own,
And ceaseless, tireless moves it, He
Is the immortal Self.

1052

The Self is not the ego the restless
Carriage-wheel which rises, falls
And suffers all the time; It is
The true, unmoving central axle.

1053

Whether phenomena appear
Or wholly disappear, it is all
The same to Self-awareness. When
All things have merged in the upsurging
Plenitude of Shiva pure,
What still abides is but Self-being.

1054

When on being scanned the treacherous
Ego dies and disappears, the Self,
The clarity of pure Awareness,
Is what the Upanishads proclaim
As the true meaning of God's grace,
The glorious vision of Shiva as He dances.

1055

Brahma, the One without a second,
Has for His Being primordial bliss,
No blank though seeming void,
The plenitude of Being-Awareness,
Bliss, the sole Reality.

1056

The seers say where the 'I'-thought is
Wholly absent, there is *mouna*,
There the Self. This Self, this *mouna*,
Is God, the *jiva* and the world.
The Self creates, perceives and is the world.

1057

Like ether, the sole substance true
Of all things known, the Self alone
Is God and *jiva* and the world;
The state transcendent, ultimate Abode,
And Shivahood supreme.

OF THE GRANDEUR OF THE SELF

1058

Since in the grandeur of absolute Being the
seer
Becomes himself the universe he sees,
The Self is the ultimate Reality.
When the ego which "sees" has wholly
disappeared
The ensuing silence bright, the state
Of pure Awareness, is the Self.

1059

The Self, the seat of the Bliss of Awareness
Is an ocean vast of Bliss. And he
Whose mind turns inward and dives deep
within
Gains the infinite treasure of Its grace.

1060

Great is the Self. Greater than That
Or other than That nothing exists.
Hence we know no other thing,
No other thing at all, which we
Can buy by paying as its price
The Self.

(The warning seems to be against gaining *siddhis* or powers (like Faust) at the cost of the Self.)

1061

Here on this earth and in this birth
There is no greater good than gaining
The Self. To find it and enjoy it,
Search well within and first destroy
The ego false and worthless.

1062

The ever-present Self, the radiant
Diamond, is the rarest, richest
Treasure. Look within and find
And hold it fast. Your penury,
The illusive yet vexatious troubles
Of life on earth, will vanish forthwith.

1063

Not knowing the value of this treasure,
Their own by birthright, people perish
Through mere sloth. The great ones who
Have found the clue and traced and
gained it
Enjoy eternal bliss.

COMPASSIONATE RAMANA

**Moments Remembered
by Managing Editor**

I record in this column another instalment of unpublished anecdotes. I deem it a duty and find it a pleasure to share with friends what I have heard from time to time from old devotees.

V.G.

SRI VISWANATHA SWAMI has a special place in the RAMANA VAIBHAVAM. Bhagavan gave him physical shelter and also assumed responsibility for his spiritual progress, when he sought refuge at the Feet of Bhagavan, during his college days! To no one else perhaps was such grace vouchsafed. From the day the lad arrived at the Ashram, running away from his parents and family in Dindigul, Bhagavan showered His love, protection and Grace on this fortunate boy. He would instruct little Viswanathan to do his spiritual practices at specified spots and at particular times. Bhagavan would sometimes go there by way of verification and would encourage the lad in his *sadhana*. "I shall always be grateful to Sri Bhagavan for having opened for me this unhampered way of life, for having initiated me into it", Sri Swami told me once. Old devotees living now in the Ashram speak of the motherly affection Bhagavan showered on Viswanathan in those early days. Sri Viswanatha Swami fully reciprocated this divine affection by his steadfast surrender to Sri Bhagavan and did much to

interpret His teachings in various ways, through his scholarly writings, his translation of the *Talks* and personal guidance of seekers.

I had the privilege of having his precious company at the Ashram for many years, particularly after he became the *Editor* of our journal. He once told me: "I wish to communicate to you my inner experience of *Advaita*, so that it might be useful to you.

"Though there is so much of confusion, turbulence and misery in manifestation, all that belongs to the realm of the mind — the ignorant mind getting split as subject and object. All experiences of life are relative, i.e., related to the experiencer, who is nothing but a shadow, having no intrinsic reality of his own. The reality in every person is the Ultimate Pure Existence which is Awareness Absolute that does not get split into subject and object. It is the only thing that matters. If the ego and all its experiences are dismissed as passing shadows, the ever-present Ultimate Reality alone shines forth. If one is even intellectually

convinced of this truth, will gain detachment and mental peace.

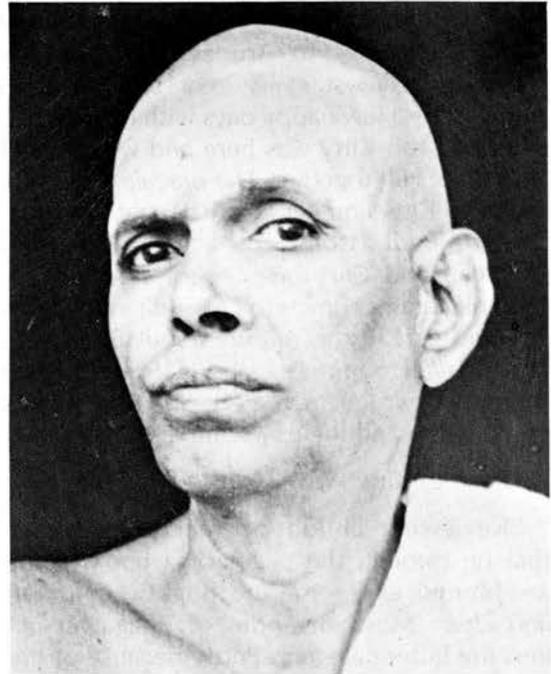
"We should now and then stop for a while, stand aloof, and experience this Immutable and Immaculate Awareness Absolute which alone matters, which alone IS, despite the manifestation of endless variety of experiences. Buddha, Sankara and Ramana are standing monuments affirming this Reality which is our own being. The very sight of these Pillars of Light remind us of this Reality and bring us the Peace that passeth understanding. The finite mind has to be dedicated to, merged into the Infinite reality". Sri Viswanatha Swami then quoted the last verse of Sri Bhagavan's *Arunachala Pancharatna*:

He who, with Heart to you surrendered,
Beholds for ever you alone,
Sees all things as forms of you
And loves and serves them as none other
Than the Self, O Aruna Hill,
Triumphs because he is immersed
In you whose being is pure bliss."

* * *

Sri P.R. Nagasundaram Iyer of Karaikudi was entrusted with the duty of bringing cooks from the south on special occasions at the Ashram, like *Jayanti* and *Mahapuja*. He would work along with them so intimately that even a permanent resident like A. Devaraja Mudaliar took him to be only the head-cook! On one such *Jayanti* occasion after having worked all night, Nagasundaram Iyer, with his usual short towel around his waist, stretched himself utterly exhausted under the open sky without any bedding or covering, near the kitchen. Being December it was quite cold. Bhagavan who got up very early in the morning (2 or 3 a.m.) noticed Nagasundaram Iyer sprawling there uncovered. Full of compassion, Bhagavan stopped near him and asked an attendant to go and bring His own woollen shawl and covered Nagasundaram Iyer with it, saying: "Poor Nagasundaram, having worked all day and night, is totally exhausted. Doesn't even notice the heavy dew!"

* * *



A devotee from north India, M. who stayed here for a few years in the later forties, was doing money-lending business. He was a staunch devotee of Bhagavan, but his activities were disliked by almost everyone in and around the Ashram. He lost all his money, his only daughter became mad and she came over here to stay with him, adding to his burden. M. was totally shattered; still he continued to stay in the vicinity of the Ashram. One day, in April, 1950, he stood in the queue to have *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan who was then very ill. Devotees were strictly prevented from talking to Bhagavan, much less to hand over things to Him. M. when he stood in front of Him, dropped a piece of paper at the feet of Sri Bhagavan and moved away. Bhagavan read it and kept it under His pillow. After some time, an attendant came to fetch M. Others felt that it was to reprimand M. for having transgressed the rules. However, he was taken straight to Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan looked at M. with intense grace for some time and nodded His head to express approval. In the paper M. had written: "Bhagavan, save me!"

* * *

Kitty, daughter of our respected Arthur Osborne, comes to Arunachala, with her daughters, almost every year for Christmas and spends a few happy days with her mother. This year too Kitty was here and we all went round the Hill together. The *pradakshina* party included Kitty and her lovely daughter, Aruna, Evelyn, Paul (from *Arunachala Ashrama*), Marceau and Christiane Pastor, K. Natesan, K. Venkataraman, myself and Sridharan. When I requested Kitty to tell me about Bhagavan, she was all happiness and narrated a few incidents which revealed Sri Bhagavan's compassion and the power of His Grace.

Listen to Kitty's own words :

"Reviewing childhood memories is like flicking through the pages of a book. Some are blurred and some are brightly coloured and clear. Most memories of Bhagavan fall into the latter category. Partly because of the intrinsic quality of all events associated with Him and partly too because these memories have been taken out and examined over and over like treasures in the years that followed. As children our attitude to Bhagavan was perhaps slightly different from that of the adults. We of course knew that he was God and a wonderful person to be near — truly a magic feeling, but we accepted this quite naturally and without a feeling of awe. However, sometimes even children can be awed.

"One of these memories I have is rather strange because to this day I can recall my amazement and yet nothing actually happened at all. A lady came to Tiruvannamalai from north India; and in those days all "foreigners" whether they were north Indians or Norwegians were sent to our house. I was about ten years old at the time and not an especially sensitive child but even I could not bear to stay in the room with her as she was so tense, nervous and unhappy that it made me most uneasy. Her story was that she had married a man she loved very much although her parents had not approved as he was of a different caste — however, they had overcome all the opposition and they went to the sea side somewhere for

their honeymoon. They had a week or so of great happiness until one day he was killed by a shark right in front of her eyes. All this had happened about two years earlier and the distraught widow was travelling through India, going to various Ashrams and seeing various holy men. She had a list of questions which she asked at each place — all more or less a demand why such a thing should happen if there was a God of Justice and so on. She was an unhappy and aggressively angry lady and my heart sank when my mother asked me to show her the way to the hall where Bhagavan sat. I led in silence and she followed me, I showed her the hall and then went off to play. A while later I realised it was lunch time and I went to collect her and bring her home — most reluctantly.

"I will never, never forget the change that had come over her in just an hour or so. She was calm and relaxed and peaceful and *happy*. I was so awed and intrigued that I hung around anxiously waiting for my mother to ask her what Bhagavan had said to her. Whatever it was must have been words of the greatest wisdom and power to have had such an effect. Eventually my mother did ask and she answered that she had gone into the hall and sat down and Bhagavan had looked at her — just looked — with such infinite compassion that she felt that her questions were just not important any more. She sat there and felt at peace and not a word had been spoken. Bhagavan is Supreme, indeed!"

Sri Krishnaswami had the rare privilege of serving as personal attendant to Sri Bhagavan for over 12 years. As he was domineering over the other attendants, he earned the nickname 'Hall *Sarvadhikari*'! He lives now in the Ashram. The following anecdote narrated by him reveals the exceptional compassion Bhagavan had for animals.

The monkeys were Bhagavan's companions throughout His stay on the Hill. Stories on monkeys abound in every book on Bhagavan. How during His stay in Virupaksha Cave and Skandashram He would divide equally and

share the begged food, not only among those present but also with the monkeys. After eating their portion the monkeys used to make loud noises expressing gratification. When Bhagavan came to the present Sri Ramanasramam the same monkeys visited Him. Soon they settled in the Ashram groves. They were fed here also.

Once, the monkeys played havoc with the garden and took great liberties with the visiting-devotees by relieving them of the offerings brought by them for Bhagavan! Many complaints reached the ears of the *Sarvadhikari*, Sri Niranjanananda Swami, and he took immediate action by asking Krishnaswami not to feed the monkeys. That day, a monkey came and sat on the window-sill, looking expectantly at Bhagavan for the usual '*prasad*'. Since Krishnaswami did not give anything, Bhagavan directed him to help the 'visitor'. Krishnaswami, while refusing to give any food to the monkey, explained how the *Sarvadhikari* had passed orders due to the intolerable mischief wrought by the monkeys. The monkey still waited.

It was too much for Bhagavan to see him wait so long. With great emotion He said: "You see! When Anjaneya found Mother Sita safe in Sri Lanka, his joy knew no bounds. In sheer joy he destroyed the Ashoka grove and set fire to Sri Lanka and returned happily to convey the good news to Lord Rama!" He continued: "The monkeys, out of intense joy, sometimes turn violent, pulling down branches and leaves from trees and play with the visitors. We should not treat this as a 'nuisance' and deprive them of their rightful share. This is their birth-place and it is we who have come from outside; we have no right to chase them away." Bhagavan was so moved that He could not control His emotion. The loving concern of Bhagavan for the animal moved Krishnaswami so much that he transgressed official orders and immediately gave a bunch of bananas to the waiting monkey. Bhagavan beamed with a glorious smile!

When once *Sri Kunju Swami* had a severe abscess on his foot he was shouting with pain. He was made to stay in the *mantap* opposite

to the Ashram; of course, Ashram people were attending on him. At that same time, the Ashram dog, *Jackey*, also was lying down there in the *mantap*. He was attacked by a ferocious pig and during the fight his stomach was torn and his intestines came out. A major operation with many stitches on the stomach had to be done. Bhagavan came to the *mantap* and Kunju Swami, who could not bear the pain, cried aloud and fell at Sri Bhagavan's feet. Bhagavan, with full of compassion, said: "See, how *Jackey* is silently bearing all the pain after such a major operation, without so much as a whisper!" On hearing these soothing words Kunju Swami's pain became bearable. Bhagavan fondled *Jackey* and enquired whether he had his food and then took leave of the two patients:

While alighting from a horse-cart, Krishnaswami noticed the cart-man demanding double the rate from a north-Indian devotee who wanted to go back. Krishnaswami intervened but the driver refused to listen to his counsel. Krishnaswami reported this to Bhagavan and added that the driver did not listen to his words. Bhagavan, with a smile, replied: "Do you listen to me?"

Do we listen to Him? Do we follow His teaching? Is not the question addressed to us all....!?

PRAYER

By S.M. Kaul

Aeon after aeon, life after life,
I suffered sorrow and pain untold,
Till Thy light beckoned from afar
And drew me gently to thy feet.
Seeking in this illusive life
Vain pleasures, for away from Home
I wandered till I lost my way
Enveloped in dark Ignorance.
Shunning the bitter sweets of earth,
I turn now to Thee, Ramana bright,
And may Thy Grace, Thy smile benign,
Engulf me and fulfil my heart
With love and joy like Thine perennial.

Off The Shh . . . Elf

By Jayaraman

NO, it's not the printer's devil. It's the Way and the Goal encapsulated!

ANECDOTE:

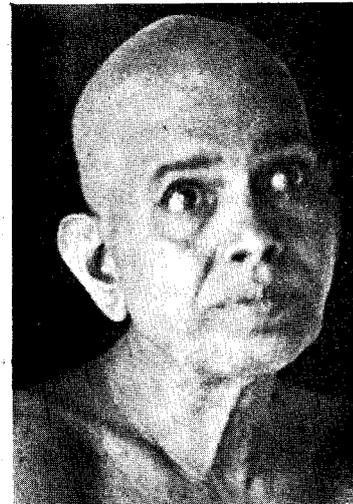
It happened just before the days of terrible ignorance when shopkeepers sold Akasa in various forms because there was such a keen demand for what wasn't. There can be no doubt about it; due to some unfathomable reason, having come to regard Akasa as an object separate from myself, I became the first person involved in ignorance.

When I asked at a shop for a bit of Akasa, the owner looking nonplussed went through his inventory and shook his head. In order to make the Euclidean Point more significant to the shopkeeper, I pointed to what he must have regarded as a vacant shelf and raised a questioning eyebrow. He looked, lowered his voice and stammered, "Don't seem to have what you want" sorry, can't give it off the *shelf*." There is no place where the Guru is not, and perceiving Him in the stammer of the shopkeeper, I remained silent and understood.

ANTIDOTE

Off the Self, the mystic fire of utter indifferent delight, arises mysteriously the momentary spark of awareness called Ego. To its subsequent chagrin it finds itself enmeshed in the quagmire of its own creation — a gigantic dream of but a moment — during which it regards a portion of its dream as more "intimate" and, calling that as "its body", locates itself in it.

With this body as reference, it interacts with everything else in the dream and "deter-



mines" them. Thus, it real-izes "other" bodies, postulates "other" egos in those bodies and engages in willful action moving towards experiences pleasant to its body and away from experiences unpleasant to it.

It real-izes much action, many fruits, and terrible scholarship regarding its environment and itself. Within its dream it undergoes a continuous cycle of waking, dreaming, sleeping and birth.

The ego tired, suspicious and then convinced of pursuing its own shadows, finally pursues itself. Dropping its form it resolves as awareness into its Self. The moment, which began just a moment ago, thus ends.

To remain as oneself naturally, without a whimper of thought, is to witness a continuous miracle which no *Sankalpa* can accomplish Shh.....Quiet.

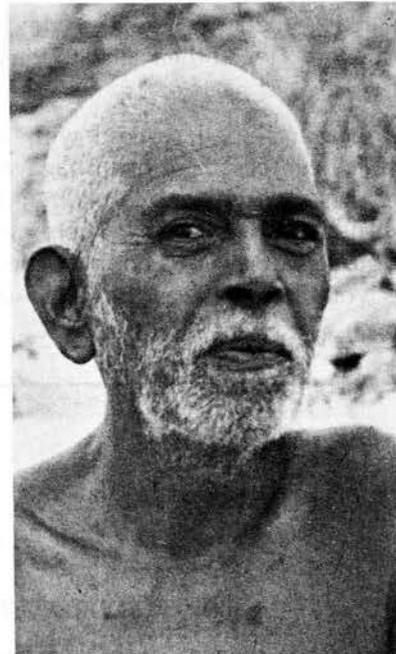
Introducing....

Sri Krishna Bhagavathar

Bangalore Krishna Bhagavathar is very popular among the senior devotees of Sri Bhagavan. However, for the fresh many younger devotees of Sri Bhagavan it is necessary that we introduce Sri Bhagavathar.

He is a *Harikatha Bhagavathar* of unusual calibre, who had a spell over his audience both in Karnataka and in Tamil Nadu for well over half a century, retiring only in his seventy-third year, just a decade ago. In fact, he was giving *Harikatha* discourses on Sri Bhagavan annually, in the Ashram during Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanthi* celebrations.

He comes of a musical family and is related to the famous *Harikatha* exponent and musical genius, late Palghat Anantharama Bhagavathar. Settled down in Bangalore, Kannada became his fostermother, while Tamil was his mother tongue. English too dear to him and His discourses were never without copious quotations from English. His *Harikathas* were very popular among the old and young alike, and especially among students, as they sparkled



with satire and humour without sacrificing the devotional element. Gifted with a remarkable memory, he became an adept in the art spreading piety and never hankering after money.

It was in 1927-28, that a relation of his, coming to Bangalore from Tiruvannamalai, gave him news about Sri Ramana Maharshi, His greatness and silent teachings. The curiosity to see such a great soul in the *Kaliyuga* was aroused in him, and within a few months when he went to his relation, he was amazed to see a plethora of Sri Ramana's pictures adorning every wall in the house. The ever-shining eyes of Sri Bhagavan pierced the heart

of the Bhagavathar and created an urge to have *darshan* of Him.

A couple of months later, accompanied by his nephew, he had to go to Cuddalore, where he gave a *Harikatha* on Purandaradasa, in the house of Sri Naraharidas of the Tukaram Das group. Thence he came to Tiruvannamalai, had his food in the Railway station and went straight to Sri Bhagavan at about 2.30 p.m. with some sugarcandy as offering. After prostration at His feet, he moved aside and sat staring at Him. He left the Hall with the utmost reluctance.

Sri Bhagavan's spell worked with him as with other devotees. Had not Bhagavan said to one of His devotees who left Him in a huff, but returned to Him later, "Where can you go? If you do not want to come to me, I will go after you." Similar was the case with the

Bhagavathar who made frequent visits to have *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan.

The Bhagavathar attended a marriage function about March, 1928, at a relation's house in Tiruvannamalai. There Sri Sundaresa Iyer saturated Bhagavathar with the greatness of Sri Bhagavan, His life, His silence and His Teachings, day and night for full three days. After this episode, commenced the uninterrupted discourses by the Bhagavathar on Sri Ramana wherever he went. His visits to the Ashram too became regular.

Sri Krishna Bhagavathar has, in his own inimitable style, set down in Kannada notes on Sri Bhagavan, and his teachings. These are being collected and edited.

May Sri Ramana bless the Bhagavathar with many more years of healthy and peaceful life!

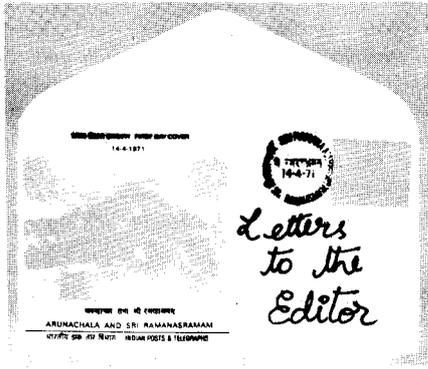
CORRECTION TO OCTOBER '82 ISSUE

Page 241-Omit last two paragraphs, beginning with, "He once told Sri Sadhu Om."

Page 277 — the line should be read as follows (underlined words have been omitted by oversight):

"Next comes the realisation that this 'I' is the source of every thought. To consider that this 'I' is the body, the personality etc., is but Another thought, a very frequent thought maybe, but still, only a thought, (that thought is in fact the ego)."

Page 299 — (Left hand top): *Read Karnataka for Kerala*



SECRET OPERATION OF GRACE

The Editorial of October '82 by A.R. Natarajan very aptly brings to light and reminds us that we are never out of the orbit of the secret operation of Ramana's Grace. When a visitor complained that he will be in hell after leaving the heavenly atmosphere of Bhagavan's Presence, His reply was: "Even if you go to hell Bhagavan will go after you!"

Much to the point is the case of Sankarananda saved by Bhagavan from being lost in the inward journey by mistaking "the lulling of the mind" as being the end of the journey. Thus very aptly the editor puts in inverted commas Sankarananda's spells of "stillness of thought" signifying only the lulling of his mind, *manolaya*.

The editor a devotee par excellence writes from the heart about Grace, a subject very near to his heart, giving many instances emphasising the secret operation of Ramana's Grace. A great encouragement is this reminder to devotees in their 'up and down' inward journey.

— Mrs. Lucia Osborne,
former Editor

A BOON TO JAPANESE

The Spiritual Teaching of Ramana Maharshi, containing Who am I? Spiritual Instruction and Maharshi's Gospel, has now been brought out in Japanese. This is the first book on Bhagavan Ramana in Japanese. We fondly hope this will pave the way for many more books on Ramana in Japanese. The publishers are:

I do understand Sri T.K. Sundaresa Iyer's statement that it is impossible to stay away from Sri Bhagavan. (Re: *The Mountain Path*, Oct. '82 — Editorial, p. 230). My life in this part of the world is so exhausting mentally as well as physically that I sometimes just give in. But after a few weeks or days I have to stand up in the middle of the night to fetch Sri Ramana's portrait and to place it next to my pillow in order to stop the suffering in my heart. A beautiful smile seems to say "you cannot get away"

as Sri Sundaresa says "away from Him there is no life for us" How privileged among men we are, dear brother.!

Charles Madigan; Sweden

BHAGAVAN'S PATH

I am very much impressed by Osborne's exposition of Bhagavan's Direct Path in his article 'The Ascent' (Oct. 82, p.234). The aspirant who chooses this path has to strive hard to reach the summit as "the ascent is sheer". Out of thousands who attempt Self-Enquiry only the blessed few can have the good fortune to have "an occasional glimpse of Realisation" and the rest have perhaps to slide the steep face with the consolation that their attempt will succeed in some future birth. The hard truth is that the path of Self Enquiry is not an easy one (unless one is blessed with His Grace) and that only the knowledge of the existence of such a path can be acquired by the common man, who is sincere and does not wish to dissemble that he has stilled his mind. For my part, though a devotee from 1938, I am reconciled to the state of the common man, the *bhakta*, who has deep veneration for the Guru and is joyful for the material gains obtained by His Grace.

— R. Rajagopalan, Musiri

Devotion is good, but it must ripen into surrender and active sadhana. Sri Bhagavan discourages talk of 'future births' and prescribes immediate, earnest Self-enquiry. One's concern is spiritual quest, the search for "I", and it has nothing to do with 'the common man', 'the average man' and so on. Studying Upadesa Sara, the Forty verses on Reality, the Supplement to the Forty Verses, one learns the method of 'tapping' Bhagavan's Grace, which is ample, ever-flowing and impartially available to all seekers. One is never too old or too young to start; the old have the sense of urgency, the young the strength and hope to find the meaning and purpose of human life.

ASHRAM, IT'S CHARM

Please permit me to express my gratitude for the kindness and hospitality extended to me and my family during our short visit to the Ashram. It was an experience that I shall cherish for a long time and it has kindled in me a desire to visit the Ashram again and perhaps spend a longer period of time there. I was deeply impressed by the atmosphere that prevails there and the efficient running of the Ashram's activities.

— P.C. Mahadevan, News Editor,
The Times of India, Ahmedabad.

II

Recently I had taken a Life Subscription to *The Mountain Path* and I have already received the 4 issues for 1982. Going through the "Ashram Bulletin" only have I come

to know the working of the Ashram to a great extent. Eversince, though I am staying away from the Ashram, my mind dwells always at His Ashram, at His Abode!

The books of Ramanasramam are my close friends and guide in my spiritual path for the last 15 years and with confidence I can say that I feel the presence and Grace of Bhagavan always.

— S. Hariharan, Cochin

III

The July/82 issue is very good, particularly, the "Ashram Bulletin". The photographs of the *Veda Patasala* and the students (on p. 210) were heartwarming. Ashram's dedication in furthering this cause is indeed very laudable.

I am enclosing a draft for rs. 10,000/- which you may use towards improvements or assistance of the *Patasala* and students. To me it appears like a command from Bhagavan. It is His money and we feel like His instruments in disbursing the same.

— N. Panchapakesan, Dubai

HIS GRACE

"Our last son, Gautham, aged 4½ years, suffered a severe attack of fever recently. Unfortunately, I could not take him to the doctor immediately. When I expressed my intention to take him to the doctor in the evening, Gautam firmly demanded that only Bhagavan's *prasad*, viz. *Vibhuti*, should be given him and he should be taken to Ramana Mandir at Lodhi Road. It was only late in the evening that I could go to Ramana Kendra which is far away from my residence in Lajpatnagar. After worshipping Bhagavan there, just before returning, I had a desire to buy the "*Bhagavan Sri Ramana: A Pictorial Biography*". But, as I did not have money, I had to stop with a mere enquiry. At this and on listening to my son's utterances in praise of Bhagavan, another devotee there unexpectedly presented a Rs. 100/- note to me and insisted that I buy the book and keep the remainder with me. Words fail me in expressing the strange feelings I had that day. Incidentally, the boy was all right in a few hours. This only confirmed my faith in Bhagavan's words: "The Creator pervading everywhere makes each one play his role in life according to their *karma*. That which is not destined will not happen despite every effort. What is destined is bound to happen. This is certain. Therefore, the best course is to remain silent."

I pray for Bhagavan's blessings.

—Smt. Sundari, New Delhi

THE CHRIST WITHIN

Ever since *The Mountain Path* had been published I

had had the benefit of a Gift Subscription by my dearly beloved aunt, Frau Dorothea Graefin von Matuschka, West Germany who is very fond of you personally and of the Ashram. For all these years now I was greatly pleased to feel like a member of goodwill and unification in religious strivings symbolized in the name of the magazine '*Mountain Path*'. And strangely enough I have to admit that I could never read the quarterlies without keeping in mind a sentence my father is said to have asked my aunt when she first told him about her new ambitions concerning the religions of the Far East, "What else do Christians want after they know Christ and that HE did for us?" Though on one side I felt free to find out for myself whether I could possibly find something better I still could never get rid of this question and finally asked Sri Maharshi, to show me the truth; he, the Saint, being in a new reality of life ought to know by his present experience. And this is the answer I got, a word I always knew but — as it seems — I did not fully realize: "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." So I decided to look for nothing else any more but for my Lord Jesus Christ who is the same with the Father and the Holy Ghost and my God. I am not free any more to accept and read "*The Mountain Path*" and want to ask you the favour to never send me a copy again, please. And I will ask my aunt not to give me the present of a further gift subscription in order not to get tempted again to do anything but obey my Lord.

— Herta Pependicker, Triberg, West Germany

We received your letter of 2nd May in which you put an end to our spiritual contact of long-standing. We feel it as a loss, but, of course, we respect your wish and shall not continue sending you our *Mountain Path*; still less shall we try to make you change your mind, though we are certain that you have misunderstood the 'answer' of Bhagavan to your problem — if not in His words but in their meaning. Who spoke the famous words: "I am the Way.....no man cometh unto the Father but Me?" Could it have been Jesus, the man of Nazareth — or was it not rather the Christ within Him, the Divine Spirit? And is it not the same Spirit, who made young Venkataraman, the Light of Arunachala, sage of Steady Wisdom after His Self-realisation through His 'Death Experience', deliver the 'Gospel' of this age? Is Bhagavan Ramana different from the same Spirit, the one Truth in all men?

Please understand: We are not trying to alter your decisions; We only wish to point out the possibility of your misunderstanding a great Word. You remark in your letter: "I have to admit that I would never read the Quarterly, without keeping in mind a sentence of my father ...etc.' It seems to me that this fact was bound to take you back to the faith of your childhood, which you actually have never left, and should not leave. Because the genuine life in the Spirit is always independent of creeds and churches. On the other hand it is well-known

that Sri Ramana Maharshi never encouraged any one to leave the community or religion into which one was born. To follow His teaching thus should mean, for a Christian to become a better Christian, for a Hindu a better Hindu and so on.

Well you have chosen your Way. We hope and pray that it will lead you unto that Peace that passeth understanding, into the Ocean of Divine Love where all soul-rivers finally lose themselves.

QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

I am reading "The Liberating Question" again and again. A very difficult question has been explained in a very simple way. It is Bhagavan's blessings which have flowed over your thoughts and directions. The very process of reading it is undergoing Self-enquiry and acquiring the skill of Self Realisation, which is an experience so automatic that one cannot explain it. You have fed the devotees of Bhagavan with a sumptuous feast, which will be well remembered. Kumari Sarada has clearly analysed the salient points of Bhagavan's method so that everyone can understand them.

Every human being at one time or other has experienced 'perfect peace of mind' as we call it. At that time he must be knowingly or unknowingly sensing the answer to the 'liberating question'. This is not only a spiritual experience but also a scientific truth. This is comparable to the 'Biofeed back' method. Researchers from famous laboratories all over the world have reported satisfactory results from patients who had found no relief from other forms of treatment. What Biofeedback does is to help people tune into their own body processes so that they can control or modify physical and mental functions that are generally automatic. When a patient enquires within where the problems lies, he learns the method of solving the problem unconsciously. Bhagavan's method of Self-enquiry solves all problems consciously.

— A.S. Natarajan, General Manager,
Gwalior Rayons, Nagda.

My very best thanks to you. With *The Mountain path* you have sent a little Great Booklet—"The Liberating Question". It is wonderful. It shows Sri Bhagavan Ramana's clear, short way to come to one's self. The *Vichara Path* is the sole path where the mind directly can and must die. All other ways are ways of the mind, the unique greatness of Bhagavan Ramana's method is in the possibility to combine the three ways Jnana, Bhakti and Karma, by paying full attention to the 'I'. So long as our attention clings to this 'I' we cannot know or attend to anything else. Grace is needed most.

— Jos Fr. Haagen, Koln, West Germany.

Thank you so very much for sending me the text of the two talks given by you and Sarada. It is amazing and encouraging to know that there appears to be such wide interest not only in hearing about Bhagavan but also in

learning details about how to try to carry out His teaching. It seems you both have a gift of being able to make this presentation pleasantly and understandably.

— Cynthia Gopalakrishnan, Seattle, U.S.A.

This is to thank you for your gift of the booklet "The Liberating Question". I found it highly thought-provoking, inspiring and elevating. I marvelled at the deep insight and understanding of Ramana's Teachings by Kumari Sarada at such a young age. May she progress higher and higher in her search till she reaches the "Highest"!

— Nergish Parekh, Bombay.

I am going to read "The Liberating Question" repeatedly and put it into practise forthwith. The two articles spontaneously drive one within and one cannot but plunge into the quest!

— Olaf Langsepp, Tartu, U.S.S.R.

I have greatly enjoyed your and Kumari Sarada's work. As always, it is you who throw light in a philosophical way, balancing her intuitive and practical approach: 'Wisdom and action', as the Buddhists say. I also take this opportunity to thank you for the cassette: "Ramana Geetam": it is hauntingly beautiful, a piece of art, the most masterly of the whole loveable lot!

— Swami Virajananda, Pura, Switzerland.

I bless Chi. Sarada for her studied article 'The Liberating Question'. To an extent the answer thereto is in Chi. Ganesan's article in the same supplement.

— G.L. Narasinga Rao, Hyderabad.

SPANISH BOOK ON BHAGAVAN'S TEACHING

Through the Grace of the Lord Guru Ramana the SUPREME TRUTH — MAHA YOGA has finally been published and distributed throughout Brazil. The same book is at present being published in Spain and translated into English. During this entire period great efforts and hours were devoted to the final corrections and preparations for the publishing of this book. Now that it has at last been published, it is with Universal Happiness that I send you a book. The teachings of Self Realisation of Bhagavan Sri Ramana will be known in Brazil, thus opening the path of Maha Yoga to all true aspirants of Truth. Copies can be had from:

Sri Maha Krishna Swami,
Bhagavan Sri Ramanashram,
Rua Tonelero 1276, Alto da Lapa,
SAO AULO — SP, Brazil CEP 05056,
America do Sul. (Tel: 262 2683)



BOOK REVIEWS

EKA SLOKI of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi: Commentary :
C. Sundarsanam. Pub.: Ramana Maharshi Centre for
Learning, 40/41, Second Cross, Bangalore 560 003.
Pp.20-Price: Re.1/-.

Acharya Sankara's *Eka Sloki* is well-known among the students of Vedanta. A great Ramana-bhakta, Sri C. Sundarsanam, has focussed attention lucidly on an important Sanskrit verse composed by Bhagavan Ramana as early as 1915. We have to appreciate the strenuous study that he has made not only in analysing the precious content of this glorious verse but in studiously going through the various interpretations put forth for this important sloka. However, we do not know how many would agree with the conclusions arrived at by Sri C. Sundarsanam in this paper submitted by him in a recent Seminar. Yet, this booklet will definitely be included as an interesting addition to the Ramana-literature.

In the 'Introduction' Sri. A.R. Natarajan states: 'The *Eka Sloki* has two distinct halves. In the first portion of the verse what the experiencing of the Self means is stated and in the second half, the way to have the experience is spelt out.' While the first portion does not pose any problem, the second portion, dealing with the *sadhana* of how to attain it, does. *Sri Ramana Gita* (1917), has a chapter entitled 'The Three Paths' — *Swam Chinвата* (Self-enquiry), *Majjatha* (merging) and *Pavana chalana rodha* (breath control).

The best one to interpret His *Eka Sloki* would be Bhagavan Himself. Fortunately, we have His Tamil rendering in 1928, of this *sloka*, the English translation of the relevant portion of which reads as follows: ".....Resort to the heart by diving deep within, through Self-enquiry or by subduing the mind along with the breath. You will thus become established in the heart." — v. 8 of the *Supplement to the Forty Verses*. The Telugu and Malayalam rendering of this verse by Bhagavan is also on the same lines. Thus, we can say that the paths are really two and not three.

One should always remember the primacy of Self-abidance for which Bhagavan has shown the 'direct way'.

— 'SEIN'

AN INQUIRY INTO TRUTH OR TATTVA VICARA: By
V. Subrahmanya Iyer. Edtd. by Dr. T.M.P. Mahdevan.
Pub.: the family of Subrahmanya Iyer, Subhashree,
36-A, Subramaniapuram Extension, SALEM 636 007.
Pp. xiv + 201-Price: Not mentioned.

'An inquiry into truth' or *Tattva Vicara* was first published in 1965 bearing the title *The Philosophy of*

Truth or *Tattva-gnana*. It consists of miscellaneous lectures, talks, discussions and epistles and class notes. The central teaching of Advaita is presented in different contexts, discussions and letters. Gaudapada's *Mandukya Karika* had great influence on Sri Iyer. When his first collection of essays and speeches of Sri V. Subrahmanya Iyer of Mysore was brought out, in a foreword Dr. Radhakrishnan wrote. "Reason unfettered by dogma reveals to us the nature of Reality", which is perhaps the most apt summing of Sri Iyer's philosophic attitude.

It was during his visit to Europe along with the Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar, that Sri Iyer had the opportunity of meeting great mathematicians like Eddington, scientists like Max Planck, Sir James Jeans and philosophers like Otto Jespersen, Henry Bergson and Bertrand Russell. After prolonged correspondence with such scientists and philosophers Sri. Iyer has presented the unique contribution of India to philosophic thought as expounded by Sankara and his preceptors preceptor Gaudapada in the *Karika* on the *Mandukya Upanishad*. Sankara's philosophy is much appreciated in the West because of its similarity to present-day modern scientific method of approach. Sri. Iyer removes many misconceptions of the scientific world as well those of the thinkers of his homeland to establish that Sankara has presented a systematic scientific investigation of totality of experience—namely the objective and subjective world.

Sri. Iyer's prime quest is Truth and truth alone and the search for it is through *Jignasa*. He is of the opinion that Religion is the same as Philosophy. It is in Religion alone that mystic insight, intuition and inspiration are relied upon. Whereas in philosophy 'Reason' rules everything and one relies on ratiocination. Western thinkers on Indian thought have not noticed this fact yet is the opinion of Sri. Iyer.

It is evident from the rich content of the book that Sri. Iyer's mature knowledge will serve as a basis and guide for philosophical studies for a long time to come.

— PROF. K.S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO.

SRI AUROBINDO HIS LIFE UNIQUE: By Rishabachand.
Pub.: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Pp.427-
Price: Not mentioned.

The book under review is the culmination of the author's reverence and love for his Master. The book was serially published in the 'Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education' and thus it has the sanction and seal of the Mother of the Ashram.

The book begins with a brief account of Sri Aurobindo's

biography, his parentage, his upbringing and education under the influence of the West.

Rishabachand has given us a detailed account of his Master's political life with documentary evidence. To Sri Aurobindo politics is the interference in personal liberty and such interference is justified when personal liberty affects society. In his opinion politics should not ignore the element of the Divine in the individual. The partition of Bengal in 1905 made Sri Aurobindo to jump into the fight for Indian Independence. Sri Aurobindo at this time of turmoil was in intimate contact with contemporary master minds such as Sister Nivedita and Rabindranath Tagore. The author has also discussed in this volume the publication of the 'Bandematarm' and its popularity and the importance of the Calcutta National Congress in 1906. The account of Aurobindo as an undertrial prisoner in Alipore jail, the vision of Sri Krishna and his great spiritual experiences, is enthralling to read.

In the last Section 'Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry' the author takes us to the innumerable tests and hardships Sri Aurobindo had to undergo in the early period, the arrival of the Mother and her momentous meeting with the Mahayogi and the launching of the monthly journal ARYA, all very interesting to read.

Many biographies have been written on Sri Aurobindo but this book is highly informative and useful for students of Aurobindonian philosophy and for students of Indian History and justifies the title, 'Sri Aurobindo his Life Unique'.

— PROF. K.S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO.

YOGA AND THE SUPREME BLISS Songs of Enlightenment
By Swami Rama Tirtha. by A.J. Alston. Pub.: A.Z. Alston,
31 Northumberland Place, London - Pp.205.

There never was a time in this *punyabhumi* of India when there was not a living witness to the Unknown god, and Swami Ram Tirth was one such who trod this earth, visiting foreign countries too, in the closing years of the last century. Known as Tirth Ram Goswami in his *purvashram*, he was born in a village in Gujranwala district of the Punjab in October 1873. Having to study in school and college under extreme conditions of poverty, he praises that condition as being blessed, for one of the entries in his diary reads: "Poverty constructs the ladder of tear-drops to the throne of God". He blossomed into a poet, philosopher, scholar and mathematician. He was Professor of Mathematics in Forman Christian College, Lahore and later Reader, at the Oriental College. But all the time his soul was astir with ecstatic devotion; he was like Sri Chaitanya a devotee of Krishna. As Swami Narayana reports:

"The mere mention of the name of Krishna sent him into a trance; if he heard some one playing on a flute, he was lost in the illusion of the player being his Krishna"

At the turn of the century he gave up all his secular posts and retired to the Himalayan regions. At the suggestion of the Raja of Tehri, he set off to Yokohama to represent Hinduism at a World Congress of Religions. From there he proceeded to America where for two years he spread the gospel of Vedanta even as Vivekananda had done a decade earlier. His lectures there were later published under the title: "In Woods of God-realisation". No sketch of his life, brief or long, can give out the full flavour of his spiritual realisation; only his poems, written in English, Hindi, Urdu and Persian which have been so ably rendered by one of his English devotees, Alston, breathe the true spirit of his mysticism which in essence is the upanishadic wisdom of the ancients in modern terms. In each one of the verses, one can discern Swami Ram Tirth's scholarly erudition in the triple stream of Hindu, Islamic and Western cultures, so excellently blended and so lightly worn.

"By what track can you allure one who is enlightened? Trackless indeed is He. No net of desire can catch Him. No craving can entangle Him. He is a Seer of limitless range,"

says a verse in the *Dhammapada*.

Indeed, Swami Rama Tirtha has gone beyond desires and cravings but he has been caught in this net of verses, poured out in full enthusiasm, exaltation and inspiration which to erring mortals like us serve as a beaconlight; and the public is beholden to the translator for making the poem available to a wider circle of readers.

— ARGUS.

THE CUP OF LOVE (Fifty-Four Poems of SWAMINARAYAN SAINT-POETS). Versions by Harindra Dave. Ed. by M.V. Kamath with an Introduction. Pub.: BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY 400 007, Pp.111 - Price: Rs.25/-.

Sri Swaminarayan (1781-1830) was born and brought up in Capaiya near Ayodhya. he was least interested in worldly life and led a God-intoxicated life. He wandered from place to place till he ultimately settled in Gujarat where he was given *Vaisnavi diksha* by his Guru Ramananda.

Sri Swaminarayan loved music as he felt it 'helped to invoke God.' His *Paramahamsas* sang his praises as they considered him as the living God. Sri M.V. Kamath who has written an excellent introduction 'Lyrics and Metaphysical Poems of East and West' says: "It may be hard for a generation brought upon materialism to understand or appreciate the philosophy of Shree Swaminarayan. He was in the world but not of it. A product of his times, he was still the leader and the arbiter. He did not reject life but gloried in it. But in glorying in life he was first to point out its impermanence. The aim of life was to establish harmony with the ultimate Reality but that aim could only be fulfilled in this life. That was Shree Swaminarayan's message. And that is the message in his disciples' lyrics."

The Gujarati lyrics have been translated into English by H. Dave. It is not an easy job but it has been done well. The get-up and printing are very good.

— Dr. K. SUBRAHMANYAN.

SIDDHANTA SAIVAM IN ESSENCE AND MANIFESTATION:

By Ilangai Ratna Ammaiyar Navaratnam. Pub. Annamalai University, Annamalai Nagar, Tamil Nadu, India. Pp. 149, Price: not mentioned.

The book under review consists of the lectures delivered by Srimati Ratna Ammaiyar Navaratnam, at the Universities of Benares and Allahabad in 1976 under the Tiruppanandal Adhinam Endowment. The author emphasises the need to study the *Pannirurimurai* consisting of the inspired Songs of Tirujnanasambandar and other Saiva Saints and, the biographies of Saiva Saints — popularly known as the — *Peria Puranam*. She shows how the experiences of these Saints recorded in their songs provide the basis for the doctrinal works known as *Meykanda Sastras*. Tirumular's *Tirumandiran* and Meykandar's *Sivajnana-bodham* (are presented in relation to modern thought. The matter is arranged under twelve chapters with headings which are highly suggestive of their rich content.)

The author writes with conviction about the value of the devotional and doctrinal works of Saiva Siddhanta. She has explained the significance of the Sacred ashes and the *Pancakshara* with appropriate quotations. The basic Concepts of Saiva Siddhanta are also explained with the profound conviction that Saiva Siddhanta is a living faith and that it is a heritage to be cherished by all those interested in spiritual life.

It is to be hoped that there will be need soon for a second edition affording opportunity to correct the numerous printing mistakes which mar the present one.

Dr. V.A. DEVAENAPATHY,

THE ESSENCE OF YOGAVASISTHA: Compiled by Jnananda Bharati and translated by Samvid. Pub. Samata Books, 573, Mount Road, Madras-6. Pp. 344, Price: Rs. 40/.

Here is a well got-up well-written book, at once illuminating and exhilarating. Unusually, it is free from eulogies both of the original work and of the translator. All that we gather from the work is that the translator's pen-name is SAMVID, that among his *gurus* are Varadarya, proficient in *rahasyatraya* or the three secrets of Visistadvaita-Vedanta, and Lalitananda, perfect in esoteric wisdom. Possibly, he is a *sannyasin*, judging by the way he alludes to Lord Narayana at the close of his invocation at the beginning of the work. The dedicatory verses reveal that this great task was completed in a short time by the grace of Radha and Krishna. We wish the publisher's note were a little more explanatory than it is now.

To students of Vedanta the *Yogavasistha* is indeed well known as a masterly classic about *Advaita* experience which man might achieve in this very life and become a

jivanmukta (i.e. one liberated even when alive in body). While its poetry is of the purest order, its anecdotal and allegorical way of presenting Wisdom Absolute is striking and unique. Its vast magnitude of 28,000 *slokas* is almost a deterrent to genuine seekers of spiritual gnosis today. Distilling the essence of wisdom as found in the most profound doctrines of the Upanishads, schools of Buddhism, Sankaracarya's commentaries and Kashmir Saiva esoteric texts, this vast body of the original work seems to have arisen in Kashmir by about 900 A.D. The great poet Abhinanda of Kashmir summarised it under the name *Yoga-Vasisthasara* or *Laghu-Yogavasistha* at the beginning of the 11th century in about 6000 verses. Even that is beyond the reach of common readers. The latest and most quintessential abridgement is the one made by Sri Swami Jnanananda Bharati and published by the Sringeri Jagadguru Samsthanam. It contains only 1698 *slokas*, and is divided into thirty two sections. The present work under review contains the text of this abridged text in the Devanagari script, accompanied by the English translation of the architect of all our experience in the state of waking as much as of dream. One wrongly identifies himself with the mind and the senses and locks himself up in the self-created cage of the ego delimited by the body. But the truth is that there is only One Absolute, infinitely conscious behind all this passing show, not only of the waking and dream worlds, but also of the cyclic course of births and deaths. Indeed, to the Seer who is awakened, there is no such parade of characters in action; he is sublimely secure, steady and tranquil in his cosmic wisdom. The One alone is real; the many are mere appearances. He is the liberated soul who has transcended his mind and even when alive in body, he can remain unaffected by the infinite illusions thrown up by the mind. He can discriminate between what is real and what is unreal; and discharge his duties with perfection without fear or passion. We are told that this was the teaching given to Rama by his *guru* Vasistha when he was but sixteen years old, but had developed, like the later Gautama Buddha, an aversion to all the enticements of worldly life.

The great saint-philosopher Vidyananda (14th century) in his *Jivanmukti-viveka* has drawn copiously excerpts from the *Yoga-Vasistha* to substantiate his observations, thus testifying to its authority.

The present translation is admirably close to the original and also crystal clear. What is more important, it preserves the full spirit of the original without sacrificing even the letter. It is written in a spirit of devoted conviction and can carry conviction to the reader bent on the eternal quest.

The publisher deserves credit for this gem of a publication and it is hoped that he will release more works of this kind, authored by Sri SAMVID.

— Dr. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY

ashram Bulletin

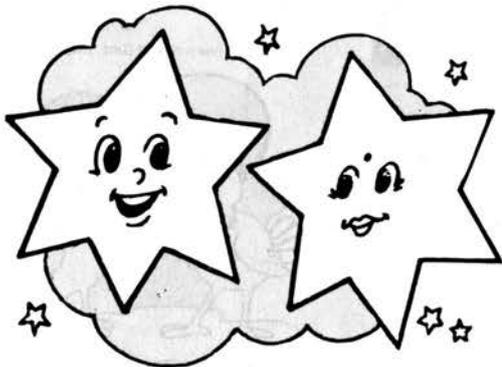


'RAMANA BHOOMI' — OVERHEARD

Yesterday night I lay awake and after awhile, thought I heard a tiny tinkling voice. Looked around and saw no one speaking, looked out of the window and there two stars in the sky were holding conversation.

"It's a pity", said one star to the other, "a great pity you come late to this part of the sky."

"Why?" wondered the 'Late' star.



"You missed something special, something very special," replied its friend.



— Portrait of Sri Bhagavan being brought into the shrine.

"Two weeks back one early morning, it was time for us to leave the sky. But my great good fortune made me disobey the rules, I overstayed and beheld a glorious sight. It was dark still and not time for the sun to appear yet I thought **I saw a Sun, a Sun so tremendously brilliant, but I could see Him and He was lovely and He was on the earth** and He was moving slowly. I could not take my

eyes off Him, so beautiful was He. Somehow I noticed that **there were people all around Him, carrying Him, and He was seated within a wooden frame. They carried Him into a unique stone building and there placed Him on the altar.** And all the while He smiled tenderly and all the while they



Bhagavan at the sanctum sanctorum

"Come, come. I will show you before we leave," assured the star. "He is still there in that shrine, in that land which they call **Ramana Bhoomi** and He will always be there for us to nightly see His comely form, His tender smile and to lose ourselves in the brilliance of His eyes."

So saying the stars moved on to **Ramana Bhoomi** and I smiled at the memory of the 5th December.

Dawn pinked the sky and two little sparrows hopped on to my window. They chirped a happy morning song and there seemed more joy than usual in their shrill voices. Listening closely I discerned some words,

"Ramana Ramana Ramana" started the song



Ramana-bhaktas

Ramana-prayer by Ramana Bela Kendra



chanted a name so sweet and melodious, 'Ramana, Ramana', yes, 'Ramana, Ramana' was their chant."

Saying this the star fell silent as if lost in the memory of that glorious hour. And the other star with tears in her voice replied, "It is moving even to hear of that hour and how I long to see this beautiful Sun of Suns."

(no wonder the words had sounded so sweetly familiar)

Ramana, Ramana, Ramana was the chorus, the main and the end of the song.

"Little birdie", I asked one of them, "when and where did you learn this sweet song?"



Architect Srinivasan being honoured by Sri Govind Narain, Governor of Karnataka



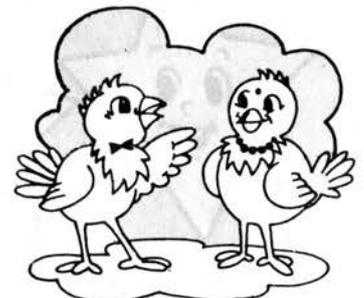
Architect Suri

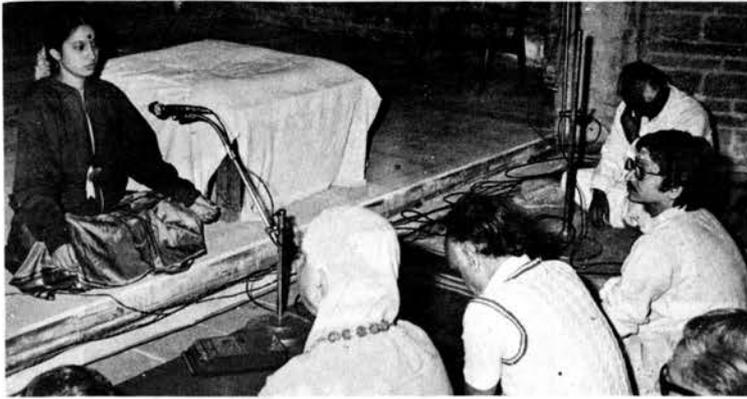


Release of 'Sat Darshana' Sri T.N. Venkataraman receiving the first copy from the Governor



Sri Govind Narain and Smt. Chandra Narain





Kumari Sarada at the Ramana-workshop



Subbu Arumugam – 'Villupattu'



Smt. Shyamala Bhawe



Ramana Exhibition



Sadhu Ram Swami showing keen interest in 'Ramana Music' section. Swami Dayananda looks on.



A hearty presentation to Kumari Meenakshi by A.R. Natarajan

"Have you been staying in Bangalore and don't know even this," chided the bird.

"Didn't you attend the grand Ramana Festival here two weeks back? We were there with our friends at **Ramana Bhoomi** and there we heard this (the sweet name of Ramana) echoing and re-echoing, chiming in so many voices, sometimes in the speech of men and sometimes in melodious music; and sometimes in



Kumari Ambica – 'Ramana Dance'

their **pooja** chant. Naturally, we were thrilled to discover this most beautiful song for ourselves. Now, don't disturb us, and let us enjoy this song."

Sadhu Ram Swami, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Adidevananda



Sri Shrikantan
"Ramana, Ramana, Ramana"

began the sparrow again in 'full-throated ecstasy' indeed.

Getting ready I walked down the road with happy steps towards **Ramana Bhoomi** and heard the tar beneath my feet boasting to the pavement stones. "Do you know that I am now immortal," stated the road with beaming pride.

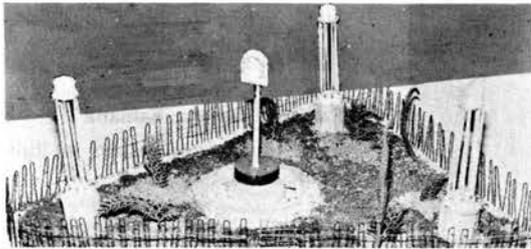
"How immortal?" queried the pavement stone.

"I have been given a name which is immortal."

"What name is that?"



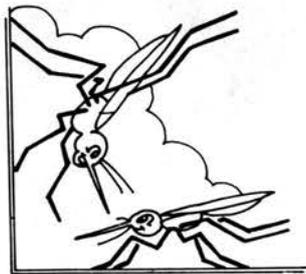
Sri Ramana Maharshi Road in Bangalore



Ramana Circle



Ramana Temple at the Ramana Bhoomi



Aarti to Sri Bhagavan

"Do you not know that I have been renamed and an now called 'Ramana Maharshi Road'. And I lead to Ramana Bhoomi. Have you ever felt joy in the very footsteps of people. I felt it for a week, why a week — for nine glorious days. And following their footsteps and hearing their gay talk I could sense the glory of the Lord at Ramana Bhoomi and I knew that there was great festivity (of course, I could not lift my head to see but still I was happy). Being used to indifferent footsteps, feet which go by unconscious of the ground beneath them, it was a new, special experience to feel footsteps so gay they hardly fell on the ground and yet how they praised the ground, as the ground which led to their Master's shrine..."

I could not wait to hear more as it was almost time for the morning **pooja** and hurried towards the shrine. But there was to be one more halt

On the door of the shrine sat a group of mosquitos holding conference. Said an elderly mosquito, "We are glad to note that the epidemic in our midst has now. It was so pervasive — one and all had an attack of it and that for nine days — except a few of us who were constantly alert, we thought all the rest would die of starvation. What happened to you?" he concluded addressing the convalescing mosquitos. "How could we think of biting? How could we think of humming our tune when the children enacted a most beautiful life? And the other programmes too claimed our attention so wholly that we forgot all about work and even food. That was the epidemic."

"Well, let's get back to work," said the mosquito elder.

And with the hum of mosquitos we started the chant of the Ramana Ashtotra pooja, in the serene Ramana Bhoomi and Bhagavan smiled still His tender smile and the Light beamed from those glorious eyes.

Picturesque Narration by Kumari SARADA
(Editor: 'RAMANA')

103rd Jayanthi Celebrations at Sri Ramanasramam

Though the feet of Bhagavan are everywhere and no one can gather except at His feet, there is always a special joy in being at His shrine of grace on Jayanthi days. There is an aura on that day at Sri Ramanasramam which participants know to their delight. The 103rd Jayanthi of Bhagavan drew many a devotee from different corners of India and abroad. The Eluru Satsang has taken roots so quickly that they printed in record time a Telugu commentary of Bhagavan's *Ulladu Narpadu* (Forty verses on reality). The first copy was released by the President Sri T.N. Venkataraman, by giving it



to Smt. Sulochana Natarajan at whose instance the Eluru Satsang and many other satsanghs have been started. Shri N. Balarama Reddy who as usual was lost in vichara was persuaded out of it to accept a copy as the blessings of old devotees is invaluable. This was followed by expressions of gratitude by different devotees, to Shri Bhagavan for bringing them into His 'net of grace.' Sri T.S. Nagarajan making his maiden speech at the shrine made one wonder if it was really so. Sri Sadhu Om's remarks though brief were welcome. Sri Somayajulu speaking in Telugu took everyone to a

different world where Sri Bhagavan was physically present. How indelibly those wondrous eyes would be imprinted on the fortunate who had Bhagavan's physical proximity. Evelyn's total dedication to Bhagavan was evident when she conveyed the best wishes of the American devotees of Bhagavan to their Indian brothers. The gentle presence of Paul of Arunachala Ashrama and Savitri Cuttaree of Mauritius showed how powerful the silent influence of Bhagavan is.

Ramana-bhaktas



Sri Ramaneswara Maha Lingam





V. Ganesan, J.V. Somayajulu, T.S. Nagarajan, Sadhu Om, Paul, A.R. Natarajan, Savitri Cuttaree and Evelyn

It was a sheer delight to hear the little children from Kalai nambi's school chant Bhagavan's songs during the cultural programme and so was the Raman music of the students of Smt. Kalyani and Smt. Sankari. The "Ramananjali" group excelled itself in the multilingual programme, the *Ramana Geethamala*. They always seem to find special inspiration when singing at Sri Ramanasramam. Sri Kalai Nambi was



A Title being conferred on Smt. Sulochana Natarajan by the Ashram President. Sri. D. Thandavarayan, Ashram Trustee brims with joy



N. Balarama Reddy, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Ashram President and our Managing Editor



Tiruvannamalai Ramana Music group



'Ramananjali' on 103rd Jayanti night

so moved by the services of the group in the spreading of Bhagavan's name to different homes that he on behalf of citizens of Tiruvannamalai bestowed a special title 'Ezh Ishai Selvam' on Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, the leader of the group. Sri Tandavarayan, a Trustee of the Ashram also took a prominent part in the felicitations.

Prasadam both in the morning and evening, which thousands of devotes enjoyed, and the poor feeding marked the steady growth of the Ramana family.



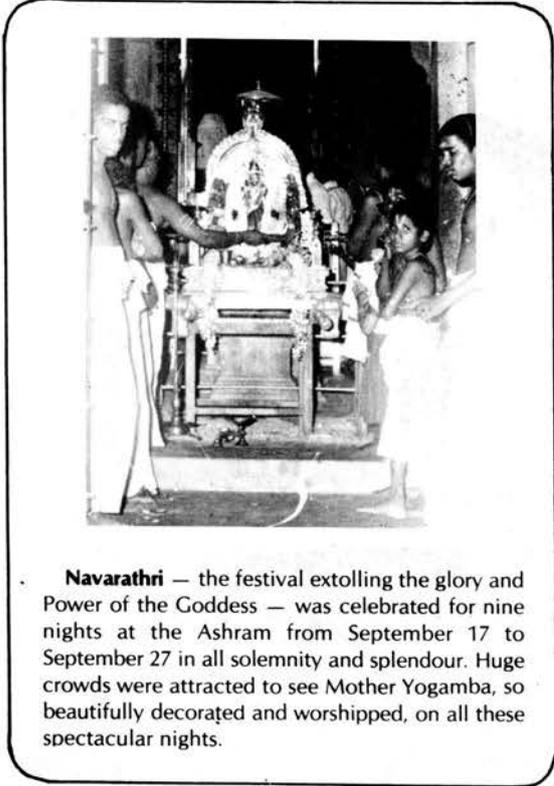
Tiruvannamalai 'Ramana Bala Kendra'

It gives us great pleasure to report in this column visits of **bhaktas** in larger groups, for instance from **Ramana Kendras** or from other spiritual institutions like Chinmaya Mission.

Smt. and Sri B. Anantaswami, Vice Chairman of Ramana Kendra, Madras, brought on October 2, 1982, nearly fifty sincere devotees from Madras. They had the privilege of having Sri Kunju Swami with them, who explained to them the importance of Sri Bhagavan's **avathara** and His

** * * * **
Ramana-bhaktas of Madras Ramana Kendra





Navarathri — the festival extolling the glory and Power of the Goddess — was celebrated for nine nights at the Ashram from September 17 to September 27 in all solemnity and splendour. Huge crowds were attracted to see Mother Yogamba, so beautifully decorated and worshipped, on all these spectacular nights.

unique teachings. The party visited the places up and around the Hill, hallowed by the sacred Presence of Sri Bhagavan.

* * * * *

Br. Brahma Chaitanya of the Chinmaya Mission, Kolar, brought more than fifty earnest seekers to the Ashram for a spiritual retreat. Br. Brahma Chaitanya is well-versed in Sri Bhagavan's **Upadesa Saram** and **Sat Darshana**, which he had studied under Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswathi.

* * * * *

Sri Jyothi Swami of Jaffna, Sri Lanka, was with Sri Bhagavan in his early days and is now spreading Sri

Jyothi Swami is seated in the middle



Bhagavan's message in Sri Lanka. When the "**Ramananjali**" group of dedicated singers visited Colombo, Sri Jyothi Swami received them at the airport (along with Smt. & Sri Navaratnam) and was with them throughout their stay, extending all assistance and cooperation in his own simple and humble way. Sri Jyothi Swami arrived at the Ashram along with a group of dedicated devotees from Sri Lanka. It would give us great pleasure if Sri Jyothi Swami visits the Ashram more frequently!

* * * * *

Sri K. Sivaraj of Ahmedabad Ramana Kendra spent four days at the Ashram, along with his wife and son. He has taken over the Presidentship of the Ramana Kendra, with a view to pay more attention towards the construction of a Temple for Sri Bhagavan (and also a Meditation hall, Research Library) in Ahmedabad, where he has already succeeded in obtaining a sizeable land from the Government for the Kendra.



Smt. and Sri. H.C. Khanna of Kanpur spent 2½ months at the Ashram, from the middle of September, which is their longest stay at the Abode of Sri Bhagavan. This elderly couple have always been a source of inspiration for all the devotees, old and new, residing or visiting the Ashram.

Smt. Khanna narrated the following to our **Managing Editor**:

"Many know that my sons when they were kids on day caught hold of Sri Bhagavan's Holy Feet when He was coming down from the hill; but, few know that I was also there and when I tried to touch His Feet, He walked away. This affected me and I started crying continuously. The fact was that Bhagavan could not stand for even a few minutes and I came to know of that only later. Bhagavan reached the Old Hall and he came to know that I was crying. He immediately knew my plight, is He not the Lord; He was graciously inclined, and called me inside. He sat up for my sake protruding His feet and directed me to touch His Holy Feet. The very affectionate gesture of Sri Bhagavan gave me the Bliss Supreme that I did not even touch His Holy Feet. I was totally happy and satisfied. He looked at me with immense compassion and grace. I was filled with supreme bliss. Though my husband and others in the Hall felt my not touching His Holy Feet as a great loss, yet in my inner most core I felt: "Have I not touched His Holy Feet which are really His Heart? Is it not

because of that He has poured His Grace on me which now fills my heart with tremendous joy!" Whenever I enter the Old Hall I feel the same Bliss that Bhagavan poured on me on that day!"



Marisa Denis

This is how a recent visitor from France felt about her first visit to the Ashram.

"It is the first time I am coming to India and I went directly to Sri Ramanasramam. It has been a big experience for me even for a very short time. After reading **Talks with Sri Maharshi** I wanted to know the place where He lived and gave His instruction. I have been very impressed by the atmosphere of spirituality which resounds everywhere here: the different walls, but also in the people who live at the Ashram and spend their life serving others. Ramana still lives here and you can feel that."

— Marisa Denis, France

Devotees from Finland, showing keen interest in Bhagavan's method of Self-Enquiry were here for more than 20 days in September, 1982. Their stay at the Ashram meant so much for them that they would like to share the following:

"Three wonderful weeks at the feet of Sri Bhagavan!

During many years of reading His teachings in Finland, here the silence has given us peace and a feeling of His Holy Presence.

The Finland Ramana-devotees



Holy **Deepam**-on top of Arunachala is a symbolic reminder to all seekers that they should 'awake' to the Light of Self within. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims flooded to Arunachala to have a glimpse of this Holy Beacon. On November 30, evening, at the Ashram, devotees gathered around the portrait of Sri Bhagavan which was solemnly kept facing Arunachala Hill. At exactly 6 p.m., the **Deepam** on top of Arunachala was lit, so too at the Ashram in a small cauldron. Devotees chanted Bhagavan's works, particularly the '**Five Hymns to Arunachala**', so dear to the heart of Sri Bhagavan. Many went round the hill in the night gazing at the blazing light on the Sacred mountain top.

"Almost every day we got some new friends.

"Oh Arunachala, majestic Silence! You have spellbound us.

"Visiting many times Skandashram has been an experience no words can describe!"

With gratitude
— FINLANDIA GROUP, Helsinki
Birgit Mahkonen, Kyllikki Halttu,
Anna-Liesa Arakangar, Marion Tuarna.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha of Narayanasrama Tapovanam, Trichur gave five discourses on Kathopanished in English, from October 26.

Shri. K. Senthippan of Madras gave four talks in Tamil in October on Periya Puranam in which he gave a fine exposition of the lives of the Saivaite Saints, Thirunavukarasu, Sundaramurthy Nayanar, Appar and Jnana Sambandar..

Shri. K.K. Nambiar Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras and Shri. D. Sankaranarayanan, Consultant, Hindustan Levers, Mangalore were invited to give talks at the Kendra during their visit to Delhi in September/October.

There was a grand bhajan by ladies on Abhirami Andadi on September 26. On October 27, the Delhi Tiruppugazh Anbargal celebrated Vijaya Dasami with a full-scale Tiruppugazh Bhajan.

Karthika Deepam festival was celebrated on November 30. The entire Kendra was gaily lit with lamps and candles. Devotees went round the shrine singing Arunachala Siva in chorus. Prasadam was distributed at the close of the function.

Sri Jyoti Swami of Sri Lanka, visited the Kendra in October/November.

RAMANA SAT-SANGH AT TORONTO

Sri Sekhar Raman from Toronto reports; "You will be happy to know about the **Ramana Sat-Sangh** of Toronto. We have been meeting once every month for the past two years. Bhagavan's Grace has brought two of our members, *Mike* and *Richard*, to the Ashram; they are now staying there.

We would be happy to meet devotees passing through Toronto. Please include my Telephone number in the next issue of '**The Mountain Path**': SEK HAR (416) 275-7274

RAMANA KENDRA AHMEDABAD

At the General Body Meeting of Ramana Kendra, Ahmedabad, held on 26-9-1982, Ms. K. Sivaraj, K.M. Parikh and N.S. Sundaram were elected as President, Vice President and Secretary, respectively.

* * * * *

Discourses were held for 3 days, August 26 to 29, on Bhagavan Ramana's teachings. H.H. Jagadguru Swarupanand Saraswati, Sankaracharya of Dwarka Pith and Jyothi Math, spoke brilliantly of Bhagavan.

* * * * *

BHAGAVAN GIVES SIGHT

A factory worker in panruti was totally blinded when he touched by mistake a high voltage current. His Manager, **Sri A.K. Natarajan**, immediately gave him a picture of Sri Bhagavan to hold in his hand and asked him to look intensely at the picture. In less than five minutes, his vision came back gradually.

When they came to offer their thanks at the Shrine of Grace of Bhagavan, tears of gratitude were seen to be running down the cheeks of the worker and Sri Natarajan!

Two days' discourses were also held in Hindi on Bhagavan Ramana's teachings on Nov. 7 and 8, the speaker being H.H. Swami Vyomananda of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Rajkot. Her Excellency Smt. Sharada Mukherjee, Governor of Gujarat and Justice Sri B.K. Mehta of Gujarat High Court presided, respectively.

NIPPON RAMANA KENDRA

We have pleasure in receiving one more member from Japan. Though he could spend only less than a week at the Ashram, **Sri Seishiro Yamada**, was happy he could participate in the 103rd **Jayanti** of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Sozo Hashimoto and Sri Takao Yamada, whom he met before coming to the Ashram have sent warm felicitations to all the Ramana-bhaktas, all over the world. Our **Managing Editor** has received from **Yoko Suda**, one of the members of the Kendra who visited the Ashram last year, greetings of good wishes and "I had a good time and experience at Sri Ramanasramam" message!



'Nippon Ramana Kendra': As reported on p. 289 of our October '82 issue, the members of **Nippon Ramana Kendra**, led by Sri **Sozo Hashimoto** (centre — standing to the right of our **Managing Editor**) visited the Ashram in August, 1982 and spent three eventful days. We are happy to know that this Kendra is inspiring more and more people to take to Sri Bhagavan's Path.



Kamal, Wg. Cdr. K.L. Grover, Smt. Pramila Grover, Anuradha

Wg. Cdr. K.L. Grover and his family are deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan and visit the Ashram almost every year. During their stay they participate in all the Ashram routines like the puja, meditation etc., while Sri Grover is very keen in going round Arunachala every day! When we requested him to give in writing about his visit, Sri Grover has given the following, from which we can infer the state of his mind during his stay at the Ashram!

"This world is nothing but the product of our mind. Only Self is real. While living in the world, play the roll assigned to you as an actor on the stage, but do not be deluded that you are that character. let the thoughts subside and the Awareness thus allowed to shine constantly. Open your heart and let the happiness flow out unobstructed from the ocean of Bliss which is within you."

* * * * *

A sincere seeker, who prefers to be 'nameless' and who hails from Australia, was requested to share his views with our readers.

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

MY BELOVED LORD

By Ingrid Guha

My Beloved Lord,
With folded hands I come to There,
Praying for Thy Grace:
That Thou wilt draw with gentle stroke
The last veil from my soul,
And freeing me, so that I see
The beauty of Thy light,
Which shines in all I know to be
As Thy eternal Truth.

How do I wish the day to come,
When Thou wilt be to me the sole reality,
Embracing all the world.
Thou art my God, for whom I yearn,
Wherever I go, search for Thee:
And Thou revealst Thyself to me
In every flower which I see,
In every sunray's golden glee,
The bird's song and the mighty tree,
When in the lonely forest Thou alone wilt
be
And fragrance, peace and silence flow from
Thee.

Oh, may the glaring sunbreak through
Dispersing clouds and fog!
Oh, mayst Thou come, enfolding me
In light and love, my Lord,
That I, now rendered pure in heart,
May give myself to Thee!

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

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

"Lastly, a small thank-you to every one in the Ashram who are always prepared to help you. When you are in need."



Ramana Prasad (extreme right) in the shoulders of K. Venkataraman

Sri K. Venkataraman, the grandson of Echchammal, celebrated the first birth anniversary of his grandson, **Ramana Prasad**, at the Ashram. Ramana Prasad was born on Bhagavan's Jayanti night, last year. Sri S. Krishnaswamy, Secretary of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore, also **Ramana Prasad's** grandfather, was very happy that the celebrations could be held at the Ashram in the immediate presence of Sri Bhagavan's shrine of Grace.

**"MAHARISHI RAMANA RESEARCH CENTRE"
at NELLORE**

Sri B.S. Ranganadham, Managing Trustee of **Maharishi Ramana Research Centre**, Nellore, has sent the following report:

"On 31-12-1982, Sri Bhagavan's **Jayanti** day, our Ramana Sangh was registered as **Maharishi Ramana Research Centre** — (Trust) — Nellore.

The office-bearers are:

Donor:

D. Venkat Rao, M.A., M.Sc.

Patrons:

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C.P. Rao, M.Sc. (Secretary)
V. Sada Ramamurthy (Jt. Secretary)

Treasurer:

B.S. Ranganadham

We hope soon to construct a structure (Hall with sanctum) suitable for the purpose of spreading Sri Bhagavan's teachings."

THE EXEMPLAR

By N.N. Rajan

Formerly Vedic recitation was being done by Vedic scholars at 5 a.m. in the ambrosial hour of dawn in the presence of Bhagavan in the Old Hall. Bhagavan used to sit erect motionless in *padmasana* pose like a statue during this period.

He was an exemplary teacher and His attentive posture should only be taken as a means of inculcating discipline in the devotees who came to Him.

OBITUARY

ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

Acharya Vinoba Bhave shed the body on Dipavali day (November 15, 1982) by the traditional method of *prayopavesa* (abstaining from food and drink awaiting death).

A great scholar, a master of sixteen languages and an authentic modern exponent of St. Jnaneswar's Jnana-Karma *samuchaya* (package), Vinobaji taught spiritual Wisdom by the example of his life and death and through many books like *The Talks on the Gita*, *Swaraj Sastra*, *Sthitarprajna Darsana*, *Gurubodha*, *Essence of the Koran*, *Christian Teachings and Samya Sutras*.



During his *padayatra* in Tamil Nadu in the fifties, he walked thirty miles out of his way to spend a day at Tiruchuzhi where he held a prayer meeting and blessed and thanked the little town for its gift of Bhagavan Ramana to the world.

He could command sleep at will and used to say "When we sleep, we cease to think. And so, when we cease to think, we sleep". For him death came as naturally as sleep. "When we die, we cease to eat and drink. When we cease to eat and drink, we die".

His last and indeed his sole possession was the body which he surrendered when it had served its purpose!

SRI RAJA IYER

From the 1930s visiting-devotees cannot but remember a slender figure so enthusiastically serving Ramana-bhaktas at the Ashram in various capacities, most important of them all being Postmaster, kitchen-assistant, guiding visitors, particularly foreigners. He was Raja Subramania Iyer, fondly addressed as 'Raja Iyer'. Writer-visitors to the Ashram never fail to mention a few sentences of praise of him in their travelogues.

Raja Iyer's duty at the Ashram began very early in the morning by his preparing *iddlis*, for Bhagavan and the resident bhaktas. This *kainkarya* (labour of love) he did with meticulous care and love till he became physically infirm, a few years back. His narration of how Bhagavan helped him on the first day when he found making *iddli* impossible. When he reported to Bhagavan that the *iddlis* did not come off properly, Bhagavan advised him: "Offer the first *iddlis* to the fire".



Ever since making *iddlis* was no problem for him. Not only that his *iddlis* became so famous that he got the nick-name: 'Iddli Master'. In 1938, when Sri Ramanasramam Post Office was declared open, Sri Raja Iyer used to proudly proclaim, "It was Bhagavan who affixed the postal cancellation seal on the letters received on the first day!"

Raja Iyer was deeply interested in *bhajans* and dances connected with *divyanama sankirtan*. Old devotees of the Ashram recollect with joy the devotional dances he had performed on important religious functions at the Ashram. Raja Iyer was loved by all.

He passed away peacefully in his room on July 24, '82 at the ripe old age. He lived a simple life of dedication and service to Sri Bhagavan and to His devotees. His absence will be felt by many for a long time to come!

SMT. MEENAKSHI AMMAL

Smt. Meenakshi Ammal, wife of Sri Muruganar, was living in the Ashram in the early days and Sri Bhagavan was fond of her. In fact, Sri Bhagavan used to go round Arunachala Hill at her instance, along with her and other devotees. Also, Bhagavan had assured her when she had to live alone away from Muruganar for the rest of her life that she would not have difficulty with regard to her food and clothing. Till her last day, this assurance of Sri Bhagavan was kept up fully. She passed away after a prolonged illness in Madras on October 8, 1982.

In her, we have lost a devotee of simplicity and innocence and who enjoyed the tender affection of Sri Bhagavan.

SRI NATESAN

One of the greatest devotees of Sri Bhagavan is, no doubt, Sri Natesan¹, the barber who served Bhagavan continuously without any break for 25 years. Visiting-devotees of Sri Bhagavan remember him with affection and used to have a shave by him since his hands had the rare opportunity of shaving Sri Bhagavan's head. He was fully conscious till the end and was chanting 'Arunachala Siva' and 'Ramana', and passed away most peacefully.



We pray that Natesan be absorbed at the Holy Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

¹Introduced to our readers on p. 166 of July, '81



Music: Shyamala G. Bhavs & Mrs. Sulochana Natarajan
Sung by: Sulochana Natarajan & other Ramana devotees



रमण जीत
STEREO



EDITED BY
SULOCHANA NATARAJAN
& OTHER RAMANA DEVOTEES



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SING OF THE SAGE OF ARUNACHALA !!

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Telugu	569 RAMANANJALI IN CANADA
552 RAMANA GEETHALU	611 RAMANANJALI IN MAURITIUS

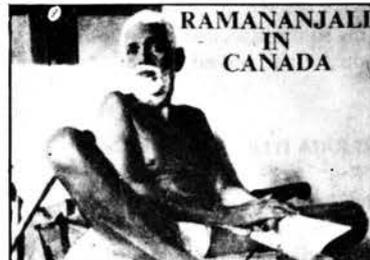


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RAMANA VANI



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