



The Mountain Path

Editorial

Far Yet Near

by A. R. Natarajan

The Ultimate as the Truth

by Paul Brunton

The Laughing Ramana

by Ra. Ganapati

What's Wrong With The World?

by Douglas E. Harding

Darling Ramana

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by Lucy Cornelissen

Garland of Guru's Sayings

by Professor K. Swaminathan

VOL. 20 No. II

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I am a fool who
prays only when over-
whelmed (by misery),
yet disappoint me not,
Oh Arunachala!

*The Marital
Garland of Letters,
Verse. 78*

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

— *The Marital Garland of Letters,*
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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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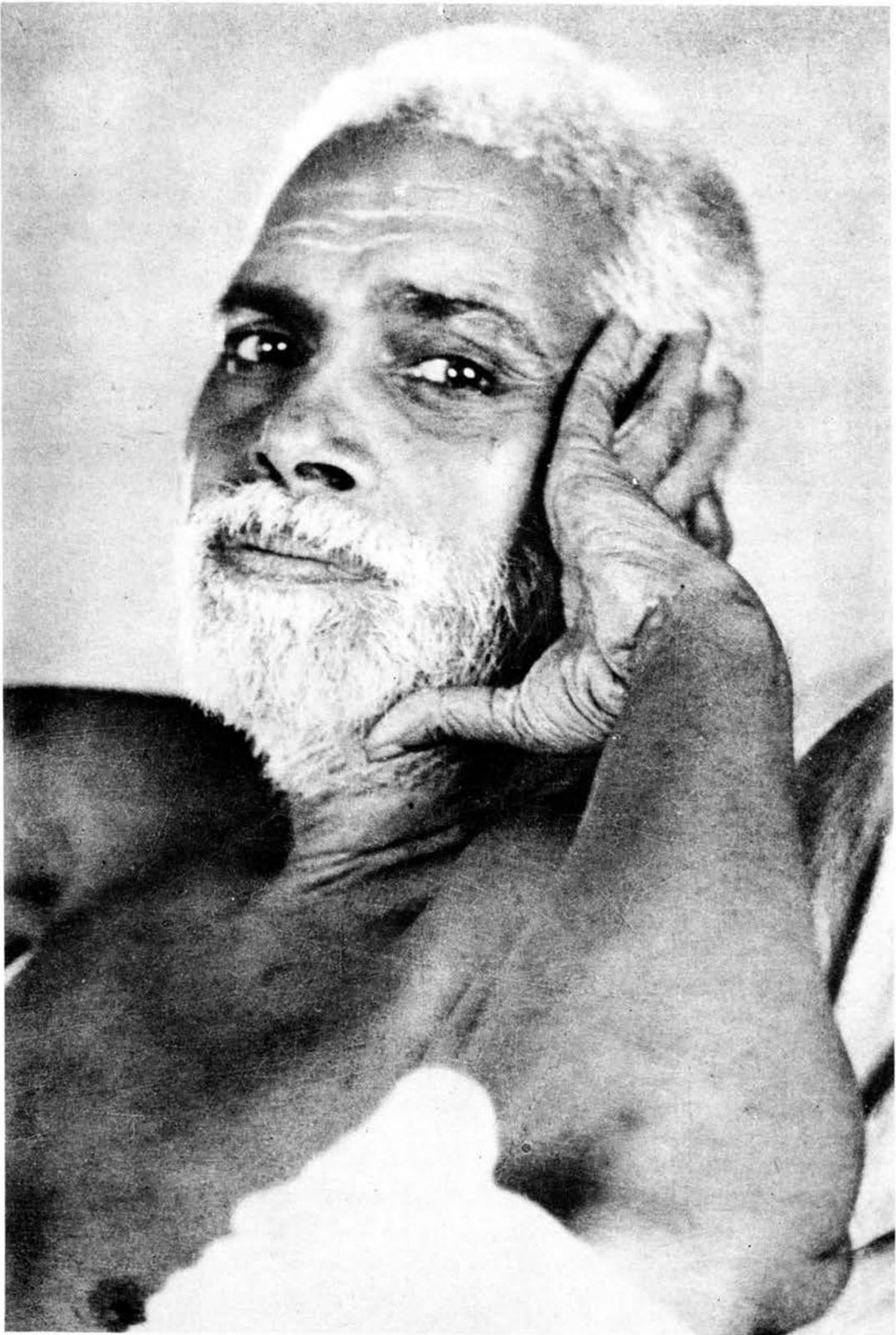
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi





RAMANA is timeless, existing everywhere, and always. When the eternal clothes itself in the human form it is only as a concession to our frailty. Ramana would refer to the analogy given by Thayumanavar that God appears as a human being to dispel ignorance, just as a deer is used as a decoy to capture wild deer.¹ God has to appear in the body in order to dispel the 'I-am-the-body' idea.

The setting is the Ganesa temple at Tiruvattiyur.² Ganapati Muni is performing severe penance and is thinking intensely of Ramana. He finds Ramana by his side pressing his forehead in blessing. For the Muni this was a tangible demonstration of the absence of bodily limitations for Ramana. Years later writing from Sirsi the Muni feels the pangs of separation and the distance from Ramana only to remember that His 'gracious look is capable of traversing any distance'. He finds comfort and joy in recalling that none can be outside the immediate orbit of the true light-giver Ramana. The scene changes. It is the death-bed of Meenakshi, Ramana's childhood playmate.³ Ramana is there by her side, filling her last moments with inexpressible joy. Then we have the case of Jean Clause huddled together

FAR YET NEAR

EDITORIAL

By

A.R. Natarajan

The Mountain Path

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with other prisoners in a small town in France. The fear of execution, for wrongs which he did not commit, is staring him in his face. His wife smuggles in a photo of Ramana and everything changes and many an imminent danger is warded off. Small wonder when he asserts: "People say: you cannot have known Bhagavan; he lived in India; and you in France. That is true — and yet I have known Bhagavan and he has protected me. Bhagavan is the Self - and for the Self time and space do not exist".⁴ For

1 *Guru Ramana* by S.S. Cohen, p. 50

2 *Self Realisation* by B.V. Narasimhaswamy, p. 94

3 *Epistles of Light-Ganapati Muni's Letter to Ramana*

4 *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* by Suri Nagamma,

such ones blessed with direct knowledge nothing further is needed. They know that Ramana is always near.

But long habit has ingrained in us the false notion that we are the body. We superimpose this on the Sadguru Ramana as well. So he is far away residing on the slopes of Arunachala, or at His shrine of Grace at distant Sri Ramanasramam. True, the physical proximity has its own value for one can readily and quickly partake of the radiation of Grace which exists in such proximity. If many had willingly sacrificed the comforts of their home and hearth for the arduous life of living near the 'jungle hermitage', just to be near Sri Ramana, it is precisely because of the feeling of nearness which physical proximity brings about. Ramana too would often point out its value by joking at the desire of devotees to go on pilgrimages. For, they were forgetting that they were already at the holy of holies, enjoying the imperceptible but most purifying physical presence of Ramana.

At the same time Ramana was aware that circumstances would often not permit such proximity even if one were to desire it. So Ramana would always indicate the fact of His universal presence, and His accessibility at close quarters to all regardless of geographical limitations.

He had to break the inbuilt stone-wall of identification by the devotees. For them, Ramana was the golden-hued one with a bewitching smile, penetrating and gracious eyes, a person of unforgettable beauty. The difficulty of this task was heightened by the fact that His body was the abode of God radiating the divine force terrifically. The fifteen months from February 1949 to April 1950 during which Ramana bore the cross of sarcoma, was only to prepare the minds of all to the inevitability of the approaching physical end to the body and to the fact that it did not make any difference to Ramana's continued presence. His effulgence though apparently limited to the body for the time being, was never confined to it.

One cannot read Cohen's day-by-day account of this period without being touched by the gentle manner in which Ramana would drive home this point. Once when Muruganar prayed that Bhagavan should live to be hundred, Ramana then narrated the story of a saint whose disciples prayed on his hundredth birthday that he should live for another hundred years. He then joked: "You want me to live upto hundred, so that you may at the end of it ask for another hundred!"⁵ When Subbaramayya asked Ramana to cure Himself by His will power, He remarked: "Did I ask the tumour to come, so that I may tell it now to go? It came of its own accord; what then have I or my will got to do with it?"⁶ A surgeon once suggested amputation of the left arm adding the assurance that His life could be saved by it, Ramana dismissed this suggestion and remarked: "As I let you look after your body you will please let me look after mine."⁷ In one sense the body itself was the burden, the disease which He had not cast aside out of love, for fifty-four years after Realisation, an event unparalleled in spiritual history. Thus humourously sometimes, but firmly always, Ramana imprinted on the mind of everyone that it was the body and not He that was dying. Once this fact becomes an indelible part of our psyche, Ramana can never be far, but only be ever near and non-separate.

So much for the long period of illness during which Ramana made the devotees see Him in the true light, as the formless source of the form He had assumed in the divine drama. Generally too, Ramana would never miss an opportunity to make one understand that He was the impersonal, the bedrock of life, present universally. Once Sundaresa Iyer sought and got a lucrative job, away from Tiruvannamalai. But when it came to leaving, he just could not reconcile himself to the idea of the physical separation which it entailed. Ramana asked: "How long have you been with

5 *Guru Ramana* by S.S. Cohen, p. 102

6 *Ibid* p. 101

7 *Ibid* p. 97

Bhagavan?" "Forty years", was the reply. Then Ramana remarked: "Here is someone who has been listening to my teaching for forty years and he says he is going somewhere away from Bhagavan!"⁸ Here it would also be appropriate to refer to Ramana's remark: "What does it matter, if it is hundred miles of a thousand miles? *IT* acts."⁹ Where is the limitation of time and space for such a one? The story of the Preuvian couple¹⁰ to whom Ramana told that they could have been with Him in Peru itself, underscores this very point that not being the body, but the Consciousness in which He was rooted, Ramana is indeed the nearest. Yet again one can recall that while joining in the singing of *Ramana Sadguru*,

He would remind that Ramana was not the six feet form before the devotees but the eternal Self.

What He sang of Arunachala is equally true of Arunachala Ramana. Every atom of the universe is permeated by Him - the five elements, the sun, the moon, all creation are but His manifestation. How then can He be ever far? By providing the infallible means, the direct method of self-enquiry, He has made it possible for each one to experience this for himself.

8 *At the Feet of Bhagavan* by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, p. 9

9 *The Maharshi* by Kapali Sastry, p. 94

10 *Ramana Smrit* — A life-time with Bhagavan by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer

"It was Navarathri time (Dasara Festival). A bhajana troupe had arranged in the temple a display of dolls of worship. They pressed me to go with them to see the display. As I was afraid that somebody might recognise me and start doing all sort of services, I put on a dhoti of Palaniswami and covered my body with another cloth, put on a Namam¹ like a Vaishnavite and went with them. The administrators of the temple knew me well. I wanted to avoid them. They however, recognised me at the gate itself, and came after me saying, 'Swami! Swami! You also have come here to see the Swami? You yourself are a Swami, aren't you?' What to do? I felt I was deceiving myself. I somehow managed to evade them and get inside but I felt that everyone was looking at me only. I did not see the Mandapam nor could I see anything else. I turned back intending to return home unnoticed but the chief amongst the archakas caught me again at the gate. 'Swami! Swami! You have come in this dress? Aha! How nice it is, Swami! Please wait'. So saying he stopped me, and addressing his assistants, he said 'You fellow! Bring a garland of flowers. Bring sandal paste. Bring Prasadam. Our Brahmanaswami has come here putting on the dress of Lord Sri Krishna. It is our great luck!' So saying, they began to shower temple honours on me. I somehow managed to escape their attentions and went away. Later on, I tried a number of times to hoodwink them and somehow go to the temple but invariably they used to recognise me and give me all the temple honours. Thereupon I gave up all further attempts and stopped going to the temple altogether. It is the same with everything. You can stay anywhere without fear, if you are in your real form. If you put on a dress to deceive others, you will be afraid every minute that some one might catch you at your deception and so your mind becomes your own enemy and troubles you", said Bhagavan.

Letters and Recollections p. 90-91

¹The distinctive caste mark of Vaishnavite

THE ULTIMATE AS THE TRUTH

SRI BHAGAVANS TEACHING

Recorded by PAUL BRUTON

As reported in our January'83 issue, p.3, the unpublished notes of conversations that Paul Brunton had with Sri Bhagavan are being printed in a book form. The following is an extract from a Chapter from that book. The entire article is in Bhagavan's own words (except, obviously, the questions which were raised by devotees).

THE Self is like a powerful hidden magnet within us. It draws us gradually to itself, though we imagine we are going to it of our own accord: when we are near enough, it puts an end to our other activities, makes us still, and then swallows up our own personal current, thus killing our personality. It overwhelms the intellect and overflows the whole being. We think we are meditating upon it and developing towards it, whereas the truth is that we are as iron filings and it is the Atman-magnet that is pulling us towards itself. Thus the process of finding the Self is a form of Divine Magnetism.

It is necessary to practise meditation frequently and regularly until the condition induced becomes habitual and permanent throughout the day. Therefore meditate. You lost sight of the bliss because your meditative attitude had not become natural and because of the recurrence of *vasanas*. When you become habitually reflective, the enjoyment of spiritual beatitude becomes a matter of natural experience.

It is not by a single realisation that "I am not the body but the Atman" that the goal is reached. Do we become high in position by once seeing a King? One must constantly enter into *samadhi* and realise one's Self, and completely blot out the old *vasanas* and the mind, before he becomes the Self.

If you keep to the thought of the Self, and be intently watching for It then even that one thought which is used as a focus in concentration will disappear and you will BE, the true Self, no 'I'. Meditation on Self is our natural state: Only because we find it hard do we imagine to be arbitrary and extraordinary state. We are all unnatural. The mind resting in the Self is its natural condition, but instead of that our minds are resting in outward object.

Question: How to find Self?

Maharshi: There can be no real investigation into the Atman. The investigation can only be made into the non-self. Elimination of the non-self is alone possible. The Self being always self-evident will shine of itself.

'Knowing' means 'being'. It is not the relative knowledge.

Progress can be spoken of in reference to things to be attained. Whereas it is the removal of ignorance here, and not acquisition of knowledge.

Q.: Why do I not realise the Self?

M.: The fact is that all the while you are knowing the "Self". How can the self not know the Self? Only you, the self have got into the habit of thinking that you are a third thing. What is to be done is to get rid of the wrong notion of the Self. In the case of the ever-



Paul Brunton (Seated holding the Calf)

present, inescapable 'I', how can you be ignorant? You have constantly to fight out and get rid of your false notions of 'I', one after another. Do that. That then leads to Self-Realisation. Who is ignorant of which? Ask the question and pursue the inquiry as to who it is that is said to be ignorant. Once you put the question trying to probe into the 'I' the 'I' disappears. Then what remains is true Self-Knowledge. Again, what is *avidya*? Ignorance of Self! But who is ignorant of Self? The Self must be ignorant of Self. Are there two selves?

Q.: What shall I do to get into that state of Self?

M.: No attempt is required to be in that state. What is required is to give up all the false ideas. Whenever the idea comes trace out to whom it occurs. When a new thought comes, trace it out by analysis. In course of time, all thoughts are destroyed.

Q.: Suppose the idea is a desire for a certain object.

M.: Objects are many but the subject is one. Practice the same line — trace out to whom the desire comes.

Concentration and all other practices are meant for recognising the absence, i.e., the non-existence of ignorance. No one can deny his existence. Existence is knowledge, i.e., awareness. That implies absence of ignorance. And yet, why do they suffer? Because man thinks he is this or that. That is wrong. "I AM" alone is and not "I am so and so". When existence is absolute it is all right, when it is particularised, it is wrong. That is the whole truth. Does a man look into a mirror to know he exists? His awareness makes him admit it. But he confuses it with the body etc. In sleep he still exists, even without the body. Hold that awareness. You cannot see your own eyes, yet do you deny their existence? Similarly even though the Self is not objectified, you are aware of it. Who is to know the Self? Can the body know it? Your duty is to be, not to be this or that. The method is summed up in "Be Still". It means destroy yourself, because any form is the cause of the trouble. When the 'I' is kept up as 'I' only, not 'I am this' or 'I and this', it is the ego. The Real Self will not and cannot ask these questions. All these discussions are a matter of competence, of ripeness.

Q.: From where did ignorance issue?

M.: There is nothing like ignorance. It never arises. Everyone is *Jnana Swarupi*. Only Jnana does not come easily. The dispelling of ignorance is Jnana which always exists, e.g., necklace round the neck supposed to have been lost or ten fools failing to count oneself and counting all others. To whom is knowledge or ignorance?

Q.: How to get peace?

M.: That is the natural state. The mind obstructs the innate peace. Our Vichara is only in the mind. Investigate the mind; it will disappear. It is eliminated and you remain. So the question is one of outlook. You perceive all. See yourself and all are understood. But you have now lost hold of yourself and go about doubting other things.

Q.: If 'I' am always here and now, why do I not feel so?

M.: That is it. Who says that it is not felt? Does the real 'I' say it or the false I? Examine it. You will find it is the wrong I. The wrong I is the obstruction. It has to be removed in order that the true I might not be hidden. The feeling that I have not realised is the obstruction to realisation. In fact, it is already realised; there is nothing realisable. If the latter, the realisation will be anew; if it has not existed so far, it must take place hereafter. What has birth will also die. If realisation be not eternal it is not worth having. Therefore what we seek is not that which must happen afresh. It is only that which is eternal and which is not known, due to obstructions, it is that we seek.

All that we need do is to remove the obstruction. That which is eternal, is not known to be so, because of ignorance. Ignorance is the obstruction. Get over that ignorance and all will be well. The ignorance is identical with the 'I'-thought is like a spirit which is not palpable, rises up simultaneously with the body, flourishes on it and disappears with it. The body-consciousness is the wrong I. Give up this body-consciousness. It is done by seeking the source of the I. The body does not say "I am". It is you who say: "I am the body". Find out who this 'I' is. Seeking its source, it will vanish.

Q.: Should one keep a goal before one's eyes?

M.: What goal is there? The thing you conceive as being the goal, exists even prior to the ego's own existence. If we conceive ourselves as ego, or body or mind, then we are those things. But if we do not conceive ourselves as such then we are our real nature. It is the thinking which gives rise to such troubles. The very thought that there is such a thing as ego is wrong, because ego is 'I'-thought and we are ourselves the real 'I'. The thought-less state is itself Realisation.

Q.: How can we get into touch with the Higher Self?

M.: Is it something far away that you have to touch it? The Higher Self exists as one, but it is only our thoughts which make us feel it is not. You can neither think about it nor forget it. The Higher Self is always so whether you follow the path to it or not. *Divine existence is our very nature.*

It was nearly 9 O'clock, and so Krishnaswamy tuned on the radio to verify the time. After the clock struck nine the radio ended with the words *namasthe to all*'. Bhagavan smiled and said, "The Radio announcer says, '*namasthe to all*' as if he and they were different. Is he not one of them? It amounts to this, that he is saluting himself also. They do not realise that. That is the strange thing".

— *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, p. 181

THE LAUGHING RAMANA

By Ra Ganapati

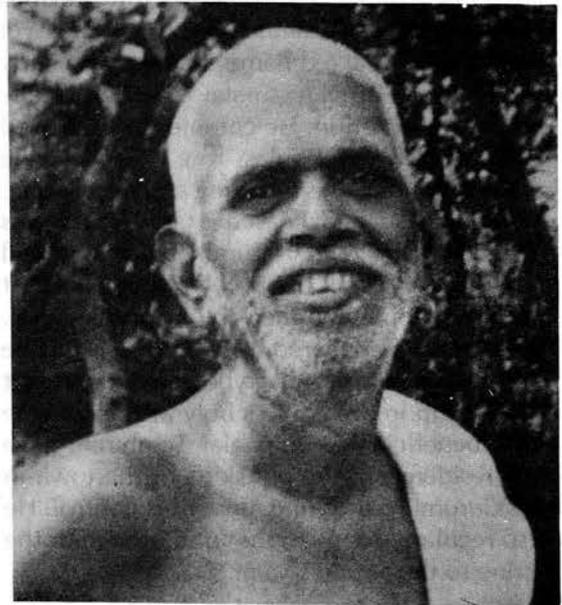
THE *jnani*, in popular conception, is a kill-joy. But in reality, he, having experienced the Reality as Joy (*anando brahmeti vyajanaat*), has always been joyous, and also spreading joy to others of this care-worn world, which he witnesses as *leela*. Joy naturally has its aspect of humour. The *jnani* has never been found wanting in this — right from the age of the Upanishads, where a *rishi* makes Yama (Death) say that he is like a condiment among the courses of the meals of Brahman¹, and another *rishi* spins that beautiful story of each organ of man trumpeting its own superiority, but pitifully coming to heel behind *prana*, when it pretends to flee from the body.² See how this realistic picture in the *Brahadaranyaka Upanishad* where the conversation in between two spiritual Titans is suffused in humanly humour:

Janaka: "Yajnavalkya, with what object have you come? Desiring cattle or subtle philosophic discussion?"

Yajnavalkya: "Both indeed, O Emperor".

It is as a tribute to this humorous human side of the Realised Soul that the Buddha, thought to be absorbed in the silence of ponderous meditation, is also portrayed as "the Laughing Buddha".

We have our own laughing Ramana, the loving Ramana who caused the buds of his devotees' faces blossom out in beaming laughter, bringing the light of joy to those children groping in the darkness of sorrow. As he was a *jnani* — true, pure and simple — "moving about", as the *Chaandogya* says, "laughing, playing, rejoicing" (*jakshan kreedan, ramamaanah*) — the last epithet exactly points to his own Name, he often converted the



Ashram into the dancing dais of the Muse Thalia.

Just skim through the pages of Nagamma or Mudaliar — you will glimpse so many scenes of the comedies mono-acted by the Monist Monarch.

*The little drama he enacted of the would-be *Matadhipati* (head of a Mutt) and his non-existent disciple, as unfolded in Nagamma's letter of the 5th April, 1947 is enough to launch us in a lagoon of laughter.

*How much humour (or humorousness) must be coursing in his vein to describe his unenviable position as *swami* as reported in the letter dated the 22nd October, 1947? Here is a sample sentence: "If a book recording these events

¹Kathopanishad — 1125

²Prasnopanishad

(depicting the troubles that one has to pay for being a *swami*) is written, all people will then know that spiritual preceptorship (*swamitvam*) consists in saying, 'Yes, Yes', and 'All right, all right'."

*His subjection to "*Swamitvam*" has a very interesting beginning, and we must be thankful for the fact, as the reader will see presently. It goes back to the last years of the previous century. The lad Ramana (who had not yet acquired that sacred name) had only recently set foot on Tiruvannamalai. He was totally given to absorption. He completely eschewed talking. He was actionless too, except for the natural compulsions of eating and evacuating. Thinking also had ceased as the mind was merged in the Self. Naturally nobody could find out any details about this log of a lad that had fallen from somewhere into Tiruvannamalai. But the log appeared to be a part of the celestial *Kalpa-taru* — everybody found comfort and a calm in the youth's holy presence. One such beneficiary, Annamalai Tambiran, gave him residence in the out-skirts of the town in the Gurumurtam shrine, under his control. He also regularly supplied the food offered at the shrine to the young *Swami*.

One fine day the Tambiran struck upon the idea of honouring the *Swami* with a ceremonial bath in milk, honey and sandal-paste.

The silent boy watched the preparations. This imposition of *Swamitva* weaned him away from his indifference to whatever happened around. He was indifferent, nay, simply unconscious, when worms dug deep into the back of his thighs in the Patala-linga cave; when naughty urchins eased themselves on him as he sat in uninterrupted *samadhi* under the *Illupai* tree. But he was indifferent only to suffering and not pampering. He would suffer the urchin's defecation on him! It was Parasakti's will that the highest of virtues must be revealed with natural ease by this *jnani* and so She brought him from the *Kevala* to the *Sahaja* state. The youth took serious note of what was to happen to him. Yet in the *drshti* of the *jnani* there cannot be anything absolutely serious in

this relative world of *maya*, and as *maya* becomes *leela* to him, the serious becomes serio-comic. This is the essence of his humorousness.

That very first surfacing of a "reaction" in him to external happenings was one suffused in humour, showing the log to be a living branch of the Life that revels in *leela*. Yes, it was not a dry log; it was moist with human tenderness. (By the way, "humour" etymologically means "to be moist".)

Ramana in later days used to describe that reaction to devotees: "I found that the Tambiran felt, being a *swami*, I could not be propitiated by the *naivedya upacharam*³ alone and must also be accorded the *abhisheka upacharam*. But I wanted to convey to him that this *Swami* was satisfied with the single *upacharam* of *naivedya* alone."

How witty of the young Ramana to have thought thus! Thought, he did not want to translate into spotless words, because that would drag him into endless conversation, and so he resorted to written words. In three seemingly commonplace words he condensed all the humour and wrote on the wall with a charcoal piece, "*Idarkku tondu iduve*", "This (food) alone is the service (needed) for this (body)". When the Tambiran came and placed the food before him, he pointed to him the writing on the wall (certainly not like the biblical foreboding of evil), and made him give up the plan of ceremonially bathing the *swami*.

In the early years of this century when the "Brahmana *Swami*" was shifting his abode to various caves on the hills, he was mostly given to silence. But the streak of humour did show out every now and then.

A country urchin takes pity on the lonely Ramana, with nothing than a cod-piece on,

³Though a witticism loses its punch by explanation we have to make the statement intelligible to the foreign readers. The '*upacharams*' are the various services and offerings rendered to the Gods (*Swamis*). There are as many as sixty-four *upacharams*. The chief among them are *abhishekam* (ablution) and *naivedyam* (food-offering).

and asks him, "Why are you here all alone, like this?" Immediately Ramaṇa replies, "I had some trouble at home and so have come away like this." When the boy offers to take him to his (the boy's) master for employment, Ramaṇa says, "Yes, please do". He loves to create a comic situation around himself!

With the years, the reserved Ramaṇa was coming out more and more, and so too was his sense of humour. He has shown his capacity to play practical jokes too!

Once when his servitors proposed that it would be good to enjoy a stay at Tirupati, free from the unbearable mosquito trouble experienced on the Annamalai Hills, he dittoed them. They made all arrangements for the journey and at the time of departure asked him to get up. But he sat unmoved, immovable. They were intrigued. He too pretended to be intrigued. Did he not agree it would be good to move out of Tiruvannamalai. Yes, he did. It was only now that he offered with the explanation that he thought it would be good for the servitors to move out, without him! They minded the mosquitoes. But he had no mind or body of his own.

A more impish practical joke. Jadaī Swami living higher up on the hill grew jealous of the popularity gained by the Brahmaṇa Swami living below. The green-eyed monster drove Jadaī Swami to resort to a mean trick. Hiding himself behind the rock he would roll down small stones and a shower of pebbles and mud would descend on the visitors in the lower cave to scare them away by a seemingly natural land-slide.

Ramaṇa found out the plot and went up stealthily behind the culprit and caught him, red-handed (or rock-handed). The culprit had the cleverness and presence of mind to say, "I just wanted to see how you maintain your equanimity in adversity."

Ramaṇa replied that he too had caught hold of him with the very same intention!

*The splendour of the Self was daily emitting sparks of wit, many of them clothing sublime *upadesa*.

Take his parody of the verse of Avvai. Her original verse portrays the plight of the *jiva* (individual soul) in having to cope with his stomach which he addresses thus: "Oh stomach, You will not go without food even for one day, nor will you take enough for two days at a time. You have no idea of the trouble I have on your account, oh, wretched stomach! It is impossible to get on with you."

The *jñani* Ramaṇa feels that this reverses the real state of affairs and feels that it is the *jiva* with his gastronomic greed that is harassing the poor insentient stomach. The *jñani* changes a word or two of the original and transforms the complaint into one by the stomach to the *jiva*:

"Oh *jiva*! You will not give me, your stomach, rest for even a *nazhi* (less than half-hour); you are not tired of taking food in *nazhis* (huge measures): You have no idea of the trouble I have on your account, O wretched *jiva*! It is impossible to get on with you".

*Rajaji assuming Governor-Generalship is caricatured in a Tamil paper as wearing the naval uniform and cap of his predecessor, Mountbatten. Bhagavan utters a loud chuckle on seeing it and says, "Just as Rajaji is hidden in Mountbatten's clothes, so also the real is hidden in the unreal sheaths". A joke could convey philosophy to him and he too conveyed high philosophy through his jokes. Philosophy we dread, we dread the deep sea. But the spray from the same sea, made of the same substance as the sea, we enjoy. Such sprays are his jokes from the philosophic deep within.

*He is rubbing oil on his joints. A boy of ten years offers to do that service. All smiles and tenderness he says to the boy, "If you are going to do the rubbing for me, then you must also do the eating for me".

*He used to say that except Enquiry, all the other *sadhanas* which have to be performed by the mind are like the thief himself donning the uniform of the cop and trying to nab himself.

*There is the other parable touching the mind. An impostor was enjoying the festivities

and feasts of a marriage as an important person intimately connected with the function. The bride's people thought he was a member of the bridegroom's party and gave him due (undue) respect. And *vice versa*. At last somebody raised the question, "Who is he?" Immediately the impostor bolted away. So long as we take the mind for granted and give respect to it, it has its field day. But once the enquiry starts, "What is this mind stuff?" it will take to its heels.

*Nagamma presents the first copies of the Letters at the holy feet. Who but a Ramana could accept it as the jaggery-piece nipped off a jaggery-Ganesh and offered to that Ganesh Himself as *naivedya*?

*One day the talk was about leaving everything for God to do, without the *jiva's* effort. Ramana was one who lived that principle every second of his life. Yet he considered that this course was difficult for adoption by most people who therefore must exert individually till *samskaras* were worked out. He said that God will normally give the guidance only and the ordinary men had himself to act upon it, with faith in Him.

Opinions to the contrary were expressed.

Just then the bell of the dining hall rang. Everybody rose up.

Ramana too, getting up, wound up the discussion saying, "The bell has rung. But should we not go? Or should we sit still expecting the food to come here?"

*To over-zealous people, who taking too much to heart the *adharmic* trends in the world, were agog to reform humanity and also wanted Ramana to shed off his solitude and give a lead to them, his reply was: "When there is scorching sun-shine would we cover the entire skies with a canopy, or would one take an umbrella to walk under? Do we cover with leather the whole of the earth, with its thorns and stones, or do we cover our own heels with a chappel?"

There have been occasions when visitors, who have not previously seen the *Swami*,

and also could not recognise the *Swami* in the simple *kaupinadhari* (cod-piece wearer), have asked that *Swami* himself about his whereabouts. And he would reply, 'the *Swami* has gone out somewhere'. Later they have been flabbergasted to know that the *kaupinadhari* himself was the *Swami*. He quite enjoyed the fun. When asked how he could play such a practical joke on visitors, he said, "Am I to say that I am *Swami*, I am *Swami*?"

Yes, He was only "I-am", not "I am this or that"!

When Echamma almost teased him for misleading new visitors he said laughing, "Oho! Then do you want me to tie a board round my neck to say 'I am the *Swami*'?"

*Once this took a funnier (and more importful) turn. Some rustics asked him, while he was engaged in some chore in the kitchen, "Where is Ramana?"

"Here" — Ramana pointed to them a big vat.

The articles belonging to the Ashram bore on them the inscription "Ramana". So did this vat. Whereas his body did not have that name inscribed anywhere on it! Was he not the Unnameable?

That was why he was amused at the "*upacharams*" done to the body. We have an addendum to what we already saw on this. Once when too much incense was put in the oven by his side and fumes rose thick, he said such was the *dhoopa upacharam* that a *Swami* must have. Then the incense blazed up into flames and "added incense to" the mocking mood of the *Swami*, who remarked, "Oho! *Deepa-upacharam* too!"

[*Deepam* (Waving of light) and *dhoopam* (offering incense) are among the five principal *upacharams*].

Even when on the verge of death he could cut jokes (at his own expense).

When the eyes of devotees were filled with tears to see the sarcoma-tumour rising red on the arm of the holy one, he would laugh at it as *Svayambhu* (self-manifested) *linga* or the *Syamantaka-mani*, the lustrous gem of the *Bhagavata*.

*At the height of fever his body would be shivering severely. The sight would be torture for the devotees. But he would say: "All this while you had only *Achala darshan*; looking for a change, you have this *Tandava darshan*."

["*Achala*" is the Unmoving Absolute; "*Tandava*" is the Dance of God, creating, preserving, destroying, unveiling and liberating *jivas*]

* * *
In his hymns also humour peeps out every now and then.

The very first hymn he composed is in the humorous *ninda-stuti* (ironical praise) style. It is appropriately addressed to Ganesh, who takes precedence among Gods.

Him who begot you as child you made
Into a beggar; as a child yourself
You then lived everywhere just to support
Your own huge belly; I too am a child.
Oh Child God in that niche! Encountering one
Born after you, is your heart made of stone?
I Pray you look at me!

—(Trans: Arthur Osborne)

('Him who begot' Ganesh is Siva. He adopted taking alms of His own accord, but Ramana lays the blame on Ganesh. 'Niche' refers to the one at Virupakshi cave where he-lived at that time. In 1912 a potter came to the cave with his present of a small image of Ganesh, which was placed in the niche.)

*Even that moving and solemn *Aksharamana-malai* is not wanting in humour.

Rain Thy Mercy on me ere Thy Knowledge burn me
to ashes,
Oh Arunachala!
Hast thou not bartered happily Thyself for me?
Art Thou not blind, Oh Arunachala!
Fearless I seek Thee, Fearlessness itself! How caust
Thou fear to take me, Oh Arunachala!
Didst Thou not call me in? I have come in. Now
measure out for me. Hard is Thy lot, Oh Arunachala!

(Trans. Arthur Osborne)

* * *
Rubbing oil on his joints, jovial Ramana would remark, "This machine cannot move without lubrication".

*Why he must do the rubbing himself, While attendant devotees vied with one another to do that service.

"Why do they clamour to do this? Because, they say they will earn *punyam* (religious merit) by this service. Why not myself too earn something of that *punyam*?"

*It was because of "the humour of wind" — *vaata* — that Ramana suffered from stiffness of joints, calling for lubrication. He could joke about this humour of wind also. Sri Rama's feet were held by only the Son of the God of Wind, Hanuman; but Ramana's feet were held by the father, the God of Wind, himself!

*This is from D.K. Roy's reminiscences: "A Muslim friend of mine asked, 'Tell me, Bhagavan, why is it that God does not answer my prayer even when I petition Him for nothing earthly. I only pray to Him to make me more humble and selfless so that I may serve Him as I ought to, but He simply does not listen, Why doesn't He?'

'Probably because He is afraid that if He did, you wouldn't pray any more!' answered the sage readily, with a merry twinkle in his eye! And we all laughed in chorus".

*Hear this conversation bubbling with humour:

Devotees: How to get Realisation?

Ramana: Through God's Grace. How to get God's Grace? Through God's Grace. If I say pray for God's Grace, one may say that one is not able to do that also sincerely and ask me what to do to get that sincerity. Then again the reply is that one has to pray for God's Grace to make one's prayers sincere; but this prayer will also be not sincere, and so it goes on infinitely".

*How we breathe the comforting air of innocent joy when we hear the great Bhagavan shaking like a helpless but witty chap under the constant medication of a dictatorial doctor: "Look! Ramachandra Rao is coming in. He must have brought some medicine with him. When I see him I do not feel that I am seeing a human being. I feel that I am seeing the medicines themselves".

Rao comes in with his inseparable weapon — a big bottle of medicine.

Ramana laughs and asks those around, "Did I not tell that the medicine itself has walked in?"

*Another in the same strain. One Annamalai Swami was engaged in the construction works of the Ashram. Immediately on spotting him Ramana used to talk about the construction and nothing else. A dear devotee asked Bhagavan why was it that he invariably switched on to the building topic whenever he happened to see Annamalai Swami.

Bhagavan: "Is that your doubt? When he comes here does he come as an individual by name Annamalai? It appears as if the structures themselves have come."

*At the time of the inauguration of the Bharati Memorial at Ettaiyapuram in October 1947, the newspapers were full of news about the opening of the memorial by C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) and the unveiling of the poet's portrait by O.P. Ramaswami Reddiar, the then Chief Minister of the State. Two of the intimate servitors of Bhagavan, Rajagopala Ayyer and Krishnaswami Reddiar were engrossed in collecting and cutting all the photographs that then appeared of the Poet and the Memorial. They pasted them on a card-board, with the photos of the Poet on the upper half, and those of the building on the lower half. The job was completed on 11th October, the day prior to the inauguration at Ettaiyapuram.

Bhagavan said, with a guileless smile, "Well! What you have to do now is to cover the top and bottom of the cardboard with two pieces of cloth fashioned like a curtain with strings attached. Let Rajagopala Ayyer play the role of Rajagopalachari, and Krishnaswami Reddiar that of Ramaswami Reddiar. Just when the function at Ettaiyapuram takes place, both of you draw the curtains, so that the function will be duplicated here simultaneously!"

Had they done that, Bhagavan would have clapped his hands with a baby's glee!

*He would not hand over his water-pot, *kamandalu*, to any of the servitors, and would

himself carry it all the eight miles of the *parikrama* (circumambulation) of the Hill of the Holy Beacon. He explained the reason: "If it is handed over to anybody the pot alone will return to me (sans the water), when I ask for it".

*Yet another subtle dig at the servitors: Once he hinted that Nagamma could act as a volunteer and see that the rustic women devotees observe some discipline. She asked whether they would care to listen to her.

Bhagavan (coolly): "Why not. *Outsiders* will certainly carry out your instructions".

*There was a great discussion about the veracity of the claim that *kaya-kalpa* could make the body everlasting. Softly said the sage: "None of the authors of this *sastra* seem to be alive now".

*We can go on with instances galore. The mighty tree of Ramana bore not only its fruits of *jnana* and flowers of *bhakti*, but also its verdant foliage among which are these tender shoots of witticisms. They are so many fountains to give us a refreshing bath every now and then as we tread the arduous path, round the mountain.

Just one more to show how he defused tension and brought relief.

There was much consternation in the Ashram — the tiny tot Ganesan, grandson of the younger brother of Ramana, was missing for quite some time. But the Wet Flame coolly said, "Running away from home is in the family"!

Idukkan varun-kaal naguga — "Laugh when trouble comes," counsels the *Tirukkural*.

Let us look at the laughing face of the lofty Ramana, and grow light-hearted in the presence of that Light of lights. Undaunted by dire circumstance, let us learn the truth behind the story of how Siva burnt the evil forces to ashes by His laugh alone.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE WORLD?

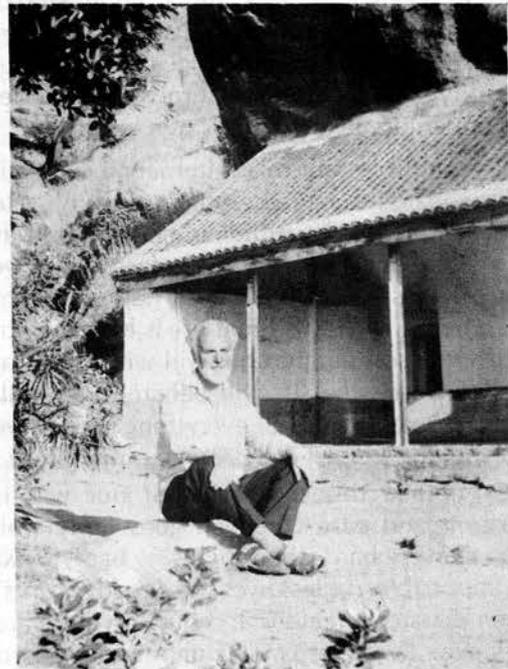
By Douglas E. Harding

FEW people would agree with Robert Browning's rapturous exclamation that all's right with the world. Most of us, most of the time, feel that something's terribly amiss. The aim of this article is to find out what's gone wrong, and what — if anything — you and I can do about it. An ambitious project? Yes, indeed! But let's see how far we can get.

We need hardly trouble to list the things about our world that aren't as they should be, or we don't like. They are too many and too obvious. So let's move straight on to consider the various ways we can and do respond to the troubles that surround us, and threaten to engulf us.

THREE REACTIONS TO THE HUMAN SITUATION

(1) One very natural reaction is — *resentment*. We had no choice, no say at all in the kind of environment we find ourselves flung into. We weren't consulted, our preferences and needs were — it seems — unfeelingly ignored. We were pitchforked into this blood-soaked arena which, apparently, is all set up to hurt and mangle and eventually destroy us. What sort of Creator or Demiurge is it (we want to know) who gives us one nature, and gives our world the contrary nature; who not only fails to match up the two, but actually fixes it so that, whereas we need love and security and success and joy and peace, the nature of things ensures that we get the opposite? What have innocent children done to deserve all the pain and disillusionment, ending in sickness and senility and death itself, that is steadily coming to them? Surely the only appropriate and manly



Douglas E. Harding in front of Virupaksha Cave.

reaction is *anger*. But the trouble with *anger* is that it is unproductive. It's a dead end, and gets us nowhere at all. It just adds to the misery.

(2) The second alternative is rather less negative. It is *resignation*. Or, if you prefer, *realism*. Thus we say to ourselves, wryly but very sensibly, "Life is difficult!" Or, with the Buddha, "Life is painful, life is suffering." So let's stop pretending it could be otherwise than tragic, terribly unfair, made up of anxiety upon anxiety, agony piled upon agony. Let's nobly face this noble but dreadful truth: that

our world is, and always will be, a very nasty place, even for the lucky ones. Lucky for how long?

There is a positive side to this kind of hard-headed realism. It makes a difference when at last we give up all our false optimism and wishful thinking, our pathetic pretence that tomorrow or next week or next year things will return to normal, and happy days will be here again. Suffering is the norm, relief from suffering the exception. Tomorrow's trials will be at least as severe as today's, and a certain kind of peace does descend upon us when we are honest enough to acknowledge the grim facts, steadily and without bitterness. Life does become more bearable, less of a let-down.

(3) And so to our third alternative, which is that we should actually intend everything to be just as it is. This attitude is a long, long way from mere acceptance: it is *endorsement*; we go so far as to *choose* what's happening, to say a hearty YES! to all that life is handing out to us. It is so lining up our will with God's or the Universe's that Its will becomes our will. Then it must follow that everything goes as we wish, and in a sense we become omnipotent.

Of course this alignment of our will is pleasant and easy when all goes fairly well with us; very hard when things go badly; next to impossible (unless we are already saints) when disaster threatens and our very lives are at stake. Even Jesus was agonizingly torn between his own will and his Father's in the end. And if *he* found this ultimate surrender of his personal will immensely difficult when it came to the crunch, what hope for ordinary mortals like you and me? What hope for *me*, I should say: you may be a saint, for all I know.

Yet all the evidence I'm aware of, and certainly the reported experience of the world's spiritual leaders, confirms that here lies only real and conclusive answer to our troubles. If only we could be selfless, totally surrendered, in a word *saints*. There's the rub. How many of us are willing and able to transcend and do violence to our deep instinct for survival? To immolate ourselves, to play the role of both

sacrificial priest and sacrificial victim? In a sense, to commit suicide as humans, in order to be what else we are? And to do so not merely because it's the best policy, but because we deeply feel it is right?

The answer is: very few of us. And even that heroic few who, by virtue of Grace or of extraordinary feats of discipline and self-abnegation, manage genuinely to will God's will — even they do not necessarily find that the Universe is, after all, a perfectly happy and beautiful scene. With some exceptions, they don't see it that way at all. No: Even the saints are apt to embrace the world *in spite* of what it is, rather than *because* of what it is. Some of them haven't a good word to say of it.

And so, on the face of it, there's no feasible solution, for us unsaintly ones, to the problem of what's wrong with the world. We have seen that *raging against* the Universe only makes matters worse; *resignation* may help us somewhat, but does little or nothing to improve the situation; and *full acceptance* is virtually impossible for us as we are now.

However, there is a fourth alternative, so let us take heart and go into it carefully, critically, and with open minds. After all, what have we — desperate characters that we are, in a desperate situation — to lose?

THE FOURTH ALTERNATIVE

Here is a very different approach from the three we have outlined. I trust you will find that it does hold out hope — even certainty — for us rather ordinary people — provided we are willing to drop our precious opinions, and specially our religious prejudices, and dare to take a fresh look at ourselves and the world we find ourselves in.

The proposition we are going to examine is this: *In itself, the world is all right. It isn't the world that has gone wrong or is unsatisfactory, but what you and I are all the time doing to it.*

Or let me put it like this: Apart from us, the Universe would be alive and in fine shape; it

is we who are the trouble. We are inflicting a grievous wound upon it, and it's bleeding to death from that wound. We have split it into



two unequal fragments called OURSELF and THE REST, or ME and NOT ME. The result is that we have on our hands not a Universe but a Duoverse, a Duality and no Unity. And it's hardly surprising that the severed parts should be deficient, tragically and incurably sick, so long as that dreadful wound isn't closed and healed.

The *Katha Upanishad* identifies the disease: "He who divides the One, wanders from death to death," and indicates the remedy: "Tell the mind that there is but One." And the Third Patriarch of Zen speaks of the health which follows that remedy: "When the ten thousand things are viewed in their Oneness, we return to the Origin and remain where we have always been....One in all, All in one — if only this is realized, no more worry about not being perfect!"

But again, merely understanding and concurring with these profound truths doesn't get us far along the difficult road to perfection. Sure enough, when times are good and the sun's shining and the birds are singing, it's not too difficult to feel the Oneness of all things, with ourselves included in the Grand Design. Or, meditating in the tranquility of a holy place,

We may occasionally sense that, however miserable the parts of the world may be as

parts, the Whole is all that our hearts could wish for. Just as the most horrible slum, viewed from a weather satellite, becomes very pleasant to look at — and our sad, war-torn planet, viewed from the Moon, becomes shining dream of peace and beauty — so, when we are in exalted mood, our Universe may briefly be viewed in its wholeness as wholly good. When we're in the mood! How are we to live in that exalted and rarefied atmosphere for more than a few moments at a time? Someone said that life down here on earth is one of quiet desperation. I guess he was right — except for the quiet! "Some day," says Master K'ung Ku Chin-lung, "you will realize that the Pure Land of Serene Light is none other than this earth itself." Meantime you may — if you're lucky — enjoy that realization in flashes. The rest of the time this earth is apt to seem more like Hell.

So what is our practical answer? I have already suggested that it is a very simple one — simple, if not exactly easy. *So long as I am anything whatever I have divided and therefore spoiled the One.* The only remedy is to restore its missing parts, to re-graft the organ I amputated, to hand back what I stole from the One — namely myself — and so bring it again to life, health, wholeness, and perfection. In other words, *everything* will be all right when I am *nothing*. "Claim nothing; enjoy, do not covet His property," says the *Isa Upanishad*. In China, around the same time, the Taoist Sage Chuang-tzu taught: "Your body is not your own... It is the delegated image of God. Your life is not your own. It is the delegated harmony of God. Your individuality is not your own. It is the delegated adaptability of God." And, two millennia later, the French Jesuit De Caussade (1675 — 1751) wrote: "The body and its senses, the soul and its energies, the modicum of good you have performed — are God's portion. It so manifestly belongs to Him that you realize you cannot claim one whit of it as yours, nor feel one grain of complacency, *without being guilty of theft and larceny from God.*" Another Jesuit father,



John Nicolas Grou (1731 — 1803), having pointed out “How God is all, and the creature is nothing,” goes on to say: “I am nothing of myself, and I owe to God all that I am.... If I appropriate these gifts to myself.... *I steal from God what is His own*, I do not comprehend my own nothingness, I commit an injustice...” Karl Marx, too, seeking justice, decided “all property is theft,” but didn’t go half far enough. He excluded personal property like one’s cooking utensils and clothes, and of course one’s body and mind. He had the right idea, but stopped short of the heart of the matter. No wonder Marxism does not set our world to rights! It is insufficiently radical!

THE FOURTH ALTERNATIVE AS SEEING RATHER
THAN BELIEVING

So I admit I’m a thief, a despoiler of the world. Thieves, however, are loath to part with their loot — specially when they’ve held it so long that they’ve come to think of it as theirs, and all the world has been agreeing. Who of us is prepared to return his or her body-mind to the Universe, and be reduced to *absolute poverty*?

The only convincing reason I can find for this restoration of stolen goods to their rightful Owner — the only consideration that would

induce me to hand them over willingly and without further delay — would be the clear perception that I have no choice, seeing that they were never mine anyway, and my thieving was quite imaginary. In other words, if I were actually to see — not just *believe* — that I have never had and have never been a body-mind at all, that all along I have been exactly No-thing whatever and therefore problem-free — why then this clear seeing really would loosen my fictitious grip on myself. Sri Nisargadatta rightly asks: “Is it not important to you to know whether you are a mere body, or something else? Or maybe nothing at all? Don’t you see that all your problems are your body’s problems?” And indeed, when I give up my body-mind I not only give up its problems, but the world’s too.

Asked why a perfect God should create such a disastrous world, Sri Ramana Maharshi replied: “His work is perfection. But you see it as imperfect because of your mis-identification with the body.” That says it all.

Still I ask myself: is it *true* that I’m not the body and the mind I thought I was, and everyone told me I was? Is it a hard *fact* that I am, in reality, No-thing whatever, that I neither have nor am so much as a dustgrain? Above all, is it *dispassionately verifiable*? Or is this

just holy talk, pious uplift, a good thing to believe because it makes me more comfortable? I must find out, because only complete honesty with myself will work here. A trace of self-deception or wishful thinking, and this promising remedy for trouble does me and my world no good at all.

Well, I can't speak for you, but I do indeed find that this Nothingness — this absence of body-mind right here — is the most obvious of all obvious truths. Whether I like it or not, I see — far more clearly than I see anything out there in the world — that right here is Emptiness, Space, Openness — Vacant Accommodation for the whole world. Whenever I look back here at what's looking, at this mysterious Spot I'm said to occupy, I find it unoccupied by me — and occupied instead by all the rest. Here, I am just Capacity, Room at this moment for these two arms and hands and this busy pen and half-filled sheet of paper, this littered desktop, and beyond them the room, and the view from the window of grass and bare trees, of racing clouds and cold sky. Plus all my thoughts and feelings about those things: not about *me*, I emphasize, but about *them*. I no more *am* these hands, or am *in* these hands, than I *am* these clouds, or am *in* these clouds. I'm nowhere to be found, and everywhere. I have no body, and the whole world is my body. Never, never have I been *part* of the world; never, never have I parted or split up the world. I am Nothing — yes; and All things — yes; never Something, never any half-way house between these extremes. That great saint St John of the Cross tells me that to be all things I must be nothing. I don't have to take his word for it. I can always check this astounding fact, whatever my mood or activity of the moment, by just taking a look.

This clear perception, carrying with it utter conviction, is my best hope and indeed my only hope of setting myself and the Universe to rights. Let me steadily see What I am — thus restoring to the Whole everything I supposed I was, everything I stole from It — and see what happens. Insofar as I do just this,

I do indeed find that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, the world is — yes, perfect! It is healed, and for the very good reason that its wounds were quite imaginary.

Continuing to speak for myself, then: whereas I'm wholly unable to make myself into any kind of saint (and settle the issue of perfection that very difficult way) I'm wholly able to see that I could *never* be a saint anyway, or *any* sort of person or thing or object! And (I repeat) this in-seeing isn't hard. It's entirely natural, refreshing, pleasant, secular, not special at all. Not so easy to keep up all the while without a good deal of "practice", no doubt, but renewable always and at will, whenever one's attention is turned round to the Absentee who's attending, right here.

So this, our fourth alternative, is certainly the one for me. What about you? Why not try it? Again, what have you (who in fact have lost all) to lose? You, too, may find that this alternative works because it convinces, because it's thoroughly verifiable and actual-factual, and not for taking on trust just because you read it somewhere or someone told you so. You, too, are likely to find that the Universe is radically transformed, once you clearly see *for yourself* that you could never disturb its perfection by stealing so much as a needle from it.

I say a needle, because it brings me to the conclusion of this article, which is a Muslim tradition about Jesus. The Sufi poet Attar tells the story. "When you are reduced to ashes, including your baggage, you will have not the least feeling of existence. But if there remains to you, as to Jesus, only a simple needle, a hundred thieves will lie in wait for you along the road. Although Jesus had thrown down his baggage, the needle was still able to scratch his face....When existence disappears, neither riches nor empire, honours nor dignity, have any meaning."

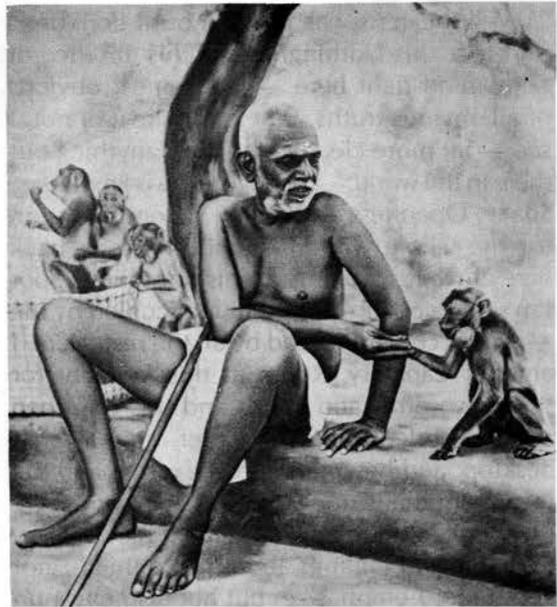
And then it is (we may add) that all our wounds — and even mere scratches — are healed, and we are safe from thieves and all harm, and enter Paradise.

“I” THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

By Artie L. Haaswyk

ALL turns around the “I”, the smallest word in the English language, the center-point of all thought or mind, the foundation of the whole Universe. In the physical world, the biggest is the most impressive and important. But everything, however large and big is limited. It has boundaries in space, the silent permeating and enveloping presence. Forms or objects are limited, plural and changeable. Space is One and changeless. It is in Space that all the stars and planets and their systems of universes float and shine. Therefore, Space is the Mother of the worlds, their Nourisher, their Support.

The real “I” is not an object, but the Ground, like Space, wherein all ideas and feelings appear and dissolve. The real I, being present in all forms of Life, is the Space and Light of pure *Consciousness*, wherein all come, undergo change in relatively low and high frequency of vibrations, the Shakti but remain inside of the *One Supreme Being/Consciousness*, the true *Self* of All Living or sentient forms. Birth and Death, appearance and dissolution, beginning and end, all these terms relate to sense objects, forms and names, appearances in mind. And the latter are ultimately understood and known in the Light and Space of *Consciousness*, the Pure I, the Real *Self* of which the whole universe is the manifestation or reflection. The manifestation changes according to the nature or power of the conditioned five sense-organs. The spectacle (the world appearance) changes or is conditioned according to the glasses we wear, like microscopes or telescopes. But the *Awareness* of “seeing” remains the same throughout. “The world is really synonymous with Mind; (*Sad Vidya* No. 6) “Existence of the world is merely relative to the sentient body” (*Sad Vidya* No. 5).



From the foregoing, we can conclude that Awareness or Consciousness is *One*, homogeneous, Whole, indivisible, like the pervasive indivisible space/time continuum. It is an illusion to think of space/time as divisible or multiple. As Sri Ramana remarked: We do not create space by digging a pit and removing the earth. Nor do we fence-in space in building a wall around an area. Space is present before the digging of the pit and after filling up the hole again. We do not divide space in building a house, so to speak, creating the space inside and outside the material structure. Space being subtler than the subtlest material composition which we perceive by our sense organs of limited power, space permits of all sorts of material construction and its disintegration without itself being affected.

Scientific research has analyzed matter to its smallest unit, from the molecule to the

atom (the indivisible unit, as one used to think). When research was carried further, the indivisible was split in subatomic particles whirling at terrific speed around a center, the nucleus. There is the same space again allowing particles of energy to travel in orbits as in the great outer space of stars and planets. And in our mind, we divide that One space again in the micro-cosmos and the macro-cosmos. However, the Cosmos is One. The difference lies in the instruments we use to perceive those worlds. The unaided eye, the eye of flesh, sees a picture of the world. However, it is the One ultimate Consciousness which remains the same throughout all change of world-appearance. Our thinking is affected by the sight, by the spectacles we wear. We think about what we see, naturally. The seer, the subject, is the eye-organ, the seen, the object, the picture, like a mirror reflecting the landscape. The landscape is even seen inside the mirror in depth. The ultimate is the *Self-Effulgence*, infinite, perfection, Source of all Knowledge or Intelligence and Power or Shiva-Shakti.

We often read the statement: "how the one became the many, is a mystery". Let us not forget that counting is based on the many objects, we see around us. Our world is a collective name for the great variety of forms and colours and sizes. Every human being considers himself a separate, particular bodily form. As we see, so we think and reason is based on memory and to us this is all ultimately true. Our reasoning becomes habitual, like our acts, and we imitate our fellow beings, like sheep, and we live totally outwardly, very rarely taking account of what is Within, the Source of our existence, the Ground or Substratum of all phenomenal, fleeting forms of Life. Here, calm observance of plant-life can show us wonders, which we can pursue and try to understand.

The wonder in the realm of plants is the seed becoming the tree, the law of cause and effect. How from one seed a whole tree manifests, reproducing not one, but thousands of seeds which become the cause or mother

THE EARTH THAT NEVER CRIED

By Noona Osborne

**"I"¹ am the dyke that kept away the Sea,
"I" am the earth that never cried,
"I" am the rock that takes in warmth from
The sun, "I" am patient, kind
And always the nameless thing is me.**

**"I" am the ear that listens to sounds,
The patter of rain, the love
Of falling leaves, "I" am the music
In many songs, and the earth on
Which the corn grows, is me, is me, is me;**

**"I" am the silence on the fighting earth,
"I" am the sadness that no one
Ever wept, light — "I" love it warms me,
Colours are a gift from the
Silent nameless thing, and still am "I"
the breeze softens my coldness,**

**Water, my dearest love, and clothe me
With forests, oh "I" am the
Nameless thing. "I" am! The void is all,
"I" am the nameless thing, light;
Space, time, all that is. "I" am.**

¹Refers to cosmic consciousness

of thousands and thousands of trees in their turn, a chain-reaction of cause and effect a cycle, a continuum of the manifestation of life in changing material forms. There we see how the material manifestation of forms serves as a vehicle for the subtler forms of vital life energy, invisible to the human eye. What we behold is transformation of gross material forms so that the finer, at this moment, yet unborn may manifest what is hidden or enveloped within its gross body. The Life-Principle is One and the Same in the subtler region, but directs and reveals itself in the gross plane of matter. Eyes are made gross to reveal the gross material world. Intelligence makes us understand the operation of the Life Force, which infuses our mind with faith in its presence and workings.

A Dialogue with the Maharshi-IV¹

By B.V. Narasimha Swami

Devotee: Swami, now that you have disclosed this to me, is *Jnana* attained by me?

Maharshi: No. You are just being enabled to prepare the intellectual foundation and to give the necessary turn to your will. What has to be done is to *realise*. You have been supplied with a bottle of elixir or nectar (*amruta*), but you can get happiness only by the actual taste of it. It is only by realisation that it becomes firm or habitual, that is, that the old tendencies (*vasanas*) which draw you away into identifying yourself with what is unreal, what is not the Self, are extinguished, leaving you really free and unencumbered by the non-Self. This enduring freedom or perpetual realization (in which time itself sinks back as unreal) is called *Moksha*, salvation or release.

D. Is this salvation or enlightenment (*jnana*) instantaneous or gradual?

M. Time is taken to prepare the intellectual basis on the strength of which intuition is formed. Such time may be of varying lengths in various cases. But the intuition which is realisation, is something to which time does not apply. Realisation of the Self and consciousness of time are like wax and water. There is no sense of time in *Samadhi*. What is regarded as either quick or delayed realisation (*jnana*) is really the quickness or delay in the preparation leading to realisation — not in the realisation itself.

D. Is it not necessary to study the Vedas or at least the *Prasthanatraya* (the Bhagavad Gita, Dasopanishad and Brahma Sutras, all with commentaries) to ensure firm realisation?

M. No. Do you need all that to see yourself? All that is intellectual wealth, useful in explaining doubts and difficulties if others raise them or if you yourself encounter them in the course of thinking. But to attain realisation, all that is not necessary. You want fresh water to drink, but you do not require all the water of the river Ganges to quench your thirst.

D. What is the exact attitude of the *Mukta*, the one who has attained realisation? Is he aware that he has realised and is a perfect *Jnani*, that he has been released from the bondage of ignorance or *samsara*, that he is God or the Self or all the *triputi* (the triad of seer, seen and seeing), that he is the one thing that is real and that all these phenomena are unreal.

M. These are all intellectual concepts. No concept is realisation. You must leave the intellect behind and be firm in intuition of the Self. None of these concepts are required even as aids for ensuring firmness, once perfect realisation is attained. A man does not go on saying to himself, "I am a man, I am free, I am conscious", and so on. Realisation is simple consciousness and is not complicated by thoughts like these.

D. Is non-duality (*advaita*) alone the Truth then? Are dualism (*dvaita*) and modified monism (*visishtadvaita*) wrong at the time of realisation? From that point of view, does not the *Jnani* realise the unity of being?

M. He does and does not realise unity. *Advaita*, *dvaita* and *visishtadvaita* represent the attitude

¹Continued from our last issue, pp. 36

of the individual before he realises. These are also intellectual concepts. In realisation there is no such thing as number experienced, that is, there is no contrast of unity and plurality. These quarrels of one and many are outside realisation.

D. Is not the reality only one?

M. The scriptures say of it, "Yatho vachonivartante aprapyamanasa saha" (*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2-9-1), that is, that the mind and speech retire from it baffled. Why then should you impose mental concepts upon it?

D. But do not the scriptures contradict themselves by adding, "Manasa eva boddhavyam" (by the mind alone it is to be known)², and do they not describe that state as *Prajnana ghanam* (awareness absolute)?

M. The term 'mind' (*manas*) there means the mind which is transformed by realisation into That (*tadakara*). The terms 'tat' (that), 'wisdom', 'consciousness' and so on, are used since they are the nearest approach to That.

D. In the scriptures a table is given showing the ratio or proportion which each kind of happiness or pleasure bears to other kinds, and this realisation is the twelfth in that series. Does not this show that this realisation (*Swarupananda* or *Brahmananda* as it is called there) is relative? It is only a billion billion times a student's happiness. Can this be termed absolute?

M. Commentators say that the word too is *upalakshana* (an approximation). What is meant is that the state of realisation is infinitely happy when compared to the unit which is a student's happiness. There is no comparison between one and infinity. The infinite is the Absolute, alike in point of happiness, knowledge, power and so on.

D. Should not the *Jnani* do good deeds (*karmas*) even after *Jnana* or realisation?

M. This question shows that what was said above about realisation (*jnana*) has not been comprehended. To the *Jnani* there is nothing but *Jnana*. Action (*karma*), which implies



change, plurality, doership and so on, exists only in the intellectual and physical fields.

D. But when a person, who is a combination of spirit and a particular body, proceeds by enquiry (*vichara*) and attains realisation (*jnana*), will not the body of that person go on doing work even after realisation as a result of previous *karma*?

M. From the point of view of the *Jnani*, there was never any bondage (*bandha*) or release (*moksha*), never any body nor any action (*karma*). From the standpoint of the spectator, a body is seen going on doing work in accordance with the tendencies (*vasanas*) operating on it. What is destiny (*prarabdha*)? The arrow which is loosed from the bow, is proceeding straight to hit its mark. But since the *Jnani* feels that there was never a bow or an arrow, where is the mark yet to be hit?

D. But we see the arrow moving.

M. Then to your sight there is *prarabdha*. What meaning does *prarabdha* have, however, except to one who knows it or its effect? That body which you see is not the *Jnani*; it is his former or cast off slough. The serpent's slough (*ahi-nirlvayani*) may be blown about by the

²Compare with *Katha Upanishad*, 2-1-11.

wind, but the serpent itself is free, happy and unaffected.

D. But cannot all this *karma* and these *vasanas* be destroyed by realisation?

M. To the *Jnani* they never existed, and hence there is no meaning in suggesting to him that they should be destroyed.

D. But for one's practice, is it not legitimate for one to pray to God to remove one's *karma* or to counteract it, and to hasten one's attainment of *Moksha*?

M. It is legitimate. As long as you feel that you are different from the higher powers, pray to them; as long as you feel that there are burdens on you, pray in respect of them. But better still, attain *prapatti* (the state of self-surrender) and entrust your entire burden to the Lord, who will then take the burden off your back and give you the feeling that you are in Him and are one with Him.

D. Swami, some say that change or activity of the body, senses and mind are obstacles to *samadhi*, while others say that it need not be so. Which of them is right?

M. Both are right. In *kevala nirvikalpa samadhi* the mind is temporarily lulled into inaction, but it is not yet dead. It is in *laya* and not in *nasa*. Therefore when objects are in contact with the body and senses or when the mind is otherwise exercised, his thin thread of *samadhi* snaps off. But in the case of the perfect *samadhi* known as *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*, the *samadhi* state has become permanent and part of one's nature. Objects may be in contact with his body and senses, and his mind may also be working, yet his *samadhi* remains undisturbed. How is this possible? An analogy will illustrate it. A boy goes to sleep without taking food. Being a heavy sleeper, after much trouble he is roused just sufficiently to swallow some food. He is hardly conscious of eating then, and has no recollection of it after he wakes up in the morning. Again, take the case of our usual bullockcart drivers. They sleep while seated or lying in the cart, but the bulls take the cart right on to the destination. In both these cases, sleep rendered the boy or man oblivious of the motion of the body. In the case of *sahaja samadhi*, what renders the possessor of the body oblivious of its motion or change is the intoxication of Consciousness-Bliss.

MY BELOVED BHAGAVAN

By Rhoda Bharucha

My Beloved is always with me.

So happy should I be.

But why is it not so?

My Father, please let me know.

Is it because I do not have enough love,

Or is it because I do not think of my love?

Do tell me what should I do

To constantly keep thinking of you?

Should I take your Name with each step I take?

Or with each breath I take, or should I meditate?

My Father please, hear my plea

Make me always conscious and aware of Thee.

Moments Remembered
by Managing Editor

DARLING RAMANA

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 Kunju Swami, who is still happily in our midst, entered Ramana-history in Skandashram days! As observed by our friend, Barbara Rose, there are only two old devotees living now who were in Skandashram with Bhagavan — Sri Kunju Swami and Sri Ramaswami Pillai.

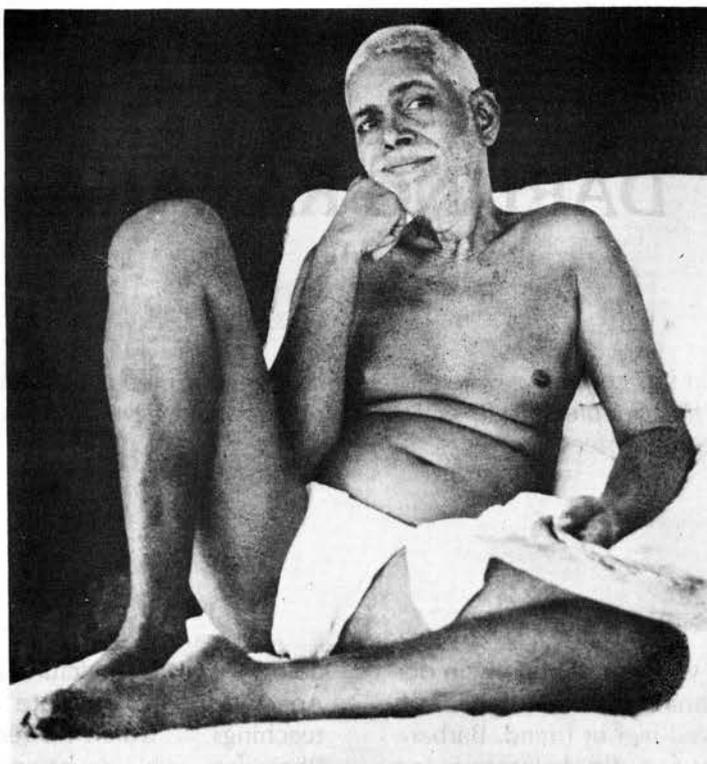
Kunju Swami's real name was *Kunju* itself. When as a lad he arrived at Skandashram, he looked so puny — the tiniest of the inmates — Bhagavan remarked: "Yes! He is 'kunju' (meaning 'small')!" During his Himalayan *yatra* in 1927, he was forced by circumstances to take to *sannyasa* and was given the name 'Kumarananda Giri'. On his return to the Ashram, and when he narrated all this in detail to Sri Bhagavan, He was gracious enough to say: "Whatever it may be, for us, you will always remain as 'Kunju'!" Ever since he has been 'Kunju Swami'.

Fellow devotees will agree with me that Kunju Swami has many endearing characteristics; he is ever approachable and available; he has extensive knowledge of Sri Bhagavan's teaching and a retentive memory which enables listeners to 'live' in the presence of our Master. His narrations of Sri Bhagavan's sayings and

doings are really so picturesque and captivating. Apart from his intimate knowledge of his teachings — which he received direct from Bhagavan — his devotion to Sri Bhagavan is so intense that he often breaks into tears when describing beatific moments with Sri Bhagavan. Fellow-devotees find in him a treasure-house of Ramana-literature and Ramana-stories and share with him the vivid presence of Bhagavan, the human and divine, Bhagavan the *Jnani*, the *Bhakta*, the *Yogi*, and the perfect *Karmi*, Bhagavan the child, the father, the mother, the orthodox, the heterodox, Bhagavan the humourist and the silent sage serene!

It was he who explained to me how Bhagavan came to use the staff very early in His life. Most people would think that Bhagavan started using the staff in old age, but it was not so. It was almost from the days of His arrival in Arunachala! It is again surprising to be told that His head started shaking from that time onwards. When asked about the shaking of His head, Bhagavan Himself told Kunju Swami: "What to do? The great experience¹ had a shattering effect on the body. The body was in

¹The Death Experience in Madurai in July 1896.



a tottering condition. It was as if one tried to push a huge elephant inside a small thatched shed. What would happen to the latter? Such was the condition of this (showing the body)!"

Every now and then during such narrations, Kunju Swami would repeat the refrain: "It is impossible to describe Him". It is these 'impossibles' that I am trying to collect and preserve. I deem it a great privilege that Kunju Swami spends some time with me almost every day and permits this recording of our talks.

One evening while walking on the hill Kunju Swami explained to me how Bhagavan came to compose the invocatory verse to *Supplement to Forty Verses on Reality*².

Jnana Vasishtam, a great work in Tamil, was very often referred to by Bhagavan. It is a selection of verses exclusively dealing with the Path of Self-Knowledge, translated from the Sanskrit *Yoga Vasishtha*. In the early twenties, Bhagavan was going through it and in the process, started correcting the printing errors.

One chapter deals with the story of how King Janaka attained Enlightenment on listening to the *siddhas'* conversation. The conversation in the original covered six verses, but only five were found in the Tamil. Bhagavan translated the omitted verse into Tamil and added it in the book along with the Sanskrit original.² It is this verse which now forms the invocatory stanza in the *Supplement to Forty verses*. The story of King Janaka was told by Sage Vasishtha to Sri Rama as follows:

King Janaka took evening walks everyday in his royal garden, while his retinue stayed outside. One day Janaka, when alone in the garden, happened to hear the conversation of some invisible *siddhas*. The purport of the conversation is as follows:

- (1) When the knower and known become one, then the bliss of the Self is experienced. This is known as Self-Knowledge and this is what one should aim at.

- (2) To eradicate the *vasanas* one should contemplate on the Self which bestows light on the seer, seen and the act-of-seeing. One should thus contemplate on the eternal Self which is the centre between the being and non-being.
- (3) **That in which this entire universe is established, to which it pertains, out of which it arises, for which it exists, by which it really is, that is the self-existent reality, the Truth. Let us contemplate on that in the heart.**²
- (4) One should contemplate on the one eternal Self which reveals itself shining as "I"-*"I"*. Instead of seeking the Truth in the heart, the ignorant goes in search of God outside oneself. It is like a man throwing away the valuable *Kaustubha* Gem in hand and going after conch shells.
- (5) The Self can be realised only by those who have destroyed completely the hosts of desires. Knowing the absence of happiness in the baneful objects (both in the past and future) yet if one clings on to them one would remain in bondage and is no better than an ass.

²These are the Tamil (translation) and Sanskrit (original) verses, written on the margin of the book "*Jnana Vasistham*" by Bhagavan Himself.

The original writing of Bhagavan, as found in the margin of the book is reproduced.

“எதன்கண்ணே நிலையாகி யிருந்திடுமில்
வுலகமெலா மெதன தெல்லா
மெதனின்றில் வணத்துலகு மெழுமோமற்
றியையாவு மெதன்பொ ருட்டா
மெதனாவில் வையமெலா மெழுந்திடுமில்
வெல்லாழு மெதுவே யாகு
மதுதானே யுளபொருளாஞ் சத்தியமா
மச்சொருப மகத்தில் வைப்பார்.”

यस्मिन्सर्वं यस्यसर्वं

यतस्सर्वं यस्मा इदम् ।

येनसर्वं यद्विसर्वं

तत्सत्यं समुपास्महे ॥

ருக 2 ஞான வா

லாம் - நிலையான குணமுடைய, உள்
இரண்டினிடையேய்தி - இரண்டின
இறவிலாதாய் - முடிவில்லாததாய்,
சிமையான ப்ரகாசங்களுக்கெல்லாம்
செய்விப்பதாகிய (வாத்மஞான) ஸ்வ
ப்போமென்றொரு சித்தர் சொன்னார்.

3 (இ-ஊ.) ஞானாவும், திரிஸ்
டும் நீக்கச்செய்து உயர்வான ப்ர
அவ்வாத்ம ஸ்வரூபத்தை தியான
ரும்நிலையானகுணமுடைய சத்த
னியாபகத்தை யடைந்து முடிவில்
காசங்களுக்கெல்லாம் ப்ரகாசஞ்
ரூபத்தை சிந்திப்போமென்றொரு

(ப-ஈ.) அகமென்பார் காண்பார்
னவென்றும் அஸ்மியென்பார், காசு
சீவேஸ்வர பிரமத்தோடும், இவற்றில்
த்தை நீக்கென்பார், வாத்மையுடனே
விளங்குவது ஸ்வயம்ப்ரகாசமென்பார்.
பின்பு தற்பதமென்பார், உள்ளதெ
றும் அசிபத மென்பார்இரண்டினில
கூடஸ்த பிரமமென்கின்ற நான்கு
ன்பார், ஒளிக்கெல்லா மொளியாய்ச்
பதைசீவசிதாபாசனென்க.

அதர்வணவேத மகாவாக்கியார்த்
வேறொபவக்
அகமகமென்றீனத்துயிரி
பதாகி, நிகழொளியாயானமதத்
தல்செய்வார், திகழிதயகுகையு
தெய்வந்தேடன், மிகவரியகவுத்
டும் வேட்கைபோலாம்.

(இ-ள்.) அகமகமென்று - காண
மிருந்து - சகலவாச்மாக்களிடத்துமி
காலமுஞ் சொல்லுவதாய், நிகழொ
ஆன்மதத்துவமான சொரூபத்தை -

- (6) Just as the celestial Indra struck down the mountains with his thunderbolt, let us strike at the senses which raise their hoods as hissing snakes, with our powerful discriminative mind. By this the mind acquires peace, gets equanimity and becomes one with the Blissful Self.

The King was pure and ripe. On hearing the Truth thus revealed by the '*siddhas*' he became so dispassionate that he lost all interest in the relative world and left the affairs of the kingdom to his wise ministers and returned to his private apartments. Left alone he contemplated one-pointedly on the Truth. Following is the gist of King Janaka's experience as revealed by himself:

"With the destruction of *sankalpa*, the mind will also be destroyed easily. The baneful root of mind being destroyed, the tree of birth and death will also be terminated. "O, I have detected the thief who robbed me of my *Atmic* Jewel viz., my Self. His name is mind. I have been long suffering through this villain, I will now gibbet him and make him die."

"Till now I have not been able to bore a hole in the pearl of mind. Now I will do so and make a rosary of it by stringing it in the thread of experience and wear it on my person."

Thus the ripe mind of the King became introverted and merged with the Self. The King remained in *samadhi* for long. In due course, when he came back to the relative plane, he realised that the Self was the substratum of everything. Rooted in the Consciousness, in the Self, he started ruling the kingdom, his mind remaining totally detached from the consequences of any pairs of opposites, like the pain and pleasure.

Kunju Swami recited all the six verses in Tamil, as well. I was spellbound. He interrupted: "Don't give me any credit. This was how

Bhagavan narrated it to us; the credit goes only to Him. Uneducated as I am, how could I know all this except through Him?"

* * *

Smt. Subbalakshmi, wife of Dr. M.R. Krishnamurthi Iyer, is a very staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. Bhagavan has blessed her in her dreams. Particularly, in the early days of her married life, while living in the nearby Tandampattu village, her husband would often run away to Bhagavan, leaving her all alone. She was terribly afraid that her husband might become a *sadhu*. This troubled the newly married wife. The next night Bhagavan appeared to her in her dream, sat beside her and assured her: "Have no fear. I am by his side. Leave him to pursue his chosen path. I am with you always. Give up all worries." So saying, Bhagavan put His hand on her head and blessed her. She woke up delighted. When the dream was narrated to Bhagavan by Dr. M.R. Krishnamurthi Iyer, He gave a gracious smile!

She described another beautiful incident of Bhagavan's overflowing Grace. One day in the streets a portrait of Seshadri Swami was being taken round in a procession, with the usual playing of pipes and beating of drums. Smt. Subbalakshmi had a strong urge that she should have a large portrait of Bhagavan in her home and offer worship to it. Thus thinking she went inside the house and bolted the door. Soon after, some one knocked at the door. When she opened it, to her great surprise, there was a man holding a big framed photo of Sri Bhagavan! He said that he was coming from Tirupattur, that he was an electrician by profession, and that he was directed to leave the photo there. He added that he would come later after paying a visit to the Ashram, "I garlanded Bhagavan's photo and was in ecstasy. My children returned from school and seeing the beautiful photo of Bhagavan they also jumped with joy, shouting: 'Bhagavan has come to our house'. When my husband returned home, the children reported to him that Bhagavan had come to their home. He

was surprised when I told him that I thought that he had sent the photo through the electrician. When we were having our lunch, the person returned from the Ashram. He explained: 'I did some electric work in Major Chadwick's room. When he offered money, I pleaded with him to give me instead the large framed photo of Sri Bhagavan, which he did. I was worshipping it in my house, doing regular *puja*. One day, I got possessed; I was heard shouting: 'Go and give this photo at once to Dr. Krishnamurthi Iyer residing in Avarankattu Street.' My father directed me to you and here I am giving you the photo!" So saying, he went away. The same evening we all went to Bhagavan and told him the whole story. Ramana, the Darling, looked benignly at me and at my family-members, and there reigned only Peace!

* * * * *

One day, Major Chadwick (Sadhu Arunachala) who had settled down here and had never even thought of going back to England, called Sri K. Natesan and requested him to show a piece of paper to Sri Bhagavan, in which he had given a definition for Self-Realisation. Sri Bhagavan read what was written in it and appreciated it very much. The slip of paper contained: "*Self-realisation: It is the death while yet alive of that which lives after death.*"

* * * * *

Sri K. Natesan used to visit holy places in his youth and do it without informing his parents, who would report it with great concern to Sri Bhagavan. Bhagavan used to advise Natesan: "When you go away, why don't you leave a message, so that your parents and others know you are on a pilgrimage?" Once, Natesan was away for some time and many were worried. When he did return, Bhagavan asked him which places he had visited. Natesan replied that he was in Tiruttani, Padaiveedu and Tirupati. Bhagavan pointedly asked him: "What was in your mind at that time?" Straight came the spontaneous answer from Natesan in the form of a verse he quoted from *Sri Ramana Gita*.

न त्वं स्वामिगिरौ नाथ
न त्वं क्षणिकपर्वते ।
न त्वं वेंकटशैलाग्रे
शोणाद्रावसि वस्तुतः ॥

"Lord, not on Swamimalai, nor on Tiruttani Hill, nor on top of Venkatachala (Tirupati) do you now dwell. In reality you are in Arunachala!"

Ramana seemed to be pleased.

* * * * *

When I asked S.S. Cohen as to what was the last question he had put to Bhagavan, he replied: "It was in 1949. Bhagavan was seated outside the New Hall, facing Arunachala. Muruganar and a few others were by His side. I reverentially approached Bhagavan and said: "I want to do only the right thing. The difficulty is that I do not know at the time of decision-taking whether what I wish to do is the right thing or not. If you could give me a formula, a yard-stick, with which I could arrive at the right decision, at any cost I will do only that right thing and not falter. Please guide me" Bhagavan became very stern and said: "There is no such short-cut for living. You have to take your own decisions, take the responsibility for them and reap their consequences too."

I asked Cohen to explain it. He was kind enough to tell me: "Asking for a short-cut for decision-making is the mind's mischief. It is the mind which wants to shirk its responsibility, but yet wants its perpetuation. You cannot have the cake and eat it also. So long as you want to take decisions, it positively indicates the operation of the mind. As long as the mind operates, it cannot do so except on the parallel lines of likes and dislikes. Likes and dislikes imbalance one's decisions. Disequilibrium is the forte of the mind. In acts of pairs of opposites alone the mind can exist. Hence, the right action could be done only in total surrender. For that, Grace is needed. Before doing any act, surrender your mind to Bhagavan and act. It will be the right action. In every sentence, every word Bhagavan drove home

the truth that mind has to be eschewed finally!"

* * * * *

When Maurice Frydman was working as owner-cum-engineer in a firm in Bangalore, he absorbed into his firm some of the sons of the Ashram inmates like T.K. Sundaresa Iyer. Every Saturday evening he would come to the Ashram and return back to Bangalore the next night in his jeep along with these lads. When some one asked Maurice why he spent so much money by coming every week instead of once a month or so, quick came his reply: "What to do? My battery can last only one week and then it dries up. I have to come here to Bhagavan to have it recharged!"

* * * * *

Once Maurice Frydman wrote a poem and handed it over to Bhagavan. Long after he had left, Bhagavan commented. "Maurice Frydman prays: 'Just as in a King's court a dancer has to go on dancing till the King signs to him to stop, though the dancer would be absolutely exhausted, Oh Bhagavan! when are you going to throw your glance of grace at me and bid me to stop from this world-pool of activities?' Appayya Dikshitar has written a verse in Sanskrit on these lines. Maurice should have had the same *bhava* and written this, as he could not have read Dikshitar at all!"

* * * * *

Mrs. Roda MacIver, who is now seriously ill, bed-ridden, once narrated to me the following incidents:

- (1) "One, Kamalrani, who was observing silence, put before Bhagavan a long message, all written out nicely on big sheets of paper. Bhagavan said: 'Is this silence?' and returned the papers to her without reading them. According to Bhagavan, real silence is of the mind, not of the tongue alone. I also recollect Bhagavan's comment: 'Yes, yes! Excellent silence!' when it was reported

to Him that a particular *sadhu* had written more than fifty books during the period of several years of complete silence!"

- (2) "Two visitors came to Bhagavan and one of them said: 'My friend has taken as his guru a man who is not even a *sadhu*. I brought him here so that he would give up this guru and follow you, Bhagavan. Please make him do so'. Bhagavan replied sternly: 'Who are you to say who is the right guru for him? By what power can you make out what a man really is? And are you sure the guru counts so much? All depends on the disciple. Even if you worship a stone with great devotion it will be seen as God'."
- (3) "Bhagavan never liked people to talk ill of others and would take the side of the accused party. On one occasion a rich lady-devotee adopted an outcast boy, but after some time he disappeared with some of her jewellery. When she complained to Bhagavan, He said: 'Your jewels made you lose your boy'."

* * * * *

One day, when Sri Ramaswami Pillai entered the Old Hall, there was a discussion going on as to who was the greater of the two: Siva or Sakti (God or Goddess). Bhagavan, as usual, sat in silence, with a look of amusement. The trend of the talk was that without Sakti (power) Siva could not do anything and this argument looked infallible. Ramaswami Pillai also joined in the fray and said: "Yes, yes! 'He' is contained in 'She'!" The Sakti party became jubilant. "But", interrupted Pillai: " 'He' can be independent and be without 'She'; but 'She' cannot be without 'He'!" The Siva-party looked triumphant. Bhagavan laughed till tears came to His eyes; He enjoyed this spelling-game very thoroughly!

THE CULT OF THE HILL¹

By Kenneth Grant

OF the outer symbol of Sri Arunachala on earth, Lord Siva says: "Meditate on the fact that in the Heart of the Hill surges the Spiritual Glory within which the whole world is contained." It is in fact this holy Hill — the Mount Kailas of the south, the very embodiment of Siva — that is the manifest and visible Guru of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. It behoves us therefore to remember that now the beloved master is no more with us in the fleshy garment of frail humanity, his holy Guru is nonetheless visible and accessible to all those whose eyes are opened to the spiritual glories which Siva describes as surging within Its Heart. Here is the tangible focus of the tremendous spiritual energy which burned with unabated strength in the form of Ramana; thus is this symbol supremely sanctified for us today by the certainty of Liberation, which Bhagavan himself taught us was the reward of the unflinching surrender of the ego in the flames of Its all-consuming embrace. Those who feel disturbed within themselves at the great loss of the body of Bhagavan should instantly direct their minds to the contemplation of the Hill of the Holy Beacon which, Bhagavan has told us, only waits to respond eagerly and tenderly to even our weakest yearning towards it.

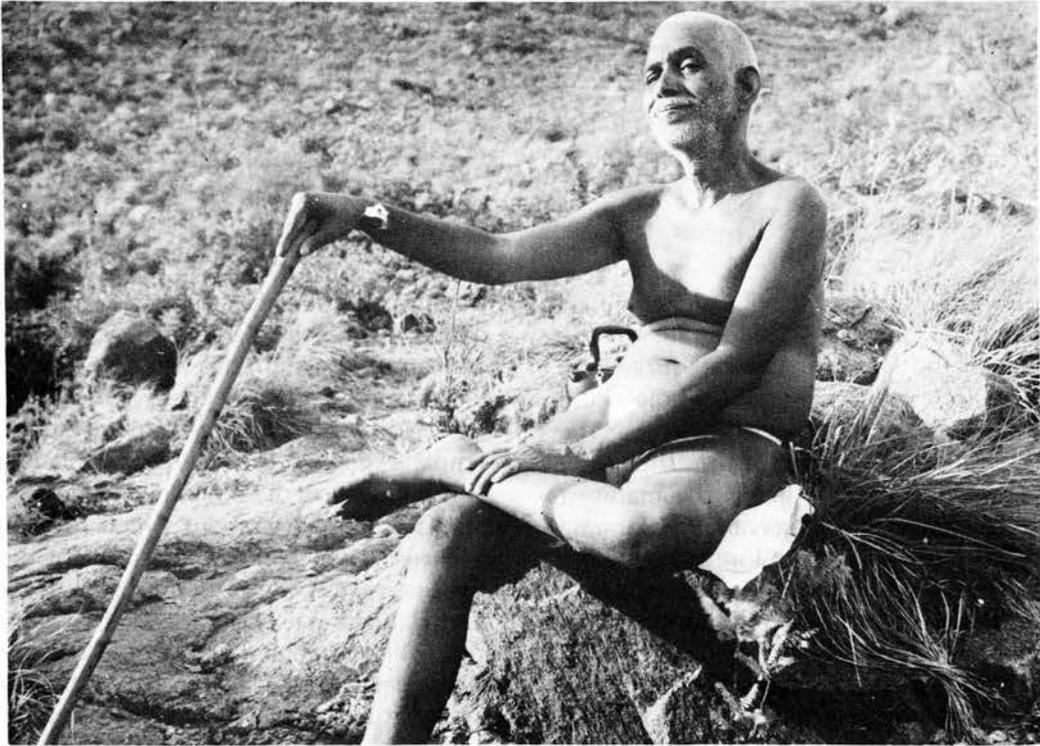
The Hill is verily the greatest of all physical supports of grace. For did It not bear upon Its sacred surface the earthly tabernacle which was the physical form of Bhagavan? Yet, for those who are unable to live within sight of the earthly Arunachala, there need be no regrets, for the Hill Itself is but a thought construction, the same as any other object. If we would grasp the inner significance veiled by the 'dull', outer form of Its simple contours,

we must search within the Heart, and establish contact with that regionless Bliss, void of all conceptions which the mind is capable of formulating. For Arunachala is the symbol of the void nature of the Self manifesting in so simple a shape as the Hill of the Holy Beacon. This is that form of Ramana which lasts longer than the human garment which he wore for our sakes, which nonetheless is not eternal, since no matter can be that. But so long as the world appearance lasts for each aspirant, so long will endure the Hill, to symbolise to us the perfect void, the All-full Self that lies as the heart in spaceless and timeless eternity.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said: 'Is Kali, my Divine Mother, of a black complexion? She appears black because She is viewed from a distance; but when intimately known She is no longer so. The sky appears blue at a distance, but look at it close by and you will find that it has no colour. The water of the ocean looks blue at a distance, but when you go near and take it in your hand, you find that it is colourless.

And so it is with the Hill of the Holy Beacon; go near to It in spirit and it is without shape, without colour, without attributes of any kind. It is only 'distance' which lends It the illusory qualities It seems to possess. Really, we impress the Void It essentially is with the attributes we seem ourselves to possess, and then we imagine we are seeking what is not truly there. Thus it is our attributes we have to slough off if we would come close to the sacred symbol and know its real significance. And our everyday life can help us insofar as we regard all things

¹Adapted from *The Call Divine*, July, 1953.



that occur to us in a new light. For instance, instead of viewing circumstances and conditions as isolated phenomena occurring to us for no reason at all, we should strive to regard each event as a stone upon the slopes of Arunachala; each trivial repetition of which event constitutes at last that sacred Mount of the Spirit which is our true nature. Thus we can worship Sri Bhagavan in and through our ordinary mundane life; it is merely a matter of reorientation and determination to accept as deeply significant in a spiritual way all the seemingly trite and disconnected incidents which constantly occur to us. Yet is this but a preliminary to the final process of knowing Truth as It really is, for, when Arunachala has been thus truly built into the fabric of our hearts, we shall need to view each separate part no longer as a separate stone of the divine edifice, but as the structure entire in Its sublimely simple shape of the Holy Hill. And then, entering into the Heart thereof with understanding, we shall know the whole as the embodiment of that Spirit of grace and compassion which eternally broadens

our hearts.

In this way it is possible for the less advanced of us to perform a spiritual discipline while living in the world — even though far removed from the outer symbol of divine grace in Tiruvannamalai. It is only when we realise that it is we who clothe the formless Arunachala with form, because we view It with the eyes of the body, that we shall begin to search within our hearts for the formless Reality which that form veils. Until then we shall not penetrate and comprehend this miracle, nor shall we understand why Bhagavan Sri Ramana made no difference between his human form and his hill form. It is the Guru in hill form who is an everlasting beacon of hope for those who inhabit the earth (or body); as soon as the body is dissolved into a shining mist, so also does the Guru's hill form dissolve, and we are no longer deluded by other concepts — our own form or the hill form — for these twain are no more; and the underlying reality shines forth as the Pure and perfect void, conceptless and ever Blissful.

Jesus's Parable of the Wedding Feast

By Rosalind Christian

Addressing them later Jesus spoke once more in allegory. 'The Kingdom of Heaven,' he said, 'is like a king who was celebrating his son's marriage. He sent out his servants to remind the people who had been invited to the wedding; but they refused to come. He did the same again, sending further servants to whom he said: "Tell the guests that I have prepared my wedding-breakfast; my bulls and fatted cattle have been killed and all is ready. Come to the wedding."

'But they took no notice and went off, one to the farm he owned, another to his shop, while the rest, seizing the king's servants, abused and killed them. The king was furious. He sent his army out, destroyed the murderers and burnt their town. Then he said to his servants: "The wedding-feast is ready, but the guests have proved unworthy. Go then where the roads lead out of town, and call anyone you see to the wedding." So they went out into the roads and collected everyone they saw, good and bad alike, with the result that the full number sat down to the wedding-feast.

'But when the King came in to look at his guests he found a man there who was not dressed for a wedding. "My friend," he said, "how did you get in here without wedding clothes?" The man had nothing to say for himself; and the King said to the stewards: "Bind him hand and foot and cast him into the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." **St Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 22 V. 1-14 (Translation by EV RIEU-Penguin Classics)**

In the light of advaita, we must, I feel, read this, and indeed all Jesus's parables, *as a whole*. This particular parable, amazingly economical in statement as it is, is long and dramatic compared to many of his other allegories of the Kingdom. It appears to have many parts and to deal with different groups of people. This, I suggest, is deceptive. *All* the apparently separate segments of the story can be regarded as part and parcel of the individual's journey into the 'Kingdom', Non-duality.

First we may note that the guests have already been invited to the marriage feast — but it would appear that they need reminding. Strange guests these, who are so forgetful about so important an event! But if for 'Wedding Feast' we read Non-duality, and duality or 'Maya,' the veiling power of illusion, for the guests' forgetfulness, then we see how very like ourselves they are! Man is, of his very nature, one with the Ultimate Reality; the

Self; but this Reality is veiled by ignorance. This is one of the great themes of the Maharshi's teaching. The goal of the jivanmukta state is also called 'Sahaja', i.e. Easy or natural. We have nothing new to acquire, as in arts, crafts and sciences. We have only to regain our primal innocence — the 'little child' concept of Jesus's teaching (Mark 10.15). Yet nothing is more hard for mankind than this 'easy' or 'natural' thing.¹

The 'King' therefore needs to send 'servants' to remind these deluded 'guests', or rather 'guest' — for this is an experience within *one* consciousness. It must be so by Jesus's own definition, 'the Kingdom of heaven is within'. Who then are these 'servants'? I take them to be those reminders of the spiritual world and its reality vouchsafed at some time or other to every individual, but to some more than others

¹This sentence is a part quote from an article by Prof. U.S. Asrani, *The Mountain Path*, July 1971, p. 177



— particularly to those who pay some attention to them. I refer to meaningful dreams; a passing vision or voice heard; a flash of insight which makes nonsense of our normal consciousness of time and space; a sudden unnerving psychic experience. Any such experience should strike the wakeful mind with a sense of the closeness of the Divine behind the mask of the world. However, the 'guests' of the parable refuse to be moved by any of these into any questioning of their ego-centered existence. 'They refused to come.' So the servants are sent out again with the news that the wedding breakfast is actually ready. What have we here; other and more pointed intimations of the world of spirit, or a sharp reminder that time is not forever? Every woman knows the sense of urgency that runs through the domestic household when the meal is *ready*. But the recipient of these 'messages' make every possible excuse — particularly with reference to his all-compelling pre-occupation with human affairs. We may guess that, subconsciously, he purposefully

magnifies the hurry and stress of life with a view to *not* paying attention to 'the king's servants'. The illusion of the reality of the world in all its multiplicity lures mankind from the task of looking squarely and truthfully at things spiritual. The very last thing that this guest intends to do is to honestly investigate these extrasensory phenomena — as we would call them today. Rather than do this, he is prepared to 'beat and kill' the 'king's servants'. He decides to dismiss all such insights, visions or intuitive flashes as absurd and unreal cloudings of the mind. In short, he tries to adopt the stand-point of the out and out materialist.

Then the 'King' is indeed 'angry' and sends out his 'soldiers' to destroy the 'murderers' and burn their 'town'. The change here from 'servants' to 'soldiers' is noteworthy. Here we have, I believe, something found in other parts of the Gospel, a town and its inhabitants used as symbols of the human condition. The concept of a man as a city with gates is found

frequently in Eastern Scriptures. Jesus might well see such a concept as lying behind certain portions of pseudohistory in the Hebrew Scriptures — for instance the fall of Jericho, or the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The latter is probably the closest parallel to the way Jesus is using his stage set and dramatis personae in this parable.

The 'sack' of the 'city' by the King's 'soldiers' could be a truly dramatic 'showing', to use the term of Christian mystic; or, more probably, a searing and frightening illness, which totally destroys, for a time, this man's normal balance. The recalcitrant 'guests' were, I take it, the surface mind of this very stubborn personality. Just as city builders throw up defensive earthworks, so he entrenches himself behind common sense, reason and traditional beliefs, even behind devotion to duty and family loyalties. Up till this point he has felt himself 'safe' inside these encircling 'ramparts'. Then suddenly all this is shattered. These attitudes are 'killed', and even their *habit-ations* laid waste.

This 'King', it seems to me, intends to seize the total personality on the re-bound. It is fascinating, I think, that in the translation given we have the King saying to his servants, 'Go where the road *leads out of the town*', not just 'into the highways', as does the Authorized Version. We see here, I believe, a tiny but brilliant stroke; a wonderful hint of a shattered personality trying hard to pick up the 'pieces' — a man broken in body and mind vainly struggling to rebuild his life again in some new 'spot'. Perhaps, instead of 'shop' or 'farm' which he has made the *raison d'être* of his life here-to-fore, he will now devote himself to good works, or a study of the Scriptures — anything rather than enter the strange Kingdom of Non-duality. However, this King is not one to be denied. The escaping 'townspeople' are brought into the feast willy-nilly, 'good and bad alike'.

This 'good and bad alike' is a close parallel to the parable of the farmer who sowed good

seed, but whose 'enemies' sowed darnel while he 'slept'. There, it will be remembered, the weeds and corn were to be cut together at one time and sorted out during the process of 'Harvesting' — which I would read as the experience of Enlightenment. The parables are subtly different, however, in that the 'farmer' knows what he is doing and acts purposefully. The personality portrayed in the parable of the Wedding Feast is of a different quality. The wedding guests — if guests they can be called — sit down 'good and bad' alike to this 'feast', which is to say that the experiencer *knows*, beyond any shadow of doubt, that duality, or multiplicity, is at an end. He has been drawn in beyond the realm of opposites and his outlook can never be the same again.

None-the-less, when the 'King', i.e. his own Sovereign Self, 'looks', as it were, at the 'guests', he sees one there without 'wedding clothes'. I have to admit to quite a thrill of recognition as my attention was drawn to this particular 'wedding guest', because, oddly enough, I had met not dissimilar characters before in folklore and myth. Eurystheus in the Heracles myth at once springs to mind. He is so terrified of the hero that he hides from him 'underground', beneath an upturned urn! But it is this cowardly 'creature' who sets the immortal son of Zeus all his impossible tasks. In Celtic folklore there is to be found a wretched little scullery boy who hides in a hole when any hard or dangerous job is to be done, but pops out again to claim the reward! Surely in the guest-without-a-wedding-garment, Jesus is using a similar device? Of course, this 'personage' is not built on the same scale as the other two, but surely he represents the same aspect of the total human make-up — the same, we may say, but subtly different? Like the scullion, he has the faculty of disappearing from view. We may observe that the servants do not seem to have noticed his entry or his condition, and the guests were so absorbed that it is only the 'King' who finds him out. The cook-boy is the greed aspect of the ego, which can re-assert itself even in spiritual people: Eurystheus is

(among other things) that selfdoubt in the hero that makes it impossible for him to find final peace. The guest-without-the-wedding-garment, however, would appear to be something of a sceptic — a corner of the mind which says 'Is this real?' about the whole experience of Non-duality, the Wedding Feast. All these three are aspects of the continually re-assertive ego, which will 'disappear' with Enlightenment, but which may well 're-appear' as that vision or state of consciousness ebbs — indeed, bearing these 3 stories in mind (the Celtic, the Greek, and the parable of Jesus) most certainly *will* re-appear, except with a very few advanced beings.

'Experience is said to be temporary or permanent. The first experience is temporary and by concentration it can become permanent. In the former *the bondage* is not completely destroyed; it remains subtle and *re-asserts itself in due course*. But in the latter it is destroyed root and branch, never to appear again.²

How perfectly this phrase 're-asserts itself in due course' fits in with the hitherto unobserved appearance of this 'wedding guest'. The 'King' of this parable has even been criticized for an uncompromising ruthlessness and a total lack of justice! To do so is to completely miss the 'facts' with which the parable deals and its *within* quality. A parable, like a myth, has its own terms of reference, and value judgments from another sphere in no way pertain. Incidentally, one might ask how all the other 'guests' had 'wedding-garments'? It is of great interest that both Jesus and the Maharshi speak in terms of 'bondage' when describing the ego. The 'stewards' cast the re-assertive ego into outer darkness, which suggests to my mind 'his' final and total extinction. But there are also subtle hints of a dark period of mental suffering, when 'by concentration' the sadhaka has to regain stability of consciousness. That this slip back into duality causes intense anguish is, I think, beyond doubt. Of the world of duality and multiplicity, the Buddha is said to have pronounced — 'all is suffering'.

A devotee asked the Maharshi, 'What are the obstacles to remaining steady in unbroken Bliss?' He answered, 'The obstacles are:

- (1) Ignorance, which is forgetfulness of one's pure being.
- (2) Doubt, which consists in wondering if even the experience was of the Real or of the unreal.
- (3) Error, which consists in the I-am-the-body idea, and thinking that the world is real...²

If for 'Bliss' we write 'Wedding Feast', then we see that the Maharshi and Jesus were answering exactly the same question in exactly the same way. Amazingly, the Maharshi's words might be said to paraphrase the parable — or the parable to be his words in story form.

'Thus', concludes Jesus, 'you see that many are called, but few are chosen'. Many, it would seem, are visited by the 'King's' 'servants'; they have intimations of immortality. But only very few are taken, as this man was in the parable, and forced willy-nilly to sit down to the 'Feast'. Non-the-less, we, the observers of this strange story, may conclude that this apparently unwilling guest was an advanced being ripe for plucking. Fundamentally he was very well aware of the King's invitations — hence the vehemence of his excuses. It is always before capitulation that the ego puts up its biggest fight.

All in all, this parable is a Masterpiece — a masterpiece in miniature. For the most part the imagery is Jesus's own, though the Wedding Feast motif comes from very ancient religion. Like the great myths, it contains many meanings — upon one of which I have not so far touched but which becomes more explicit in other parables of Jesus.

²Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi p. 90

HOW I CAME TO SRI BHAGAVAN

By Eleanor Pauline Noye

*This pious lady from California has a special place in the Ramana-history. She reached a crisis in her life and after years of anguish and sleepless nights, she was in a critical condition. In 1938, she left by boat from San Francisco on a round-the-world trip, against great odds, including physical disability, in search of peace. Her reply to a query why she was taking that trip was: "I want to find myself". Ever since, the Divine hand was directing her and guiding her towards her goal. She lands in Madras. While others reach Calcutta, she goes to Kodaikanal. She meets two Hindu brothers and for no known reason she spontaneously asks them if they knew any Seers. They, in one voice, say 'Sri Ramana Maharshi' at Tiruvannamalai! She reaches Tiruvannamalai. The following exquisite account was culled from the Ashram publication: **Golden Jubilee Souvenir**. Eleanor Pauline Noye was introduced to our readers in our issue of April, 1972, p. 156.*

After arriving at Tiruvannamalai I engaged a bullock cart to take me to the Ashram, where I was greeted by some of the inmates including Niranjanananda Swami, brother of Sri Bhagavan. They told me that Sri Bhagavan was on the hill, but would be in the hall shortly, and graciously invited me to have my breakfast.

My heart throbbed with expectation as I was taken to the hall. As I entered it I felt the atmosphere was filled with Sri Bhagavan's Purity and Blessedness. One feels a breath of the Divine in the Sage's presence. He was sitting on a couch, clad only in a loin-cloth, surrounded by His devotees. When He smiled it was as though the gates of Heaven were thrown open. I have never seen eyes more alight with Divine Illumination — they shine like stars. He greeted me very tenderly and made some enquiries about me, which put me at ease. His look of Love and Compassion was a benediction that went straight to my heart. I was immediately drawn to Him. His gentleness and kindness is all-embracing. One feels such an uplifting influence in His saintly Presence and cannot help but sense His extraordinary

spirituality. It is not necessary for Him to talk, His silent influence of Love and Light is more potent than words could ever be. I did not know what manner of man I expected to find. But once I saw Him, I said to myself, "Surely, no one like Sri Bhagavan!" I do not think there is another like Him on earth today. To see Him is to love Him. After spending the morning with Him, I had lunch at eleven o'clock and rested until two p.m. Then I returned to the hall. As I looked upon Sri Bhagavan's serene face and into His eyes which beamed with mercy, my soul was stirred. He knew how much I needed Him, while He looked straight into my heart. Every one who comes to Him is blessed; the Inner Peace which is His is radiated to all. A beautiful sight is the little children kneeling before the Master as He blesses them and smiles so tenderly, sometimes taking one in His arms, reminding me of the painting, "Christ Blessing the Children". Later I walked around the grounds, talked to the devotees. At seven o'clock I had a light meal; then I had the opportunity to say just a few words to Sri Bhagavan about my journey. Some time later I went to the Traveller's Bungalow, as ladies are not allowed to stay in the Ashram at night.

I would like to say here, that the one reason why I had been in such a run-down condition was that I had not slept well for years, although I had been taking medicine, which never gave me any relief. Although I said nothing to Sri Bhagavan about this, the amazing thing was that I slept soundly the first night and thereafter without taking any medicine, though I lacked the many comforts I had been accustomed to. I received "the Medicine of all medicines, the unfailing grace of the Lord, whose name is Heart". I arose next morning, feeling refreshed, as though I were born anew!

Soon after, one afternoon, as I was standing by the gate, Sri Bhagavan stopped, while on His way to the Hill-side, and asked me if I had more peace. His loving solicitude made me feel quite at home; and when He smiled, my joy knew no bounds.

My love blossomed into deep devotion and I was filled with ineffable peace; the things which seemed so vital before were no longer of any importance. I could see things in their correct perspective; the heartaches of yesterday and thoughts of tomorrow faded into oblivion. Here, in the Ashram time seems to stand still. It is truly the Holy-land. The air is permeated with His peace and love.

Looking upon eternal Arunachala: "The Hill of Light", one is filled with awe and is overwhelmed by a great Spiritual Power. Everything is vibrant and speaks to us in Silence. On full moon night it is especially inspiring to go around the hill. In this deep silence and, quietude one readily hears the voice of God. In the inspiring words of the Master from *Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala*: "Only to convey by Silence Thy Transcendent State Thou standest as a Hill, shining from heaven to earth". One may also say with the Psalmist: "Be Still And Know That I Am God". These were among the first words spoken to me by Sri Bhagavan and the last ones before I left for America. I had always loved to meditate upon them, but now they seemed to take on a new meaning and filled my heart with bliss. I had been at the Ashram for two months, then

made arrangements to sail one month later. I wanted to know more about India before going home. So, I reluctantly made plans to leave the place. I had grown to love it and was very sad during those last days. Bhagavan said: "I will always be with you, wherever you go"!

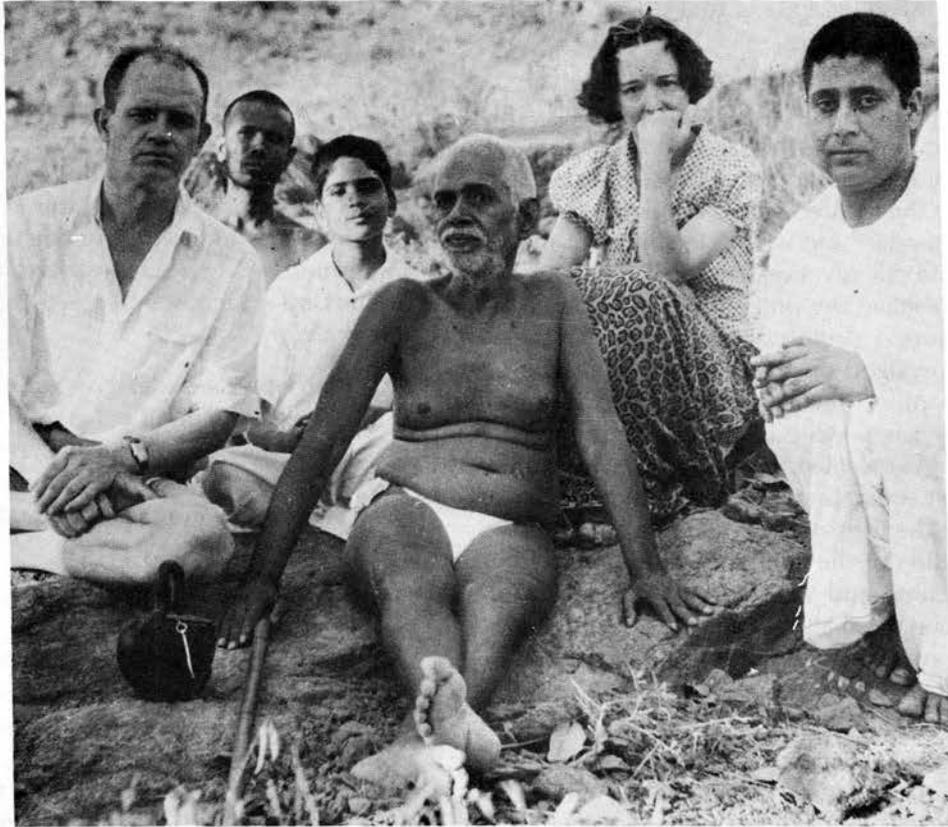
When the last day arrived I could not stop crying. Therefore, I did not go to the hall but sat by the pool. In the afternoon when I sat before Bhagavan He smiled and said: "She has been crying all day; she does not want to leave Me." He was so sweet and tender. Later I went to Him for His blessing; the pain of parting was almost more than I could bear; with tears in my eyes I knelt in deepest reverence and devotion before my Beloved Master. May He always be my Father, Mother and God; and may I always be His child, and whatever I do, may it be in His name!

I went from Madras to Srinagar and then to Calcutta wherefrom I expected to sail for America. My mind was filled with the love of Bhagavan; by His Grace I was guided and protected as never before, sometimes almost miraculously.

My eyes were filled with tears many times as I thought of returning to America without seeing Him again. One day I seemed to hear Him say: "Come back to Me again". During the time I was away from the Master my love and faith had deepened, and I decided to return to Him as soon as possible.

I changed my plans. Instead of going back to America by the next boat, I took the train, leaving Calcutta for Tiruvannamalai. Queer to say, I felt as though I were going Home! The tender way Bhagavan greeted me, as I stood before Him, will live in my heart always. I wept with joy knowing I was thrice Blessed in being able to return to Him. As I basked in His Eternal Sunshine in those silent hours of communion I was filled with His Grace.

It is a privilege to have some meals with the Master; to eat the food which He has handled is in itself a Blessing. He would arise at dawn



and help to cut the vegetables, very often helping also to prepare special dishes which were delicious. Bhagavan was always considerate to everyone. He wanted to be sure there was plenty of everything; and the rich and poor received the same kind of attention, as also the animals; no distinction was shown.

The monsoon was on. Whenever it rained Bhagavan's attendants put a white cloth on His chest to protect His body from the cold weather. He looked like a sweet child wearing a bib, and with all His Wisdom and greatness one is struck by His childlike nature. At other times He looks like the King of kings; His poise and dignity are outstanding. When some times at night He would throw a shawl over His head, He looked like the Madonna. I would stand outside in silent adoration. Again, at other times He looked like a devoted father

smiling upon His children. I loved to watch Him as He walked up the hill, just when the sun was setting. And it was my greatest delight when I could go with Him.

One morning I picked a lovely rose; my first thought was to give it to the Master. A devotee said: 'What a beautiful rose!' I replied: 'Yes, it is for Bhagavan'. I sat in the hall, wondering if I should give it to Him. After a few minutes I laid it on the small foot-stool at His sofa, and he said: "What is that?" I replied: "Only a rose". He said: "Give it to me." He took it and touched with it His forehead and cheeks. I was so deeply touched, I wept.

When I left America I longed for Peace; there was a yearning in my heart which would not let me rest. Here at the feet of the Lord of Love, peace and happiness garlanded me and

enriched my being. I know that Bhagavan led me to this haven of rest.

As the time to leave drew near I was very sad; I knew this time I would really go. It had been eight months since I returned to the Ashram for the second time! Those last days I spent with the Master were blissful. He was so kind and tender; and when He smiled at me, tears would fill my eyes. I wondered how I could ever leave the place. When the day of parting came, I could not stop crying. In the morning I walked on the Hill with Bhagavan and some other devotees, then again in the afternoon, when we had our pictures taken with Him. As I walked down the Hill with Him for the last time He alone knew what was in my heart. The little monkeys were all lined up on either side of the Hill-path. Bhagavan told them to come and say good-bye to me. He knew I loved them also. When we reached the hall, Bhagavan read a few comforting passages from *Psalms*, Chapter 139, verses 7,8,9 and 10.¹

He invited me to have supper with Him, as ladies are not allowed in the dining hall at night. It was a Blessed joy to have that last meal with the Master. I shall never forget it. Just before I left I went to Him for His blessing and wept at His feet as my heart overflowed with adoration and love. He is dearer to me than life itself. May I consecrate my life to Him! Then I said good-bye to the devotees in the Ashram, who were invariably kind to me.

My devotion and faith have grown through the years and will never be shaken under any circumstance. I am very happy to say that I shall be returning soon to my Beloved Master. I hear His call!

¹Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?
Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? (7)
If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there! (8)
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, (9)
even there thy hand shall lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me. (10)

JNANI'S ACTIONS

By Dr. K. Subrahmanian

A man with a mind cannot evaluate a Jnani who has 'swallowed' the mind. A personality cannot fully understand an impersonality. Our explanations of the actions of a Jnani cannot ever be fully adequate.

People often wonder how and why a Jnani who has no mind of his own laughs and weeps like the rest of us. He does this out of compassion for us, out of love for us. He is not in the least affected by what he does.

When my small child comes and asks me to attend her doll's wedding, I am not indifferent. I ask her whether all others in the family have been invited, whether the bride and the bridegroom are ready, what kind of wedding feast it will be, etc. etc; Everyone in the family gets excited about the doll's wedding. The child is supremely happy making the arrangements.

Now, I know it is not a real wedding. But I get involved in it to make the child happy because to the child it is real. I do this hoping that one day the child will get out of the illusion. I don't want to disillusion her now as I am aware that it is a necessary stage on life's journey.

In the same way, a Jnani gets involved in our joys and sorrows. His involvement is only apparent. He is involved in the way we are involved in a doll's wedding. It is real at one level and unreal at another. To the Jnani the world as we see it is unreal and he acts the way we do out of love for us, and his actions do not affect him in any way. He is pure consciousness.

Insight meditation in the forest

By Ron Ohayv

*The techniques of Theravadan meditation vary from place to place, but they generally have two factors in common: a foundation of strict morality, and in the meditation itself, persistent attention to the thoughts, feelings and sensations of the body-mind. No judgements are made — there is just a simple observation of the emergence and the disappearance of mental and bodily sensations. This interview with a Theravadan meditation teacher illustrates and exemplifies a whole tradition of Buddhist Meditation. The interview takes place at a spread-out hilly monastery in Thailand near the Cambodian border. It is one of the serious meditation monasteries in N.E. Thailand, the area most associated with intense meditation. It is led by **Ajahn Jan**, a pupil of Ajahn Chah, a famous teacher of the Theravadan techniques of meditation.*

These extracts are taken from a booklet published by the Buddhist Publication Society, Sri Lanka.

Question: What do you teach new comers?

Ajahn Jan : When they come to practice I give them the basic training in morality (*sila*): to know evil and to stop doing it. It is necessary to keep the five moral precepts as your standard: not to kill other beings, not to steal, not to be sexually unfaithful, not to lie and not to lose your consciousness with drugs and liquor. These precepts are the foundation for meditation at all levels. From there you should associate with wise and good people and not get caught up and lost in bad company. Then you must have the right profession, one in which you can be moral, and not lie, steal or cheat or do things that would hurt or exploit other beings. Then to develop generosity, to be charitable towards other people, to the poor, to give people things they need. When you are meditating, you will see greed or anger or wrong views come up. It is necessary to challenge them and do something about them and not to dismiss them or lie to yourself about it, or be easy on yourself. Then to develop patience in everything when things are good or bad,

without getting caught up in joy or sorrow. The advice of the Buddha to lay people is to develop virtue. Loving-kindness is to refrain from doing unkind things to others, like exploiting them. To feel compassion, which is not pity or looking down on others; it is a higher form and means "to know the nature of suffering within yourself, and that all beings share this suffering". When you know that we are all in the same boat, the compassion will come by itself.

Question : What part does the life style here, the physical work, for instance, play in the meditation goal? Or what part does meditation play in the life goal?

Ajahn Jan : In Buddhist monasteries in Thailand, they often speak of entering and leaving meditation. These strict methodical systems help people a lot, but that is a narrow perspective, because they have got the idea that it is something you enter and leave. Here the idea is to make it your way of life, something which pervades everything you are doing all

the time. So I stress less extreme forms of practice here, more naturalness and more mindfulness. When the monks work and do chores, the idea is to become aware of whatever they are doing, and not get caught up in thinking: "I wish I were meditating in my hut now, really meditating, and not this carrying of water from the well," thinking that carrying water from the well is not meditating. I want them to treat meditation so that no matter where they go, or what things come into their lives, they will develop mindfulness around *that*. With some Buddhist methods you walk very slowly and eat in very stylised exaggerated ways, but here you are supposed to eat and walk in a normal way and to develop mindfulness around the normality of your life as you live here as a monk. Mental training is not enough, so we work too.

Question : What about mental meditation then?

Ajahn Jan : After you have the foundation in bodily and speech morality. I teach the meditation for your mind. It starts with *samatha*, pointing the mind on one thing rather than letting it wander around through all its cares and worries, problems and anxieties. We use the breath and a word to discipline the mind. After a while, when the mind gets "stuck" onto this one thing, the unpleasant thoughts and memories cannot get in.

Here we use concentration on the inhaling and the exhaling of the breath and word *Bhu-to*, *Bhu* while inhaling and *to* while exhaling. There is nothing sacred in this, it is only a way of concentrating the mind, but it is also the name for the Buddha or "the one who knows". I advise all my disciples here to keep this word going through their mind whatever they are doing, all day long, when working, eating, going on the morning alms round, washing, meditating, chanting and so on.

Question : Does insight follow this tranquillity exercise?

Ajahn Jan : After the *samatha* the mind is

not going round so rapidly. Tranquillity is stopping the mind while insight is looking at it and examining it. This wisdom is not of worldly things, but is in knowing the nature of existence. You examine your own existence, whatever comes in and goes out of your mind, without judging as good or bad, but just watching their nature. And you see, not just intellectually know, that all that is born also dies.

Question : That all phenomena are impermanent?

Ajahn Jan : Yes with Buddhism, concerning your feelings and emotions, you are always going through a process of birth and death. You may have a feeling of great love for someone, or indifference or hatred, and then it disappears; this is emotional birth and death. But the very grossest forms of clinging are with the body, the clinging to the idea that we are born when it is born, and die when it dies. Through understanding the idea of birth and death you can understand the Buddha's doctrine that there is no soul, there is nothing you can find through sensory perception that has a permanent entity like a soul.

To understand the nature of the physical body, we use certain techniques here and in the other monasteries of the north-east. One is a traditional Buddhist meditation dating back to the first ordinations, which is still in the ordination ceremony when you become a monk. You examine the five objects of meditation—the head hair, body hair, teeth, skin and nails—to understand their nature, to get insight into these very crude, coarse things about yourself.

We see things according to the conventional way we have been trained to view them. Male and female, youth and old age, are conventional ways of viewing that are ingrained within our own minds and born out of ignorance. They are not absolute truths of existence, but are part of the flux and change of the universe. We see men and women through our sensory perception, which can only discriminate but not unify. Thinking in dualistic terms is a form of ignorance, not truth. If we identify with this

body and think we are a male because this is a male body, then we are born and will die along with the body. If we cling to that role or convention which is impermanent, to that mental state, then we are subject to birth and death along with it. But if we free ourselves from convention and see things in their true nature, we are no longer subject to birth and death, as are the emotions and body.

Question : What kind of results does this kind of meditation bring?

Ajahn Jan : If a person has been meditating, his mind becomes stable and firm. If something unpleasant happens, instead of getting lost in the emotions, the mind is really firm through everything. A meditator takes things as they come and his mind is stable under all circumstances, whether life is giving him the best, or he is having to endure the worst pain, sickness or old age. We talk a lot about "letting go, not clinging" here. Becoming detached instead of attached. One of the key ideas is to do things with a mind that is empty, that is not attached to something else.

Question : Does that mean that you will not experience pleasure or happiness as such?

Ajahn Jan : We experience it, but we do not get lost in it, nor do we seek it.

Question : You experience it as intensely, but do not become dependent on it?

Ajahn Jan : When beauty or happiness is

there, you know it, it seems like what it is but it is not something that you feel miserable without. The happiness of a monk is peace rather than sensuality. The real joy or bliss is from the mind becoming peaceful, not from feelings of ecstasy or extreme happiness. In not fearing that you will lose this happiness, and in seeing things as they are and knowing their nature.

Monks mainly approach Buddhism now from the scholastic side. They spend years learning *Pali* (the preaching language of the Buddha), the scriptures, the *Abidharma* (Buddhist psychology), but they never learn the practical side of Buddhism. If you only study, you may become like some *Abidharma* students who know the fancy words for all the different mental states you can possibly have; but if you do not know what your mind is that does not help you at all. A lot of monks study for years and then come into meditation and spend their time looking for things they have learned in their books, rather than seeing what is there in the present. It is hard for them to let go of all this knowledge which they spent so many years acquiring. Often the people who meditate do not know anything about Buddhism and so they do not have too many biases.

The main thing is to see things as they really are, to know good and evil as they are, without trying to seek one or avoid the other. You are not to cling to evil, but also not to goodness, because they are both changing and depend on each other.

A few days ago, one night when Bhagavan, after supper, was resting on his cot in the verandah east of his hall, something funny took place. He was facing south. Chadwick was sitting behind Bhagavan's back. Soon after Bhagavan took his seat and leaned on the cushions, Chadwick from behind stealthily and unnoticed fanned Bhagavan. When Bhagavan turned and looked Chadwick withdrew the fan and remained still. When Bhagavan turned his face south, Chadwick resumed fanning again. Bhagavan turned round and Chadwick stopped. Bhagavan was left wondering how he got the breeze. Chadwick then laughed out and Bhagavan joined in the laughter. This shows how even with such an eminent master a devotee can play and both can enjoy the joke like children!

— *Day by Day with Bhagavan.* 31.5.45

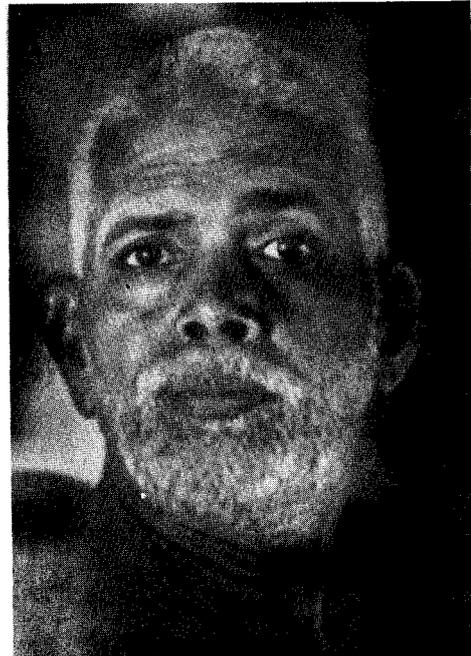
Wisdom set to Music, Music Tuned to Wisdom

By William Jackson

It is recorded¹ that one day a musician entered the hall in which Sri Ramana Maharshi was sitting and gave a performance of some of Sri Thyagaraja's songs. It was noted that one of the songs gave the imperative: "Find the source of sound which is transcendental (*mooladhara sabda*) by diving deep like a pearl-diver diving for pearls." While the purport of this line is exactly in keeping with Sri Thyagaraja's philosophy and practice, this specific combination of the idea of finding transcendental sound's ultimate source and the image of pearl-diving is not found in any single song; separately the ideas are mentioned in the songs *Svaragasudha* and *Nannuvidaci*, respectively. In any case the idea is clear and represents a way in harmony with both Sri Ramana Maharshi's and Sri Thyagaraja's paths — which, incidentally, appear to me to converge. Return to the mysterious Origin, source of the divine Om, the vibration from which differentiated sounds and creation emerge — this is the way to resolve the problems of becoming, by tuning in on the original Reality with loving song, with subtle meditation.

It is recorded that the musician then sang another song, which the reporter translated as: "For a man who has controlled his mind where is the use of *tapasya*? Give up 'I-am-the-body' idea and realize 'I am not; Thou art all.'"

This song by Sri Thyagraja is no doubt *Manasvadhnamaina*. It is composed in the contemplative mode of *Shankarabharanam*, and the Telugu lyrics consist of a series of questions



which sound much like the kind of inquiry with which Sri Ramana Maharshi turned seekers inward.

Pallavi: manasu svadhnamaina ya ghanuniki mari mantrantramulelo (For the glorious soul who has mind-control where is the need for mantric and trantric lore?)

Anupallavi: tanuvu tanu gadani yencuvaniki tapasu ceyanela dasarathabala

(For the one who knows full well the body is not oneself what's the need for *tapas*, O Son of Dasaratha!)

¹Talks With Ramana Maharshi, P. 418.

Charanam 1. *anni nivanucu yencinavaniki
yasrama bhedalela
kannugattu mayalani
yencuvaniki
kantala bhramalela dasaratha
bala*

(For the one aware that all is really only oneself what's the point of differentiation into life's quadruple stations? How could one who knows that the visible world is *maya* be stunned by dazzling women, oh Dasaratha's Charming Son!)

Charanam 2. *ajanmamu durvisayarahituniki
gatagamiki yela
rajarajesa niranjana nirupama
rajavadana tyagarajavinuta*

(For one who from birth has never been a sychophant of pernicious sensations what further re-deaths can there be? O Lord of emperors, Immaculate, peerless One, with moonlike countenance, O Lord Whom Tyagaraja adores.)

It seems that a seeker who had come to see Sri Ramana Maharshi and was present for the performance of the Sri Thyagaraja songs asked the sage if the yogic practice of breath control was necessary.

"Breath control is only an aid for diving deep. One may as well dive down by control of mind. On the mind being controlled, the breath becomes controlled automatically," he was told.

"Thyagaraja says well," Sri Ramana Maharshi went on to say. "The mind should be controlled. The question arises 'What is mind?' He himself answers in the next couplet, saying that it is the 'I-am-the-body' idea. The next question is 'how the control is effected. He answers again, saying, 'By complete surrender. Realize that I am not and that all is He.' The song is fine and compact."

Surrender, devotion, music, meditation can all be aids for diving deep as both Sri Thyagaraja and Sri Ramana Maharshi have taught. And having dived deep and won the pearl worth trading all for, both saints spoke and sang out

JESUS CHRIST

By Maha-Kavi Subramania Bharati

"God came down and died on the cross,
And on the third day rose again.
Loving Mary Magdalene
With her own eyes saw these things happen."
So says the Bible. Listen, O world,
To its true inner meaning.
God will enter our body and save
Us from destruction for ever and ever
If only we destroy our ego.

Look, Love is Mary Magdalene
And the pure Spirit Jesus Christ.
If first we kill the evil in us
A good new life springs forth full soon.
Beholding its beautiful golden face
Love that is Mary Magdalene
Cherishes and clings to this good life.
Ah! this is happiness indeed.

Fix the mind on the cross of Truth,
And strike it with the nails of *tapas*,
The living glory of Jesus Christ
Shines in the body's firmament.
Womanhood, Love eternal, Mary
Is guarded by *dharma*, Jesus Christ.
The meaning subtle to see is yet
Easy to put into practice this instant.

— Tr. By Professor K. Swaminathan

of the fullness of their experience of communion with the divine. Theirs is a confidence born of Realization. One by way of music, the other by his presence, inquiry and silence — both have inspired many souls to enjoy a deeper contemplative mood and to know the profounder dimension of their own being — there where silence becomes song and song becomes silence. For those established in such a reality where is the need for rigid rigamarole, or for craving and clinging — and where is there cause for fear of the future?

1/2

ONLY HALF A SENTENCE . . .

By Lucy Cornelssen

.....to think is not your real nature. (Ramana Maharshi, *Talks* 184)

It is only half a sentence; however it contains a spiritual Truth, which, when put into practice in everyday life, can lead the *sadhaka* straight to his Goal.

Still, how many even among the serious followers of Sri Ramana Maharshi have ever stopped for a moment in reading it? Though it is stressed in the *Talks* by using a different kind of type: It is only *half* a sentence; how can it be of weight?

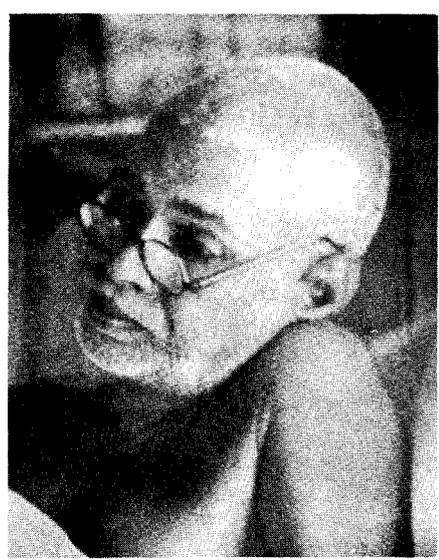
The first half of the saying runs: 'To imagine Muladhara at the bottom, the Heart at the centre, or the head at the top or over all these, is all wrong. In one word, to think is not your real nature.'

The few words 'Muladhara', 'Heart' and 'head' used by the Master of Silence encompass here the whole body of classic spiritual teaching, the Darsanas, the six orthodox Hindu-philosophies, Yoga and anything else claiming to partake in the basic knowledge of a spiritual 'Way'. "It is all wrong", says the Sage of Arunachala. "Stop thinking."

The attentive reader, coming across this order, asks: 'How is that done? How can I stop a completely automatic function of my brain? It seems technically impossible.'

Before we proceed, another doubt has to be cleared. Have not those who sat at the feet of the Master seen Him thinking as he answered the questions of devotees and visitors, as he read and corrected proofs or as he glanced through books or papers or letters?

True. To understand the matter, we have to



have a look at the developing of our thinking faculty, or rather its organ, our brain.

The human brain developed by being used as the foremost means for surviving in a threatening environment, and this is its foremost task even up to this day. To the primitive man thinking in the context of his environment and situation was a *faculty under his control* and direction; in the course of milleniums of evolution it degenerated from a *capacity* to a *compulsory* automatic function, which is not any more under the conscious control and direction of man. To understand the strange statement of the Master we have first to discover in our thinking the *realm* which is the *legitimate* field of intellectual activity. Perception by the senses gathers facts; thinking means 'to discriminate and choose' according to necessity. Discriminating leads as the next step to abstract thinking. When the primitive

man perceived the strange behaviour of sun and moon — their rising and setting — he tried to understand. As far as his life was influenced by those celestial bodies his thinking was concrete and to the point; but there remained much beyond this understanding; this led to abstract thinking. It went always and goes still from within towards without.

It has done this for millions of years. About 10,000 years ago the evolution of the brain and nervous system of man had reached a state of maturity which caused his thinking to change its direction from without to within onto himself; He discovered a new feeling, that of 'I'. That means he discovered reflexive thinking. This event in the evolution of man was meant to cause him to stop thinking and surrender himself to another, higher capacity, intuition.

It opened a new dimension of consciousness to him: That of the Spirit, whose language is Silence. *Silence* not only of talking, but of the mind: of thinking!

Most men however seem to have been intoxicated by the overwhelming possibilities of this new dimension of consciousness. Those, who were sufficiently sensitive to the influence of the Spirit, stopped thinking and thereby feeling and intending, and entered the mystic Silence of quiet receptivity; they became the saints and sages, the messengers and mediators of the Spirit of mankind.

Others used the newly won Power to build temples and images, rites and ceremonies, to keep this mysterious Power under their control; they created creeds and cultures and destroyed them one after the other — up to the present condition of this our planet.

And they did it by submitting the new dimension of consciousness to their old capacity of thinking, not perceiving that by this method they veiled the new realm and developed the old able servant into a tyrannic master, their *capacity* of thinking into the *compulsion* of automatic associations, which nobody could stop any more. They never discovered that this kind of thinking was not their true nature.

It is this truth that the Sage of Arunachala brought into the full daylight: '...(this) thinking is not your real nature.'

You will find many wise sayings about the nature of 'I' and 'mind', Spirit and 'the world' all over the world, but it will be all 'thinking', all thick curtains veiling the face of spiritual Truth.

But how to stop thinking, to remove this rotten curtain between man and the Reality?

There is no-magic wand available for this purpose, no conjurer's trick nor yogic technique. The only way is to try. Do not ask, how it is done. Try.

Try to watch your thoughts, how they rise and disappear.

Try to discriminate their character; restrict them to move in their legitimate field of everyday life and professional activity; keep them strictly in the here and now. Don't let them indulge in a cherished past; don't let them dream about the future. Keep them to their task.

Try to be aware, when they trespass into the forbidden domain of the Spirit! But even then don't use violence in fighting or repressing them; simply give your attention to another object, another direction.

Develop the consciousness of a *witness* to the world of your thinking: Watch it without letting yourself be carried away by your thoughts! And ask yourself as often as you remember: Is this present thinking process really necessary? If not: stop it!

It is the *only* way to cure the mental disease of automatic associative thinking. And it takes time. There is no hurry and no short cut, but the method works! One day or other you perceive that there is no automatic thinking any more. And, what is more: You perceive that this miracle is really your *natural state*, as Huang Po expressed it: 'Omnipresent, void, pure, silent, a glorious and mysterious peaceful joy — and that is all.' Then you will know what the Sage of Arunachala really meant by his statement: **'To think is not your real nature.'**



GARLAND OF

By Sri Muruganar

Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

1064

Instead of calmly questing "Who
Am I", thus gaining and then being
The Self which is Awareness, why,
Why should one alienate oneself
From that and in the treacherous field
Of the senses suffer torments?

1065

Though one should win at one stroke all
The eight *siddhi's* people yearn for,
All one's gains and all one's learning
are wasted if one fails to undo
The primal knot and to reclaim
The one, sole, perfect jewel, the Self.

1066

True wealth is but the gracious silence
Of steady, unswerving Shiva-awareness.
This bright, rare treasure can be gained
Only by those who earnestly
Strive for extinction of all thought.

1067

As the pearl-fisher single-thoughted,
Weightened with a stone, dives deep
Into the sea and grasps the pearl
So precious and rejoices, dive

Into the heart with stern *vairagya*
Gain the Self-treasure, and so end
All suffering and sorrow.

1068

In that flawless state of Being
The Self, without a sense of "I"
And "mine", the still abidance in
And as Awareness pure, this is
The noblest victory worth winning.

1069

The Awareness pure, unflawed of Being
Is the transcendent state wherein
Both mind and breath find bliss. This state
Of grace supreme surcharged with peace
Serves also as the medicine which
To the sick, restless mind restores
Healthful peace.

1070

Only those who deem themselves
The body false and transient, not
The real, eternal Being, the Self,
Have visions sometimes of various gods
And think of these with a thrill of joy.

1071

By worshipping the non-self one
May gain all sorts of benefits
Unreal. But that true, permanent
State of Awareness which is Shivaood,

GURU'S SAYINGS

This life eternal, no lesser god
Can give.

1072

"I see the vision...Now it's gone,"
Say they who know not that they're witness
Alike to what they don't perceive
In sleep and to what when awake
They do perceive.

1073

The gods whom earnestly we worship
Appear and disappear by turns.
The natural awareness which abides
Ever unchanging, clear and certain
Is the true god supreme.

1074

This thing here, that there, whatever
Objects we confront, the true being
Of them all is the pure, bright space
Of Awareness shining as the Self.

1075

Knowing that all the things we point to
As this and that are mental concepts,
The truth that shines in perfect stillness
Deep within us all, the real, mighty
Being-Awareness is the Self.

1076

To search amid bewilderment
Some other truths than the truth supreme,
The truth of Self,
Is like the foolish barber's vexed exploring
Instead of swiftly sweeping out
The rubbish on the floor.

1077

To those who dwell within the heart
Loving the Self, bliss comes upsurging,
Mounting ever higher, like love,
Shiva, grace, awareness, peace or moksha.
Bliss is the true nature of the Self.

OF FREEDOM FROM FEAR

1078

Even the high gods know fear because
The foolish mind sees differences.
Wisdom it is to reach through *neti*
The true Self and, in this non-dual
State supreme, abide for ever
Free from fear.

1079

Only when the Self is gained
Is permanent, perfect, blissful peace
Attained. In this Self-sovereignty
Non-dual, heaven-like nothing dual,
No desire or fear can exist.

OF NON-DUALITY

1080

Whether in the pot or in the house
Space is ever one and the same.
Like space, Awareness is but one.
And so, the Self though manifest
In different forms as god and *jiva*
Suffers no change in substance.

1081

Are there two different entities
As *jiva* and Shiva? Say, is there
Any real difference between

The slave-doll and the master-doll
Both made of one sweet nectar?

OF ATHEISM

1082

He who doubts his own existence,
He alone, O God, would say
That you are non-existent. How
Can he who truly knows himself
Despise as non-existent You
Who are the same true Being-Awareness.

OF TRUE FAITH

1083

For those with faith God does exist
As Awareness in the heart.
He never is in minds impure.
If with mind purified one looks
Straight, undeluded, He shines clear
Bright, joyous as the Self alone.

1084

Who merits truly the high title
Of *astika* or believer? Only
The Awakened one who sees within
His own pure mind the identity
Of Being, Awareness and the Self.

OF ETERNAL FREEDOM

1085

The darkness of illusion never
Touched the seer who knows his true
Identity as Awareness pure,
Vast as the sky, bright as the sun.
Only the blind who think they're bodies
Suffer from dark ignorance.

1086

Self-enquiry and gaining jnana,
These are only for the *jiva*
Caught in delusion. The non-dual
Self, eternally free, can never
Be bound or flawed by imperfection.

1087

Will the Self, which as true being
Fills the universe entire,
Be ever bound by this mirage
Of *maya*? Quake not as if you're bound.
Be calm. Think clearly and see the truth.

1088

Why do you suffer in vain believing
That you are bound and hemmed in by
The body. Even in sleep when you
Are free from thoughts of separateness
Your being abides intact and whole.

OF TRUE LIVING

1089

Life you desire. But how to live
You know not. Thinking that this sinking
Deep in this void, vain, illusive
Waking-dream is "life" — you proudly
Claim you "live". Pierce this illusion,
Grasp your true being and truly live.

1090

Shun anger and desire; destroy
Illusions false that cause confusion;
Behave at all times with detachment
Calm; this is true living. Ever
To this hold fast.

1091

Abiding as Self-being, living
 A life that is a steady flow
 Unhindered of true love welling up
 In the heart, this is the bright, joyous
 Sivahood which ends for ever
 The inveterate, false, illusive ego.

1092

The seers who have placed at Siva's Feet
 All their life's burdens and now live
 Lives sublime of calm detachment
 And shine in radiant purity,
 They alone possess true beauty,
 They alone enjoy true bliss.

1093

The Heart which truly knows the Self
 Is full of love whence Bliss supreme
 Wells up for ever. There desire,
 And sorrow, its shadow, have no place.
 Such a life whose nature is
 Pure Being flows serenely calm.

1094

The only goal worth seeking is
 The bliss supreme of Self-awareness.
 Constant remembering and abiding
 As That within the heart amounts
 To plenitude of life.

1095

A life of Grace is only such
 A life lived in full, real Being.
 This worldly life of false phenomena
 Full of fear is sinking deeper
 In illusion, not true living.

1096

Those whose five senses turn no longer
 Towards the world which once seemed real,
 Those who have learned to live without
 Their mind being moved by the illusive
 Universe of forms need not
 Do penance any more.

1097

Those whose ego has quite subsided,
 Who having transcended pleasure and pain
 And seeing the world as but the Self,
 Now live the life of Grace, they need
 Perform no penance at all.

OF THE FORMLESS

1098

If I have form, the Lord, the Source
 Of being, appears with form. But if
 I am bodiless, formless, then there is
 No awareness of another. How
 Could one say that God has form?

(Compare *Sat Darsana*, Verse 4)

1099

Though devotees' prolonged, repeated
 Meditations give to Siva
 Countless names, forms, attributes,
 His Being in truth is only formless,
 Pure Awareness.

1100

The speech transcendent uttered by
 The heart in perfect stillness shining
 Is worship true of real Being.
 The light within, and not the sky's
 Blueness, name or form, exalts
 Aright the mighty, primal Being.

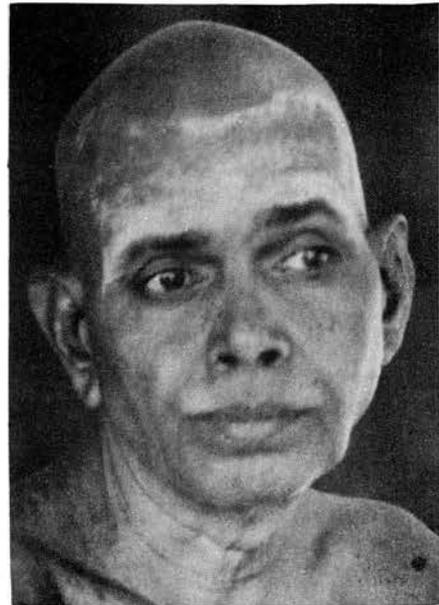
(Speech transcendent or 'paravak' is the silent experience
 of "I am", the bliss of the Self.)

Introducing....

Smt. Kanakammal

Smt. Kanakammal comes from a pious family devoted to Bhagavan. She came to Bhagavan when she was just eight years old in 1930. The first contact left a deep impression. She came again after three years for a short stay.

Even from very early days, she was devoted to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and had a desire to dedicate her life exclusively to devotion. She became dispassionate and confined her movements within the house spending the days in meditation. Soon she had a deep urge to settle in Tiruvannamalai to be near Bhagavan. Her parents didn't agree to leave her alone and this made her very sad. That night Bhagavan appeared in her dream and consoled her. Next morning she got the needed permission and came to settle in Ramana Nagar in 1946. There were not many houses and with great difficulty she found a small room. She would come early in the morning and stay in the Meditation Hall till breakfast time. She would then hurriedly go, cook the food and would be back before Bhagavan's return from the morning walk. She would remain in the meditation hall till lunch



time. After lunch break she would come again to remain in the hall till evening, thus spending all the day-time in the glorious presence of Sri Bhagavan.



Kanakammal

Kanakamma never felt like putting any questions to Him. She held Bhagavan in such awe and respect that she would not go close nor to speak to him. One day she brought roasted cashewnuts as an offering. When Bhagavan asked her what she had in her hands try however hard to reply she could not. Then Bhagavan received it and gave it to the attendant. She expected Bhagavan would take some and distribute the rest as usual among devotees present. Since the offering was put aside, she felt sad and was worried whether her offering was accepted by Bhagavan or

not. To her great delight the next morning the cashewnuts were served along with the breakfast.

As ladies were not allowed to stay during the night inside the premises of the Ashram, she missed the opportunity to hear Bhagavan. To compensate this, old devotees like Venkataratnam and Narayana Iyer would tell her the next day what took place in the Hall the previous night.

Once Venkataratnam told her how in Bhagavan's Presence one would forget oneself. One day when he was massaging Bhagavan's knee-joints he was totally lost in listening to Him and Bhagavan had to point out to him that he had been repeatedly massaging the same spot all along! Similar incidents took place in the case of other devotees too. Once Muruganar along with Bhagavan was grinding a paste to be used for cooking. He became totally oblivious of the world while listening to Bhagavan's words, he went on grinding the paste and Bhagavan had to remind him that the grinding was over long before!

Generally Kanakammal would prefer to take the last seat in the New Hall. One day she went with Anandamma and to her surprise found the first rows unoccupied. Anandamma prompted her to sit close and they did. Bhagavan looked at her steadily and Kanakammal's eyes closed involuntarily, unable to stand His gaze.

After some time she opened her eyes and still Bhagavan was looking at her. Again the eyes closed themselves and the penetrating gracious look of the Master was taking her mind to the innermost depths to be dissolved at the source. She remained for a long time in that blissful state till Suri Nagamma shook her and asked her to get up in order to make way for Bhagavan to go out. Kanakammal had to struggle to get up. At this Bhagavan took Suri Nagamma to task for disturbing the devotee's meditation. Throughout that day she was immersed in that bliss. She went to her room but did not enter it. Anandamma woke her up and complimented her on her good fortune to have Bhagavan looking at her so continuously.

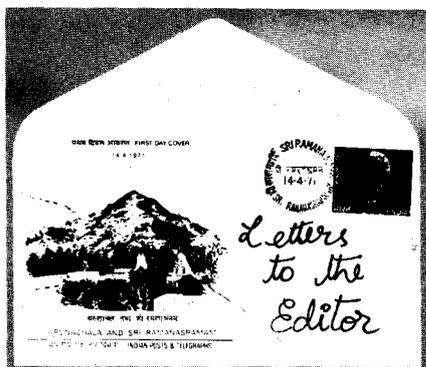
On another occasion too, Bhagavan was looking at her steadily for a long time and once again she was immersed in peace and Bliss.

After Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana*, Kanakammal was in close contact with Muruganar. She was greatly devoted to him and had the rare privilege of listening to his explaining the entire "*Collected Works*" of Bhagavan.

Now, Kanakammal lives in Ramana Nagar and continues to spend most of her time in meditation and in attending the *pujas* to Sri Bhagavan and the Mother.

When the personal attendants of Bhagavan were advised by doctors to give him food containing vitamins to relieve the pain in the legs they began doing so and were also massaging his legs with some special ointment. They were thus serving him to the best of their ability. Bhagavan used to say humorously, "A guest comes to your house. If you are indifferent towards him he will go away early, but if you show greater respect towards him, and are very attentive he will never go. So is disease. If you attend to the disease in the manner you are doing now, why should it go? If you take no notice of it, it will disappear of its own accord."

— *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, p. 371



SPIRITUAL MOVEMENTS

I note with interest the various spiritual movements growing in popularity here in Britain and of course the rest of Europe. One group in particular, the Hare Krishna Movement, are meeting with tremendous popularity even although they would appear to be narrowminded in their teaching that God is Krishna in His personal Form as He appeared 5000 years ago in India, and that any talk of Formless Absolute is subordinate to His personal Form. They even go so far as to say that Lord Siva can only be considered as a demi-god. I wonder what Bhagavan would say of such teachings. The Hare Krishna devotees are nice, educated people and Prabhupada, their Spiritual Master, seemed to be an honest, intelligent man who devoted his life to the spread of Vedic Knowledge in the English language. He has translated an enormous number of Sanskrit volumes into English, always with the basic idea that God is foremost a person and any impersonal manifestation is but an emanation from His body. I neither wish to confirm nor deny this view but would very much like to know Bhagavan's views on this fundamental matters.

I note that *Japa* is an acceptable form of worship. What name should one take for *Japa*?

— M.N. Wright, East Lothian, England.

As for the many spiritual movements in the West, well, they only prove that the hunger of mankind for spiritual values can digest anything up to pebbles! You want to know what would Bhagavan's views have been. He never started any such movement nor did he interfere in it. Those under His guidance had better leave everybody to his own way, unless our advice is sought. Bhagavan would have avoided attacking the error of the questioner and would have given him the Truth in the form in which his understanding could grasp it. His attitude was: Man in his search for his Self can start at the spot where he stands, provided he makes his everyday life one of purity and peace. Where one living such a life pursues Self-enquiry, there will drop soon away everything which is **not** Love and Truth, including the futile discussion about God 'with form' or 'without'. The Absolute needs neither propaganda nor defence. It knows very well how to look after Itself!

Japa is certainly a very effective way for practising the Presence of the Divine. For your own practise you can choose a word or sentence which appeals to your heart most; otherwise, it would remain only 'words'. Many devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi choose '**Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya**' meaning: 'Obeisance to Bhagavan Sri Ramana'.

JOY OF LIMITLESSNESS

Everything we do is instigated by the ego in one of his guises. Even this letter is written by the ego. If he did not exist then this letter would not be written for there would be no need to write it. The ego would therefore appear to be in absolute control of all situations. Even to the extent of the need for enlightenment or Self-Realisation one must ask who it is that requires Self-Realisation. Once again it appears to be the ego, perhaps, desirous of yet another hat to wear! Although this person understands intellectually that "All is One" and that the ego is an ever-changing impermanence, in practice it would appear to be impossible even to commence the path of Self-inquiry without the help of the ego. My understanding is limited; if it were not then once again I would not be writing this letter. How can I make my understanding unlimited?

— M.N.W. Longniddry, U.K.

Your letter is a nice piece of logical thinking, but all thinking is one of the strongest elements of the ego's pretended existence! "To think is not your real nature", says Bhagavan in *Talks*, Nr. 184. In spite of this fundamental spiritual principle many seekers get caught in the wrong understanding of Self-enquiry as a thinking process. The thinking 'I', the ego, can never give you the answer, for, the real answer is in its annihilation! "There is no answer to 'Who am I?'. The asking is the answer", says Bhagavan. The asking is, of course, done by the ego. Such an enquiry should really be directed at the source of the ego — the basis and ground of its apparent existence; then the search will introvert the mind and such introversion will merge the ego in its source, the Self within. To constantly experience your identity with pure Awareness, not the thinking ego, is the sure way to remain in the bliss of limitlessness.

HIS ABUNDANT GRACE

What is meant by 'dark night of the soul'? Sometimes I undergo periods of mental turmoil in which I try to answer a thousand questions of 'why'. What is the difference between 'brooding' and 'introspection'? Some spiritual teachers say that we should not try to judge ourselves spiritually, as only God is the real judge who knows our true progress. Is this true? All my life I have been rejected by my relatives and friends. Now, I have accepted Sri Ramana as my Guru; but I do not know if He will accept me. As so many do not bother about me, I don't feel I deserve His Grace. Can liberation be achieved by anyone in this life?

— B.S.D.B., Bangalore.

The 'dark night of the soul' is an experience of anguish by a seeker. It has different connotations. One of these is certainly your own experiencing periods of 'mental turmoil' caused by an intriguing 'why' to so many puzzles of life. In a seeker's life at a certain stage he is able to feel the presence of the Divine within; temporary loss of this contact with the feeling of the Divine within, causes anguish, which is usually called the 'dark night of the soul'.

'Brooding' is done in a gloomy, depressed mood when there seems to have gone away the light and joy of life; 'introspection' happens in a neutral mood, with a clear and quiet mind, undisturbed by emotional interferences. It is better not to judge oneself; for, practically, it means feeding the ego which we want to get rid of in our efforts to elevate ourselves spiritually.

Sri Ramana will never forsake any one who approaches Him in earnest, sincere devotion. Hence there is no question of your not deserving His Grace. He will envelope you in His abundant Grace! "Liberation is your real nature", says Bhagavan. There is no question of attaining it, since the real You is ever free.

STATE AFTER DEATH

There is one strong doubt and I would be pleased if you could give your opinion on it. A seeker attains the goal — the fruit of his life-long spiritual pursuit — and dies; so also a confirmed criminal. Though both the bodies perish, it is said, the Absolute in them remains unaltered the same. I confess it worries me to think that if at the end there is no difference between the two (after death) then are all the efforts in life totally useless?

— F.R., Sweden

"If **Atma-Vichara** (Self-investigation) ceases, **Loka-Vichara** (objective, worldly inquisitiveness) takes its place" — this is Sri Bhagavan's answer to all questions like the one above. However, the following is enlightening:

Devotee: What happens to the man after death?

Maharshi: Engage yourself in the living present. The future will take care of itself. Do not worry about the future. The state before creation and the process of creation are dealt with in scriptures in order that you may know the present. Because you say you are born, therefore they say, yes, and add that God created you. But do you see God or anything else in your sleep? If God be real why does He not shine forth in your sleep also? **You are always** — now the same as you were in sleep. You are not different from that one in sleep. But why should there be difference in the feelings or experiences of the two states? Did you ask, while asleep, the question regarding your birth? Or where do I go after death? Why think of all these now in the wakeful state? Let what is born think of its birth and the remedy, its cause and ultimate results. What is

birth? Is it of the 'I-thought or of the body? Is 'I' separate from the body or identical with it? How did this 'I-thought arise? Is the 'I-thought your nature or is anything else your nature? Engage in Self-investigation, then the non-self will disappear. The Self will be left over. This is self-investigation of the Self'. "Death is only for the body. One is not the body".

If you pursue the path of Vichara you have the experience of the Self, a state of no-death. The question of death and the state after it is only a matter of intellectual curiosity and certainly not born out of personal experience. Doubts like the above are born out of weakness in the faith that one is essentially Divine. In His reply to Paul Brunton, Bhagavan asserts: "Every man is divine and strong in his real nature. What are weak and evil are his habits, his desires and thoughts, but not himself". The question about the state after death for those who are realised and for those who are not realised cannot arise once you are convinced that you are divine in nature. These problems are projected by the mind. Let us not be bogged down by doubts raised by the mind but go straight to the root of the problem — the doubter, himself. The mind alone is the problem. Problems created by the mind are only 'food' for the mind's own existence. Starve the mind by ignoring them and the problems will disappear. Sri Bhagavan says: "The mind carries within it the seed of its own destruction". That is, if you seek its source it will weaken it and finally merge with the being, the true nature of every one. Bring the wandering mind back to its source, without paying any attention to the problems created by it. If one is firmly rooted in the Truth, where is room for any more doubt, since the one is ever-present, never-absent and ever born and never dead!

VIBHUTI — KUMKUM

Thank you for the Vibhuti-Kumkum prasada, one wrapped in a red and the other in a white piece of paper. I am not familiar with the use of them. Could you explain what I should do with them? How is this to be used? And what does it represent?

— Artie L. Kasswyk, Montreal, Canada

Vibhuti (White powder) is the burnt ashes of cow-dung and **Kumkum** (red powder) a product of turmeric, soaked in lime juice and powdered nicely. **Vibhuti** denotes the ultimate oneness (when burnt everything turns into ashes). **Kumkum** generates spiritual energy or **Shakti**. **Vibhuti** represents Peace and **Kumkum** Power. Peace and Power are the two forces enveloping the whole universe. **Vibhuti** has to be applied on the forehead horizontally; and **Kumkum** in between the eye-brows. They help one-pointedness in meditation.

THY WILL BE DONE

I have been feeling a little lonely -- but not very much more than I was in Brazil. I can meditate and perhaps still

go on giving a little teaching as I was doing previously. I pray Bhagavan will guide me. Of late, I have started feeling that something catastrophic would happen — and I wonder — what will become of me? Shall I die — and how? I hope I would be able to hear Bhagavan and have His help so as to take the 'path of the Sun' as I think I am not virtuous enough to be free from 'vasanas' — and I would love to go on progressing in efforts until the end. Please do not give up answering me and sending me Ramana's blessings. His kindness helps me a lot and He joins for me with Christ's overwhelming Love towards us 'world pilgrims' who have still such a long way to go ...

— Regina Pereira, Lourdes, France

We are happy you are now near the compassionate Madonna of Lourdes. Real surrender to a Higher Power — God or Bhagavan or Christ — is living in the total attitude of 'Thy will be done, not mine'. The secret of a spiritual life, in the light of Bhagavan's teaching, is to accept gladly what comes and let go what has to go. This surrendered attitude should be experienced within and not merely entertained as a thought, a wish. Why do you bother yourself with preaching to others? Let the one who wants to teach be taught the lesson of abiding in oneself. Do not worry over 'vasanas'; try to be humble, simple and quiet. Has not Christ told us to become like children? Like children you will also be happy at the heart always. Then you will realise that the Grace of Bhagavan has always been with you and that it has been veiled only by one's own wrong attitude to life.

MARKS OF A DISCIPLE

I wish that you could make clear a doubt I had on reading '**Spiritual Instruction**', the second question put and Bhagavan's answer to it.

Q: What are the marks of an earnest disciple (**sishya**)?

A: An intense longing for the removal of sorrow and attainment of joy and an intense aversion for all kinds of mundane pleasure.

I don't have this intense aversion but I get some peace on meditation; and so I wanted to know if this aversion must be cultivated or not. I know I have a very attached

mind, although it is true that the Master is helping me to reduce it. The word 'aversion' sounds strange; I want to know if the Master used it. If so, I would try to change my attitude cheerfully. I am now reading the TALKS; I have no words to thank you for this work.

— Luiz Carios da Costa Ribenboim, Rio De Janeiro.

We are pleased with your letter as you are very sincere in treading the path as taught by our Master, Bhagavan. The answer was given by Bhagavan. However, it need not trouble you in the way it does, because you have this 'intense longing' which will dissolve your attachment for worldly pleasures of its own accord in course of time. You need not try to change your attitude forcefully; it is enough you direct your attention to your 'intense longing' for spiritual life. The more you are inclined to meditate the less you will become attached to worldly pleasures. Bhagavan never encouraged an ascetic attitude as opposed to a normal social life. What has to be eschewed is merely the attachment to the fruits of action. The proper attitude for a spiritual life is: accept cheerfully what comes to you and let gracefully go what has to leave you. If you study carefully the TALKS you will get the appropriate practical hints from Bhagavan.

Many sincere thanks for all the comforts afforded to us; we enjoyed the benign Grace of Lord Ramana. almost we were transported to Ramana's Wonderland, where bliss alone reigns. During our six days' life at the Ashram our every moment there was unfolding the reality of the Truth wherever we went — our own room, Ashram Office, Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam, Sri Matrubhuteswara temple, Meditation Hall, Kitchen, Skandashram, Giri-pradakshina, or even any place we touched vibrated with Ramana's presence. Late K. Ramappa's¹ wife and children were greatly consoled and felt relieved of their sorrow after seeing the holy place, after witnessing the puja, devotional mantras and aarti done on the day of his first death anniversary. May Lord Ramana give us sufficient wisdom and health so as to make many more visits to have sat-sang and holy darshan of Sri Bhagavan.

— G.V. Thimmaiah, Bangalore.

¹See Obituary, p. 154 of April '82 issue.

RAMANA MAHARSHI CONTACT LETTER

All these years, two sincere devotees of Sri Bhagavan have been so dedicated and efficiently carrying on the mission of spreading Sri Bhagavan's teaching under this 'Ramana Maharshi Contact Letter' in England. They had collected and saved during the course of this period £ 550.76 which they have now donated to Sri Ramanasramam. They say "it was promised that on winding up, any funds in our account would be paid to Sri Ramanasramam". We express our gratitude for this contribution and for their noble efforts to spread Sri Bhagavan's Teachings.



BOOK REVIEWS

POINTERS FROM NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ: By Ramesh Balsekar. Pub: Chetana, 34, Rampart Row, Bombay. Pp. 223 price Rs. 70.

In the ten years that have elapsed since the publication of *'I am That'* Nisargadatta Maharaj has become something of a cult figure. He once jokingly remarked that because of this book his house had been turned into a railway station platform, but there was an element of truth in his statement. His refreshing and radical iconoclasm attracted seekers from all over the world and it was a rare event when the small room where he gave his talks was not overflowing with visitors.

The author of this book only discovered Maharaj in 1978, but he rapidly assimilated his teachings and within a year he was confidently acting as one of his interpreters. His obvious comprehension of the nuances of the western mind, his flawless English and his articulate summaries of Maharaj's words made him a popular interpreter, particularly with foreigners.

The teachings collected here by Ramesh Balsekar are representative of the final and climinating phase of Maharaj's teachings. His primary concern during this period (1979-81) was to convince his devotees that "the only effective effort is the instant apperceiving of Truth". For Maharaj that truth was that there was no individual consciousness: consciousness or beingness is universal, and is the totality of the manifest temporarily appearing in the unmanifest. That which is prior to consciousness, that upon which consciousness depends and that which witnesses the appearance and disappearance of consciousness is the unmanifest absolute. And that, says Maharaj, is what you really are.

For Maharaj there is no question of making an effort to reach this state. Since there is no individual 'I' that can do *sadhana*, there is no bondage and no liberation. Be aware of this truth now, he would say; if you imagine that there is a way to this truth you will only get bogged down in illusory and unproductive conceptualisation. According to Maharaj there is no graduated path to an awareness of this truth; one grasps it instantly or not at all.

This basic message is the substance of almost every conversation recorded in the book. The uniformity of the contents is largely due to the limitations Maharaj himself placed on the scope of the discussions. He would often tell new visitors: "I am not interested in what you have heard or what you have read. The only topic we discuss here is consciousness, that is, your experience of yourself. Ask as many questions as you like but don't ask them from the body-mind level. That is to say, don't ask questions that assume that you are an individual person."

The ramifications of this embargo soon became apparent to the new visitors. One could not discuss the ideas put out in religious texts or the ideas of other teachers; even questions on standard topics such as *karma*, ethics, rebirth and *sadhana* were usually inadmissible on the grounds that they all presupposed the existence of an individual person. Because so few of the visitors were able to accept, even theoretically, the notion that they were not individual persons, few acceptable questions could be formulated, and as a result, Maharaj usually did most of the talking himself.

The conversations recorded here are not direct translations of Maharaj's; they were written down from memory at a later date. The sequence of ideas in each conversation undoubtedly stems from Maharaj himself, but in transcribing these ideas into his own words, Mr Balsekar has relied heavily

on the jargon favoured by Wei Wu Wei; the whole book is liberally sprinkled with terms such as noumenon and phenomenon, perception and apperception. While the use of such terminology improves the clarity of the presentation, somehow it doesn't sound like the idiom of a man (Maharaj) who was brought up in a village and who never went beyond the 4th standard at school.

The author does not restrict himself to summaries of Maharaj's talks. He comments and elaborates on them and he invariably gives background details about the questioner and the circumstances surrounding the interview. The talks themselves give a good insight into both the teacher and his teachings and the background details build up a well-defined picture of Maharaj's teaching environment.



Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Maharaj's words always had the power to disrupt and stop a visitor's conceptualising process. On his good days, Maharaj's eyes would have a blazing intensity, and his words, delivered from the source of his being, had such a penetrating power that visitors often felt that they were experiencing the truth of his statements rather than merely believing them. For the lucky few the words were so powerful that there was an "instant apperceiving" of the truth, and one or two instances of this kind are recorded in the book. It is a measure of Mr Balsekar's insight into Maharaj's teachings that even though he is writing from memory and transcribing his words in an alien idiom, the power of Maharaj's words has survived the transition to the printed page.

To supplement the conversations Mr. Balsekar summarizes Maharaj's teachings in three essays which are printed as appendices, and preceding these, there is the first printed account of the last days of Maharaj. And finally, a kind word for Chetana the publisher: after seeing the same numerous printing errors reappear in successive editions of 'I am That', it is a pleasant surprise to read one of their books on Maharaj which has virtually no errors at all.

D.G.

SIVA SUTRAS, YOGA OF SUPREME IDENTITY. Translated by Jaideva Singh. Pub: Motilal Banarsidas, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 7. Pp. 278 Price Rs. 60.00.

The Siva Sutras, one of the basic texts of Kashmir Saivism, belonging to the 8th or 9th century, are traditionally held to have been revealed by Siva himself. They are principally concerned with the practice of yoga but at the same time incorporate the basic tenets of Kashmir Saivite philosophy. The philosophy is advaitic, much more so than Saiva Siddhanta, but there are a number of major differences between the advaita of Kashmir and that propounded by Sankara. For those interested in the practical side of the system, the major difference is that Self-realisation is not held to be the highest stage. The ultimate aim is *Sivatma yojana*, or acquiring the status of Siva. At the level of Self-realisation there is the recognition of one's true nature, the innate pure 'I' consciousness, but Saivites then postulate a further stage in which the whole universe, which is not apart from the Self, is experienced subjectively as the *Sakti* of Siva. Another major practical difference is their attitude to individual consciousness (*citta*). Realisation does not eliminate it, nor is it discovered to be non-existent. Rather, it is transformed into *citi* or universal consciousness by rising to the status of *cetana*, the knowing subject.

Some of the works of the *agama sutra*, (the branch of Saivism to which the sutras belong), tend towards dualism, but the Siva Sutras are uncompromisingly advaitic. As in most ancient sutra works the text itself is brief and terse and an extensive commentary is needed to bring out its full implications. Several commentaries have been written

on them, but the one translated here by Jaideva Singh, the *Vimarsini* of Ksemaraja, is held to be the most detailed and the most authoritative.

The sutras are split into three sections, each of which describes a different type of yoga. The first section (*Sambhavopaya*) is written for advanced aspirants only. After giving the philosophical background to the system it maintains that the ultimate Siva consciousness will suddenly manifest in ripe devotees if a mere hint is given that one's essential nature is Siva. No particular effort or discipline is required. Once one has been given this knowledge, one abides in a simple awareness, without accepting or rejecting the contents of consciousness, and immediate realisation comes in a sudden spontaneous flash.

The second section (*Saktopaya*) is for less advanced devotees and the exercises it prescribes may be roughly categorized as *jnana* yoga. Most of the classic Saivite texts emphasize that one cannot reach the Absolute by thought alone, but they also admit that keeping one's attention on the Self by continually thinking of it is beneficial. Like Ramana Maharshi, who maintained that all thoughts can be destroyed by keeping attention on the 'I'—thought, the Saivites maintain that by thinking of the Self, all thoughts can ultimately be transcended. The *Saktopaya* follows this line of argument and states that only incorrect thoughts are harmful. It teaches that if one holds onto the thought "I am the Self and the universe is an expression of my power", ultimately, the thought itself subsides and the Self is revealed. By constantly dwelling on the significance of the real 'I' the individual consciousness is ultimately transformed into the real Self.

The third section (*Anavopaya*) describes a system akin to *Raja Yoga* in which the individual utilises his senses, his *prana* and his mind to make progress towards realisation. It is emphasised that these practices are only for those who are unable to follow the methods outlined in the second section.

The text and commentary are given in both English and Devanagiri and the translator has added his own notes and comments wherever technical terms and concepts need clarifying. A long introductory essay summarizes the philosophy of the sutras and the text itself has been prepared with the aid of a number of yogis and scholars of the Kashmir system. It is a highly technical book which makes few concessions to the general reader, but it will more than repay the efforts of anyone who is willing to master its contents.

D.G.

THE Gnostic GOSPELS By Elaine Pagels. Pub: Vintage Books and distributed by Random House, New York, U.S.A. Pp 214 Price \$ 2.95

In the first centuries of Christianity, the Christian world was split into two distinct camps. The majority group was the orthodox 'catholic' church, a body which claimed to be the ultimate authority on all matters relating to Christian teachings and doctrine. The leaders of this church belonged to a lineage which went back to Peter, the disciple of Christ who was appointed to head the first church. Opposed to them were the gnostics who believed that spiritual authority stemmed from inner spiritual experience and not from religious texts or appointed religious leaders. The orthodox church held that the gospels which appear in the Bible were the ultimate scriptural sources of authority and they further maintained that since they were the appointed heirs of Peter, they were empowered to give a definitive interpretation to these texts. The gnostics accepted the biblical gospels as being authoritative, but since they held that spiritual experience was the ultimate source of authority, they felt free to add texts of their own. Just as the Upanishadic rishis felt empowered by their Self-realisation to add to the divinely revealed scriptures of the early Vedas, so the early Christian mystics who had attained gnosis (meaning Knowledge or *Jnana*) felt empowered to add to the biblical texts.

The two factions of the early church were bitterly opposed to each other and when the orthodox church finally gained the upper hand (largely through being better organised and having a wider mass appeal) they ruthlessly stamped out all traces of gnosticism. All the known gnostic texts were burnt and when the orthodox church gained political power, practising gnostics were ruthlessly persecuted. The orthodox church did such a good job of eliminating the gnostics that until recently the only surviving records of their teachings were occasional quotations in early Christian books written by opponents of gnosticism. And these quotations only survived because the books in which they appeared abused and condemned all aspects of gnosticism.

In 1945 a whole library of hitherto unknown gnostic texts was unearthed at Nag Hammadi in Egypt. The most well-known is the Gospel of Thomas but there were many others which threw new light on gnostic beliefs and practices. In the book under review, Dr Elaine Pagels, a scholar of early christian history, has made a systematic review of all aspects of gnosticism, illustrating her thesis with numerous quotations from the Nag Hammadi 'gospels'. Many of the texts are concerned with the politics of the early church. The question of who had the right to be called the 'True Church' is a dominant theme and it is clear from these new discoveries that the gnostics abused the established church just as much as the established church abused them. Clearly, the precepts 'Love thy

neighbour' and 'Love thine enemy' were not considered applicable to the internecine disputes of the early church leaders.

On a more elevated plane the book outlines the spiritual beliefs and practices of the gnostics, illustrating with texts which have hitherto been inaccessible to the general public. On this level the gnostic message is loud and clear; one must look for God within oneself, and until one has found Him, one has no authority to speak on spiritual matters at all. Unfortunately, the precise techniques for discovering the God within are not often described, but when they are, they sometimes bear a remarkable similarity to the practice of self-enquiry expounded by Ramana Maharshi. Consider this quotation from Monoimus, a gnostic teacher: "Abandon the search for God and the creation and other matters of a similar sort. Look for Him by taking yourself as the starting point. Learn who it is within you who makes everything his own and says, 'My god, my mind, my thought, my soul, my body' ...If you carefully investigate these matters you will find Him in yourself."

Without abandoning the high scholarly standards of her profession, Dr. Pagels has produced an eminently readable account of early gnosticism. It is the first easily digestible book on gnosticism to be based on the Nag Hammadi texts and it is written with such elegance and clarity that it will probably become a classic in its field.

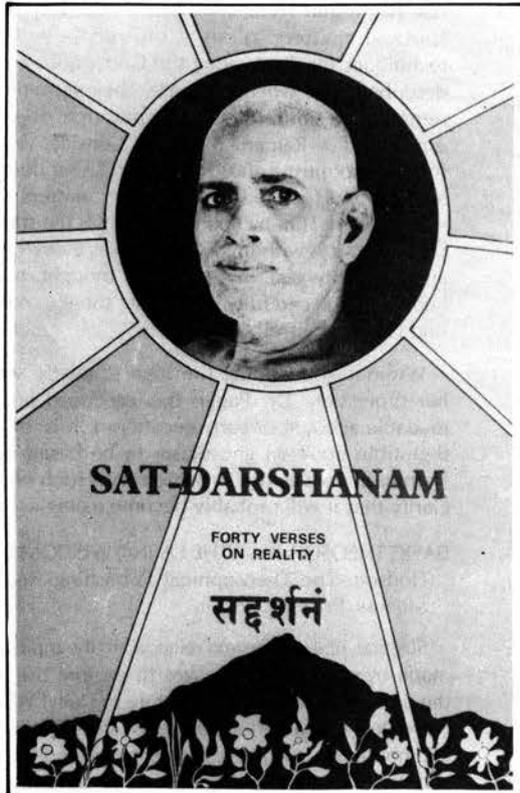
BASIC THEOSOPHY — THE LIVING WISDOM By Geoffrey Hodson. The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras. Price Rs. 45

Science, philosophy and religion are the triple approaches made by man down the ages to explore the mystery of the universe, which he calls Nature or Deity. While science represents human effort to explain the objective universe and philosophy his attempt to comprehend the subjective spheres of existence, religion tries to probe the unknown which transcends both science and philosophy. The synthesis of the three approaches is Theosophy, wherein man is defined as that being in whom the highest Spirit and lowest matter are united by intellect. Like Vamana encompassing the universe by his three steps, Theosophy by fusing the triple approaches presents a profound fundamental truth of man being a replica of the whole order of created beings, a model of the totality of Nature in his spiritual, psychical and physical aspects. Geoffrey Hodson, an outstanding writer with more than a score of books to his credit, has presented here the fundamental ideas of the Living Wisdom in this valuable publication, which he had earlier prepared as lecture notes for the esoteric section of the Theosophical Society.

Science in recent times has given up its arrogant note of certainty and become sceptical of any precise understanding of Nature. Has not quantum mechanics proved the scale of observation creating the phenomena and

SAT-DARSHANAM

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Heisenberg's uncertainty principle disproved its earlier claims to perception of truth? The most startling revelation of science in the course of recent investigations is the interference caused by the observer in the very act of observation, vitiating the observed almost reminiscent of Patanjali's 17th aphorism in the Sadhana pada. It is refreshing to note that not only scientists like Eddington but even such poets as Wordsworth and Coleridge have affirmed that we get back from Nature only what we have put into her! Even as one begins to wonder whether there is an external world at all, we get the confirmation from Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's *Forty Verses*:

"The pictures, which consist of names and forms, the observer, the screen, as also the light which illumines all: these are but the Self."

It is a pity that neither religion nor philosophy has kept pace with the modern scientific trends towards mysticism; for while philosophy loses itself in intellectual verbiage

and in its methodology of abstractions evolving newer system of thought, religion binds itself in a framework of creeds and dogmas. It is here that Theosophy comes to our help in answering the questions which technological science, intellectual philosophy and formal religion have failed to give. Madame H.P. Blavatsky in her monumental volumes, the *Isis Unveiled*, which she calls "a Master-Key to the mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology" and the *Secret Doctrine*, "the synthesis of science, religion and philosophy", has revealed to us a vision of perfect order, a design and a plan in the universe, carrying the methods of pure science the super-physical realms of nature and Man. The author hopes that his restatement of Blavatsky's doctrine in clear and simple terms in this Book will be "helpful in the attainment of intellectual illumination and national and international collaboration, leading to the ultimate establishment of an enduring World Peace."

ARGUS

Correction to our October/82 issue

Professor N. Krihnamurthi Aiyer writes to point out a printing error. On p. 269, para 3, the sentence runs thus: "The *thamo guna* aspect is found in spells long or short of awareness during the peirod of sleep or wakefulness". It should read: "The *thamo guna* aspect is found in spells long or short of *nescience* during the period sleep or wakefulness".

Corrections to our January issue

Page 21, column 1, line 40: "we can understand" should read as "we can never understand".

Page 36, column 2, line 23: "Can you therefore conclude..." should read as "Can you not therefore conclude...?"

Statement about ownership and other particulars about THE MOUNTAIN PATH according to Form IV. Rule 8, Circular of the Registrar of Newspapers for India :

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I, T.N. Venkataraman, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of the Publisher : (Sd.) T.N. VENKATARAMAN.

Date: 31-3-1983



Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President of Sri Ramanasramam, lighting the kuthu vilakku. Next to him is Sri B. Ananthaswami, Vice Chairman of Ramana Kendra, Madras.

“GARLAND OF TRIBUTES TO THE SILENT GURU”

— NATIONAL SEMINAR AT MADRAS

An attractive invitation-brochure welcomed devotees to participate in a National Seminar on the teachings of Sri Bhagavan, held in connection with Sri Bhagavan's 103rd Birthday Celebrations, in Madras.

The entire three-day Ramana-festival was a rich tribute soulfully offered by the members of the Madras Kendra to Sri Ramana — one who is beyond all attributes!

As one who had his fill of this spiritual feast, I feel joy-impelled to give a report on the Seminar so that fellow-devotees can have a taste of it.

The spacious auditorium of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, behind the famous Kapaleeswarar Temple in Mylapore, was specially adorned to receive Bhagavan Ramana and His scholar-devotees expounding His teachings, as well as a vast number of listening *bhaktas*. The entire auditorium, the entrance and the book counter, were decked with striking oil-paintings of the Master, tastefully displayed by **Dr. Ramanakumar**, one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Kendra. Volunteers and workers were so enthusiasti-

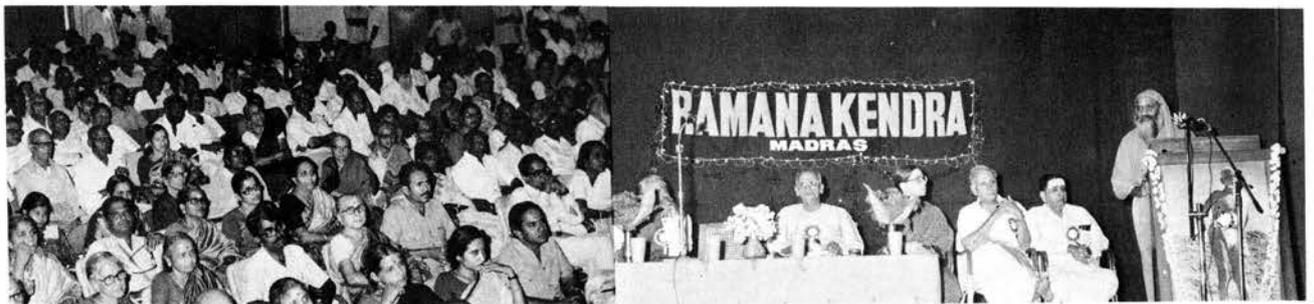
cally busy in helping and guiding the in-coming *bhaktas*. The Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Auditorium was filled with Ramana's presence and overflowing with Ramana-ananda!

The Seminar commenced on January 7, with the lighting of the *Kuttu Vilakku* by the Ashram President, **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**. **Sri K. Natesan** sang the invocation.

Sri K.K. Nambiar, Chairman of the Kendra, set the tone for the Seminar in a lucid welcome speech.

Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, speaks. (l to r) T.N. Venkataraman, K.K. Nambiar (Chairman of the Kendra), Princess Irene, K.S. Venkataraman (Vice Chairman), B. Ananthaswami (Vice Chairman)

A section of the vast audience





(l to r) Smt. Soundaram Kailasam, Swami Suddha Chaitanya, Princess Prabhavati Raje, Smt. Prema Pandurangan, V. Dwaraknath Reddy, 'Anna' Subramanian

In his own inimitable way, **Swami Dayananda Saraswati** brought out the uniqueness of '*Sat Darshana*' the scripture and practical guide which opens the door to everyone to experiencing the Reality shining within each of us. Swamiji added: "We should be concerned only with That which always is — '*Sat*'. The present contains within itself the past and the future and therefore our concern should only be our experiencing of the '*present*', '*now*'. To conceive It is but to be It in the Heart. To remain as the '*Sat*' is to be the Self, which ever is changeless."

"Bhagavan Ramana did not become Self-realised after a study of *srutis* or mastering the scriptures. *Atma anubhava* came first and all scriptural texts only corroborated His plenary experience. What is a scripture except a record of experiences of great sages and seers! Upanishads are thus the *anubhava* of seers. In our own time we are fortunate to have had in our midst a unique and '*silent Upanishad*' and that was Bhagavan Ramana!" said **Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan**, a veteran exponent of Ramana-teaching, whose speech was read out by Princess Irene. Quoting from His original works, he showed how Sage Ramana was not only a *Jnani* of the purest ray serene, but also a warm-hearted *bhakta*.

"*Aksharamanamalai* came to be written, in order to show that it is Arunachala who speaks in the form of Bhagavan Ramana in this ecstatic hymn, which stands out as the greatest exposition of all time on the synthesis of bhakthi and jnana. The running theme of this magnificent and moving devotional lyric is that Arunachala is the surest and most infallible destroyer of the ego of anyone who either thinks of Him as the Self in the Heart or who surrenders to Him totally," emphasised **Sri B. Anantaswami**, Vice-Chairman of the Kendra, who was mainly responsible for the success of the Seminar, having conceived, planned, organised and executed it with a machine-like precision and sustained efficiency. He mobilised the available talents, resources and co-operation of the Kendra office-bearers, members and the Ramana-bhaktas in general and saw to it that lunch and tea were supplied with joy to the participants on all the three days.

The afternoon session opened with **Br. Paramartha Chaitanya's** summing up of Sri Bhagavan's teachings from the view-point of Karma Yoga. He said: "Karma cannot give Liberation. When one is in union with Reality there will be no operation of karma, too. The doer being dissolved — the '*I*'-thought vanishing — the pure '*I*' will alone shine within. Thus, to be the Self is to know the Self."

Next **Sri Godha Venkateswara Rao**, a disciple of Sri Jagadeeswara Sastry spoke on "Bhagavan and the Upanishads".

Sri K.K. Nambiar, an old devotee, who had enjoyed the privilege of moving closely with Bhagavan, spoke on *Hridaya-Vidya*. Quoting profusely from *Sri Ramana Gita*, he explained how Bhagavan stressed and taught "abidance in the Self". This is not an intellectual exercise, nor a yogic feat, but the realisation of our origin and end, the Self. '*Hrit*' '*Ayam*' means 'this is the Centre'. "Abidance in that Centre, the Self, is all effulgence and bliss".

Smt. Prema Pandurangan, spoke eloquently on "*Bhagavan's Gita Sara*". She said: "Bhagavan Ramana selected 42 of the 700 verses of the *Bhagavad Gita* and rearranged them to bring home its central message of Jnana and Bhakti, the path of *Nishkama Karma* being implicit in them".

The morning session of the second day of the Seminar was in Tamil. **Sri Sundara Kumar** spoke brilliantly on Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram*. Speaking next, **Smt. Soundaram Kailasam**, said: "Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni was to Sri Ramana what Swami Vivekananda was to Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Each of the appellations '*Bhagavan*', '*Maharshi*' and '*Ramana*' signifies an aspect — Devotion, Perception and Universal Love".

Sri Muruganar's greatness lies in his utter: dedication and devotion to his Master, Sri Bhagavan, whose praises he sang and whose teachings he expounded in thousands of poems in the grand, old Tamil literary traditions. His unpublished poems are being brought out in a series of



(l to r) T.N. Venkataraman, Swami Dayananda Saraswathi, K.K. Nambiar, K.S. Venkataraman, B. Ananthaswami

volumes entitled *Ramana Jnana Bodham* by the Delhi Ramana Kendra. The third volume, "*Anubhava Vilakkam, Part I*" was released by the great Tamil Scholar **Sri Ki. Va. Jagannathan**, who extolled Muruganar's beautiful poetry in communicating the Bliss he had experienced.

The second session was as usual in English. **Sri V. Dwarakath Reddy** spoke on 'Beyond Fate and Freewill'. He explained clearly: "In experience we become aware of a superior power, governing our acts and consequences and we learn to accept this as 'God's Will'. This is not mere escapism, but is cognition of the universal law in all humility. Sometimes, we hear an inner voice bidding us deviate from a particular course of action, this is a choice given to us — free-will. However, in His will alone is our peace".

Dr. T.N. Pranarthiharan who spoke next said: "Pleasure of the senses and joy of the mind are conditioned, while Bliss is unconditioned. Bhakti, devotion, results in Bliss: it ripens into Realisation. Devotion to Ramana quickens the process".

Sri S. Sankaranarayanan spoke on his favourite subject: *Sri Ramana Gita*. Besides his vast erudition, his association

'Ramana Music' by Maharajapuram Santhanam and party

with Bhagavan and deep understanding of His teaching gave his talk a lucidity which brought out the greatness of this precious book.

Princess Prabhavati Raje, whose talk was charged with emotion, captivated the audience by her eloquence. She brought before the assembly a vivid picture of the beauty and splendour of the personality of Bhagavan. A devotee of many years' standing who has had wide talks with Bhagavan on matters spiritual, a versatile scholar herself and a facile speaker in several languages, she kept the audience spellbound.

The final day began with devotional fervour. There was *Vedaparayana* by eminent Vedic Scholars. The morning session was again in Tamil. After that, **Sri "Anna" N. Subramanian**, gave a scintillating talk on the 'Gist of *Sivananda Lahari* according to Bhagavan'. **Sri Mi. Pa. Somasundaram**, who spoke next, extolled Bhagavan Ramana as a great *siddha* in the line of the ancient Master, Tirumoolar. His speech appealed to the hearts of both scholars and devotees. **Pulavar Chidambaram Swaminathan's** talk "One Way Traffic" was humorous, yet full of wisdom

'Ramana Darsanam' by the Ramana Sudha Group





The Ashram President presenting a Ramana-memento to
S. Sankaranarayanan

His understanding of Bhagavan's teaching is profound and his presentation popular and the thought, "Why should he not speak on Ramana all over Tamilnadu?" was uppermost in one's mind as one listened to him. **Dr. N. Veezhinathan**, who spoke next, explained how Bhagavan got His realisation while yet a boy and His expositions sprang out of His own experiences. "He taught mainly by the power of silence; and that silence still endures," he added.

The evening session was in English and it started with a scholarly talk by **Br. Prasanna Chaitanya** on 'Atma, anatma Viveka' according to Bhagavan, which was thought-provoking and absorbing. **Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao**, who spoke next, pointed out how Bhagavan met precisely and perfectly the need of the hour. "Bhagavan's method of Self-enquiry is the only satisfying remedy for the inquisitiveness of the modern mind. 'Who am I?' thus enables one to reflect on oneself and not blindly turn to written works or injunctions. To find the truth of oneself by oneself no better spiritual path is available or acceptable now, except that of Ramana's *Vichara Marga*".

A spiritual feast was provided by **Swami Suddha Chaitanya** in his talk on 'Bhagavan's "*Vichara Marga*". Stressing the salient features of Bhagavan's method, he explained the differences between the traditional *Inana Marga* and Bhagavan's *Vichara Marga* with profuse quotations from Bhagavan's works. With his knowledge of Bhagavan's teaching and his extensive *sadhana*, Swamiji, one feels certain, is bound to play an important part in the on-going Ramana Movement!

The valedictory talk was given by **Swami Pumanda Tirtha**, who is already well-known for his exposition on Bhagavan's '*Sat Darshana*'. This time he spoke on Bhagavan's '*Upadesa Saram*'. "Knowledge is varied and many-faceted, but the knower is always only one (the source). Bhagavan refers to various paths to Liberation but clearly indicates ultimately that the best is Self-Enquiry. Bhagavan's definition of '*tapa*' is novel and based on experience; He says 'Realisation of That which subsists when all tract of 'I' is lost is good '*tapa*'." His talk was a glorious tribute to the universality of Bhagavan Ramana and a fitting finale to the three days of talks which showered on listeners the Grace of the Silent Guru!



Great Tamil scholar, Ki.Va. Jagannathan releases Muruganar's
'Anubhava Vilakkam, Part I', by giving the first copy to
T. N. Venkataraman

In the evening of all the three days, there were Cultural programmes. The melodious singing of **Sri D.K. Jayaraman**, **Sri Maharajapuram Santhanam** and **Sri Pithukuli Murugadas** and a dance programme; '*Ramana Darsanam*' by the **Ramana Sudha** group were alike enjoyable and edifying. The film on Bhagavan brought tears of joy to many; the audience were thrilled to see Bhagavan walking and moving around the Ashram!

The Seminar was a memorable and momentous event, which deepened and widened our devotion to Him. The *sat-sang* of old devotees, who preceded us on the path, has emboldened many to join the quest or pursue it with greater zest. We are grateful to the Madras Ramana Kendra for having given us an opportunity to live in Ramana-Presence for full three days.

— Vivid.Resume
BY S.S.D

HEARTIEST MESSAGE

Dear Sri Ganesh,

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year 1983!

When we recollect the year 1879, sure it is a lucky year, since Sri Ramana Maharshi came to us, to this world, to live for ever *in us*, yes, for ever!

Now, the happy time of His Birthday is near and as every year, you will celebrate it in a grand manner. For the celebrations please find enclosed a money order as a little 'birthday gift'. But, I know for sure, the biggest birthday gift is only our *love* for Him; how else can we express our gratitude for His having come to earth!!

As always the best wishes for the Ashram inmates and especially for you.

— Anna Leifheit, Lengen, West Germany



Beautifully decorated portrait of Sri Bhagavan being taken in procession in the streets of Kumta.

RAMANA JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS

AT KUMTA

Dr. M.D. Naik, Vice President of 'Sri Ramana Seva Sangha', Kumta, writes: "Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi was celebrated with enthusiasm. The devotees took the portrait of Sri Bhagavan in procession along the main streets and bazar of Kumta. It took three hours and all the way the devotees were singing 'Arunachala Siva' refrain. After chanting of *Upadesa Saram* and *Aksharamanamalai* (both in Tamil and Kannada), *stotras* on Sri Bhagavan, *Arunachala Pancharatna*, the function concluded with a *puja* and distribution of *prasad*.

AT MADURAI

A grand four-day function at the Sethupathy Higher Secondary School, marked the 103rd Jayanthi celebrations of Sri Bhagavan, at Madurai. Sri Kallupatti Srinivasan inaugurated on Dec.28,'82 the celebrations and was

followed by a musical discourse on Bhagavan's life and teachings by Smt. Sivananda Vijayalakshmi. On the second day Dr. P. Krishna Menon presided; for the second day Smt. Sivananda Vijayalakshmi expounded Sri Bhagavan's teachings. On the third day Dr. SP. Annamalai, Principal of Thyagarajar College, presided while Dr. G. Sundaramurthy gave a talk on Bhagavan's teachings. The film of Sri Bhagavan's life was screened. On the last day, *Saharsranama Archana* and *Veda Parayana* were conducted. In the afternoon a large number of poor were fed. In the evening Sri Bhagavan's portrait was taken in procession on the streets around Sri Meenakshi Temple. Br. Parama Chaitanya of Arsha Vidya Peetam conducted classes on Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram*.

AT DELHI

The 103rd Jayanthi of Bhagavan was celebrated on December 31,'82, with due solemnity and grandeur. *Pooja*,



RAMANA JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS AT MADURAI:
A section of the audience. (middle) Dr. SP. Annamalai speaks. Next to him is Dr. G. Sundaramurthy
Smt. Sivananda Vijayalakshmi extols Bhagavan Ramana.

Vedaparayana and devotional music were held both early in the morning and in the evening. Despite the inclement weather and chilly winds, a large gathering of devotees participated in both functions. At the Uttara Swami Malai Temple, *trikala pooja* was performed on behalf of the Kendra and members sang *Arunachala Siva* in chorus before the deity.

AT MADRAS

Ramana Kendra, Madras celebrated Bhagavan's 103rd *Jayanthi* in a grand manner. On the 2nd Jan. 1983, at the Kendra premises, the celebration commenced at 5.30 a.m with recitations of *Thiruppali Ezhutchi*, *Tiruppavai*, *Tirupallandu*, *Punarvasu Vannam* and *Aksharamanama*. After *Vinayaka Puja*, *Copuja*, *Ekadasa Rudram*, *Abhishekam*, *Suryanamaskaram* and *Saharsranama Archana*, there was poor-feeding for about 1000 persons. In the evening there was *Vedaparayana* and a talk on Bhagavan by **Prof. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar**.

AT SINGAPORE

Sri Jashan Nenumal, Singapore, joyously reports that on 2nd January, 1983 the *Jayanthi* of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at 'Sindhu House' by devotees in Singapore. Pictures of Sri Bhagavan were distributed to them all, along with a leaflet containing the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan. On that auspicious day, between 8 and 10.15 a.m the members took part in *Kirtan*, *Bhajans*, *salok mahala nava* and distribution of *prasad* after *aarti* to the portrait of Sri Maharshi. **Prof. Dr. Gobindsingh Mansukhani** spoke.

AT KOLHAPUR

Dr. G.V. Kulkarni writes on behalf of the 'Bhagavan Ramana Satsang Mandal', Kolhapur, that *Jayanthi* of the Master was celebrated for four days — Dec. 28th to 31st, 1982. A symposium was arranged on "The Importance of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's philosophy in this Age of Science". **Justice D.A. Kirloskar**, **Prof. M.Y. Kulkarni**, **Prof. Dr. Vatkar**, **Prof. Dr. (Mrs). Snehal Vaidya**, **Dr. Sunanda Kulkarni**, **Sri Balasaheb Dhopeshwarkar**, **Prof. Ambuja Sonatakke** and **Sri Sudhir Kulkarni** participated in the symposium. Besides this, **Sri Rajabhan Kulkarni** spoke on 'The Grace of the Guru' and **Sri G.S. Kulkarni** on 'Self-knowledge and Ramana Maharshi'. On the last day **Sri Phadke** (Pune) paid tributes to the glory of Bhagavan. There was *bhajan* by **Mrs. Huddar** and party and by **Sri Shinde** and party. *Puja*, *abhisheka*, *aarthi* and feeding of the poor and the distribution of *prasad* were meticulously performed. Sri Bhagavan's presence was abundantly felt by all.



Prof. Vatkar, **Mrs. Vaidya** and **Miss Sunanda Kulkarni**, all devotees of Sri Bhagavan and students of Sanskrit Literature, were felicitated on securing Ph.D of the Shivaji University this year at the hands of **Sri K.V. Joshi Shastri**.

AT TURAIYUR

Kum. K.J. Avadhani reports from Turaiyur:

"On this holy day, we, the members of Chinmaya Mission, celebrated Ramana *Jayanthi* Day in a serene and sanctified manner. At 6.30 in the morning we assembled in front of the gracious portrait of Sri Bhagavan and adorned it with fragrant flowers. *Puja* was done to the accompaniment of Vedic chantings and '*Ramana Ashtottara*'. Sri V.J. Avadhani and Sri R. Krishnamoorthy, the President and the Secretary of the Mission, enthusiastically participated in the function by chanting *Upadesa Saram*. *Prasad* was distributed. The Presence of Sri Bhagavan was felt by all. We distributed '*Ramana Ashtottara*' to all the members as this is being used on important occasions. All glory to Bhagavan Ramana!"

AT PALGHAT

The 103rd Birth Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated at *Vijnana Ramaneeeya Ashram*, Palghat, with a variety of programmes.

The Celebration, which lasted for three days, commenced with *Ganapathy Homam*. On all the three days there were *Akhanda Japam*, chanting of *Ramana Kirtanams* and feeding the poor on a large scale.

On the first day, the public function was presided over by **Sri S. Kishnanunni**, Sub-Judge, Ottappalam. **Sri Swami Maitranandaji** of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Trichur, gave a lucid narration of his experiences of meeting the Maharshi. **Prof. Sumangala Devi** of Govt. Victoria College, Palghat, spoke about *Sahaja Samadhi* and extolled Bhagavan as an exemplar of this Supreme State.

Dr. V. Balakrishna Panickar, Principal N.S.S. Engineering College, Madurai, presided on the second day. He spoke on Maharshi's Death Experience. His Holiness **Swami Swatmananda Saraswati** of Sankara Ashram, Mookambika, gave a brief account on the teachings of Bhagavan.

On the third day, **Sri Janardanan Thampan**, who presided over the function stated that the state of *Bhakti* culminating in *Parabakti* could be seen in Bhagavan Ramana. **Sri Swami Mridanandji** of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Trichur, elaborated the special significance of the Direct Path of Ramana.

The celebration concluded with a film-show on Ramana.

AT PALGHAT: (1) Sri Ku. Janardanan Thampan Speaks. Sri Swami Mridanandaji of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Trichur, is seated. Sri S. Krishnanunni, Sub-Judge, Ottappalam is seated and Sri Swami Maitranandaji of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Trichur speaks.



PILGRIMS

PILGRIMS

PILGRIMS

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PILGRIMS

(From top to Bottom)

Members of 'Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad' at Sri Bhagavan's Old Meditation Hall.

Princess Gabrielle Liechtenstein along with Lucy Cornelseen

V. Dwaraknath Reddy with sister Sandhya

Ella Maillort (standing; third from right) with a group of her friends interested in Sri Bhagavan.





Swami Suddha Chaitanya

Richard Warner

Dolly Kolah

Ruth Wilson

Hermann Hibschenberger



Anne Foot

Savitri Cuttaree

Trudel Elsaesser

Sharon Gausmann

Karin Stagemann



Fred Braumand

Mike Vertolli

Mrs. Robin Bowen and Mrs. Jean Norman

Dr. Leonard Bowen

Waldi Muhlhouse

Members of Arunachala Ashrama, New York:
 (1 to r) Paul Saphier,
 K. Natesan, Evelyn
 Kaselow, Kunju Swami,
 our Managing Editor

Ramkali





Lucy Cornelissen's cottage was renovated into a concrete building; it still retains its name: "Lucy Ma Cottage". On Feb. 2 the house-warming ceremony was performed. Bhagavan's devotees graced the occasion.

PILGRIMS

We have pleasure in sharing with our readers and fellow-devotees the joy of having had in our midst, at the abode of our Master, a good number of visiting-devotees during this quarter. We have given their accounts with photos, without photos, and photos alone, and names alone.

Ramana-bhaktas flocking at the Ashram, form circles of Ramana-inspiration. Here is a specimen report from Mrs. Nergish Parekh:

"After my last annual visit to the ashram, which, as always, I found most inspiring, elevating and soul-stirring, I went to take leave of our *Managing Editor*. I happened to narrate to him one particular incident of our beloved Ramana's all-abiding Grace on His Children. As desired by him, I describe it below:

During my mother's long illness we had engaged a permanent nurse to look after her. One day she happened to see Bhagavan's pendant on my neck and exclaimed in surprise if it was Ramana Maharshi's picture. Now it was my turn to be surprised and I asked her how she came to know Him!

She then narrated to me a most wonderful dream she had a few years back in which a Fakir appeared to her, smiling and placing His Hand on her head, said, "In a few days you will be called in to attend on a very dear child of mine who is critically ill. Please look after him well", blessed her and disappeared.

She was quite puzzled and wondered who that Fakir could be — as she had never seen or heard about Him till then. Within a few weeks she was asked by the authorities to attend on a special case. When she entered the premises



Mrs. Nergish E. Parekh

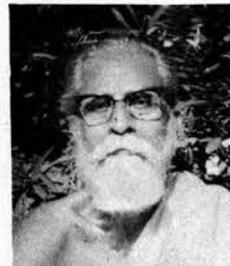
she was wonder-struck to see on the wall large portrait of the same Fakir she had dreamed about. On inquiry she was told that it was Ramana Maharshi and the patient was an old devotee of His. It was a difficult case but she stuck it out till the end, remembering the imploring words of the Fakir in the dream.

I listened to her narration, my eyes over-flowing with tears of joy, love, and faith in my Divine Father. May His Grace be always with us — His Beloved Children!"

— Mrs. Nergish H. Parekh, Bombay.

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Sri Swami Sivananda, who is soon bringing out a book containing Pearls of Wisdom culled from Bhagavan's works, arrived from Sri Vaishnavi Shrine and spent a fortnight at the Ashram. A pious and erudite sannyasi, his devotion to Sri Bhagavan is profound. On his return to Madras, Swami wrote: "The pilgrimage to Bhagavan's Chosen Abode — the eastern tip of the Spiritual Axis of this globe and the Sun, the Spiritual Heart of this solar system -- together, is the only place where this form and name (individual) should exist and be cast off finally, attaining Nirvana. Blessed are those who are within a radius of 30 miles of 'Arunachala'."



Swami Sivananda

**Impressions of devotees of Sri Ramana Kendram,
Hyderabad.**

"A group of 22 members from *Sri Ramana Kendram*, Hyderabad, that visited Sri Ramanasramam, during the second week of January 1983, i.e. from 10th to 14th, expresses its gratitude to the Ashram President **Sri T.N. Venkataraman** and **Mr. V. Ganesan**, *Managing Editor*, *The Mountain Path*, and to other devotees who spoke of their personal experiences with and of Sri Bhagavan.

Mr. Venkataraman, President, was extremely kind to spare time to take the members round the kitchen and *gosala* and speak to them with gusto on the glory and greatness of Sri Bhagavan. Later, **Mr. Ganesan** movingly described for nearly three hours incidents connected with the *Nirvana* Room, the *Matrubhuteswara* Temple, the old and new Meditation Halls. His descriptions were very vivid and moving making indelible impressions on all. **Mr. K. Venkataraman**, Echamma's grandson, recounted several interesting experiences which visibly moved many of the members.

During their sojourn the members also had the good fortune to listen to the wonderful and intimate experiences of **Mr. Balarama Reddy**, **Sri Kunju Swami**, **Mrs. Lucia Osborne** and **Mrs. Lucy Cornelissen**. We can't be sufficiently grateful to them for sparing their valuable time.

The members also wish to record their appreciation of the Ashram cooks in the kitchen/dining hall for having cheerfully and patiently waited on them even during odd hours. To the management they express their sense of gratitude for the excellent arrangements made to take them round the many sacred and secluded spots where Sri Bhagavan had trod and lived in Arunachala!

The trip has been a thrilling experience to the members and it has strengthened and deepened their devotion to Sri Bhagavan".

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Sri Satyanarayana Tandon of Kanpur and his wife, are regular pilgrims and this year too they spent more than three months at our Ashram. While leaving the Ashram, when our *Managing Editor* requested him to give a

Sri & Smt. Satyanarayana Tandon, with our Managing Editor.



message, Sri Tandon wrote the following prayer to Sri Bhagavan and gave it to him:

"Grant me, O Bhagavan, that I may have a place at the Lotus of Thy Feet, that it may be my privilege to live always in Thy Holy presence, and that I may have deep, true devotion unto Thee, birth after birth".

* * * * *

Sri Perry E.H. Smith, a happy businessman, spread joy to all around him by his congenial company and sincere devotion to Sri Bhagavan. He writes: "I am most appreciative of the courteous and helpful manner in which all of the office and kitchen staff treated me. As usual, the food was excellent. I know of no better Ashram food. Far away from Arunachala, my heart misses the inspiration of Bhagavan's shrine, my feet the pleasure of *giripradakshina*, my stomach the dedicated efforts of the kitchen, my senses the delight of puja, and I miss the pleasure of your company, dear Ganesh! With renewed thanks for a fruitful visit".



Perry E.H. Smith

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"Recently, my wife and I spent about two weeks in Sri Ramanasramam. Actually, we went there in a dispirited condition and returned back from our visit greatly refreshed and with ability to take a more detached view of life and its problems. During our stay we felt Sri Bhagavan's continued Presence guiding us. The majestic view of the Arunachala Hill (*Mouna Guru*) from the Ashram's precincts influenced us deeply. All this would not have been possible but for the calm and serene atmosphere scrupulously preserved by the selfless service of a band of dedicated workers.

The daily routine of life at the Ashram is very conducive for continued sadhana. The early morning service, the morning and evening Vedic recital, followed by the puja at Sri Bhagavan's and *Matrubhuteswara* shrines, Sri Chakra puja performed on Fridays and certain other days, provide the necessary religious background, leaving ample time for the full use of the Meditation Hall, purifying and uplifting visits to *Skandashram* and *Giripradakshina*, Siva darshan at *Arunachaleswara* temple and not the least the Centenary Library well stocked to suit the tastes of both the 7 year and 70 year olds.

We offer our humble grateful thanks. We prostrate to Bhagavan praying that His blessing be showered on us all!"

— N.S. Swaminathan, Madras

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Mrs. and Dr. Bhatiani of Delhi, are very staunch devotees of Sri Bhagavan. They spent a fortnight at the Ashram



Mrs. & Dr. Bhatiani

and Dr. Bhatiani would like to share the following with fellow-devotees.

"How to thank the Lord, for us to be here at Sri Ramanasramam, the fourth time. A blessed call from Bhagavan! We pray for many more to come. To have spiritual experience is exclusively personal which one may like to reveal or not. But how can any one dent the beauty of the meeting of East, West, North and South — the meeting not of the businessmen nor of the politicians, but purely of seekers after Truth — at Sri Ramanasramam! The bold assurance of Bhagavan 'Where can I go? I am here', inspires the aspirants to flock here at the feet of Sacred Arunachala, where still the earth holds the holy dust of Ramana's feet, the air carries the air of His breath and the sun is still radiant with the lustre of his physical form in which He lived for 54 long years! This is how Bhagavan keeps His devotees in this spiritually surcharged atmosphere to dive deeper within their own hearts. Bhagavan in His abundant compassion has also made provision for the physical needs of the seekers by way of excellent sattvic food and comfortable shelter. Every one in the Ashram serves every one else in silence and in devotion to Him. It is all His Grace!"

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Sri Helda and **Walter Jackson** from South Africa, are very dear persons, devoted deeply to Bhagavan. They spent two weeks at the Ashram and on their return to their country write: "We were introduced to Sri Ramana's teachings about 10 years ago. At that time our impression of Him was that of a great sage of India who had the most loving and compassionate face, but who had left the body in 1950. His teachings were not easy for us to understand. Then two years ago, by Grace, we arrived in Mother India at Sri Ramanasramam. Our first glimpse of Arunachala Siva was from a taxi arriving from Katpadi to Tiruvannamalai at dawn — a memorable sight for us! We arrived here at about 6.30 a.m. to be lovingly welcomed and after settling in our room, one kind ashramite offered to show us around the Ashram. We started at the Mother's Shrine. From here we both became aware of a "Something" — for want of better word we call it a 'Presence'. As we approached Bhagavan's Shrine in the Main Hall, this 'Presence' rang in our ears — yet there was complete silence! Then on through to the Old Hall, the Maha

SMT. INDIRA GANDHI PERFORMS KOTI ARCHANA TO SRI BHAGAVAN

The litany of 1000 Names of Sri Bhagavan — *Sri Ramana Sahasranama* — is being chanted at Sri Bhagavan's Shrine on special occasions. Performing such a *Sahasranama Puja* to Sri Bhagavan is deemed very efficacious. *Laksharchana* is chanting of this litany a hundred times.

Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, requested us to arrange for a *Koti Archana* — the litany to be repeated 10,000 times — to be performed at the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan. Praying for the prosperity of Mother India and the welfare of people all over the world are the purposes she wanted fulfilled through the performance of this *Koti Archana*. It will take a few months to complete this grand repetition of the glorious Names.



Koti Archana

On March 28, Smt. Indira Gandhi was in Tiruvannamalai for less than half-an-hour and she was visiting the drought-affected villages nearby. She did not have time to visit the Ashram; however, she desired the *Koti Archana Prasad* to be given to her in the helipad before she left. **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, Ashram President, **Sri B. Ananthaswami**, Vice Chairman of Madras Ramana Kendra and **Sri P. Thandavarayan**, Trustee of the Ashram, handed over Sri Bhagavan's *Prasad* to the Prime Minister.

Samadhi Room, up Arunachala Siva, Skandashram — we were aware of this special 'Presence' everywhere about us and within us, filling us with much joy. Rather sadly, we had to leave within a few days, but this intense feeling, although it diminished with time, has never really left us, filling our lives these 2 years with much Grace in many ways, spiritual and material-wise. Now we realized the 'Great sage of Arunachala' is very much "alive" and re-reading His Teachings — it all became easier to follow!

Thus we are again at Sri Ramanasramam for a short while. How to describe the happiness of sighting the Holy Hill again? What Bliss to sit at the Feet of Bhagavan at His Shrine and 're-charge' ourselves with the so special Presence that pervades the entire place. We realised that Bhagavan could still be seen — not with physical eyes, but within our own Hearts. Thank you once again for all your kindness and hospitality!"

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West Australians, **Dr. Leonard Bowen**, his wife, **Robin** and her mother, **Mrs. Jean Norman**, have been staying at the Ashram for a few weeks. Old devotees will remember Robin as Robin Norman, who stayed at the Ashram for lengthy periods during the early 1960's. For Dr. Bowen, it has been his sixth visit since he first came in January, 1964.

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If inmates of the Ashram go into fits of laughter, one can be sure **Pamela Leah** has come back from England! She is deeply devoted to Bhagavan and sets an example of how a person should face the worldly calamities with a smiling (or 'laughing') face. A serious *sadhak*, every visit of her, almost yearly, only makes us welcome her more heartily.



Pamela Leah

She writes: "How rewarding is a visit to Ramanasramam. Each time one comes one finds something new and this time the stomach's enjoyment was paramount. One met several friends living outside the Ashram who kindly offered one's stomach some very tasty food which was much appreciated. Virtually all the food locally obtained is the same but in each home it is cooked differently and so makes a great variety. The Ashram food itself provides a good variety of vegetables and soups and is always interesting and some of the best in Ashrams. This is due to the happy and hard working cooks who like to serve the devotees. Unfortunately, on this seventh visit to Arunachala — Ramanasramam one is struck by the difference from the first visit eleven years ago; in particular when there was a sanctity pervading everywhere and this once jungle hermitage has become a very public place. Commercialism seems to creep even into Ashrams, so now our beloved 'home' has become very noisy due to the many visitors who come almost daily in coaches; they are never quiet because most of them have just been driven here while on a tour and they know nothing of Sri Ramana Maharshi. This is a great pity as the peaceful atmosphere has been largely lost.

Let us hope this Kali Yuga will soon end and our spiritual 'home' will once more be a beacon of light to which we may come for the essential re-charging of our batteries, whilst one still has to come in the body".

Mrs. Marlies Hibschenberger of West Germany is known to most of the visiting-devotees of Sri Bhagavan. This time, on her arrival, she said she was celebrating her twentieth anniversary — she first came to Ashram in 1963! Her husband, **Hermann Hibschenberger**, arrived at the Ashram after Marlies left. This devout couple are a standing example for following Bhagavan's practical teaching in their day-to-day life. Marlies writes:



Marlies Hibschenberger

"Coming again home this year to the feet of Arunachala gave me a feeling of never having gone away. So there was no excitement which was there years ago.

Since the last 20 years I have been coming again and again — as an empty cup to be refilled by the great power of this place. So, that will always be like this, so very much for the hectic people of western society, to regain strength, stillness and the ever-fulfilling Wisdom. What one inwardly hears here is 'THAT' which is really the everlasting Peace. It is hard task to put all ones effort into the keeping up of this Wisdom and to hold on to it in whatever surroundings one is put in".

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The world-famous pianists, **Annie Alt** and **Jerald Stofsky** from Vienna, are very staunch devotees of Sri Bhagavan. The following words came straight from their hearts:



Mrs. Annie Alt and Jerald Stofsky

"Before I leave this wonderful place which I was so fortunate to visit already five times since 1962, I wish to express my gratitude for the authorities of Ramanasramam for their friendliness and hospitality. It is hard to describe The great peace I experienced, the all — embracing love in the old meditation Hall and in the Nirvana room. I thank Sri Ganesh, who went with us around the majestic Hill Arunachala, the great memorable giant, who takes away and absorbs our decreasing 'I'. If there is one place on earth where the little false ego has little chance to survive, then it is Arunachala the sacred place chosen by our Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramana. May His Grace allow me to come again soon and be with all His devotees".

— Annie Alt, Vienna

"May I say in all honesty that I am at a loss for words with which I may express my innermost gratitude for the peace, joy and inspiration to be found here. The manifestation of Grace is a living reality at Sri Ramanasramam".

— J.H. Stofsky, Vienna

A pious French lady, **Malou Lanvin**, though this is not her first visit, was busily engaged in going round the Ashram — she was with keen interest showing the Ashram to her daughter, **Mariam**. Please read what she wrote on Feb. 20, 1983 about her visit before they left the Ashram:

"Myriam and I are very touched by your kind attention. To day: last day. No! it cannot be true: Arunachala is a place one cannot leave. The Ashram's welcome atmosphere is such that new-comers spontaneously feel "at home", and an old-comer feels he has never left. It is really a sacred place where everyone imbibes peace, stillness, harmony, and also what cannot be expressed through words. All Ashram "sevas" are accomplished with discretion and perfection — in all details — and it is wonderful to recognise the "ancient" ones and to meet also the young ones, spreading cheerfulness!

Exactly 8 years after Bhagavan's *Maha Samadhi*, I landed in India for the first time — unaware of the coincidence at that time, I became deeply moved when I read the date of the "14th April" in the small room of Bhagavan and when I recognised there, His last living photo where He gives such an intense look — this photo I saw once in France in 1950 was, in fact, His call. — Now 24 years later the calendar and the photo are always in the same small room of His Nirvana, full of His Presence.

There is a verse in the *Guru Gita* telling: "May the glance of Grace of the Guru be always on me". I truly felt this glance, everyday, this last week, specially when sitting in the back of this sacred room. Bhagavan's eyes are all-pervasive. They fill the inner and outer space with their living awareness, *Prem* and *Bliss*. — Sometimes they smile with a light humour!

But the last act of His loving play occurred this very night. Here and Now! How amazing to be presented with so attractive a photo of Him on a small calendar "83" card, printed in Singapore! Oh! His look in it! In silence, as if smiling, He tells:

"His glance of Grace is permanently on us

Here, There, and for ever".

Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata (of *Arunachala Ashrama*, New York), along with his family and **Dennis Hartel** (of *Arunachala Ashrama*, Nova Scotia, Canada) came to Arunachala and stayed for a couple of weeks at the Ashram. Sri Bhagawat had to go to Begusarai to attend to some family problems. Though he was eager to come back to the Ashram for holy *Deepam* (Nov. 30, '82) and for

Bhagavan's *Jayanti* (Dec. 31, '82) he could not make it and he had to leave for New York from his native place, itself.

Swami Bua Ji, New York, U.S.A. was at our Ashram for some days and was immersing himself in the Ramanasramam Presence. On his return to the States he has sent us the following: "I have just returned from my pilgrimage to India. As a *sannyasi*, during my sojourn in India, I stayed mostly in Ashrams and other religious-cultural institutions and sometimes in private individuals' residences at their request. As is the tradition, in all Ashrams food and accomodation were free to *sannyasins* and visitors except in the case of Bhagavan Satya Sai Baba's Ashram at Puttapparthi.



Swami Bua Ji

In Sivanandashram at Rishikesh; Sri Guru Gangeshwar-dham at Haridwar, New Delhi, Vrindavan, Bombay and Nasik; and in Abhedashram in Mariapuram and Trivandrum, food was served with love besides being neat and pure. But Sri Ramanasramam was exceptionally neat and pure. I felt I ate the Divine food — Ramanasramam's *Prasadam* given with love and affection. The rooms are extremely neat and tidy. In many other Ashrams neat rooms are absent. I am overjoyed with the upkeep of everything in Sri Ramanasramam and hence this letter of appreciation".

Smt. Durga Lagemann, together with her son 'Little' **Ramanan**, came to the Ashram along with Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata. They enjoyed their stay, though for 'little' Ramanan the food was very hot. He, of course, enjoyed the friendly company of the peacocks, monkeys, cows, calves, squirrels and crows. Smt. Durga, though physically handicapped, following the foot-prints of her husband, **Sri Robin Lagemann** (who unfortunately could not accompany them) participated with keenness and devotion in all the activities of the Ashram, in *pujas* and meditation. We pray that Sri Bhagavan showers His Grace on 'little' Ramanan, smt. Durga and Sri Robin Lagemann in full abundance!

Miss Evelyn Kaselow and **Sri Paul Saphier** came from *Arunachala Ashrama*, New York, on Dec. 5, '82 and spent six weeks at the abode of Sri Bhagavan. They made full use of the precious company of old devotees like Mrs. Osborne, Sri Ramaswami Pillai, Sri Kunju Swami and Sri K. Natesan. During their stay they utilised every minute in prayer, meditation, chanting, having *sat-sang* with old devotees and going round the holy hill. On her return to the States, Miss Evelyn Kaselow writes as follows:

"Following a pilgrimage to the Holy Hill of the Beacon Light, its meaning expands and deepens. Again and again,

one remembers the words of Wisdom spoken by friends and devotees of Bhagavan. Details from pradakshinas or walks up the Hill come to mind. One remembers the sun sets and the hours spent in the Old Hall, the Samadhi Hall and Mother's Shrine. And yet, more than this, one feels one's self changed! A person who imagined she was just going and returning finds that inwardly she feels much different — renewed and refreshed and reinvigorated. Arunachala! It is a seed planted deep with in the heart! One feels, this too is Arunachala! The body alone has travelled while Arunachala shines eternally! The scenes of New York appear but scenes. Arunachala is the one Reality! With Sri Bhagavan we chime in, "What value has this birth without knowledge born of Self-inquiry? How can I compare it to anything, O Arunachala!" (*Aksharamanamalai*, v. 46)"

— Evelyn Kaselow, New York

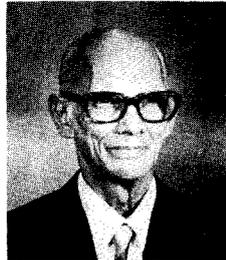
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An elderly couple **Mrs. Eloisa Nergon & Dr. Miguel Godreav** from Puerto Rico spent nearly a week at the Ashram and we were very happy to be told by them that they are helping a group of earnest seekers in their place. Bhagavan's teaching is well received in Puerto Rico, they said.

Dr. Godreav adds: "Our visit to Sri Ramanasramam is the culmination of a spiritual search. I have been on the path of Yoga for the past 40 years, always searching for the Truth. I became a sincere and permanent devotee of Paramahansa Yogananda and eventually became a Yoga Teacher. Organising a Yoga Center I continue to give Yoga instructions twice a month.



Mrs. Eloisa N. Godreav



Dr. Miguel F. Godreav

"My spiritual contact with Sri Ramana was about six years ago. While searching for a Real Master in the Oriental Section of a large bookstore in New York City, I happened to see two books with the picture of Sri Ramana on their covers — I felt an immediate impulse from my heart to take them with me. So I did and what sublime blessing I received by its fundamental teaching of 'Who am I?'. Continued reading of all His works instilled a great urge to visit His Holy Abode. At long last my heart's spiritual longing is now fully accomplished and I feel most happy to be here! My wife shares and endorses these views fully".

Some of the names of devotees who spent long spells of stay at the Ashram during this quarter.

Swami Sadananda and Mahadevan, Madras.
Schiff, Kothrud, Poona.
Swanee Heng Kai Watt, Singapore.
Palekar and M.M. Rao, Bombay.
N.S. Subramanian and Ramachandran, Madras.
Mrs. Savitri Cuttaree, Reduit, Mauritius.
Mrs. Rajalaxmi, Bangalore.
Volker Gausmann, Frankfurt, West Germany
Tomrey Tjan and Eunice Tjan, Toronto, Canada.
Sri T. Sreeramamurthy, Hyderabad.
Sri Rajagopalan Ravi, Vineland, U.S.A.
Venkateswara Rao, Tirupathi.
M.R. Chatterjee, Chakradharpur, Bihar.
Diana Sundin, France.
William Arnold Krammer and Miriam Daine Gobblin, Toronto, Canada.
Bertossa Armando and Beatrice Benfenati, Bologna, Italy.
Christine Radiccia, West Germany.
Princess Gabrielle of Fietchenshire, Geneva, Switzerland.
Amelie Werner, West Germany
Mahlhause, West Germany
Christa Scholz, West Germany
Sri Suddha Chaitanya, Madras
Dolly Kolah, Bombay.
Fred Broumand, Vancouver, U.S.A.
Horst Grossner, Berglen, W. Germany
Mr. & Mrs. Gunter Albrecht, Bremen, West Germany.

His Father's Day

On 3rd March at the Mathrubuteswara temple, we solemnly observed the day of Sri Bhagavan's Father's death anniversary, with *puja* and distribution of *prasad*. Sundaram Iyer was generous, kind-hearted and helpful to all. To pay homage to such a great soul is a rare privilege, indeed!

RAMANA SAT-SANGH

Our Life Subscriber, GUIDO BACHMANN, writes that he will conduct 'Ramana Sat-Sang' at his residence:

Lehnplatz — 12,
 CH-6460-ALTDORF,
 Switzerland.



Sri Swami Chinmayananda in all smiles!

A REPORT FROM BANGALORE RAMANA CENTRE

The bubbling grace of Ramana was evident in the event-studded months of January 83 to March '83. Every Wednesday a different group of ladies have been offering their homage through 'Ramana Music' at the Ramana Shrine.

"**Ramananjali**" at Bombay's prestigious National Centre for Performing Arts and Shanmugananda Hall, in front of discerning audiences, was thrilling. Then there were the widely appreciated performances at Kollegal and Mandya.

Swami Chinmayanandaji was inspired while talking on Ramana on the 30th of January. He said that Ramana is a State of Being and that it is open to each one of us to abide in it, as it is our own natural state of happiness.

February was **Sant Kesavadas's** month. A talk on Ramana, a talk on the 'Glory of Arunachala' and three talks on 'Ramana Gita', made a strong impression on the hearers mind for he pours his heart into his discourses and sweetens it by *Bhakthi*-soaked music.

The celebration of the Composers' Day on 5th of March marked the beginning of a new way of keeping Ramana's Company. The composers taken up were Satyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer, Manavasi Ramaswami Iyer and Sadhu Om. The skit depicting the song '*Saranagathi*', brought



Sant Kesavadas at the Ramana Bhoomi. (l to r) K. Natesan, Dr. Sankaranarayanan, Vice-President, S. Krishnaswamy, Secretary

home, dramatically, the efficacy of prayer for succour when we are utterly helpless. The dance and music of the children of **Ramana Bala Kendra** made one's cup of joy full.



The Ramana Bala Kendra Children depicting absorbing scenes on the Composers' Day.



Sri S.B.P. Pattabhi Rama Rao, Minister of State for Finance and Professor K. Swaminathan on the occasion of release of the book: "Bhagavan Ramana & Mother"

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

At a well-attended function held on the evening of January 30, '83, **Sri S.B.P. Pattabhi Rama Rao**, Minister of State for Finance, released the book, "BHAGAVAN RAMANA AND MOTHER" written by Sri A.R. Natarajan. **Prof. K. Swaminathan** welcomed the Minister and other invitees. The Minister released the book by presenting a copy to **Sri K.C. Subbaiah**. The function came to a close with the singing of **Arunachala Siva** and distribution of *prasad*.

On February 20, *Thyagaraja Day* was celebrated. **Smt. Saraswathi Santhanam** & party and students of Sarada Sangh, Ramakrishnapuram sang the *pancharatna kritis* of the Saint.

On March 6, **Sri K.K. Nambiar**, Chairman of the Ramana Kendra, Madras, gave his reminiscences of his life with Bhagavan.

Sivaratri was observed on March 12.

The Annual General Body meeting of the Kendra was held on January 16 at which the biennial election of office-bearers was held.

The classes in the *Upanishads*, *Gita* and *Brahma Sutras* are going on regularly. Classes for teaching Sanskrit have also been organised.

On March 13, **Dr. R. Balasubramanian**, Director, Radhakrishnan Institute of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras gave a talk on Bhagavan's method of Self Enquiry.

"RAMANA SAT-SANG IN BOMBAY"

When our *Managing Editor* was in Bombay in September — October '82, he initiated the 'Ramana Sat-Sang'¹ on October 10 on *Purnarvasu* day, at the residence of **Sri Balasubramanian. Smt. & Sri Vichare**, along with Sri Balasubramanian, hosted the sacred function. With simple injunctions as stipulated by **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan** of *Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning*, Bangalore (see p. 293 of October '82 issue) the function included *Ramana Ashtottara puja*, chanting of *Upadesa Saram*, silent meditation, reading from Bhagavan's books and 'Ramana Music'. Every month the sacred *Purnarvasu day* is being celebrated in the house of each devotee there.

On Jan. 1, 1983, the New Year began joyously for the devotees of Sri Bhagavan in Bombay, with a Ramana-Celebration. Sri Bhagavan's 103rd *Jayanthi* was solemnly celebrated at the residence of **Sri V. Subramanian**, (son of Ashram President) at Juhu. The function commenced at 4.30 p.m. and lasted for nearly 3 hours; many devotees joyously participated. The *Ramana Ashtottara puja* was performed by **Sri N.S. Ramanan** to the beautifully decorated portrait of Sri Bhagavan. Chanting of *Upadesa Saram*, reading from *Talks* and silent meditation, playing of 'Ramana Music' were observed. After *aarti* to Sri Bhagavan's picture, *prasad* was distributed. The devotees felt the Presence of Sri Bhagavan.

¹Those who wish to participate may kindly contact:

V. Subramanian, B-3, "Husman", North South Road No. 11, Juhu, Bombay — 400 049. (Phone: 579076,

RAMANA KENDRA, AHMEDABAD

On Jan. 27, 1983, a packed house in Bhaikaka Bhavan listened with rapt attention to a brilliant discourse by **Sri**

Swami Ranganathanandaji on "Sri Ramakrishna and Human Destiny in the Modern age".

Stressing that religion was a science of the soul, he emphasised the need to add a spiritual dimension to life to make it more purposive and meaningful and serve the welfare of the individual and society. "We have to realise the essential unity of all religions as the divine spark is there in all of us, and our endeavour should be to enlarge it and develop universal brotherhood so necessary in the present day crisis-ridden world", he said. He added that

religious groupism took us away from God. In this context, he referred to the exemplary life of Universal Sages like Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana. **Sri Vyomanandaji**, President of Ramakrishna Ashram, Rajkot, presided. **Sri K. Sivaraj**, President of Sri Ramana Kendra, Ahmedabad, welcoming the guests, spoke of Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana as exemplars of Holy Poverty who assured householders that, if they were sincere and earnest, they can live in and for God all the time and find fulfilment and supreme happiness in this life itself. **Sri N.S. Sundaram**, Secretary, proposed a vote of thanks.

OBITUARY

SRI JAGADEESWARA SASTRI

Very few people have been addressed in familiar terms by Sri Bhagavan by their names. One among them was the great Sanskrit scholar, Sri Jagadeeswara Sastri, who later rightly earned the titles of *Atma Vidya Bhushana*, *Sastra Ratnakara*, *Vidyalkara*. He was always addressed by Bhagavan familiarly as 'Jagadeesan' (usually Bhagavan used to address everyone with formal respect only).

Devotees owe him a great debt for his composing the litany of 1000 Names of Sri Bhagavan — *Sri Ramana Sahasranama Stuti* — It was appreciated by Sri Bhagavan and ever since is being used in the *Ramana-puja*. This litany contains His life-incidents, His teachings and His unique glory. It was he who was responsible for the birth of the famous *Eka Sloki*¹, beginning with *hridayakuharamadhye*, written by Sri **Sri Jagadeeswara Sastri** Bhagavan. His erudition was vast. Many famous scholars of today have gained such vast knowledge by studying under him.



Once when he was very seriously ill, Bhagavan retained him at the Ashram and cured him. Old devotees known that it was nothing short of a great miracle performed by Sri Bhagavan out of His compassion!

This great devotee of Sri Bhagavan passed away at the ripe old age of 89 years in Madras on March 14, '83. In him the devotees of Sri Bhagavan have lost a gem of a *Ramana-bhakta*.

¹ "In the interior of the heart-cave Brahman alone shines in the form of the Atman with direct immediacy as 'I', as 'I'. Enter into the heart with questing mind by diving deep within or through control of breath, and abide in the Atman". — *Sri Ramana Gita*, Ch. II, v.2

PROF. SHIV MOHAN LAL

A great Saint sang: "Through crying alone can one reach God". Without tears in his eyes, Prof. Shiv Mohan Lal has never spoken about Sri Bhagavan! He was well-versed in His teachings, his love for Him was stupendous. Indeed, his was a Bhagavan-centred life! A resident of

Hyderabad, he was a great scholar in Urdu; he translated Bhagavan's '*Who Am I?*' into Urdu. During the 'Golde Jubilee' celebrations of Sri Bhagavan's advent to Arunachala in 1946, he read out a paper full of adoration for Bhagavan and it was so good that he was asked to give in English as well, which he did the next day. When his wife and he took a large portrait of Sri Bhagavan before leaving for Hyderabad and prayed for His Grace, He took it in His Hands and wrote in Sanskrit on the mount below the portrait: "We worship Sage **Prof. Shiv Mohan Lal** Ramana of graceful form, adorned with a *kaupina*, and seated on a cot, with His hand placed on the cheek, the right knee slightly raised and the face beaming with a compassionate smile".¹



His love for devotees was exemplary. When the 'Sri Ramana Kendram' was started a few years ago at Hyderabad, he gave unstinted support to it. This humble *Ramana-bhakta* passed away on January 6, '83.

Where could he go except to the Lotus Feet of his Sat-Guru Ramana!

**कपोलहस्तं करुणस्मितास्यं
किञ्चित्समुत्तम्भित सव्य जानुम् ।
कौपीन भूषं कमनीयगात्रं
मञ्चासनस्थं रमणं भजामः ॥**

SRI SWAMI ATMANANDA GIRI

For old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Sri T. Krishnaji is a good friend and familiar figure. He was practising law in Madras till his wife passed away in 1967. In 1973 he was initiated into sannyas at Srirangam and was given the name Swami Atmananda Giri. He was a strict disciplinarian all his life, a voracious reader and a master of English, Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Sanskrit and Gujarati. His devotion to Sri Bhagavan he has expressed in many articles he had contributed to *Sri Swami Atmananda Giri* spiritual journals. On Nov. 26, '82 the Swami attained Samadhi at the ripe old age of 77 years. May he be absorbed at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

**H.H. SRI SAI MIRCHANDANI**

In our July, 1978 issue we had published an article, entitled: 'A Sufi Mystic' and it was about Pujya Baba Sai Mirchandani. He got initiated by Pujya Baba Sai Giani, in the line of Sufi saints, known as the Masters of Shah Daraz. For three decades he donned this spiritual mantle, and showered loving compassionate blessings on all. His devotion to Sri Bhagavan was pure and long-standing. Pujya Baba was one of the Patrons of Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee. Our *Managing Editor* was having close contact with Baba. Baba, like his master, was married and was leading a normal married life and never felt it an impediment to his guiding spiritual aspirants.

*H.H. Sri Sai Mirchandani*

He is now merged with the Absolute!

SRI A.R. RAGHAVAN

The proprietor of Chari & Ram, Sri A.R. Raghavan, has been a long-standing devotee of Sri Bhagavan. He has been helpful in the maintenance of 'Sri Ramana Mandirah' in Madurai, where Bhagavan had His Glorious Death Experience. Sri Raghavan's father, Sri A. Rajagopal, was the Tahsildar of Tiruchuzhi, during the life-time of Sri Bhagavan's father, Sri Sundaram Iyer. Sri Raghavan will be rememberer for his philanthropic activities. He when he died peacefully at Madurai.

*Sri A.R. Raghavan*
was 83 years old

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