Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!
Regard me! Take thought of me! Touch me! Mature me! Make me one with Thee, Oh Arunachala!

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 63

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— Editor.

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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THE MOUNTAIN PATH is dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
A Path For The Householder

WHAT is meant by the term ‘householder’? To the Hindu reader, the answer is easy. Who does not know that the boy, born as a Hindu, has to confront practical life as a householder after having completed his education and having been happy enough to have secured a job which provides him the means for maintaining him and his slowly growing family? Is not that the way of life that nature and custom prescribe, sanctified by scriptures the world over?

To him it means simply the householder’s “Dharma” and as such a religious duty. This idea is so deeply rooted in the tradition of Hindu-life that even those who consider themselves ‘modern’ in the sense of not caring for tradition or social ethics seldom question their own entrance into society by accepting the status of the householder and its manifold responsibilities. And they feel supported, consciously or unconsciously, by the strong feeling of being accepted, integrated in life according to its natural laws.

The young Westerner, having finished school, looks out for a place of training or some work which he would like to do. The boy with university-education faces the same situation about ten years later. The question of married life disappears altogether in the background of uncertainty about the time when he will be able to earn a livelihood, so where is there the status of a ‘householder’, let alone the obligation of Dharma in any form?

But worse than all this: he has no belief in a meaning of life, even under favourable conditions. His keen young eyes are not blinded by material success, by wealth and name and fame. He recognises that outer ‘prosperity’ has its heavy price — a price too high to pay — though his ideas about this may be still rather dim.

He asks his elders, and gets no reply that can satisfy him. Thus he comes — say — to India, in the vague hope of finding here, in the land of ancient Wisdom, the answer. He comes in search of a Guru, and sees sitting at his feet the Hindu householder engaged in a similar quest for the meaning of life.

They are not of the same age; the Hindu householder comes in at a much later stage of life when most of his expectations have been disappointed, many honest and sincere efforts have failed, or even outer success has brought no real happiness and he discovers emptiness and boredom behind all repetition and habit.

Of course, neither of them, neither the young Westerner nor the ripe Hindu in trouble, expects the Sage to perform a miracle or alter the outer conditions of life. They
know that this is not the task of the Guru. They come for the Master's approval for their intention to renounce worldly life, because it has nothing worthwhile any more for them.

However, when it was Sri Ramana Maharshi whom they happened to approach with their question, "Is it not better for me to take to sannyasa?" they met with a blank disapproval:

"If it was, you would not have asked!"

This somewhat enigmatic answer implies that sannyasa is not simply a matter of one's own sweet will, but a very serious matter of karma. The Master confirmed this when he was confronted occasionally with the argument that he himself had left his family and home as a youth.

"Yes. Because that was my karma. Yours is different." To call this a matter of karma was however not a help to the troubled householders. The reason for this negative attitude to the question was explained by the Master on another occasion:

"Why do you think you are a householder? If you go out as a sannyasi, a similar thought (that you are a sannyasi) will haunt you. Whether you continue in the household, or renounce it and go to the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thoughts. If you renounce the world, it will only substitute the thought 'sannyasi' for 'householder' and the environments of the forest for those of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there. They even increase in the new surroundings. There is no help in the change in environment. The obstacle is the mind. It must be got over whether at home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? Therefore why change, the environment? Your efforts can be made even now — in whatever environment you may be."

A closer look at this advice shows that it is an arrow taking its way straight into the target, if only one were a Master of archery. But then neither the ripe householder of experience nor the young aspirant is such a Master. Bhagavan shows them the precise point in the Centre which has to be hit — the mind — but how can they hit it immediately, not knowing any techniques in archery of this kind?

The answer demands and deserves the highest and most serious understanding for it involves the discrimination between the Real and the unreal in the identity of the personality. Can this be expected from the householder worn out by a life of worries and difficulties or from a young Western householder-to-be who has not yet learnt how to look at himself?

Though this famous reply decides conclusively that to exchange the role of the 'householder' for the 'sannyasi' is no solution of the problem, it does not show that the 'path of the householder' can become even more fruitful and efficient in a spiritual sense than that of a sannyasi. This is shown clearly by Ramana Maharshi, when he talks about 'the doer'.

The householder is, in the first place, a person bound to be active, though nobody can live without activity, not even a sage. The so-called worldly life is based on activity — and poisoned by the mistake — that man takes himself to be the 'doer', whereas actually things happen of themselves, man being merely one among the means to make them happen. The Bhagavad Gita has it in the form: 'Man's concern is with work, not with its fruits', meaning: Don't let your work be motivated by the expected result; work for work's sake alone. Do what seems to be necessary, because it has to be done; then you will soon forget yourself as the 'doer'.

Sri Ramana uses as example in one place the cashier of a bank. Thousands of Rupees pass daily through his hands; he will never come on the idea, that they represent a for-
tune, because they are not his own. In spite of that he will work with the utmost care and attention — and just this is the way in which all work of the householder should be done.

Bhagavan knew quite well that the problem of the householder before him was not merely a practical or economical family-problem, but went much deeper. Even when the motivation of asking for sannyasa might have been very near to escapism, the problem was at any case a spiritual one: How to bring a real value into a seemingly empty life which at the same time claims all one's time and energy to be managed? The Hindu is generally quite ready to shoulder the burden which karma has in store for him. His problem, as he puts it at the feet of the Guru, is rather: how to reconcile the longing of my inmost nature after a higher Wisdom of Life on the one side — and attention on the other hand to the downdragging conditions of the everyday-duties of the householder?

The great presupposition for a successful spiritual life of a householder is this: We are always in exactly the outer situation which offers the best conditions for our spiritual growth.

Naturally in unfavourable circumstances you will try to change them. But the best way to change them is to accept them as the lesson which is meant for your spiritual growth. Because when you do that in the proper attitude — with a quiet and grateful mind — then you have mastered the lesson, and circumstances will change on their own, maybe in a quite unexpected way, because then you are in tune with your Inner Guidance. And as to the question of the bare necessities of bodily existence of yourself and your dear ones, there will always be what you need, provided you do not ask for things which are not needed. The only condition is to have confidence and courage to take your stand once and for ever in the invisible.

For this way Bhagavan's advice is:

HYMNS TO ARUNACHALA

By Swami Amar Jyoti

O Arunachala! Witness of the mind and body.
Yet you give strength to both.
You are the all-pervading brightness of the self-effulgent Sun.
The soundless sound of the Aum you are.
All in All, you manifest as all.

"Act like the player on the stage. He gives his whole attention and capacity to the task on hand and still knows all the time that he is neither the king nor the beggar of his role, but somebody else."

To live as a grihastha means really to play the role of a grihastha on the stage of life. Do your best whatever kind of householder you have got to represent, but remember always, that your real Self is the silent witness, the real 'you' the real 'sannyasi' within your heart. Do the work allotted to you by your karma, but be neither attached to nor troubled by it.

Manu's Law for a sannyasi runs as follows:

'He should not wish to die, nor hope to live,
But await the time appointed, as a servant awaits his wages.
He should not show anger to one who is angry.
He should bless the man who curses him.
He should not utter falsehood.
Rejoicing in the things of the spirit, calm,
Caring for nothing, abstaining from sensual pleasure.
Himself his only helper,
He may live on in the world, in the hope of eternal bliss.'
Isn’t that exactly what is expected of the ideal householder? Where then is the difference? It is only in the mind. It is the nature of the mind to create differences where there are really none.

Brahmacharya, grihasta-dharma, vanaprastha, sannyasa — they are the changing pictures thrown by the light of life on the never changing screen of the one and only Self, the real ‘I’, which is neither this (householder) nor that (sannyasin), but pure Awareness or conscious Being.

What has been said above about the possibility and efficacy of Self-enquiry in all states, sannyasa or grihastha, applies equally to our activities in the public sphere as it does to domestic or family life. The concept of dharma and the practice of swadharma as a means of self-purification cannot be restricted to any particular stage or aspect of human life. Household duties, public office, professional service, all can provide opportunities for sadhana in the earnest seeker. In a sense all of us are sannyasins who live for the world rather than in it. Blessed are those who like the realized Sage, live not in or outside or for the world, but simply as the world. When Bhagavan called himself an atyāsrami, one who transcended all the asramas or stages of life, he only asserted his total identity with all mankind. The supreme Person is supremely impersonal.

**WHO I AM?**

By Ed Hirsch

Global tours go begin, or explore worlds within,
Experience all or get high;
But alone and distressed, at the end of the quest,
You’re left asking, “Who I am?”

Ask those in position of the human condition,
They’ll answer your “What?” “How?” and “Why?”;
But you’ll find there are none since the world has begun
Who can answer in Truth, “Who am I?”

So ask yourself solely, directly and wholly,
The question you cannot put by;
Leave your wit and your art and go straight to the Heart
And question yourself, “Who am I?”

Let all of your notions and mental commotions
Arise and then gently pass by;
Bring all your attention to what’s no invention
And keep asking, “Who am I?”

Cast off preconceptions and mental deceptions,
Self-images here won’t apply;
Not knowing or seeing but only True Being
Will answer in Truth, “Who am I?”
AFTER the devotees who had gathered for the birth-day celebration of Bhagavan left the Ashram, I approached him with my problem: "How am I to rise above my present animal existence? My own efforts in that direction have proved futile and I am convinced that it is only a superior might that could transform me. And that is what has brought me here." Bhagavan replied with great compassion: "Yes, you are right. It is only on the awakening of a power mightier than the senses and the mind that these can be subdued. If you awaken and nurture the growth of that power within you, everything else will be conquered. One should sustain the current of meditation uninterrupted. Moderation in food and similar restraints will be helpful in maintaining the inner poise." It was this grace of Bhagavan that gave a start to my spiritual career. A new faith was kindled within me and I found in Bhagavan the strength and support to guide me for ever.

Another day, questioned about the problem of Brahmacharya, Bhagavan replied: "To live and move in Brahman is real brahmacharya; continence, of course, is very helpful and indispensable to achieve that end. But so long as you identify yourself with the body, you could never escape sex-thought and distraction. It is only when you realise that you are formless Pure Awareness that sex-distinction disappears for good and that is brahmacharya, effortless and spontaneous."

A week after I arrived, I got the permission of Bhagavan to live on madhukari, i.e., begged food. In that context, Bhagavan spoke as follows: "I have experience of it; I lived on such food during my stay at Pavalkundru to avoid devotees bringing for me special rich food. It is altogether different from professional mendicancy. Here you feel yourself independent and indifferent to everything worldly. It has a purifying effect on the mind."

Four months after my arrival at Arunachala, my parents came there to have darshan of Bhagavan and take me back home. Though they did not succeed in this latter intention they were somehow consoled by Bhagavan before they returned. He asked them if it

1a small hillock, a spur of Arunachala on the east.
CONVERSATION—9

By Darlene Delisi

At Skandasram there was a certain tree under which Bhagavan used to sit. Even though it was fully grown, it did not bring out fruits, for which the tree is famous. When once this was brought to the notice of Sri Bhagavan, He remarked, jclickly: “What to do? It is all due to its association with Us! It has become like us.” (meaning, childless like a sadhu).

On another occasion, when devotees like Kunju Swami and others at Skandasram planted onions, Bhagavan too was persuaded to join them and plant an onion. After some time all the onions planted by others gave off shoots while Bhagavan’s did not. Then also Bhagavan made the same remark.

It is a fact that the Jack-fruit tree, coconut tree and others did not yield fruit as long as Bhagavan was seated beneath them at Virupaksha Cave, Skandasram etc. By the touch of the Pure Jnani that Bhagavan was, the cycle of births was made extinct even for seeds and plants!

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

was possible to wean one from a course one had taken with all one’s heart and soul. Parents might as a matter of duty try it if it was a wrong course that one had taken. The problem did not arise, if the course taken was intrinsically good.

My father was a cousin of Bhagavan four or five years older than him and knew him very well as Venkataraman before he left home for Tiruvannamalai. Though he had heard from others about Bhagavan’s spiritual greatness and had also gone through his

Teaching in Sri Ramana Gita and verses in Praise of Him by his scholar-poet disciple, Ganapati Muni, he was not sure of what his reaction would be on seeing Bhagavan. He decided to go to him with an open mind and see for himself what He was. But the moment he sighted Him in the stone mantapa (on the other side of the Ashram), he was overpowered by a sense of genuine veneration, fell at His feet in adoration and said: “There is nothing of the Venkataraman whom I knew very well in what I see in front of me!” And Bhagavan replied with a smile: “It is long since that fellow disappeared once for all!”

My father then explained that he did not visit him so long because he had not enough of dispassion and non-attachment to approach him. Bhagavan replied: “Is that so? You seem to be obsessed by the delusion that you are going to achieve it in some distant future. But, if you recognise your real nature, the Self, to what is it attached? Dispassion is our very nature.”

As the Ashram-cottage was being repaired, Bhagavan stayed in the huge stone-mantapa on the other side of the road during day time and devotees had darshan of Him there. Bhagavan used to dine with others under the shade of a huge mango-tree within the Ashram premises. The cool, clear water of the Ashram-well was kept in big pots at the foot of the tree. We enjoyed the shade of the tree and the grace of Bhagavan which like a cool breeze blew off man’s torments.

As advised by Bhagavan, I engaged myself in non-stop japa, day and night, except during hours of sleep. And I studied Sri Ramana Gita in the immediate presence of Bhagavan, drinking in the import of every sloka in it. Bhagavan explained to me his own Hymns in Praise of Arunachala. Even during his morning and evening walks, I used to follow him, hearing his explanations of his inspired words. Early one morning there was none
else near Bhagavan and he suggested that we both might go round Arunachala and return before others could notice his absence and begin to search for him. He took me by the forest-path and suggested that Sankara’s Hymn in Praise of Dakshinamurti might be taken up for discussion on the way. And within three hours we reached Pandava Thiratham on the slopes of Arunachala, a little to the east of the Ashram, where he used to bathe on a few former occasions.

I shall not pretend that I understood everything that Bhagavan said in explaining the import of the Hymn, but there was the spiritual exhilaration of his company in solitude and that was enough for me.

I had learned by heart, even before coming to Bhagavan, the three vallis of the famous Taittiriya Upanishad, which is being chanted every morning before Bhagavan at his Ashram even today. When I expressed to Bhagavan my aspiration to learn the import of the Upanishad, he directed me to Ganapathi Muni, familiarly known as Nayana, who was then living in the Mango Tree Cave on Arunachala which had been Bhagavan’s summer residence during his stay at the Virupaksha Cave. It was a cool spot under a big mango-tree with a spring of crystal clear water a little above it. I went to the cave and waited at its outer precincts. Within a few minutes Ganapati Muni came out. There was the fragrance of tapas in his presence and in the whole atmosphere. After sitting in silence before him for a few minutes, I asked him for the explanation of a passage in the Taittiriya Upanishad embodying the experience of Sage Triangu, beginning Aham Vrikshasya rariva, meaning, ‘I am the Force operating behind the Tree of Existence’.

Nayana gave such a lucid and illuminating explanation of it, that I decided that there was no need for asking him further questions; every word coming out of his mouth had scriptural clarity and sanctity. And yet he used to direct to Bhagavan those who went to him, saying: “To learn from him first-hand has a special effect.” And Bhagavan, on his part, used to send those who approached him in connection with traditional worship to Nayana, as he was the authority on the subject. Such was the relationship between the Master and his famous disciple. We have had opportunities of noticing the special regard Bhagavan had for this learned poet-disciple who from his early youth had dedicated his whole life to tapas.

(To be continued)
“The thought I am Brahman has to vanish.”
“It is really like gazing into vacancy.”

These two excerpts from the *Talks of Ramana Maharshi* raise the whole question of the nature of Self-realisation, of how the true spiritual life is lived, of what mystical experience is all about. If that experience is as barren as these passages declare, what price those marvellous utterances of the great mystics, East and West, ancient and modern, which describe not emptiness but fullness, the enjoyment of all manner of spiritual riches, insights, revelations?

What is mysticism? Of all the loaded words we use and misuse, this is among the most ambiguous, and also one we can least afford to be vague about. What do we mean by mystical experience? What are the marks of the true mystic?

Anyone naive enough to set out to answer these questions by paying a visit to a bookshop, and dipping into the books on the ‘mystical’ shelves, would invite total confusion. What connection could he find between clairvoyance and Meister Eckhart, between colourful stories of miracles and the Void that is even of voidness, between mental magic and the poetry of St. John of the Cross, between astral travel or out-of-the-body experiences and the claim by some mystics that they were never in the body anyway? How could he reconcile those spiritual authorities who describe the essential awareness as enjoyment of this or that state or quality or idea (such as Aloneness, Non-duality, Stillness, Silence, Love, Boundlessness . . .) with those that insist that the essential awareness has no content at all, is free from all thoughts and feelings, is idea-less and altogether non-mental?

In this article we shall try to clear up these confusions by sharply distinguishing three kinds of experience which, though commonly lumped together under the heading *mystical*, are in fact very different indeed.

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1 The first series of this article appeared in our April '79 issue, p. 77.
The first sort need not keep us long. Here *mystical* means mysterious, odd, inexplicable, occult, weird, beyond belief, unnatural, incompatible with science. I remember buying, many years ago, on the strength of its title, a book called *The Mystical Life*. It turned out to be an account of journeys, in a state of trance, through astronomical realms unknown to science; and the implication was that here we had the very stuff of mystical experience, and no other sort existed. This sort of mysticism covers a huge field, from flying saucers and numerology to the strange worlds of Rudolph Steiner and Emmanuel Swedenborg and W. B. Yeats. This isn’t to deny value and significance to this kind of experience (it can be beautiful and life-changing) but to point out how very different it is from mystical experience of our second sort.

Rather than attempting to describe this second variety, let us take an example. In his book, significantly entitled *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*, Dr. R. M. Bucke wrote:

There came upon me a sense of exultation, of immense joyousness, accompanied or immediately followed by an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Among other things, I did not merely come to believe, I saw that the universe is not composed of dead matter, but is, on the contrary, a living Presence; became conscious in myself of eternal life. It was not a conviction that I would have eternal life, but a consciousness that I possessed eternal life then; I saw that all men are immortal; that the cosmic order is such that without any peradventure all things work together for the good of each and all; that the foundation principle of the world, of all the worlds, is what we call love, and that the happiness of each and all is in the long run certain. The vision lasted a few seconds and was gone; but the memory of it has remained during the quarter of a century which has since elapsed. I knew that what the vision showed was true. . . .

This second variety of mystical experience is not so much concerned with the thrills, the excitement, the oddity of what is experienced as with its truth. It claims to arrive at self-evident Facts of immense importance, hitherto concealed. It comes as Knowledge of a higher order, and conversely as the discovery of underlying Realities. It is a Revelation or series of Revelations. Examples are the vivid realisation of oneself as being Nothing, having Nothing, knowing Nothing, wanting Nothing. . . but the list is endless. At these levels the Truth is like a diamond with innumerable facets, many-coloured, fiery-brilliant, far-reaching.

The experience we are trying to describe, though so varied as to baffle definition, does have four distinct marks. First, it cannot be had at will. It is a spontaneous, unpredictable happening. You can do little or nothing to bring it on. Amazing grace does not respond to urgent invitations. Second, it is specific rather than all-embracing. At any given moment it has a limited thought-content and feeling-content, no matter how exalted that content may be. For example, if you are now consciously realising your true Self as I AM, or pure Being, or the Source that does the ‘impossible’ and creates Itself from Itself, why then you are not simultaneously realising your true Self as Love, or as Qualityless, or as Timeless and Unchanging, or as the Only Power? Third, it has a certain vagueness, and cannot be pinned down. It refuses to stand still for inspection, and it spills over into other realisations. It can be remembered only with difficulty. Above all it is a matter of degree. Mystical feelings and thoughts of Love, or Peace, or Oneness, or whatever, vary in intensity from moment to moment, and (it’s safe to say) from mystic to mystic. Some are hugely gifted here and others aren’t; some are practised experts and
SONG OF SONGS

By

Ursula Muller

I AM the one Lord's beam
The tune of life I AM
I AM delusion's dream
The song of truth I AM

Shadow and light ecstatically
My sport draws from MYSELF
Cadence of times eternally
Reflects my smile to MYSELF

I AM not here nor over there
The only cause I AM
I AM the centre everywhere
Creation's mouth I AM

others mere beginners. There is a hierarchy of spiritual attainment. Fourth and last, it is an occurrence in time. It comes, flourishes more-or-less briefly, and goes, perhaps never to return, and certainly never to return in precisely that form.

Now these four characteristics — unpredictability, incompleteness or partiality, vagueness, and brevity — which are the marks of our second variety of mystical experience, do not apply to our third kind at all. In fact it is quite the opposite of the sort of thing we've been examining so far. If we call, for convenience, our first two varieties Popular Mysticism and Peak-experience Mysticism respectively and this third variety Liberated Mysticism, then Liberated Mysticism is indeed liberated from the defects of mysticism, not to mention mysticism itself. Thus:

Firstly, this experience is accessible, at will, whatever my mood or state of health or merits or demerits. All I need to do to see into my true Nature is to turn round the arrow of my attention at this moment and notice that I'm looking at the world out of nothing whatever, and certainly not out of a small, opaque, coloured, complicated thing. The spot I occupy now is alive to the fact that it is unoccupied, and that right here is merely 'Space for the world to happen in'. If I should doubt this I have only to point at my 'face', and see what's on my side of that pointing finger.

Secondly, this experience is a mind-stopper. What I find here has no perceptual content, no thought content, no feeling content. It's a sort of alert idiocy, free from ideas and emotions of any sort, and certainly of the mystical sort. This doesn't mean that I'm in any sort of trance, or that there is anything odd or unnatural about this state. Quite the contrary: it is ceasing to pretend that I am what I'm not, a thing in the world, a body-mind. It isn't that I dismiss or reject the contents of my awareness, but that I awaken to the fact that where I am is stainless Clarity, free from all contents or qualities or functions. Here the mind cannot penetrate.

Thirdly, this vision of the Source has nothing vague about it. It is precision itself. It cannot be doubted. It is self-evident, clear, simple, all-or-nothing, and there is no way to get it wrong. There are no inferior sightings of Who one really is. You can go on forever getting more beautiful feelings, more brilliant thoughts, more profound insights, but when you come Home to their Origin there is only one way of being there. What you see is perfectly seen, as it is forever and ever.

Fourthly, this experience is out of time. It is only Now. That is why it can never be remembered or anticipated, but only enjoyed in the present moment. And when so enjoyed, no date or hour can be attributed to it. "I saw Who I was from 3 p.m. to 4-35" makes no sense at all. This isn't for discussing but for testing. Examine now the Absence that lies at the centre of your universe, and you will notice that your inspection has no beginning.
or end. The experience actually reads as timeless.

In every vital respect, then, our third type of mystical experience is sharply contrasted with the others, and we have no excuse for confusing it with them. To get rid of this confusion is to solve the basic problem of the spiritual life.

Let me cite an instance of this problem-solving. Friends who really do turn their attention round and perceive their Source commonly complain that it does nothing for them, that they remain (in their human manifestation) petty, moody, the same mixture as before. Or they are deeply disappointed to find that this in-seeing isn’t a mystical experience at all in the ordinary meaning of that expression: certainly it can’t be guaranteed to produce high-grade thoughts or feelings. The mistake such friends are making, of course, is to mix up Variety 2 with Variety 3, Peak Experiences with Liberation. I suggest that their best hope of getting their share of Peak Experiences is not to go after them directly (a fruitless pursuit) but to rest in their Source. And then I suspect that the Source will, in spite of its absolute Plainness (in both senses of that word) grow on them to such an extent that they will lose interest in Peak Experiences, and indeed in the mind itself with its ever-changing weather of thoughts and feelings. What finally fascinates is the Space it all happens in.

To sum up, then, our first type of mystic is interested in the strange things that come and go in that Space; our second type in the best things (the most beautiful, true, good) that come and go in that Space; our third in the Space itself, transcending all concepts. Let

Ramana Maharshi conclude for us, as he began:

“We should never pray to God that He may grant what we desire, but that His will may be accomplished in us.”

— St. Nilus.
Save me, Oh Lord, from otherness! And yet
There is no other nor no me to save;
Thou only art, in countless forms declared;
Thou wert and nothing else before the worlds,
And Thou art now as then.
All change and pass, only Thy Face endures.
What then is man? Other he cannot be:
There is no other. He who is One, Alone,
Unchangeably, illimitably IS,
Yet, without ceasing from His Changelessness,
Sparks all the tale of laws and flowing lives,
All seeming strife within the womb of Peace.
Thou art His spoken word; yet listen well
And all the universe is spoken through thee;
Thou art the lens through which the rays divine
Pass to spread out in this wide pageantry.
Give up thy self and no self can remain
But That which IS; if thou give up or not
Yet at the end must all return to Him
As dream-forms melt in waking; at the end
He IS and otherness has never been
And all thy strife was needless and the course
Of that which thou callest thee is before time
And but unrolled as pictures on a screen.
Why wilt thou cling to that which never was?
What refuge is there from the Eternal Now,
The Truth that changes not? In ignorance
awhile
A seeming self a seeming refuge finds
From peace in strife, from bliss in famished quest
Of joys still fleeting, in frustrated life
That mocks and swings its still ungathered fruit
Just beyond reach and then, receding far,
Leaves hunger and a memoried regret,
And the few gathered fruits taste sour at last
And all ungathered, fair yet far, still mock
With might-have-been. Yet all that hides
Truth's Self
And lures, delusive-fair, then breaks and mocks,
Leaving the embittered traveller unappeased
Like one who sought relief in a mirage
And finds the pitiless sun and the wide sand,
All that disguises Truth's white radiance
Under prismatic myriad-gleaming points,
Gleaming and ending, flashing from the dark
In phantom forms, then melting into dark,
Dreams insubstantial, form ephemeral,
All is the Face of Truth for who can see,
All is the Word blown forth in waves of song,
All threads in thy life's tapestry declare
The Truth behind Thee. Men shall not escape
From That which is to that which fancy builds,
Frail as the builder.
Listen! In all things is the Voice of God.
Turn where ye will, there is the Face of God.
WHEN I visited it, Sri Ramanasramam was a very simple structure. There was just one large hall with a kitchen and dining place attached to it. There was a compound and a small temple which was probably the samadhi of his mother. There was a board in the compound which warned people to be careful about monkeys, birds and other creatures and also warned visitors not to harm them.

I heard that once, in its early years, some thieves entered the ashram, drove Ramana Maharshi and others out and even assaulted Ramana Maharshi, injuring him on his thigh. Many things were stolen. The Maharshi did not protest. When the thieves were leaving and his disciples learnt about their having beaten Ramana Maharshi, they began to chase the thieves. Ramana Maharshi prevented them from doing so and told them that the thieves had done their work and now they should do theirs instead of going after the thieves.

I had the privilege of seeing Ramana Maharshi in the large hall in which he usually

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sat. He was sitting on a sofa and wore only a loin cloth. I could see an aura on his face which was glowing with peace and joy. I sat opposite him but did not ask him anything. He too did not say anything to me. I sat over an hour and just looked at his face. Till today I have not seen that aura, that joy or peace on anybody else's face. While I sat there, no questions arose in my mind, nor did I feel any desire to ask anything. I was at complete peace with myself. It was this experience which convinced me that Ramana Maharshi had realised God or Truth. Some of his disciples who were present asked him some questions concerning religious matters which he answered. He, however, said nothing of his own accord.

I had to leave the place next day by train around eleven. About an hour-and-a-half before the time of departure, I approached Ramana Maharshi for permission to leave, when he told me that I should go after I had eaten. We sat down for lunch at about ten and Sri Ramana Maharshi sat for lunch with us. I bowed to him after lunch and left.

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**THE POET**

*By* Dale

The poet knows his own source and seeks his Godhead there.

It is only in the afterglow of his continual Self-discovery that he reveals his soul to us.

Yet only the Poet has ears to hear him. Poet speaks to Poet, Heart to Heart, and all is said in Silence.

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**CRY**

*By* S. M. Kaul

Must the gods from their Himalayan heights,
Look down on man with cold, indifferent eyes
And let him writhe in agony and pain,
Lest their divinity be clothed in clay?

The cosmos echoed with a thunderous "Nay!"
Awakening the sun within man's heart
And earth and heaven together seemed to say,
"Arise and struggle, seek and find, and make out of the clay a temple fit for gods."
WHEN Kon-Fu-Tse met Wen-Poh-Hsuch-Tse, a sage from the South, the first did not speak a word. Then his companion, Tse-Lu, said, “Master, for a long time you have wished to see Wen-Poh-Hsuch-Tse. Why is it that you don’t speak, now that you see him?” Kon-Fu-Tse answered, “One only needs to look at someone like him, and Tao is. There is no need for speaking”. (from Chuang-Tse, Chap. XXI).

In the presence of the Maharshi the same thing happened to me — twelve years ago when I saw him for the first time and during the many years that I visited him again and again, especially during the three years that I stayed near him almost without interruption. It is for this same reason that I find it ever so difficult to speak or write about the Maharshi, as I am often asked to do. It is not so very difficult to write about the course of the Maharshi’s life or about his teachings. Both of them differ very little from those of the earlier great sages that Hinduism has produced, although in some respects the Maharshi himself is unique. It is certainly much easier to invent the image of a great sage and write a story about his life and works than to give a description of a living sage. Such a creation is produced by emotional, intellectual, moral and cultural forces, whereas the important element which makes a human being a sage does not lie within these aspects of the human soul, but deeper in the essence which forms the ground of the spiritual. As long as attention is fixed on emotional, intellectual, moral and cultural life, there is a permanent contradiction which expresses itself in a duality of life and works, of that which is introvert and that which is extrovert, of theory and practice, of speaking and doing. However, as soon as the essence has become the basis, which is only the case with a real sage, who is Holy (which means “wholly”), there can no longer be any question of a contradiction. The essence is the unity of these contradictions that rule the lives of ordinary mortal beings, and in it these contradictions simply disappear. For visitors who have enough insight to perceive something of this essence, this unity of contradictions in the sage is exactly that element that makes such

1 translated from the Dutch in “Mens en Kosmos” Vierde Jaargang, No. 2, March 1948.
a mighty impression on them. Anybody who is honest with himself is aware of a contradiction between his being and his actions, between his inside and the outside which he shows to the world by his actions. With a sage he experiences that being and doing, that spiritual aspirations and practical life can be one, and this cannot but make a mighty impression upon him. Others, who are less honest with themselves and consequently are not disturbed by these contradictions, are probably more struck by a novel in which the life of some historical saint is set out in detail, written from the emotional and moral points of view but lacking the essence.

However what has been said above is nothing but words — for the essence is just that which is beyond words and can't be put into words. It is exactly that factor which one cannot describe, which one can only feel for oneself. One must see a sage in order to experience him — if only his eyes are able to see!

For a sage who lives in the realization, “I and my Father are One”, St. Dionysius’ words hold good: “All that you may say about God is untrue, for God is beyond speech and therefore what you say about God relates to something else”. Therefore, if in India someone asks me to speak or to write about the Maharshi, I am inclined either to answer that the questioner ought to visit the Maharshi and see for himself, or to do what Sri Sankaracharya did when somebody asked him to describe the real ecstasy. Sri Sankara sat quietly down and communicated the ecstasy by merely getting absorbed in it without any further word.

In Europe, however, neither of these answers will do. Under the circumstances, it would be unfair to suggest to people to go to India to see the Maharshi. Those very few to whom it is given by destiny to see him will be led to him of themselves. As for the demonstration, it would in almost all cases produce no effect, since it would be understood as a mere pose, meaningless in itself, for in Europe people go to each other to talk. The speechless absorption in some spiritual or super-spiritual state is so little known that to do so in the company of other people would be entirely misunderstood. Even in church “talking” is going on nearly the whole service; the mind is kept busy without interruption with sentimental, moral and spiritual images. A sage, however, possesses the calm of the Seventh Day of Creation: “God blessed and hallowed the Seventh Day by having rest on that day, after creating all things to perfection.”

It is in this way that sages advise their disciples to do nothing — a state of mind reflecting the calm of the Seventh Day. Read, for instance, what was said by Lao-Tse 2,500 years ago and by Chuang two centuries later about and you find it is just the same as what the Maharshi teaches now. This “doing-nothing” does not at all mean that one should do nothing! On the contrary, Divine Inactivity is the opposite of laziness, one of the “seven deadly sins” which kill a man’s spirit or keep him dead. Laziness is the sin of not striving upwards, of indifference to higher life, and it brings spiritual death with it.

The inactivity of the Sages of China, the rest on the Seventh Day of Creation, is that which the Maharshi calls the “Natural State”. This Natural State has nothing to do with the state of relation to the natural world propagated by the “back-to-nature” supporters, but is rather the state of mind in which no Fall is possible. It is a state of perfect inner rest and equilibrium, in which there is no striving whatever, and which in normal life may include the greatest activity. This comes to light in the 6 verses chosen by the Maharshi from Yoga-Vasishtha. They contain instructions given to Prince Rama by his Guru, Vasishtha, and are
found in Upasanthi Prakarana, in “The Story of Purnya and Pavana”.

“Having enquired into (the nature of) all the states, (wakeful, dreaming and deep sleep), and ever holding steadfastly at heart to that State Supreme which is absolute and which is free from illusion, play in the world, O Raghava, the Hero! You have realized That in the heart which is the Substratum of truth of all appearances. Therefore, without ever abandoning that (right-perspective), play in the world just as you like.”

— (Forty Verses, Supplement 26).

“As one with feigned enthusiasm and joy, with feigned excitement and hatred, as one taking feigned initiative and making a feigned effort, play in the world, O Raghava, the Hero!”

— (Forty Verses, Supplement 27).

It is one of the wise traditions of Hinduism to look upon life as a Divine play — Lila. For the sage, in whom Maya, the world of appearances, and God-Reality have become one, who experiences God-in-Action and God-in-Being as a Oneness of which he himself forms a natural part, Maya becomes Lila, or Divine play. To engage in this play consciously and to enjoy it from the Centre of peace, described above as Inactivity and rest and the Natural State, is recommended by the sages. As a matter of course one should know and follow the rules (the conditions mentioned by Vasishtha) in order to be able to play and enjoy the play.

I am often asked, mainly by Westerners, “What exactly does the Maharshi do?” One should in fact answer, “The daily occupation of the sage is to be Himself”. Because he really succeeds in doing so, the Maharshi makes such a great impression on many of his visitors. Not only does he demonstrate the Natural State, but in doing so he is perfectly natural — a man without any pose, without a mark. The Maharshi effects drastic changes in the lives of many like me. That’s what he does, and he does so by doing nothing at all. In no way does he force anything on anyone. He doesn’t even offer me advice regarding any problem of life. The world bristles with advisors, but with all their advice they are unable to solve world problems or personal difficulties. Their method is to try to get improvement from outside, which is like looking for a needle in a haystack. The method of the sage, on the other hand, is to let improvements come from within, from the Essence that is the Supreme quality and to let the improvements manifest themselves outwardly quite spontaneously and naturally, without any interference.

Concerning the Maharshi’s daily life, until recently it was entirely public. Visitors surrounded him night and day and he was ever inclined to pay attention to them and to answer their questions, provided they were sincere and their questions lay in the sphere of the spirit. In fact he was never alone. At night people slept in his room on mats on the floor, as is the Indian custom. Now that he has become old, the administrative head of the ashram community that has grown up around him has made some rules, so that Maharshi is to be left alone for some hours...
after lunch and during the night. The Maharshi himself has never asked for such protective measures. He is one with all people in a very real way.

**CONVERSATION—11**

By Darlene Delisi

Sri Kunju Swami conveniently divides Sri Bhagavan’s life at Arunachala into three parts: They are given hereunder in a tabular form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>His life until He came up the Hill (at Gurnamirtham, Pachiamman Koll etc.) (1896-1898)</th>
<th>He did not talk. His presence and darshan was enough to give one a complete spiritual fulfilment.</th>
<th>Can be compared to a ‘powerful spring’</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His life on the Arunachala Hill (at Virupaksha cave, Skandasram etc.) (1899-1922)</td>
<td>He spoke sparingly and with very few words and that too only in answer to questions put to him. His presence radiated peace and quietude (the perfect silence of the first stage) and added to it were the words of nectar by way of answers.</td>
<td>Can be compared to a ‘Smooth flowing beautiful River’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>His life at Sri Ramanasram (1922-1950)</td>
<td>Bhagavan was extraordinarily brilliant, and pouring out His experiences and reminiscences. (He would some times repeat anecdotes 4 or 5 times, viz., to help late-comers to the hall). Bhagavan had to oblige multitudes of devotees coming for His darshan.</td>
<td>Can be compared to an unfathomable Ocean’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Gathered by the writer while talking to Sri Kunju Swami.
2 ‘One Masthan Sahib got his atma saketkara in eight hours. When Kunju Swami asked him whether he had asked Sri Bhagavan any questions, the Sahib replied: “When I came to Bhagavan He was seated like a rock outside Virupaksha Cave, without altering His look, which was filled with Grace, compassion and Steady Wisdom. So, I also stood by His side. After giving me a look, He opened the gate of my heart and I was also established in His state. I stood like that for eight hours, absolutely without fatigue, but filled with total absorption and peace. Bhagavan in those days used to open our heart with a simple gracious look and it transformed us. There was no need for any questions since He made us, by His look, like Himself!’”
nasramam before dawn with the recitation of
some part of the Yajur Veda by Brahmins,
whose hereditary occupation it is to do so.
This recitation is done in the hall where the
Maharshi spends the day on his couch. By
this chant orthodox Hinduism honours the
sage, who himself is beyond any sectarianism
or religious differences. Before sunset the
recitation is repeated together with other
texts. People in great number — usually
hundreds, and even thousands during the
time of temple festivals in town — are always
present at the recital. Every day the Mahar­
shi reads the incoming and outgoing mail.
Letters from Ramanasramam are written by
a Secretary and signed by the administrative
head of the Ashram. The Maharshi never
signs anything. More than 50 years ago he
gave up his name and possessions. He
answers questions when they arise; glances
through Tamil and English newspapers; he
corrects translations of writings and reads
proof sheets. All the while many people sit
cross-legged in the Hall, men on one side,
women on other. Small children walk about.
Visitors — among them are nearly always a
few Europeans — sit quietly meditating or
in their own way profiting by the presence of
the Maharshi. Frequently visitors or inmates
of the Ashram sing devotional songs and
sometimes concerts are given, all as offerings
to the Maharshi. Occasionally the Maharshi
gets absorbed in contemplation. The usual
expression “getting absorbed” is actually not
correct, for there is no question of getting
into and later returning from a special state.
There is but one state for him, the Natural
State, and he appears to be in this state
continuously. He is usually addressed as
“Bhagavan”, which means “Divine Being”. He
takes little notice of the crowd that
surrounds him. Peacocks, dogs, monkeys and
other animals go to him; even an old cow
visits him at regular intervals. There is
always something in store for them, the offer­
ings of fruit, nuts and cakes which are put
at his feet and which are always distributed
amongst those present. The Maharshi refuses
to take anything special or more than what
others get.

Sometimes “important” visitors arrive —
learned men, Maharajas, men of name, well-
known politicians, globe-trotters, captains of
industry and so on. The management will,
perhaps, for the most “distinguished”
amongst them, put some extra carpet on the
floor or pay special attention to them. Not
so the Maharshi; he treats all the same way.
At best he may be somewhat friendlier to
those who come from far away. Often “the
great of this earth” feel like small school­
boys while standing before him. They get
quite new experiences which radically alter
their understanding of the sage. The late
Maharaja of Mysore, the biggest State of
South India, a very devout and orthodox
Hindu, kneeled humbly before the Maharshi
and stood motionless for a long time with
tears in his eyes. He kneeled once more and
departed without a word.

Once a visitor asked the Maharshi what
he thought about the ignorance and sufferings
EVENING

By Colin Oliver

A light across the river
fires my own gaze
like an arrow
back at myself
and on, forever falling.

When I pause
to look at an ear
of corn, tenderness
passes like a hand
across the field.

of the modern world. The Maharshi answered, "The world is but an ocean of delight", though he went through much suffering during his early years in Arunachala. He remained for some time in a dark cave with his body covered with vermin, and was almost always alone, exposed to the teasings of mischievous youngsters.

Moralists sometimes think of sages as "escapists" who avoid their social duties. It is not so. A sage is not one who has been put on the defensive by the difficulties of life, but one who has bidden farewell to the world, not because of its sorrow and crudity, but because it is not True Life! Even the joys of worldly life are painful in comparison with the beatitude of real life. The average man is inclined to pity the sage, whom he regards as having foregone the pleasures of life. The sage, however, pities his commiserating fellow-man, because the latter does not know what real happiness is. The average man either thinks that a sage is one who has strayed from the path and is abnormal and unnatural, or else sees him as a fairly harmless lunatic. In either case, it is clear to him that there is something wrong with the Sage's mind. A few people humbly admit that they have not as yet progressed as far as the sage, and that it will be a long time before they acquire the same wisdom. The sage, on his part, considers all his fellow-men as potential sages; he is aware of no difference between others and himself. The mystic Hui Neng of the eighth century, A.D., made the remark that the only difference between a Buddha and the average man is that the one realizes what the other discards. The Maharshi has often said the same. When someone asked him, as Swami Vivekananda asked Rama- krishna, "Have you seen God?", the Maharshi replied, "Is there anybody who hasn't seen Him?" To the sage, God is the only Reality. He is the Beginning and the End.

If we don't see Him in the midst of all experiences, and consequently lose our Natural State — symbolized in the Holy Bible as the garden with the Arbor Vitae (Tree of Life) wherein Adam walked with God by his side — it is our own fault. The prodigal son may at any time return to his Father.

"Whoever has in his heart even so much as a rice-grain of pride, cannot enter into Paradise."

— MUHAMMAD.
Sayings of Bhagavan

1. "Turn the mind inward and rest in your own Self."

2. "Mind is the cause of bondage."

3. "Give up one thing after another and rest in peace."

4. "What we get, we shall lose, so desire not."

5. "There are two kinds of meditation. The first is to be practised by advanced aspirants — nirguna dhyana — where one seeks to know the Meditator himself. The second kind is to be practised by those less advanced — a somewhat round about course — saguna dhyana — where the meditator, meditation, and the object of meditation get merged ultimately into one."

6. "When I come to know that I was never born, I shall never die. Death is for one who is born. I was never born. I have no body and so I shall never die. I am everywhere; where am I to go and where am I to come?"

7. "When a man's mind is dead, he will not die again."

8. "Attain the sushupti (state of sleep) in the jagrat (waking) state, and you become a jnani."

1 Recorded in June, 1918. By C. V. Subramania Aiyer, Chittoor.
9. "Turn the mind inward and search for the Seer and you find that you are the Seer and the objective world does not exist."

10. "The mind divides itself into the subject and object — the Seer and the seen. So the outer world of names and forms has no independent existence."

11. "The jiva is the reflection of Brahman on the mind."

12. "A man might have performed many karmas in his previous births. A few of them alone will be chosen for this birth, and he will have to enjoy their fruits in this birth. It is something like a magic lantern show where the showman picks but a few slides to be exhibited at a performance, the remaining slides being reserved for other performances. But it is possible for a man to destroy his karma by acquiring knowledge of the Self. The different karmas are the slides, karmas being the result of past experience — and the mind is the projector. The projector must be destroyed, and there will be no reflection and no samsara."

13. "I am the ruler of the mind. I am not the mind. Most people take the mind for the Self and bring misery upon themselves."

14. "Guru is necessary for a man; he serves as a guide on the road to realisation. But there are some who have known the Truth without a Guru to guide them. Such men must have learnt in their previous incarnations. There are some in whose case a word or two will suffice to set them on the road to realisation, while, there are others who have to work for years before they can make any progress."

15. "Dhyana is necessary for the realisation of the Truth. Every man must select what suits him among the paths laid down for reaching the goal — yoga, bhakti, and jnana. Vichara is also yoga, not merely study of books."

16. "When the jiva knows himself to be Parabrahman and rests in peace, that is the Supreme Silence (maunam)."

17. "The Self is changeless; all changes are changes of the mind. Through avidya (ignorance) the changes of the mind are attributed to the Atman."

18. "Look at sweets made of sugar. Some are of the shape of brinjals, some are shaped like mantapams and horses, yet they are all of one substance, sugar. In the same way, the objects of this world, though of different shapes and sizes, or names and forms, all are nothing but Brahman."

19. "Asramas (stages of life, such as grihasta, brahmacharya) exist only with reference to the physical body; Atman has no asramas."

20. To the question: "Why should a man be under an illusion?", Bhagavan answered: "Enquire who has illusion, and you will find that there is no illusion."

21. "You should have no fear, for the Atman is everywhere, and you are that Atman. When there is a feeling of separateness, fear arises."

22. "The advaita philosophy alone can successfully stand all tests. Other schools torture the Vedic texts so as to suit their own theories."

23. "Men desire psychic powers, but what they get they must lose some day or other. Seeking powers implies that you are inferior to the power from whom you try to get them. All movements of the mind tend to keep you in bondage. So give up desire, and do not be dependent on anything for you yourself are the store-house of power and bliss. Give up everything else and keep your mind at peace."
Visitor: Sri Ramana Maharshi says repeatedly that the Self is always realised. What does this mean?

Editor: Such a statement will seem perfectly meaningless, if you have not first grasped the fundamental truth that every object, whether it be called gross or mental, appears in you, and not the other way around. The profundity of the Maharshi’s remark cannot be grasped at once. You first have to take the trouble — perhaps a lot of trouble — to see that the only thing you can ever know is what appears in your mind. What is called the world, including your own body; what is called thought and feeling, in short everything known by you is so only when it appears in your awareness. No one has ever known anything unless it appeared in his awareness. You can only know what appears in you as a conscious presence.

The moment you grasp this, you will easily discover that anything perceived by you comes and goes, whereas you were there before its appearance, during the moments when it presented itself to you, and after it had left you.

You will also discover the truth of Ashtavakra’s remark, that nothing can leave an impression on you. If, at 10 o’clock a thought appeared in you which you called a memory of your first school-day, and at one past ten the thought appears that you must go to the shop to buy something, then the first thought has completely left you, to make room for a completely different thought. The first thought must disappear, and for an infinitesimally short moment you are complete emptiness. This emptiness created the possibility for a new thought to appear, or for a sensorial impression or a feeling. Awareness can be filled only by one thing at a time.

Having seen this, the most important discovery may be made that the ‘I’ in the expression “my consciousness” or “my awareness” is also one of the temporal appearances. So, the expression I used a minute ago was wrong: things do not appear in your awareness, but the feeling of me and mine also come and go — they are perceived things, movements in consciousness, exactly like the perception of houses and streets, intimate feelings, opinions and kitchen utensils. They also are objects perceived by consciousness.

Consciousness is there before a perception, during its appearance and after its dissolution. This consciousness is referred to in Sanskrit as Ātma. Consciousness never changes — the objects which appear in it come and go. They are nothing but movements in consciousness, which we call ‘mind’ in one collective word.

Once you have deeply grasped this and seen that you are that which is always present, consciousness or Ātma, and that you as Ātma, as Presence, never change, whatever may appear or not appear, you are able to understand the Maharshi’s remark.

To begin with, it has now become evident that something which appears in you-
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scious-Presence depends on you, and not vice versa. You must be there as Presence, before any object can appear in you. If there is no water, there can be no wave; if there is no consciousness, there can be no movement in it.

This discovery should reveal immediately that no object can ever bind you. A vibration of sound in the air can never bind the air, and exactly so no vibration, no movement in consciousness can bind the consciousness that you are.

Illusion says that you are bound by time, space and causality, or, in a psychological sense, that you are bound by fear and desire. But if you really take the trouble and if you are really serious and wish to discover the ultimate truth, you will see that all these things appear in you, and disappear after some time, leaving you as you were before they appeared.

So on the one hand, there is nothing in this universe that can bind you, because everything, including the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' depends on you as Conscious Presence. You are like an infinite source from where the movements arise that you call 'I' or 'the world'. And when these movements cease to appear, either in this brief moment when one has left you and the next has not yet come to occupy the "screen" that is awareness, or in deep, dreamless sleep, you do not cease to be. Neither in the moment between two perceived movements, nor in deep sleep or after waking up is there any thought or feeling that you had ceased to exist. No thing, no movement appeared, but that in which they appeared remained when appearances stopped. You are, when time and space appear in the waking and dream states, and you are when those ways of thinking do not appear, as in dreamless sleep. It is only an account of your identification with fragments of these two states that the thought appears that you were absent in deep sleep. Only the projected I-feeling from the waking and dream states was absent. Not you as Presence, Consciousness, Atma.

So no object can bind you, for every object depends on you.

And on the other side of the door, there is also no 'I' that could be bound. That which you call 'I' is an image or a reflex or a feeling or a state, but always something temporal — in other words something that appears and disappears. When you talk about 'I' you talk about one of the uncountable movements in consciousness — let us call it a thought.

How or by what could such a thought be bound? By time? But time itself is a thought. And how could one thought be bound by another thought, when only one thought can appear at a time?

You may well say that a thought — an 'I'-thought or any other thought — is a very brief occurrence. It is like a cloud passing by in space. But words like bondage or liberation are not applicable to objects. Is a chair bound or free? Is a thought bound or free? Or a cloud? Or a stone?

All these things are things perceived — movements in consciousness; they are neither free nor bound. Illusion consists in believing that they are something outside of consciousness, something giving us an experience. In reality this Consciousness, this Presence is the only Experience that is, and we are this Experience. All that comes and goes appears and disappears in this Experience that the Maharshi called the 'I-I'.

So on the one hand there is nothing that can bind me; and on the other hand there is nothing in me that can be bound. Illusion — put differently — is the belief that there is such a thing as bondage. The idea of bondage itself is illusion.

It follows that there is no one who could be liberated and no one who could be bound,
There is no such thing as bondage, and therefore there is no such thing as liberation. That is the ultimate truth. If you want me to compromise, you may say that liberation is but this discovery.

The moment it dawns on you that there is neither bondage nor liberation, it becomes clear that all further search is meaningless for seeking implies that there is a someone in need of liberation — a someone, outside of freedom. When this has been seen thoroughly, the search comes to an end, and with it the seeker disappears, for a seeker without search is impossible.

There is something here that might be compared to a chain-reaction.

For the moment that search and seeker disappear, there is no more need for thought. The thought-and-thinker phenomenon is nothing but a constant attempt to find security, to dominate one's surroundings, and so on. When it is seen that there is no 'I' in need of security, the need for thought vanishes at once, and with it, the feeling that one is a thinker disappears. As thought and thinker constitute what we call mind, the disappearance of thought and thinker means the complete stillness of mind. But a still mind is no mind at all. Mind is movement, by definition. Stillness, real stillness, can never be mental. Stillness is really another word for the Self, Atma.

Sri Ramana Maharshi defines the sage as someone without a mind. That is the same thing, put slightly differently.

So the moment the mind comes to rest, stillness dawns, stillness remains. That stillness is known as Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samaadhi. Nothing needs to be done to provoke it. As Shankaracharya said: “When the wind of right knowledge has blown away the clouds of illusion, nothing else is required to make the sun shine.” It has been there all the time.

In other words, the moment the trick called ‘ignorance’ is unmasked — as soon as one has seen with one's entire being that there cannot possibly be such a thing as bondage or ‘I’ that might be liberated, the only thing necessary is to keep that vision alive. The rest will follow by itself: “the Self has always been realised.”

Bondage turns out to have been nothing more and nothing less than an idea, something that we have been taught, a concept, kept alive only by our belief in it.

When by a clear vision along the ageless Vedantic tradition and induced by the presence of an authentic Master, this belief in illusion is undermined, it is realised that we have always been Freedom Itself, even when the firm belief to the contrary seemed to dominate us.

Bhagavan used to say also: “Get rid of the idea that you have not realized.” That too is a way of expressing the same thing.

An authentic sage is love itself, translating itself into so many ways of expressing this one, ultimate truth as the sincere listener may require to let go of his erroneous points of view.

Thus, the Stillness that yogis can only temporarily achieve by the use of force, tyrannising the mind and refusing thoughts access, reveals itself without effort in the Jnana-samadhi. Since there is no "I" left such as remains in the effort of dominating body and mind, the stillness "felt" in the Jnani is timeless, eternal. Once this is seen, never more will there be the possibility for a thought to exist, saying that Freedom might leave once again.

“Verily religion with Allah is submission (Islam).”

— Qur’an, iii, 19.
Your life on earth entitles you to ENORMOUS JOYFULNESS.

This book aims to help you achieve it.

You generate this bliss in your own motions.

We move all the time to get comfortable.

More than comfort, we are generating our own innate JOY as we move. Not as we think or feel but AS WE MOVE.

Anyone can do this.

Any motion can do this for you, even when turning over in bed.

LET YOUR HEAD MOVE FAR TO RIGHT,

THEN FAR TO LEFT

TAking 10 MINUTES EACH WAY — REPEAT —

10 MINUTES EACH WAY IN S-L-O-W C-O-N-T-I-N-U-I-N-G M O T I O N.

Slow motion cures commotion and more it generates JOY in the motion.

Prove this true by letting the motion through.
CONSIDER
MEDITATE
YOUR TRUE
NATURE

STAND,
SIT,
LIE DOWN
DON'T MOVE.
IF YOU MOVE
EVEN AN EYELASH
OR FINGER
START OVER.
START.
STOP.

This 'Don’t move'
swallows time,
place, think,
feel, worry, hurry
as you enter at once
into our true nature.

Rest assured,
SRI RAMANA BHAGAVAN, who is known to the world as a jnani and jivanmukta of the highest order, did not work miracles, but miracles happened in his presence. These miracles are many and were a matter of daily occurrence. The beauty and significance of such occurrences is not so much in the events themselves as in the manner and circumstances in which they took place. I give here two such examples.

The one that comes to my mind with utmost strength is of the recovery of sight by a mill-hand from Bangalore. He had lost the sight of both eyes by small-pox. After trying many different remedies, he was advised by someone to go to Ramanasramam, so he came here as a last resort.

Bhagavan used to take a walk in the forest garden that was then adjoining the ashram, as soon as he finished the midday meal with devotees and guests. On this particular day he had finished his lunch and was about to start off. Two doctors from Madras, Dr. Srinivasa Rao and Dr. Krishnaswami Iyer, who were both long-standing devotees of Bhagavan, had been at the ashram for Bhagavan’s darshan. They had taken leave of Bhagavan and were about to leave for Madras. Their car was waiting for them.

Just then the man from Bangalore arrived and prostrated before Bhagavan, who had not yet left his seat. He narrates his sad story. Besides his being blind, he was the sole wage-earner for a large family which included his aged mother and father, his wife and children. Bhagavan simply listened to the whole story in silence. The two doctors, who had seen the man enter the dining hall, returned to the dining hall, after having some consultations between themselves. They said to Bhagavan, “Bhagavan, we will take this man with us to Madras and do all we can for him, by your Grace.” They left immediately afterwards and no one thought of him again.

Nothing was heard from the doctors or the hospital where he was treated, but about a month later, this man returned and prostrated before Bhagavan, saying with tears of gratitude that he had regained perfectly the sight of one eye.

Is this whole sequence of events not a miracle? If this man had reached the ashram just a few minutes later, it would have been a completely different story. Looking at the whole thing from the standpoint of the working of Bhagavan’s Grace, we have to understand that the doctors had come the day before with a car as though in anticipation of this man’s arrival and were waiting for him. It is like this that Bhagavan works his wonderful miracles.
Almost all the miracles that took place in the Bhagavan’s presence that I witnessed or even took part in were all most natural and normal in appearance. “Action in inaction and inaction in action”, is the only explanation for all these events that took place in the presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Another equally interesting and illuminating event took place when Bhagavan was in Skandashram. I was then a student, occasionally visiting the Ashram whenever I had the urge or felt a call. (Here I have used the word “call” after much hesitation.) Ordinarily when I came to the Ashram in those days I would go into the town for the night like all other visitors. But this time somehow I managed to stay in the Ashram. Somebody told me there would be no food there at night, since Bhagavan was then taking only one meal during the day. But I had made up my mind to stay, and so I stayed.

About 8-30 that night, one of the devotees, Ramanatha Brahmachari, told Bhagavan that he had been given half a coconut and some sweet rice during the day by some man in town who had celebrated his child’s ear-boring ceremony. He apologized for not informing Bhagavan earlier. Bhagavan said, “Since you all have nothing for the night, you can make a paste of the rice and the coconut, boil it with some water, and make a kanji (gruel), which you can all take.” We immediately made a paste and dissolved it in water and boiled it in a vessel on the furnace-like charcoal stove that was burning before Bhagavan to keep off the rainy season chill.

When the kanji was ready, Bhagavan asked whether there was any sugar or sugar-candy in the ashram. Those were the days when anything and everything that pilgrims brought as offerings were distributed then and there without leaving anything over. So the search for sugar and sugar-candy proved futile. Even salt, which Bhagavan suggested as an alternative, was not to be found!

At that moment, about 9 o’clock at night, a knock came at the door. Since I was sitting near the door, I opened it. To our great surprise, two young men, who had come through the drizzling rain, entered the verandah, one with a packet of sugar-candy, the other with a bunch of plantains. Bhagavan jokingly said, “Aye! Sugar-candy has come with plantains to supplement!” The sugar-candy was powdered and duly mixed with the kanji.

Then Bhagavan said in all solemnity, “Today is the 365th day of my fast, and it is broken by my sharing this kanji with you.” When he spoke these words, we were all filled with awe, including the visitors. They were overpowered with joy and gratitude at Bhagavan’s gracious love which enabled them to partake in the breaking of his 365-day fast.

Then Bhagavan asked them how it was that they had come at that time with the very things that were needed for the occasion. Even now it brings tears to my eyes to think of that wonderful scene.

One of the visitors replied, “Bhagavan, it was my good fortune to come across the booklet containing the three articles of Mr. Humphreys that had been published in the ‘International Psychic Gazette’. Ever since, it has been my greatest ambition to see Bhagavan and have his darshan. Somehow it is only today that we have had the opportunity. We are both students of the agricultural college of Coimbatore, and we have come as a group on an excursion to see a Government farm near Tirukoilur. We came to Tiruvannamalai only this evening, and tomorrow morning by 6 o’clock we will take a train to Tirukoilur. Not willing to miss this God-given opportunity, we came straight here, not minding rain or darkness. We are amply paid for our efforts. We shall never forget this most memorable meeting.”
OVER twenty years ago, when I was apparently happy and living in congenial circumstances, a sudden shock overwhelmed me. The effect of this stunning blow on my body and mind was terrible. For the first time I turned within myself and became religious.

The sorrow has abated with time and has lost its sharpness today. But, at that time, it was unbearable, and I looked here, there and everywhere seeking relief. Nothing could assuage the pain, and I was torn between the demands of my office and personal life. I remember to have uttered prayers from my heart as I had never done before. I chanced to come across a copy of the *Vedanta Kesari* which contained a dialogue between Sri Dilip Kumar Roy, of the Pondicherry Aurobindo Ashram, and Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. My heart was flooded with joy and for the first time in my life I instinctively felt the way to the peace for which I was hankering. I gave my heart then and there to Him and since that day He has never left me. I afterwards read everything I could on Him. It is not enough to say that I read them. I am a matter-of-fact man with everything wooden about me, but I could not read them without a rush of involuntary tears and ecstatic feelings. I felt, like Tagore, how lovely and glorious is this life! He made me weep by striking me with His love.

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The relevant old issue of the journal could not be traced but the same article was published in the "Kumbha", a Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan publication. Sri Dilip Kumar Roy says there that Sri Aurobindo characterised the Maharshi as a "Hercules among the Yogis" and remarked that His Tapasya had won, "glory for India".
The books on His great life that are with me are now my only refuge. Whether I work or rest, He is always with me. How can I communicate that mood to others? As I write these lines, tears well up and obscure my vision. How could this happen — least of all, to one like me? Bhagavan is great because both the high and the low equally merit his attention. I have composed and set to music many Bengali songs in praise of Bhagavan. I feel that sincere prayers are answered. My heart is full today.

Here are a few snatches from these Bengali songs:

Have I not surrendered all my heart,
O refuge of the lowly, at your feet?
Hold me by the hand
And in the chariot of your compassion
I shall ride on the bright, white path
To sweet sweet Death
And in a trice be free
And burdenless.

The Body and the Message of Ramana

By

S. S. Krishnan

O Bhagavan!
Where have you gone? Where are you now?
You were here some years before
But now, they say you are no more.

These questions are about the body
the body we cover with clothes all gaudy.

But you were not the body
and hence your presence Resplendent and Gracious
We feel today in your Ashram spacious
and the eyes that look into our eyes
In every picture of yours we see.

The body goes, the spirit remains,
the spirit remains for ever alive
In the Ashram and the hearts that love you.

The body was but a thick disguise,
You are only space and the light of love.
The glance of grace from your radiant face kindles the love in our heart and there You are, as you are everywhere.

A light, a guide, a power within
you are Siva, Arunachala
The Heart of the World and the Heart
that beats
With love in every human breast.

"I AM in your own souls! Why see ye not?
In every breath of yours am I, but ye
Are blind, without true eye, and see Me not."

— The Koran.
WHEN I asked whether Bhagavan ever cut jokes and whether He was ever in a lighter mood, Sri Kunju Swami jumped at me as it were to correct me and went into an ecstatic mood. With tears in his eyes he said: “Bhagavan is the most natural man you can ever conceive of. He had a very subtle sense of humour; it never hurt any one and was never aimed at any one. He also appreciated others’ jokes, even those at His cost!” I became impatient and wanted him to tell me a few instances. He narrated the following:

(1) Once, a boy was seated in front of Sri Bhagavan. Flies were troubling him and he was killing them. Seeing this Bhagavan told him: “Don’t kill them; it is wrong.” After some time the boy looked at Bhagavan intensely and remarked: “You say killing is wrong. I was only killing little flies which were giving me trouble, but you have killed a big tiger and you are sitting on its skin. How can it be?” Bhagavan laughed and said: “Yes, what he says is quite right!”

(2) The same boy had the habit of wasting food served on his leaf-plate while seated with others. Once Bhagavan told him that he should not leave anything on the plate when he finished eating. That day too the boy could not eat everything, but stuffed something into his mouth and took out the empty leaf. Bhagavan saw him take out the empty leaf. However, the boy after throwing away the leaf also spat out the food that he had stuffed inside his mouth. It was reported to Bhagavan. He enjoyed the trick of the boy and gave a hearty laugh.

(3) Another boy who used to go round the Hill with Sri Bhagavan and other devotees was always silent though others used to sing hymns and prayers and chants. (Bhagavan sometimes even used to hold this boy’s shoulder while walking round the Hill.) One day Bhagavan, after everyone of the party had sung some song or other, asked this boy why he alone did not sing. The boy’s spontaneous reply made Sri Bhagavan laugh to his heart’s content. It was: “Do Jivanmuktas ever sing?”
(4) The author of SAT DARSHANA BHASHYA, Sri Kapali Sastriar, was very close to Sri Bhagavan from his early youth, so much so he was one of the very few whom Bhagavan addressed intimately without prefixing or suffixing respectful terms (Bhagavan was very particular in addressing all, even children, only with respect.) His parents were very keen to get him married and he himself was stoutly opposing it. They even approached Bhagavan to persuade him to marry. One day, Sri Kapali Sastriar went near Bhagavan and said: "Bhagavan, tomorrow I intend taking up asrama 1 (stage in life)." Bhagavan, who knew his aversion to marriage and the anxiety of his parents, was surprised and said: "Kapali, what are you talking? Have you taken the permission of your parents?"

Meekly he replied: "Yes, Bhagavan! I am going to enter into the second asrama (meaning, marriage)!" Bhagavan laughed heartily and enjoyed the joke.

(5) A young girl, named Rukmini, aged ten, the daughter of Vilacheri Ranga Iyer, used to meditate in front of Sri Bhagavan, seated like a statue. Same aged boys or girls sitting next to her used to tickle her to disturb her. Bhagavan used to watch all these in amusement. One day, after having had her bath, Rukmini sat for meditation, as usual in right earnest (like a Yogi). A boy nearby (who had not had his bath yet) teased her, saying: "I am going to touch you." Rukmini firmly replied: "No one can touch me!" Bhagavan was looking at them. She turned to Bhagavan and remarked: "Yes, none can touch me, they can touch only my body. How can any one touch ME?" Bhagavan gave an expression of wonder and appreciation at the depth of her statement!

(6) The Mudaliar Patti, who used to feed Sri Bhagavan daily, always tried to serve more cooked rice to Him, by making a ball of rice by pressing it hard into a certain shape. One day, Sri Bhagavan, noticing her trick, commented: "She is clever. She feels she could serve me more food though making it appear less. I know her trick!" Bhagavan made gestures of her pressing the rice with her hands. Taking the cue, straight came Mudaliar Patti’s reply: "Bhagavan! What is more and what is less? There is nothing that is either big or small. Everything is only our bhavana 2 (thinking)." She made similar gestures as made by Bhagavan. Bhagavan enjoyed the joke and remarked: "See, see! How well she is giving back to me my own teaching!"

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1 Four asramas, viz., brahmacharya, grihasta, vanaprastha and sannyasa. Usually when a person says he would take asrama it meant only sannyasa asrama.

2 bhavana also means gestures.

"Those who cling to life die, and those who defy death live."

— UYESUGI KENSHIN.
Glory of the Mantra “AHAM”

JAPA purifies the mind and makes it fit for the Vichara (enquiry). ‘AHAM’, ‘AHAM’ is a great mantra. Sri Bhagavan has emphasized this in many of his writings and replies to questions. I cull out some of these passages for the benefit of the readers.


Desai: I have been practising s?guna meditation with japa of guru mantra. . . . Can I practise meditation according to the method of enquiry “Who am I?” Am I fitted to take up this method, if I feel inclined to do so?

Maharshi: ‘I’ is also a guru mantra. The first name of God is ‘I’. (Tasya aham nama, from Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad). Even ‘OM’ comes later. Atma or the real Self is always ‘I’, ‘I’. There is no mantra without the person who does the japa, i.e. AHAM’. The japa of AHAM is always going on within.

Excerpt 2. From Day by Day with Bhagavan, a talk on 23-11-1945.

The talk then turned to names of God and Bhagavan said, “Talking of all mantras, the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad says ‘AHAM’ is the first name of God. The first letter in Sanskrit is a (A) and the last letter a (HA) and AHAM thus includes everything from beginning to end.

Excerpt 3. From Guru Ramana Vachana Mala.

Vachana 108: Since his name is ‘I’ (AHAM), the seeker who constantly practices meditation of the ‘I’ will be taken inside the Source of Being, the world of God.


The sage recommends also meditation of the pure ‘I AM’ or ‘I’ (AHAM) as an equivalent to quest (Vichara). He says since his name is ‘I’ the sadhaka (aspirant) that meditates on the ‘I’ is taken to the Heart, the world of the Real Self.

Excerpt 5. Vivekachoodamani (Crest Jewel of Discrimination) of Sankaracharya.

Verse 135: The Supreme Self is distinct from Prakriti. It is pure awareness. It clearly manifests itself as ‘AHAM’ during all states (waking, sleep and dream). It is the witness, the faculty of understanding.


Leaving the God which shines as ‘AHAM’, ‘AHAM’ in the heart and going in search of God outside is like throwing away the pearl at hand and going in search of a conchshell.

Excerpt 7. From Upadesa Sararam of Bhagavan.

Verse 20: On the annihilation of the ‘I’-thought, the heart itself shines forth as ‘AHAM’, ‘AHAM’ and it is the Supreme Self, all-pervading.
**Excerpt 8.** From *Arunachala Pancharamam* of Bhagavan.

*Verse 2:* As thou dancest in the Heart of all beings as 'AHAM', 'AHAM', Thou art known as Heart.

* * *


The truth about God is most faithfully expressed as 'I AM'. The Hebrew name of God, 'JEHOVAH — which means 'I AM' — expresses the truth of God perfectly.

The sage also drew pointed attention to the mysterious sentence in the Bible which is said to have been uttered by God Himself. The story goes that a vision of light appeared to Moses. Out of the light a Voice spoke to him, instructing him to lead his people out of Egypt. Moses then desires to know who it is that speaks to him; he begs to be told, so that he may tell his people. The Voice tells him, 'I AM THAT I AM'. This is the only sentence in the whole book, the whole of which is printed in capital letters, as the sage pointed out. It must be of great significance. The sage tells us that in this sentence God has given out the secret of His own nature — that He is just the 'I AM' which is the ever-shining light of consciousness in our hearts. In other words, He is the Self.

* * *

**Excerpt 10.** From *Sri Ramananda Gita*.

*Chap. 2, verse 2:* In the interior of the heart-cave Brahman alone shines in the form of the Atman with direct immediacy as 'I', 'I'. Enter into the heart with questing mind or by diving deep within or through control of breath, and abide in the Atman.

* * *


The Rishi Vasishtha also says that searching for the Self outside oneself, oblivious of its constantly shining as 'I', 'I' within the Heart, is like throwing away an invaluable celestial gem for a sparkling pebble.

* * *

**Excerpt 12.** From *Words of Grace*, p. 3.

Or again, even if one merely continuously repeats to oneself inwardly 'I', 'I' with the entire mind fixed thereon, that also leads one to the same source.

* * *

**Excerpt 13.** From *Collected Works*, p. 196.

INVOCATION: Rejoice eternally!! The heart rejoices at the feet of the Lord, who is the Self, shining within as 'I', 'I' eternally, so that there is no (alternation of) night and day. This will result in removal of ignorance of Self.

* * *

**Excerpt 14.** From *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 88 (No. 92).

The one Infinite Unbroken Whole (plenum) becomes aware of itself as 'I'. This is its original name. All other names, e.g. OM, are later growths.
Garland of Guru’s Sayings

By SRI MURUGANAR
Translated from Tamil by Professor K. Swaminathan

752
As long as you regard a thing
As indispensable, enjoy it.
But when with mind mature you think
That you can do without it,
Renounce it promptly.

753
Look for God’s grace not only in
The precious gifts that virtue brings
This grace is present even more
In that tranquil clarity of awareness
Free from the care that follows
Self-forgetfulness.

754
Better the state of inner peace
And Self-abidance where no thought
Arises than attainment
Of the power to bring about fulfilment
Prompt and sure of every wish.

755.
If without wasting time one starts
And keeps up Self-enquiry,
One’s life becomes at once ennobled,
One is no more this wretched body,
And a sea of bliss supreme
Wells up within.

756.
Barring Self-enquiry there is.
For real mind-control, no other method
Whatsoever. The mind may seem
To be controlled by other methods,
But after a while it will spring up again.

757.
Through breath-control too mind-control
Results. But then this lasts only as long
As the breath remains controlled;
When breath-control relaxes, then
The mind drawn by old vasanas wanders
In the world without.

758.
The one majestic method to restrain
The movements of the mind which darting out
Becomes perceiver, object and perception
Is for the mind to scan itself alone.

759.
Since that which is shines bright within
As I, the Self is but awareness.
To search in the heart and find the Self
The best help is the inescapable light
Of the one Self alone.

760.
In the interval between two thoughts
The mind as pure awareness shines.
To know this as eternal being
And firmly in the heart to abide.
As such awareness is the state supreme.

761.
Incessant practice of strict disciplines
Like japa, image-worship, regulated
Diet drives out ancient vasanas
And makes the mind strong and
one-pointed.
762.

As the movements of the elephant’s trunk
Cease when it holds an iron chain,
Even so by holding to some form or name
The weak mind finds it can desist
From its own illusive movements.

763.

Only a mind one-pointed, inward-turned
Succeeds in self-enquiry. Weak,
Faltering minds, like green banana trees,
Are not fit fuel to feed this fire.

764.

When noble ones see that desires
Bring in their wake increasing sorrow
They renouncing all desires begin
Straight Self-enquiry, they attain in full
The infinite bliss of the Self within.

765.

Sadhana is indispensable
So long as triads last. Their presence
Proves that the false, illusive ego
Is yet to be destroyed.

766.

As long as in the gross and subtle bodies
Triads craving seem three entities,
So long the illusive causal body holds
Intact. And hence the series of false births
Has not yet ended.

767.

If by the practice of self-enquiry
The ego dies, nothing henceforth is seen
As alien. What was falsely known
Of yore as objects are experienced
Now as the very Self of which
Advaita speaks.

768.

Those who with egos utterly destroyed
Behold the truth experience all the world
As only space, for they themselves
Shine as the infinite space. They are
Convinced that all is but the one self,
All made up only of Awareness.

769.

Firm, perfect, brightly shining
Abidance in the Self alone
Snaps all bondage to the non-self.
Viveka which sorts out the false
From the Truth which is one’s being
And nature
Aids only freedom from desire.

770.

If you enquire you come to know
You are not the body which you think
You are. Hence questioning “Who am I?”
Dive into the heart direct and stand
Established firm as That.

771.

Know that there is no resting place
Save in pure true Being alone.
Desire for aught else wholly gone
And all disliking also gone,
Let heart and soul abide in peace
In the state supreme of Being-Awareness.

772.

When by clarity of knowledge nescience
Ends, the mind thought-free, firm fixed
In Awareness dies, and the Heart
Solo and whole being abides as Siva
Himself,
One lives in eternal freedom.
ARE you contemplating a pilgrimage to Tiruvannamalai, brother? Maybe the Holy Mountain Arunachala is calling you, or Ramana Himself, "the Blissful one abiding in your heart". Let me share with you what I have seen and found, brother, (though behind the little that I saw and noted there must be untold marvels).

When you come to the first large city of the South, comfort yourself: the dust, the noise and the stream of people are all concentrated there. As you travel further, stillness grows, the land becomes quiet and peaceful. The landscape welcomes you, especially as you approach Tiruvannamalai. The Holy Mountain and the great temple dominate the scene and make you feel that you are on another planet.

Be not taken aback by the seeming impersonality of the Ashram! Soon you will discover an all-pervading gentleness: quick smiles and friendly help. You will notice the contrast between the shrines of Bhagavan's Mother and Himself; between the dark, crowded temple in the traditional style, befitting a Hindu Saint, and the bright, lofty, airy hall lit up by a Spirit that transcends every religion. The simple puja here spells out the meaning of the radiance, transcendence and peace that Ramana is. There are many bright, light bells, along with a big one, the leading voice, joyously dancing together as the lights are waved and the mantras chanted.

There is nothing more purifying than the daily chanting of the Vedas, morning and evening: a powerful, sacred ritual that will take you back across centuries of time.

Go to Skandashram, early in the morning when the rising sun touches with his rays Bhagavan's picture in the inner shrine and gives it a rosy hue, while the Mountain pulls you in and holds you. And, I beg you, do not miss the puja at the great temple of Arunachala! You are no longer in this world when you sit near the sanctum while lights, trumpets, drums and cymbals and loudly ringing bells salute the Great Lord. You might even catch a glimpse of the message of the Mountain: the thunder of Dakshinamurti's silence.

Do not be upset if for quite a while your meditations are troubled, your thoughts and dreams confused: all sacred places call forth from us what needs to be cleaned out! The lines on your face, resulting from living in a harsh and tiring world, will day by day be smoothed out, as layer after layer of the iron rings around your heart fall off . . .

You will feel drawn more and more to some specific spot in that oasis that is Sri Ramanasramam, Bhagavan's abode, where you will lose yourself in Him, and what remains is Silence.

Long have I wandered, seeking You, Hoping, and yet not knowing quite, That I one day would reach Your feet. The veils have fallen; some with pain And others hardly noticed. Now at last I have found You, the Life within my heart. No fear, no pain is felt. Wherever I am is Home to me, for You are there already.

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1 For a short note on whom please see p. 132 of our April, 1979 issue.
THE PRESENCE OF BHAGAVAN

By

H. Heimer

First of all, let us establish why we desire his presence. It is because of our feeling of inadequacy to cope with our problems, our need as children for a mother to give us love and a father to guide us through life's difficulties. This then leads us to have a look at our feelings and to ask the question: Whose are these feelings? This is the question which Bhagavan put again and again to his visitors, telling them that they must seek the answer, because an answer from someone apparently outside themselves was of little use. As soon as we ask the question, therefore, we should become aware of Bhagavan's presence, it is Bhagavan who is manifesting himself by the question in what we erroneously believe to be our mind. Those who had the privilege of sitting in front of him and meditating in his physical presence would feel this very clearly, that his grace was entering their minds, destroying the illusion of a separate identity until there was only one.

However, what about all the others who are not privileged to have even seen him, are they in any way farther away? Or indeed, is there any difference now that the physical presence of Bhagavan no longer exists? The answer lies in Bhagavan's own words when he said that which was temporary was not worth striving for because when it was found, it could and would also go away again. Only that which is permanent is worth striving for, because it would not go away again. Therefore, however marvellous Bhagavan's physical presence was, it was temporary and could only give help to a limited number of people. It is his teaching and example which are permanent and, therefore, worth striving for. Exactly as Jesus said: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. Bhagavan's teaching was not new, it was that which had been taught from the beginning, was and always will be valid. He was Dakshinamurti, the glorious presence who taught in silence, who is always present, here and now.

Arunachala, the hill of light, is the best physical reminder of Bhagavan. Geologically from the earth's oldest rocks, silent, immovable, everlasting and the centre point of the beacon of light which stretches limitlessly into
the earth below and heaven above. This is the physical reminder that Bhagavan’s teaching is immeasurably old, that it is silent beyond words, unchangeable and limitless. If it is limitless, then it is present wherever we are, be it in India, Asia, Europe, or America.

This leads to the realisation that the self, which is Bhagavan, is present in every part of the world; but it does not shout to us saying:

I am here. No, it is silent and can only be found in silence. It can only be found by looking beyond that which is temporary, i.e., appearance and thoughts and by listening for that which is beyond words.

This can be done wherever the body is situated. In the end we come to realise that Bhagavan is manifest in all appearance and that, therefore, any appearance can be taken as the starting point for becoming aware of his presence.

CONVERSATION—12

By Darlene Delisi

Monkeys would sit in samadhi in front of Sri Bhagavan. Once, one of the monkeys started moving and was looking restless and Sri Bhagavan told him: ‘What kingdom do you have to conquer?’ The monkey again became still.

1 Gathered by the writer while talking to Sri Kunju Swami.
IT was in the year 1945 when I was just 28 years old, I received a post-card from the Ashram Sārvadhiṅkara Śri Niranjanananda-swāmī. I thought that Śri F. G. Natesa Iyer should have talked about me to the SĀrvadhiṅkara. The letter was an invitation to me to visit the Ashram and meet Śri Bhagavan and tell him that I was going to do His Statue from life sittings. My mother asked me to start immediately for Tiruvannamalai and so I did. I came by train and at the station I engaged a bullock-cart and reached the Ashram early in the morning. I went to the Sārvadhiṅkara's room which was very near a well and Bhagavan's hall and introduced myself to him and he was so happy to introduce me to those in the room. I remember Mr. F. G. Natesa Iyer and Śri T. K. Duraiswamy Iyer were also there. The Sārvadhiṅkara asked me to send a note to Bhagavan to tell him that I had come and wished to meet him. I wrote it in English and within a few minutes an attendant came to me and took me to Bhagavan. When I entered his room, He was arranging some things around him. When I went near him, he gave a penetrative look at me and asked me to sit down. I prostrated before him and stood watching his movements. Vibhūti was given and while I was smearing that on my forehead, he was also smearing his forehead with his fingers.

He sat on the Sofa and I sat on the floor near his feet. He enquired about me and when I said I was living in Mylapore, he asked whether my house was on the tram road — I was surprised to hear that! I was sure he had never visited Madras at any time. Then he asked me whether I was going to do the statue at the Ashram itself. I said, yes, and added that I would be doing it from his sittings. Then he asked me whether he should give any special sittings for me. I said that I would come and sit near him and begin the work, whenever convenient to him. He smiled, and enquired whether I would do it in the hall itself, to which I said, yes. Then he supported his head with his right hand, and asked about the complete process of making a bronze statue. When I said the first model would be in clay, he wanted to know whether the clay would stand for some time or begin cracking, I told him that I would cast a plaster copy of the clay by a moulding process. I said it would bear his likeness fully and it would be just like him. Again, smiling a little, he asked me whether it would be life-like (जीवितसूचक)? I said whoever
looked at the statue would say that it was Bhagavan's. Then he remarked that to arrive at a bronze figure it took so much work and time and he felt it was really a difficult job. I could only smile.

I think I was with him for about 20 minutes, all alone in the hall. A bell rang and he was preparing to go to the dining hall for lunch, someone asked me also to go to the hall for lunch. I entered the hall and Bhagavan was sitting at the centre near the wall. Three leaves were spread in a row and he was sitting at the middle leaf. I sat along with others in a line to his left. Then he glanced round at those sitting in the hall and asked me to come and sit next to him. I obeyed. I sat on his left side and had a sumptuous meal. Bhagavan was having the same food which was served to others. Nothing special. I was watching him eating with grace and beauty, leaving nothing on the leaf. The leaf looked so fresh that any one by mistake might use it again. Soon after lunch Bhagavan went towards the place where the Dispensary buildings now stand. The attendant asked me not to follow him and I stopped.

So, after 34 years, by Sri Bhagavan's Grace I am called upon to make the statue for the Centenary Celebrations. This chance is rare and cannot come to all sculptors. I feel blessed, renewed and reborn.

---

**ST. MATHEW - 25**

34. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand; Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in:

36. Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying; Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38. When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39. Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison and came unto Thee?

40. And the King shall answer and say unto them: Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

41. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42. For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.
Mobilising The Media For Human Survival

Dear Editor,

My wife and I spent three memorable days at Sri Ramanasramam in December 1973, to shoot footage for a film about Yoga. Believing as I do that Shri Ramana Maharshi's teaching is decisive for the fate of humanity, I am writing this letter to urge readers in the East and West to use their influence for persuading the modern media of communication, especially TV organisations, to put out programmes which will help human survival.

I would suggest that a multi-national group of TV organisations should be formed, with the aim of producing and telecasting in a well-planned co-operative endeavour, programmes dealing with survival problems such as over-population; shortage of food; shortage of resources; pollution; abuse of nuclear power; politics without love; science without conscience; technology without control; terrorism; drug abuse; decadence of human values; Man — a mystery.

The programmes should be dramatic and challenging. Without under-estimating the dangers, they should tackle the problems in an optimistic and constructive spirit. The multi-national group of TV organisations should develop into a permanent institution, so that televiewers in the participating countries can watch at least one "survival programme" per month. TV companies will be reluctant, but let us break through the thought barrier they put up.

Who will deny that TV is an extremely powerful means to influence the pattern of thought of modern man, and particularly modern youth? Who will deny that a lot of good can be done by giving young viewers healthy spiritual food, instead of violence, nationalism and sex?

So let us join our efforts. If you happen to know somebody who has influence with a TV organisation, or whatever media you have access to, please use every opportunity to develop a mass media campaign for human survival.

For further dialogue, write to

Hagen Hasselbalch
Hojagervej 20
2942 Skodsborg
DENMARK

(Mr. Hagen Hasselbalch is a well-known producer of short films in Denmark. — Ed.)
Sri R. Narayana Iyer is a very earnest devotee of Bhagavan Ramana, who first came to Him at the end of 1922. He himself does not know how — he was simply drawn to Him and he surrendered himself completely at His feet.

He was a postmaster at different places and is the father of nine sons and a daughter, all of them well-placed in life. Whenever there was a critical situation in his family (he has many instances which he narrates when asked), he simply resorted to Bhagavan and the response was unerring. His devotion to Bhagavan is such that all his children are equally devoted. He became a Life Member of the Ashram together with all the members of his family, in addition to contributing liberally to the Ashram. He is friendly with and helpful to all those who come in contact with him.

At the beginning when he once prayed to Bhagavan for initiation by touch, Bhagavan replied he had always His touch of Grace. One can easily see the truth of this statement when one moves with him!

On another occasion Narayana Iyer asked Him: "How to get rid of the triputi (seer, seen and seeing)?" Bhagavan replied: "Only by exhausting the vasādās (latent tendencies)." During one of his visits on a three-day casual leave, he had to leave the next day and told the same to Bhagavan with a heavy heart that there was only one day left. Bhagavan graciously replied: "There ever exists only one day. Time is always one continuum."

He is now 84 years old and stays as long as possible at the Ashram and does not require the help of others in his day-to-day life.

May this humble devotee of Bhagavan, who is a model of simplicity, be with us for many years!
BOOK REVIEWS


Hiriyanna was a philosopher who would not be the king, he cherished his values. He set the highest standards in the presentation of Indian Philosophy and Indian Aesthetics. His Outlines of Indian Philosophy, meant for study in the Universities, is still unrivalled for its precision and authenticity. The present Essentials, meant for the interested reader, is in the same line.

Discussing the date of the Vedic period, the writer points to 2,500 B.C. as the earliest accepted by modern scholars but observes that the point is hardly important. For the Hymns of the Veda as they have come down to us represent only a fragment of the rich Aryan vocal past that had been much earlier. He accepts the commonly propagated view of scholars that the early Aryans were nature-worshipping immigrants and the conclusions ensuing therefrom. He mentions the concept of Rita in the Veda and notes that this principle of 'cosmic order' appears in later ages as Dharma. "There is no thought in these Mantras of the physical universe or any aspect of it being unreal." (p. 13).

Coming to the Upanishads, the author writes: "Socrates is stated to have brought philosophy down from heaven to earth; the seers of the Upanishads, we may say, discovered that heaven itself is on the earth, could one but realise it." In a discussion of the practical discipline enjoined in these texts for the realisation of the truth of oneself, he underlines the pre-condition to be fulfilled: ethical training to eliminate ego and desire. After that is done, a threefold practice is prescribed: "learning the ultimate truth with the assistance of a teacher (sravana); reflection upon what has been so learnt with a view to convince oneself of the certainty, or at least, the probability of it (manana); and meditation which aims at deepening and intensifying that conviction until it effectively uproots all beliefs that are inconsistent with it (dhyana)."

He explains that for Buddha the Atman stood for God-in-man, the spirit that persists here as well as hereafter (p. 73). It is interesting to follow the writer in his study of the developments of Buddhism into the channels of Hinayana and Mahayana. Its original positive character was slowly changed into a negative and analytical approach (p. 74).

Jainism, Nyaya Vaisesika, Sankhya-yoga, Purva-Mimamsa, and Vedanta (in its three schools) are given a systematic treatment. In explaining the main principles of Sankhya Yoga, Dr. Hiriyanna stresses the need for the seeker to cultivate an impersonality. That impersonality cannot come unless egoism is eliminated. This impersonal attitude is vairagya, (dispassion) which again is aparâ (lower) and para (higher), "which does not appear till full enlightenment has come and selfishness becomes spontaneous." It is an interesting observation made by the author that while the yoga of the Upanishads aims at union (with the absolute self), the yoga of the Sankhya-Yoga system aims at separation (from Prakriti), no absolute self as such being acknowledged.

Many fine points that are apt to be missed in popular books on the subject are brought to attention in this study.


No history of Mysticism can be complete without mention of Jalaludin Rumi, the doyen of the Sufi poets and mystics. Born in 1207 A.D. in Persia in a notable family, he received training in theology from his illustrious father, and by twenty-five he was imbued with enthusiasm and fire for the discipline of the Sufis. He came into contact with Perfect Men — men who had united with the Lord in their deeper consciousness — and developed in their mould. Besides flowering into a mystic par excellence he was a poet in his own right. His mystical odes number as many as 2,500 and his Rubiyat, a collection of quatrains, is unique both for what it expresses and what it implies.

The Doctrine underlying Rumi's outpouring is a kind of pantheism. In the words of Nicholson, who has translated these sections with revealing explanations, it holds:
There is one real Being, the Ultimate Ground of all existence.

Divine Self-Manifestation is a perpetual process.

God is both Immanent and Transcendent.

The Divine Essence is unknowable. God makes his Nature known to us through Names and Attributes. "I created the creatures in order that I might be known."

The Perfect Man is he who has realised his Oneness with God.

Rumi's poetry takes up a tradition, vivifies it in his own experience and pours it into words.

The present collection consists of mystic poems, anecdotes, cryptic observations. To take one; Rumi was once asked 'Is there any way to God nearer than the ritual prayer.' 'No,' he replied, 'but prayer does not consist in forms alone. Formal prayer has a beginning and an end, like all forms and bodies and everything that partakes of speech and sound but the soul is unconditioned and infinite. Prayer is the drowning and unconsciousness of the soul, so that all these forms remain without.... Absorption in the Divine Unity is the soul of prayer.'

But to listen to "The Song of the Reed" one needs a preparation. For, he warns:

"The secret of my song, though near,
None can see and none can hear...
Oh, for a friend to know the sign
And mingle all his soul with mine!"

The translator observes in his note: "Only the mystic understands the mystic." We may add that the first requisite for the purpose is to be reborn in Love. For:

"Love is a malady apart, the sign
And astrolable of mysteries Divine.
Whether of heavenly mould or earthly cast,
Love still doth lead us Yonder at the last....
Love is Love's own expounder."

(From Love, the Hierophant)

A book for meditation, not for casual reading.

M. P. PANDIT


This is a scholarly and satisfying study, critical and comprehensive, of all the aspects of the philosophy and religion of Sri Caitanya. The first chapter, which is introductory, traces the history of Vaishnavism from the Vedic times to the pre-Caitanya period. The fascinating story of the life of the Apostle of Namassankirtan, the Sampradaya he promulgated, and the works of his disciples are dealt with in the succeeding chapters. Then follows the illuminating study of the religion and philosophy of the great saint.

Abstruse philosophical concepts like Nature of the Absolute, the phenomenal world and the various doctrines are explained lucidly and interestingly. The Chapters on Bhagavan Krishna, Bhakti, Priti and Rasa are written with rare insight.

The author discusses in detail the various doctrines like Monism, shows their shortcomings with scholarly detachment and proves that the doctrine of Acintya bhedaabhedā, the inconceivable unity in difference, alone can reconcile the conflicting view points. The philosophy of the Mahaprabhu is to consider the Absolute as Bhagavan and enunciate the relationship between the devotee and the deity as Acintya bhedaabhedā. Thus Sri Caitanya's philosophy embraces all the other doctrines in its fold and forges a synthesis of their apparently conflicting view points.

The created beings pine in separation from their Creator and Love is the only emancipator. Love is not the same as lust — Prema and Kama are entirely different things. When Love descends on earth, the whole world becomes Brindavan, the sporting ground of the Divine Player, and the Rasa, the sap of life, is relished.

The book under review is an authoritative guide to all those who seek an authentic account of the great saint's life and teachings.


These are recordings of a series of experiences the author had about Nirvana. To quote the author, this is how it all came about:

"One night I suddenly awoke with a most vivid remembrance of a supreme exaltation, of a marvellous expansion of consciousness, absolutely indescribable, though then and there I felt I must somehow or other record it on paper. It was about 1 a.m. and part of me was very much inclined to take the trouble to sit up and write, even though pencil and paper were by my bedside — as has been my habit for some time, in case an idea came during the fruitful hours when sleep minimizes physical interference. But
another part of me insisted. So I sat up and wrote that which the book begins and I remember hearing: ‘This is Nirvana’. And I knew it was Nirvana.”

Practically the whole of the book had been written in the small hours of the morning after a night of rewarding experience.

The experience of consciousness in the vegetable kingdom opens out for the author a series of experiences and readjustments. He hears the voice of Silence gaining articulateness, sees God working out His Purpose in everything around him and understands the Crucifixion of Selfishness and the consequent Resurrection in Power that is the Glory of God.

The reflection on Mother-light touches Upanishadic heights: “As in the Bread and Wine of the Eucharistic Service is the Real Presence of our Lord, so in every child-birth is the Real Presence of our Lady. How glorious the role of woman — temple, priestess, altar, chalice, in one!”

This book is an inspiration to all earnest seekers.


Every man can exceed himself and ascend to the highest height in himself. This is the Mount Everest which beckons us all the time. There are difficulties and obstacles on the path which is steep to climb. At the same time there are Pioneers who have hewn the path already for us, the Masters who guide and help us on our ascent. We must learn the art of discipleship and surrender ourselves in glad submission to their guidance.

In the first essay, the conditions for Discipleship are discussed. The succeeding essays deal with the psychology of the physical body, emotional being, the lower and the higher mental planes. Then the intricate subject of individuality and leadership is analysed. In the attempt to climb one's Mount Everest, one should keep his feet all the time on terra firma.

"Among other things, draw near to our Mother Earth, rejoice in her, take her near to you and she will help you to give you your heart's desire."

Though written from the Theosophical point of view, the subject matter of the book is equally applicable to other spiritual paths.

In reprinting the works of Dr. Arundale in commemoration of his Birth Centenary, the Theosophical Society has paid a fitting tribute to this great savant and lover of humanity.


From time immemorial, in this hoary land, people have been preoccupied with self-culture, and the Gayatri Mantra is the most potent common prayer used for that purpose. The japa of Gayatri Mantra is the corner stone on which the whole edifice of Sandhya worship is erected, and it is prescribed as a Niyama karma, a constant action towards Self Culture.

Taimni's handling of the subject follows the time-honoured tradition on these matters and at the same time is appealing to the modern reader. The subtleties of Mantra Yoga, the intricacies of Upasana, and the effectiveness of purificatory rites are all explained simply and lucidly. Pointing out that sitting for some time quietly for daily worship is not a one time operation, the author rightly says that the success of the worshipper in this direction at the time of the worship will be governed almost entirely by the condition of his mind and the attitudes which he is able to maintain during the rest of the day. Deprecating the perfunctory manner in which the ordinary Hindu worshipper recites the invocatory Mantra, in many cases not even sending a momentary thought to the Devata whom he invites to appear, the author concludes that such a worship will not bear fruit. Gayatri is worshipped as Rudras' force in the evening Sandhya, and the author explains this with rare insight: “Destruction by Rudra is not for its own sake but takes place because the form which He destroys has ceased to serve its purpose efficiently and has become a hindrance in the evolution of the life embodied in that form. So He takes it away and gives in its place a new more elastic and useful form” (Page 167).

We heartily commend the wholesome advice given by the author when he says: “It would be foolish for a person to give up Gayatri Upasana simply because he is unable to perform his japa exactly at the time of sandhya. Common sense and spirituality both require that necessary adjustments be made and the essentials be not sacrificed for the non-essentials. Intelligent adaptation of means to ends is one of the cardinal principles of Hindu religion and it is this principle which has enabled it to survive the ravages of time.”
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One of the illustrious saints of Maharashtra, Sri Ekanath is famous for his Marathi Bhagavata. Deriving his inspiration from Jnaneswari, the saint wrote a masterly commentary in Marathi on the eleventh Skandha of Sri Ramacharita Mahabharata. The eleventh Skandha consists of thirty-one chapters, out of which the first five deal with the Bhagavat-Dharmottariya, the code of conduct of the Devotee of the Lord. The next twenty-four chapters give an elucidation of this Dharma in the form of a discourse between Sri Krishna and Uddhava. The last two chapters deal with the destruction of the Yadavas and the Great Departure of the Lord. Thus the eleventh Skandha carries in its content the essence of the message of Bhagavata, the true synthesis of Knowledge and Devotion.

The book under review is a systematised comparative and constructive presentation of the ideas selected from Ekanath's Bhagavata. In this the learned and devout author has spared no pains. Drawing upon the writings of many writers, both Eastern and Western, the author has prepared the necessary back-drop and setting for the brilliant display of the saint's personality and teachings.

The first part of the book deals with topics like the Evolution of Devotion, Ideals of life, Nature of God, World and Soul, while the second part deals with the means of attaining God-realisation. Bhagavanta is the Book of Love and Ekanath's message is the message of expanding love, Sarvatma bhava — omnipresence of God as felt and realised. In the words of the author, "the Sarvatma bhava of Ekanath is both a means as well as an end. As a means it is an attitude to be cultivated. As an end, it is a spiritual experience to be realised. It starts as an idea, develops into an emotion, evolves into an attitude, stabilises as a virtue and culminates into realisation."

It is to the credit of the author to have made this attempt to spread the message of the great saint beyond the frontiers of the Marathi knowing people.


The book contains brief sketches of the lives and teachings of the epoch-making personalities in the history of humanity. First comes Sri Rama with his message of universal friendship, a friendship which embraced men, monkeys, birds and animals in its fold. Then follow Sri Krishna who came to establish the Divine Love on earth, Buddha preaching a life enlightened by virtue and compassion, Christ, the Son of God bearing the Cross of suffering and misery, Mohammed with his message of Peace and universal brotherhood, and Kabir and Nanak stressing the common ground in Hinduism and Islam. As the crown of evolutionary spirituality emerges Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa demonstrating through his life the unity of all religions.

There is a ninth chapter dealing with unity and variety. The sketches are revealing, succinct and interesting. Both the young and the old can profit by studying these sketches.


"I came to India to meet Sri Aurobindo. I remained in India to live with Sri Aurobindo, When he left his body, I continued to live here in order to do his work which is, by serving Truth and enlightening Mankind, to hasten the rule of the Divine's Love upon the earth."

This is how the Mother, The Spiritual Collaborator of Sri Aurobindo, recorded her life for the All India Radio. Only she could relate her biography with such brevity. For others, it is a formidable task even to delineate an aspect of her multifaceted personality. But Prema Nandakumar has succeeded admirably in drawing an inspiring and faithful life sketch of the Mother.

Born in the West, Mirra Alfassa turned to the East for light, came to Sri Aurobindo and found in him her haven of refuge. She in turn became the haven of refuge for all those spiritual seekers who sought Sri Aurobindo and thus the Sri Aurobindo Ashram came into being. The Ashram is a standing testimony to her superb organisational skill and uncanny mastery over details. Her bounded compassion and grace are a matter of intimate experience, while her relentless battle against the forces of darkness and ignorance in her great endeavour to bring down the Divine Life on earth is a part of modern spiritual history. Her vision of the Future sees the new city, Auroville, as the hope of humanity in bringing the gulf between matter and spirit, body and soul.

As a critical exponent of Sri Aurobindo's Savitri and the works of the Tamil poet Subrahmanya Bharati, the author is well-known. The book under
RAMANĀNJALI

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In this, his first book, Mark Holborn explores the relationship between the historic cultures of Japan and the gardens they produced. Starting with a brief survey of the roots of Japanese culture, he goes on to show how each period in Japanese history has produced its own distinctive schools of gardening of landscape production. Major cultural influences, such as the proximity of China, Pure-Land and Zen Buddhism, Shinto and the tea ceremony, are all discussed in terms of the influence they have had on the evolution of the Japanese garden.

As befits a book on visual art, the text is profusely illustrated with black and white photos, some by the author, but the majority by professional photographers. Although the pictures and the text are badly co-ordinated, the pictures themselves are outstanding. There is a quiet serenity and a mellow beauty about them, which, more than any verbal description, touches the heart of the Japanese way of life over the centuries, and in addition, mirrors the changing attitudes of the Japanese in their perception and interpretation of nature.

The text flows easily, and the author's love for Japan and its culture is reflected in the style which at times borders on the lyrical.

Designed for the non-specialist reader, the book is a useful introduction not only to Japanese gardens, but also to the forces and ideas which have shaped the Japanese way of life throughout its history.


In Compassion Yoga, John Blofeld has portrayed his love for the Far Eastern goddess Kuan Yin by describing his long search for the truth behind her historical and present-day manifestations.

He relates the effect of an early contact he had with her presence in terms that are characteristic of his writing in its power to establish a rapport between the reader and himself:

"...there seemed to hover just beyond the threshold of my mind a teasing recollection of something or someone once greatly loved but long faded from my memory. The effect was so poignant that I wanted both to laugh and to cry. I am convinced that it was this illusive recollection rather than the trick wrought by the incense smoke (a statue had seemed to come alive) that produced what seems in retrospect a magical effect. In that moment I conceived a reverence for the Compassionate One which, far from fading with the years, was destined to intensify, although for a long time it remained no more than a pleasant whimsy. In those days I had not the wisdom to reconcile a deep devotion to a deity with the knowledge that deities are not!"

It was the attempt to work out this latter puzzle that led the author on the long search of which he next writes. The reader is treated to a wide selection of folk stories illustrating the traditional views of Kuan Yin; as the Chinese goddess of compassion, a folk deity, as Buddhist Bodhisattva, of Indian origin, or as Tara, a Tibetan likeness to Kuan Yin (for it is the author's conclusion that the present-day female Chinese deity was originally the male Avalokita Bodhisattva of ancient India and was transformed, as the tradition moved overland towards China, by the intermediary association of Avalokita with the female Tibetan deity Tara). The numerous stories are related in considerable detail so that finally one has absorbed quite a full picture of the lore surrounding Kuan Yin.

After the main body of these stories, there are other characters in the book which describe more specifically some contemplative techniques that the author has encountered and used during his lifelong search. He offers us their quintessence as a possible aid in our seekings.

Finally he gives a frank summary, which I quote at some length as it reveals the author's straightforward and humble character.

"Among readers of this final chapter, there will be none, I hope, who doubt my sincerity. All are welcome to suppose me the victim of errors and delusions resulting from the inexpert use of yogic knowledge; and who is to say they would not be justified? If, however, there are any who have followed me thus far and who accept what I have written as being reasonable, I owe them an apology. Having offered glimpses of Bodhisattva Kuan Yin at many levels, starting with her as a goddess of fisher-folk, I have broken off leaving her a shadowy figure to the end. I am sorry for that, but what can I do? I must not invent a climax to the quest. There is really no way to go further, short of undertaking the appropriate yoga right up to its final stage.

review, written with such charm and delicacy, is still another feather in her cap.

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In Lama Govinda's works one finds the main development of the theme reaching a culmination at the middle of the book, after which the succeeding chapters constitute a rich display and exposition of the techniques of consciousness development outlined in the first half of the book.

The first essays present an extremely readable account of Buddhist philosophy. Then follows a carefully developed exposition of the many dimensions of the mantra and mandala. While the development is described in detail, it is not all dry or dogmatic. The unaccustomed reader is led by a living hand along paths of explanation that bring him, still fresh, to a state where he can respond with real joyful appreciation to the power of the mantra techniques described.

In the chapter called "The Inward Way" one reaches that precious moment of suspension of movement between the in-gathering and the out-flowing breath. Here Lama Govinda states clearly the fundamental point which gives the significance of all that he has presented in the book so far and speaks the eternal message: "In order to get to the hub of existence, into the center of our being, we must reverse the direction of our mental outlook and turn inward. . . . So long we have looked from within outward, scattering our attention upon the self-created objects of our sense awareness and our mental activities. Now we reverse the direction and go back the way we came, untying the knots by which we have tied ourselves to our present human existence."

He then provides a brief exposition of two principles which can most readily assist one to effect this turn inwards. The principles are devotion and anapanasati — the contemplation and conscious experience of the process of breathing.

On breathing, the author comments:

"... if we try to co-operate with it consciously, without interfering with our will (our selfish intentions, our hankering after power and domination), but merely filling it with our conscious and undivided attention (smriti) then the function of breathing will not only be raised from a physical process to the level of a spiritual experience, but the whole body will be penetrated with vital energy and become conscious in its entirety so as to be transformed into an instrument of the mind."

"If we then see the function of breathing against a still wider background than our ordinary momentary individual organism, we realise that it is a link not only between the conscious and the unconscious functions of our body but between two worlds: the inner and the outer, the individual and the universe."

What follows, in the second half of the book, is a wealth of examples of the continual progress along the path. In two sections, 'Art and Meditation' and 'Contemplative Thoughts', Lama Govinda presents a flow of fresh ideas that seem to well up with ease and clarity.

The book stands like a multicoloured lamp with a steady white light at its core that enables the colours to play around it with simplicity and freedom.

The masters of the Hindu darsanas have condensed their tenets in aphoristic statements called sutras which form the basic text of each creed. Bhakti, which may be considered the darsana of darsanas, has had two superb exponents in the sages Narada and Sandilya, each of whom has given his name to a Bhakti-Sutra. Of the two, Narada’s is more simple and straightforward, appealing directly to the heart of the reader with little need for an explanatory commentary. Narada describes devotion in its various forms and gives directions for cultivating and practising devotion. Sandilya’s approach is more intellectual. He propounds a systematised philosophy of bhakti based on pramanas and prameyas, and he tries to establish that it is bhakti, not jnana, that is the primary means of liberation; that it is jnana which ripens into bhakti, not the other way round. This is directly at variance with the advaitic stand-point. Yet the liberation that Sandilya speaks of is the advaitic merger of the soul in the Supreme, the realisation of the identity of the individual with God.

The Sandilya Bhakti Sutra, despite its intellectuality in a subject that pertains to the heart, is a precious pearl in the sea of Hindu thought. However, most readers would need a commentary to understand it, because of its strict logic and its terse language. Fortunately there are three such bhashyas, the best being Svapnesvara’s, which is simple and detailed.

Swami Harshananda, a venerable monk of the Sri Ramakrishna Order, has placed us under a deep debt of gratitude by producing this faithful and lucid English rendering of the Sutra-text and Svapnesvara’s commentary. The value of the book is enhanced by his profuse and profound explanatory notes and an informative preface.

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The devotees of Sri Bhagavan will be happy to know that considerable progress has been made in implementing the 27-item programme chalked out. A calendar of events has been drawn up, commencing from July 1979 to December, 1980.

In our April '79 issue we had an announcement giving details about the formation of a nation-wide, influential Sri Ramana Maharshi Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee and also 27 important items of projects to be carried out during 1980.

Since these were finalised late in March we could not announce it earlier under this column. Devotees are requested to go through the details of the announcement enclosed in this issue also.

The recording of long-playing records and pre-recorded cassettes of songs composed by Sri Bhagavan and on Him, will be completed by December '79, so that these will be made available to the devotees throughout 1980. The first LP consisting of songs in Tamil and Sanskrit will be released in September '79. It is also proposed to bring out an LP in which there will be complete chanting of Arunachala Siva and passages from Sankrit works of Sri Bhagavan.

There will be seminars, talks and cultural programmes in each calendar month of 1980 in different centres in India and possibly abroad. Prominent speakers and artists are expected to participate. Steps for proper coverage of Centenary events in TV/Radio, magazines/newspapers and for the production of a documentary film on Sri Bhagavan have been taken up.

A number of useful articles have been selected for publication in a souvenir: Ramana Smriti.

The India Book House, Bombay is bringing out a pictorial life of Sri Bhagavan in their 'Amar Chitra Katha' series. Copies will be released soon.
Sri Kalasagaram Rajagopal, the reputed sculptor, has commenced making a clay statue of Sri Bhagavan as the first stage. Since he wants to bring out the beauty and spiritual presence of Sri Bhagavan in the statue, he has chosen to make it at the Ashram itself. Even the processing of bronze will be done only here.

Many devotees have already responded generously by making substantial donations. The Committee is confident that others will not lag behind and that the programmes involved — the minimum total expenditure of Rs. 15-lakhs — will be implemented.

**BOMBAY CENTRE SRI RAMANA JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS**

The Governor of Maharashtra, Shri Sadiq Ali, paid glowing tributes to Sri Ramana Maharshi when he participated in the 99th Birthday celebrations in Bombay, on April 4, 1979.

The Governor observed that the Maharshi's message of equanimity and brotherhood was of particular relevance to India, which had yet to become a strong nation. He said His teachings had an eternal quality about them and that irrespective of his religious beliefs, each one could find in them solution to his problems.

The Jayanti function was celebrated at the Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan Auditorium and it was well-attended by Ramana-bhaktas.

The Sufi Mystic, H. H. Sai Mirchandani, who graced the occasion, gave an illuminating speech on the teachings of Sri Maharshi. He emphasised the need to spread His message throughout the world.

Mrs. Mani Sahukar, in her own inimitable style and Dr. M. Sadashiva Rao, in a thoughtful speech, paid homage to the Great Master.

Sri N. D. Sahukar, President of the Jayanti Celebrations Committee, and Sri P. V. Somasundaram, its hard-working Secretary, deserve all credit for the success of the function.

**BHAGAVAN RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE IN BOMBAY**

The first meeting of the Trustees of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi Trust to establish the above Centre in Bombay met on May 10, at the office of Shri Jagadish K. Munshi of Bhaishanker Kanga & Girdharlal, Solicitors, and signed the Trust Deed. The same will be registered with the Charity Commissioner in Bombay.

1 An article by him on how he had the inspiration to make the statue is published elsewhere in this issue.

2 An article on whom was published in our July, 1978 issue, p. 180.
Thanks to Sri T. Navaratnam, prasad brought from Bhagavan’s Ashram was distributed to all assembled.

One felt in the atmosphere the Presence of Bhagavan.

A SADHANA CAMP

Persons engaged in spiritual sadhana naturally flock to hallowed spots for their own benefit. Seekers attached to the Chinmaya Mission get proper guidance, not only by way of learned discourses but also through such well-chosen pilgrim-tours.

Brahmachari Suddha Chaitanya, of the Chinmaya Foundation of Education and Culture in Madras, brought the members to have a sadhana camp at the Ashram for two days on April 12.

They were happy to conduct bhajans in front of the shrine of Sri Bhagavan in the ‘Ramana Auditorium’.

Brahmachari Suddha Chaitanya took the members round the Holy Hill — giripradakshina — and to Skandashram and Virupaksha Cave, the places hallowed by the stay of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Devotees at the Ashram were very happy to have these sincere bhaktas in their midst.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Gurupuja, the anniversary of Sri Bhagavan’s mahanirvana, was observed with due solemnity on April 14 and also on April 24, the actual tithi. On the latter occasion, Brahmachari Yajna Chaitanya gave an illuminating talk on Bhagavan’s message to mankind.

On April 22, Major Sachidanandam of Bokaro gave an interesting exposition of Yoga. On the following day he gave a further demonstration for the benefit of members.

Mother’s Day was celebrated on May 13.

The usual satsangs on Sundays, Dandapani Oduvar’s recitals on Mondays, talks by the Chinmaya Mission Swamis on the Gita and the classes in Veda recitation are going on regularly.

THE MOTHER’S MAHA PUJA

The Mother of Sri Bhagavan is enshrined in Sri Mathrubuteswara Temple in the Ashram. Every year the day of Mother’s Mokti is celebrated as Maha Puja, and this year it was observed on May 20, when many devotees were present and received the Mother’s munificent grace.

KHANNA FAMILY

Not many devotees could claim to have had the privilege of having touched the Feet of Bhagavan Ramana!

Sri H. C. Khanna of Kanpur once made three of his children touch Sri Bhagavan’s feet when He was returning from the Hill. Though it was against the rule of the Ashram then, Sri Bhagavan, out of pure Grace, did permit these three children to touch His feet with their heads.

Sri Prakash Khanna is one of them. He is now a factory owner in Jabalpur. Though he had stayed with his wife, Geetha, for a few months in the vicinity of the Ashram, it is after 17 years they came back to the Ashram, with the happy addition

3 Introduced to our readers in our April, 1970, p. 109.
Deepak after mundan, with Geetha and Prakash receive Prasad from Bhagavan's Shrine.

of their son, Deepak, three years old. It was for the mundan ceremony of this lively boy that Prakash and Geetha came to Arunachala in April. The moment they stepped into the Ashram they were overwhelmed by happy memories. Prakash started recollecting the good old days he had spent at the feet of Sri Bhagavan, playing and praying. He was happy he could have his son’s tonsure performed here, for as he himself says: “Sri Bhagavan is God and everything for us!” Deepak gave joy to every one at the Ashram through his intelligence and wit.

Geetha is so devoted to Sri Bhagavan that she writes:

“The pull of Arunachala-Ramana has all along been in me ever on the increase. Though I wanted to be at Arunachala much earlier, family entanglements prevented it, to my great sorrow.

“Bhagavan’s Ashram is full of His Grace. Whoever comes here will always gain. Though my stay has been short, I feel now so changed and so fresh. I depart with deep sadness, since I have to leave, but I am determined that I will return soon to our HOME.

“I thank my father-in-law and mother-in-law for having my son’s mundan ceremony in front of the abode of my chosen deity — BHAGAVAN.”

— SM. GEETHA KHANNA, Jabalpur.

VISITORS

Among the many devotees of Sri Bhagavan who visited and stayed at our Ashram during this quarter, mention may be made of the following:

Smt. & Sri Kalasagaram Rajagopal, Madras.
Mr. Carrington McGraw, USA.
Sri Lakshmandas Nanumal, Poona.
Sri & Smt. P. R. Suryanandam, New Delhi.
Sri Lakshmanaswami & his devotees, Gudur.
Dr. K. S. Sarojammal, Bangalore.
Sri A. R. Natarajan & family, Bangalore.
Dr. R. Shankaramanayanan, Bangalore.
Sri & Smt. R. Murail, Madras.
Mrs. Kalynnsundaram, New Delhi.
Mr. & Mrs. Sriivasalu Naidu, Bangalore.
Mr. Peter Grieder with daughter & nephew, Switzerland.
Sri S. V. R. Dikshitulu & family, Vuyyur.
Sri Srinivasa Seshadri, family, Bombay.
Smt. Sunila Jhangiani & party, Bombay.
Sri K. G. Krishnaswamy, Madras.
Mrs. Bhushan, New Delhi.
Miss Inge Rada, Switzerland.
Punithavathi Ammal with mother, Chidambaram.
Smt. Rukmani Ammal, Salem.
S. Soundaravalli, Salem.
Sri M. K. Somajjul & family, Warangal.
Sri B. Swaminathan & family, Tippirajapuram.
Sri S. C. Sengupta, Jamulpur.
Sri V. S. V. Mani, Tirunelveli.
Sri Bhoganath Pillai, Cuddalore.
Swami Krishnamurthy, Mungudi.
Sri D. B. Sexana & family, Madras.
Mr. & Mrs. Hasmukhlal Desai, Fiji.
Sri L. R. Murthy & L. Krishnamurthy, Malaysia.
Mr. & Mrs. S. G. Devaraj & family, Canada.  
Professor T. F. Bidari & family, Nipani.  
Sri K. Veerasingam, Colombo.  
Dr. M. Ramamurthy, Warrangal.  
Sri C. N. Sastry, Hubli.  
Mr. & Mrs. C. D. Ayyar & Sons, Madras.  
Sri J. K. Mandhya, Allahabad.  
Dr. N. Sooq & family, New Delhi.  
Sri C. P. Panduranga, Ananthapur.  
Sri V. R. Laikshiminarayan, Calcutta.  
Mrs. & Professor K. Swaminathan, New Delhi.  
Dr. Gandhibai & Sister, Madurai.  
Mr. Malgawnkar, Bangalore.  
Mrs. Prakash Chopra & children, New Delhi.  
Sri K. V. Rama Rao, Visakhapatnam.  
Mrs. & Professor K. Swaminathan, New Delhi.  
Dr. N. Sood & family, New Delhi.  
Mr. B. V. Kuber, Thana.  
Sri C. P. Panduranga, Ananthapur.  
Sri V. R. Lakshminarayan, Calcutta.  
Mrs. & Professor K. Swaminathan, New Delhi.  
Dr. Gandhibai & Sister, Madurai.  
Mr. Malgawnkar, Bangalore.  
Mrs. Prakash Chopra & children, New Delhi.  
Sri K. V. Rama Rao, Visakhapatnam.  
Mrs. Jean Dunn, Mr. Earl Dunn, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Mrs. Patricia Freitas, Hawaii, U.S.A.  
Dr. Venu Pant & mother, Allahabad.  
Smt. & Sri A. Dorairaj & family, Madras.  

Sri K. L. Grover (HQ., W.A.C., I.A.F., Delhi) and his family insist that they have understood by experience the teaching of Sri Bhagavan that the devotee caught in the jaws of a tiger can never escape. Only five months back they were here, from far away Delhi; and they were again here, to the joy of all at the Ashram, during the middle of May, after a visit to Tirupati. Sri Grover brought his wife, daughter and son, and all of them felt at home at the abode of Sri Bhagavan.  

This is what he wrote when he bade farewell to the inmates of the Ashram:  

"I got attracted to Bhagavan by the effect of His piercing eyes, which I saw in a photograph put by the side of Goddess Vaishnavi in the Vaishnavi Shrine in Tirumullaivayil, near Avadi (Madras) about eleven years back. The eyes, along with His calm and serene face, were so captivating that one had to admit that this photo could only be of a saint of the highest order.  

A couple of years later, I once again saw some photograph of this saint in Ramana Jyoti. I saw this souvenir in 'Anand Ashram' (a small ashram by the side of the Vaishnavi shrine), which was the abode of our Guru, Swami Pranavananda Saraswati, who got spiritual diksha from Bhagavan in his vision. The Ramana Jyoti was so captivating in its contents that I was attracted to the spiritual path, then onwards. Seeing my keenness, Swamiji presented me a copy of this souvenir, which I am still preserving for my spiritual guidance. He also advised me to become a subscriber to The Mountain Path.  

"In 1976, I came to Sri Ramanasramam for the first time and stayed for two days. I was so impressed by Arunachala Hill, Skandashram and Sri Ramanasramam, with its beautiful surroundings and excellent management, that I decided to come with my whole family for a longer stay.  

This desire was fulfilled in 1978-79 when we arrived here on New Year's eve and stayed for six days, when we found a completely homely atmosphere and also had the privilege of having talks with Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Sri Cohen, Sri Viswanatha Swami and Sri Ganesan. The spiritual atmosphere here in the Ashram was very impressive and I was told that one who comes to this place gets caught in the grip of Arunachala.  

"True to this prediction, after a lapse of only five months I and my family are again here at the lotus feet of Sri Bhagavan for a longer stay of two weeks. This trip was planned early since a senior colleague of mine was also very keen on coming here with his family. It is now very clear how Bhagavan brings to His fold the souls that need spiritual guidance.  

This Ashram is a great spiritual centre, where people from all over the world can come and stay in a peaceful and blissful atmosphere as a big family of Bhagavan without any distinction. I hope that, with the Grace of Bhagavan, this Ashram will continue to thrive so that not only sadhaks, but even the peacocks, monkeys, dogs and other Ashram animals will live in and enjoy the bliss spread by Bhagavan-Arunchala."  

— K. L. GROVER,  
New Delhi.  

Air Commodore C. V. S. Suryanarayana Row of New Delhi spent less than a fortnight at the Ashram during the middle of May, together with his wife. His earnestness drew him towards some of the old devotees living at the Ashram, from whom he benefitted much.  

He writes:  

"Though I had been eager to visit this Ashram for years, it is only now that Bhagavan has pulled me to this place by His Divine Grace. Our eleven days' stay here has been spiritually memorable and I must admit that both myself and my wife have greatly benefitted by it.  

The Ashram is being managed extremely well and everything goes like clockwork.  

"We drank deeply the spiritual vibrations in the Meditation Hall, Skandashram and Virupaksha Cave.
The circumambulation of Sri Arunachala was completed by divine grace.

"The Who Am I? enquiry has taken root in our heart and I hope that before long it will sprout and grow. HAIL BHAGAVAN!"

— Air Commodore C. V. S. Suryanarayana Row, New Delhi.

The Deputy Secretary of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, Bombay, Sri K.R.L. Sharma, stayed at the Ashram in the last week of April.

He writes:

"It is due to the Divine Grace of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi that I have been dragged to the holy Ashram on my visit to some other place for personal business. I have been struck with wonder and happiness to see how the Ashram maintains the shrines of His Holiness Bhagavan and His Holy Mother with such neatness, amidst peaceful surroundings. I was also impressed by their meticulous punctuality in observing the daily routines of puja and catering to the needs of the devotees with accommodation and homely food.

"The authorities are taking all possible steps to satisfy the needs of the devotees, and in the course of my last two days' stay, I saw an increasing number of devotees, especially those from foreign countries. I must frankly express my great and sincere appreciation for the efforts of the Trustees, in whose hands the Ashram is safe and will grow with greater prosperity.

"I pray to the Almighty, with my head down before the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, that the Ashram prosper and its branches spread the message of Bhagavan."  


A great devotee at heart, Maria Prosk of Austria used to correspond with the Ashram quite often, expressing her genuine desire to keep in touch with her Master. On this, her second visit to the Ashram, she feels she has benefitted greatly.

After having spent three months at Arunachala this time she is keen on returning here soon.

She writes:

"The first time I read about Bhagavan Ramana in 1939, just before World War II, in Paul Brunton's book, A Search In Secret India. I was a very young girl then, but I felt at once there was something that would be important in my life. I read the three chapters on Bhagavan about a hundred

PLEASE CONTACT

We are happy to announce that most of the 27 items of projects enunciated in our Centenary Announcement have been taken up for implementation. The support and cooperation from the devotees of Sri Bhagavan are encouraging. Devotees who would like to give their suggestions and support to this laudable cause may also contact the following centres dedicated to our Master-Bhagavan Ramana. Our Ashram publications are also available with them.

(1) Ramana Kendra, No. 8, Institutional Area, Lodi Road, NEW DELHI-110 003.
(2) Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 40/41, First Floor, Second Cross, Lower Palace Orchard, BANGALORE-560 003.
(3) Ramana Maharshi Jayanti Celebration Committee, 10/155, Adarsh Nagar, Nariman Road, Worli, BOMBAY-400 025.
(4) Ramana Kendra, 11, Sird C. P. Ramaswami Iyer Road, MADRAS-600 018.
(5) Ramana Kendra, C-2, Government Flats, Near Gujarat College, AHMEDABAD.
(6) Ramana Kendra, 16, Jatindus Road, CALCUTTA-700 029.
(8) Ramana Kendra, 57, Aishihotra Agraharam, NELlore, A. P.
(9) Ramana Centre, C/o Dr. Ch. Sharma, 101, Seymour Place, LONDON-W 1, England.
(10) Arunachala Ashrama, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Center Inc., 342 East 6th Street, NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. 10003, U.S. A.
times, copied the questions and answers and took them with me when I had to join the German Navy.

"Since the end of the War, I longed to see the place where the Maharshi lived. My first chance came only in 1968. It was a short stay of three weeks, but long enough to become familiar with the places, the power of Arunachala and the peace all around Sri Ramanasramam. And I took with me the most important books and many pictures of Ramana.

"From that time I have had an intensified life with Bhagavan. And now I am very happy to have had the chance to stay in this holy place of worship and grace for nearly three months. I was able to increase my understanding of Bhagavan's teaching by sitting in the Old Hall or near the Samadhi and by attending the pujas. I could feel His Presence while going round the Hill or up to Skandashram and sitting in meditation there.

"So I must warmly thank the President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman and others, who made this undisturbed stay possible.

"And I thank Sri Viswanatha Swami, who helped me in meditation and spiritual matters in his wise and kind way."

— Maria Proske,
Austria.

THE FOUNDER-EDITOR'S DAY

Last year, while reporting the Liberation-anniversary day of Arthur Osborne, the renowned author-devotee of Sri Bhagavan, we mentioned that Mrs. Lucia Osborne had gone to England. This year too we missed her on May 8, when devotees gathered at his samadhi. The function went off very well, with the singing of hymns on and by Sri Bhagavan and distribution of prasad.

Mrs. Osborne's health is much better now, after a simple operation on her heart, and she is keen to return to Arunachala, which she hopes to do in November. The devotees at the Ashram miss her very much.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

July

OBITUARY

SRI GUDIPATI VENKATA CHALAM

A reputed Telugu writer and a renowned social worker, Sri Gudipati Venkata Chalam, popularly known as "Chalam", had a successful career as a training school teacher and Inspector of Schools. He settled down in Tiruvannamalai in the forties. Being also a daring thinker, he gained from his contact with Sri Maharshi the conviction that the goal of life was spiritual achievement. Hence he chose to stay at Arunachala till his death on May 4, 1979, at the ripe old age of 85.

He had his first darshan of Sri Bhagavan in December, 1936, through the kindness of Sri Chinta Dikshitulu, and he felt himself transformed by the Master's silent presence.

When asked what he thought of Sri Bhagavan he answered: "He is my GURU!" He completely surrendered himself to his Guru.

Once he complained to Bhagavan that he was feeling sleepy during his sadhana and the sharp answer was: "Then go to sleep!"

He was a well-known writer in Telugu and an ardent champion of freedom for women. He did not stop merely writing on their problems but gave shelter to women from all walks of life who were victims of social injustice.

— Maria Proske
Austria.
Sri Chalam was ailing for some time. A number of his admirers including the President and other Ashramites, went to pay their last respects to him on hearing of his death.

May his soul rest in Peace at the Holy Feet of his chosen Master!

*SRI NARAINDAS S. JHANGIANI*

Addressed dearly by everyone as ‘Narain’, Sri Naraindas S. Jhangingian, was born in 1902 in a well-to-do doctor’s family, and when born his eyes remained closed for ten days! He lost his parents very early in life. Though he had an introspective attitude he did not show any inclination towards temples, kirtan or discourse. A voracious reader, he took a keen interest in scriptures, lives of saints and sages, and in astrology. But his thirsty soul was searching for a Sat-Guru who could show him the Direct Path.

The divine call came as soon as he migrated to Bombay after partition of India. He immediately left for Sri Ramanasramam in 1948. When he was seated in front of Sri Bhagavan in the Meditation Hall, His blessed eyes directly illuminated his soul. After three days he returned home and by Bhagavan’s Grace was able to intensify his meditation for full thirty years. His health remained poor and he bore his last cross (cancer) with patience, accepting it as ordained by the divine Will.

He breathed his last on March 3, 1979, with full awareness and with a smile and the holy name of Sri Bhagavan on his lips. He kept the picture of his Master on his chest till he breathed his last and got merged with Him.

Sri V. RAMANATHAN

Sri V. Ramanathan, a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, was born in North Arcot District, but settled in Anantapur, where he was the headmaster of the high school. He had a great reputation as a teacher. From his school days he knew Bhagavan and used to visit the Ashram every year, and sometimes to go giripradakshina in the company of Sri Bhagavan.

Once when he was at the Ashram during summer vacation he had to return home immediately. The Old Hall was so crowded he was not able to have even a glimpse of Bhagavan, and so he was feeling disappointed. Suddenly, when he had decided to return without having His darshan, Sri Bhagavan stood in front of him all smiles, thus blessing this earnest devotee!

Even after the Brahma Nirvana of Sri Bhagavan he visited the Ashram regularly. He also gave lectures in English and in Telugu on Him.

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