Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!
Thyself regard me and dispel illusion! Unless Thou do so who can intercede with Grace itself made manifest, Oh Arunachala!

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 65

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
The Mountain Path
Vol. 17, No. 1, January 1980

EDITORIAL

THE SAT-GURU

SAT stands for Being, Absolute Reality, whose essence is the bliss of awareness, chidananda.

In Chapter XVII of the Gita, Sat is equated with Aum and Tat. A famous hymn to Sri Bhagavan hails him as Aum Tat Sat Aum, the sacred Word or Logos, is pranava, ever-fresh. It corresponds to Vishnu, the second Person in the Trinity, the all-pervasive Satya Narayana, subsisting everywhere and ever fresh through all time. Tat is, according to the mahavakya, That which Man is, though he can never know It. It is the Supreme in its detachment and transcendence, the universal Self conceived as distinct from individual selves.

Sat is Being which includes becoming; it is prakriti as well as purusha, mother as well as father, the empirical as well as the transcendental, the combination of Truth, Goodness, Beauty: Satyam, Sivam, Sundaram.

Derived from this root Sat are two pregnant words, satya and sattva, integrity and goodness, the human reflections of the supreme Sat.

The Sat-Guru embodies (1) the ultimate reality, Aum Tat Sat; (2) the relative reality, our own common human nature, Satya and Sattva; and (3) the mysterious link between the two, the Timeless taking human form in time. He is the asipada, the word "art" in
What if this frantic search for satisfaction, elsewhere, blinds you to the searcher’s true Nature, which is Bliss itself?

Sri Nisargadatta does not mince matters: “Nothing can make you happier than you are. All search for happiness is misery and leads to more misery. The only happiness worth the name is the natural happiness of conscious being.” This, and the quotations from Ramana Maharshi that preface this article, together with the testimony of the long line of Sages who have linked — or rather, identified — ananda (Bliss) with sat (Being) and chit (Awareness), and certainly the experience of this writer, all confirm that the practical and sensible recipe for happiness is seeing Who you are, and enjoying your very Nature as Bliss — now.

All right: but let’s be really practical! How to see who you are? Maharshi assures you and me that it is easier to see This than to see anything else! Of course he is right. Just look at what you’re looking out of at this moment, and see Nothing — no shape or form, no complexity, no colour, no opacity, no limits, no movement — nothing but Awareness.

But does this seeing into one’s Self-nature (and it’s something you can’t do wrong) mean that one actually wants things to happen as they do happen? Well, who is responsible for them? You created the world, and presumably you aren’t regretting it! Or are you saying that you hate what you did?

But it’s no use discussing the matter. Continue seeing Who you are, and notice whether you reject or resent or deplore anything at all. Go on seeing into your Nature and find out if anything can make you unhappy.

Those who have actually tried it find that this last recipe for happiness is the one that works. What’s more, it makes the other two work. When you see who you are, you want what you get, and you get what you want!

Let us take just one example. This seeing/being Who you are is no personal or private enterprise. You do as the Alone, as the One that is all beings: and so your liberation is theirs. Your deepest desire is to save the world, and you are its salvation. This is the supreme instance of “getting what you want” and “wanting what you get” by “seeing what you’ve got.” Hence Ramana Maharshi once more: “Your own realisation is the best help you can give to others, but there are no others to be helped.”

Again, this isn’t for believing, but for testing. If we want to be happy, let’s go about it in a practical way. The proof of the pudding.

“Sat Sang means association with Sat or reality. One who knows or has realized Sat is also regarded as Sat. Such association is absolutely necessary for all. Sankara has said, in all the three worlds there is no boat like Sat Sang to carry one safely across the ocean of births and deaths.”

— from Gems From Bhagavan, p. 27.
The only thing a human being knows and can ever know, is what presents itself in ‘his’ mind, what unfolds itself in the consciousness that he is. A chair or a house exists only for a human being, when it appears as a conscious perception — in other words, the only chairs and the only houses that we know are appearances in consciousness.

The appearances change perpetually; consciousness does not. Looking inward, we find that we, as consciousness, are ever the silent witness of whichever perception presents itself in mind (I use the word mind as a collective word to include all movements in consciousness: feeling, thought and sensorial perceptions, and both the waking and dream states). All these appear in consciousness, like waves in the ocean. Whether there are big and dangerous waves or small and peaceful ripples, water remains $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ — and similarly, whatever appears in consciousness, consciousness remains itself, unchanged.

All movements, all things perceived — thoughts, feelings and sensorial perceptions — are nothing but movements of energy. Every such movement has its beginning, its point of culmination and its dissolution. Consciousness, the One Experience that we are, is there before a movement commences, during its unfolding and after its disappearance, just as water is there before the birth of a wave, is its essence during its lifetime, and remains over when the wave has disappeared.

It is of the greatest possible importance to examine this fact as long and as often as is needed to make it perfectly clear to us that the only thing we know is a play of energy in the Conscious Presence that we are, whether we want it or not, whether we are aware of it or not.

The moment we grasp the impact of this discovery, it suddenly becomes clear that whatever we call the world or people or a house or me is a play of energy, surging up from the consciousness that we are.

This play of energy continues as long as we identify ourselves with parts of it; when we...
experience ourselves as a man or a woman, a thinker, a doer, a proprietor, and so on. The deep peace or happiness or love that we are ever looking for dawns the moment this play of energy stops.

This can be done in two ways. The first is the way of the yogi who clubs thought on its head, considers it as an enemy to be dominated, and thus, by lots of effort, achieves a temporary state of tranquillity called ‘sama-dhi’. This state is always temporary, as it is created by an ‘I’ and later on claimed by it, when the yogi thinks that he was in sama-dhi, failing to note that samadhi was precisely the absence of this ‘he’.

The second method is the way of the jnani, who realises that thought is nothing but a movement in the Conscious Presence that he is. From this “point of view” nothing can ever be an enemy; every thought, feeling or sensorial perception is a movement in consciousness, and therefore a part of ‘myself’. To the jnani there are then no more states; he knows that there is nothing but this one unconditioned consciousness, Experience Itself, and that all things spring from him as Experience, not from him as a person. The one Living Presence that he is is the “raw material” from which all appearances are created. He is all people, all thoughts, and there is nothing to be curbed or controlled, no ‘I’ to be checked, for all that was ever called ‘I’ is also seen as mere movement of energy. This Presence is what he is, whether there are movements in it or not. That is why his state (actually a non-state) is permanent, ever present, although there is no ‘I’ to say so or to claim it.

In the immortal book which contains the Mandukyopanishad with Gaudapada’s Karikā and Shankara’s commentary (compiled and annotated by Swami Nikhilananda) it is said: (1) that objects in the waking state are as much imagination of the mind as those seen in dreams, and (2) that the difference between the two only appears on account of the organ of perception used. In the notes following II, 13 it is said that the world is nothing but an “internal” idea, projected outside by the sense-organs. What does this mean — or rather how could we understand the truth of such a statement?

If we rewrite it in our own twentieth-century words and in sentences that may be found in a serious week-end magazine, it might run as follows:

We think that we are living beings, made of flesh and blood and bones and so on. This belief is so encrusted in us that we do not for a moment remember that in school we learnt that, as a matter of fact, flesh, bones and the rest are made up of molecules, which in turn are made up of atoms, which consist of particles so small that no living scientist can have even the vaguest idea of their dimension. Every atom is a minute solar system, and, relatively speaking, the particles are as far removed from each other as the sun and the earth. If someone were able to take away the space between the particles, you and I and the entire population of Tiruvannamalai might perhaps fit into one single matchbox.

This body, in other words, is empty space, for far more than 99.9%. That is a reality from the standpoint of physics. What we are is one big bubble of air — not even that, for air too consists of atoms to which the same story applies. In other words, we are a bag full of emptiness. Cosmic rays and all kinds of minute particles fall right through us, without ever hitting an atom of the body.

And the part in the matchbox: is that matter? When the minutest particles, together forming the atom, are examined, the borderline between matter, energy, light and heat disappears. What we are, ultimately, is nothing but light or energy.

Perhaps scientists may discover where this energy comes from. We are convinced that we know it already: energy comes from love.
On the level of the psyche this is quite evident. A job that we normally hate to do becomes a pleasure if we do it for someone we love. In this country which has a climate almost as bad as Britain, a young man will think nothing of riding 20 miles on a bicycle through hard, cold wind and rain to visit his sweetheart, but he'd probably never do this to go shopping, and he'd complain his head off if he had to do this to go to his work. . . . The moment we love, there is boundless energy, and no effort is too tall, no work too heavy if it is done to make the beloved happy.

In love, our projected ‘I’ are absent, and all attention is focussed on the beloved instead of on the ‘I’ that we often project into our own body or thought. This absence of a projected ‘I’ (of hundreds of projected ‘I’s in the course of the day) brings an enormous relaxation with it, and frees the current of energy to the extent that the whole body disappears and dissolves in love. Only when ‘I’-thoughts come back, the idea of I-as-a-body is again projected into time and space, and with it its extension called ‘the world’.

The idea of a solid, material world is truly an idea, nothing more and nothing less. Why is it so difficult to see this, even though the story, told above in a primitive way, is one that we have not “heard in temples or churches, but during the course of physics in school? The reason lies in the fact that we identify ourselves with what one might call an accidental wavelength, an accidental frequency. This identification creates the impression that IT and nothing else is reality. But it is easy to see that this is not so, for in dreams we identify ourselves in precisely the same manner with other frequencies, which we have no difficulty in identifying as purely mental. Our identification, during dreams, with that other frequency creates a show which to the dreamer is precisely as real as the show called the waking state is real to the waking person.

In other words, the apparent reality of the waking state, and later that of the dream state, is only due to the fact that we plunge into an image called ‘waking person’ and later ‘dreaming person’, and firmly believe what our parents have told us: that we are this person. Our faith, our unquestioning faith in their statements has helped to create the miraculous event, described in Shankara’s commentary, namely that we project an idea into time and space with the help of the sense-organs (which themselves are only a way of thinking) and thus create a dream that seems so real that we find it almost impossible to believe that it is quite unreal, even when the greatest spiritual and worldly specialists come to explain in the clearest of terms that it is so. That is why — at least for 99.9% of us — a living Presence, a Guru, is necessary, whose insight and conviction are so perfect and clear that they are able to undermine our own deep convictions, inherited from our parents and the rest of society around us. The rabbit of a real, solid material world is produced from the hat of illusion only through our faith. When we are convinced by arguments, and
probably first of all by the certitude and clarity shown by the authentic Guru, that this faith in a projected 'I' is quite infantile, this 'I' disappears, and with it the solidity of the world. That is perhaps why Shankara compares the Guru, rather humorously, with a juggler, saying that the Guru is greater, for the magician shows us things that do not exist, but the Guru creates equality between himself and the disciple. In other words: the Guru unmasks the juggler within us — the blind faith in what sense-organs, memory and our parent's story have conjured up — and liberates us from this illusion. The moment this liberation has occurred, what remains is freedom, pure consciousness, Atma, which is the Guru. The Guru is at once the 'path' (even though in the end we discover that there was no path from ourselves to what we really are) and the goal; he is freedom, peace, love itself, or whichever label we prefer to indicate the Ultimate Reality. In the discovery that we too are nothing but this freedom, the goal is reached, and we now are, consciously, what the Guru also is consciously. The only difference between Him and us was that He knew it all the time, and we did not.

We, identified with our faith in an image, in a projected 'I', will never find this Ultimate Reality. The limited can never find or understand or discover the non-limited. But the non-limited, the Ultimate Reality, will turn out to be the clearest of the clearest, the moment the last bit of faith in the limited disappears.

This will not happen by clubbing the limited on its head, for that implies that we believe in it, even if only as an unwanted enemy. It will only happen by looking clearly and discovering that the limited is nothing but a mirage, a movement in the Conscious Presence that we are, and that the limited has not a shadow of independence — that it is as dependent on us as Consciousness, as waves depend on the presence of water.

The projected 'I' is therefore completely unreal; it is a mere thought, a mere image projected upon a cinema-screen. It can never be liberated, as it has no existence of its own. That is, no doubt, what Shankara meant when he said (Part 2, V. 32): "There is no dissolution, no birth, none in bondage, none aspiring for wisdom, no seeker of liberation and none liberated. This is the absolute truth."

Or, in the almost outrageously simple words of the Light that is Sri Ramana Maharshi: "Give up the idea that you are not realised!" — that you are a somebody in search of something.

"Work performed with attachment is a shackle, whereas work performed with detachment does not affect, the doer. He is even while working in solitude. To engage in your duty is the true Namaskār . . . and abiding in God is the only true Asan."

— from Maharshi's Gospel, p. 5.
NEARLY every year during my stay at the Ashram, one question that is invariably asked by the devotees of Sri Bhagavan is: Have you seen Bhagavan? My reply to them is that though I have not seen Sri Bhagavan in the body, Sri Bhagavan had seen me long before. There are reasons for this:

When I first came to the Ashram over two decades ago for a short stay, after taking permission from the Ashram authorities I started for Skandashram with my wife. After going some distance up the Hill we lost our way and went in several directions, each time coming back to the same place. We got perplexed and could not decide what to do. We did not find anybody on the Hill whom we could request to guide us to Skandashram. We decided to return to the Ashram. To our utter surprise we saw a person coming from behind in the garb of a rustic and enquiring from me in our language (Hindi) if we wished to go to Skandashram. After my assent, he asked us to follow him. I was astonished to find him talking in Hindi. On my enquiry he told me that he was in service at Kanpur, even though I had not told him where I had come from. He took us to Skandashram, opened the door, which was bolted from inside, and asked us to go into the Ashram. I wanted to pay him some money for the great service he had done but he refused and went out of the sight in a few moments. To my mind the guide was none but someone sent by Sri Bhagavan to take us to the place.

Another instance of his Grace was when he saved this body during a serious train accident in 1972, an event which was described in an earlier issue of The Mountain Path.¹

There are other occasions when Sri Bhagavan came to my rescue at various critical moments and guided me to the right path.

This is the twenty-fourth² time that we have come to the Ashram. It is his benign Grace that we have been coming to the Ashram every year without a break. Next year (January 3, 1980) will be Sri Bhagavan's Centenary Year, and, if it pleases my revered Guru, it will be our Silver Jubilee visit to Sri Bhagavan's Feet.

I conclude this scribbling with the following quotation from Bhagavan's Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala:

'Oh Lord! What did it profit Thee to choose me out from all those struggling in Samsara, to rescue my helpless self from being lost and hold me at Thy Feet? Lord of the Ocean of Grace! Even to think of Thee puts me to shame. Long mayst Thou live! I bow my head to Thee and bless Thee!'
I first heard of Sri Ramana Maharshi while I was a member of the Yoga Ashram of Sri Aurobindo. I asked him about the Maharshi and he wrote back that he was a Yogi of remarkable strength and attainments and that his tapasya had won ‘glory for India’. On another occasion he characterised him as a ‘Hercules among the Yogis’. So I longed to pay a visit to Ramanasramam, situated at the foot of the hallowed Arunachala Hill.

When I arrived at the small house where the Maharshi lived, I felt a deep malaise. How could I hope to get peace and inspiration from him if I had failed to get it at the feet of my own Guru, who was surely no less great? Yet I felt sincerely that I had done well in coming to seek inspiration from the great Yogi who was venerated by spiritual aspirants of every category. At the same time, I wondered whether this was the proper frame of mind in which to seek peace from a mighty Illuminate!

I entered the room of the great sage in the afternoon. It was just a bare hall in which I found him reclining on a couch. A handful of devotees were sitting on the floor. Some were meditating while others were gazing wistfully at the sage, who sat stone still, staring in front at nothing at all, as was his wont. He never spoke unless somebody first spoke to him or asked a question. For fifty years he had been living on this Hill and had felt no call to leave it. In the earlier years he had lived in a cave on the Hill for many years in silence. In the Ashram, which had subsequently been built around him by a few of his devotees, he had now been living a singular life, blessing all but belonging to none, interested in everything but attached to nothing, answering questions but hardly ever asking any.

He gave the impression of Siva, the great God of compassion, who was there to give but not to ask anything of anybody, living a blissful, free and open life, with no walls of the ego to cabin the summit vision. I had, indeed, read what Paul Brunton had written about him and had heard a lot about his

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1 Extracts from Kumbha, pp. 170-176, published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and reprinted with their kind permission.
lovable ways from a dear friend of mine, Duraiswami, who had known him for years. Some other devotees had told me that he had been living ever since his abandonment of worldly life in a state of sahaaja samadhi (superconscious in the ordinary wakeful consciousness). What I saw with my own eyes impressed me deeply, though I find it far from easy to portray what I saw, or rather experienced. Here was a man who lived like a god, supremely indifferent to all that we worldlings clamour for without cease. Dressed in a bare koupin (loin-cloth) he yet sat ensconced in a grandeur of plenary peace and egoless bliss which we could but speculate upon yet never fathom. Kings had come to him with all sorts of rich offerings, but in vain; he had blessed them, but never accepted any gifts. He said one day to a disciple with an ironic smile as he pointed at a huge pandal which his devotees were building to honour him at the Golden Jubilee celebrations (1946): “Just fancy, they insist on erecting this for me when all I need is the shade of a tree to sit under.”

Modern man may criticise him for his lack of initiative and argue that humanity has little use for one who lives thus aloof and isolated. But was he isolated,—he who radiated peace which hundreds of visitors have experienced by just sitting near him in silence? Did not the lineaments of his serene face, his beautiful smile, his tranquil glance, convey to all a message of liberation? Did he not blossom like a flower stemming from the earth, yet alien to all that was earthly? Did not his frail frame embody a strength that was not human, his life attest to an invisible anchorage which made him utterly secure and free from the last vestige of fear? Yes, as he told me later, the Maharshi put a premium on two things: inaccessibility to fear and to flattery, however subtle. Once a snake passed over his chest. “Why, what is the matter?” the Maharshi asked him. “A snake!” he answered. “I know” acquiesced the sage. “It passed over my body previously.” “It did?” asked the doctor. “And how did you feel?” “Cool!” came the rejoinder.

“Anent flattery he told me this story: “A man may go very far,” he said, “but not till he has travelled beyond the reach of all flattery can he be said to have arrived. Listen. There was once a rich man who wanted God. He gave up his family, home, comforts, everything, and repaired to a forest where he practised untold austerities for years till he arrived at the Golden Gate. But alas, the portals did not open to his repeated knocking—he did not know why!”

“One day an old friend of his came upon him in the forest while he was meditating. When he opened his eyes, the friend fell at his feet in an ecstasy of adoration. ‘O blessed one! How great you are, how heroic your austerities and sacrifice! Accept my homage.’ The holy man had, indeed, practised all the austerities and made all the sacrifices attributed to him. Nevertheless he was pleased when the other paid him homage. And that was why the Golden Gate had not opened to his knocking.”

I heard of many other traits of his supremely lovable personality, amongst which must be counted his sense of humour and love of laughter. He coveted nothing, but loved to joke freely with those who came to him. One day, while I was sitting near him and some visitors were putting questions to him, a Muslim friend of mine asked: “Tell me, Bhagavan, why is it that God does not answer my prayer even when I petition Him for nothing earthly? I only pray to Him to make me humble and pure and selfless so that I may serve Him as I ought but He simply does not listen. Why doesn’t He?” “Probably because He is afraid that if He did you
wouldn't pray any more," answered the sage readily, with a merry twinkle in his eye! And we all laughed in chorus.

Many a time he was asked, even challenged, to prove what he had seen. "Ah!" he would reply placidly. "I will answer that question if you answer mine: who is it that is asking this question?" "Who? Surely, I — so and so." "I know. But who are you?" "Me? I. I. I..." And the Maharshi would laugh. "So you see, you do not even know such a thing as your own identity, yet you presume to challenge others and their experiences. I would suggest you find out first who is the challenger and then the truth you challenge will be made manifest to you."

True to our great tradition, the Maharshi did not relish answering merely intellectual questions or the queries of the curious who were content with more wordy answers to words. Again and again he used to stress that information was not knowledge, and that all true knowledge stemmed from self-knowledge. So sometimes, when he was asked about the worlds beyond of the life hereafter, he would simply evade the question. "Why put the cart before his horse?" he was wont to say. "Why this itch to know about the other worlds? Do you know even the crucial and basic things about this one? If not, why not wait till you do before you start delving into the next? Why do you want to know what happens after death? Do you know what is happening before your eyes? Why go to an astrologer to be told what you will be twenty years hence? Do you know — truly know — what you are today — this moment?" And so on.

Once the matters came to a head. A disciple of his was puzzling a good many members of the Ashram, for he was living in perfect bliss in a tiny room, sitting all day on a bare mat, hardly taking the trouble even to eat unless somebody brought him food. Speculation was rife; some thought that he had gone mad; others that he had gone far, while others again said with bated breath that he was living in that superconscious state which the Gita describes as Brahme shiiti (situated in the Absolute). In the end a regular deputation waited upon the Maharshi, who heard them with his usual patience. Then he gave the leader of the deputation a quizzical smile. "You want to know his inner state, do you?" he asked pointedly. The man fidgeted beneath his scrutiny. "Well... yes... I..." "Wait," the Maharshi interjected. "First tell me this: do you know your own state?" The other was unnerved. "No — no," he faltered. "Right," the Maharshi rejoined, in a pleased tone. "First find out your own state and then you will know his." The whole Ashram enjoyed it — except the leader of course.

This outstanding Yogi and his holy life have exercised a deep influence upon hundreds of spiritual seekers all over the world, although he had done hardly anything of a spectacular kind to enlist the attention of the multitude.

"Success and failure are due to prarabdha and not to will power or lack of it. One should try to gain equipoise of mind under all circumstances. That is will power."

— Gems From Bhagavan, p. 48.
June 29, 1929

The evening was calm but cloudy. Occasionally it would drizzle and in consequence it was somewhat cool. The windows of the Ashram Hall were closed and Maharshi was seated as usual on the sofa. A number of devotees sat on the floor facing him. Mr. A. S. K., the subjudge of Cuddalore, had come to see the Maharshi accompanied by two elderly ladies, his aunt and his cousin. He was also accompanied by Raghupati Sastri, a pleader of Cuddalore. Of the inmates and regular visitors there were about seven or eight, including Sri Niranjanananda Swami (Chinna-swami), Echammal, Ganapathi Bhat, Visvanatha Iyer, Muruganar, and Madhavan.

It was about 6:00 p.m., and the conversation was mainly carried on by the Maharshi and the Cuddalore visitors. Mr. A. S. K. started the discussion as to the impermanence of all mundane things by putting the question: “Has Sat-Asat-Vicharana (enquiring into the Real and the Unreal) the efficacy, per se, to lead us to the Realization of the One Imperishable?”

1 Taken from the Ashram archives.
"That Thou art." Like the copula in grammar, logic and music, he may be useful and even indispensable, but he need not be active. His only function is to be.

The Sat-Guru does not "teach." His presence is enough. A darshan of his enables quite ordinary people to view the world invisible and touch the world intangible. By the power of his being and the purity of his awareness, he governs people, as the sun holds and illumines the earth. In our own satya and sattva we see the play of the eternal sat. We discover in ourselves the Awareness — Bliss that we really are and have ever been.

The Sat-Guru has long been accepted in Hindu tradition as the embodiment of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and as the visible image of the transcendental, non-dual Self. Not only that. One sees in one’s own chosen Guru the whole line of preceptors from Siva, through Vvasa, Sankara and so on.

Despite all changes in outward form and circumstance, the Sat-Guru remains the same. As the Self alone appears as Awareness within and as form and circumstance without, the Sat-Guru represents both permanence and endless change; he is the living link between the absolute, timeless, immutable Reality and the empirical dynamic Satya and Sattva, relative truth and active goodness. Amid all the variations of language, culture and belief, the Sat-Guru sustains and reveals the human dharma, the secret of our human life divine, which is growth in freedom and transcendence, while being rooted in the actual and accepting every obligation. The universal man we all dream of and hope to become is present before our eyes, in flesh and blood, in the form of the Sat-Guru. His identification with all mankind is so complete that the poorest feel at home with him and the rich find his compassion uncomfortable. By his mode of living he points the way to the highest human destination, the simplicity sublime which enables one to enjoy in this very life, on this very planet, the bliss divine of the one incorporeal awareness. By touching the nucleus of transcendence in a few, the Sat-Guru transforms all mankind.

The claim that Maharshi Ramana is a Sat-Guru in this sense should not be misunderstood. No Hindu would argue that one Guru alone holds the key to Truth and can lead mankind from non-being to being, from darkness to light, from death to immortality. The founders of the great religions, Buddha and Jesus, for example, like Sankara, Ramana and Sri Ramakrishna revealed Reality in the idiom of their time and place, as is amply proved by the number of saints that came in their wake. They all taught the same great truth concerning Man, the truth that Man is spirit or pure awareness, and not the mortal body. This truth in its stark simplicity was discovered by Ramana through his own experience and revealed to our century. No wonder he repeated and confirmed many of the teachings of the earlier Masters.

At the heart of all religions, running through them all as the thread that holds a string of pearls together, is the experience of the pure "I am", the identification with Awareness and detachment from the body-bound ego. The goal of every traditional religion is egoless living, whether this is achieved through self-enquiry or self-surrender. Self-transcendence is the human dharma.

Candles may collide; but the rays from many kindled candles only inter-penetrate and add to the brightness of a room and show up all the objects in it. Sun, moon and stars, mountains and rivers, Jehovah and the angels, Siva, Rama and Krishna, all that we perceive or imagine, all things, and thoughts and symbols, live and move in the vast expanse of our awareness. In so far as religions are sources of enlightenment and not close-knit organizations or aggressive movements, there
Maharshi: “As propounded by all and realised by all true seekers after the Truth, Brahma-Nishtha (abidance in Brahman) alone, if one may say so, can make us know and Realise It, as being of us and in us. Any amount of vivechana (discrimination) can lead us only one step forward by making us tyaginah (renouncers), by goading us to discard the abhasa (the fleeting), and to hold fast only to the Eternal Truth and Presence.”

Then the conversation turned upon the question as to whether Iswara prasad (the grace of God) is necessary for the attainment of samrajyam (self-rule) or whether an individual’s honest and strenuous effort to attain it cannot, of itself, lead us to that from where there is no return. The Maharshi, with an ineffable smile which affected everyone present, replied:

“"Iswara prasadam is essential to Realisation. It leads to God-realization. But Iswara prasadam is vouchsafed only to him who is a true Bhakta or a yogin who has striven hard and ceaselessly on the path towards freedom. . .”

Sri Raghupati then proceeded to question the Maharshi about the six yogic centers (adaras).

R.: The six adharas are mentioned. But the jiva (individual soul) is said to reside in the heart. Is that not so?

M.: Yes. The jiva is said to remain in the heart in sushupti (deep sleep) and in the brain in waking hours. The heart need not be taken to be the fleshy or muscular cavity with four chambers which propels the blood. There are indeed passages which support the idea. The description that it resembles the bud of the lotus, that it is above the navel and between the nipples, that the blood vessels terminate there appear to confirm that view. There is the stanza in "Forty Verses on Reality," Supplement, v. 18, to the same effect. But there are many who hold that the term ‘heart’ denotes a set of ganglia or nerve centers about that region. Whichever view is correct does not matter to us. We are not concerned with anything less than our Self. About that we have certainty within ourselves. No doubts or discussions arise there. The ‘heart’ is used in the Vedas and Shastras to denote the place whence the notion ‘I’ springs. Does it spring only from this fleshy ball? It springs from within us, somewhere right in the middle of our being. The ‘I’ really has no locality. Everything is ourself. There is nothing but That. So the heart must be said to be our entire body and the entire universe conceived as ‘I’. But for the practice of the abhyasi (spiritual aspirant) we have to indicate a definite part of the universe, or body, and so this heart is pointed out as the seat of the Self. But, in truth, we are everywhere. We are all that is and there is nothing else.

R.: The six adharas, are they not the seats of the soul?

M.: Those six are stated to be the seats of the soul for the spiritual aspirant’s contemplation. He should fix his attention on...
Muladhara first, think of the Self as residing there, and gradually go higher up.

R.: There is a description of each of the six, as the seat of a God, or a figure with a varying number of sides, and with a varying number of faces.

M.: Yes. These are for purposes of concentration. They are interpreted symbolically.

R.: There is a difference of opinion between two schools as to the order of the adharas. Sir John Woodroffe mentions that some (probably the Nepalese) place the Anahatha (the heart) next to Muladhara, i.e. as the second of the six.

M.: Yes, there may be variations. But the usual order here is Muladhara, Swadishthana, Manipuraka, Anahata, Visuddhi, Ajna — with Sahasrara Chakra on the top of all these six.

R.: The Muladhara is said to be triangular.

M.: Yes. We may think of the Muladhara or Self therein as arising from a three-sided figure.

R.: The Kundalini is said to rise from that.

M.: Yes. That current is ourselves. By meditating on each adhara, the current advances higher and higher and various powers are said to develop.

R.: It is said that Iswara prasadam is necessary to attain successful samadhi. Is that so?

M.: We are Iswara. By Iswara drishti (seeing ourselves as Iswara) we are having Iswara prasadam. So we need Iswara prasadam to obtain Iswara prasadam.

Maharshi smiles as he says this and the devotees all laugh.

R.: There is Iswara anugraham (grace). That is said to be distinct from Iswara prasadam.

M.: The thought of Iswara is Iswara prasadam. His nature is arul or prasadam, i.e., Grace. It is by Iswara’s grace you think of Iswara.

R.: Is not Guru anugraham the result of Iswara anugraham?

M.: Why distinguish between the two? The Guru is viewed as Iswara and not as distinct from Iswara.

R.: When an endeavour is made to lead the right life and to concentrate thought on our Self, there is often a downfall and break. What is to be done then?

M.: It will come all right in the end. There is the steady impulse of your determination that sets you on your feet again after every fall or breakdown. Gradually the obstacles disappear and your current gets stronger. Everything comes right in the end. Steady determination is the thing required.

(to be continued)
THE SOUL OF SILENCE

Silence is Truth. Silence is Bliss. Silence is Peace. And hence Silence is Atman. To live this Silence as such is the Goal. It is Moksha. It is the end of the endless cycle of births and deaths. Sri Ramana Maharshi was an embodiment of such a Silence. He was the Silence Itself. Therefore he did not preach the Silence. Only when one comes back to the ‘noisy’ from the Silence can one preach the Silence. How can the Silence preach Itself through Silence?

Nearly thirty-five or forty years ago, I had the good fortune of having the darshan of Maharshi at Tiruvannamalai when he was living there in a cave along with his mother and brother. One mid-day, a young brahmachari at that time, climbed to the cave, saw the Maharshi there and, placing a bunch of bananas at his feet, bowed and sat before him. At the same moment some monkeys jumped on to the scene, scrambled for the fruits and ran away with them.

Maharshi looked lovingly into my face. That was all. He spoke but silence not a word passed between us. A supreme, a dynamic and divine Silence prevailed. An hour passed by, all in Silence. He rose for his meals (bhiksha). I too rose from my seat, bowed again and walked down the Hill. The divine Silence sank deeper and deeper into me at each step! Someone came running behind me and pressed me to take some prasad. Thankfully I declined. I was full — full with the Silence. Maharshi called him back and advised him not to press me. Then I left the cave and walked away.

Maharshi was an idol of Peace and Silence. It is the first duty of all those who admire and follow him to seek after that Divine Silence. The enquiry into that Divine Silence is but the enquiry “Who am I?”

Oh, man! Enquire and be immersed in that inner Silence. Do all works of this world to reach that goal, to attain that Divine Silence. If you have already attained that Silence, do strive for Loka-sangraha (the salvation of the world) if you choose to do so. The ocean’s surface dances in waves, laughs in sparkling foam, roars as its thunderous waves clap and clash! And yet deep in its inner vaults it rests in eternal Silence and peace. Without such a divine and spiritual depth, the works and activities of this universe prove worthless and aimless.

“Works should be undertaken and pursued to take us ultimately to the workless Abode of Divine Silence and endless Peace.” This is the secret doctrine of all our Vedas and ancient scriptures.

Devotee: If I surrender myself, is no prayer to God necessary?
Maharshi: Surrender itself is a mighty prayer.

— from Maharshi’s Gospel, p. 56.
We never had a dull time when we were in Bhagavan Ramana's presence. There was much mirth and laughter. Bhagavan used to talk as much as would be necessary and he would be gay or grave as the occasion demanded. Some people write that Bhagavan never spoke and such writings may surprise those who spent much time in the Ashram. When anyone put a question, he would answer. He narrated the lives of saints and his own reminiscences whenever he was requested to. Often he would dramatise according to his feelings. The word 'dramatise' may not be correct, but what I mean is that his feeling and expression would go together. I have seen him behave childlike, and at other times be grave and poised like a king.

2. One day the Sarvadhikari came accompanied by a man who was limping, whom he introduced to Bhagavan. He brought an electric lamp with a big mother o' pearl shade and presented it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan said that he had been reading an illustrated Tamil encyclopaedia just an hour before, and a doubt had come whether a big mother o' pearl could exist. He was surprised at the coincidence. Some people took it and examined it and it was sent to the office. Suri Nagamma came and Bhagavan asked her whether she had seen it. Then it was sent for. Bhagavan was saying: "Let her see, let her see!" At that time his mood and expression were like those of a child exhibiting his toys to another child.

3. One day Prof. Subbaramiah told Bhagavan that Mauna Swami of Kuttalam used to say that longevity depended on food and asked whether that was so. Immediately Bhagavan asked whether the Swami who said that was still alive. His answer lay in this counter-question, since the Swami was no more.

Mr. Mudaliar began to narrate that the same swami stayed for some time with Echammal. The swami had some extraordinary powers. One day he told Echammal:
"You see, I have some powers. I can get whatever I like. But your swami has none.
Echammal told him: "You have desires, my swami has none." Bhagavan did not like the trend of the conversation, with its implicit belittling of that swami, so he narrated another incident. The swami in his purva asrama (previous station in life) was known as Sivayya. One day when they were going up the Hill, Bhagavan saw Mr. Sivayya carrying a pot of water on his head. Bhagavan asked him why he was carrying it. He told him: "Bhagavan may feel thirsty and water may be needed." Narrating the incident Bhagavan’s eyes brimmed with tears.

LOSS AND GAIN

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By
Margaret Dupert

The mind-moon for a little while
Shines delighting in reflecting
The Master’s lustrous rays.
Then it pales and fades
Till, by His grace, it disappears
And the rising Sun,
Ramana-Arunachala alone
Illumines all the world
And dwells as light and sweetness
In the lotus of my heart.

Earth, moon, planet, satellite,
Warm body and dead, barren mind,
Whatever life or light is mine,
And I the Knower of joy and pain
Have now no being apart from you.
Thus losing all things I gain you
And as your gifts regain them too.

THE SEEING

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By
Ira

He who goes searching for the Truth through the Universe, which is only his mind objectified, is like one who wanders over the earth looking for his own eyes.

From this I learnt that we should not speak ill of anyone. We must bear in mind the good qualities of others.
4. “Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.”

(St. Matt. XXIII, 9)

JUST as one sun in the sky reflects itself as myriads of lights in the morning dew, so one Source of Life fathers all the beings of the world.

Where in truth there is but pure Being we see a multitude of beings, just as we see a host of lights, when in fact there is but light.

And furthermore: not even water and light are really distinct. Both are a form of energy and therefore truly one. There are no lights, there is no water, all is energy.

It is because we see spirit and matter as distinct from each other that there are individual beings.

Ultimately, matter, like spirit, is a form of energy, Divine Energy.

All being Energy, where are the differences, where are the many?

Distinctions are born solely of the mind, their existence stands and falls with the mind.

In deep-sleep, when the mind is not functioning, there are no differences, no spirit, no matter, there is but Being.

When the mind rises, so do distinctions: a body is seen and a soul is inferred. Spirit and matter are set apart whilst they are but one and the same.

While there is nothing apart from God, while there is nothing but God, we see anything except Him.

This is why Jesus reminds us of our true Father who is our true Origin, in fact our very Being.

But this is not known, or only intellectually so, until we have personal experience of it.

And this experience comes when we receive the true Light which makes ordinary men the sons of God, not ‘born of the will of the flesh’, but born, in fact, but forever ONE with the Father from eternity to eternity.

5. “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.”

(St. John XII, 46)

IN order to lead us to the realization that we too are really the Sons of God, Jesus appears in this world of ours, shining like a light into the darkened mind.

Apart from mind, where is the world, where is the light?

As in a cinema show, where the pictures are seen only in the semi-darkness of the theatre, so the world appears in the darkened mind only.

When the mind is illumined by the true Light, then the world is swallowed by it — there is but pure Light, Consciousness or Reality — in a like manner as when the lights in the theatre are turned on fully and the projections fade into invisibility.

At the coming of the true Light, Realization, all ignorance of the mind is burnt away.

*Continued from the last issue.
A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

How Bhagavan Comes to Me

Sir,

Bhagavan comes to me four times a year on the wings of The Mountain Path, and brings me Peace and Quietness. The pictures and the printed words alike convey the message of tranquility and light spread by the Maharshi and Arunachala! Whenever my mind gets perturbed, or seems to lose confidence, I turn to The Mountain Path, and Bhagavan comes to me with his wordless message "Quiet, my boy, be quiet...". And the questions vanish, the fever subsides, and a peace indescribable descends. I close the book, close my eyes and try to perpetuate this experience. I feel a rare joy in the placid calm of the mind.

So He comes to me often, at least four times a year in tangible form, and floods me with His grace. I am so grateful to him that I don't thank him; I keep quiet, as all thoughts vanish in the golden aura of Arunachala.

B. K. MISRA, (Cuttack).

for ever, leaving nothing (no thing!) but that which always is:

eternal Bliss, pure Consciousness, unqualified Being.

6. "And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me."

(St. John XII, 45)

SEEING Jesus with the mind is but perceiving a thought. Thought and things (thought think thing) being children of the dark, how can the self-effulgent Light be seen?

Only when thought and things have vanished from our consciousness, the Son of God is seen, who is one with the Light of lights.

Just as the purity of the screen in the cinema is perceived only when projection ceases, so the purity of the supernal Light is known only when the mind and its thoughts are transcended.1

To see the Son of God no mind is needed. How is one to see without a mind?

To see Him is but to be Him

That alone is seeing 'him that sent me'.

1 St. John I, 9 and 12.
2 St. John I, 13.
3 While this invisibility is literally true in respect to non-manifestation, and to certain lower stages of samadhi or ecstasy, it is only metaphorically so in respect to the Perfect State of Enlightenment. There, invisibility has simply the sense of primeval non-differentiation, which is Eternal At-One-ment. In that State, which is truly beyond all states, there is semi-darkness, yet the world is seen, but not apart from the Self. That is indeed invisibility of projection!
4 Purity of screen is not to be taken as an empty blankness, which the analogy might lead us to believe. Purity here suggests, as invisibility above, absence of ego-superimposition rather than absence of actual objects. As it is said: "To the pure everything is pure." No matter what is viewed, then nothing is seen apart from Self.
5 Because Jesus said he was the Son of God, he was called a blasphemer; because he 'made himself God', he was threatened with death, though the scriptures themselves declared that "unto whom the word of God came! were 'God'! (St. John X, 33 to 36) And likewise: so long as we deny our innate Godhood, we daily kill the Christ within. When we are ready to deny the outward man then the Christ will rise in all His Glory.

"Silence is the ocean in which the rivers of all religions discharge themselves." — Sri Maharshi in TALKS.
How I Came to Ramana

By
R. Kasinathan

In the course of my official tour to Tiruvannamalai I had the opportunity of having my first darshan of Sri Ramana Maharshi in September, 1949. A year before I lost my eldest son, aged 9 years, due to chicken pox. I was very much depressed, and to keep the balance of the mind I was engrossed in spiritual exercise like doing pradakshina in temples and having darshan of idols and evolved souls.

When I met Maharshi he was seated in the main hall of Matrubutheswara temple. His sparkling bright eyes were fixed on an object behind me. I dared not meet his eyes. There was a notice kept by his side which read: 'Sri Ramana Maharshi has undergone a major operation. Please do not engage him in conversation.' I thought that my prarabdha karma had stood in the way of my getting oral blessings from the Maharshi. I started doing pradakshina of the temple. When I completed the first round three clear doubts concerning my personal life rose in my mind.

While doing the second and third rounds, two Telugu speaking gentlemen followed me closely. One of the gentlemen asked about the same doubt that I was having in my mind. The other gentleman was giving replies in Telugu. I was dumbfounded and prostrated to the Maharshi. My hairs stood on end. I forgot my physical body and my mind was desireless for a short spell. I understood this incident as Sri Ramana's lila, in which he entered into the selves of all three individuals. I then mentally took leave of him and went away.

By the blessings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, exactly three years later I was initiated into Sri Vidya. I paid a visit 25 years later to Ramanasramam, and felt his presence in the whole atmosphere there. I was able to attend the Vedic chantings at the time of the Ramana Jayanthi celebrations. Ramana's philosophy has entered into every fibre of my being, and by his grace I am continuing sadhana and living a full and happy life.
A Hidden Gem—The Story of Peter Klima

By
Peter Halaska

THE life of Mr. Peter Klima is much like that of the Roman slave Epictetus—though poor and lame, he has been the darling of the gods. Known as 'Pedro' to his friends, he was of course not a slave literally, but his early life was very hard, and in fact not very different from that of a slave.

Pedro was born on May 11, 1901, as one of the eleven children in a poor Bohemian farm worker's family. Small and gifted, he was the only one among these children who showed any spiritual inclinations. But he had no opportunities for study and he suffered greatly from poverty, rough treatment, the superstitions of family and neighbours, and an orthodox Catholicism which he could not accept. Being very sensitive, he found this environment outrageous and totally unacceptable. His only refuge at this tender age was his uncle, a wise and humane man. His name Tousek, later became one of Pedro’s pseudonyms.

At the age of four he broke his left ankle. There was nobody to treat this injury and treatment by a physician was too expensive. So his parents waited a whole year for a well-known pilgrim to come and help. When he arrived he rebroke the poorly connected bone and set it properly. His leg, however, sustained the loss of length and Pedro became lame. At the age of twelve he had to go to the Bohemian borderland to serve as a labourer under a German farmer. In this way poor peasant families used to get rid of superfluous boarders.

As a young man Pedro left for Vienna in Austria. After the First World War there was great unemployment there. Pedro was not then well versed in the German language and so it was very difficult for him to adapt him-
self. That made him feel so wretched that he thought about suicide in the manner of the old sages, i.e. with thirst and hunger. In Austria he was dying of hunger and life at home was quite impossible. However, once after eating only a few apples a day for a fortnight he had a vivid morning dream. He saw himself employed at an office for the unemployed. That vision came true in the following days. This was not the first time Pedro was given evidence of his spiritual protection.

During the years 1921-28 Pedro kept company with nobody. At that time he practised the dualistic inner way and studied hard. Devoted excessively to reading and study during long nights he strained his eyes under the dim lamp light. Sometimes he used to hear: "Don’t read so much, your sight will get bad!" More than once at that time he saw St. John of the Cross in his glory as a reward for his asceticism. Meditating on St. John’s glory Pedro thought to himself: "Having exhausted his merits — maybe in the span of thousands of years — must he not return to the world and begin again with nothing? If that is so I would refuse such a state." In this wonderful period Pedro had a prophetic vision. The evangelist St. Paul approached him asking: "Do you want to become an episcope?" Pedro replied he had never heard of such a thing before. At that time the gods from the Brotherhood of Ben Salem, i.e. the place of peace, came again to Pedro to guide him through the circle of the signs of the zodiac. This is why Pedro’s explanations of the mysteries of the zodiac were so excellent. These things belong to the lower mysteries of the paradise sphere which is classified as a ‘hell of gentle forms’ from the higher point of view. These gods have protected Pedro throughout his life and they have appeared again recently to help treat his serious cardiac disease.

During the course of time Pedro acquired both the new and old forms of the German language. He became a famous scholar and mastered the vast field of Western spiritual literature. Unlike Indian spiritual literature there is not any logical system in it and its gems are often hidden under covers of superstition and misunderstanding. Only the key of inner wisdom enables one to understand such ideas. Pedro’s rich experiences, both theoretical and contemplative, are written down in about twenty books and brochures. Most of them have not yet been published. In the future these books are sure to be looked for for their spiritual depth. Pedro also read all the available literature in English and he presented his friends with many scarce books of great Indian wisdom from his collection.
can be no conflict between any of them and the light spread by Sri Bhagavan, the seer, the muni and kavi.

Nor can science in its present stage of development offer any obstruction to the spread of Bhagavan’s teaching concerning the essential nature of Man and the World as compact of awareness. The relativity and pluralism of world-views, the unity of knowledge, and the psychology of Being have now replaced the rigid mechanomorphic materialism of older scientific thought. As the four well-documented volumes of Krishna Chaitanya on the Physics and Chemistry, the Biology, the Psychology and the Sociology of Freedom have established, no responsible thinker today would exclude awareness from the realm of science. Robert Powell, in his recent work Return to Meaningfulness, has shown how closely Bhagavan’s ontology and his method of self-enquiry correspond to the latest findings of science and psychology. The practice of “My Absence”, the experience of the void, the tentative acceptance of individual non-being, serves as a precise and fruitful exercise, whereas the practice of the presence of God is the pursuit of a mental projection.

Modern science, like the traditional religions, has come to share the universally held common faith in a Higher Power, a Primordial Intelligence, from which we and the world we see have both emerged. It is to this Awareness, our eternal home, the paradise we have lost, that all mankind must now return for the renewal of the race, perhaps, even for its survival.

This Awareness is the sole Reality behind all religions and all sciences, behind all power and all peace. Declaring clearly and categorically that We are all Awareness, and demonstrating, through four and fifty years of egoless behaviour, the joy and beauty of a life divine lived in our midst, Maharshi Ramana has been acclaimed Purushottama, the Supreme Person of this age, because, meeker than the meekest, through meekness the Supreme reveals and yet conceals His true supremacy. The Satya he taught and the Sattva he practised, his Sat-darshana and Sad-achara, are now available to all mankind. The mystery of moksha lies coiled up here. The gift he gives is freedom and we are free to take or decline it.

Sri Ramana initiated no movement, founded no Sangha, formulated no new dharma. He took no part in politics, brought about no social reform, organized no social service. He sought neither fame nor popularity. And yet many came to him in the agony of doubt or distress and found clarity or comfort in his presence. He accepted all alike as so many embodiments of the timeless Being-awareness-bliss. He considered no one his “disciple” because he found no “other” lacking enlightenment.

Everyone who turns to him has to be a light unto himself, to dive within himself and discover the sun shining and the lotus blossoming in his own heart. Each one has to accept his personal responsibility to his own inner light, to that Primordial Intelligence which is
A large portion of his income was spent on purchase of books like these.

In 1928, after these seven pregnant years, Pedro came out of his isolation and became a public figure. He established a spiritual circle which was attended by a considerable number of people from its very foundation. It included one more intimate group of contemplatives and a group of readers of spiritual literature. In the first group there appeared several very gifted souls. Some of them, for example, radiated visible light. Many interesting events concerning that circle’s life are described in Pedro’s treatises. Pedro is convinced that those who will come after us will hardly believe in the existence of a prophet school in our profoundly materialistic age.

So Pedro really became an episcopate of the inner church, the leader of a spiritual circle, which was the meaning of the word ‘episcopate’ in the apostle’s time.

In 1935 one spiritualist informed Pedro that a new guru would visit him. Pedro was surprised when this prophecy was soon fulfilled. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi himself came into contact with him and initiated him into grand monism. He often appeared in Pedro’s morning dreams. Usually he came alone — only once did he come with his attendant — and mostly in the form of the most austere god, though once he had a splendid brilliance around him. He discussed various things with Pedro and taught him. He warned him against sleeping during his sadhana and showed him his next incarnation. Once Pedro saw the sign of life blazing on Bhagavan’s forehead, whereas his did not shine. Bhagavan explained that it showed the difference between a highly developed yogi and an apprentice. Sri Bhagavan appeared in Pedro’s dreams until about two years after the departure from his earthly body. Before Sri Bhagavan took leave of him, he stepped near, bent his head almost to the earth and let Pedro kiss the top of his head. Awakening from this last dream Pedro found himself flooded with tears. Since that day the great sage never showed himself again.

Before the Second World War, on the Ashram’s recommendation Pedro bought a complete English translation of the book Yoga Vasistha. He found its teaching similar to that of Sri Ramana Maharshi’s and so beneficial that it became his favourite reading for more than thirty years. At that time he also attacked Paul Brunton’s activity because of his giving the Maharshi’s sadhana without his permission and spiritual protection. At that time, however, Brunton’s position was strong.

After World War II Pedro moved from Vienna to Prague. The interest in spiritual matters began to decline also in Bohemia. Only a very small circle of devotees continued their spiritual work and some of them have not given up their striving in this respect up to the present. Pedro himself strove tirelessly though his living conditions were hard. For many years he lived in a very cold small attic, on a pension insufficient to buy enough food, coal, etc. Some devotees supported him, but nevertheless he had to sell some of his books. Later on his situation improved. He spent about twenty years as a monk and an ascetic. At the expense of his health and happiness, the sufferings of his whole uneasy life have brought spiritual benefits for himself and for his followers. A real teacher pays for his disciples. Pedro does not consider himself a guru but only an advanced disciple.

Nowadays Pedro is a bedridden old man, age-worn, ill, with eyesight too poor for reading. He cherishes only two wishes, not to wish anything for himself and a happy departure from his earthly body. Thus harmonized and living for his sadhana he awaits the Angel of Death in all humility.
Sri Viswanatha Swami was born on 21 April, 1904 to Sri Ramaswami and Smt. Ammaalu Amma. Sri Ramaswami, who lost his mother in his childhood, was brought up by Bhagavan’s parents at Tiruchuzhi. Ammaalu Amma’s father, Sri Narayana Sastriar, was a profound scholar in Sanskrit. Her only brother, Krishnan, who died in his teens was a playmate of Bhagavan at Dindigul, where he did his sixth standard in his twelfth year.

Viswanathan was the third of the five sons of his parents. The youngest of the five, Sri V. Sivaraman, is the only surviving member of the family.

From his fifth year to the ninth year, Viswanathan studied Rudram and Pancha Saktas at the Sringeri Mutt at Dindigul. When he was at college, he felt the urge to do something for the freedom of the country. Along with his two elder brothers, he left college obeying Gandhi’s call to the students. He took active part in picketing shops and boycott of foreign cloth. He took to spinning on the charkha and worked for village uplift. He was appointed Secretary of the District Congress Committee, Madurai on a monthly salary of Rs. 18/-. He declined the salary, but instead accepted food.

When he was seventeen, Viswanathan went with his two elder brothers to Madras to buy charkhas. On their return journey, they were stranded at Villupuram as the train could not go further because of breaches on the railway track. Viswanathan and his brothers decided to go to Tiruvannamalai, 40 miles away from Villupuram. This trip to Tiruvannamalai was purely accidental.

Viswanathan saw the Maharshi at Skandashram and spent one week with him. This was towards the end of 1920. About this visit, Sri Viswanatha Swami wrote later: “Sri Bhagavan’s most powerful presence completely annihilated my ego; I can’t say anything more.” Bhagavan gave him a copy of Nayana’s Sri Ramana Gita and asked him to hand it over to his father.

After his return home, Viswanathan found himself drawn to Bhagavan more and more. It was a tussle between the desire to work for the freedom of the
country and the desire to surrender to Bhagavan totally. The tussle lasted for two years. He decided finally to go and surrender to Bhagavan.

On the evening of 2 January, 1923, Viswanathan stood before Bhagavan who had by then shifted from Skandashram to the present site of Sri Ramanasramam. There were only two thatched sheds at the time. Bhagavan looked at him graciously and Viswanathan was thrilled that he was accepted.

He studied all the 18 chapters of Sri Ramana Gita in the presence of Bhagavan. When he expressed a desire to study the Upanishads, Bhagavan directed him to Nayana who was at the time living in the Mango Grove. Viswanathan met Nayana and asked for some clarification of a passage in the Taitriopanishad. He was overpowered by the presence and eloquence of Nayana. That was the first and last time he put a question to Nayana. He was struck by the beauty and power of Nayana’s Umasahasram and translated it into Tamil.

During the early period of his stay at the Ashram, Viswanathan used to spend the mornings doing gayatri japam. At noon he would go out for bhiksha. Afternoons he would spend with Bhagavan and nights with Nayana.

When Nayana passed away in 1936, Sri Viswanatha Swami settled down in Sri Ramanasramam. He and Muruganar took a small room in Palakkothu and cooked their food.

Sri Viswanatha Swami was a profound scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit. His writings in Tamil, English and Sanskrit are remarkable for their clarity and precision. The very first literary work undertaken by Sri Viswanatha Swami was the translation of Mahatma Gandhi’s Arogya Digdarsan. He has translated into Tamil Ashtavakra Gita. He also rendered into beautiful Tamil, Swami Ramdas’s In Quest of God. Bhagavan utilized Sri Viswanatha Swami’s literary talents and would send for him whenever an interesting magazine or book was received. He has translated into Tamil Talks with Maharshi and Upadesa Sara Bhashya, Forty Verses in Praise of Bhagavan and Sad-Darsana-Bhashya of Sri Kapali Sastri. He also wrote Sri Ramana Ashtotra Sata Namavali in Sanskrit. It is a litany of 108 names of Bhagavan. He has written a commentary on this explaining the significance of each name. During his last years, he was called upon to be the editor of The Mountain Path. His work as editor was marked by excellence and exemplary devotion. His editorials were scholarly and inspiring, his revisions few and careful. He was most unwilling to write about himself but was persuaded to record his “Reminiscences”. He began the series in The Mountain Path for January 1979 and the last one appeared in October 1979.
Sri Viswanatha Swami in his final years was sought by ardent devotees from India and abroad for clarification of doubts. In the evenings several devotees used to meditate with him in his room. He did not talk much; when he did, the subject was either Bhagavan or Nayana. He had the rare privilege of observing and hearing them in close proximity. However he never boasted of his association with them. He was without any ego of any kind. He never made any fuss about himself. He looked after his needs himself and did not depend on others. He mingled freely with the high and the low. There was no exhibition of his scholarship or his life-long sadhana or deep spirituality. While he had a thorough grasp of Bhagavan's teachings, he also had deep faith in the potency of great mantras, having been influenced by Nayana.

The boy who surrendered to Bhagavan in his teens merged with Arunachala at the age of 75 on October 22, 1979. His samadhi is near the sacred tank 'Yama Theertham' on a site specially selected by the Ashram President, Sri Venkataraman, who showered on Sri Viswanatha Swami his love and affection till the last minute. Hundreds of devotees will cherish the memory of this unostentatious and simple child of Bhagavan.

"Indomitable faith combined with supreme serenity of mind are indispensable at the moment of death."

— Gampopa

"Human birth, the desire for salvation and the company of holy men are rare things on this earth. Those who are blest with all three are the most favoured of men."

— Sri Sankaracharya

"If you do not meet a transcendental teacher, you will have swallowed the Mahayana medicine in vain!"

— Chih Kung
I CANNOT believe that our revered Sri Viswanatha Swami is no more. I feel he is still here and his genial and comforting smile is there in front of my eyes. He was an embodiment of simplicity, affection and scholarship.

I would like to recall my association with him in the later part of the 50s when I was studying in the college in Madras. Even then I recognised in him something ‘very great’. I met him quite often and pleaded that old devotees like him should not wander about and that they should all stay together at the abode of the Master. When, happily, Sri Viswanatha Swami, had not only settled down for good at the Ashram but had also taken over the heavy responsibility of editing the Ashram Journal, THE MOUNTAIN PATH, he took me one day to his room and showed me a letter that I had written to him two decades earlier pleading with him very strongly that he should return to the Ashram. He was all smiles when he told me: “It is your sankalpa that has pinned me to the Ashram. I am grateful to you.” I am mentioning this only to show what a great man he was, to remember and preserve a letter from a novice!

Sri Viswanatha Swami is known to many as a profound scholar in Sanskrit, Tamil and English. But few knew his childlike behaviour and intense devotion to Sri Bhagavan. His concern for the poor and the disabled was intense and practical. He never hesitated to ask for alms for their sake. He never allowed anyone to do his work; even so much as posting of a letter. Though he was in full command of the journal as its editor and he was a past-master in topics spiritual, he behaved as if he was a nobody, allowing all decision-making to me. This feature I had also found in revered Sri Arthur Osborne, the founder-editor.
Though Professor Swaminathan insisted that every article should receive the stamp of approval from the Swami, when approached Swami repeatedly told me in all humility: “Swaminathan is an authority on editing and also knows not only Sri Bhagavan’s philosophy but also other schools. It is only out of modesty that he refers these to me. Whatever he says meets with my full approval and you need not bring to me articles already gone through and edited by him.” His erudition was matched by his humility. I had the most enjoyable relationship with Swamiji as the editor of the Journal. This period of close contact with him will remain ever green in my memory.

The end came suddenly but most peacefully, with the least resistance from Swamiji. Two days before he passed away I asked him whether he was having any pain in any part of the body. He replied, as usual, in a soft tone: “There is no pain at all. But I feel very weak and I need rest.”

Sri Bhagavan granted the last wish of His chosen disciple by giving him ‘eternal rest’!

My obeisance to this scholar-devotee of our Master.

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Mr. T. K. S. Iyer, a disciple, was excited because someone in the town had spoken disparagingly of the Master. He did not retort and came away excited. So he asked Master what penalty should be paid for his failure to defend him.

M.: Patience, more patience; tolerance, more tolerance!

— from Talks With Sri Ramana Maharshi
A Tribute to Swami Viswanatha

By

Evelyn Kaselow

WITH Sri Bhagavan’s Grace, I believe that few people have benefitted as much as I in the company of the saintly Swami Viswanatha. All of us in Arunachala Ashrama looked on him as the embodiment of Bhagavan, and he treated us, just as Bhagavan would have, as no less than his own children, nieces or nephews. In fact, he very graciously said as much to me himself. On one occasion when I went to Swamiji’s room for my daily “Sanskrit class”, I took my seat by his side as usual. Unexpectedly, a Kashmiri gentleman had come that day, and Swamiji enthusiastically said to him, “You see how, like a little girl, she feels no shyness to sit by my side? I am an unmarried man, I have no issue, but I have my brothers’ children — she is like one of them!” This same solicitude was extended to all our Ashrama members and only demonstrates his extreme graciousness. Swamiji, out of his kindness as well, reprimanded us if we spent too much money on various Ashrama projects. He would personally advise us about when and how to go on pradakshina or up the Hill. And on one occasion, a day after he had advised me not to go on pradakshina, with a mischievous look in his eyes he inquired, “So, did you go around the Hill this morning?” (Naturally, I had not). He personally intervened when two other devotees in our Ashrama had intended to climb the Hill before going to Madras the same day. Swamiji requested them to forgo this climb, which they did. Like Arunachala, he could appear aloof. Yet at...
one and the same time he was disinterested
witness and a most compassionate father
for us.

It was in August of 1973 that Sri Bhagavan
ushered us into Swamiji's presence for the
first time. Ganeshan introduced us to him. A
passage from my diary follows:

"Cloudless was the day which dawned to
usher us into the presence of Sriman Viswa­
natha Swami, reminding us of the Self which
shines 'by its own light as a ruby unaffected
by any outward object'. How could we
record our impressions of one whose even
seemingly insignificant remarks and actions and
silences appeared to us to be the purest teach­
ings of the Truth? Are we capable of express­
ing it in words while 'Thou in ancient days,
as Dakshinamurti, couldst do so by silence
only'? He appeared to us to be Thy embodi­
ment, 'To see Bhagavan was to see the ever­
present reality of the absolute,' he said. And
again, 'There is a center in man where there
is no ignorance . . . where there is pure
awareness . . . ' His words, reflecting Truth,
proceeded from Truth itself. It seemed to us
that his individual being had long ago left him
and all that remained was Thou.

"Seeing his austerely furnished room con­
taining little more than two hard benches, one
for himself and one for visitors, and the two
pieces of cloth he possessed to cover his body
in South Indian style, we noted the poor
reflection they cast on our more complicated
lives.

"Before leaving, some verses of Swami
Abhedananda were quoted for us in Sanskrit
and their import given, 'we who enjoyed the
company of one who was the Lord incarnate
are not so blessed with faith as you who,
upon merely hearing His name (never having
seen Him), have given Him your hearts.'
This most gracious condescension was not
wasted on us by one whose life had been
spent with Thee. Unworthy though we be,
such a remark was coveted as the relic of a
saint and truly more dear to us were the words
and stories which were to fall as fresh dew on
our parched souls from him."

Following our pilgrimage to Arunachala in
1973 (when all seven devotees of Arunachala
Ashrama had travelled there together), I
didn't get to see Swami Viswanatha again for
five years. When I returned to Arunchala on
Sri Bhagavan's Jayanti Day in January, 1979,
we found the same solicitude and compassion
as before. In spite of his weakened physical
condition, numerous literary projects and
voluminous editing for The Mountain Path
Swamiji found an hour each day to give me a “Sanskrit class.” Despite my repeated requests that he teach me this or that composition of his own, Swamiji absolutely insisted on concentrating uniquely on Sri Bhagavan’s works and teachings. However exalted his own state of mind may have been, Swamiji was first and foremost a devotee of Bhagavan.

On one occasion I had requested Swamiji to narrate some incidents from his association with Sri Bhagavan. Significantly, he prefaced his stories, saying, “Sri Bhagavan has given me the experience that He is none other than my own Self. He is not external to me.” This was to be one of my last conversations with him.

Sri Bhagavan gave me the grace not to delude myself with the expectation of seeing Swami Viswanatha again in physical form, so how much more poignant was my leave-taking in March of 1979. Swamiji knew this as well, and he couldn’t have been more compassionate. My next before last night I encountered him pacing the verandah in front of Sri Bhagavan’s Samadhi. Mrs. McIver approached us and told me of Swamiji, “He is my oldest friend here — he took me on my first pradakshina.” “He may not be my oldest friend, but he’s my ‘best friend’,” I said. Laughingly, Swamiji graciously exclaimed, “Friend, child, daughter, niece — she is all these to me. I feel she is my own child.” How these parting words assured me of Swamiji’s continuing solicitude and interest in me and all of us in Arunachala Ashrama.

Numerous are the anecdotes and incidents which one could recount about this man who so immaculately exemplified Sri Bhagavan’s Teachings, yet we are content here to offer these few in honor of him whose Presence, even as that of Bhagavan, continues to guide us.

Someone asked, “It is stated in the scriptures that the Self will reveal itself to one whom it chooses. Then what is the use of our effort?”

Sri Bhagavan replied: “The Self will draw unto itself an aspirant only when he becomes introverted. So long as he is extroverted, Self-Realization is impossible. Many people try to define the Self instead of attempting to know the Self and abide in It.”

—from Sri Ramana Reminiscences, p. 58
1980

Garland of Guru's Sayings

By SRI MURUGANAR
Translated from Tamil by Professor K. Swaminathan

793
Let all things happen as they will,
And never attempt to cross events.
Instead of doing this or that,
Abide within in perfect peace
As but the witness, nothing more.

794
When all your strivings end in failure
It means that you are being taught
The lesson that not your own efforts
But God's good grace alone can bring
Success and you should seek this Grace.

795
Those who like Dattatreya learn
From every creature some true lesson
And keep their minds straight, unperverted,
Find all the world a gurukula
And life itself continuous learning.

[Note: Gurukula — guru's abode, school.]

796
Than peace there is no greater strength.
Than peace there is no higher achievement.
Than peace there is no nobler tapas.
Nothing but peace is life immortal.

797
An enemy most troublesome
Is mental excitement; it drives one
Into heinous sins; it is drunkenness.
The deep, dark pit.

798
Even so [after self-surrender]
One's duty is — dreaming or waking —
To walk firm upon the path,
Based on experience, taught and shown
By Masters who stand high, exalted,
By gracious kindness to disciples.

799
One who walks firmly on the path
That leads to life immortal may
Swerve through neglect or other cause
From the strict Vedic way; but never
His Master's word may he transgress.

800
For sinning against God one may
With Guru's help make some amends,
But God Himself can never help
One who has sinned against the Guru.
This is what in one clear voice
All great men have declared.

801
Experience in the heart advaita,
Never put it into action.
You may through all three worlds express
Advaita to gain life immortal,
But never, never with the guru.

[Note: This verse paraphrases Verse 39 of the Supplement to the Forty Verses. One may identify oneself with the Gods in Heaven, but not with the guru.]
the one and only power behind and within the universe and all its phenomena. Each individual has himself to respond to the call divine and seek and find his true identity, to go through silence and the void, and then come back renewed to his own given external world. All this journey inward and outward one has to perform in utter loneliness. There is no escape from one's freedom in transcendence or from one's empirical responsibility. Freedom and self-reliance go together. Every moment is a moment of truth and one has to face all alone the truth of one's absence in the presence of the Self. No adult human person can afford to be a frightened hare or a sheep in a fold. One cannot escape being the hound and the hunter, the sheep dog, the shepherd and the Master. The mind eats grass in the field of the senses and grows in order to become meat fit for the Self. We are both empirical and transcendental awareness.

Many seers and poets from Kashmir to Kanyakumari have known this experience of transcendent Awareness and enjoyed it as Sivananda. Siva is the name and formless form of this Pure Awareness. Maharshi Ramana found it natural and convenient to clothe his own early experience with Father Siva and His tangible form of Arunachala.

By the persistent quest "Who am I?" and by willing surrender to Siva, the Self immortal whose shadow is the mortal self, any one can be rooted in the solid ground of the one Being-awareness-bliss. Rooted in Suchidananda, one finds that all one's human dealings are healthy and joyous, that acceptance and love of "others" are natural and easy, and life becomes one long Self-service.

Arunachala, the frozen form of Siva, reminds us of our true identity as one Awareness. Men and nations can if they choose break the vicious circle of fear and cruelty. We need feel no longer like alien islands floating in the salt estranging sea and ever prone to clash. We know we form one single continent girt by the ocean of grace. Which is also the Mountain, the Sun in the sky and the lotus of love in the human heart. As he sang to the Mountain, we sing to the Maharshi:

Ocean of Nectar, full of grace,  
O Self supreme, O Mount of Light,  
Whose spreading rays engulf all things,  
Shine as the Sun which makes  
The heart-lotus blossom fair.

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

"Success and failure are due to prārabdha and not to will-power or the lack of it. One should try to gain equipoise of mind under all circumstances. That is will-power".

— Sri Ramana Maharshi
Only he who has attained
Immortal life can help the world.
For the ignorant one to help another
Is but the blind leading the blind.

[This paraphrases Bhagavan's couplet: Only
the mukta can save the world. The blind cannot guide the blind.]

The jnani who quite egoless
Stands steadfast as Awareness pure
Helps others who in suffering seek
His help by giving them this experience.
This is compassion. Other kinds
Of kindness are worth nothing.

"Physician, heal thyself!" 'tis said.
So people tell the would-be guru.
"Before you start prescribing medicines
For us, please first cure yourself
(of blindness) and then come to us."

Strange are the world's ways. People,
Neglecting parents while they are alive,
Perform with pious pride elaborate
Rites for departed ancestors.

Deceiving others one becomes
One's own foe and hurts oneself.

Whatever one to "others" gives
Is well and truly given to oneself.
Who knowing this would fail to be
Generous in service of the world?

Since in all selves one same self lives,
Whatever one to "others" does
Is really done but to oneself.

Though driven into the nether world
Mahabali gained endless glory
By viving his all to Vamana.
Therefore, though philanthropy
May hurt, it is worth practising
Even at the cost of selling one's goods.

He whose word strength-giving frees
From fear all creatures, he who lives
In bliss perennial, being firm-fit
In Self-awareness, knows no fear
Even when he sees the God of Death.

When the strong with violence harm
The weak, the virtuous one unflurried
Comforts and protects the victims,
Letting the Lord who pities the poor
Deal out appropriate punishment.

When life has left a body none
Knows how to bring it back,
Hence no one has the right —
Whatever be the cause — to take
From any creature its dear life.
I WAS reading in the 3rd standard in the Taluk Board School at Tiruchuzhi when Maharshi was reading in the 4th standard. He was about 10 or 11 then. His father, Sundaram Iyer, was well-known as the prominent *Vakil* (pleader) of the town. There were no certified pleaders then. He was obliging, sweet and agreeable in speech and manners. He was also handsome. His complexion was very fair and he was of medium stature. Those who wanted to have a meal or quarters to stay for a while would go to him and be invited as a matter of course. His house was terraced and had two compartments. His practice and income were good. He was not especially religious. There were no *Purana Kalakshepams* (talks on Puranas), etc., in his house so far as I know. I was, as a brother of the teacher Srinivasan in that school, invited to Sundaram Iyer’s for a dinner on the occasion of Nagasundaram’s (*later known as Chinnaswami*) *aksharabhyasa* (beginning of schooling). There was no hotel in the town at that time. I have known his maternal uncles: (1) Ramalingam, who went away to Malabar, (2) Ramachandra Iyer, landlord at Pasalai near Manamadurai, and (3) P. N. Krishna Iyer, who is still a *Vakil’s* clerk at Dindigul. These are the 3 who can give a good deal of information about the early life of Maharshi.

I lost touch with Maharshi after he went to Madurai to study. I heard of his sudden disappearance and of his being found at Tiruvannamalai. I saw his features (as at 30) in a print with someone and was very impressed. Gopi Chetty at Chidambaram spoke highly of him. I also heard from others.

I went and saw Maharshi first at Skandashram about 1917, one or two years after he had begun to live in that Ashram. I stood

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1 These reminiscences were gathered by Sri B. V. Narasimha Swami in the early 30’s from Sundaram Iyer, who had grown up in Tiruchuzhi with Sri Bhagavan. At that time he was employed as a clerk in the Devasthanam Trustee’s Office in Madurai.
and wept and did not take a seat though
bidden. I felt too shy and nervous. Maharshi
did not recognize me. Then I went outside,
and saw his mother. I asked her if she
recognized me. She also did not. I then
told her I was the younger brother of
Srinivasa Iyer, the teacher at Tiruchuzhi, and
she then enquired about all of our relations
and I answered. Maharshi questioned me
and said: “I thought I saw some familiar
face. Now I see why.” I visited Maharshi
three or four times but did not query him at
all as I was not sufficiently learned or experi­
cenced to have doubts. Later I went on read­
ing Advaita works in Tamil such as Vichara
Sagaram, Panchadasi, and Shankara’s works.
They were all puzzling to me, but by Mahar­
shi’s kindness they began to get clearer in
my mind.

I once asked him why pranayama and
yoga were so superficially touched on and
taught at upanayanam (the sacred thread
ceremony) and I wanted to learn more.
Maharshi answered that just a foretaste was
then given and symbols were taught, e.g.
touching nose and ears, in early youth so that
later in the serious period when attention is
turned towards higher things these might form
the starting points. “You are now getting
interested in that, for instance.” But prana­
ayama is of different sorts. It is not for all
either. For Maharshi himself, he had not
been attracted by that. If, however, anyone
should be strongly drawn to hatha yoga or
laya yoga, etc., he will find the necessary
teacher to guide him onward in his path. But
for the royal road of jnana marga, pranayama
is not necessary.

I never saw or heard from him or any other
reliable source of any siddhi (supernatural
power) in him such as clairvoyance. One or
two have, however, said things of a sort, but
I do not consider their general character
reliable.

The tremendous darshan filled one with awe.
Adoration welled up in the heart. The waters of
life washed the heavenly feet that walked on earth.
A radiance rent flimsy veils, rendering other veils
transparent. Love and surrender burst from hearts
and flew to rest upon his feet, like flowers offered
in worship. It was eternal darshan that drew
eternal worship.

I knew his uncle Nelliappa Iyer, who also
became a pleader. We entrusted some cases
to him. He also was very fair in complexion
but a big burly figure like Dandapani Swami.

Neither the mother’s side nor father’s side
of Maharshi’s family could be considered
rich; nor were they poor. They had a modest
income and were in simple circumstances.
“SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI has kept India’s spiritual glory alive in our generation. He has in his own way made the name of India respected by wise and enlightened men spread all over the world even as Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and other saints did in former times."

Thus spoke Sri C. Rajagopalachari when declaring open the Pathala Lingam Shrine, once the abode of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi encapsulated the whole of the Vedas and Upanishads into a simple formula — his famous ‘Who am I’? enquiry. He was too humble to claim any originality to this. Such enquiry goes beyond the realm of seemingly impenetrable mysteries. But by the grace of Sri Ramana the followers unmistakably reach the goal.

During the period of his illness Sri Maharshi appeared visibly unaffected in spite of the ailment which gave him excruciating pain. The doctors and other devotees were baffled with astonishment by the utmost unconcern demonstrated by Sri Maharshi for the cruel ailment. The total detachment with which he looked on his suffering body was unique. By this he demonstrated practically for our benefit that only the body suffers and the Atman (Self) has no share in it.

His radiant face did not show even the least trace of pain. In fact his eyes sparkled with more divine brilliance than usual. Despite the pain he was rigidly attending to his daily routine, like going to the bathroom, attending to important letters, etc., without deviating from his characteristic punctuality.

“Let the disease run its course and let the body suffer, but I am ever immersed in unbroken Bliss” — such was his attitude.

“A man established in the Self in liberated even while living in the body then the fate of the body does not matter” — this is the Vedic truth.

Sri Ramana had entirely forgotten all consciousness about his occupancy in the human frame and automatically the authorship had
no existence at all. He was full of bliss indicating exuberance.

The following episode, which occurred during the same period was a thrilling sight to witness.

An old teacher of Sri Bhagavan came to see him. He was 87 and very feeble. Nevertheless an overmastering desire to see the God-man whom he had once taught in second form urged him on to Tiruvannamalai. In Bhagavan’s presence, he recalled an incident from that time with great emotion. Once he had asked young Venkataraman to stand up on the bench for a minor misdemeanour. But Venkataraman gazed at him for a while with such steadiness and power that his (teacher’s) will withered rapidly and he reversed his orders.

It was a touching sight to see the old teacher meet his Seer-pupil. Then the teacher asked Sri Bhagavan whether he recognised him, Sri Bhagavan smiled broadly and graciously and answered: “Why not?” The teacher was visibly moved at this and he again asked Bhagavan about his health. Sri Bhagavan replied that he was feeling all right. Throughout this very moving but short interview Sri Maharshi displayed such graciousness and cordiality that neither the old teacher nor those who were close by felt that there was anything wrong with the Maharshi.

These things make us feel that Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is a perfect divine incarnation, whose divine excellence was lying dormant till he left his home.
SRI N. BALARAMA REDDI is one of the most ardent devotees of Sri Bhagavan. An erudite scholar and earnest sadhaka, his whole life has been dedicated to meeting Mahatmas wherever they might be and leading a pure, sattvic, adhyatmic (spiritual) life. His knowledge of Sanskrit enabled him to dive deep into our spiritual lore.

Even while studying in the college he kept aloof from worldly distractions. His purity in daily life led him to Mahatma Gandhi, who then stood for him as a symbol of moral perfection.

His quest for the Truth took him to the Himalayas where he stayed with Sri Sadhu Vasvani. Later he met several sadhus in the north; the head of the Radhasaomi movement of Bias was one of them. After a stay of three days with him, he was asked by his disciples to get initiated by the head; but Sri Reddi hesitated, because he felt the time had not come for him to choose a guru. When this was put before the head, he agreed with Sri Reddi entirely and said that he himself took twenty years to choose his guru. This gave the young seeker great encouragement.

During his sojourn in Bombay he came to know of the darshan-day of Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry and went there in the early thirties. The atmosphere there was surcharged with yogic force and the presence of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother helped the seekers a great deal. The strict discipline in
the Ashram attracted Sri Reddi and he stayed there for some years, though he could not decide upon becoming a permanent inmate. He then happened to hear of Sri Ramana Maharshi and one fine morning in the middle of March, 1933, he arrived at Sri Ramana-ramam.

It was breakfast time; a single room served the purpose of Bhagavan’s bath-room, dining hall, office and audience hall by turns! He was given a seat next to Sri Bhagavan. Looking at him, Sri Bhagavan nodded his head as a sign to start eating (the breakfast). This gave a strange thrilling experience and he instantaneously felt ‘home’. Sri Bhagavan appeared to him to be the eternal Mother showering love and grace on one and all. He was to leave the same evening. Sri Bhagavan asked him: ‘Where do you come from?’ Sri Reddi came to know later that it was never the practice of Sri Bhagavan to put such a personal question; and the deeper meaning behind the query was revealed to him. Bhagavan had devoured him then and there!

This is how he made his decision about his final allegiance. In the book: Self Realisation, by B. V. Narasimha Swamy, it is clearly stated that a seeker should not change his guru. Sri Reddi was perplexed and put this problem before Sri Bhagavan, to which pat came the reply: ‘What if?’ The decision was taken. He attached himself once for all to Sri Bhagavan and He became his all!

His visits to the Ashram became more frequent and the stay longer, and he spent most of the time with Bhagavan. In those days, there were usually five sessions with Bhagavan in the Old Hall, though actually Sri Bhagavan was available all 24 hours. Sri Reddi never missed even one session — very early in the morning, after breakfast, after the morning walk, after lunch and then after dinner — all the time sitting in front of Sri Bhagavan and drenching in His words of nectar. In the earlier days, Sri Reddi recounts, he had the privilege of sleeping in the same hall where Sri Bhagavan was reclining!

Sri Bhagavan was not a ‘teacher’ in the formal sense. By His eloquent Silence He infused spiritual discipline into the seekers. “He loved us like a mother, protected us like a father, guided us as a teacher, moved with us like a friend. Where can we find such a Master whose sameepya (proximity) and soulabhya (accessibility) were unparalleled in spiritual history, Sri Reddi rejoices.

The disappearance of Sri Bhagavan’s body did not affect Sri Balarama Reddi. He says that Bhagavan had prepared them for this event, by repeatedly dinning into them that He was not the body. “The charm of Sri Maharshi’s bodily presence was beyond words. Yet through His Grace, we feel now His Presence more than ever,” he stresses.

Though Sri Reddi looks agile and energetic, he is 71 years old. He is one of the unobtrusive devotees of Sri Bhagavan, totally dedicated to sadhana, after surrendering himself to Him. Sri Reddi’s presence in the Ashram is a source of inspiration to all seekers, young and old!
BOOK REVIEWS


Dr. Yates is very well qualified to write on Shakespeare's last plays. Author of a book on "Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition", she has also specialised in Rosicrucianism. The central theme of her present work is that the last three plays, viz. "Cymbeline", "Henry VIII", and "The Tempest" contain a magical sense of the interplay between man and nature. The book under review has behind it more than forty years of research into the cultural history of the Renaissance movement. Her thesis is that the Hermetic aspects of the Renaissance culture in European thought greatly influenced Shakespeare. The elements of magic and mysticism found in these plays seem traceable to Rosicrucianism. Contemporary historical incidents also figure in the themes of these last plays.

The character of Prospero in the "Tempest" is given a new significance. He is "so clearly the magus as scientist."

Dr. Yates displays profound scholarship and the book is delightful to read.


Even before William James gave shape to the Pragmatic Philosophy, Peirce had stated the pragmatic principle and made it a cardinal tenant. He was not only the founder of the movement but also a philosopher of originality and vision. Dr. Turley has taken a much-neglected phase in Peirce's philosophy, viz. his cosmology, which anticipated many theories now well-established.

In his four well-documented chapters, the author discusses his theme step by step. Touching upon the categories in his first chapter, he explains how Peirce arrived at the three categories which are recognisable in every phenomenon. A law is the category of Thirdness. Peirce was not very clear about what he meant by a 'law of nature'. That the law of nature is an efficient cause is denied. This efficient cause tends to the concepts of God, though this is not specifically stated by Peirce. He holds that these laws of nature as general principles are really operative in nature.

The third chapter deals with cosmology with its lofty speculation which, however, on the basis of its unverifiability, goes counter to his general thesis of pragmatism. Dr. Turley elaborates some important 'ramifications' of Peirce's cosmology and finally evaluates his disproof of determinism. The complex thought of Peirce is well presented in simple and clear language, which makes it a pleasure to read the book.


George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff is a very controversial figure; writers swing from one extreme to the other in their estimate of him. Rene Guenon warns us to flee Gurdjieff like the plague, while eminent intellectuals consider him as "precursor of the New Age." Born in December, 1877 in Armenia, he realized very early that forces were at play that could not be explained by the known laws of science. In 1911 he organized his own followers. For some 20 years he wandered throughout the regions of Central Asia in pursuit of wisdom, "gaining access to the so-called holy of holies of nearly all Hermetic organizations such as religious, philosophical, occult ... and exchanging views with innumerable people who, in comparison with others, are real authorities." He developed considerable psychic powers and permitted his disciples to tap this resource.

His work lacks a set pattern, but has an aura of mystery, which made some strive to get at the hidden meaning, while others were repelled by its riddles and sophistries.

The author has divided the work into three parts, viz. the Background, the Teaching, and the Phenomenon. His presentation of the teachings is very clear. Mr. Perry has based his study on the account given by such writers as Anderson, Hartmann, Bennett and Ouspensky. Nevertheless his exposition is an independent and faithful evaluation of Gurdjieff who was a very practical man and treated religion with "benign neglect."

The reader who is unable to wade through the mass of books by Gurdjieff and on him by his eminent contemporaries can have a good picture of him by reading this small volume by Mr. Perry.

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BOOK REVIEWS

1980


Dora van Gelder is an aggelologist, if there be such a term, just as some people are entomologists or anthropologists, and the subject of her studies are fairies. She has spent a whole lifetime among fairies, listing, docketing and classifying the divers kinds of fairies with the care of a conscientious natural scientist. She writes not only of fairies, earth fairies, fire fairies and water fairies, of angels, elementals, gnomes, sylphs and undines, but also of their habits and behaviour, their preferences and aversions. Here is her account of the "common wood or garden fairy," which is "the most typical of them all."

"He is some two feet six inches tall, with a slender body and a head which is rather larger in proportion to this body than is common among adult human beings."

"... The material of his body... is somewhat of the nature of a cloud of coloured gas... emerald green and fairly dense."

Fairies are very friendly to birds, particularly young ones, and help them find worms. They themselves don't like worms!

If you are the sort of person who shrugs his shoulders in doubt at the mention of these creatures, then of course there is nothing further to say. But if you grew up believing in fairies, as Dora did, then this is the book that will answer your questions and maybe what your curiosity enough to make you decide to settle in their midst for the rest of your life and be one of them.

J. P. Uniyal


For most people, Taoism is synonymous with Lao Tsu and the Tao Te Ching. This is perhaps understandable since the vast majority of Taoist works available in the west deal with little else. However there is much more to Taoism than this, for like Hinduism, it is a complex and comprehensive religion with its own unique culture and way of life. Apart from its well-known metaphysics, it has its own distinctive varieties of yoga, ritual worship, meditation, poetry and art, folk lore, alchemy and much more besides. This book is probably the first attempt to present the whole of Taoism to the average Western reader in a form that is easily digestible. John Blofield is eminently qualified to write such a book. Having lived in China for many years before the revolution, he had ample opportunity to witness and absorb Taoist culture first hand. In addition, his near fluent Chinese enabled him to visit numerous Taoist shrines and monasteries
SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI has passed away... Even so, we would still remember him with all the love we are capable of, we would still celebrate his Jayanthi as a miracle of grace bestowed upon us, but it would all be past history. For the benefit and the reassurance of any who may feel doubts on the subject, I wish to record here that Bhagavan himself gave an answer to the question.

When the sickness that had gripped his body threatened already to be fatal, some devotee besought him to put it away from him and to will his recovery and continued life for their sake. Their plea was that they were utterly dependent on him that they needed his continued grace and guidance and could not carry on their sadhana without him.

Bhagavan's answer was curt and to the point. All that he said to them was: "You attach too much importance to the body." This then is the final and conclusive answer, Bhagavan's own answer to those who think that he lives in any less real way since the body's death, that his guidance is in any way broken or weakened, that he is in any less complete sense the Sat-Guru; they attach too much importance to the body.

The grace at Arunachala is so potent, so vibrant to-day, so searching and intimate in its effect, that one wonders whether those who find a change in it have been there to see. Some there were who even formerly were insensitive to Bhagavan's grace, but it is not a question of such people here, since he who complains of having lost a treasure must once have possessed it or at least part of it. Those who found nothing formerly can complain of having lost nothing now. And yet, those who really possessed the treasure know that they have lost nothing.

What, then, is the difference today? There is a difference, and its reality none can deny. Indeed, who most feel the present guidance are, on the whole, those who most enjoyed the graciousness of Bhagavan's physical manifestation. The very receptivity to his grace which made them so susceptible to the beauty of his physical form, so apprehensive of losing it, in some cases even so despondent to think what would ensue, makes them now aware of his continued Presence. There is difference: the beloved voice is not heard nor the divine form seen; but this has become strangely unimportant to those who had thought they would feel it most. For they have found a lightness and a happiness in the very air of

1 From *The Call Divine*, 1953 (Jayanti number).
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to observe their way of life and to listen to their teachings.

The book follows the basic pattern of Blofield's previous works on China. Humorous anecdotes and personal reminiscences abound, mythical beings float through evocative landscapes and eccentric but lovable hermits commune with the Tao in their isolated mountain hermitages. The style, though gently humorous throughout, is permeated with a subtle but persistent undercurrent of nostalgia for a period of his life and a culture which have both long since vanished.

Although the book aims to entertain as much as it informs, the author maintains a scholarly discrimination with regard to his facts. He is careful to distinguish between information he has received direct from Taoist teachers and that which has come from Taoist literature or is merely hearsay. Although he tends to romanticise some of the more bizarre and whimsical practices such as the alchemical production of "golden elixirs" for physical immortality, he is at all times careful to distinguish between the genuine spiritual practices, the non-spiritual accretions of popular Taoism and the totally spurious practices of nominal Taoists who could be more accurately described as practitioners of the native folk lore religion.

The chapter on yoga is outstanding. Previously published explanations have always been shrouded in an obscure mystical terminology, but Blofield's account is the first detailed summary in clear, concise modern English of the central core of Taoist spiritual practice. Reading this chapter one feels that since so little has been published on popular Taoism, the rest of the book could have been greatly improved by the inclusion of more factual information. The author almost certainly knows much more about Taoism than he chooses to reveal, but in many sections of the book his anecdotal style and his tendency to digress leave little room for a serious and detailed examination of his chosen subject.

This however can only be a minor criticism, for even though the picture he paints is at times impressionistic through lack of detail, he nonetheless captures the spirit of the Tao more successfully than most of the more accomplished scholars who have written before him.

I leave the last word to Wang Ching-Yang, an early Taoist sage, of whose poems appear in the chapter on Taoist poetry:

"From first to last there is
No dying or being born;
From a flash of thought a myriad
False distinctions spring to mind.
But when you know just where
Those thoughts arise and vanish,
A radiant moon shines forth
In the temple of the mind."

D. G.


Alan Watts, "one of the most original and unrutted philosophers of the century", was best known as an exponent of Zen Buddhism, although he disliked branding himself as a Zen Buddhist. He is the author of more than twenty books, each of which is brilliant and challenging. He has the ability to focus our attention on the really fundamental but obscure aspects of the human situation. This is what has made him the most interesting advocate of Eastern mysticism.

The two books before us amply illustrate his exposition. The first on the meaning of happiness seeks to unravel the tangles of modern psychological and psychiatric speculations vis-a-vis Oriental religion. He points out that the problem of happiness can be solved only by an integrated approach. He shows that the problem is basically simple and straightforward. In the words of Tao-wu, "If you want to see, see directly into it; but when you try to think about it, it is altogether missed."

After a wide survey of modern psychology, Zen Buddhism, Vedanta, Taoism, Islamic mysticism and Christianity, he brings out the essential correspondences that obtain among them. For instance, here is how he describes the very core of happiness. "The free man walks straight ahead; he has no hesitations and never looks behind, for he knows that there is nothing in the future and nothing in the past that can shake his freedom." (p. 171).

The other book (This is It) is a collection of essays on Zen and spiritual experience, written at different times. The common thread that runs through them is the relation between mystical experience and ordinary life. The chief interest of these six essays is the autobiographical nature of the narration and the concern with what Bucke called cosmic consciousness, in all its varieties.

The essay "Beat Zen, Square Zen, Zen" (4) is a masterpiece; published in 1958 in the Chicago Review. It brought celebrity to Alan Watts. It brings out the humanism and naturalism of Zen.

The last essay in this collection, "The New Alchemy", became a controversial piece, as involvement with LSD was not very well received in Zen circles. When he claims that when drugged he was "in an unusual degree open to reality" (p. 145), one would be tempted to ask, after the fashion of jesting Pilate, "What is reality?"

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The book contains several interesting reminiscences related by Swamiji, one of the direct disciples of the Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Originally written in Bengali and now available in English, these accounts are valuable for the light they shed on the conditions, the men and women of those times.

The author first met the Master in 1883 at Dakshineswar. He received initiation through writing on his tongue. His descriptions of the meetings and discussions at Dakshineswar remind one of the writings of ‘M’. To cite a few of the observations of the Teacher:

‘Tears of repentance flow from the corners of the eyes nearest the nose, and those of joy through the outer corners.’

When the Master travelled in a horse carriage, if the coachman whipped the horses, he would become restless and cry out: ‘He is beating me.’

After the passing of the Paramahamsa, Akhanda-nanda took to travelling, mostly on foot, and trekked to the Himalayas. In Tibet, a Khampa went into ecstasy on looking at and holding the Master’s photo and did not want to part with it. He placed it on the seat of the Buddha and other gods and worshipped it, saying: ‘It must be the likeness of God himself.’

Swamiji’s encounters with opium addicts and ghosts, his efforts to start Vedic Pathashalas in various parts of the country, his meetings with celebrities like Sir Ashutosh Mukerji, Raja of Khetri and Surendranath Banerjee are interesting footnotes to contemporary history. It was Swami Vivekananda who encouraged the author to take to serving the poor, worshipping God in humanity instead of wandering all over the country.

The writer’s account of his visit to Nabadwip and the horrors of the scholars there when they learnt that the Swami revered Chaitanya Mahaprabhu as an Avatar is more than amusing.

It is a spiritual education to read this book.

M. P. Pandit

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A Colourful Function at the Ashram

Thousands of students had acquainted themselves with the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan and prepared for the competitions held at various levels in many States in India.

One of the objects of Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary Celebrations has been to give some incentive to the younger generation to study Sri Bhagavan's sayings, songs and teachings.

In pursuance of the above objectives the Centenary Celebrations Committee approached schools and colleges in various States with a request to conduct competitions for students in their institutions.

The Centenary Committee is grateful to the devotees at various Centres for their efforts in organising the competitions with the kind co-operation of the school/college authorities.

In more than 200 Institutions in Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, over 8,000 participants competed in Music (Carnatic and Hindi), Recitations in English, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu and Essay-writing in English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and Kannada, right from first standard to the degree-level. The competitions were held initially at the school-level and later at the inter-school, inter-city, State and finally at all-India levels.

The participants and their schools/colleges were supplied free of cost the Ashram publications in various languages, including English, and passages from the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. (The scheme of free-distribution of such books cost nearly Rs. 1 lakh). The enthusiasm of the children and their grasp of the subject delighted the devotees at various centres and later at Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, on the 5th and 6th December, when the prize winners at the State-levels appeared at the final all-India competitions.

Each first prize winner at this all-India competitions held at the Ashram was awarded an exquisite Shield containing the relief-replica of Arunachala Hill, Sri Ramanasramam and Sri Bhagavan (as reclining on the sofa), made of silver-alloy mounted on rosewood plates. The presentation was made at a special function held...
Sri Sadhu Natannananda, one of the senior-most devotees of Sri Bhagavan and a great scholar-poet in Tamil, arrived at the Ashram at 9 in the morning, on Dec. 7. The function of prize-distribution at the Ramana Auditorium, packed with joy-filled children, gained fresh momentum on his arrival. Already seated, in front of an array of glittering prizes, were Sri Sadhu Om, Sri K. K. Nambiar, Sri T. N. Venkataraman (Ashram President) and Sri P. Thandavarayan.

Sri K. Natesan, one of the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, recited songs on Sri Bhagavan both in Sanskrit and in Tamil. Sri A. R. Natarajan explained the details of the school/college competition scheme and delighted the audience with his ready wit and vivid descriptions. Sri P. Thandavarayan, Ashram Trustee and a leading lawyer in town, welcomed the gathering. He expressed happiness in seeing the smiling faces of children.

Sri Sadhu Natannananda released the pre-recorded cassette “Ramana Amudham” (containing the Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala) by handing over the first copy to Smt. Sulochana Natarajan who has sung in the tape. Then Sri T. N. Venkataraman released a Centenary Souvenir in Tamil songs composed by Sri Sadhu Om, one of the staunchest devotees of Sri Bhagavan and a scholar-poet in Tamil, by giving the first copy to Sri Sadhu Om.

The all-India level first prizes were distributed to the winners by the Ashram President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman. Beautiful cups were presented to all State-level winners by Sri K. K. Nambiar, President, Ramana Kendra, Madras. Sri A. R. Natarajan, Secretary, Centenary Committee, distributed special gifts of big tin boxes bearing the beautiful colour photo of Sri Bhagavan (containing within a wooden trophy with a colour picture of Sri Bhagavan) to those who had helped the scheme to a successful fruition. A special prize was given to Arunachala Ashrama, New York City, which was received by Mr. and Mrs. Greenblatt, for their support to the scheme. There was intense joy among the children while winners received their prizes. It was a delightful sight!

Sri Sadhu Om spoke on the uniqueness of Sri Bhagavan’s teaching and emphasised the importance of Atma Vichara (Self-Enquiry) as the only path leading to Perfection. Sri K. K. Nambiar recounted his association with Sri Bhagavan. With Sri V. Ganesan proposing a vote of thanks the function came to a happy conclusion.

We give below the details of prize-winners at State and all-India levels. A very interesting instance has been reported. A tiny tot aged about three who watched the daily practice of her elder sister (aged 8) preparing for the competition, also learnt the passage by heart and delighted the devotees at the Centre by reciting it in her own inimitable style!

Many parents and devotees at various centres have suggested that such competitions should be made a regular annual feature, to imprint the teachings of Sri Bhagavan in young minds. We fully endorse this view. We feel this is only a beginning and a good augury in this Centenary year and that it should continue to be held every year henceforth.

The Centenary Celebrations Committee would place on record its deep appreciation of Srimathi Sulochana Natarajan and Kumaris Sarada Natarajan and Ambika Natarajan for conceiving this laudable scheme and...
One unassuming devotee who has worked very hard for the success of the project is Sri K. Venkataraman (the grandson of Echamma), one of the Treasurers of the Centenary Committee.

**LIST OF PRIZE WINNERS IN ALL-INDIA COMPETITIONS HELD ON 6-12-1979**

**AT SRI RAMANASRAMAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Prize</th>
<th>Name of the Winning Candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>English Recitation — Std. I to III</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Sandeep Menon (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Deepti Panchwag (New Delhi)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>English Recitation — Std. IV to VII</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Janaki Ganesh (New Delhi)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Roopa Rajanna (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>English Recitation — Std. VIII and above</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>V. J. Vasihali (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Sanskrit Recitation — Std. I to V</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Deepti Panchwag (New Delhi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sanskrit Recitation — Std. VI and above</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Vidyaranya (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sanskrit Recitation — Std. VI and above</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Aruna (Tamilnadu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Music (Tamil) — Std. I to III</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Ranjani (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Swaminathan (Tamilnadu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolation</td>
<td>Padma (New Delhi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Music (Tamil) — Std. IV to VII</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Banumathi (Tamilnadu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolation</td>
<td>N. S. Nandini (Tamilnadu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Music (Tamil) — Std. VIII and above</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Vijayashiva (Tamilnadu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolation</td>
<td>Girija (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
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<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolation</td>
<td>V. P. Shobha (New Delhi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Music (Hindi) — Std. IV to VII</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Kalavathi (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Music (Hindi) — Std. VIII to X</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Sandhya (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Elocution (English) — Pre-Degree</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Amruthkumar (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Elocution (English) — Degree</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Jayashri Kulkarni (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Hindi Elocution — Pre-Degree</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Vijayalakumari (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Hindi Elocution — Degree level</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Ramachandran (Andhra Pradesh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Essay (Hindi) — Std. IV to VII</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>B. Manjula (Andhra Pradesh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>Sonia Malhan (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Essay (Hindi) — Std. VIII to X</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Rajesh Dube (New Delhi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Essay (Hindi) — Pre-Degree</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>C. N. Sashidhar (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Essay (Hindi) — Degree level</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>T. Ramachandran (Andhra Pradesh)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Essay (English) — Std. IV to VII</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>R. Ramesh (Andhra Pradesh)</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consolation</td>
<td>M. A. Srilakshmi (Karnataka)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Essay (English) — Std. VIII to X</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Narayani (New Delhi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Essay (English) — Std. VIII to X</td>
<td>Consolation</td>
<td>Husna Ara (Karnataka)</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Essay (English) — Pre-Degree</td>
<td>First prize</td>
<td>Sudindra (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Essay (English) — Degree level</td>
<td>Special prize</td>
<td>S. V. Shanbhough (Karnataka)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
**STATE LEVEL PRIZE WINNERS — Tamil Nadu**

*(Prizes Distributed on 7-12-1979)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Name of the Candidate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Recitation</td>
<td>Anirudh and D. Shankar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>N. Savitri and Sharmila</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard IV to VII</td>
<td>Suresh and Usha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VIII and above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil Recitation</td>
<td>K. Sudha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>Ganeshwaran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard IV to VII</td>
<td>Kulandaimmall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VIII and above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanskrit Recitation</td>
<td>K. Sharada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to V</td>
<td>K. Swaminathan and Aruna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard V and above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>S. Swaminathan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>N. S. Nandini</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard IV to VII</td>
<td>Vijaya Shiva</td>
</tr>
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<td>Standard VIII to X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Elocution</td>
<td>Padmasani</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tamil Elocution</td>
<td>N. Vijayan</td>
</tr>
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<td>Degree</td>
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**STATE LEVEL PRIZE WINNERS — Andhra Pradesh**

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<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>S. Rajesh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>Madhavi Latha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard IV to VII</td>
<td>Furhana Sami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VIII and above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telugu Recitation</td>
<td>Kumarudu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>Basava Mohana Rao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard IV to VII</td>
<td>Hema Malini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VIII and above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanskrit Recitation</td>
<td>Srinivasacharlu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to V</td>
<td>Hema Malini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VI and above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elocution — English</td>
<td>V. S. N. Raju</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Degree</td>
<td>T. Rameshchandra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Elocution — Telugu</td>
<td>Ganga Rao</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Degree</td>
<td>Naganandini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
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STATE LEVEL PRIZE WINNERS — KARNATAKA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>English Recitation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>Sandeep Menon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard IV to VII</td>
<td>Rupa Rajanna</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard VIII and above</td>
<td>J. Vaishali</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Kannada Recitation</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>D. S. Padma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard IV to VII</td>
<td>Sabina Chouta</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard VIII and above</td>
<td>Prabhunandahe</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sanskrit Recitation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to V</td>
<td>S. Meena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VI and above</td>
<td>Vidyaranya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music — Tamil</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>Ranjani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VIII and above</td>
<td>Girija</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music — Hindi</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I to III</td>
<td>Ranjani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard IV to VII</td>
<td>Kalavathy and Bhuvaneshwari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard VIII and above</td>
<td>K. Sandhya</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elocution — English</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Degree</td>
<td>Amruth Kumar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Jayashri Kulkarni</td>
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<td><strong>Elocution — Hindi</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Degree</td>
<td>K. Vijayakumari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Sharada Rao</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elocution — Kannada</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-Degree</td>
<td>Gopalakrishna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>B. S. Muralidhar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR AT BANGALORE

As already announced, the entire year, 1980, is going to be celebrated as Sri Bhagavan’s Centenary Year. Now that the celebrations at the Ashram on 2nd, 3rd and 4th January 1980 have been successfully concluded, we are planning to hold a SEMINAR on the Teachings and Message of Sri Maharshi at Bangalore on the 14th, 15th and 16th of March, 1980.

Reputed scholars and great bhaktas of Sri Bhagavan, from all over the world, will be participating and presenting their papers on Sri Bhagavan.

Adequate arrangements are being made and we request all devotees to participate in it and thus enrich themselves.

For more details kindly write to:

President:
RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING,
40/41, First Floor, II Cross,
Lower Palace Orchards,
BANGALORE-560 003.
(Phone: 33588).
Tiruvannamalai, an immaculate peace beyond the rough handling of destiny, an immortal wealth despite their loss.

But is this the same as actual guidance by Bhagavan? It is, and in the most direct and personal way. Indeed the guidance seems more active now than formerly in those people who meditated little before but were contented rather to feast their eyes upon him and listen to the sound of his voice, are now being drawn more and more to sit in silent meditation before the Samadhi and to gather together in the old hall redolent with his presence. As one sits there, it is nothing vague or diffused that one feels, but the same intense inner stirring, the same lifting up, the same blissful certainty that was felt under his watchful eye, there is the same variation from day to day in mode and potency of guidance, the same response to devotion and to any earnest plea for help.

But, it may be asked, cannot this be felt elsewhere? Is Bhagavan now confined to Tiruvannamalai? He never was. His grace flowed out upon all who turned to him. To imply that the guidance was confined to Tiruvannamalai either now or formerly would indeed be attaching too much importance to the body. Now, as formerly, it is felt in the heart of the devotee independent of all outer aids; but it is also true that now, as formerly, there is great beauty and potency in a visit to Tiruvannamalai. Many have compared it to the recharging of their spiritual battery and the comparison is no less apt now than it used to be. Although Bhagavan goes out to all who invoke him, he is no less gracious now than formerly to those who make the effort to come to him at Tiruvannamalai. One feels there that he is pouring out an abundance of grace of which there are all too few recipients.

At this time of Jayanti we celebrate the birth of him who is deathless. Many are able to pay their homage at Tiruvannamalai as of old. Others gather together in groups in whatever town or country they may be; and some give praise alone with Bhagavan in the secrecy of their heart. Those who are sensitive and watch the signs feel that the force we now celebrate is waxing, not waning. The numbness that overtook many after the Master's apparent departure is wearing off. A gladness of response is replacing it. The guidance to which they respond is growing so potent, so intimate, that for any to deny its existence causes them the same surprise as if a blind man were to deny that the sun is shining.

"I am not going away", Bhagavan said. "Where could I go? I am here." He is here at Tiruvannamalai, here in the hearts of his devotees. He is Bhagavan, the Inner Guru, the Self that guides to the Self.

**Devotee:** We are told that pain and pleasure are due to past actions. But can one do actions according to one's wish?

**Bhagavan:** One will reap the fruit of one's actions now itself, if one is extraordinarily virtuous or wicked.

* * *

**B.:** Do the actions that come into your life without straining yourself, in a detached way. That is knowledge.
PRIZE DISTRIBUTION IN MYSORE

On November 18, the prize-distribution function was held in Mysore, in connection with the competitions conducted under the auspices of Sri Bhagavan’s Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee of Mysore.

The function commenced with invocation by Smt. Indumathi and Kumari Vidya Nadgir. Dr. Laxman Rao Nadgir, the Convenor of Mysore City Competitions, welcomed the gathering. The Chief Guest, Sri Sureshanandji presided over the function and distributed the prizes to the winners. Sri K. G. Ramakrishnan gave the vote of thanks.

Details: About 200 students from various schools received the prizes and the inter-school winners recited the passages from Sri Bhagavan.

Various competitions, viz., Essay, Music, Elocution and Recitation, in English, Kannada and Sanskrit, were conducted in which 20 schools partook and about 1,500 students participated under different class-groups. Two winners from each school were selected for the

(Right) Kumari Jyothi receiving prize for Sanskrit Recitation at Mandya. (Left) Audience at the Prize-Distribution function held at Mandya on 29-9-1979.

PRIZE DISTRIBUTION FUNCTION 7-12-1979

Smt. Sulochana Natarajan receiving the cassette Ramana Annalayam from Sri Sadhu Nataranand. 

(S to R) Sri Sadhu Nataranand, Sri P. Thandavarayan, Trustee, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Sri K. K. Nambiar.

Sri T. N. Venkataraman releasing Sri Ramana Geetam by giving the first copy to its author.

Sri Sadhu Om. 

Sri K. K. Nambiar, President, Ramana Kendra, Madras, receiving the silver shield.

Sri M. V. Ramachandran receiving a Shield for his meritorious service for the success of the scheme.

Prize-winners in front of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi Shrine together with the Ashram President and devotees.
inter-school competitions (about 150 students took part and among them 13 students won the inter-school finals). They participated in the inter-city competitions held in Bangalore. In it, Mysore bagged 5 prizes, out of which 3 went to Sri Ramakrishna Vidyashala, and 2 to Nirmala Convent, Mysore.

BANGALORE NEWS

As an integral part of the All-India Competition Scheme for Inter-School and Inter-Collegiate Competitions, the Kannada State Level Competitions were held in Bangalore on Sunday, November 4, 1979 at the Bangalore High School, Jayanagar, Bangalore. Children from different parts of Karnataka participated in them. It concluded with a fine speech in Kannada by Prof. Venkatasubbaiah, who spoke inspiringly about Sri Bhagavan's teachings.

On the same day, the renowned Sant Keshavdas of Dasasrama International gave an excellent musical discourse on the life of Sri Bhagavan to a capacity audience at the Rotary House of Friendship.

"RAMANA VAIBHAVAM"
L. P. RECORD RELEASE

"Ramana Vaibhavam"—a Birth Centenary Musical Offering—was released on October 14, 1979, in the presence of a large audience at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bangalore.

His Excellency the Governor, Sri Govind Narain, who released the L.P., spoke at length about the uniqueness and special importance of Sri Maharshi’s Life and Message. He also expressed the hope that the message would be spread to many homes through musical renderings, in different languages.

Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam, who specially attended the function and Smt. Subhada Natarajan, received the First disc.

"RAMANANJALI"—group sang different songs composed by Sri Bhagavan and on Him in Tamil, Kannada, Sanskrit and Hindi and this was appreciated greatly.

"RAMANA VAIBHAVAM", L. P. Records released at Bangalore. Sri T. N. Venkataraman receiving the first disc from Sri Govind Narain, Governor of Karnataka.
L.P. RECORD ON BHAGAVAN
RELEASED IN MADRAS

At a well-attended function held at Srinivasa Sastris Hall, Mylapore, Madras, on October 28, Sri Prabhudas Patwari, Governor of Tamil Nadu, released the Long Playing Record, entitled: Ramana Vaibhavam (compositions of Bhagavam Sri Ramana and on Him), rendered by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan and other Ramana-bhaktas.

The function was arranged under the joint auspices of Sri Bhagavat's Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee, Sri Ramanasramam, Ramana Kendra, Madras and Deccan Recording Pvt. Ltd., Bangalore.

After the Vedaparayama and invocation by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Sri K. K. Nambiar, Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras, welcomed the chief guest and the devotees. He vividly narrated the circumstances in which Bhagavan composed the sloka (with which the L.P. record begins) 'Ekamaksharam hridi niran-taram . . .', as well as the thirty Sanskrit verses comprising, Upadesa Saram. Sri Nambiar adored the unique method of communication and initiation by 'Silence' adopted by Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Prabhudas Patwari, the Governor, presented the first record to Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President of the Centenary Committee and another to Smt. Sulochana Natarajan. In his speech the Governor extolled the powerful impact Bhagavan Ramana made on those who came under His influence.

Sri T. N. Venkataraman made a short speech dealing with Sri Bhagavan's life and philosophy and thanked the participants on behalf of the Centenary Committee.

Then, excerpts from the L.P. record Ramana Vaibhavam were played to the delectation of all present.

Sri K. S. Venkataraman, Vice-Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras, expressed his thanks to the Governor and all the distinguished guests and devotees who had gathered on the occasion.

RAMANA KENDRA AT PALGHAT

We are happy to inform that a new Ramana Kendra has been started at Vijnana Ramaneeyam, Palghat-1, Kerala State, with Sri Swami Sureshananda as its President.

The Office-bearers are:

Sri R. Balaram Chettiar—Vice-President.
,, T. L. Eswaran and
,, A. Swaminathan —Joint-Secretaries.
,, K. M. Unni —Treasurer.

The new Kendra is planning to celebrate the Birth Centenary of Sri Bhagavan in a grand manner.

SRI RAMANA KENDRAM, HYDERABAD

The Kendra which was formed on July 22, 1979 is meeting regularly every Sunday between 4.30 p.m. and 6.30 p.m. at the Hindi Arts College, Nallakunta,
Hyderabad. The meetings begin and end with a five minute meditation. Bhagavan's life and a few verses from the Aksharamanamalai are explained in English.

During July - December 1979 the following spoke on their association with the Maharshi: Sri and Smt. Ranganadham of Nellore, Vajreswari (Kavyakanta's daughter), Professor Shiv Mohan Lal, Sri G. Lakshminarasimha Rao, Sri T. Ramachandra Rao of Madras and Dr. Chaganty Suryanarayananmurthy.

A special puja was performed on November 22, 1979. The Deepam Festival was celebrated on a grand scale.

AT WARANGAL

From Warangal (Andhra Pradesh) many sincere devotees visit the Ashram often and partake of the munificent grace of Sri Bhagavan. They have formed a Ramana Kendra there with the name "Sri Ramana Bala Bhaktha Samajam". They conducted the school and college competitions successfully and they have also brought out a Souvenir in this regard.

The office bearers are:
Patron: K. Sivananda Murthy,
Organising Members: N. Rama Rao,
A. U. R. Somayajulu,
V. Sreenivasa Murthy,
H. Krishna Murthy,
M. Nagaraja Kumar.

We pray to Sri Bhagavan that He blesses this Samajam with His Grace and Peace!

DELHI RAMANA KENDRA NEWS

Anant Shri Swami Karpatriji Maharaj paid a visit to the Kendra on the Annamalai Deepam Day on December 2, when the Kendra was gaily lit with innumerable lamps. In a talk in Hindi he stressed the essence of Bhagavan's teaching on Self-Knowledge. He wrote in Sanskrit in the Kendra's Visitor's Book: "This peaceful spot helps the attainment of Self-Realisation."

This talk as well as the others arranged by the Kendra were very well attended and greatly appreciated by all.

Swami Hari Om Tat Sat Anandaji of Sivananda Ashram gave three talks in English on Vedanta, the four fundamental teachings of Bhagavad Gita and Yoga and Modern Man, from September 30 to October 2.

Smt. Prabhavati Raje, the well-known devotee of Bhagavan, gave a series of twelve talks in two spells — most of them in Hindi — in October and November. Her exposition of Ram Charit Manas was masterly and her identification of Sri Ramana’s philosophy in Sant Tulsidas’ verses revealed her deep understanding of Bhagavan’s teachings.

Swami Bhoomananda Tirhita of Narayanasa rama Tapovanam, whose discourses as usual drew large audiences, gave a series of five lectures in English on Mundakopanishad in October/November. His lectures were marked by enthusiasm and profound scholarship.

On October 28, Sri Sukabrahmam Ramaswamy Sastri gave a talk in Tamil on Sri Bhagavan.

On December 16, Venerable Dharmavara of Ashoka Mission gave a talk in English on Meditation.

The student community in Delhi evinced great interest in the competition scheme organised throughout the country by Sri Bhagavan’s Centenary Celebrations Committee. Nearly 620 school children from various schools in New Delhi participated in the different competitions. The inter-school competition in music and recitations were held on October 14 and the essay competition on November 11. Seventeen children won the All-India competitions held at Sri Ramana Ramam, Tiruvannamalai on December 5 and 6. Four of these children won All-India prizes and two were awarded special prizes.

The competition scheme has succeeded in its aim of kindling interest in Sri Bhagavan in the minds of children.

RAMANA KENDRA, NEW DELHI

List of first Prize winners in Inter-School Competitions at New Delhi Centre

I. CARNATIC MUSIC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>School</th>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jr</td>
<td>Deepti Panchwag</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mother's International School</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Janaki Ganesh</td>
<td>VII-C</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>DTEA Hr. Sec. School, Lodi Estate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S. Narayani</td>
<td>X-C</td>
<td>15</td>
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**III. RECITATION — TAMIL**

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**STATE LEVEL — ESSAY**

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The Holy Waters are being poured over the kalasa on the tower over the Samadhi of Sri Bhagavan while the devotees witness it.

Aarti is being performed to Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam. Devotees are seen absorbed.
(Left) Aarti to Sri Mathrubuteswara. (Centre) Beautifully decorated Sri Rameswara Mahalingam after Kumbhahshekam. (Right) Aarti to the shrine of Sri Niranjananidhaswamy.

**KUMBHABHISHEKAM**

The Holy waters are being carried in procession to the temple-towers.
It is the tradition that a temple or shrine erected according to Agamas or vaidik dharma should be renovated every twelve years by performing the Kumbhabhishekam. During 1967, Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi was completed and its Kumbhabhishekam, along with that of Sri Mathrubuteswara shrine, was performed then in a grand way. It so happened that the birth centenary of Sri Bhagavan came (after 12 years) and the auspicious day November 22, 1979, was fixed for the Kumbhabhishekam.

The elaborate arrangements for the ritualistic function were all entrusted to the experienced devotee, Sri Mangudi Krishnamurti (Sri Krishnananda). Huge thatched pandals (coverings) were erected at several places. The three gopurams (towers) over the shrines of Sri Bhagavan and of the Mother were all repaired and repainted. Through the generous help of Ramabhatas, the kalasa on the tower over Sri Bhagavan's shrine was given a gold-plating. The gold-plated kalasa was taken with all solemnity to the accompaniment of nagaswaram music to the top of the shrine and installed there on the 19th.

The same day, according to ritualistic convention, the presiding deities were invoked to shift themselves into pots full of mantra-filled water and the pots were taken, with intense chanting, to the Yaga Shala specially erected. At the Yaga Shala the following pujas were performed: Anujna, Dhana puja, Rakshogna Homa, Vastu Shanti, Mrirt Sangraham, Ankurarpanam, Ghata Sthapanam and Yaga Puja.

The following two days, both in the morning and in the evening Yaga puja was performed to these holy pots, beautifully decorated, to the accompaniment of the chanting of the four Vedas. These pujas were well attended by earnest devotees.

On November 22, after the Yaga Puja at the Yaga Shala, the consecrated pots were taken in a procession round the shrines and then taken up to the tops of the towers by vaidiks and the holy waters were poured over the kalasas by Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President of the Ashram, to the chorus shouts of 'Bhagavanji ki Jai', 'Annamalai ku Arohara'. To the ecstasy of the devotees the Maha Kumbhabhishekam was thus successfully concluded.

In the night again Mahaabhishekam was performed to all the shrines. After these ceremonies, the regular ritualistic pujas at the shrines of Sri Bhagavan and of the Mother were resumed.

Thousands of poor were fed, in addition to hundreds of devotees who had assembled at the Ashram to witness this auspicious function.

The Trustees of the Ashram and members of the Centenary Committee deserve full credit and appreciation for the excellent way in which they organized this important function.

Sri S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, the Ashram Trustee, deserves special praise for his invaluable services and all-round efficiency.

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Smt. RATENBEN DAMANIA

Smt. Ratenben, devout wife of Sri Ishwarlal Damania was a freedom fighter and also well educated. Her devotion to Sri Bhagavan was equally deep as that of her husband. Among her children, Sri Jagdish Damania, renounced the world and became a mendicant. He now lives at the Ashram and is popularly known as 'Jagdish Swami'.

Smt. Ratenben, past 80 years, was always energetic and active in spite of her ripe old age. She passed away a few months back.

We pray to Sri Bhagavan that He absorbs this devout soul at His Lotus Feet!

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Samsara is sorrow.

Men want absolute and permanent happiness. This does not reside in objects, but in the Absolute. It is Peace, free from pain and pleasure. It is a neutral state.

Self-realisation is Bliss.

Bliss is not something to be got. You are always Bliss. . . . . Get rid of your ignorance which makes you think you are other than Bliss.

Happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realise Oneself in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness.

--- from Ramana Maharshi's Talks.

One of the inalienable rights of man, we are assured, is the pursuit of happiness. Yes, indeed! But it is a right that is exercised more in talk than in action — effective action. Of course we all say we want to be happy. Do we mean what we say? The truth is that our behaviour — the way we actually pursue happiness — makes quite sure it will get away. So unpractical we are in this search — so unwilling to profit by the advice of experts like Ramana Maharshi, and by our own and others' oft-repeated failures — that it looks as if we were pursuing misery instead of happiness. Sure enough, we catch up with that quarry!

And yet it remains true that we want to be happy and not wretched. Otherwise, those two words — our very lives — make no sense at all.

In short, we are thoroughly confused about the problem. It is the purpose of this article, with the help of Maharshi and other Sages, to remove this confusion: to be very, very clear about how to be happy — so clear that we have no excuse for being miserable any more.

All the many recipes for happiness reduce to three, and they aren't so much contrasting as conflicting. Let us call them (1) The Common sensible Recipe, (2) The Uncommon-sensible Recipe, and (3) The Sensible Recipe — which seems nonsense till you put it to the test,
THE WORD

"Sri Bhagavan was correcting and aiding some youngsters of not more than ten years of age in memorising His Sanskrit work *Upadesa Saram* and the writer was laughing, so to say, up his sleeve, at the futility of coaching these youngsters who could not understand the *A, B, C* of this highly metaphysical poetry. Without the utterance of a single word, Sri Bhagavan turned to him and remarked that though these children might not understand the meaning of these poems then, yet they would be of immense help to them, and would be recalled with great relief and pleasure, when they came of age and were in difficulties."

— from *Crumbs from His Table*, p. 45

(1) The Common-sensible Recipe for Happiness is getting what you want.

For instance, at the ‘lowest’ or most popular level, happiness means getting money and/or reputation and/or power — and getting more and more of it. In a phrase, on-going personal success.

At ‘middle’ levels, happiness means striving successfully for the well-being of one’s family, sect, political party, nation, race, species — hopefully culminating in the establishment of some New Jerusalem, if not Utopia, on earth.

At the ‘highest’ level, happiness means working for the salvation of the whole world, the liberation or enlightenment of all beings — and getting results.

Though so ‘ignoble’ at its lowest and popular level, and so ‘noble’ at its highest and enlightened level, this first recipe comes to the same thing throughout: namely success, getting what you want.

As a recipe it seems sensible enough, but recipes happen to be inedible. The proof of the recipe is the pudding, and the proof of the pudding is the eating. Do we, in practice, get any pudding this way? Do we get whatever it is that we want so much? By the time we get it, is it enough — enough money, security, affection, admiration, influence, power, whether for our personal selves or for those larger selves called family or sect or nation or species? Notoriously this getting is addictive, so that the more we accumulate the more we demand, and the achievement that would make us ‘really happy’ recedes at least as fast as our advance towards it. Nothing fails like success. The suicide rate goes up rather than down in affluent societies, and in the most ‘successful’ groups within these societies. But of course everyone knows that great possessions and power bring little satisfaction. And no wonder: their maintenance gets more and more difficult as they grow, the prospect of their loss more and more worrying, their actual loss more and more painful. What fleeting pleasure they give lies more in the getting than the having.

The ordinary man aims less high. Whether from necessity, or fear, or lack of drive, or native shrewdness, he plays for lower stakes. Not that his caution does him much good. At best, he avoids extremes of pleasure and pain; at worst, he becomes a vegetable. For it is the very nature of what we have — whether it be little or much — to be insufficient. And it is the very nature of what we do — whether it be petty or heroic or even enlightened — to leave us unfulfilled. Necessary though they are, neither having nor doing will cure our sadness.

Altruism doesn’t help here. Clearly the anxieties and disappointments of the public-spirited citizen — the one who seeks the welfare of his city, his nation, mankind itself — aren’t less severe than those of the averagely selfish citizen. Nor are they, strictly speaking, less ‘selfish’. After all, the Nazis submerged their personal selves in a supra-personal one.

But what of the ‘highest’ level — working for the salvation or enlightenment of the world?
Is this a way to be happy? Jesus wept, and we know how he died. Anyone who takes on such a job is asking for trouble, as history shows. The fundamental reason is that his happiness doesn't consist in getting what he wants, and anyway he doesn't get it.

In short, however we look at it, our first recipe for happiness appears good but turns out to be no good. So let's try our second:

(2) **The Uncommon-sensible Recipe for Happiness is wanting what you get.**

One of the finest advocates of this recipe (which, please note, is the precise opposite of No. 1) is De Caussade: “If people knew the merit hidden in what each moment of the day brings them..... and that the true philosopher's stone is submission to the designs of God, transmuting into fine gold all their occupations, their worries and their sufferings, how happy they would be!” In one way or another, all the great spiritual traditions are agreed about this need for ‘abandonment to the Divine Providence’.

Thus the very word Islam means submission — surrender to the will of Allah. And not, for the proficient Sufi, resignation or mere obedience, but full identification with the divine will, so that he chooses what that will ordains. How could he be unhappy?

Again, according to the Buddha, it is desire or craving which causes suffering, and the extinction of desire is the end of suffering.

And Ramana Maharshi himself: “Desirelessness is God.”

When you are personally desireless, when you choose what is instead of what isn't, when you want what you get instead of what you demand, when God’s will as expressed in your circumstances becomes precisely your will — why then you are Him! It’s as simple as that!

Simple to write down, to read, to understand. But hard to carry out! Well, this article undertook to be practical. How to give up one’s personal desires to the point of actually wanting what one gets? By desiring this result and training for it? By wanting and working for some kind of saint-hood? That would be absurd. What’s the use of accepting everything — except your humanness? In any case, how on earth can you make yourself want or cease wanting anything? Suppose your house catches fire, your child is hurt, your cash is stolen, your health starts cracking up: and tell me how you would go about welcoming those events!

And yet Maharshi is right. Desire and happiness are mortal enemies. The cure for your misery is full submission to God’s will, whatever it holds in store for you.

And so, for the second time, we have a seemingly insoluble problem on our hands: in fact, the problem of our lives. We have still to find a recipe for happiness that we can actually use, right now. Let’s see whether our third and final recipe works.

(3) **The Sensible Recipe for Happiness is seeing what you’ve got.**

What if you were happy already — were Happiness itself — and never noticed the fact?