The Mountain Path

Editorial

LOVING RAMANA
by A. R. Natarajan

The Wet Flame
by Ra. Ganapati

Sri Ramana's Teachings
by Sadhu Om

Garland of Guru's Sayings
by Professor K. Swaminathan

Bhagavan and Life in World
by I. S. Varghese

Ambrosial Ramana
by V. Ganesan

VOL. 19 No. III    July 1982
Unattached to the physical frame composed of the (five) elements, let me forever repose happy in the sight of Thy Splendour, Oh Arunachala!

— The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 75

THE MOUNTAIN PATH
(A QUARTERLY)

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

— The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH is dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
A liberating air of freedom comes to one’s life when Ramana enters it. There is sweetness and joy in losing ourselves in love of Him, in a union in which the individuality merges. What does ‘loving Ramana’ mean? Is it an act of volition, an exercise of our will or is it the operation of His grace?

“In my loveless heart you planted love of you, O Arunachala”, says Bhagavan in Aksharamanamalai. Muruganar too sings: “Your Grace it was I stumbled to your feet, your love that raised me up and made me yours” (Ramana Sannidhi Murai). One thing, however, is clear; that to be chosen, to be touched and transformed into this communion, is the greatest good fortune that can happen to anyone, for it is the nature of Ramana to give His Sivahood, His auspiciousness, His supreme state of Bliss, in exchange for one’s narrow, limited self!

To taste the maddening bread of love of Ramana is to be flooded with bliss, the bliss of one’s own Being. This overwhelming love for Sadguru is termed ‘Anuraga’ in Hindu terminology. The gopis of Brindavan were soaked in it for Sri Krishna and Srimad Bhagavatha is the last word on the beauty and ecstasy of such love. It is conventional to classify love for the Sadguru, who is not different from Self, from God, as bhakthi, and to treat it as different from jnana, the fire of knowledge. In reality the two are so intertwined and intermingled that they feed on each other. As Ramana puts it, Grace is active only if one has Vichara, and Vichara is not possible without Grace. The love of the comely form of Ramana, serious study of His teachings, and pursuit of Self-enquiry as taught by Him go hand in hand, step in step and they merge into one another that they are all only a single way to Ramana, to the Self, to the Heart.
Therefore it is of the utmost importance to establish a relationship with Ramana and to be able to perceive His Grace through constant, prayerful surrender to Him. If we cannot always be aware of the fact that He is nearer than the nearest, dearer than the dearest, as our Heart, let us at any rate learn to establish a human relationship with Him as we do with those who we consider as ‘our’ near and dear ones. Let Him be ‘ours’ as Father, Mother, Guru or all rolled into one, which indeed He is and more, of course. But think of Him you must constantly if you are blessed, or as often as you can for such a single thought-stream is a prelude, a necessary one for a plunge into oneself, into the Heart, for merging in Ramana.

To bring this about, one must be alive to one’s dominant temperament and inclination and channel it towards Ramana. Bhagavan was aware of this and therefore while His fundamental sruti was geared, always, to the loss of individuality through self-enquiry, He would permit and encourage people travel to Him along their chosen path starting from their present state. Indeed one could even say that there are as many paths to Ramana as there are devotees.

To many the name or the form of God is the most important channel for worshiping the Supreme. “Worship of the luminous Supreme in any name or form is certainly the way for attaining it.” — Sat Darshana. For such Ramana had given the great treasure of His devotional songs. Arunachala Aksharamamalai and Arunachala Pathigam calls forth tears of love and ecstasy, in the singers and hearers. The worshipper merges in the worshipped and what is left is only the vast beatitude of Ramana union. Again, why did Ramana allow Himself to be photographed in so many places and postures; some charming and enchanting, others majestic and sublime? Be it midday or fading light, indoors or out in the open. He would never say ‘no’ and would look into the camera like an eager child. Was it not because He knew that His divine human form would draw full many a heart to Him and through Him to newer, brighter, and vaster vistas in life?

To some He recommended repetition of a holy name — like ‘Siva’ or ‘Rama’ — which was already dear to them for this too has the power to lead to a one-pointed mind.

The potency and efficacy of Ramana’s name has been stressed by Muruganar who proclaims it to be the sacred mantra, which is at once Inana and Bhakti, the Goal no less than the Way. All these means are complementary and are bound to fill our being consciously or unawares with love for Ramana, without which steadfast and joyous pursuit of the Ramana way is not possible.

Yet another important way of linking oneself with Ramana is to be involved in what may be termed as ‘Ramana Activities’. Our mind is not always in a state of equipoise. It is often activity-oriented or just lazy. Whenever the mind is inclined to become slothful or over-active, it would be best to channel it in activities in which the substratum is the ceaseless thought of Ramana and His glorification. This is to be done conscious of the fact that He shines as the one light in all, the diverse forms of life.

“Beholding but his glorious presence
In elements fire, sun, moon and every being,
Each apt response and timely service
To these amounts to Siva worship
Excellent and everfresh”

Upadesa Saram, V

This would be the best way of promoting a loving and constant remembrance of Him. In this sense any activity which evokes the feeling of His presence is conducive for the loss of our individuality in Him.

Once a devotee complained to Ramana that he was all alone in his place, and got the gentle answer that he could have the satsang of His books and pictures. When Sundaresa Iyer drafting the preface for the Tamil original
of the *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi* expressed the hope that these works would liberate a person, Bhagavan suggested a change; it was no mere hope but an assertion that they would assuredly bring freedom to the student. One can therefore say that *satsang* of Bhagavan’s books is an important ingredient in the awakening and fostering of love for Ramana.

We cannot truly feel the love for Ramana or bear witness to it save by a living faith in His teachings and steadfastness in treading the Ramana Way. True, Ramana never disturbed anyone’s faith, but he never also failed to point out the limitations of merely mental *sadhana* and to stress the paramount importance and unfailing efficacy of self-enquiry for Self-knowledge. In *Upadesa Saram*, He asserts that His method, the enquiry into the source of ego, is the direct path for all. Again, in *Anma Viddai*, He categorically states that the one sure way to cut asunder the bondage to Karma is self-enquiry. It is therefore the sacred duty of everyone of those who are fortunate to get caught in the net of Ramana’s Grace, to supplement and support their sadhana by pursuing the enquiry ‘Who am I’? Only thus can we integrate Ramana into our lives. What the enquiry really means, has been explained over and over again in *Day by Day*, *Talks*, *Crumbs from His Table* and other recorded conversations with Him. And, He, the *Sadguru*, is ever with us as our inmost Being, the Heart, giving the light to guide and the strength to walk every step of ours. Ramana says and it is the divine law that our only freedom is the freedom to turn our mind inwards to its Source. Let us avail of this freedom, and demonstrate our love by treading the simple and direct Path taught by Ramana.

As Muruganar says, “Let us yearn for the day when we can live conscious, every single second, that Bhagavan’s grace is our strength and sustenance.” For this let us learn to turn towards Him and approach Him by every available means, be it by singing His glory, or by silently exchanging glances with His eloquent and magnetic eyes or by seeking and cherishing the company of His devotees. In *Sri Ramana Gita* and in *Sat Darshana* Ramana gives us His central teaching that one must somehow inhere in the heart. And, He, the *Sadguru*, is ever with us as our inmost Being, the Heart, giving the light to guide and the strength to walk every step of ours. Ramana says and it is the divine law that our only freedom is the freedom to turn our mind inwards to its Source. Let us avail of this freedom, and demonstrate our love by treading the simple and direct Path taught by Ramana.

Let us with loving eagerness learn to loose ourselves in and abide as Ramana. Can there be a greater bliss than becoming the food for Him?

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1. “In the interior of the heart-cave Brahman alone shines in the form of the Atman with direct immediacy as I, as I. Enter into the heart with questing mind or by diving deep within or through control of breath, and abide in the Atman.”
2. “One should search the source of ego, deep within, with keen intellect, holding speech and breath. It is like diving for recovering a thing which has fallen into water.”
1. THE GOAL

Bhagavan Sri Ramana has shown that the goal of all humanity is only to gain perfect happiness (paripurna sukham). There is no one who does not desire happiness. Through all their efforts, are not all living beings (jivas) seeking only for happiness? Therefore, there is no one who will object to the goal shown by Sri Bhagavan. For this very reason, the teachings of Sri Ramana do not belong to any particular religion but instead shine as a common great path which gives refuge to all living beings. That is why people of every country and every religion in the world accept the teachings of Sri Ramana and follow them with great love.

What is happiness? It is only because people do not know the correct answer to this question, that they put forth their efforts in so many different directions in order to obtain happiness. Happiness is truly nothing but Self (atma). The very nature of Self is happiness. We are in truth Self itself; hence our very nature is happiness. Yet, since people do not know that they are truly Self and since they think themselves to be the body, they suffer needlessly, as if they had lost happiness. To regain our happiness which appears to be lost, it is sufficient if we know ourself — our true nature — which appears to have been forgotten.

Some people ask, “Is it not selfishness if we try to obtain happiness for ourselves?” Because the correct meaning of the word ‘self’ is not known, this question rises even in the minds of many good people. The word ‘self’ (swayam) means only Self (atma). It is only because we do not know ourself to be the unlimited and undivided Self and because we view ourself through the limited outlook ‘This body alone is I’, that the word ‘selfishness’ is understood by us to denote a base quality. But in the experience of an Atma-jnani, one who knows ‘I am truly the one Self who shines equally in all living beings’, does not the word ‘selfishness’ (swaya-nalam, literally self-benefit) denote the benefit of all living beings? Only when Self-knowledge (atma-jnana) dawns will the truth be known that Self alone is the reality of all living beings. And only when we thus know ourself to be Self, can we do real good to all the living beings in all the worlds. We cannot experience true love towards all beings in the world merely by vocally preaching, “Love thy neighbour as thyself”. It is only when we experience through Self-knowledge that all beings are ‘I’, the first person singular, that we will attain otherless love (ananya priyam) towards all beings. Such Self-attain-

1This article is an English translation of 'Sri Ramanopadesa Surukkam', a portion of Sri Sadhu Om's Tamil book Sri Ramana Charita Surukkam (A Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana), which was published by the Ashram during the Birth Centenary Celebrations. Since some portions of this article are direct quotations of Sri Bhagavan's own words in Who am I?, they have been indicated here in italic types.
ment (atma-siddhi) alone is the main root which enables peace, love and happiness to thrive in the world. Therefore Self-enquiry, the medicine which destroys the evil of ego, is the immediate and principal need of the world. Only the true Atma-jnani can do real good to the world! The mere existence of a Jnani, one who knows Self, is sufficient for the welfare of the whole world. Thus, is it not clear that if the whole world is to obtain happiness, the correct goal of all people should only be to know Self?

Only through Self-knowledge can people attain true and perfect happiness. It is wrong to ignore this fact and to try to achieve happiness by enjoying worldly objects through the five senses, because happiness does not come from those objects. Even when a little pleasure is experienced from some object, it is only because the mind is then dipping in Self, its activities (vrittis) being momentarily lulled. Whenever the things that we like are obtained and whenever evil befalls the things that we dislike, the mind becomes introverted and, by thus dipping in Self, experiences the happiness of Self alone. Because people do not know this truth, they wrongly think that happiness is obtained from worldly objects, and hence they work day and night seeking those objects, taking that to be sole goal of their life. This indeed is ignorance, otherwise called maya.

The happiness acquired by seeking and amassing worldly objects and by enjoying them through the five senses is very trivial and transient, is it not? Hence, the goal shown to us by Sri Ramana Bhagavan is to avoid being one who thus enjoys only such trivial happiness and instead to become one who enjoys perfect happiness.

2. THE PATH

For attaining this goal, Sri Bhagavan has charted out two paths, namely (1) Self-enquiry (atma-vichara), that is, knowing oneself (one's true nature) through the enquiry 'Who am I?', and (2) self-surrender (atma-samarpanam), that is, restoring oneself (the ego) completely to God. The former is the path of knowledge (jnana-marga), and the latter is the path of love or devotion (bhakti-marga).

Self-enquiry :— When we want to know a thing, we attend to that thing. Accordingly, if we want to know ourself, we should attend to ourself (to the first person feeling 'I').
However, are not all the researches that we see going on in the world concerned only with knowing the world and God, which are second and third person objects, instead of with knowing oneself, the first person? Man, the knowing entity who tries to know the world and God, does not yet correctly know who he himself is. We say 'I am a man'. This is not a correct knowledge of oneself, but only ignorance. How? We feel 'I am a man' only because we wrongly think that we are the body, our possession. Knowing oneself through the enquiry 'Who am I' the possessor and thereby distinguishing oneself from the body, is alone the true discriminative knowledge. The feeling 'I am the body' (which is the ego or ahankara) is a false knowledge of oneself. To know oneself as the unlimited and undivided Self (akhanda atma) alone is Atma-jnana or true Self-knowledge.

When consciousness rises from sleep, we know ourself in the form 'I-am-the-body'. But in sleep there is no knowledge of the body and the world. The pure consciousness 'I am' alone exists in sleep. In the waking state this self-consciousness rises mixed with an adjunct (upadhi) as 'I-am-the-body; I am a man; I am so-and-so'. This is the ego (ahankara), the sense of individuality (jiva-bodha); this is bondage; this is the first thought. Only to this first thought, the "I"—thought, do other thoughts — the knowledge of second and third persons — rise. The more one attends to second and third persons, the more the thoughts will go on increasing. Instead, one should attend to the form of the ego, the first person feeling 'I am so-and-so', in order to know the nature of its existence. If other thoughts (which are second and third persons) rise, one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire 'To whom did they rise?' What does it matter however many thoughts rise? The means to set aside thought-attention and to regain Self-attention is as follows: At the very moment that each thought rises, if one vigilantly enquires 'To whom did this rise?' it will be known 'To me'. If one then enquires 'Who am I?', the mind (our power of attention) will turn back (from the thought) to its source (Self); then, since no one is there to attend to it, the thought which had risen will also subside. By repeatedly practising thus, the power of the mind to abide in its source increases. The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry 'Who am I?'. To make the mind subside, there is no adequate means other than enquiry (vichara). If made to subside by other means such as breath-control (pranayama), meditation upon a form of God (murti-dhyana) or repetition of sacred words (mantra-japa), the mind will remain as if subsided, but will rise again. As long as there are tendencies towards sense-objects (vishaya-vasanas) in the mind, so long is the enquiry 'Who am I?' necessary. Always keeping the mind (the attention) fixed in Self (in the feeling 'I') alone is called 'Self-enquiry' (atma-vichara).

The 'I'—thought (aham-vritti) which rose to scrutinize 'What is this first person feeling I?' will destroy all other thoughts and, like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre, will itself finally be destroyed. That is, from the mixed consciousness 'I am so-and-so', which is the root of all thoughts, only the adjunct-feeling so-and-so' will slip away (since its existence is false), and Self — 'I am', the true consciousness of one's existence — alone will remain shining.

This state in which we thus shine by our own light, freed from the adjunct of individuality (jivapadhi), is extolled in different religions by various names such as jivanmukti, Moksha, Paranirvana, the Supreme Abode (paramapadam), the Kingdom of God and so on. This state of the destruction of the ego, the form of the individual consciousness (jiva-bodha-rupa), is itself the state of immortality. Let us now see how this rooting out of the ego also takes place through self-surrender, the path of devotion (bhakti-marga).

Self-surrender:— Self-surrender should be understood to mean surrendering (or to be more accurate, restoring) the ego to God. In truth, Self-enquiry and self-surrender are not two but one and the same, both in result —
the annihilation of the ego — and in practice! The path of self-surrender or devotion is meant for those who believe in God. When this ‘I’ or individual soul and the world are truly the possessions of God, to claim the body as ‘I’ and ‘mine’ is the great sin of stealing what belongs to God. If this attachment to the body (dehabhimana) is surrendered to God, the state of egolessness will be attained. This state devoid of ‘I’—ness (ahankara) and ‘mine’—ness (mamakara) is the state of Self.

On superficial observation it may appear as if there is a difference between the practice of Self-enquiry and that of self-surrender, namely that an aspirant practising Self-enquiry attends to Self while a devotee practising self-surrender attends to God. However, to one who truly engages in practice (sadhana) it will be clear that both are one and the same, not only in their result — namely to be established as Self through the destruction of the ego — but also in practice. How? A devotee who has begun the sadhana of surrendering himself to God should thereafter refrain from again seizing the body either as ‘I’ or as ‘mine’. If he again takes the body as ‘I’ or ‘mine’, he is committing the sin of dattapaharam, that is, taking back what has already been offered to God. Therefore, trying to avoid taking back what has been offered is the correct method of practising self-surrender. How does he do this? To prevent the false first person — the feeling ‘I am the body’ — from rising again, does he not try to remain with a very vigilant attention fixed on the rising of that first person? Thus, the same Self-attention which is going on in an enquirer (atma-vichari) is also going on in a true devotee (bhakta)!

Moreover, if one wants to surrender oneself to God, it is first of all necessary for one to know the ‘self’ which is to be surrendered. For unless one knows who this so-called ‘self’ is, how is one to surrender it? If a soldier does not know what is meant by the word ‘gun’, when he is asked to surrender his gun he will surrender only his pen. This is exactly what happens in the case of many aspirants on the path of devotion. Though they know that they should surrender themselves to God, they do not know how to do so because they have no clear knowledge as to who they are and what exactly they are to surrender. Since they do not know what the ‘I’ is which is to be surrendered, they are only able to surrender whatever they take as ‘mine’. That is, since they do not know the nature of the possessor, they can do nothing more than surrender their possessions. Therefore, if their surrender is to become complete, they must sooner or later enquire and find out who they are, for then only can they surrender themselves. Since the nature of the ego — the individual ‘self’ which is to be surrendered — is such that it will subside and disappear when it is attended to (being found to be truly non-existent), the Self-enquiry done by an earnest devotee will automatically result in self-surrender.2

Thus Self-enquiry — in which the mind gives up attending to second and third persons and attends instead to its own source — itself turns out to be the correct self-surrender! Remaining firmly in Self-abidance (atmnishtha), without giving even the least room

2 Surrender can take effect only when it is done with full knowledge as to what real surrender means. Such knowledge comes after enquiry and reflection and ends invariably in self-surrender”, says Sri Bhagavan in Maharshi’s Gospel. Book One, ch. 4 (8th edition, pp. 24 to 25).
to the rising of any thought other than the thought of Self (atma-chintana), is surrendering oneself to God. Even a devotee's seeking God outside himself is only a second person attention. Since God shines as the reality of the first person, attending to the first person alone is the correct God-attention and the true path of devotion!

THE SONG ON MEDITATION

(Dhyana Pattu)

1. Sit closing your eyes and think of God; without thinking of anything else, think of God alone.

2. By thinking of the world we see, the thought of God will go away; steadfastness is needed at first, so meditate (on God) with love.

3. In whatever form you think (of God), in that form He will appear; He has no form or name of His own. His nature is pure, silent consciousness (suddha mauna chinmayam).

4. A blissful thing exists in your heart; if it is sought with love, unlimited happiness (will be yours).

5. God, who is everywhere, can be seen in the heart-cave; only after He is seen here, will all that exists be (seen) as God Himself.

6. The Lord exists within you as the witness who knows your thoughts; where all thoughts subside, the Lord will shine forth.

7. Listen to the path to make the thoughts subside, listen to the words of Ramana, the Lord; at the very moment a thought rises, see 'To whom does it rise?'

8. Since thoughts rise only to oneself, see 'who is this I?' When one looks at oneself who thinks, the thought which had risen will subside.

9. By looking more and more within yourself, the supreme knowledge (Parama-jnana) will blossom forth; to see the seeing knowledge (the mind which sees), practise, practise and succeed.

10. Among the many sciences we learn, the science of God (or Brahman) stands foremost; among all the worthy glories, Self-abidance (jnana-nishtha) stands foremost.

11. The aim of having taken the body is to enjoy the true bliss (the bliss of Self); abiding as God (or Brahman), having removed and thrown away the body, let us go!

12. God means nothing but Grace itself, and the whole world is only darkness (ignorance or delusion); if you scrutinize 'What is real?' this truth will become clear.

A MIRACLE

By Dr. M.B. Bhaskaran

The beginningless
Unknown Past
Is as mysterious
Impenetrable
As the unending
Unknowable Future

The miracle of living
Is a movement
Between the known past
And the unknown future
The two anchorages
Thought has cast
Into the fathomless
Enigmatic Voice.

Glory to Ramana Sadguru!
Glory to the path of Jnana!
Glory, glory to the life
Lived in the bliss serene of Self!
HOW BHAGAVAN CAME TO ME

(Anonymous)

It all started a long time ago. A man who tended the boats at a small town on the Thames not far from London, lent my mother a book. He and my mother must previously have conversed and exchanged ideas, for the book he loaned her was Paul Brunton's *The Secret Path*. “This may be of interest to you,” he said. On my next visit home my mother suggested I, too, might like to read the book. This I did, but the contents did not interest me greatly. I was working in London and in a factory where the pressures upon time and energy were all-consuming, and the journey to and from work in crowded transport left one exhausted at the end of the day. What could relaxation and peace, and meditation above all, have to do with me?

Yet the book had some influence upon me for I started to search amongst many religious organisations and less orthodox groups like the Spiritualists for...I was not sure what precisely — confirmation of an intuitive belief? For understanding of Truth? Nowhere did I find that to which my intellect and feelings could give assent.

I left the factory and was looking for less demanding work. Quite soon an advertisement appeared in a daily newspaper. An author was looking for secretarial help; he could not pay much, he stated, but the work could be interesting and an applicant should not hold strong, orthodox, religious views. I applied and was granted an interview. Yes, the author was Paul Brunton. That he gave me the post proved to be the turning point in my life, although I did not realize this at the time.

Mr. Brunton's address was within an hour's walk of my home and the way lay through pleasant heathland and birch-woods. What a change from the hurly-burly of public transport previously experienced! And what new horizons opened up for me as venerable names, commonplace to this present generation, were used in correspondence and in conversation between Mr. Brunton and the occasional caller. At that time I had scarcely heard even of the Lord Buddha and my ideas about him were certainly erroneous. So much has happened in the West during the past fifty years to help us understand the teaching of the Great Beings of the East, and to this Mr. Brunton made a notable contribution.

So far as I knew, Mr. Brunton did not speak at even small public meetings. A close colleague...
undertook this work for him, and I was asked to attend such a meeting and make a verbatim report. This I did and after I had finished typing the report it occurred to me to attempt to carry out the advice given in *The Secret Path* and again at the meeting. At my first attempt I became cold and abandoned the effort. Two days later I tried again, early in the morning and sufficiently wrapped against the cold. There was a pleasant picture before me on the wall depicting a pathway which ran towards a range of mountains, and it occurred to me that perhaps this was my pathway and that eventually it would lead me through the dark mountains and beyond.

I relaxed physically, mentally and emotionally, along the lines indicated in *The Secret Path*, and when more at peace I reventently asked within myself Who Am *I* and waited. At the third questioning there occurred a strong, almost physical, pull at the centre of my being. Consciousness of the body lapsed. There developed an all-inclusive, universal realization of ‘*I—I*’, of self-less Self. Here words falter and fail to convey the overwhelming Love Divine which then flowered in an unspeakable, all-pervading Glory, or the Absolute Truth beyond all human comprehension. The revelation lasted only for a few minutes, but during this time and afterwards there was absolutely no reaction of astonishment or fear. It was as it was. As I reviewed what had occurred. I knew that whatever might happen to me in my life, “this” I should never be able to forget — and so it has proved to be.

Bhagavan had come to me along the rather tenuous path I have indicated. “Why did this fragment receive such Grace?” is a question to which ‘this fragment’ can find no answer.

The inner guidance continues and day-to-day experience confirms the wisdom of Bhagavan’s words as contained in the Ashram’s publications and not least in *The Mountain Path*.

Gratitude overflows!

The writer can but remain anonymous.

---

**WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

By Sadhu Natanananda

“For those who come here (to His Presence), this will be the last birth” — Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna

“For those who come to this place (His Presence), Self-realization will be obtained automatically” — Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

It is true that the words of Sages, who are the embodiments of pure consciousness, will never be proved false. And did not these two great Sages prove the truth of the above maha-vakyas (their words of assurance) through the experience of all those who came to them? Therefore, those who had the *darshan* of these two great Sages are truly the most fortunate among the most fortunate!

(from Sri Ramana Darsanam)
WE used to rub Bhagavan’s feet with castor oil and vaseline at bed-time. Normally that must have produced a cooling effect on us. But here the result was entirely different. In the next morning our eyes would not open out of their own accord, we had to open the eyelids with our hands—because of the mucus”, said Sri Kunju Swami. The healing effect of Bhagavan Ramana, who was one with the Mount of Fire!

It does not stop with that. His bodily contact could not be withstood for long by any other being. The birds and animals often fondled by this Fire, and the attendants who used to daily rub His body, had mostly to shed their bodies ere long.

Was it physical heat drying up the sap of life? Nothing could be farther from truth. It was the conferment of Life Itself on those fortunate beings. The Fire of Knowledge encased in the corporeal frame completely burnt up the karma of those who came into contact with that frame, because it was a kind of diksa to have that physical contact. With the extinction of karma their body-mind complex had to disappear. In the words of Krishna: Jnanagni degoha karmanam; Jnanagni sarva-karmani bhasmasat kurute. So it was physical death bestowing the Life as Self.

This is not a far-fetched conclusion. Because, devotees have witnessed monkeys known for their fickleness, fidgety pigeons and even a ferocious cheetah being drawn into deep samadhi when caressed by His hand. If a momentary contact could give momentary samadhi, why not repeated contacts bestow perpetual Liberation? If some persons like Sri Kunju Swami are still alive (in our sense) it does not mean that their karma has not been destroyed. There are rare persons moving about on this earth even without karma, just because they are ordained to carry out some divine purpose. Kunju Swami’s purpose is to spread Ramana’s glory.

And now we come to the body of Ramana. He has time and again asserted that a Jnani has no body. Yet the world not only saw it, but felt its impact too—its physical heat and its spiritual power to bestow samadhi. This means that though He did not at all have any identification with what the world saw as His body, it was there for the divine purpose of channelising Divine Grace to the world in various ways. As a physique it emitted heat both physically and spiritually.

The Jnani’s (apparent) body is really a riddle. All the more so in the case of Ramana, who was simpler than simplicity. Inspite of its heating power, his body belongs to the category of sita sarira, the phlegmatic body marked by coldness. But it is to be remembered that the Occidental humour of phlegm as also their ‘coldness’ denote indifference, whereas our sita signifies the most soothing form of love. Ramana’s was not indifference, but non-difference, loving all as His own Self. Of this later. We will now see something more of the riddle of His (so-called) body.
Hot waves were shooting out of the crown of the head of Kavya-kantha Ganapatiputra Muni when in his sadhana the Life-Force rose up to its goal. At that time he pressed Ramana's hands right over that burning cranium and immediately the burning began to abate in the flow of an indescribable coolness. Here the jnani's body seems to have lost all its fieriness and become a sita-sarira in its external effect also.

He was one with the Mountain of Fire. The same Arunachala has taken the form of the Linga of Arunachalesvara in the great temple. As Tejolinga He too cannot be anything but fire. Yet see the riddle. The lad Venkataraman, afire with the experience of Oneness, was physically having a burning sensation all over His body from the day He was immersed into that experience. Then He was pulled by Arunachala's magnetism. Entranced He entered the sanctum sanctorum of the great temple, reported to Arunachalesvara Linga, “Father I have come”, and moved by uncontrollable love hugged Him in a tight embrace. The Fire-Linga immediately gushed forth a flood of coolness into the body's physical frame and the burning sensation was completely assuaged. Like father, like son. The son did the same to Kavva-Kantha later on.

The Fire-Water riddle has deep inner meanings.

Knowledge is always associated with fire Inanagni, Jnana dipa, Jnana bhaskara. Love is associated with water i.e., with coolness karuna sagara, bhakti dhara, premamrta. Knowledge and Love are inseparable. So this Fire-Water combination. It is pronounced in the physical level of a body, and also a rock (the Mountain, or the Linga, both being His forms). Because there is nothing but Spirit. The physical enshrines and symbolises the spiritual. Even the scientifically water as H2O has the fiery oxygen element in its composition.

In terms of Kundalini Yoga, where the physical is sublimated in to the spiritual, it is the muladhara agni (fire in the solar plexus) that ultimately becomes sahasrara amrta (shower of nectar in the upper cerebrum). What happened to Kavya-Kantha on Ramana's physical contact has relevance to this.

But to the present writer's thinking what happened to Venkataraman on contacting the Linga has a different import. Venkataraman had already realised the Self, and so without His effort and without even His knowing it, the sahasrara lotus must have started exuding the honey of its nectar. It seems nothing more need be done for one who has realised that Oneness. That is what the scriptures and seers also say. Yet if we go into the interpretations given to these sayings by Ramana Himself, with the weight of His own actual experience, we see something like a further stage. We hear of Jnanottarabhakti from Ramana's lips. This is the Love begotten after attaining perfection in Knowledge, i.e., after realising the Self as the One without a second, which normally is thought to be the very end of sadhana. Perfection in Knowledge is a state of pure Being where only the Self exists and there is no God or world. It is what is called Kevala Nirvikalpa. The sadhak needs nothing more. But God needs something more from him. So, He bestows on him a further state where without in the least losing his identity as the One and Only Self he is enabled to apparently experience God and the world only to taste the sweetness of Love, as bhakti to God and compassion to the world, feeling God and the world too as his own Self. This is what is termed sahaja nirvikalpa. Here duality is not negated, but is assimilated in non-duality. Venkataraman's Self-experience in Madurai stopped perhaps with non-duality alone; burning all duality in the fire of jnana. Now Arunachalesvara sent into Him a torrent of Prema amrta and thereby established Him in the sahaja nirvikalpa and/or jnanottara bhakti making Him love duality as a play of the Non-dual. The real Ramana was as much a Premi as a Jnani. The Jnani-lad emerged out of Arunachalesvara as the Jnani-Premi.
This duality is latent in Arunachala Himself. He is the column of fire, and as the Mountain He radiates heat. This signifies the Knowledge aspect in its sheer non-duality. It is the motionless, achala, state. But in Arunachala, aruna comes before achala. Aruna is ‘red’. Achala knana is thought to be a colourless white incandescence. But here it is blended with redness, the redness of Love. It is Sakti, the Power of Siva, manifested as Love. Arunachala is therefore Sakti-Siva, Prema-Jnana, rightly called the Two-in-One Ardhanaarisvara svarupa. It is the unravelling of the riddle of the Fire-Water association.

Like father, like son. As son, Ramana is identified with Kartikeya. In Kartikeya too there is the deep connection with both fire and water. He is called both “Agnibhu” and “Saravanabhava”. “Agnibhu” means “born of Fire”, because He emerged as sparks out of Siva’s eyes. “Saravanabhava” means “born of the waters of the lake Saravana”. Like Venkataraman he first emerged as the Fire of Knowledge alone. Then He was immersed in the Saravana lake, the stream of Love, re-emerged as Love-Knowledge incarnate. The lake is but another form of Mother Sakti. First He came out of the achala Siva and again He came out of the aruna Sakti and Himself became ruddy, Kumkumavarna as He is called. He now manifests both the burning and cooling power. Arunagirinatha (he too belongs to Aruna Hill as his very name shows) sings in his immortal Anubhuti of “burning our sorrows by remembering Kartikeya’s feet”1 and of His “making cool the celestial spheres”2. Succinctly he describes the Son of Siva-Sakti as “krpai choozh chudar” — “Flame by grace surrounded”. The stream of Grace envelops the flame of Knowledge.

That which is the Ramana of our days, that which is the Kartikeya of the puranas, is the Agni of the Vedas. Agni is Fire. but the Vedas, with the power and beauty of their symbolism, associate this Fire with Water. ‘Associate’ is too weak a word to denote the near — identity of both as suggested in the mantras. Agni

\footnote{1} imaiyor kura ulagam kulirvittavane
\footnote{2} ninaivai chuduvai nedu vedanai

(Fire) is often referred to as born out of apas (Water). Conversely the element of water is said to issue out of the element of fire, as in the “Taittiriya Upanishad” : Agnerapah. That is to say, like Siva and Sakti they are insepa-
Neither Up the Mountain Path Nor Down

By Martin Leo

Neither up the mountain path nor down
the answer lies not in your crown
not to the left, not to the right
it's simply there — intuitive insight!

Intuitive insight is out of mind
there's no one there with shutters blind
the light is blazing in the sky
it's all right there behind your eye.

It’s all right there, everything’s OK
would you have it any other way?
Of course not, the answer’s plain
— there’s nothing anymore to gain!

rable. Their identity is made clear when the Vedas enjoin one to sip in water (prasana) reciting a mantra which ends, “jyotishi juhomi svaha” — “I offer myself as oblation to the Fire”

Though beyond rational understanding and literal interpretation the Vedas communicate to our very core this two-in-one grandeur in such mantras as:

\[
apo adyanvacarisam rasena samagasmahi payasvanagna a gahi tam ma sam srja varcasa (Rg Veda, Mandala 1, Sukta 23, repeated again in Mandala 10, Sukta 9) —
\]

“I have this day entered into the waters; we have mingled with their essence; Agni, abiding in the waters, approach, and fill me, thus (bathed), with vigour”. (H.H. Wilson)

The fiery ball, the sun, dries up waters, the sustenance of the plants. And it is the same sun that nourishes the plants with his light and with the rains brought by the clouds he raises. Thus what the Rshis say in many a mantra. But the discerning ear hears more meaning in these mantras The sun that is Self burns up the lower life by its fire of knowledge and at the same time by the showers of its Love causes the Higher Life to sprout. To cite a beautiful mantra, — pregnant with suggestions:

\[
iha bravirtu yaimanga veda —
sya vamasya nihitam padam veh
sirsnah ksiram duhrate gavo asys
vavrim vasana udakam padapuh
\]

(Rg — 1.164)

— “let him who knows this (truth) quickly declare it, the mysterious condition of the beautiful ever-moving (sun); the rays shed (their) milk from his (exalted) head, investing his form with radiance; they have drunk up the water by the paths (by which they were poured forth)”.

(H.H. Wilson)

Here the sirsnah ksiram (milk from the head) could be nothing but sahasrara amrt.

The Vedic Rudra-Siva is very closely associated with Agni. One of the meanings of His most beloved name “Tryambaka” is that He was born of the three waters (of the life-substance of the gross, subtle and causal) One notes with a thrill that the asterism of our fiery Rudra-Siva is ardra which means thoroughly wet. Moreover this ardra star, like Kartikeya and Arunachala, is lustrous red!

Reflecting on all this we reach certain conclusions.

Just as rain is embedded in sunshine, Love is embedded in Knowledge.

If the waters of the cloud could produce the fire of lightning so too could Love Produce Knowledge. This is bhakti-uttara-jñana, Knowledge following Love. Then the lightning itself activates the atmosphere and causes the downpour; and then we have Love following Knowledge, jnanottara-bhakti. The ultimate truth is that Love and Knowledge are one and the same.
All this is illustrated in the physical plane too by heat and coolness; strikingly in the Kundalini Yoga which breaks the barrier between the physical and the spiritual. The physical form of a \textit{jnani} or divinity exhibits these properties on both the planes.

Those who are in the first instance considered as embodiments of Knowledge-Fire-Ramana, Kartikeya, Agni and Arunachala — are equally brimming full with Love-Water. It is only by the power of their love that they draw the devotee to them to seek jnana from them.

Just a generation back the world saw with eyes open each day-leaf in the epic life of the \textit{jnani} Ramana unfolding a nectarine chapter of \textit{prema}, Love in its various forms of grace, compassion, blessing, empathy, understanding, consideration and sacrifice towards all the various classes and forms of living beings right from a Puri Sankaracharya down to a Jackie and crow!

After the disappearance of the physical frame too the mission of Love leading to Knowledge continues in full vigour in the innumerable experiences of an ever-widening circle of new-comers.

The Ramanasramam functions as a great power-house (Or peace-house) in this regard. Does not the very first \textit{Sukta} of the first of the Vedas speaks of Agni as "vardhamanam sve dame", "ever-growing in thine own dwelling"?

Ramana's very name is revealing. Ra is agnibija, the seed-word of Fire, and Ma is chandra-bija, the seed-word of Moon, ever dripping showers of nectar.

His life and message provide a perfect commentary on the cryptic words of the Rshi:

\begin{quote}
\textit{ardram jvalati jyothi}: "WET SHINES FORTH THE FLAME!"
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{1}Taittiriya Aranyaka 1.70.

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\textbf{A Verse from Saint Manikkavachakar's Tiruvachakam}

\textit{Translated by Professor K. Swaminathan}

\begin{quote}
Without a seed sown you can reap a harvest.  
Whole heavens and earths you make and you destroy.  
Even this traitorous wretch you have transformed  
Into a madman at your temple—door,  
A servant true of your dear devotees.  
Though a tree that one planted and has tended  
Prove but a poison-tree, one does not kill it.  
Such yours, your creature, I am, Master, Lord.

---

\textit{Tiruchatakam, verse 66}
\end{quote}
Dear Sir,  
Feb. 7, 1946

Thank you for your inspiring invitation! I look to the Lord for guidance and am assured that everything will be O.K. When and how, I haven't the faintest idea. The Maharshi's Blessing is a Treasure I pray to cherish by lavishly spending it on all.

I feel that I have been in Maharshi's Presence for some time but I wish to come closer physically, spiritually and mentally.

The thought of actually meeting someone like Suka, Sankara, or Sri Ramakrishna thrills me and makes me want to leave house and apparent possessions immediately.

— 2 days later

Thank you for the photo, silently portraying a perfect renunciation that retains only sufficient requirement for modesty.

This letter is written slowly because your letter and the photo inspire meditation rather than even pleasant discourse.

On March 6, 1946

Last night, as often has occurred, I reflected, "let me now go to Maharshi mentally". Briefly a dim figure of Maharshi appeared and pointed to His left. I went there mentally whereupon He pointed to His right. I went there. Then He alternated from right and left all the while extending His arm away from His person. I followed obediently (realizing it was silent instruction) to the full extent of the arm. Then He reached out to a point in the middle and drew a straight line to Himself (whereupon I understood that one meaning of the instruction was that as long as my consciousness dwelt in the opposites of dualism I receded from Him, and when I could consciously dwell in Oneness I could come to Him.) I shall of course eagerly seek to comply with this act of Grace. The physical trip waits. The mental journey goes on in a beautiful Nowhere. In another sense I feel the journey already accomplished and that I go not too much to seek anything but simply to pay grateful homage to the Bhagavan who has Blessed us all.

Feb. 13

Enclosed is a photo of me explaining an abstraction of Karma in black and white to another artist who took it and wrote the 'kidding' on the back. True it is that the sculptural subject was in one dimension, the drawing in another, the explanation in another, and the Self Blissfully Free from it all.

Feb. 11
Later I thought, it is either idle or preliminary to ask what a thing means. The big question is "What does the mind mean?" Here we can happily turn to the Maharshi.

Feb. 16

Yesterday I received 8 books from Mr. McCoy:

"Sri Bhagavan's face is like the face of river water, always changing, yet always the same. It is amazing how swiftly it moves from gentleness to rock-like grandeur, from laughter to compassion. So complete does each successive aspect live that one feels it is not one man's face but the face of mankind."

— Arthur Osborne

"To go around this hill is good. In the word pradakshina, the letter 'pra' stands for removal of all kinds of sins; 'da' stands for fulfilling the desires; 'Kshi' stands for freedom from future births; 'na' stands for giving deliverance through Jnana."

— Sri Bhagavan

Mr. McCoy is an elderly man and thinks it too late for him to go to India. I am only 42, so I'll keep an open mind and give attention to promoting the required finance. This will be an unusual adventure because I am a hermit artist and my expenses are few. I have no regular job. Patrons and friends support me according to God's mercy. Miss Eleanor Pauline Noye sends me in the same mail a splendid large photograph of Sri Bhagavan. With love to you all in His Presence.
The great ones free from the mind's movements,
They are truly happy, never leaving
The Mother's lap and playing there
Fed solely with the milk of bliss.

OF UNION WITH THE ATMAN

The state non-dual where there is
No 'I' or 'He', the ego-mind
Having slipped away and one has merged
In the true Self, this heaven of pure
Awareness is the glorious crown
Of faithful love for Shiva.

What scope is there for speech or breath
In silent union where the two,
The 'I' and 'He' have merged in one?
When 'I' is gone,
As when two pairs of lovers' eyes
Have met and mingled, of what use
Are spoken words?

(The last couplet of the Tamil Stanza reproduces verse 1100 of the Kural).

Only those who have experienced
This union with the Self can know
Its bliss. How else is one to know it?
And those who have the experience know
Nothing but That, in stillness lost
Like honey-bees with honey drunk.

Even by those who have enjoyed it
This bliss can only be experienced,
And not thought of. The ego-mind
Destroyed in that transcendent bliss,
They know not how they won this silence.

OF THE GRANDEUR OF AWARENESS

The ego's knowledge, relative
Awareness which perceives the world
As something other than the Self
Is but ignorance. When the ego dies
There shines the pure nondual flame,
Awareness true, the source of thought.

Being alone shines and rejoices
As awareness. Hence till all thought
Merges in absolute Being—Awareness,
The poor conceptual mind can never
Know true Being, supreme Awareness.
1002

'Tis only till the sun appears
In the eastern sky that the proud moon
Shines o'er this earth. 'Tis only till
Real Awareness comes and kills
The ego false that the jiva's mind
Bravely struts about.

1003

The Sage in whose Heart-firmament
The Self, the unrising and unsetting
Sun, shines for ever finds the mind
Of no more use than this wide world
Finds the moon in broad daylight
At high midnoon.

1004

The mind's light which reveals the false
Phenomenal world is but reflected
As in a mirror. The true, bright,
Self-luminious light is Being-Awareness,
The Heart from which the mind arises.

1005

The state in which no 'other' is seen,
No 'other' is heard, no 'other' is known,
This only is cosmic consciousness.

1006

Nondual infinite Awareness
Where the error of seeing, hearing, knowing
Various objects' has been destroyed,
This is the purest bliss serene.

1007

Ye who in eager search of truth
Roam o'er the world looking for saints,
When you examine what they teach
As definitive, it is only
Empty contentless Awareness.

1008

Seekers hurrying round the world
In search of teachers find at last
That their paternal gift is only
The marvellous sky of mere Awareness.

1009

That final and eternal resting place
Reserved for those who are tired of seeking bliss
Here, there and everywhere, what is it but
The marvellous turiya space revealed
By sages who with Siva's own supreme
Bright, flawless Being-Awareness shine.

1010

The high experience gained by him
Who to the end persists in firm
Self-abidance, casting off
Desire as a snake moults its skin,
What is it but the bright, immense
Void of pure Awareness?

1011

When jnana's fire destroys the jiva
And all its countless concepts false.
The glorious light of Pure Awareness
Spreads o'er the whole cremation ground.
It's like a forest vast and dense
Which catching fire burns all at once
Into one huge, enormous blaze.
I think it was in 1943 or so that I had the good fortune to visit Ramanashram along with His Highness the Maharaja of Dharampur. I came and paid my respects to Sri Bhagavan morning and evening and read a few books about Him but I could not understand why people should come there morning and evening, sit quietly in the Hall, and go away after a day or two. Most of the time, there was hardly any talk. I heard the early morning Veda Parayana hoping that it would throw some light. So I got fed-up and approached Sri Narayana Iyer, who spoke good English and attended on Sri Bhagavan. Sri Narayana Iyer was first surprised to learn that I had understood nothing after a week or so.

So he advised me: “Please look at Sri Bhagavan as much as you can. He will look at you, some times. When He looks at you, look at His eyes and don’t direct your eyes elsewhere and during this moment, pray for whatever you want silently and then you will most probably get the answer.”

This was a talk in the morning at about 8.30. I went and sat in the Hall, rather in a rear line, as I could not get a seat in front. And after some time, Bhagavan looked at me, continuously, with a fixed gaze for nearly a minute. During this minute, I felt that He saw me through His left eye which looked just then a bit more protruding than the right. He did not wink or close His eyes at all, nor during this did He look at anything else, but looked at me with a fixed eye. I had the feeling that He searched me through and through. I also looked at Him with a fixed gaze during this minute. At the end of this minute, He closed His eyes for a second, took up a napkin to wipe a drop of perspiration, and then started a general look, — it was His usual way — at bhaktas coming and going. His looking steadily at me started some thinking in me to what He could have seen of me.

The same evening, a number of friends and Mrs. Feroza Taleyarkhan, the Maharaj and about twenty persons walked to Sri Arunachaleswar temple to have a look at the artistic and other wonderful parts of the pond, the walls, the Gopuram, etc. While we were moving in the temple compound, the ‘arti’ of Sri Arunachala Shiva started with all its fanfare of several temple-bells, drums and the priests chanting. As usual, crowds of devotees had assembled in the temple, as the arti-time being the best time for darshan. As suggested, we all went to the inside of the temple to attend the arti and have darshan.

We all were there together. But during the time the arti was going on, a huge big light whitish, like moonlight, was seen around the linga of Sri Arunachaleswar. The glow was big and covered the whole area behind the linga. It was extremely pleasing to look at, a rare, delightful sight. It lasted some time after the arti was over. But by then I had sat down and I never could think of taking my eyes away from that wonderful sight. While I was
engrossed, friends called me, saying ‘Come on’, we are leaving. To that, I nodded, ‘please wait’. But they again disturbed me and I looked at them, and again I looked for the glow, but . . . . it was there no more.

The inner part of the temple had no electricity and only some small oil-lamps were there to light up the place in the olden days. So this big glow was something unusual.

Well, it was dark and we all walked to the Ashram and were standing just outside the Hall where Sri Bhagavan used to sit. And usually, no one used to go into the hall after dark, except his personal attendants.

I was also standing outside along with others, exchanging pleasantries, when Sri Bhagavan’s attendant came out ‘calling loudly’ “Eh, Doctor, Bhagavan is asking about you. Come in”. I was thunderstruck to be called by Sri Bhagavan. I entered, and while I was just on the threshold of the Hall, Sri Bhagavan said “HH-m-mm” with a movement of the hand and asked me, “what did you see?” This question stunned me and I knew that my seeing the glow in the Arunachalam temple was the divine magic of Sri Bhagavan. Otherwise, how would He call me in and ask this question? I requested permission to bow down and touch His feet (usually nobody was permitted to go very close or touch the feet), to which He said “HH Mm” I had the greatest Brahmanandam when my head touched His feet, and He put His right hand on my back. And I thought and felt that Sri Bhagavan had shown me Ishwara Darshan, the highest bliss in the world.

When I got up and stood in front of Him, He was in a very happy mood and was all smiles and asked me to join Him at breakfast the following morning.
Like a hungry owl, I was at the Dining Hall much earlier than the usual time. The breakfast used to be served there and most of the inmates attended.

Sri Bhagavan came in at the usual time. He was always very punctual, and signed to me to sit very near him. When food was served, particularly a preparation of ground-nut, he asked the server to put some more on my plate, saying, "This contains Vitamins, and you must eat".

After the breakfast, as usual, He walked of the mountain. I followed some distance and requested if I could take a picture and He readily agreed — this photo or its negative is in my collection.

After coming down He asked if I had more films. He said, "A peacock comes here every morning at 9. Take it's picture". Next day I was there, ready with the camera. The peacock come exactly at nine, apread its feathers and moved about. I took the picture and negative is along with other negatives. I requested Sri Bhagavan to come and stand by the peacock and He readily did so.

One evening, somebody brought the temple elephant. I requested Sri Bhagavan to come and stand near the elephant. Sri Bhagavan immediately came out, fed the elephant and stood by the elephant — a negative is included.

One of these days, there came a businessman who requested Him to solve a problem of his. The man said that his family deity was Ganesh, but he now found that worship of another deity brought him better business, and good profits. So what should he do? Should be discard the old deity and adopt the new one? Bhagavan’s answer was “Do you think the deity is like some old piece of furniture, that can serve a purpose, and can be discarded? Go on with whatever you have been doing”.

A squirrel was a regular visitor to Bhagavan’s Hall. So was a white cow which came daily.

Therefore, every living thing possesses some latent ability which is awakened by some incident.

Some such transformation took place within me. I pray to Sri Bhagavan daily. May He Bless all.

THE PATH OF SRI RAMANA

By Sri Sadhu Om

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(See book review on pages 129 to 130 of The Mountain Path, April 1982).

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Trivunnalai 606 603, South India.
I have the great privilege of being born in a family which is deeply devoted to Bhagavan Ramana. My grandparents, Sri M. Ramu Setty and Smt. Muniammal, would take me with them for Sri Bhagavan's darshan. Thus I started visiting the Maharshi right from my childhood days. Being a native of Tiruvannamalai, it was my great good fortune that I was able to have Bhagavan's darshan till His Maha Samadhi. The continued Presence of Sri Maharshi draws me even today to Sri Ramanasramam wherein at His Sacred Shrine the Grace of the Great Master is powerfully felt.

Soon after Bhagavan came to Tiruvannamalai and immediately after His Pathala Lingam days, He was sitting for a period at the Illuppai tree near the Vinayaka shrine by the side of Sivagangai Tank, inside the Arunachaleswara temple. It was there that my grandmother first saw Bhagavan, when she went to the temple for worship. Seeing the Maharshi seated oblivious of the world, she used to thrust food offerings into Sri Bhagavan's mouth with a little water and it would take five minutes for Bhagavan to swallow it. My grandmother told me this and Sri Bhagavan also confirmed it.

When Bhagavan staying at Virupaksha cave, the devotees would come to the town singing Aksharamanamalai and we would be eagerly waiting for their arrival to offer them cooked food. Only after such offering to Him would we eat. This continued without a day's break till Bhagavan's mother started cooking at Skandashram. Our house was open to devotees of Bhagavan at all times. Even while Bhagavan was at Virupaksha cave, occasionally we used to go there and offer biksha. On one such occasion the leaf-plates we had brought were just enough for the devotees present and there was none for me. Being too young, I started crying. Bhagavan called me and coming to know of the reason consoled me by providing me with a leaf. Bhagavan understood the child's feelings, and He has been gracious to me throughout my life! It was Bhagavan who introduced me into the religious texts. Once Bhagavan wrote...
the first verse of *Dakshinamurti Stotra* on a slip of paper and told me to get it by heart and repeat it on my next visit. Thus I learnt the *Dakshinamurti Stotra*. I would often forget the first word of a verse and Bhagavan would help me. Then writing down the first word of each verse of *Dakshinamurti Stotra*, Bhagavan gave the slip to me to remember the sequence.

On the first of each Tamil month I would go round the Hill, along with my mother, Lakshmi, and on the way we would walk into the Ashram to pay our homage to Bhagavan. Bhagavan would receive us with a smile and sometimes would ask us to have our breakfast at the Ashram. Once, when as usual, two rice cakes were served on my plate, I asked for one more. Bhagavan turned to me and said that I could have one more after eating the two. When I had finished eating them, Bhagavan asked me whether I would like to have more, and I replied ‘No’. Bhagavan, with a smile, said: “Why did you ask for more even before starting eating?” Thus Bhagavan taught the lesson that one should not be greedy.

In summer, occasionally we used to bring sherbet and sundal for distribution and would leave them at the dining hall. When we entered the Hall, Bhagavan, with a smile, would tell me in advance what I had brought and that would thrill me! He knew how to amuse a young lad like me.

In 1922, when Bhagavan came down to stay at the present Ashram there were only a few devotees. I was studying in the High School. The lessons which had started with *Dakshinamurti Stotra* at Skandashram continued at Sri Ramanasramam. Each day I would visit Bhagavan and learn a verse and recite it the following day. Thus I learnt *Upadesa Undiyar*, *Ulladu Narpadu*, *Appala Pattu* and *Anma Viddai*.

Bhagavan explained *Upadesa Undiyar* and *Ulladu Narpadu* to my mother and I would be
silently listening to it. Bhagavan would turn to me and say, 'Um, Um', enquiring whether I was following. I confessed that I was not. Bhagavan consoled me saying that the meaning would be clear to me in course of time. And so it was by the pure Grace of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan took personal care in our family affairs also. My uncle, Sri Varadan, once left home and came to the Ashram for permanent stay, without informing anybody in the house. Bhagavan knew what had happened and sent word that Varadan was at the Ashram and thus relieved the anxiety of our family. Later, our uncle returned home. After my school education was over, I very much wanted to study further in a college at Madras. My mother somehow did not like the idea. When we visited the Ashram the proposal was put before Bhagavan and it was decided that I stayed at home. I soon got an appointment in the local municipality.

Once the Commissioner served an injunction order against the construction of a dispensary in the Ashram. Bhagavan mentioned this to me and I felt there must be some meaning in His words. I successfully pleaded with the Commissioner to take back the order.

When my mother passed away, I went to the Ashram to convey the news to Bhagavan. Bhagavan graciously looked at me and relieved me of my intense grief. Bhagavan smilingly told me that my mother was as old as his stay at Arunachala. With folded hands I prayed to Bhagavan to protect our family, and He graciously nodded His head by way of approval.

Sir Bhagavan was not merely a spiritual Master of the highest order, but was also our mother, our father and our all!

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**THE GENESIS OF SRI ARUNACHALA PANCHARATNAM**

By Krishna Bikshu

(The following is an extract from an unpublished English manuscript written by Krishna Bikshu which was found in the Ashram archives and which gives an interesting account of the genesis of the original Sanskrit version of Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam. Similar though less detailed accounts of the genesis of this work are given in *Day by Day*, 19-6-1946, and on page 72 of T.K. Sundaresa Iyer's recently published book, *At the Feet of Bhagavan*. — Editor)

Pranavananda, who was present then (in July and August 1917), requested Sri Ganapati Muni to compose a song on the Guru, so the latter immediately wrote the *Guru Gita*. Then some of the disciples called for a benedictory verse. Long before this, just to while away His time, Sri Bhagavan had composed one single in *arya* metre beginning 'Karuna puma sudhabdhe'. That incident came to light on this occasion, so immediately Ganapati Muni requested Bhagavan to compose four more verses which, along with the first, could form the benedictory verses to the *Guru Gita*. Ganapati Muni also mentioned that in the rest of the verses the subject matter should be (1) a definition of the Self (*atma-lakshana*), (2) Self-enquiry (*vichara*), (3) yoga, and (4) karma and *bhakti*. Thus the *Arunachala Pancharatnam* took shape. The concluding verse beginning 'Srimad Ramana Maharsher' was written by Gajanana (alias Daivarata) immediately.

(Subsequently, in 1922, at the request of a devotee named Aiyasami Pillai, Sri Bhagavan translated *Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam* into Tamil in *venba* metre, and the concluding verse by Daivarata was into a Tamil verse beginning 'Arunagiri Ramanan' by Sri Easwara Swami — Editor)
FROM where should I start? I am neither a V.I.P. nor an intellectual giant. Yet, just like an urchin doing his home-work, I write these following lines.

First, my encounter with Sri Ganesan and the impact his words had on me, his tearful blessed eyes as he spoke to me about Bhagavan Ramana and about Mr. Arthur Osborne, who was chosen by Bhagavan to get Him introduced to the western world. Next my meeting with Mrs. Osborne, the dedicated lady, with the look of a mother.

I should not forget the samadhis of a cow, a dog, a crow inside the Ashram, which prove the loving solicitude and compassion of Bhagavan Ramana and demonstrate the whole teaching of non-dualism. Memorable are the experiences of parikrama (pradakshina) of Arunachala Siva (going round Arunachala Hill, and covering eight miles, bare-foot, a difficult task for persons like me!), the vibration of OM in Skandashram and Virupaksha Caves, the ‘Silent Hall’, the transforming effect in the Samadhi Hall, and inside the small room where Bhagavan entered into Maha Samadhi, where one looks at the timepiece with its hands stopped at 8.47 p.m. and the calendar showing 14 April 1950; the community feeling in the kitchen hall where every one irrespective of rank, caste and community sits together and is served food; watching the dawn and the sunset, the peacocks, the monkeys, the children reciting and learning Vedas; and watching devotees in silent meditation. Most important, of course, is pursuing the quest, Who Am I? All these things have flooded me, overwhelmed me, to such an extent that I write in the hope that like me others should find in this abode of love a true ‘home’ and gain peace of mind and enlightenment here, where the whole place vibrates with the Master’s Presence.

I along with Principal Gokarn Prasad Sharma reached the Ashram on the 12th March, 1982 to spend three nights and pray to Bhagavan for His Grace so that the mystery of ‘WHO
AM I? could be unfolded. We had undertaken this journey as directed by Shree Ram Nandan Mishra, a great living spiritual teacher of Darbanga, Bihar, who assures us that the New dawn is very near as the Almighty has here manifested Himself out of compassion for suffering humanity.

Here are no air-conditioned rooms, no Impala cars, no security men posted at the gate! It is all simple, most informal, the first meeting being the enquiry whether we had our meal. Though late (about 1 p.m.) we were on arrival sent to the dining hall. I had heard about Bhagavan's personal interest about kitchen arrangements for the devotees. Since then the Ashram has been for devotees a real 'home', with a divine father, who was also a loving mother.

Sri Ramanasramam and its surroundings provide a shelter for true seekers. It is free from all jargon, rituals and formalities. One becomes natural here, and learns to listen to one's own inner silence. The message for seekers of the Self is constantly conveyed through the stillness.

— Sri Bhagavan

Identification with the body is dwaita; non-identification is Advaita.

AN ENTRY FROM MY DIARY (21.3.1945)

By N.N. Rajan

Sri Sivaprapakasam Pillai is a graduate in Philosophy who was working in the South Arcot Collectorate. He visited Bhagavan first in 1902 at the Hill and continued his visit often. During his visit in 1913 he had strange visions and he saw Bhagavan in different forms while at Virupaksha cave. Because of his intense faith in the greatness of Bhagavan and the path shown by Him, he is acclaimed as one among the foremost disciples of Bhagavan.

His questions and Bhagavan's answers were recorded by him then and there and later published in book form, under the title, "Who am I?". Now in his old age he is living as a recluse in his village.

Myself and Sri T.N. Venkataraman, who is a permanent inmate rendering yeomen service to the Ashram, decided to pay a visit to the venerable old devotee. We reached his remote village Idayanpalcheri near Chidambaram in a bullock cart late this evening. He was very happy on seeing us and expressed pleasant surprise at our visit, and that too at this untimely hour.

He warmly welcomed us and offered consecrated milk and fruits. He is living in the Ganesh temple near his house, but never enters the house. We exchanged reminiscences of Bhagavan till late in the night and then retired to bed. We returned home the following morning.

Arriving at the Ashram T.N. Venkataraman related this visit to Bhagavan who was all smiles and appreciation and made some detailed enquiries. Highly blessed are such devotees of Bhagavan Ramana.
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BANGALORE
BHAGAVAN'S TEACHINGS AND LIFE IN THE WORLD

By I.S. Varghese

BHAGAVAN Sri Ramana Maharshi has on various occasions clearly indicated the details of the path of Self-enquiry — the investigation Who Am I? — presented by him as the supreme spiritual path fit for this age. Once a person embarks on self-enquiry, sooner or later the question of how that would affect his life in the world, invariably arises.

Bhagavan never claimed that self-enquiry would lead to 'instant salvation', but one is enjoined to follow diligently the path for an indefinite time — perhaps for his whole lifetime. Hence the question of how it will affect the various facets of life in the world assumes greater importance. Though Hinduism does not enjoin physical renunciation for spiritual seekers, it is generally presumed in India that renouncing the world in some form or other is necessary for all aspirants. This was also the original Christian teaching, as reflected in St. John's epistle: "If you love the world you do not have the love of God in you". (The Bible 1 John 1:15). Therefore it was natural that many of Maharshi's followers often asked him whether they should renounce the world.

In India renouncing the world invariably means becoming a sannyasi or a mendicant (equivalent to a Fakir in Islam), one who possesses nothing desires nothing and lives on charity. It is noteworthy that the Maharshi withheld permission in all such cases. The search was internal and the inner process of spiritual progress had nothing to do with the conditions of life. According to Bhagavan: "The one obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you do it in the forest, why not in the home? So why change the environment?" (Maharshi's Gospel-I. p.6)

"ALL OUR WORKS, BEGUN, CONTINUED AND ENDED IN THEE"

Closely allied to the problem of renouncing the world is the problem of engaging in worldly activity or work while pursuing the path of self-enquiry. Here again the Maharshi was quite categorical that work in the world need not interfere with spiritual practices. In the well-known interview Paul Brunton, the author of A Search in Secret India, had with the Maharshi, Brunton asked the basic question: "Is it possible to develop along the path of the spirit while leading a life of work?" and Bhagavan replied: "There is no conflict between work and wisdom. On the other hand, selfless

1 This article is the second in the series awarded prizes under the ‘Ramana Maharshi Essay Competition’ held recently under the auspices of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore. The first prize article was published as the Editorial of our April '82 issue.

2 The mention of 'forest' by the Maharshi may sound enigmatic to western readers, and so it may be mentioned that 'forest' refers to the tradition of a sannyasi retiring to a forest for his spiritual practices. It particularly refers to the third state of life in Hindu scriptures, Vanaprastha, which literally means ‘a resident in a forest’.

3 The Book of Common Prayer
work leads to self-knowledge." (The Mountain Path, October 1981, p 198). Bhagavan has also said: "Nothing that the body does should shake you from abidance in the Self. Such abidance will never interfere with the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has. Any more than an actor's being aware of his real status in life interferes with his acting a part on the stage." (Day by Day with Bhagavan—I, p.31)

Still, many devotees and aspirants had doubts as to how a householder who is constantly engaged in the active discharge of his domestic duties could obtain supreme peace. To this very relevant question Bhagavan has said: "It is only to the spectator that the enlightened householder seems to be occupied with his domestic duties; for even though apparently engaged in domestic duties, he is not really engaged in any activity at all. His outer activity does not prevent him from realizing the perfect peace of withdrawal". (Spiritual Instructions, p.23).

**SILENCE, SOLITUDE, SELF-SERVICE**

While such basic questions and doubts about life in the world troubled many aspirants and devotees, others were worried about subsidiary problems like taking a vow of silence, the value of solitude, reforming the world, social service, political work, the right kind of food, etc. It is traditionally recognised that a vow of silence helps a spiritual aspirant to insulate himself from much of the noise and bustle of the world. However, Bhagavan saw much deeper than that and tells us that it is the inner silence that is necessary. According to him, if the mind is incessantly active and
chattering, the outer show of silence, which a vow of silence enjoins, is useless. Again, about solitude, the Maharshi has said that solitude is in the mind of man. “One man may be in the thick of the world and yet maintain perfect serenity of mind. Such a person is always in solitude. Another may live in the forest, but still be unable to control his mind. He cannot be said to be in solitude. . . . . . . A man attached to the things of life cannot get solitude wherever he may be, whereas a detached man is always in solitude.” (Maharshi’s Gospel—I. p.14).

With many western and some Indian visitors it was the opposite question to renouncing the world that arose — what could they do to reform the world? A classic example of this is the following conversation between Paul Brunton and the Maharshi in the early days of Ramanasramam, in the nineteen thirties: —

Paul Brunton: “Will Bhagavan give his opinion on the future of the world, as we are living in critical times?

Bhagavan: Why should you worry about the future? You don’t even know the present properly. Take care of the present and the future will take care of itself.

Brunton: Will the world soon enter a new era of friendliness and mutual help or will it go down in chaos and war?

Bhagavan: There is one who governs the world and it is His task to look after it. He has given life to the world and knows how to look after it. He bears the burden of this world, not you . . . . . . This is a question that seekers after Truth need not worry about. People waste their energy over all such questions. First find out the Truth behind yourself. then you will be in a better position to understand the Truth behind the world, of which you are a part.” (A.Osborne Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge p.155 Jaico Publication.)

However, this does not mean that Bhagavan advocated indifference to distress and suffering. What was prohibited was the egoism inherent in trying to act the part of the Supreme Power. This aspect is brought out very clearly in an exposition recorded by A. Devaraja Mudaliar: “Till you attain the state of Realisation and thus wake out of this illusory, phenomenal world, you must do social service by relieving suffering whenever you see it. But even so you must do it without ahankara (egoism), that is, without the sense of: ‘It is I who am doing it.’ Instead you should feel: ‘I am the Lord’s instrument’. Similarly, you must not be conceited and think ‘I am helping a man who is below me. He needs help and I am in a position to give it. I am superior and he is inferior.’ You must help him as a means of worshipping God in him. All such service is serving the Self, not anybody else. You are not helping anybody else, but only yourself.” (Day by Day with Bhagavan — II. p.102).

It so happened that from the early part of this century up to 1947 was a period of intense political activity in India. This was the time when Mahatma Gandhi’s Civil Disobedience Movement and Satyagraha were convulsing the conscience of large numbers of people in India. And the major part of Maharshi’s life on earth was also during this time. So it was natural that there were frequent questions put to the Maharshi about a political activity. It may be said at the outset that the Maharshi discouraged political activity in those seeking after Truth. Once during that period, Jamnalal Bajaj, the great industrialist and Dr Rajendra Prasad, who later became the president of India, were sent by Mahatma Gandhi to seek the blessings of the Maharshi for the Independence Movement. An extract from the exchange of Jamnalal Bajaj with the Maharshi, given below, shows how far Bhagavan was from the typical independence worker:

Jamnalal Bajaj: “Is the desire for independence right?

Bhagavan: Such desire no doubt begins with self-interest. Yet practical work for the goal gradually widens the outlook so that the individual becomes merged in the country. Such merging of the individuality is desirable and
the karma in question is nishkarma (unselfish). Jamnalal Bajaj: If Self-government is granted for India after a long struggle and terrible sacrifice, is one not justified in being pleased with the result and elated by it? Bhagavan: In the course of one's work one must have surrendered oneself to the higher Power whose might must be kept in mind and never lost sight of. How then can one be elated? One should not even care for the result of one's action. Then alone the Karma becomes unselfish”. (Talks 502)

Many persons who are active by nature find it extremely difficult to understand that in the realm of the spirit “there are no others” as taught by Bhagavan and they presume that seeking one's own realization is itself egoism. They forget for the time that the whole purpose of self-enquiry is to annihilate the ego. Such people often asked Bhagavan why he did not go about preaching the Truth to the people. To this question Bhagavan has said: “How do you know that I don't? Does preaching consist in mounting a platform and haranguing the people around? Preaching is simple communication of knowledge and can be done in silence too. What do you think of a man listening to a harangue for an hour and going away without being impressed by it so as to change his life? Compare him with another who sits in a holy presence and leave after some time with his outlook on life totally changed . . . . Again how does speech arise? First there is abstract knowledge not manifested. From this there arises the ego which gives rise to thoughts and words successively . . . . If words can produce an effect, consider how much more powerful preaching through silence must be.” (Talks. 285)

MAN IS WHAT HE EATS

Though Bhagavan did not attach much importance to physical aids to meditation, he was very particular about an aspirant confining himself to sattvic (pure) food in moderate quantities. By sattvic food is meant vegetarian food like rice, wheat, bread, fruit, milk, vegetables and such things. In one of the earliest expositions in answer to the question whether there are any aids to concentration and getting rid of distractions, Bhagavan has said: “Physically, the digestive and other organs are to be kept free from irritation. Therefore, food is regulated both in quantity and quality. Non-irritants are eaten, avoiding chillies, excess of salt, onions, wine, opium etc. Avoid constipation, drowsiness and excitement and all food which induce them.” (Talks. 28). And in an answer given to Mrs. Piggot, a foreigner, Bhagavan said: “The quality of one's food influences the mind. The mind feeds on the food consumed”.

Mrs. Piggot: “Really! But how can Europeans accommodate themselves to sattvic food? Bhagavan: (turning to Mr. Evans-Wentz, the well-known writer on Tibetan religion) — You have been taking our food. Does it inconvenience you at all? Evans-Wents: No, because I am accustomed to it. Bhagavan: Custom is only an adjustment to environment. It is the mind that matters. The fact is that the mind has been trained to find certain food good and palatable. The necessary food value is obtainable in vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian food; only the mind desires the sort of food that it is used to and considers palatable.

Mrs. Piggot: Do these restrictions apply to the realised man also? Bhagavan: He is stabilised and not influenced by the food he takes (Talks. 22.) Also, Bhagavan never advocated fasting or celibacy as necessary for Realisation, though he conceded that they can be aids to Realisation like many other things. He advised that fasting is only a temporary help and not an end in itself. Actually he has said: “Absolute fasting weakens the mind too and leaves you

4Ludwig Feuerbach
without sufficient strength for spiritual quest. Therefore eat in moderation and continue the quest." (Talks : 170)

Nor did Bhagavan consider Brahmacharya (celibacy) as essential to Realisation. He has said : “It is a question of fitness of mind. Married or unmarried, a man can realise the Self, because the Self is here and now” (Talks : 17). Also he has said : “Brahmacharya means ‘living in Brahman’ and it has no connection with celibacy as commonly understood” (Talks : 17).

When in studying Bhagavan’s teachings concerning different aspects of life in the world, it is relevant to enquire whether the Maharshi looked upon the world itself as unreal and an illusion. The Hindu concept of Maya has been criticised by many not conversant with its full content. There are three statements of Sankaracharya which have to be taken together to understand his philosophy of Maya. These are, as Bhagavan explained: “that Bhagavan is real, that the world is unreal, and that Brahman is the world. This means that when the world is perceived apart from Brahman, that perception is false and illusory. It further means that phenomena are real when seen as the Self and illusory when seen apart from it.” (A.Osborne. Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge. Jaico, p.93).

This is also very clearly brought out in the eighteenth verse of Bhagavan’s “Forty Verses on Reality” Ulladu Narpadu :

“...To those who have not known the Self and to those who have known the Self, The World in front of us is real. But to those who have not known the Self The Reality is limited to its names and forms, Whereas to those who have known the Self The Reality shines devoid of name and form

As the substratum of the world.
Know that this is the difference between the two”

(The Mountin Path, Oct. ‘81, p.219)

SURRENDER, AND GOD TAKES OVER

Though Bhagavan prescribes self-enquiry as the supreme path to Realisation, he recognises that there is no ‘best method’ suitable for everyone. He has said. “One method will prove easy to one person and another to another. There can be no general rule”, (Talks : 580). While self-enquiry suits only very mature souls, it is found that most people are of a devotional temperament which requires worship and a dualistic approach. In such cases Bhagavan always advised submission and surrender to God to the extent that one is to do one’s duty and leave the results entirely to God. To anyone who has tried it, this is an extremely difficult thing to do, as the ego always pushes itself to the forefront and expects certain results from all actions. The necessity for complete surrender is brought out forcibly in an exposition recorded in Sad Darshana Bhashya (p.XXV).

Bhagavan : Now, I will ask you a question. When a man gets into a train where does he put his luggage?
Devotee : Either in the compartment or in the luggage van.
Bhagavan : He does not carry it on his head or in his lap while in the train?
Devotee : Only a fool would do so.
Bhagavan : It is a thousand times more foolish to bear your own burden once you have undertaken the spiritual quest, whether by the path of knowledge or devotion.

The very first Western devotee of the Maharshi, Frank Humphreys, Assistant Superintendent of Police, Vellore, has given in moving words his personal testimony about an unseen Guide bearing the burden of spiritual seekers “Though it takes years to find that “That” (i.e., for Realisation), the results of this concentration
(the enquiry ‘Who am I’), will soon show themselves in four or five months’ time — in all sorts of unconscious clairvoyance, in peace of mind, in power to deal with troubles, in power all round — always unconscious power” (Frank H. Humphreys: Glimpses of the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi p.19)

There is also a great company of witnesses from religious as varied as Roman Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism etc., of a greater power than man operating in a mysterious way in the case of people following any spiritual path in earnest. To this I can add my own humble testimony about an unseen Presence taking over all earthly concerns once we enter the path of self-enquiry. To some very complicated problems in life in the world, mysterious solutions have appeared by themselves. Also some happenings which may be classed as miracles have also been experienced by me, though it is irrelevant to describe them here. I have written of these things in more details in The Mountain Path in the 1960’s under the title “Light on the Path”. Bhagavan’s invitation is not to proceed after death to somewhere over the rainbow where skies are blue, but to enter now the beatific Kingdom of God within all of us. May the Grace of Sri Ramana Maharshi be on all who read this!

All quotations are taken from books published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, except where otherwise indicated. ‘Talks’ refer to Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, the numbers noted after ‘Talks’ refer to the numbers of the Talks and not to page numbers.

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THE LIVING PRESENCE
By Viswanatha Swami

To the blessed devotees, who have contacted Bhagavan at heart — His Home — He is the Eternal Presence, the Unchanging Reality, the Substratum of all appearances.

But have we, the many, understood, appreciated and utilised properly this rare opportunity of Ramana’s advent in our midst?

Anyhow the potency of Bhagavan’s Grace is such, that it will, in course of time, effect the spiritual transformation in us, annihilate our ego, the source of all evil and absorb us back into Its Life Eternal. Let us open up and surrender ourselves to the operation of His Grace.

Blessed is the dust that has come in contact with His Lotus Feet. His words are our beacon-light. The Samadhi on the southern slope of the Hill of Fire enshrining the Holy Form of our Master and Lord is our sanctum sanctorum; where we will feel His Living Presence, as vividly as at the place of His Mahanirvana. May Ramana’s Light, Love, Peace spread on and on! May His Grace reign supreme!

— from Ramana Bhoomi
A DIALOGUE WITH THE MAHARSHI – I

By B.V. Narasimha Swami

In the first edition (1931) of Self-Realisation, pages 238 to 239, B.V. Narasimha Swami wrote as follows: "Regarding Narasimha Swami, it is not proposed to set out short auto-biographical notes here. It is sufficient to mention that he had an active career as a lawyer and politician and had therefore ample opportunity to sift and weigh evidence and to study men and things. From 1928 May, i.e. for three years, he has made a reverent yet critical study of Ramana Maharshi and his teachings. He made an attempt to combine the best in the teachings of Hindu religion with the achievements of Western ethics, psychology and philosophy, and when there was a real or apparent conflict between these, Maharshi was asked to suggest, and often successfully suggested, an explanation or reconciliation. These appear in the Talks with Maharshi, a companion volume to the present, yet unpublished."

As we mentioned on pages 85 and 102 of our issue, this book Talks with Maharshi by B.V. Narasimha Swami was never published, but portions of the manuscript were preserved in the Ashram archives and we have been publishing them piece by piece in The Mountain Path over the past few years. Among these unpublished manuscripts we found the following long and interesting dialogue between Sri Bhagavan and an unnamed devotee, which will be serialized in the next four issues of The Mountain Path. From the above-quoted passage of Self-Realisation, we may surmise that this unnamed devotee was perhaps B.V. Narasimha Swami himself.

Devotee: Swami, pray give me some mantra-upadesa.
Maharshi: I am not in the habit of giving such upadesa.
D. Swami, I came here in hopes of obtaining such a blessing.
M. What do you want it for?
D. Is it not good to have upadesa?
M. Yes, it may be good. But do you want upadesa merely to repeat it or do you expect any benefit from it?
D. Well, certainly it will benefit me to have upadesa, japa and so on.
M. What benefit?
D. I shall attain many good things such as supernatural powers (siddhis), heaven (swargam), God’s Grace and so on.
M. What do you seek from all these things?
D. Will I not be well off with all these? I will get a good state (gati) in this way.
M. You expect perfect happiness from these things, do you not?
D. Certainly, Swami.
M. Then you desire happiness from all such efforts of yours?
D. Yes, I want happiness.
M. Then have you not got it now?
D. I have bits of it now and then, but I get sorrows and worries as often.
M. Then you want it unmixed with sorrow?
D. Yes.
M. Just now, you have no sorrow, have you?
D. No.
M. Then what more do you seek?
D. Sorrows will come very soon, which I wish to prevent.
M. Then you seek enduring and permanent bliss, do you not?
D. Yes.

M. You will be content, then, if your present state is made permanent?
D. (musing awhile) I fear, Swami, that it will not suffice. I am not enjoying any happiness at this moment.
M. Do you find pleasure or pain in going on putting questions to me?
D. It is rather pleasant to put questions and to learn.
M. What is it that gives you pleasure in this?
D. Your kindness in giving me knowledge and guidance gives me pleasure.
M. But that pleasure is only when you get the answer. What is it that gives you pleasure when you are putting questions?
D. If I put question, your kindness is certain to give me replies.
M. You mean that the assured prospect of replies which will give you pleasure when they are given, is itself a pleasure, in other words, that the coming pleasure casts its shadow or reflection in advance.
D. Yes.
M. Is that the only reason or cause for the pleasure?
D. Probably the presence or proximity of holy people may itself be pleasant.
M. When you put questions to ordinary people, for example, when you wish to know the road to a village to which you are going, does that not give you pleasure?
D. Yes.
M. Why?
D. Because knowledge of facts is in prospect there also.
M. Suppose some passer-by is talking to another about many facts and the talk falls on your ears. Is that not also knowledge of facts? Yet you pass by and do not care to listen to him. Does not that knowledge give you pleasure?
D. No, Swami, I do not care for it.
M. Then knowledge or a prospect of knowledge gives you pleasure only if you care for it, that is, only if you are interested in it.
D. Yes, that is it.
M. What you feel interested in gives you pleasure, is it not so?
D. Yes.
M. What do you mean by interest? Why are you interested in any knowledge? For example, why are you interested in putting questions to me?
D. By interest I mean that for some reason (habit or chance contact) my mind feels drawn to some knowledge or act. Knowledge interests me, as in my present questions, since it will benefit me.
M. How will this knowledge benefit you?
D. It will lead me to a good state (gati) and thus secure happiness for me.
M. Then your questions give you happiness because they are associated in your mind with the happiness you expect to gain therefrom in the form of that good state, in other words, because they produce a reflection or image of the forthcoming happiness.
D. Probably that is the explanation.
M. If you were not interested in that state, would you put questions about it or would such questions put by others give you pleasure?
D. No, they would not give me pleasure.
M. Is it not clear then that if you are resolved to find pleasure in some object, the attainment of that object is what will give you pleasure?
D. Yes.
M. Then you can choose to take pleasure or no pleasure in any particular object?
D. Yes.
M. Can you then say that pleasure or happiness is a quality of outside objects? Is it not rather a quality of you who can at will take pleasure or no pleasure in them?
D. Clearly pleasure or happiness is in me and not in outside objects, as you have said. But still I have a doubt. Why then does sugar taste pleasant to all people at all times?
M. Do they? Do they derive pleasure from it at all times?
D. Yes. Swami, everyone likes sugar and views a piece of candy or a cake containing it with obvious signs of pleasure.
M. If you take the sugar-candy or sugar-cake to a diabetic patient who is just undergoing an operation for a carbuncle, will it give him pleasure?
D. No, it will cause fear then. I mean all healthy people love sugar.
M. Do they? Do they derive pleasure from it at all times?
D. Yes. Take a glutton who has crammed his belly with laddus (sweet cakes) and who is trying to relieve the pain of his stomach by vomiting. Will your cakes then give him pleasure or pain?
D. They will not give him pleasure, for he is then trying to get rid of them. But sugar will give pleasure to one in normal health and in his normal state, free from such an unnatural condition as over-eating.
M. Having scrutinized your facts, now examine the question you raised on them, namely, "Why are all people pleased with sugar, if sugar does not have in itself the pleasure-giving quality?" You believe that these facts show that the pleasure is not in the subject but in the sweet object, do you not?
D. It appears so.
M. Then why did this same sugar not produce the same pleasure for the diabetic patient or the vomiting glutton?
D. Because it would harm their health.
M. How would it affect the health of others?
D. Sugar is a good and nutritious food, and in the case of ordinary people it would promote their health.
M. Well then, is it not clear that men generally take pleasure in having good health and hence in objects which produce good health; and that they reject the same objects if their health would suffer by taking them?
D. Yes.
M. Then the reason why sugar gives pleasure lies not in the sugar itself but in the subjective preference for health.
D. Yes.
M. Which is natural to man, health or disease?
D. Health.
M. Then the pleasure in attaining health is the pleasure in attaining or rather re-attaining one’s natural condition, is it not?
D. Yes.
M. When a man eats sugar, is he not seeking to secure happiness by giving his body that which it lacks and which it needs for the perfection (purnatvam) of its health or natural condition?
D. Yes.
M. Is it not the nature of man to be happy? That is, when nothing extraneous interferes with him, is he not happy?
D. Yes.
M. Should we not say, then, that man’s nature is happiness?
D. Probably that is so. But still I feel some hesitation or doubt to say so.
M. Why should you entertain such a doubt when your experience can remove it?
D. What experience do I have, Swami?
M. Do you not experience yourself?
D. In some vague way. But when I think of myself, it is always in connection with so many other extraneous things and rambling thoughts. I can hardly get a clear idea of myself.
M. Do you not at any time free yourself from these extraneous things and rambling thoughts?
D. I have tried to.
M. Why should you try? Do you not every day find yourself free from them?
D. I have never found myself free from them.
M. You are talking of your waking condition, are you not?
D. Yes.
M. But what about your condition in sleep?
D. I have sleep. But what can I remember of it except a few which happen to produce a strong impression on me?
M. I do not refer to your dreaming sleep, which is but a weak echo or replica of your waking state. I refer to dreamless sleep. Have you not had dreamless sleep?
D. I have it every night.
M. Then in that condition, are you not free from these extraneous things and the rambling thoughts about them?
D. I do not know. I remember nothing about that state when I wake up.
M. Do you wake up with a sense of having passed the time of dreamless sleep in misery or with rambling thoughts?
D. No, of course not.
M. Do you not wake up with a sense of blissful, undisturbed repose?
D. Yes.
M. Who enjoyed that blissful, undisturbed repose during the time of dreamless sleep?
D. I myself enjoyed it.
M. Were extraneous things and rambling thoughts with you at that time?
D. No.
M. Here then is your daily experience of yourself when free from extraneous things and rambling thoughts, and you find it blissful and pleasant, do you not?
D. Yes.
M. Is this not a further reason for inferring that the essential nature of yourself is happiness?
D. Yes, it seems to be.

(To be continued)
I deem it a service rendered to co-seekers to record in this column, which I wish to continue in each issue, some unpublished anecdotes gathered from talks with old devotees.

By His grace I have had, ever since 1956, the proud privilege of attending on the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, and the immense advantage of listening to their reminiscences. These narrations may not follow any set pattern or chronological sequence. The main purpose is to share with like-minded friends what I have heard from time to time from various devotees.

V.G.

Sri Muruganar, the poet-saint and staunch bhakta of Sri Bhagavan, was ever willing to help and guide earnest seekers. He would melt even at the very mention of the Name, “Ramana”, yet he was very firm like a rock and unrelenting when it came to His teachings. In him one found the perfect blend of bhakti and jnana. As far as the person of Sri Bhagavan was concerned, he was totally, blindly devoted, so much so that he earned the name: ‘Shadow of Bhagavan’! In guiding seekers and inculcating Bhagavan’s teachings, he was stern and uncompromising.

Once I went to him and reported that it was difficult for me to follow the vichara marga and hence it was better that I take to other simpler methods, become mature and then try the Enquiry method. He was quick in his response and almost roared at me: “That is all escapism. Having come to Bhagavan and knowing His teaching you should plunge into Self-Enquiry. One who has been drawn to Bhagavan is already on the direct path. When Bhagavan recommends other methods, they are meant only for those questioners, not for you. Bhagavan’s path is the only path meant for you. Having come to Him, why wander about?”

The same Muruganar, when I spoke to him a few days later, about the fascination of His Form and the music in His Name, he burst out, with tears welling up in his eyes. “Yes, yes, Bhagavan’s Name is itself enough for us. His Figure draws us to Him only to absorb us into Him. His Name is all-embracing! His Form is all-consuming!”

* * * * *

Princess Prabhavati Raje, immediately after her marriage, came along with her husband to receive blessings from Bhagavan. She brought two beautiful rose garlands and wanted that she herself and her husband should place them around the neck of Sri Bhagavan. Such things were strictly forbidden. Yet, out of her intense
love, she persisted in her request and took the garlands to Bhagavan seated on the couch. Bhagavan, while refusing the garlands, suggested: "Place them in the Shrine of the Mother". She was disappointed and, before leaving, deposited the garlands on the couch as she bent low to prostrate. She got up, took the garlands and left the hall, bitterly crying.

After some time, Sri Kunju Swami by way of consolation showed her from a distance a remarkable sight. Bhagavan was picking one by one the petals that had dropped from the garlands on the couch and was slowly putting them into his mouth one after the other! Said Kunju Swami to the Princess: 'Look! How lucky you are! You were disappointed that Bhagavan did not accept the rose garlands, but now your roses have served as His food. Is not this real acceptance?' She was immensely pleased and her tears of anguish turned into tears of joy!

* * * * *
Ashram iddlis are so famous that when on some rare occasion iddlis were served in Sabarmati Ashram in Gujarat, Gandhiji would remark: "Ramanasramam iddlis!" (Sarojini Naidu, the 'nightingale of India', stayed with Bhagavan for some time and liked Ashram iddlis so much that she had described them to Gandhiji!) It may be interesting to recall how iddlis came to be made in the Ashram. In those days, Bhagavan used to get up very early in the morning and cut vegetables and occasionally help in the preparation of uppuma. Once Lokammal sent from her village, Pattakurichi, near Tenkasi, some large quantities of par - boiled-rice, the best quality. Santhamma, another kitchen-assistant, not knowing how to utilise the half - boiled rice (only raw rice is cooked at the Ashram), in consultation with Bhagavan, prepared iddlis that day for breakfast. It was very much liked by every one. Thenceforth, iddlis became the staple breakfast. Even today, Ashram iddlis are acclaimed for size, softness and taste; the full credit should go to Lokamma Pati!

* * * * *
"At Tiruvannamalai summer lasts for ten months" was a favourite joke among devotees.
at the Ashram! During May-June the sun is at its fiercest; the whole earth burns, as it were. Bhagavan never used shoes in his lifetime. After lunch, every day, he would walk up to Palakothu between 12 and 1.30. The bare, sandy path would make walking barefoot impossible-Bhagavan would never vary the pace of His walk whether it was pouring rain or burning sun. He would walk slowly, but He would tell the attendant following Him, ‘Run, run and take shelter under that tree. Put your upper cloth under your feet and stand on it for a while’. He would insist on the attendant doing so, while Himself walking steadily slowly!


Sri Sankarananda, a devotee of Sri Bhagavan, was employed in Madras in the Postal Department. As a result of practising mantra japa for a long time, he attained mano-laya, i.e. stillness of mind. He lost interest in all mundane things and he could no more attend to his duties either in the office or at home. He was all the time in laya samadhi. It was at this juncture that he came to Bhagavan, having taken six months leave. He sat in the old hall with Bhagavan and soon lost all outer consciousness. Even after the lunch bell was given he sat unmoved. Bhagavan brought him back to consciousness by giving a mild push with His foot and took him to the dining hall.

Since mano laya samadhi would not lead one to the ultimate Truth, Bhagavan asked Sri Kunju Swami, Sri Visvanatha Swami and others to take Sankarananda to the temple in the morning, to Samudram lake in the evening and engage him in one way or another throughout the daytime, thus preventing him from relapsing into laya. For many days this process of keeping him awake in the day time continued till he was overpowered by sleep. After some time, by the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, Sankarananda became normal. At the end of his leave he returned home to continue life in the normal way and also earned a promotion.

It was this Sankarananda who later took Sri Niranjananda Swami to Burma to procure

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**Journey Homeward to the Self**

*By Sri Muruganar*

28. No mortal now can turn me back
Or keep me in my house confined.
Fallen in love with Shiva Himself
And overcoming all obstacles
I have set out for my own home.
My Lord and Master, my dear Self.

29. Across the desert I follow Him
Who came to me and made me His.
The arid, burning sand I walk on
Seems to me cool and shady like
Some gardent green, divine, thick laden
With lovely fragrant flowers in bloom.

30. He leads and I keep walking on.
My heart with a strange gladness filled.
He tells me kindly, “Do not fear.
It is not far. Our home is near.”
I answer, “But are we not now
Already there, already there?”

— translated from Ahapporul Vilakkam, volume two of *Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham*.
teakwood for the construction of the Matrubhuteswara temple.

* * * * *

Bhagavan was surrounded by devotees, even at night. All round his couch, people would sleep, and also dogs.

Sri Somasundaram Swami, an inmate of the Ashram, used to drive out the monkeys and save devotees from disturbance. He would sleep with other devotees in the hall. Sometimes, in the middle of the night, he would make peculiar noises which were meant to drive away the monkeys in his dream. Sri Ramakrishna Swami would say, "Yes, yes! The monkeys have gone away. Go to sleep!" Bhagavan would tell Ramakrishna Swami to wake him up so that his mind would not dwell in the dream. Bhagavan would say that one should go to sleep directly without dreams and likewise on waking should get up immediately after the first impulse of waking.

None knew whether Bhagavan ever slept at all! At 2 or 3 in the morning Bhagavan would be sitting up in the couch. Bhagavan would never disturb others while asleep. But if after waking up anyone tried to resume sleep, Bhagavan would tell them not to prolong sleep after waking up and indulge in dreams. He would with His stick prod them by way of signalling them to get up. Bhagavan was really a mother to His devotees!

* * * * *

Sri Bhagavan's intense devotion to Arunachala is well known; but few know the following fact. Whenever, Bhagavan got a new pen or filled in a pen or sharpened a pencil, he would scribble on a piece of paper to test whether it was writing all right. Invariably, Sri Bhagavan wrote on every such occasion the word: "Arunachalam" (in Tamil)!

* * * * *

We have been publishing in our past issues a drawing of Arunachala Hill drawn by Sri Bhagavan Himself in the note-book of Sri Kunju Swami. Another close attendant, Sri Sivananda Swami, very recently handed over to me a note-book in which Bhagavan had drawn the picture of Arunachala Hill, which is reproduced below:
One of the staunchest and most ardent devotees of the sage of Arunachala is Bhagavat Prasad Singh, now known as Arunachala Bhakta Bhagavat. Born on Diwali day in 1912 in the village of Sahuri in Bihar to Sri Giro Roy and his wife, Pancha Devi, Bhagavat Prasad from childhood manifested an intense religious fervour. But that was not unusual in the Roy family, all the members of which were deeply pious. Morning and evening the house rang with readings from the Gita and Ramayana, the songs of Kabir, Surdas and Tulsidas. As the children grew up, the parents sometimes feared that Bhagavat Prasad might one day renounce family life and become a mendicant wandering the earth singing the praises of God.

But even his parents could not read Bhagavat Prasad well for the lad soon began to display a great precocity for secular learning and, to the astonishment of his parents, breezed through school, climbed easily the next higher rungs of education and, on reaching the top, immediately walked into a teacher's job in Darjeeling. He also worked for some years as a journalist in Ujjain and Calcutta.

In Darjeeling, Bhagavat Prasad had an odd experience. He came across Paul Brunton's book, A Search in Secret India and was spellbound by the photograph of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi in it. 'Could this be my Guru?' he suddenly asked himself.

For years, while he had been studying, working, there had been growing deep within him a restlessness which had nothing to do with his work but was related to something he
could not put his finger on. He suddenly also began to see himself as inexorably moving towards something, some as yet unspecified goal. He could neither control the movement nor define the goal. He seemed to be troubled by a spiritual hunger which cried out to be satisfied. But how? By whom?

The first sight of Maharshi’s photograph had shaken him, thrown him off balance. He could not just then answer the question he asked himself: “Is this my Guru?” But eleven years later, when he was living on a Quaker farm in Worcester, Pennsylvania, the question was answered for him in the affirmative, when Maharshi appeared to him in a dream. This second Darshan, the second sign, as it were, simply swept Bhagavat Prasad off his feet and annihilated his physical personality. In his place rose, as if newly born, Arunachala Bhakta Bhagavat.

It was in 1961 when Bhagavat came to Sri Ramanasramam for the first time that the idea of a Ramana Centre in New York was suggested to him by Arthur Osborne. The suggestion, like all suggestions made in earnest by the devotees who loved the Sage, soon became fact. Thus came into being “Arunachala Ashrama”, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Centre Inc. The centre, now fifteen years old, is a place for quiet meditation and exudes an atmosphere of simplicity and warmth.

It has been the experience of Maharshi’s devotees that when a suggestion occurred to them and they transmitted it to the sage they were to consider their duty done and sit back. The quiet conquest of the New World by the Maharshi came about in the same manner. But, in truth, it was not a conquest because nobody lost anything, everybody won!

In 1965, a little over ten years after Bhakta Bhagavat’s dream, an Arunachala Ashrama was inaugurated at 342 East Sixth Street, New York City. A year after, it was incorporated in the State of New York.

As has consistently happened at other Ramana Centres established in India and abroad, the New York Ashram at once attracted many seekers and, in course of time, became a centre for religious and spiritual guidance. In 1971, Matthew and Joan Greenblatt and Dennis Hartel joined the Ashram.

Installing the picture of an Indian guru who had shed his mortal coil twenty years before in a small town in South India, in an Ashram in New York city, undoubtedly called for indomitable faith and courage. But of these Bhakta Bhagavat had aplenty. There were difficulties, of course, but once the Maharshi’s picture was installed. Bhagavat left it to the sage to do the rest. Sure enough, the quiet Ashram soon began to attract people.

In 1972 a permanent residential Ashram was built in the peaceful valley of Nova Scotia on the Clearances Road, on Bridgetown, Canada. As has consistently happened at other Ramana Centres established in India and abroad, the New York Ashram at once attracted many seekers and, in course of time, became a centre for religious and spiritual guidance. In 1971, Matthew and Joan Greenblatt and Dennis Hartel joined the Ashram.

Following “RAMANA” of Bangalore Centre, in response to our appeal, three more Centres have started Ramana Journals: “Ramana Jyothi”, Hyderabad, “Arunachala Ramana”, Gudivada, “Ramana in Mauritius”, Mauritius. We appeal again to all other Ramana Centres to bring out a family journal of their own. Let us offer many more flowers at His Holy Feet!
Introducing Biography of his Master. When the 24-member 'Ramananjali' group visited the States and Canada, a penniless Bhagavat saw to it that 'Ramana Music' was heard in the Western hemisphere. Though it is his active effort and elaborate arrangements that led to the successful fulfilment of this Centenary commitment, he attributes it all to the blessings of Sri Bhagavat and the cooperation of His devotees.

But Bhakta Bhagavat is still not a contented man. It is not enough for him that a steadily growing number of people in the United States have been attracted to the Maharshi. He wants the whole new world to come to know the greatness of his guru. But his problem is how to convey to the world the Maharshi's message in the language which the Maharshi used? How to spread the language of enlightened silence which is the sage's mother tongue?

The great teaching of Jesus Christ spread by word of mouth. It took a long, long time but the day did finally come when His name and His gentle, beautiful face came to be known in every corner of the earth. Great spirits like Jesus Christ and Ramana Maharshi are not born, they happen. And while today with all our many means of communication it should be possible to "publicise" Ramana Maharshi very successfully, the real spread of His instruction only be by word of mouth from one enlightened human being to another. And Ramana Himself is always there somewhere near to support His devotees.

Meanwhile, Bhakta Bhagavat's ambition to tell the world about Ramana Maharshi seems to increase day by day. His resolve now is to establish a temple for the Maharshi on the Fifth Avenue, New York, no less! He is not daunted at all by the magnitude of the project. All he has to have is the Maharshi's nod or look. He is hopeful that one day it would come. He is prepared to wait. Waiting for the Maharshi is a joy and a blessing.

What is Hinduism?

"In principle, Hinduism incorporates all forms of belief and worship without necessitating the selection or elimination of any. The Hindu is inclined to revere the divine in every manifestation, whatever it may be, and is doctrinally tolerant, leaving others — including both Hindus and non-Hindus — whatever creed and worship practices suit them best. A Hindu may embrace a non-Hindu religion without ceasing to be a Hindu, and since the Hindu is disposed to think synthetically and to regard other forms of worship, strange Gods, and divergent doctrines as inadequate rather than wrong or objectionable, he tends to believe that the highest powers complement each other for the well-being of the world and mankind. Few religious ideas are considered to be finally irreconcilable. The core religion does not even depend on the existence or non-existence of God or on whether there is one God or many. Since religious truth is said to transcend all verbal definition, it is not conceived in dogmatic terms. Hinduism is, then, both a civilisation and conglomerate of religions, with neither a beginning, a founder nor a central authority, hierarchy, or organisation."

1In a recent case — 1977 (1) NLJ Page 5 at page 8
— The Supreme Court of India explained the meaning of the term 'Hindu'.
RAMANA ASHTOTHRAM

The books on Bhagavan and by Bhagavan, so kindly presented by you by surface mail have already reached us, thanks a lot. I will inform people that books on Sri Bhagavan are available for reading until we can get a loaning system. I am also contacting the Youth Clubs proposing to give a talk on Sri Bhagavan. I hope there will be good response from them.

In case you have the translation of 'Ramana Ashtothram', please send me a copy. I have tried to learn Sanskrit alphabets just to recite the Ashtothram and when I read the translation of one line "Smaranath Bhandamochakaya Namaha" in 'Ramana', I thought how much one misses when one does not understand the language.

— Savitri Cuttaree, Mauritius.

You will be happy to know that Professor K. Swaminathan's English translation of Ramana Ashtothram (composed by Viswanatha Swami approved by Sri Bhagavan and chanted daily at Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi shrine) will be published soon and a copy will be sent to you, with our best compliments!

OUR HEART CENTRE

"I was fascinated on reading the Editorial "The Power of Arunachala" in The Mountain Path — April 82. I was thrilled to read Sri Bhagavan's comment on Pradakshina, just as fire will burn all those who touch it whether they believe it or not, so the Hill will do good to all those who go round it." This reminds me of my granny (my father's mother) when we all went to the Ashram for my thread ceremony. Naturally, she did not know about the spiritual efficacy of giri pradakshina and was quite surprised when we said that all of us would be doing pradakshina on foot around the Hill. When we had all finished our pradakshina we expected her to be exhausted and quite annoyed. But her reaction was quite contrary to our belief! She asked my mother if we could again do the pradakshina, a couple of days before leaving. Now it was our turn to be surprised. Strange are His ways of annexing one to Himself!

Reading the Editorial I noticed that it is mentioned that one should walk around the Hill keeping it to one's right side. Is there any reason behind this?

— Ramanendu Chatterjee, Calcutta.

We are happy to read your reactions to the "Editorial". It only shows your deep devotion to Arunachala. The reason why one should walk with the Hill on one's right during pradakshina is that our heart on the right side would then be kept close to the holy hill Arunachala, which is the Heart Centre of the entire creation. The thought that Arunachala is the Heart Centre and that our real spiritual centre is on our right chest, helps attuning oneself to this powerfully spiritual atmosphere, ever present in and around Arunachala.

THE YEARNING

Thank you very much for your kind letters, and also for the precious albums (records) you sent me. They arrived here, all in the best condition, about a month ago, and I listen to them almost every day. It was so beautiful to receive the albums, all packaged meticulously and with utmost care; just like they say Bhagavan Ramana used to handle books and things. It is very uplifting and inspiring. I don't understand the words, but just feel so uplifted and inspired. The more I listen, the more I like it. There is something about "Ramananjali" that's really different from everything I've ever heard. They are certainly, my favourite group.

I just had my 29th Birthday on Feb. the 28th, so my body is relatively young. But my real Birth, the most important experience in my life, a sort of a spiritual rebirth I have had when I was 19 years old, on June 29th 1971. Without that experience my life would be totally different, I would be another person, and probably wouldn't have left Germany, the country where I grew up for 23 years of my life. Consequently, I would have never heard about Ramana or even been interested in anything truly valuable.

In my search for contact or company with spiritual-minded people, here on the physical plane, I've come in contact with many groups and devotees of different spiritual masters. Different masters have different approaches or methods for reaching the same goal, the real Self. Ramana's method of Self-Enquiry really is the one for me above all other methods. After reading the book: "Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge" by Arthur Osborne, I knew that I've found "my group". I immediately wrote to the New York Ashrama and to Sri Ramanasramam for more books and pictures. People in the New York Ashrama immediately responded, so too you.
Just the other day I finished the other Biography “Self Realization” by B.V. Narasimha Swami and got very inspired by it. I’ve been doing Self-Enquiry as a child and all my life long, even though I was not aware that it was ‘Self-Enquiry’. The orient has always attracted me, even in my childhood. If I ever go to India, I definitely would go to Sri Ramanasramam first. It is so beautiful to see the Ashram is doing so well and it is so alive and real — so long after Ramana’s physical death!

— Hans, Arcata, U.S.A.

WELCOME, PLEASE!

By Bhagavan’s Grace I might be able to come there by January next year. I hope this is all right. I have been meeting people who have visited you — Alan and Stella Macleay — and they have been most helpful. Also friends who have toured India recently in fact, suddenly, many people who have been to the Ashram are appearing out of the blue! I am also being helped with money, finding I can’t save more easily, or money is owed me from unexpected sources, and I have found money — £10 — under my feet in the street! I will be putting my house up for sale and hope to fund that amount and have the interest sent to me in India. I will be bringing my two youngest children with me, aged 11 and 12. This will give them time to learn Tamil; I am myself learning it at the moment! I felt from your letter that you were concerned that I might be burning all my bridges behind me and would have nothing to fall back on. But I am being very careful about finances.

It is as if, after Sri Bhagavan has touched me and shown me the Self, although at first there may be distractions and anxieties and outwardly one appears exactly the same, very subtly, the rays from Arunachala make contact and one is drawn out along one of these rays — I mean to the actual physical Arunachala itself; because the Self, God, Bhagavan is everywhere, so one is drawn inward as well and in a sense one does not need to visit Arunachala. But if it is my karma to do so. I thank God for it, with all my heart in gratitude.

— Jane Gill, Clwyd, Wales.

We are delighted to know of your one-pointed perseverance in planning to settle down at Arunachala. Your Tamil is excellent!! The care with which you are planning is heartening. You may please go over here after January ’83. In the meantime, let us be in correspondence about details.

LIFE, ITS PROBLEMS

(a) How is Punarvasu puja conducted? I would like to start it from next year, if possible. Where can I get a copy of “Ramana Ashtothram” to recite? As we do not know Tamil well, can we sing with the “Ramananjali” cassettes at such puja?

(b) Sri Ramakrishna says that a householder should look after his home i.e., the paradise of the snake and sanyasi. I feel that to BE is all very well for ascetics. But what about us, householders, who have to earn, our livelihood and bringing up children? Don’t you think that a mother and wife should ‘live and let live’ but put up a brave fight if threatened by the outer world?

(c) We are told to disregard the body. But “cleanliness is next to godliness”. Isn’t there anything wrong in liking and wearing clean and neat clothes? Don’t you think it stupid of a householder to show vairagya?

— Dr. B.D. Baliga

(a) A copy of ‘Ramana Ashtothram’ is enclosed herewith. This is included in our latest ‘Ramana Stuti’ cassette. Of course, you can chant with the ‘Ramananjali’ at such puja!

(b) & (c) If you would study Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi’s teachings and ‘Talks’ you would find answers to your questions about the life of the householder. No one is “told to disregard the body.” On the contrary, Bhagavan stressed the point that to lead a pure and decent life as a householder fulfilling faithfully all its duties as one’s swadharma, is much more fruitful to spiritualise our life than to run away and become an ascetic. Bhagavan’s Path is intended precisely for the householder in the modern world.

So we can only advise you to go through Bhagavan’s teachings, particularly ‘Talks’. You will find in them answers to all your questions and ample guidance on the proper attitude to life and people. For the rather difficult art of vichara — investigations of the I — you should study and follow Bhagavan’s “Upadesa Saram”

✨

ATMA VICHARA

Your advice has been put into practise, (regular and constant meditation was needed), as you so rightly pointed out. Recently I have slowly begun to feel mental peace and security. Looking at that face of Sri Bhagavan and practising enquiry are the cause of this subtle yet sure peace.

Mostly when a thought occurs to me the question to whom (I) is employed. The answer “to me” seldom comes but the preceding thought is immediately replaced by another one. For example if I think of X, I ask to whom? The “to me” answer rarely comes, but the thought of X is immediately replaced by Y. So I ask to whom this Y? So, most of my time is spent asking the question “to
Dear [Name],

I just wanted to say hello and let you know how much I love hearing from you. Your letters really do make my day. You have a special way with words, and I always feel so inspired when I read them. I hope you're doing well and that you're taking good care of yourself.

Thank you for your patience and understanding. I've been doing my best to keep up with everything, but sometimes it feels like there's just too much to do. I appreciate all your support and understanding.

Keep in touch.

[Your Name]

There are many commentaries on Sat Darshana — Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan's Ramana Maharshi and His philosophy of Existence, Lakshmana Sarma's ('Who') Maha Yoga and Revelation and Truth Revealed (Sad Vidya) by Grant Duff — all Sri Ramanasramam publications in English. S.S. Cohen's Forty Verses is yet another useful commentary. The Sat Darshana published by the Ramana Maharishi Centre for Learning, Bangalore, has been prepared after a careful study of the existing publications and manuscripts, not only in English but in other languages, as well.

Sat Darshana is the Sanskrit version in verses by Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni of Sri Bhagavan's Ulladu Narpadu ('Forty Verses on what Is') in Tamil. The words of the Muni truly reflect the immortal words of Bhagavan Ramana. Sat Darshana means perception of the Truth. However, in the words of Sri Bhagavan Sat Darshana means abidance in the Self, the Heart.

The essence of this glorious scripture is to point out the need for incessant, one-pointed enquiry into the sources of 'I'-thought. As such, it is purely a practice-oriented text, enabling the seeker to experience the Reality for himself. The directness with which the lofty subject of Pure Existence presented in Sat Darshana is unique. We can boldly claim that the quintessence of the entire Prasthana Thraya (Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Brahma Sutra) cannot match the richness of the spiritual wealth so clearly offered in this work.

Its importance is so beautifully stressed in the introduction that we better quote it here: "One can say without fear of contradiction that in Sat Darshana there is the most lucid exposition of the nature of the 'I'-thought, the ego, the method of tracing it to its source and merging it there, so that Truth, the 'I-F', can shine forth. All false notions which cloud our understanding are removed and repeatedly attention is revivted on the need to dive deep into one's own source. There all contradictions end and doubts cease. The sacred words of Sri Ramana's Sat Darshana are original and independent utterances based on His direct experience. The message of Sat Darshana is for one and all. The words of Sat Guru Ramana will certainly make our heart lotuses blossom."

It is truly admirable that Sri A.R.Natarajan, who through his lucid English translation brings out both the dexterity and beauty of this remarkable work of Ramana in this little book. Not a brilliant writer in the academic sense, yet Sri Natarajan's mode of presentation is pleasing and acceptable in toto, since it is devoid of metaphysical jargon and cliches of conventional religious terms. He uses only contemporary language, accurately yet tellingly, in glorifying the purest words of Bhagavan Ramana's own experiences so cryptically put by Him in forty beautiful verses.

It is evident that the grace of Sri Bhagavan is on the author for this work.

The purpose of this translation is not to provide an elaborate commentary, but to make available an easily understandable translation in English (with a brief commentary) which will serve to focus attention on the important areas covered by each group of verses. Seekers of truth will find this book extremely useful for the proper understanding of the divine words of Bhagavan Ramana.

The introduction giving the background of the circumstances under which Bhagavan came to compose these verses and the life-sketch add to the value of the book.

It should be applauded that the book has been priced at a subsidised price only with a view to make it in the easy reach of all.

"Deep sleep is only the state of non-duality. Can the difference between the individual and universal souls persist there? Sleep implies forgetfulness of the differences."

— Sri Bhagavan

The present volume, it is said, belongs to the category of books on Indian philosophy which expound and analyse the teachings of selected thinkers (among whom sages also are included). Eight great names have been considered out of which only two are academic philosophers, viz. S. Radhakrishnan and K.C. Bhattacharyya. The others are Tagore, the poet, Tilak and Gandhi, exemplars of moral and ethical conduct in political life, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana Maharshi, the God-men of the age.

The book is in two parts, the first part is a learned introduction by T.M.P. Mahadevan, an acknowledged contemporary exponent on the philosophy of Advaita. It is said that whenever Saint Tyagaraja went to a temple, he always saw Sri Rama in the deity there. Likewise, Mahadevan, whose dedication and devotion to the cause of Advaita is well-known, sees Advaita as the true basis of the teachings of all the great ones mentioned in the book and they all "subscribe to Advaita in some sense or other". If Advaita is taken as non-dualism, everybody is agreed that it is the some of spiritual experience one has to aspire to. The trouble starts only when it is coupled with Mayavada. So many schools of thought appeared after the great Sri Sankaracharya only to emphasize that Mayavada might be an experience at a particular stage of spiritual endeavour, it could not possibly be the absolute and ultimate experience.

The second part is authored by G.V. Saroja who ably summarises the life, work and teachings of the great leaders. The study is very well done. But the same cannot be said of the comments and appraisal. It is all right to judge and critically comment on the teachings of academic philosophers. But the comments from the same armchair of academic philosophy on the realisations of seers and poets cannot be taken seriously and one wonders how they will, as claimed, serve as a methodological model to university level students.

— S. SANKARANARAYANAN.


The main inspiration for this work seems to be the 61st Hymn in the X Mandala of the Rig Veda, for which different interpretations have been proposed by Western scholars. They found the Hymn so intriguing that in the words of Ludwig, this "belongs to the most difficult, one might almost say most hopeless, portions of the Rig Veda. It is made up of several parts which are in no intelligible connection with one another". According to traditional scholarship, the Hymn is addressed to Vishnu devas, the All-Gods, and is known by the name Raudra Brahman, the Terrific Word of Power.

The author senses the presence of Rudra in this powerful hymn and develops her theme. "He is implied, for it is He who is invoked in this hymn. He, the most powerful, who with the arrow in his hand hit the target". "The double meaning of the word raudra is intentional: the poem is about Rudra, the wild formidable God and it is itself a fiercely wild creation charged with many meanings. They emerge from other hymns, are made explicit in later texts, and are basic to the cosmos of Rudra, which has its image in myths and the visual arts. In these two modes of theorems of mystery the God has left its imprint over the millennia on the resilient matrix of the Indian mind. The unnamed God evoked in the scene of violence and awe in the primordial moment of the creation of man — when time was about to begin — is the main actor, although he does not figure in the scene. The Gods, the collective celestial intelligence, watch the scene and in their concern they turn it into a mantric poem from which the unnamed God arises as Vastoshpati, the guardian of the sacred order (vratapa)".

The author extensively deals with the various aspects of Rudra, as the primordial Hunter and Avenger, as the Fire, Agni, that purifies and cooks the raw material, as pasupati the lord of the animate creation, as the great Healer and Physician, as the lord of Yoga, as the lord of the dwelling, Vastoshpati, and as the Residence and Residue of everything.

With insight the author quotes from the Satarudriya and Svetasvatara Upanishad "To this God of dread and bliss, the satarudriya, a paeon incomparable in its compelling immediacy, gives praise". "The universe resounds with Rudra's presence, he is sound and echo, intangible vibration and infinitesimal substance, too, of every particle of dust and foam. His presence is immanent in verdant trees and the soft green grass. He is in the rustling withered leaves and the silent dead". "Hundred fold, thousand-eyed Rudra has innumerable faces. He has each and every one's face. Everything human is in him, for he is in every man". "Wherever life is felt most acutely, that is Rudra". "Rudra is manifestation itself, together with its consciousness of the absolute".

Explaining the significane of Linga, the author says that it is the linga sarira, subtle body of Siva, column of flaming Light, sthanu, the imperceptible essence of a thing in its potentiality. In the words of the author, "the phallic component slumbers at the bottom of the realisation of the linga. While it lends its shape to the abstract stereometry of the linga as cult object, the linga is of the nature of transcendent bliss and of the nature of knowledge and it abides in the heart of Yogis". Discussing the symbol of linga in the Yoni, the author explains the paradox of urdhvalinga as sign of urdhvaretas connoting the retention, ascent and transformation of the creative principle.
A description of the great cave temple of Siva on the island of Elephanta is given in the appendix, supported by thirty two art plates dealing with the temples at Elephanta and Ellora.

The author writes with erudition and deep feeling. Her style is evocative and one senses the Presence of Siva in her happy renderings of the sacred texts.

— S. SANKARANARAYANAN.


Not very much disturbed by the ravages of foreign invasion and inroads into its hoary culture, the Southern part of India still preserves its ancient culture. It is a land teeming with temples and shrines, each of which has preserved a local tradition of its to sacredness by means of myth, folklore and ritual. The author analyses the myths of Tamil Nadu in the light of the many traditions that have contributed to their formation, including Vedic, epic, puranic, classical Tamil and Southern folk traditions.

The author holds that "the Tamil myths are a part of the wider world of Hindu mythology, however different their orientation, however local their concerns, they are by no means independent of the classical Sanskrit tradition". Discussing the tradition of Agastya coming from the North to the Tamil country, the author points out that "this orientation toward the North as a source of inspiration and prestige is quite characteristic of Tamil Culture in its development after the Sangam period, that is after the process of fusing local and imported elements had reached an advanced stage and a rich, composite tradition had emerged". Again, he says "Here, as in other areas, we glimpse the unifying, synthesizing, fertilizing force that Brahminism has represented in the history of Tamil Nadu. It is largely this force, that allows us to speak of a single distinctive system of Tamil mythology incorporated in literary texts composed over a period of some one thousand years".

Most of the Tamil talapuranams are renderings or adaptations of their Sanskrit counterparts; but all of them are not ancient. A Tamil Purana could be commissioned by a wealthy person. The author quotes an instance from the biography of Sri Minatchisundaram Pillai written by the great Tamil savant Sri U.Ve. Saminathaiyar.

The tradition of the Tamils does not believe in other-worldliness or in salvation in some world beyond. Each temple or shrine claims to be the seat of creation, the centre of the universe, the one spot where all sins are washed off and salvation readily attainable, a Kailasa on earth. The ascetic traits which are enjoined for salvation, in which the identity of the embodied soul to the pilgrim in this life".

No doubt, most of the temple myths revolve round the Deity as localised and humanised and give importance to physical incidents and vital emotions. From these the author uncovers two persistent themes, "the approach to power in all its manifestations, and the attempt to reconcile contact with power with desire for purity."

But an Indian with his inherent spiritual background would understand the significance of these myths quite differently. He sustains the myths and is in turn sustained by them.

— S. SANKARANARAYANAN.


This well-printed booklet published by the Theological Research and Communication Institute of Delhi is intriguing in its own way. It apparently expounds Advaita or Absolute Monism of Sankara briefly, in his own words, in the first five chapters which are entitled : (1) The problem of Being, (2) The Reality of Brahman, (3) The Doctrine of Maya, (4) Personal God and (5) The doctrine of Jiva. But a close reading will show that it is nothing but a resume of the thought based on secondary sources like the books of Hiriyanna, Das Gupta, Radhakrishnan, Thibaut, etc. That the author is not conversant with original Sanskrit sourcebooks is evident in the wrong diacritical marks abounding on every page even of simple words : buddhi, aspada, anirvacanayata-vacana, vyakarti, sarva-vadana, bhavarupa, dsaya, etc. are just a few specimens which even a school boy can correct. Sankara's thought is analysed by way of hermeneutics, ontology, epistemology, phenomenology, existentialism and so forth.
Even granting that the thought summarised is well-intentioned and that the selection is representative of the essential stance of Sankara, the final chapter called Epilogue mounts momentous accusations against Sankara such as “dissolving the ontological status of the world as well as god” (P.54). The so-called thesis of Sankara is then subjected to a severe critique from the angle of Christian theology which is replete with technical terms such as individuum, ek-stasis, communion; hypostasis of God as person or being, imago Dei, sin and idolatry, Fall, idion thelema, baptism, theosis, schesis etc. etc.

The world of art-creation forms an analogy to that of God’s in this turgid excursus wherein Sartre, Heidegger and others too find a place.

Such a theological critique of Sankara in terms of modern existentialism or ontology or epistemology is, in our opinion, misconceived, mischievous and mendacious; doing more harm than good to the cause of Truth. If one wants to understand Sankara rightly, there are other studies which are more complete and dependable; if one wants to understand Christian theology properly, again there are better guides. This booklet, in our opinion, fails in its surreptitious attempt to disprove Sankara’s Advaita from the angle of Biblical theology, for want of intelligible argument as well as sustained criticism of the points really at issue.

Sankara’s Absolute Monism has no quarrel with any religion; but at the same time, it cannot be decried either by any religious dogma, as it transcends them all in its doctrine of Absolute Brahma: and is grounded unshakably on saksatkarat or aparoksa-anubhava which is esoteric experience within the reach of genuine jnanins.

— Dr. K. KRISHNAMOORTHY.

BHAGAVAN’S SOLICITUDE

By Kunju Swami

Once, thinking that Bhagavan was angry with me, I decided to leave for Tirupati and got Bhagavan’s permission also to leave. That afternoon, Bhagavan unexpectedly started for pradakshina and Ramakrishna Swami asked me to accompany them. I started with a towel and a dhoti in order to be ready for my departure. That day Bhagavan walked unusually slowly. As it was not proper to go ahead of Him, I could not walk faster either. After some time, we could see, at a distance, my train leaving the station. Bhagavan said: “There goes your train; fly, fly to it!” So saying He laughed. I missed my train and we reached the Ashram late that night. Bhagavan told Dandapani Swami: “He thinks that I was annoyed with him and decided to go to Tirupati. What a wonderful fellow! Even here at the Ashram he eats without relish. What will be get outside? How will he eat?”

Yet another occasion evidencing Bhagavan’s great consideration is imprinted in my mind. I had to go to my village to look after Ramakrishna Swami’s brother but had only just enough money to buy a ticket. There was no extra money to meet the expenses on the way. That afternoon at three, a devotee came and served pooris to Bhagavan. Normally He does not take more than two pooris. That day when the devotee put six pooris in Bhagavan’s plate, He did not say anything. We were all surprised! Bhagavan took only one of them and packed the remaining five and gave them to me, saying: “He has no money for food on the way”. All were deeply touched by Bhagavan’s compassion.

— form Ramana Bhoomi
NIRVANA ROOM

14th April, 1950 — All hearts and eyes of devotees are turned towards the Mahanirvana room. Bhagavan’s body is suffering from acute pain, yet, He pours forth love and grace in the fullest measure on those filing past for darshan. During His last illness, Ramana repeatedly and emphatically assured all that His living Presence could always be felt in Sri Ramanasramam. One has only to enter Sri Ramanasramam to realise the truth of these words. Wherever one enters, be it the Shrine of Grace, or the Old Hall or the Nirvana Room, there He is, vividly and vitally present.
Nirvana Room — “there He is vividly present”! (Inset)
Sacred things used by Bhagavan are preserved here.

The devotees filing past for Bhagavan’s darshan on whom “He poured forth His Grace in the fullest measure”.
The fortunate lot of serving Bhagavan through keeping the 
Nirvana Room open fell on Hall Natesa Iyer for a number of years. 
It is now given to Sri Narasimha Iyer, who welcomes visitors with 
a ready smile. The articles used by Bhagavan are kept there and 
they take one’s mind to His simple and endearing ways. The 
whole universe was at His feet, yet. He has use only for a cod­ 
piece, a stick, a Kamandalu and a small towel. One has only to 
spend a few moments in the Nirvana Room to realise how full the 
place is, with His dynamic Presence. Through His prolonged and 
painful illness, Bhagavan bore the cross of the devotees’ burdens. 
Blessed indeed are those who can sit in silence now in the 
Nirvana Room, feeling the soothing balm pouring out of those 
eyes which look at one from that magnetic colour photograph on 
the wall.

On the very last day of Bhagavan’s 
physical life He spoke one word to His 
attendant, Sri Sivananda Swami “Santhosham (I am pleased)”. When this innocent 
but ardent devotee was taken aback, 
Bhagavan explained : “The English use 
the words ‘thank you’, but we say simply 
santhosham!” Sri Sivananda Swami 
says : “I am an ignorant man. I knew 
only how to serve Him. He used to joke 
with me taking liberties. I would under­ 
stand the joke only when He chose to 
explain it! He indicated by that one 
word, santhosham, His leave-taking. What 
compassion, what blessing as parting!”

“Certain is it that one coming under 
the guidance of Bhagavan will be 
saved from the cycle of births and 
deaths.”

— Hall Natesa Iyer

“I have lived in the Ashram in my 
younger days and have had the privi­ 
lege of serving Him and His devotees. 
Now, Sri Bhagavan’s Presence is as 
powerful as it was when He was in the 
body.”

— Narasimha Iyer
Patasala — in olden days under the guidance of Sadhu Arunachala.

VEDA PATASALA

In Bhagavan’s presence, each morning and each evening, there used to be regular chanting of the Upanishads, Upadesa Saram, Chatvarimsat and some Tamil works. The chanting would help in quieting the mind and turning it within to its source. Bhagavan Himself would have a far off look, particularly in the evenings. The Veda Patasala or school for teaching Vedic texts, consists of about ten or twelve full time students, with a preceptor in charge. It has always been an important adjunct of Sri Ramanasramam. Sadhu Arunachala (Major A.W. Chadwick) took keen interest in its development.

Sri Ramaswamy Ganapatigal

Today too, the Veda Patasala and parayana are given due importance, remembering the position they enjoyed in the eyes of Bhagavan. Ten boys learn, systematically, under Sri Ramaswamy Ganapatigal. Even in the dawn hours, one can hear the harmonious chanting in the Patasala and every event in Sri Ramanasramam is enriched by the presence of these students and the teacher.

Patasala — boys at study
Bhagavan’s Stamp released in New Delhi by the then President of India, Sri V.V. Giri.

At the Ashram the Madras Post Master General handing over Bhagavan’s Stamps to the Ashram President.

SRI RAMANASRAMAM POST OFFICE

Though Bhagavan always assured that He was beyond time and space and that anybody could feel his presence and guidance anywhere in the world, He was aware of how important the correspondence with Him and the Ashram was to the devotees. He therefore always inquired and ensured that all telegrams/letters were attended to promptly. In the majority of the cases reply would be sent on the same day but in no case would a reply be delayed beyond two or three days. It was the experience of the devotees that the moment they post a telegram or letter about their problem, the problem would be solved.

The morning time when the tapals would be received from the post office is almost the busiest time in the Ashram Office. This tradition is kept up in the fullest measure even now. A letter to the Ashram President Sri T N Venkataraman or to the Managing Editor of ‘The Mountain Path’, Sri Ganesan would invariably be attended to in most of the cases by return of post and Prasad from the sacred shrine of grace would reach the correspondent by return of post.

The first Ramanasramam post office was opened in Sri Bhagavan’s presence in 1938. It has grown very much in size and is at present located in a bigger building very near Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri Bhagavan reading a letter at the entrance to the Ashram Post Office (Inset) Sri Raja Iyer, inside the Post Office with letters to be delivered.

The Post Office now, very near the Ashram. (Inset) Letters being posted within the Ashram premises.
ASHRAM DISPENSARY

In February, March, August, December, 1949 Sri Ramanasramam dispensary was an important focal point of attention to all devotees of Sri Bhagavan. The first operation was to remove what appeared to be a small boil on Bhagavan's forearm and was taken lightly, but each successive operation increased the fears of all that the Master's physical presence would no longer be available. Operations were done without anaesthesis and Bhagavan would always insist on giving darshan notwithstanding the doctors' advice to the contrary. It was a marvel to see the pleasant expression and the gracious smile of Sri Bhagavan inspite of these painful operations.

The Ashram dispensary has been regularly serviced by qualified doctors and free medicines have been dispensed to hundreds of women and children in particular. Bhagavan's healing touch is evident in abundant measure. When He is the sure remedy for the malady of worldliness can He not take care of physical ailments?

Sri Bhagavan graced the opening ceremony of the Ashram Dispensary's new building, in 1943.

"Serving Ramana is service to God. Blessed are those who serve Him."
— Dr. K. Shiva Rao (1943)

"Service to humanity is service to God. I feel proud and happy to do that at the Ashram."
— Dr. A. Karunanidhi (from 1980)

Needy patients are being attended to with care at the Ashram Free Dispensary.
Summer in Tiruvannamalai is really severe and devotees run away from Arunachala for the months of March, April, May and June! Devotees from abroad go back to their countries during this season and return in September! Yet, there are relentless sadhakas unafraid of the heat who continue their stay and they come to the Ashram and enjoy the serenity that prevails there, whatever the weather.

"Many follow His teachings but only few know His great human love and friendliness. Common sense, psychological understanding and concern for others were abundant in this spiritual Colossus."
— Sri B.S. Ranganadham.

Sri B.S. Ranganadham

"Bhagavan is really my mother, my father, my God, my all. I do not know how I deserved His attention, tender care and affection. I prostrate to Him, again and again."
— Smt. Lakshmi Ranganadham

Smt. Lakshmi Ranganadham

Sri & Smt. S.G. Devaraj, along with their daughter.

Sri & Smt. B.S. Ranganadham from Nellore are here providing spiritual satsang to Telugu-speaking devotees. Sri S.G. Devaraj came with his wife and daughter and a host of his relatives, including his sister and brother-in-law, for a brief stay. Everyone, especially the children, enjoyed their stay. Sri Devaraj surprised us by suddenly appearing, one fine morning, with a clean shaven head. When he came to know of the existence of Sri Natesan, the barber who regularly shaved Bhagavan, he was prompted to perform this gesture of surrender!

David Lawrence, a sincere devotee from the States, stayed at the Ashram for more than a month, along with his friend Bob Sals. He wants to share his thoughts with his fellow-devotees:

"I feel very grateful to have had the calling to return to Arunachala after a period of nearly eleven years. The desire to return was always there, but not with Bhagavan’s blessings.

"From the first moment I was there, it was as if there had been no time lapse or separation at all. It was clear that the separation had been in my own mind. So many doubts were cleared and some new teachings in the deeper realms of silence were revealed.

"I am very thankful to everyone at the Ashram who provided such a warm gracious atmosphere and left one as free to pursue one’s sadhana."
— David Lawrence, Mount Horeb, U.S.A.

A REQUEST

"Dear Mr. Ganesan,

I received your letter of request for an article on Paul Brunton. It would be good if an article on Paul Brunton could appear in The Mountain Path, but I regret I could not contribute this. He was a man who “left no foot-prints”, and travelling widely as he did, he was only intermittently in England. Moreover, I could not respond to his books beyond A Search in Secret India and The Secret Path.

It would be a good idea to put a notice in The Mountain Path asking readers who had any contact with Paul Brunton to let you know about this. If there was a response then something could be put together and I would be glad to add what can only be a few paragraphs.

— Mrs. Barbara B. Toner"
Dr. Panduranga Rao, with his family members

Dr. Panduranga Rao was staying at the Ashram in the forties and is one of the staunchest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, now living in Bangalore. His entire family is devoted to Ramana. He is a regular visitor to the Ashram and he writes about his recent visit.

"Though we reached the Ashram late at night (10 p.m.), we were served with dinner and the rooms allotted were very comfortable. Whenever we come to the Ashram we feel we are going to our 'home', where our mother is waiting to feed us and hear our problems and worries. It is true, once we reach here all our problems and worries do disappear. That is the mark of Sri Ramanasramam!"

The two days were the days when President's two grandsons had their 'Upanayanam' at the Ashram. It was a great joy to see the Ramana-families assembling there—feeling of oneness and exchanging affection with each other were unique.

My son Chi. Ganesa Ramana Prasad, his wife Smt. Sudha and my daughter, Chandrakala, were thrilled to go to Skandashram, Virupaksha Cave, to the Arunachala Temple and the next day, Giripradaskshina. The Ashram with the peacocks, squirrels and monkeys made me recollect the olden days when Bhagavan was moving amidst us in human form and showering His Blissful blessings on all. We returned to Bangalore in better frame of mind and happy feelings."

Prof. T.F. Bidari belongs to that group of staunch devotees who involve each and every member of their family in their deep devotion. He invariably brings his family to the Ashram, as he did this year in May. He writes :

"Every year, during vacation, I visit with my family and relatives the holy Sri Ramanasramam, which is situated at Arunachala — the Heart Centre of the universe. The vibrations are powerful, and our Sat-Guru, out of His compassion, channelises them for us, like a condenser, so that we could be the fortunate recipients of this supreme Bliss. The silence of the Holy Father — Sri Arunachala — is understood only by His Son — Ramana — and we could receive it only when it is transmitted to us by this Sat-Guru who is Love Incarnate. Sri Ramana thus conveys to us the pure import of Aham in this sacred place. Blessed indeed are those devotees who are fortunate enough to flock to this Ashram, the haven of Peace.

As a Professor of Philosophy, I have an inordinate thirst for reading spiritual books. What a rich treasure is found in Ramana-literature — Ulladu Narpadu, Upadesa Saram, Sri Ramana Cita. Talks! After having discussions with the late revered Viswanatha Swami, even this urge of mine had diminished; now I swim only in Ramana Bhodha. Is not Ramana Bhodha the same as Sad Vidya, the culmination of all learning?

Although Bhagavan is present everywhere and we could even at our home contemplate on Him-Our Jnana Guru, yet, we do come again and again, to the Ashram, this spiritual center, to plunge in Ramana-bliss!"

Sri M.R. Kulkarni of Miraj, an annual visitor to Ashram gave gifts of his products to the Ashram Free Dispensary, as usual during his visit in May. Mrs. Shantabai S. Jambigi, Mrs. Ramabi M. Kulkarni, Miss Madhu S. Jambigi, Miss Vaiju S. jambigi, Sri Narayanamama V. Jambigi, Miss Vidy N. Kulkarni, Miss Ashvari S. Jambigi, his grandson, Shishir and Dr. S.N. Jambigi accompanied him. Dr. Srirang N. Jambigi has sent us his impressions, in a poem :

Prof. T.F. Bidari and family.
OUR PILGRIMAGE

Inspired and initiated by a devotee of Sri Bhagavan
Our entourage commenced from the Ashram;
Thirty-eight hours' stay at the site spiritual
Was indeed an experience cherishable and memorable!
The premises blessed with the Holy Soul’s presence,
The fauna and flora emitting a sweet fragrance,
Enrapturing was the peace of the Place Divine!
Never shall we forget; ever shall we attempt —
To re-live the moments we spent there-in.

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI HIGH SCHOOL
PRODDATUR, A.P.

Sri N. Subbarayudu Setty, one of the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan and President of Sri Ramana Maharshi High School, Proddatur in Andhra pradesh, brought the school children and staff to the Ashram for two days and they all thoroughly enjoyed their stay. We wish more schools expose their children to the Ramana-Ray.

The Headmaster of the school writes:

"The Ramana Maharshi School was started in 1975, with only 25 children in the premises of ‘Sri Ramana Kuteeram’. By the Grace of Bhagavan it has grown into a good High School now, with 500 children. Every day the children sing Bhagavan’s songs as prayer and they are taught Bhagavan’s life story. Each Monday Ramana Puja is done in the school. Bhagavan’s picture adorns all the 18 rooms. Every year Sri Bhagavan’s Jayanti is celebrated in the school; the children take the portrait of Bhagavan round the streets in a procession, singing Bhagavan’s songs. We pray to Him to bless our school, our children and our staff.

Our visit to the Ashram is a most memorable one and it has left a indelible impression in the young, tender hearts."
You are requested to participate in the

NATIONAL SEMINAR ON BHAGAVAN’S TEACHINGS
AND
FESTIVAL OF RAMANA MUSIC/DANCE
AT

Boarding/lodging and transport within Bangalore free for delegates/devotees.

Organised by
Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore.
Mr. DAVID GODMAN

A man comes to the Ashram for a casual stay of three days, but finds himself staying there for several years! Such is the transformation wrought by Sri Bhagavan on any so deserving as David Godman. It is difficult to say which aspect in him deserves the high praise; he lived in mantaps scattered round the Hill till he was accommodated at the Ashram itself; he never demanded anything special for himself; he was an ardent sadhaka following strictly Sri Bhagavan’s vichara marga. He was asked to help the Ashram Library which was then in bad shape. Not only did he arrange it very well, but he strove hard to bring into being a new spacious ‘Sri Ramana Centenary and the Ashram Library. In addition to all this, Sri Godman took upon himself the lion’s share of The Mountain Path work during the last two years and brought out some outstandingly good issues.

Mr. David Godman is going home to England and hopes to be back with us after a year. His quiet and efficient services have impressed all observers and earned the sincere gratitude of those interested in the Library and The Mountain Path.

RAMANA CENTRE IN RIO DE JANEIRO

The ‘Ramana Movement’ is spreading steadily all over the world. We are happy to share with our readers this lovely letter from the President of Associacao Espiritualista, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"The joy of the warmest devotion flooded our hearts when the April issue of The Mountain Path got into our hands.

We could see many ‘Ramana Movements’ spreading all over the world, many people being touched by the Wisdom of His Teachings and many Ashrams being founded, enhancing new and increasing opportunities for Ramana-Service!

It is not just a coincidence that we, in Brazil, are developing similar activities which range from our “Ramana Children Group” to celebrations of “Ramana Jayanti”. Besides the fact that we have already had chances to exchange experiences of Maharshi’s Presence and Grace, we have not so far provided you with an overview of our work and how it has developed in our country, which we will describe below .... In the “hall” of our Ashram (please see the attached photos) weekly sessions of praying and meditation take place. There, also, the children meet to learn our Master’s teachings from a leading group of young devotees. Furthermore, every..."
Tuesday and Thursday reading and talks are attended on the main books about Ramana's life and teaching, such as, Who am I?, Upadesa Saram, The Forty Verses, Talks, and once a month, food and clothes are distributed among nearly 200 poor people, as Bhagavan's Prasad.

In consideration of the contribution to the country's welfare "A LUZ NO CAMINHO" a recognition of "Public Utility", has been granted to us, by the Brazilian Federal Government, which enhances, among other benefits, tax exemption for the institution and underlines its relevant role in the social area.

We are proud to spread the message of MAHARSHI, as you do. Besides, we compose devotional songs and strive to follow His thoughts. We feel the light of His Presence within our hearts illuminating our path, and those who come to us say that our Ashram exudes tranquility and peace. Our desire is to overcome the distance between us so that we could work together in the service of the Master and deserve your remembering us during your prayers."

— Orlette Laroni Wenning, President, Associacao Espiritualista

Jayanti Celebrations at Bombay

The 102nd Birthday of Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated on April 10, 1982 at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, under the auspices of Bhagwan Ramana Maharshi Centre, Bombay.

A large gathering of devotees listened with rapt attention to the lucid exposition by the Chief Guest, Sri B. Ananthaswamy (Vice Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras), on Ramana Maharshi's method of Self-enquiry. Quoting profusely from the Upanishads, Bhagavat Gita, Upadesa Saram, Sat Darshana and Narayaneeyam he elaborately set forth the salient features of the paths of bhakti, karma, jnana and dwelt on Vichara Marga of Sri Bhagavan as a unique method, most effective and challenging, as it was the most direct.

Sri Justice S.C. Pratap of Bombay High Court, who presided referred to the greatness of Sri Bhagavan and said that Bhagavan approved all paths to realisation.

Sri Justice S.C. Pratap of Bombay High Court, who presided referred to the greatness of Sri Bhagavan and said that Bhagavan approved all paths to realisation.

The Bombay Television Centre telecast the Documentary film on Sri Ramana Maharshi the same night to the delight of the residents in Bombay and Poona.

Devotional songs by Smt. Kamala Moorti, Kum. Usha Moorti and Sri Nikhil Thakkar on tabla
At the time of aarti devotees went into ecstasy

The 32nd Brahma Nirvana day fell on April 21, 1982 and as usual devotees thronged to His abode of Silence and those who could not come to Arunachala paid their homage in their hearts or in solemn gatherings in innumerable places.

In His Shrine of Grace at the Ashram, elaborate pujas were offered to Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam from early morning and Maheswara puja or feeding the hungry was performed on an elaborate scale. The Ramana Auditorium was filled with devotees who went into ecstasy at the time of aarti, as they felt the power of the Presence, when the camphor melted into light and the light of the camphor into the light of day.

The evening saw the dedicated ‘Ramananjali’ led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, offering their rich, resounding homage of melodious songs. They were in excellent form and rendered some new songs, set to music by the famous Music Director, Sri Ilayaraja. Sri H.K. Narayana with his ‘golden voice’, thrilled everyone, so too Kumari Sarada and Kumari Ambika with their mellifluous music and the orchestration was as usual very good.

Admirers of ‘Ramananjali’ in Tiruvannamalai took delight in showering gifts on the artistes. Sri Kalai Nambi, representing the citizens of Tiruvannamalai, extolled the services being rendered through Ramana Music by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan. Sri P. Thandavarayan, Ashram Trustee, distributed the gifts to the artistes.

The special moment was 8.47 p.m., the time the Master discarded the body — and now the ‘Ramananjali’ group and the whole audience joined in singing the entire Aksharamanamalai, the 108 couplets, to which Sri Bhagavan listened with tears of joy while merging into the Infinite.

Ramana Kendra, Madras, celebrated the 32nd Anniversary of the Mahanirvana of Sri Bhagavan, on April 25, at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Hall, Madras.

Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, inaugurated the function by lighting the kuthuvilakku.

Ramana Kendra, Madras:
Sri Suddha Chaitanya expounding Sri Bhagavan’s teaching.
The Chairman of the Kendra, Sri K.K.Nambiar, in his welcome speech referred to many events that took place during the lifetime of Sri Ramana and said that Bhagavan Himself had written a Malayalam verse in reply to a query regarding the identity of Bhagavan Ramana. The English translation runs: “Arunachala Ramana is Paramatman shining as Consciousness in the hearts of all living beings from Hari downwards. Direct your vision to the inner most recesses of your heart and find Him shining there as Pure Awareness.”

He thus explained the fact that even though Bhagavan was no longer in the body, His Presence was felt as powerfully as before, not only at Sri Ramanaasramam, but also in each heart that turns to Him.

Sri Suddha Chaitanya, who was the Chief Guest and main speaker, dwelt in great detail on the Vichara Marga advocated by Bhagavan and on the significance of 'Who am I?' enquiry. His speech was not only intellectually inspiring but also surcharged with emotion.

Sri B. Anantaswamy, Vice Chairman of the Kendra, proposed a vote of thanks, after which the famous musician, Sri D.K. Jayaraman and party rendered melodiously several songs composed by and on Sri Bhagavan.

Ramana Kendra, Delhi

Bhagavan’s Mahanirvana Day was observed with the customary solemnity on April 14 as well as on the actual tithi (April 21) with vedaparayanam and devotional music.

Mother’s Day was observed on May 16. Professor K. Swaminathan and Sri K.C. Subbaiah spoke on Maharsi and the Mother.

At a well-attended public function got up on April 11, Sri G.K. Moopanar, M.P. released Delhi Kendra’s sixth book, viz., Aka Porul Vilakkam, the second volume in Muruganan’s Ramana Inana Bodham series. In his scholarly speech, Dr. K. Arumugham of Delhi University, dwelt on the poetic and spiritual excellence of Muruganan’s works. The vote of thanks was proposed by Sri T.M. Subramanian.

Rama Navami was celebrated on April 2. On May 2 Mr. Justice S. Rangarajan spoke on Sarita Sarithi Bhava as expounded by Ramanuja. On May 9, Dr. I. Panduranga Rao spoke on Sankara and his philosophy.

The Seva Samiti is continuing its service to the residents of Shakkurpur, a Reservement colony. The construction of a library-cum-reading room for their use is nearing completion.

Talks on Bhagavan’s Gita Sara by Prof. K. Swaminathan and Sri K.C. Subbaiah continued to be the main programme during the Sunday satsangs. A Shanti Koothu (a form of folk dance) on Pusalar Puranam was given by Sri R. Venkateswaran on April 18.
At Tirupati

Sri Bhagavan’s ‘Aradhana Day’ was celebrated in an impressive manner at Bhimas, Tirupati, in the presence of Sri N. Balarama Reddy of Sri Ramanasramam, on April 21.

The function commenced with the recitation by Samudrala Lakshmaiah of the verses from Chatvarimats of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni. Sri M. Balarama Reddy, President, Chinmaya Mission, presiding, Sri Panduranga Rao, welcomed the gathering.

Sri Balasubrahmanyam, Principal, Kendriya Sanskrit Vidya Peetham, Sri Venkatanarayana, Sri Arvwa Somayajulu, Secretary TTD, Hindu Dharma Raksha Samsth, Sri Samudrala Lakshmaiah, Special Officer, TTD, Dr. P.V. Arunachalam, Prof. of Maths, S.V. University, Tirupati and Sri Mallela Guravaiah, Head of the Department, Telugu, Madanapalle, spoke on various aspects of Sri Ramana’s life and teachings, with special emphasis on His unique personality and His path of self-enquiry. They also dealt with the human side of His glorious divine life.

Sri Sundara Murthy, Lecturer in Maths, S.V.U.College of Engineering, Tirupati, proposed a vote of thanks. The function came to a close with a song on ‘Ramana’ by Sri P. Venkateswara Rao. Sri Venkatachalam Iyer, Proprietor, Hotel Bhimas, deserved full credit for organising the celebration in a grand manner.

At Poona

Sri Bhagavan’s Mahanirvana Day was observed on April 22, at the residence of Sri Bhausaheb Y.N. Athavale (1390, Shukrawarpeth, Poona.2) Sri Bhausaheb, Sri Pandey and Sri Deshpande spoke on Sri Bhagavan. The celebration lasted for about two hours and it was concluded with aarti to Sri Bhagavan and distribution of Prasad. The assembled devotees felt the Presence of Sri Bhagavan.

MAHA PUJA TO HOLY MOTHER

In 1922 while still living at Skandashram, Sri Bhagavan gave liberation to His Mother. Under His guidance and supervision the sacred remains of the Mother were interred in a place near Pali Tirtham, on the southern slope of Arunachala. A few months later it became the abode of the Master and grew gradually into Sri Ramanasramam.

A temple was raised over the shrine and it took ten years — from 1938 to 1948 — to complete this temple to Matrubhuteswara, God in the form of Mother. When the consecration ceremony was held, Bhagavan took keen interest in every detail, laid His Hands on the Sri Chakra and filled the sanctum sanctorum with the power of His Infinite Grace and Peace.

Even during Maharshi’s lifetime Maha Puja, worshipping the Mother on her Mahasamadhi day, was a grand festival. The Puja was celebrated this year on May 17.

Two Melodious Cassettes

“RAMANA GEETH” :
(Hindi cassette)

“RAMANANJALI IN MAURITIUS” : ENGLISH AND TAMIL
Listen for the first time to the English tunes in praise of Bhagavan which caught Mauritius by storm. Also listen to a number of new Tamil songs by Sri Muruganar and Sri Sadhu Om on Sri Bhagavan.
Our Managing Editor stressing the imminent need for all to take to Bhagavan’s teachings. (l to r) Br. Chandramouli, Br. Subha Chaitanya, Br. Vivek Chaitanya and Br. Vimukta Chaitanya.
The Chinmaya Mission members are listening with rapt attention.

Devotees of Sri Bhagavan are grateful to Sri Swami Dayananda of Chinmaya Mission, who has inspired his students to study Sri Bhagavan’s Upadesa Sara and Sat Darshana. The Brahmacharis who studied under him give talks on these two scriptures, with right understanding, wherever they go. Special mention has to be made of the Trichy Chinmaya Mission which is disseminating Sri Bhagavan’s teachings under the guidance of Br. Subha Chaitanya. With encouragement from Sri Deepak Shah, the General Secretary of the Mission, Subhaji is spreading Sri Bhagavan’s life and message among the young and old — through Bala Vihars, Yuva Kendras and Chinmaya Mission classes and meetings.

June 12th and 13th will be remembered both by the inmates of the Ashram and the Trichy Chinmaya Mission members as most memorable days! The Ramana-Presence, with which the Ashram is filled was experienced by them. On both days, Sat sangh was conducted in front of Sri Bhagavan’s shrine.

On the 12th, Br. Vivek Chaitanya released a Tamil Book ‘Upadesa Unthiyar’ written by Subhaji — a commentary, with text on Sri Bhagavan’s original in Tamil of ‘Upadesa Saram’. Sri Vivekji extolled Sri Bhagavan as the greatest of Rishis and said that Upadesa Saram was a complete scripture in itself. Br. Vimukta Chaitanya stressed the need for sadhana as most important in addition to studying and attending lectures on scriptures. Br. Subhaji was overwhelmed with emotion as he recalled his childhood days when he was made to stand on a bench in his house by his father, whenever he did mischief. While standing on the bench he was asked to look at a picture of Sri Bhagavan hung in front. Thus, he said, Bhagavan had entered into his heart at that very tender age. Upadesa Saram was the first text taught to him by Sri Swami Dayananda, his guru.

Our Managing Editor in his welcome speech said that life and its problems should seriously be taken and one should strive to solve them by striking at the root of these problems. Impermanence, fear and suffering are rampant in one’s life. “Questioning to whom are these impediments will alone lead to their removal”, he asserted, and continued: “To abide at the source of one’s self alone is the solution for the problem of problems — the cycle of births and deaths”. “Bhagavan”, he stressed, “is not a person nor an intution but He is the truth of our own being. His coming to earth is to awaken everyone to this Truth of one’s own Self — the Ramana within”.

The 13th commenced auspiciously with the Giripradakshinam very early in the morning. Then the Mission members enjoyed the special biksha. In the afternoon there was bhajan in the Ramana Auditorium conducted by Vivekji, Chandramouliji, Vimuktaji and Subhaji. It was followed by two brilliant speeches by Vivekji and Vimuktaji.

Our Managing Editor presented beautiful photos of Sri Bhagavan to Subhaji, Vivekji, Vimuktaji, Chandramouliji and Deepak Shah. While giving them he mentioned: “When Mr. Osborne’s daughter placed a photo of Sri Bhagavan on His lap to be taken by her when she was leaving the Ashram, Sri Bhagavan remarked: ‘Kitty is taking Bhagavan with her!’ It is true. Bhagavan’s picture is Bhagavan Himself. You have received these not as gifts or presents but as Prasad since they have now been placed on Sri Bhagavan’s shrine. You are all taking Bhagavan with you. You are fortunate indeed!”
MARRIAGE

Sow Shanti with Chi. Ramanan

Our Puja on 'Kittu' performed his daughter Sow Shanti's marriage with Chi. Ramanan, on April 7, at the Ashram. 'Kittu' takes this opportunity to thank all those who blessed the young couple and helped to make the function a grand affair.

UPANAYANAM

Chi. Sekhar and Chi. Ravi

Chi. Sekhar, the son of Sri Kalyanam and Smt. Mangalam (President's daughter) was invested with the sacred thread, in front of the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan on May 26. And on the next day, Chi. Ravi, son of Sri Sundara Ramanan (President's son) and Smt. Sushila had his Upayanam.

The family reunion of all brothers and sisters for these events brought great joy to the inmates of the Ashram.

SRI RAMANA JNANA KENDRA, MYSORE

The President and the Members of Sri Ramana Jnana Kendra (Regd.), Mysore (which was founded in 1979) are happy to announce that they propose to construct a Ramana Mandiram over the site they had already acquired in a prominent place in Mysore City. They appeal to devotees and philanthropists to donate liberally for this project which is estimated to cost Rs.6,00,000/-.

This Temple for Sri Bhagavan — Ramana Mandiram — will have a meditation hall, a Library, reading room and a Guest House, as shown in the plan published herewith.

They further appeal that contributions (which are exempt from Income-tax) may please be sent by Demand Draft/Cheque/MO to: Sri B.S. Govindappa Setty, Hon. Secretary, Ramana Jnana Kendra (Regd.), Mysore, 1148, 'Vraja Niwas' Railway Station Road, Chamarajapuram, Mysore 570 004, Karnataka State.

Holy Visible Form

"Someone from abroad has written asking for a stone from the most sacred part of the hill (Arunachala). He does not know that the whole hill is sacred. It is Siva Himself. Just as we identify ourselves with a body, so Siva has chosen to identify Himself with the hill. Arunachala is Pure Wisdom in the form of a hill. It is out of compassion for those who seek Him that He has chosen to reveal Himself in the form of a hill visible to the eye. The seeker will obtain guidance and solace by staying near this hill."

— Sri Bhagavan

ARTHUR OSBORNE DAY

Many are being drawn to Sri Bhagavan, even today, reading Arthur Osborne's Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge. His writings on the Master are marked by utter devotion and clarity of vision. His Samadhi day was solemnly observed, at his tomb in his residence, by the devotees of Bhagavan on May 8 with the chanting of Aksharanamanalai.

Mrs. Osborne is now in London with her daughters, as she could not stand the heat of the summer here. She will be back at Arunachala as soon as summer recedes. Wherever she is she spreads Sri Bhagavan's message by her talks and friendly associations. We wish this pious devotee all the best, particularly good health.

S.S. COHEN DAY

Sri Cohen was no ordinary bhakta and his understanding of Bhagavan's teaching was complete and his exposition of it was clear even in his last days of infirm health. His Samadhi day was gratefully remembered on May 27.
Smt. Sandragandee Thancanamootoo

Smt. Sandragandee Thancanamootoo was an ideal wife, an affectionate mother and a generous hostess. She was respected and loved not only by her relatives but by people all around. In fact, she was as much loved as Sri Thancanamootoo, her husband, is respected in Mauritius. When the "Ramananji" group went to Mauritius last year, she welcomed them enthusiastically, though she was totally bed-ridden. Her devotion to Sri Bhagavan was supreme.

This noble lady passed away on December 25, 1981 in spite of the best medical treatment, leaving behind her husband, four daughters and two sons.

May the good soul rest in peace at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Ramana!

Smt. Sandragandee Thancanamootoo

Sri T.A. Jambulingam Pillai

We record with regret the passing away of one of the oldest and staunchest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Sri T.A. Jambulingam Pillai, at Fiji on 27th April '82, at the ripe age of 89 years.

His devotion to Sri Bhagavan was revealed by his calling the Fiji Island as 'Ramana Dweep'! He deemed it his mission to give one book and one picture of Bhagavan to each house in the entire Fiji Island. He also used to visit hospitals and distribute Sri Bhagavan's pictures and Prasad to patients. His Ramana-Seva was indeed unique and unparalleled!

Sri T.A. J. Pillai met Bhagavan in 1933 and once for all surrendered himself to the Master. He occupied many honoured positions in Fiji. He was the Founder-Secretary of TISI Sangam, the largest organisation devoted to propagation of Hindu dharma, establishment and maintenance of schools and the encouragement of South Indian arts and literature.

Sri Pillai was in poor health for the past few months, and spent them in prayer and meditation; he liked listening to 'Arunchala Siva' cassette with devotional fervour. He is survived by his 3 daughters and 7 sons, one of whom is presently Fiji's Attorney-General and another a world-renowned scientist in Vector-Control.

In him the Ramana Family has lost a most venerable elder brother, though he is eternally joined with the Master, at His Lotus Feet!

Sri Vadivudayar Swami

Devotees would have noticed, all these years, the uniform size of the vibhuti-kum kum prasad packets that are being sent all over the world, it is one man's handiwork — Sri Vadivudayar Swami. A permanent inmate of the Ashram, in charge of the Guest Room inside the Ashram from the days of Sri Bhagavan, he is well-versed in His teachings. A silent sadhu and a steady worker Sri Swami has endeared himself to all devotees. Though coming from a wealthy family, he renounced everything to live and serve at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Vadivudayar Swami attained samadhi inside the Ashram on May 11. He could not swallow solid food in his last days and wryly remarked, “There should be some excuse for the body to drop off; for me, it is this throat trouble!”

In the passing away of Sri Vadivudayar Swami, Sri Ramanasramam has lost one more silent and devoted servant of the Master and His devotees.

Sri C.K. Anavema Reddy

We record with deep regret the passing away of one of the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Sri C.K. Anavema Reddy, on May 18, after a prolonged illness.

Much cannot be written about a man of stark simplicity. Sri Anavema Reddy was drawn to Sri Bhagavan so power­full that he spent three years in the vicinity of the Ashram from 1938 to 1941, and basked in the sunshine of Ramana proximity. During that period he became a close friend of Sri Viswanatha Swami and Sri Ramanananda Saraswati (recorder of Talks). Since he was deeply interested in agriculture he returned home. He was a regular visitor to the Ashram till very recently when he fell sick
He was a great admirer of *The Mountain Path*. Now, he is one with the Master at His Lotus Feet!

We convey our condolences to the members of his family.

**Grp. Cap. N. Raghavan**

We regret to report the untimely demise on April 28 of Group Captain N. Raghavan, a great devotee, an active worker and a source of strength to the Kendra. His high organising capacity was evident in the arrangements he made during the International Ramana Centenary Seminar held in Delhi in November 1980. The highly religious soul was called to the Feet of the Lord on Sankara Jayanti day.

**Smt. Shanta Raghavan**

Smt. Shanta Raghavan, wife of Sri R.V. Raghavan, was powerfully drawn to Sri Bhagavan like every member of the family. She passed away at the age of 65 years; peacefully in Bangalore on May 4, 1982 with the Lord’s Name on her lips, her devotion was so deep. Even during her ailment she was consistent in chanting *Aksharamanamala*. May her soul rest in peace at the Lord’s Feet!

One afternoon a devotee stood near Bhagavan’s sofa and said: “Swami, I have only one desire namely to put my head on Bhagavan’s foot and do namaskar (obeisance). Bhagavan must grant me this favour.” “Oh! Is that the desire! But then which is the foot and which is the head?” asked Bhagavan. No reply. After pausing for a while Bhagavan said: “Where the self merges, that is the foot”. “Where is that place?” asked the devotee. “Where? it is in one’s own Self. The feeling ‘I’, the ego, is the head. Where that *aham vritti* (ego) dissolves, that is the foot of the Guru.”

**FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS**

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