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Guard me lest I flounder storm-tossed like a ship without helmsman. Oh Arunachala!

The Marital Garland of Letters, Verse. 79
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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
Icy hand of time is stealing away every second of one's allotted life span. When the Karmic forces, which gave rise to the body, will get exhausted, no one knows. The young meet 'untimely death'. The young, middleaged or old, none, none, is ready to face death when it knocks, uninvited. The naked fact of the transience of life itself, around which everything is built, seems to have no impact, except perhaps momentarily, in the face of unforeseen tragedies. One lets days and months slip by living like driftwood, without even attempting to discover the meaning of life. Topsy turvy values and priorities rule the roost. Everything else is urgent and important but not the desire for Self-knowledge or the serious purpose to find it through appropriate spiritual practice. Full many a life is wasted in the arid desert of motivated and thoughtless action. Even those who have taken seriously to spiritual endeavour are either addicted to intellectual philosophisation or are side-tracked into the bylanes of occult powers. So one must be ready when the call comes, for all that one has learnt, be it Sanskrit grammar or even the knowledge derived from the study of scriptures, would be of no avail at the appointed hour.

What does being ready imply? Distaste for fleeting things, is like the dawn. Then God enters one's life as a Sat-guru as Ramana did in the lives of many in their hour of need. Eleanor Pauline Noye in anguish and in search of peace found it far away from her home in California, in Ramana's smile and teachings which threw open to her 'gates of heaven'. Subbaramayya, the father of many children had his share of fate's buffets and came to face them only by seeking the soothing balm...
of Ramana’s company and words of grace. Echamma, just recovering from the shock of death of her husband and daughter, could survive the stunning blow of the death of her adopted daughter also only because of the comforting bliss of Ramana’s love and unflagging advice. Charles Madigan tired by endless stresses and strains of daily life carries on just by hugging to his bosom, the photograph of Ramana and feeling His presence, which he invokes by his loving eagerness, to give strength and succor in his spiritual efforts. Problems arise now since Ramana’s physical presence is no longer available and our passion for Him is seldom strong enough to feel intensely His joyous presence.

What then is one to do to invoke Ramana’s constant guidance. Such is the divine scheme that the balm of Ramana’s words of grace have been fully preserved. First we have the advice in ‘Self-enquiry’ and ‘Who am I’ given to Gambiram Seshier and Sivaprakasam Pillai respectively, just at the turn of this century. This is notwithstanding the fact that the words were written on sand or on a slate. This was followed by the conversation with Humphreys, the first western devotee, which took place in 1911. Then came ‘Ramana Gita’ covering the period from 1913 to 1917. In the twenties B.V. Narasimhaswami elicited Ramana’s answers on a variety of questions. Ramana’s talks in the 1930s were duly recorded by Munagala Venkataramaiah to become a milestone in spiritual literature. Then there is also Paul Brunton’s record of the transforming influence of Ramana’s message to humanity, experienced by him in the ‘the jungle hermitage’. In the forties Devaraja Mudadiar and Suri Nagamma maintained between them a day by day account of the happenings in Ramana’s presence at Sri Ramanasramam. To this we have the added record of Subbaramayya’s Reminiscenses and Cohen’s diary.

Thus practically every single conversation of Ramana with earnest seekers of Truth has been recorded and is available to all whose sights are set on the ‘most desirable’. The first group of such pilgrims who sought spiritual instructions from Ramana was headed by Ganapati Muni and their questions and Ramana’s replies are set out in mellifluous sanskrit in the ‘Ramana Gita’. The essential question as to one’s ‘Paramount duty’ raised by Deivarata sets the ball rolling on the whole gamut of spiritual matters. In reply Ramana asserts that the most important duty is to ‘discover one’s own true nature’. For therein lies the key to bliss, that being our own true nature. Since bliss is our true nature one has only to remove the obstructions which stand between us and our true nature. The veil which separates and denies one the knowledge of this true nature, is the constant outward movement of the mind away from the Self. When a devotee, Bose, asked if ‘sorrow is a thought’ pat came Ramana’s reply that ‘all thoughts are sorrowful’ and He explained that it was so because every single thought is a distraction from the Self.

As Ramana pointed out to Sadhu Arunachala that it was no easy task to check this outward movement of the mind. Once Ramana told him that even if one were to commit suicide hoping to think of God in the last moments it would be futile for, crowds of other thoughts would sprout up involuntarily.
Hence one has to find an effective means for mind-control, for inturning the mind, for fixing it in the Self. An infallible and direct means is suggested by Ramana. If one enquires deeply, within, as to the source of ‘I-thought’ or the core thought, then the mind would be merged in its source. Sorrow born of ignorance would be uprooted and the blissful atmosphere of Ramana, the ‘Ramana Lahari’, our own natural state would be regained. Can there be a more urgent need than to assimilate the teaching of Ramana and to make it our own by treading the path on which He has thrown such clear light? Then, His words become our experience. One abides in the state in which Ramana revels.

17 The Essence of Ramana Gita-Verses 7, 8 and 9.

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**IS LOVE THIS OR THE FALSE SELF?**

**BY WE & US**

Society says

- Worry
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Doubt

Materialistic Things

Crystallized beliefs and decayed systems

- Politics
- Religion
- Traditions
- Customs
- Romance
- Marriage
- Family
- Expectations
- Categorizations

Which of these keep one attached to the Physical realm of life through the mental processes? — intellectual and/or emotional controlled by the five senses.

Love knows no rivals.
Love knows no fear.
Love knows no bargaining.
SRI RAMANA'S
TEACHINGS

By K. Lakshmana Sarma

Sri K. Lakshmana Sarma ("WHO") was a senior devotee of Sri Bhagavan and a well-known exponent of His teachings, being the author of Maha Yoga, Guru Ramana Vachana Mala, Ulladu Narpadu Virivurai and other books in English, Sanskrit and Tamil. The following article is condensed and adapted from a series of four articles written by him which first appeared in the June, August, October and December 1954 issues of The Call Divine. These articles are of considerable interest, since they not only reveal the history behind the genesis of Sat-Darsana Bhashya and Maha Yoga, but also throw much light upon the different interpretations of Sri Bhagavan's teachings.

The Mountain Path seeks to act as an impartial forum in which various differing views on matters spiritual and philosophical can be freely expressed. As we state at the beginning of each issue of this journal, "The editor is not responsible for statements and opinions contained in signed articles", and hence we leave it to our readers to judge the contents of this article for themselves.

The teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana are centered around the direct path, the quest of the Self. That is to say, the Master did not teach the metaphysical truths of Vedanta as having an intrinsic value of their own, but only as aids to the understanding and the practice of the Quest. The latter alone has an intrinsic value as the means of solving all our life's problems at one stroke. The Quest is the direct path to the Natural state, wherein these problems do not exist. The Master even taught that if only one could take to the Quest and persist in it with the whole power of one's mind, then the metaphysical teachings would be superfluous. This He expressly sets forth in two verses of His Ulladu Narpadu. In the first He states the metaphysical question whether the three — the world, God and soul — are separate entities, as is maintained by the dualists, or appearances of the one, as the non-dualists say. In the next verse He mentions the controversy about the reality of the world. Neither of these questions need detain the earnest seeker of the Self, who is able to pursue the Quest without caring to come to a conclusion on these questions, because the goal of the Quest, the Natural State, which is also the egoless state, is the state in which doubts do not arise. Metaphysical teachings are necessary only for those whose minds are not yet fully ripe for the Quest. To become aware of the real Self is the means of solving all the problems of life.

Some explanations may be useful for the novice who is just entering on a study of the teachings. He will do well to make a thorough study of the little book Who am I? to begin with. This consists of Bhagavan's answers to a series of questions put by one of His earliest devotees, Sivaprakasam Pillai, and it is a concise statement of nearly the whole of His teaching. It is also worthy of note that it begins with the Quest.

The most important and to some extent the most difficult of the books is Ulladu Narpadu, the Forty Verses dealing with the Transcendent Truth, the real Self, which is the core of the
Master's revelation. As this text is in Tamil and as the interpretation of it differs in the various books that are available in English, it would be useful to set forth here some facts so far known only to a few intimate devotees so as to enable disciples to estimate the relative values of the different interpretations.

From the very beginning there were two schools of belief among the devotees of Bhagavan. One school consisted of the famous Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni and his disciples. These were adherents of the Sakta cult, which has tenets of its own, different from the Advaitic teaching of Bhagavan. And they were actuated by a firm resolve to interpret this teaching in harmony with their own faith, or at least to tone down its strict Advaitic thrust. The other school consisted of staunch believers in the pure Advaitic metaphysics as expounded by Bhagavan Sri Sankara.

The Sakta interpretation was set forth in the book entitled Sat-Darshana Bhashya, which consists of a text and commentary. The text, called Sat-Darshanam, was a rendering into Sanskrit verse of Ulladu Narpadu, and the commentary was styled the Bhashya. It was later that the Advaitic interpretation became available in English in the form of the book Maha Yoga.

There are obvious differences between these two schools. At the very start of the enquiry there arises the question, 'What is the proper criterion of Truth?'. The Saktas maintain that transcendence of time and space is not a necessary quality of truth, that is, that things that come into existence in time and space and cease to exist later are as real as that which transcends time. On the other hand, it is an axiom of Advaitic metaphysics that that alone is true which was never born and which will never cease to be, and that temporal things are not real for the purposes of metaphysics. These things have no independent existence.

To explain this criterion of Truth, we are given the analogy of gold and ornaments made of gold. Such ornaments are only names and forms of gold. They come into existence when they are made and cease to exist when they are melted. It is right and necessary to make a distinction between the names and forms on the one hand and the substance on the other, because the latter endures all the time. That is, it existed before the ornaments were made and will survive after they are melted. Not only that, even while the ornaments seem to exist, it is gold alone that exists in those form.

It will be seen, therefore, that the Truth of metaphysics is that which survives in the Egoless State, and nothing else.

Bhagavan's last work, Ekatma Panchakam, shows both in its title and in its contents that His unwavering standpoint is Advaitic, because it is the Truth. But Sat-Darshana Bhashya fails to bring out Bhagavan's own strict adherence to the Advaitic standpoint. In the first place it makes it appear that Bhagavan did not teach the unreality of the world. In the second

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1. The word 'Sakta' primarily means one who worships Sakti, the Divine Mother. However, it also denotes the philosophy and beliefs which are held by the majority of the Sakti worshippers, particularly by those of the Tantric school. It will be clear from this article that Lakshmana Sarma is not criticizing the worship of Sakti (which is certainly not incompatible with Advaitic experience), but is only pointing out how the so-called Sakta philosophy differs from the pure Advaitic truth taught by Sri Bhagavan. The "sectarian views" held by the adherents of the Sakta philosophy have been discussed at length in Maha Yoga, particularly in chapter ten. (Ed.)

2. Refer Maharshi's Gospel, 8th ed., p. 63, where Sri Bhagavan says, "What is the standard of Reality? That alone is real which exists by itself, which reveals itself by itself, and which is eternal and unchanging"; and to Talks No. 315 (p. 278), where He says, "What is not continuous cannot be real. If real, the thing must ever be real— and not real for a short time and unreal at other times". (Ed.)

3. See for example Sat-Darshana Bhashya, 6th ed., p. 6, where it is stated that "it is both futile and false to affirm that the world is unreal", and p. 24, where it is implied that Sri Bhagavan differs from Sankara in that He does not teach that the world is unreal or illusory. However, in many of His works and in many of the records of His oral teachings Sri Bhagavan has repeatedly stated that the world is merely an unreal appearance, and in verse 74 of The Garland of Guru's Sayings He even ridicules those who try to foist reality upon the world-appearance, saying that they are like "an infatuated lover foisting chastity upon a prostitute". (Ed.)
place it ignores His teaching that the so-called individual soul is just an illusory being, a result of the wrong identification of the real Self, who is pure consciousness or spirit, with the mortal gross body. Rather it conveys the idea that the individuality survives in the state of Deliverance as an entity distinct from God, who is the one supreme Reality. That there is no place for this tenet in Bhagavan’s revelation is perhaps well known to the great majority of the Master’s devotees.

In one of the crucial verses of this Revelation, the 13th verse, it is emphatically affirmed that the real Self is the sole Reality and that the world has no existence of its own apart from that Self. An analogy is given to make this teaching intelligible, namely ornaments and gold, and there are adjectives unreal and real given in the text; the former qualifies ornaments and the latter gold. The purpose is to show that in Bhagavan’s view the world of multiplicity is unreal and the Self alone real. But if the adjective ‘unreal’ is dropped, it can easily be made to appear that the world is real. And this adjective is absent in the Sanskrit rendering of the text in Sat-Darshanam.

Bhagavan’s teachings have been given orally and cryptically to a few disciples, any one of which can be taken up and meditated upon. One of these, given to Sadhu Arunachala, formerly Mr. Alan Chadwick, was this: “There is nothing. Be”. A discursive study of its implications by the recipient finds a place in the Golden Jubilee Souvenir.

Another earnest disciple who came from America and stayed somewhere near the Ashram, engaged most of the time in the Quest as taught by Bhagavan, was given the following teaching: “Only one consciousness, equally distributed everywhere. You, through illusion, give it unequal distribution. No distribution, no everywhere”.

The difference between cause and effect, Master and servant, Master and disciple, father and son and so on, are non-existent for the real Self, and for Him that has the awareness of that Self. Hence it is obvious that none of the ideas and standpoints that are part of our lives in illusion, are possible for the Sage. So we must understand that if Bhagavan remained serene and unmoved in the face of ‘temptations’, it was just His transcendent nature and not the effect of exerting will-power. For the Sage the term self-control has no meaning, because as Bhagavan would say, there are no two selves so that one of them could control the other. The perfections that aspirants achieve with effort are to the Sage just natural and altogether effortless. The true Self is like a waveless ocean, or like a lamp in a wind-free place. And what is true of the Self is true of the Sage.

The direct path as taught by Bhagavan is the Quest of the Self, the source of the ‘I’-sense, by the question ‘Who am I?’. But in Ekatma Panchakam Bhagavan actually ridicules the Quest, comparing the seeker to a far-gone drunkard who is unable to recollect his own personal identity and who asks others ‘Who

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6See for example Sat-Darshana Bhashya, 6th ed., pp. 21, 35 to 38, 47 to 48, and 86. Refer also to Talks No. 446 (p. 415), where Sri Bhagavan comments upon “the curious claim of Sat-Darshana Bhashya that individuality is retained even after the loss of ego”. (Ed.)

7In verse 119 of The Garland of Guru’s Sayings, Sri Bhagavan clearly states that “ascribing individuality to realized muktas is only learned folly” (refer to our April 1982 issue, p. 100). And in many places in Talks (for example on pp. 22, 47, 147, 175-7, 318, 388, 396, 426, 431 and 484) Sri Bhagavan repeatedly emphasises that individuality is nothing but the ego and that loss of individuality is absolutely prerequisite for the attainment of Liberation or Jnana. Moreover, the word ‘individuality’ means a distinct and separate existence, and hence it implies the existence of other things from which it is distinct and separate. Thus it should be clear to the discriminating devotee that any state in which an individuality remains cannot be a state of non-duality (advaita). (Ed.)

8A fuller explanation of this point can be found in Maha Yoga, 7th ed., pp. 119 to 120. (Ed.)

9In the Tamil original of this 13th verse, Sri Bhagavan has used the words ‘ignorance’ (ajnana) and ‘unreal’ (pov) twice each. But in Sat-Darshanam neither of these two words has been translated even once, and hence the Sanskrit rendering inevitably gives a very different meaning to the Tamil original. (Ed.)
am I?' and 'Whence am I?'. The following is the verse:

"Like the muddle-headed drunkard questioning others 'Who am I?' and 'Where am I?', is the deluded man that asks himself the question 'Who am I?' or 'Whence am I?', all the time being the Self and none else'.

That is, if even for a moment we can mentally visualise the absurdity of this self-questioning, we shall be getting near to our goal of Self-awareness. The reason is given by Bhagavan Himself in the words "being the Self all the time".

For those that think that this is unthinkable, Bhagavan prescribes the frequent remembrance of the purified 'I', the Aham which is all the content of the true Self. To keep hold of the pure 'I', unidentified with any predicate as 'I am this body' or 'I am this mind' or the like, is enough, because this name Aham is holier than the sound of 'Om'. This is also said in the little book Who am I?. This teaches us to avoid thinking of the Supreme Being as not-self. To think of Him as distinct from oneself is the original sin according to our Master. To become sinless, one must root out the false notion 'I am a jiva, distinct from God'.

But Bhagavan does not discourage those that are unable to accept this standpoint. For them He suggests the method of self-surrender to God as the saviour from death and the giver of immortality. Self-surrender is the final stage of devotion. So Bhagavan teaches devotion also as a method of reaching the goal. In doing this, He distinguishes the grades, viz. devotion with a sense of difference and the same without that sense. The latter is described as supreme devotion (para bhakti). This para bhakti is the same as true Awareness. Thus the distinction between love of God and awareness of God as the Self is shown to be an illusion.

Surrender of oneself to God is just a restoration to Him of what has always belonged to Him; it is not a gift. On the other hand, to think of oneself as having an existence distinct from that of God is described as theft. This
theft has to be atoned for by true and uninterrupted self-surrender.

One consequence of this atonement has been experienced by Him, viz. the renunciation of all personal ambitions, even the ambition to ‘save the world’. This particular ambition is nowadays looked upon as noble; but Bhagavan seems to say that this stems from the ego-sense and is therefore an obstacle to the aspirant. To every questioner whose aim was to save the world, He said that that is God’s function, not ours. To one questioner He put the counter-question, “Do you believe in God?”. The answer was “Yes”. Then Bhagavan told him to leave that task to God. To another, a woman, he pointed out that she was unable to save herself and needed to surrender herself to God for that purpose, so she could also surrender to God her worries about the world. Bhagavan never missed an opportunity to warn His devotees not to increase their worries and interests, but to make them less and less. Thus it was that He discouraged some of us from worrying about the way the Ashram was being managed. He told us we should confine ourselves to the one purpose for which we came to Him, and abstain from all else.

So long as the ego is rampant, God is a distinct reality and it is an error to ignore Him. To the doubters Bhagavan would say, “God is as real as you are”. The three — the world, the individual soul and God — are an integral whole. If one of them be believed as real, the other two must also be taken as real. Only he who can realize that all the three are false distinctions in the one Reality, the Self of all, is the knower of Truth.

In this connection it has to be remembered that Bhagavan Sankara also has established the six religions, one of which is the Sakta cult. But none of these can be identified with Bhagavan’s pure Advaitic teaching. That teaching has been faithfully conveyed by devoted disciples like Sri Muruganar. It is not strange that Sri Kapali Sastri, who wrote *Darshana Bhashya*, ultimately left Bhagavan’s presence and got admitted in Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry and became an adherent of the Aurobindo cult, in which it is claimed that the individual soul continues as a distinct entity even after becoming ‘free’. The teaching of Bhagavan, on the other hand, is that even now the soul is a phantasm, a chit-jada-granthi, an ascription of selfhood to the physical body, which is ignorance.

While the ego survives it comes naturally to the well-intentioned to believe in God, to love Him and to rely on Him. This Bhagavan has wholeheartedly approved of in many places in His writings and on many occasions in His talks. The good soul has to reach the goal, the supreme state, by God’s Grace, deserved and won through devotion culminating in self-surrender (atma-samarpana). This is expressly said in the last of the five verses of the *Atma-Vidya* lyric.

As to the direct path, only one hint is needed, which is given by Bhagavan in the ‘link words’ of the kalivenba version of *Ulladu Narpadu* (in Tamil). These words occur before verse 29, and in English they mean “the body being left as if dead”. This reminds us of the exact preliminaries of the Quest as practised by Bhagavan Himself. The body has to be discarded as if dead. The thoroughness with which this is done is the measure of the success of the Quest.

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8 The six religions (shan-mata) established by Sankara are Saiva, Vaishnava, Sakta, Kaumara, Ganapatya and Saura. (Ed.)
9 On p. 95 of his book *The Maharshi*, Kapali Sastri explains his reason for leaving Sri Bhagavan and for becoming a follower of Sri Aurobindo, as follows: “But I found his (the Maharshi’s) teaching too direct, immediate, seemingly simple, having no steps in between the starting point and the goal, at any rate not practicable to people circumstanced like myself”. (Ed.)
10 See *The Mountain Path*, October 1981, p. 217, where a translation of the kalivenba version of *Ulladu Narpadu* has been given. (Ed.)
Idea of the Centre in Ancient Traditions

By Rene Guenon

Symbols have been from time immemorial a kind of universal language, used and understood among different cultures throughout the centuries, though modern mankind has lost much of its wealth of spiritual meaning. The late French philosopher of European reputation RENE GUENON, composed a work with the title of, Symbols of the Sacred Science ('Symboles De La Science Sacree', 1962) some excerpts of which we are going to offer to our readers as a serial by kind permission of the French publishers of the Editions Gallimard, Paris. This is the first of them, translated from the French by Hubert and Rohini Schiff.

The idea of the Centre is of utmost importance in all ancient traditions. The Centre is, above all, the origin, the starting point of everything; it is the principle-point, formless and without dimensions, thus invisible and consequently the only image that could be given of the primordial Unity. From it, by its irradiations, are all things produced, just as Unity produces all the numbers, without its essence being thus modified or affected in any way. Here we see a complete parallelism between two ways of expression: geometrical symbolism and numerical symbolism, in such a manner that either can be used indifferently and we can even cross over from one to the other most naturally. Besides, it should not be forgotten that in either case it still remains symbolism: arithmetical unity is not metaphysical Unity; the former is only a figure of the latter, but a figure which is anything but arbitrary, for, between the two, there exists a real analogical relation, and it is this relation which enables the idea of Unity to be transposed beyond the field of quantity in the transcendental order. The same holds true in respect of the idea of the Centre. This idea is susceptible of a similar transposition by which it sheds its spatial character which is then evoked only as a symbol: the central point is the Principle, the pure Being. The space that it fills with its radiance — space which exists but by this very radiance (Fiat Lux of Genesis) — and without which this space would be nothing but "deprivation" and nothingness, is the World in the largest sense of the term, i.e., the totality of all beings and all states of existence that form the universal manifestation.

The simplest representation of the above exposed idea is the dot at the centre of the circle (fig.1): the dot is the emblem of the Principle, the circle is that of the World. As for the use of this representation, it is impossible to determine its origin in Time, for it is frequently found on prehistoric objects. No doubt, it should be considered as one of the signs in direct connection with the primordial tradition. Sometimes, the dot is surrounded
by many concentric circles representing apparently the different states or degrees of the manifested existence placed hierarchically according to their greater or shorter distance from the primordial Principle. The dot at the centre of the circle has also been considered, and probably ever since an extremely ancient epoch, as an image of the sun, because in the physical order, the sun is truly the Centre or the “heart of the World”. To this day, this sign has remained as a usual astrological and astronomical sign of the sun. It is perhaps for this reason that most of the archaeologists, wherever they come across this symbol, claim to give it an exclusively “solar” significance, whereas in reality it conveys a meaning far more vast and profound. They forget, ignore or do not know that from the viewpoint of all ancient traditions, the sun itself is nothing but a symbol — a symbol of the real “Centre of the World” which is the divine Principle.

The relation that exists between the centre and the circumference, or between what they respectively represent, is already indicated clearly enough by the fact that the circumference could not exist without its centre, whereas the latter is absolutely independent of the former. This relation can be pointed out in a still clearer and more explicit manner, by radii originating from the centre and ending in the circumference. These radii can of course be drawn as varying in number, for they are really an indefinite multitude like the points of the circumference which are their extreme ends. But, in fact, for this kind of representations, numbers conveying by themselves a particular symbolic value have always been chosen. Here the simplest form is the one that shows only four radii dividing the circumference in equal parts, i.e., two rectangular diameters forming a cross inside the circumference (fig. 2). This new figure bears the same general significance as the first one; however, in addition, certain secondary meanings are attached thereto as a completion: if one imagines the circumference as run over in a certain direction, it is the image of a cycle of manifestation, such as the cosmic cycles of which the Hindu doctrine gives an extremely developed theory. The sections determined on the circumference by the ends of the branches of the cross then correspond to the different periods or phases into which the cycle is divided. Such a division can be considered, so to speak, on various scales, in accordance with the cycles being more or less extended: in this way, for example, in the field limited to the sole order of earthly existence, there will be the four principal moments of the day, the four phases of the lunar cycle, the four seasons of the year, and also, according to the conception found in the traditions of India and of Central America as well as those of the Graeco-Latin antiquity, the four ages of mankind. We are only mentioning these considerations briefly here, in order to give a general idea of what is represented by the symbol concerned. Moreover, these considerations are directly related to what we will have to say further.

Among the figures comprising a greater number of radii, special mention must be made of the wheels or “rouelles” having most often six or eight spokes (fig. 3 and 4). The Celtic “rouelle” which perpetuated itself almost throughout the Middle Ages is found in either of these two forms. The same figures, and mostly the second one, are found very often in the oriental countries, noticeably in Chaldea and Assyria, in India (where the wheel is called chakra) as well as in Tibet. On the other hand, there is close relation between the six-spoked wheel and the chrisma (fig. 5). The latter differs from the former only in so far as that the circumference, to which the extreme ends of the radii belong, is not usually drawn. Now, the wheel, instead of being merely a “solar” sign, as is commonly taught nowadays, is above all a symbol of the World; and this is easily understandable. In the symbolic language of
In India, there are constant mentions of the “wheel of things” or the “wheel of life”, which corresponds clearly with this significance. It also mentions the “wheel of Law”, an expression borrowed by Buddhism, among many others, from the earlier doctrines, and which, originally at least, refers to the cyclic theories. It must also be added that the Zodiac is represented also in the form of a wheel, naturally with twelve spokes. In fact, its name in Sanskrit literally signifies “wheel of signs”. It can also be translated as “wheel of numbers”, according to the original meaning of the word rashi which is used to designate the signs of the Zodiac.

Besides, there is a certain connection between the wheel and various floral symbols, and in certain cases at least, we could have even spoken of a real equivalence. If one takes into consideration a symbolic flower like the lotus, the lily or the rose, its blooming represents, among other things (for, these are symbols with multiple significances), the development of the manifestation, and this through a very understandable similarity. Moreover, this blossoming is a radiance around the Centre, for, here again these figures are “centred”, and this is what justifies their assimilation with the wheel. In the Hindu tradition, the World is sometimes represented in the form of a lotus at the centre of which rises the Meru, the sacred Mountain symbolizing the Pole.

But let us return to the significances of the Centre, for, till now we have only exposed the first of all the significances — that which makes of the Centre the image of the Principle. We shall find another significance in the fact that the Centre is properly the “middle”, the point equidistant from all the points on the circumference, and which divides all diameters into two equal parts. In the former lines, the Centre was considered, in a way, before the circumference which has no reality but through the radiance of the Centre. Now it is viewed with regard to the realized circumference. In other words, it concerns the action of the Principle instead of in the bosom of prevailing creation. The middle between the extremes represented by opposite points of the circumference is the place where the contraries ending at these extremes neutralize each other, so to speak, and are in perfect equilibrium. Certain Muslim esoteric schools which attribute to the cross a symbolic value of utmost importance call the centre of this cross “divine stage” (el-maquamul-ilahi) and point it out as the place where all opposites are unified and all oppositions resolved. Thus, the idea expressed here more precisely is that of equilibrium. This idea is one with that of harmony. These are not two different ideas, but merely two aspects of one and the same idea. There is still a third aspect of this idea, connected especially with the moral outlook (although likely to receive other significances as well) — it is the idea of justice. One can, in this way, link up to the subject discussed here the platonic conception of virtue consisting of a golden mean between two extremes. From a much more universal point of view, the traditions of the Far East speak unceasingly of the “Invariable Middle” — point where
"Heaven's Activity" manifests itself and according to the Hindu doctrine, at the centre of all beings, as well as that of any state of cosmic existence, abides a reflected image of the supreme Principle.

Moreover, equilibrium itself as a matter of fact is nothing in the order of manifestation except the reflection of the absolute immutability of the Principle. In order to consider things from this new viewpoint, one should view the circumference as if in movement around its centre which alone does not partake of this movement. The very name of wheel (French roue, Latin rota) immediately calls to mind the idea of rotation; and this rotation is the figure of the continual change to which everything manifested is submitted. In such a movement, there is only one point which remains fixed and immutable, and that point is the Centre. This brings us back to the cyclic conceptions about which we have said a few words formerly: the course of any cycle or the rotation of the circumference is succession, either in temporal mode or in any other mode. The fixity of the Centre is the image of eternity, where all things are present in perfect simultaneity. The circumference cannot rotate except around a fixed centre. Similarly, change which is not self-sufficient, necessarily presupposes a principle which is external to change: it is Aristotle's "unmoving mover" which is again represented by the Centre. Thus, the immutable principle is at the same time, and by the very fact that all that exists, all that changes or moves, owes its reality only to it and depends totally on it, we say that it is the Principle which gives to movement its first impulse; the Principle is also that which rules it afterwards and directs it. It is the Principle which gives it its law, the preservation of the World order being, so to speak, nothing but an extension of the act of creation. According to a Hindu expression, it is "the inner organizer", (antaryami), for it rules over everything from inside, itself abiding in the innermost point of all, which is the Centre.

Instead of the rotation of a circumference around its centre, it is equally possible to consider the rotation of a sphere around a fixed axis; the symbolic significance remains exactly the same. This is why representations of the "World Axis" are so numerous and so important in all ancient traditions. The general meaning is fundamentally identical to that of the figures of the "Centre of the World", except perhaps in that they call to mind the role of the immutable Principle with regard to the universal manifestation, more directly than other respects in which the Centre can also be considered. When the sphere — earthly or celestial — accomplishes its revolution around its axis, there are two points on the sphere which remain fixed: these are the poles that are the extremities of the axis, or its meeting points with the surface of the sphere; and that is why the idea of the Pole is, again, an equivalent of the idea of the Centre. The symbolism in connection with the Pole, which assumes sometimes very complex forms, is to be found in all traditions, and even takes up a considerable place in them.

One of the most striking figures in which the ideas we have just exposed are summed up is that of the swastika (fig. 6 and 7), which is essentially the "sign of the Pole". Besides, we think that in modern Europe one has never made its real significance known clearly so far. Attempts have been made in vain to explain this symbol through the most whimsical theories. One has gone to the extent of viewing it as the diagram of a primitive instrument meant for producing fire. As a matter of fact, if it does have a certain relation with fire sometimes, it is for quite different reasons. Most of the time it is considered as a "solar" sign, which it might have become only by accident and in a rather indirect way. We could repeat here what we said in the preceding lines concerning the wheel and the dot at the centre of the circle. Those who have been the closest to the truth are those who considered the swastika as a symbol of movement. But this interpretation is still insufficient, for it is not just any movement, but a rotating movement carried out around a centre or an immutable axis. It is precisely the fixed point...
IDEA OF THE CENTRE IN ANCIENT TRADITIONS

which is the essential element and with which the symbol in question has a direct relation. The other significances comprised in the same figure are all derived from the former: the Centre imparts motion to everything, and as motion represents life, the swastika becomes as such a symbol of life, or more precisely, a symbol of the vivifying role of the principle with regard to the cosmic order.

If we compare the swastika to the figure of the cross inscribed in the circumference, we can notice that these are fundamentally two equivalent symbols. But the rotation, instead of being represented by the outline of the circumference, is indicated in the swastika only by the lines added to the ends of the branches of the cross at right angles. These lines, tangential to the circumference, point out the direction of the movement at the corresponding points. As the circumference represents the World, the fact that it is merely implied, in a way, shows very clearly that the swastika is not a figure of the World, but as a matter of fact, that of the action of the Principle with regard to the World.

If the swastika is related to the rotation of a sphere, such as the celestial sphere around its axis, it should be understood as drawn on the equatorial plane. The central point, then, will be the projection of the axis on this plane, which is perpendicular to the axis. As for the direction of the rotation indicated by the figure, it is of secondary importance. Actually, one comes across both forms as reproduced above, but one should not feel the necessity to consider it always as an intention to establish opposition of any kind between the two. We know very well that in certain countries and at certain epochs, schisms may have occurred, and we also know that their supporters deliberately gave to the figure an orientation contrary to the one which was in use in the circles from which they were breaking away, and this in order to assert their antagonism by an external sign. However, this does not alter the essential significance of the symbol in any way, which remains the same in all cases.

The swastika is far from being an exclusively oriental symbol as it is often believed. In reality, it is one of the most widespread symbols, to be found almost everywhere, from the Far East to the far West, as it exists as far as among certain indigenous peoples of North America. In our times, it is conserved above all in India and in Central and East Asia, and most probably it is only in these regions that its significance is still known. However, even in Europe it has not entirely disappeared. In Lithuania and in Courlande, peasants still draw this sign in their houses. Undoubtedly, they do not know its meaning, and consider it merely as a kind of protecting talisman. But what is most curious is that they call this sign by its Sanskrit name.

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6 The same remark holds true of the chrisma compared to the wheel.
7 The word swastika in Sanskrit is the only one which serves in all cases to indicate the symbol in question. The term Sauwastika applied by some to one of these two forms in order to distinguish it from the other one (which alone would then be the real swastika) is in reality nothing but an adjective derived from swastika and stands for all that is meant by this symbol or its significance.
8 The same remark could be made for other symbols and especially for the Constantinian chrisma in which the P is sometimes reversed. It was sometimes thought that it should then be considered as a sign of Antichrist. This intention may have been inherent in certain cases, but there are other cases where it is obviously impossible to admit it (in the catacombs, for example). In the same manner, the corporative "digit four" which is only a modification of this same P of the chrisma is turned indifferentely in either direction without it being possible to even attribute this fact to a rivalry between various corporations or to their desire to distinguish themselves from one another, since we find the two forms in marks belonging to one and the same corporation.
9 We are not referring here to the entirely artificial use of the swastika, especially by certain German political groups who, very arbitrarily, made it a sign of antisemitism on pretext that this emblem would be appropriate to the so-called "Aryan race". This is nothing but sheer fantasy.
of swastika.\textsuperscript{10} In the antiquity, we find this sign especially among the Celts and in prehellenic Greece,\textsuperscript{11} and again in the West, in the ancient times it was one of the emblems of Christ and it continued to be in use as such until about the end of the Middle Ages. Like the dot at the centre of the circle and like the wheel, this sign dates back unquestionably to prehistoric times. On our part, we consider it without any hesitation as also one of the vestiges of the primordial tradition.

We have not yet finished indicting all the significances of the Centre. If it is above all a starting-point, it is also an ending-point. Everything has sprung out from the Centre and must finally go back to it. Since all things owe their existence to the sole Principle and cannot subsist without it, there has to be a permanent link between all things and the principle, represented by the radii which join all the points of the circumference with the Centre. But these radii can be run over in two opposite directions: firstly, from the centre to the circumference, and secondly, from the circumference back to the centre. Here it is like two complementary phases; the first phase is represented by a centrifugal movement and the second one by a centripetal movement. These two phases can be compared to that of respiration, following a symbolism often referred to by Hindu doctrines; and on the other hand, an equally remarkable analogy with the physiological function of the heart is also to be found here. As a matter of fact, blood goes out from the heart, circulates throughout the organism vivifying it, and then comes back to the heart. The role of the heart as organic centre is thus really complete and corresponds entirely with the idea which the Centre should represent for us in the plenitude of its significance.

All beings, depending on their Principle for all what they are, must consciously or unconsciously aspire to return to it. This tendency to return to the Centre also has its symbolic representation in all traditions. We mean the ritual orientation which is properly the direction towards a spiritual centre, the earthly and sensible image of the real “Centre of the World”. The orientation of the Christian churches is after all nothing but a particular case of the same and refers essentially to the same idea which is common to all religions. In Islam, this orientation (qibla) is like the materialization — if one may put it in this way — of the intention (niyya) by which all forces of the being must be directed towards the divine Principle.\textsuperscript{12} Many similar examples could be easily found. A lot could be said on this subject; we may probably have some opportunity to come back to it during the course of this study. This is why, for the time being, we shall only point out briefly the last aspect of the symbolism of the Centre.

In short, the Centre is at one and the same time the principle and the end of everything. In accordance with a wellknown symbolism, it is the alpha and the omega. Or better still, it is the principle, the middle and the end. These three aspects are represented by the three elements of the monosyllable Aum. Mr. Charbonneau-Lassay had alluded to it as an emblem of Christ, and its association with the Swastika among the signs of the monastery of Carmelites in Loudun seems particularly significant to us. Actually, this symbol which is much more complete than the alpha and the omega, susceptible of furnishing meanings which could lead to almost indefinite developments, is by one of the most astonishing concordances, common to the ancient Hindu tradition and the Christian esoterism of the Middle Ages. In both cases, it is equally and par excellence, a symbol of the Word, who is really the veritable “Centre of the World”.

\textsuperscript{10}Moreover, of all the European languages, it is Lithuanian which resembles the most to Sanskrit.

\textsuperscript{11}There are many variables of the swastika: for example, a form with curved branches (looking like two crossed $S$) that we found especially on a Gallic coin. On the other hand, certain figures which have preserved only a purely decorative character, like the one called “Greek”, derive their origin form the swastika.

\textsuperscript{12}The word “intention” should be understood here in its strictly etymological sense (from in-tendere, meaning: to tend towards).
Aspects of Sri Ramana Maharshhi in the Context of Advaita Thought

By Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy

'ADVAITA' is not just a word whose meaning can be found in a dictionary; it is not even a mere concept whose significance can be determined precisely by wide reading of abstruse sastra works on the veracity of which endless debates have been held over the centuries. Nor is it only a chapter in the history of Indian philosophy of interest to academicians. And, certainly, it is not any new religious faith with well-defined dogmas propagated by the great Sankaracharya. But these are some of the ways in which both laymen and scholars usually understand Advaita today. And we should first disabuse our minds of these wrong notions. What Advaita truly stands for is the wisdom of all the Upanishads, also known as Vedanta. Our national poet Kalidasa in 400 A.D. starts one of his plays with a prayer to Siva which is profound in its insight:

Vedantesu yamahureka-Purusam
vyapya stitham rodasi
yasmin Isvara ityanavisyayah
śabdo yatharthakasarah
Antaryāśca mumuksubhir
niyamita-pranaih sada mrgyate
Sa sthanuh sthirabhaktiyoga-sulabhah
niḥśreyasayastu vah.

"The one cosmic person, enveloping the earth and heaven and transcending both, is how Siva is described in the Upanishads. The word Lord becomes fully applicable to Him and none else. And He is the one sought within themselves by seekers of moksha. He is constant and easily within the reach of devotion. May He grant us the highest good." Absolute and Transcendental Reality is One alone (eka); and its realisation here and now is the highest goal set for human life by the hoary Upanishadic sages.

This unbroken tradition of the absolute identity of Isvara guru-atman is the rich heritage handed on to posterity by countless generations of saints and seers in this land, in a myriad ways of immortal expression — hymns, songs, tracts and texts — in all the Indian languages. This is the one refrain of the innumerable Agamas or scriptures of various religions. No wonder on Bhagavan's lips the words —

Isvaro gururatmeti bhedatrayavivarjitah
of the Agamas were ever present. 'God, Guru and Atman are non-distinct'. that indeed is
Advaita in a nutshell. It is a felt experience for adepts and saints admittedly beyond verbal description. It is both mystic and esoteric; but it is an experience which is not beyond the reach of any sincere seeker within himself, whatever his caste or creed or station in life. There is no wisdom more universal than Advaita.

II

Let us now turn to Advaita text-tradition. It is a tradition as beginningless as creation, and starting from Lord Siva himself as Dakshinamurti. In the Vedic age Vasishtha and Vamadeva were its inheritors; and Yajnavalkya its best spokesman in the Upanishads. The tradition was passed on in Puranic times to Parasara, Vyasa and Suka until we come, in historical times, to the revered names of Gaudapada, Govinda and Sankara. If Gaudapada’s is the first poetic summing up of Advaita thought as developed in the Upanishads, Sankara’s is the first systematic exposition of it in philosophical terminology. Sankara offers his obeisances to this long line of Advaita preceptors at the beginning of his Tattviriya Upanishad-bhashya:

Yairime gurubhih purvam
padavakyapramanatah
vyakhya-tah sarvavedantah
tan nityam pranato smysham.

Pada is sastra of grammar, vakya of mimamsa and pramana of tarka. An intellectual formulation of the eternal verity of Advaita taught in the Upanishads, consistent with grammar, logic and principles of scriptural interpretation, is the self-imposed task of the great Bhashyakara. It is as relevant today as ever before. Such is the Brahmavidya-sanpradaya.

III

With the grace of those gurus, the mumuksha-disciple can reach Absolute perfection in this life provided he is earnest in his quest. But such a self-realised jivan-mukta can not announce it as he has no individuality left. His silence alone will be his explanation. Avacanam Buddha-vacanam!

But when the guru condescends to explain the great mystery of Brahman whose essence is Sat-chit-ananda in one; i.e. unity of existence, knowledge and ineffable bliss, he would adopt certain techniques. These serve as steps only to reach the end; and the analogical method used by him should not be taken as reality in itself. It is here that the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana and Sankara Bhagavatpada converge. One rings like an echo of the other in essence, though Bhagavan’s is the language of the laymen, while Sankara’s is the language of the learned.

We shall take here a few outstanding examples.

(1) The postulate of Primeval Adhyasa or Avidya or Maya: The word Maya is as old as the Rigveda, while avidya is first found in the Upanishads, and Adhyasa is developed for the first time by Sankara. A man lives and has his being in three states viz., Waking, Dream and Deep sleep. He is active in mind or body or both in the first two; and his experiences are infinite indeed. During dreamless sleep, he is almost dead to the waking world as well as the dream-world. Yet when he wakes up he remembers somehow his existence and feeling of joy during sleep. This cycle of routine goes on endlessly; and his life of hopes, disappointments, joys and sorrows revolves till the hour of dreaded death. This is exactly what the Vedanta would regard as Samsara and we are all deep in it and we never doubt the reality of it all. We cannot imagine our intellect playing false. It has, however within its own recess, the Absolute reality as Atman which is so thickly covered by the veil of impenetrable Ignorance that it goes unrecognised by everyone save a jivan-mukta or a Maharshi. This Ignorance primordial, native to the human station, is not endless; it can be removed by the sunshine of Self-realization or Atma-jnana. In other words, what we call “knowledge” is “ignorance” in fact. As the Gita puts it — when we are awake.
the \textit{mukta} is asleep; when we are asleep, he is awake. This paradox is integral to the Advaitic standpoint. Man's real estate is absolute wisdom and bliss within his Atman. He can experience it by probing deep into his own essential spirit and reaching a fourth (turiya) state of self-awareness which is the opposite of the mundane self-awareness.

\begin{quote}
\textit{ya nisa sarvabhutanam tasyam jagrati samyami, yasmin jagrati bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh.}
\end{quote}

The latter is due to non-exercise of the intellect properly and allowing oneself to be guided by \textit{avidya} and \textit{kama} or desire in all life-activity. This mistaken identity of the non-self with the real self itself is \textit{Adhyasa (atasminstadbuddhi)} This is the language of Sankara's Advaita which is basic to his philosophy.

Bhagavan's exhortation to his devotees is for knowing the \textit{I} as it is, that is, not as the body, nor as the mind, not even as the intellect, because the true \textit{I} exists in all the three states unaffected, only as a witness and \textit{not} as a participant, until by the grace of the guru the \textit{Atma-jnana} dawns upon one and one becomes Brahman Absolute. Since by definition, this ultimate knowledge is indescribable in words, the only way it can be indicated even by a \textit{jnanin} is by negating what is superimposed for purposes of communication. This method is known as \textit{adhyaropa-apavada}, negating something imaginary (\textit{kalpana}) by another thing, also imaginary (\textit{pratikalpana}) to use the words of the \textit{Yoga-vasistha}. To a \textit{jnanin}, the world with all its multiplicity is but a dream-like appearance. But it is posited for the time being only to be denied at a later stage. This methodology becomes bewildering and confusing to laymen because the scriptures do speak of \textit{pitrus} (manes), \textit{devatas} (gods), rituals and modes of worship, creation of the universe and its destruction, in limited time and space and so forth. All these are only half-truths because, when \textit{Atman} dawns, or when \textit{Ignorance} ceases, all these become false appearances. They serve as half-way houses in purifying the mind; though they cannot save the soul, they can make the souls fit to be saved.

(2) The description of the Enlightened soul found in Advaita texts — such as that of \textit{sthita-prajna} or \textit{gunatita} in the \textit{Gita} and Sankara's \textit{Upadesa-sahasri} and the actual life of Sri Bhagavan bear one-to-one correspondence. Sri Bhagavan repeatedly indicates the unknown through the known. \textit{Brahmajnana} is the unknown; existence-bliss of the \textit{Atman} in deep sleep is the known. The waking and dream world of multiplicity just disappears during deep sleep without a trace; this is known. In the state of transcendental enlightenment or \textit{turyavastha}, the man awake to \textit{Brahman} is in a state contrary to deep sleep. This is the unknown. Says Acharya Sankara:

\begin{quote}
\textit{Susuptavajjagrati yo na pasyati dvayam tu pasyannapi cadvyatvatah. tatha ca kurvannapi niskriyasca yah sa atmavinnanya itiha niscayah. (Upadesasahasri, X. 13)}
\end{quote}

How is one to distinguish the true, \textit{atmavit} from one who is but a pretender? The test proposed by Sankara is this. He should be wide awake while appearing to be in deep sleep. He should be blind to duality even while perceiving it by his senses. He should be actionless while engaged in action all the time. This paradoxical description begins to make sense only when we see that the whole life of Bhagavan Ramana was a living commentary of that text. That is why his highest message was couched in silence. This is the essence of the \textit{Gita} ideal of \textit{niskama-karma-yoga}, \textit{Lokasangraha}, and \textit{sva-dharma}, strongly grounded in \textit{jnana-nishtha}. Karma without \textit{kama} is really \textit{jnana}-oriented and similarly \textit{loka-sangraha} means \textit{lokanugraha}, the uplift of humanity as a whole spiritually. \textit{Sva-dharma} means verily the fundamental nature of \textit{Atman} which is universal and transcends the limitations of time, space and causality; certainly not mere social and caste duties.
Sankara did not attach much importance to book-learning divorced from experience. Nor did Bhagavan Ramana. Sankara observes in his Vivekachudamani:

\[
\text{avijnate pare tattve} \\
\text{sastradhitistu nisphala} \\
\text{vijnate pi pare tattve} \\
\text{sastradhitistu nisphala.}
\]

When the Absolute Truth is unrealized, futile is book-learning; again, it is equally futile when Absolute Truth is realized!

More often than not, mere learning in \textit{sastras} inflates the ego and leads to one’s display of vast learning and subtle intellect, to gain worldly wealth. This is the very opposite of what it is expected to achieve:

\[
\text{vagvaikhari sabdajhari} \\
\text{sastravyakhya-kausalam} \\
\text{vaidusyam vidusam caiva} \\
\text{bhuktaye na tu multaye.}
\]

All the powers of eloquence and flow of words, the subtlety of expounding abstruse texts and scholarship of the learned are misused to secure worldly pelf and not liberation from worldly existence! This is another verse from the Vivekachudamani. Only very rare souls like Sadashiva Brahmendra Yogi and Bhagavan Ramana are found leading their whole life in the ideal way of jnanins, which often appears perplexing by ordinary standards.

Sankara’s happy way of expounding the ultimate truth of Advaita is often found in Bhagavan’s “Talks”. Scriptures do state that the three stages in the path to \textit{moksha} are — \textit{sravana} or hearing, \textit{manana} or cogitation and \textit{nidadhyasana} or concentration. Does the first imply mere parrot-like repetition of the \textit{mahavakya} or sentence “\textit{Tat tvamasi}” without reference to its significance? “No”, says Sankara. “None offers a daughter in marriage to a bridegroom to kill him!”

“\textit{na tattvamasi vakyarthat pracyavya avrttau pravartayer. na hi varaghataye kanyam udvahayanti.”}

\textit{(Br. S. Bhasya IV. 1.2)}

Depending upon the eligibility of the disciple, the \textit{guru} leads from the simple to the complex, from the known to the unknown. To carry conviction to his mind, the stage of \textit{manana} is prescribed. But all the time, the ultimate goal remains \textit{atmanubhava} which cannot be had without \textit{nidadhyasana} or one-pointed concentration on the ‘\textit{atman}’ within, shutting out the activity of the senses as well as the mind and the doubting intellect.

People at large are impressed easily by miracles of godmen. The \textit{siddhis} of godmen, even if true, are disdained by real \textit{jnanins}. The latter show equal regard for all religions; they are not dogmatic like those who claim that theirs alone is the right path and all the rest are wrong. Advaita is the only philosophy which serves as an antidote to religion becoming an opiate of the masses. It countenances religion as a discipline only so long as it serves as a means to \textit{Jnana} and not as an ultimate end in itself.

The common god-seekers today want easy ways from the \textit{guru} a \textit{mantra} or an amulet or an act of grace or at least an easy way of action by which they can also attain Supreme \textit{Jnana}. “What shall I do?” ‘on what shall I think?’ — are the usual questions. They would like to know the indications that signal their spiritual advancement.

Neither Sankara nor the Bhagavan have any easy recipes for devotees in a hurry. “\textit{Na purusha-vyaparatranta Brahmavidya}” is the bold declaration of Sankara. Absolute Knowledge is not dependent on any sort of effort on the part of man, physical or psychic. It is as \textit{vastu-trantra} as even knowledge of perceptible objects.

“\textit{Sarvam khalvidam Brahma}” is the simple and complete Truth of the universe. It has to be realised as the Absolute Existential truth; no more and no less. In worldly knowledge there is the subject-object duality. In absolute Knowledge, this duality disappears; the subject and the object become one non-dual being;
that is all. In that experiential state of Advaita, there is no trace of duhkha or suffering; all is one unalloyed knowledge and bliss as declared by Sankara.

Sarvadukkha-vinirmuktaikacaitanyatmakah
ityesa atmanubhavah
(Professor S. Balasubramanian, Bhasya IV. 1.2)

And Ramana’s saying bring out this fact most forcefully and illuminatingly.

We have noticed above only a few basic aspects of Bhagavan Ramana’s life and teachings in the context of traditional Advaita thought. Before we close, we cannot do better than invoke the eternal grace of that guru-parampara to lead us from darkness to light, from ignorance to illumination, where doubts are dispelled and difficulties are destroyed.

Ajnatatimirandhasya
jnanajnanasalakaya.
caksurunmilitan yena
tasmai Sri-gurave namah.

Caitanyam sastravat santram
vyomatitan nirajanam.

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA ON SELF-ENQUIRY
(extracts from The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna)

"... the ego and the universe are both illusory, like a dream ... If one analyses oneself, one doesn’t find any such thing as ‘I’. Take an onion, for instance. First of all you peel off the red outer skin; then you find thick white skins. Peel these off one after the other, and you won’t find anything inside. In that state a man no longer finds the existence of his ego. And who is there left to seek it?... Not the slightest trace of distinction is left.” (page 148)

"Just try to find out who this ‘I’ is. While you are searching for ‘I’, ‘He’ comes out.” (page 804)

"Try to find out what this ‘I’ is. Is this ‘I’ the bones or flesh or blood or intestines? Seeking the ‘I’, you discover ‘Thou’. In other words, nothing exists inside you but the power of God. There is no ‘I’, but only ‘He’.” (page 819)

"Now I cannot find my ego within myself any more. When I search for it I see God alone. One can never attain God without completely getting rid of the ego.” (page 459)

"One ultimately discovers God by trying to know who this ‘I’ is.” (page 180)
ETERNAL RAMANA

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

— V.G.

PROFESSOR N.R. Krishnamurthi Aiyar (introduced to our readers in our issue of January, 1973, p. 52) is one of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, happily living amidst us at Arunachala. His father, Sri Ranganatha Iyer, was a class-mate of Sri Bhagavan. With every breath Sri Krishnamurthi Aiyar utters the Holy Name of Sri Ramana! A professor of Physics, he is well-versed in the teachings of Ramana, besides being totally drowned in Ramana-devotion. In one of his earlier visits to Sri Bhagavan, he was fortunate enough to receive from Bhagavan’s own Hands a copy each of Arunachala Stuti Panchakam (‘Five Hymns to Arunachala’) and Ramana Stuti Panchakam (‘Five Hymns to Ramana’). Ever since he has been doing parayana of these; he has the ambition of completing a crore (ten million) times of reciting each. He says proudly: “The two are mantras and are meant especially for parayana. Bhagavan, when asked to give the meaning of Arunachala Stuti Panchakam, said: ‘Repeatedly reading it is its meaning!’ I will obey my Master and be doing this parayana any number of times every day, day-after-day!”

I have the proud privilege of talking to him quite often. Here is the gist of the latest talk I have had with him. He said:

“Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is Himself the embodiment of all sadhanas hitherto known to the human race for the achievement of jivanukti (Liberation while living in the body).

“Lord Matru-Bhuseswara-Siva Himself incarnated as Mother Alagammal and presented the Divine Ramana to suffering humanity. That Ramana Body is now enshrined in His samadhi at Sri Ramanasramam and abides therein as Ramaneswara Maha Linga. That Divine Body is enshrined also in the hearts of Ramana-devotees, all over the world.

“All of us Ramana-devotees are the beloved children of Mother Alagammal. Sri Ramana is the daily food for our thought and the cynosure of our eyes. The darshan of His picture or even His remembrance sets up within us the subtle current of Atma Vichara, the inner quest Who Am I? which alone is enough to give us Muktı.

“In Sri Ramana, Mother Alagammal has given to us the instant cure for the disease of our primal ignorance. It is folly to discard this Divine Gift already in our hands, and involve ourselves in the traditional yoga sadhanas which are difficult to practise, or worse still, to seek the guidance of pseudo-gurus and their miracle-mongering which is a great obstacle to Self-Realisation, Mukti.

“Let all of us, children of Alagammal, accept her precious gift. Let us sit before the
samadhi or picture of Sri Ramana, and drink in His lovely Form with our eyes. The immediate and infallible result of this will be the total stilling of the mind and gaining that state of Maha Mowna, or Supreme Silence, the eternal disembodied bliss, from which there is no return to the womb of an earthly mother."

After a pause Sri Krishnamurti Aiyar continued:

"Let me tell you something interesting about Bhagavan. You have addressed Him in your articles as Ambrosial Ramana, Beloved Ramana, Compassionate Ramana and Darling Ramana. I would prefer to call Him as Thiru-Adirai-Kali-Ramana'.

"In the Tamil month of Margazhi (December-January) when the moon is in conjunction with the constellation of Ardra, the mystic dance of Siva as Nataraja is celebrated in all Siva temples in South India. On that day, a special pudding known as 'Thiru-Adirai-Kali' is offered to the deity, and that prasad is enjoyed with great eclat. The main ingredients of that 'Kali' or pudding are fried rice finely powdered, green-gram pulse, brown sugar and butter-oil besides cardamom and cashewnut kernels. The sweet food is accompanied by a savoury side-dish, called 'Yezhu-than-koottu'. The Koottu is prepared by adding salt, tamarind and dried red pepper (chillies) to a stew of seven varieties of cut-green-vegetables. On that auspicious day, that combination is really a feast for gods!

"Now, on that day of Ardra-Darshan in December 1879, Alagammal gave birth to Ramana, the Divine Child. We call this Ramana the special 'Ardra-Pudding' gifted to the suffering world by Lord Matru-Bhuteswara-Siva Himself, whose human embodiment was Mother Alagammal. The savoury accompanying that cloying sweet 'Ramana-Pudding' is the strong current of 'Self-Enquiry' (Who Am I ?) inherent in the core of every living being. Mere thought of Arunachala-Siva-Ramana grips and pulls the ego into the strong current of Self-enquiry..."
and plunges it in that abyss of Bliss everlasting which is declared by the Vedic seers as Sat-Chit-Ananda-Brahman.

"Please allow me to tell you the following story which I showed to Sri Bhagavan Himself who read it with relish and gave an approving gracious smile:

"The Story of Kiddie Kannan:

Little Kannan aged six years was alone in his house when his mother went out on some errand, after finishing her preparation of 'Thiru-Adirai-Kali' and 'Koottu'. The boy was closely attentive to all the activities of his mother and was particularly amused by the pounding of the fried rice in the mortar. No sooner had his mother left than he set about his business. With all his childish ignorance and enthusiasm he emptied the pot of 'Kali' into the mortar and started pounding away with all the strength of his little hands; after some time he got tired and hungry. He was disappointed in not getting the nice rice flour; all that he got for his trouble was splashing of the paste on his face and eyes. He started crying when presently his mother returned. She hugged and consoled the child and said: 'Alas! My dear child! Why did you not quietly sit down and eat that 'Kali'? Had I not already completed all the work for you?' The child sat down and enjoyed that pudding blissfully. That was all that was left for him to do.

With tears in his eyes, Sri Krishnamurthi Aiyar concluded: "Maharshi's darshan is the endpoint of all sadhanas. Why commit the grave blunder of going back to the old sadhanas, when Bhagavan has cooked the 'Kali' ready for us to eat? Let us drench and drown ourselves in Eternal Ramana's downpour of Grace!"

* * *

On our evening walk in the thin forest that is slowly coming up on the slope of Arunachala, near the Ashram, Kunju Swami told me the story of latini Sundarambal, a yogi-devotee of Bhagavan. Here it is:

"Sundarambal was born in a pious family devoted to Siva and His bhaktas. Sadhus often came to her house and even as a child she welcomed them. She was bright and cheerful. Once a wandering monk impressed by her devotion, taught her how to meditate between the eye-brows. She was practising it with great enthusiasm and would sit for long time lost in total contemplation. Then she got married, but continued to meditate for long spells. In married life she had to attend to day-to-day household activities as well and this disturbed the flow of her meditation. As long as she was in meditation everything was going on well; but, when she took her mind away from it she would experience an unbearable pain in the forehead. She wished to stay in a solitary place to practise uninterrupted meditation. Realising this her husband gave her the necessary permission and help to pursue sadhana where she liked.

"Thus, Sundarambal came to Arunachala and stayed on the Hill, doing penance. As her hair grew matted she was called latini Sundarambal. She would visit Bhagavan now and then. Once she fasted for 21 days and ended the fast by offering a biksha to Bhagavan and His devotees. Then, at her request, Bhagavan and bhaktas went round the Holy Hill. On the way, Sundarambal described in detail the spiritual practice she was following, the problems she faced and sought Bhagavan's guidance for furthering her sadhana. Bhagavan turned to Kunju swami and asked him to narrate to her the story of Sikidvaja as found in Yoga Vasishtha. Kunju Swami, with great joy, told her the story at length, latini Sundarambal listened to it with rapt attention. The story went home. She soon left Arunachala, no doubt, fully established in herself; what else could happen since Bhagavan chose such a powerful story to be told to her? Let us also listen to the story.

"King Sikidvaja and Queen Chudala ruled the kingdom of Malava. Chudala regularly practised meditation in the silent hours. In due course she realised the Absolute Truth, her face shone brightly and became much more beautiful than before. The King observing this asked her the reason. The Queen replied that it was due to her realisation of Truth. The King laughed at her, thinking that realisation was possible only through severe austerities and could never be gained
while living in a palace. He wanted to leave the kingdom and practise tapas in the forest so that he could gain Realisation. The Queen tried to dissuade him and suggested that he could carry on the tapas in the palace itself and rule the kingdom as well. Refusing to act on her advice, he went to the forest and performed hard penance. The Queen was ruling the kingdom in the King's absence.

"The Queen taking pity on her husband and anxious to rescue him from the mire of delusion, practised siddhis and took the guise of one Kumbha Muni and stood in front of him, but a few feet above the ground! The King, thinking that some celestial being had descended from the heavens to bless him, fell at his feet, told him his woes and sought guidance. The Muni taught the King as follows: 'Karmas can give fruit as ordained by the Lord, but karmas in themselves cannot grant you salvation. By doing disinterested actions, one's mind can become pure. With the pure mind one should contemplate on the Self. This would destroy the vasanas. Then one should approach a Master and through His Grace learn how to enquire into the nature of the Self. Liberation is possible only through enquiry and not by performing any amount of karma. By renouncing everything one would realise the Truth.'

"The King said that he had renounced everything, including his kingdom and family. Kumbha Muni told him that the renunciation was only external and the seeds of attachment were still in him. The King then took out his walking staff, kamandalu, rudrakshas and clothes and threw them all into the fire and stood without any possession. Still, on being told that he had not renounced completely, the King was ready to drop his last possession, the body, by jumping from the top of the mountain. The Muni asked him: 'What harm has the body done to deserve the punishment?' Thereby the Muni taught him that he would not realise the Truth by destroying the body, but only by destroying the mind which was the source of all attachment. The mind identifies itself as 'I' and this was bondage. The snapping of this identity was renunciation of everything.' Then, the Muni described in detail the sadhana of discrimination.

"Thus, the King's doubts were dispelled and his mind became pure. The King enquired into the source of Self and soon became one with it and remained in blissful samadhi. Kumbha Muni disappeared and returned after some time. The King was still in samadhi. Chudala roared like a lion to wake him up, but could not. Then taking a subtle form she entered into the King's heart and found it pure and devoid of any latent tendencies. Then in a melodious voice she chanted the Sama Veda and like the blossoming of a lotus, the King became aware of the world. The King filled with joy remained silent knowing not how to express his gratitude. Then as advised by the Queen, he returned with her to the kingdom. Thus established in Truth he ruled the kingdom and lived happily with the Queen for long."

Kunju Swami, as usual, accompanied Bhagavan up the Hill, one evening. He noticed some secretion, like puss, oozing out of the upper portion of Sri Bhagavan’s thigh. Bhagavan wiped it out with his small towel. Kunju swami was nonplussed. Bhagavan explained, with a smile: "Yes! It is the white ants' prasad for Swami!"

During the Pathalalinga days Bhagavan's thighs were eaten away by insects and white ants. The poison of white ants stayed on in His body. Bhagavan told him that the oozing used to occur twice a year, but it was not noticed by others. Kunju Swami said that this oozing stopped only in the 40's!

Devotion knows no limitation of illness or age!
Here is an excerpt from a letter written to me by Sri R. Sivaraman, younger brother of our respected Sri Viswanatha Swami:

“It was December 1958. Sri Viswanatha Swami was attending on my mother, lying down with a paralytic stroke at Dindigul. My next elder brother, Sri Subrahmanyam, was on his death bed too in a clinic in Madurai. The latter sent a post card to Sri Viswanatha Swami, dictating it to a friend:

Madurai
21-12-1958

My dear Visvanna,

I am unable to write or even read. You too appear to be in the same predicament having no time. Sri Bhagavan’s Jayanti falls on the 27th, as you know. Please ask Mookan (clerk) to despatch one basket of (300) fruits so as to reach Tiruvannamalai on the 26th instant. My respects to mother.

Yours affly,
(Sd.) R. Subrahmanyam.

“Sri Subrahmanyam, my brother, died on 29-12-58! Even on his death bed, he remembered Bhagavan’s Jayanti and wanted to send fruits, as offering to Sri Bhagavan, as he was doing for the past many years!”

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Smt. Alagammal, daughter of Velacheri Ranga Iyer (classmate of Sri Bhagavan, referred to on p. 239 of our Oct/82 issue) was here again and she was pleased to talk about her mother, Chellamma.

“My mother, in one of her visits to the Ashram, told Bhagavan that her two daughters — Parvatam and Minakshi — were of marriageable age and that it was difficult to find grooms for them. Bhagavan, in His compassion, copied two verses in Tamil — one, in praise of Lord Ganesa, and the other, on Lord Subramanya, and handed them over to her and asked her to recite them. After some time, my two sisters were happily married. The remarkable thing about it was that the names of their husbands are Ganapati Iyer and (Siva) Subramania Iyer!

* AS MANY ROADS AS MEN *

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

We are lonesome travelers from a-far,
Each unto himself an alien;
Each a traveler under his own star
And, what though the goal be one,
there are
Even as many roads as there are men.
We are lone way-farers from the start
Sensing what great hunger of the soul;
Suffering what high beauty in the heart;
Distances between us lie apart
While we tread unconscious of the goal.

Even the steadiest feet, at times, might slip
Beneath travel-strain and heavy load;
We know that life even beyond the dip
Is sure continuance of a flowering road.

“One evening my mother, Chellamma, with another girl, was sitting in front of Sri Bhagavan. It was about to rain and my mother felt she should reach home (in the town) without being drenched. She could not go without getting permission from Bhagavan. Bhagavan that day, strangely, asked her to sing. When one song was over, he asked her to sing another. The rain came in a downpour; the singing continued. Bhagavan then asked her to go; the rain had stopped. When she reached the town and stepped into the room, came again a big downpour, which continued throughout the night. When my mother met Bhagavan the following day, Bhagavan, with a smile asked her: ‘Chellamma! You didn’t get drenched, did you? You were keen not to be caught in the rain!’ How Bhagavan knew her thought about not getting drenched in the rain, my mother wondered, and how He protected His devotees even in trifling matters in a most natural way!”

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One devotee from far north India, who had come to have darshan of Sri Bhagavan,
wanted to take His prasad to his family. He bought a good quantity of sugar-candy and placed it in front of Bhagavan. He did not know that whatever was placed before Bhagavan would be immediately distributed in the Hall! The attendant took the plate of sugar-candy to Bhagavan. Under the pretext of picking the smallest piece, Bhagavan put His hand in the lump and touched almost every piece; He then took a small piece, looked at the devotee, and told the attendant, quite unusually: "Don't distribute the whole lot; keep some; he wants to take a few pieces as prasad to his family". What compassion! He had touched almost every candy so that the devotee's wish to take some for his family as prasad could be fully satisfied!

Talking about distribution of prasad in the Hall, I am reminded of how a staunch devotee wanted to test Bhagavan's equanimity and was discomfited to his entire satisfaction!

'Thousand-faced' Ramkumar was famous in those days; he could assume the face of Churchill, of Gandhi or any one else by just pulling up his facial muscles and he would resemble those personages. He was with Bhagavan for some time and Bhagavan admired his talent. Ramkumar was keenly observing devotees offering fruits to Bhagavan and getting back a portion as prasad. He wanted to test Bhagavan.

One day he bought a huge mango and brought it and offered it at His feet. Bhagavan signed to the attendant to take out a small mangoe fruit lying there and give it to Ramkumar. Ramkumar fell prostrate before the smiling Bhagavan and said: "Bhagavan! you have won and I have lost! I brought one big fruit and tried to find out how you would give me back my prasad. I got the biggest fruit in the market. You have taught me a lesson by giving me a small fruit, since everything that comes in contact with you is Holy Prasad!"

"There is reason to believe that the Maharshi understood the language of birds and animals. Mr. Anantanarayanan, former Chief Justice of Madras, writes:

'Bhagavan, who has been busy writing, puts away the materials and his spectacles and calls the attendant.

"The pair of sparrows just came here and complained to me that their nest had been removed. I look up and find their nest missing... Madhava, did anyone remove the sparrows' nest?"

The attendant says that he did so, as their persistent nest-building above the couch of Bhagavan had become a major nuisance. Bhagavan replied: "That's it. That is why the sparrows complained. The poor little ones..."

All things lie open to him who is in Love, and all animals and birds speak to him, the Knower, as to each other.'"

— Professor K. Swaminathan in *Ramana Maharshi*, p. 56
ATTENTION – STOPPING – AWARENESS

An Effective Triune

By Ken Wilber

The following excerpt originates from “The Spectrum of Consciousness”, a bold attempt of Ken Wilber, an American psychologist of the younger generation, to point at a kind of footbridge between the “Eastern” and “Western” approach to a reasonable science of the soul of man. His final conclusion sounds amusing, but is really encouraging. “We must necessarily view the individual self as — in a certain sense — an illusion and its world as a dream. This does not denigrate Western approach at all, however, for even if Eastern disciplines can awaken us from this dream, Western ones can, in the meantime, prevent it from becoming a nightmare. Let us avail ourselves of both.”

Here we are not concerned with ‘The Spectrum of Consciousness’ itself, though the idea is certainly worth considering.

However, investigating ‘The Level of Mind’ and the practical possibilities of experiencing it, the author mentions upaya, meaning ‘skillful means’, a word, “that is often translated as ‘trick’ because we are tricking ourselves into looking for what we have never lost. Upaya, skillful means, constitute precisely that experiment which, if conducted in the personal laboratory, will allow the individual to decide for himself, whether or not Mind exists.”

And here at least we come across a real massive ‘bridge’, a most interesting correspondence between ‘Eastern and Western’ psychological experience — which we want to share with our own readers, East and West.

The number of Skillful Experiments that have developed over the centuries is considerable, but we contend that the active ingredients, the essential factors, are very similar in all of them. To document this contention we will now present two prevalent forms of the Skillful Experiment pointing out the essential similarities among two outstanding examples of them.

Let us begin with Dr. Hubert Benoit, whose Skillful Experiment embodies a particular ‘inner gesture’, which, when faithfully and repeatedly carried out, will allow us to realize that ‘each one of us lives in the state of satori and could not live otherwise . . . (because) it is our eternal state, independent of our birth and of our death.’ Benoit’s study of this ‘inner gesture’ is devoted primarily:

“To analysing the inner processes which now condition our illusion of not living in the state of satori. We will see that they are our imaginative-emotive processes-in which our vital Energy is disintegrated — and we

will try to define clearly what incomplete functioning of our attention conditions in its turn these imaginative-emotive Processes."

These processes are, in short, our tendencies of conceptualization, objectification, and dualism, which Benoit simply calls our 'imaginative-emotive processes, and these tendencies result in identifying myself only with my organism and not with the rest of Manifestation.' Thus, to perceive our fundamental cosmic identity we must surrender — at least temporarily — all of our concepts, mental images, and mental objects. Now, to do this effectively — and this is the Experiment, the inner gesture — we must first understand the psychological process which conditions us to go on forming thoughts and concepts and images, all that mental chatter and talking to oneself that seems to ramble on continuously in our heads. As a matter of experimental fact, you can stop reading for a moment and watch how you continue thinking and chattering to yourself. Further, you cannot, without the greatest difficulty, stop this mental chatter and kaleidoscope of ideas and thoughts through your mind; because the idea to stop chattering is itself nothing more than chatter! This is the old trap of: for the next 10 seconds, don't think of the word 'monkey'. That approach will never work, for we will spend all of our time thinking about not-thinking.

Instead we need to understand the process which gives rise to conceptualization so that we can cut it off at its root-source, and Benoit has pinpointed this process. To understand his explanation of it, we need only recall that Benoit is working within the framework of 'Energy mobilization', that is, each instant our Energy is constantly rising from 'below', from the level of Mind, where it is pure, informal, non-objective, timeless and spaceless Energy that operates Now 'in a moment without duration'. This Energy, as it mobilizes, seems to 'well-up' from within, and then, as it passes the Existential-Biosocial level, it starts to take on form as thoughts and direction as emotions, and these 'imaginative-emotive processes' act to disintegrate and disperse our Energy.
snapped up by the formal world (of thought and concepts); the chance has been missed (of contacting Reality). The disintegration into imaginative-emotive forms is inevitable. My Energy is now in the domain in which my egotistical identification reigns."

And of course, once our Energy is on the Ego-level, it bears about as much relation to Reality as a square circle, for here our Energy is so wrapped in thoughts, symbols and maps, that we have great difficulty in seeing the territory directly. After these thoughts arise, it does no good to try to get rid of them or to suppress them. As Hui Neng puts it, "To suppress the working of the mind... is a disease and not Zen." Once thought forms have appeared, it is too late to do anything about them, although most of us try — which is like saying don't get mad at the tiger until he bites your head off.

THE INNER GESTURE

What Benoit would have us do, therefore, is not to suppress thinking, but to evoke the 'inner gesture' which forestalls thought-forms from rising by cutting them off at their source:

My attention ought not to be awakened by the mobilisation of my Energy, but before that; and this is realised, when instead of seeing the imaginative-emotive processes which are being produced, I regard the processes which are about to be produced. *This is realised when, of being passively attentive to my mobilised Energy and its disintegrating future, I tend actively to perceive the very birth of my Energy. A new vigilance now superintends the mobilisation of Energy.* To put it more simply, an active attention lies in wait for the advent of my inner movements. It is no longer my emotions which interest me, but their coming to birth; it is no longer their movement that interests me, but this other informal movement which is the birth of their formal movement.

It is the genius of Benoit to point out that when our attention operates in the passive mode, this conditions the rising of thought-concepts, while, on the contrary, when our attention operates in an active and vigilant fashion, *then thought-concepts do not arise,* for this active attention prevents the disintegration of our Energy into the imaginative-emotive forms. We will presently elaborate upon this so that the reader will firmly understand just what this entails, but for the moment, we must forewarn the reader: When our attention is operating in the active mood that Benoit describes, there is absolutely nothing objective to perceive. In the active mood of attention mental objects (thoughts) do not arise, and — since it is this screen of conceptualisation that appears to separate me from the world — when these mental concept-objects no longer arise, then 'I' and 'the world' are no longer separate. 'I' and 'the world' become one in the act of this pure non-conceptual seeing. Hence there remains no objective word 'out there' to perceive — the 'world looks at itself' in a non-dual fashion.

There is seeing but nothing objective seen! Benoit explains it thus:

Our attention, when it functions in the active mode, is pure attention, without manifested object. My mobilised Energy is not perceptible in itself, but only in the effects of its disintegration, the images (thoughts, concepts, mental objects etc.). But this disintegration only occurs when my attention operates in the passive mode; active attention forestalls this disintegration. And so, when my attention operates in the active mode there is nothing to perceive...

Benoit then gives an example of this and, in so doing, he describes just what his 'active attention' entails:

It is easy for me — to verify concretely that active attention to my inner world is without an object. If I take up, in the face of my inner monologue (the incessant chattering to ourselves), the attitude of an active auditor who authorises this monologue to say whatever it wishes and however it wishes, if
I take up the attitude which can be defined by the formula 'Speak, I am listening'. I observe that my monologue stops (without my forcing or suppressing it). It does not start up again until my attitude of vigilant expectation ceases.

It is this 'attitude of vigilant expectation' that constitutes the 'inner gesture', the inner gesture that forestalls thought-concepts and therefore puts us directly in touch with Reality. Benoit describes this inner gesture of active attention in several fashions, one we have just given, another which follows:

This gesture... is like a look which, cast on the full center of my inner world, transpierces the plane of this world towards that which is unknown to me. This look, because it does not prefer any object, because it is sent, without preconception, towards no matter what, meets nothing (objective) and so results, without my having wished it, in the suspension of my imaginative film. It is a total interrogation without particular formal expression, which remains without answer, since it does not carry any. It is a challenge which neither aims at nor meets anybody; it is an attention to everything, which has no object. The suspension of my imaginative film, thus obtained without having been sought, is instantaneous; it is without duration, an intemporal flash of lightning in the heart of time....

All descriptions by Benoit refer to the same inner gesture, that results in the suspension of dualistic seeing, of 'I' seeing 'objects' or 'concepts' — in a phrase, it suspends thought without suppressing it — and that is the key. When I give total and active awareness to my thought processes, when I say 'Speak, I am listening', when I authorize any thought to arise that wants to, and then actively listen and watch for it to arise, then none arises! Benoit summarizes this inner gesture by stating that it “is realized when I authorize the totality of my tendencies before the conscious appearance of any of them; and then none of them appears.” And when none of these imaginative-emotive tendencies appears as conscious objects, then I am grounded in pure non-dual organic consciousness, “thanks to which I am virtually already free”.

Let us now analyze Benoit's inner gesture of vigilant attention without object and point out the essential factors that, as we shall see, all Skilful Experiments have in common. Basically, these factors are three in number:

Factor 1: Active attention — a special type of intense yet relaxed alertness, which can be described as a 'Speak-I-am-listening' attitude, as a total authorization or total acceptance of my tendencies, as an active vigilance and watchfulness directed at the very birth of thought and emotions. It is a burning attention-authorization to what is Now, watching inside and outside with equal eye. When this active attention is carried out correctly, it results in:

Factor 2: Stopping — the suspension of thought, of conceptualization, of objectification, of mental chatter. This 'stopping' is, in fact, the suspension of the dualistic and symbol-map knowledge that ultimately distorts Reality. In short, this is stopping of the Primary Dualism. It is a suspension of space, time, form and dualism, and in this condition an utter mental Silence prevails. This is remaining with what is. The condition of, remaining in this, isness, this Silence, the Stillness, we will call (after Huang Po) 'sitting in a Bodhimandala', that is sitting in a place where enlightenment can erupt at any instant. If this 'stopping' is clean and complete, it will result in:

Factor 3: Passive Awareness — a special seeing that is seeing into nothing. 'Seeing into nothingness — this is true seeing and eternal seeing. Again, this awareness, this seeing, is not a looking into a mere blank or vacuum, but a looking into nothing objective — it is pure timeless awareness without the primary dualism of subject vs. object, and thus it is complete in itself, with nothing external or objective to it. Because nothing is outside it, it operates without any effect whatsoever in a
future. It operates above space-time in the absolute Now, pointing to nothing beyond itself. And one instant of this pure awareness is itself Mind. Whether we realize it or not, it is always already the case.

These three factors are the essentials in any Skillful Experiment, and although they assume a startling variety of forms, they are clearly discernible in almost every major upaya. To document this let us continue our survey by turning to Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Moving to Vedanta Hinduism, we find the same three factors, but they assume a slightly different outer form, predominantly because the Vedanta is working with the metaphor of Absolute Subjectivity (Brahman-Atman) instead of Absolute energy (as are Krishnamurti and Benoit). Nevertheless, the three factors of attention-stopping-awareness are present, as the following quotations from the Vedanta’s greatest modern sage, Sri Ramana Maharshi, will demonstrate.

To begin with, Sri Ramana Maharshi maintains that thought — as a root cause of dualism — is the source of all illusion and bondage. Again, this in no way means that we are to forever surrender conceptualization and return to the purely animalistic level of evolution. Symbolic thought is mandatory, provided we don’t so confuse it with Reality as to be unable to tell the difference between a map and the actual territory. The trouble is, we have hopelessly confused the two, and thus, for practical purposes only, it is usually necessary to completely suspend thought and throw away our maps (Factor 2) for short periods, so that we can actually see the territory for a change. Then we will be able to take up and possess our maps again without them possessing us. Thus does Ramana declare that ‘thought alone is bondage!'

But the Maharshi’s unique contribution to the way of liberation is his insistence that the ‘I-thought’ is the source of all other thoughts. That is, every time you think of your ‘self’ that is the ‘I-thought’, and Ramana declares it to lie behind every other thought:

The first and foremost of all the thoughts that arise in the mind is the primal ‘I-thought’. It is only after the rise or origin of the ‘I-thought’ that innumerable other thoughts arise.

Thus the suspension of the I-thought marks the suspension of all other thoughts and mental objects. Now Sri Ramana Maharshi realized that the I-thought cannot be suppressed — for who would suppress ‘I’ except another ‘I’? Spiritual altruism is spiritual hypocrisy. The I-thought, like any other thought, is to be suspended, not suppressed, and for this suspension, Ramana recommends what he calls ‘Self-Inquiry (nan yar)’, which is the intensively active inquiry ‘Who am I?’ This attentive inquiry, which we recognise as Factor 1, leads — according to Ramana — to a suspension of images, which we recognise as Factor 2. Thus:

Since every other thought can occur only after the rise of the I-thought and since the mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, it is only through the inquiry ‘Who am I?’ that the mind subsides. Moreover, the integral I-thought, implicit in such inquiry, having destroyed all other thoughts, gets itself finally destroyed or consumed, just as the stick used for stirring the burning funeral pyre gets consumed.

Even when extraneous thoughts sprout up during such inquiry do not seek to complete the rising thought, but instead deeply inquire within, ‘To whom has this thought occurred?’ No matter how many thoughts thus occur to you, if you would with acute vigilance inquire immediately (Factor 1) as an when each individual thought arises to whom it has occurred, you would find it is to ‘me’. If then you inquire ‘Who am I?’ the mind gets introverted and the rising thought also subsides (and) the perception of the world as an Objective reality ceases (Factor 2).

How does this self-inquiry work? Let us suppose, for example, that I ask you ‘Who are you?’ and you reply ‘Well, I am so-and-so, I work at this particular job, I’m married... Is...
that what you mean?’ ‘No’, I would answer. ‘Those are all objects of perception, they are mere ideas. Who are you, that sees these objects, these ideas?’ ‘Well, I am a human being, an individual organism endowed with certain biological faculties. Is that closer?’ ‘Not really’, I would have to counter, ‘for those are still ideas and thoughts. Now deeply, Who are you?’ As your mind keeps turning back in on itself in search of the answer, it gets quieter and quieter. If I keep asking ‘Who are you? Who are you?’ you would quickly enter a mental silence, and that mental silence would be identical to the one produced by Benoit’s ‘Speak, I am listening.’ That objectless silence produced by active attention, by vigilant watchfulness, by intense inquiry, is a Bodhimandala, for right at the point where no mental answer, image, or object is forthcoming, you are open to seeing the Real in a flash. This silence, or stopping, which is Factor 2, opens the door to infinite awareness, of Factor 3, as Ramana explains:

By inquiring into the nature of the I, the I perishes. With it you and he (objects) also perish. The resultant state, which shines as Absolute Being, is one’s own natural state, the Self... The only inquiry leading to Self-realization is seeking the source of the ‘I’ with in-turned mind and without uttering the word ‘I’... If one inquires ‘Who am I?’ within the mind, the individual ‘I’ falls down abashed... Reality manifests itself spontaneously as ‘I-I’ (Absolute Subjectivity, non-dual awareness, Factor 3).

Thus we see that the Skillful Experiment of the Vedanta, as expounded by its most enlightened sage, also comprises the three factors of attention-stopping-awareness. The following statement of Ramana completely summarizes his upaya, and the three factors are again clearly present:

Whence does this ‘I’ arise? Seek for it within (Factor 1); it then vanishes (Factor 2). This is the pursuit of Wisdom. Where the ‘I’ vanished, there appears ‘I-I’ by itself. (Factor 3). This is the Infinite.
1101
The hymns by these Self-seers sung
Praise but the Self supreme, the heart.
Which is the heart of every scripture,
And no particular name or form.

1102
A wonder strange is this, the marriage
Of the moon and the sun; the mighty
Upraised Foot of dancing Siva
Marks the joy of Self-enquiry;
The Master's loving quest for the servant.
The mutual attraction of Heart and mind.

1103
It is folly to waste one's life in running
In many directions searching different
Goals. Learn to practise firm abidance
At the Feet of Siva supreme,
The eternal and auspicious silence,
Which alone can still the ego's
Restless silence.

1104
Those whose awareness has subsided
In the heart and they alone
Can know the flawless state of Being.
For others Being seems to come

1105
The sage imperturbable who dwells
Within the body knows no difference
Between work, meditation and sleep.
Even as a man who is fast asleep
Within a cart is not aware
Whether it moves or stands or whether
The beasts are from the cart released.

(21. As for a sleeper in a cart
It's all the same whether the cart
Moves, stops or has its bulls released,
So for the sage who is asleep
Within the body, work, meditation
And sleep are all the same.
— Bhagavan)

1106
The sage's pure mind which beholds
As a mere witness the whole world
Is like a mirror which reflects
The foolish thoughts of those who come
Before him. (And these thoughts are then
Mistaken to be his!)

1107
Those with a sense of doership
May sometimes notice in the sage
Whose sahaja state transcends even sattva
GURU’S SAYINGS

Signs of rajas. Doubt not the fault
Is in the beholder’s eye.

Jivanmuktas are great ones
Who shine for ever as Being Supreme.
If one but wrongs them the sin and guilt
Will be a burden heavy to bear
Birth after birth.

Like a dog that knows no difference
Between an oil-press and a linga
And licks them both, some lowborn creatures
Treat a sage as if he were
No better than their wretched selves.

If a dog looking at the sun
Barks, it does not hurt the sun.
Even so the insults of the low
Touch not the sage whose powerful light
Of wisdom shines bright like the sun.

Who is the sthitaprajna, the sage
Of steadfast wisdom? Only he
Who, knowing no difference between
The states of being introverted
And being extroverted, shines
And lives for ever in one steady
State of Being-Awareness.

He who through heart-awareness true
Shines egoless as Siva, the Self.
He is the sthitaprajna perfect
Still, silent, from all movement free.

As sense-misled the ignorant man
Perceives the world as a collection
Of many objects, so the sage
Whose knot is cut asunder sees
Only the ground, the one Awareness,
Present and shining everywhere.

He is the sage, the eternal Sun
Self-luminous in whose presence this
Phenomenal world so variegated
And wonderful wholly disappears,
Unseen as other than the Self.

The true sage in the Self exulting
And firm-fixed in the heart regards
The universe as neither mere
Illusion nor as something other
Than the Self.

The whole world which we are aware of
Is by the seer seen as Awareness
And nothing but Awareness only.
And knowing that there is no being
Except Awareness, he abides,
Rich in bliss, as Self-awareness.

Those whose minds are merged and lost
In one advaita plenitude
Will never be bewildered by
This false phenomenal life. In that
Blessed state supreme of Being
Pure Awareness, That exists,
Alone without an ‘I’ or ‘this’.
1118
The sage whose knot of doership
Has snapped finds no more "duties"
To discharge. In his Awareness
There is no other, no objects, hence
No doubt and no delusion.

1119
Held only by the light of Being,
The sage's mind may as of old
Seem to taste, smell, see, hear, and feel,
And yet is from and world out off
And dead to it.

1120
Those who live within the Heart
The life of Pure Awareness find
No delight in the spurious pleasures
Of the senses. Is not that still, silent
State of Being alone the boundless
And unbroken bliss supreme
Of Brahma?

1121
The river that in the ocean deep
Has merged will never lapse again
To separateness. No more will he
Who has reached his Being as Awareness
Forget the Self and be reborn.

1122
Mortals with forgetful minds
Are born to die and die to be
Reborn. But those whose minds have died
Into true Being supreme abide
There high above both birth and death.

1123
He who has seen himself as Being
Awareness sees the Eternal Siva.
He has seen the death of terrible
Duality. He has seen his own
Natural state of turiya pure.
Birth is what this great one sees not.

1124
If once the primal knot is cut
Never again can one be bound.
For this is one's true Being, this
The state divine, this power supreme,
This peace serene.

THE POWER OF THE TRULY GREAT

1125
When he who has seen the Self within
As God supreme now walks abroad
Free from attachment, know that God
Himself beside him walks to guard
Him from all harm.
(The last two lines may also mean: Himself before us
walks to guard Us from all harm.)

1126
He who, his mind being dead, now stands
As Siva Himself dwells equally
In every creature as its life.
By constant thinking on the clear,
Bright form of such a mukta one
Discovers straight the light of truth
Shining within oneself.

1127
The glance of sages true who live
Lives deathless and eternal saves
Like Ganga pure the bathers in it
And makes them also immortal soon.

1128
Sages who rejoice in Siva's
Radiant bliss alone convert
Into a fertile field divine
Even that barren, arid desert,
The mind dried up by hot desire.

1129

The sage whose heart with peace serene
Is overflowing fills with bliss
The minds of those who come to him.
Is not his face cool, radiant, joyous
A full-blown lotus round which gather
Honey-bees?

OF SERVICE TO THE GREAT

1130

He who obeys the gracious wishes
Of a great sage and serves him gains
Freedom from the bonds of maya,
And wealth of grace and lives a rich
Life with all his aims fulfilled.

OF THE ENDING OF VASANAS

1131

Free wholly from the thought that one
Is but the body, hence even in dreams
Free from bewilderment of mind.
Such is the sage whose vasanas
Have been extinguished once for all.

1132

Inferior creatures, beasts and birds,
Live with their minds in endless movement.
He truly lives a human life
Whose mind unmoved by any thought
Shines in being’s stillness.

1133

The sage whose vasanas are extinguished
May seem to undertake and do
Many mighty tasks and yet
In fact he does nothing at all,
Like some one with mind far away
Seated for hours amid a crowd
Of listeners to an ancient tale.

1134

One whose vasanas are not dead
May sit still and yet work away
Busily doing a lot of things,
Like one sleeping in his bed
And dreaming that he climbs uphill
And falls head down into a pit.

(Like one who absent minded hears
A tale, the sage with vasanas dead
May seem to act yet never acts.
The mind with vasanas alive
Works busily while doing nothing
Like someone lying still in sleep
And dreaming that he climbs uphill
And tumbles down. — Bhagavan)

OF JIVANMUKTAS

1135, 1136

Even if the sense of doership
Is dead, how could one call the sage
A Mukta freed from all the bonds
Of karma? Do we not see him eating,
Engaged in works, bearing a body
Of flesh, accepting prarabdha,
And suffering pain? If you ask this,
The answer is, “True, in your sight
He seems to suffer. You see him suffering.
But did he tell you that he suffered?”

(Bhagavan once remarked:
“The body is like a wireless receiver which only seems to
speak and sing.”)

1137

The sage enjoys only the bliss
Transcendent as his sole being.
The error lies in these ignorant folk
Seeing him as a body that suffers.
WHEN Sri Bhagavan was living in Virupaksha cave, Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni once argued that the brain or sahasrara (the seat of the mind) is the most important centre, while Sri Bhagavan maintained that the Heart or hridayam (the seat of Self) is the most important centre. Kavyakantha further argued that the brain must be the abode of the tendencies or vasanas, since it consists of innumerable cells in which the vasanas are contained, but Sri Bhagavan refuted him saying, “If the vasanas were in the brain, a person whose head is cut off would be free of vasanas and hence he would not be reborn. But in fact it is not so” (see Garland of Guru’s Sayings, verse 249). Sri Bhagavan then went on to explain that the vasanas reside in their subtlest form in the heart, and that they function like the film in a cinema projector; when the light of consciousness emerges from the heart, it projects the vasanas though the lenses of the brain and the five senses and enlarges them thereby as thoughts in the brain and as the pictures of the gross world outside. Sri Bhagavan also explained that the heart (or Self) shines by its own light, like the sun, while the brain (or mind) shines only by reflecting the original light from the heart, just as the moon shines only by reflecting the sunlight (see Sri Ramana Cita, ch. 5, verses 13 and 14, and Garland of Guru’s Saying, 857 and 1004); and just as the dim light reflected by the moon illumines the earth during night-time, so the dim light reflected by the brain illumines the body and world during the time of ignorance of ajnana. This incident is narrated by Sri Bhagavan in Talks Nos 402 and 616, and in Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, vol. 1, letter 94.

Among those who were present when this incident took place was a schoolboy from Arani named N.S. Arunachalam. After hearing the conversation between Sri Bhagavan and Kavyakantha, N.S. Arunachalam who was then only a schoolboy composed nine verses in English describing the scene and comparing Bhagavan, Kavyakantha and the onlookers to the Heart, the brain and the body respectively, and again to the sun, the moon and the earth respectively. Some Tamil devotees who did not know English then asked Sri Bhagavan to translate those verses into Tamil, which he did in one long verse in ahaval metre. The English verses of N.S. Arunachalam were published in July 1954 in The Call Divine, vol. 2, pp. 551 to 552, and the Tamil rendering of Sri Bhagavan was published in 1980 in a small Tamil booklet.
entitled *Manimozhigalum Tanippakkalam* (Precious Words and Stray Verses of Sri Ramana Maharshi), pp. 19 to 20. N.S. Arunachalam’s verses composed when he was a boy have since been touched up and given below, along with a translation in clear and simple English of Sri Bhagavan’s Tamil rendering.

It is worth noting that in the third verse of this poem the words “the Muni whose plane is that of Heart” refers to Sri Bhagavan, while the words “the Lord who the brain’s plane keeps” refer to Kavyakantha. Verses 6, 7 and 8 are a summary of what Sri Bhagavan said on that occasion. The meaning of verses 6 and 7 is quite clear, being Sri Bhagavan’s explanation about simultaneous creation using his favourite analogy of the cinema projector (see also *The Eight Verses to Sri Arunachala*, verse 6, and *Spiritual Instruction*, ch. 2, answer to question 13, where the same analogy is used). However, some explanation is perhaps necessary about the meaning of verse 8. According to Sri Bhagavan, the consciousness ‘I’ ever abides in the Heart as the Self, but when it seemingly rises from the heart as the mind or ego, it comes first to the brain and from there it spreads all over the body and projects the world through the five senses (see *Sri Ramana Gita*, ch. 5, verses 6 and 7). Therefore, in order to return to the heart, the consciousness ‘I’ which has risen as the mind must go back the way it came, that is, through the brain. The system or method discovered by Sri Bhagavan to return thus to the heart through the brain was the path of Self-enquiry, which He first discovered in Madurai and later revealed to the whole world.

— M.J.

**The Verses of N.S. Arunachalam**

1. The Heart and Brain of the Universe  
   On the sacred cave  
   Began of themselves to converse  
   When all were struck mute and grave.

2. As from the blazing sun the light  
   Which stands heart for Earth  
   Makes the Moon shine in its height  
   Which gives light for the Earth.

3. *Upanishads* from the Muni’s lips  
   Whose plane is that of Heart  
   To Lord flowed who the brain’s plane keeps  
   And heard by us as the Earth.

4. Of these sacred sayings I heard  
   I verifv, though uncouth.  
   Of the truth of every word.  
   Why truth, merely because Truth.

5. Sri Ramana, the silent great,  
   The Secret of secrets  
   Took Heart and brain of which I prate  
   And described accurate.

6. Just as pictures play on the wall  
   Through the machine’s glassy hole  
   By inserting therein cards small  
   And seen as figures whole.

7. So a smallest lust in the heart  
   Made big by the glassy brain  
   Escapes through eyes, nose and mouth  
   And makes of scenes a train.

8. I spent in heart all these my time  
   And when to world I came  
   I found through brain the way of mine  
   Learned the system of mine.

9. Thus the sacred speech they ended  
   While these the Lord noted  
   And all of us well attended  
   And which I now quoted.

**The Tamil Rendering of Sri Bhagavan**

The Heart of the world (Sri Bhagavan) and the brain of the world (Kavyakantha) began to converse between themselves in the beautiful sacred cave (Virupaksha). All who heard those words at that time remained speechless as pillars. The light of the sun, which exists and shines as the Heart of this earth, illuminates the moon in the height, and that moon gives light to the earth; likewise *Upanishads* came from the lips of the Muni (Sri Bhagavan), whose
There is no other way to succeed than to draw the mind back every time it turns outwards and fix it in the Self. There is no need for meditation or mantra or japa or dhyan or anything of the sort, because these are our real nature. All that is needed is to give up thinking of objects other than the Self. Meditation is not so much thinking of the Self as giving up thinking of the non-Self. When you give up thinking of outward objects and prevent your mind from going outwards and turn it inwards and fix it in the Self, the Self alone will remain.

The more you get fixed in the Self, the more other thoughts will drop off of themselves. The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts, and the ‘I’-thought is the root of all of them. When you see who this ‘I’ is and whence it proceeds, all thoughts get merged in the Self.

Regulation of life, such as getting up at a fixed hour, bathing, doing mantra, japa, etc., observing ritual, all this is for people who do not feel drawn to Self-enquiry or are not capable of it. But for those who can practise this method, all rules and discipline are unnecessary.

— Sri Bhagavan (Day by Day, 18-7-1946)
The Parable of the Seed growing Secretly
(St. Marks Gospel, Chapter 4)

By Rosalind Christian

AND he said, 'So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed in the ground, and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. Of her own accord earth bears her fruit, first the green blade, then the ear and then the ripe grain in the ear.' Mark 4:27.

"As if", says Jesus: no two words could be more important. This experience, the Kingdom, is inexpressible, but he attempts to tell his disciples about it, straining image and allegory, to give them some small glimpse of the state to which they are heirs — for, "Ye are all sons of the Father".

I am especially fond of this particular parable because it closely parallels a story from the very fringe of the Western world, the Hebridean islands off the coast of Scotland — the country in which I live. It concerns three brothers. The two elder brothers each wins for himself a castle, one of copper and one of silver, and reigns over a kingdom, but the youngest son enters the Golden Castle. Here he sleeps and wakes, and each morning he finds richer and richer apparel spread out for his use — and yet no living person does he see anywhere at any time! The Hebridean variant is simply one of a huge family of stories, called The Three Brothers, and found almost world-wide. We may note how the two great masters, Jesus and the teller of this ancient tale, have each put several common ingredients into their allegories. This Kingdom of Enlightenment is not fleeting or transitory; it continues night and day, giving to the recipient a greater and greater sense of wealth — the 'harvest' and the 'jewels' and 'rich apparel' being very ancient symbols for this spiritual condition. A modern mystic would write, "It was like being emptied of all knowledge, all memory, and at the same time being filled with knowledge which only need 'surface' in the conscious mind for it to take form as some specific insight". We may note with admiration how wonderfully the two allegories under discussion convey this same sense of mystery and of something surfaced from the deep unknown. "This experience", continues Jae Jah Noh, "has slowly matured into a living reality, an on-going experience of the transcendental". In short, the 'Harvest' time has come, as it inevitably will.

Three other symbols from these allegories are worth noting. The concept 'gold' is explicit in the Hebridean story, implicit with Jesus in his use of the image of the corn growing and ripening. This simple device points a finger to an almost universal aspect of the mystical experience — the experience of 'Light' in some form or another. Arthur Osborne describes how just such an experience came to Sri Ramana when, as a boy, he sat in the pillared hall of the temple of Arayaninallur. "He immediately beheld a brilliant light pervading the whole temple." Again the word 'effulgence' is often used in this context, which fits well with the imagery of both stories. Very striking is Jesus's constant use of this word 'the kingdom' in his teaching, because the 'king'/kingdom'/inheritance' theme was probably the world's

1Authorized Version
2Quoted from "Do you see what I see?", by Jae Jah Noh, The Mountain Path, July 1981.
3Ramana Maharshi by A. Osborne, p. 29.
oldest symbol for man’s high destiny and potential.

Again, both parable and story stress sleep and waking. Concerning these two states, Arthur Osborne writes, “A man is identical with the Self ... but the mind creates the illusion of separate individuality. In deep sleep the mind is stilled and man is one with the Self, but in an unconscious way. In samadhi he is one with the Self in a fully conscious way, not in darkness but in light.” If man contains these various levels or layers of consciousness, then it is at that point where waking state and sleeping state most nearly meet that we would expect to make the first breakthrough into deeper levels. In discussing this point, the Maharshi likened ego-mind to a caterpillar which leaves one hold only after catching on to another. “The ego in its purity is experienced in intervals between two states.” The sadhaka, leaving sleep and entering the waking state, may draw up with him, as it were, a small portion of the great deep of the Self into his surface consciousness — in that tiny interval before busy mind latches on to its varied holds. This may indeed be for him the first intimations of the Dawn of realization.

This tiny allegory shows that entry into the Kingdom can be a natural awakening or flowering of the total personality. “Of her own accord earth bears her fruit, first the green blade, then the ear, and then the ripe grain in the ear.” At this point Jesus’s perception of the pressing nature of time intervenes, “But when the crop is ready he at once sends out the sickle, for the harvest has come.” This sense of urgency is one of the great hallmarks — and one of the great puzzles — of Jesus’s teaching. The answer to this puzzle lies, I believe, embedded in The Parable of the Wedding Feast, previously discussed. Man does grave damage to his own ‘health’ and happiness by his constant refusal to welcome those ‘messengers from another world’, the King’s ‘servants’. Happily he may be ‘chosen’, to use Jesus’s term, but the stark alternative is there, the fate of the guest without the wedding garment who was thrown into outer darkness, the sea of suffering or samsara. Nor is this terrifying denouement for the individual alone. The world itself, and especially human society, suffers from the terrible imbalance created by man’s rejection of the spiritual dimension. In fact, the fate of the city of the parable is all too reminiscent of the fate of many a real city in our own day, with streams of refugees escaping from bombshattered homes. Jesus’s diagnosis of the human condition was far from over-pessimistic.

— Mahanarayana Upanishad

“Him beyond whom there is nothing higher, than whom there is none smaller, none greater, alone who stands immutable like a tree established in heaven, by Him, the Purusha, all this is pervaded.... Not by ritual, not by progeny, not by wealth, but by abandonment did some attain to Immortality. That which renouncers attain is laid beyond the heaven, yet it shines resplendent in the heart-cave. Small, free from evil, dwelling of the Supreme, is the pure Lotus of the heart that is at the centre of the citadel (of the human body). Even there in that smallness is the sorrowless ether; what is within it that is to be meditated upon.”

— Mahanarayana Upanishad
WAS JESUS A MAHAYOGI? 1

By Norman Fraser

DID Jesus spend many years in India and Tibet and, especially, did he become a Mahayogi before returning to Palestine? Until about a hundred years ago this question would not have been asked in the West. To begin with, nobody would even have thought of asking such a question, and to go on with, if anybody had asked it he would have been dismissed as a madman.

Then, in the 1880's, a Russian traveller called Nicolas Notovitch made his way through Afghanistan, India and Tibet. While riding a donkey on a steep mountain path he was thrown and injured and taken to the Buddhist Gompa of Himis at Leh in Ladak. The fascinating story of his discovery there of a copy of a Tibetan manuscript about Jesus in India and Tibet is told by Janet Bock in her book, The Jesus Mystery, published in 1980. It seems that although Notovitch published his book in 1890, it remained practically unnoticed until Mrs. Bock managed to locate a copy and start her own research into the matter. As her material is very strictly copyright I cannot refer to it here though much in it contains the most positive evidence I have come across so far, especially as she mentions that, in 1922, the Swami Abhedananda saw the Tibetan manuscript in question and mentions it in his book, Kashmiri to Tibetti. However, nothing further seems to have been done about this manuscript before the Chinese hordes ravaged the Tibetan monasteries where copies were said to be kept. Mrs. Bock, in her travels, found that the copy at Leh had also disappeared and so has not been able to locate any copy. The Life of Saint Issa apart from that published by Notovitch.

Although there have by now been quite a number of references to Jesus in India in various publications, together with the thunderbolt released in 1980 in Germany by the Sonder-Nachrichten Zeitung about Jesus's final return to India, I have given my attention in this article only to three major sources available in the West: first, Janet Bock's The Jesus Mystery; then, that old curiosity, Levi H. Dowling's The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ, and finally, Jeffrey Furst's, Edgar Cayce's Story of Jesus. The evidence in the latter two books is interesting and plausible but would not be acceptable to the man-in-the-street as it stems from the so-called Akashic records. In the case of Levi (1844-1911) who came from a very small Ohio township which I cannot trace in any of my three atlases, but seems to have reached Indianapolis after serving as a chaplain in the Civil War, I cannot conceive of any normal way that he could have obtained the detailed inside information which he gives out in his Aquarian Gospel. Pure imagination, you might say, but my goodness, how could a not very highly educated smalltown American of his time have dreamed up such a lot of perfectly plausible and specialized material? Of course Edgar Cayce (1877-1945) is in the same boat. Born in an insignificant locality (a farm in West Kentucky), he did at least reach the cities of learning and culture but, surprisingly, not until he had fully established himself as a "sleeping prophet" and had proved beyond doubt that, in a state of deep self-hypnosis, he had access to information which was not otherwise available, though later confirmed and proved.

Now, both these latter-day prophets gave in some cases detailed accounts of Jesus in India though Cacey, dependent on the ques-

The author informs that since submitting the above article, he has found substantially corroborate material in another recent book: Jesus Died in Kashmir, translated from the German of A. Faber-Kaiser.
tions asked of him, contributes less to our subject than either Notovitch or Levi whose accounts tally in their broad lines though differing in details.

So the story is roughly as follows: By the time Jesus was 13 his fame as a prodigy was spreading rapidly in his native land and he had been questioned and tested by some of the leading religious and intellectual figures of the day. Now a wealthy Indian merchant prince passed through Palestine and heard talk of this boy. Filled with curiosity he made his way to Nazareth and found Jesus busily helping his father to build a house. The Indian traveller recognized the signs of a very spiritually advanced incarnation in the boy and finally persuaded Joseph and Mary to allow their precious first born to go to India with his newly-found patron. According to Cacey, the Essenes, to whom Jesus and his parents belonged, encouraged this venture as they knew that the religious and philosophical teaching in India were basic to all such teachings.

So Jesus went off on his long journey along the ‘silk route’ to the Orient. Of this journey neither Cacey nor Levi has anything to say. His first productive encounter on arriving in India seems to have been with the Jains as he passed through Rajputana. They opened his eyes to the final oneness of all life, and here one must remember that he had been brought up in a religion which sacrificed animals. But Jesus was probably ready for ahimsa — at any rate it was to become the central point of his teaching. Jesus then proceeded across India with his patron and ended up in Orissa at the prince’s palace in Jagannath where he was accepted as a pupil in the Temple. Here one of the priests took him under his wing. After a time they went to Benares where, according to Cacey, the name of his guru was Kalijian.

But here, alas!, Jesus was to blot his copy-book very considerably and get into bad odour, for he would go and mix with the untouchables. The Brahmins warned him that this was not allowed, but Jesus, being Jesus, was already in defiance of ‘authority’ and when the Brahmins had finally decided to punish him very severely for his open disregard of their warnings, he was secretly told of this and fled by night in a northerly direction, arriving eventually at Kapilavatthu (given as Kapivastu by Levi) the capital of the Sakya kingdom where Siddhattha’s parents, king Suddhodana and his wife Maya, had lived some 500 years previously. Buddhism is still the religion in Nepal Therai.

According to Levi Jesus learnt Pali and studied the Buddhist Suttas together with a priest called Vidyapati. Eventually he reached Lhasa in Tibet. Here a monk called Meng-tse helped Jesus to read the sacred manuscripts. Then he wandered off westwards and stayed, for quite a time, in the Himis monastery at Leh which was then in Tibet. From Ladak he descended through Kashmir with a Caravan of merchantmen and, according to Levi, they were so taken with him that when they learnt that he was going all the way home to Palestine, seemingly on foot, they gave him a camel, and on this beast he arrived in Lahore. Here he made a lot of friends and stayed quite a while before crossing the Sind on his way to Persia.

According to Levi the reason why he eventually left India and went home was because he had received news, through a traveller while he was in Benares, that his father Joseph had died and his mother was pining for him to return. But, surely, according to these accounts, wasn’t that a long time before he finally left India? Anyhow, that is the story. True or false?

Having added to his inborn knowledge by acquiring from the Hindus and Buddhists their occult knowledge and practices which lead to what we now know as siddhis, Jesus’s journey home was more eventful than the outward journey had been, some 12 years previously, and Levi gives quite an account of it. We must remember that all these journeys were amazingly slow and dilatory by our present standards and, curiously enough, one is also
reminded of the slow, leisurely journey to Bethany when Lazarus had died.

And now we come to a significant clue from the Bible. When Jesus arrived back his cousin John (the Baptist), whom he had known well as a boy, did not recognize him. (St. John 1:31) If John had not seen this man of about 30 since he was a boy of 13, is this so surprising? However, John did recognize the fact that Jesus was spiritually immensely his superior.

Have we any other biblical clues or pointers to the possibility that Jesus acquired his siddhis in India and Tibet? A close study of his teaching, according to the Bible, would seem to show us that those points in both his teaching and behaviour which infuriated and enraged the Hebrew priesthood could very possibly have come from his study of the Vedas, Upanishads, etc. It is said that everything that Jesus taught can be found in the Old Testament and, to a certain extent, that is true; but and this is a very big but, there is an awful lot in the Old Testament that is entirely contradictory to the utterly compassionate and peaceful teaching of Jesus. Wasn't he, like the Maharshi, the very embodiment of ahimsa? Didn't this lead to his extraordinary behaviour in the Temple at Jerusalem when he drove out the perfectly legitimate animal dealers and money changers who were defiling his Father's house? Everybody else fully accepted these practices: why didn't he? Then there was the complete reversal of the eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth teaching, still, seemingly, in force in Israel today? Resist not evil. Return good for evil (to prevent evil from further establishing itself), etc. We are forcibly reminded here of the Maharshi's behaviour with the robbers. But Jesus's crowning blasphemy came when he announced that he was one with the Father. He knew exactly what this meant, Nobody else did.

We could go on in this way passing from point to point, but it is quite unnecessary when we consider what is to my mind the final proof: the so-called death and resurrection. While in India among the yogis Jesus would have had plenty of opportunity to hear about and witness all kinds of siddhis, including the seeming removal of life from the body and its subsequent restoration. For all we know, Jesus may even have practised this siddhi himself as he was perfectly confident that he could "restore this temple" within three days after it was "destroyed". Incidentally, Jesus's reference to his body as this temple is a simile to be found in Stanza 10 of the Skandopanishad. Now biblical scholars may retort that while he was dead he went and preached to the dead. Well, why not? The 'dead' are merely those in another level or state of consciousness. While Jesus was absent from his physical body he was still very much alive and in that state of consciousness where ordinarily the jiva awaits return to our present level. So it would be quite true to form, for him to attract a gathering and start teaching them. Indeed, would this very vital Son of God, this avatar sent by his Father, sit and twiddle his thumbs until the time came to take up his earthly body again? No! In any case his work during the Piscean age was seemingly not over yet as there is documentation to show that he returned to India, settled in Kashmir, and was buried in Srinagar at the age of 160 after having reformed the Buddhist movement. But this is another story and does not concern our query: was Jesus a Mahayogi?

"Did you hear about what the monkeys did last Independence Day?" A few days before, on the 11th or 12th, while Bhagavan was seated in the Jubilee Hall, an army of monkeys came clamouring for fruit. Krishnaswami, the attendant, tried to drive them away by shouting, whereupon Bhagavan said, "Remember, the 15th of August is an Independence Day for them as well. You must give them a feast on that day instead of driving them away".  

— Letters from Sri Ramanasramam, p. 263
I was born at Kalyanpur, a village in the district of Mangalore, Mysore State. I was the only son of my parents Sri Manjunath Keeni and Saraswati Keeni, of Gowd Saraswat Brahmin community.

From my childhood, I was deeply interested in religion and I loved visiting temples to hear devotional bhajans.

In January 1977, while staying at Calcutta with my family, I along with other members of my family received a severe emotional shock from a certain religious organisation to which we were closely attached. Seventeen years of association was suddenly cut off.

Round about the same time the fact that I had diabetes came to light. Because of strains and anxieties arising out of the shock, I often passed into a state of diabetic coma. This gave rise to the fear of death and fear of rebirth, in me. And my desire was turned to having a peaceful, fearless, painless death with no rebirth. So the search for protection from a Sad-guru began. I started reading almost any book I came across on religion and philosophy, to find and meet a Sad-guru.

In my studies, my eldest daughter, Gargi Keeni, now doing research in Japan, was my constant inspirer. It was she who kept on providing me with books on religion and philosophy. At last I came across Dr. Paul Brunton’s “A Search in Secret India”. The chapter IX entitled THE HILL OF THE HOLY BEACON at once attracted me, and I came to know about Sri Arunachala Ramana. This indeed was the turning point of my life.

Eager to know more about Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and the Hill of the Holy Beacon, I kept on looking for a person who knew more about Sri Ramanasramam. I came across one Mr. P.S.N. Swamy of Mather and Platt, Calcutta and it was he who supplied me with the book entitled ‘Self-Realisation’. I found the volume very interesting, exactly what I was looking for.

Correspondence with Sri Ramanasramam started and in the process I procured all the available publications. The book Five Hymns To Sri Arunachala of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the chapter "THE GLORY OF SRI ARUNACHALA" was exactly what I was searching for and especially the paragraph 5 and 6 which read “What cannot be acquired without great pains — the true import of Vedanta, that (Self-realisation) — can be attained by any one who looks at (this Hill)
from where it is visible or even mentally thinks of it from afar”.

“I, the lord, ordain that those who reside within a radius of three yojanas of this place (Arunachala) shall attain union (with the Supreme) which removes bondage even in the absence of initiation, etc.”, was nectar/Amrit, giving me, an illiterate person in philosophy, a new life.

I visited Sri Ramanasramam on 6-3-80 and this was followed by a second visit on 3.11.82. During my second visit along with my 3 sons, Bikram, Rajib and Shivaji, I met Sri V. Ganesan, Managing Editor of ‘The Mountain Path’. He was very kind inspiring and ready to answer any query regarding Bhagavan’s teachings. He was encouraging to sincere devotees and we are grateful to him. He was kind enough to take us to senior devotees, Mr. N. Balarama Reddy and Lady Lucy Cornelissen, at the Ashram. A few minutes stay and talk with these two devotees was quite inspiring and educative.

We also found enjoyable and satisfying our daily visits to Sri Sadhu Om and the blessed opportunity of doing Giri Pradakshina, in the company of Sri Sadhu Om and Sri Michael James on 1st November 1982 (full moon night) which will ever remain in our memory.

The going round the Holy Hill — Arunachala — the Sacred Red Mountain reminded me of my young days when my parents used to take me on pilgrimage to the various holy places in the district of Mangalore. I remember well my staying back at the village temple of Kalyanpur to hear bhajans during the nights.

Now I have a feeling that I am in the ocean of grace of Bhagavan Sri Arunachala Ramana and am learning to face life and events easily, peacefully.

Truly — Sri Ramanasramam is a universal port of call for spirituality because of the presence of Guru Ramana, a ever-living flame!
"The Lord made me his own, as the principle of his doings, from the first, before he set about the creation of things.

From all eternity I have been installed, from the old days before earth took its being.

There were no depths, when I first lay in the womb, no springs teeming with water;

The mountains had not sunk into their place, there were no hills, when I was brought to the birth.

Not yet had he made the earth, or the rivers, or the poles of the round world; I was there, when he had laid out the heavens, when he fenced in the depths by fixing a vault there to restrain them; when he made the sky strong overhead; when he gave the springs of water their level; when he confined the sea within its bounds, so that its waters should never transgress his command.

When he balanced the foundation of the earth.

All the time, I was at his side, his master workman, all delight, day after day, as I kept holiday before him continually, kept holiday in this world of his where it is my delight to dwell with human kind.

Come then, while youth serves, listen to me; blessed are those who follow the paths I shew them.

Attend to the lessons that will make you wise. Do not thrust them away.

Blessed is the man who listens to me, waiting for my doors to open and standing ready at my threshold.

He who finds me will find life, and have his fill of the Lord’s way....”

(Proverbs, viii 22-35)

The Divine Female Principle is Cosmic. She can be traced from the beginning of time.

In ancient civilizations She has been venerated and worshipped as: ‘Mother of God’, ‘Queen of Heaven’, the ‘Intercessor or Mediatrix’, the ‘Immaculate Blessed Virgin’, the ‘Fount of all Graces’, the ‘Star of the Sea’, the ‘Black Madonna’ and a host of other titles.

In Persia, the Male Principle in the Zarathrustian religion is known as MITHRAS, the male fire; MITRA is revealed to be the Female Light-counterpart.
The Babylonians venerated ISHTAR, mother of the sun-god TAMMUZ.
The Druids worshipped Her as CEREDWYN.
In Yucatan She was CIRIBIAS.
The Syrians named Her ASHTORETH.
To the Mexicans She is CHIMALMA.
The Phoenicians worshipped Her as ASTARTE.
The Greeks revered Her as APHRODITE.
In Egypt She was worshipped as the VIRGIN-MOTHER, ISIS.

Upon one of the temples consecrated to Her is written the inscription:

'I am everything that hath been, that is or that will be, and no mortal hath ever yet removed the veil that shades my divinity from human eyes.'

In Buddhism She appears as MAYA, Weaver of Illusion.

In Hinduism it is understood that although the Supreme Being or Brahman is devoid of qualities, the SHAKTI which is the FEMALE PRINCIPLE exists side by side with the Male Principle of SHAKTA.

To the Western World She is known as the VIRGIN MARY, the manifestation of the Principle the Chinese call YIN.

This Female principle presents two aspects, namely, the heavenly and Unmanifest, and the earthly or Manifest.

Within the earthly vessel of Mary, daughter of Joachim and Anna, was contained the plenitude of Grace, as the words of her visitant, the Angel Gabriel, proclaims:

'Hail Mary, full of Grace — the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.'

(Luke 1).

Before the divine Incarnation of Jesus the Christ in Bethlehem, the womb which was to serve as a tabernacle for the God-man, was spotless, untainted, immaculate.

As St Thomas Aquinas writes in his 'SUMMA';

'Christ was conceived from Mary the VIRGIN, who supplied the life matter in such wise as to produce similarity of kind, and therefore He is called Her Son. On the other hand, Christ in His human nature, was conceived from the Holy Ghost as from the active principle, but not in such wise as to produce similarity of kind as a son is born to a father, and therefore Christ is not said to be the Son of the Holy Ghost.'

The author of "The Divine Motherhood", the Abbot of Buckfast, elucidates further:

'The reason why the Holy Ghost, through the operation in Mary's womb, did not produce an offspring in the similarity of kind, as does a human father, is given by ST Thomas in the same paragraph. The Son Of God, though becoming incarnate, existed before the incarnation. In His own existence He had perfect similarity of nature and kind from the eternal Father, the first Person of the Trinity. Therefore he was Son already, the only Begotten of the Father. Becoming incarnate through the operation of the Holy Ghost could not make Him Son of the Holy Ghost, as such a relation of parentage already existed with the Father. But it made Him truly the Son of Mary, because Mary and Mary alone, gave Him a true similarity of nature in humanity, as the Eternal Father, and the eternal Father alone, had given Him similarity of nature in divinity through the eternal filiation of the WORD. The eternal Father and Mary are the true parents of Jesus Christ.'

The Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, which was declared by Pope Pius LX in 1854, affirms the truth that Mary was without stain of original sin.

'O Purest of creatures, sweet Mother, sweet Maid,

The one spotless womb wherein Jesus was laid...'
In the ‘Gospel According to the Pseudo-Mathew’ and the ‘Book of James’, which are Apocryphal, ‘veiled’ or ‘secret’ writings, Mary, who is “undefiled before God,” (Book of James 10:1), is told to weave the holy veil of the tabernacle by the priest. Later in the narrative, Mary states with innocent simplicity: ‘I am pure before God, and know not man’. (15:3).

In the same Gospel the manner in which the divine Babe is delivered into the world is narrated in beautiful mystical parlance. A wondrous light overshadowed the cave or grotto wherein Mary lay. The brilliant light remained ‘until the infant appeared; and the infant took the breast of its mother, Mary.’

Holy Simeon, when he beheld the Divine Babe in the temple, ecstatically cried out that he was ‘A LIGHT to the revelation of the Gentiles’.

* * *

Just as a child loves to feel the nearness of its earthly mother, so the soul experiences a sense of security when the Presence of the Divine Mother is felt. Within the radius of Her Love, Her tenderness, Her understanding, Her Sagacity, the soul basks in utter content. What harm can befall it when SHE is there?

It is not always necessary to pore over erudite works, mystical treatises, scholarly tomes, in order to draw close to the QUEEN of the Universe. What is required is a sincere heart.

Sincerity unlocks the door to wondrous spiritual treasures. It will be understood that from the Cosmic point of view SHE is the IMMACULATE WOMB from Which the INVISIBLE and UNMANIFEST becomes VISIBLE and MANIFEST.

SHE is the Compassionate All-Merciful heart — the Lady of Graces — the Gracious Advocate — the Holy Light of Wisdom whereby spiritual inertia and ignorance is dispelled and put to flight. SHE is Guide and Mentor, Adorable Refuge and unfailing Protectress.

From HER flows all the virtues, for SHE IS VIRTUE ITSELF!

Her Rays of infinite understanding, infinite Beauty, infinite Mercy, infinite Hope, infinite Patience, lead to the tranquil Vale of Peace, the Lagoon of spiritual serenity where all dichotomies are no more, and where all conflicts cease.

Whether in sorrow or joy, the soul can look to Her. SHE never wavers, never changes. The Divine Mother never abandons Her charges.

The Ways to Her are infinite, the approaches to Her varied. Thus, the soul may be led to speak to Her in a prayer couched in mystical language:

‘O Thou Who art the Weaver of Thought Fashion for me a prayer worthy of Thee!
O Thou Who art the Melody in sound
Compose for me a Song worthy of Thee!
Thy smiling glance encompasses the
Universe
Like a Diadem of utter splendour
The glory of which irradiates my being,
Thou wearest the Skies for a mantle.
And woven into the fabric of Space
Is Thy starry luminous loveliness
Which enraptures and bewitches me.
Within and beyond all dimensions I find Thee,
O glorious Soul of the World!’

Again, a very different prayer-song may be offered up to Her, clothed in simple, plain language:

‘My Mother in Heaven, O Madonna of the Seven Moons,
Protect, guide, encourage me always.
When fear comes near me
Let it not take root in my heart.
When sorrow visits me as it must
Be Thou my Comforter.
When joy floods my being
Participate in my happiness.
I welcome Thee into the totality of my life.
Held tenderly within Thy Mother’s heart
What greater blessing can I seek?’

— (to be continued)
HERE are a few miraculous real-life stories of seekers, narrated in their own words, as they were originally told by them to the writer. The dramatically inspiring experiences, which are retold here, will give the reader a very vivid impression of the mysteriously supernatural but nonetheless plainly evident way in which his power works, attracting people from any part of the globe.

The writer was once drawn to talk to a young girl from Germany whom he met there. He asked her whether it was her first visit. When she said 'Yes', he felt impelled to ask her — "What made you come here?" The following is her reply — "Well, it happened this way. One day, I went to a friend's house. Whilst there, my attention was suddenly drawn to a photograph on her table. As soon as I saw it, it held me spell-bound, and I just couldn't move my eyes away from it. I didn’t know who he was, but as I went on gazing at his picture, some strange power started overcoming me. Shivers of ecstasy thrilled through my frame, my hair stood on end and tears flooded my eyes. All this was too much for me and I gasped out to my friend — 'Who is he and what is all this happening to me?' My friend, who was not at all surprised to see my state, as she was well versed in these matters, coolly replied, 'Oh! So you don’t know Him. But that doesn’t matter at all. He is the great sage of India, named Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi and what happened to you just now is a sign that His power is working on you and He is drawing you to Him'. Afterwards, my friend, who had already visited this place, guided me to enable me to arrive here."

The next story was told by an Australian woman Swami who was living up in one of the caves of the Hill. — "One evening, towards sunset, I was just relaxing in my arm-chair, gazing out of the open door of my house. all alone and at peace. Then, all of a sudden, in the open door-way, there stood the figure of a man. He was aged and had a stick in his hand to support him. The brown skin of the man indicated that he was an Asian but the most striking part of his appearance was that he was quite nude, except for a loin-cloth. And there was something very peculiar in the way he was looking at me. As I was staring at him in astonishment, the figure simply disappeared before my very eyes. The mystery of the strange vision was revealed the very next day. One of my friends came visiting and she had brought a book for me. As I opened the book, how thunder-struck I was to see a picture of the same man in the same pose! So, He had given me His 'darshan' even before I knew Him! After reading about Him, it naturally followed that I should also visit His Place."

The final episode deals with the experience of a middle-aged Indian who was on his first visit. His case was rather unique in as much as he was a devotee of a well-known woman saint and he was not attracted to Bhagavan. Even then, Bhagavan called him. He narrated his experience in these simple words — "One night, in a dream, Bhagavan appeared to me. With one hand, he pointed at his heart and with the other hand, He beckoned to me, saying, 'come to me.' So, that’s how, you find me here."
SMT. PANKAJAKSHI

Smt. Pankajakshi is the younger daughter of the staunch devotee, the late Sri C. Somasundaram Pillai (introduced in our issue of April, 1979, p. 119). Pious, hard-working and sincere, Sri Pillai served the Ashram for many years in various capacities. Pankajakshi’s mother, Umayammal, was a fervent devotee, who had the mystic experience that Bhagavan was her ‘child’. As reported by A. Devaraja Mudaliar, she once brought to the presence of Bhagavan a cradle with a doll in it and started singing lullaby to the Ramana-doll in the cradle, while Bhagavan watched with amusement!

With such deeply devoted parents Pankajakshi was naturally drawn to Bhagavan even from her childhood. In 1935, her grand-uncle brought her a photo of Sri Bhagavan and Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi in Tamil (Ramana Noolthirattu), graciously touched by Bhagavan. He told Pankajakshi: “These have been blessed by Bhagavan, touching them with His Holy Hands, to be given to you!” She was then 13 years old and was thrilled. She had been doing parayana of Kandar Anubuthi from the age of 10, and now added Arunachala Aksharamanamalai to her daily parayana.

In 1939, along with her elder sister, Alamelu and her father, she had her first darshan of Sri Bhagavan. “The three days that I spent in His Presence are the most memorable in my life”, she affirms. Pankajakshi and her sister were singing Aksharamanamalai before Bhagavan. Pankajakshi recounts with joy how Bhagavan once corrected her pronunciation of the word ‘kantham’ (meaning, magnet).

She was married in the following year; Pankajakshi’s husband was also deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan and brought her twice a year for darshan of Sri Bhagavan. In
1945, she came along with her husband and two sons and stayed here in a rented house for three years. Those three years were golden years for her, since she would come morning and evening — from 8 to 11 a.m. and again from 2 to 7 p.m. — they would be in the Hall, basking in the Master’s Presence and listening to His words of Wisdom.

Since Pankajakshi was from childhood a devotee of Lord Muruga, she recognised, like several others, the essential identity of Sri Bhagavan and Kumara. One day when she was meditating in front of Bhagavan, she saw within herself Lord Muruga sitting on a peacock with a Vel (spear) in His hand and was enjoying the Divine Vision, when Lord Muruga disappeared and Sri Bhagavan was there in His place. Are not God and Guru one and the same and both bring Blissful Peace to earnest devotees?

In 1949, she lost her husband to whom she was very devoted. This was a big shock and she came over to Arunachala along with her sons and stayed with her parents. Bhagavan was then seriously ill and within six months of her arrival, He shed His physical frame. Added to this shock, Pankajakshi’s pious mother also passed away within five months. These shocks only made Pankajakshi get more deeply rooted in her devotion to Bhagavan and move closer to Him. Sri Somasundaram Pillai, her father, helped her stay at Arunachala for good and was her friend, philosopher and guide. This gave her the great privilege of serving senior Ramana-bhaktas, like Sri Muruganar and others, by supplying them food. Pankajakshi brims with pride that even now she continues to do this service to such a staunch devotee as Kunju Swami. It was she who wrote the book: Yenadu Ninaivugal (My Reminiscences) of Kunju Swami, gathering all the information from the Swami.

Smt. Pankajakshi’s life was by no means smooth or easy. She had suffered from tuberculosis early in her life. She had to undergo a few major operations. During the operations while having anaesthesia she would not count numbers, but say ‘Ramana’, ‘Ramana’, ‘Ramana!’ This enabled her to have a beautiful vision during her unconscious condition, of Bhagavan extending over her His Hand of Protection.

Smt. Pankajakshi, now past 60, lives in her house at Ramana Nagar, close to her Master’s Abode. Her one ambition in life is to continue what she began at 16 — to spend every day, every hour, every minute in contemplation of Bhagavan Ramana. We wish this pious, unassuming and simple bhakta the joy she prays for.

“Sri Bhagavan was more human, more fully and naturally human, than the rest of us and showed that to be thus human is to be truly divine. Through half-a-century of egoless living both as a man among men and as the Person, the Awareness, in all persons, the Sage proved Tagore’s thesis that religion is not the descent of divinity but the fulfilment of humanity: ‘As science is the liberation of our knowledge in the universal reason, which is human reason, religion is the liberation of our individual personality in the universal Person, who is human all the same.’”

— Professor K. Swaminathan in Ramana Maharshi, p. 62
SKANDASRAMAM

Skandasramam is a spiritual oasis nestling on the eastern slopes of Arunachala. It was here that Bhagavan became a 'householder'. Regular cooking was started, thanks to the loving care of Azhagammal, Bhagavan's mother. For six years between 1916 and 1922 this place was a veritable heaven on earth. The spiritual ministration and liberation of the Mother by Bhagavan's own Hands took place here.

In 1922, Bhagavan shifted to the Mother's shrine at Sri Ramanasramam but the devotees have always felt the magnetic draw of this place. The room where mother was liberated, the small shrine of Bhagavan, the perennial spring, the cool shade of the trees, all make one long to repeat a visit here.

A regular pathway from Sri Ramanasramam has been made and a visit to Skandasramam is a must for those coming to Sri Ramanasramam. One would be well advised to go early in the morning and imbibe the deep spiritual vibrations of this place sanctified by Bhagavan making it His abode for six years. Cool water from a perennial spring is available as if to remind one of the life-giving qualities of Ramana.
GIRI PRADHAKSHINA

From time immemorial, seekers of Truth have been drawn to Arunachala. The Hindu mythological work 'Skanda Purana' extols the glory of Arunachala and the immeasurable value of the circumambulation of the Hill, which is about eight miles. Bhagavan Himself used to go round the Hill till 1926 and would always encourage those wanting to do so, regardless of their age and physical condition. Before starting, devotees would get the smiling approval of Bhagavan. He would say, 'Try it and see if you can resist its pull!'

It is believed that many realised persons are residing in subtle bodies in the Arunachala and that consequently it would be auspicious to circle the holy Arunachala. Some days are considered special, particularly the time when light is lit on the top of Arunachala in the month of November/December. But one can go any day as all days are sacred for this purpose.

One is advised to go bare-footed and slowly like a queen in the ninth month of her pregnancy. The idea is that our minds and hearts should be given to God. So, it is suggested that one should walk either silently or discussing about spiritual subjects or chanting songs in praise of God. For a visitor to Sri Ramanasramam the circling of Arunachala is bound to be most gratifying, spiritually.

Pancha Mukha Darsanam
SELF — NON-SELF

I had the privilege of going through the book: Yoga Vashishta Sara, the English version as translated by Swami Sureshananda. In Ch. III, article 21, viz., ‘The Idea of Self in the non-Self is bondage’, etc., could not be understood. It is requested that this article may please be elucidated.

— S.B. Saxena, Bareilly

We appreciate very much the seriousness with which you have gone through Yoga Vashishta Sara. For further elucidation of the passage referred to by you, please read the following which might help you clear your doubts.

The word ‘Self’ means ‘I’ or ‘Aham’ in Sanskrit. This is a peculiar word. Usually, when a word, ‘one’, is uttered, it describes or points out only ‘one’ object, like water, a mango etc. Whereas, the word ‘I’ points out or refers to too many things. In fact, in the beginning there seems to be no ‘definite’ meaning for this world ‘I’.

When a man says ‘I am young’, ‘I am hungry’, ‘I am disturbed’, ‘I am happy’ and ‘I am ignorant’, one can see that though the word ‘I’ remains the same, it has gathered, gained many varied identities, like ‘young’ in relation to the body, ‘hungry’ in relation to ‘prana’ and ‘disturbed’, ‘happy’, ‘ignorant’ in relation to the mind. Naturally, therefore, one has to think about the real identity or the real meaning of the word ‘I’. One discovers the correct meaning and purport of the word ‘I’ as Pure Awareness. Other identities of the ‘I’ as seen above are rooted only in this simple Pure Awareness.

Therefore, the verse goes on to say that as long as one identifies oneself with the not-Self — the body and mind, and takes them to be the ‘I’ or Self, so long there will be bondage. However, no sooner one gives up the wrong identification but remains ever the real ‘I’ as Pure Awareness only and that for it there is neither bondage to be removed nor freedom to be gained. The ‘I’ or Self is ever free, even if one ignorantly thinks oneself to be bound. The jivanmukta ever lives in and enjoys that pure state of Bliss without any notion of either bondage or liberation.

For further elucidation, you may please read Bhagavan’s Who Am I? and also Sat Darshana, particularly, verse 39:

“Thoughts of liberation are only so long as one thinks one is bound
One attains the eternally liberated ‘I’ by the enquiry ‘for whom is the bondage?’
Thereafter how can thought of bondage and freedom arise?”

EARNEST EFFORT — I

First of all, I should want to thank you for the long-playing records that I listen with a very great joy. They bring me the Presence of Ramana and the purity of Arunachala . . . .

I should be infinitely grateful to you for publishing in the next Mountain Path this request: I should be very happy to correspond with an Indian family, devotee of Ramana Maharshi (in French or possibly in Italian or English) to exchange ideas, reflections and especially friendship and spirituality. I am 35 years old, married. I have three children of 7, 5 and 1 years. I am a farmer, astrologer and occultist and I am passionately fond of Indian spirituality. Moreover, I propose to all the Ramana’s devotees around the world, my spiritual help by occultism and by my astrological studies, in French. I shall answer to all the requests or informations.

At last, I do, every morning, hatha-Yoga with pranayamas and concentrations on the Ramana’s photograph. So, may a master of the Ashram conduct me and instruct me? Expecting your spiritual assistance, I am enclosing my photo.

Jean-Pierre Melelli, Cazillac, Cazes-Mondenard, 82110-Lauzerte, France.

We are pleased to learn that you find the Long Playing Records are so helpful. More than the mere music, the surging devotion of the singers who are themselves great adepts of Ramana’s teachings, should captivate you totally. Devotion is the life-root of spiritual foundation.

It is good that you do Hatha Yoga with pranayama and concentration on Sri Ramana’s portrait. If you progress spiritually it helps spontaneously. No need for you to offer your spiritual help by occultism or your astrological studies to devotees around the world. What is of importance is to try to elevate yourself spiritually. It also is of no importance to communicate with Indian families. What matters is the spiritual state not the nationality. We suggest you get some books on Sri Ramana Maharshi’s teachings from the enclosed catalogue of books, study them carefully and try to follow as far as possible. ‘Earnest efforts never fail’ asserts Sri Bhagavan!
1983 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EARNEST EFFORT — II

Greetings! I have been a follower of Ramana Maharshi for several years, and earnestly pursue His path of Self-enquiry. For those times when the quest seems a little more difficult my ego needs a crutch. For that reason I write to say hello and learn more of the Ashram and learn if there are a list of books of Ramana Maharshi’s teachings available, perhaps a photo of His.

— Jim Backstrom, Cherry Valley, U.S.A.

We are pleased to see the earnestness and dedication that surge from within you for Sri Bhagavan and His teachings. We have pleasure in sending you by separate airpost a copy of our Ashram journal: The Mountain Path, which please accept. This is the best way you can have more knowledge about Maharshi’s teachings. We also enclose therein a booklet: The Liberating Question which clearly states Sri Maharshi’s teachings as to how it should be practised. Literature on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings are available, as per the catalogue. A beautiful photo of Sri Maharshi is enclosed.

NEED FOR PERSONAL GURU?

I have been doing dhyana for several years. Now it is only a year that Sri Ramana Maharshi took me into His fold. Since many years I have been a devotee of Sri Sai Baba to whom I had been praying for atleast an inkling of ananda which we seek blindly in our spiritual quest. Ananda or peace is an unknown factor or state for most of us seekers. Only on the evidence of others or books we launch on the long and arduous journey. But if we have some idea, i.e., experience of the objective, our efforts will be more persistent, sincere and one-directional.

March last year a more advanced sadhaka loaned me the TALKS to read. Though I had come to know of Sri Ramana in 1952-53 through A Search in Secret India and had got impressed but had done nothing further in the matter. Recently in 1981, I happened to come across and purchase a set of Paul Brunton’s books and through them once again Sri Ramana and Self-enquiry came into my life. But it was TALKS which proved a landmark in the course of my spiritual pursuit. In those days I had ample free time and not only did I peruse through the book thoroughly, I also made extensive notes of the passages which appealed to me most. Besides solving most of my intellectual questions, TALKS inspired me to Self-enquiry which I started doing regularly.

One afternoon in April during meditation, I found my intellect very sharp and lucid. Crossing the various hurdles (as suggested by Brunton in The Secret Path) like ‘I am not the body’, ‘I am not the feeling, thinking, intellect’, I came to the ‘I’ — thought. Silently I still enquired ‘what after this’? Then all by itself a feeling of some kind of expansion took over me and I experienced the ‘chill’ of Peace. How long it lasted I do not know. May be a few minutes, a few seconds or even a fraction of a second! But, now looking back, I can very objectively say, that experience of ‘chill’ benefitted me most profitably in my day-to-day life too. Those were the days, professionally speaking, of waiting, exasperation and acute frustration. For more than four months that ‘chill’ froze my seething unhappiness at life wherein nothing seemed to be happening. I felt no anxieties in that period, no disquiet of mind, though, I underline, there was every reason for it. So profound, though temporary, was the effect of that ‘inking’ for which I had so arduously prayed for.

Anyway since then I made it a point to purchase all the important books, in Ramana-literature and read them with eagerness and devotion. A year has passed since that ‘inking’. I have not experienced it again. Though, of course, meditation at times was quiet deep. Sometimes I felt I had reached the ‘door’, even knocked at it or sometimes even the ‘door’ opened but I could never cross the threshold. One thing I noticed again and again. Everytime I went ‘deep’ it was inspite of me; some higher power had a hand in it.

My professional life has been rather far from satisfactory; on the contrary it is more disheartening and frustrating. But I can truthfully assert that certain peace and equanimity have prevailed although and are still prevailing. Never before have I faced bad times with so much poise and detachment as this past year. Thanks to that ‘glimpse’ and lesser experiences thereafter.

Sri Bhagavan in his life-time had transformed many souls and elevated them from an earthly footing to a divine level. Many of his contemporaries and later-period devotees are reported to have benefitted spiritually under His ever-present benign grace. But has anyone of these ‘realised’ to such an extent as to help a novice and quieten a disturbed mind? There were many such instances in Maharshi’s Presence. Has anyone reached the Sahaja Samadhi or any influenceable heights? Is there anybody who can by his very presence or look prevail upon a thought-riotous mind? Has anyone of the ‘senior’ devotees of Sri Ramana become Ramana? Is there any such ‘non-personality’ residing in or around Bombay whom I may take refuge to? According to Sri Bhagavan thoughts persist due to vasanas and vasanas can only be destroyed by a Guru! I am looking for such a Guru.

Please don’t give me the usual answer that why seek anybody when Sri Bhagavan’s Presence and Grace can still be felt. Such an answer will only prove the limitations of such Grace in the sense that even after 33 years of His passing away, not a single ‘individual’ has lost his ‘individuality’ following His path of Self-enquiry and receiving His Grace. I very earnestly want to take sharanam under somebody (some one with a body) as Sri Muruganar
and thousands of others had the good fortune of having. I solicit direct answers as indirect ones will only evade the issue.

— R. Jhalani, Bombay

We gladly receive you into the fold of spiritual community of devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi and wish you all happiness and peace which are bound to result from this your resolution — particularly since you have got already some direct confirmation from the `beyond' that you so well narrate yourself: "... it came inspite of me; some higher power had a hand in it".

Having been blessed so obviously in your endeavour we were rather surprised to read what immediately followed, as it seemed contrary to any understanding about the conditions of a spiritual life, and the inner attitude of an aspirant treading `the Way'. Your letter sounds, translated into everyday language: 'There has been a Sri Ramana Maharshi. He has blessed numerous sadhakas with Realization during His lifetime and later on. Don't tell me, he is still there. According to His teachings one can get rid of one's vasanas only by the Grace of an embodied Guru. I am ready to pay for it. Please give me an address. There must be plenty of them!" You go on, literally: "I very earnestly want to take sharanam under somebody (some one with a body) as Sri Muruganar and thousands of others had the good fortune of having".

Will you kindly stop a moment and ask yourself how you will recognise those 'thousands' of realized ones? Do they advertise themselves? Do they lecture and preach? Which certificate do they show about their 'realization'? And what do you expect to get handed over by them?

In short, your ideas about a spiritual life, more so about the Path of Ramana, are wrong. It is amazing how wrong, considering that you meditated for years and are reading Ramana's TALKS for more than a year.

Vasanas disappear, gradually in the light of treading a sincere spiritual life; and completely with the dissolution of the `personal I'. If you think you need a `some one with a body' as a Guru, you have to look yourself and to choose at the risk of meeting with costly disappointments too! It is safer to go on with a quiet and pure life of meditation, keeping the high ideal and goal aglow in your mind. Then the Guru will find you! Please be patient and have faith in your Inner Guru and submit to His time. He will guide you.

It would be easier for you to grasp the whole matter, once for all, if you come and stay with us here at Sri Bhagavan's Abode, a while. We are rather sure, that you will get the opportunity soon, since you have obviously the blessings of the Great Ones. They will also give you the Light and patience for you to further in the Path, since already your writing to us is a positive guidance to you by the Great ones blessing you.

A RICH TRIBUTE

Dear Shri Ganesan,

Please permit me to congratulate you and your colleagues on the over-all excellence of the Ashram Quarterly, The Mountain Path — contents-wise and production-values-wise. Of late, the improvement in the quality of the magazine is becoming strikingly discernible and in this I see a visible manifestation of the grace of Bhagavan.

A colleague of mine, Shri Shyamkumar, who was associated with me in the production of the special number of the Bhavan's Journal dated December 30, 1979 on Bhagavan, recently visited the Ashram and he spoke to me in glowing terms about the palpable Presence of Bhagavan and of the excellent arrangements for devotees, for which much credit should go to you and your venerable father.

The April issue of The Mountain Path (Volume 20, No. II,) contains an article, 'What is Wrong With The World' by Douglas E. Harding. Even on earlier occasions too, I have been struck by his clarity of thinking and felicity of expression. We in the Bhavan's Journal feel that it would be a good idea to reproduce his articles in the Bhavan's Journal for which I am seeking your formal permission through this letter. Will it also be possible to provide us with a good photograph of Harding and biographical details about him?

K. Subbarayan,
Associate Editor Bhavan's Journal,
Bombay.

A THESIS ON RAMANA

I am a Ph.D. student of the Warsaw University in Poland. My major is Indian Philosophy. I am working on the thesis on Sri Ramana Maharshi.

I am very interested in everything that is connected with this great sage. First of all — the books written by him which contain his teaching given by his own self. Or the books — written by others while he was alive and which are confirmed by his authority that contain the essence of his teaching. I am also interested in the reminiscences of his disciples connected with the person of Sri Ramana Maharshi, his savings, and the life (I can easily read English texts). I have seen an issue of the
magazine *The Mountain Path*. Is there any possibility to get the subscription of it? If you perhaps have a catalogue may I ask you to be so kind and send it on to me?

I have applied to get a scholarship in India, so, may be I will be lucky to go over there. Would it be possible to visit your Ashram then? Is it possible at all for a woman to stay there for some time? It would help me a lot in gathering the necessary materials for my thesis. I would very much like to see the place where such a great sage was living, and the Arunachala Hill so well glorified by Sri Maharshi. I also plan to translate some books of Sri Ramana Maharshi as I am sure it would be very precious for people living in this part of the world.

Daria Hunt, Krakow, Poland

We are very happy to know that you have taken up a thesis on Sri Ramana Maharshi. We convey our heartiest congratulations to you. Kindly find enclosed a catalogue of our publications in English — this contains books written on the original works of Sri Ramana Maharshi as well. You may select whatever books that you need and if it is possible you can arrange to send money; otherwise we will be happy to help you by sending these books free of charge. By separate book-post, registered, we have pleasure in sending you a Bound Volume of *The Mountain Path* for 1982 and the issues for January and April ’83.

With regard to your going over here, you are most welcome and you will be accommodated in our Ashram guest house and of course, you will dine with us — everything is free of charge. There are old devotees who have had the great opportunity of living with Sri Bhagavan who would be willing to help you with their vivid recollections of the Master and as how He taught them. Please do let us know what more you want and how better we could help you further.

"Macarius of Alexandria was a lover beyond all other men of the desert, and had explored its ultimate and inaccessible wastes... The place in which the holy Macarius lived was called Scete. It is set in a vast desert, a day and a night's journey from the monasteries on Nitria, and the way to it is to be found or shown by no track and no landmarks of earth, but one journeys by the signs and courses of the stars. Water is hard to find, and when it is found it is of a dire odour and as it might be bituminous, yet inoffensive in taste. Here therefore are men made perfect in holiness (for so terrible a spot could be endured by none save those of austere resolve and supreme constancy), yet their chief concern is the love which they show to one another and towards such as by chance reach that spot.

They tell that once a certain brother brought a bunch of grapes to the holy Macarius: but he who for love's sake thought not on his own things but on the things of others, carried it to another brother, who seemed more feeble. And the sick man gave thanks to God for the kindness of his brother, but he too thinking more of his neighbour than of himself, brought it to another, and he again to another, and so that same bunch of grapes was carried round all the cells, scattered as they were far over the desert, and no one knowing who first had sent it, it was brought at last to the first giver. But the holy Macarius gave thanks that he had seen in the brethren such abstinence and such loving-kindness and did himself reach after still sterner discipline of the life of the spirit."

— from *The Desert Fathers*, p. 71

This beautifully got up book — a garland of Bhagavan’s teachings culled from Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi and other Ashram publications, as also a few floral gatherings from Bhagavan Sankara’s works — is bound to interest those who are deeply interested in Advaita Vedanta.

The author, a sannyasin of peerless nature, soaked in Sankara’s teachings, has found clarity and certitude in Sri Bhagavan’s path. He narrates the vital spiritual experiences he has had himself while pursuing Sri Bhagavan’s royal path, which he calls “the sovereign science”. In compiling this book he has correlated his direct experiences with the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana and Acharya Sankara and has presented the result as an Advaita Vedanta Research Thesis of Truth. Affirming the Grace of Guru Ramana, the book concludes: “I bow down to Bhagavan, His Compassion, His Grace.”

Swami quotes verse 32 from Sat Darshana to substantiate his own experience gained by Sat-Guru Ramana’s Grace:

“Get at the Heart within by search
The ego bow its head and falls.
Then flashes forth another ‘I’
not the ego that, but the Self,
Supreme, Perfect.”

It is possible for everyone who follows Bhagavan’s path to attain the Truth, here and now.

The book brings home the immediacy of the Truth in one’s own heart and affirms that one is already the Truth and there is no more journey “to reach it”. Both the traditionalists and the modern rationalists will agree in thus accepting the value of Sri Bhagavan’s teachings and how they fully corroborate the sastras and yet appeal to modern man.

The Swami has offered a rich and attractive garland at Sri Bhagavan’s Lotus Feet. This new addition to Ramana-Literature will be found useful by all seekers who would gain by reading it repeatedly and reflecting on its contents.

AT THE FEET OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA: By Swami Vijnananda. Pub.: Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mangaladevi Road, Mangalore. 1. Pp. 66 Price: Rs. 3/-

“To Sri Ramakrishna, God was the one fact of Reality. Everything else was real on account of God. In his eyes, nothing was unreal for nothing was apart from God. If anything was unreal and to be rejected as such it was the feeling that something is apart from God. A sense of alienation from God is all the ignorance that exists and that is responsible for all the misery and bondage of humanity.” Many such passages in the book illustrate the supreme wisdom of the Great Master. Swami Vijnananda extols the Holy Mother and her divine nature as shown by sayings such as this: “If you want peace, my child, do not see faults in others. Rather see your own faults. Learn to make the whole world your own. No one is a stranger, my child. This whole world is your own.” His assessment of Swami Vivekananda and his unique place in Indian spiritual history and culture is apt. The article on the philosophy of Sri Ramanuja needs special mention as it is lucid and fits in the book so well.

Swami Vijnananda deserves praise for placing this compact book of eight precious essays at the Feet of the Great Master.

SAHAJ DARSHAN YOGA: By Satya Paul. Pub.: S.P. Agarwal, IX-63, R.K. Puram, New Delhi. 22, Price: Rs. 3/-. The little handbook in the Yoga of Direct perception provides theoretical and practical help to any seeker whose self-enquiry or inner journey takes the form of conscious participation from moment to moment in the process of living with full awareness of all relationships. Intensely personal and packed with common sense, the booklet points the way to growth and self-transcendence by witnessing one’s own roles in the world drama and enjoying life while living it.

PAX


Sri Mahadevan’s writings on Advaita Vedanta, have always merited the attention of learned scholars and critics. But the ordinary man is more interested in the
human personality of the great exponent and this is provided by these reminiscences.

The author with his characteristic humility says in the Preface of the book that "the term 'Philosopher' in the title of the book is used in its etymological sense: 'Lover of Wisdom'"

Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Sri Maha-purushaji Maharaj, Swami Rajeswarananda and Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi have been the masters, who cast their spell on the spiritual life of the author.

The chapters on Sri Ramana Maharshi and The Sage of Kanchi are quite informative and interesting.

The chapter entitled Fifty years of Philosophy is a glowing tribute to the late Professor Suryanarayana Sastrir under whom the author had his initial training in Advaita Vedanta.

Of the two main traditions of post-Sankara Advaita, the Vivarana and the Bhamati, it was the latter that had a greater appeal to Professor Sastrir.

According to the traditional Advaita, there is a hiatus between the empirical and the transcendental, between the world of maya and Brahman. Professor Sastrir is averse to this cleavage. For him 'the finite is not a plane or sphere apart from the infinite; it is the infinite itself which expresses itself in finitude.' There are not two realms, those of vyavahara and paramarthra; of which the vyavaharika is a section and semblance'. From the empirical to the absolute there is not a discontinuous jump but a continuous progression.

The author quotes Professor Sastrir's moving tribute to the great Sankara:

"The main fabric of Advaita, the garment has clothed Indian thought for so much of domestic as well as foreign service through these long centuries, that is essentially the handiwork of Sankara, the youthful preceptor of elderly disciples, the non-dualist champion of six faiths, the orthodox opponent of ritualism and the rational opponent of logicism. To him all eyes have turned and will continue to turn with loving reverence, so long as man retains his nobility, and wisdom its prestige."

Though inclined to hold on to the traditional view of Advaita rather than to the new insights provided by Professor Sastrir, Dr. Mahadevan has done full justice to Professor Sastrir and his views by presenting them exhaustively in proper perspective.

The author ends these reminiscences with the words:

"To the understanding and exposition of this experience (Advaita) which is the culmination of all inquiry and research, I have offered all my attention be it academic, human or spiritual. It is that which sustains me."

S. SANKARANARAYANAN.


Chuang Tzu is a well-known classic of Taoism, the Chinese philosophy of the Way. It is a collection of very varied writings of the 4th, 3rd and 2nd Centuries B.C., the oldest of which are the seven Inner Chapters, most confidently ascribed to Chuang-tzu himself. Taoism expresses that side of Chinese civilisation which is spontaneous, intuitive, unconventional and private as opposed to Confucianism which represents the moralistic, the official, the respectable. Very little is known about Chuang-tzu, the person. But tales and legends about him give him a distinct personality as an individual, mocking logic, scorning office and wealth and welcoming death with open arms.

In the words of the translator,

"The more closely one reads the disconnected stories and fragmentary jottings in the Inner Chapters, the more aware one becomes of the intricacy of its texture of contrasting yet reconciled strands, irreverent humour and awe at the mystery and holiness of everything, intuitiveness and subtle, elliptical flights of intellect, human warmth and inhuman impersonality, folkiness and sophistication, fantastic unworliday raptures and down to earth observation, a vitality at its highest intensity in the rhythms of the language which celebrates death, an effortless mastery of words and a contempt for the inadequacy of words, an invulnerable confidence and a bottomless scepticism".

In the brilliant introduction, Graham explains in detail the characteristics of this philosophy. The organ of thought is not the brain, but the heart. The spontaneous energies without any rational calculated thinking or logic can be cultivated by "ch'i, breath energy conceived as a fluid which in its purest state is the breath that vitalises us". With the abandonment of fixed goals, the dissolution of rigid categories, the attention roams freely over the endlessly changing panorama; and responses spring directly from the energies inside us. With such spontaneity comes liberation. Spontaneity does not mean surrender to passions which distorts awareness. It is a responsiveness in the impersonal calm when vision is most lucid. A mere mental logic has to be rejected; in its place has to be cultivated "a sorting which even things out". The sage cannot find words for the totality he experiences. Name and form only distinguish and divide. But with a unifying vision the sage lucidly mirrors in him heaven and earth. And finally one is able to look directly at the fact of one's own physical decomposition without horror, to accept...
one's dissolution as part of the universal process of transformation.

Here are some vignettes:

“When I chisel a wheel”, says the carpenter to Duke Huan, “if the stroke is too slow, it slides and does not grip, if too fast it jams and catches in the wood. Not too slow, not too fast; I feel it in the hand and respond from the heart, the tongue cannot put it into words, there is a knack in it somewhere which I cannot convey to my son and which my son cannot learn from me”.

A swimmer is asked how he stays afloat in a whirlpool. He answers, “I enter with the inflow and emerge with the outflow. I follow the way of the water and do not impose my selfishness on it. That is without me knowing why it is so is destiny”.

Last night Chuang Chou dreamed he was a butterfly, spirits soaring he was a butterfly and did not know about Chou. When all of a sudden, he awoke, he was Chou with all his wits about him. He does not know whether he is Chou who dreams he is a butterfly or a butterfly who dreams he is Chou...

The text of the original is a hotch potch, corrupt, fragmented and unintelligible at places. The job of the translator and that too in an alien tongue is unenviable. Graham has done an admirable job in sifting and ‘sorting that evens out’. The homogeneous blocks clearly distinguishable in ideas and in style have been put together and we have besides the seven Inner Chapters, a ‘school of Chuang-tzu’ selection, the essays of the Primitivist, the Yangist miscellany and the Syncretist writings.

A solid and scholarly contribution in the field of Chinese philosophy.

S. SANKARANARAYANAN


Ramprasad is one of the leading devotional singers of Bengal in the 18th century. His Deity is the Divine Mother whom he invokes under different names. In approaching the Divinity direct, with a personal urgency, now as a devotee, now as a child, now as a beggar, now as a friend, he fully reflects the characteristic moods of the Bhakti movement that swept India during the medieval ages. In an informative and closely reasoned exposition, the translators point out in the Introduction how there are more than one level of meaning in these lyrical outpourings. There is mythology, there is Tantra, there is Yoga. The seeming contradictions in the phraseology disappear when we remember that to the poet the Mother is not a person but a principle, a cosmic Shakti that has various functions. She takes postures and forms according to the nature of the situation and the need of the devotee who waits upon her Grace.

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The sixty-two lyrics translated in this collection are fairly simple and self-contained. The poet not only describes the external factors that enter into his relationship with the Mother; he also explores the inner dimension, e.g.

Now cry Kali and take the plunge!
O, my Mind, dive into this sea,
This heart which has yet to be sounded.
There are gems down there that two or three dives
Aren't going to get. Now, hold your breath
And jump! Kick down to where She sits
Deep in the wise waters, a great pearl. (P 54)

He does not seek union with Her. He wants to have the joy of relationship:

what's this salvation
If it swallows the saved like water
In water? Sugar I love
But haven't the slightest desire
To merge with sugar. (P 62)

The renderings are a good attempt to capture the spirit and verve of the originals.

M.P. Pandit


Science, philosophy and religion are the triple approaches made by man down the ages to explore the mystery of the universe, which he calls nature or Deity. While science represents human effort to explain the objective universe and philosophy his attempt to comprehend the subjective spheres of existence, religion tries to probe the unknown which transcends both science and philosophy. The synthesis of the three approaches is Theosophy, wherein man is defined as that being in whom the highest Spirit and lowest matter are united by intellect. Like Vamana encompassing the universe by his three steps, Theosophy presents a profound fundamental truth of man being a replica of the whole order of created beings, a model of the totality of nature in his spiritual, psychical and physical aspects. Geoffrey Hodson, an outstanding writer with more than a score of books to his credit, has presented here the fundamental ideas of the Living Wisdom. The author passed away in the last week of January in Auckland where he has been living in recent years.

Science in recent times has given up its note of certainty and become sceptical of any precise understanding of Nature. Has not quantum mechanics proved that the scale of observation creates the phenomena and Heisenberg's uncertainty principle disproved its earlier claims to perception of truth? The most startling revelation of science in the course of its investigations is the interference caused by the observer in the very act of observation, almost reminiscent of Patanjali's 17th aphorism in the Sadhana pada. Scientists like Eddington agree with Wordsworth and Coleridge who affirm that we get back from nature what we have put into her! Even as one begins to wonder whether there is an external world at all, we get the confirmation from Bhagavan Ramana Maharishi's Forty Verses:

"The pictures, which consist of names and forms, the observer, the screen, as also the light which illumines all: these are but the Self." (Ulladhu Narpathu. Forty Verses. 1)

It is a pity that neither religion nor philosophy has kept pace with the modern scientific approach towards mysticism; for while philosophy loses itself in intellectual verbiage by its methodology of abstractions evolving newer systems of thought, religion binds itself in a framework of creeds and dogmas. It is here that Theosophy comes to the rescue answering the questions which technological science, intellectual philosophy and formal religion fail to give. Madame H.P. Blavatsky in her monumental volumes, Isis Unveiled, which she calls "a Master-Key to the mysteries of Ancient and Modern Science and Theology" and the Secret Doctrine, "the synthesis of science, religion and philosophy" has revealed to us a vision of perfect order, a design and a plan in the universe, carrying the methods of pure science into the super-physical realms of Nature and Man. The author hopes that his restatement of Blavatsky's doctrine in clear and simple terms would be "helpful in the attainment of intellectual illumination and national and international collaboration, leading to the ultimate establishment of an enduring World peace"
### GROWING RAMANA LITERATURE

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**Publications of RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING**

40/41, II Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore-560 003, Phone : 369633
BHAGAVAN'S ARADHANA CELEBRATIONS AT THE ASHRAM IN PICTURES (10-5-83)

Ramana Music cassette sung in Carmina style by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan was released. The Ashram President, Sri T.N. Venkataraman presenting copies to Dr. O. Ramachandran and Sri Sadhu Hans Swamigal.

Ramana Auditorium: filled with flower garlands and devotees!

Children of Ramana Balas Kendra, Bangalore, enjoying visits to Gurumurtam (left) and Pachalammam Koval (right).

Ramanjali offered their 157th enjali to Sri Ramana on His Aedhana eve in front of Arunachaleswara Temple and in the midst of a mammoth crowd.

'Ramana Drama' by Ramana Balas Kendra children. (I) Mother Alagammal receiving the thieves only to feed them! (r) When he was scolded, the 'boy' Ramana took shelter behind the idol of Mother Sahayamba in the Tiruchzi Temple. The priest brought him out.
Children's dance

Son and Father merge in unison: Bliss thy name if Arunachala Ramana

A Tableau: Mother Atagamal is extolled by comparing her with the Mothers of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Parasurama, Buddha and Jesus.

Kumari Sarada, the steel anchor behind the children's participation in the Ramana Movement, is honoured by the Ashram President.

Bhagavan's Continuous Presence is brought out by a skit on a factual story which happened recently.

Ramana Bala Kendra children in all smiles after completing their joyous task of enacting Ramana Drama. Continuously in front of Arunachalpura Temple on 21-5-83.
Following the grand success of the Madras Kendra’s three-day-long celebration of Sri Bhagavan’s 103rd Jayanti (as reported in our April ’83 issue, p. 128), a two-day Ramana Aradhana Celebration was arranged on May 14 and 15, in Madras.

On May 14th, the Aradhana function commenced early in the morning at the Kendra’s premises (1, Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer Road, Madras-600 018) with the chanting of Ramana Suprabatham, Ramana Thirupalli Ezhuchi, Punarvasu Vannam, Ramana Sthuthi Panchakam and Aksharamanamalai. These were followed by Ekadasa Rudhtabhishekam, Ramana Sahasranama Archana to Sri Bhagavan and a large-scale feeding of the poor.

Justice M.M. Ismail (middle) being received by Sri B. Anantaswami (left) and Dr. K. Ramana Kumar (right).

Sri Swami Chinmayananda: “Maharshi’s Path of Self-enquiry establishes one in his Natural State of Pure Bliss.”

RAMANA ARADHANA AT MADRAS

In the evening, at the Sankardas Kalai Arangam, Sri Swami Chinmayananda spoke brilliantly on the salient features of Maharshi’s teachings.

“Man always strives for happiness, for his main aim and endeavour is to return to the source, the Self, which is Pure ‘Ananda’ (Happiness). Paradoxically the effort and the achievement, viz. the path and the goal, remain far apart since there is an ‘ego’ which strives for happiness in all sorts of wrong places. Till the source of the ‘seeker’ is reached, this Ananda eludes him. Maharshi’s path of Self-enquiry strikes at the root of the illusive ego, and enables one to reestablish oneself in the Natural State of Pure Bliss.”

“To an ordinary man, ‘I’ is the subject and all else is the object; and ‘knowledge’ is the link between the two. Through persistent effort — by asking ‘Who am I?’ — the ‘knowledge’ and the ‘knower’ will merge and there will be no more duality — mere awareness without thoughts will be the resultant state. How to achieve this? Invoking Bhagavan’s Presence helps progress in the path of Self-Enquiry. Rememberance of Him clears all doubts and lights up Royal Path Self-Knowledge.”

Sri Swamiji’s stirring speech brought home to the audience the power of the Presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Next day, at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mylapore, Sri K.V. Jagannathan a doyen among journalists and a great Tamil scholar, paid glowing tributes to Sri Bhagavan. He said: “The eye is the window of the soul. The Truth of this was fully felt in the extraordinarily radiant eyes of Bhagavan Ramana, brimming with Compassion and grace.”
Mr. Justice M.M. Ismail, who spoke next, took the audience along with him in his serious talk on Sri Bhagavan's method of 'Self-Enquiry'. He said: "All expressions like 'Self-Enquiry' 'Realisation' and 'Liberation' acquire meaning only in one's personal experience; otherwise they remain mere 'words'. Ramana's universal identity expressed itself in words that echoed the Holy Quran and in the total surrender, exemplified in the life of the Prophet. Even as a boy, Ramana went through the experience of the body's death and leaped into Total Awareness. 'I 'You' and 'He' — these change with other individuals, but Ramana left these differences behind and became the universal Spirit, immanent in all'. Both Sri Jagannathan and Mr. Justice Ismail extolled the spiritual attainments and poetic powers of Sri Muruganar.

As the cultural side of the celebrations, there was on the first evening a dance by Smt. Roja Kannan and Kumari Meena and on the second evening, there was a musical discourse on Sri Bhagavan by Sri Sadhu Ram Swamigal.

All the functions were attended by large, enthusiastic audiences.

AT YELLAMANCHALI

Sri Bhagavan's Aradhana was celebrated at Yellamanchali, under the auspices of the Sahiti Samiti, on April 15. Sri Varahanarasimhachary, President of the Sahiti Samiti presided. Sri Kasturi Ramarao gave a talk on the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan. Sri C.L. Narasingarao, Retd. Principal, explained the Skanda elements in Ramana's avatar. In the morning there was Ramana Abhishekam and Ramana Sahasranama archana performed by Sri C.L. Narasingarao.

RAMANA STUDY CENTRE, ERNAKULAM

Sri S. Hariharan, a staunch Ramana-bhakta, who had been in contact with us and with Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, informs us that on May 28 the 'Ramana Study Centre' was inaugurated in Ernakulam (address: 35/1235, 'LAKSHMY', Devi Colony, Diwan's Road, Ernakulam, Cochin 682 016).

The Centre was inaugurated by Sri M.G. Unnamaheswaran, Retd. F.A. & C.A.O. of Cochin Port Trust. The proceedings began at 5.30 p.m. with distribution of Kumkum and Vibhuthi Prasad sent by the Ashram. The programme included prayer, puja, chanting of Upadesa Saram and Talks. Cassettes of 'Ramana Music' were played. A leaflet in Malayalam and in English, containing a prayer and 'Upadesa Saram', was distributed among those present. The Portrait of Sri Bhagavan was richly decorated. The entire atmosphere was surcharged with His Presence.

MAHA PUJA TO HOLY MOTHER

The sacred Mother, Alagammal, who gave us the Great Master, has been glorified by Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, in his chaste Sanskrit, as:

"Kausalya gave birth to Rama, the protector of the sages; Devaki to Sri Krishna, the teacher of Yoga; Renuka gave birth to teacher Parasurama, a life-long celibate, and Maya Devi to Buddha, who gave refuge to all beings, Mother Mary gave birth to the 'son of Man', who bears the burden of sin of all devotees.

Likewise, for the welfare of the world, for removal of the darkness of ignorance, for the casting away of all ill-conceived notions, for the realisation of the Truth, Your Mother gave birth to you, endowed with all these excellent qualities. To her, to Saundaryambha (Alagamal) the beloved wife of Sundara, our salutations. Salutations to her samadhi and to the Lord Mathrubhuteswara, installed on it. Salutations to her worshippers and salutations to the devotees of Ramana."

Mother Alagammal's Anniversary day — Maha Puja — was solemnly observed on June 4 at Sri Mathrubhuteswara Shrine at the Ashram.
Sri Bhagavan’s 103rd Jayanthi was celebrated in Bombay on the 30th and 31st of March at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Chowpatty. The auditorium was aesthetically decorated with the Arunachala Hill, made of flowers as back-drop and the pranava ‘OM’ in the Centre.

On the first day, Mr. Justice S.P. Bharucha of the Bombay High Court, presided and the great poet, Sri Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, was the Chief Guest. Sri B. Ananthaswami, Vice President of Ramana Kendra, Madras, was the main speaker on both days. The function began with the garlanding of the imposing portrait of Sri Bhagavan. After prayer by Smt. Alagu Sundaram and Smt. Lakshmi Somasundaram, Sri Jagdish K. Munshi, Trustee, Bombay Centre, welcomed the audience.

Sri Harindranath Chattopadhyaya recalled the glorious days of his stay at the Ashram and the bliss he enjoyed in Sri Bhagavan’s Presence. Outlining Bhagavan’s teachings, he thundered that His method of Self-Enquiry was the only direct path to Self-Realisation in the modern times. He also sang extempore two songs.

Sri B. Ananthaswami’s enthralling lecture on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings was full of apt quotations from the Upanishads, Gita and other scriptures, as well as parables from Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Sankara and other great sages. He emphasised the path of Self-Enquiry alone led to realization and the attainment of real happiness and peace in the present day world of strain and stress.

Mr. Justice Bharucha, in his presidential address, explained how the saints and sages of our country had shown the common people the way to attaining Bliss and leading a contented life amid the problems that confronted men. He extolled Sri Ramana as the great Maharshi of this century. “Let us follow His guidance and be saved from misery”, he added.

Sri K.K. Nambiar, President, Ramana Kendra, Madras, presided over the second day’s celebrations. He spoke of Sri Bhagavan’s compassionate and liberal guidance and gave the audience a lucid narration of incidents that took place during Bhagavan’s life-time.

Sri B. Ananthaswami elucidated Bhagavan’s beautiful Lyric-masterpiece, Aksharamanamalai, recounting how it came to be composed and how devotees used to go for biksha, singing this soul-stirring ‘song of songs’ in the streets of Arunachala. The large audience was spellbound and listened with rapt attention to Sri Ananthaswami’s moving speech.

Sri P.V. Somasundaram thanked the devotees and guests for the success of the celebration on both days.

Sri N.S.D. Sahgal, a devout bhakta, was an ashramite for years after he had resigned from military services; however, he again took up the services, got married and is now a noble grihasthasrami. He paid a visit to the Ashram, after a long time, with his wife, daughter and son. While Sri Sahgal said he thoroughly enjoyed his stay at the Ashram, the inmates of the Ashram were very happy to have him and his family at the abode of Sri Bhagavan.
FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

GURU POORNIMA (Vyasa Puja)  
KRISHNA JAYANTHI (GOKULASHTAMI)  
DAY OF BHAGAVAN'S ADVENT TO ARUNACHALA  
VINAYAKA CHATHURTHI  
NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL (commences on)  
SARASWATHI PUJA  
VIJAYADASAMI  
DEEPAVALI  
SKANDA SASHTI  
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (commences on)  
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM  
SRI BHAGAVAN'S JAYANTHI  
PONGAL  
CHINNA SWAMIGAL ARADHANA  
MAHASIVARATRI DAY  
TELUGU NEW YEAR DAY  
TAMIL NEW YEAR DAY
On 19th May, 1922, Bhagavan gave liberation to Mother. So, May saw the celebration of ‘Mother’s Day’ at Ramana Bhoomi. Some incidents about Bhagavan and mother were dramatically presented by the Ramana Bala Kendra children.

Gradually, firmly, Bhagavan ripened mother for liberation. Once, remembering the childhood liking for appalam, she somehow collected the ingredients for making appalam and called Him to help her with the preparation. Instead He replied, ‘Amma, you make your appalam and I’ll make mine’. And He composed the Appalam song full of vedantic meaning. This scene of the drama depicts mother Azhagammal listening to the Appalam song and experiencing its import.

A folk dance of the Appalam song.

Once Sabhapathi Swami, a generous minded and staunch devotee, gave away his only dhoti to some poor man. Mother immediately tore off two yards from her sari and gave it to Sabhapathi.

The happy participants in the drama Mother’s Day.

Came June, the month of Lakshmi’s liberation, now Lakshmi’s Mukti and we witnessed the Bala Kendra children’s drama ‘Bhagavan and Animals’.

Bhagavan watches calm and unperturbed as a snake approaches.
RAMANANJALI
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Bhagavan and Cow Lakshmi —
another sequence from
' Bhagavan and Animals '

Sri A.R. Natarajan, President, Ramana Maharshi
Centre for Learning receiving Sri Ramakrishna
Hegde, Chief Minister of Karnataka.

Sri A.R. Natarajan and Sri Ramakrishna Hegde talking about the
Centre. Sri V. Ganeshan, Managing Editor The Mountain Path, looks on.

The Chief Minister releasing the Kannada book Bhagavan Ramana
mattu Mathuri (a translation by Dr. Bhaveram Kamath of Sri
A.R. Natarajan's Bhagavan Ramana and Mother) by presenting the first
copy to Sri A.R. Natarajan.

Sri Ramakrishna Hegde talking of the
uniqueness of Bhagavan's Glory.

The event of His grace — Ramananjali's 150th
performance within three years of its birth.
At a well-attended function held on May 21, Hon’ble Sri R. Venkataraman, Union Defence Minister, released the two books:

i. Muruganar’s RAMANA JNANA BODHAM Pt. 3: ANUBHAVA VILAKKAM — I and


Welcoming the invitees and the Chief Guest, Professor K. Swaminathan explained how the book: I am: The Great Affirmation — That Thou Art presented Bhagavan’s teachings as a practical and modern version of the philosophy of the Upanishads, Nammalwar and Sankara. Commending the book: Anubhava Vilakkam-I, he explained the Delhi Kendra’s on-going project of publishing Muruganar’s works with the active participation of Sri Sadhu Om.

The President, Sri R. Venkataraman pointed out how Bhagavan’s teachings as explained in Swami Sivananda’s book confirmed and clarified several stanzas in the Gita. He also expressed admiration of Muruganar’s poetry and his happiness over the Delhi Kendra’s programme of publishing his works.

Dr. K. Arumughan of the Delhi University dwelt on the outstanding literary beauty and philosophical content of Muruganar’s Ramana Jnana Bodham. He explained in detail a few typical verses from Anubhava Vilakkam-I to illustrate this.

The function came to a close with a vote of thanks by Sri K.C. Subbaiah, singing of Arunachala Siva in chorus and distribution of Prasad.

Bhagavan’s Aradhana Day was observed with due solemnity on April 14, the Mahanirvana Day, as well as on the actual thithi, May 10.

Lectures by Professor N.S. Siddharthan of the University of Delhi on Dhammapada and Gita were held during the Sunday meetings in March and April.

Sivaratri was celebrated on March 12 and Sri Ramanavami on April 21.

June 5 was observed as Mother’s Day.

The Library-cum-Reading Room constructed in the Shakurpur Resettlement Colony was declared open on April 6, on the occasion of the Annual Mariamman Pooja.

There was a brisk sale of Ramana Books at the stall set up by the Kendra at the local Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan between March 22 and April 2, during the lecture programme of Swami Dayananda Saraswati.

“Sri Ramana taught the Ashram inmates more by example than precept how to simplify life, effect economies and avoid waste and extravagance. The wrapping paper or envelopes in which the mail came would be preserved by him for writing or other uses. He would make cups and spoons of coconut-shells, polish them like ebony and tell the attendants to keep and handle them with care, saying, ‘These are our silver cups and golden spoons!’ Orange peels would be saved for making pickles and faded rose petals for adding flavour to payasam (sweet pudding). He would diligently correct manuscripts and proofs, copy out poems accurately in a neat hand, bind books with professional dexterity, cut vegetables, stitch leaf-plates and assist in cooking, thus exemplifying the dignity of labour and the charm of simplicity. Karma was, for him, not some special ritualistic action, but the daily tasks that are our common lot.”

— Professor K. Swaminathan in Ramana Maharshi, p. 47
OBITUARY

MRS. RODA McIVER

Old devotees of Sri Bhagavan will remember a pious lady, coming to the Ashram morning and evening with intense devotion to Sri Bhagavan and after His Maha Nirvana, going round and round His Samadhi. Hailing from a priestly Parsi family, Mrs. Roda McIver had her first darshan of Sri Bhagavan in 1942, who was then known as Roda Kamdin. She got married to Mr. David McIver at Arunachala itself. Mrs. McIver was the first European to have his house built near the Ashram. Both, David and Roda McIver, have the credit of hosting very many devotee-visitors to the Ashram in their house.

She became seriously ill and was confined to her cottage for the past three years. And even then her talks were always around her Master, whom she loved dearly.

Mrs. Roda was absorbed in Arunachala on Friday June 17; her end was very peaceful. The previous day when our Managing Editor visited her, though she could not open her eyes nor talk, yet surprisingly, when he asked her: 'Roda Ma, how are you?' she gave a clear reply: 'I am all right!' Her ashes were laid at the slopes of Arunachala Hill, as per her wish. She has thus become one with Arunachala!

MRS. ANDREA BUDAY

Only in 1979, Mrs. Andrea Buday wrote joyously how happy she was to build a house at Arunachala and how much she enjoyed her stay here, with her husband and son. We were shocked to hear from her husband Mr. Zbigniew Buday that the good lady had passed away in London due to blood cancer. Though the couple knew of the impending end, no one else ever suspected it was so near. Her devotion to Sri Bhagavan was deep. She loved Arunachala very dearly. She said: "By Bhagavan’s Grace, Arunachala is our ‘home’ for ever."

Now more than ever before her spirit is at home in Arunachala.

SRI B. BHADRIRAJU

Sri Bhadriraju was one of the founder-member of Sri Ramana Kendram at Hyderabad. He was a well-disciplined devotee. On the last day, he had done his morning puja to Sri Bhagavan and meditated a bit longer than usual. He suddenly succumbed to a severe heart-attack. He passed away peacefully after uttering Bhagavan Ramana’s Holy Name three times.

Sri Bhadriraju retired prematurely from service as Deputy Chief Engineer (P.W.D.). He was drawn to Sri Bhagavan in 1968, through his friend Sri B.V.L.N. Raju, an old devotee well-versed in Sri Bhagavan’s teachings.

May Sri Bhadriraju be absorbed at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

SRI SUDARSANAM

How true is the name of our Centre’s Manager Sudarsanam, auspicious to sight. For, he is the dedicated servant of Ramana, Siva, incarnate. To the children of Ramana Bala Kendras he is their dear Mama. To those who come to the Centre, he is a mine of information. To his co-workers in Ramana activities he is a wise counsellor. To the leader of the Ramananjali group he is an ever ready helper. To the Centre President a very dear friend. We regret to report the passing away of such a dear one.

"Sraddha or faith and Dharma or right action are invariably present where happiness is found and are invariably absent where happiness is not found. They are therefore the cause of happiness. Get them back and you will get your happiness.”

— H.H. Chandrasekhara Bharati in Dialogues with the Guru