The Mountain Path

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Thou hast cut the knot which hid the vision of Thy Head and Foot (the limitless Self). Motherlike, shouldst Thou not complete Thy task, Oh Arunachala?

The Marital Garland of Letters, Verse 80
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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
EGOLESS living. Is such a thing possible at all? Will the ego ever commit suicide? How can one act at all without ego? Will life bloom in all its fullness only when one's life is egoless? These are some of the doubts and fears which arise. For, such a life is outside the sphere of our experience. Action without the actor, a mind without sloth, and outward movement, are unknown to us and therefore we fear the logical consequence of the pursuit of self-enquiry resulting in the 'loss' of the mind in the Self. Ramana assures that in this death of the mind or ego is the birth of true life. Then one is born anew in a totally different dimension in which the fountain of joy endlessly overflows. One is, as it were, inundated by it. There is constant renewal, a totality of perception, and perfection in action.

What does egoless living really mean? What is the birth and death of the ego? The rising of the 'I'-thought of waking is ego's birth. All thoughts are its forms. Seemingly infinite is its variety. What constitutes its death? Is it the silence of the mind made quiescent by breath-control or mental practices which lull the mind? Is it a trance or a swoon? It cannot be these, for these are but temporary spells. When they end, the ego is strident again and is in full cry. The situation would be no different from what it was prior to these spells of mental inactivity. All attempts at "pruning" the ego are destined to fail. But then is there no sure way to bring about its death? Is there no escape from its suffocating grip?

One can surely nail the coffin of the ego, if only one enquires steadfastly and ceaselessly as to where from it originates. Firm attention to the 'I'-thought as it rises each time is all that is needed, in the Ramana Way. "Plant your lotus feet upon the head of the ego as it
emerges;”1 prays Ramana to Arunachala. For, the mind’s outward movement has to be checked before the ego mingles with its associates, these ceaseless thoughts. If it is caught at the threshold, then loosing its anchorage in conceptual thought, it would fall, crestfallen, into its source — the Self. But that is not the end of the story of ego. Latent tendencies born of residual impressions of past actions would soon externalise the mind. Repeated practice of self-enquiry, however, would result in the mind staying ever merged at its source.

What happens thereafter when the infinite expanse of a limitless life opens up? This is the constant question of the ignorant about knowledge. It must remain a riddle, an unsolved puzzle so long as the knowledge of that state is only vicarious and not one’s own. That it is the most desirable is evident even to those who have tasted a little of ‘this maddening bread’, who have savoured its sweetness, even if it be for a few fleeting seconds. But being caught up still in the ego’s snares, the fear that one would lose all interest in life, that no action would be possible lingers as an undercurrent. Paul Brunton is the voice of this universal misgiving, when he questions Ramana about what happens when ego comes to an end like a snuffed candle’. Ramana’s reply to him is most reassuring. It is only then that the door to limitless bliss opens. Muruganar too exhorts: “Don’t ask in fear and doubt, ‘What will happen if I give up quite this self?’ Whosoever lets go the bough he clings to lands on solid earth. You are bound to reach the Self.”

It requires the utmost courage to take the plunge. For this, the words of the great ones are a source of great encouragement to dive within. Why this deep-rooted fear? Implicit in this fear is the innate idea that action is performed by reason only of individuality, by reason of the ego’s strength. We labour under the idea that the mind is an independent and separate entity. Is it really so? No. Though ego might put on the garb of the Self and mas-1

quarade as being all powerful, it has no inherent strength of its own. Ramana gives the analogy of images placed on temple towers. Their strained look would make it appear that the tower is supported on their shoulders. In reality, it is the masonry structure which supports the tower as also the images themselves. The individual consciousness or the ego is only a reflection of the Self which is unlimited consciousness. Ramana explains that ego or individuality is like the moon and the Self is like the Sun? The reflected light of the moon is required only so long as the Sun does not rise. When the ego merges in its source and stays so merged, action is performed automatically just as all the activities are carried on in this world when the Sun rises. The ‘undercurrent which vivifies the mind’ will flow without the limitations imposed by ego’s identifications. The mind as we know of it may be dead but in another sense it would function totally for it has become pure. Then action would not only be automatic but would also be perfect.

There is no need for such a one to be active. There is no compulsion of desire, no ambition to be fulfilled, no goals to be reached. ‘What action remains for those abiding as the Self’? For when they are rooted in consciousness, the much cherished values of life pale into nothing and become meaningless. After-all, all effort is in search of happiness and once they become the very embodiment of it, nothing more needs to be done. Yet they act with an enthusiasm which is at once exemplary and infectious. But such action is effortless, for in them the sense of doership is totally obliterated. Being wholly unaware of such action, we wonder over and over again if it is possible at all.

Ramana gives several examples of such action. He asks when we walk from one place to another do we count the steps? Does a

1Arunachala Pathigam (Eleven Verses) — Verse 7
2Selections from Ramana Gita — The Science of the Heart — Verses 11 and 12
3Upadesa Saram — Verse 15
sleep-walker know that he is walking? Would a child which is fed by the mother, when asleep, know that it was fed? Again he refers to women walking with water pots on their heads chatting with their companions but keeping their attention still fixed on the load on their heads.

What happens is that every action is complete and there is no carryforward of thought. For the egoless, incidents, as for a child, are of interest only as long as they last. When they are over, they are over. No residual impressions are left by the actions.

When asked by Paul Brunton whether an egoless person’s actions would always be right, Ramana says —

“They ought to be. However, such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of action. His actions are God’s and are therefore right.”

The egoless persons having no feeling of a separate individuality just float in the divine current for fulfilling its purposes. What marks them out is their total faith in the cosmic order. Ramana’s remarks to Paul Brunton that ‘he who has given life to the world knows how to look after it’ typifies this attitude. A prayer of Ramana to Arunachala is also worth recalling, for it reflects their unfailing remembrance of the fact that it is the Creator’s Law and His Grace which shape everything —

‘Ordain that my burden should no more be mine but yours, for what can be a burden for you, the all sustainer’.

For those whose mind has ceased further search, having reached the heart of bliss, “life is a copious spring of ever fresh experience”! Since there are no ‘others’ for them they are

Three Poems
— By “Nakulan”

I
This monstrous machinery
Of arms and limbs,
You know,
Is not what you call your self
The naked self
Is all that you have
And all that is
So Ramana said.

II
The mind is
But an endless flux
Of thoughts
So Krishnamurti said
So it is;
But, you should know,
The vasanas
Have you
In their grip
So dive deep
To come by
The Self
Beyond the Self
So Ramana said.

III
The little sparrow
The crow
Sea-stretch
And mountain-range
These are
Our friends
This is Bharati
Also the monkey
And the snake too
So Ramana said.

‘humbler than the humblest’ and are overflowing with love. Enveloped as they are in the Infinite, in them one finds the confluence of peace and power. Their very presence is a benediction to humanity.
Moments Remembered
by Managing Editor

FASCINATING 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.

YOU should be capable of making use of even the dust, while at the same time you should also be ready to reject the entire cosmos as mere dust! These were the potent words given by Sri Bhagavan to Sri Viswanatha Swami, when they were together cutting vegetables. Bhagavan was keen on using every bit of the vegetables for cooking; usually, the stem portion of a brinjal is cut off and thrown away. Bhagavan would gather these ‘rejects’ and utilise them in some other preparation. He would use the whole spinach, the stem and all, and not just the green leaves alone. He would grind the stems, take out their juice and use it in rasam. Bhagavan frowned on wastage. Like vegetables, paper too was to be used with the utmost care and economy. Every bit of paper would be preserved by Him; He would bind them into small notebooks, according to their size. He Himself would bind them; He kept with Him gum, calico, needle and twine. He would use these materials too only when and to the extent they were required. His day-to-day life was by itself a great lesson for every one of us. He did not preach brevity on economy alone; He exemplified brevity of expression while talking and writing too.

Sri Viswanatha Swami once told me of Sri Bhagavan’s love and knowledge of The Divya Prabandham, the Vaishnava hymns. He admired the intense love fo the Alwars not only for the Lord but for each other and used to relate the following thrilling story. Bhagavan dramatised vividly the meeting of the Alwars, said Sri Viswanatha Swami; even a professional actor could not hold a candle before His so fine an expressive action.

The story is:

The Saiva saints are called ‘Nayanmar’ and the Vaishnava saints are called ‘Alwar’. The first three Alwars were Poigai Alwar, Bhutat Alwar and Pey Alwar.

One evening Poigai Alwar, on his pilgrimage, reached Tirukoilur and took shelter in a very small and narrow room. It became dark.
and he had enough space to stretch himself. After some time another man arrived there and asked whether he could come in. Poigai Alwar joyously got up and accommodated him, not knowing who he was, saying: 'Space for one to lie down, but enough for two to sit up!' After some time a third man came and wanted some space to stay. The two occupants gladly got up and welcomed him, saying: 'Plenty of space for one to lie down, for two to sit up and for three to stay standing!' The three did not know each other, but were exchanging in ecstatic descriptions of the Lord. Lord Vishnu had tricked the three saints to meet in this narrow passage, wanted to bless these saints and also to partake of their jubilation. So, He created a sudden dense darkness and very heavy rain. Also, He assumed a huge form and entered into that small room. The three saints immediately felt the new Presence which caused no physical congestion but heightened their jubilation. They wanted to see who it was.

So, Poigai Alwar in his ecstasy sang a song, in which he 'made the whole world as the vessel, poured the oceans in it as the oil and lighted it with the lamp of the sun.' Listening to this glorious verse, Bhutat Alwar, out of joy, composed for his part another verse, in which he too 'lighted the lamp of Jnana, in the vessel of love through the oil of Faith and with joy-filled mind as the wick' and Lo! they all witnessed the grandeur of the Lord Vishnu standing very close to them, filled the small dungeon with joy and light! Pey Alwar was thrilled and sang the following song:

"Today I have seen, in my Ocean-blue Lord, His golden Form, the beautiful colour of the shining Sun, the golden wheel which wins all battles and the Conch!"  
The three saints recognised each other and were thrilled to know that it was Lord Vishnu who had made them meet in that place only to revel in His Name and Glory!

Now, when many Ramana Kendras all over the world offer puja by chanting the Ramana Ashtothram — the Ashtothram approved and authorised by the Master — I recall the words of Sri Viswanatha Swami. He told me once the following:

"My mother was a great scholar both in Tamil and in Sanskrit. Her devotion to Bhagavan was very intense. She was worshipping a very tiny note-book daily and not allowing any one to even look at it! Only after her passing away could we know that it was a precious note-book, stitched by Bhagavan Himself and handed over to her. On the cover it was written ‘Sri Ramana Ashtottara Satyanam Stuti’, the Ashtothram written by me on Sri Bhagavan. Bhagavan had copied it in such beautiful small letters in Grantha script so that it was too precious for mother to share it with others!"

He added: "I had a great urge to write the 108 Names of Sri Bhagavan. I used to write a few namavalis and place them before Bhagavan. He showed them to Nayana (Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni) saying: 'Our

1. "With the earth as the vessel, the ocean as oil, the Sun as the flame and my verses as the garland, I offer puja to the holy feet of the Lord who has the lustrous wheel, in order to get rid of the ocean of my miseries."

— Poigai Alwar

2. "With love as the vessel, my faith as the oil and the joyfilled mind as the wick, I, who know Jnana-Tamil, have lit the lamp of Jnana to Lord Narayana."

— Bhutat Alwar

3. "With the earth as the vessel, the ocean as oil, the Sun as the flame and my verses as the garland, I offer puja to the holy feet of the Lord who has the lustrous wheel, in order to get rid of the ocean of my miseries."

— Poigai Alwar
Viswanathan is writing an *Ashtothram* on me'. Each such sheet was thus passed on by Bhagavan to Nayana, who would make some alterations here and there and return it to Bhagavan. This is how the whole *Ashtothram* has had the approval of my Lord Bhagavan and my teacher Nayana.

He continued: “Talking about *Ashtothram*, you should know its greatness and importance, as well. Once when one of the close devotees of Sri Bhagavan asked Him to select a *sthotra* for his parayana, Bhagavan gave him this ‘Ramana Ashtothram’. Again, on another occasion, when some one wanted to write a biography of Bhagavan in Telugu, Bhagavan Himself suggested to him: ‘If each Name in the *Ramana Ashtothram* is elaborated it will itself become a biography!’

* * * * *

Sri Prabhakar came to Bhagavan in 1949. The story of how he came to the Master is of absorbing interest. Prabhakar was a pure rationalist and was averse to anything spiritual. Though he had heard about Bhagavan and seen His photos, he ignored Him. A total change in his life took place suddenly. One night, Bhagavan appeared in his dream. In that dream his boss pointed to Bhagavan and asked him whether he knew Him. On replying in the negative, Prabhakar was told that he was none other than Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and that he had to go to Arunachala and have His *darshan*. Prabhakar proudly replied he felt no such need and in any case he had no money to travel. His boss offered to give him the required money. He demanded: ‘I will need Rs. 60/-’. At this, he woke up from his dream.

He hesitated to narrate this dream to his boss, though he did to one of his close friends. Prabhakar was persuaded by his friend to approach his boss with his dream story. One day he picked up courage and fully narrated his dream to his boss (avoiding the portion dealing with money). The boss was unmoved. He said: ‘Anyhow, pay more attention to your job and thus save some extra money, with which you could go to your Bhagavan’. Before Prabhakar tried to move away, there was a sudden change in his boss’ attitude and he hastened to say: ‘Do you yourself have a deep desire to pay a visit to Bhagavan?’ On Prabhakar replying in the affirmative, his boss asked him how much money he would require. Even before Prabhakar opened his mouth to reply, his boss wrote a cheque for Rs. 60/- and handed it over to him! Receiving the exact amount indicated in the dream, Prabhakar saw that it was all Sri Bhagavan’s Grace and immediately left for Tiruvannamalai. More than all these happenings was the fact that Bhagavan was looking intently at the entrance to the Hall as if waiting for some one to arrive and as soon as Prabhakar entered He gave a beaming smile and a welcome nod acknowledging his arrival! For the first time in his life, Prabhakar did *sashtang namaskar* (full prostration) to a great man. With his very first glimpse of Sri Bhagavan he became a full-fledged *bhakta*!

He asked Bhagavan: “Did you summon me?” Bhagavan nodded His head in assent. He repeated the question twice; Bhagavan nodded it each time. This stabilised Prabhakar’s bondage to Bhagavan. During his stay he used to ask questions and Bhagavan would reply to every one of them. Once, Bhagavan told him: “You say ‘I am Prabhakar’, who is this Prabhakar? Why do you accept that you are Prabhakar? Your parents called you so; you being a rationalist, why should you accept it? Who is this Prabhakar? Use your reasoning faculty and search for ‘who you really are’. Then, the Prabhakar of this particular form and name will drop off and the real being alone will shine. The wrong thought that you are the sufferer of all these troubles will cease once for all.”

Prabhakar led a peace-filled life, inspite of odds and obstacles, because of his faith in and devotion to Bhagavan. He composed *Prapatti Satakam* in Sanskrit, though he was not well-versed in that language. Many corrections were made and Bhagavan had it included in the collection of poems preserved
in the Ashram archives. It has a very moving beginning: "The fullness of my devotion to you, Oh Bhagavan, is due not to the excellence of my reasoning power or my spiritual maturity, but only to the lustre that you shed on me in such abundance!"

Sri Viswanatha Swami's younger brother, Sri R. Sivaraman, is not much known among the Ramana-bhaktas. But his devotion to Sri Bhagavan and his understanding of His teachings are very deep. Though I knew of Sri Sivaraman even during my college days (he is a voracious reader and I used to supply him with books!), I came to know of his deep involvement with Sri Ramana only in the last days of Sri Viswanatha Swami. The following is what I gathered from this pious and humble Ramana-bhakta (in his own words):

"My first visit to Arunachalam (in those days even the Railway Station board bore the name Arunachalam) was in 1923 when I was only nine years old, along with my parents, who then made a futile attempt to take back to our house my brother, Visvanna (Sri Viswanatha Swami) — a mission that failed. For the first time I travelled in a train and was amazed to see the electric lamps! In sheer exuberation I kept awake throughout the night. In the morning, half a dozen persons received us at the Tiruvannamalai Railway Station. 'Where is Visvanna?' I eagerly asked my father. He showed me a person with dhoti above the ankles and with six-months' beard on his face. I gaped in astonishment. We stayed in Vasudeva Sastri's house in the town and used to visit the Ashram in the morning and return in the evening. Ramanatha Brahmachari, Chirnna Ramanathan, Annamalai and others used to accompany us.

"Having had no sleep the previous night, I promptly fell asleep. Sri Bhagavan gently woke me up saying: 'Don't sleep. Get up. There are delicious mangoes waiting to be eaten'. I got up and Bhagavan gave me a plate with sliced mangoes and asked me to give a piece each to the two dozen persons sitting there. I did so. Sri Bhagavan asked me: 'Have you served every one?' 'Yes', I nodded my head. In all tenderness, Sri Bhagavan pointed out a person sitting behind a pillar, telling me: 'You have missed him!' I repaired the omission. I noticed how keen Bhagavan was in equal distribution to every one present!

"Morning. Sri Bhagavan was sitting on the ground cutting vegetables; I squatted in front
of Him. Chinnavswami (Sri Niranjanananda Swami, then Sarvadhikari) was coming from the town with a basket on his head. On my asking Bhagavan what he was carrying, He replied: 'Last night one of the dogs was badly mauled by a pig. He took the wounded dog to the veterinary Hospital'.

"Kamala, Karuppan and Jackie were the three dogs. I took the conch that was lying in the Hall and blew on it. The dogs howled. Sri Bhagavan advised me to stop blowing it, as it irritated dogs. The concern He had even for the animals got imprinted in my heart!

"The most significant incident that took place during this visit of mine was the way Sri Bhagavan asked me to tell Him a story from the western legends and how He listened to it, like a small baby with such rapt attention and avidity! One day, after food, Sri Bhagavan asked me to tell Him a story adding: 'It seems you have read so much'. I began quite seriously to tell the fairy tale of a King and his three sons, a garden with fruit trees, particularly the one with the golden fruit ripening every full-moon night and disappearing with the dawn; the King setting his three sons to catch the thief; the two elder heartless sons failing in the mission; the third son, all goodness and innocence, being helped by an old woman, a dog and so on, to catch the thief. Finally, how he succeeded in recovering the golden fruit and handing it over to his father, the King. Even at this distance of time, when I recollect the facial expressions of Bhagavan as He sat listening, I am thrilled how like a child He thoroughly enjoyed the story. Only a Jnani could become a child instantaneously, while yet abiding firmly in His high state of steady Wisdom!

"Another recollection of mine about the fascinating Ramana happened in 1943. During this visit I was accompanied by my wife and our baby-girl, Vimala, aged 1½ years. I was eager to see Skandashram; I even got permission from Bhagavan to do so. So, myself, Visvanna, my wife with the baby started to go up the Hill towards Skandashram. We had hardly gone 100 yards when an attendant of Bhagavan came running towards us carrying a parcel. He handed it over to us and it contained fruits, sugar and other eatables. Before our happy surprise or gratitude could be expressed, the attendant hurriedly remarked: 'Bhagavan said: "What will they do if the child gets hungry and cries? Go and give these eatables to them", and here I am!' How remarkable was His compassion! I saw Sri Ramana as a Mother on that day.

"The greatest moment in my life was when I had the last darshan of Sri Bhagavan. It happened like this. I was busy touring all over India with my boss, a strict taskmaster. A letter came suddenly from Visvanna: 'Do not delay. Proceed to Tiruvannamalai at once'. I hurried to Arunachala and Visvanna rushed me into the queue standing to have darshan of Sri Bhagavan. Visvanna was behind me. When my turn came, I was face to face with Bhagavan, the Master of Compassion shedding pure Bliss and Grace in abundance! Visvanna whispered with only lip movements: 'Sivaraman, Sivaraman', as if introducing me to Sri Bhagavan. That Hill of Love gave a near-imperceptible nod that He knew! The purpose of my life is fulfilled in that single nod of Bhagavan. I am recognised, I am accepted, I am saved!"

* * * * *

Sri Sivananda Swami, a close attendant of Bhagavan, narrated to me how Bhagavan was keenly observant and profoundly compassionate. He said: "It might be morning 10 O'clock. Bhagavan was returning from the Goshala and when He neared the well, before entering the Hall, He noticed some peculiar sound coming out of the well, similar to the flapping of the wings by a bird or a large insect struggling in the water. He stood still and looked into the well and found out that it was a large insect with wings. He told me: 'Please see whether it is in a playful mood fluttering its wings on the water or struggling to escape drowning. If the former, don't disturb it; if the latter, please quickly release it from the water.' I reached the insect with the help of a bamboo and rescued it; it flew out joyously!'"
MIRACLES? Wonders? Clairvoyance? Clairaudience? What are these? The greatest miracle is to realise Self. All these are side-tracks. The realised man is above them. Leadbeater describes hundreds of former lives seen by clairvoyance. Of what use is this? Does it help him or others to know the Self? What are these lives but body-births; the true birth is in the Self. You could be in England now (aesthetically) but will you be better off? You will not be a bit nearer realisation.

The sights and sounds which may appear during meditation should be regarded as distractions and temptations. None of them should be allowed to beguile the aspirant.

Q: Do the appearance of visions or the hearing of mystic sounds come after the concentrated mind is still and blank or before?

A: They can come both before and after. The thing is to ignore them and still pay attention only to the Self.

What good will the siddhis (occult powers) do? Suppose you exercise all these wonderful powers? You are desiring and trying to fulfil that desire. and when a fresh desire breaks out, you expend your energy and attention to that. Is not the net result mere worry to the tossed mind? If happiness is your real goal and aim you must ultimately come back from your diversion with siddhis and try to find yourself, by enquiring who it is that wants the happiness.

Q: Why is the peace which I feel in your presence not enduring after I go?

A: These flashes are only signs of the enduring revelation of the Self. That peace is the real nature. Contrary ideas are only superimposition. This is true yoga. You may say however that this peace is acquired by practice. It is the wrong notions that are given up by practice.

People often misunderstand Samadhi. He told the story of a Yogi who spent hundreds of years in trance on Ganges and on awakening his first thought was for some water he had asked for before entering trance! The thoughts had resumed their way. The trance was useless. Real attainment said Maharshi was to be FULLY CONSCIOUS, to be aware of your surroundings and the people around, to move among them all, but not to merge your consciousness in the environment. Remain in your inner independent awareness of I. That is the highest — not to sit in trance which merely halts the mind. The mind must be destroyed entirely, not merely arrested.

Man runs the course of his samskaras. When taught that he is the Self, the teaching affects his mind and imagination runs riot. His occult experiences are only according to his imagination of the state “I am the Self.” But when he is ripe for receiving that instruction and his mind is about to be sunk into the Heart, the instruction imparted works in a flash and he realises the Self. Otherwise there is struggle.

Occultism and theosophy and the like are round-about and circuitous routes to the same goal. Ultimately their followers will arrive at the Self. But their leaders do not teach the meditation on the Self.

Forms which interfere with the main course or current of meditation should not be allowed to distract the mind. Bring yourself back into the Self, the Witness, unconcerned with such distractions. That is the only way to deal with such interruptions. Never forget yourself.

Asana is not necessary for the Jnani’s course. He can practice in any place or posture.

Q: What if one meditates incessantly without actions?

* This is the first chapter of the unpublished diary of Paul Brunton and Munagala Venkatarajiah. The diary is to be published fully early in 1984.
A: Try and see! The predispositions will not let you do it. Dhyana comes only progressively with gradual weakening of vasanas by Guru’s grace.

Intellect is the astral body. It is only an aggregate of certain factors. What else is the astral body? In fact, without intellect no kosa is cognised. Who says that there are five kosas? Is it not the intellect itself?

There is no kind of sorrow for one who leaves off seeing through his physical senses and begins to see everything as his own Self. Further this grief (of the loss of his wife) does not indicate real love. The love which one evinces towards external objects and forms is not the real love. Real love has always its abode in one’s own Self.

Q: There are beautiful colours in meditation. It is a pleasure to watch them. We can see God in them.

A: They are all mental conceptions.

The objects or feelings or thoughts, i.e., all experiences, in meditation, are all only mental conceptions.

When Sundaresa Iyer, local teacher described yogic experiences, including visions of light, ringing of bells etc. which he was having Maharshi replied they come, and they would pass away. Be only the witness. I myself had thousands of such experiences, but I had no one to go to consult about them.

Q: Can we not see God in concrete visions?

A: Yes, God is seen in the mind. The concrete form may be seen. Still, it is in the devotee’s own mind. The form and appearance of the God-manifestation are determined by the mentality of the devotees. But the finality is not that for it has the sense of duality. It is like a dream vision. After God is perceived, vichara commences. That ends in the realisation of the self. Vichara is the final method.

Q: Did not P.B. see you in London? Was it only a dream?

A: Yes, he had the vision. Nevertheless he saw me in his own mind.

Q: But did he not see this concrete form?
A: Yes, but still it was in his mind.

Keeping God in your mind as everything around you, becomes dhyana. This is the stage before realisation, which is only in the Self. dhyana must precede it. Whether you make dhyana of God or Self, it is immaterial, the goal is the same.

Q: Through poetry, music, etc. one sometimes experiences a sense of deep bliss. Will practice of this lead to deeper samadhi and ultimately to a full vision of the real?

A: There is happiness at agreeable sights. It is the happiness inherent in the Self. That happiness is not alien and afar. You are diving into the pure self on occasions which you consider pleasurable. That diving results in self-existent bliss. But the association of ideas is responsible for foisting this bliss on other things or happenings. In fact, it is within you. On these occasions, you are plunging into the Self, unconsciously though. If you do so consciously, you call it Realisation. I want you to dive consciously into the Self, i.e. into the Heart.

Q: St. Theresa and others saw the image of Madonna animated. It was external. Others see the image of their devotion floating in their mental sight. This is internal. Is there any difference in degree in these two cases?

A: Both indicate that the person has strongly developed meditation. Both are good and progressive. There is no difference in degree. The one had conception of divinity and draws mental images and feels them. The other has the conception of divinity in the image and feels it in the image. The feeling is within, in both instances.

Q: In the spiritual experience of St. Theresa, she was devoted to a figure of Madonna which became animated to her sight, and she was in bliss.

A: The animated figure prepared the mind for introversion. There is a process of concentration of mind on one's own shadow which in due course becomes animated and answers questions put to it. That is due to manobala (power of mind) or dhyanabala (power of meditation). Whatever is external, is also transitory. Such phenomena may produce joy for the time being. But abiding peace, i.e., Shanti does not result. This is got only by the removal of Avidya.
THE field of religion is huge and in places very wild, but it certainly isn't trackless. It contains all-too-many Paths or Ways, some more like trunk roads and others barely discernible tracks. Every religion, every sect, and indeed every spiritual innovator, hacks a new route through the jungle and sets up signposts and makes some attempt to draw a map of the route's twists and turns, its staging posts or rest houses, and give some idea of its destination. You could almost say that religion consists of these Paths, criss-crossing and running parallel, converging here and diverging there, and leading — where? That is the question.

A few centuries ago, even a rough map of this country as a whole hardly existed. Comparative religion, and the explosion of literature about the world's faiths — first scholarly, then popular — covering the whole field, had yet to come. For nearly everyone, nearly everywhere, one's religion was simply that of one's family and social group from time immemorial. In effect, there existed only this one true and sacred Path. Other religions and sects, insofar as one heard of them at all, were believed to lead nowhere, or else to some very unholy and unhealthy regions right off the map.

Nowadays, for increasing numbers of us, the religious scene isn't anything like so clear-cut and simple. We are offered a fast-growing and bewildering choice of Paths. Visit a well-stocked store selling books on religion and allied subjects, and you will see what I mean. The trouble is that, until you have actually travelled one of the many highways and byways that nowadays compete for your custom, you cannot know where it leads; and when at last you do get to the end of it (after who knows how many years and decades and even lifetimes — if ever you do) you have left it rather late to try the others. In that case, how are you to discover which of them all is your Path, the right one for you, leading to your heart's desire, the final truth, the end of all your troubles? All very confusing and frustrating! Of course what actually happens (I'm afraid) is that one chances to pick up this wonderful book, or casually meets someone who knows that marvellous teacher, or receives through the post a leaflet about a certain meeting. And so one starts off on some Path by accident, almost irresponsibly. One is more careful, more wary and exploring, before investing in some kitchen utensil — let alone a suit of clothes or a house!

What can be done about this absurd state of affairs? Is it avoidable? This article aims to make some helpful suggestions.

But first let's take a much closer look at the religious map. So far, I have implied that there is no regular pattern to these many Paths, that they have little in common and no general direction. In practice, that's not at all true. They all serve one overriding purpose, which
is to enable one to get away. The whole reason for a Path is to make it easier to go somewhere else, to leave the place one's now at and to turn up in another place that's distant in space and in time. This obvious fact is not revealed to the "objective" student of comparative religion, surveying the whole field as if from a great height; to him the system of Paths is all of it given at a safe distance, and so it shows no simple and unitary pattern. But for the serious traveller on the ground, for the involved and down-to-earth spiritual seeker (no matter how little or great his "spiritual progress") the map is always wheel-shaped. He finds himself always HERE at the wheel's hub, and all Paths (including the one he favours at the moment) radiate like spokes leading to a rim that's labelled ELSEWHERE. And the questions he asks are, which way do I take from Here, and how far off is the goal, and how long will it take me to get there?

Questions to which, alas, clear answers aren't forthcoming. How is the poor traveller to judge? The reputation and popularity of a Way are no sure guide to its practicality. In fact, the wider and more well-travelled the beginning of a Path, the longer and more difficult it is apt to prove in the end. The going may be so hard and the hazards so numerous that very few travellers indeed are observed to get anywhere near the Goal, whose unimaginable delights are conceived as proportionate to the rigours of the journey. Indeed one gets the impression that no short, straight, smooth Path can lead to any place worth getting to. It is such an impression which this article is designed to combat. In fact, the Path it signposts and strongly recommends is very short indeed. To be as precise as possible (this article is practical and means business) it is about one metre or forty inches. As for where that shortest of Paths leads, be assured that it really does take us to the Goal, all the way to our true Home — if we care to take it.

But before coming to that Path it is necessary to describe what amounts to its opposite — a quite different kind of Path and not a religious one at all — which you and I travelled so long ago that we've almost forgotten about it. Perhaps it would be better not to speak for you here, but only for myself. As we proceed you can check up how far my story agrees with yours.

Let me reconstruct that original journey of mine, as far as I'm able. It began at birth, or not long after. Actually (for myself and from my viewpoint at no distance from Here) I wasn't born at all, though my parents (taking up a different viewpoint, roughly a metre from Here) naturally had a very different story to tell. In my own experience, I certainly didn't begin as a baby, or a human being, or a thing of any kind. On the contrary, I was this Space which had no beginning, this Room of Capacity for things. Or, it's equally true to say, this No-thing which is the primary Producer of all things. At first the things that occupied me were comparatively undifferentiated, but quite soon they began sorting themselves out into that comforting breast and those fondling hands, those fascinating arms and legs and fingers and toes, that gorgeous rattle and ball, those smiling or frowning faces, and so on. And all those impressions — those objects built up of tastes and feels and smells and sounds, and moving patches of colour — all of them were right Here, unseparate from me, coming and going in my Space. It's true that more and more things, in ever increasing
variety and degree of organization, kept appearing in this Space. But I wasn't one of those things. How could I be — I who was Accommodation for them all? In short, I was still Myself, still at Home, still with Myself and not yet beside Myself. Which means I was still sane.

But Humankind had designs on my native sanity. As time went on, my parents persuaded me to stand aside from Myself, to leave Home, to make the momentous journey from HERE where I'm perceived to be No-thing to THERE where I'm perceived to be a very concrete Some-thing. They taught me that the person staring at me out of my mirror was not who I took him to be (namely "that baby over there," or "my little friend in the other bathroom behind the glass") but was someone called "Douglas", and indee "Me". They taught me — and the lesson took many years and many tears to learn thoroughly — to see myself no longer from where I am but instead from where they are, as if through their eyes and from their viewpoint.

I was a slow learner. For years I travelled back and forth along that original one-metre road, undecided where finally to take up residence. At times, particularly when playing happily on my own, I was content to stay here at Home; at other times, particularly when in company and less at ease I took up my position over there, looking back at myself and "seeing" more or less what others were seeing — a complete human being like the rest of the people around. (In fact, of course, I wasn't "seeing" at all, but imagining). And, as the years went by, I spent longer and longer out there looking back anxiously at Douglas Harding, and less and less time here being just Space for others; till in the end I came to live a truly eccentric life as an exile, held as if in a trap or prison a mere metre or so from Home Ground. Of course, a miss is as good as a mile, and I was in effect infinitely estranged from Myself. It was as if I had never known Home, had never visited my Native Land. Meister Eckhart tells my story: "No man was ever lost except for the reason that, once having left his Home Ground, he has let himself become too permanently settled abroad... There are many who have sought Light and Truth, but only abroad where they are not. They finally go so far out that they never get back to find their way in again. Nor have they found the Truth, for the Truth is in their Ground, not outside."

Correction: in fact, my story ends more happily. Circumstances, or Grace, combined to breach the walls of my prison and open out the way Home. But the return journey isn't made once and for all. It takes just about as much practising as the outward journey did. But now I've come to know that road — its precise direction and precise length and the means of transport available — very well indeed. For that reason I shall not be vague about it here. (Spiritual vagueness or woolliness is, in my experience, a very effective way of avoiding clear-cut spiritual facts.) So here are the distinguishing marks, the specification of that road:

It doesn't lead out from Here to There, but back from There to Here. In other words, it is centripetal instead of centrifugal. It is very short, its length being the distance between the face I see in my mirror and the absence-of-face I see here; or, again, the distance between you over there who are taking in my regional appearance and myself here who am the central Reality which is giving rise to that appearance. It is very straight, as we shall presently see: only a very determined untruth-seeker could lose his way. And finally, it is easy going. Any number of vehicles — techniques, devices, modes of transport — stand ready to take the traveller Home.

Here is one of them. I look at that face in my hand-mirror, noting where it's given, how big it is, which way round it is. And then I let my attention travel along my out-stretched arm to what lies here at the near end of it. And I see that here is nothing but empty Space. Yet it is Space which finds room for that arm and hand and mirror and face — the
"Can I find my Self in a mirror?" asks Ramana Maharshi, and continues: "Because you look outwards you have lost sight of the Self and your vision is external.... Turn you, look within." Nor is this difficult, he assures us: "It is absurd — the idea that to see other things is easy but to look within is difficult. It must be the other way round.")

Those are just two of the countless vehicles all lined up to conduct you across that no-man's-land — repeat no-man's-land — one-metre wide, which separates your appearance (on display there to others) from your Reality (displayed here to your Self). Please try the two vehicles I've just described, or (better still) find your own. But don't fail to make that journey. It's the only one that matters. It takes you all the way from what you look like to what you are, namely Space or Capacity or Awareness, and beyond even Awareness to the unknowable Abyss from which Awareness timelessly springs. In short, it sees you Home.

The fact is, of course, that this shortest of Paths is even shorter than I have said. It has no length at all. As Maharshi points out, "There is no reaching the Self.... You are already that." It was only a pretence that I could leave myself behind and go out to see what others over there were making of me. There's no way of escaping from Here, because obviously I take Here with me — I go. Which is to say that I take Nothing with me — nothing but this Awareness which I am.

And so, in conclusion, the Path we travel is as long or as short as we care to make it. And all Paths — including our metre-long one — finally reduce to no distance at all, for it's impossible to leave or approach the Self. Or (if you prefer) at the end of every genuine spiritual way there lies the realization that the weary traveller never left Home for an instant, and the way itself — however long and arduous — was quite fictional.
THE lives of all great saints and sages have one thing in common, and that is their infinite love and understanding towards their fellow-men. It is out of love that they rebuke and reprimand, in order to point out the cause of suffering. They merely wish to save humans from the unwanted suffering they bring upon themselves. Once it was the smarting whip of Jesus that cast out those who turned 'the temple of worship into a den of thieves'. And again it was the great heart of Jesus that went forth to a fallen woman, condemned by a cruel society to be stoned to death, when he uttered the searching words: 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.' (John viii, 7.)

Could saints and sages have known what human weakness is without having experienced it themselves? If good and bad belong to the relative plane of this phenomenal world, everyone is subject to their effects, be he saint or sinner. Consciously or unconsciously we are ever endeavouring to transcend both the good and the bad and to accept them as they are. Actually there is no such thing as absolute good or absolute bad. Good and bad are an integral part of life, causing each other and belonging to each other like complementary parts.

Life is a constant unfolding of our potential divinity, culminating in the God-man stage. 'The son of man must become the son of God' taught Lord Jesus. It is obvious that the experiences they had gained in each life enabled all the great prophets to become what they ultimately were. 'You do not remember your former lives, O Arjuna. But I remember them all,' said Lord Krishna.

'Before Abraham was, I AM' said Jesus, (John viii 58), proving the eternal state of the spirit, which always is NOW and HERE. He was here before and afterwards, was born again as Jesus of Nazareth.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee.... Ye must be born again," (John iii 3+7), said Jesus to the rich merchant who sought the kingdom of heaven. When Nicodemus expressed his doubts about being born again, the great teacher made it clear that what is not possible for the flesh is possible for the spirit. Lord Buddha remembered several of his previous births as a merchant, king and Bodhi Satva or the Buddha elect, lives during which he was perfecting himself. Prophets and world teachers, however great, are not exempt from human experiences, which do not lessen their stature. On the contrary, they add to the values of a teacher who KNOWS out of the
vast experience he has gained through many lives. Living in a human body, the prophets exhibited human qualities as well, and through their own lives demonstrated the future attainments of man.

‘Have you seen God, Sir?’ asked the yearning young Narendra of Sri Ramakrishna. ‘Yes, my son,’ came the answer, ‘only I see Him more clearly than I see you and all created beings around me. But who wants to see God nowadays? People cry after wife, children, money and the things they possess. Verily and truly I tell you, my son, that he who weeps after God three days and three nights, he shall see God.’ Narendra was captured by the genuine sincerity of the Master. Sri Ramakrishna was the first prophet to tread the paths of all the existing great religions of today and attain one and the same goal, called God. He too proclaimed with the sages of yore: ‘Truth is one. Only sages call it by different names.’ His achievements were derived from this life alone, but were the sum total of all the lives he had lived in the past. He too, like Lord Jesus, taught that man’s final goal is the attainment of God. It is the love of such great ones that holds the world together, ever inspiring man to fulfil the true purpose of life — to realize God.

In studying the lives of Sri Ramakrishna and his right hand, Vivekananda, who spread the message of his Master through the world, one becomes aware that man’s earthly sojourn is brief and his stay has to be utilized for something more permanent than creature comforts. The quintessence of Sri Ramakrishna’s teachings, expressed in so masterly a way by Vivekananda, is: ‘If atavism gains, you go down, if evolution gains, you go up.’ Creature comforts, as Sri Ramakrishna emphasized, are ‘lust and gold’, or passion and greed. Indeed, passion means yielding to our lower nature of animal instincts. Gold symbolically means greed which is never satisfied. The three rungs of the ladder of evolution are animality, humanity and divinity. They are the three stages of human growth, the trinity of our unfolding. It is like the seed becoming a tree and the tree eventually yielding its rich harvest of fruit. Enjoying the fruit means the realization of God. The average man and the saint have much in common. One could even assert that there is no difference between them, only the degree of manifestation. The potential Godhood has become manifest in the saint, whereas it remains a possibility in the average man. The admiration we cherish for a saint is an unconscious yearning to possess or, better still, to manifest the same qualities of perfection. That is why humanity places saints on the pedestal on which they belong and offers them their deserved homage. In them man sees the fulfilment of his own desires and the attainment of his long-cherished goal of true happiness.

Saints too were potential sinners, redeemed through their own sufferings, struggles and efforts. There was no sin unknown to Francis of Assisi, but when he saw the impermanence of worldly joys, which merely increased his earthly sorrows, he gave them up and learnt that in giving them up he had gained the long-sought-for freedom. Once somebody told him, ‘You are so good’, to which he promptly replied, ‘If I act otherwise, I am so unhappy.’

There is a legend about Sankaracharya. He taught his disciples the importance of the life of celibacy for God’s attainment. At a certain meeting, a woman of great learning challenged the Brahmacharya, saying: ‘On what grounds can you, a celibate, claim your assertions to be true, who have no experience of the life of a householder? How can you teach renunciation without knowing what it is that you renounce?’

The young monk asked the woman to grant him some time to give her the answer. Sankaracharya retreated into a forest with his disciples and entered into a state of deep trance, leaving his body in charge of his disciples. His wandering spirit soon found the dead body of a king who was about to be

1 Narendra in later years became the world-renowned Vivekananda.
cremated. Entering the body, he rose from the dead, to the fear and rejoicing of his courtiers and queens. Joy ruled in the kingdom at the return of the king. But soon the queens noticed the extra-ordinary behaviour of their old husband, who showed an unusual attachment towards them as in the days of his youth. After experiencing the demands of the flesh, Sankaracharya left the body and returned to that of his own.

At the next meeting he was able to defeat the learned woman in all her arguments, proving celibacy to be the priceless path leading to the attainment of God.

Prince Siddharta was a historical figure who lived 2500 years ago. He became Gautama, the Buddha, after experiencing the four truths of life — Suffering, the Cause of Suffering, The Annihilation of the Cause of Suffering, and The Path Leading Out of Suffering. What had led him to truth was his contact with age, sickness, death and a monk who had renounced the world. His wealth of experience gained in many lives expressed itself as an all-embracing love and sympathy for the suffering ones. ‘Birth ends with death,’ he thought. ‘But what is that which is not born, which cannot die? Until I attain freedom from this illusion, I shall not arise from this spot, even if I were to perish in my endeavour.’ When he became Buddha, the Enlightened, he taught for more than forty years and shared his experiences with the world.

The sage Vyasa entreated the gods to grant him the birth of a son of light and wisdom. But the son did not want to be born, for he knew he would be the cause of much sorrow to his parents. ‘Then cast a veil of illusion over his eyes, only for a moment,’ pleaded Vyasa to the great Goddess. This was done and Sukadeva, a lad of sixteen, was born. The delight of Vyasa, however, was short-lived, for no sooner did the boy behold the transient nature of this world than he arose and headed for the boundless Himalayas, the throne of the gods. The sorrowful father called after his son, whose body had dissolved into the four elements it was made of. ‘O my son Sukadeva, O my son, O my son,’ were the pitiful pleas of Vyasa, but the Himalayas only echoed his voice, filling the air with the name of God, OM... OM... OM.

Filled with pity, Sukadeva now returned to his father and asked what he had to offer him in the way of knowledge. Vyasa at once realized that he was in the presence of a great sage. Recognizing his inability to offer his son anything, he spoke of King Janaka, great in learning and wisdom. Janaka became aware of Sukadeva’s intention to visit him and at once made plans to test the boy. The palace guards rudely refused him admission, but Sukadeva bore the humiliation and waited for three days and nights outside the palace walls. At last King Janaka himself came with his courtiers to receive the young saint. The face of Sukadeva was as calm as before. He was the same whether he was scorned or praised. A banquet was prepared in his honour with heavenly delights around him. There was music, there was dancing and there was food in abundance. Amidst many alluring temptations Sukadeva was able to walk around the great hall with a cup of milk filled to the brim without spilling a drop. The king’s minister suddenly transformed himself into a damsel of exquisite beauty who appeared before the boy in order to tempt him. With the innocence of a child Sukadeva turned towards her and addressed her as ‘mother’. Returning to the king, the minister reported that the mind of the boy was pure and without blemish. When the cup of milk was returned, the king spoke, saying: ‘What a man should know in life, O Suka, is known to you. Return to your father, for I have nothing to teach you.’

* * *

Sukadeva wandered the forests of the Himalayas, imparting his knowledge to those who sought his wisdom. One day he met nymphs in a merry mood, playing in a beautiful blue lake studded with water-lilies. Happy at the sight of him, they came out and greeted
the young Sage. Purity was the robe he wore to cover his naked form. The nymphs too, though unclad, were not in the least abashed in his presence.

A while later Vyasa came by, and though he was fully dressed, the damsels who were singing and dancing below a shady tree ran in all directions to cover their shame. Surprised beyond words, the old man asked: ‘How can it be that you showed no shame in the presence of my son, whose body was bare and uncovered, yet before me, who am full of years, you hide behind bushes and trees?"

‘What you say is true, O Vyasa. Forgive our saying so, but while there is not the slightest trace of desire in your son Sukadeva, there is still a sense of difference between man and woman in you. That is why we hide.’

* * *

Vyasa became the celebrated author of the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*. These writings were dictated by him to Lord Ganesha, the son of the God Shiva. It is the daily bread of the children of Bharata since time immemorial and will keep the heart of the nation throbbing as long as creation on this earth lasts – this was the proclamation of the ancients. The characters of this immortal epic poem range from the lowest manifestation of human nature, personified by the envious Duryodhana, to the very highest and noblest of moral instincts, manifested by Yudhisthira.

The other immortal epic of Aryavartha (India) is the *Ramayana*, depicting the lives of Lord Vishnu and his divine consort Lakshmi, both born on earth as Rama and Sita. Their lives reflect human sufferings in the fullest measure. Every reader recognizes through these two characters his own earthly life portrayed in every detail, from the dungeon of human misery to the noble aspirations of liberation, salvation and freedom found only in the pursuit of God. For the Hindu, Rama and Sita are the ideal husband and wife, and merely to mention these names is to invoke God’s presence. The highest blessing children can receive from their parents while kneeling before them is contained in the words: “Be a Rama” or “Be a Sita”.

The author of the *Ramayana*, the story goes, was a robber and a reprobate in his younger days, who made his living by plundering and killing his victims. The turning point in his life came when he met the Sage Narada, who convinced him of the inevitable karma or destiny he was to face. When his nearest and dearest came to know of his profession and deserted him, he came to his senses and beseeched the Sage. Falling at the saint's feet he begged for mercy. ‘My son, fear not. There is One who is with us in our joys and sorrows, pains and pleasures, One who never forsakes the fallen. Call upon Him and you will be saved from all your sins,’ consoled Narada.

The robber sat under a tree and meditated on the holy name of God he had learnt from the Sage. As time passed, ants had built their nests around the seeker of God. One day a voice spoke, saying: ‘Arise, O Sage.’ ‘No, no, not a Sage, but a robber,’ he replied. ‘No longer a robber but an enlightened Sage. Valmiki shall be thy name, meaning, he who was born amongst the ant-hills,’ spoke the voice.

Brahma, the Creator Himself, chose to dictate the life of Rama and Sita to Valmiki, who set down the inspired teachings of God for posterity. Be it a Rama, a Krishna, a Buddha, a Jesus Christ, a Prophet Mohammed, a Sankaracharya, a Chaitanya Deva, a Ramakrishna, a Vivekananda or a Ramana Maharshi, they all lived in human form, sharing our joys, sorrows and struggles, and through their own lives showed the wonderful possibilities that lie within the reach of man: to attain God, regardless of caste, colour or creed.
How Bhagavan Came to My Life

By Fred Broumand

I was born in a Moslem family in the south of Iran. I was the 5th child among seven. My childhood years were happy and normal. I was the most religious member of the family, sometimes jokingly referred to as the Priest.

Adulthood brought many changes in my life. College education strengthened intellectualism. Religious beliefs and interests seemed lost for ever. And yet the feeling persisted that I was in search of something, I could not quite determine what it was or where it should come from. I only knew that every time I embarked on a new adventure, a journey, a job, or a new friendship and it was completed, I would become aware that I had not found what I had been searching for.

At the age of 26 I left my family and friends and migrated to the United States. There I experienced many new challenges, uncertainties and problems.

At about the age of 30 I acquired a book which had some explanations on occultism and some practical exercises on concentration. The author had been a disciple of Maharishi and had referred to his teachings very briefly. I became interested in this book and followed the practices for 2 years and had some limited success towards one-pointedness of mind.

What happened to me during the next few years, I viewed as disaster. The latent desires for worldly gains and the pursuit of pleasure came to the surface. I abandoned my concentration practices. I often felt as if I had been stuck in quicksand. The harder I tried to rescue myself the deeper I sunk to the bottom.

The only good event during this period was my marriage to my wife and the birth of my two lovely daughters. Now looking back at this I realize that it was the Grace of God to have arranged this marriage as my wife turned out to be my great support in pursuing the spiritual life and became a devout follower of Bhagavan. During this period I read another book of the same author describing the time he had spent in the presence of Maharishi and
also acquired a photograph of the Master. However neither my family nor my desire for pursuing a different life style was strong enough to pull me out of the bottom of the ocean of ignorance.

Shortly before my fortieth birthday I went through what is known in America as the Mid-Life crisis. The more materialistic a man is, the more severe the crisis becomes. Many men are known to leave their families and jobs and start afresh.

However, with me it was quite different. There was no unhappiness about the family or the environment. What I experienced was like being lost in a forest. I continued my life as usual. But work, coming and going, eating and sleeping all became automatic without much thinking or participation on my part. I was completely apart from my environment.

In seclusion and away from curiosity of people I would be merged in myself. I would become very much aware of the presence of God. Wherever I went I always felt He was next to me, then I would weep and pray for His mercy and to be set free from the bondage of desire. I would walk weakly and lean against a tree or a post as though I was about to collapse. A simple mention of God and I would melt in tears and the feeling of devotion. Without the notice of others I underwent a complete change. I became more serious and introverted. Everything was fresh and different. My worldly desires and ambitions vanished without any effort on my part. New hopes and new ways of life were being formed. I was amazed and pleased at the change which had taken place in me.

The crowning experience took place soon afterwards. After months of search I was able to acquire some books on Maharshi's teachings. By the time I finished the first book I knew without the slightest doubt in my mind that I had finally found the one thing that I had always been searching for. The secret longing of my heart had been realized and satisfied at last. The search had come to an end and contentment and peace took its place.

When I first realized that God had come to me in the form of Ramana I trembled with joy and excitement, yet with hesitation and caution. I could not imagine what I had done to deserve such kindness. O Lord Thou art indeed the Almighty King of the Universe to have such Generosity, such Grace, such Compassion on insignificant creature. Ramana sang in praise of the Lord Arunachala, “Thou hast become famous by Thy continued union with the poor and the lowly”, and now I could see this for myself. To Thee O Ramana I bow my head in humility.

Maharshi's Grace was revealed to me in a series of dreams and internal responses to some important questions during waking hours. Each experience made me melt in tears of joy and filled my heart with devotion and gratitude to Ramana. By Bhagavan's boundless Grace the old self, the mighty ego, started melting in the fire of His Wisdom. Now, instead of being stuck in quicksand I am resting calmly aboard the vessel of His Grace and sailing towards His Kingdom of peace and serenity. And that is how Ramana out of His compassion came into my life and made me for ever His humble and devoted servant.

It has been some three years since the beginning of all these changes. But during this short period I have lived a lot more than all the previous forty years. The love and the joy that I have experienced is beyond what I had ever imagined possible, and beyond what I can express in words. The bond of love by which He has drawn me to Himself is so strong he has now become everything to me. There is never a day when He is apart from me, but then how could He, He is the Real Self that abides in my Heart.
1138
From doership freed and steadfastly Serving the supreme, the sage Seems to earn both merit and guilt. To those who praise him goes the merit, The sin to those condemning him.

1139
If one asks "How can deeds get done When doership is lost? Do we not see Deeds done by muktas?" The answer is: They being egoless, it is God Himself who dwelling in their hearts Performs these deeds.

1140
The actions of a jivanmukta Done in tranced stillness free From any sense of 'I' or 'mine' Are like the swallowing of some food By a sleeping child while yet asleep. (They neither 'do' nor 'enjoy' the actions which we think are theirs.)

1141
As the porter hired to carry luggage Puts it down at journey's end.

1142
A tiny insect almost dead And tossed about by mighty waves In the deep ocean cannot hope To swim ashore. Can the poor ego Body-bound prevail against The swelling flood of true Awareness, The full tide of bliss serene?

1143.
Can the whole, egoless mind lit up By the bright glory of self-being Be ever bewildered by the sights Of this phenomenal world? Can these False phantoms multitudinous Materialize in the clear, marvellous Space of transcendent pure awareness?

1144.
What is this highest glory, what The state of jivanmukti, to be Yearned for and striven for and gained By the poor jiva born to die? To know and be the Self, and so To end the rampant ego which Grew through forgetfulness of one's True Being.

1145.
When doership gone the doer dies, All three wives, all his "Karmas" stand Widowed, helpless. Can one alone
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GURU’S SAYINGS

Escape this fate and still retain
The status of a wife?

(It used to be said that the sage was subject to prarabdha
(now current) though freed from sanchita (accumulated)
and agami (accruing) Karma, Bhagavan says that he is free from all three kinds of Karma.)

1146.
The body born of prarabdha
May not escape its prarabdha.
But having snapped the matter-awareness Knot, the jivanmukta has gone beyond Prarabdha’s reach.

1147.
If some one questions, “Since the body Came into being only by
And for prarabdha, will it not Fall when prarabdha ends?” the answer Is, “Tell me truly, in whose sight And for whom does this physical body Seem to continue to exist?”

1148.
A man dead drunk, inebriate, blind
Knows not whether his clothes are on
Or off. Even so the sage whose Being Is Awareness bright knows not Whether his body, an object false, Inert is present or else absent.

(The sage self-realized knows not whether the transient body comes And stays, or dies and leaves, even as The senseless drunkard knows not what Happens to his clothes.

1149
As a brown garment burnt to ashes
Seems to be, yet is not, a garment
The jivanmukta’s body flawless.
Ego-free is but the form
Apparent veiling his true life.

1150
As only a serpent knows a serpent’s Spoor, so only a jnani knows A Jnani’s nature. Others can But misunderstand it, never Know it as it truly is.

1151
The sage’s silent, firm abidance
As self-awareness which succeeds The ego’s death, Brahma’s own state Of bliss supreme, the total absence Of another, this grand experience, None can comprehend.

(For one who has destroyed the ego And is awake as Being-Awareness,
What remains to be accomplished? Nothing other than the Self He sees.
Who, who can comprehend His blissful state?

— Bhagavan)

OF SAGES

1152
Beyond the reach of words extends
The sage’s greatness. None but he Can know his state of Being, vaster Than the sky and than the mountain Firmer. To experience it Yourself, you should first shed your own Body-consciousness.

1153
The sage who has realized the self Direct, immediate, as the rich Plenitude of Being, the formless Light revealing every form. He is the sovereign lord and master Of the three worlds of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.
1154
The sage abiding in Self-being
Asleep and yet awake, immersed
In the still, deep, immutable ocean
Of bliss supreme, will never lapse back
Into this ruinous world and suffer.

1155
The learned man who, letting go
The Self, the real Being, sees
And cherishes this dream, this false
Illusive world, may be a scholar.
Something different is he
Who has gained the clarity of knowing
The Self; he is a knower.

1156
However thoroughly explored,
The scriptures only tell us, "Search
And find the Self within yourself,"
Why does one into a mirror look
But to see clear and bright one's own
Good face and to enjoy the sight?

1157
Holding in their hands the mirror,
The scriptures which declare "The Self
Alone is to be known", many,
Alas, study with care the words
And commentaries; only few
Seek the Self and gain true life.

1158
Far different from the scholar learned
In books of wisdom is the Seer.
Seekers of release from the bondage
Of ignorance had better leave
Schoalrs alone and enter the presence
Of seers established in the Self
Supreme.

1159
The seer has realized the Being
Whose gracious light sustains the world.
For those long lost and groping in
The darkness of ignorance, a word
Of his will prove a veritable
Staff of strength, the path, the goal.

OF SEER'S ACTION
1160
If inaction is the mark of jnana
Then the inaction of the helpless
Leper would be jnana. The real
State of jnana is to act
Without a sense of doership
And rising far above all liking
And disliking.

1161
What need is there for any thinking
For those who in the thought-free bliss
Of Self-awareness live their lives?
All they experience is bright stillness.
In this state supreme there is
No "other" and nothing to gain.

1162
Well knowing that mere being is
Their nature and abiding in
The thought-free state sublime, the sages
May seem to do a thousand deeds.
And yet they are non-doers; they
Never mistake themselves to be
The doers of these deeds.

1163
Having through strenuous dharma gained
The natural state of being the Self,
The sages may or may not follow
The rules of outward discipline.
But either way their conduct has
A certain beauty.

1164
The mukta bodiless, boundless, vast
Moving about as one embodied
Traverses with his feet the heavens
Supreme, transcendent. Did not Vishnu
In three steps cover the universe?

1165
The doer of actions is a person
Made up of ten external senses
And a fourfold inner organ.
The seer who stands apart, detached.
From all these means and instruments
May seem to act, and yet he is
Verily a non-doer.

1166
In what comes of its own accord
Rejoicing, envy-free, transcending
All duality, ever at peace,
Alike in victory and defeat.
The seers are not by actions bound
Even when they seem to act.
(Contented with whatever comes,
Free from duality and envy,
The even-minded seer may act,
And is not bound.
— Bhagavan)

SELF-ABIDANCE

1167
Those who would by external marks
Measure a seer's greatness look
In vain and turn back baffled. How
Can they with their mere eyes of flesh
Behold the light that shines within
The sage's heart?

1168
Wrong, perverse it is to judge
A jivanmukta's greatness by
His siddhis. With or without siddhis
He shines the same. They know him not
Who at siddhis gape and wonder.

1169
The world is full of madmen who
Trivialize the seer's true grandeur,
Their poor bewildered mind's attempting
To comprehend the mukta's bright,
Transcendent Being, and imagining
Several sorts of siddhis in him.

1170
To judge by miracles the greatness
Of a seer self-realized
Is like measuring the sun's intense
Light by the pretty patterns wrought
By a stray pink beam stealing through
Some tiny hole.

1171
The seer that knows that both the body
And the world are but Awareness
Lives a life oned with the world's.
To others he appears as living
In a body in a world.
None should at face value take
A mukta.
GOODBYE ‘I’, HELLO ‘T’-‘I’

By Kumari Sarada

For the fourth year in succession a Seminar on the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was held at Bangalore on July 16, 17 and 18. A pictorial description of the Seminar is given in this issue’s Ashram Bulletin.

We are happy to publish the absorbing paper presented by Kumari Sarada, which was appreciated very much.

Walking along a street one day, I looked around and suddenly discovered I was in a strange land. Strange it was, not only because it was new to me, a place unknown, but strange it was in its aspect. There was activity all around and yet quietness prevailed. The people talked with each other all right, yet, they seemed silent. And I, now having spoken a word, felt I was being almost noisy in that quiet.

Naturally, I was not very comfortable and wondered how I could get back to familiar ground, when all at once I spotted a familiar face.

“Hey, Sriram!” I called.

No reply. Not even a turn of head in my direction. The last time I saw him this boy wasn’t deaf! Well, maybe he was too engrossed in his conversation. So I went close to him and said, “Sriram, Sriram.” Still no response. Even the person he was talking to did not seem to realise that someone was calling his companion. I was indignant.

“What on earth do you mean? I have been calling you for the past half-hour and you don’t even have the courtesy to reply!” I remonstrated.

At that the boyish head turned calmly round to face me as if oblivious of the outburst.

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“What on earth do you mean? I have been calling you for the past half-hour and you don’t even have the courtesy to reply!” I remonstrated.

At that the boyish head turned calmly round to face me as if oblivious of the outburst.

“Who called whom?” he asked.

My endurance had reached its limit.

“If you wish not to acknowledge our acquaintance ...”, I began angrily, but he interrupted. again with that infuriating calm.

“‘You’ did not call ‘me’ “

If he was playing with words I could not get his meaning.

“Are you not Sriram?” I asked. bewildered.

“If I am Sriram”, he asked, “who are you?”

He seemed to be thoroughly amused at my indignation and confusion.

“‘I’ am Sarada”, I replied, getting more and more defensive in the face of his imperturbable calm.

“Sarada is it? Who’s that?”

“Can’t you even see? Sometime ago you couldn’t hear me calling you. Now you can’t see me standing right before you. “I exploded. Strangely, instead of answering me he turned to his companion, the look of infuriating amusement still persisting.

“She seems to be possessed by the ghost. Shall we take her to our exorcist?”

I was alarmed, so alarmed that it did not even occur to me to take to my heels.

“I am possessed by no ghost, and need no exorcist”, I protested.

But strange land it was, my protest did not turn into resistance and I went with them. The quietness of that strange land grew stronger. A powerful silence took over and grew more pronounced with every step of our approach and ... we were in His presence.

If He was an exorcist, He was no ordinary one. Never before had I set eyes on anyone so beautiful. His very easy posture had an infinite grace. A tender smile played on His lips. When He turned His gaze on us it was an encounter with the brilliance of the sun, the depth of unfathomable oceans, the compassionate coolness of the moon, it was ... oh! those eyes defy description. Any ghost would bow its head and dissolve happily in that
glance! Yet, Sriram approached Him with such affectionate informality, as if He were a very good friend. And He responded with all naturalness.

"She seems to be new here," Sriram said, pointing to me. "still afflicted by the ghost." he grinned. "So, I thought..." He smiled at Sriram and then turned the penetrating look on me and slowly, in all seriousness, asked;

"When you say 'I', what do you mean?"

This time, the reply was not given without some thought. But the answer was still the same.

"I'm Sarada", pointing to myself.

"But that's only your body. Who are you?"

I was non-plussed. Then, thinking for a while, I hit upon it. It's the mind which perceives all things, which enjoys, feels, is conscious... There are some things which happen to the body but which don't affect me because my mind is not on them. For instance, if I'm engrossed in reading a book or watching a movie I am not aware of my own hunger and sometimes even of my pain. That's because my mind is elsewhere. So....

"I suppose I am the mind...", I venture.

There is no refutation but a further question.

"What is this mind?"

Again, I am taken unawares. Funny, how little I have given thought to that which I call myself. Seeing me non-plussed, He comes to my rescue.

"The mind is only a bundle of thoughts," He says simply, "and the root thought, or the parent thought, is the 'I'-thought." Things are beginning to make some sense to me. It's hardly a difficult thing to understand that the 'I'-thought is the root thought. After all I am the centre of my own universe — 'I am most important to myself and all other things are important only in so far as they concern 'me' or give 'me' happiness. So the 'I'-thought is the parent thought from which all thoughts spring.

"So," I conclude quite happily, "I am the mind, or the 'I'-thought which is the essence of the mind."

"What happens in deep sleep?" He counters.

Again, I am beaten. What happens in deep sleep? What does the question mean? If I am the mind or the 'I'-thought, what happens to 'me' in deep sleep? I am not conscious of my body then. Once I hit the bed everything is forgotten. There is no world around me. Why, I don't think there's even a 'me' for there to be a world around. And yet, I'm not dead then and I enjoy my sleep. In fact, every night I want to sleep. So, I must be enjoying my sleep. But then I am not conscious, certainly not thinking then, so it cannot be the 'I'-thought which enjoys the deep sleep. Then who is the 'I' who enjoys the sleep? Is there an 'I' different from the 'I'-thought? If so, are there two 'I's? Or is this 'I'-thought not really the 'I' at all? Then, who am I?

I had reached dangerous ground, the most worthwhile ground, but dangerous all the same, dangerous for 'me'. And so, suddenly as suddenly as I had found myself in that strange, quiet land, I found myself awake in the usual, noisy world of ours. Yet, the influence of that powerful presence had not worn off and so the mind still dwelt in the presence of that unique exorcist, in the presence I had been. It was He, Bhagavan Ramana of the bewitching smile. Why in the dream was He an exorcist? For He alone can exorcise the most powerful ghost of all, the 'ego-ghost' as He Himself calls it in Sat-Darshana. And the most direct and simple way to bid goodbye to this ghost 'I' is to enquire about its nature and source.

Why is this the best way? Bhagavan tells an interesting story. The bridegroom, arriving for his wedding was received with great pomp and treated royally. During the celebration, one of the groom's party, a man who appeared to be a very close friend of his, proved himself to be a great nuisance. Finally, when the father-in-law could bear it no longer, he summoned courage and asked the groom.

"Who is that man? Is he a very close friend of yours?"

The groom's reply was startling.

"What do you mean?" he exclaimed. "I thought he was a close friend of yours. I don't know him at all. He was the first to meet me
at the station; so I thought he belonged to your family."

"Since he was with you when I met you," protested the father-in-law, "I thought he belonged to your family."

Naturally, when they searched for the fellow, he was nowhere to be seen. The impostor had fled the moment he knew that an enquiry was afoot.

In a similar way when one enquires about the nature of the ego and its source, the ego flees, it retreats to its source. The first step for eradicating a problem is to understand it. If we are to solve the problem of the ego ghost, we must first understand the nature of this 'I' — thought.

That it is the root-thought, the basic thought is clear to us. This idea Bhagavan stresses and explains in Sat-Darshanam. He points out that only after the first person 'I' do the second person 'you' and third person 'he' arise. If there was no 'I' there would naturally be no 'you' and 'he' — since 'you' and 'he' are only relative. That is, 'you' and 'he' can occur only in relation to 'I'. When we say 'you' and 'he' if we add 'it' also, we can see that all objects occur only in relation to the subject, the 'I'-thought. If I am not, the world also does not exist for me, as it is not in deep sleep.

Hence, the 'I'-thought and the world rise and set together but it is the 'I'-thought which lights the world, which forms the basis of the world for each one of us.

If the 'I'-thought is non-existent in deep sleep but comes into existence again on waking, then it must have a resting place during sleep. Bhagavan says that the 'I'-thought sets in the Self and rises out of it. Thus, if we track the 'I' to its source, it will merge there and the Self will shine forth.

This Self is not the limited 'I'-thought; instead, it is complete and blissful. And it is the strength of this Self that the 'I'-thought draws upon.

'Are there then two selves, one limited and the other unlimited?' the question may arise. 'Impossible', would naturally be the answer. For, when we say unlimited, does that not automatically imply that it encompasses the limited, that there can be nothing separate from it. The 'I'-thought shares the consciousness of the Self and links itself with the body. It masquerades as the Self, though its glory is only reflected. And it seems to resist every effort to turn it back to the source, for it is afraid of losing its independent position. The surest way to say goodbye to it is to enquire about its nature and track it to its source.

How does one track the 'I' to its source? The way is to watch the 'I'-thought and observe from where it arises and into what it sets. One may wonder how one can watch the 'I'-thought. Is there another 'I'-thought which can observe this 'I'-thought? It is not so. The process is watching the mind with the mind itself. This may sound a little confusing, but in actual practice is quite simple — it is in fact a process which constantly occurs in our minds. We are very often aware of our own thoughts, we are aware of feeling depressed, feeling joyous, we are also aware of more specific thoughts than these general feelings.
If, for instance, I think, 'What a nice sari that person there is wearing', I may think this thought without paying much attention to it or else I may be fully conscious of it and if someone were to ask me, 'What were you thinking?' I would be able to answer quite precisely 'I was thinking that the person there is wearing a nice sari'. Though the mind did the thinking, the mind itself was also conscious of it. The body when it acts is not conscious of its own action. It is the mind alone which is conscious of the body's action. But the mind is capable of observing itself. It is a similar process which occurs when one observes the 'I'-thought and traces it to its source. The example Bhagavan gives is of a stick used to stir the funeral pyre. Finally this stick too is consumed in the flames.

For those who find it difficult to pay attention to the 'I'-thought because of the outward movement of the mind and for those already practising some mantra, Bhagavan suggests alternative, but parallel, methods. Watching the breath with the mind and tracing the source of the breath would be an alternative method. Since the source of the breath and of the mind is one and the same, watching from whence the breath arises would also merge one at the source. In a similar manner, watching for the source from which the sound of a mantra rises or emanates, would also lead one to the source.

The important thing is that attention is directed through some means on the source. Watching for the source of the 'I'-thought because of the outward movement of the mind and for those already practising some mantra, Bhagavan suggests alternative, but parallel, methods. Watching the breath with the mind and tracing the source of the breath would be an alternative method. Since the source of the breath and of the mind is one and the same, watching from whence the breath arises would also merge one at the source. In a similar manner, watching for the source from which the sound of a mantra rises or emanates, would also lead one to the source.

The important thing is that attention is directed through some means on the source. Watching for the source of the 'I'-thought is easier and more direct than tracing breath or mantra to their source. This is because the 'I'-thought, as we observed, is the most important, the central thought in every one of us. Hence, it is much easier to pay attention to the 'I' than to anything else, for the 'I' is already the centre of our world, of all our activities and thoughts.

If the process of self-enquiry is simply the watching of the 'I'-thought, and tracing its source, then where is the place for the enquiry 'Who am I?'

This enquiry 'Who am I?' refers, first, to an attitude of enquiry. Our long wrong habit of identifying ourselves with the body should be broken. How is this habit to be broken? The first step is to get shaken out of the complacent feeling that we know ourselves entirely. Am I only what I have taken myself to be all along? Or am I labouring under some illusion?

It is when this doubt is aroused, when the attitude of enquiry comes about, that the mind gets inturned. Hence 'Who am I?' is an attitude, it is a serious attitude of enquiry. When the ego is thus seriously questioned, it falls back automatically into its source. To give a small example, if I am caught in some uncomfortable situation and questioned about my identity, I am not likely to give just my name. I would immediately say 'Don't you know whose daughter I am? I am so and so. These are my credentials. How dare you trouble me.' I would quote all my strong points. The 'I' too when questioned falls back upon its strength, the Self, because it derives all its power only from the Self. As it falls back if we observe the 'I' — thought, we will be led to its source. Hence, the process of tracing the 'I'-thought to its source or 'Whence am I?' is in fact complementary to the question 'Who am I?'

In this process the 'I'-thought merges at its source. The 'I' — thought is not destroyed, rather it becomes a pure reflection of the Self. What gets destroyed is its existence as a separate entity and what shines forth is the 'I'-I', the Heart. This is the spiritual Heart to the right and not the physical organ. This does not come anew but is only discovered, as it were. Bhagavan describes the very experience of the Self in Ramana-Gita. He says that it throbs as 'I'-I'. It shines forth. This 'I'-I' is the form of the Self. Why is it necessary for us to know at all the nature of the Self? In fact Bhagavan does not often lay emphasis on the nature of the Self, rather he turns our attention on the known, 'I'-thought — since it is easy for us to focus attention on the known, rather than on the unknown, the Self. Yet, there are places where Bhagavan has very clearly
described the experience of the Self. To know that it shines forth as 'I'-T', that it is our Heart and within reach of everyone of us, is important. Because this knowledge infuses in us the confidence that this Self, this 'I'-T' has been experienced vividly by some and can be experienced by everyone of us. It drives away the fear which sometimes, unfoundedly, occurs in us that the dissolution of the ego may leave behind only a void. It gives us the assurance that when we bid goodbye to the 'I' we will not meet a blank. When we bid goodbye to the 'I', the ego ghost, the great joy of the 'I'-T' shines forth. With this confidence, our search will be redoubled in its vigour. And when finally, the 'I' disappears in the complete throb of 'I'-T' — there is only that brilliance that bliss.

We say 'goodbye' to the 'I', but there is none to say 'hello' to the 'I'-T' for there is then no 'other' to greet. But when I say 'hello' — 'I'-T', it is to denote the new awakening. It is also to denote that what remains after the disappearance of the 'I'-thought is not something strange, it is so familiar, it is our very Self. As the 'I'-T' shines forth the strange quiet, peace and joy of that dream land will no longer be strange, it will be our very kingdom of joy. It is the same old world, but now seen clothed in clouds of glory. When 'I' as the body dies, it rises again as 'I' the universe entire.

— from Sri Ramana Jyothi Souvenir, p. 14
“Why not? Did we not see vignettes of the ‘Laughing Ramana’ in the April issue? So he was not one, who in the name of Jnana, was immune to human sensibilities and sentiments. . . . . . .

“All the same, laughing goes well with a Jnani, as he is one always immersed in Brahman-Joy. But weeping!”

But dear brother, the incidents we saw had nothing to do with your Brahman-Joy. His Brahman was as much in the Absolute which is spoken of as That plenum (poornam adah) as in the Relative. This plenum (poornam idah). This world, its humanity, the human qualities too dripped only the rasa (ambrosia) or Brahman to him. Please go through his upadesas carefully. He has often quoted the exhortation:

\[
\text{Drshthim jnaanamayeem krtvaapasyet}
\text{brahmanamayam jagat}
\]

“Making the vision absorbed in jnana, the world must be seen as Brahman-filled”. Initially, of course, the sadhak in the Jnana Path has to negate the world, so as to free himself from its illusory pulls. Then he rests in the Absolute, to the complete exclusion of the relative world. But this state of Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi is not the highest Perfection. After this must come the realisation that the Relative also, as an expression of the Absolute, is full with It. This is the Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi state in which Sri Ramana Bhagavan was ever ensconced. Here one partakes of all human experiences, shorn, of course, of their illusory power to bind him to the wrong identification of the relative itself as the Absolute — just as we play with a serpent with its fangs extracted. See that single verse (87) of his Akshara-mana-maalai:

Mauniyaay kar-pol malaradirundaal
maunam-idaamo Arunachala!

“Oh Arunachala! Is it true mauna — freedom from mind — if one were to rest like a stone, with no blossoming forth!”

This blossoming forth includes the Jnani’s revelling in the human excellences, on top of which come his laughter and — tears too, dear brother.

Seven verses prior to this he subtly points to this consummation:

\[
mudi-adi kaanaa mudividutt (u) anai-ner
\text{mudividak — Kadanilai Arunachala}
\]

“Thou has cut the knot which hid the vision of Thy Head and Foot (the limitless Self). Motherlike, shouldst Thou not complete Thy task. Oh Arunachala!”

Anai-ner, “mother-like”! Just as Brahman makes the sadhak too Brahman, the Mother makes the Jnani too a Mother. You surely know, brother, that the Mother not only laughs, but also weeps, with her children.

\[^1\text{Trans. Arthur Osborne: He further explains: “The cutting of the knot which binds man to illusion implies the attainment of nirvikalpa samadhi; completion of the task refers to the state of sahaja samadhi.”}\]
Our conception of the Jnani is really different from the Jnani’s own concrete living. Our view is very well presented by the poet:

They are not long, the weeping and the laughter,
Love and desire and hate;
I think they have no portion in us after
We pass the gate.

But when passing the gate, the pilgrim ultimately becomes the Goal, “the weeping and the laughter” and surely “Love”, which is the source of both, remain very much a portion of that Perfected One, though “desire and hate” are extinguished. This is nowhere more beautifully, bewitchingly revealed than in the life of Ramana, who in his own sublime, unspoken humility dittoed Marcus Aurelius’, “All that is in tune with thee, O Universe, is in tune with me.”

Just as there is the joy of Brahman experience, so also there are the ecstatic tears of bhakti, aananda-bhasspa as it is called; and Ramana was no mean bhakta. We see in the Bhagavata, which is the bible of Jnana-bhakti, that such Masters of Brahmic Consciousness as Suka Brahman and Jada Bharata burst into tears of bhakti while recounting or recollecting the exploits and excellences of the Lord.

Many such instances we come across in the various accounts of Master Ramana. Often the burst-out came when Ramana was reading the divine experiences of great devotees or divinities themselves. Says Devaraja Mudaliar in his Day by Day: “I have noticed on more than one occasion in the past how Bhagavan would not proceed with the reading of any deeply devotional portions of Tamil works such as Thevaram and Thayumanavar.” (p. 59). He further quotes the very pregnant words of Ramana, who could not make out “how those people who perform kalakshepam and explain such passages to audiences manage to do it without breaking down. I suppose they must first make their hearts hard like stone before starting their work!” Like a stone, without blossoming forth!

Let us have glimpses into some of those moving passages, though we hard-boiled as we are, may not be moved to the depths as Ramana was.

Ramana is reading the Arunachala Purana. The Divine Mother, willingly subjecting Herself to a curse, is separated from Her Lord Siva and like a humbled mortal comes to Arunachala to do penance in expiation of the ‘mistake’ She committed. The Sage Gautama, who is having an ashram at Arunachala, is beside himself to see the Mother so unexpectedly coming to his place and welcomes Her with a choked throat. Now Ramana becomes himself that throat-choked Gautama. In Suri Nagamma’s words: “Bhagavan’s eyes were flooded with tears, his voice faltered and he put the book aside and sank into silence.” (Letters — 23-11-1945).

This is from her “Letter” of 1st February 1947. After recounting in detail the curious way in which Siva brought the prodigy-bard Jnanasambandha (who like Ramana is considered an avatar of Kartikeya) to Arunachala, Ramana rounds off saying, “out of His affection for Sambandha, who was serving Him with reverence, had Himself, it would appear invited him to this hill.” Now the writer rounds off her letter: “So saying, Bhagavan assumed silence, with his heart filled with devotion and his voice trembling with emotion.”

Another picture painted by that gifted letter-writer on the 14th of September 1947. A bull born and bred in the Ramanasramam is offered to the great temple at Madurai, where Ramana not only had his first-and-final Advaitic Realisation, but had also drunk deep of the love-nectar of the Presiding Mother-Deity Meenakshi. Accepting the gift, the temple authorities send the sacred ash vibhuti, the sacred vermilion kumkum, and a shawl to the Ashram. “Holding the plate reverentially and smearing the vibhuti and kumkum on his forehead, Bhagavan said: ‘See, this is Meenakshi’s gift.’ And his voice quivered as he said it. Sambasiva Iyer spread the shawl over Bhagavan’s feet, and when Bhagavan, deeply moved, removed it with evident feeling of reverence, the attendants took it and spread it over the back of the sofa. Adjusting the shawl properly with his hands.

religious discourse
Bhagavan, looking towards us, said: 'Mother Meenakshi has sent this. It is Mother's gift'. And, choked with emotion, he was unable to say more and became silent. His eyes were full of tears of joy and his body became motionless.

Now, to Devaraja Mudaliar's entry dated 6-11-46: “When he came to the stanza in which it is said that the poet fell repenting at Subramanya's Feet and said, 'I would not care for you. Still such was your grace that you of your own accord appeared before me, set me right and took me into your grace. How can I thank you for your mercy?' Bhagavan could hardly restrain his tears. He was choked with emotion.”

There is the moving story of the hunter-turned-bhakta, Kannappar. To test his love, the Linga image he worshipped shed blood out of one of its eyes and without the least hesitation he plucked out one of his own eyes and transplanted it on the Linga. Now the Lord began shedding blood through the other eye of the image. The bhakta would not hold back. Immediately he started plucking out his other eye too. Whereon the Lord forbade him saying: 'Stop Kannappa'. See how Ramana reacted on reading this. “Bhagavan's voice choked. His body perspired profusely, the hairs stood on end, tears gushed out of His eyes; He could hardly utter a word.” The description is by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer in At the Feet of Bhagavan.

This bhakti-weeping commenced immediately after the time Ramana, as a lad of sixteen, all of a sudden had that first-and-final Advaitic Realisation. This is how Ramana himself described it, according to B.V. Narasimha Swami's Self-Realisation: “After the awakening into the new life, I would go almost every evening to the temple (at Madurai). I would go alone and stand before Siva, or Meenakshi or Nataraja or the sixty-three saints for long periods. I would feel waves of emotion overwhelming me... Mostly I would ... let the deep within flow on and into the Deep without. Tears would mark this overflow of the soul...”

Then throughout his great life the rainbow of tear-drops continued to beautify the sky of his Jnana-Realisation. Mainly the Name, the Form (as the Mountain), the feela and the thought of Arunachala served to spread out this rainbow. Many were the Kartika nights when the full moon saw this Sun of Jnana cooling into the Moon of Bhakti at the sight of the Holy Beacon on the Mount, and shedding staunchless tears.

And at the very end of that glorious life on this earthly plane it was not the glow of Knowledge, but the flow of Love that consumed (or consummated) the body. As life was ebbing out into Life, the chorus burst forth from the gathering “Arunachala Siva, Arunachala Siva. Arunachala Siva. Arunachala” and tears burst out from Ramana’s eyes to sprinkle his path to Videha Mukti.

What is of particular interest to us is that not only during such devotional moods did “tears such as angels weep, burst forth” from Ramana’s limpid eyes of Light. Tears welled up there even in many a human context, because he could very well see the divine play in the human also — “the holiness of human emotions.” Therefore, apart from shedding tears of sorrow in sympathy with the grief-stricken, he was moved to tears even by anything beautiful or noble in human conduct or feeling.

Revered Sri Kunju Swami vividly remembers one such instance. It pertains to the great Tamil poet Kamban, but to his human excellence and not poetic eminence. He was the poet-laureate of a Chola King. For some reason the Chola King fell out with him. Immediately Kamban left the Chola domain, saying that there were better Kings, for example, the then Chera King to whom the Chola himself was paying tribute, who would understand the poet’s worth and be willing to

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1Poyyamozhi, who in his rabid devotion for Siva decried and despised His son Subrahmanya (Kartikeya), but was later enfolded by the grace of the latter.

2Jivan Mukti is Liberation while living in the body and this was Ramana’s state while on earth. Videha Mukti is Liberation out of body.
even serve him as pan-bearer. The Chola retorted, "Then let me actually see that you prove your words". Kamban took up the gauntlet. He repaired to the Chera territory, where he was welcomed by the Chera King, whose reverence for Kamban grew day by day as the latter stayed in his court, saturating it with his high poesy. And finally the Chera did consent to come along with him to the Chola court as his servitor and offer him pan. But at the psychological moment when Kamban must have accepted the betel from the hands of the Chera before the very eyes of his tributary Chola, at that moment of success Kamban forbade the Chera from rendering him that very lowly service. Ramana reading out the poet's life could not contain himself and broke out in gushing tears to see, nay, feel, the nobility of the poet in voluntarily welcoming defeat at the very moment when he was to be crowned with success.

In his "personal" life he had encountered such noble traits as love, faith and purity and whenever he remembered the persons with those traits the pearls of tears used to bejewel his golden visage. For instance, there was that dancing girl, Ratnamma, born in the caste of prostitutes, verily as a lotus amidst the slush. She was deeply devoted to the young Ramana, who was staying at that time in the Big Temple at Arunachalam. Those were days when he was always in-drawn in At-one-ment. But Ratnamma would ‘wake’ him up, by asking passersby to shout in his ears, and if necessary, even to pull him up. Then she would offer him food. She made it her resolve not to eat until the young Swami (he had not as yet got the name Ramana) had his fill from out of her offering! Even when her mother pointed out to her the various predicaments and embarrassments in this, she continued to feed the Swami with the help of some of her relatives. Then the mother herself was roped in to do the feeding. But not long after, she passed and Ramana too moved away from the temple. So Ratnamma had to give up her service and resolve. In Ramana’s own words: “Since she would not live unless she earned by her profession, Ratnamma confined herself to one man only. What does it matter to what community she belonged? She was pure. She had great non-attachment and great devotion. She had never liked her profession and did not want her daughter to follow it, so married her off.” (Letters, entry dt. 12-4-1948). While talking of her, Ramana used to be so touched that his voice would thicken and often falter and unshed tears would bedim his eyes.

Then, we have those instances where the milk of human kindness flowing in his veins was converted into tears in his eyes. He would begin talking jovially about the simple, arduous life of the shepherds and the poor grass-cutting women and end with the sobs that perfected the talk to silence.

His life-time servitors, like Kunju Swami, can never forget the power of pathos that came out when he was accommodated in the more ‘comfortable’ New Hall with its beautifully polished stone sofa. “How would the common people venture to step into this massive structure? They would feel alienated from their Swami whom they are accustomed to see only in simple surroundings. How could my crows and squirrels, dogs and monkeys, dare to come anywhere near the Nawab Swami resting in this saloon?” It seemed his physical frame would melt in tears.

A statue of Ramana was being made at that time. He said very pregnantly: “the stone Swami will sit on the stone sofa.” Remember the inert stone that won’t blossom forth? What he said came to pass. Within a year the flower-Swami fruited into the stone-Swami which to this day is presiding over that “New Hall” inaugurated on the 20th of May, 1949.

Studying his life one may feel that he was very callous to his mother at the time she settled down with him at Arunachalam. He has himself said that whenever she cried he used to say, “Cry, cry! That’s good”. Yes, he was really doing her immense good. She had to be chastened in this way to become fit to receive the Muktí that she later had from the hands (physically so) of Ramana. But we see

Ramana was actually pressing his hands upon her heart and head at the time of her passing so that her soul did not go out (only to re-enter a different body) but got dissolved in the Self abiding at the root of breathing.
the same Ramana, himself crying while recalling the mother’s adamantine resolve to die only in his arms. We can do no better than quote from the Letters: “As he was saying that, his voice began to falter through emotion. My eyes got moist. I said: ‘Renunciation should be as firm as that with everybody.’ ‘Yes, yes!’ he said and was silent.” He always became silent when overwhelmed by emotion.

The “Letter” of the 6th February 1949 shows him like any of us. Ramana shed tears over the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi. “...... Vaishnava Janato was again being broadcast and tears fell from Bhagavan’s eyes.”

Echammal lacerated with bereavements one after the other finally took refuge at the feet of Ramana. He proved to the hilt the saying, “Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.” After some years of placidity, yet another bereavement shook her. Now, he further proved that the “Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot feel!” By that feeling itself, i.e., by himself sharing her grief at the loss of her foster daughter, Chellammal, he also healed the sorrow. Chellammal died of child-birth. Some days afterwards, the tiny tot was brought to Ramana. “On seeing the babe I could not help thinking of its mother and I wept.” Not only did he weep at the time he saw the motherless child, but he made no fuss about this behaviour of the Jnani and himself referred to his weeping whenever he recounted the incident.

As for his shedding tears of sympathy a tome could be written quoting instances. Herrick in his poem “Tears” says:

The tears of saints more sweet by far
Than all the songs of sinners are.

Not only of sinners. But of the saints themselves! Because their tears of sympathy vicariously lessen the burden of our human grief.

An impersonally personal instance of Ramana’s shedding tears is delineated in G.V. Subbaramayya’s Sri Ramana Reminiscences (p. 63). G.V.S. reads a poem he has composed on Ramana and his voice becomes

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choked with emotion. Ramana too then sheds tears. The impersonal human excellence of devotion expressed through G.V.S. moves Ramana, who forgets his own personal (though passive) part in the drama, as the source and the target of G.V.S.’ devotion!

One “explanation” that devotees give for all this is a quote from Ramana himself. “Though there are no pains and pleasures for a Jnani, for the sake of others, he does everything. He is like those who beat their chests, and weep loudly, if ordered to, for an agreed wage.” (Letters, dt. 15-4-1946).

The present writer does not feel like applying this in the case of Ramana. The beauty and the moving pathos of his spontaneous weeping is completely lost if we were to take it as only a make-believe ‘mercenary’ sorrowing.

Nearer home seems his other observation which also appears in the Letters (dt. 2-2 1947): “The Jnani weeps with the weeping, laughs with the laughing, plays with the playful, sings with those who sing, keeping time to the song. What does he lose? His presence is like a pure, transparent mirror. It reflects our image exactly as we are”.

Even here the warmth of active participation is lost. Was not our Ramana the Jnani of the Gita, actively actionless?

We have a third observation where, moreover, Ramana does not refer to the Jnani in general but to himself; and this seems to give an even more perfect “explanation.” It is from Suri Nagamma’s My Life at Sri Ramasramam, p. 59: Let us see it with its interesting context: “in reading and explaining the whole story (of Tara, whose husband Vali was slain by Rama) Bhagavan’s eyes became full of tears and his voice became tremulous. It looked as if the whole drama was being enacted in his presence. Noticing this also, I said, ‘Bhagavan appears to have got transformed into Tara herself’. Pulling himself together the Master said with a smile, ‘What to do? I identify myself with whoever is before me. I have no separate identity. I am universal.’”

That brings us back to Marcus Aurelius “All that is in tune with thee, O Universe, is in tune with me.”

The heart-truth of love is plain in the weeping of Ramana. Where is the need to “explain” it?

This morning at 10 O Clock Dr. Anantanarayana Rao and his wife, Ramabai brought some good mangoes from their garden and while giving them to Bhagavan said, “The monkeys are taking away all the mangoes. So, we hurriedly plucked these and have brought them here”. Bhagavan said smilingly, “Oh, is that so. So the monkeys are going there, also?” Then looking at all the others there, he said, “yes, monkeys take the fruits one by one while people take them all in one lot. If asked why, they say it is their right. If what the monkeys do is petty theft, what people do is regular looting. Without realising that, they drive away the monkeys,” said Bhagavan.

— Letters from Sri Ramasramam. p. 63
NSPIRED artists throughout the ages have used the sublime language of symbols to express divine truths.

In Hinduism, Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita:

'This is only my lower nature Shakti, the life-principle that sustains the entire Universe'.

The Upanished declares:

'The Para Shakti, the Supreme Power of this God is heard of in various ways; this power is the nature of God manifesting as Knowledge, Strength, Activity'.

Shakti is worshipped in Her manifestations of Creation, Preservation and Destruction.

As such, Shakti assumes three functions, those of Saraswati, Lakshmi and Kali.

As Saraswati, SHE is Cosmic Knowledge (Jnana), Cosmic Consciousness, Cosmic Intelligence.

Saraswati is the Source of the life process, the wondrous Light of Pure Knowledge. SHE confers supreme Wisdom.

As Shakti of Brahman SHE is represented clad in a white garment. The Lotus Bloom, the snow-white Himalayas, the Moon, are Her symbols.

Likewise the Madonna of the Western World is shown with the Lily, signifying Her stainless, virginal Wisdom.

As Queen of the Universe, the stars are Her crown, the luminous glory of the moon Her tender Light, shining with soft radiance.

Lakshmi manifests as the nourishing and sustaining function of the Supreme Shakti. SHE sustains spiritual life. Her symbol of pomp and power, the elephant, is ever near Her, representative of regal might, highest knowledge and wisdom. Lakshmi, shown standing upon a Lotus and holding two lotus-blossoms in full bloom, is arrayed in resplendent robes and jewels, exemplifying the positive aspect of life in its joyous burgeoning forth, its plenitude, its loveliness, contentment, happiness, health, prosperity.

On festive occasions, the Madonna is richly attired, adorned with gorgeous jewels and bedecked with perfumed garlands. Her statue is carried in the midst of rejoicing crowds forming processions. To Catholics all over the world this aspect of the Madonna epitomizes all that is positive in life. SHE is the dispenser of heavenly gifts, health, prosperity, happiness, peace. Roses adorn her feet.

Continued from last issue
Kali is known by the name of Avidya which signifies that Delusion which is in direct contrast to spiritual wisdom.

Because Kali represents the negative aspect of life being overcome and undergoing transformation. SHE is depicted holding a sword, clutching a severed head and wearing a skirt of human arms. Her aspect of 'terrible' destroyer is fearsome, but the mysterious Kali destroys in order to save. Nescience is destroyed in order to make way for spiritual knowledge. All aspects of cosmic delusion are destroyed by Kali.

The Blessed Virgin Mary stands upon the globe of the world with Her foot upon the head of Satan, prince of darkness. SHE crushes underfoot the dark forces of ignorance, over which SHE has total command. This Sovereignty is declared in the "Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach" or 'Ecclesiasticus'; by SOPHIA:

"I came out of the mouth of the Most High, And covered the earth like a cloud. I dwelt in high places, and my throne is in a cloudy pillar. I alone encompassed the circuit of heaven, and walked in the bottom of the deep. I had power over the waves of the sea, and cover all the earth, and over every people and nation —

He created me from the beginning before the world, and I shall never fail. In the holy Tabernacle I served before Him, and so was I established in Sion. Likewise in the beloved city he gave me rest, and in Jerusalem was my power...

I was exalted like a cedar in Libanus and as a cypress tree upon the mountains of Hermon. I was exalted like a palm-tree in En-geedi, and as a rose-plant in Jericho. As a fair olive tree in a pleasant field, and grew up as a plane tree by the water. I gave a sweet smell like cinnamon as aspethaus, and I yielded a pleasant odour like the best myrrh. As the turpentine tree I stretched out my branches, and my branches are the branches of honour and grace. As the vine brought I forth pleasant savour and my flowers are the fruit of honour and riches. I am the mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope. I therefore, being eternal, am given to all my children which are named of Him."

(Ecclesiasticus 24: 3-18).

Like the goddess ISHTAR, Wisdom is likened to trees such as the terebinth, palm, cedar, cypress, olive. Trees have always been the symbols of the Mother-goddess. Oaks and terebinths (turpentine) trees are oracle trees in the Old Testament.

In Babylon the tree represented Tammuz, the son-lover, as it represented Attis, Adonis, Osiris and Dionysus.

The Song of Songs, attributed to King Solomon is a mystical work of profound meaning.

St. Bernard of Clairvaux expounded in eight-six sermons his mystical interpretation of the Canticle.

Deus Caritas Est (God is Love). Therefore Saint Bernard, God or Christ is the Divine Lover in the Canticle. Since God is Love, the soul must be purified and wholly transfigured by Love.

The smitten Shulamite is sometimes the soul, sometimes the Church, sometimes the Virgin.

Only when the Bridegroom confers the Holy Kiss upon the totally love-intoxicated Bride-soul, can the Sacred Nuptials take place. Thus the 'kisses of his mouth' explain this moment of glorious union:

'Thy lips, my Spouse, drop as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under my tongue'.

(Song of Solomon 4:11).

The Virgin Mary was, to Saint Bernard, filled with love because she bore LOVE within her womb.

But this love which is felt for the Divine Bridegroom must be completely disinterested:

'I love because I love. I love that I may love. A great thing is love, provided only that it returns to its principle, looks to its origin,
and flowing back towards its source draws thence the pure waters wherewith it may flow unendingly... 

(St Bernard, Sermon 83 in Cantica Cantorum quoted in Gilson, The Mystical Theology, p. 137).

In the "Wisdom of Solomon" Sophia is 'a loving spirit' (Wisdom of Solomon 1:6)

SHE is 'kind to man... 'the worker in all things...': In her is an understanding spirit, holy...

SHE is 'the breath of the power of God. — 'a pure effulgence flowing from the glory of the Almighty

SHE is a being most subtil who passeth and goeth through all things by reason of her pureness'.

SHE is 'the mirror of the power of God'.

Carl Gustave Jung stated: Mary the Virgin is chosen as the pure vessel for the coming birth of God free from the taint of original sin'. It is therefore evident that SHE belongs to the state before the Fall — SHE not only bears the image of God in undiminished purity, but as the bride of God, is also the incarnation of her prototype, namely Sophia. Mary, the blessed among women, is a friend and intercessor for sinners which all men are. Like Sophia, she is the mediatrix who leads the way to God and assures men of immortality.'

(The Answer to Job, p. 57)

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In the Catholic world, the Feastday of August 15 celebrates the Assumption of the Blessed Mary.

It was proclaimed an article of Faith by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

At the 'ASSUMPTION'. The Blessed Virgin assumed the title of 'SALVE REGINA': Queen of Heaven.

Apox.Xi 19, xii 1410 reads:

After this, God's heavenly temple was thrown open, and the ark of the covenant was plain to view. standing in his temple, and there were lightnings, and mutterings, and an earthquake, and a great storm or hail. And lo, in heaven, a great portent appeared; a woman that wore the sun for Her mantle with the moon under Her feet, and a crown of twelve stars about Her head....'

Jung wrote about the Assumption with the ring of authority, of a seer:

'The most important event since the Reformation... the equality of women... requires to be metaphysically anchored in the figure of a divine woman: the Bride of Christ. Just as the person of Christ cannot be replaced by the Church, the feminine, like the masculine, demands an equally personal representative...


Again: 'Her Assumption is therefore the prototype of man's bodily resurrection. As the Bride of God and Queen of Heaven SHE holds the place of the Old Testament. Sophia.'

(Ibid., p. 57).

+ + +

Ancient civilizations have portrayed the NURSING VIRGIN.

In Egypt Isis suckles the divine infant Horus. Likewise the Nursing Mother is found in Ur, Mexico, the Congo, Liberia, the Gold and Ivory coasts of Africa, in India where the babe Krishna is held to the breast of his mother Devaki.

With the Virgin Mary, the Maria Lactens represents a powerful symbolism.

In the 'Book of James' it is described with stark simplicity:

'And the infant went and took the breast of his mother Mary'

Milk is synonymous with the gift of spiritual life. Painted on the ceiling of the dome of the Church of Our Lady of Graces at San Giovanni
Rotondo, the Heavenly Mother, wearing a sky-blue mantle and crowned with stars, holds the divine Infant on Her lap. His small hands reveal the Sacred Breast from whence the Milk of Wisdom flows in never-ending Graces upon all who thirst for Truth.

The mystic beholds in the Nursing Mother the sublime mystery whereby the soul receives nourishment and sustenance by partaking of this heavenly milk.

'Behold, I will extend peace to Her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; then shall ye suck, ye shall be borne upon Her sides, and be dandled upon Her knees.' (Isaiah 66:12)

Just as in the Old Testament, milk and honey were representative of the Promised Land, so in Egypt the Goddess Isis, following the Egyptian religious rites, suckled her devotees with milk and honey. An artist depicted Her thus on the wall of a temple. There, She is shown offering Her breast to the Pharoah Sesostris. This is described verbally in the inscription: 'With my milk pure life shall flow into thy members'.

In the greek myths the metaphysical potent of milk and honey is present when Zeus is suckled by Amaltheia, the nurse who gave him of her milk whilst her husband provided him with honey.

Dionysus was said to have been suckled by MACRIS who sustained him on milk and honey.

Whilst Hercules was being nursed on Juno's milk, the liquid spurted forth into the sky, thus creating the galaxy of the Milky Way.

Saint Anselm wrote:

'Christ, my Mother, As you place your chickens under the protection of Your Wings. So this chicken of Yours, now lifeless, places himself Under those Wings. So it is Lord, God that you are the GREAT MOTHER.'

(Bernard of Clairvaux to whom the Divine Mother appeared whilst he prayed and placed upon his lips three drops of milk, declared with loving fervour, that when the soul receives the Kiss from the divine Bridegroom in the Song of Songs, 'He gives her the kiss she had yearned for... and so potent is that kiss that she conceives at once, and her bosom swells with milk... In like manner do we approach the altar of God in prayer, and, should we only persevere, despite our own aridity and apathy, we will become overpowered by Grace, our bosom will become swollen, love will fill our hearts... and the milk of honeyed sweetness will spill over everywhere like a flood...'

(Life and Works of Saint Bernard. Mabillon).

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The Mater Dolorosa, pictured with swords piercing Her heart, tears of blood issuing from Her eyes, anguish coating Her features, represents the aspect of pain and sorrow.

In Mesopotamia, the Queen of Heaven Inanna, Mother and bride of Dumuzi, wept for him after he had been tortured, offered as a sacrifice to the underworld and beset by demons.

In the Sumerian religion the name of Inanna signified 'Celestial Lady' whilst Dumuzi meant 'True Son'. As in the Egyptian religion where Osiris has been cruelly put to death, Nephty's sister of Isis, weeps with her in bitter grief, so in the Sumerian drama Inanna's sister weeps with her over Dumuzi.

In the Christian tradition the sword which Simeon prophesied would pierce the heart of Mary, signified to the mystic that Mary was martyred in the spirit; that from the wounds of the crucified Christ flowed the purifying water and nourishing blood, destined to draw forth spiritual graces for the whole of mankind. Like the soul in the Canticle, Mary experiences the pain of Love. Caritas, the Mother of Love itself must undergo this anguish in order to allow the spiritual nourishment of divine Love to issue forth.

Mircea Eliade writes of the tears of the Mater Dolorosa: 'The waters symbolise the entire universe of the ritual: they are the fons et origo, the reservoir of all the potentialities of existence; they precede every form and sustain every creation. Emergence repeats the Cosmogonic act of formal manifestation — while immersion is equivalent to a dissolution of forms. That is why the symbolism of the waters includes death as well as rebirth. (Mircea Eliade 'Images and Symbols — Studies in Religious Symbolism'. Trans. Philip Mairet (New York) 1969).

In Sumer the tears of Inanna for the sacrificed Dumuzi caused the barren and arid soil to burst into new life. The tears of the Mater Dolorosa symbolise the purifying sacrifice of the Cross which cleanses the sinner from the stains of sin and imparts new spiritual life. After the deathly stillness of winter’s night in the soul, the advent of Spring surges through it, bursting forth in a resurgence of hope and faith. The soul is quickened to life thereby as virtues adorn and ennoble her.

As the counterpart of the Masculine Principle, SHE is the Feminine Principle, the ANTHROPOS, from whose Nocturnal Womb emerges the 'masculine' consciousness in the form of babe.

There is a mysterious spiritual cord which binds this Divine Mother to Her children, and as Grace touched the soul, a heightened awareness develops, a keener insight into spiritual truths is obtained, a greater capacity for surrender is experienced. The beloved Presence draws the thread of thought more and more towards meditation and contemplation of the divine mysteries. Gradually the heart begins to 'KNOW' that 'MOTHER' is truly present deep within the soul's nucleus.

This is accompanied by a wondrous peace and the knowledge that whatever may befall the physical and spurious 'I', the true Self remains unfettered and completely detached from these happenings. So is born equanimity of spirit.

St. Ignatius of Loyola held the Queen of Spain in veneration. When Grace poured the vial of spiritual Knowledge and Discernment into his heart, he transferred his allegiance to the Holy Queen of Heaven, to Whom he was faithful and devoted to the end of his life.

When Sri Ramakrishna implored the Divine Mother to show Herself to him, SHE graciously complied, lavishing Her sublime graces upon him.

The peasant girl Bernadette Soubirous beheld the 'Beautiful Lady' within the shelter of a Grotto at Lourdes in France. When Bernadette made known the message entrusted to her by the 'Lady of the Grotto', the words 'I AM THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION' expressed in unequivocal terms a profound truth.

The Feminine Principle Whose aspects are varied in their manifestations must not be relegated, however, to a realm beyond the reach of the human spirit. It is imperative that the Sacred Presence of the Divine Mother of the Universe be felt in intimate communion with the soul of man who yearns for Her compassionate protection and guidance. This faith and dependence of Her is expressed in the beautiful prayer 'The Memorare':

'Remember, O Most Gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known, that anyone who fled to Thy protection, implored Thy help or sought Thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto Thee, O Virgin of Virgins, my Mother. To Thee I come, before Thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in Thy Mercy hear and answer me. Amen.'.

So too is this Invocation a universal prayer:

'Hail Holy Queen, Mother of mercy, Hail, our Life, our Light and our Hope. To Thee do we come, poor banished children of Eve; to Thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, O most gracious Advocate, Thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our
exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary.'

In the small Church of San Giovanni Rotondo in Italy, the stigmatized Catholic priest Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, taught his spiritual children to confide with total trust in their ‘Heavenly Mamma’. She would never fail them under any circumstances they might find themselves in, because SHE is the Compassionate Mother Whose love is infinite and unchanging. There is not a sigh, a moan, a silent tear which goes unheeded by the Beloved Madonna deal Grazie, and Padre Pio exhorted the faithful to draw ever closer to the Divine Mother. In plain simple language he spoke of Her solicitude. Her tenderness. Her power as Mediatrix. Her infinite understanding and above all, Padre spoke of the Madonna’s unfailing response to sincere prayer directed to her. This last is of prime importance, for it enables the soul to make contact with the glorious Sophie, that Spirit of Wisdom which is the Silent Indweller of the soul.

Whenever the psyche of man is threatened by the dark threatening tide of nescience, his attention must be directed inwards where salvation lies in the powers of the spirit which never forsake him, and which alone are capable of bestowing Self-Knowledge.

When the Divine Mother is sought with loving heart, and prayer is clothed in the white raiment of sincerity, Her Rays of Grace will irradiate, elevate, transfigure, sanctify. And when finally purification has taken place, the soul-heart, as the Egyptians termed it, will sound its own paean of praise, and gratitude to the Lady of Graces:

Bursting forth with a cry of triumph, the liberated soul could well shape this Song in the Grove of Silence:

‘My Heart. My Mother! Than ‘I’ and the ‘Thou’ Are no more. Liberated at last, I AM PURE! I AM PURE!’ — (Concluded)
HAMPI, the seat of the great Vijayanagar empire, was founded by a sage, Sri Vidyaranya Swami. It had its golden days during King Krishnadevaraya’s regime and later fell into ruins under Muslim rule. The ruins are now a centre of attraction for the tourists. Hampi is 13 kilometres from Hospet in Karnataka, a land hallowed by great sages. The sacred Tungabhadra river and the Virupaksha temple here invite seekers of Truth; no wonder it is called ‘Tapovanam’.

Hampi may now regain its importance as Bhagavan Ramana has chosen to settle down there! The formation of Ramana Kendra at Hampi and the way Bhagavan helped it right from the beginning is by itself a story of His Grace!

It all began like this. ‘Ramananjali’ came to Hampi a few months back and gave a ‘Ramana Music’ performance in the temple which captivated the hearts of all. Sri

A shrine for Sri Bhagavan, within the Virupaksha temple, Hampi

The site chosen by Bhagavan to enshrine Himself in Hampi! The formation of natural caves is an added attraction.
Sriramulu, who arranged for the ‘Ramana Music’ expressed a wish to start a centre for Bhagavan at Hampi. The devotees of Hampi, particularly the young, welcomed this suggestion with great enthusiasm. After a few days, Sri Sriramulu came to Bangalore, with Sri K. Someshwar and Sri Purushothaman, two young devotees and requested Smt. Sulochana Natarajan to send a devotee to expound Bhagavan’s life and teachings and also help them to found a Kendra.

Sri Thyagarajan, a resident of Sri Ramanasramam, who happened to be there, was requested to take up this laudable project and he willingly agreed. A picture of Bhagavan was installed at Hampi on July 4, to the jubilation of devotees there. Ramana Ashtothram was chanted and puja offered to Sri Bhagavan. (Since then pujas are being conducted regularly twice a day). After the Puja devotees listen to Bhagavan’s life and teachings, so lucidly expounded by Sri Thyagarajan. We are grateful to the Swami Sri Vidyaranya Mutt for permitting the Kendra to make use of the Mantap behind the Virupaksha temple. Sri Ananthapadmanabhan, the temple Executive Officer, has extended all help to the Kendra.

About the members of the Kendra:

Sri Lokesh, a young devotee is stocking in his toy shop the publications of Sri Ramanasramam and the ‘Ramana Music’ cassettes. He is ever willing to serve the Kendra. Sri Somesh, another young devotee, arranges supply of food for the inmates and visitors to the Kendra.

In the second week of July, an interesting development took place. Sri H.G. Rangan Gowda an industrialist and philanthropist from Hospet is humble and pious by nature. He used to come with his family to Hampi frequently to offer worship to Lord
Virupaksha. On one such visit recently, he purchased a few sets of Puja materials for performing archanas at the shrines. After these archanas, he found one set of puja materials was remaining unused. He did not know what to do with it. While he remained thus perplexed in the Vidyaranya temple, the priest gave the information that, behind the temple, Sri Ramana’s picture has recently been installed and was being worshipped by devotees. As Sri Rangan Gowda has already read some books on Ramana, he was drawn to the picture of Bhagavan. The Puja there was just over and being Sunday, a number of devotees were listening to Bhagavan’s life being narrated. The whole atmosphere was serene and impressive and he gave the puja materials for being offered to the picture of Sri Bhagavan. The devotees asked him to be the President of the Kendra to which he immediately but in all humility agreed!

Chandru is another young devotee who has been powerfully drawn to Sri Bhagavan. He is there in the Kendra, getting up early in the morning, collecting flowers, making beautiful garlands and offering them to Sri Bhagavan. He is a good artist and has already started colouring a few photographs of Sri Bhagavan.

Small children come regularly in the evening after school hours on their own accord to listen to Bhagavan’s stories. Sri Gopal, a young musician with a sweet voice, has come forward to teach ‘Ramana Music’ to the children.

August saw devotees showing keen interest in finding a permanent place for the Kendra. They did find a beautiful spot just on the bank of the river, neither too close to nor too far away from the town. It also is by the side of the road that leads to the Rama Temple and to the famous ruins of Hampi. When the Kendra buildings come up the attention of the visiting-pilgrims would definitely be drawn to the Kendra. To the right side of the site is a plantain grove and to the left there is a cluster of boulders with plenty of natural caves suited for meditation. Devotees are very pleased with the choice of the site!

Again, the grace of Sri Bhagavan was evident. A leading agriculturist and industrialist from Chikkajogihalli, Sri K.V. Ravindranath Babu, has willingly come forward to pay the entire amount for purchase of the land in the name of his grandmother, Smt. K. Venkataswamy. He has also gladly agreed to serve as the Secretary of the Kendra. With the active co-operation of Sri Sriramulu, the Joint-Secretary, Sri Babu is sure to make the Hampi Ramana Kendra a real monument fit to be dedicated to Bhagavan Ramana.

On August 12, a further act of His Grace was revealed. A devotee, Sri Hanumanthappa, came to the shrine and voluntarily offered to donate a portion of his landed property, to the tune of 3½ acres, to the Kendra.

After witnessing these visible signs of Bhagavan’s Grace, devotees in Hampi wished to visit Sri Ramanasramam. Along with Sri Hanumanthappa, a group of sixteen devotees hired a van and visited the Ashram. They performed pujas to the shrines of Bhagavan and the Mother and after going round the holy Arunachala Hill, and visiting the Arunachaleswara temple and other important places hallowed by Bhagavan’s stay, they returned to Hampi, with greater dedication to serve the Master.

The Ramana Kendra plans to construct a Shrine for Bhagavan, a Library and few rooms for seekers to come and practise Sri Bhagavan’s teaching of Atma Vichara.

**RAMANA KENDRA, HAMPI**

**Office Bearers**

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**Members**

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**Auditor**

Sri R. Shanmugam
I had seen Bhagavan’s pictures and heard about Him, but was not particularly drawn to him till 1975. One afternoon in September 1975 in a busy street in an American city, I saw a man walking ahead of me, with a bag on his back on which the Sanskrit word AUM was embroidered. Prompted to talk to this man, I invited him to have a cup of tea in a nearby restaurant. I asked him how it happened that his bag bore the Sanskrit word AUM. He opened the bag and took out the book “Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi” and a few other books about Him. We talked for a while. This North American told me: “I was an ordinary person like the rest here in this country. I had a job and a good income, a car and friends and relatives. Everything was O.K. but I was worried about my possessions being stolen and I had to make sure that my apartment was properly locked. I was worried all the time about losing my possessions. Somehow I got some books about Bhagavan and read them and then things started changing. Now this bag is all I have. I do not have a place I call mine. I do not have a job. If I need money I work for a few hours or for a day and what I earn could get a free meal with no questions asked. All the time I spend reading these books about Bhagavan. I keep reading them again and again, but I learn something new.”

It was this strange encounter with an unknown person in a city far, far away from Arunachala that prompted me to make a trip to Bhagavan’s Ashram.

We reached the Ashram around 3 p.m. on the 25th anniversary of His mahanirvana. Putting our bedding and luggage in a room and getting a copy of the Ashram schedule, we went up the Hill to Skandashram, drank the spring water, spent a few minutes in the room there and returned in time for the evening meal at the Ashram. During our 1979 visit, my daughter, looking at Bhagavan’s picture in the Old Meditation Hall, said to her mother, “Amma. I see light in those eyes”. In 1982 April I was planning to visit India to bring my family to join me. In the same city where I met the strange person who gave up all his possessions except the bag on his back, circumstances brought me into contact with another American just a couple of days before I was to start my trip to India. My new friend, learning of my trip to India, wanted me to go to Tiruvannamalai and meet his friends (whom he named) in the Ashram!

This encounter with a total stranger was for me a blessing and a welcome to this home by Bhagavan Himself. Since the first trip in 1976, Sri Bhagavan made it possible for me to come to His feet no less than six times. Not only that, He made it possible for me to go to Madurai and spend some time in the spot where He had His realisation. What I was at the time of my first trip and what I am now, only I know and He knows. At present I am far, far away, physically, but again and again He makes His presence felt in innumerable ways. HE IS EVERYWHERE.

See Ashram Bulletin, July’82, p. 213
AFTER a gap of more than five years I went to the Ashram. Another devotee was also with me. We reached the Ashram late in the evening. We missed the pooja. But we were in time for prasad. It was nearing 7.30 p.m. and the bell rang. We are directly led into the dining hall. Now-a-days I have several restrictions in my diet. But while in the Ashram I felt that I was not taking food, but prasad. Partaking in a meal is a special feature of Ramanashram.

The first time I visited the Ashram was in 1932. Then I was deeply involved in the freedom fight under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The twin weapons of Satyagraha and Constructive Work were used for liberating the country from foreign domination as well as awakening the people from their deep slumber. Those were years when Gandhiji was concentrating on Constructive Work to transform the life style of the people towards building up a non-violent culture. The goal was to spiritualise politics as well as the whole of life. Everyone was exhorted to be self-reliant and self-sufficient at least for their primary needs. Of course Khadi, the 'livery of freedom', was the core of the constructive programme.

I saw in the Arunachaleswar Temple, on my way to the Ashram, a few sadhus spinning with the disciples of the Maharshi. I had not seen the sage of Arunachala before. So I hastened to the Ashram. It was 11.30 a.m. We were directed to go to the dining hall. We were all seated and the leaves were spread. I was anxious to have darshan of the Maharshi. A middle aged sadhu, bare bodied except for a koupeenam, entered. My neighbour informed me that he was the Maharshi. To my wonder he started distributing equitably to everyone without any distinction what was brought for him by some devotees. The motherly affection with which he was serving made a deep impression on me. This was a sight which I could not forget. He also sat with us after serving. Partaking in prasad is a special feature of the Ashram. This is a unique family, a transnational family of global magnitude, sharing a common meal without distinction of colour, creed or language. Maharshi's care and concern extended beyond human beings to animals and birds.
He took care to live in tune with the eco-system. I am happy to find that this is being kept up even today.

The following morning, getting up at 4 a.m., after ablutions and bath, we went to the Meditation Hall at 5 a.m. I took my seat in the same place where I sat in front of the Maharshi some fifty years back. I found the atmosphere surcharged with His spirit in spite of the absence of the physical body.

The whole day was spent in meditation and in visiting some of the old inmates of the Ashram. One of them is Ramaswami Pillai who joined the Maharsh as early as 1917. Mellowed by age and experience Shri Pillai is radiating his influence in silence and dedicated work in the Ashram. He communicates the central teaching of the Maharshi in word and spirit. During the course of my stay I met him thrice and had discussions with him.

The second day happened to be Avani Avittam; the thread-ceremony was performed in front of Ramaneswaringam. But the Ashram routine continued as usual. This being full moon day (Pournami) we thought of pradakshina. At about 8 P.M. there were signs of dark overhanging clouds and a drizzle. So we dropped the idea and went to bed. I got up at 2 a.m. and found the sky clear and the moon shining brightly. We set out for pradakshina at 3 a.m. after bath. My companion had spent more than a year at the Ashram during the lifetime of Bhagavan. So we sat in those spots where Bhagavan used to sit during pradakshina. My friend told me, to my great delight, several anecdotes of those days. We reached the great Arunachaleswara temple exactly in time for Viswarupa dharshnam.

After worship we could reach the Ashram in time for morning worship of Ramakrishna linga and breakfast.

On the third day of our stay 85 lakhs of archanas were completed. This is part of the “Koti Archana” that is going on at Bhagavan’s shrine. All the devotees were entertained to the special prasad under the care of young Ganesan.

The family spirit and concern continue as of old. The Maharshi’s spirit dominates the atmosphere. Some material things are changing. There are a few additions to the buildings; new plants and trees have come up. But the changeless abides. “He is”. Even during a brief stay in the ashram one’s battery seems to get well recharged.

WILL-POWER

"Your idea of will-power is success insured. Will-power should be understood to be the strength of mind which makes it capable for meeting success or failure with equanimity. It is not synonymous with certain success. Why should one’s attempts be always attended with success. Success develops arrogance and the man’s spiritual progress is thus affected. Failure on the other hand is beneficial, in as much as it opens the eyes of the man to his limitations and prepares him to surrender himself. Self-surrender is synonymous with eternal happiness. Therefore one should try to gain the equipoise of mind under all circumstances. That is will-power. Again, success and failure are the results of prarabdha and not of will-power. A man may be doing only good and noble actions and yet prove a failure. Another may do otherwise and yet be uniformly successful. This does not mean that the will-power is present in the one and not in the other.”

— Sri Bhagavan in TALKS, 390-1
Born of very pious parents, Sri Siddheswar Nath, had in his boyhood days many opportunities of serving sadhus and yogis, who stayed in their house on their way to Allahabad to attend Kumbh Mela and other festivals. No wonder the lad took to spiritual pursuits even at that tender age. His father, hard-working and self-made village-leader, was keen on educating his children. After taking his M.B.B.S. degree, Siddheswar was with his father for some time, but moved to Varanasi in 1936 and started his career as an Eye Surgeon. Quite soon he became very popular. He served the poor and needy with compassion and tender affection. A genuine philanthropist, he helped many youngsters in their education. While serving humanity and helping the suffering, he kept alive his respect for and attendance on sadhus and saints.

In 1944, on reading Paul Brunton’s A Search in Secret India, Sri Nath recognised his Guru. He went straight to Arunachala and fell at the holy feet of Sri Bhagavan. Seeing Nath, Bhagavan remarked: “Look here, he has come” — these words meant for Dr. Nath acceptance of himself as His disciple. He never asked any questions, as he saw in Bhagavan the one Answer to all the riddles of life. The unseen power and the silent eloquence of Bhagavan drew him again and again to the Ashram and he became a regular visitor.

During Bhagavan’s illness, after the third operation, Dr. Nath was taken inside the room while Bhagavan’s arm was being dressed. As a doctor he knew the intensity of the patient’s pain and saw the perfect detachment with which Bhagavan bore it. The sight of the raw wound on Bhagavan’s arm moved him to tears. Bhagavan then made a sign to him, and gave him a piece of mango to eat. This prasad, Dr. Nath took as the panacea for the great disease, the cycle of births and deaths! He says: “My Master makes every one ‘like Himself’; since, for Him there is no other than the One Self that He is.”

A series of tragedies struck him. He lost his only son, Ramana Nath, when he was blossoming into an Eye Doctor like his reputed father. His relatives betrayed him. He and his pious wife became bed-ridden. And yet he says: “I am untouched by these sufferings. I have the Grace of Bhagavan Ramana, my sole Refuge!”

His youngest daughter, Dr. Nalini Nath, is now a famous Eye Surgeon in Varanasi. Dr. Nath proudly says: “Nalini has earned her place through hard and sincere work. I am proud of her!” The responsibility of looking after the old couple has been taken up by Smt. Rashmi, their daughter-in-law, who spares no effort to make them comfortable. Our Managing Editor, who is very fond of Dr. Nath, went to Varanasi and spent a few days sitting next to this great Ramana-bhakta and sharing his thoughts on the Master.

May Sri Bhagavan bless Dr. Nath and his wife with health and peace!
AN UNPLEASANT CONTROVERSY — I

The readers of The Mountain Path are used to praises of the great Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, who as if by ‘divine command’ gave the appellation Bhagavan Ramana to the young Brahmanaswami, as he then was called, and declared him a Maharshi. However, the July ’83 issue carries an article disparaging the great Muni and attributing motives to him and Sri Kapali Sastry, the authors of the Ashram publication Sat Darshana Bhashya. Although the Editor says he is not responsible for the contents, his notes to various passages cast doubt on the impartiality professed. The article itself was written 29 years ago by the late K. Lakshmana Sarma and the publication maligned (Sat Darshana Bhashya) has been widely read and admired for well over 50 years. The Editor ought to have pointed out that Kavyakantha’s Sanskrit rendering had been subjected to Bhagavan’s scrutiny by the author and the series of letters that the Muni wrote from Anandashram, Sirsi bear this out. The following extracts from those letters will go to show that Sri Lakshmana Sarma had made a Sanskrit rendering and given it to Muni for correction: that the Muni felt that it was better to produce a fresh Sanskrit version than correct it; that in all humility and with utmost care the Muni applied himself to the task and submitted the work to Bhagavan; that Bhagavan approved the Sanskrit rendering. The following are the extracts: (also, please refer Epistles of Light by Kavyakantha Vasishtha Ganapati Muni Trust, Madras):

From letter dated 17-3-1931 — “The Sanskrit verse-rendering of Sat Darshana was finished on Saturday. The import of Bhagavan’s verses in Tamil Venba-metre has been brought out in it to the best of my ability. I bow to Sriman Lakshmana Sarma who led me to take up this work. Perceiving the restriction of my hands in correcting his rendering, I myself began composing and have completed it. If there is any excellence in my verse-rendering, it is Bhagavan’s Grace. From that Saturday my vision became distinct, I may say that I see everything as the manifestation of One Existence. It is my prayer to Bhagavan that this vision may culminate as spontaneous experience unassailable. I see as bubbles in water all formation in One Existence; and I try to discard the former and experience pure existence alone always.

Sat Darshana was sent on Sunday and I hope it would have reached the Presence of Bhagavan before this letter. Chiranjeevi Kapali has begun his Tika (commentary) on Sat Darshana today. May Bhagavan bless this endeavour so that it may be completed unhampered.”

From letter dated 24-3-1931 — “Sat Vidya has been returned by post corrected and improved as far as possible. Kapali has not yet begun his commentary on Sat Darshana. He is just now making a critical study of the work in its entirety to scrutinize the pros and cons of its contents. Whichever portion of my rendering of the original he doubts as exceeding or deficient, I am revising and setting aright. Our Viswanath also is of help to us in this task (changes made in the Sanskrit rendering of Ulladu Narpadu, Sat Darshana).”

From letter dated 28-4-1931 — “Deva has mentioned in his letter the word of Bhagavan that my Sanskrit-rendering of Sat Darshana conveys alright the import of the original (Tamil verses in Venba-metre). That gave me great joy. Kapali’s commentary as far as has been written, is rich with unique charm and elegance.

Deva says in his letter that the Tamil verse (of Bhagavan) quoted by me in my Exposition of the Significance of Guha and Ganapati brought forth a charming smile on Bhagavan’s face. He was blessed to behold that captivating expression on Bhagavan’s countenance and we are thrilled to hear about it.”

These letters also show how the Muni looked to Bhagavan for guidance. It is also seen from an article by Sri Viswanatha Swami which appeared in The Mountain Path (April, 1965) that Bhagavan kept these letters with Him in the Meditation Hall, which shows Bhagavan’s great regard for the Muni.

It is shocking to be told that Kavyakantha and his disciples were actuated by a firm resolve to interpret his teaching in harmony with their own faith, or at least to tone down its strict Advaitic thrust. Let us recall Bhagavan’s words on the receipt of news of the passing away of the Muni: “This is a shock: Nayana has passed away!” After a short pause he added, ‘Has he?’ indicating that he had not. With tears in His eyes He exclaimed: “Where can we find the like of him?”

Bhagavan disliked controversies; he tolerated everything except intolerance!

— H.S. Suryanarayan, Bangalore
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1983

Bhagavan disliked nothing and tolerated (and enjoyed) everything! He approved of WHO's Jamil commentary on the Forty verses and also of Kavyakantha's Sanskrit Sat Darshana.

AN UNPLEASANT CONTROVERSY — II

As usual the July '83 issue of The Mountain Path carries very interesting and instructive articles.

One of them by Lakshmana Sarma ('WHO'), however, surprises me not a little. Sri Bhagavan is seen by different devotees in different ways. All of them are agreed on at least one point, viz., He is Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi to every one of them. All the devotees should be beholden to Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni for proclaiming Him as "Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi."

There can be different schools of thought viewing Bhagavan from different angles, which may be totally opposed to Kavyakantha. Should The Mountain Path publish all these different versions and leave the readers to come to their own conclusions?

Should the magazine be made into a platform for theoreticians to ventilate their personal vendetta garbed in the guise of intellectual arguments?

The journal should project only the established and time-honoured views of the Ashram of Sri Bhagavan and His teachings and direct Light only on a single mountain path to readers. I earnestly appeal to the Editorial Board not to publish such articles in future.

— VS. Ramanan, Baroda

Neither the Ashram nor the Editorial Board can dictate to devotees and readers what views to hold. We publish all good articles with the warning that only the authors are "responsible for the statements and opinions contained in signed articles."

THE 'I'-THOUGHT

I was interested to go through the booklet 'The Liberating Question'. The method of Bhagavan's Atma Vichara is elaborately dealt with in it and I am eager to take to it earnestly. I want to know what exactly is the 'I'-thought. Can you explain and can I know it experientially?

— D.D., Canada.

What is to be "known" experientially is not the 'I'-thought but its source. The 'I'-thought is only a reflection of the Self from which it derives consciousness. The 'I'-thought may be defined as the feeling of 'I' which exists in everyone of us and which is the basis for all other thoughts. Watching from where the 'I'-thought arises and into what it sinks will lead us to the source. Not only is it possible for everyone to follow this path, but Bhagavan has said that it is the simplest and most direct path to Self-Knowledge. Your devotion to Bhagavan will certainly help you in pursuing this path.

— BHAGAVAN ON PRANAYAMA

What is the place of pranayama in the teaching of Bhagavan? Bhagavan does give importance to it; yet, some say that He did not. Will you please clarify?

— J.S., Calcutta.

Bhagavan repeatedly says that the most direct and simple path for Self-Knowledge is self-enquiry, the tracking of the 'I'-thought to its source. If, however, one is unable to pay attention to the 'I'-thought, one may use breath-control for quietening the mind. This breath-control recommended by Bhagavan differs from hatha-yoga which deals with inhalation, exhalation and retention of breath and Bhagavan prescribes simply watching the breath and tracing it to its source. This is Bhagavan's definition of pranayama. Such watching of breath and attention to its source would also take one back to the source of "I", as both breath and mind have a common source.

REALM OF 'PERSONAL' I

Nisargadatta Maharaj holds that there can be no rebirth and that the individual self has no volition.

Other sages have said that the ego-centred being has certain amount of free-will and that is how Karma is accumulated and become a cause for rebirth. They have exhorted us to turn the flow of consciousness inward and this certainly assumes a degree of free-will.

I shall be grateful if you have this matter clarified.

— L. Subrahmanyan, BCCL Township, Dhanbad.

All problems arise only with the support of a 'personal' I. When the experience dawns that there is no separate individual 'I', all philosophical speculations become meaningless. Bhagavan's reply to such questions is: "Find out the 'I' — then there is neither rebirth nor free-will... It is you who think, that you will be reborn. See, for whom this question arises. Unless the questioner is found, the question can never be set at rest." (Talks, p 602, No. 644)

And: "Find out, to whom free-will or destiny matters. Abide in it: then these two are transcended. That is the only purpose of discussing these questions. To whom do these questions arise? Find out and be at peace." (Talks, p 393, No. 426)

RAMANA, THE HEART

In the so beautiful Pictorial Biography of Sri Bhagavan, it is said:
"Once a man has surrendered his life here, he belongs here, wherever he may go, he shall return. For him this is the door of liberation." (p. 72)

What do these words exactly mean? What does ‘here’ mean there? Do we have to understand that ‘here’ means the physical place called Arunachala? Or, does it mean that once a man has recognized Bhagavan as his Supreme Lord having lived for a certain number of years on the slopes of the Mountain and dwelling eternally in his heart, then devotion to Bhagavan and inquiry into the Heart are for him the only door for liberation? A door which, I must say, has taken possession of all my aspiration. Then, in that case, wherever he may go would mean whatever other pursuit he may engage in, he is bound to come back to Bhagavan? I thank you in advance for the light you may throw on this question.

Now a suggestion: I think it would be a great joy for us to be able to sing the glory of our Lord in His own words. Could not someone make an English verse-rendering of the Marital Garland of Letters, for which “Ramananjali” could find the appropriate tune? Do you think it will happen some day?

— F.J., France.

As to your question referring to the quotation in the “Pictorial Biography”: Yes, you have got the proper meaning of the words. It is an esoteric one: That the Heart of one who has surrendered to Bhagavan belongs to Him (and in this sense to this place), “This is the door of liberation” for him who is convinced of it. Nobody and nothing can separate him from the holy Hill and our Master and they set us free.

Your laudable suggestion has been passed on to the leader of the “Ramananjali”, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan.

THINKING IS NOT ..... 

Part of an unsigned letter referring to Lucy Cornelssen’s article ‘Only half a sentence’ of April issue and her reply thereto:

‘The ego, “I”, as thinker, is a product of thinking/thought and obviously the product cannot produce that of which it is itself a product. When this relationship between thinking/thought and thinker is perceived directly and immediately in the clarity of a deep silent state of watchfulness of one’s own thoughts; when the ego, “I”, shows itself momentarily as a sort of afterthought, then you, the thinker, stop thinking. But thinking itself need not and does not come to a stop... etc. etc.

— Anonymous

The devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi are of two kinds. Some are theorists — thinkers, others are practitioners. There are beautiful castles of thoughts which the former have built on the basis of Bhagavan’s Teachings. On the other hand there are the silent practitioners, who, after having grasped once the direction of the Way, do not think ‘I am!’ (The whole Vedanta is contained in the Biblical statements “I am that I am” and “Be still and know that I am God!”), Don’t be this or that — just Be!

Just Be! There is neither ‘I’ nor ‘thinking’ in Be-ing... There is guidance in Bhagavan’s Teachings for both the theorist and the practitioner — and The Mountain Path tries its best to keep the balance, though in theoretical discussions there is little use. May each of them — theorist and practitioner — follow their inner Voice; if they only are sincere, they will be on the ‘right’ Path. “The ultimate Truth is so simple. It is nothing more than being in the pristine state. That is all that need be said.”

— Lucy Cornelssen

USEFULNESS

I have been reading The Moutain Path and would like to take a Life Subscription.

I like some of the articles, but some authors intellectualise states of Consciousness which would make Truth depending on memory. Also I had doubts about the authenticity of some talks with Bhagavan or stories connected with Him.

I hope you don’t mind these remarks.

— Reinhard Jung, Oberstaufen, West Germany.

Our Founder-Editor, Arthur Osborne, had left specific instructions how we should continue publication of the journal. We would not go in for academic, theoretical articles, but publish only articles based on experience or articles that would help readers to pursue the practical side of the teaching. As for the talks, reminiscences and stories connected with Bhagavan, you can rest assured they are all authentic. A few old devotees living in our midst here have had the great opportunity of staying with Bhagavan for many decades. It is only after consultation with such people that we publish these anecdotes connected with Bhagavan.

PROFOUND TRUTH

In the April 1983 number, in reply to a letter from M.N.W. of Logmiddry, U.K., one finds the most profound sentence in the magazine.

“To constantly experience your identity with pure awareness, not the thinking ego, is the sure way to remain in the bliss of limitlessness.”

In reply to another letter, that from Regina Pereira of Lourdes you say, ‘Real surrender to a Higher Power — God, Bhagavan or Christ — is living in the total attitude
of ... This seems to mean surrendering to some power outside of oneself.

I prefer to think of the power as being within, available when required; it is, to me, my own awareness or am I arguing about words?

— Murdoch Kirby, Petersfield, U.K.

The Higher Power, God, Christ or Bhagavan, is not outside the Self. A Personal God helps the interiorization of the world.

... BHAGAVAN LAUGHS ... 

I like that poem you published (April '83), with a charming picture of Bhagavan feeding the monkeys. I always watched Bhagavan giving bananas to the monkeys, when they came to the window of the Old Hall. I loved watching His way with the animals. Funny thing, once I got in a temper when someone called me Meena, and I objected; 'I am not a fish; if you want a fish, go look in the tank, my name is Noona, not Meena.' Bhagavan laughed. When He laughed, everybody laughed; they all were happy. It seemed very very funny when He said, 'she says she isn't a fish, she says she is Noona (avai Noonavam)! We were all talking in Tamil. Bhagavan liked specially my telling the person to go and look in the tank. He made everybody happy.

— Noona Osborne, London

... LAURELS ... 

I have received the latest The Mountain Path of July '83; and I must congratulate you. Each and every article therein is thought-provoking!

— Nagindas H. Thakker, Vasco-Da-Gama, Goa.

Mr. A.R. Natarajan, through his Editorial: 'The Urgent Need', has rendered a service by taking us into the Store-house of Bhagavan's Upadesams, carefully preserved by many thinkers. It is wide and variegated yet bearing a unique ONENESS. The Ashram Bulletin carried me away to Sri Ramanasramam for more than half an hour...... It took some time for me to realise that I was at my table! A very fine pictorial report of Ramanasramam.

— K.V. Subbaratnam, Erode.

Having read through "The Liberating Question" a few times now, I find both articles very inspiring. You and Sarada have brought out different facets of the same diamond which is Sri Bhagavan's path of Self-Enquiry.

— Marya Tonnaire, Par Chalabre, France.

This helps not only in the understanding of what Self-Enquiry means, but also (which is even more important) you both give the reader that added incentive to plunge even deeper within so as to touch "the Reality in the Heart beyond thought!"

— Marya Tonnaire, Par Chalabre, France.

It is a joy to receive The Mountain Path regularly. While it is difficult to single out any one item for special mention because of the uniform excellence, I feel that the letters to the editor are answered very commandably — to the point, free of dogmatism and most important, keeping up the spirit of Sri Ramana's teachings. He is certainly working through you all.

— S. Ramachandran, Arkon, U.S.A.
If any one individual could be said to have drawn out Bhagavan from His years-long Silence in the immutable Self, it is undoubtedly Vasishtha Ganapati Muni. Till he appeared on the scene the world knew little of the spiritual dynamite that is known today as Sri Ramana Maharshi. A thrilling account of this profound interaction between the peerless Sage and the versatile poet and prophet is given in the latest book to come out from Sri Ramanasramam.

The author, Sri S. Sankaranarayanan, gives an inside account of the association of these two illustrious figures on the spiritual horizon of India based upon his own studies and his contacts with Bhagavan and Sri Kapali Sastriar, the renowned disciple of Ganapati Muni.

Describing the classic encounter between the Sage and the scholar which initiated a new era in the spiritual annals of the world, the author writes:

"The Swami was all alone. Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni looked at him to his heart’s content and fell at his feet, holding the Swami’s right foot with his right hand and the left foot with his left hand. When he got up, he found himself supplicating to the Swami: ‘I have read all the sastras, performed japa of the famous mantras, observed hundreds of penances and austerities. Yet I have had no realisation. Is my tapas tainted, is there any shortcoming or perhaps I do not know the method. I am said to be a learned man, yet I do not know. I take refuge in thee. Help me out!’"

"The Swami immediately recognised him as the great scholar ... Brahmanswami kept quiet for quite some time, gazing at him. In those days he rarely broke his silence. But slowly these words in Tamil emerged from the lips of the Sage: ‘Find out wherefrom this spring of light rises and merge at its source; that is tapas. Find out wherefrom the sound of the mantra in japa rises up and merge there; that is tapas.’ “ (p. 3—4)

The Muni was thrilled. A new chapter opened in his life, a new vision dawned. He acclaimed the Swami as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and that is the way the Sage of Arunachala has come to be known ever since. A great relationship commenced which had important bearings on the formulation and the spread of the Truth of the Self that the Maharshi had discovered. The first part of the book records the main events in the long association of the Sage and the only accepted disciple that was Ganapati Muni. For it is well known that the Maharshi always refused to own any disciples but the Muni was a thundering exception.

Many are the memorable incidents that are narrated in these pages. One particular event may be cited here. Some obscurantist elements have questioned the propriety of giving samadhi to the physical mother of the Maharshi and that too within the precincts of the Ashram. Here is the authentic answer by the Muni than whom there can be no greater authority in our sastras:

"He cited verses from Sri Ramana Gita to show that women had an equal right to sannyasa as men. Even in the case of an ordinary ochre-robed sannyasi, people bury the dead body and do not cremate it. Here the mother of the Maharshi had the good fortune of being actively assisted in her last journey by the Maharshi himself and she shed her mortal frame as a perfectly, liberated being. Therefore it would be improper to cremate her, argued Vasishtha Muni, and saw to it that a samadhi was erected over her mortal remains."

Ganapati Muni had abundant confirmation — both in his own experiences and in the lives of others — of the fact that he was an emanation of God Ganapati. But who was Maharshi? This question was uppermost in his mind till one day the truth was revealed to him. To read the author:

"One early morning, in the Pachaiamman temple at Tiruvannamalai, Vasishtha Ganapati Muni and other disciples were all sitting in front of the Maharshi who was, as usual, indrawn. The Muni saw a sparkling light come down from the skies and touch the forehead of the Maharshi six times."

Immediately the Muni had the realisation that Sri Maharshi was none other than an incarnation of Lord Subrahmanya, the light and energy of the Lord that
became sixfold. He is indeed Guha residing in the hridaya guha, the heart-cavern of all beings. He is the eternally young teacher Sanatkumara who shows one the shore beyond darkness. The Seet-Poet gave expression to his realisation throughout the famous eight verses beginning with yanayatra na kekinam kulapatih, revealing the Maharshi's identity to the whole world."

In the second part of the book the main writings, utterances of the Maharshi are taken up briefly but satisfyingly. The background and the history of the Upadesa Saram, Sat Darshanam and Sri Ramana Gita are narrated bringing into proper focus the contributions of Vasishta Muni (affectionately called Nayana, father, by devotees and also by the Maharshi himself!) and of Sri Kapali Sastriar who had intimate connections with the Sage in his earlier years on the hills.

In the third part of the book the author gives a rapid account of the rich life of Ganapati Muni, his extraordinary gifts — literary, spiritual and occult — and feats of memory (pp.95 to 102). He also introduces the reader to the main works of the Poet, e.g. Umasahasram, his magnum opus and gives samples of his varied compositions. In the Muni's bhashya of Isopanishad we find a refreshingly original approach. "All the hidden and secret teaching in the Upanishad assume a contour and a meaning in the light of the Maharshi's teachings. The bhashya in Sanskrit is itself published for the first time and the English translation is bound to reveal how the Maharshi's teachings are very much akin to the Upanishadic thought."

Now the narrative aspect of the book, appealing as it is, is not the main feature of the work. In his descriptions, notings, insights, the author consistently keeps in mind the needs of aspiring seekers who are on the Path trodden by the Masters. It is one thing to read of conditions and processes in treatises on yoga. It is quite another to know things at first hand from the living experiences of yogins of the calibre of Nayana. His remarkable Kundalini experience and his extraordinary experience of kapalabheda are exhilarating! It is absorbing to read about the Muni's power of initiation:

"When he initiated someone into a mantra, there was no necessity for that person to carry on with the japa, the constant repetition of the mantra. From the moment the initiation was done, the voice of the Muni that articulated the mantra continued to reverberate ever afterwards in the heart of the disciple." And we may add the voice would come back even after twenty years of lapse on the part of the practitioner!

The Maharshi's technique to track down the ego: "just as a person who has dropped an object into a well, plunges headlong silently into it with bated breath, one should controlling his speech and breath plunge into one's Self and find the original form of the 'I'"

The Muni was ever conscious of his debt to Bhagavan. His Guru-bhakti is a model. Writing to Bhagavan on 22nd July 1931, he submits:

"The greatness of mantra japa has been experienced. The essence of yoga has been perceived. The meaning of sastras has been gone into thoroughly. Tapas has been performed with one-pointed concentration. The play of Kundalinii force has been witnessed. The birthplace of 'I' has been examined. The inner evolution has been observed in silence. All notion of difference has been cast away. Attachment to sense-objects has been rooted out.... Still I am not satisfied. Now I am desirous of getting satisfaction only through devotion. For that, there is Bhagavan Maharshi."

Again, "Lord, you repose in my heart. I repose at your feet!"

The book is an authentic history as well as a spiritual guide. Indeed, it is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Ramana.

— M. P. PANDIT


Bhagavan Ramana has opened up a new path combining traditional Wisdom and modern rationalism; in experience and action they go together without contradicting each other; this is what makes the "Science of the Self" both new and true. The path of Atma Vichara has been laid on the solid foundations of incessant individual effort, pure reason and Guru's grace. His Upadesa Saram and Ulladu Narpadu stand out as the most potent expression of this teaching. Another such great work, Sri Ramana Gita, composed in sonorous Sanskrit by Kayakanthan Ganapati Muni, contains Bhagavan's teachings in question and answer form. The dialogues took place when Bhagavan was at Virupaksha Cave and at Skandashram. The inspiration behind the words of this valuable work was the Presence of Ramana Himself and His Grace silently "directed" on the interlocutors, including the Muni. Sri Ramana Gita is an early and very important work in Ramana-literature.

As Bhagavan Ramana selected 42 verses from Srimad Bhagavad Gita, Sri A. R. Natarajan has abridged the original Sri Ramana Gita into these 42 verses, taking good care to ensure that they retain the essence of the teachings expounded in the parent-text. The subjects covered are man's paramount duty, self-enquiry, the science of the Heart and mind-control.

The translation is lucid and the commentary crisp and direct. Sri A.R. Natarajan's is the first commentary in
English, Ganapati Muni claims that the words of 'divine' Ramana recorded in Sri Ramana Gita are ambrosia for seekers of freedom. The present selection is a useful supplement to the Sat Darshanam, brought out in 1982 by the same Bangalore Ramana Centre. A similar commentary on Upadesa Saram, another most important work of Sri Bhagavan dealing with the essence of His teachings, from the pen of Sri A. R. Natarajan is highly commended.

The cover page with a fascinating picture of Bhagavan Ramana simply rivets one's eyes on Him. It is no exaggeration if it is said that one finds it difficult to flip over it, though flip over one must to drench oneself in the contents of the book, the nectar of Ramana-over it, though flip over one must to drench oneself in work of Sri Bhagavan dealing with the essence of His teachings, from the pen of Sri A. R. Natarajan is highly commended.

The brief life-sketch of the Master given at the beginning and the subsidised low price are additional welcome features.

I strongly recommend this book to all seekers.

— 'SEIN'


Tilopa, Naropa, Marpa, Milarepa — this is a celebrated lineage in the history of Tibetan Buddhism and the present biography gives a tantalising survey of all of these great teachers, though naturally it deals at length with Marpa, the Teacher of Milarepa of the Thousand Songs fame. Marpa is revered as the translator not only because he has rendered important texts into the Tibetan language (from the originals in Sanskrit) but equally because he has translated his knowledge into effective practice.

Born in the eleventh century, Marpa paid three visits to India where he learnt important Wisdoms and Yogas from several teachers. Each time he gathered gold in his country and carried it to the land of the Teachers to offer it to them as was the custom. The first time he met Naropa, his destined Teacher, he had an unnerving experience. When he offered his gold, the Teacher threw it away into the forest. As the bewildered novice looked at him, Naropa touched the earth which became gold and he proclaimed: "All the world is gold for me."

Naturally all the techniques are transmitted orally. Still we can have some idea of the dynamics of this system of Buddhist practice from these pages.

"Mahamudra meditation is simply to be one-pointedly aware in the moment of whatever arises in one's experience. Therefore everything that occurs is part of the path, and meditation is continuous throughout the day and in any activity. There is a constant sense of unfolding and uncovering the true state of one's mind and world. One does not churn up further turmoil through trying to attain something." (xl) "Guhyasamaja enables the prana to flow through your fingertips and enables you to hold buddha in the palm of your hand. (p. 13)

It is explained in detail what is yidam and what part it plays in the yoga of the disciple. "Yidam" is the vajrayana practitioner's personal deity, who embodies his awakened nature. Yidams are sambhogakaya buddhas, which are visualised in accordance with the psychological makeup of the practitioner. The student first develops intense devotion toward his guru. This relationship makes it possible for the student to experience intuitive kinship with the lineage and then with his yidam. Identifying with the yidam means identifying with his characteristic expression of buddha nature, free of distortions. Through seeing his basic nature in this universalised way, all aspects of it are transmuted into the wisdom of the spiritual path." (P 257) It is the guru who evokes the relevant yidam after studying the karma and the nature of the novice.

In this connection, it is narrated how at a crucial stage, Naropa the guru of Marpa created the mandala of Hevajra, Marpa's yidam, in the sky and asked Marpa if he would prostrate to the yidam or to his guru. Dazzled by the yidam mandala, the disciple bowed to the yidam. He forgot that it was by the intercession of his guru that the yidam came into his life. This happening had certain unfortunate results later in Marpa's career. At the moment he suffered severe illness which he was firmly told to treat as a blessing to 'flush out his karmic obscurations'.

There are vivid accounts of Marpa's demonstrations of his proficiency in the transference of consciousness. He revived a dead bird, a dead deer and even a dead yak by transferring his consciousness into their bodies. It is to be noted, however, that the adept had later to withdraw his consciousness and let the creatures die.

The account of ejection of consciousness by Marpa's son into a pigeon, at the hour of his death, and later transferring it into a dead boy's body in the mountains of India, is vivid and hair-raising. There are splendid songs (ably translated into English) describing how Dakinis play an enabling part in the yoga of the practitioner even when they are terrible in appearance. It is instructive to learn how one's own past evil deeds come up in the form of frightening obstacles as the moment of realisation nears.

Rightly the editors conclude: "Thus, through his study and his teaching in Tibet, Marpa was able to receive and intuitively realise the heart of the teachings, actualise this heart in his everyday life, and transmit this heart-essence into the minds of his disciples. This is how the Kagyu lineage has continued unbroken and undiminished to this present day."

This work is history, legend, philosophy, occultism and yoga, all rolled into one.

— M. P. PANDIT

In this neat analysis of the concept of Karma — and its corollary, Rebirth — the well known author dispels many popular misconceptions and presents the subjects in the right focus. The approach is based upon Buddhist Thought and Theosophy.

It is pointed out that Karma is the machinery of Nature to restore harmony whenever it is disturbed by an individual or a collectivity. It is not a mechanical law leading to fatalism as the character of life. It is not the act in itself that matters; what matters is the motive behind it. It is possible to modify one’s karma by forging a corrective karma. It may also be added that there are many levels on which karma is formed and each karma is operative on the level on which it is forged. By shifting the consciousness inwards or upwards it is possible to lessen its rigours.

It is useful to note that the doctrine of Rebirth was an integral part of the Christian faith till the Council at Constantinople in the 6th century removed it from the Canon. (Pp. 16)

— M. P. PANDIT


Swami Jyotirmayananda is a familiar name in the field of Yoga and Philosophy. He has established a Yoga Research Centre at Miami in U.S.A. He has written many learn and scholarly books on Yoga that have earned him great reputation both in our country and abroad. To mention a few of his works are: Concentration and Meditation, Raja Yoga, Death and Re-incarnation, Applied Yoga etc.

The above work is eloquent of Swami’s grasp intellectually and emotionally of Narada’s vision of Divine Love as revealed in his immortal Bhakti Sutras. The greatest art in this world is that of loving God with a pure heart. The composition of the above Sutras is an art to convey maximum meaning in minimum number of words. The essence of a Sutra or aphorism is nothing but wisdom, and commonsense brought together in contrast to the opposite of dissertation and declamation.

The composition of Sutra is marked by a highly specialised literary technique involving the scientific use of special forms, idioms and construction appropriate to the domain and content, of thought which the Sutras set to investigate and expound. The Sutra literature which covers almost every field of enquiry from hedonistic ethics to the profound metaphysics of spiritual realisation are usually four in number and they are the Dharma Sutras of Jaimini, the Brahma Sutras of Veda Vyasa, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and Bhakti Sutras of Sandilya and Narada, dealing respectively with the moral, intellectual, psychic and emotional development in his pilgrimage through life.

Narada Bhakti Sutras contain the mature reflections of the sage on the nature of Bhakti, its Philosophy and Practice, the Fruits of Devotion and the marks of the perfected man of God, and to love God through genuine Love, which looks not with the eyes but with the mind and Love is like an understanding which grows brighter carving upon many truths. They form a collection of eighty four sayings arranged roughly round these four major ideas mentioned above treated in four chapters. To those who are emotional by nature and for whom Bhakti marga is specially suited, Bhakti Sutras can serve as a very useful manual and guide.

Swami Jyotirmayananda in presenting the text of the Sutras for the benefit of the earnest readers, has done yeoman service by bringing to light the hidden pearls of wisdom and faith that are strung on the golden thread of Devotion and God-Love with reference to the setting and context of the setting (Adhikaranas) in which it appears. The spirit of the whole teaching is also brought out with ample references to appropriate the original texts (Vishayas), which constitute the quintessence of the great spiritual enquiry.

Swamiji affirms through this Narada Bhakti Sutras that Bhakti or Love is itself the fruit of all the other Yogas and is the easiest and surest path to God.

— Prof. K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO


The book attempts to explain in detail the Indian theory of non-attachment which is claimed to be of central importance to the understanding of spiritual philosophy of the Hindus as expounded in the Upanishads. Throughout the book the author maintains that the philosophy of non-attachment is a philosophy of truly creative consciousness.

The author speaks that the goal of life as the quest after Truth or Reality. To attain the above truth he elucidates the notion of non-attachment and its relation to morality. Indian philosophers are deeply interested in propounding an answer to the question, ‘How ought people to live?’ which is at once both moral and spiritual in character and accordingly there can only be one way of life whose central concern is the realisation of Truth. Truth cannot stand in conflict with moral value and moral value as having to be a manifestation of an aspect of spiritual action. Each one of us is fond of certain things....
in life and the liking develops into raga, attachment or affection. When the things or persons we like, part from us, or we part from them at the end of life's journey we are afflicted with grief. So, it follows the moment we begin to like a thing, from that moment we sow the seeds of grief. Death forcibly separates us from the objects of our attachment, resulting only in grief around like an unripe mango when forcibly plucked from a mango tree we see the juice flowing both from the stem to which the mango had all along been attached and also from the mango itself. The same mango when fully ripe, gets automatically separated from the stem; then no juice comes out. So also one must develop the capacity to leave this world without regrets when death knocks at our doors. In Bhagavad Gita when Krishna, the Lord teaches that one should not have attachment, does not mean that you should not love your family and your children, and not do your duty towards them. It is one's duty to perform and discharge his responsibilities. But if you neglect the duty because you love your child and you do not want to hurt him, even when he is wrong then it is called attachment. The process of developing detachment from objects of love and affection-must change over from raga to vairaga, should start when we are still in the full enjoyment of our senses. One should mentally become ripe as ripened mango and get oneself non-attached from our attachments-this is the quintessence of this book. This pursuit of truth has necessarily to steer clear identification of the Self with the objects of attachment. As the entity that thinks and feels the Self has to enquire into what is behind thought, action and emotion; for only then it will discover its true freedom and consistency in its essence in non-being, and "non-becoming" when one attains this state of mind or consciousness, illusion based on attachment and self-identity with our sense perceptions gets absorbed and the Self reveals its original state of bliss.

The book will prove of equal interest to the students of philosophy and religion as well as to all those who are seriously interested in Indian spirituality.

— Prof. K. S. Ramakrishna Rao


This sumptuously got-up Indian reprint of Homer Jack's Gandhi Reader is a welcome fall-out from the explosive triumph of Sir Richard Attenborough's movie on the Mahatma. A stuffed dummy set up for floral offerings could equally serve (and has actually been used) for target-practice by the opponents of non-violence. Bellonna's bhaktas in America, Iran and elsewhere have stridently condemned the antics of the modern Hanuman, precisely because the common people everywhere have been powerfully drawn to his message which has incidentally attracted a cluster of Oscars.

Spiritual awakening is now wide spread and for one Mahakashyapa who understood the meaning of the lotus held aloft by the Buddha, millions today respond to the message of the spinning wheel. As Buddhism once proved an excellent export variety of Indian metaphysics and morals devoid of mystical and mythological frills, Gandhian Satyagraha now represents the most popular export form of the commodity called Karma Yoga well blended with the jnana of Ramana and the bhakti of Ramakrishna. If the Indian flavours are replaced by Islam or Christianity, the stuff loses none of its efficacy, as has been well-demonstrated by the Frontier Gandhi (Abdul Ghafar Khan), the American Gandhi (Martin Luther King) and the irrepressible "Green Party" waging a non-violent war against war in the Federal German Republic.

Homer Jack, a good Christian, peace activist and the energetic Secretary General of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, has in this anthology (prepared in 1956) provided and processed for the earnest student a definitive text-book on Gandhi the Man and his Message, the drama of his life, the events of his time and the lessons to be learnt from the interplay of swadharma and samanya dharma. This complex, composite and authentic picture is presented for the most part through the hero's own words, but also occasionally through the comments, critical or laudatory, of contemporaries like J.J. Doke, Rabindranath Tagore, Srinivasa Sastri, Jawaharlal Nehru, C.F. Andrews, Louis Fischer, Vincent Sheean, Romain Rolland and John Haynes Holmes, not to mention Mahadev Desai and Pyarelal.

The flesh and blood left out in the film live and breathe and flow in this Reader. The new generation in India is so deracinated and westernized and "non-becoming," when one attains this state of mind or consciousness, illusion based on attachment and self-identity with our sense perceptions gets absorbed and the Self reveals its original state of bliss.

The real Gandhi may well be achieved peace as well as justice in domestic, social and international affairs. The real Gandhi may well be re-imported into India in a nice, western package. The editor Homer Jack had done a signal service by reviving the man in his milieu and reminding us that Gandhi was a very ordinary person who lived his religion, not a saint for worship on October 2. Homer Jack's Gandhi is not a lotus plucked and held aloft, but a flower standing in the slush and smiling at the sun. This sun shines ever in each human heart and even the slush is a blessing, not a curse, for a healthy plant.

K. S.

Yoga (Union) is necessary for one who is in a state of Viyoga (separation). But really there is only one. If you realise the Self there will be no difference.

— Bhagavan
Sri A.N. Banerjee, Governor of Karnataka arriving to inaugurate the National Seminar and being received by Sri A.R. Nataraja, President Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore and Sri T.N. Veeraswamy, President Sri Ramanasramam.

National Seminar on Bhagavan’s Teachings

Every year in July at Bangalore there is reunion of Ramana-devotees, an invoking of His Presence. This year too the National Seminar on the teachings of Sri Bhagavan was held there for three days from July 15.

Inaugurated by Sri A.N. Banerjee, Governor of Karnataka, the three-day Ramana-festival was addressed by the eminent scholars and sadhak-devotees, which included: Dr. S.K. Ramachandra Rao, S. Krishna Swamy, K.S. Venkataraman, Dr. A.S. Venugopala Rao, M.F. Rangachar, Dr. N.S. Lakshminarayana Bhaita, Dr. Nitya Chaitanya, B. Anantaswami, Dr. R. Sankaranarayanan, A.R. Natarajan, Kumari Sarada and V. Ganesan. This Fourth National Seminar was, however, marked by two outstanding speeches — “Goodbye T’; Hello T’” by Kumari Sarada and “The Day, The Night and the Silent Sun” by V. Ganesan.

Ramana-inspiration was evident in the Dance presentation — ‘Ramana Vandana’. Ramana Ballet, Ramana Dramas (“Continuous Presence”, Bhagavan and Animals and ‘Bhagavan and Mother’) and elevating ‘Ramananjalai’ music.

The President and office-bearers of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore, deserve high praise for successfully continuing this Ramana-seva year after year.

Coffee-break — not even this was an excuse for breaking the Ramana-sharing-discussions!

Dr. S. Balasundaram receives a Ramana Music cassette from the Governor.
"Ramana Drama" - Scenes from Bhagavan and Mother. (1 to r) Mother Devaki's son Lord Krishna (and Arjuna), Mother Alagamma appealing to her 'divine' Son at Virupaaksha Cave.

"Ramana Anubhava" - Ramamanjali through Ramana Music paying homage to Bhagavan.

"Ramana Vandana" - Obeisance to Bhagavan Ramana offered.
An absorbing exhibition depicting the growing many-faceted Ramana Movement.

Smt. Saraswati Sundarshan, Choreographer of 'Ramana Ballet', the beautiful dance-drama enacted by 'Ramana Sudha' group, being honoured by Sri A.R. Natrajan.

Sri A.N. Banerjee releasing 'Selections from Ramana Gita' by presenting the first copy to the Ashram President, Sri T.N. Venkataraman.

in the Bharatanatyam style by Kumari Sarada and Kumari Ambika.
SRI MURUGANAR’S DAY

Sri Muruganar has been affectionately called the “shadow of Sri Bhagavan” — so close was he to Him! The 40,000 verses that he had composed in chaste Tamil on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings will remain as eternal monuments in Ramana-Literature. These outpourings will inspire humanity to take up to the Master’s unique method of Atma Vichara. His dedicated life was built on scholarship, austerity, detachment and devotion.

This poet-saint was remembered and adored on August 7 at the ‘Ramana Bhoomi’, Bangalore. An emotion-choked illustrative talk on Muruganar by V. Ganesan moved the audience to tears. Very many facets of Muruganar hitherto unknown were unravelled by him.

The dance-drama extolling the greatness of Muruganar by the Ramana Bala Kendra children was the highlight of the programme — a rich tribute decoratively offered.

At Sri Ramanasramam, the Samadhi-day of Sri Muruganar was solemnly observed at his samadhi inside the Ashram, with abhisheka, puja and chantings from his poems, on Sept. 6, in the midst of Ramana-bhaktas.

The Goddess for Learning Saraswati, so overwhelmed by the beauty of Sri Muruganar’s Tamil poesy, in exhilaration pays homage to Bhagavan Ramana (along with Her retinue).
Sri H.K. Narayana's 'Ramana Music' at Ramana Kendra, Delhi, was very much appreciated.

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

On July 24, Guru Pournima was celebrated with a grand 'Ramana Music' concert by Sri H.K. Narayana of A.I.R., Bangalore and party.

Aruna Vijaya Day, which coincides with the anniversary of the inauguration of 'Ramanachala', was celebrated on Sept. 4. The day was also observed as Muruganar's Day.

On that day, a number of school children were given gifts of note-books and study material. Sri. M. Sivarama-krishnan, Principal, DTEA Senior Secondary School, Mandir Marg, blessed the children.

July 17 was observed as Vidyodaya Day.

Vogiraj Vethathiri Maharishi gave a talk on Realisation of the Self on August 4.

The Kendra mourned the passing away of Swami Budhananda of Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, Sri. G.D. Birla, Sri C. Sudarsanam an old member of Delhi Kendra and Sri. S. Krishnaswami who was intimately associated with the Kendra for a number of years.

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The Upanishad, Gita and Tiruppugazh classes are being regularly held and well attended.

SRI RAMANA KENDRAM, HYDERABAD

The Ramana devotees meet every Sunday at the Gandhi Centenary Hall of the Andhra Mahila Sabha College for Women, from 9 to 10.30 in the morning. The meeting begins with the chanting of Arunachala Siva, followed by meditation and recitation of Upadesa Saram; then a talk on Bhagavan's life and teachings which is again followed by meditation. Books on Sri Bhagavan are sold here for the convenience of the

First C-45 Cassette in Tamil!

"ULLADU NARPADU"
(in Tamil)

Sri Bhagavan's unique
FORTY VERSES ON REALITY
"எழுதிய
" RAMANANJALI"

in the original Tamil - has melodiously been sung by

A lucid introduction and short commentary in Tamil, rendered by V. GANESAN, is an added attraction.

Price Rs. 35/- (Postage extra)

For requirements please write to:

SRI RAMANASRAMAM BOOK DEPOT,
SRI RAMANASRAMAM, P.O.,
Tiruvannamalai- 606 603 S. India
devotees. Satsang meetings are held on all the other days of the week at the residences of different devotees from 6 to 7 p.m. In a series of classes Dr. K. Subrahmanian gave lucid expositions on Chaitanya Sampradaya, Upadesa Saram and Who Am I?

On August 7, the election of new office-bearers was held; the following devotees have unanimously been elected:

President: Sri G.C. Narayana Swamy
Vice President: Sri Chandra Prabhakar
Secretary & Treasurer: Smt. A.V. Ramanaiah
Executive Members:
- Sri R.I. Doshi
- Sri Bh. Venkateswara Rao
- Sri C.V. Rajeswara Rao
- Sri V. Kothivasan
- Sri S. Venkatalarman
- Sri Raja Rao
- Sri G. Sridhara Rao
- Sri R. Appa Rao

RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS

From May to September 1983, Ramana Kendra, Madras, arranged several talks on Bhagavan and His Teachings. Sri Godha Venkateswara Rao, the Chief disciple of the late Sri Jagadishwaras Sastrigal (who was closely associated with Bhagavan), gave a series of 8 talks on Upadesa Saram. With his profound knowledge of the sastras, particularly the Upanishads, Sri Venkateswara Rao brought out how Bhagavan has given us the very quintessence of the Gita and Upanishads, in just 30 verses in Upadesa Saram, avoiding ambiguities and repetitions.

Sri K.K. Nambiar, the Kendra Chairman, gave 5 talks on his reminiscences of Bhagavan. Starting from his first visit to Bhagavan, Sri Nambiar gave a chronological account of his experiences and narrated very vividly and interestingly many details of various incidents that happened in the Master's presence, and how his (Sri Nambiar's) whole life was taken over and guided, as it were, by Bhagavan, through many dreams at crucial moments, and how he feels Bhagavan's Presence every minute even now.

Dr. Prasanna Chaitanya of Chinmaya Mission spoke on 'Tapas according to Bhagavan' and explained how Self-Enquiry alone is the real Tapas.

Sri M.S. Nagarajan gave 5 talks on Upadesa Undiyar in Tamil. With apt quotations from Gita and writings of the Saivite Saints, Sri Nagarajan elucidated the profound meaning underlying the apparently simple stanzas of Upadesa Undiyar and the way Bhagavan from His swanubhava takes His uncompromising stand on ajata siddhanta.

RAMANA SATSANG AT SHIMOGA

Sri H.S. Mallikarjuna, a Chartered Accountant, Shimo and brother of Sri Š. Krishnaswamy (Secretary of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore) is a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. At Shimoga every month the Punarvasu Day is being celebrated at his residence, with puja to Sri Bhagavan's portrait, 'Ramana Music' and readings from Bhagavan's Works; the first 'Ramana Satsang' having been conducted in August 16, 1982. Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi was also celebrated on a grand scale on December 31, 1982, when many had the privilege of being introduced to the teachings of Sri Bhagavan. Smt. Mallikarjunan conducts 'Ramana Music' classes for the ladies.

SRI RAMANA MANDIRAM, MADURAI

AN APPEAL

In the temple-city of Madurai, in His uncle's house, the young lad, Venkataraman, aged only 16 years, attained Atmanubhuti (Self-Realization) through 'Death Experience'; and became a Sage of Steady Wisdom. This holy spot is maintained as 'Ramana Mandiram'. Daily worship in the morning and evening is conducted there, and satsangs organised on Thursdays and Sundays. Devotees are requested to enrol themselves as LIFE MEMBER by paying Rs. 100/- each to the undersigned. This will be funded and out of its interest one day's puja to the large portrait of Sri Bhagavan in the Mandiram will be performed in the name of the donor and Puja Prasad sent to the Life Member:

The Manager,
RAMANA MANDIRAM,
11, Chokkappa Naicken St.,
MADURAI-625 001.
RAMANA SAT SANG IN BOMBAY

We gather from Sri V. Subramanian, Bombay, that the Ramana Sat Sang is being conducted regularly every month at the residence of each devotee. New faces, almost in each Sat Sang, spring up showing keen interest in pursuing the path of Sri Bhagavan. The devotees plan to celebrate Sri Bhagavan's Jayanti on 22-12-1983 in Bombay in all solemnity. Devotees in Bombay are requested to contact:

Sri V. Subramanian,
B-3, 'Husman', North-South road No. 11,
Juhu, BOMBAY-400 049. (Phone: 579076)

RAMANA STUDY CENTRE, ERNAKULAM

Sri S. Hariharan reports:

"During Sat Sang on 22-6-83 it was decided to conduct the classes on all Wednesdays from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m. and to take Bhagavan's works on two days. It was also tentatively decided to celebrate Bhagavan's Jayanti in a grand scale for ten days with discourses on Bhagavan's works by Swami Dayananda Saraswathi. We are also searching for a suitable plot to construct a Meditation Hall to enshrine Sri Bhagavan's Holy Presence."

SRI RAMANA BHAKTA MANDALI, HYDERABAD

The 33rd Brahma Nirvana of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on 14-4-83 from morning 6.30 to night 8.47, at Ramalayam. There were pujas, feeding of the poor and guests. The devotees experienced the Presence of Sri Bhagavan.

The highlight of the programme was the release of Sat Darshanam of Sri Bhagavan with Telugu commentary by Dr. Chaganti Suryanarayana Murthy. This important addition to Ramana-literature in Telugu was released by Smt. Vajreswari, daughter of Kavvakantha Ganapatimuni.

Sri T. Bheema Sena Rao, Rayala Kala Parishat,
Ananthapuram. Smt. Lakshmi, Rani of Peddapavani, Sri
T. Anjaiah, Ex-Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and Sri
Lakshmi Narayana, Retd. Head Master from Tenali, who
spoke on the occasion brought out the beauty of Sri
Bhagavan's comely presence and emphasised the easy
applicability of Sri Bhagavan's teaching suited to modern
conditions. Sri M. Narasimhan, President of the Mandal,
stressed the need for a suitable plot to construct a
Ramana Temple, where the visiting-devotees would
tangibly receive His Gracious Blessings.

Again, on the 10th May, the Brahma Nirvana day,
according to the Hindu calendar, was celebrated. Sri
Raghava Sarma of Viswa Hindu Parishat spoke on the
greatness of Sri Bhagavan. The Ramana Bala Kendra
children chanted Bhagavan's Upadesa Saram, Bhagavad
Gita and songs on Sri Bhagavan. Smt. Lakshmi Rani of
Peddapavani graced the occasion with her presence and
offered plenty of flowers and fruits to Sri Bhagavan.

On Sept 15, Advent to Arunachala Day was celebrated
with Ekadasa Rudrabhishekam and chanting of
Arunachala Siva. The distinguished assemblage
included Sri T. Anjaiah, Ex-Chief Minister of Andhra
Pradesh, Sri V. Rama Rao, M.L.A. and Sri A.
Chakrapani, M.L.C.

From Sept. 10 to 20, we have celebrated Vinayaka
Chaturthi with the children of Ramana Bala Kendram.
For these eleven days Sri Mallavarupu Venkata
Ramanaiah, a 93-year old scholar-devotee, gave a
series of discourses on Bhagavan's Sat Darshanam.

RAMANA SATSANG AT ANANTAPUR

Devotees of Bhagavan at Anantapur conduct 'Ramana
Satsang' every month.

On 1st September to mark the advent of Bhagavan at
Arunachala, a function was arranged at the premises of
Sri Kasi Visweswara temple in the New Town. It was
presided over by Sri D. Subrahmanyam, Sub-ordinate
Judge.

Sri Murty and Sri Sivashanam of Kalayanaguntla
chanted Upadesa Saram. Sri R. Sreeramulu explained the
significance of the function and the purpose of conducting
the Ramana Satsang. Messrs. K. Chandramouli, B.V.R.
Subba Rao, P. Bugganna, G.P. Ramakrishna Sastry, T.
Bhimaasena Rao spoke on the life and teachings of the
Maharshi. Sri Tungirala Inwar Sastri presented Bhagavan's
photograph to the local Sankara Mandir.

"No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is
not your birthright. The few who succeed owe their
success to their perseverance."

— Sri Bhagavan.
OUR PERENNIAL LINK

Here is a teen-ager’s spontaneous outpouring on her visit to the Ashram.

“My great grandfather, late Sri F.G. Natesa Iyer, was a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, and generation after generation we are all coming to the Ashram of our Bhagavan, since we have developed a deep attachment for this place.

“In life I have come across, even at this tender age, different types of problems and I have met people who are worldly and materialistic. At such times Bhagavan’s teachings have come to my aid and I kept telling myself that my spirit remains untouched by these problems. I shall always be grateful to my parents for initiating me into Bhagavan’s teachings.

“The Ashram itself is a beautiful place, closely associated with Mother Nature; situated below the hills, amidst trees of different varieties, enlivened by peacocks and monkeys. Here one can feel the silence (a deep silence beyond all thoughts) and the presence of Bhagavan. After spending a few days here I feel fully charged and energised to face life, with a feeling of well-being and confidence.

“I have been practising meditation which has helped me to think inwardly. I am confident of His blessings and guidance. Salutations to Bhagavan Ramana!”

— Shoba Kumari, Madras.

Sri C. Lakshmanan of Kozhikode and his family are long-standing devotees of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Lakshmanan is a regular visitor to our Ashram and is actively being guided in sadhana by Sri Kunju Swami. His Son, Sri Namassivayam, an Advocate, is deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan and to His bhaktas. Sri Lakshmanan writes:

“To be physically inside the premises of the Ashram itself makes one experience Ramana Bliss and the sense of the world as separate from you gets dissolved. Sri Bhagavan’s powerful Presence enables one to achieve this rare experience. Except by total surrender to Ramana, the Giver of Eternal Peace, how else could we show our gratitude to our Master! Our entire family are thus the eternal slaves of Sri Bhagavan and humble servants of the Ashram. Bhagavan is our Father, Mother, Guru and our all-Powerful Lord!”

Smt. & Sri Kumar with their son and daughter. (l to r) Shobha Kumari Smt. Alamelu Kumar, Sri V.S. Kumar, Prasanna Kumar, (Inset) Shoba Kumari

Sri C. Lakshmanan

The Sashtiabdapurti of Sri S. Ganapathiraman (and Sow. Alagamma) was celebrated in a fitting manner, with all necessary rituals, at the Ashram on Sept. 11, in the midst of his relatives and the inmates of the Ashram. Sri Ganapathiraman is a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan and on every occasion of his visits to the Ashram he would be working hard by way of assisting in the Ashram stores and in the kitchen. He has now retired from service and has resolved to serve the Ashram. He will be an useful addition into the Ashram-fold!

Smt. Alagamma and Sri S. Ganapathiraman
The entire family of Sri Girdalur Sambasiva Rao of Nellore are dedicated to Sri Bhagavan, generation after generation. Girdalur Sathyanarayana Rao, Girdalur Subba Rao, Girdalur Narasimha Rao and Smt. Lakshmi Ranganadh are all staunch devotees of Bhagavan, having had His blessings direct from Him. Sri Sathyanarayana Rao, had the unique privilege of having Bhagavan's arm around his neck while both of them walked. He wanted to die only at the Ashram. During his last moments Bhagavan was with him, putting His golden hands on Sri Sathyanarayana Rao. He breathed his last, within the Ashram premises, a few minutes after Bhagavan left him. Girdalur Sathyanarayana Rao's portrait was brought by the members of his family and was installed in the Ashram dining hall.

Sri P.V. Somasundaram (extreme left) was very happy to bring sincere devotees from Bombay in July; “all of us benefitted spiritually by our pilgrimage to Arunachala”, they said.
Smt. Savitri Cuttaree, Ramana Kendra, Reduit, Mauritius writes:

"On September the 4th, we celebrated Sri Bhagavan’s Aruna Vijaya Day at our home between 9 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. There was a good response from all those invited, the house was full. As usual, Br. Pranavaji of Chinmaya Mission, led the function. A bhajan group had, with the help of the cassettes, prepared a few songs of Sri Bhagavan and they were very happy to perform on that day. They would like to present a programme for Jayanti and would need a long preparation. This year on September 1st we could also present a programme in Tamil on Sri Bhagavan on the Radio. A short talk was given followed by a few songs from the Tamil record. Mr. Thancanamootoo and Mrs. Chinappen graced the occasion to the delight of the assembled."

Sri Kato Nioki, hailing from Tokyo, Japan; stayed at the Ashram for four months. He has seriously taken to Sri Bhagavan’s Vichara Marga. Discussions with senior inmates of the Ashram helped him go deeper in his sadhana, he affirmed.

Before he left the Ashram on September 7, he was pleased to leave the following:

"Nothing delighted me so much as staying in this Ashram. I understood and had a glimpse of Arunachala Ramana, the ocean of Grace, which was tremendous for me!"

NIPPON RAMANA KENDRA

Miss Yoko Suda is now the President of the Nippon Ramana Kendra. Every month Ramana Sat Sangh meeting is being held in Tokyo. The Kendra is also planning a study meeting for Tamil culture (fine art, language etc.) Sozo Hashimoto, Chairman of the Meditation Information Centre arranged for the publication of the book: Guide Book of the Meditation, in which he wrote articles on Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, Self-Enquiry Vedanta, Yoga, Mandala, Mantra. The book is so popular that already 10,000 copies have sold out! Sozo Hashimoto delivers talks on Self-Enquiry in various cities, thus spreading the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana in Japan.
RAMANA CENTRE AT GOA

We are happy to receive the following report from Sri R. Ramakrishnan, Goa:

"Ramana Maharshi and His philosophy is not well known in Goa. There are a few handful of people who have had darshan of Sri Maharshi or who had been to Sri Ramanasramam. Since 1981, to create here the Ramana-awareness all the important days — His Jayanthi, Arunachala-Pravesa, Karthikai Deepam and Nirvana — are being celebrated by singing songs on and by Maharshi and lectures on His life and message. In 1982-83 our efforts were intensified by contributing articles to the local English newspaper (i) on his Birthday (on the topic 'Preaching in Silence'); (ii) on Aug. 29, 1982 the day of His departure from Madurai; (on 'Mystic of Arunachala'); (iii) April 14, 1983 the day of Nirvana ('The Philosophy of Ramana Maharshi'); (iv) July 24, 1983 on Guru Poomima day, an article emphasising His method of Self-Enquiry.

For the benefit of Marathi-knowing public an article was published in the local Marathi daily, Komantak, (July 7th) entitled ‘Ramana Maharshi’s life and philosophy’. Ramana devotees coming to Goa are requested to visit our Centre. Please write to:

Sri R. Ramakrishnan
Vaikunt Nivas,
Miramar, PANAJI, Goa 403 001.

RAMANA KENDRA AT MADURAI

At a meeting of the devotees of Bhagavan held on September 25, 1983, “Ramana Kendra” was formed at Madurai.

It has been decided to hold Satsang meeting periodically in the houses of the devotees by turn. The first meeting is being organised at the President’s house on October 2, 1983. The office-bearers of the Kendra will meet on the same day to draw up an outline of the functioning of the Kendra.

The Office-bearers are:

President
Sri S. Ramachandran
Vice Presidents
V. Jagannathan
B. Ramakrishnan
K. Rengaswamy
K. S. Krishnan
Joint Secretaries
T.N. Pranatharthiharan
Secretary
N. Venkataraman
Treasurers
N. Somasundaram

GRACE IN THE WIND

By Joan Greenblatt

Grace in the wind
blowing blessings’ lovely
scent through the
blossom scented air...

Disguised in many ways
through happy times and
sadness too.
We often recognize it not
Yet it is — it ever was.
Grace discriminates not;
like the wind it touches all,
it asks us only to be
aware of its eternal flow.
Gushing forth with
penetrating force, Grace
waits with patience —
mountain-firm.
Freedom of the soul
invites it in,
and resignation binds
it strong.
Grace in the wind —
blowing blessings’ lovely
scent through the
blossom-scented air...

AN APPEAL

TALKS WITH RAMANA MAHARSHI is a spiritual-treasure; the Wisdom of Sri Ramana Maharshi is embedded in it. It has been translated into many Indian and European languages. As a Birth Centenary tribute to Bhagavan Ramana a Marathi translation of TALKS was to be brought out. The great Marathi Scholar, (though blind) willingly undertook the translation work. He translated the first volume of TALKS, with the able assistance of his wife; but before he could translate the remaining two volumes he passed away in July.

We appeal to readers to contribute liberally so that the above translation in Marathi of TALKS, Vol. I could be brought out soon. Please send your contribution to:

Sri A.K. Devraj
12, Resham Apts, Church Road,
Andheri East, Bombay-400 059.
From August 13 to 17, nearly thirty enthusiastic Ramana-bhaktas from Andhra Pradesh, under the leadership of Sri M.R. Nageswara Rao, stayed at the Ashram and basked themselves in the Ramana-Sun. Sri Nageswara Rao, editor of the Telugu monthly 'Ramana Vani', on all these five days, gave series of talks on Bhagavan, emphasising that Bhagavan's 'Who am I?' method was the panacea for all the ills of humanity, material and spiritual.

Sri Ch. Chandrasekhara Rao of Vijayawada, with his family was at the Ashram in August. Performed special Mahanyasa Puja to Sri Bhagavan; offered bishna and clothes to the inmates and sadhus of the Ashram. He is keen in starting a 'Ramana Kendra' at his place.

Sri Lakshmana Swami of Lakshmana Ashram, Chilkur, spent a week in deep contemplation and meditation in August; so also, his party of fourteen.
In the sixties, a youth from Calcutta used to visit the Ashram. One day he came for good to the Ashram resigning his job. Sri V. Seshadri thus became an inmate of the Ashram. After some time he chose to live independently and built his cottage outside. He did the laudable service of renovating the Ashtalinga temples on the giri pradakshina route. He has given up even his private property and has taken sannyas; under the name, Swami Ramanananda Saraswati. We are happy that he is now back at the Ashram.

Sri T. Veerasingam, of Selangor, Malaysia, has had the golden opportunity of staying in Sri Bhagavan’s Presence in the thirties. Captivated by His spiritual grandeur he named his son ‘Ramanapathy’. When the ‘Ramananjalil’ group went to Kuala Lumpur in 1980, he enthusiastically appreciated their ‘Ramana Music’ and also collected funds for the Centenary Celebrations.

Sri Veerasingam has been staying at the Ashram for the past few months. He says: “Sri Ramanasramam is best suited to me — the food, stay, no interference from anybody; I can be myself, yet without the ‘me’. One can uplift oneself spiritually, at this slope of Arunachala.”

Miss Darlene Delisi, Arunachala Ashram, Nova Scotia, Canada, was at the Ashram for three weeks in July’83. She is a serious seeker and naturally she utilised every minute of her stay in meditation, sat sang and going round Holy Arunachala. She shares with fellow seekers:

“I was at Arunachala in 1978 and had a most wonderful stay. While preparing for this recent pilgrimage I kept wondering: Is it going to be as good? Am I living in the past? Will this time and money be wasted in travelling half way round the earth?

“Undoubtedly, there is something special about the place where Sri Bhagavan physically lived and the power of Sacred Arunachala never diminishes. Through the old and new devotees and the management, one is given constant encouragement to turn to Bhagavan.

“To be inspired, refreshed, rejuvenated with Pure Being is a visit to Sri Ramanasramam. With eternal gratitude for Sri Bhagavan’s Grace.

— Darlene Delisi, Canada.”

Action performed unselfishly purifies the mind and helps it to fix itself in meditation

— Bhagavan
OBIITUARY

SRI SWAMI ANVANANDA

Sri Sadhu Parthasarathy, as he was popularly known, was the son of S. Srinivasa Iyengar, a reputed lawyer, Advocate-General and leading Congressman. Parthasarathy also took an active part in India’s independence movement. He studied at the Madras Law College and then joined S. Duraiswami Aiyar’s office as a junior. It was with Duraiswami Aiyar that he often visited Sri Ramana, who had a profound effect upon him, and when the Maharshi fell ill Parthasarathy brought from Madras many doctors and medical specialists who attended upon Him.

In the early 1950s, he severed his business connections in Madras and retired to the village of Tirumullaivayil, where he had large property that eventually became his ashram, and thereafter lead a sadhu’s life away from his family. With him was an exquisite image of Divine Mother, Sri Vaishnavi, that had come to him under unusual circumstances. He built a small shrine and offered worship himself, being joined later by Ramana’s devotee, Sadhu Brahmaniam.

In 1971 he took formal sannyas and was called Swami Anvananda.

He left his body on the evening of June 12 having merged himself with his beloved Devi. He was 82 years old, and in strict accordance with his wish his body was cremated the next day at noon and the ashes later immersed in the Ganga at Varanasi.

SMT. PUNITHAM CHANDRA RAO

Sri A. Devaraja Mudaliar, author of Day by Day with Bhagavan, infused Ramana-devotion into every member of his family. Even today his grand-children make it a point to visit the Ashram at least once a year. When he relinquished his job as Public Prosecutor in Chittoor and settled at the Ashram, his daughter Smt. Punitham Chandra Rao became a regular visitor to the Ashram. She was intensely devoted to Sri Bhagavan. She enjoyed the grace of Sri Bhagavan not only when He was in the body but even after, till her last moment. This pious-lady passed away on June 4, reaching the Lotus Feet of her chosen master, Sri Bhagavan.

A Correction

On page 183 of our last issue, in the article entitled ‘The Heart and the Brain’, it was wrongly printed, “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 should have been printed, “Since N.S. Arunachalam was only a schoolboy, the verses are in rather poor English, and hence the ideas are not very clearly expressed. Therefore we give below not only his verses but also a translation in clear and simple English of Sri Bhagavan’s Tamil rendering.”

The verses of N.S. Arunachalam were printed on that page exactly as they were printed in July 1954 issue of The Call Divine, which is presumably as they were written by N.S. Arunachalam, and neither the editors of The Mountain Path nor anyone else made any attempt to touch them up.

SRI S.L. NARASIAH

Sri S.L. Narasiah, was an inmate of the Ashram for nearly 15 years. We had served as a Senior Accounts Officer, in several Indian Embassies abroad. He was, for some years, incharge of the Ashram Book-Depot and later on over-all in-charge of the Ashram accounts. After a prolonged illness for more than a year, he passed away in Madras at his son’s residence. His scrupulous cleanliness, efficiency in execution of any work, sincerity and hard work will be remembered for long by every member of the Ashram.

SRI M.C. SUBRAMANIAM

Sri M.C. Subramaniam, who was a resident-devotee of the Ashram for many years in the sixties, was serving in the Madras Research Library and Archives. A convinced Advaitin, he was drawn to Sri Bhagavan and volunteered his services to the Ashram. He catalogued and rearranged our Ashram Library. He was ably assisting Arthur Osborne in The Mountain Path work. Due to old age, later he preferred to stay with his family, though in spirit he was only at Arunachala, for he was ever thinking of Sri Bhagavan. He has passed away and become a real ‘Arunachala-Vasi’!
AN APPEAL

"MOUNTAIN PATH FUND"

With hesitation we bring to the notice of our readers an urgent need of ours.

For the past few years The Mountain Path is working at a loss which is steadily increasing due to the high cost of paper, printing charges and heavy postal charges. We are keen that the excellent quality maintained by us should continue.

We are, therefore, announcing "The Mountain Path Capital Fund". Please contribute liberally to it. Donations to this Fund will be earmarked and kept in Fixed Deposit with Banks so that interest from it would go to augment our funds. Even though there is no obligation on the part of any life-member to subscribe any more amount, in view of the altered circumstances, we would like to request them also to kindly remit any additional amount which they may desire to meet the situation.

Subscribers and readers who are in business or having business connections may please secure at least one advertisement each per year. The cost of such advertisement is only Rs. 500/- per page. We are confident that your ready help in a big way would be available.

Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai-606 603.
October 1, 1983.

V. Ganesan,
Managing Editor,
THE MOUNTAIN PATH