

The Mountain Path

Editorial

Divinity - Here and Now

by A. R. Natarajan

The Need of Ultra - Mysticism

by Paul Brunton

The Power of Positive Thinking

by Douglas E. Harding

Sadanai Saram

by Sadhu Om

Aesthetics in Social Life

by Dr. C. Satyanarayana

Garland of Guru's Sayings

by Professor K. Swaminathan

Holy of the Holiest Ramana

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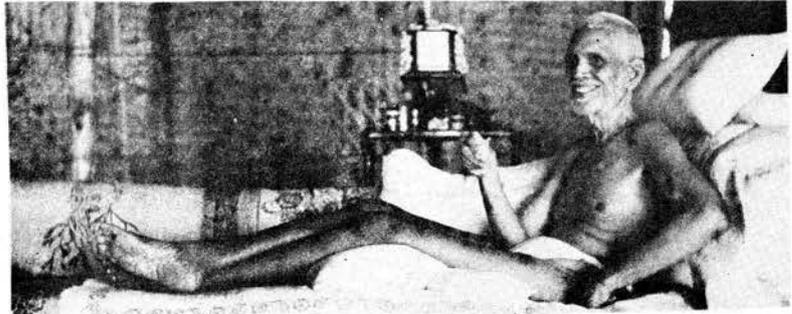
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Let us embrace upon
the bed of tender
flowers, which is the
mind, within the room
of the body (or the Ulti-
mate Truth), Oh
Arunachala!

— *The Marital
Garland of Letters,
Verse 82*

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

— *The Marital Garland of Letters,
verse 1*

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EDITORIAL

DIVINITY—HERE AND NOW
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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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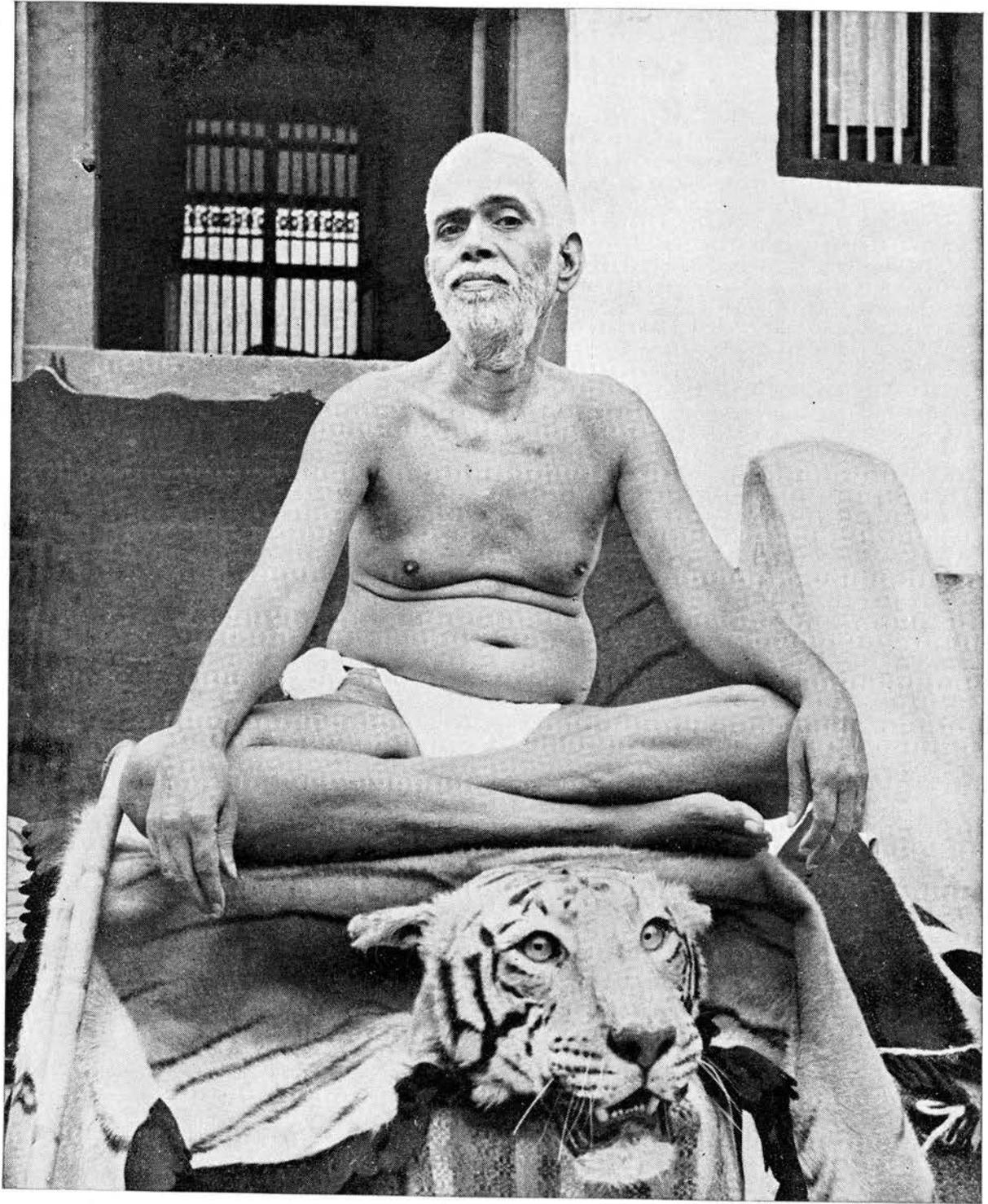
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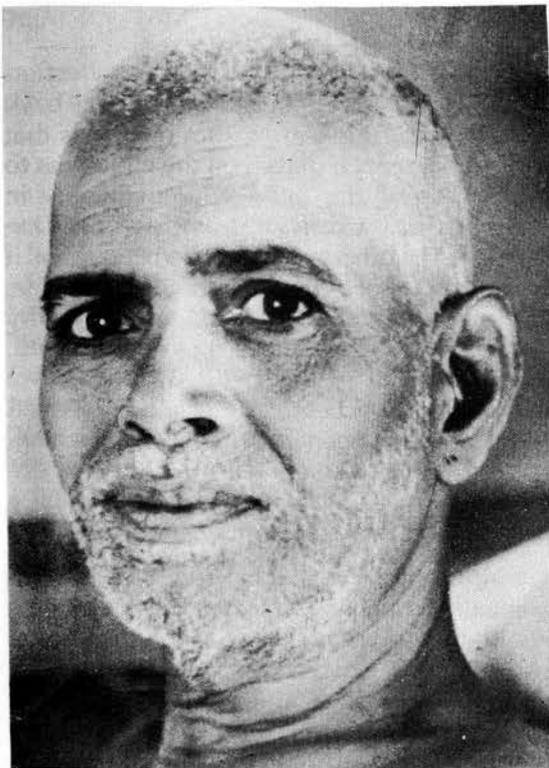
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi





IN the beginning it is like poison. But in the end it is nectar. This is how spiritual practices are generally described. For, even those who have been treading the religious path for quite some time are only too familiar with the daily battles during the hour of meditation. The unwanted, intruding thoughts seem to be just waiting round the corner to push out the desired thought. The single thought which one sets out to contemplate on is crowded out by a legion of other thoughts. What is desired is unbroken, natural meditation like the 'steady flow of a stream', but what is achieved is only intermittent, broken, meditation. 'Controlling winds' seems far easier.

Is one then to waste time and life in the Kindergarten of meditation? No, says Ramana. 'The bliss beyond bondage and limitation is here and now for one who unites with the divine'¹. Post-dated cheques are of very little value. The taste of the bliss beyond thought, beyond the ceaseless movement of thought, must be ours if steadfastness in the pursuit of the inner journey is to be achieved. Unless one is aware of 'the maddenning joy of abidance in

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EDITORIAL

By

A.R. Natarajan

The Mountain Path

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truth'², even if it be but once in a while, listlessness may creep in. Energetic adherence to the chosen way of life would seem very difficult. Ramana's assurance, therefore, is of the greatest significance for those to whom the search for truth and discovery of life's meaning are of vital importance. Ramana was rooted in the steady wisdom of a Heart-based life. His affirmation is, therefore, born of direct experience. This unique treasure of His experience has been made available to all through His teachings. Ramana asserts that for liberation the *vichara* or enquiry method suggested by Him is the 'easiest'³. If diligently pursued 'union with divine' would necessarily follow.

What then is the essence of this direct path? Before proceeding further, one has to examine

¹ *Upadesa Saram*, Verse 29

² *Marital garland of Letters*, Verse 23.

³ *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Atma Vidya, P.101

the validity of certain fundamental propositions which we are apt to take for granted. We identify the 'I' with the body. We assume that the mind is an independent, conscious, entity. We are unaware of the spiritual centre within us. One has to probe, one has to enquire, and find out. What is the true import of the 'I'? Is it limited to the body? If so, what happens to it in deep sleep? What exactly is the mind? Is it different from the 'I' or individuality? What is the mind's link with the consciousness within?

Ramana explains that the mind and 'I' or individuality are the same. Why? Because that which we call the mind is only a 'bundle of thoughts'. But these thoughts cannot stand on their own feet. They are dependent on the core thought, the 'I'-thought. Only when linked with the 'I'-thought, there can be a movement of thought. It is logical to say, therefore, that the 'I'-thought is the mind. But this 'I'-thought cannot be the totality of the individual. Why? For, it 'perishes daily' in sleep. But there is no break in the continuity of one's Being. Ramana sets out these propositions with His characteristic simplicity and brevity in verses 17 to 21 of *Upadesa Saram*. In *Ramana Gita*, He throws clear light on the science of Heart. The Heart is the spiritual centre where fullness of one's existence can be experienced as a spontaneous flash of consciousness, the 'I'-'I'. 'And this is Heaven', 'This is that stillness, the abode of Bliss'.⁴ It is from the Heart that the mind rises and it also sinks into it. If the merger of the mind into the Heart is done consciously, as distinct from what happens unconsciously in deep sleep, then knowledge dawns, bliss inundates. This is the theoretical structure.

Ramana, however, laid no store on mere intellectual appreciation. Concepts, however lofty, are but concepts. Anything vicarious is of no value. Hence His emphasis, which was constant, on the importance of practice and experience, a practice in which the means is not different from the goal.⁵ Two infallible weapons in the armoury of self-enquiry, for Self-knowledge, are provided to us by Ramana in the form of two questions — "Who am 'I'?" and "Whence am 'I'?". The second is recommen-

ded more often for the mind is only a reflection of consciousness within and is the bridge back to it. It is for this reason, that one finds that focus repeatedly is placed on the enquiry as to the source of the mind or individuality in *Ramana Gita*,⁶ *Upadesa Saram*⁷ and *Sat Darshanam*⁸. The other tool is complementary and it is most effective in checking a body-centred life. The spirit of enquiry is kindled by the enquiry "Who am 'I'?". The familiar is never examined. The truth of certain ideas which we unconsciously accept is never closely looked at in any depth. The search light is not on them. It is precisely this complacent thoughtlessness, of a superficial life which is uprooted by a properly directed self-enquiry.

In this path, the straying cow, the mind, is gradually brought back to the stable by feeding it with the grass and fodder of the bliss of the Heart. The mind's constant outward movement can be compared to that of a cow which used to thievishly feed on others' pastures. When fed with the fodder of joy of an inner life, in the beginning it would still slip away. But the taste of it would bring it back until a point is reached when it would not stray even if let loose.⁹

In His 'Appalam Song' Ramana says, 'work away, untiring, steady, cheerful'.¹⁰ Why self-enquiry without let or unflagging vigour? Because the mind is habituated to look outward for happiness. The residual memories of past actions would make it difficult for the mind to stay sunk at the Heart. So long as the mind is not naturally silent, vigilance would be a must to turn the mind back to its source. Why joyously? Because in it lies the key to a joy whose abundance knows of no limit. If self-enquiry is so done then the mind's movement

⁴ *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, P.101

⁵ *Selections from Ramana Gita*, Verses 23, 24 & 25, P.31

⁶ *Selections from Ramana Gita*, Verses 7 & 8, P.11.

⁷ *Upadesa Saram*, Verse 19

⁸ *Sat Darshanam*, Verses 14, 26, 27, 28 & 29

⁹ *Conscious Immortality* — Paul Brunton

¹⁰ *Five Hymns and Other Poems*, P.152

outward through association with other thoughts will cease. The mind would be intuned and quiet. It is, however, essential at this stage to remember that the inturning of the mind is but the first step. The peace and happiness which follows can become the graveyard of spiritual progress. Often such mental stillness might delude one into the belief that the goal is reached. One has to push deeper and deeper by persisting in the enquiry for the source of the 'I' by questioning 'for whom is this peace?' Beyond a point effort ceases, then effort would be impossible. The

'inner magnet', the Heart, would take over and draw one within — the enquirer, the individual, would be lost in the divine current, in the Whole. The bliss of truth would be overwhelming when this union of the individual and the divine takes place. The 'steady river of peace' would reign supreme for our natural state of bliss and oneness would have been discovered. Joy would remain as a constant under-current. Activity would not be a disturbance to the overflow of the bliss within making each movement of our life new and vibrant.

There is no principle that actions can be performed only on the basis of the 'I-am-the-doer' idea, and therefore there is no reason to ask whether they can be performed and the duties discharged without that idea. To take a common example, an accountant working all day in his office and scrupulously attending to his duties might seem to the spectator to be shouldering all the financial responsibilities of the institution. But, knowing that he is not personally affected by the in-take or outgoings, he remains unattached and free from the 'I-am-the-doer' feeling in doing his work, while at the same time he does it perfectly well. In the same way, it is quite possible for the wise house-holder who earnestly seeks liberation to discharge his duties in life (which, after all, are his destiny) without any attachment, regarding himself merely as an instrument for the purpose. Such activity is not an obstacle on the path to Knowledge nor does Knowledge prevent a man from discharging his duties in life. Knowledge and activity are never mutually antagonistic and the realization of one does not impede performance of the other, nor performance of one the realization of the other.

— Bhagavan

THE DIRECT PATH

"This path (*atma-vichara*) is the direct path; all others are indirect ways. The first leads to the Self, the others elsewhere. And even if the latter do arrive at the Self, it is only because they lead at the end to the first path, which ultimately carries them to the goal. So, in the end, the aspirants must adopt the first; why not do so now? Why waste time?"

— Sri Bhagavan (from *Conscious Immortality*, P. 176)

THE NEED OF ULTRA-MYSTICISM

By Paul Brunton

The following is a chapter from 'Conscious Immortality' a new book published by the Ashram in February.

ALL metaphysical discussion is profitless unless it causes us to seek within the Self for the true Reality.

One can and often does go through numerous books, a whole library perhaps, and yet comes out without the faintest realisation of what he IS. Learning often renders a disservice when through it one's egotism develops with his study, and also pride: these prove serious obstacles to progress.

All controversies about creation, the nature of the universe, evolution, the purposes of God, are useless. They do not conduce to our true happiness. People try to find out about things which are outside of them before they try to find out "Who am I?". Only by the latter means can they gain happiness—not by understanding the whole universe. For the Self is happiness.

Ananda is the bliss of not being disturbed by any mental activity or characteristics. There is a temporary bliss and a permanent one. The former state is called *Kevala Samadhi*. The latter is called *Sahaja Nirvikalpa Samadhi* i.e. the state of *Nirvikalpa* that has become natural.

The *Jnani* in the former state enjoys the bliss of *samadhi* arising from the cessation of mental activity and disappearance of outside objects. But after a while his bliss ceases as mental activities begin and there is no *samadhi* for a time. But the latter state means that there is no relapse into mental activities etc. and no consequent loss of bliss. His happiness is unbroken and ever enduring. His body, senses and mind may be operative, though, but the person is hardly conscious of the acts of his body.



Q. : Are there thoughts in *samadhi* or not?

A. : There will only be the feeling "I am" and no other thoughts.

Q. : Is not "I am" a thought?

A. : The egoless "I am" is not a thought. It is realisation.

Mental quiet is easier to attain, and earlier, but the ultimate goal is mental destruction. Most paths lead to the first, whereas self-enquiry, leads to it quickly and then to the second. Find where mind takes its rise, or who is mentally quiet and you succeed.

Q. : What particular steps will be helpful to mind control?

A. : That depends on circumstances of each. Bhakti, Karma, Jnana and Yoga are all one. You cannot love God, without knowing Him nor know without loving Him. Love manifests in everything you do and that is karma.

The adoption of mental perception (yoga) is the necessary preliminary before you can know or love God in the proper way.

The *Jnanis* point out that the Yogi assumes the existence of the body, its separateness from the Self and therefore advises effort for the re-union by practice of Yoga. The body is in the mind which has the brain for its seat which again functions by the light borrowed from another source, as admitted by the Yogis themselves in their fountain theory. The *Jnani* further argues if the light is borrowed it must come from its native source. Go to the source direct and do not depend on borrowed resources. Just as an iron ball comes into being as separate from the mass of iron along with fiery heat it cools down later giving up the fire, but must be again made fiery to reunite with the mass, so also, the cause of separation must also form the factor of union. Again if there is an image reflected, there must be a source and also accessories like the sun, a pot of water, for reflection. To undo the reflection, either the surface may be covered corresponding to our reaching the fountain according to the Yogis; or the water may be drained away which is called *tapas* i.e. the thoughts or the brain activities are made to cease: this is *Jnana Marga*. All these are however on the assumption that the *jiva* is separate from Self or Brahman. But are we separate? "No" says the *Jnani*. The ego is simply wrong identity of the Self with the non-self as in the case of a colourless crystal and its background. The crystal though colourless appears red because of its background. If the background is removed, the crystal shines in its original purity. So it is with the Self and the *anthakaranas*.

Q. : There are four times in my life great spiritual ecstasies came and went. I want them permanently.

A. : They have come and gone, but *you* have not gone. Your real Self is still there!

There is a unity really, but intellect makes the differences. Yet intellect is a power (faculty) of the Self. But the Principle which lies behind the intellect, cannot be known by the intellect.

However much you learn, there will be no bounds to knowledge. You ignore the doubter but try to solve the doubts. On the other hand, hold the doubter and the doubts will disappear.

Yoga and meditation are for ordinary people. *Vichara* is for the wise. *Vichara* is the means to get realisation.

There are men of giant intellect who are spending their lives in discovering knowledge about many things; but all this intellect is being turned *outwards*. What is the use of knowing about everything when you do not yet know yourself. Ask these men if they know who they are, and they will hang their heads in shame.

Q. : What is the difference between meditation and *Vichara*.

A. : Meditation can be upon an external or other object. Thus subject and object differ. In *Vichara* both subject and object are the same—the Self.

I never knew of these philosophical conundrums and controversies and problems till after I came to Tiruvannamalai and people began to pester or come to me. Up till then I had never concerned myself with them. I never knew any system of philosophy. All these systems have evolved out of the one *simple* fact of Realisation. Therefore seek realisation, practice *vichara* and do not worry about philosophies and systems and problems.

But all these rules regarding hours etc. of meditation are only for beginners. There will come a time when you will say "I have given up meditation", because then you will have realised that the idea connotes duality, viz. a person who meditates, and an object of meditation, and you will perceive the standpoint of the true Self which does not need to meditate.

Let us not begin to exercise our intellect upon *Atman* by trying to find of what sort is the self-effulgence of this *Atman*, whether it is of this sort or that. It is such discursive thought that constitutes our bondage.

Ecstatic experience imply association of very subtle mind. What is your state in sleep? No ecstasy nor pain, but beyond both. The natural state is just that with conscience of existence added.

The final obstacle to meditation is ecstasy; do not yield to it but pass on to the sixth stage which is great calm. The calm is higher than ecstasy and it merges into *samadhi*. Successful *samadhi* causes a waking sleep state to supervene, when you are always Consciousness, for Consciousness is your nature. Hence a man is always in *samadhi*. Only he does not know it; all he has to do is to remove the above obstacles.

Yes, intellect can be a help towards realisation up to a certain stage. But intellect must vanish to reach the Self.

Q. : How does book-lore help?

A. : Only so far as to make a man spiritually aspiring.

Q. : How does intellect help?

A. : Only so far as to make him sink his intellect in the ego and ego in Self. After realisation all intellectual loads are thrown overboard as flotsam. Whose is the intellect? It is man's. Intellect is only an instrument.

The study of the sacred books will not suffice to reveal the truth.

So long as *vasanas* are latent in the mind, realisation cannot be achieved. *Sastra*-learning is itself a *vasana*. Realisation is only in *samadhi*. *Samadhi* alone can reveal it. Thoughts cast a veil over reality and so it cannot be clear in states other than *samadhi*.

Ramana's "DISCIPLES"

In the review of the book *Bhagavan and Nayana* (p.274 of Oct.'83 issue), one of the sentences claims 'Nayana' (Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni) to be "the only accepted disciple" of Sri Bhagavan and that "it is well known that the Maharshi always refused to own any disciples but the Muni was a thundering exception". May I call attention to the following passage from the Ashram's own publications.

In *Talks* No.281, p.238, He says, "I do not consider anyone to be my disciple . . . If the people call themselves my disciples I do not approve or disapprove. In my view all are alike. They consider themselves fit for being called disciples. What can I say to them? I do not call myself a disciple or a Guru". Sri Bhagavan often explained the reason why in His view there were no disciples. When Paul Brunton asked Him to accept him as a disciple, He replied, "What is all this talk of Masters and disciples? All these differences exist only from the disciple's standpoint. To the one who has realised the true Self there is neither Master nor disciple. Such a one regards all people with an equal eye". (see *The Maharshi and His Message*, 6th impression, p.49, and *Self Realization*, 7th ed., p.243).

And when Major Chadwick once asked Sri Bhagavan about His saying that He had no disciples, He explained, "For the *Jnani* all are one. He sees no distinction between Guru and disciple. He knows only one Self, not a myriad selves as we do, so for Him how can there be any distinction between persons?" though He went on to add the assurance, "However, for the seeker the difference between persons is very real. For him there is undoubtedly the relationship of Guru and disciple". (see *A Sadhu's Reminiscences*, 3rd ed., p.73; compare also *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, pp.141-2)

Because there was no duality or diversity in the view of Sri Bhagavan, He looked upon all people alike and hence He made no distinctions. This was clearly stated by Him on one occasion when, in reply to a question put by Devaraja Mudaliar as to how He could observe distinction among His devotees, He said, "To me, there is no distinction. Grace is flowing like the ocean ever full. Everyone draws from it according to his capacity" (see *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*, 2nd ed., p.67).

— Devotee

THE POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

By Douglas E. Harding

FOR the past hundred years or so the press has been pouring out a flood of books, mostly American, about the alleged "power of positive thinking". They claim to teach the reader "the science and art of mental magic", or "how to work miracles through will-power or concentration", or "how to realise one's ambitions through visualization or self-suggestion". While they differ very widely — varying from unashamed materialism to a kind of spirituality — they all draw upon the incontrovertible fact that one's health, wealth, and success are largely governed by one's mental attitude. Anyone who is optimistic, resolute, committed, an ardent believer in the goal he or she is aiming at, is very much more likely to get there than someone who is half-hearted, let alone someone who is pessimistic and wavering and fearful of failure. No doubt about it positive thinking pays off. Nor is it merely that such a frame of mind naturally generates sustained and effective work, which in its turn naturally generates achievement. It's as if the mind itself acts directly, you could say magically, upon things and people, influencing them in the direction of its intentions.

"Until one is committed there is hesitation, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself then Providence moves too.

"All sorts of things occur to help one that would otherwise never have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have come his way.

"Whatever you can do or dream you can — begin it. Boldness has genius and magic and power in it. Begin it now".

These are Goethe's words, and he is right. The evidence for the effectiveness of this kind of magic is plentiful and convincing. It supports and is supported by the "idealist" philosophy which claims that the Universe itself is the product of mind, apart from which it has no substance at all. Ramana Maharshi agrees: "The world is your thought... your own imagination". According to this view, "reality" — including the so-called physical Universe — owes its existence to the fact that it is consistently and persistently imagined. It follows that an individual's ability to picture his or her future circumstances, projecting them powerfully upon the shape of things to come, necessarily does much to change that shape.

All this is well-known, if not generally accepted in practice. So is the negative side of this mental magic, and indeed of magic in general. Would-be magicians beware! Your spells, woven out of strong desire and vivid imagination and re-inforced by one-pointed action, are pretty sure to work outwards upon your circumstances; and no less sure to boomerang, to work back powerfully upon you. In the short term you may well get more or less what you want — in skills and goods and recognition — and in the longer term you pay the price, perhaps a very high one. You gain one thing, at the cost of losing something more subtle and precious — may be. It's unlikely that your magical successes will find you much happier and fulfilled than before, or less dependent upon further success. As for the ultimate goal of complete and lasting satisfaction, there's no reason to suppose that any amount of magic could bring it an inch nearer.

There are two main alternatives to this sort of mental magic, with its prospect of profits balanced against losses. The first is to muddle along as usual, thinking and feeling positively

or negatively as the mood takes one, and attempting no magic and no miracles — hoping for the best, fearing the worst, and getting some of both. Call it the *normal* attitude, in contrast to the *magical*. The third attitude, which we may call the *mystical*, is even more unlike the magical, in fact its precise opposite. Whereas the ordinary man says “My will be done — I hope”, and the magician says “My will be done — I insist”, the mystic says “Thy will be done — I know”. He submits with his whole heart at all times and in all things to what *is*, to God’s designs for him as perfectly displayed in his present circumstances, and leaves his future wholly in God’s hands. The normal man would like to win, the magician is determined to win, the mystic is content to surrender. His attitude could not be more different from theirs.

Yet here’s a very curious thing, a contradiction which has puzzled me for years and is my main reason for writing this article — in the hope of clearing the matter up at last. I’m referring to the strange fact that the authors of the saner and sounder of these books about mental magic and positive thinking aren’t content with promoting that attitude, but also urge us to place our life in God’s hands, to sail with and not against His wind, to swim with and not against His current. I have been amazed to find they betray no sense that they are contradicting themselves and proposing an impossibility — not just in theory but, more importantly, in practice. How on earth can the mood, the attitude which announces “I’m going to get what I want by working a miracle!” co-exist with the mood which says “The one real Miracle is already in progress — the incredible Miracle of His Being and creation, in whose perfection I fully share!”? How can I make demands, *and* surrender unconditionally?

For our example of this confusion in thinking (and, it must follow, in practice) let’s take one of the earliest and best of these books — Ralph Waldo Trine’s *In Tune with the Infinite*. Here is a typical excerpt:

“This is the law of prosperity: When apparent adversity comes, be not cast down by it, but make the best of it, and always look forward for better things, for conditions more prosperous. To hold yourself in this attitude of mind is to set in operation subtle, silent and irresistible forces that sooner or later will actualize in material form that which is today merely an idea. But ideas have occult power, and ideas, when rightly planted and tended, are the seeds that actualize material conditions.

“Never give a moment to complaint, but utilize the time that would otherwise be spent in this way in looking forward and actualizing the conditions you desire. Suggest prosperity to yourself. See yourself in a prosperous condition. Affirm it calmly and quietly, but strongly and confidently. Believe it, believe it absolutely. Expect it, keep it continually watered with expectation. You thus make yourself a magnet to attract the things that you desire. Don’t be afraid to suggest, to affirm these things, for by doing so you put forth an ideal which will begin to clothe itself in material form. In this way you are utilizing agents among the most subtle and powerful in the universe”.

This is sheer, unadulterated, unashamed magic, poles apart from the religion of the world’s saints and sages. Yet elsewhere in the very same book we read:

“Life then ceases to be a plodding, and moves along day after day much as the tides flow, much as the planets move in their courses, much as the seasons come and go.

“All the frictions, all the uncertainties, all the ills, the sufferings, the fears, the forebodings, the perplexities of life come to us because we are out of harmony with the divine order of things. They will continue to come as long as we so live. Rowing against the tide is hard and uncertain. To go with the tide and thus to take advantage of the working of a great natural force is safe and easy. To come into the conscious, vital realization of our oneness with the Infinite Life and Power is to come into the current of this divine sequence. Coming thus into harmony with the Infinite brings us in turn into harmony with all about us”

Note which Trine puts first here — the Infinite — and which second — the finite. In this excerpt his priorities are those of real

religion, not of magic. It is possible that Trine himself found no difficulty in reconciling these contrasting attitudes to life — of deliberate manipulation on the one hand and deliberate compliance on the other. May be he had a secret way of rowing with God's current, yet against it; but his book doesn't let us into the secret. He isn't alone. In a number of the better trainings and seminars that are nowadays on offer, as well as in their associated literature, the same confusion or double-talk is apparent. With one breath they urge us to rouse ourselves and harness all our powers of imagination and desire to work the miracles that will transform the world and make our lives work the way we want them to work; and with the next breath they urge us to abandon desire and choose what *is* and recognize in what actually happens our deepest intention.

If you feel that I'm finding a contradiction in strategy where there is only a tactical difference or that I'm exaggerating the practical difficulty of reconciling these two attitudes, please consider what the world's spiritual leaders have had to say on the subject of making sure you get what you want. Somebody asked Ramana Maharshi how he could develop will-power. Maharshi replied: "Your idea of will-power is success assured. (Real) will-power should be understood to be the strength of mind which makes it capable of meeting success or failure with equanimity . . . Why should one's efforts be attended with success? Success develops arrogance and one's spiritual progress is thus arrested. Failure on the other hand is beneficial; in as much as it opens one's eyes to one's limitations and prepares one to surrender oneself. Self-surrender is synonymous with eternal happiness". And Rumi, the greatest of the Sufi masters, went so far as to declare that "Unsuccess is the guide to Paradise".

How remote this is from the philosophy that brands the very thought of failure as negative thinking, leading to every sort of unhappiness and disaster! All the great spiritual traditions insist that Liberation (alias Salvation, Enlightenment, Self-realisation, Awakening) is at least as consistent with what the world calls

SONNET

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

**In future, Mind! You shall not be allowed
Idly to indulge in praise or blame,
Since, ultimately, "What is in a name"?
The head of opposites is humbly bowed
Alike to daylight and to rainy cloud -
Beyond us, all that is is all the same,
Only the naked Process dares to claim;
Loneliness is another name for crowd.**

**Even as crowd, a cunning synonym
For loneliness aching for the Alone,
Children of earth are heavenly cherubim,
Sperms of the Unknown spilled into the
known**

**Each birth being a horizon to caress
Ages and ages of earth's loneliness.**

object failure as with success. A vivid illustration of this sobering fact is the following story of Meister Eckhart's.

God said to him: 'Go to the church and there you will find a man who will show you the way to blessedness'. There he found a poor man whose feet were torn and covered with dust and dirt, and all his clothes were hardly worth three farthings. And he greeted that poor man, saying:

'God give you a good day'

He answered: 'I have never had a bad day.'

'God give you good luck'.

'I have never had ill luck'.

'May you be happy. But why do you answer me thus?'

'I have never been unhappy'.

'Pray explain this to me, for I cannot understand it'.

The poor man answered: 'Willingly. You wished me a good day. I never had a bad day; for if I am hungry I praise God; if it freezes, hails, snows, rains, if the weather is fair or foul, still I praise God. Am I wretched and despised, I praise God, and so I have never had an evil day. You wished that God would send me luck. But I never had ill luck, for I know how to live with God, and I know that what he does is best; and what God gives me or ordains for me, be it good or ill,

I take it cheerfully from God as the best that can be, and so I never have ill luck. You wished that God would make me happy. I was never unhappy, for my only desire is to live in God's will. And I have so entirely yielded my will to God's that *what God wills, I will*.

Is this positive thinking, or negative thinking? Beyond question, this is *absolutely* positive thinking! Compared with Eckhart's poor man, who indeed had reason to call himself a king, the most aggressively optimistic and effervescent and positive of mental magicians is hesitant and on his guard and at least partially negative; for his magic to work at all it has to work against resistance, against circumstances that he finds undesirable and in need of changing. Thus his positivity is necessarily partial, relative to the negativity it requires and combats. Not so the positive thinking of Eckhart's poor man, which is unconditional and unlimited. As Ramana Maharshi points out, "Identity with Brahman places the man in harmony with *everything*, and there is nothing apart from the Self".

So our criticism of the practitioners of mental magic — of the positive thinking which needs and even creates negative resistance — is that though they have the right idea they don't carry it nearly far enough. They are insufficiently positive, indeed insufficiently expert at magic. The only way to unleash irresistible magic, and to think and feel without any negativity, is to station oneself where one has always been anyway, namely at the Source of all — the unthinkable Origin which is the only real Magician and the only real Power and the only real Affirmation free from trace of denial. Re-join that sole and wholly positive Source, and see if you have any need or inclination deliberately to modify some of its products in the interests of others. See whether you then have any use, in the light of the total Miracle of the Source, for particular miracles, or special acts of positive thinking. In any case, do you as an *individual* wield any power at all, let alone magical power? Just how many Powers are there?

There remains this practical question: When one's thinking and feeling thus become absolu-



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tely positive (saying YES to everything), and one's proficiency at mental magic becomes total (taking on the role of world-creator), is one then likely to bother as a human being to plan or achieve anything at all? Since all is perfectly acceptable as it is, any interference could only upset or cloud the rightness of things — or so it would seem.

Actually the problem exists only in theory. In practice, it isn't that one sees something wrong, some negativity, some gap or deficiency in God's otherwise perfect arrangements, and accordingly tries to make good that deficiency by positive thinking and action. No: rather it is that, as Space or Capacity for the world, one is forever the same and free of ideas or intention or drive or action; while the world that fills this Space is *all* ideas and intention and drive and action, ever on the move, ever "correcting" the old by means of the new. And this busy scene includes the things these hands are observed to do, and where these feet are observed to go, and what sounds are heard to issue from here. In other words, at this level one doesn't initiate action (the No-thing here does no-thing) but finds it going on anyhow. These hands and this typewriter are at this moment producing these words, and there's no experience of somebody here stringing the words together. Right here, nothing is initiated; no separate and special events are being contrived and set in motion. They are witnessed as the rest of what's going on is witnessed. The flow of these words is no more (and no less) the product of intention than the flow of the river and of the clouds in the sky.

Returning, then, to our practical question: when you consciously become Who you are anyway (and accordingly your attitude is wholly accepting and positive) will you find a lessening or an increase in the activity going on around you — activity that others naturally attribute to your human manifestation? In plain terms, are you as a human being less (or more) positive and creative and energetic when you start living from the truth that intrinsically you aren't a human being at all?

The answer is: see Who you are, and then see what you get up to. In any case the history

of the true mystics suggests that on average they were much more effective than the ordinary person. Clearly many of them changed the course of history. What would this Species be like without its saints and sages?

They were the great ones. You, dear reader, are no different essentially. You also think and feel and act positively (in the absolute sense) directly you wake to your true Nature. And, as Ramana Maharshi tirelessly pointed out, awaking to that Nature is the simplest and most natural thing you could ever do. You have only to stop pretending.

In conclusion, there's no way up from the very partial and relative positive thinking which Trine and company advocate, to the Absolute Positivity that you already are. The traffic is all in the other direction, down from the Source to its products. So it all comes to a question of getting your priorities right, of putting first things first. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added". No accumulation or manipulation of these things will get you into the Kingdom — the Kingdom you never left. "Find the Self", says Maharshi, "and all problems are solved". Ignore the Self, and no amount of positive thinking or mental magic will get you out of trouble.

**He who has his mind in check
Needs no aid of incantations;
He who knows the body from the Self
Needs no penance to perform;
He who realises Thee as all
Need not pass through the stages of life;
He who shuns all evil passions
His past or future need not mind.**

— Tyagaraja

TWO DECADES OF

TO THOSE WITH LITTLE DUST

It is related (and the story is no less significant whether historically true or not) that after attaining Enlightenment the Buddha's first impulse was to abide in the effulgence of Bliss without turning back to convey the incommunicable to mankind. Then he reflected: "Some there are who are clear-sighted and do not need my teaching, and some whose eyes are clouded with dust who will not heed it though given, but between these two there are also some with but little dust in their eyes, who can be helped to see; and for the sake of these I will go back among mankind and teach". It is for those with little dust in their eyes that this journal is intended. Theoretical understanding is not enough. Neither is belief in the sense of a conviction that this or that will happen after death. What is needed is to set one's hand to the plough, as Christ put it, to undertake the true alchemy, transmuting the dross in one's nature to gold. This is the quest of the Sangraal, the search for the elixir of life, the eternal youth of the Spirit. It is the pathway of the heroes, the way from trivialities to grandeur. Its consummation is like waking up from a dream into the ever-existent Reality.

FROM THE EDITORIAL OF THE MOUNTAIN PATH, JANUARY, 1964

BY ARTHUR OSBORNE

THE GOLDEN MASTER

(Composed by the eminent poet, **Harindranath Chattopadhyaya** in the Ashram Hall, crowded with devotees on the night when death had claimed the body of Sri Ramana).

Grief hath grown silent with its own excess
And will not weep lest it betray his trust;
Even in this dark hour of dire distress
He lights the flame of knowledge through our dust.

Illumining its blindness wide and far
He glitters from his heaven of deathless grace
In every speck and stone, in every star
We see the lonely wonder of his Face.

May he forgive our wavering faith, forgive
The folly of our doubts whose eyes are dim;
How dare we move or breathe except through him?
How could we live if he should cease to live?

MOUNTAINPATH, JANUARY, 1964

'THE MOUNTAIN PATH'

BHAGAVAN IN THE HEART

(From a record kept by Ethel Merston)

I was torn as to whether to return to Europe to see my friends and relatives after nine years of absence or whether to stay on with Bhagavan I could not make up my mind. In the end I put the question verbally to Bhagavan himself. I sought him out on the hill during his morning walk and he replied in English that destiny decides where the body shall go; I couldn't. But my real nature always stays everywhere with me wherever I am. "So be in it. Wherever you are, remember, Bhagavan is there in your heart watching over you".

AHAD

By Arthur Osborne

**Before the beginning He was,
Beyond the ending He is,
Hidden in the heart of man,
Flared forth in a myriad stars and a bird's song**

**Unchanged and unbegun,
Unfellowed, He, the One,
The all He is, the Alone,
Otherness but a dream gone on too long.**

A RAGING FIRE

By "Sein"

It is against the spirit of our age to flee SAMSARA for solitude. Some even ridicule those who do.

Yet SAMSARA is a raging fire and those who fall into it are destroyed

Some can remain near the fire without getting scorched, can even use it, but how few!

Whether we flee from it or not, the fact remains that it is a fire. How few can avoid its flames, how few can be like King Janaka!

To escape from it is absolutely necessary, yet in the present age Bhagavan has assured us that the escape may be an inward one. One way or the other, whether by inner aloofness or by solitude, escape we must!

MOUNTAIN PATH, APRIL 1964

SADHANAI SARAM

By Sadhu Om

Sadhanai Saram (*The Essence of Spiritual Practice*) is a collection of Tamil poems and songs composed by Sri Sadhu Om, consisting of a total of 523 verses, most of which were written in reply to questions raised by aspirants on various aspects of spiritual practice. The whole work is divided into 86 chapters and contains numerous clues and ideas of encouragement and advice to help aspirants who are following the paths of Self-enquiry and self-surrender, the two principal paths taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Sadhanai Saram was recently published as a book in Tamil, and an English translation of it will be serialized in **The Mountain Path** beginning from this issue.

Invocation

1. O Sri Ramana, bestow Your Grace upon me so that I may in experience flawlessly attain the unequalled and unsurpassed essence of the *sadhana* of Self-knowledge, the excellent path 'Who am I?' which you have discovered to be the central and foremost among all the various paths.

2. O Sri Ramana, the Heart, who through Your Grace protects me at every moment by guiding me along the correct path, rise from within and teach me the true import of Your divine and unequalled teachings so that I may know them in their undefiled pristine purity.

2. The Greatness of this Birth

3. However many crores of births they may take, it is indeed very difficult for anyone to have the opportunity of gaining such a great benefit as that which is gained in this birth of ours, in which we have come to the Feet of Bhagavan Ramana, who is a rare treasure for the world. So great is the benefit of this birth.

3. The Body and Yoga

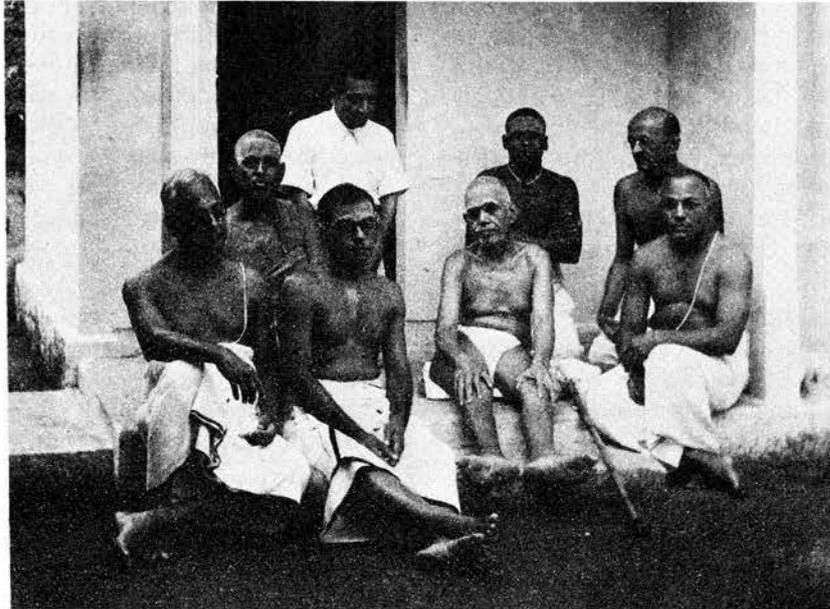
4. If it is asked, 'Why is it said in scriptures that for attaining Self-experience the human body is best?', it is in order to reveal that this body alone enables one to have the keen discrimination (*viveka*) to scrutinize the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep (and thereby to attain Self-knowledge).

Note: Sri Bhagavan used to say that plants are always in sleep, that animals are always either in sleep or in a dream-like state, that celestial beings are always in the waking state, and that human beings alone experience all the three states (compare *Talks* No.617, p.580). Since the ability to scrutinize all the three states and thereby to discriminate and understand that one's true nature transcends the limitation of these states, is a priceless aid for attaining Self-knowledge, it is said in scriptures that the human birth is the most favourable.

5. (When the scriptures say that the human birth is the best, they mean only what is said above) "After it has come to you, cherish this human body" is not at all the meaning of that saying. The destiny (*prarabdha*) which has given you this human body will cherish (or protect) it. (Therefore, without worrying about protecting the body) you should earnestly make effort to remove the delusion 'I am this body' by intense enquiry (*vichara*).

5. A human body is necessary (in order for us to attain Self-knowledge); all right, it has now come to us. But if we still have a liking for this human body (and if we desire to make it healthy and strong), the attachment to it in the form 'I' and 'mine' will increase, and it will not help us in the least to destroy the feeling 'I am this body' (*dehatma-bhava*). That (desire to protect the body and to make it healthy and strong) is indeed an obstacle (to the attainment of Self-knowledge).

7. These (ideas expressed in the above three verses) are an expanded elucidation to make



us clearly understand the true import of the *Jnana*-precept given by Sri Ramana (in verse 12 of *Ulladu Narpadu - Anubandham*) which says, "Trying to know the (real) Self and at the same time cherishing the (unreal and) perishable body, is like taking hold of a crocodile in order to cross a river".

4. Endeavour and Result

8. For those who seek and make effort to attain Self, not only Self but also all other benefits will automatically be attained in full. But if one desires and makes effort to attain worldly objects (either through worldly endeavours or through spiritual practices), know that they will be attained only partially and to the extent of one's endeavour, and that Self will not be attained at all.

5. The Goal

9. If we deeply ponder over the natural yearning of all living beings to remove their miseries (through some means or other), it will be decidedly known that the sole aim for which the whole world is striving is only to remain always in perfectly imperishable bliss.

10. If the people of the world still do not cease making efforts, the conclusion we must come to is that they have not yet attained perfect happiness, is it not? Whoever among the people has obtained complete content-

ment and has therefore ceased making any kind of effort is truly one who has attained all that is to be attained.

6. Which is Greater?

Refrain

Is the Giver (God) greater, or are these gifts (the body and the world) greater?

Sub-refrain

O you who, having left aside the Giver, are wandering through so many births clinging to the body and world (which are given by Him) and seeking to derive happiness from them, (is the Giver greater, or are these gifts greater?)

Stanzas

11. For how many days are these gifts (the body and the world) given to you? For how many days more can you play with them? For what purpose were they given to you? Why have you not yet discovered that purpose? If (throughout your life) you cling to the Giver, He will thereafter give you even greater gifts than before. Therefore (is the Giver greater, or are these gifts greater?)

12. (O child) your mother has purchased and given you a doll made of clay. But is not the love of your mother greater and more dear to you than that clay doll, however pleasing it

may be to your eyes? (Now that hunger has come to you) your mother is calling you to come and take food. If you now cling to this clay doll (the body and the seemingly pleasurable objects of this world) instead of running to your mother, will your hunger (the longing for true happiness) subside? (Can this clay doll appease your present hunger? Therefore, is the Giver greater, or are these gifts greater?)

13. If you unceasingly adore and entreat the Giver, He will graciously give Himself to you as a gift. Therefore, if you do not give up your attachment to the body and world and cling instead to Sri Ramana, who has given these things to you, what foolishness it is! (Is the Giver greater, or are these gifts greater?)

7. True Learning

14. Learning to abide as the indestructible existence-consciousness 'I am', having known it to be different from the existence of the body this alone is true learning (the supreme science or *para-vidya*). Abiding thus, having clearly known this existence-consciousness and having thereby subsided in Self, this alone is the state of true knowledge (*jnana*).

15. Even though one's mouth is dumb, (that may be an obstacle to one's speaking but) how can that dumbness of mouth be an obstacle to one's eating and filling one's stomach? Similarly, even though one has not at all studied and learnt the scriptures, (that may be an obstacle to one's delivering long and learned lectures but it cannot be an obstacle to one's enjoying the true happiness of Self, because) to abide permanently in Self is easy.

16. All the knowledge which one learns (by studying countless scriptures) is nothing but a great store of thoughts and tendencies (*vasanas*). The pure (adjunctless and contentless) knowledge 'I am', which remains as Silence when one has completely discarded all those thoughts and *vasanas*, this alone is true knowledge (*mey-jnana*). Therefore know that all one's learning more and more is only ignorance (*ajnana*).

17. Know that making effort to achieve an inward-facing attention, which will increase the clarity of Self-awareness, instead of driving the mind outwards with great force in order to acquire the useless learning (of mundane knowledge or *apara-vidya*), which will cloud and destroy that clarity, is the truest and highest learning (*para-vidya*).

18. The knowledge of one's own Self, 'I am', alone is true knowledge (*jnana*). Whatever knowledge one has acquired of anything other than oneself, is only ignorance (*ajnana*). Know that all that is seen by one who has first known himself, will not appear to him as different from himself.

19. The greatness which one attains by learning all the arts and sciences (the sixty four kinds of mundane knowledge or *apara-vidya*) is only like a very valuable gem which one has acquired in dream. In the true awakening, the state of *kaivalya* or absolute oneness, which is like one's awakening from dream, all that mundane learning will be found to be useless and unreal like the blueness of the sky.

8. The Importance of Grace

20. The ego is only a trivial entity; besides, it is unreal (*asat*) and powerless (*asakta*). It is a mere adjunct which rises and subsides. Therefore, what a foolish idea it is to say, "The *sadhana* done by the strength of this ego will by itself bestow the goal of life; the supreme power of divine Grace is not of any consequence (and is unnecessary in order for one to attain the goal)"!

21. Is not the unreal help which one unreal man renders to another unreal man, experienced by everyone in this world as real? Therefore, O *Sadguru*, the embodiment of Grace, the sole reality, is it impossible for You to save me by dispelling the unreal ego? What doubt or wonder is there in Your being able to help me thus?

Note: A man or *jiva* is merely an unreal appearance, and hence whatever help he may seem to render to another man is also unreal. But when such unreal help rendered by an unreal man is experienced by everyone as real, why should we doubt the ability of the *Sadguru*, who alone is truly real, to render us the

real help of destroying the unreal ego? Such help from the *Sadguru* will certainly be experienced by us as more real than the help which we feel is rendered to us by others.

22. Unless our Lord, Sri Ramana, who is the form of God, Himself bestows His divine Grace, who can by his own effort attain that heroic state of firmly abiding as Self, having clearly known one consciousness other than the body to be the real 'I'?

9. The Grace of Sri Ramana

23. Sri Ramana, the Bestower of Grace, will never give the least dissatisfaction to those who weepingly pray to Him, "Make me Your possession". I know that our Lord uses countless inexpressible tricks in order to protect and save those who have become His slaves.

24. What our Lord uses to save us are tricks of Grace. Even by the skill of our intellects, it is impossible for us to know all those tricks. If He wishes, even an ocean will enter and disappear into a mustard seed. Therefore, as soon as the glance of Sri Ramana's Grace falls upon us, the Supreme Reality will be revealed.

25. Since He is not bound by time or even by the limitation of place, He will not wait for some suitable time or suitable place to bestow His Grace upon His devotees. He has far greater compassion than even a compassionate mother, who has no plan that she will give her baby milk to drink only when it cries (and hence, even without our crying for it, He will bestow His Grace upon us of His own accord).

26. O Bhagavan, innumerable are the wrongs (the mistakes and misfortunes) from which I, this poor creature, have escaped by Your Grace unknown to myself. You know all of them, but I do not know anything except enjoying the bliss of being saved by Your Grace.

27. We and all our possessions beginning with the body are in truth only the possessions of Sri Ramana. When the responsibility of saving us and protecting our possessions is borne by Him alone, why should we worry about anything in our life on this earth,

THE SEEN AND THE UNSEEN

By Mahesh A. Gavaskar

The world saw
a bud seen at night
bloomed into a flower in the morn.
Sitting beside
the bud throughout the night
I saw and saw not how it bloomed into a
flower.
The world saw the concrete
I the subtle.

thinking it to be either pleasure or pain?
Where is any such thing as suffering now?

10. The Certainty of Sri Bhagavan's Protection

28. O Sri Ramana, those who have taken refuge at Your Feet are protected perfectly not only on one or two occasions but on more than a crore of occasions. From many incidents which happen in their life, this is a truth which is clearly known to the hearts of Your devotees.

29. The state of abiding in the Heart as the Heart as it is (that is, as the adjunctless and thought-free existence-consciousness 'I am') is the ineffable and most excellent state. He who nurtures the fruit of such Self-abidance by sowing the seed of clarity of mind and by watering it with divine Grace, is only our *Sadguru-deva*, Sri Ramana.

11. The Wealth of Sri Ramana

30. The wealth of the almighty Sri Ramana's *Jnana* is a treasure which is ever available to be plundered by all people who want it, and however much it is plundered, it will never decrease even in the least. However, only good people who are true devotees know how to plunder it; though other people, who are too immature go near that treasure, cannot see anything there.

(To be continued)



GARLAND OF

By Sri Muruganar

Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

1189

The substance and the power of full
Surrender is but this state of *mouna*,
Where by inquiring who this 'I' is,
Who this ego false, one dies
And merges in the Being true
Of God impersonal, the Self.

1190

The Lord controls the doer till
The fruits of former action are
Exhausted; until then no effort
Can change the course of things
ordained,
'Tis wisdom then to rest in *mouna*.

(This stanza contains Bhagavan's message to Mother
in response to her entreaty that He should return
home.)

1191

None can oppose what is ordained
By God omnipotent. 'Tis wisdom
Then for the false, weak, villainous
mind
To cast off every care and rest
In *mouna* at His Feet.

1192

The ego image moves reflected
In the mind's waves. How to stop
This movement, how regain the state

Of stillness? Don't observe these
movements.
Seek the Self instead. 'Tis wisdom
To gain and abide in *mouna*.

1193

The seers declare that *mouna* pure
Is firm abidance in egoless, true
Awareness. For such thought-free
mouna
The means is clinging to the Self
Within the heart.

1194

When one refrains from looking out
And noting outward objects, but
abides
Within the heart in Self-awareness
The ego disappears. The *mouna* pure
That then shines forth is *jnana's* goal.

1195

The goings-on the dreamer saw
In dream are, when the sleeper wakes,
Found laughable and false. Even so
The *jnani* in his wisdom so finds
All his life's goings-on mere concepts
And appearances.

1196

When Grace supreme reveals to him
Who lay in darkness his true Being
He is overwhelmed by Siva-bliss
And in pure *mouna* disappears.

GURU'S SAYINGS

1197

When the ego shaking off
 All tricky concepts finally
 Merges in the heart, the *mouna*,
 The plenitude of Self-awareness
 Blissful, bright, this, this is what
 The sages call transcendent speech.

(*Paraa-vaak* or transcendent speech has been defined by Bhagavan as the stillness whence the 'I' sense rises, the silence whence the sound of mantra rises).

1198

"Sweet is the flute, sweet is the lute,
 Sweet, sweet the prattle of one's
 children,"
 Say those who have not with mind
 serene
 Listened for and heard God's Word
 Of grace, transcendent speech, pure
mouna.

(The quotation from the *Kural* extols the householder's joy in his children's prattle. Tiru Valluvar knew well enough and praises in its own place the bliss of pure Awareness).

1199

Unless the noise of thought subsides
 One cannot know the ineffable bliss
 Of *mouna*. But those who have seen
 the end
 Of mental movements never swerve
 From *mouna* firm even in the midst
 Of clashing arms in a battlefield.

1200

True *mouna* is the state of being
 Self-awareness in the heart
 When the false, foolish sense that
 one
 Is but the body is no more.

Mere verbal *mouna* undertaken
 Without enquiring "Who am I?"
 Is no better than a mental trick.

1201

When the mad craving for false,
 trivial
 Objects is no more, and the ego
 Is in its source absorbed and lost,
 The life of Self-awareness true
 That now shines forth is bliss
 supreme.

1202

Those in whose hearts pure *mouna* shines
 And the perennial, blissful nectar
 Of Self-awareness overflows
 Will never look at or get lost in
 This world and its false, trivial, maddening
 Pleasures.

1203

The Truth the sages clearly saw
 As the end and goal of all the scriptures,
 The conduct taught by every *dharma*,
 Is nothing but this *mouna* pure,
 This state supreme of peace serene.

1204

The glory of *mukti*, peace serene,
 Is that one gives up utterly
Dharma, *artha* and *kama*. Give up
 All thought of other ends. Pursue
Mouna alone; Siva Himself, the
 Being Supreme.

(The other values are neither good means nor ultimate ends. Self-enquiry, establishing one in the peace and bliss of one's true being, brings all other good things in its wake).

AESTHETICS IN SOCIAL LIFE

By Dr.C.Satyanarayana

DR. Annie Besant on the occasion of founding of Kalakshetra spoke: "Beauty diversified into art is the true refiner and uplifter of humanity, for it is the instrument of culture, the broadener of the heart, the purifying fire which burns up all the prejudices, all pettiness, all coarseness". In these highly expressive lines we discern the high social and cultural values of Arts and Traditions.

Culture may be defined as the sum total of the way of living built up by groups of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another. Social culture is a very important instrument in the development of a country, as it acts through family training, tradition, religious belief, literature, education and, more important than all these, its artistic achievements.

A country's penal laws may try to restrict over-indulgence, but culture makes people feel that they are not forced to obey but do it of their own free will. It gives them a sense of pride in good behaviour.

Traditional arts are integrated with life of the people and are the best unifying forces of different ethnological groups: The great epics of India, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Vishnu Purana*, the *Bhagavata Purana* and other sacred literature furnish inexhaustible source material to the traditional Arts all over India, whether to *Kathakali* of Kerala, the *Bharata Natya* of South, the *Kuchipudi* dance of Andhra or the dances of *Manipuri*. Cultural exchanges of different states of India or different countries will bring people nearer together than perhaps any other force, and bridge lands and people far and near.

Every society strives for ideal in truth, goodness and beauty. All the three are in fact one. Wordsworth says: "We live by admiration, hope and love". Man has a passion for the disinterested pursuit of truth. Socrates

exclaimed that "Whatever is beautiful is for the same reason good". Coleridge says that the secret of beauty is in unity and harmony. It results from a pre-established harmony between nature and man. Beauty is not a quality of things but it is the result of spiritual activity. According to Plotinus: "The mind could never perceive the beautiful had it not become beautiful itself. Every one must partake of the divine nature before he can discern the divinely beautiful". To Hegel "Poetry is the most universal of all Arts". Physical beauty is attractive because, said Comte, "it is a mirror of the spiritual which underlies it". Keats in his celebrated *Ode to a Grecian Urn* asserts, "Beauty is Truth, truth beauty; this is all ye know on earth and ye need to know". Carlyle remarks that the fine Arts divorcing themselves from truth are quite certain to fall mad if they do not die. Ruskin holds that men become more ethical by having a disinterested love of beauty.

The philosophy of the Beautiful is called Aesthetics. In India, Aesthetics has had a history of three millenia, like metaphysics. For Dewy the American philosopher, "all aesthetic experience is imaginary". For the Indian, aesthetics is merged with the highest truth, *Brahma Satyam*. The ultimate end of aesthetics is to help the *rasajna* to attain *moksha*. In *Taittiriya Upanishad*, *Ananda* is defined as coterminous with Brahman, the highest principle *Anando Brahmeti Vyajanat*. Aesthetic experience as pleasure is temporary. But it is only by attaining to the highest spiritual experience that the real purpose of aesthetic experience is realised. It is then only that there can be joy in the beautiful *raso vai sah, rasam hi evayam labdhvanandi bhavati*. He is truth in all its beauty and to realise Him is to taste joy everlasting.

Ananda is interpreted in two ways, the Vedanta theory and Samkhya theory.

According to Vedanta, *Ananda* is equated with Brahman; *Ananda* is bliss. Brahman represents the inner universal harmony. Common experience takes for granted that variety is the ultimate truth. The final truth lies in the unification of this variety in perfect knowledge. This harmony of the universe must be realised in one's own experience and not merely intellectually apprehended; for there can be no such thing as mediated *Ananda*. True Beauty is neither expressible in words nor knowable objectivity; it can only be realised as the joy or bliss, the intrinsic nature of the Self. According to Vedanta, the ultimate reality is *Ananda*, the bliss of Self-awareness.

According to Samkhya theory, *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are two separate elements. Their interaction produces, through the mediation of *buddhi*, *bhoga* and *apavarga* that is experience of pleasure and pain and attainment of spiritual poise by correct knowledge. Samkhya evaluates things as means of pleasure or pain of another and vice versa. This must be so until *Purusha* dissociates himself from *buddhi*, when a mental state of no pain, no pleasure comes about. This is possible only for a person who is serene like a mountain.

It is not possible for the ordinary man to become so perfect or attain that detachment. Here it is the function of high Art to help to restore that balance by leading us into a world of greatness out of our world of sordidness.

Nandikeswara is regarded to as the progenitor and patron God of Indian aesthetics. The earliest treatise on aesthetics now available is Bharata's *Natyasastra*. Bharata referred to eight *rasas*. The number of *rasas* became nine afterwards by including *santarasa*. The aesthetic concept of *rasa* corresponds to the spiritual concept of *ananda*, as the reflection (*pratibimba*) corresponds to the original. As the white light is dispersed by a prism into seven colours, the spiritual *ananda* shines refracted as nine *rasas* in the human mind. *Rasa* is the aesthetic perception of the beautiful.

The literature on aesthetics in Sanskrit is abundant. The nine *rasas* are *Sringara* (love), *Hasya* (comic), *Karuna* (pathos), *Rudra* (fury),

Vira (heroism), *Bhayanaka* (terror), *Bhibhatsa* (disgust), *Adbhuta* (marvellous), *Santa* (peace). Later on *Bhakti* (devotion), *Preyas* (friendship), and *Vatsalya* (love for the young) were included.

The main schools of aesthetic thought are:

1. *Rasavada* (aesthetic flavour)
2. *Alankara* (figures of speech)
3. *Dhvani* (suggested sense)
4. *Vakrokti* (sarcasm)

Rasavada is applicable to any art, whether it is poetics, music or painting and sculpture. The other three are applicable mainly to poetics and literature. Vamana says style is the soul of poetry (*ritiraatmaa Kaayasya*). Viswanatha says poetry is speech ensouled by aesthetic emotion (*vaakyam rasaatmakam kaavyam*). In Ananda-varadhana's view suggestion is the soul of poetry (*kaavyasya aatma dhvani*). Jagannadha Pandita goes further when he says: "Poetry is words conveying beautiful sense (*ramaniiyardha pratipaakakah sabdah kaavyam*)". These sayings give us truth of art visualised from different angles and are not mutually exclusive or contradictory.

But the crowning ideas among them all are the creative originality of the poetic imagination (*pratibha*) and suggested sweetness of poetic emotion (*rasadhvani*). *Pratibha* is innate (*naisargika*). It is the mental power which is capable of ever new forms of visualization and presentation.

From the Indian point of view, "art for arts sake" does not exist, all art is to teach delightfully and lead one to supreme bliss. Therefore the aim of Aesthetics is considered to be the same as the aim of the Veda. The Veda speaks like the ruler (*prabhu*), the *Purana* speaks like the friend (*Mitra*). In the *kavya* there is the appeal of the beloved (*kaanta*). The message of the Veda is the command of the master to be followed in an unquestioning fashion, to be literally carried out without altering a word or syllable. The *Purana* acts like the friend who does bind by a strict injunction but does so by examples; they reach through stories appealing to the heart and mind. A poetic work is like the beloved, who enmeshes her lover; the

poetic work by its beauty ensnares the listener. Mammata says that the message of polished composition is like the cajoling of the beloved.

LITERATURE

Rich and varied is the contribution of the Telugu language and literature to Indian thought and culture. The language is termed as the "Italian of the East" by the Europeans, "Great among the languages of the country", by Amuktamalyada and Srinadha, and "Sundara Telugu", by great Tamil poet Subramanya Bharathi. Great works like *Mahabharata* translated into Telugu by the three poets Nannaya, Tikkana and Yerrapragada, the *Bhagavata-Purana*, and *Basavapurana* of Somanadha, have played a great role in moulding the socio culture and religious thought not only throughout Andhradesa but also its neighbouring areas.

In the modern period the great reformer Kandukuri Veeresalingam Pantulu has through his selfless service and persuasive writings helped to spread the message of social reform in Andhradesa in the first quarter of the 20th century. "Maalapalli" of Unnava Lakshminarayana had a great impact on Telugu society, in the freedom struggle and Harijan movement.

MUSIC

During eight centuries prior to the 16th century A.D., *Bhakti* movement prevailed in the country particularly in the South. The growth of Karnatic music received the greatest impetus during this movement. Jaayapaseenani during Kakatiya rule composed two great works on music and dance, namely, *Geeta Ratnavali* and *Nritta Ratnavali*. Great musicologist Saranga Deva's *Sangita Ratnaakara* was also composed about the same time.

Annamacharya and the other Tallapaka poets composed no less than 32 thousand *kirtans* all dedicated to Lord Venkateswara. Many of their *kirtanas* are household songs even today. Annamacharya is known as *Pada Kavita Pitamaha*. In devotional music we have saint Thyagaraya, Kshetrayya, S. Mutthuswami Dikshitar, Shyamasastri and Swami Tirunaal.

DANCE

The famous *Kuchipudi* dance, the most distinctive of the traditional dances of Andhra, is called after the village *Kuchipudi* on the banks of the river Krishna. Under the impetus of Vaishnava Gurus this school of dance adopted stories from *Maha Bhagavata Purana*; hence they are called *Bhagavata Mela*. *Kuchipudi* dance is a complete form as conceived by Bharata Muni, with *laasya*, *Taandava* and *Abhinaya* gestures in the classical style.

Yakshagaana is a most popular people's dance-drama which has contributed much to benefit social life.

Bommalaata, a shadow play, was the most important village entertainment till the recent advent of the cinema.

Burrakatha is a popular entertainment in Andhra even now. Usually valour and good deeds of National Heroes are projected in these ballads.

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The contribution of Andhra kings from 2nd century B.C. to 2nd century A.D. to Art and Architecture is colossal; the Ajanta cave paintings are perfect masterpieces for all time. So are the sculptures of Amaravathi and Sripavatha, also called Nagarjuna Konda. These were the models on which the Barhut and Sanchi *stupas* were built. Far away in Bara Bodur and Cambodia the ancient monuments were also modelled on these.

Culture improves social life, social life improves culture. Culture's main instrument is Art. Art is guided by Aesthetics in the right direction.

A man does not seek to see himself in running water, but in still water. For only what is itself still can impart stillness into others.

— Chuang-Tse

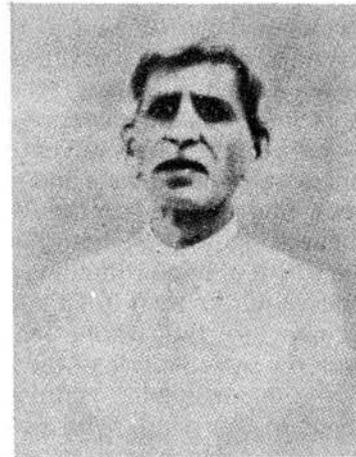
HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By M.K. Spencer

WE left Karachi for Arunachala in the beginning of the second week of July 1947, and as predicted by Ram Ram, our journey both ways, going and returning, proved the happiest in our lives. It was not only happy, because of the happy memory of the visit and the success of the mission — though that in itself would have been more than enough — but all throughout the long range of rail journey of over two thousand miles via Bombay and Madras, it was nothing but roses and roses all over. The plans of the invisible helpers seldom go awry. It was all planned by the Master.

We met at Madras, Doraswami, Swami Nityananda and Sister Lalitha and stayed in the house of Khan Bahadur Abdul Karim, a fine flower of humanity and a learned author of a book on "Islam".

Tiruvannamalai is a small railway station in South India and the village of Arunachala where Sri Ramana lives is at a short distance by road from the station. We left Madras for Tiruvannamalai by the afternoon train and arrived at our destination in about eight or nine hours. The journey was exceedingly pleasant. Arrangement was made for us to stay in a small cottage near the Ashram of the Sage. We reached it in the starry light of the night. In tune with the religious atmosphere of the whole place, the cottages were named according to religious predilections of the people. The name of our cottage was "Detachment". How beautifully it blended with our thoughts of renunciation! It was a tiny cottage with two bare wooden cots, without any mattresses or pillows, and a few pieces of the most necessary furniture. But bare in equipment it was exceedingly neat and tidy. Situated in the very heart of Nature's exuberance of foliage and trees, it was the most charming place to live in and meditate



Sri M.K. Spencer

on God — the Giver of Beauty, Light and Joy. One could go even without food, water or sleep in such a holy place.

The next morning, we went to the *ashram* and saw the Sage seated on a dais, covered with a tiger's skin in a big hall, where his devotees squatted on the floor in complete silence. The atmosphere was vibrant with waves of invisible light and joy. I saw a Master, in living flesh and blood and my intuition told me immediately as I went down and prostrated before him, that I had entered into the presence of a perfected man's aura. My whole body was vibrant and was tingling with a new feeling of light and delight, creating waves of joy sweeping me like a tidal flood. I sat in mute meditation inquiring within: "Who am I?" "Am I the body?" "Am I the mind?" "Am I the senses?". The desire to know Self which can only be accomplished by transcending the body, the senses and the mind, overawed me. The feeling of oneness with all, came gushing on me like the north wind in the wintery weather. The barrier of separateness was lifted, as I saw the Sage, the embodiment of human unity with all, sitting in stark

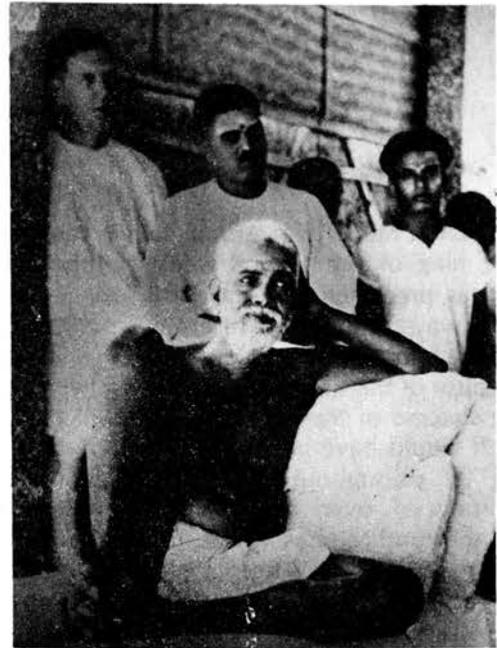
nakedness, except for the loin cloth, immersed in deep communion with the Invisible. It was soul exhilarating and intoxicating. In the ethereal silence of the hall, with the Master, as a central figure, it appeared as if God's blessedness was being vouchsafed to every one squatting on the floor. It was really a thrilling experience.

In the evening, the Sage sat in the verandah of the huge Ashram building. The vedic *mantras* were sung, creating vibrations, which when blended with the Sage's waves of divine consciousness, stirred the hearts and minds of the devotees, who squatted on the floor. The rays of the setting sun as they glimmered through the leaves of the surrounding trees, so tall and beautiful in their foliage, adding Nature's charm to the whole landscape, blended with the sacred music of the hall and created an imperishable, unforgettable impression upon the mind. Who would not love to be in such a dance of divine nature, so exhilarating to the soul, so enrapturing to the mind?

It is very rarely that the Sage speaks. His work is to lift souls, hungry for God's vision. He helps in opening the inner valves when the pupil is ready for divine comradeship. His is invisible work. He reads the mind of a devotee like a book. He knows the soul's yearning. He gave me a penetrating glance after I had squatted near him for two or three hours in the day and he knew the purpose for which I had come. When he was accosted outside the hall, after he had finished his morning work, he said to me in a few cryptic words, the significance of which I understood immediately. A thrill of delight passed through me. What a glorious time! What joy, what bliss to be in such bonds of unity with the Sage!

I was thrilled from head to foot. My wife also felt a thrill of delight and loved to be in the presence of the Master's aura.

It was the second visit of Doraswami to the Sage and he was pulsating with joy all the time. It is said, if we love God, God in return gives us a greater measure of love. How true this is, was witnessed in that Ashram of the



Sage, where Love was the Ruler and the Lord and where the very atmosphere was surcharged with the Master's superconsciousness.

We stayed at Arunachala for a few days only, seeing the Sage every day and energising ourselves with the warmth of his sacred heart.

"O, who can tell how many hearts are altars
to His praise,
From which the silent prayer ascends
through patient nights and days!
The sacrifice is offered still in secret and
alone,
O world, ye do not know them but He can
help His own".

(A.Protector)

How many thousands, footsore and weary of heart must have come for consolation and upliftment of their souls and how many must have returned home, from their pilgrimage, strengthened in soul and spirit with a determination to tread the stony path of life to the very end with cheer and perfect faith in devotion to God, the Giver of Love and Light.

"A good man and an angel! these between
How thin the barrier! What divides their

Perhaps a moment, or perhaps a year.

Angels are men in lighter habit clad,
 High o'er celestial mountains wing'd in flight:
 And men are angels, loaded for an hour,
 Who wade this miry vale and climb with pain
 And slipp'ry step, the bottom of the sea".
 (Young)

There are divine potentialities in man. He has only to look within to develop his inner capacities and rise to the highest place in the cosmos, destined for a human being.

It is the heart that is the key to divine vision and it is by thinking with the heart that the secrets of the universe could be unravelled.

We have to put out our own candle and follow the advice of the Master, whether he be a living Master or a Spirit Master for the light of His sun is a million times greater than of our earthly candle in its physical limitation. It is true in the majority of cases, as Byron says we are "Half dust, half deity, alike unfit to sink or soar". But Shakespeare had a larger vision, when he said: "What a piece of work man is! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a God!".

The keynote of divine knowledge is perfect faith in God and the Master. We want the faith of that village girl who when she was told by a sage that she could cross the river, by treading on its waters, if she had *absolute faith* in God, actually did so to the utter surprise of every one whereas the true *sanyasin*, supposed to have greater trust and faith in God could not do it.

This brings us to the question of miracles. A devotee, asked a question to the Sage: "Master, can I perform miracles as Sri Krishna and Jesus did before?" To this the Master replied: "Did any of them at the time he acted feel he was performing a miracle?" The light dawned upon the questioner immediately and he said after a while: "No, Master".

The ideal of Self-realisation is to attain the highest peak of spirituality and not to gain *siddhis* or what are called miraculous powers. In fact, when they come of their own accord

as God's will and not as desired by the devotee, they are to be used as silently and unostentatiously as possible for the good of all mankind and not to be exhibited for gaining public applause, which is unspiritual and injurious. When Christ performed miracles, He never thought He was doing any miracles. It came naturally to Him, because it was the Will of God. "I seek not my own will but the will of the Father that hath sent me" (*John Ch.V—30*). "Believe thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works" (*John XIV—10*). Really how humbly and truly Christ gives an exposition of His powers. They are not his, they are God's.

That day in the morning, Doraswami and myself had put some questions to the Sage, in the hall and he gave us illuminating replies. It is not a rule with him to answer questions in the hall, as he prefers to remain silent all the time. But it was a unique honour to us that the Sage broke his silence and replied to our queries.

We stayed only for a few days near the Sage at Arunachala (Tiruvannamalai) and on Tuesday morning, the 15th July, 1947 we made preparations to return to Madras. I sat alone and I got the following message at 7 a.m.

"Your visit has come out successful. Go again to Bhagavan. He will put you into *samadhi*. You can then go".

As directed, I went to the hall, where the sage sat as usual in his sombre, statuelike silence. There was complete silence and having prostrated myself, I squatted on the floor. In that pin drop silence, it appeared, as if it were, that I was not living in physical body. I sat calmly, lost in meditation, entirely oblivious of what was happening around me. It was a betwitching hour. I bade adieu and then left the hall with cheer in my heart. My mission had proved entirely successful and the joy of that achievement was so great, that I felt that the gates of heaven had burst open.

Moments Remembered
by Managing Editor

HOLY OF THE HOLIEST 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

SRI Kunju Swami is at his best when he joyously narrates the sweet qualities of Bhagavan. His teaching was ennobling, but the manner of it was easy and most pleasing.

"Bhagavan's *samatva bhava* was supreme. Since He did not see anything or any body as other than Himself, every one was equal to Him. That is why when devotees appealed to Him: 'Bhagavan, you are a realised sage, not like us who are ignorant and unrealised', He cut them short 'Where is ignorance and who is the unrealised?' There was no other for Him and no gradation in spiritual evolution. It was a pity that Bhagavan saw 'no difference'. If only He could have 'seen' our sorry plight, He could have by a single wish given us instantaneous realisation!

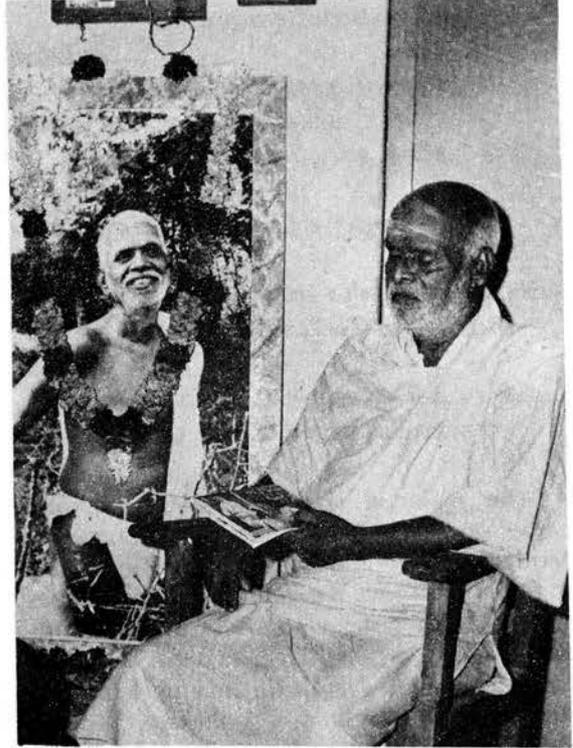
"Every one knows what great stress Bhagavan laid on *Atma Vichara*. 'Self Realisation is easy, the easiest path, easier than all other paths' — *Atma Vidya*, verse 4. Yet, not even once had of His own accord He asked any devotee to follow this method. He could have ordered practise of *Atma Vichara* and devotees would have blindly followed. Yogi Ramaiah, who was very close to Bhagavan for many, many years, used to practise Hatha Yoga. Bhagavan would approve of the Ashram providing him special restricted food. He would visit him in his cave at Palakothu. Yogi would accompany Bhagavan in His walks; others had restrictions, but the Yogi was free to be with Bhagavan as he chose. Yet, there is nothing on record to show that Bhagavan told him to do *Atma Vichara* instead of *pranayama* or Hatha Yoga. Mudaliar Patti's son, Thambiran Swami, was a Veera Saiva. He would collect flowers from

the garden only at noon, and then perform puja at the tank in Palakothu making a linga out of the flowers, and worshipping it with flowers. Day after day Bhagavan would watch this. Thambiran Swami was a very weak man, and he did his cooking after this late puja and then have his meal; it would be evening by then. Bhagavan once joked: 'Poor God! He has to wait so long for *naivedya* (offering) since the puja takes so much time to complete!' But never even once did Bhagavan tell him, 'Why do you waste your time like this; you would do well by doing *Atma Vichara*'. Bhagavan never asked even close followers why they did not meditate or do Self-enquiry. His teaching was the highest, but it was left entirely to us to practise it or leave it! What equanimity! This non-interference policy extended of course to the mundane life of the seekers. After serving Bhagavan for many years, I left the Ashram for certain valid reasons, and wished to settle in Palakothu. When I conveyed to Him my decision, He took it casually; there was no reaction in Him! Should we call this indifference? Far from it. Bhagavan would immediately place any person coming to Him after 20 years and recount what had taken place then.

"Totally dispassionate, He was never affected by anything. Nayana was very much respected by Bhagavan; but when he was to leave for Sirsi never to return to Arunachala, Bhagavan did not ask him, 'Why should you go? You can stay here itself'. Muruganar, another great devotee, used to go out abegging, while the Ashram was serving food to hundreds of people; Bhagavan never asked him why he should take the trouble of begging, when he could eat in the Ashram itself.

"Dandapani Swami was an important member of the Ashram in the early days. However, for various reasons he was asked to leave the Ashram; he would not. A team of responsible people from the town came and warned Dandapani Swami that unless he left peacefully, he would have to face dire consequences. All this took place in front of Bhagavan. He remained unmoved. The following morning, when Dandapani Swami came to Bhagavan to take leave, Bhagavan again remained unmoved. It was the same Bhagavan who had often said earlier that Dandapani Swami should be served plenty of food and drink, since he wanted and also needed it. Once when Bhagavan's own brother, Niranjananda Swami, was being physically lifted and carried away by a group of people who threatened to kill him, He was absolutely unperturbed. He did not even turn His head towards that side. In the evening when Niranjananda Swami came unharmed and sat in front of Bhagavan, He took no notice of his safe arrival. (Of course, it was His Grace alone that saved Niranjananda Swami on that day — but that is a different issue altogether)".

The other day on reading my article on Sri Muruganar in the January, '84 issue Sri Kunju Swami was happy that I had brought to light the fact that the verse அகத் தாமரை ¹ was composed by Bhagavan though the Tamil book *Sannidhi Murai* attributes it to Viswanatha Swami. He recalled how Bhagavan often obliged others by writing verses and giving the honour and ownership to them. When Bhagavan wrote, *Vichara Mani Malai*, a beautiful abridgement of the voluminous work 'Vichara Sagaram' (Ocean of Enquiry), one Sri Arunachala Mudaliar of Tiruvannamalai, wanted it published by him claiming its authorship. Bhagavan allowed him to do so. Till recently *Vichara Mani Malai* appeared in Tamil only under the name, Arunachala Mudaliar! When an English translation was made by Munagala Venkataramiah (compiler of *TALKS*), then only the facts became known to the devotees.



Sri Kunju Swami

Sri Kunju Swami then narrated another interesting incident.

"In Virupaksha cave many scholars like Vidvan Ramachandra Iyer visited Bhagavan and composed verses in Tamil in His praise. Sri Perumal Swami lamented that he lacked the ability to compose such verses. Bhagavan came to know of this and immediately composed a verse, and wrote beneath it the name of Perumal Swami. Here is the stanza:

அகத்தாமரை மலர்மீதுறை யருணாசல
ரமணன்
நகைத்தானுற விழித்தானறச்
செகுத்தானென துயிரை
மிகத்தானுள் சுரந்தானென
முகவாபுரி முருகன்
செகுத்தாருய வகுத்தான்முறை
திருவாசக நிகரே."

¹ "Arunachala Ramana, dwelling in the heart-lotus smiled and steadily looked at me and slew My little, separate Self. So singing of this flow of grace, 'Maha-vaapur Murugan', composed his Sannidhi Murai to rival Tiruvachkam itself".

“அஞ்சலென அடியர்குறை யகற்றதிருச்
 சுழியில்
 அழகனைசுந் தரனருள அவனிதனில்
 வந்தே
 தஞ்சமெனத் தாமுமவர் தன்வினைகுர்
 தடிந்து
 தன்பதத்தைத் தந்தருளப் பன்னிருகை
 தாங்கி
 விஞ்சுமனக் கஞ்சமயில் மீதமர்ந்து ஞான
 விழியாகும் வேலோச்சி வினையாடல்
 புரிவோன்
 அஞ்சடக்கி ஆறுமுக மானபெரு மாளும்
 அருணமலை ரமணனென அமருபெரு
 மாளே.”

“The six-faced Lord (Subrahmanya) who came on earth (in human form) borne by Mother Azhagu and Sundaram in Tiruchuzhi in order to remove the defects of His devotees saying, ‘Fear not, who bears twelve hands (the twelve works, Five Hymns, Upadesa Undiyar, Ulladu Narpadu, Ulladu Narpadu - Anubandham, Ekatma Panchakam, Appala Pattu, Atma - Vidya Kirtanam and Who am I?) in order to bestow, His own state by destroying the karmas of those seeking refuge at His feet, who having subdued the five senses rides upon the peacock of the elevated mind-lotus, and who plays the game of throwing the spear which is the Glance of Jnana, He is indeed the Lord who blissfully abides as Arunamalai-Ramana.”

Kunju Swami continued: “Bhagavan knew many of the heads of Mutts, in the South. The head of the famous Kovilur Mutt was invariably a learned scholar. Sri Veera Subbiah Swami, the then Head of this Mutt, was a scholar of great repute who had written many standard spiritual works in Tamil. He was a great admirer of Bhagavan; even then he knew Him only as a great *tapasvin*. It was the time when ‘Ulladu Narpadu’ was brought out. When Veera Subbiah Swami read the first invocatory verse in pure Tamil ringing changes on the root *ulla*, he was thrilled. He said: ‘The *Venba* is itself a difficult metre, which few poets dare to attempt. Bhagavan has composed all the forty verses in this metre only and that too for conveying the most

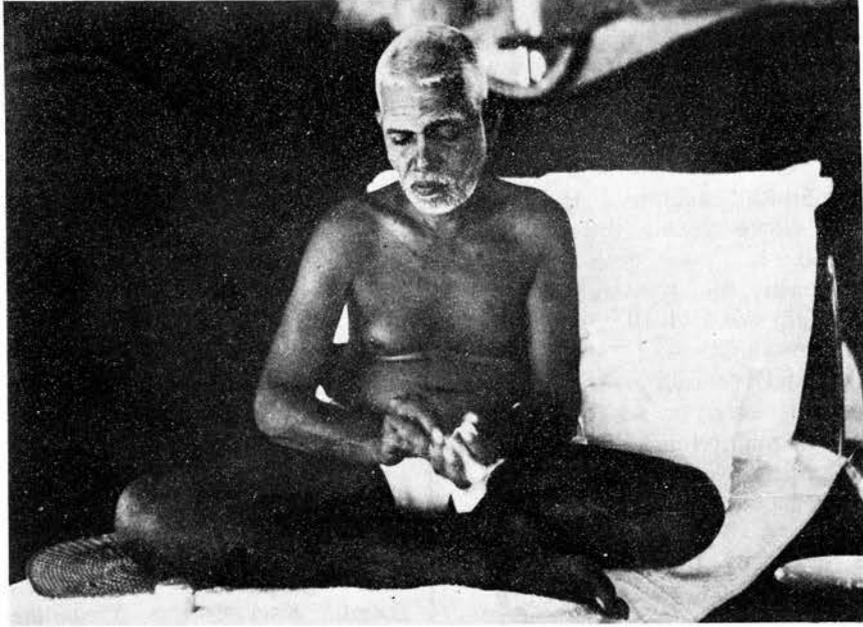
abstruse philosophical ideas. Crowning them all is the first invocatory verse. Till today I had great veneration for Bhagavan only as a *tapasvin*, but now I bow down to Him as a Tamil poet par excellence”.

The last work that Bhagavan did was the translation into Tamil *venbas* of Sankaracharya’s ‘*Atma Bhoda*’. Sri T.P.Ramachandra Iyer told me how Bhagavan completed the work, sitting the whole night with a candle light by His side, straining His already weak eyes. Kunju Swami gave me the following interesting account of its origin.

“Some time before I came to Him at Skandashram (*viz.*, before 1920) Bhagavan and others planned to spend a whole day at the Seven Springs, much above Skandashram but below the top of the hill. They took the vessels, rice and other ingredients, for cooking, and left them at the Seven Springs, and went to the top. On their return to Seven Springs, they found to their dismay that they had not brought a match-box! Bhagavan immediately remembered a *sloka* in *Atma Bodha* and recited that. It runs: “Of all the means to Liberation, knowledge, which is worth gaining by all means is alone the direct means; as without fire there is no cooking; without knowledge there is no Liberation”.²

“Years later, just before Bhagavan’s last illness, one Mr. Minna Nuruddin, a Law Officer and a competent Sanskrit scholar and fluent Tamil poet, visited the Ashram with Professor K.Swaminathan and presented to Bhagavan a printed booklet containing his Tamil rendering in eight line stanzas of Sankara’s *Atma Bodha*. At once Bhagavan recalled his old *venba* version of a *sloka*, felt the urge to pack the meaning of each *sloka* into a brief *venba* and forthwith sat down and translated

² बोधोज्ञ्यसाधनेभ्योहि
 साक्षान्मोक्षैक साधनम् ।
 पाकस्य वह्निवत् ज्ञानं
 विना मोक्षो न सिध्यति ॥



all the other stanzas into *venbas*. When this new printed booklet came out, Bhagavan was gracious to send two copies, one to Mr. Nuruddin and one to Mr. Swaminathan, to be personally handed over to them by the two devotees then on a visit to Madras, namely Dr. V. Srinivasa Rao and Sri. T. P. Ramachandra Iyer.

"When Bhagavan had completed translating *Atma Bhoda* into Tamil verses, a scholar-devotee pleaded with him that He should write a *mangala sloka* (invocatory verse) also for it. Bhagavan as usual complied with the request and wrote:

"ஆன்மாவின் போதமரு ளாசானுஞ்
சங்கரனவ்
வான்மாவுக் கன்னியனாவே-வான்மாவா
யென்னகத் தேயிருந் தின்றுதமிழ்
சொல்வானு

மன்னவ னன்றிமற் றூர்."

—'ஆன்மபோதம்'-மங்கலம்

"Can Shankara, the Enlightener of the Self, be different from that Self? Who but he does speak to-day, abiding as the Self in me and speak in Tamil now?"

"Other such invocatory verses composed by Bhagavan centre round the Self that Bhagavan was:

"Rejoice eternally! The heart rejoices at the feet of the Lord, who is the Self, shining within as 'I-I', knowing neither night nor day and putting to flight the ignorance of ego" — Invocation to Vivekachudamani³

"Atma-Sakshatkara once revealed by Ishvara, the Self to Guha is now in Tamil taught by the Same Lord, within me dwelling, the Ancient and Supreme" — Invocation to Atma Sakshatkara⁴

"That Shankara who shone as the South-facing Lord and granted peace to Great Ascetics (Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanat Kumara and Sanatsujata) by revealing his real state of Silence, and in this hymn revealed the nature of the Self, he abides in me" — invocation to Hymn to Dakshinamurthi⁵.

³"அகமெனு மூல வனித்தை யகன்றிட
வகமக மாக வல்லும் பகலற
வகமொளி ராத்ம தேவன் பதத்தினி
லகமகிழ் வாக வனிசம் ரமிக்கவே."
—'விவேக சூடாமணி'-மங்கலம்

⁴"ஆன்மாவா மீசன் குகனுக் கருள்செய்த
வான்மசாட் சாத்கார மாரும்—தான்மாவா
யென்னகத் தேயிருந் தின்றுதமிழ்
சொல்வானம்

முன்னவ னுய முதல்."

ஆத்ம சாக்ஷாத்காரம்' — மங்கலம்.

⁵"மன்னுமா முனிவரர் சாந்தி மன்னவே
தென்முக மூர்த்தியாய்த் திகழ்ந்து
மோனமாந்
தன்னிலை திகழ்த்தியித் துதியிற் றன்மயஞ்
சொன்னவச் சங்கரன் றுன்னு மென்னுளே."
—'தக்ஷிணமூர்த்தி தோத்திரம்'-மங்கலம்

"Let us meditate in the heart upon the Elephant faced God (Ganapati), embodiment of non-dual Silence gracious, blissful heavenly ambrosia, mighty fruit of jnana revealed by Devikalottaram, which Lord Siva taught through speech divine to Devi" — invocation to Devikalottara⁶.

After reading 'Gracious Ramana', my esteemed brother, Sri Ra.Ganapati — devotee, scholar-writer, — wrote to me thus: "The 'metaphysical' too is 'interesting' when Bhagavan explains why Bhakti Marga is not referred to in the *Gita sloka*, ch.III, verse 3. It sheds such light on Bhakti — all the more luminous as it is from the mouth of the Jnana Jyoti". I showed this letter to Sri Balarama Reddy, who then explained how Bhagavan tolerated and permitted everything except intolerance.

He said:

"Among His devotees there were two groups, the *Saktadvaitins* and the pure *Advaitins*, but Bhagavan was impartial and would not pass judgment for or against either group. I remember one day at about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, when very few people were present in the Old Hall, Jagadiswara Sastri asked Bhagavan: 'We are disputing among ourselves about the correct interpretation of your teachings, the *Saktadvaita* interpretation or the pure *Advaita* interpretation. Why does not Bhagavan Himself say which is correct?' Bhagavan remained silent, but after a few minutes these words came to me and I said: 'That is why He is called Bhagavan!' On hearing this Bhagavan gently smiled His agreement".

Sri Balarama Reddy then proceeded:

"What is important is not to fit Bhagavan's teaching into any already existing philosophical framework, but to start practising it. If a devotee thinks that *Sat-Darshana* teaches *Saktadvaita* philosophy, let him put it into practice. And if someone else thinks that it

⁶..தேவன் றிருவாயாற் றேவி செவிபுகட்டுந் தேவிகா லோத்தரந் தேர்ஞான—மாவினவா மானந்த வானமுத மானவரு ளத்துவித மோனக் கரியகமே முன்."

—தேவிகாலோத்தர ஞானசாரவிசாரபடலம்*
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By S. SANKARANARAYANAN



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teaches pure *Advaita* philosophy, let him put that into practice. Practice alone is important. Bhagavan's teachings can be interpreted in so many ways, and in future no doubt even more interpretations will come. That is all for good. But we should remember that Bhagavan always gave teachings according to the needs and capacity of the individual. Bhagavan Himself said that He did not teach only one doctrine, but encouraged the learner to proceed on his chosen path and at the same time pursue *atma vichara*. However, one should never forget the assertion of Bhagavan: "ஐயே அதிகலபம், ஆன்ம வித்தை" ("Self-knowledge is an easy thing, the easiest thing there is" - *Atma Vidya Song* on p. 131 of "*Collected Works*"). Self-enquiry is what He taught and what we should earnestly follow as the direct path, instead of wasting time and energy on endless disputations. Practice, is all-important".

* * * * *

"Bhagavan was the most considerate and kind-hearted, but, at the same time he was a strict disciplinarian. Bhagavan appeared indifferent to what was happening around Him, but in reality He took keen interest in the progress of seekers, particularly if they happened to be youngsters. I myself was helped by Bhagavan many times. When a crisis came whereby I had to leave Bhagavan and settle down in my native village for good, I informed Him, and He listened and nodded His head. The meaning of the nod I understood only when I received a letter from my mother that I need not leave the Presence of Sri Bhagavan and that she could attend to all our affairs in the village. This was a turning point in my worldly life, and was due no doubt to the direct intervention of Bhagavan's Grace. When I showed my mother's letter to Sri Bhagavan He read it and gave me a benign smile as if to tell me: 'Are you now satisfied?'

"I was one day going round the Hill alone at night. When I reached the *Pancha Mukha darshana* spot, where we see Arunachala's five peaks, the atmosphere was surcharged with peace and silence. At that moment I remembered how in the scriptures *mouna* had

been extolled. I felt a strong impulse to take the vow of silence and I did so. Coming to know of my vow, Sri Viswanatha Swami intimated this to Sri Swami Ramdas of Anandashram, who in turn wrote appreciating my action. Bhagavan showed this letter of Swami Ramdas to me, which is a clear indication of His approval. For some time I continued to observe silence. I used to talk only with Bhagavan if occasion arose, and to no one else!

"One evening after a period of meditation in the Presence of Sri Bhagavan in the Old Hall, when I opened my eyes I saw sitting next to me was the great patriot and sage, Sadhu Vaswani. I knew him very well as we both stayed together in the Himalayas. Apparently, no one recognised him at the Ashram. Since I was in *mounam* I did not speak to him. After some time, he left the Hall; I was absorbed in meditation.

"The following morning I searched for Sadhu Vaswani and came to know he had already left. I felt unhappy that such a great personage should leave the Ashram without proper recognition and without even being formally introduced to Sri Bhagavan. I went to Bhagavan and told him everything, adding that because of my vow of silence I could not talk to him the previous night. Bhagavan said: "You should have spoken to him". This was an indication to me to give up my vow of silence.

To show how stern Bhagavan could be, Sri Reddiar narrated the following incident:

"Bhagavan used to get up at 3.30 in the morning and go into the kitchen and start cutting vegetables and preparing ingredients, so that the lady-cooks who arrived in the morning had not much work to do except to put the vessels on the oven.

"Bhagavan would utilize every bit of the vegetables, skin, stem, leaves and all, for *Koottu*, *Chutney*, *Sambhar* or *Uppuma*. Further He would crush roots in the mortar, extract the juice and use it in *rasam*; all this involved great attention and much effort and time.

"On one occasion Bhagavan had cut spinach and brinjal the previous night and kept the 'unwanted' portions separately, for use in some combination the following morning. In the morning when He, in the usual course, went into the kitchen and asked for these odds and ends, He was told that they had already been thrown away, lest they should add to Bhagavan's work and strain. Bhagavan went out, searched for and retrieved the remnants rejected, washed them clean cut them into small pieces, used them before leaving the kitchen.

* * * * *

Professor N.R.Krishnamurti Aiyar narrated the following: "I met the boyhood friends of Bhagavan — Velachari Renganatha Iyer and Muthirulappan — and heard the following story from them.

"When Ramana was five years old he was admitted as a pupil in the Infant Standard of the Setupati Elementary School in Tiruchuzhi. Outside school hours and the hours he spent at home for eating and sleeping, little Ramana would be active playing with his friends in the spacious corridors and open spaces round the Bhuminatheswara shrine. The temple tank known as *Soola Tirtham* was a favourite haunt of Ramana and his friends. They would have any number of dips in the temple tank daily. The water being sulphurous, Ramana had no end of trouble in rubbing off the tell tale stains on his silver bangles so as to avoid parental castigation.

"One fine morning Ramana and his friends were exceptionally mirthful. Father Sundaram Iyer, was away from home. In a loft in the house were stacked bundles of old paper relating to law suits settled long ago. Little Ramana and his friends managed to climb on to the loft and take out one bundle. They soon made a large number of paper boats. Presently, a fleet of paper boats were floating in the temple tank to the great glee of the little urchins.

"When Sundaram Iyer returned home and came to know what had happened, he got very angry, and burst out: 'Strip the fellow of

THE WIND

By Arthur Osborne

**I am a pipe the wind flows through:
Be still, it is the wind that sings!
The course of my life and the things I do
And the seeming false and the seeming true
Are the tune of wind that neither knows
Good and ill and joys and woes;
Yet the ultimate awe is deeper yet
Than song or pipe or storm,
For pipe and tune are the formless wind
That seemed for a while to take form
And words are good to escape from words
And strife to escape from strife,
But silence drinks in all the waves
Of song and death and life.**

his clothes and drive him out of the house! On hearing this little Ramana disappeared.

"During midday meal, he was found missing. He was nowhere in the house, nor in the house of any of his friends, nor in the temple. Nobody had seen the boy anywhere. Had the child drowned himself in the temple tank unable to bear the parental reproof! All search was fruitless.

"Meanwhile the temple priest was preparing for the midday worship of the Deity, Mother Sahayavalli, entering the dimly lit sanctum sanctorum and removing the drapery on the image to perform *abhishekam*, (bathing), he saw behind the image another figure in a sitting posture! Stockstill, it is a little human being! Here then was the missing child. The news reached the anxious father, who rushed into the temple and carried the boy home on his shoulders. Unable to bear the parental rebuke, Ramana had sought and found solace from ever-helpful Mother, Sahayamba!"

* * * * *

Mrs. Roda McIver, of whom I am very fond, told me the following: "I was married to David McIver at Sri Ramanasramam. Bhagavan showed visible interest in the proceedings. Owing to some misunderstanding between my husband and the Ashram, we avoided the Ashram premises for some time. But I could not give up seeing Bhagavan daily. I would go

to the place on the Hill where I first met Him and wait for Him there. Each time Bhagavan would stop for a moment and look at me with great kindness. The quarrel with the Ashram management proved a blessing in disguise; I would rarely get in the Hall such a direct glance from the Maharshi as I did on the hill!"

Roda Ma added:

"Once, coming from Bombay, I brought some expensive stationery for Bhagavan. A devotee asked me why I had brought such costly stuff. I said: 'I thought stationery was needed. Could I bring something cheap?' Bhagavan intervened and said: 'But why bring anything at all, I have everything I need already'. I felt very disheartened and started thinking that what Bhagavan really needed was a pretty silver box for the nuts He kept for His bird and squirrel friends. The little iron tin He had was old and ugly. No sooner had the thought crossed my mind than some one brought a silver box which was exactly the sort I had in mind and he offered it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan would not even touch it. 'What', He exclaimed, 'a silver box? No. Please take it back. Look at this; a silver box for me! What have I to do with silver boxes?' While saying all this, He looked at me as if to say, 'The same would have happened to you and to your silver box!' Bhagavan lived a simple life and disapproved of luxury and pomp — a good lesson for all of us".

She continued:

"The monkeys were a real nuisance in those days. They would play havoc with the eatables and other things brought by devotees. When we complained to Bhagavan, He would say: 'Not many years back it was

deep jungle here, the monkeys' home. We came, cleared the ground, built houses and drove the monkeys away. Who is to blame, we or they? If they give us a little trouble, can we not bear it quietly?' Bhagavan was really fond of them. When an attendant beat the monkeys for stealing fruits, Bhagavan reprimanded him, saying: 'You are not beating the monkeys, you are beating me. The pain is mine'.

Among those who in those early days regularly supplied Bhagavan with food Mudaliar Patti and Echammal are well known. There was another generous devotee who used to feed Bhagavan and His *bhaktas* from the Virupaksha days. She was Desur Akhilandathammal who too deserves to be known and remembered. There is a little book about her in Tamil written by Sri Sadhu Om, and I hope to have an article on her soon in our journal.

Once at Skandashram when Akilandathammal served food to Bhagavan, the pet monkey 'Nondi' snatched it and ate it. When she tried to place another helping on Bhagavan's leaf, the monkey got annoyed and tried to frighten the pious lady. Bhagavan interferred and told Nondi: "Adei, Adei (hey, hey) She is our own; don't threaten her!" Akhilandathammal got the golden privilege of being bracketed with the monkey and Maharshi.

She asked, one day, "Bhagavan, please give me some *Upadesa*". Bhagavan gave her a benign look and replied: "உன்னை விடாமல் இரு" ("Be without losing awareness of your Being").

ALL A MATTER OF ATTENTION

"When attention is directed towards objects and intellect, the mind is aware only of these things. That is our present state. But when we attend to the Self within, we become aware of It alone. It is therefore all a matter of attention. Our mind has for so long been attending to external things that the latter have enslaved it and drag it hither and thither".

— Sri Bhagavan (from *Conscious Immortality*, p. 12)

SPIRITUAL HEALING

By Norman Fraser

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THERE are so many ways to obtain bodily healing — whether temporary or lasting — allopathy and homoeopathy, surgery and manipulation, hypnotic, faith, and mental healing — that the way of Truth which supercedes all the others should be of vital and practical interest to us. This is the only real spiritual healing.

All mystics have known and understood what genuine spiritual healing is. Henry Thomas Hamblin, the well-known English mystic of our times, in an inspired invocation, put it this way: *"The universal life of God is seeking to manifest, in my body, perfect health, wholeness and power"*.

There we have it all in a nutshell. We do not have to beg, plead or cajole God into doing what we want Him to do as He is already seeking to manifest perfect health in us. So first of all let us learn H.T.H.'s fundamental statement of Truth by heart. Then let us look into it.

Now, do we understand what the universal Life of God is? On the surface, yes, but deep down within us have we come to terms with something that is generally either misunderstood or never considered: the absolute ONENESS of all life? Aren't we inclined to think that we have a life of our own, that the caterpillar has a life of its own — and that the rosebush also has a life of its own — three separate and entirely unrelated 'lives' out of the countless number in the world? Worse still, don't some of us have 'healthy lives' and others 'sickly lives' which we manifest to ourselves and the world? And don't there bodily conditions depend on heredity, germs, viruses, climate, right or wrong food and drink, etc., etc.,? And yet the only Life that there is, is God!

There must be something radically wrong with all world-mind thinking on this subject. But how very difficult to shake oneself clear

of it. However, once the scales have fallen from our eyes the whole of our outlook on Life is born again, and that is a great step towards understanding what real spiritual healing is.

Life is indivisibly ONE and we all share this fundamental manifestation of God. This is the platform, the rock on which we must stand. Then what about these 'sickly lives'? But we know now, that it isn't Life that is sickly. Life is perfect. It is we, the deluded individuals, who are suffering from ignorance of the Truth which is caused by the general hypnotic state in which we live, known as 'this world'.

Yet all the time God is seeking to manifest wholeness in us and it is we, 'seeing through a glass darkly', as it were, and experiencing the fear that engenders, who are not accepting God's wholeness. It's rather as if we were out in the sunshine hoping to enjoy its healing ray while unwittingly holding up an opaque sunshade called world-mind. The sun cannot reach us so we think it is not shining and try to make it shine. The problem then, is not how to make the sun shine, but how to get rid of the unwanted sunshade. The sun is *not withholding* its rays any more than God is withholding His manifestation in us.

There comes to mind a biblical principle on which real spiritual healing is based. It is to be found in *Luke 12:31* "But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you". In other words, do not waste time seeking the 'things' but seek their Giver, He, who is seeking to manifest perfect health in us. But remember, we cannot benefit from the kingdom of God while our minds are concentrated on 'this world's appearances'.

This brings us to the subject of the spiritual healer. First and foremost he must see things as they really are and resolutely *refuse* to judge by appearances. A person may appear to be dreadfully ill — and what a temptation

that is — but the healer must *see through this* to the underlying Truth that this apparent state is nothing but a projection held in body-mind by the individual concerned. I know very well how difficult this can be, but on the other hand how can the image and likeness of God be diseased? The disease is in world-mind — or *maya* if we like to call it that — and a clear-sighted Master could 'unsee' it at once. But the person who is holding an illness in his or her mind, and therefore in the body, must either consciously or unconsciously drop it.

Unfortunately there are cases where people hang grimly on to their illnesses and diseases, and even the disciples of Jesus could not shift these stubborn minds. It takes the Christ, or full God-Consciousness, to deal with these, and we even read of Christ: "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief".

In His Almighty Wisdom God does not *compel* anyone to do anything. He 'stands at the door and knocks', and if we prefer to stew in our own juice, that is our own affair and we are left to die in our ignorance and perhaps, through sheer suffering, take heed next time.

So, if we really acknowledge God as the *only* Power, we shall surely benefit by His constant seeking to manifest perfect health in us. Then we shall also realize our wholeness and the divine All-Power for good which is at work in us and through us. Remember especially that it is never a case of sickness being *changed* into health! The Indian who saw a snake instead of a rope didn't have to *change* the snake into a rope: there was only a rope there all the time, and the snake that he saw was a mistaken appearance conjured up by his own mind. A very useful story.

It is only after the disappearance of all worldly interests that the universality of the transcendental Spirit is known.

— Yoga Vasishtha

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THE CHRISTIAN Gnostics

By Murdoch Kirby

FIRST thought I would write an article to explain the Christian Gnostics, the heretical sects driven out of the Christian fellowship in the first few centuries of the era. The name gnostic is from the greek *gnosis*, meaning knowledge and intuition: it has a connection with the sanskrit word *jnana*. When, however, I read through the literature that has come down to us, there was too much to put in an article, so I thought I would take one book, perhaps the *Gospel of Thomas*. That is a collection of about a hundred sayings claimed to have been spoken by Jesus; but how could I write an article that was not just a collection of the sayings. So, I thought, perhaps one paragraph from one book.

This is from *'The Dialogue of the Saviour'*:

"I wish to see that place of life where is no evil, only the pure light". The Lord said "Every one of you who has known himself has seen it: everything that is fitting for him to do, he does it and he has been doing it in his goodness". (*The Nag Hamadi Library* by James M. Robinson, p.233).

There are two ideas here which strike me. The first one concerns knowing oneself,

answering the question *'Who am I?'* This is referred to in another gnostic quotation:

One, Monoimus, said "Abandon the search for God and the Creation and other matters of a similar sort. Look for Him by taking yourself as a starting point. Learn who it is within you who makes everything his own and says 'My God, My mind, My thought, My soul, My body ! Who is it, who is this My?'" (*The Gnostic Gospels* by Elaine Pagels, p.18).

The second idea takes me further afield — 'everything that is fitting for him to do, he does it' — This calls to my mind the Taoist idea that one should always act according to one's own nature, taking no unnatural action, doing what is fitting for oneself and not trying to copy someone else. We each have a natural ability to do what is right for us and it is foolish to attempt things for which we are unsuited. To find out what it is that we should do we must listen for the voice or the prompting from within, and then we must do it. That will bring us peace of mind and will be, as it says in the quotation, in our 'goodness'.

MEDITATE ONLY ON THE SELF

"No meditation on an object is helpful, for this reason. You must learn to realise the subject and object as one, and in meditating on an object, whether concrete or abstract, you are destroying that sense of oneness and creating duality. Meditate only on the Self In the end there is only one approach to the Goal, and that is through the realisation of the Self, so why waste time on other roads which at best will only lead to the final path? Better to be on the final path itself all the time, than on an auxillary road. Meditate on what the Self is — that is all".

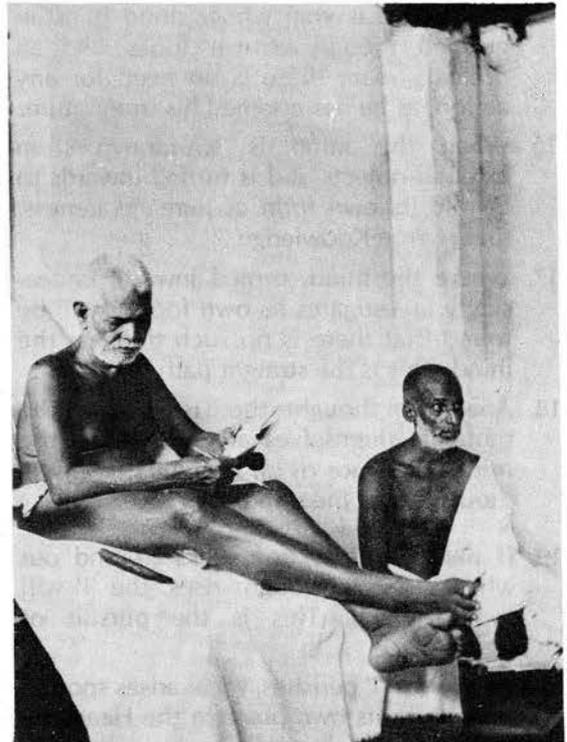
— Sri Bhagavan (from *Conscious Immortality*, p. 53-4)

UPADESA SARAM

(DIRECT TRANSLATION FROM
MALAYALAM VERSION)

By K.K.Nambiar

1. Since Karma yields results as ordained by the creator, how can Karma be God? It is insentient.
2. The results of Karma are impermanent, and yet leave seeds in the form of Vasanas (tendencies) in the mind which will only repeatedly plunge the doer in the ocean of Karma. Karma never leads one to salvation.
3. Perform disinterested Karma purely in the service of God, without any desire for its fruit. Such actions purify the mind and lead one on the way to moksha.
4. Actions are of three kinds, those performed by body, by speech and by mind. These are pooja (worship), Japa (incantations) and dhyana (meditation), and are in ascending order of merit.
5. Keeping in view that this entire eightfold universe is the visible manifestation of God, worship Him accordingly. This is the best form of worship.
6. Repetition of mantras of God's names is better than the best forms of praise (stotras). Mantra repeated in faint murmur is superior to loud chanting. Mental repetition is the best of the three. Meditation is not different from this.
7. Meditation carried out without a break like the steady flow of oil or of a perennial stream is better than intermittent meditation. Incessant meditation without a single break is the best and most powerful.
8. The attitude "He is I" or "I am not separate from God" is far superior to the attitude that I am separate from Him
9. Abidance in the Real Being transcending all thoughts is the purest form of



devotion. Supreme devotion leads to moksha.

10. Having reached the secret core of one's existence, abiding therein without any mental distraction is the essence of all four paths, Karma, Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana.
11. By breath — control the fleeting mind is kept under restraint like a bird trapped in the net. Thus breath control is a device for absorption of the mind.
12. Mind has the power of apprehension, while *prana* has the power of activity only. Mind and *prana* are both branches springing from the same source of power.

13. *Laya* and *Nasha* are two forms of restraint. *Laya* being absorption for a time, that which is so absorbed is bound to revive. But that which is dead or permanently absorbed will never rise again.
14. Where the mind gets absorbed by breath-restraint, it will die if made to follow a single current of thought.
15. For the great yogi whose mind is extinguished, though he yet looks like an ordinary man, there is no need for any action, as he has attained his true nature.
16. When the mind is withdrawn from external objects and is turned inwards to behold its own form of pure Awareness, that is True Knowledge.
17. Where the mind, turned inward, unceasingly investigates its own form it will be found that there is no such thing as the mind. This is the straight path for all.
18. Apart from thoughts there is no mind. The thoughts themselves are said to be the mind. The root of all thoughts is the 'I'-thought. 'I' is the mind.
19. If diving within, one seeks to find out whence the 'I'-thought rises, the 'I' will topple down. This is the pursuit of wisdom.
20. Where the 'I' perishes, there arises spontaneously in its own place in the Heart the Real 'I'-'I', which is infinite.
21. This is the true import of the term 'I', for nobody doubts one's own existence, when the 'I' is absorbed daily during sleep.
22. Body, senses, *prana*, intellect, ignorance and the visible world, all being illusory, non-existent and insentient, are not I; I am the Eternal Reality.
23. There is no consciousness apart from 'I' to be aware of "That which is". "That which is" is Absolute Consciousness. Am 'I' not also that Consciousness?
24. The Creator and creature are both in substance "One in Being". No distinction should be made between them as the differences are only in their attributes and knowledge.
25. Where the creature sees and knows himself without the various attributes, that is verily seeing God himself. The Creator is no other than the Self.
26. What is spoken of as 'seeing and knowing one-self' is only 'abiding as the Self'. The Self is ever one alone, never two. Know this as '*Tanmayanishtha*'.
27. That knowledge is "True knowledge" which transcends both knowledge and ignorance. What more is to be known? There is nothing other than True Knowledge"
28. Searching for one's own form, if one realises one's true nature, then it is Being without beginning and end; it is unbroken Awareness-Bliss.
29. Who can describe that supreme bliss of Brahman, beyond all thoughts of bondage and release? Those abiding ever in that state are steadfast in the service of the Supreme.
30. Realising That which is when all trace of 'I' is gone and abiding as That is good *tapas*. So says Ramana, the Self of all.

[It was at the instance of Sri Muruganar and in order to complete a poem of his that Bhagavan Ramana composed the Tamil *Upadesa Undiyar* in 30 verses. Soon after, on the request of some devotees, Bhagavan himself produced a Telugu version of the poem. In 1927 Bhagavan composed in one sitting a Sanskrit version in slokas of 24 syllables each suitable for daily *parayanam*.

In the following year, for the benefit of Malayali-speaking devotees, Bhagavan composed Malayalam version in longer stanzas and therefore in a more explanatory style. Verses 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 20, 22, 26 and 29 provide clear examples of this helpful expansion which recommended the Malayalam version to Muruganar, Kunju Swami and others who found in it clarification of points left implicit in the other three versions.

Hence, as requested by friends, I have attempted a literal English translation of the Malayalam poem and hope that devotees will find it useful in their understanding of a compact poem composed by Bhagavan himself in four languages and containing in intent and effect the essence of His Teaching, which is also in the dramatic setting the *Upadesa* of Siva to the Rishis.

—K.K.N.]

ALAMARATHU GUHAI

(Banyan Tree Cave)

BHAGAVAN stayed for a short time, perhaps immediately after His leaving the coral hillock, in the cave called the Alamarattu Guhai, which is situated beneath the Guhai Namasivayar temple. In *Day by Day with Bhagavan* (entry dated 26.1.1946 - Afternoon) Sri Bhagavan says: "I lived in the cave now called Alamarattu Guhai for some time. There was no banyan tree then. That tree as well as all the trees on both sides up to Virupaksha Cave were all planted and watched by Kandasami, who planned and created Skandashram later".

Arunachala has been the abode of saints — Bringi Maharshi, Gautama Maharshi, Arunagirinathar, Guhanamasivayar, Guru Namasivayar, Virupaksha Devar, Easanya Swami, Seshadri Swami and Bhagavan Ramana. Bhagavan lived in many caves, including the Alamarattu Guhai.

In this Banyan-tree cave, Sadguru Swami lived for a long time. Swami Ramdas of

Anandashram, Kanhangad spent many weeks in meditation at this cave and experienced the oneness of all beings. He gained Realisation in the *sannidhi* of Bhagavan Ramana and went and settled for good at Kanhangad.

This cave, which had housed many sages, remained till recently, quite uncared for and neglected. Now a *bhakta*, Sadhu Sundaram, has renovated the cave and dug a well near it. He has constructed a meditation hall for the use of visiting pilgrims. Along with Sadhu Sundaram, another adept, Achuthananda Swami, who also lives here has been doing *tapas* for decades on the slopes and vicinity of Arunachala.

A big portrait of Sri Bhagavan now adorns the cave. The Ashram President Sri T.N. Venkataraman and Sri Kunju Swami have visited the cave and expressed appreciation of the good work done by Sadhu Sundaram.



Alamarathu Guhai.

The Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard

St. Mathew's Gospel, Chap. 20

By Rosalind Christian

'For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a landowner who went out the first thing in the morning to hire labour for his vineyard. He agreed with the hands for a shilling a day and sent them into his vineyard. Going out again at the third hour he saw some others standing idle in the market-place and said to them, "Go into the vineyard too, and I will pay you what is right". So they went; and going out again at the sixth hour and at the ninth he did the same.

'But when he went out at the eleventh hour he found more of them standing about and said, "Why do you stand idle like this all day long?" They said, "Because nobody has hired us". So he told them also to go into his vineyard.

'When evening came the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, "Call in the hands and pay them their wages. Begin with the last and finish with the first". So those that were hired at the eleventh hour came up, and they were given a shilling each.

'But when the first to be hired came up, expecting to be given more, they too were paid a shilling each. They took the money but grumbled at their employer. They said, "These men that came last have only done an hour, yet you put them on a level with us that have worked all day in this heat".

'He dealt with this by saying to one of them: "My friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a shilling? Take your due and go. It is my pleasure to pay this man who came last the same as you. May I not do what I like with my own people? Or are you jealous because I am good?"

'Thus the last shall be first and the first last'.

THIS parable is found in Matthew's gospel alone, and, like the parable of *The Wedding Feast*, it has a challenging quality which at once sets the seeker struggling for inner meaning. As I stressed before, no parable may be judged by values outside itself. The 'people' or 'events' within the parable are a law unto themselves and only have meaning within this one context. Quite obviously then, a land-owner who followed the practices outlined in this story would soon create economic chaos. But the story is not about a landowner and a vineyard, but about 'the Kingdom'. In spite of the apparent paradox in which Jesus delighted, there is always a key phrase which we cannot escape in our interpretation. Here the phrase, in the mouth of the land-owner, is 'I am good'. Any explanation which nullifies this key phrase is at once ruled out. Maharshi made the same point in reply to a questioner. 'The plan is good', he

said. It is a statement that generally speaking we are very unwilling to accept. I am reminded of the great epic of God and creation which we have in the first book of the Hebrew Scriptures, Genesis. Each 'day' God created a new aspect of the world and each day He 'saw that it was good'. We might paraphrase and say the God is The-seeing-that-it-is-good.

As I see it, we need to put into this parable one simple ingredient, and that ingredient is to be found in the teaching of all the great Rishis of the East, both Hindu and Buddhist, i.e. the doctrine of re-incarnation. Christianity is not supposed to underwrite this truth. However, there is a great deal of evidence — especially on the iconographic side — that early Christians did believe in re-incarnation, and, to my mind, this parable only comes to life when this ingredient is used in its interpretation. The 'Lord of the Vineyard' is the Self, and the 'labourers', successive incarna-

tions of the evolving human soul. In the fullness of time, this soul reaches maturity and experiences the 'Harvest-home' of Realization. But what of those earlier 'labourers' who may have faced many and terrible ordeals, and appear to have borne the heat and burden of the day without any sufficient reward? But, of course, 'they' too enter the 'Kingdom', and the 'reward' of each is exactly equal - or, better expressed, the same.

Jesus used this parable to explain his enigmatic statement, 'In many cases the last shall be first and the first shall be last', which becomes more meaningful when we put in this ingredient, re-incarnation. However, the statement was made in answer to Peter's question, 'Did we not give up everything to follow you? What shall we get by that?' Jesus answers plainly that all will enter into the Kingdom/Non-duality — 'When the world is born anew and the Son of Man takes the throne of his glory' — a phrase close in idea to the dawn of the 'sun' of the Self wiping out of the old narrow view-point. In early Christian iconography, the Christ was often given sun-symbols, which, of course, were never wholly lost. But his followers may not enter this experience in exactly the order they may expect. It is not necessarily the oldest devotee who will first enter into Realization; a relative newcomer may seem to attain without effort. The success of the sadhaka is, as often stressed by the Maharshi, according to his karmatic destiny and the effort made. Thus, as Jesus said, the 'Lord of the Vineyard' is at all times good and just, however much appearances are to the contrary.

In a previous essay, I spoke of Jesus's diagnosis of the human condition being pessimistic — and not without reason. I would like to amplify that statement in the light of this parable. Jesus, I think, saw many as moving towards spiritual maturity via the mechanism of re-incarnation (in this he was not pessimistic), but if he dawdled indefinitely along this predestined road, he did so at grave peril. We see how anxious the Lord of the Vineyard is

THUNDEROUS SILENCE

By Ilaya Raja

I asked Sri Ganesan whether the voice of Sri Bhagavan was ever recorded. He replied that though Bhagavan had allowed Himself to be photographed any number of times and to be movie-filmed also; He had stoutly objected to His voice being recorded. I asked him whether Bhagavan had given any reason for such refusal, Ganesa said 'No'. Myself and Sri Sounderrajan were left wondering why.

Sri Sounderrajan asked me again and again, "What could be the reason for Bhagavan's refusal?"

I looked up prayerfully and — I saw on the wall the photograph of Sri Bhagavan reclining on the sofa, radiating peace. Suddenly, words came out of my mouth: "His teaching was *mouna* (silence); so, where is the question of recording it?"

Sri Sounderrajan was fully satisfied with this spontaneous answer which he thought had come from Bhagavan through me! Next morning when we told the story Sri Ganesan and Sri Kunju Swami were thrilled too!

to complete the harvest, calling in more and more labourers as the day wears on; and the farmer, in the Parable of the *Seed Growing Secretly*, at once without delay puts his harvest to the sickle, immediately it reaches maturity.

'Everything happens in its own time. The one who is ready for the absolute knowledge *will be made somehow to hear of it and follow it up.*'

Jesus says the same thing in the *Parable of the Wedding Feast*, but his sense of urgency is more apparent. Man, he seems to have felt, puts himself, his own mental and physical health, and indeed the health of society, in grave jeopardy by his refusal to accept his high calling — the 'Kingdom'. Moreover, it is possible that there are certain points in history, at the climax of civilizations, when the time is ripe for a wide upsurge into the spiritual plane. Jesus seems to have seen his own time in this light. Our own day may be just such another.

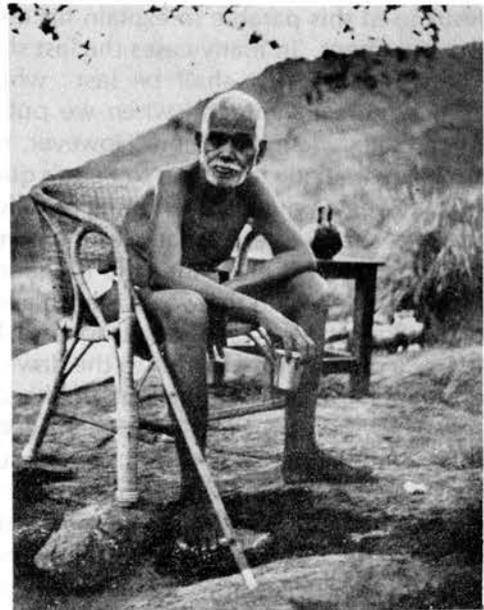
Introducing....

Sri N. Sambasivan

Sri N. Sambasivan, the celebrated water-diviner, is among the oldest and staunchest devotees of Sri Bhagavan and he is never tired of narrating the many striking incidents in his life which have confirmed his faith and which have convinced his friends that such faith is an unfailing source of strength, whether it helps in worldly success or in spiritual enlightenment. Apparent failure, accepted as Bhagavan's will, is later discovered to have been in one's long term interests.

Sri Sambasivan's father, Sri N.R. Narayana Iyer, of the Telegraph Department, was an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan and spent nearly forty years in the Ashram. In fact he retired six years before the date of his superannuation in order to render full time service to Sri Bhagavan and His devotees.

When Sri Sambasivan was a college student, his natural gift for dowsing was discovered by Sri Garudachala Mudaliar, a well known water-diviner, who utilized his talent and encouraged him to develop it. Later on, at the instance of one Sri Ramana Reddi, he became a professional water-diviner. Armed with a divining rod



hallowed by the touch of Sri Bhagavan, he commanded a lucrative practice and pointed to hundreds of clients where to dig and find good water. From 1935 onwards his career has been a series of miracles which he attributes to Sri Bhagavan's grace.

It was Sri S. Parthasarathi (later Sadhu Parthasarathi or Swami Anvananda, founder of the Vaishnavi shrine at Tirumullavayil) who arranged for Sri Sambasivan's shifting to Madras city. His professional work expanded and frequently involved journeys to distant places. Once in response to a call from Palani he booked two berths on the Tuticorin Express for himself and his wife. The train was to leave Egmore at 9 p.m. However at 6 p.m. he had a **severe attack of headache and nausea** which compelled him to cancel the journey, though he regretted the financial loss and the serious



Smt. & Sri. N. Sambasivan

disappointment to his clients in Palani. Guilty and frustrated, he spent a sleepless night. But listening to the morning news on the radio he heard that practically the whole train had been washed away near Ariyalur and he discovered that his last-minute illness had saved him and his wife from certain disaster.

Another event which he attributes to Sri Bhagavan's special grace was his acquisition and obtaining vacant possession of his present house, Sri Ramana Villa in Kutcheri Road, Mylapore. By a series of lucky accidents, the owner was persuaded to part with the premises, and even more wonderfully a recalcitrant tenant was forced to vacate it in an incredibly short time.

In 1951, his nine-month old son, Sundara Ramanan, fell seriously ill. The doctors suspected meningitis and offered little hope that the child could be saved from death or at any rate, from

permanent impairment. However, after a few hours of anxiety, the parents' prayers to Sri Bhagavan seemed to prevail. The same doctors declared that the response to their treatment was surprisingly quick and strong. A few days it became clear that the recovery would be complete. The young man is hale and healthy now.

In similar fashion, the marriage of Sri Sambasivan's daughter, Sow Ramani, to a most eligible young man came off in a quite unexpected manner to the surprise and delight of both the families concerned.

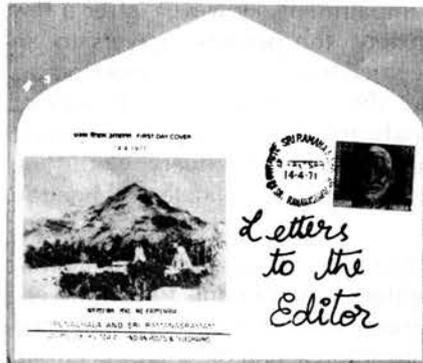
On the night before Sri Bhagavan's *maha-samadhi*, Sri Sambasivan had the privilege of a private interview and a brief talk with Sri Bhagavan, who told him, "Do not cry. I shall always be with you".

We wish Sri and Smt. Sambasivan many more years of health and devoted service.

REMARKABLE RAMANA-CHILD

In India, my youngest daughter named 'Bhawna' aged 8 years 6 months, died due to heart operation on 1.9.1983 in a Bombay Hospital. She was a devotee of Bhagavan and was praying to Him from the age of 18 months. She used to call Him 'Raman Dada'. Before going to bed she would utter Raman Dada's name and also in the morning, after bath, in front of Dada's photo she would pray. She was very smart, yet very devotional too. She was very brisk, very beautiful and was moving with others very happily. She learnt English in U.S.A. within two weeks! While visiting neighbours she would plead with them to follow her 'Raman Dada'. Before entering the theatre for operation her last words were 'Jai Bhagavan, Jai Raman Dada'. Last words of life! In Fiji and in U.S.A. people close to us say that our youngest daughter was divine. From this tiny tot I had myself learnt a lot as how to lead a happy life, which now consoles me from being totally lost.

— Ranchchodhbhai N. Patel,
Lautoka, Fiji



ON EGOLESS LIVING

I was much interested to read your Editorial of October 1983. There is, however, one point on which I shall be glad to have your clarification. At page 221 — "Egoless Living" — it is stated that "One can surely nail the coffin of the Ego if only one enquires steadfastly and ceaselessly as to wherefrom it originated. 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', prays Ramana to Arunachala".

Who is this "One" that can nail the coffin, etc. — "Who" is it that pays firm attention to the "I"-thought and "who" plants his lotus feet?

"I" (which is also 'I'-thought and Ego) is asked to eliminate the Ego. I am not very happy at this interpretation. Is there something else in the "I" or the 'I'-thought which is called upon to do the *sadhana* or the exercise for the purpose. Can you help?

— H.C. Mahindra, New Delhi.

There is only one 'I-Am'. It is not a thought, but a feeling. Cling to this feeling; it is the true 'I', the Self.

*This pure feeling of 'I'-I' is different from the concept of our 'person', our body-mind complex with name and form, our good and bad qualities, our social position and so on. What we gain by our *sadhana* is the experience of the feeling of 'I'-I', of pure Being, and freedom from total identification with a separate 'I', an individual ego.*

Some light on this subject is shown by Kumari Sarada in the article "Goodbye 'I' and Hello 'I-I'." (Oct. 83).

THE HOME OF ALL

"One has to come to Arunachala to have a total grasp of Maharshi's teachings", says my friend. Has this statement to be taken literally? Since I stay far away spatially from His abode of Grace, how can I follow correctly and practise Sri Bhagavan's teachings? How best can I do both spiritual *sadhana* and my day-to-day activities for maintaining myself?

— Tom Ridgeway, Auckland, New Zealand.

Your friend's statement need not be taken literally, though a stay at Arunachala and particularly

circumambulation (pradakshina) of the Hill are very beneficial. "In the end, everyone has to return to Arunachala"; Bhagavan said meaning the Self, the return to one's primordial state. If one remembers Arunachala-Bhagavan-the Self, the Being-Awareness-Bliss abiding in every heart, Bhagavan's teaching can be practised even far away spatially from His abode of Grace.

*Spiritual *sadhana* performed steadfastly, sincerely, does not stand in the way of day-to-day activities. On the contrary these can proceed with less strain and better results and in a spirit of detachment.*

AVATAR?

The subject of the question is the idea of the avatar — the messenger from the Supreme God who comes as a man on Earth to show us the correct way to travel when we go astray.

Such a one is said to have appeared among us at various times from a thousand or more years B.C up to the present day. But as far as I know, the idea is not expressed in any scriptures before the period between about 200 B.C and 200 A.D.

In the Christian Bible the idea first appears in the letters of Paul and the Gospel of John, written in the second half of the first century. Some years before that a Jewish sect in Palestine wrote, in the 'Dead Sea Scrolls', of a Teacher of Righteousness. The idea of a messenger from God is fundamental in the Gnostic writings, whether they derive from a Syrian, an Iranian, an Egyptian or a Christian source. Finally the *Bhagavad Gita* also dates from the same period.

The question I wish to ask is — did the idea of the avatar arise independently in all these areas, or did it spread from one area to another from a single source?

— Murdoch Kirby, Petersfield, U.K.

Ideas such as of an avatar in a worldly form for a certain purpose arise usually from a single source and spread to other areas when for instance need arises to restore virtue.

ON REINCARNATION

Recently I bought a book titled: *Pointers from Nisargadatta Maharaj*, by Ramesh S. Balsekar. It is a fine book throwing much light on the volumes of *I am That*.

I was going along fine with this new book until I encountered a chapter called "There can't be Rebirth". I got a shock as I read and here I quote: "What is 'born' the objective body, will in due course, 'die'; thereafter it will be dissolved i.e. irrevocably annihilated, the life-force will leave the body and mingle with the air outside. The objective part of what was once a sentient being will be destroyed, never to be re-born as the same body and consciousness is not an object, not a 'thing' at all — therefore, consciousness, as something non-objective, cannot be 'born', cannot 'die' and certainly cannot be 're-born'".

Now having read Sri Ramana's *Talks*, Paul Brunton's *The Wisdom of the Overself*, and Swami Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi*, I was indeed taken aback at the above statement.

How can there be such a totally conflicting view point about such an important subject between two enlightened sages, Sri Ramana and Sri Nisargadatta?

Your opinion would be much valued.

— D. McNally, London, U.K.

Sri Ramana Maharshi's teaching is 'ad hominem'. To mature minds, he said, "If the ego has no real existence now, it has none after death either". Speaking to less advanced people, he utilized as a lemma the assumption that a jiva is reborn. A poetic fiction, like a scaffolding, is useful, but not after the building has been completed. (see Teachings, pp.26-34)

JAGRAT AND SWAPNA

In the book *The Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Maharshi*, on page 250, paragraph 2, it is stated: "There is no difference between the dream and waking states except that the former is short and the latter long".

My doubt is in waking state the actions and reactions (thought, word and deed) are controlled by *prarabdha karma* and which also tempts/leads to *Agami karma*; but does this condition extend to dream state also — will we be lead to *Agami Karma*?

— A.V. Meenakshisundaram, Bangalore.

After all the dream state need not be always short. In Yoga Vasishtha there is the story of King Padma who suffered a lifetime of misery in a dream lasting only a few minutes in the so-called waking state. Time itself is an illusion.

REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE — I

On the 10.12.83, my parents and myself were involved in an accident when my car was totally wrecked. I had a strange experience. On impact, I saw myself in the car, shielding my head. About my neck were lovely blue lights. Then, a marvellous 'peace' came to me. I was encased in a cocoon of silence. I saw a white sheet of flame (that is when the engine exploded). I also saw fragments of glass (in slow motion), looking like snowflakes, falling very slowly. This silence and Peace in which I was enfolded, also robbed me of the ego — 'I'-identity. Gladys was non-existent in my 'awareness.' Whilst this was going on, terrible things were happening outside. A hailstorm had flooded my engine causing us to wait on the Highway, with our flashlights working, cars had passed to the left and right of us for about fifteen minutes when a man drove into us at a high speed. Another car tried to avoid him, and hit my car on the left

hand side where I was sitting. The petrol was chased along the pipe, causing the engine to explode. I was conscious again of the 'me' when I heard someone screaming, I found myself holding my stomach, with screams torn from my throat. People ran to free us — our car door was jammed, and we were taken to Hospital. I sustained a cracked pelvis, and torn stomach muscles. My father had bruised ribs, a gash on one leg, severe shock (he is 82 years old). My mother was unconscious with a gash on her forehead, head and neck injuries. We spent the most part of 3 weeks in bed. My car was totally wrecked.

When I finally returned to work, I was told I must take two weeks rest as I still looked ill. What remains with me, is that indescribable 'PEACE' which enfolded me — like my BELOVED's loving arm. I know that I was 'dead', then returned to my body. Surely death is wonderful, for I have tasted of it. The article from THE MOUNTAIN PATH, the 'THEOTOKOS' which I had written, had just been placed in the glove compartment of my car, before driving off. I believe that God sheltered us all from terrible injuries. His mercy fills me with gratitude, and I wanted to tell you of this experience.

Mrs. Gladys De Meuter,
Johannesburg, South Africa

REMARKABLE EXPERIENCE — II

The Bloom of Inner Glory saved my life. How? I was travelling in my Datsun station-wagon (510 model) at 50 MPH on SR520 from Bellevue to Seattle Freeway (Evergreen Point bridge). Suddenly, for no fault of mine the car skidded. The back of my car was damaged costing the Insuran over 2000 dollars. The police of Washington state ignorantly placed the blame on me. Car was destroyed. Car dweller was saved. How? A copy of *The Bloom of Inner Glory* (written by N.N. Rajan) was on the dashboard. I was constantly watching the picture of Ramana in Lotus pose. The picture was on the cover page of this book: *Glory to Ramana Arunachala!*

— T.S. Vaidyanathan
Redmond, U.S.A.

LAURELS

It all happened in October 1953, before Diwali Day.

Looking at a picture of Sri Janaki Matha, who was an ardent devotee of Bhagavan Ramana, I had prayed to her to show me her divine power. Earlier, a series of supernatural happenings had taken place in the house of my neighbour, who is a devotee of Mathaji and Bhagavan. I shall dwell only on my own experience that day in 1953 in Calcutta.

From the day I made my prayer to Sri Mathaji, I found that my mind was gradually undergoing some change. I had become more silent than usual. It was as though some power was preparing me for something out of the ordinary.

It was about 7 p.m. All of a sudden I experienced the tremendous impact of Blazing Light within and without. At the same time, in front of me on the wall, I saw three white, parallel, horizontal lines about 3" each in length. Later, during my visit to Sri Janaki Nilayam, Tanjore, I was to see the same three white lines of sacred ash, being applied on the forehead of Sri Bhagavan's picture, which Mathaji used to worship regularly.

I am a regular reader of *The Mountain Path* for the past many years. The editorials and other articles in it are very helpful. In 1970, Sri V.Ganesan's article on Arthur Osborne at the time of Osborne's demise, was highly illuminating. The editorial of Michael James on 'The Power of Arunachala' in the April 1982 issue was helpful to me and to my family members, especially the tips on Arunachala-Pradakshina. The Editorials that now appear from the pen of Sri A.R.Natarajan are very helpful to one's sadhana. No wonder Sri Janaki Matha had asked all her devotees to subscribe to *The Mountain Path* without fail!

— K.N.Viswanath, Bangalore.

Every issue of the magazine carries with it the living spirit and presence of Sri Bhagavan and his teachings. I stayed at Sri Ramanasramam in January 1979 and January 1980, during the birthday celebrations. I hope to return at the end of 1984, if not sooner. The power of Arunachala and Sri Bhagavan has an invincible grip upon me. Even if I don't want to come, consciously, on another long pilgrimage, I feel compelled to do so. Somehow, my destiny is linked with that holy mountain, with Sri Bhagavan and the path of Self-enquiry. Thank you for watching over the sacred abode where Ramana walked the earth.

— Stephen M.Quong, Santa Cruz, U.S.A.

I have been very much pleased to read the article of Kumari Sarada, ("Goodbye 'I' and Hello 'I-I'") which is full of deep inner understanding of Advaita. Sri Bhagavan's Grace is definitely on her.

— H.C.Khanna, Kanpur

May I say how much I savour and appreciate 'Moments Remembered by Managing Editor', and 'Editorial' by Sri A.R.Natarajan.

— John W.D.Baker,
East Boldon, England.

As a Life Subscriber to *The Mountain Path* I have found it to be a spiritual gem, a true voice of Ramana and source of continued inspiration to me.

May the excellent quality of our magazine continue. I do hope that to ensure this sufficient funds will be made available to avoid further losses.

— P.L. Sullavan, Tauranga, New Zealand.

I think always of *The Mountain Path* as a scripture, and in it two wonderful qualities come together: spiritual education and inspiration. I have never held in my hands an issue which did not breathe the love and compassion of the Maharshi.

A journal such as *The Mountain Path* which helps a being catch even a glimpse of his real nature is beyond price.

— Agnes. F. Hudson, Burtonsville, U.S.A.



Mrs. Raji Wilson. Next to her is her husband, Andy Wilson.

GRACIOUS RAMANA

Dear Ganesh,

Now to your letter — the previous week Dr.Pamplin expected me to speak at one of his Meetings, unfortunately I was ill and away in Reading; however, he sent me a one day Conference Programme and hoped that I would attend.

On my return from Reading he came to see me and to find out how I was keeping. A few days later, in fact, the day your letter arrived, he turned up, and said "Raji, I am in a dilemma. One of the speakers, Dr.Ralph Hetherlington, is ill: can you take his place and speak for an hour?" Well, I went to the Office and gave him your letter to read, the part that I should "in future accept and give talks". I told Dr.Pamplin, "Of course, I will, Bhagavan's Grace will speak through me".

There were about 65 guests, as you can see from the enclosed programme; it was a highly intellectual crowd; when my turn came, Andy (my husband) took Bhagavan's photo, on to the stage, placed it on a chair, I placed a few flowers, lighted the sandalwood incense, did pranam and Arati, and then I went to the Chair and took my stand. I told them to try and empty their minds of all thoughts and to relax on their seats. "Now slowly let your gaze fall on the photo of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi let no thoughts ask questions — JUST BE — let go of thoughts and dive within and BE". It was marvellous to invoke the presence of Sri Bhagavan! No doubt my talk that followed was very much appreciated.

— Raji Wilson, 'Arunachalam'
Avon, England.



BOOK REVIEWS

"CONSCIOUS IMMORTALITY": A practical Guide to Vichara Yoga

"During my trance related in **Self Realisation**, I had a very clear experience. All of a sudden a light came from one side erasing the world-vision in its course until it spread all round, then the vision of the world was completely gone. I felt the muscular organ of the heart had stopped work. I could understand that the body was like a corpse, that the circulation of blood had stopped and the body became blue and motionless. Vasudeva Sastri embraced me (the body), wept over my death, but I could not speak. All the time I was feeling that the Heart Centre on the right was working as well as ever. This state continued 20 minutes. Then suddenly something shot out from the right to the left resembling a rocket bursting in the air. The blood circulation recommenced and normal condition was restored. The Heart is thus the centre of the body. It can be felt in the absence of the body... In this experience I was not, as stated in the book, unconscious but was all along aware. I could feel the action of the physical heart stop and equally the action of the Heart centre unimpaired."

This is one of the striking autobiographical incidents narrated by Bhagavan in the book *Conscious Immortality*¹, compiled from the original papers of Paul Brunton in which he and Sri Munagala Venkataramiah recored conversations had with the Maharshi. Unlike most other books of philosophical import, this one has a fully practical bent and takes the reader straight in the heart of the sadhana perfected by the Sage. Almost every difficulty in the *Vichara Marga* is anticipated and resolved. Almost every doubt that might arise has been answered. For instance about the Heart which plays such an important part in this yoga:

"The Heart is not a place... The Heart of which I speak is on the right only. It is my experience. No authority is required. Still you can find confirmation in the *Sita Upanishad*. The whole cosmos is combined in one pinhole in the Heart. A tiny hole in the Heart remains always closed and is opened by the *Vichara* (investigation into the Self). The result is 'I-I' consciousness, the same as *Samadhi*". Not only is this spiritual Heart different from the physical heart organ on the left, it is not the same as the *anahata chakra* of the yogis (p.14). It is in fact the Centre of Consciousness.

Nobody can start on this path all on a sudden. It requires some preliminary preparation. And that is provided by religious disciplines, study of scriptures, moral purification etc. But they are not to be confused with the realisation of the Self. "The highest wisdom is too subtle for most minds, and so a whole scheme of worlds, gods, bodies, evolution etc. had to be given out..." *Inter alia*, Bhagavan refers to some other interesting practices viz. "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". But then he points out, "Such phenomena may produce joy for the time being. But abiding peace does not result. This is gotten only by the removal of *avidya*."

Is solitude indispensable for this path? Should one have to withdraw from the world? "It does not matter where we

are. We must learn to find solitude (mentally) in the midst of society". And then he adds, with his characteristic wit: "We must not give up our meditation because we are among people but carry it on even then, but do not do it ostentatiously. Do not make a physical exhibition of the fact that you are meditating". Another instance of his humour (which can be at times very disconcerting!): If non-veg food is to be avoided because it involves killing of life, then is it not true that even plants have life? "So too have the tiles upon which you are seated!"

Meditation is not something that you do for a fixed period during the day. It is to be naturalised. "When *dhyana* is well established it cannot be given up. It will go on automatically even when you are engaged in work, play or even sleep. It must become so deep-seated that it is natural". What is the best posture? "The best posture is to plant the Guru firmly in your heart". And *asana*? "Abidance in God is the only true *asana*".

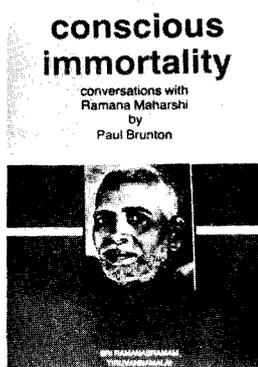
On the subject of the Guru, Bhagavan has certain pointed and pertinent things to say which every one needs to ponder over:

"Guru's grace works automatically, spontaneously. The disciple gets precisely the help he requires

"If the disciple finds the Guru internally, then it does not matter where he goes"

"Guru is the Self after all, but manifests as the external Guru. A spiritually minded man takes God for his Guru believing that God is everywhere. Later God brings him

¹ CONSCIOUS IMMORTALITY: By Paul Brunton. Pub: Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai. p.p. 204 Price: Rs.15/-



in contact with a personal Guru whose grace enables him to feel that his Self is the Reality and Guru.

"The Guru is both within and without. He creates conditions to drive you inward and prepares the interior to drag you to the Centre. He gives you a push from without and exerts a pull from within, so that you may be fixed at the Centre".

Equally important are his observations on Grace and effort:

"Both are necessary. The sun is shining but you must turn and look at it in order to get a glimpse of the sun".

"Your remembrance of Guru is the forerunner of Grace. The latter is both the response and stimulus.. the enquiry you are making is itself Guru's Grace".

Then speaking to a devotee who asks for Maharshi's grace, the Master replies: "You have it". And immediately he feels a throb in the centre of the chest, a slight pressure. Bhagavan tells him: "Hold that sensation firmly whenever the mind is distracted. Your *mantra*-saying is no more necessary. It is called *Sphurana*. It is felt on several occasions such as fear, excitement etc. It is really always there, felt at the heart centre.. it is a foretaste of realisation".

To cite a few more telling aphoristic replies:

Change of environment is no help; for the mind must be got over in both the places. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home?

What is renunciation?

Giving up the ego.

Is it not giving up possessions?

The possessor too.

So long as one thinks he is a *sannyasi*, he is not one. He who is not worldly is a real *sannyasi*.

Knowing is being. (It is not mental, relative knowledge).

Have compassionate love for others but keep it secret; do not show it or speak of it.

The final obstacle is ecstasy: you feel great bliss and happiness and stay in that ecstasy; do not yield to it but pass on to the next stage of great Calm.

Finally about the vexed question of who is a true *avatar*: Bhagavan is unequivocal. "Everyone is an *avatar* of God. In every face he sees God".(158).

Whatever the starting point, the Maharshi has a unique way of leading to the Self, the experience of the Consciousness that is immortal. All must be pressed into service to arrive at that central Truth.

— M.P. PANDIT

ANANDAMAYI MA THE MOTHER BLISS-INCARNATE:
Anil Ganguli Pub. Sree Sree Anandamayee Charitable Society, 10, Govt. Place East, Calcutta.700 069 pp.288. Price Rs.20/-

AS THE FLOWER SHEDS ITS FRAGRANCE. No author.
Pub: Sree Sree Anandamayee Charitable Society, 10, Govt. Place East, Calcutta 700 069. pp.199

"Before I came in this earth I was the same. As a little girl I was the same. I grew into womanhood, but still I was the same. When the family in which I was born made arrangements to have this body married, I was the same. And, Father, in front of you now, I am the same. Even afterwards, though the dance of creation changes around me in all of Eternity, I shall remain the same. These words of Anandamayi Ma to Paramahansa Yogananda bring out the nature of the Consciousness she breathed. She was one of the rare modern saints of India who lived in the *Satchidananda* Consciousness but ever kept her feet solidly on the earth. Her various utterances and actions in her intense life of over eighty years illustrate her comprehension of the complexities of earth-life and her faith in the all-powerful Grace of God.

Sri Anil Ganguli gives a detailed account of the physical life of the saint and her ministry. He describes the unusual circumstances in which he was unwillingly drafted into the magic circle of Divine Love and throws light on some of the highlights of her career. Subhas Bose, Jannalal Bajaj, Kamala Nehru and Gandhiji figure in these pages.

Among the important topics dealt with by the author are *sadhana* process like *Diksha*, *Nama Japa*, *Prayer*, *Meditation*, and *Asanas*. There is reference to the famous incident of the unearthing of over 200 idols in *Madhya Pradesh* from under granite rock following her vision and direction to an officer-devotee. Pithy sentences in answer to questions contain a world of philosophy. To cite a few:

"What is the easiest way to God?"

"Profuse tears".

"If tears do not come?"

"Seek the company of those who shed tears".

Or,

"Since all names are His indeed, He will let Himself be grasped by any one of them; furthermore, it will gradually be revealed that He is also without name and without form". (P.123)

The Flower sheds its Fragrance is a compilation from the diary of a devotee, well edited and quite appealing; and it covers very much the same ground as Anil Gangulis biography. They are eye-witness accounts of the saint's meetings with the high and low, her journeys and her high spiritual state. Her remarks on *Shastras* and their limitations, her own experiences of *yoga-siddhis* like *lightening* her weight when she had to sit on the lap of a devotee on a bus, warnings against resort to *planchettes* and similar means for contacting the spirit-world, explanations of practices such as animal sacrifice, *Pranam* to the holy and others are of immense practical value for everyone who is drawn to the deeper side of

life. Some of the stories and parables narrated by her are telling; her own autobiographical accounts are moving.

Both the books bring the reader closer to the personality of the saint who will always be cherished as the sweetest Guru of modern India.

— M.P. PANDIT

GURU GOBIND SINGH: Life and Footprints — By J.S.BEDI Pub: R.S.Bedi, Kohinoor Internationals, 6 27, Karikar Building, Jawaharlal Nehru St., Pondicherry. Price not indicated. Pp.106

If Plato had held the ideal ruler to be a philosopher — statesman, the life and achievements of the tenth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Gobind Singh, testify to the need for a religious leader to be a warrior-saint. After the public execution of his father, Guru Teg Bahadur, by Aurangzeb in Chandni Chowk, Delhi, Gobind Singh accepted the responsibilities of his office at the early age of nine. Primarily a saint, he became a warrior by compulsion, as he felt that any devotee of Truth must not refrain from fighting in order to uphold it. Starting from nothing, he raised an army, collected weapons, built forts, and formulated strategies to meet the challenge of the mightiest Moghul empire. Out of the veritable dust he raised noble warriors, for the bulk of his followers came from the so-called low castes which, to our disgrace, had been treated in the course of our long history as untouchables and subjected to indescribable humiliation. As long as our society remains imperfect and the law of the jungle lasts, the *Gita* ideal of action conjoined with wisdom remains, and gives relevance to Guru Govind's message.

In the true Punjabi style of speech, at once homely and simple, the Guru is shown portrayed as affirming that his aim was to unify all four castes like the four ingredients of the pan which every villager chews namely: betel leaf, areca nut, lime and katha, which although different in colour, taste and substance, unite to produce one aromatic flavour and delightful relish. His only goal was the weal of society which, in the Sikh parlance, is called *Sarbat-do-Bhala*. By naming no successor except the holy Granth, to which his followers were asked to pay homage, he stressed the noblest traditions of religious unity, as its pages contain the compositions of Hindu bhaktas, irrespective of caste, and of Muslim Sufis as well.

As the last and perhaps the greatest Guru after Nanak, the subsequent development of Sikhism after Guru Gobind Singh is of greatest significance. For his footprints are evident in the strength of the Khalsa movement which he inaugurated in 1699, whereby the earlier weakness of the community was replaced by power and unity. The Khalsa (Pure Ones) is a new brotherhood, following a strict Code of Discipline and consisting of initiated men taking the name of Singh (lion). Although the Sikhs form only 2 per cent of the country's population, their influence goes

much beyond their numbers, as the emphasis which their Gurus laid on hard work and welfare activities has brought them rich dividends. Punjab, where they are mostly living, has become not only the sword arm of India but its granary as well. Dharma is to be established in this material earth, Kurukshetra, and hence in one sense Sikhism can be called the most materialistic of the Indian religions, even as Sir William Temple applied this term to Christianity. For this is a faith which takes the material world seriously, not escaping to abstractions or fanciful speculations, but as a place to be made useful for the good of mankind.

— ARGUS

SELF ENQUIRY: The Inner Quest of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, by Dr.M.Sadashiva Rao.Pub: Central Book Company, Dongre Building, Opp.Ruia College, Matunga, Bombay 400 019. Pp.37. Price not indicated.

"There are at present a large number of people, particularly in the Western countries and in India, who have been drawn to the teachings of the Maharshi and desire to practise Self-enquiry but have no access to precise information on the methods of practice. This book provides the information on the basis of first-hand experience. It is written by a scientist in the form of a rational exposition describing, step-by-step, procedures of practice which aspirants will find easy to follow. The book has been written under the Grace of the Sadguru", writes the author in the preface of this small book. However, the hopes raised by this preface, are likely to be disappointed, for the author has his own, rather confused, understanding of Self-enquiry.

This book is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, and the subsequent four chapters are said to describe "the methods of practice in the form of detailed procedures for practising" (p.1). The author concludes the introduction by saying, "The practices described in Chapters II to V must be strictly taken up in that order after achieving success in each. The criteria of success are indicated in the descriptions of the practices" (p.13). From such introductory remarks and from the subsequent descriptions of the various "practices" of Self-enquiry, it is clear that the author is under the wrong impression that Self-enquiry consists of a number of different practices, each of which is to be followed step-by-step in a particular order. But in truth there is only one practice of Self-enquiry, and there are no "step-by-step procedures" to be followed. In *Who am I?* Sri Bhagavan has clearly defined the method of practising Self-enquiry as follows, "Always keeping the mind fixed on Self alone is called 'Self-enquiry' (*atma-vichara*)", and He has never described Self-enquiry as consisting of any graded steps or stages.

According to the author "the first and the most important practice under Self-enquiry" is the enquiry 'Who

am I?', which he describes in Chapter II and which he defines quite correctly as "an inner quest for the Self with an introverted mind by concentrating one-pointedly on the single thought 'I' or 'I am' without permitting other thoughts to come to the mind" (p.15). But confusion creeps when he goes on to describe 'Abiding in the Self' (ch.3), 'Samadhi' (ch.4) and 'Savikalpa and Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi' (ch.5).

In Chapter III he writes that when the aspirant "can take the mind into the Heart without going through the concentration", then "the Enquiry may be given up as it has served the purpose of bringing the mind into contact with the Self. Instead, the aspirant should practice a thought-free meditation with the mind held firmly in the Heart" (p.25). This is a misleading statement. If through the enquiry 'Who am I?' one concentrates attention on the thought 'I', all other thoughts will be destroyed and finally the thought 'I' will itself be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre, as stated by Sri Bhagavan in *Who am I?*. Until the thought 'I' is thus destroyed, the enquiry 'Who am I?' should not be given up. And after the thought 'I' is destroyed, what need is there to "practise a thought-free meditation"? According to Sri Bhagavan, fixing the attention on 'I' is the first and the last step in Self-enquiry.

Chapters IV and V are also elaborations of personal experiences which have nothing to do with Bhagavan's straight and simple teaching of the method of Self-enquiry.

— M.J.

SELECTED STORIES FROM YOGA VASISHTHA By P.P. Bharata Iyer. Pub: 41/42 Usha, Plot 86, Kidwai Rd. Bombay 400 031. Pp.262. No price indicated.

Yoga Vasishtha is not only a classic of Advaita philosophy but also a manual of Jnana Yoga. It is its practical aspect that appealed to Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, who refers to it in many places. (It has an occult side too but that is not relevant here). The full text of this work not being available, there have been many attempts of late to present a concise edition of the treatise. A series of articles appeared some time ago in the pages of *The Mountain Path* summarising the main teachings in the form of stories. The present publication gives these renderings along with their Sanskrit originals.

In the Introductory section there is pointed mention of the qualifications expected of the aspirant on this path of liberation. They are the 'Four Gate-keepers of Liberation' viz: tranquility, contentment, company of the wise and reflection. "Truth dawns by itself upon the mind of the tranquil, who are equally good and friendly to all beings. Wisdom never dawns upon the mind which is under the control, and at the mercy of desires and expectations and is destitute of contentment. . . . Association with the wise removes the darkness of the heart, leads one to the

right way, and causes the sun of wisdom to shine upon one's mind Truth cannot be known without thinking. Thinking leads one to the attainment of peace".

There are thirteen sets of instructions in the form of stories and some of them are well-known, such as "Shikhidhwaja Upakhyanam" and "Bilwa Upakhyanam". The author quotes from the writings of Dr. Atreya, whose work on *Yoga Vasishtha* is extensive. Selected verses from *Viveka Chudamani*, *Ashthavakra Samhita* and *Sat Darshanam* are appended to the work with good effect. The key-note of the approach is given in the verse from *Devapoojanam*: "Among the various forms of worship, the best is that in which the mind is purified and wherein one forgets that one is the body and realise the Self by effort".

— M.P. PANDIT

BHAGAVAD GITA FOR PEACE OF MIND:

By R.J.Venkateswaran, Pub. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Bombay-400 007 Pp. 111 Price Rs. 21.

TILAK, GANDHI AND GITA: By D.K.Gosavi, Pub: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati Munshi Marg, Bombay-400 007. Pp. 56 Price Rs. 16/-

The first book contains quotations from a broad spectral writers from Augustine of Hippo to Wernher Von Braun, who have presented what the author calls, "the formulas for mental peace.... to support and strengthen my interpretation of the Gita". The author also mentions a Reuter's news report about the discovery of a miracle pill to wipe out depression, anxiety and sleep problems with no side effects!

A better book, is the one by the erudite Sanskrit scholar Gosavi, analysing and comparing the philosophies of life of the two great sons of India, Tilak and Gandhi, both deriving their inspiration from the same source, the *Bhagavad Gita*. While both had faith in the philosophy of *Advaita* and held "selfless action to be the central message of the *Gita*" the former was a pragmatist and the other an idealist.

"Tilak was primarily a patriot and a statesman; Gandhi was primarily a Sadhak or a seeker after Truth and only secondarily a patriot and a statesman".

Here is a sweet little book, yet detailed, correct and readable.

— ARGUS

SAMAVEDA By S.V.Ganapati. Published by the author, 143, Kalakshetra Colony, Madras-90; 1982, Pp.34-491 (Printers and agents: Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Delhi-7). Rs. 75.00

For well over two hundred years the Vedas have been very intensely researched by scholars, Oriental and Occidental; and yet the truth remains that we are no nearer

the original intent of the sages who sang them. In the tradition of Niruktakaras, as well as Acaryas, several layers of meaning in the Vedas have indeed been suggested; and often the Puranic myths too have been characterised as transformations of the Vedic truths in story format. More recently, Aurobindonians like Kapali Sastri have striven hard to explicate the hidden meaning of the Veda, since in their view the Veda is the embodiment of the deepest intuitions and insights into reality. As against the German philological exgetes whose aim is to interpret the Veda from the Veda itself, and who never go beyond the literal meaning permitted by grammar and syntax, we have also the Indian school of Dayananda who would fain read in the Veda all modern science and technology too, in their own fashion. The secret of the Veda is thus something of a mystery even today.

The present author takes a new line of approach altogether, choosing to begin with the Samaveda rather than the Rigveda because, according to him, the former is earlier than the latter. All that we gather from the short introduction is that the Samaveda can be best interpreted as a document of cosmic evolution, at the biological and material levels. The Devas were real tribes like Asuras inhabiting the Ilavrita-varsa in ancient times. Indra, Agni, Varuna etc. were all their leaders. While these lived on the hills, the forefathers of Indians lived in the plains, of Central Asia before arriving in India. The author also holds that all proper names like Vrithra and Namuchi are symbolic or allegorical. He gives us such neat equations as matter-Vrithra, inertia-Namuchi, activity-Agni, universal mind-Soma, sense activities-Aditi, consciousness-Ushas, living body-Indra, brain-Mitra, and so forth. No attempt has been made to substantiate these equations with any authority, ancient or modern.

Then we are told summarily:

The three Vedas have wholly different outlook and goals and approaches to life. Samaveda stresses only prayers for release to the original home in heaven and had not conceived *yajna*. (p.xxx).

Man does not merge with the creator at any time (p.xxxiv). Such is the pontifical theorising we are treated to before the text of the Samaveda is given along with 'translation' and 'commentary'. What is the translation, what the commentary is never clear. In the so-called translation even ground-rules of grammar and syntax are thrown to the winds. A verb in the imperative mood can be rendered as a statement about the creation of brain-cells. A subject in the first person may be rendered as third person in sense. Following are some examples at random:

P.1, No.3: 'Agni chooses messengers' for 'we choose Agni as messenger (I.i.3); P.35, No.4! 'Indra goes around the brain...' instead of 'for Indra, lover of carousing, our songs proceed loud' (II.ii.4); P.168, No.1: 'And bestows a great variety of oblations' instead of 'We call on thee thunderbolt-handed and wondrous' Pt.II, I,i.22-1). Almost every sentence is fancifully rendered, without respect either to Sayana of old or the modern philologist. Hence this free version—since it is not a translation in any real sense—of the Samaveda will not win the approval of scholars in the field until the method followed is substantiated at length by the author. Till then one is apt to dismiss it as a futile exercise of fancy.

— Dr. K.KRISHNAMOORTHY

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Date: 31-3-1984



**All are welcome
for the**

**Seminar
on The Teachings of
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
AND
RAMANA CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

**at Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore
on 13th, 14th and 15th July, 1984.
(Friday, Saturday and Sunday)**

**Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning
Bangalore**



Mr. Kenneth Hurst and the Ashram President

“CONSCIOUS IMMORTALITY”

— a new book by Paul Brunton released

Mr. Kenneth Hurst, Paul Brunton’s son, following in the footsteps of his father, developed a love and fascination for India at a very early age. As a high ranking executive in an American publishing firm — Prentice Hall, he started the International division in India. This brought him to India many times, initially staying in Delhi for two years. This year he was inspired to travel through-out India giving lectures on his father and Sri Bhagavan. Beginning with a successful talk at the Delhi Kendra he then went to the Madras Kendra. In Madras Mr. Hurst was delighted to meet **Sri K.K. Nambiar** who regaled him with his own personal reminiscences of Sri Bhagavan and his father. Mr. Hurst’s

next visit was Bangalore. The Ramana Maharshi Center for Learning was filled to capacity and the audience listened with rapt attention to Mr. Hurst’s informal and interesting talk.

After Bangalore Mr. Hurst fulfilled a long cherished dream and visited Sri Ramanasramam. He was thrilled to visit all the places connected with Sri Bhagavan which he had long heard of from his father. He especially enjoyed his visits with a few old devotees and a walk through Palakothu to see the cottage where his father stayed.

A program was arranged in the jubilee hall beginning

The Ashram President presenting the first copy 'Conscious Immortality' to Mr. Kenneth Hurst. The Hon'ble Minister Sri Lahtan Choudhry is in the middle. (r) "This visit to Ashram is a long cherished ambition of mine" says Mr. Hurst. Next to him is Sri Lahtan Choudhry, Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President and Sri P. Thandavarayan, Trustee.





Sri Lahtan Choudhry, Minister of Revenue and Food, Bihar, graced the occasion. The Ashram President presents him a copy of 'Conscious Immortality'.

with a welcome address by the Ashram trustee **Mr. Thandavarayan. Mr. Lahtan Choudhry**, the Minister of Revenue and Food from Bihar State, then gave a short yet deeply felt talk.

Mr. Hurst then spoke in a lively and conversational style. He expressed delight in finally coming to the Ashram which he felt was like coming 'home' to one's own family. He then explained, as in his previous talks, what provoked his father, a young man in his teens, is an ardent search for truth; and how in the proximity of the Maharshi, years later, his heart was finally set at rest. The program ended with the President **Sri T.N. Venkataraman** releasing a collection of conversations taken down by Paul Brunton and Munagala Venkataramiah, entitled '**CONSCIOUS IMMORTALITY**'. In the evening movies of Sri Bhagavan were shown to all the devotees.

The next morning, on his way to Madras, Mr. Hurst left at dawn to try and secure a meeting with Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchipuram. The Sankaracharya had encouraged Paul Brunton, 40 years ago, to see Sri Bhagavan before he left India. Even though the exact whereabouts of the Sankaracharya was not known, (he was walking towards Kanchipuram), Mr. Hurst and party felt drawn to the place. When he met Sri Sankaracharya, the later told him "I was waiting for you".

The last stop for Mr. Hurst was Calcutta. Two very successful meetings were arranged. The first was in Sri Satyananda Devayatam and the second was a small group meeting at the residence of **Sri Ashok K. Sen**, thanks to the efforts of **Sri Binod Ganguly**.

"SRI RAMANA HOSPITAL"

Since its inception in 1947 the Ashram dispensary has been rendering vital service to devotees and to neighbouring residents — especially children. It played an important role for Sri Bhagavan's own use during the last two years of His illness.

Now, due to the dedicated efforts and generous support of **Dr. S. Siva** of UK, "Sri Ramana Hospital", on the Ashram premises, is soon going to be built.

We are happy to announce that the *bhoomi puja* was celebrated on 4th March 1984. Under the towering gaze of Arunachala, a lovely site was selected to the right side of the Ashram front gate, where the centenary celebrations took place. A beautiful modern architectural rendering has been designed by both the superintending engineer of the project **Sri H.S. Suryanarayana** and the Architect.

Dr. Siva in close consultation with the Architect, has planned the hospital in two phases. The first phase is to establish a primary care unit, specialist facilities and dental and eye clinic, with emphasis given to preventive medical care. The facilities will include an operation theatre for visiting surgeons. The hospital will be furnished with the latest equipment and there will be a full laboratory, x-ray unit and pharmacy as well. The second phase of the hospital, which will be built at a later date, is wards for in-patient treatment. In the future, the Ashram envisions a mobile clinic and Ayurveda and Homeopathy clinical departments.

We have already begun looking for well qualified and experienced male and female medical practitioners. Devotees are welcome to help in whatever way they choose for this unique and noble service.

For further information foreign devotees are requested to contact **Dr. Siva at: 22 Hatherleigh Close, Morden, Surrey, U.K. — Tele: 01-540 3285**. Indian devotees may contact **Sri V. Ganesan** at Sri Ramanasramam.

Bhoomi Puja for 'Ramana Hospital': **Dr. S. Siva** receives 'Prasad' from the Ashram Priest at the site of the Hospital. The Ashram President blesses the project whole-heartedly.



104th RAMANA JAYANTHI AT THE ASHRAM



Dr. Ram Desai of USA receives the first copy of 'Sri Ramanasramam Today' released on the Jayanti day.

Sri Sadhu Om presents the first copy of his Tamil book 'Sadana Saram' to Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President.

Sri Michael receives 'Sri Ramanasramam Today'



'Aarti' to Sri Rameswara Mahalingam on Jayanti day

Devotees inside the Ramana Auditorium



A section of the lady-devotees

Sri K. Sivaram, President, Ramana Kendra, Ahmedabad, gave an absorbing talk on the teaching of Bhagavan; here he shares a moment of joy with the Ashram President.

Sri Kunju Swami and Sri Sadhu Om; very happy in front of the Master's 'Samadhi'.

RAMANA SATSANG, BOMBAY

On December 23, 1983, at the residence of Sri V. Subramanian¹ the 104th Jayanti of Sri Bhagavan was joyously celebrated. Devotees from all parts of Bombay participated. The monthly Satsang is being held on the Sundays following each Punarvasu nakshatra, at the residence of each devotee.

¹ V. Subramanian, B-3, 'Husman', North-South Road No.11, Juhu, Bombay - 400 049. (Phone: 579076).

'RAMANA SATSANGH' AT BARODA

'Ramana Satsangh' was inaugurated on the auspicious Maha Sivarathri night (29.2.1984) at Baroda². Dr. Padmanabhan took very keen interest in having it conducted at his residence. Smt. Geetha Padmanabhan made all arrangements and the 'Ramana Satsangh' was held for nearly three hours in the midst of a large gathering of devotees. Every Punarvasu Day it would be conducted regularly in a devotee's house at Baroda.

²Please contact: Sri V.S. Ramanan, D-20, Petrochemical Township 391 345 Baroda Dt. Gujarat.



Professor Sundaramoorthy addresses the 'Jayanthi' audience (l to r) S. Ramachandran, President of Ramana Kendra. E. Hariharan and K. Rengaswamy, Secretary

(l to r) Prof. Venkataraman, V. Selvaraj, Prof. T.N. Pranatharhiharan and S. Ramachandran.

JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS

RAMANA FESTIVAL AT MADURAI

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's 104th Jayanthi was celebrated with many festivities by the Ramana Kendram, Madurai. The celebrations extended for three days from 21st to 23rd December, 1983. On all the three days there was a welcome blend of speeches on Bhagavan and his philosophy with cultural events, such as Ramana Music and Ramana dance.

The meeting on the first day was presided over by Sri E. Hariharan, Inspecting Assistant Commissioner of Income-tax, Madurai. Sri S. Ramachandran, President, Ramana Kendram, Madurai, welcomed the gathering and extolled the formation of Ramana Kendram, Madurai and its purpose. The guest lecturer was Prof. Sundaramurthy, who spoke lucidly about the philosophy and teachings of Bhagavan. He recalled with gratitude the yeomen service rendered by Sri Muruganar and early devotees like 'Keerai Patti' who recognised the greatness of Sri Bhagavan. The speeches were followed by a scintillating music performance by Madurai Ramana Music Group, led by Mrs. Shyamala Ramachandran and its members. With a vote of thanks by Sri Rengaswamy the first day's programmes concluded.

The second day's meeting was presided over by Sri Selvaraj, Principal, Gandhi Memorial College. The welcome address was given by Mr. Kala Rani Rengaswamy. The special lectures were delivered by Dr. B. Venkataraman and Prof. T.N. Pranatharhiharan. This was followed by Ramana dance by young girls trained by Mrs. Kala Rani Rengaswamy who did the choreography and sang the songs herself. This was followed by a dance recital by Smt. Radhika Ganesh and Kumari Renuka Krishnamurthy, disciples of Smt. Neela Krishnamurthy, who did the choreography and also sang the songs. The dance performances were excellent. Prof. Sri Krishnan, Joint Secretary, Ramana Kendram, Madurai, proposed a vote of thanks.

The meeting at Lakshmi Sundaram Hall on the concluding day, was presided over by Sri Narayanan Chettiar, Chairman, Sri Visalakshi Mills, Madurai. Sri S. Ramachandran, welcoming the gathering, appealed to all to participate increasingly in the activities of the Ramana Kendram, especially the younger generation. Sri Narayanan Chettiar in his presidential address pointed out how Bhagavan never went after any disciples. He congratulated the Kendram for arranging the celebrations within such a

Members of 'Ramananjali' flanked with the officer-bearers of Ramana Kendra, Madurai at the Lakshmi Sundaram Hall.





'Ramananjali': Devout offering of melodious music to Bhagavan Ramana.

short time. This was followed by the inaugural talk given by **Sri V. Ganesan**, our Managing Editor. He said that Bhagavan cannot or should not be confined to a physical



A.R. Natarajan

frame or period of time. When He went to Tiruvannamalai from Madurai it was as if He jumped from the Mother's lap into the Father's embrace. Bhagavan thus imbibed in Himself the boundless grace of Goddess Meenakshi and the rocklike spiritual stability of the Arunachala Mountain. To cite Bhagavan's influence over even strangers, a foreigner

who had never known Bhagavan was so overwhelmed when he saw the eyes of Bhagavan in a photo that he actually arrived at the Ashram, before his letter announcing his arrival could reach!

The keynote address was delivered by **Sri A.R. Natarajan**, Member of Central Board of



S. Ramachandran

Direct Taxes, New Delhi who said that man's primary interest is to secure peace of mind and happiness. Ramana's philosophy which is very simple and direct is eminently suited for it. He pointed out that Ramana's philosophy was very relevant in the modern world and this is borne out by the fact that Ramana Kendras



V. Ganesan

Completion of Koti Archana

As reported in our issue of April '83, p. 138, we are happy to announce that the 'Koti Archana' commenced by Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, at the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan was concluded on 6th February 1984. Sri M.P. Kaushik, representing Smt. Indira Gandhi, received the *Koti Archana Prasad*. He was accompanied by Sri B. Ananathaswami, Vice Chairman of Madras Ramana Kendra. It is worth mentioning again that the Prime Minister's *sankalpa* for performing *Koti Archana* was for the welfare of Mother India and the welfare of people all over the world.

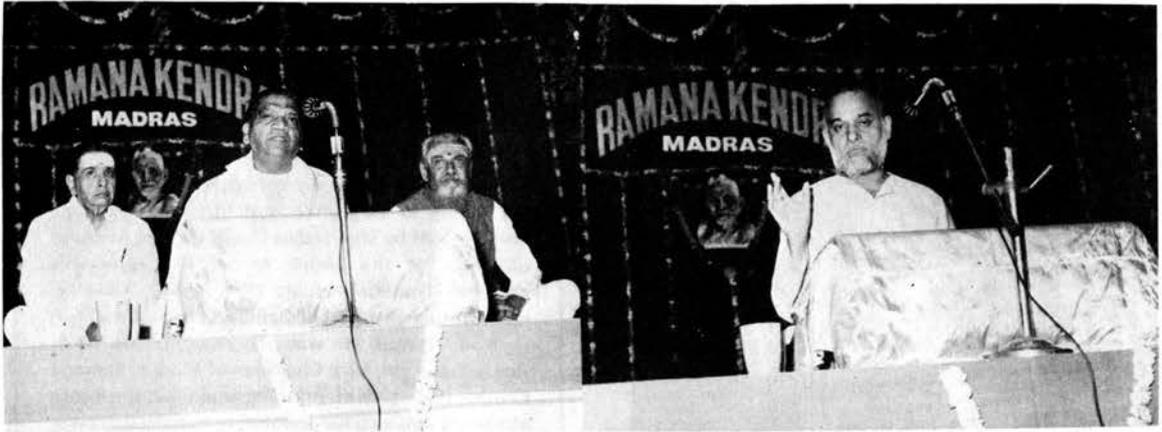


'The Koti Archana Prasada' is being received by Sri M.P. Kaushik, on behalf of Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi.

have been set up all over the world. The speeches were followed by a captivating 'Ramana Music' performance by *Ramananjali* led by **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan**. A vote of thanks was proposed by **Sri K. Rengaswamy**.

'Ramana Dance' by Kumari Renuka Krishnamoorthy and Smt. Radhika Ganesh





Sri S. Sankaranarayanan extols the greatness of 'Sat Darshanam' Sri B. Ananthaswami (l) Sri T.N. Venkataraman (r) are seen at the inauguration of these talks

Sri Swami Poornananda expounding 'Upadesa Saram'

AT RAMANA KENDRA — MADRAS

Ramana Kendra, Madras, celebrated Bhagavan's 104th Jayanthi for 8 days from 8th to 15th Jan 1984. On the morning of 8th Jan., *Ekadasa Rudra Abhishekam* was performed and about 1000 poor people were fed.

In order to expose the devotees to the teachings of Bhagavan in depth, two series of eight talks each — one by Sri S. Sankaranarayanan on '*Ramana Gita*' and another by Swami Poornananda Thirtha on '*Upadesa Saram*' were arranged at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. The Bhavan auditorium was tastefully decorated with large portraits of Bhagavan. Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, inaugurated the function by lighting the **Kuthu Vilakku**.

Sri Sankaranarayanan, Retd. Executive Director of Ashok Leyland, a great Sanskrit scholar, and a direct disciple of Sri Kapali Sastriar (who was the disciple of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni) gave a brilliant and lucid exposition of *Ramana Gita*, and held the large audience spellbound. He explained, in detail, that in *Ramana Gita* Bhagavan has given clear answers to almost all philosophical questions and doubts that usually assail the ardent seekers of Truth and "therefore the *Ramana Gita* is the most valuable and practical guide to all genuine *sadhakas*".

Swami Poornananda, who has been expounding Bhagavan's *Sat Darshana* and *Upadesa Saram* for more than 20 years, gave a masterly exposition of '*Upadesa Saram*' and emphasised the uniqueness of Bhagavan's teachings. He pointed out that what the *Upanishads*, the *Brahma Sutras* and *Bhagavad Gita* convey in thousands of verses, Bhagavan conveys in just 30 verses with much more precision, clarity and simplicity, "so much so, that if one understands Bhagavan's works, there is no need to study any *sastras*".

Apart from the above two series of talks, there was also a talk in Tamil by Vagisa Kalanidhi Sri Ki Va Jagannathan on 'WHO AM I'.

There were also three cultural programmes — a *Bharatanatyam* recital by Kumari Shobha Natarajan in which *abhinayam* was performed to Bhagavan's songs, a *Hari-Katha Kalakshepam* by Sri Mannargudi Sambasiva Bhagavathar on the life and teachings of Bhagavan (which was specially prepared for the occasion) and a dance-drama by *Ramana Sudha Group* so well choreographed by Smt. Saraswathi Sundaresan wherein young children beautifully depicted Bhagavan's life.

Sri B. Ananthasami, Vice Chairman of the Kendra, deserves credit for the excellent way he helped conduct this 8 day Ramana-Celebration.

AT RAMANA MANDIRAM — MADURAI

Chanting of Vedas, Upanishads, Abhishekam and Sahasranama pooja was conducted from 6 a.m. onwards on 22-12-83. This was followed by devotional songs of Bhagavan in which prominent part was taken by Smt. Parvathi Sundaresan. Poor-feeding on a large scale was organised by the Kendram.

In the evening the portrait of Bhagavan was taken in procession around the Meenakshi Amman Temple.

AT YELLAMANCHILI

A public meeting was held in the Sri Satya Seva Mandir Hall. Sri C.L. Narasingarao spoke on the life and teachings of Bhagavan, laying special stress on His being an avatar of Sri Skanda. Sri Appala Ramana, an octogenarian bhakta, who had the privilege of living in Sri Ramanasramam along with Sri Kanyakantha Ganapati Muni, spoke at length on the 'Direct Method' of Bhagavan and exhorted the audience to find the source of the 'I'. The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by the secretary of the Sahiti Samiti.

AT TADPATRI

The 104th birthday of Bhagavan was celebrated at the Ashram on 22nd December 1983, beginning with a morning group meditation conducted by Sri V.V. Brahmam. Poor-feeding for a thousand was arranged. Many speakers spoke on the life and teachings of Sri

Sri Vignana Ramaneeya Ashram, Palghat : Sri Ku. Janardhanan Thanupan speaks on the greatness of Sri Maharshi. Brahmasree Vaisravanath Raman Nambodri is seated next to him.



Ramana: **Yogi Ameya Veera Vikrama Brahmachari, Vidwan Sri Ramachandra Sastry and Sri Seetharamaraju.** The chief guest was **Sri. R. Sivarama Reddy**, Inspector of Customs and Central Excise. A beautiful program entitled "Sri Ramana Geetam" and cultural programmes of songs and dances on Bhagavan, Arunachala and Geetha were superb and praiseworthy.

AT PALGHAT

The 104th Birth Anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated at Vignana Ramaneeya Ashram, Palghat, on 21st and 22nd of December 1983. The celebrations commenced with a Ganapathy Homam, followed by pooja and poor-feeding.

The evening function started with Ramana Stuti. **Brahmasree Vaisravanath Raman Nambodiri**, a renowned philosopher, recalled the experience of the well-known Ayurveda physician, Kurranchery Moosad, who treated Bhagavan. An atheist by temperament, Sri Moosad, by his contact with Bhagavan, was later converted into an ardent devotee. He also made special mention of Bhagavan's potent mouna' in which the devotees experienced

indescribable peace, clearing all their doubts. **Sri Ku Ja Thampan, Sri K.M. Unni and Sri M.K. Subramaniam** also spoke. The second day also began with pooja and poor-feeding. The evening function began with chanting of stotras and Sat Darsana Parayana. **Sri T. Ramavariar** presided over the meeting, with addresses given by **Sri T.L. Easwaran, Sri A. Swaminathan and Sri Vinodkumar.**

In connection with the Jayanthi celebration, recitation competition in 'Upadesa Saram' and Bhagavad Gita was conducted for school students and prizes were distributed to the winners.

AT BRAZIL.

The devotees joined together in devotion and meditation on the sacred day of Sri Ramana's Jayanthi. The recitation of Arunachala Shiva impregnated the atmosphere with great joy and devotion.

Sri Mahakrishna Swamy then gave a moving message on the Supreme Reality. The function ended with meditation and serving of prasad. Even as the last devotee left, the Temple still vibrated with the chanting of 'Arunachala Shiva', 'Arunachala Shiva

The Principal Altar, enshrining Sri Bhagavan, at Sao Paulo, Brazil (r) Devotees immersing themselves in Ramana-devotion.



AT ANANTAPUR

The *Ramana Satsang* held a Jayanthi function in the Kasivisweswara Temple on December 23, 1983. The function began with the recitation of *Upadesa Saram* by **Sri Narasimha Murty**. Various speakers and messages were arranged. The highlight of the function was a speech given by **Sri E.V. Seshavataram**, who paid glowing tributes to Bhagavan Ramana.

AT COCHIN

The Jayanthi celebrations held at the *Ramana Study Centre* was surcharged with Bhagavan's Divine Presence. The function began with recitations from the Upanishads, *Upadesasaram*, *Vivekachudamani* and pooja to Vighneswara and Bhagavan. **Sri S. Hariharan** gave a lucid talk on the life of Sri Bhagavan and His unique method of self-enquiry. The function ended with Ramana Music and *prasad*-distribution.

AT CALCUTTA

The 104th Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan began with the chanting of *Arunachala Akshara Mana Malai* and the garlanding of Sri Bhagavan's portrait, followed by Arunachala Jyoti Deepa Pooja. In the evening Bhagavan's photo was taken in procession in the locality of Howrah with chanting of the Vedas and Bhajan. **Sri Ramana Theertha Maharaj** then spoke on Bhagavan.

AT SIVANANDA SATSANG BHAVAN — MADRAS

Bhagavan Sri Ramana's 104th *Jayanthi* was celebrated in a grand manner. **Sri Swami Vimalananda** of Madurai presided over the celebration and explained the great philosophy of Sri Ramana and how it has attracted people from all over the world. **Sri P.R.V. Ramanan**, President of the Hyderabad Ramana Kendra, also participated.

AT SINGAPORE

An Assadivar-Kirtan was held on a very grand scale by **Mr. and Mrs. Jashan N. Daryani** to celebrate the 104th *Jayanthi* of Sri Bhagavan. The program began with Assadivar Kirtan. A discourse by a guest speaker was arranged and the function ended with *Arti*. A beautiful colour-calendar-card bearing a captivating picture of Sri Bhagavan, printed by **Jashanbhai**, was distributed. (Sri Jashanji has sent copies of these lovely cards to all the Ramana Kendras).

SRI RAMANA NAME SAPTHAHAM

'*Ramana Vani*', Gudivada, announce: Due to unavoidable inconveniences 'Sri Ramana Akhanda Nama Sapthaham' which should have been held from Feb. 29, for a week, will now commence on May 26, at Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

Latest Publication !

**108 Names of Sri Bhagavan
"Ramana Ashtothra"**

By **Professor K. Swaminathan**

A lucid translation of and absorbing commentary on the *Ramana Ashtothra* in English by **Professor K. Swaminathan**, the Chief Editor of The Mountain Path is now available.

The 108 Names of Sri Bhagavan, very significant for Ramana Puja, are efficacious. Devotees should possess this valuable book without fail.

Price: Rs. 5/- (Postage extra)

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Sri Ramanasramam Book Depot

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Tiruvannamalai-606 603.**

RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Bhagavan's 104th Jayanthi was celebrated on December 22 with great enthusiasm with pooja, Vedaparayana and devotional music both in the morning and in the evening. At the Uttara Swami Malai Temple, trikala pooja was performed on behalf of the Kendra and devotees sang Arunachala Siva in chorus before the Deity.

At a largely attended meeting held on February 12, Mr. Kenneth Thurston Hurst, son of late Mr. Paul Brunton, gave an interesting talk on his father and Bhagavan.

The Annual General Body meeting of the Kendra was held on January 8, when the Annual Report for the year 1983 and the audited accounts for 1982 were discussed and passed.

Shri B. Ananthaswami, Vice Chairman of the Madras Kendra visited the Kendra on December 25 and gave a talk on Bhagavan's Aksharamanamalai.

On February 29, Mahasivaratri was observed with traditional solemnity with Vedaparayana and devotional music.

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

U.K. RAMANA DEVOTEES

Dear Ganesan,

Pamela Leah, Alan Beaumont, Anthony de Souza, and the writer, wish to hold occasional meetings for those in Britain who have surrendered to Bhagavan. We plan to sit in silence invoking His Grace and do sadhana.

If any of your English-speaking readers are interested please request them to contact the writer. We are all known to Mrs. Osborne.

ALAN JACOB
2, Boade's Mews
Flask Walk
Hampstead,
NW3 1DB, U.K.



Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandali, Hyderabad: Sri Bhagavan's 104th Jayanthi was celebrated with great devotion for a week from December 29, 1983.

BOMBAY JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS — March 22, 23: Mr. Justice M.H. Kania speaks. (l to r) Mrs. Kania, Sri P.V. Somasundaram and Smt. Prema Pandurangan.





Dr. Ram Desai

Volker Gausmann



Ian Martin

Mrs & Mr. Kaura



Murray Feldman



PILGRIMS



D.K. Sahgal



Samuel Ramos

Mrs. & Mr. Alan Macleay



Mrs. B. Bendror, Yasmin and David



Mrs. & Mr. Gunter

Sri S.B. Mukherjee and his son, Saumen Mukherjee, have bought a house ('Sadhana') near the Ashram. The entire family, including the lovely grand-daughter, Muniya, are fully surrendered to Sri Bhagavan. (4th from left is Saumen Mukherjee, next to him is his father).



(l to r) Smt. Kannika Chatterjee, Smt. S.P. Mukherjee, Sri B.N. Chatterjee. The late S.P. Mukherjee had narrated how purely through prayers to Sri Bhagavan he was blessed with his only grandson, 'Ramanendhu'.

Sri S. Balasubramanian, (Asst. Incometax Commissioner) is a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan, associating himself actively with the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore. (He is seen here 3rd from left, with his wife and two sons).





Sri S. Ramachandran has been a devotee of Sri Bhagavan from his childhood, so too his wife. Sri Ramachandran is now the President of Madurai Ramana Kendra. Here he is seen (second from left) with our Ashram President and members of his family.

Sri Suryanarayana ('Suri') our enthusiastic Ashram Engineer (first from left) is a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan; so too his brothers H.S. Thiagaraja, H.S. Nagesh, his wife and his sister.

VISITORS

"Who can describe the well of laissez-faire (it literally means-let it be), kindness and concern for the welfare of devotees and unswerving devotion to Bhagavan that is the fabric of life at Ramanasramam? Whoever is lucky enough to become 'thread' will know how strong this fabric is. It holds and binds.



Mrs. Ruth Wilson

May the Grace of Arunachala and the silent guidance of Bhagavan Ramana—ever be more keenly felt—bring me back to this holy place!"

—Mrs. Ruth Wilson, Cambridge, USA

"It is difficult and perhaps too early to say how beneficial and important this stay has been for me. But I can say that it brought me essential joy and deep happiness. When coming, I had several questions. The answers came before I asked them. Arunachala gave me the peace of silence, there is no more questions.

Meetings with several Ramana-devotees remain unforgettable. I know this is Bhagavan's Grace, and I thank Him. I return to Switzerland with many blessings. In my heart is a great Light! I hope I can share Ramana's Presence with all my friends.

—Annie-loyce Macche, Fleurier, Switzerland



Annie Loyce, Macch., Mrs. Liliane Berger, Chierry Laurent and Michel Jeanremand.



"I express my deep gratefulness that I could stay with my daughter for six weeks under the favourable conditions that Sri Ramanasramam provides to a devotee. The reception was warm, friendly and helpful. My daughter also benefitted greatly by the Presence of Bhagavan".

— Jochen Anthurer, Munich, W. Germany



Jochen Anthurer & Noemi



Christopher Pegler, Zarine Pegler and their children.

Christopher Pegler, his wife **Zarine** and their two delightful sons, John and Timothy, though only able to spend a few days at the Ashram, exuded joy and warmth during their stay in January. They write: "Dear Ganesh, we are sorry not to be able to say goodbye to you personally. You may put the following in *The Mountain Path*:"

"In each visit we are happy to return to the Ashram. Though our stay is through circumstances short, we have always felt immediately at home. We must thank all at the Ashram for their continued warm hospitality to us".

* * * * *

"I have spent more than two months in Ramanasramam, at the feet of Arunachala-Siva. It has been one of the most grace-fulfilling periods in this lifetime; grace in the form of peace in Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi and Meditation Hall, and in the form of intense joy while doing Arunagiri-Pradakshina. The Ashram has provided me with food, shelter and family feelings. I leave Arunachala physically but not internally, in my mind there is one thought - to come back. In my heart I feel love, gratitude and surrender to Ramana-Arunachala".

— Swami Satyananda Saraswati, Spain.

Marie Therese Faurin (mother of) Michel Richard, and two friends spent a few days at the Ashram from December 31st '83.

Michael writes: "The beautiful talk you shared with us on the importance and simplicity of Bhagavan's teaching has been very moving. We were very happy to meet you. We will keep within us the 'Divine light of Ramana' to share it with others around us, at home in France. My mother's dream has come true through this visit to Ramana's abode.

Just Released! New Publication!!

CONSCIOUS IMMORTALITY

By **PAUL BRUNTON**

conscious
immortality

conversations with
Ramana Maharshi
by
Paul Brunton



As announced in our previous issues of *The Mountain Path*, the conversations that Paul Brunton and Munagala Venkatramaiah had with Sri Bhagavan, in the thirties, have now been published in a book-form, entitled *Conscious Immortality*.

Ramana's Words of Wisdom have thus been preserved in this treasure of a book. Each devotee should possess a copy for himself! please hurry!

204Pp.

Price: Rs. 15/- (Postage extra)

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**Sri Ramanasramam P.O.,
Tiruvannamalai-606 603.**



Mr. Michael Richard and family

She writes:

"From your words my ears have heard the song of God.
 Ramana's eyes have burnt mine in the Grotto
 Oh Divine Mother give my heart joy,
 To all at Ramana's Abode:
 With Tears in my eyes and a song in my heart;
 Oh God, May I come back again to Arunachala".

* * * *

"It is with deep gratitude to those who have inherited the management of Sri Ramanasramam that I wish to express my thanks, for being allowed to participate in the daily activities this last month. How can I praise enough their goodwill, which accepted me, an unknown stranger, for such a length of time. Daily I observed the efficiency and total dedication to Bhagavan's large family of devotees. I saw cheerfulness, detachment and steadfastness of purpose. Just the service of three meals a day to such a large group of constantly changing visitors must be a discipline and I tried to imagine how my back would hurt carrying buckets of food and bending down to serve it the way my hosts were doing!



Adela Clarke De Bruin

The greatest of all gifts of the Ashram was the chance to sit quietly where my Bhagavan sat, to walk upon holy Arunachala where he walked and to see and talk to others who have felt his grace. I am aware of much work being done, silently and unobtrusively, by the many members of this Ashram, so that devotees like myself may experience the wonder of this silent sage and the silent mountain of Grace."

— Adela Clarke de Bruin, USA

Smt. & Sri B.K. Kapur of Patiala spent two weeks at the Ashram. They express their views:

"On 17th January 1984, at 7 a.m. when my wife and myself were to leave Bangalore for the Ashram, we were informed not to undertake the journey as there was a complete hartal and no buses were running. We sought the blessings of Bhagavan Ramana and left for the bus stand. The bus stand was deserted and no bus could be seen. We went to the Railway Station and were informed that no suitable train was available to Tiruvannamalai.

As there was no auto-rickshaw or taxi running we had to walk all the way to the Private Bus Centre. On reaching the Bus Centre we were told that there was also no bus leaving for Tiruvannamalai. Thus we were disappointed.

Hardly had we sat for a few minutes when a man came and enquired where we wanted to go. On informing him of our destination, he led us to a bus standing nearby and offered two very comfortable seats, removing two persons already seated there. From Bangalore to Tiruvannamalai we had a very smooth journey, though we had to change at three



Mrs. & Mr. B.K. Kapur

places. In spite of the fact that there was great rush we got two comfortable seats through-out the journey.

According to the newspapers of 19th January, no bus had left or arrived at Bangalore as there was stone-throwing on all sides.

We faced no such difficulty; it was a miracle that we had a safe journey. It was purely due to the blessings of Sri Bhagavan that we arrived at His abode!"

**He who would be serene and pure
 needs but one thing, detachment.**

— Eckhart



Sri Ramana & Family

The grandson of A. Devaraja Mudaliar, **Sri A. Ramana** is a regular pilgrim to the Ashram, along with his family. He shares his thoughts with us:

"It seems on my first birthday I went up to Bhagavan with sweets in my hand and He playfully asked me for the same. Alas! it seems I refused to give Bhagavan the sweets.

My earliest recollection of the Ashram is of travelling a long way from the station by jutka and then going into a thatched shed where there was a 'Thatha' who seemed to be looking at you wherever you sat. I also remember Bhagavan walking down the hill with a stick in his hand followed by his faithful attendant.

Then followed the sad day in April, 1950. I was lying down with my parents on the open verandah of our house when we saw a bright meteor flashing across the sky. The next day we heard that Bhagavan shed his mortal coil.

My next recollection of the Ashram is of my first Giri Pradakshina. A large group of ashramites went round the Hill singing Arunachala Shiva and I hardly felt that it was 8 miles that I had walked. It is said that the Hill attracts all those who go round it and invariably since then, whenever I visit the Ashram, I go round the Hill.

After my marriage when my wife and I visited the Ashram we went to the small room where Bhagavan had shed his mortal coil. A shiver like an electric shock, passed through my wife and from that day on she was transformed into a greater devotee of Bhagavan than myself.

Bhagavan never rejects any desperate and sincere prayers of His devotees. There have been a few occasions when in sheer desperation I have prayed to Him and Lo! in an unexpected way He has solved my problems.

The Ashram has grown from strength to strength. Even though Bhagavan is not physically present we can feel His Presence everywhere in the Ashram. The peacefulness and serenity in the Old Hall and the Samadhi Hall has to be experienced to be understood. The Ashram treats all devotees alike, whether they be rich or poor; the same concern is shown for their comfortable stay and their wants. I consider the Ashram my own home.

I consider it my proud heritage to be a devotee of Bhagavan.

"FOR OFTEN WHEN ON MY COUCH I LIE
IN VACANT OR IN PENSIVE MOOD
BHAGAVAN FLASHES UPON THE INWARD EYE
WHICH IS THE BLISS OF SOLITUDE
AND THEN MY HEART WITH PLEASURE IS FILLED
AND DANCES WITH BHAGAVAN"

TAKE AWAY THOUGHT AND THERE IS NO MIND

"Find out the Self through meditation in this manner. Trace every thought back to its origin, which is the mind; never allow thought to go on; if it does, it will be unending; take it back to its source, which is the mind, and they (thoughts and mind) will die of inaction, for the mind only exists by thought; take away thought and there is no mind. As each doubt and depression arises, ask yourself, 'Who is it that doubts? Who is it that is depressed?' Tear everything away until there is nothing but the source left. Live only in the present".

— Sri Bhagavan (from *Conscious Immortality*, p.55-6)

OBITUARY

Smt. NAGALAKSHMI

'Mother has merged in motherhood' were the spontaneous words uttered by Professor K. Swaminathan when he was informed of the passing away of **Smt. Nagalakshmi**, wife of the Ashram President, **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**. At noon, on March 12th — the sacred day of *Punarvasu nakshatra* — one of the staunchest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Nagalakshmi (fondly addressed by Bhagavan as 'Nagu') merged with Arunachala-Ramana, with the holy *nama* of 'Ramana' on her lips and to the chorus chanting of 'Arunachala' by her husband, children and others around her bed. She thus fulfilled her wish to die consciously (she had recently quoted Bhagavan and said "Bhagavan has emphatically said that one should not die in sleep; one should be conscious while dying. I want to die in full consciousness").

For the past few months she was suffering from stomach and breathing trouble. The best medical treatment was given to her; thanks to **Dr. Sundaram**, Chief Medical Officer, Government Hospital, Tiruvannamalai, who attended on her, keeping her in the Hospital itself, with great care, attention and love.

She was cremated at the foot of Arunachala, as per her wish.



Smt. Nagalakshmi



Smt. Nagalakshmi along with Sri Bhagavan and her husband, Ashram President, Sri T.N. Venkataraman.

the Ashram increase; hence our calling her Mahalakshmi is truthfully justified".

Sri Balarama Reddy: "We have lost our Mother! Her contribution to the growth of the Ashram, as a family, is remarkable, though unknown to many".

Streams of devotees paid glowing tributes to Nagalakshmi.

Sri Kunju Swami said: "She is our Mahalakshmi. We the inmates of the Ashram, irrespective of disparity in age, looked upon her only as our Mother. In fact, only after her coming to the Ashram in 1938, did the material prosperity of

Mrs. Therese Regios: "Up on the hill, suddenly, I remembered Nagalakshmi; Brilliant light filled my head and spread. She has realised oneness with Arunachala, the Light of Lights".

It was a fitting tribute to Nagalakshmi that the entire residents of Ramana Nagar said in one voice that she was their own 'Mother', whom they adored.

SUBRAMANIA SWAMI

Subramania Swami was a resident of the Ashram since his childhood. His father was a staunch devotee of Bhagavan and stayed in the Ashram for many years. Though Subramania Swami's work was to supervise the general running of the Ashram, particularly the labourers, he also personally served Bhagavan by applying lineament to His feet at night. He was greatly attached to the Ashram and was proud in calling himself its 'watch-dog'. His father was in charge of looking after the dogs and was nick-named 'dog-Swami'.



Subramania Swami

Subramania Swami said: "My father was known as 'dog-Swami' but I am 'Swami's dog'" — so fully surrendered was he to Sri Bhagavan. His services will be gratefully remembered by the old devotees and especially by the Ashram inmates. The Ashram President used to call him 'my own brother'!



Smt. Lokamma

Lokamma served in the Ashram Kitchen and her food preparations were relished by all, including Bhagavan. She had passed away at the ripe old age of 90. Her end was peaceful, as is the case with all the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan. With her passing away we have lost one of the staunchest devotees of Bhagavan. Lokamma's vairagya and surrender to Bhagavan are a standing example for all young seekers. One-pointedly she worshipped Bhagavan; His Lotus Feet alone she clasped.

B.A. MANDE

At the age of 65, **Prof. Sri B.A. Mande** of Nagpur, an intimate Ramana Bhakta, expired on the 1st of February 1984, in Bombay. After a successful career in the Institute of Science in Bangalore, he devoted himself entirely to the study of Sri Bhagavan's teachings and service to Him. In Nagpur, with active cooperation of Princess Prabhavati Raje, he started a Ramana Centre—'Ramana Sannidhanam'.



B.A. Mande

He has left behind many relatives and friends who shall remember him with love and respect.

May he rest in peace at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Ramana.

BHOGANATHAM PILLAI

In our issue of July '80, p. 175, we have introduced Sri Bhoganatham Pillai. This pious devotee of Sri Bhagavan

passed away on 23.1.84, at the age of 77 years, after a brief illness.

Ever since his retirement, he was a resident of the Ashram and helped its administration in various department — stores, book-stall and accounts. His grasp of Bhagavan's teachings was commendable. His devotion to senior devotees (like Muruganar) was profound and praiseworthy. His passing away is a great loss to the Ashram and to his fellow-devotees.



Bhoganatham Pillai

Dr. R. SANKARANARAYANAN

Born in a reputed family, Sri Sankaranarayanan obtained his Ph.D in Engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology U.S.A. and specialised in computers. He held important posts in large companies, including Additional General Manager in Indian Telephone Industries, Bangalore. He was also a recipient of many Awards, being versatile in many fields.



Dr. Sankaranarayanan

Dr. Sankaranarayanan was the Vice President of Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore. His understanding of Sri Bhagavan's teaching was clear and deep. It is gratefully remembered that our Found-Editor Sri Arthur Osborne spent his last few days at Dr. Sankaranarayanan's house. His entire family worship Ramana as their Satguru. We convey our heartfelt condolences to his wife and three daughters.

Smt. PRAMILABAI JOSHI

Sri S.R. Joshi, retired District Judge, Dharwad, is a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. His wife, **Smt. Pramila Bai Joshi**, was equally devoted to the Master. Ever many years ago at Dharwad she had started conducting Ramana Satsangs and mass prayers, evoking Ramana's Presence, thereby introducing many families to the beauty of Sri Bhagavan and to His teachings. **Smt. Pramila Bai Joshi** passed away on March 14, thus attaining the Lotus Feet of her chosen Master!

SMT. LILA LALVANI

A great bhakta at heart, **Smt. Lila Lalvani**, had been dedicated to spiritual pursuits since the death of her husband nearly two decades ago. She was a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan and took active part in the wide movement headed by Dada J.P. Vaswani. Her greatness was that she looked on all as the manifestation of God. She was 63 years old. We convey our condolences to her family.



Smt. Lila Lalvani