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How is it that Thou hast become famous from Thy constant union with the poor and humble, Oh Arunachala!
— The Marital Garland of Letters, Verse 83

THE MOUNTAIN PATH
(A QUARTERLY)
“Anunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Anunachala!”
— The Marital Garland of Letters, Verse 83

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
TO BE in the world and not of it; what does it mean? Is it possible to be God's and Man's at the same time? Can one carry on the daily activities, and also give oneself to God wholly? Is there not a contradiction between worldly activities and the inner search for the Supreme? Should not one choose between the Cloister and the Hearth?

What is the underlying idea in the withdrawal from the world into monasteries and convents? Why the order of Sanyasa? Is not the adoption of a totally different way of life for higher values based upon the idea that solitude and insulation from the world is a must for achieving it? Is not the braving of the Himalayan cold, or the heat of caves, and a willingness to undergo physical austerities, rooted in the thought that for spiritual progress and search for God this solitude is of great help?

Therefore, one has to ask oneself the question whether marriage, work and the so-called worldly activities would deny one the full flowering in God and total dedication to the Supreme. In Ramana's teachings we find repeated emphasis being laid on the fact that for the discovery of truth outer circumstances should not be allowed to come in the way. Notwithstanding this assurance one finds it difficult to accept this proposition. So ingrained is our belief that the 'jungle hermitage and a 'London flat' are not the same for a spiritual seeker. It is because of this that we find Ramana being plied with such questions as 'is not celibacy necessary to realise the Self?' 'can a married man realise this Self?' 'should not one renounce home?' 'is not solitude necessary for a Sanyasin?' and so on.

Ramana would gently but firmly take the questioners back to certain fundamentals. The primary, and the foremost duty of everyone is the pursuit of self-enquiry for Self-knowledge. Diligent, unwavering and attentive enquiry can be performed, and has to be performed in any life situation. The spirit of enquiry, and the capacity to turn the mind within, by

THE CLOISTER AND THE HEARTH

EDITORIAL

By

A.R. Natarajan

The Mountain Path

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appropriate enquiry, is a God given freedom to each one of us, to enable one to discover for oneself the truth. This liberty is untrammelled and is not limited or circumscribed by anything in life. None can be denied this right to find for oneself the consciousness within and outer circumstances like marriage, job and place cannot stand between one and Self-knowledge.

On the contrary the course of events in life is totally outside one's control. They are not of one's making. The divine, karmic law, unfolds itself with an un failing certainty, altering the situations and circumstances. Our paramount duty cannot, quite obviously, be linked to that over which we have no control. We are bound hand and foot to the environments and the experience for going through which the body has taken shape. Rememberance of this basic truth will enable us to pursue self-enquiry with unflagging vigour always, and not to blame the circumstances for failure to do so.

Ramana would never fail to remind that each one of us carries the mental environment wherever one goes. It cannot be left behind. Can one abandon the environment of desires? It is as much a part of us as our shadow. Then what use is there in a mere change of the physical environment. The ego problems would have to be tackled and resolved whatever be the altered situation or circumstance.

A conversation which Ramana had with a devotee would be worth recalling. This devotee desired to leave Sri Ramanasramam for a pilgrimage. Ramana told him 'you have come all the way to Tiruvannamalai for the immediate vicinity of Ramana Bhagavan, yet you do not appear to have mental quietness. Now you want to go elsewhere and from there you will desire to go to some other place. At this rate there will be no end to your travels'.

This is not to deny the usefulness of a spiritual environment. Ramana himself would encourage the circumambulation of Arunachala and had himself set the example by doing so for over 25 years. For Arunachala has the imperceptible but certain effect of 'drawing a seeker within and making him silent like itself'. If destiny allows, let one by all means take advantage of places which are more congenial for spiritual practice, but when we have no choice, let us bring the environment of Arunachala, the environment of the Maharishi's shrine of grace into whatever place we might be in.

If we ponder we find that this talk of giving up jobs, forsaking families and so on it may be under a momentary and immature impulse. It is not necessarily the product of spiritual ripeness. Weak unmanliness, lack of courage and fortitude may often be camouflaged and one may be apt to delude oneself that the action taken under these circumstances is the product of sacrifice and renunciation in order to single-mindedly search for truth. For Ramana it was the call from the father, Arunachala, in obedience to whose commands he left home. When asked why he shifted from Skandashramam to near his mother's samadhi, Ramana simply said the same force which brought him to Arunachala had brought him there. Therefore, when one responds irresistibly to the magic lure of the divine, the situation is altogether different. Then there are no questions asked. For home would have lost its meaning and the entire universe itself would become home.

It is not work nor the family members who are the hindrance. The fault is not with the possessions. What needs to be tackled is the possessor and the sense of doership. Merely to give up certain relationships would not free one from the attachments. What needs to be renounced is the ego. Self-enquiry and the fire of knowledge alone can reduce it to ashes.

As for solitude, it is a matter of an attitude of mind. One may be alone in a crowd or in a crowd even when alone. The tumult of thought of the uncontrolled mind would deny solitude. What needs to be understood is, therefore, the nature of the mind and once it is understood the equipoise and equanimity of the mind would make solitude superfluous.

The hankering after a chosen circumstance and situation for carrying on spiritual practice also suggests that we have forgotten the fact that the guidance of the Satguru is not limited

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1 Crumbs from His Table, by Ramanananda Swarnagiri p-23.
by time and space and is available wherever one is. As the Heart within, he not only lights the flame of enquiry but also keeps it burning till one learns to be natural 'That'. Ramana made this point specifically to Ramanananda Swamagiri, when he wanted to give up his job in order to be close to Ramana. Ramana’s assurance to Ethel Merston is another instance in point. After many years she wanted to return to Europe to see her friends and relatives but was reluctant to leave Bhagavan. The assurance of Ramana ‘wherever you are, remember Bhagavan is there in your heart watching over you’, settled the matter.

The march of events is relentless. Ramana’s message of unceasing practice of self-enquiry shields one from the events. The mood of meditation created by properly directed self-enquiry permeates everything. When the current, the link with the Self is established, all work and activities will be performed in the current itself. Then home becomes heaven. Activity becomes impersonal and perfect. Life itself becomes joyous play.

The discharge of his duties by a house-holder such as this, who works for the support of his family, quite unmindful of his own physical comforts in life, should be regarded as selfless service rendered to his family, whose needs it is his destiny to meet. It may, however, be asked what benefit such a householder derives from the family. The answer is that there is no benefit for him from the family as such, since he has made the discharge of his duties to them a means of spiritual training and since he finally obtains perfect contentment by realizing the supreme Bliss of Liberation, which is the ultimate goal of every path and the supreme reward. He therefore stands in need of nothing from the members of his family or from his family life.

— Sri Bhagavan

Only those can reach God who practice extreme humility. As long as there is the slightest trace of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ it is impossible to attain God. If a man does not learn this lesson of his own accord he will learn it when blows come to him in the shape of miseries and sufferings and then he will surrender unto God. As a man enters a building friends warn him to stoop at the doorway as otherwise he will strike his head on the door frame. If he won’t bend and would walk straight he receives a bad knock and then at once he stoops. It is the same with the man whose ego will not bend.

— Sri Bhagavan’s words recorded by Shanthamma
THE REALISATION OF UNION

By Alan Watts

GOD is the most obvious thing in the world. He is absolutely self-evident — the simplest, clearest and closest reality of life and consciousness. We are only unaware of him because we are too complicated, for our vision is darkened by the complexity of pride. We seek him beyond the horizon with our noses lifted high in the air, and fail to see that he lies at our very feet. We flatter ourselves in premeditating the long, long journey we are going to take in order to find him, the giddy heights of spiritual progress we are going to scale, and all the time are unaware of the truth that "God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves". We are like birds flying in quest of air, or men with lighted candles searching through the darkness for fire.

The self-evidence of God is the result of love, and is one with the gift of union with himself which he bestows upon us. For God is not niggardly in his self-revelation; he creates us to know him, and short of actual compulsion does everything possible to present himself to our consciousness. In saying that God gives us union with himself here and now, we are saying also that here and now he exposes himself right before our eyes. In this very moment we are looking straight at God, and he is so clear that for us complex human beings he is peculiarly hard to see. To know him we have to simplify ourselves, and the mind is so dominated by the complexity of pride that it will resort to every conceivable subtlety to resist and avoid a truth so wholly simple.

God and union with God are Reality; nothing is more real, more concrete, more actual, and more present. At the same time, Reality is infinitely alive. It, he, cannot be grasped in any finite form, whether physical, mental or emotional. Therefore, as long as we try to grasp God, we shall never realize him. Life itself, as we experience it moment by moment, proceeding as it does directly from God, is the perfect analogy of this truth, for to grasp life is to kill it, or rather, to miss it, and more than ever is this true of God — the Life of life. Pluck a flower, and it dies. Take up water from the stream, and it flows no longer. Pull down the blind, but the sunbeam is not trapped in the room. Snatch the wind in a bag, and you have only stagnant air. This is the root of every trouble; man loves life, but the moment, he tries to hold on to it he misses it. The fact that things change and move and flow is their very livelihood, and the harder man hangs on to his life the sooner he dies of worry.

Religion, as it is generally practised, is simply an attempt to hang on to life and the still more lively mystery which informs it — God. Hence religion as generally practised is idolatry. God cannot be held in theologies; theism, deism, pantheism — none of them can grasp his truth. Nor can states of mind and feeling contain him; ecstasy, rapture, quiet, samadhi — these are only the secondary and unessential effects of his presence. Our various intellectual and emotional idols, our doctrines, holy books, sacraments, religious feelings, creeds and churches are of use so long as they are understood as approximating and pointing to God. But when we try to possess him within them, they must sooner or later become millstones about our neck.

God, and the living creation which proceeds from his hands, cannot be possessed. To enjoy and to know Reality we must let go of it and realize that it possesses us. Beauty grasped turns into pain, for God is the source both of the beauty and of the pain of life. In its beauty he calls us to him; in the pain which comes from grasping he warns us that we cannot come to him in a possessive spirit, because in so doing we shall miss the very thing that we desire. To clutch the splendour of flame is to be burned. To enjoy anything living, whether it be fire, water, air, earth, flesh and blood, our own lives, or God himself, we must let go of it.
and let us be free to be itself, this is true detachment.

This is why there is no method, no formal technique, for attaining the mystical state and realizing union with God. For a method is an attempt to possess, and has its origin in pride and fear. And as there is nothing that we can do to realize God, we must not fall in the error of quietism, which is trying to realize God by doing nothing; for inaction is merely an indirect form of action: it is trying to possess God by doing nothing instead of by doing something, and neither course will succeed since he cannot be possessed at all.

Apparently this leaves us in a hopeless and impossible position. Doing something about it is wrong, and doing nothing about it is wrong. Seeing thus far and no further we fall into delusion, and undergo the experience of impasse, or reaching a blind alley.

But we have to return to this point: the Reality which we term union with God simply IS, whether we realize it or not, whether we are doing something about it or nothing about it. Any attempt to grasp it, by action or by inaction, suggests that it is not absolutely present. The moment we look for union with God, we imply that we do not already have it, and this is true even when we look for it by not looking.

The focal point of Reality is now — this present moment, this elusive image of eternity, so small that it has no temporal length and yet so long that we can never escape from it. Here in this present moment life is most lively; here alone do we really exist. The past is dead; the future as yet is not. The moment assumes a hundred different forms — moments of pleasure, moments of pain, moments of elation, moments of depression, moments of quiet, moments of agitation but it will not stay, it cannot be grasped, in any of its forms. This moment is our life, but the more we try to hold it, the faster it slips away. We look for it and cannot find it because it is too small to see, too slippery to hold, and yet this is where we are given union with God. If we do not discover it in this moment, we shall never discover it.

Union with God is here and now; here and now is union with God. Surely God in his love could have made nothing more simple, but the Old Adam in us raises every possible objection to seeing the point. To begin with, we are all unconscious pantheists, trying to grasp the moment, the Eternal Now, in and as its various forms, trying to identify God with something in the moment. It may be, as in avowed pantheism, that we try to grasp and hold him as the concrete material life which occurs in this moment. More generally those inclined to the mystical and spiritual life will try to identify him with some profound state of feeling, some rapture or ecstasy, some special state of mind, which, again, occurs in but does not embrace the living moment. Such ecstasies frequently proceed from the realization of our inescapable union with God, but as soon as we try to hold on to them as if they were that union we have missed the point. Strangled by our grasp, the ecstasy vanishes.

Now the realization produces definite effects, though no amount of striving for and imitating these effects will produce realization. It infuses our life with a deep undertone of love, joy, peace and spiritual freedom, and these come in part from the certainty and security of our union with God. From the negative standpoint, the surrender of the possessive will cut at the very root of evil. Living to so great a degree in the present, we are delivered from “anxiety for the morrow” and the vital lively nature of the Eternal Now imparts a certain Joie de vivre that expresses itself naturally and spontaneously like the song of a bird. It issues in a profound and joyous acceptance of the will of God as this is expressed in the circumstances of each moment, for we realize that these circumstances are included in and governed by the Eternal Now, the love of God. Above all it appears in love, for God and for man, because we are consciously united with Love itself. Just how all this happens cannot be said, and if it could there would be no point in saying it since none of these effects can be produced by mimicry. We have to discover first our total dependence on and union with God, and then, “all these things shall be added unto you”.
More than sixty years ago, Swami Vivekananda expressed a far-reaching truth: “A good thought, even when generated in a secluded cave, will invariably have its repercussion throughout the whole world”. In other words, spiritual energy like its junior sister material energy, does not go astray or perish.

At that time, the penetration of Eastern, especially Vedantic, philosophy into the Western world was only just starting. Vivekananda, with his world-wide travelling and lecturing about Yoga, was one of its ablest exponents in his own day.

Almost at the same time, in the silent caves of the holy mountain of Arunachala, a young ascetic — Venkataraman, the future Great Rishi of India, whom we know as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, started his spiritual work for humanity.

The potent current of meditation born from his state of true Samadhi, has since enveloped our globe. If a single thought leaves its impression on the mental aura of a planet, we can hardly imagine the actual results of a constant stream of spiritual energy such as that which for more than fifty years radiated from Sri Maharshi.

In the early part of this century the central Vedantic teaching of Self-Realization as the goal of man’s attainment was little known in the West, although it had continued in an unbroken stream in India as well as through the Sufi saints of Islamic countries and the Buddhist Masters of various schools. It was Sri Maharshi who made it known throughout the world in the form of the quest for the Self.

Acting for our present epoch as a supreme messenger of Truth, Sri Maharshi gave new life to the ancient teaching, and by his own example showed to us that Realization is possible here and now.

Books giving the Master’s teachings and commenting upon them are now spreading over the world. Little wonder then, that those who are ripe for it and whose destiny draws them to the quest for Realization, respond and accept the teaching given for this epoch. Thus they gradually become able to perceive the inner Light, the ‘inner Guru’ spoken of by the Maharshi.

Very striking is another phenomenon: in letters from all parts of the world, I can see that people have found the teachings of the Great...
Rishi and the idea of using the Vichara to be something they already knew in their own depths. They often say that, after reading a few pages, development and understanding flow as if through a river-bed prepared long ago. And they find that the teaching belongs to them. Truth is not discovered but recognised.

There are also those who have not yet encountered any of the Maharshi's teachings or read anything about him, and yet of themselves seek to penetrate into their own mysterious inner realm, in which to find the final enlightenment. They seek their Self. We know that there is no such thing as a result without a cause. A potent Cause must be behind the new trend in man's eternal Search. To me it is utterly clear: it is the spiritual inheritance from one of the perfected, from a life manifesting Truth, a life which some of us were privileged to witness with our mortal eyes.

The "I-current", to which the Maharshi's teaching turns us, works beyond the veil of religion. It reaches men of different denominations and speaks equally well to the Rishi's own countrymen, to Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and others.

Here we see another characteristic of the Master's inheritance: Sri Maharshi neither created nor propagated any new religion or philosophy. He did much more, giving us the key with which to open the hidden treasure of all true religions, to understand and then to practise them with inner enlightenment, and not with gloomy indecision, doubt and lack of faith as some may have done before.

The Master ever abides with us in his spiritual energy, permeating this world of relativity, as he told us before he left his body.

The immense spiritual accumulator he charged during his visit to our planet as a living man, assists and inspires seekers who are ripe enough to realize his teaching and message.

MOUNTAIN PATH, July 1964

THE BLIND SEEER

Lines from the Ramana Deva Malai (Tamil) of Muruganar

Like the sun which, never resting,
Seeks and seeks but finds no trace
Of darkness
So our Master cannot see our foe, delusion;
Cannot see.
So blind is he.

The Mountain Path, July 1984, p.184
INDRA IN THE RIG VEDA

By David Frawley

As the sub-title “A Yogic Perspective” indicates, the article brings out the rich poetic implications of a Hymn to Indra in the Rig Veda. Indological scholars concerned with the evolution of the Indra concept in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas or the significance of Kundalini in Yoga and the dharma chakra in Buddhism, need to be reminded that the synchronic approach is as legitimate as the diachronic, that the seed becomes the tree only to produce fruit, which is a seed again, that the Vedic Hymn to Indra sounds like one of the inspired utterances of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni! The Maharshis are true seers because they see and sing the Timeless in time.

WHO IS the great God Indra in the Vedic tradition, and why is he the greatest of the Gods? In the later Puranic tradition he is little more than the king of the gods, the hosts of the astral spirits, and a fallible entity bound by ignorance. As late as the Upanishads, however, even by the commentaries of Shankara, he can symbolise the Supreme Self, Paramatman. In the Rig Veda he is a grand and mantric mythos, a cosmic personification of great power and perception, the cosmic man and divine warrior. Yet exactly what he indicated in any deeper sense than ritual or devotional worship has been a matter of dispute, not only because of the difficulty and antiquity of the Vedic mantras but because they have been judged by those not open to or aware of any possible spiritual or Atmic meaning to them, (and often not consistently according to their development through Vedanta).

The Aitareya Upanishad gives the key to the inner meaning of Indra:

‘If speaking is through speech, if breathing is through breath, if seeing is through the eye, if hearing is through the ear, if touching is through the skin, if thinking is through the mind, if expiration is through the outbreath, if emission is through the generative organ, then who am I (Ko'ham).’

‘After opening the very end of the head, through that door he entered the body. This is the door known as rending asunder. This is the blissful. Of it are three abodes, three states of dream’.

‘He being born perceived all these beings. What else could one wish to say here? He perceived this very Person (Purusha), the all-pervading Brahman. He knew, “I have perceived the truth”.

‘Therefore his name is the Perceiver of this universe (Idam-dra). Of him they speak secretly as Indra, for the Gods indeed are fond of the cryptic.’

Indra is the archetype of the human being who through Self-knowledge becomes the All, conquers the entire universe, becomes the king of all the Gods and the ruler of all creation. The root ‘ind’, from which Indra derives, means ‘to give light, to have power, to perceive’. Indra is the perceiver, the seer; he is the power of perception that overcomes all opposition and duality; the seeing of the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self, the universe in the Self and the Self in all the universe. The birth of Indra is nothing less than the consciousness of the supremacy of the Self, the transcendence of the individual over all the world, manifesting in the human being, the Creator realising himself in his own creation through man, the human being, as all creation.

The Aitareya Upanishad looks back to a verse of Vamadeva from the Rig Veda as indicating this knowledge: ‘While I was still in the womb I investigated and came to know all the births of the gods. A hundred iron fortresses imprisoned me, but I flew away with the swiftness of an eagle’.

1 Aitareya Upanishad 1.3.11-14.
2 Rig Veda IV.27.1 and Aitareya Upanishad II.5.
The fortresses are the bodies that imprison our spirit. The hawk or eagle, the ancient Sun-bird, symbolised Self-knowledge, the power of Self-inquiry that this Upanishad so directly explicates as Indra. We hear much today about the Serpent Power, the Kundalini, the way of the Serpent, but the ancient Vedic path or path of wisdom was the way of the Hawk or Eagle, Self-knowledge, Jnana or the power of perception which is the highest and greatest form of power. The hawk symbolises the direct path. He slays the serpent and soars directly into the Supreme, as the power of Self-knowledge free of the dangers of the more indirect and serpentine path (the efficacy of which is largely to bring us by degrees to this more direct path).

The foremost of the great declarations, Mahavakya, of the Upanishads, Aham Brahmasmi, is also related to another verse of Vamadeva in the Rig Veda where Indra speaks as the hawk: 'I was the Father of creation and I became the Sun', thus expressing his identity in Self-knowledge with everything. The Father of creation is Manu and the Sun, as is commonly accepted, and indicates the knowledge of the Self, the light of truth. Aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman or I am All, is the great Vedic declaration of Indra.

In the Kaushitaki Upanishad Indra declares himself, 'I am Life (prana), the Self of intelligence (prajnapatma), approach me as that immortal life (ayur amrtam)'. Indra is Prana, which in these early Upanishads (as Badarayana, the compiler of the Brahma Sutras also notes), means not just breath or the vital force but the Supreme Self, the original spirit or primal energy (pra-ana) of all existence. He is that Self, Atma, which is intelligence, prajna, intuitive knowledge. He is the immortal life which is the true life and light of all beings.

All these great Vedantic insights are expressed more poetically in the Rig Veda in an earlier language of mantra. While it is not possible to do justice to this great Vedic language in our much more superficial modern tongue, we can...
at least get some sense of it by approaching a great laudation to Indra with an intuitive feeling for these great mysteries. In this light let us examine a great hymn to Indra in the Rig Veda by one of the Kanwa Rishis, VIII.6.

1. 'Indra, who is great with wakeful vigour like the rain God full of rain, is grown by affirmative knowledge of the child'.

Indra, the power of pure perception, of ever-wakeful energy, is grown by the affirmative knowledge, the stoma, of the child, the sense of the innocent child-like mind that grasps the Self, the oneness everywhere, all existence as a plenary affirmation of itself.

2.-3. 'When delivering the progeny of Truth, the carrier-flames press forwards, sages with the carrying power of Truth, the Kanwa-seers with their affirmative knowledge created Indra as the perfection of the sacrifice. They declared him as their friend, their means of warding off illusion'.

The progeny of Truth, praJam rtasya, is our own self reborn in the light of the Self, our inner birth as Indra. He is created by our affirmation of the Self in all, by which knowledge we become seers. He is the perfection of the sacrifice, the Self-sacrifice or Atmavajna, in which all existence is an offering of the One to the One. He is our true friend that is the weapon, ayudha, or the means of warding off illusion. There are two movements in the way of knowledge, an affirmation of the real, the Self, and a negation of the unreal, the not-Self. Indra is that inner affirmation that negates all sense of otherness, of externality.

4. 'All the people of the work bow down to his spirit as rivers to the sea'.

The people of the work are the five sense organs that bow down to the Indra-spirit of true perception, the Self as the seer that is the basis of all forms and means of perception.

5. ‘That vigour of his shone brilliantly when Indra rolled up together as if in a skin both Heaven and Earth’.

It is the greatest of wonders that through Self-knowledge the human being can encompass the universe within himself, can roll up both the worlds within the skin of his body as it were. Through the knowledge of Indra becoming all creation we so encompass the world.

6. ‘He severed the head of the boisterous Obstructor with his spiritual thunderbolt with a hundred joints.’

The great enemy of Indra is Vritra, the Obstructor, dragon or serpent, who symbolises avarana sakti, the obstructing power of ignorance that hides our true Self. The thunderbolt of Self-perception cuts off his head, the ego, and lays him eternally to rest.

7-9 ‘Insights among the foremost of illuminations, we sing them forth; lightnings like the white heat of the sacred Fire’.

‘When truths which are hidden come forth by the Self, when insights shine luminous, the Kanwa-seers with the stream of Truth’,

‘May we attain to That, Indra, the reality full of radiance and energy, the Brahman for the original consciousness’.

These hidden insights, guha, that come forth by the Self, Tmana (Atmana), these understandings, dhiti, are the realisations of the universal Self within our own hearts. They are the supreme white heat of the sacred Flame of Consciousness. Dwelling in them may we attain to that Truth, the reality, rayim, full of the radiance and energy of the infinite, the Brahman for the original consciousness, purva-cittaye, for the original ground of existence. It is that Brahman we realise by invoking that Indra-archetype of Self-knowledge within us. Through the stream of meditation we enter the ocean of light.

10. ‘I from my Father received the Meditative-mind of Truth. I have been born even as the Sun.’

This is a great Vedic declaration of Self-realisation. Our Father is that Brahman-consciousness within us, the sense of the Absolute. From that we receive the meditative mind, medham, of Truth, rtasya. In that wisdom of truth we are reborn as the Sun, as the Self that is the Light of lights, the light of all existence. The Sun of truth is the enlightened mind in which all the laws of truth reside like spokes in the center of a wheel. It is that wheel of truth that the enlightened, the Buddhas turn.
It is that light of the law of oneness that the Aryan seers, the seers of noble wisdom, ever radiate. Indra is the power of truth perception, of the control, integration and tranquilisation of our senses in the Seer that is the true Self and real entity within the heart, that wins that Sun of illumined consciousness. The great victory of Indra, of true perception, is when that Sun of oneness arises in our hearts and illumines all creation as the glory of our own Self. Indra is the power of perception born of meditation and Self-inquiry that liberates the Sun of our true Self from the darknesses of our subconscious, from an obscure potential into a radiant reality. He is the discrimination between the real and the unreal, the true and the false, the transient and the eternal, illusion and reality, the great warrior of truth that slays the dragon of illusion and Maya with the great thunderbolt of knowledge. While later Vedanta presented the great truth of Indra in more philosophical and rational terms, in the Rig Veda and the ancient language of the seers he exists as mantra and is energised as an archetypal truth power in our own psyche. It is not enough merely to speculate or reason about the Absolute, we must become a warrior for it, we must incarnate Indra and live that Absolute in creation as our true Self. All of our thoughts and actions become the song and dance of wisdom, spontaneous and free, open and creative, no longer a karmic compulsion. We become true human beings, cosmic entities with real feeling for all, seers, and no longer blind shadows of our conditioning. We gain the empyry of Indra and become rulers of creation, no longer its slaves. That is our real purpose as human beings, to give power to Indra, to the rule of the Divine in creation, slaying the dragon of primordial ignorance, the Maya at the root of the world.

28-30 'In the ascending slope of the mountains, in the confluence of the streams, by the Goddess-understanding the sage was born'.

'Hence being conscious at the summit he looks down upon the sea, from which rising he stirs'.

'Then they see the morning light of the primordial seed, when beyond Heaven it is enkindled.5

And so the great laudation, the affirmation of the Self continues. In the ascending slopes of the mountains of the meditative mind, in the confluence of the streams of thought and awareness, by the Goddess-understanding Dhi the loving knowledge of oneness, the sage, our true being of wisdom, is born, is manifested in life and creation. Conscious at the summit of the supreme Self, we are also present in the ocean of the world and rise up in all hearts as the true being of all. All creation is a circulation of our being and its dance of light. Then we see the light of the true dawn, the original seed of all existence, beyond Heaven, beyond all the worlds, shining ever luminous and effulgent. Then we know the great truth and magic of Indra, the birth of the unborn, the manifest-

5 See also Chandogya Upanishad III.16.7 where this last verse sometimes occurs along with Rig Veda I.50.7 in the instruction given to Sri Krishna by Chora Angirasa, the Father of the Kanwa seers.

These points of connection between the Rig Veda and the Upanishads are discussed in my book 'The Creative Vision of the Early Upanishads' (Motilal Banarsidass).
vation of the Absolute, all creation contained in the human creature who lives in the undying flame of the Uncreate.

There is only one true knowledge, the knowledge of the Self. All the great ancient cultures, closer to the heart of creation, were originally based upon it and none more so than Vedic Indira, the land of the seers. Their mantras remain as the intuitive basis of that knowledge, as later Vedanta, Yoga and Buddhism grew out of it like branches. Indira, the warrior for the Absolute, the wielder of the vajra, stands at its summit.

A SANSKRIT VENBA BY SRI BHAGAVAN

Sri Bhagavan composed many of His Tamil works in venba metre, and He also composed the Telugu and Malayalam versions of Ekatma Panchakam in the same metre. Venba is a very difficult Tamil metre with many rules and restrictions, and before Sri Bhagavan no poet had ever composed any venbas in any language other than Tamil. As Sri Bhagavan says in Day by Day, 29-4-46, “Venba is very difficult to make, even more difficult than the aya vrittams in Sanskrit, as Kavyakantha himself had to admit once to me. Venba is described as a ‘tiger’ even to pandits. It will overcome even great poets”. And in Letters from Sri Ramansramam, vol.1 letter 95, He says, “Nayana started to compose venba in Sanskrit but the prasa (metre) did not agree, and he left off as he found the metre to be more difficult than aya vritta. He himself said that it is sukla chandas. Lakshmana Sarma at first composed his verses Unnadhi Nailubadhi in Sanskrit in venba metre, but the prasa and ganas were not right. I corrected only the mangala sloka”. The mangala sloka referred to here by Sri Bhagavan is a Sanskrit translation in venba metre of the first benedictory verse of Ulladu Narpadu (The Forty Verses on Reality). Though it was Lakshmana Sarma who first tried to translate this benedictory verse into Sanskrit in venba metre, Sri Viswanatha Swami used to say that in its final form the Sanskrit translation of this verse in venba metre was composed by Sri Bhagavan, because He had to rewrite it thoroughly in order to make it conform with all the rules of venba metre. The following is the Sanskrit translation in venba metre as it was composed by Sri Bhagavan. This is the only Sanskrit verse in venba metre, and it is very remarkable not only because it is composed in this very difficult Tamil metre, but also because it is an almost perfect word-for-word translation of the Tamil original.

The meaning of this sloka is as follows: “Without reality (sat), could there be knowledge of reality (sat-jnana)? The reality shines in the heart devoid of thought. Therefore, how is one to meditate upon it (that reality), the heart? Abidance in the heart as it is, is meditation (dhyana) upon the reality (sat-vastu).”
THE SPIRIT IMMORTAL
AMONGST MORTALS

By S. Sankaranarayanan

It is said that the Hindu religion is no religion at all, in the accepted sense of the term. Rather, it is a way of life. And as long as life exists on earth, it can continue to exist. In this sense, it is known as Sanatana Dharma, the law of eternal verities. As one of the most ancient religions on earth, how is it that it is still pulsating with youthful vigour and life? What is the secret of its vivifying influence? Untrammelled by conventions and dogmas, it marches on, giving perfect freedom to its followers to experiment all the time and find new truths. Expanding its horizon and range of vision, it is proceeding to become the religion of mankind and the hope of humanity. Its method has always been a constant rediscovery of its essential principles, a new formulation of the sway of the Spirit, a restructuring and remoulding in the mind towards a larger synthesis. And it has never failed in meeting the challenges of the times. To meet the challenges of the twentieth century materialism and rationalism, it brought forth on the scene of the earth, the sage of the age, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Everything has been unconventional about the Maharshi. He was unique in many respects. One would perhaps like to be told that the type of early education in the formative years, family background, environment and the like were the causes of the flowering of his spiritual personality. Far from it was the actual truth.

The parents of young Venkataraman — that was the name by which the Sage was known in his boyhood — belonged to a conventional pious Brahmin family in the south of India. They would have been the last to imagine that one of their sons would emerge as such a radical and original thinker. Unlike the other spiritual stalwart of the age, Sri Vasishtha Canapati Muni, his foremost disciple and contemporary, the Maharshi did not have any grounding in the Upanishads, Sastras and the religious lore of the land. The schooling he received as a boy was perfunctory. As he himself related later on, he was more interested in physical activities like games than in studies. Thus he had no schooling worth the name and was no scholar in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term. Then how to explain the vast erudition, sweeping scholarship and the profundity of the thought displayed in his literary output later on, which was indeed considerable? But he had attained the knowledge by which all this is known: yasmin vijnate sarvam idam vijnātam.

Did he attain the knowledge in the conventional way? No, he had no Guru, no formal initiation. It all happened very suddenly:

“He had completed his sixteenth year and a few months had passed when one afternoon, fear of death took possession of him driving him to seek refuge somewhere. He was soon convinced, not by mental reasoning, but by an inner movement, — we can call it Grace now, but he did not know it to be such then — that when the body perishes, with it the ‘I’ does not perish. This ‘I’, this ego - self of Venkataraman went deeper and deeper to discover its source, to know where it was rooted, to realise whence it came to the surface. As he went still further in, it was no longer his effort, he found that the ‘I’ which, struck with fear of death, started the quest, was being forcibly dragged and drawn in by something tremendous like a mountain of magnet attracting to itself a piece of steel. The ‘I’ was drowned, fell into an abyss, lost itself as it were; but there arose another ‘I’, the Parent Self, the Original Being, the source and support of the surface man.

Since then, it is this Supreme and Real Self within, that has taken charge of the personal self and outer being, of the mental activities, of his very bodily movements”.

1 The Maharshi: Sri Kapali Sastriar
Usually the aspirant takes to Sadhana and many years of tapasyā to attain realisation. But in the case of the Maharshi, the realisation started at the moment he experienced death in his house. “My Sadhana! The whole work was finished in twenty minutes, in less than half an hour”, said the Maharshi. The eleven years of silent Sadhana in Tiruvannamalai later, were the years required to normalise and stabilise the realisation under all conditions.

Once a person attains liberation while yet living, jivan mukti, the usual tendency is to quit the world and live in a forest in seclusion or quit the body itself as a useless burden.

The Maharshi lived for more than fifty four years in the physical body after realisation. It is a marvel that with such incessant contacts he had with all the motley crowd of restless humanity, his liberated soul consented to abide in a human body for such a length of time.

For the Maharshi was no traditional ascetic. He did not don the ochre robe nor did he belong to any conventional order of sanyasins. He was a class by himself. As a self-realised soul, he had nothing to do or accomplish, na tasya kāryam karanam ca vidyate. But out of his infinite compassion for the suffering humanity, his liberated soul consented to live on, a man amongst men in the world.

The teaching of the Maharshi is simple and direct. It does not presuppose any knowledge of the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Sastras or for that matter any sacred literature of any religion. It does not ask for any particular religious belief. It is directed towards Man and its appeal is universal. Man is the main concern of this twentieth century. So the Maharshi’s teaching is so relevant and appropriate to the times we live in. A radical and original thinker, he gives a summary solution to the whole problem, which sounds quite rational. In this age of individuality, man prides himself on his ‘I’. The Maharshi asks one to find out the root of ‘I’ with due vicāra and viveka, enquiry and discrimination. He wants one relentlessly and ruthlessly to pursue the elusive ‘I’ and track it down to its source, which is one’s Self. When the real ‘I’, the Self, is found, taking one’s station in it all the time is the most natural state, sahaja sthiti. In that natural state, one is able to perceive the Self in all.

The Maharshi was a living embodiment of his teaching. He was always steeped in the silent Self. He did not favour any particular religion or form of worship. He was always immersed in the vast silent ocean of bliss wherein the roaring rivers of all religions fall and lose their identity. Discerning mystics like Vasishtha Ganapati Muni acclaimed him as a manifestation of Skanda, the great God of Knowledge descended on earth in a corporeal form. But divinity lay lightly on the Maharshi. He was so meek and humble. He lived like a man amongst men, eating, drinking, sleeping, but with what difference! To a superficial observer he looked as though he was unconcerned and indifferent. But his concern for the suffering mankind made him live as one of them. He communicated in silence and his effulgent eyes tracked down the elusive ‘I’ of man to its very source. His presence was revelation.

A hundred years have passed since he manifested on earth. But can we measure in terms of time, the constant tenure of the timeless one? Breaking the bond of the physical body, the Spirit Immortal rushes forth, inundating the mortals with its flood of bliss. At the mere mention of his sacred name, lo, silence spreads everywhere and Peace descends filling the heart of all mankind!
YE therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," is perfectly fulfilled both in the divine person and the unique photograph of the Great Master, Sri Ramakrishna Parmahamsa. The photograph of the Saint of Dakshineswar in samadhi, therefore, is, so to speak, a picture of 'a picture of perfection'. It was taken while the subject was seated beside the Radhakanta Temple, immersed in deep samadhi, and it clearly depicts a great yogin in complete rapport with God. "Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati," as the Upanishad says; the real knower of God becomes verily a Perfect Being and is, in effect, one with Him. Sri Ramakrishna was wont to give the homely example of the light in the house to elucidate this point. "There is a gas-lamp in the house in disuse. Apply to the Gas Company, and, connecting the storage-tank with the pipe, ignite the lamp. Your house, too, will become lighted!" The same light which is there, at the Source of all Light (jyotisham jyotis), will also be there, enlightening the subject in communion with God. Consequently, the Master’s photograph, taken on the happy occasion of perfect God-absorption, clearly reveals spirituality incarnate — the net result of the ‘igniting’ process. Purity, simplicity and Godliness peep out of it. In fact, come to think of it, it is remarkable in that it is the first-ever photograph to be taken of an Incarnation; a true-to-life likeness secured by a trust-worthy modern device, namely, the camera. It is obviously a privilege that was denied to the earlier ages which, in the absence of the precision instrument, had to be content with imaginative depictions of their favourite spiritual geniuses, or gods and goddesses.

Indeed, it is noteworthy than even people who know nothing about the life and teachings of the Master — even children — are captivated by his photo and struck by the atmosphere of peace, serenity and sanctity it radiates. They are inevitably drawn to it because they undoubtedly find there "the inner Divinity manifesting Itself to the fullest degree", as Swami Vivekananda says. Consequently, the pure in heart, who are proverbially like children, see the image of God in it. An instance of this was witnessed some years ago during a temple decoration ceremony conducted by youngsters in a town in Gujarat. At the close of it, it was discovered to the surprise of all that some little one, moved by an inexplicable impulse, had placed the photo of Sri Ramakrishna right in the middle of the sanctum sanctorum, making it the centrepiece of attraction — even without knowing anything about the Master. Similarly, it was narrated by an old monk of a Ramakrishna Ashram that during the course of his extensive travels on foot in the Himalayas many years ago, he had come across this photograph adorning, of all the unlikely places, a shrine in a Bhotia’s house, situated on a hill in a remote
village. On being questioned, the Bhotia disclosed that he had visited a fair in Prayag several years ago, and there having chanced upon this picture, had purchased it and brought it back home. But somehow its presence in the worship room was objected to by his wife, probably because the photo did not answer her description of any of the conventional images of deities with four arms and so forth. However, interestingly, her objections soon came to an abrupt end when one night she had a vision of Mother Kali in an irate mood. The Goddess had placed one of her feet on the woman's breast and even threatened to put out her wagging tongue unless she stopped making a fuss over the photograph of her 'divine son', and ceased to nag her husband about it! So the picture of Thakur came to stay after all in the blessed home of the thrice-blessed Himalayan villager; and the wife, too, a changed person now, eagerly joined her husband in making daily ministrations to the 'Deity in the photograph'. More than this, the Bhotia confessed, they knew nothing about the photo or its subject, save that its presence in the house had proved very auspicious to both of them.

Photography is intimately connected with light. Also, it will have been noted that most manifestations of the spiritual, or Divine phenomenon, are invariably interpreted in terms of light (divya). This is frequently depicted in pictures drawn by artists by means of a luminous halo surrounding the subject. The yogic treatises, too, speak of the human body, which, after being 'purified by the fire of yoga', undergoes a metamorphosis and begins to emit a subtle glow. The transfiguration of the Avatars, who shine forth with the undimmed splendour of the glorious sun, is encountered in the sacred books of several religions.

Sri Ramakrishna, too, had undergone a transfiguration more than once, and it was viewed by more than one reliable witness. Hridaya's case is well known; not so well-known, however, is the fruitful experience of the gardener-turned-saint, narrated by Swami Vishuddhanandaji in his memoirs (Sat. Prasang, Vol 11). The devout gardener had one day seen the effulgent form of the Master sitting in meditation under the bilva tree in Dakshineswar and, like St. Paul, his whole life had become transformed into that of a devotee of a very high order. The transfiguration had, so to speak, transformed him, for 'his faith was great'.

Evidently, such divine, radiant visions, unlike the brilliance of mere physical light which, in excess, can even blind you, serve to 'open your eyes' in a very real sense -- provided you are spiritually prepared to receive their saving grace (as Hridaya was not and the gardener was!). Those touched by this grace from a Holy Source are known to have become changed individuals -- their doubts resolved, the knots of their heart rent asunder; being in this world they are no more of it; seeing this world they do not see it, but only God instead everywhere. Witness the wonderful vision of Sri Ramakrishna, representing the acme of spirituality, vouched for by M. in The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. Says the Master:

'Do you know what I see right now? I see that it is God Himself who has become all this. It seems to me that men and other living beings are made of leather, and that it is God Himself who, dwelling inside these leather cases, moves the hands, the feet, the heads. I had a similar vision once before, when I saw houses, gardens, roads, men, cattle -- all made of one substance; it was as if they were all made of wax. I see that it is God Himself who has become the block, the executioner, and the victim for the sacrifice.'

As he describes this staggering experience, in which he realizes in full the identity of all within the One Being, he is overwhelmed with emotion and exclams, 'Ah! What a vision!'

Immediately Sri Ramakrishna goes into samadhi. He completely forgets his body and the outer world. The devotees are bewildered. Not knowing what to do, they sit still.

Presently the Master regains partial consciousness of the world and says: 'Now I have no pain at all. I am my old self again.'

Sri Ramakrishna was suffering from cancer; hence the reference to the excruciating pain.
The devotees are amazed to watch this state of the Master, beyond pleasure and pain, weal and woe.

He casts his glance on Latu and says: "There is Latu. He bends his head, resting it on the palm of his hand. I see that it is God Himself who rests His head on His hand'.

Sri Ramakrishna looks at the devotees and his love for them wells up in a thousand streams. Like a mother showing her tenderness to her children he touches the face and chin of Rakhal and Narendra (later to be the great Swamis Brahmananda and Vivekananda, respectively).

His showing extreme affection for Rakhal and Narendra was not without significance, for he knew that these chosen disciples were going to be the torch-bearers of the New Order of Sannyasins dedicated to the 'service of God in man' for 'their own self-realization and the good of the world'. In fact, whatever Sri Ramakrishna said, or even hinted, about anybody invariably came to pass for he lived and moved and had his being in Satchitananda, the Source of all Truth, Light, Existence and Bliss. About his photograph, too, which radiates a divine aura of intense spirituality, he had exclaimed on first seeing it: "This depicts a high yogic state. In times to come, it will be worshipped in every home". Already the photo (or even a picture based on it) is becoming universally popular, and slowly but surely finding its way to the shrine of many a devout person's home. The manner in which it was taken is also very interesting. One day, Bhavanath Chatterji, a devotee of the Master, approached him and requested permission to photograph him. Sri Ramakrishna did not approve of the idea, but in spite of that, Bhavanath persisted and brought along with him a photographer the next day. Again the Master, for some reason, refused to be photographed, and, going to the west verandah of the Radhakant Temple, sat down there leaving Bhavanath disappointed. (In retrospect we can see that it was left to 'a chosen disciple', Narendra, to do the 'trick' and persuade the Master to be photographed in his natural, lofty spiritual state by inducing him into it by means of his enchanting, devotional singing).

A little while later, Narendra happened to arrive and on being told of Bhavanath's predicament, reassured him, saying, "Wait a bit. I'll set everything right". And set he did, for which generation after generation will be grateful to him! He approached Sri Ramakrishna and broached the subject of God to him, singing a favourite hymn in the bargain. No sooner had he done so than, as was to be expected, the Master merged into deep samadhi, or God-absorption. Narendra then beckoned to the photographer, who was lying in wait nearby, to hurry up and take what has proved to be the most celebrated photograph of 'A Real Mahatma', as Max Mueller hailed the Master. Later, when Sri Ramakrishna was shown the photograph, he reverently touched it to his forehead, remarking, that the subject was fully merged in God and consequently He was fully depicted in it. The Holy Mother, Sri Sarada Devi, too, later commented on the sanctity of the photograph, saying that it was as holy as the person of the Master himself. "If
Whatever sacrifice may be made in the service of the Lord, know that it is the equanimity of your soul that is the best and fittest offering. Equanimity is sweet to taste and has the supernatural power of transforming everything to ambrosia.

— Yoga Vasishtha
THE SILENCE OF BHAGAVAN

JUST AS with Dakshinamurti, that illustrious ancient Sage, the word ‘Silence’ is inextricably linked with the name of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. For those of Bhagavan’s devotees, who had the requisite depth and maturity, His Silence was all-in-all and meant much more than any words which were spoken. But for the vast majority of average seekers and devotees, the Silence of Masters such as Ramana Maharshi and Dakshinamurti, is something which is way beyond their comprehension; something very esoteric or mysterious. Just as a diamond is a precious jewel with numerous facets, which are not apparent to the naked eye, but are clearly seen under a magnifying glass, so the Silence of Bhagavan is a gem of the rarest and most precious kind, and this article sets out to magnify and reveal its many hidden dimensions, unknown to most seekers and devotees.

Firstly, the Silence of Bhagavan is explored from the stand-point of Jnana or knowledge. It is a basic truth that words or language are part and parcel of relativity or the realm of “maya”; a means of conveying or expressing things which are on the relative level. Language is a tool of the intellect which can operate only on the plane of ordinary understanding, and not on the plane of mystical experience. And it is the very aim of all mysticism or spirituality to make the seeker transcend his or her intellect or ordinary understanding, so that he or she can directly experience the Reality which is beyond all words. So, it is obvious that words are useful only to a certain extent. Words can point to the Truth but they cannot actually take seekers to the experience of that State, where words cannot reach. But Silence is much superior to words. Inasmuchas Silence has the power to suck seekers into the Heart, the seat of Reality, where they effortlessly experience their true spiritual nature.

Moreover, words also pose a potential danger which is very subtle, so subtle that most seekers can’t even recognise it as a danger, viz. the trap of learning or intellectual knowledge. Words are only a means to an end, and not an end in themselves. The acquisition of mere knowledge without its practical application is of no spiritual value. The writer has found many instances of people who originally started out as seekers and ended up as pseudo-pundits or pseudo-scholars, with stuffed heads and empty hearts. Instead of using words as a map to reach the destination of Perfection, they fell victims to the lure of learning and were content to know everything under the Spiritual sun rather than to experience even a fraction of the truths pointed at by the words.

The great Masters are quite familiar with this very subtle trap of intellectual knowledge, and as with Bhagavan, they try to minimise the use of words as far as possible, so that their disciples or devotees may not fall into this trap. And they always try to steer their disciples and devotees away from this trap by invariably answering questions very briefly and also very directly, if at all they choose to speak. For instance, whenever Bhagavan was asked any knotty theoretical or philosophical questions, which were actually of no relevance to the questioner, He would either remain silent or in few words counter-question the questioner thus — “Who is asking these questions? Who wants to know all this? First find that out”.

This approach of Bhagavan was indeed most direct and effective but very few questioners could fully grasp its profound implications. When Bhagavan remained silent, it was not because He didn’t want to answer the questions, but He knew that answering them wouldn’t help the questioner practically. And if He answered five of them, in due course, another ten would arise, and if He finished answering those, still more would come up, and the questioning game would go on endlessly. Questions and answers exist only on the intellectual level and not on the plane of Reality or

A Parsi Devotee
Spirit. His Silence was aimed at stilling the questioning intellect, so that the Reality ever-present in the questioner's Heart was directly experienced at first-hand by the questioner, and in that State, all questioning would automatically cease.

Unknown to the seekers who sat at His feet, through the medium of Silence, Bhagavan was giving them a taste of His own exalted spiritual State. It was thus that we find some recorded instances of people who came to Bhagavan with long lists of questions. But after sitting in His presence for some time, the lists remained in their pockets and not a single question was asked. Indeed, it was impossible for them to ask any question at all, when through His all-powerful Silence Bhagavan had quietly elevated them from the ordinary intellectual level to the dimension of Pure Spirit, where there are neither questions nor answers.

When, in response to intricate philosophical questions, He counter-questioned the questioner, as already mentioned above, unknown to the questioners, that was a sure-fire device meant to draw them inwards into the Heart or Source and to put an end to their wandering in the mental maze of never-ending questions and answers. These counter-questions of Bhagavan were just a slight variation of His standard 'Who am I?' technique. If the questioner tried to find out who was asking the questions, who wanted to know all that, then he or she would discover that all questions and the desire to know, originated from his or her apparent individuality or personality. And when the questioner persisted in tracing this elusive individuality or personality, it would slip back into its Source, the Heart, and with the disappearance of the phantom of individuality or personality, there would be no one left to ask any questions and all questioning would come to an end in the absence of the questioner.

Now, let us see another facet of the priceless jewel of Silence emanating from Bhagavan. As some readers may already know, Silence is one of the recognised ways of transmitting what is technically termed as Grace, or, in simpler words, the Master's Love for His disciples and devotees. The way of Silence is the most mysterious and yet the most powerful way in which the Master's influence is directly transmitted to those who are with Him. The transmission through Silence is not so well-known as the other ways of look and speech and touch, as the way of Silence is possible only for Masters of the highest order, like Bhagavan and Dakshinamurti; those Masters whose so-called individuality or imperfect human nature is reduced to ashes, allowing their original perfect Divine nature to shine forth unobstructed.

As Silence transcends speech, it is actually impossible to describe the way of Silence through words. But, even then, an attempt is made here for the benefit of those who would like to know more on this point. In terms of power, the power of Silence is simply unequalled as compared to the other means of look and speech and touch. The Master just sits in silence and the disciple also does likewise. In the utter stillness of silence, the Master's perfect spiritual state is openly and fully manifest without any physical or mental obstructions or distractions. As the disciple
attunes himself to the Master's Silence, an invisible direct connection is established between the Heart of the Master and the Heart of the disciple. Through this direct Heart-to-Heart channel, the Master's Love or Grace silently flows into the disciple's Heart, and depending upon the disciple's receptivity and spiritual ripeness, he or she is able to absorb more or less of it. The effect of this absorption is experienced as an immeasurably transcendent Peace and Bliss, and at this time, the disciple has an effortless taste of the Master's perfect spiritual State.

Now, finally, it is time to reveal the invisible factors which are responsible for the Silence of perfected Masters such as Bhagavan. But, please note that in this context, the word Silence is not just used in its restricted sense to mean silence in answer to questions, but Silence taken as a whole, in its entirety, as an integral part and parcel of the Master's total image. The first factor which forms the very basis of this Silence is the inexpressible nature of mystical experience. By its very nature, mystical experience, especially Advaitic experience, transcends all relativity and all intellectual ideas and conceptions. So, how can words, which are within the realm of relativity and intellect, ever express the nature of such immeasurably transcendent experience?

In this connection, there is a well-known Upanishadic story which beautifully illustrates the truth stated above. Once, a man sent his elder and younger son to a spiritual preceptor for spiritual instruction. After the period of training was over, both the sons returned to their father's house. And their father asked them — "Well, my sons, now that you have mastered our ancient spiritual heritage, I would like to know from both of you as to the nature of Brahman, the ultimate Reality". The elder son was the first to answer his father, and in reply he quoted extensively from various scriptures to describe the nature of Brahman. After he had finished speaking, the father turned to his younger son. This boy just stood quietly in front of his father and didn't utter
even a single word, as if he was struck dumb. The father rejoiced to see the eloquent silence of his younger son and said to him, “Well done, my son! Through your silence you have most perfectly conveyed the nature of the experience of that transcendent Reality which is beyond all words and all descriptions. Your brother’s words show that he has intellectually understood but not experienced, whereas your silence shows that you have truly experienced That”.

The other factor which is responsible for the Silence of the great Masters is so hidden that it is almost unknown and unmentioned anywhere in mystical literature. This factor is the ‘awakening’ of the Heart. The Heart is the seat of Reality as well as the fountainhead of Love, and Love is an integral aspect of Reality, together with Bliss and Peace. With the onset of the state known as Realization or Enlightenment, the Heart opens up, so to say, and is flooded with a torrent of an all-encompassing cosmic or universal Love. There is an old saying that when the Heart is full, the tongue is still, and, with the flooding of the Heart, the tongue is actually stilled. The genuine Master’s Love is too deep for words and He can express It only through Silence. Thus, Silence is the language of Reality as well as the language of the Heart, and Heart is but another name for Reality.

For most of His devotees, Bhagavan was just a silent Jnani, on the very summit of spiritual achievement, radiating Peace, Power and Wisdom all around. That was His outer image. But His hidden inner image was something else and it was seen by only a few devotees, who were in close communion with Him, not through words, but through Silence, at the inner Heart-to-Heart level. These devotees knew Bhagavan as the very Ocean of Love and saw His Silence as the most perfect expression of That unfathomable Love. And those handful of devotees who were gifted with deeper insight perceived Bhagavan as the embodiment of Arunachala in human form, and saw in Bhagavan’s Silence, the Silence of Arunachala, whom Bhagavan has addressed in ‘The Marital Garland of Letters’ as ‘Love Itself’.

N.B.

The silent communion of Love between Master and devotee is based on an inner Heart-to-Heart or Spirit-to-Spirit contact and not on an outer body-to-body relationship. Hence, the presence or absence of the Master’s body doesn’t make any difference to this silent communion. And so the devotees of today, who never saw Bhagavan in His physical form still feel the same silent Love enfolding them, and more so especially when they are at Ramanashram, at Arunachala.

WHERE IS RAMANA?

It was in the early days of the Ashram. A visitor who had just arrived from a distant town went about from place to place eagerly enquiring, “Where is Ramana?” At last he heard that Bhagavan was in the kitchen, and to the kitchen he hurried. Here four or five persons were found standing and the visitor could not make out which of them was the Sage. He singled out the simplest-looking person in the group — it happened to be Bhagavan himself — and asked him in a whisper, “Where is Ramanan?” The person promptly pointed to a big cooking vessel and asserted with a smile, “There is Ramana!” As the others laughed and the visitor stared, Bhagavan explained, “The name RAMANA is carved on that vessel, not on this body”.

— from Ramana Jyothi Souvenir, page 52.
SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE AND SELF-REALISATION

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

THE MOST revolutionary of all the scientific achievements of this century is the discovery of quantum theory. It abolished the picturability of the physical world at its fundamental level.1

Until a few decades ago, the electrons and protons and neutrons were thought to be basic constituents of matter. Now the scientists think that electrons and quarks and gluons are the basic constituents.

Heisenberg, with his uncertainty principle, has cast a shadow on the basic concept. If you know where an electron is, you cannot know what it is doing, and if you insist on knowing what it is doing you will lose all knowledge of where it is.2 Such an elusive object cannot be visualised, although its behaviour can be perfectly modelled by the mathematics of wave mechanics.

Is scientific knowledge a convenient and highly successful manner of expression or does it reveal what is?

WHAT IS?

Modern science has not found out what is. Nor will they discover reality unless they change their basic approach.

The world of perception modelled by the scientist is concrete but not real. Sense inputs and memory make up the imaging of a world which is mistaken as real. For instance, the star Sirius is nearly 60 million years away. The rays of light emanating from the star are received by us ‘now’. If Sirius explodes ‘now’, we will not actually see it for another 60 million years. The ‘now’ of the observer and the ‘now’ of the star are separated by several light years. Which is real, the ‘now’ of the star or the ‘now’ of the observer?

The star has exploded and I am very much alive. Therefore the ‘now’ of the observer is nearer to reality.

‘Now’ of the observer (the ‘I’) is not the ‘real now’. The ‘now’ of the observer is actually referenced to the l-pulse. The ‘real now’ is at the very source from which the ‘I’ pulse rises. This source is pure consciousness.

“He who turns inward with untroubled mind to search where the consciousness of ‘I’ arises, he realises the Self, and rests in thee. O pure consciousness, as does a river when it joins the ocean”, says Sri Ramana Maharshi. (Five Hymns to Arunachala). This pure consciousness is what is.

STRUCTURE

The scientist breaks down the physical universe into its basic levels and attributes a structure to it. What he doesn’t know is his own intrinsic structure. For instance, a weighing machine cannot measure electric current nor can an ammeter measure weight. The scientist himself is an involved mechanism as the meter is. We know the structure of the ammeter and we know that its structure fits in with the structure of electric current. Similarly the scientist should know his own structure as an involved mechanism to gauge the structure of the physical world.

Structurally ‘WHO AM I?’3 I am not this physical body, nor am I the sense-perception — I am not the organs of external activity — nor am I the thinking mind — Therefore, summarily rejecting all the physical adjuncts and their functions, that which then remains separate and above by itself, that pure awareness verily am I. This awareness by its very nature is Existence — Consciousness — Bliss.

“If the mind which is the instrument of knowledge and the basis of all activity sub-

1 and 2 The search for understanding, by John Polkinghorne FRS. The Times dated 18th February 1984.
3 Who Am I? published by SRI RAMANASRAMAM.
sides, the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases. Unless the illusory perception of the serpent in the rope ceases, the rope on which the illusion is formed is not perceived as such. Even so, unless the illusory nature of the perception of the world as an objective reality ceases, the vision of the true nature of the Self, on which the illusion is formed, is not obtained". (Who Am I)

There are all sorts of field activities taking place throughout the space-time. These activities are referenced and arranged about the I-pulse of the humans. This is the structure of the universe that we perceive.

SELF-REALISATION

Sri Ramana Maharshi assures us that Self-realisation (that is, subsisting as pure consciousness for ever and ever) is here and now. "Realisation is nothing to be gained afresh; it is already there. All that is necessary is to get rid of the thought 'I have not realised'.

"There is not a moment when the Self is not. So long as there is doubt or feeling of non-realisation, the attempt should be made to rid oneself of these thoughts. They are due to the identification of the Self with the not-Self. When the not-Self disappears, the Self alone remains. To make room, it is enough that the cramping be removed; room is not brought in from elsewhere". (Maharshi's Gospel)

To a devotee's question: "How shall I reach the Self?" Sri Ramana Maharshi says: "There is no reaching the Self. If Self were to be reached, it would mean that Self is not here and now but that it is yet to be obtained. What is got afresh will also be lost. So it will be impermanent. What is not permanent is not worth striving for. So, I say the Self is not reached. You are the Self; you are already That".

To those who were clouded with non-Self (ego sense) Sri Ramana, almost uniformly, almost universally counselled the simple technique of self-enquiry: "You should seek (Who Am I) and be the Self that includes all". (Page 52 Maharshi's Gospel)

REALITY

So to realise reality one has to know one's own real structure. WHO AM I. Only a Self-realised person perceives the world in its real nature. The world of the unrealised scientist is imaging only, it is not real. The scientist builds a model of the world out of perception and memory. He should study his own intrinsic structure and understand the world from the firm base of pure consciousness.

BOUNDARIES

by Burton Lowe

The Name

The boy contained the land
As the land contained him
He could dissolve the thin
Plane of thought which
Defined them apart: then
There was neither boy nor land,
Nor boy and land, nor something,
Or nothing; for any word at all
Must fail, drawing distinctions
Where none exist, except
The boy's own word — I.

The Forms

The girl confined the land
As the land confined her.
She could project a single
Thought onto the inchoate
Matrix of the land: then
In the interface she
Crystallized about it
See herself reflected.
And the land through her reflection,
Destroy it all, begin again,
Endlessly conceiving — I's.
The unique incident in Sri Ramana's life on or about 16th July 1896, a vivid vision of the death of his body and the awareness of the Self or Spirit apart from the gross body, was a turning point in his life. He had lost his personal ego or I-ness and on 1st September 1896 he arrived at his journey's end or destination at Arunachala. Immediately an uninvited barber gave him a shave. He abandoned all he had. Nature gave him a bath. Jabala Upanishad says: "yada hareva Virajeth, Tadahareva pravrajeth". (The moment dispassion possesses you, set out as an ascetic or sannyasi.) Sri Ramana was possessed by dispassion and some power moved him to take that step. The four Asramas of Hinduism are Brahmacharya, stage of study, Grihasta or married and family state, Vanaprastha or retirement and aloofness from family, and Sannyasa or asceticism. Sannyas is also of four types. Kutichaka, Bahudaka, Hansa and Paramahamsa. Kashaya, Danda, Kanandalu and rituals are prescribed for the Asrama sannyasa. Prof. Swaminathan writes: "The realization, was, in fact, final and once for all complete and permanent — with the single vision of death and the plenary experience of the Self in July 1896" (Ramana Maharshi p. 21). Further he states: "Though the Maharshi had renounced the ego and had thus become a true sannyasi, he declined to undergo formal initiation into any order of sannyas" (p. 26). But it may be noticed that Bhagavan stated that he was an atiasrami (his asceticism was beyond the Asramas) and his conduct was not regulated by rules or codes. (p. 237, 254 Talks with Ramana Maharshi). The asceticism of Atiasrami is also covered by the scriptures, Sannyasa Upanishads. It is supreme sannyasa or asceticism.

Ativarnasrami is defined in the Avadhuta Upanishad: "He who rises above Asrama (the four Asramas of Brahmachari, Grihasta, Vanaprastha and Sannyasa) and the four Varnas (castes) and abides for ever in the Atma or Self is called Ativarnashrami, yogi, Avadhuta". Bhagavan Ramana remained almost nude, wore only a cod-piece or a small cloth called Kaupina.

Bhagavan Ramana had stated: "I do not consider anyone to be my disciple, I have never sought upadesa from anyone nor do I give ceremonial upadesa. I do not call myself a disciple or a guru". (p. 238 Talks). One of the well known scriptures, Suta Samhita, Muktikanda III Part, 5th chapter, refers to Ativarnashrami in about 34 Verses (P. 291-296 Bala Manorama Press). All these verses are reproduced by Vidyaranya Swami in Jivan Mukti Viveka (p. 31 Sanskrit and its translation in English p. 46-48 T.P.H. publication). Siva speaks to Vishnu, "Ike Me, he (the Ativarnasrami) should never become the pupil of anyone. Such a one is verily the Guru's Guru. There is
really none in this world equal or superior to him. He belongs to the order beyond varna and asrama. He has realized the Supreme Truth, which transcends the body and the senses, which is the witness of all, the Absolute intelligence, all bliss and self effulgent. He knows his Self as God" (p. 46). "He (the ativarnashrami) is no doubt removed beyond varna and asrama, who stands centred in the Self (p. 47)."

Turiyatita Avadhuta Upanishad says that the Avadhuta is 'ever Holy', 'embodiment of dispassion', and 'He is Jnana itself, 'Veda itself' and such a person is rare indeed. Another Upanishad says Ativarnasrami has the indications of Godhead (Varaha Upanishad 2nd Part). In the Suta Samhita Siva tells Vishnu that He (Siva) was an ativarnasrami and indicates the characteristics of such a one.

An ativarnasrami is Guru's guru and as such He alone is Jagad Guru. Bhagavan Ramana's teaching is free from theology and dogmatism. The Ramana Way of Knowing the Truth is the philosophy of Self-Existence, applicable to each and every man and woman in the Universe. May Jagadguru Ramana in His Grace lead us all to Truth!

ARE WE APART

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

You say, my lord, that I am 'working' out my illusions,
I say, my lord, that your grace can burn out my illusions.
I have set my aim to remain ever in you, my supreme Lord,
Since you are ALL, where can you go without me; I can afford
A million rose-petaled bed, emitting fragrance of thy grace . . . . .
Didn't you say that if I go to Hell, you shall fetch me thence . . . .
Who is free, you or I, you having taken over my ego sense . . . .
Source of all, Being eternal, Consciousness Pure, my Love.
My I-sense gets absolved in my Heart
Where unextinguishable light merges with ALL-THAT-IS.
Unwelcome thoughts still attack me now and then but are burned in the Heart.

Your World has become my World, your Love my Song, are we apart? . .
Let me transmit unadulterated Bliss and Peace
As you do, without the 'I', with pure I, I AM THAT I AM.
A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE

By Richard Warner

Mr. Richard Warner of Toronto, Canada, stayed at our Ashram for a few months last year (vide p. 135 — of our Apr '83 issue). His letter to our Managing Editor, which is of absorbing interest, is reproduced here.

I T HAS been almost a full year now since I left India and the glorious feet of Sri Bhagavan's abode beneath Arunachala. There is absolute Truth behind the statement that you never truly leave Bhagavan's feet once you have taken Him as your Master. I can only speak from personal experience, which has also been confirmed by others who have been to Arunachala. Those who have never come there, even if they have read every possible publication about Sri Bhagavan and Sri Arunachala, can have no idea what it is to be there. No exercise of imagination or fact-gathering can prepare one for the experience of close physical proximity to Bhagavan and the Holy Hill. It is indeed, a great and wondrous experience that each must savour for himself — DIRECTLY.

There are times now, amid the mad, frantic crush of Western life, when I sit with my good friends who have also been to Arunachala, and talk about our experiences there. Even here, when we talk about Bhagavan, about all the places we have visited where He lived in the body, I can feel most tangibly His presence within my Heart. I hear the early morning calls of the cows, the bells of the Samadhi Hall, the joyful clanking of the dinner bell and the profound chanting of the Veda parayana. In moments of quiet I can hear the soft whirr of the fan inside the Old Meditation Hall, for me the very centre of the Universe, the most treasured place on Earth. If I burn incense and imagine the sound of the fan in the Old Hall, I feel as if I am THERE. In fact, all this comes to me so vividly that at times what I see before me literally disappears and I am HOME again!

There are those who may think these words silly, sentimental, romantic outpourings, but I'm willing to bet that they have not felt the presence of Bhagavan and Arunachala for themselves!

It is a mystery that the rational mind cannot even begin to approach. It is direct experience. This experience is open to all, if they but have the capacity to receive. Bhagavan does not stint on His Grace! The complete equality with which He distributed prasad is a concrete example, a direct lesson to us, to show us that He showers His Grace on us all equally. If we are unable to receive it, who can we blame but ourselves? But He is Loving and Gracious, and most of all, He does understand us and knows our hearts, each and every one. He will, most assuredly, not fail any of us who turn to Him. Eventually the warm Sun of His Grace will open all our Lotus Hearts!

I have enclosed a Hymn that I wrote to Sri Arunachala called “The Holy Hill”. It was
written in December in 1981; a year before I arrived there. It was written in a strong grip of inspiration which I was helpless to stop until the task was done. It took one full day to complete.

At the time I wrote it I felt a strong sense of conviction and sureness; rather odd considering that I had not been there yet. But nonetheless my heart was already given to Bhagavan and to Arunachala.

The Hymn represents a journey of the soul from darkness into light. In fact, it seems to mean more now after my having been there. In some ways I feel that it merely came through me, not from me.

I hope you will enjoy it. I kept it hidden away until recently when I showed it to my good friend S.G. Devaraj. It was he who encouraged me to share it with you. If you like it, you can share it with other devotees. If it brings a little light to others I shall be more than pleased.

THE HOLY HILL
(A hymn to Arunachala)

Dust in my throat, from this road that I've been on
So many lives
Weight on my back, it was far too much to bear.
I had to rest in the shade and lay down this tired frame
And yet I found no rest, I cried out up to the sky

Refrain
It's very strange, All I see is born to die,
Just to vanish, like a dream on waking up,
I've always struggled just to know
What remains through all this change
And then I see my refuge still — The Holy Hill.

Much have I to learn that will finally take me home
And leave this wandering through these barren lands of stone
This suffering I will use to pay my long way there.

To live forever in the peace
That surrounds that silent Hill — The Holy Hill.

Refrain
It's very strange, All I see is born to die,
Just to vanish, like a dream on waking up,
I've always struggled just to know
What remains through all this change
And then I see my refuge still — The Holy Hill.

So here in the night I can see the calling Light
Of a flame on the Peak
Guiding me through falling Dark
Now gone is the weight and my way is sure and clear
Soft tears of Knowing Joy
Will fall with my final steps — I'm going home

Refrain
It's very strange, All I see is born to die,
Just to vanish, like a dream on waking up,
I've always struggled just to know
What remains through all this change
And then I see my refuge still — The Holy Hill.

SRI RAMANA SHINES WITHIN ME

Since Sri Ramana shines within me as God, without egotistically thinking 'I am Brahman' I shine as That, the Space of true Jnana, which is God, having lost my body-consciousness, prana, mind, soul and 'I', and having thereby attained Samadhi. Who can know this (my shining as That) except Himself (Sri Ramana) and myself? Therefore, my dear girl, seek the true import of the word 'I', and thereby lovingly take bath by diving deep into the Heart and destroying the 'I'.

— Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai, verse 1474.
"I—am" Reveals the Self Master .... Ramana

By Dr. Migual F. Godreau

1. As VENKATARAMAN in MAN: a family member in Human Relationships, — identified with gross senses in a Carnal Body. ... Subject to Personal experiences: Birth. — Desires, — Activities, — Diseases. — Sufferings, — Old Age. — Death. — His JIVA is here manifested as the Son of Man, with a basal Materials sheath of Anna Maya Kosha, — living in harmony with a Gross World. His apparent Consciousness is one with all of us, as ordinary Human Beings residing on this Earth . . . .

2. As a Wandering SWAMI-SADHU in ANGEL: After powerful Intuitional awakening. Renunciation of Home Life, with all family responsibilities. The JIVA in a sheath of Prana Maya Kosha, — the intelligent Life Force in active operation . . . .

3. As a SANNYASIN in SUPER ANGEL: Purity of Mind, with a magnetic aura of Antah Karana, — having vast accumulation of Knowledge. The JIVA in a sheath of Primordial Senses Mind, — Mano Maya Kosha, — giving the first fruits of Wisdom to Devotees, in the clarification of all sacred Scriptures and Doubts . . . .

4. As a RISHI in ARCHANGEL: Consciousness in the Pure Mental World of Ideas. A Self-Master. — full of Wisdom (Jnana), and Love (Prem). Able to teach and lead all earnest Devotees to the Final Truth. The JIVA in the Intelligent sheath of, — Vijnana Maya Kosha. The Ideal Ego is still present, but in very subtle Causal Ideas only . . . .

5. As ISHWARA in ADAM: GOD personified in the Central Heart of Cosmic Creation. A MAHA RISHI in the Blissful Ananda of Immortality. The Son of GOD (JIVA-ATMAN), able to commune (true YOGI), with SELF-Reality in the trance of Savikalpa Samadhi. The Ego Ideas are completely destroyed, — so no Self-Body bondage and Consciousness remains. The JIVA is here in the Highest Ananda Maya Kosha, — Ever New Joy, only seeking complete and permanent Liberation from Maya and Vasanas. Here is the True and Highest Teaching (Upadesa), of ATMA-VICHARA.

6. As RAMANA CHRIST: The Perfect SON of GOD, — with FULL ILLUMINATION and CONSCIOUSNESS (CHIT), in the Central HEART a Spirit (A U M) Permanent SELF-REALISATION in Nirvikalpa Samadhi — BLISS. "I AM that I AM", — INFINITE and ETERNAL . . . . ATMAN . . . . JNANI . . . .

7. As BHAGAVAN GOD: "I AM " FATHER-MOTHER in Absolute SELF Perfection, — only BEING (SAT) ever in SAHAJA SAMADHI BLISS . . . . The WHOLENESS of the WHOLE, in Complete SILENCE SELF only ONE . . . . ADVAITA . . . . SAT — CHIT — ANANDA, — only B L I S S . . . .

CONCLUSION: Now, — How do You (Self) see HIM, — SELF . . . .?

Behold but One in all things, it is the second that leads you astray.

— Kabir
OF SUPREME BHAKTI

1205
The mark of bhakti true, total
Self-surrender at Siva's feet,
Is perfect peace without a thought
Or word of prayer or plaint.

1206
In the heart which grace divine
Has filled with radiant bliss, can
Be room for any trivial care,
The symptom of the ignorance
Which is knowledge for the body-bound
Ego?

1207
Only as long as other thoughts
Persist will there be conscious
Thought of God. When all thoughts cease,
Including Thought of God, this thought-free
State.
This pure awareness, is true
Thinking.

One well may ask, "How can mere
Being
With not a single thought arising,
How can this stillness be termed
thinking?"
The answer is: Then, then alone
The power of pure Awareness, sole
Reality eternal, shines
Unforgotten, bright and clear.

1209
When, the dense darkness of
Ignorance gone,
The heart's wide open firmament
Is filled with peace serene, clear, bright,
An inner fount of love up springs
Which is devotion true, the pure
Auspiciousness of Siva Himself.

1210
The fortunate ones who in the Self
Abide for ever, they alone
Have realized the Truth. From others
Far indeed is that eternal
Home of grace supreme.

1211
True devotees are they who are
Devoted ever to the Self
Alone, And they alone enjoy
Eternally the bliss supreme
Of all-transcendent, highest heaven.
1212

Though many are the siddhis mentioned.
Jnana-siddhi tops them all.
Those who have the other siddhis
Yearn for jnana — Those who have
Gained jnana wish for nothing else.

1213

Those who have attained the Self
Have gained at once and once for all
All other gifts. For as in space
The universe exists, in these
Self-knowers dwell, seen or unseen,
All siddhis and all powers

1214

If one dives deep within the heart
One feels no more that one is but a poor, weak mortal. The sovereignty of jnana has such power That at its Feet even Indra, King of Heaven, bends low his head.

1215

Jiva, world and God, the three Prime principles, are pawns for maya.
The Great Awareness which is Being.
In her eternal game of chess Played on the board which also is The self-same still and blissful Being.

1216

He who sees the many moving Pictures fails to see the basic And unmov ing screen. And he Who sees the unmov ing screen sees not The picture moving on it. This is What happens in a cinema show.

1217

If in the theatre there is No unmov ing screen there can be No moving picture. But observe, Even when there is no moving picture, Apart and different from all pictures Stands the screen.

1218

Brahman is the unmov ing screen. The real ground. God, Jiva, world Are mov ing pictures. Know that all The things that we perceive are mere Appearances, the play of maya.

1219

The Jiva, who is but a figure In the mov ing picture, along with Other picture-figures like Himself, beholds the picture-world Conceives the picture-God, and pines Frustrated in the picture-world.

1220

The Self is the unmov ing screen, The ground of Being. We think we are Moving pictures and so suffer Meet it is that all these movements Of the mind completely cease And we abide in perfect silence.
The Vedas' crown, the final truth
Discovered and revealed by seers
Is this: The luminous state supreme
Of *mukti* is life lived in the clear,
Bright light of Self-awareness which is
Purity of Being.

There is no creation, no destruction;
No one bound, and none at all
For freedom yearning much and striving
Hard, none attaining *mukti*.
Know this to be the Truth supreme.

That which alone abides and shines
As pure awareness, perfect peace
Is Siva eternal. Egoless silence.
The state supreme of Being That.
This is *mukti*'s plenitude.

Firm, steady abidance in the state
Of peace serene gained by the quest
For Self, the Awareness, the sole ground
Supporting all appearances.
And consequent relinquishment
Of all objects as unreal.
This alone is *mukti*.

Unless there is a final end
Of so-called knowledge of things out
One cannot gain release from
To the sense-created world
This "knowledge" being destroyed by
Abidance in the Self, the bliss
Supreme of *mukti* is what remains.

The foe Desire is the sole cause
Of our ridiculous bondage to birth
And death. Know, use the means to
Desire. Pure Being free from all
Desire is *mukti*, this alone.
1231
Can the poor mind deny the mighty Being supreme, transcendent, all — Pervading, which absorbs within Itself and so abides All kinds of knowledge, each Imperfect and from others differing.

1232
When one is still and does not think “Does it exist or does it not?” Then that which without form or name Shines as ‘I am’, that permanent, Awareness, That alone is real Being.

1233
Of the six principles with no Beginning, one alone, advaita, Has no end. The other five Must end when maya ends. Let this be clearly understood.

1234
Reality is one and only One. This permanent and perfect Being, this alone has been Various described by sages Who with keen minds have searched the heart And there experienced it.

1235
Many and various are the creeds. Crowning them all advaita stands Supreme as silent, pure Awareness, Destroying and surviving the false Ego, the seed from which grow all These differences twixt creeds.

1236
The highest goal is gained by those Who know That which is never known To the false, treacherous ego-mind, The sole True Being, with no beginning And no end, no change, no cause, No parallel, no other.

TRANSCENDENCE OF THOUGHT

1237
While brightly shining in the hearts Of sages who have left behind Treacherous triads and now abide As That alone, advaita’s grandeur Cannot be by the mind perceived, Like this false, trivial, dualistic, Thought-created world.

1238
Siva, who is pure awareness, Transcending thought, is only known To seers heroic who with minds Extinct abide thought-free within The heart, and not to those whose minds Are still engaged in thought.

1239
Aspirant hurrying eagerly Towards advaita’s lofty heaven, Only those established firm In true Self-being and bliss serene Are welcome there and feel at home. To weak backsliders diffident To take the path direct and steep. Of what use is advaita?

DESCRIBING THE EXPERIENCE

1240
Describing what the Master taught And we experience: The dense thicket Of desire, the world of sense We knew of old, was nothing but The silent heaven of pure awareness Beyond speech; all that we perceived Was in a dream perceived.
1241
I know, I know now the transcendent
State supreme of Being Awareness.
I know too that I never was
In real fact bound or released.
Although deluded I once felt
Alienated from the Self.

1242
All faiths men hold, all doctrines they
Declare, we have discovered now.
Point certainly and uniformly
To one goal only, the experience
Of this luminous Being.

1243
When one abides in plenitude
Of pure awareness, the Being bright
Praised by the Vedas ever true,
One sees no more the differences
Of time, space, seer, seeing and thing seen.

1244
These subtle secrets that I utter
Came to me, when considered well,
As comments on His mouna teaching
Spoken by the sovereign Master
Ramana, graciously appearing
Here before my eyes.

1245
In my sight, 'I' only am
And you are not.
In your sight, you only are
And 'I' am not.
In the sight of the Self, the Self alone
Exists, and nothing else.
In truth, I, you and all
Are nothing but the Self.

1246
No one owns me. I own nothing.
I am neither slave nor master.
No duty binds me. I am neither
Doer nor enjoyer.

1247
As if by maya bound, I cried
In pain. And then before my eyes
Appeared in Guru's form the Self
And governed me. To that self-same
Bright Being are due my grateful thanks.

1248
To Siva Ramana, supreme Awareness,
To Him alone this Muruga
Is subject. Never, no matter what
Painful penury may afflict him,
Never again will he be bound
By this base world's illusive power.

EQUANIMITY

1249
No caste or family obligations
Bind those established in the primal
Dharma of pure self-awareness.
'Tis for the body false and worthless,
Not for the true Self, that all these
Many and various rules exist.

1250
The awareness that the one sole
substance
In all that we perceive is but
The Self, the experience of this oneness
Is the harmonious vision bright
Praised by the sages who have known
True, all-embracing unity.

1251
The egoless seer established firm
In Self-awareness and peace serene
Is neither elated by high praise
Nor ever pained by scorn.

1252
As in fierce noonday heat appears
A cool mirage, so in this false
Illusive world Fate oft produces
Prosperity and adversity. The sage
Is neither elated nor depressed.

1253

The sages want and pray for nothing.
But their very being is natural
Penance serving to bring to all
The people of the world the wealth
And welfare they may wish for.

INVOCATION

1254

Long Live Aruna Hill. Long Live
Guru Ramana. Long Live
His devotees obedient. Long Live
This Garland of His sayings. May
This Lamp lit to reveal transcendent
Truth succeed in spreading
Light Supreme

ULLADU NARPADU

(The Invocatory stanzas of The Forty Verses on Reality have been translated many times by many hands, but there is still scope for fresh attempts, as is shown by DR. M.B. BHASKARAN of Pondicherry.)

By Dr. M.B. Bhaskaran

1. Is there anything other than WHAT IS one could be aware of?
Since WHAT IS dwells within the Heart, untouched by thought, who is aware or how to be aware of IT?
Know that to be aware of WHAT IS is to abide as IT, as IT is within oneself.

2. Human beings, shocked by fear of death, surrender for security to Mahesa, the Never Born Immortal —
This results in the ending of the separate selves of those who have surrendered — together with their attachments.
Where then is thought of death for those already dead?

By Professor K. Swaminathan

1. Apart from Being, can there be Awareness of Being?
Since That which is abides Free of thought within the heart
How or by whom can That which is, Whose other name is Heart, be thought of?
Thinking of it is but abiding As That which is, As Heart within the heart.

2. Those assailed by fear of Death
Seek refuge at the feet of God Almighty, birthless and immortal.
Thus surrendered, they and their attachments Cease to be. And deathless now,
They think no more of Death.

By Arthur Osborne

1. If there were not any idea of being? Since that which is is free from mental concepts and is within oneself, who is there to contemplate it? It is called the heart. Know that to remain within oneself as being is to contemplate it.

2. Those who have great fear of death seek refuge at the feet of the Supreme Lord who is without birth and death, in order to overcome their fear. They then die to themselves along with their adjuncts (sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’). Will those who are (have realised themselves to be) deathless entertain again the thought of death?
12. Scientific Knowledge and True Knowledge

31. Material science is only a way for one to suffer and become weary, losing one’s peace of mind by scrutinizing and trying to know the nature of the second and third person objects of the world. The root or base of those second and third person objects is only the first person, the feeling ‘T’. Knowing this first person by scrutinizing it, this alone is true knowledge, which will bestow upon one the real benefit, the peace of Self.

13. The Grace of the Jnani

32. The ladle does not know the taste of the sweet dish which it is distributing, yet plunging into it again and again it liberally serves a feast to all people. Similarly, the blemishless Jnani does not enjoy the pleasures of this world even in the least, yet He graciously bestows such pleasures upon all those who pray to Him for them.

14. What should Be Desired?

33. The great wealth which exists in Jnani is only the subtle secret of how to be still, abiding in perfect peace as the mere thought-free existence-consciousness ‘I am’. Therefore, how wretched it will be if one greedily desires to attain from them merely worldly pleasures such as gold, wealth or fame, which will only make one suffer in delusion.

15. The Sleep of Jnana

Refrain

Sleep well! There is not the least wrong. Indifferent to the life in this world, boldly sleep without sleeping.

Sub-refrain

The world which appears and disappears is completely unreal. Ignoring it steadfastly, by keenly attending to Self subside within and sleep well.

Stanzas

34. There is no work for you to do henceforth in this world, which abounds with activity and which is full of wickedness and falsehood. Therefore, having no anxiety or desire for this world, take refuge in the cave of your heart and eternally sleep well.

35. When crowds of people gather together crying, ‘Reformation, reformation’, and wander about shouting noisily with the help of loudspeakers, they are like people sitting on a tree whose roots have been laid bare (that is, at any moment they are about to fall into the jaws of death). Therefore, unperturbed by this worldly hubbub which is going on in the name of reformation, sleep well within yourself.

36. These people who thus try to do good to the world are like people who try to build a dam to hold back the waters of a mirage; they are like people who wish to paint the horns of a hare with fine colours; they are like people who shout, ‘Long live the son of the barren woman seen in the sky!’ Therefore, if you wish to attain Self-knowledge, completely give up attending to the world, attend only to Self and sleep well.

37. Having forgotten Self, they see the world, which appears only because of their mistaking the body to be ‘I’, and melting with pity for the sufferings which they see in it, they make great efforts to reform it, just like a person who stands with his arms raised up, imagining that he is supporting the sky. When you do not know yourself how can you know the truth about the world? Whatever you do in this world is useless. Therefore, forgetting all these things and attending keenly to Self, sleep well.

38. This world which you see does not exist

1 Continued from our last issue, pp.80-83.
outside, but is only the thoughts which exist within you. This whole world is merely a delusive appearance created by your unreal and deceptive mind. Your only real duty is to abide peacefully in the heart, having made the mind subside and having thereby known yourself clearly. Therefore, abiding thus as the real Self, sleep well.

39. ‘Ah! He is such a great man; there is no one who does unselfish service like him’ — all such useless name and fame are not difficult things to achieve. Therefore, with a mind which is peaceful and unmoved by either fame or blame, sleep well in the wakeful state of turiya, having put an end to the three states of waking, dream and sleep.

40. He who has created you, is also He who has created this world. He who is taking care of you, will also take care of this world. If you first know yourself and thereby abide as Him, who is the real Self, this world, which exists in you, will be benefited by you. Therefore, sleep well.

41. A blind man, catching the hands of other blind men, confidently led them as if he knew how to show them the way, but finally they all fell into a pit and died. Lest you should also perish in such a manner, know your own true state, abide in it and sleep well.

42. Before one knows oneself, the world will appear to be a very great and important thing. When one knows oneself, the world will be found to be nothing other than oneself. Saving oneself by knowing one’s own real nature, alone is the truly beneficial help one can do for the world. Therefore, having known yourself, sleep well in the true and eternal state of Self.

43. Without allowing the mind to dwell upon what has happened in the past or what will happen in the future, by the Grace of Jnana-Guru, Lord Ramana, who came to bestow liberation upon us by abiding silently in Self, destroy the sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ and sleep well in Jnana-samadhi.

16. Which Do you Like?

44. Having limited and transformed oneself into a body, and having transformed the knowledge gathered through the five senses of that body into the world, one sees that world, which is nothing other than one’s own real Self, as objects which are other than oneself, and one is thereby deluded with likes and dislikes for those objects. Such confusion alone is what is called the world-illusion (jagat-maya).
45. The non-dual state in which you do not see yourself as the body and as the many objects of the world, and in which you clearly know that which exists is only you, who are one, this alone is the state of God. Whichever you like is possible (that is, by your own unlimited perfect freedom or paripurna-brahma-swarantra, it is possible for you to remain in whichever one of these two states you like — either in the state of maya, in which you are deluded by seeing yourself as many, or in the state of God, in which you realise yourself to be the one non-dual reality).

17. The Shop Rent

46. The rent which we must give for this shop, our body, is food, clothing and shelter. If we do not pay this rent, we will have to go out leaving this body, just like a merchant who has to vacate his shop when he does not pay the rent.

47. The worldly life which we live is similar to the business done by a foolish merchant who earns only enough to pay the rent. Only he who toils hard and thereby earns a profit which is many times greater than the rent, is a wise and skilful merchant. Like such a merchant, we should try to attain the great profit of Self-knowledge before the death of this body.

Note: The reader may refer to The Mountain Path, January 1984, page 39, where the simile given in the above two verses is explained in more detail.

18. The Way to Attain Good Qualities

48. If one wishes to attain all the elevated and pure qualities (sattva-gunas) by training the mind, one will certainly fail in one's attempts, no matter how long one may try. But if one takes to the practice of Self-enquiry, which will destroy the mind, and if one thereby transcends the three ordinary qualities (sattva, rajas and tamas), the sat-guna (the true quality of abiding steadfastly as the reality) will automatically shine forth and flourish in one (and in the outlook of others one will then appear to be endowed with all sattvic qualities).

49. If ordinary people strenuously practice for many aeons without wasting even a moment, they may develop a few of the good qualities which are gracefully brimming over and pouring forth from one who has attained the treasure of Self-knowledge and who has thereby transcended the qualities, yet if any trivial tests come their way, they will fail to remain established in those qualities.

50. Good qualities and bad qualities are not qualities given by God, but are only qualities born of the mind (that is, they are the expanded form of the tendencies or vasanas which one has accumulated in one's mind through one's own free-will). The empty space of Self-knowledge, which is completely devoid of all good and bad tendencies, this alone is what is called sat-guna.

51. Those fortunate people who have attained a perfect Guru will not toil in vain to cultivate good qualities in the mind; they will only cultivate the practice of Self-enquiry, which will draw the mind within and destroy it, and thereby they will not allow the mind to rise in the form of thoughts. To attain the unequalled and unsurpassed quality (of abiding eternally as Self), there is no way other than the practice of making the mind humbly subside through devotion and enquiry.

52. In the life of a Jnani, who has transcended the qualities, the actions of His body, which happen spontaneously and without His thinking, may sometimes make it appear as if He is lacking good qualities. However, such actions appear to be real only because of the imagination of the mind of the ajnani who sees them, and hence they are merely a deceptive reflection of his own impure mind.

Note: In verses 1106 and 1107 of Guru Vachaka Kovai, Sri Bhagavan says:

“The pure mind of the Jnani, who exists and shines as a witness, is a clear mirror which reflects all the defective thoughts of the mischievous minds of others and which thus deludes the intellects of people by making Him appear to be defective”.

“To the eyes of those who are deluded by the sense of doership, the Sahaja Jnani, who lives transcending even the sattva-guna, may sometimes appear as if He has much deceptive rajo-guna. On account of that, do not doubt (His Jnana)”. 
53. Those who have bad qualities in them, will see only bad qualities even in jnanis. If one could see one's own defects as clearly as one can see the defects of the enemies who are in front of one, then would any evil befall one?

Note: The last sentence of this verse is adapted from verse 190 of Tirukkural.

19. Punishing One's Enemies

54. What is the greatest punishment which you should desire to be inflicted upon your enemy, who gives you unbearable trouble? You should pray that God should give him only the great knowledge of Self. Why? Because if he is given Self-knowledge, his mind or separate individuality will be killed, and hence he will no longer be able to do any harm either to you or to anyone else.

20. Seeing One's Own Defects

55. Since we are the light of perfect knowledge, it is possible for us to see and to rectify all the defects which rise in our mind. Does not the white light of the full moon itself enable us to see the dark patches on its surface? (That is, the defects in our own mind cannot be seen by us when our mind is very impure, just as the dark patches on the moon cannot be seen when the moon is only a crescent; but our own defects will become more and more clear to us as our mind becomes more and more pure, just as the dark patches on the moon can be seen more and more clearly as the moon waxes more and more.)

21. Desirelessness and Devotion

56. To the extent to which the conviction grows stronger in us that all the extroverted activity of the mind is only misery, to that extent the desire and love to turn within will also increase. And to the extent to which the strength to attend to Self increases in us, to that extent the conviction will grow that attending to anything other than Self is useless. Thus each one of these two (namely varagya or desirelessness towards external objects and bhakti or the love to attend to Self) is an aid to increase the other.
22. Intense Earnestness is Needed

57. If a pearl-diver remains on the shore of the ocean waiting for the roaring waves to subside, will he ever succeed in gathering pearls? If he plunges through the waves on the surface and dives deep into the ocean with a heavy stone tied to his waist, what waves will he find there in the depths? (Similarly, if we steadfastly dive beneath the waves of thoughts into the depths of our heart by keenly attending to the consciousness 'I', we will find that there are no thoughts there to disturb us).

58. Since a life of great peace exists deep within the ocean of our heart, we should be completely indifferent towards the many tendencies (vasanas) which are tossing like heavy waves on the surface of that ocean, and with intense desirelessness (vairagya) we should dive deep into Self, the primal consciousness of our existence.

59. Having dived deep into the heart, which is the consciousness 'I', and having thereby rectified all kinds of sense-knowledge, which are crooked modifications of the one real consciousness and which rise like bubbles on the surface of the ocean, we should abide only as this existence-consciousness, which shines as 'I am', without knowing anything through the senses.

60. When we thus abide more and more in the natural state of Self, all the innumerable tendencies (vasanas) will be destroyed. Other than this practice of Self-abidance, there is no effective means which will destroy the tendencies so easily and so quickly.

61. Even before all the tendencies have been completely destroyed, by one's own desirelessness (vairagya) and by the Grace of God it is possible for one to attain the blemishless light of Self-knowledge. Then by the power and clarity of that Self-knowledge, the delusion of attachment to the body and mind will automatically be destroyed.

62. Those aspirants who have attained purity of mind due to the strength of the good qualities which they have gradually cultivated and acquired through so many births, will easily learn how to abide in this state of Self-knowledge as soon as they come into the presence of the Sadguru who has manifested Himself in human form.

63. Do not fear. By the great power of the Grace of the Guru, who has transcended everything, you will certainly attain this Self-knowledge. If even a single vasana remains in us, our Jnana-Guru Ramana, Lord Ramana, will not keep silent.

64. If we each make the same effort by which it was possible for some people in some former time to attain this Self-abidance, will any of us fail to attain it as our natural state? Therefore, by making that effort (of diving deep within yourself by keenly attending to the consciousness 'I'), attain that knowledge of the one real Self.

65. Other than knowing the ever-existing Self, all the aims and paths which the deceptive mind shows to be so lofty, are not worthy to be accepted even in the least by real aspirants, but are only worthy to be rejected. Therefore, without any fear or hesitation, reject all of them.

66. We should not give even the least room in our heart to the demoniac ghost of forgetfulness (pramada), which deludes the mind by diverting it from Self-attention. Instead, with unhesitating and irresistible courage, we should victoriously attain Self-knowledge.

(To be continued)
HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By Dr. R. L. Paranjpe

I T WAS some time in 1942 or perhaps 1943. I had had an operation on my foot which had kept me in bed for nearly a month. I was not only not in the best of spirits, I was bored. So I requested my brother-in-law to get me some books to read. He brought me the book, *A Search in Secret India* by Paul Brunton. I began reading it lackadaisically, hoping it would not be too boring. Soon I found myself sitting up quite engrossed in the remarkable story of the sage named Ramana Maharshi who was as great as Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

I passed the book on to my father to read. He was indifferent at first but one night soon after I saw a light on in his room until 2 a.m. He had been reading Brunton's book and was very much impressed by it. Soon after, by chance we got a book from a relative that contained the biography of the Maharshi and His teachings. My father then went to Tiruvannamalai to have *darshan* of Bhagavan and stayed in the ashram for a week.

I asked my father about his impressions of Bhagavan and the ashram. He said, rather to my surprise, that Ramana Maharshi sat in the hall most of the time as if in a trance. He answered a few questions only when He felt it was needed. People sat and meditated in the hall and the whole scene looked like that of Adi Sankara sitting with his disciples around him. It was as if the sage was, by His very silence, answering the doubts of His devotees.

My father said that when he was meditating in the presence of the Maharshi he got answers to most of his questions. Another interesting and touching experience was that those who looked at Bhagavan while meditating felt that He was looking at them. Another unique feature was that Bhagavan disliked having any fuss made about Himself. He sat on the ground and ate the same meals as all the others.

My father's experiences and impressions of the ashram gave me much food for thought, and I wondered how one's questions could be answered through silent meditation. One thing was certain: I was determined to go myself to have *darshan* of Bhagavan.

But resolutions sometimes get weakened for one reason or another. So it was that I had still not fulfilled my resolution when in the first week of February, 1950, I was stunned to hear that Bhagavan was suffering from a malignant tumour. He had had a few operations, but His health was fast failing and there was little hope of His recovery.

Hearing this my father left for Tiruvannamalai and at once wrote to me saying that if I wanted to have Bhagavan's *darshan* I should come immediately to the ashram. I left for Tiruvannamalai at once along with my mother. On reaching Tiruvannamalai I had a bath and then went straight to have *darshan* of Bhagavan.
In those days Bhagavan used to sit on a dais outside the hall in order to accommodate the ever increasing crowds of devotees. We placed an offering of fruits and flowers at His feet and prostrated before Him. There was a large crowd of people — Indian and foreigners. Bhagavan had a bandage on His left arm. Though weak and exhausted He used to sit on the dais to give darshan for about an hour and a half in the morning and an hour in the evening. People would sit around Him meditating.

During the three days that I was there I felt very peaceful, forgetting all the worries of home and hospital. During meditation, whenever I opened my eyes I felt that Bhagavan was looking at me with compassion. I used to forget myself during meditation, which was a unique experience for me.

Though very weak the Maharshi was still taking His meals with others as usual.

My parents stayed at the ashram for nearly a month. But I had to leave for Nagpur, though unwillingly. About 7 p.m. I wanted to have my last darshan of Sri Bhagavan, but was told that He was resting in one of the rooms. I desperately wanted to see Him, but there was nobody there to ask. I was looking vacantly at the rooms where He was supposed to be resting when, joy of joys, I saw the Maharshi Himself coming from the last room to His own room with a thick stick in His hand. This was my last darshan of Sri Bhagavan. I had tears of joy in my eyes. I said in my mind: "Bhagavan, please bless me," and just then the gentle sage raised His head and blessed me with such a look of profound compassion that I cannot forget the experience even today after 33 years.

ABOVE AND BELOW

When Bhagavan was living on the Hill-side, some sadhus used to visit him. While most of them felt they were superior to the house-holder devotees, one sadhu whom we shall call X regarded himself as superior to the rest and almost equal to Bhagavan.

X's constant efforts to occupy a seat not much lower than Bhagavan’s used to evoke caustic comments. One day as Bhagavan was seated on a boulder near Virupakshi cave, X approached the company and, finding no elevated seat and unwilling to sit on the ground, walked away in a hurry. As a titter ran round the group of sadhus, Bhagavan remarked, "You have honoured me with the highest available seat and duly driven X away. But what about this fellow here?"

So saying, he pointed his finger upward at a monkey proudly perched on a branch above his head!

— from Ramana Jyothi Souvenir, page 24.
Moments Remembered
by Managing Editor

IMMACULATE 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.

W HEN Kunju Swami and I started
walking towards the forest Balarama
Reddy, Joan and Matthew Greenblatt also
joined us and all the way these elderly
devotees thrilled us with the nectar of their
talk on Bhagavan. Usually, we youngsters used
to put searching questions to these elder
devotees. But, on that day Balarama Reddy
himself put questions to Kunju Swami!

Balarama Reddy wanted a detailed descrip­
tion of Sri Narayana Guru’s visit to Sri
Bhagavan, when Bhagavan was at Skandashram.
Kunju Swami said:

Sri Narayana Guru was a great Jnani,
who
lived in Kerala till 1929. He is more known as a
social reformer than a Jnani of very high order.
His greatness was such that great men, like
Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, and
Andrews when they went to Kerala visited him!
He wrote in Sanskrit a few important philoso­
phic works. Narayana Guru used to travel and
stay in his own branch Ashrams. One among
them, Narayana Seva Samiti, is in Kancheepuram.
It was under the care of Govindananda Giri,
who used to visit Bhagavan quite often
and stayed with Him for a number of days.

Bhagavan was seated in the inside
verandah. While the Guru stood outside the

managed by a scholar-devotee hailing from
Kerala. It was the time when food was being
sent to Sri Bhagavan from Sadukkal Chatram. It
was daily collected by Palani Swami. Palani
Swami, also a Kerala-man, was introduced
to Narayana Guru. Induced by others present,
Palani Swami invited the Guru to visit the
Maharshi at Skandashram. The Guru agreed.

The next day, Narayana Guru and his disci­
pies went to Skandashram by about 10 in the
morning. Bhagavan was seated in the inside
verandah. While the Guru stood outside the
grating and intently looked at the Maharshi, his disciples went inside and prostrated before Bhagavan. The Guru silently observed Bhagavan and the activities taking place around Him. People, young and old, paid their respects to Bhagavan and sat or passed on, while Bhagavan sat silently. Bhagavan took no particular notice of anybody. He did not enquire about the whereabouts of anyone. There was no welcome and no permission to go. But all the while Bhagavan was beaming with blissful joy and the audience was partaking of it. All this impressed the Guru very much. After some time, he went up and sat under the mango tree. He used to eat alone and that too only sattvic food. His admirers had brought food for him and coming to know that he had gone up the Hill, they brought it to Skandashram. When it was lunch time Bhagavan indicated to his disciples to call the Guru. They pleaded humbly that Bhagavan Himself invite the Guru. Bhagavan came out near the coconut tree and looking up where Narayana Guru was seated, said: “ʌnmʌngʌ! ʌnʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ!” (you may come and join us for lunch). Narayana Guru thus responded “ʌʌʌʌʌʌ!” (Yes! will share Maharshi’s prasad). He came down and sat next to Bhagavan. Bhagavan said: “You can avoid what is hot and eat only that which suits you!” Then noticing that food had been brought specially for the Guru, Bhagavan said: “There is special food brought for you; so let us all eat.” Soon after lunch Bhagavan, as was His wont, went up the Hill for a walk and Narayana Guru went back to his mango-tree shelter. When one of his disciples chanced to come to him, the Guru asked him: ““ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ!” “Should we not make some offering (to Bhagavan)?” The disciple was perplexed and was reflecting as to what fruits could be given as offering to Maharshi. The Guru asked him to bring a piece of paper and pencil. He wrote five verses in Sanskrit with the title Nirvritti Panchakam.1 When Bhagavan returned, Narayana Guru came and sat next to Him and placed the piece of paper on Bhagavan’s seat. (In the edited version of Kunju Swami’s article published in July 1976, p-163 it is wrongly stated that the Guru sent these verses to Bhagavan after he returned to Kerala). He said “They have come to take me to Easanya Mutt; I have to leave”. Bhagavan gave His assent by nodding his head. Narayana Guru stood up and for a few moments, looked straight into Bhagavan’s eyes then said in ecstasy: “ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ! ʌʌʌʌʌʌ!” ‘Let it happen like there’ (meaning that let him too become established in the state of Sahaja Nishtha in which Bhagavan was ever rooted). The entire retinue went down the Hill. On reaching the town Narayana Guru told his disciples: “Maharshi is a Raja Sarpa (King Cobra). His spiritual state is so great that even a single glance from Him is enough to redeem one. Now He remains unknown to the world like a lamp hidden within a pot. He should be made known to the world so that His spiritual treasure is plundered by as many people as possible. Bodhananda! You should come and stay here for six months and make necessary arrangements for food and accommodation of pilgrims so that thousands could visit the Maharshi every day and benefit spiritually. Now, the few people around him are merely ‘annakavadis’ (carriers of food); great scholars and intense spiritual aspirants should flock to the Maharshi.”

Palani Swami, who also happened to be there, was deeply hurt by the last remark (annakavadi) of Narayana Guru. He reported all these to Bhagavan. He said he was hurt. Bhagavan replied: “Why did you keep quiet when you were called ‘annakavadi’? You should have replied, saying ‘Why do you look at the

1. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who refrains from enquiries about the name, native land, caste or clan, calling and age of others.
2. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who does not ask anyone to come, go, not to go, to enter within or where one is going.
3. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who does not enquire of anybody where he is going, arriving from where and who he is.
4. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who has no notion of differentiation as I, you, he, that, within or without, existence or non-existence.
5. He alone enjoys the inner felicity of the One Self of all, who remains the same with the known and unknown and free from distinctions as oneself and others and the assertion even of non-difference.
kavadi, at the outer garb, look within, into the sat?"

Narayana Guru had the habit of asking, anyone going to him, questions like 'What is your name?' 'Where are you coming from?' 'What do you want?' 'When do you propose leaving?' But after seeing Bhagavan, he completely gave up this habit since, as he wrote in Nirvritti Panchakam, he saw in Bhagavan the Perfect Poise unaffected by whatever took place around Him. When people hailing from Tamil Nadu went to the Guru, he would direct them to go to Maharshi first and then only come to him. 'Maharshi is within such easy reach for you; why come here? Go and have his darshan'. After returning to Varkala, his Ashram, he again wrote another set of five verses: Municharya Panchakam and sent it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan appreciated it very much.

a scholar at times and an ignoramus a while,
the sage wanders, settles down or gets up,
Having got a body, transient, conditioned by time,
all the time, he abides in the seat of the Self,
the unconditioned Knowledge supreme.
Consuming, for the maintenance of the body,
the food, unsought, unsolicited, given by divine design,
the Sage sleeps on the wayside, without a worry.
Always perceiving the Self, he attains
his own imperishable, unparalleled state,
sparkling with the union of his Self and the Supreme Self —
the state of Truth-Consciousness-Bliss.
Not involved in the arguments about
Existence and Non-existence,
turning his face away from This and That,
he attains to the imperceptible, intangible, atomic, grandiose, unsullied, high,
unruffled, deep and lofty state supreme.
All set is the sage to go beyond
the twin states of Existence and Non-existence.

Anywhere let the Yogi dwell —
in his own house, in the forest,
in the sandy stretches along the river
or at the outskirts.
His mind dwells on Brahman.
The sage perceives all this
like a mirage in a desert
from the viewpoint of the Self
and sports in Brahman supreme non pareil.

2 PENTAD ON THE CONDUCT OF A SAGE
(Municharya Panchakam)
(Tr. by S.Sankaranarayanan)

Will not the arm as a pillow serve
and the floor as a couch
for the one who sanctifies the ground beneath
with every fall of his feet?
To the sage, released from passions,
of what use is the lowly luce?
Transcending all enjoyments, he enjoys,
having the realisation of "That thou art".
Excellent in eloquence or else controlled in speech,
“When Narayana Guru fell ill, Bhagavan asked Kunju Swami to go and be with him. The Guru recognised Kunju Swami and paid glowing tributes to Bhagavan. Kunju Swami stayed on. After the samadhi of the Guru when Kunju Swami returned to the Ashram, Bhagavan listened to every detail about the Guru, with great attention and love. Bhagavan then paid high tributes to Narayana Guru. Bhagavan remarked with great compassion: “Narayana Guru was a fully blossomed person. What to do? The circumstances in which he was placed were such that he had to act as he did. Otherwise, he knew everything and he was a Purna”.

Sri T.K. Sundaresa Iyer was one among the few who have had the privilege of not being addressed by Bhagavan in honorific terms. He fondly addressed him as ‘Sundaresa’ or ‘Sundaram’. However, he was known popularly only as ‘T.K.S’ in the Ashram. His erudition in Vedantic literature was deep; he was proficient in Sanskrit, Tamil and English. So, he aptly fitted in to act as an interpreter to Sri Bhagavan, though most of his time he had to spend at the Ashram office attending to the correspondence. Of course, in this also he was blessed because he had to show letters received to Bhagavan and get hints from Him on how to write replies to certain letters. I learnt the art of replying letters received by the Ashram only from my teacher, Sri T.K.S.

Sri T.K.S. told me the following: “A staunch devotee living in England, Harry Dickman, was soaked in His teachings, though he could not have darshan of Sri Bhagavan. He wrote asking for explanation as to the term Hridayam and its significance. I got from Bhagavan hints on how the reply should be formed. The following is the gist of the reply, which was approved by Bhagavan and sent to Harry Dickman:

The term Hridaya

Just as there is a cosmic centre wherefrom all the Universe arises and has its being and functions with the power or the directing energy therefrom, so also is there a centre within the frame of the physical body wherein we have our being. This centre in the human body is nowise different from the cosmic centre. It is this centre in us that is called the Hridaya, the seat of Pure Consciousness, realised as Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. This is really what we call the seat of God in us. It is this Hridaya that is said to be different from the physical heart regulating the blood circulation. The Hridaya has its being in the right side and is not commonly known or felt. The primary thought in us arising as ‘I’, when traced to its source, ends somewhere in us and this place, where all thoughts die, where the ego has vanished, is the Hridaya. From this centre is felt and enjoyed the Pure Consciousness.

Hridaya described as ‘the literal, actual, physical seat of the intuition of the Self’ has the meaning explained above. Perhaps the word ‘physical seat’ may create some confusion of thought. What it really means is that there is a centre of Pure Consciousness in the physical body. It is related to the physical but is not itself physical.

The word Hridaya is a composite of Hrid and Ayam — “Centre, this”. It is the centre in the right which we reach as a result of medi-
From the Hridaya, Consciousness arises to the sahasara thro' the sushumna and from there spreads out to all the parts of the body through the several 'nadis'. Then alone we become conscious of the objects around us. Man, by the illusion that these have real existence, experiences suffering, as he leaves his real Self and strays far away. The seat from where all these arise and manifest is the Hridaya.

Whether in sleep, joy, sorrow, fear or satisfaction, we return to this heart and that is why we feel lost to all consciousness of things around. By meditation or Vichara if we have attained to our centre, the Hridaya, and thus when we are our real Self, we enjoy unalloyed Bliss.

In the course of tracing ourselves back to our source, when all thoughts have vanished, there arises a throb from the Hridaya on the right, manifesting as 'Aham' 'Aham' 'I'-I'. This is the sign that Pure Consciousness is beginning to reveal itself. But that is not the end in itself. Watch wherefrom this sphurana (throb) arises and wait, with all intensity, and continually for the revelation of the Self. Then comes the oneness of existence.

If we but steady our breath we feel the steadying of our thoughts. Then the thoughts turn inward and melt away at a point. Watching this point where the thoughts vanish, will also help us to merge ourselves in the Hridaya.

The more I hear from devotees incidents portraying the extraordinarily beautiful human side of Sri Bhagavan, the more I crave to hear about Bhagavan as "the perfect man", Purushothama, the Immaculate Ramana.

*****

Once a lame cat, which was giving birth to kittens every six months, thus increasing the displeasure of the inmates of the Ashram, was sent far away into a village (nearly 20 miles away.) Bhagavan did not know about it; He missed the cat. After a few days the cat suddenly appeared before Bhagavan and He was happy to see it. He said: "Yob have defeated all their efforts! Good! Come, come". His care for the lame cat was really great.

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It was the time when Bhagavan was staying in the New Hall, in front of Matrubuteswara temple. When, one day, Bhagavan was returning from Goshala, a devotee was washing his hands under the tap next to Bhagavan's bathroom. The devotee abruptly turned to Bhagavan and moved towards Him with great reverence. Bhagavan gave him a look and turned towards the tap; it was only half-closed. Bhagavan went and stopped the tap and gave a large smile at the devotee and moved on!

A Parsee devotee brought his teen-age son to have Bhagavan's darshan for the first time. In the morning when they sat along with Bhagavan for breakfast, iddlis were served. The Parsee boy had never tasted iddlis; so he put on a long face, not liking it! Bhagavan must have noticed it. The next day, the boy hesitated to enter the dining hall for breakfast. However when he was pushed in, he sat in front of Bhagavan. Bhagavan gave him an understanding smile. When iddlis were placed on his leaf, the boy was surprised, for, they were covered with a lot of sugar. They tasted delicious. It was Bhagavan who had directed the kitchen staff to serve the boy with iddlis in that tasty form!

After a few years, in the first week of April, 1950, the same lad sat along with his father near the Nirvana Room in the night. His father, like every one else at the Ashram, was anxiously worried over the deteriorating health of Sri Bhagavan. It was past midnight. The boy dozed off sitting; the father's eyes were glued to the entrance to the Nirvana Room. At about 1 a.m. Bhagavan came out of the room to go to the bathroom next to it. The boy was still sleeping. The father tried to wake him up to have darshan of Bhagavan. Bhagavan noticed it and in all compassion waved his hand as if to denote 'do not disturb the sleeping boy'. What motherly affection and love!

On one occasion a man appeared in the Old Hall and started a sashtanga namaskar performance, prostrating himself in front of Bhagavan, a hundred times. Bhagavan looked at him for some time and said, "Where is the need for all these gymnastics. It is better to show your devotion by keeping quiet!"

---

ARUNACHALA - SIVA
(A street scene recalled)
By Darlene Delisi

Cycle rickshaw
Get to the bank
Pranams to Swami with heart full of love.
Crowds of people
Gliding by
Another procession, singing, clatter and drums.
At a distance, two statues held high
We pass unconcerned
Intertwining of arms round the wooden support.
Slowed to a stop
Then a glance behind
Captivating, smiling statue
Powerfully, gently radiating waves of Love and Joy.
Ceaselessly lapping
On the shores of my being Wave after wave while the Mountain looks on.
So penetrating and persistent,
So unmistakable, vivid,
So very ordinary at the same time.

Smt. Subbulakshmi, wife of Dr. M.R. Krishnamurti Iyer, about whose great fortune to be the recipient of Sri Bhagavan's Grace I have already written, told me the following two absorbing incidents portraying the Grace of Bhagavan 'being directed' on His children. She said:

"When I had given birth to my third son, Venkata, I had a severe fever, a viral infection. So, from the village I was brought to Tiruvannamalai. Thenamma, who was serving Sri Bhagavan in the Ashram kitchen, a great adept herself, was also proficient in indigenous medicine. She felt my pulse and came to the conclusion I was sinking fast and would not last even for minutes. She rushed to Bhagavan and told him: 'Our Dr. Krishnamurti Iyer's wife is dead'. Bhagavan retorted: 'How do you know?' She replied: 'I saw her pulse and I am pretty sure about it'. Bhagavan appeared shocked, sadly put His palm on His cheeks and exclaimed: 'Ha! Is she gone?' Telegrams were sent to the kith and kin that I had passed away. My brother who was in the village came and was crying aloud. My husband took a vow in front of Bhagavan's portrait that I should be
saved by His Grace and that he would do a
biksha to the sadhus and inmates of the Ashram
on my survival. In such a state of sadness and
confusion, suddenly I opened my eyes and was
surprised over the commotion around me.
Coolly and calmly I asked 'What is all this?' I
came to know that it was nothing short of a
miracle that I came back to life! There is no
doubt whatever that if I am alive today it was
purely due to Bhagavan’s Grace”.

She narrated another incident:

“Some time after this, my brother, on his
return to the village, became bedridden with a
carbuncle on his neck. In those days it was
considered a fatal disease. The local doctor, Dr.
Lakshmanan, had given up hope and my
husband’s service was requisitioned. My husband
knew the seriousness of the disease being him-
self a doctor. He went straight to Bhagavan
and said: ‘My brother-in-law is suffering from
carbuncle; I am going there to treat him. I seek
Bhagavan’s blessings’. Bhagavan replied: ‘Yes,
yes! Go and come’. When my husband
reached the village the disease was already
sixteen days old and my brother was in excru-
ciating pain. Praying to Bhagavan, my husband
touched the affected portion to examine it.
Immediately the carbuncle opened, to the
amazement of Dr. Lakshmanan and others!
Every one acclaimed it as a ‘miracle’. My
husband alone knew the secret! It is purely
Bhagavan’s anugraha that saved my brother, a
big family-man’.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

Sri J.S. Kapoor, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan and Joint Secretary of the
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5. RAMANA ARUNACHALA by Arthur Osborne —do—
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10. UPADESA SARA & 108 NAMES OF
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These books in Braille are available at the Kendra and can be borrowed, free
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NO POSTAGE IS LEVIED ON BRAILLE LITERATURE.
ONE PART of the Christian scriptures is the Old Testament, the records of the people of Israel: it begins with a creation myth. To my mind it is not only a story of events and personalities, it is also a history of the development of man's ideas of God.

In the earliest days it was believed that God could be appeased with a sacrifice, a burnt offering: in fact in one passage it is mentioned that God appreciated the smell of the roasting meat.

Later it was realised that the sacrifice of animals was not required: as the Book of the Prophet Isaiah puts it — 'What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of wild beasts. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or lambs or of he-goats. The Prophet Hosea said — 'For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings'. The Prophet Micah went even further to denounce human sacrifice. 'Shall I give my first born for my transgression, and the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' And then Jesus came and taught that God was a God of love, and that the two great commandments from the Old Testament were that man should, above all, love God and that, also, he should love people. One might say that he taught 'bhakti' and 'prema'.

The Christian Gnostics knew all these scriptures, but read them differently. They took them at their face value; they said that it was impossible that the God of love, preached by Jesus, could be the same God as the one spoken of in the Old Testament. The Gnostic writings. The Testimony of Truth, The Tripartite Tract, and On the origin of the World. all repeat the story, from the Old Testament book of Genesis, of the first humans Adam and Eve, in the garden of Eden: how they were told only to eat from certain trees, and how they came to eat from one of the forbidden trees, the tree of knowledge. The Testament of Truth goes on: — 'And God said: "Behold Adam has become like one of us, knowing evil and good". Then he said “Let us cast him out of paradise lest he take from the Tree of Life, and eat, and live forever”. But of what sort is this God? First he envied Adam that he should eat of the Tree of knowledge and secondly he said “Adam, where are you?” as if God does not have foreknowledge and afterwards he said “Let us cast him out of this place lest he eat of the Tree of Life and live forever”. Surely he has shown himself to be a malicious enier. What kind of a God is this? And he said “I am a jealous God. I will bring the sins of the fathers upon the children of three or four generations”.

So the Gnostics decided that the God described in the Old Testament was not the true God. The world and the universe, they said, had been created by a minor, errant offspring of the True God. This offspring, called by various names in different writings, also created man. However he had not the power to give man a soul. 'On the origin of the world' tells us that, when the higher Gods realised what had happened — 'Sophia sent her daughter, who is called Eve, as an instructor to raise up Adam, in whom there was no soul . . . and Eve said "Adam, live! Rise up on the earth". Immediately her word became a deed. For when Adam rose up, immediately, he opened his eyes.'

The Gospel of Phillip says — 'The soul of Adam came into being by means of a breath, which is a synonym for spirit. The spirit given him is his mother; his soul is replaced by a spirit.'

This was the basis of the Gnostic belief that the spirit of God was present in every man. From 'the Book of Thomas the Contender' there is the saying — 'For he who has not known himself has known nothing, but he who
If you believe that God will do all the things that you want Him to do, then surrender yourself to Him. Otherwise let God alone, and know yourself.

— Sri Bhagavan
(from Maharshi’s Gospel)

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ETERNAL NOW

By Swami Nirmalananda

Self-knowledge is a process of self-knowing. It cannot be stored up in memory. It is living in the moment, being fully present in the Living Present, the Eternal Now. This very spontaneous and instantaneous perception of oneself as one really is takes one beyond. Therefore, one should be aware of oneself all the time with an ever-renewed mind blended with a heart filled with universal benevolence. In self-awareness there is bliss, profound tranquillity and a sense of being free and fearless. In order to remain bathed in this ineffable Peace and Grace, one should rise above thoughts by being fully conscious and come to this meditation without mental activity. One can thus achieve a state of freedom from the known — pure, serene and choiceless self-awareness. It is wonderful!

"He who kisses the joy as it flies,
Lives in Eternity's sunrise".

Daily meditation should never be given up even if one is otherwise busy. It is a must for every sadhaka. It is the royal path shown to us by our great Rishis, the beacons of humanity, and by the shining example of Buddha, the blessed, the Noble and the Enlightened One. The serene, subdued and scintillating smile on the face of Buddha is the seal of guarantee of man's inherent Peace and Happiness. What can the world give us? Not much. Whatever the world gives, will be taken away one day; but this attainment or realisation, once gained, is ours forever. In our troubled and disturbed world, chaos and confusion are causing ever-increasing strife, suffering, unrest and upheavals on a frightening scale. Therefore, peace, precision and the perennial joy born of Wisdom are of vital importance. This heavenly love and compassion, this Supreme Grace that brings boundless blessings for abundant living, is sufficient unto all.

THE INNER RELIGION

By Selvaraj Yesudian

Let us cross all racial barriers. Let us cross all national and religious barriers. Let us cross the barriers of time and space. Let time stand still and let us make a pilgrimage to the perennial source of Truth within the heart. Let us pay homage to the great teachers of the world, sit at their holy feet to receive their benediction in the form of their great utterances preserved for all eternity in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Bhagavatam, the Bhagavad Gita of the Hindus, the Dhammapada of the Buddhists, the Old Testament of the Jews, the New Testament of the Christians, the Koran of the Mohammedans and the great Books of the Jains and Sikhs, and let us bathe in the River of Truth wherever it may flow. Let us remove the sectarian garment of religion and wear the garment of Truth which is as white as the Sun, and know that we all belong to the great family of man. Though our colours may vary, though we may speak in different tongues, though our customs and creeds may differ, let us unite and speak the one language of the heart, the language of Love and Truth.
A FRAGRANT FLOWER

By "Uttherattathi"

A MONUMENTAL, national project of international significance and potential dharmic ramification undertaken by the Government of India has just been completed with the publication of the last two Volumes in the 90-Volume series titled "The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi".

Directing the series as the project's Chief Editor for the last 25 years is Professor K. Swaminathan, an eminent scholar, litterateur, philosopher, journalist, educationist and a karma-yogi on jnana-marga, all rolled in one. The Mountain Path should take legitimate pride that he is also its Chief Editor for some years now, besides his long association with Sri Ramanasramam, beginning from the days of the forties when he had the privilege of numerous talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi whenever the professor spent week-ends and vacations at the Ashram.

The compilation of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi in 90 Volumes is perhaps the biggest multi-volume venture ever attempted in the world. Such a colossal task of historical documentation and editing cannot be achieved by mere scholarship, financial resources and team work alone, but for invisible inputs of sense of purpose, direction and dedicated endeavour. It is no formal compliment, therefore, when India's Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi, while releasing the last two English Volumes in Delhi on 30th April, 1984, described the Professor's personal endeavour as a "love of labour as well as perhaps a labour of love".

The Prime Minister ended her short speech on the occasion with a rare but fitting tribute to the Chief Editor thus: "Above all, our thanks are due to Prof. Swaminathan who has worked with the dedication expected of a
follower of Ramana Maharshi and Mahatma Gandhi”.

In her foreword to the 90th Volume also, the Prime Minister has placed on record her appreciation “and that of the Government of India of the dedication and competence of Professor K. Swaminathan”.

The career of Prof. Swaminathan has been distinguished on all counts including his determination to shun public prominence and fuss. It needs mention here that his father late Sri P.S. Krishnaswamy Iyer, a self-made man of high thinking and simple living, on retirement from service as an Executive Engineer, brushed up his Sanskrit and translated Valmiki Ramayana into Tamil. The noble man’s two principal traits, honesty and the desire and ability to work at self-imposed tasks in old age, characterised all three of his sons, the eldest being our revered Swaminathan. The divine grace of Ramayana’s hero enveloped Professor Swaminathan years after in the form of Awareness-Bliss imparted by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Later, it added a benign earthly dimension by putting the scholar in him to chronicle Gandhiji, a great Rama-bhakta first and last.

Educated at Presidency College and Law College in Madras and then at Oxford University, Prof. Swaminathan was for 20 years an eminent teacher of English literature at Annamalai University and Presidency College, Madras, and held captive a countless number of students, many of whom now well-placed all over India still speak of him in accents of admiration and reverence. While teaching English, he emerged as one of the pioneers of renascent Tamil of the thirties and forties reaching and regaling Tamil readers through his witty articles, satiric plays and verses in his name and a score of pen-names.

Retiring as the Principal of Government Arts College in 1953, he joined the “Indian Express” as Associate Editor. His stewardship of the “Indian Express” for six years (1953-1959) saw the successful transition of this daily from a provincial to a national newspaper of repute.

Prof. Swaminathan’s English translation of Vinoba’s Talks on the Gita and Rajaji’s Ramayana and the little NBT book on Ramana Maharshi are examples of his mastery of the subject as well as the language.

In 1960, Professor Swaminathan was invited by the Government of India to take over as the Chief Editor of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. He was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 1972.

Once in Delhi, Prof. Swaminathan founded Ramana Kendra in the capital in 1963 and strived to see that it was housed in a soul-stirring building of its own by 1974.

Prof. Swaminathan now lives, moves and has being in the twin deities — Gandhi and Ramana — one the exponent of life active and the other of life contemplative. As a Gandhian he believes that Gandhism is meant to be lived, not talked about, and that individual reform should precede social reform.

He has now successfully seen through the completion of the main series of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. However, a few more residuary volumes containing fresh material that could not go in the earlier Volumes have yet to be edited. Preparation of a consolidated index for all the Volumes has also been taken up. His continued Chief Editorship is therefore required for some more time in Delhi.

With the grace of Bhagavan, this fine flower of Indian Culture is bound to radiate its fragrance for long years to come.

The art of religion consists in making every little bit of experience an occasion for a leap into the infinite.
— Swami Rama Tirta
Introducing....

Dr. O. Ramachandriah

In our October 1974, issue, p.244, we had the pleasure of introducing Smt. Kamakshi (who was then alive), and then, her husband, Dr. O. Ramachandriah was also made known to our readers. Dr. Ramachandriah has his own place in the Ramana Movement and hence we introduce him again to our readers. It was Bhagavan who proposed the name of Ramachandriah as the prospective bridegroom for Sow Kamakshi and thus he had a special place of honour (alludu) in the Ashram.

It is said that the forlorn, the needy and the yearners after knowledge resort to Sri Bhagavan. Ramachandriah did not come under any of the above categories. At the end of 1937 he went to Sri Bhagavan to see his bride to be. Sow. Kamakshi, (daughter of Ashram inmate, Munagala Venkataramiah, compiler of TALKS') was then prostrating to Sri Bhagavan in the Old Hall. Six months earlier Bhagavan had started teaching the Telugu script to Kamakshi. Though Telugu was her mother-tongue, her family had been settled in Tamil Nadu for so long that she could not read and write Telugu. It was B.V. Narasimha Swami who was sent to attend their wedding in Madras in 1938 and to present dhotis and sarees to the couple in the name of Sri Bhagavan!

For six years from 1938, Ramachandriah suffered penury. But during this period of suffering, it did not occur to him to appeal to Bhagavan for help; it could also be that Bhagavan prescribed arti (suffering) for him to learn to tread the right path! In 1943 he got a teaching job in Pilani; from then on he rose rapidly to the position of Professor and Head of the Department of History and Archaeology of the Andhra University, Waltair.

After his retirement in 1972, he and his wife came straight to the Ashram and stayed in their house, opposite the Ashram. Sow Kamakshi being the only thread that tied him
strongly to Arunachala, he thought he might be cut off after her death in 1975. But Bhagavan has kept him here under His Fold; Ramachandriah continues to stay as the privileged inmate of the Ashram ever since.

A good Telugu poet and a member of the Andhra Sahitya Academy, he had courted imprisonment in earlier years in the Freedom struggle, following the footprints of both his parents. His first poem 'Sri Ramana Smarana' was published in 1945. He translated 'Sri Ramana Lahari' by Narendra Kesari into Telugu verse. His major contribution is his translation into Telugu of 'TALKS', entitled 'Sri Ramana Bhashanalu'. Still unpublished are his translations into Telugu of Maha Yoga by 'Who', Guru Ramana Vachana Mala by 'Who', Arunachala Stuti Panchakam and Ramana Stuti Panchakam.

Many are the instances in which Sri Bhagavan showered on him His grace. In 1948 Sri Mathrubuteswara Kumbhabhishekam was performed. Sow. Kamakshi had already arrived at the Ashram. Ramachandriah started very much later. He had no time even to go to the market to get fruits as offering to Bhagavan. He was confident that, on the train journey, he would get some. To his surprise no fruit vendor was visible at any station from Kakinada to Vijayawada. Here he located a vendor, but he had only some sour oranges (narthangai) of poor quality. He had no other option but to bring these to the Ashram. Everyone mocked at him for bringing sour oranges! He was unperturbed and was absorbed in watching the ceremonies in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. Suddenly, Kamakshi came running to him and asked for the neglected and despised fruits; they were the kind precisely prescribed for the particular Homa that was being conducted then! Ramachandriah understood the 'Lila' (drama) of Bhagavan and the officiating priests were immensely pleased.

Now, at the Ashram, Dr. Ramachandriah is a special attraction since he regales listeners, young and old, with thrilling reminiscences of Sri Bhagavan.

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**FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS**

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The passing away of my mother, Smt. Nagalakshmi Ammal, has brought me heartfelt condolences from many persons who report her motherly care for Ramana-bhaktras and her self-effacing devotion to Bhagavan Ramana. It is noteworthy that she was absorbed in the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan on Punarvasu day (Bhagavan's birth-star).

Before giving excerpts from the innumerable letters received, I would like to share some sayings of my mother in her last days:

"The body may suffer. Do not pay any attention to that; but think only of Sri Bhagavan and pray to Him constantly. Serve His bhaktas. Bhagavan will bless you. I gave you only your body; your real Mother is Bhagavan".

"The beautiful eyes of Sri Bhagavan I see all the time, whether my eyes are open or closed".

"Bhagavan's Holy presence is continuously felt by me and that is enough".

"Faithfully serve Him, His blessings will ever be with you".

— V. Ganesan

BHAGAVAN'S UPADESA TO 'NAGU'

In June, 1963, when I had been to the Ashram President's house at Ramana Nagar, I requested Smt. Nagalakshmi Ammal to tell me her most unforgettable experience. After some hesitation she said:

"When I was about fourteen, freshly married, a family I had known came to have darshan of Sri Bhagavan. They were from Madras. There was a girl in that family who was of my age. She had also come. One day I casually told the girl that the saree she was wearing was pretty. After a few days they left for Madras. The girl seems to have told her father that I liked her saree. Her father decided to send a similar saree to me. It was a printed cotton saree. In fact, he sent by parcel post not one but two sarees. He had written on a piece of paper 'To Nagu'. Like other letters and parcels, this was also shown to Sri Bhagavan. Bhagavan did not ask any questions. The parcel was passed on to me. I was a bit surprised when I saw the sarees.

"Everyday I used to go and help in the Ashram Kitchen early in the morning. The next morning when Sri Bhagavan had finished His work in the kitchen, He came to me and said quietly: 'When you see someone wearing a nice piece of jewellery, you should think you are wearing it. When you see someone wearing a nice saree, you should think you are wearing it'. I said to Sri Bhagavan, with tear-filled eyes: 'Bhagavan, I never asked for the saree. I merely said it was a nice saree. But they have sent one like it. I didn't ask for it'. Sri Bhagavan merely said: 'Hm, hm' and left the place. What He told me I have taken as His upadesa. I don't ask anything for myself. You can ask your husband'. She was almost in tears when she finished!

— Dr.K.Subrahmanian, Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad
"On our visit to Sri Ramanasramam in the month of October, '82, we had gone up the hill in the evening. Getting down the hill from the eastern side, it was soon dusk in the town. Our guide from the Ashram kept reminding us about the dinner time at the Ashram. We walked as fast as we could. But, my wife and little son found it difficult to keep pace with the rest of the group.

Presently, a horse carriage drove past us and came to a stop in front of us. In the semi darkness, lit by the street lights, we could gather that a lady in the carriage was beckoning my wife and son to climb inside, assuring us that she too was heading for the Ashram. With great relief they got in and the rest of their journey to the Ashram was made light.

My mother used to recite all the Tamil verses composed by Bhagavan, His Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala being very dear to her heart. She was fond of verses written in praise of Sri Bhagavan by Satyamangalam Venkataramanier, Muruganar and Om Sadhu. However, recently when I asked her to sing a song on Bhagavan which she liked most, she sang the following song:

**Thiruchuzhinathan**

*By Ramanatha Brahmachari*

**Refrain:** I have seen Thiruchuzhinathan (the Lord of Thiruchuzhi) and, unable to turn back, I stood there transfixed.

**Sub-refrain:** He is the Lord who dances in Chidambaram, protects the helpless and is merciful to them.

1. The same Thiruchuzhinathan manifested Himself as God in Virupaksha cave on the hill in sacred Tiruvannamalai.
2. Jiva was ruling unjustly in the town called Kayapuri (body) with the karanas (the sense-organs and the organs of action) as his subjects and ahankara (ego) as his minister.
3. After some time, Jiva took up the sword of God's grace and cut off the head of his minister, ahankara.
4. Having so cut off the minister's head, Jiva stood with God who was dancing all by Himself in the cave called Daharalaya (heart-abode). He is this Thiruchuzhinathan; I saw him and stayed there, being unable to get away.

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1 Ramanatha Brahmachari, the composer, came to Bhagavan when quite young at Virupaksha cave; he never left Bhagavan except for a very short spell. On a full moon night Bhagavan with His retinue went round the Hill. Each one was to give a talk. Ramanatha Brahmachari unexpectedly but spiritedly spoke nearly for three hours to the delightful surprise of others, including, perhaps, Bhagavan! Subsequently he compressed the talk into this song. This incident is related by Sri Bhagavan in Letters, pp.117 to 118 and in Day by Day, p. 113.
"From my early girlhood I have watched Nagu Ma coming to the Hall with "Aunt" — Sri Bhagavan's sister — so gentle, quiet and most unassuming. Nagu Ma has so early been 'absorbed' into Eternity — Ramana Hridaya".

— Mrs. Soona Nicholson, Bombay.

"Your mother was truly a special person, an instrument of Sri Bhagavan's Love, endearing herself to all through the language of the Heart".

— Darlene Delisi, Nova Scotia, Canada.

"Smt. Nagalakshmi Ammal symbolised devotion to Lord, a gem in the garland around Arunachala's holy neck". — So a runs resolution passed at the Ekalaiva Sarvodaya Bhavan, Tiruvannamalai, where Smt. Nagalakshmi Ammal's noble traits were extolled by Messrs. A. Kanchimathinathan, V.V. Tilak Sastry, K. Rajagopalan, P. Thandavarayan, and T.M. Kuppuswamy.

No matter how your mother gave not expression to her severe physical suffering, and you by her side helplessly watching her and feeling much distressed, the fact that both were together in her last few days must be a matter of great gratification to either. Undoubtedly, Sri Ramana's benign grace was on her, for had she not served Him and His innumerable devotees from all over the globe with motherly tenderness and deep sense of utter dedication?

— Swami Ekatmananda, Mayavati, Himalayas.

**SALUTATIONS TO MOTHER**

By Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni

Kausalya gave birth to Rama, the protector of the sages; Devaki to Sri Krishna, the teacher of yoga; Renuka gave birth to teacher Parasurama, a life-long celibate, and Maya Devi to Buddha, who gave refuge to all beings. Mother Mary gave birth to the 'son of Man', who bears the burden of sin of all devotees. Likewise, for the welfare of the world, for removal of the darkness of ignorance, for the casting away of all ill-conceived notions, for the realisation of the Truth, your mother gave birth to you, endowed with all these excellent qualities. To her, toSaundarya Yamba, the beloved wife of Sundara, our salutations. Salutations to her samadhi and to the Lord Mathrubuteswara, installed on it. Salutations to her worshippers and salutations to the devotees of Ramana.

**BHAGAVAN’S PRAYER**

Oh Conqueror of Time
Your Lotus feet are my refuge
Let them protect my mother from death
What is death if scrutinized?

Arunachala, blazing firs of Knowledge
Burn away the dross
Absorb my sweet mother in you
What need would there be, then, for cremation?

Oh Mother, of those who seek refuge in you
Is there a better shield than you from fate's blows?

(Bhagavan addresses Arunachala as 'Mother' instead of as 'Father' as He used to do).

**HOW BHAGAVAN CAME TO ME**

"After studying books by and about Bhagavan Ramana, I came to Sri Ramansramam in June 1969 to do meditation and giri Pradakshina, during which I dwelt on the meanings of the verses composed by Bhagavan in Tamil and Sanskrit, with as much intensity and detachment (vairagya) as I could. I appealed to Bhagavan to give me sphurana, or to take away my life. At midnight on the third day, I experienced sphurana, which I repeatedly got thereafter when reading or meditating, or listening to discourses on Sankara-bhashya, on the Upanishads, Gita and Brahma-Sutra. The sphurana which I took to be Bhagavan Himself intensified and has ever-since acted as my SAT-GURU".

— V.R. Vaidyanathan, Madras

**A CORRECTION**

It is regretted that in our April 1984 issue a letter "Laurels" was an inadvertent repetition of a letter 'An Experience' which had already appeared in October 1982. It is further regretted that the title "Laurels" and a sentence found in another correspondent's letter were hastily and carelessly incorporated with Sri K.N. Viswanathan's letter, the office copy of which had got mixed up with the material for April 1984. Our apologies to Sri K.N. Viswanathan for this mix-up.
“Pujya Mataji (Sri Krishnabai) prays for Beloved Bhagavan's blessings on all of you, children, for strength and courage to bear this physical separation bravely and on your mother to ever remain at Bhagavan's holy feet, enjoying eternal peace and happiness”.

— Swami Satchidananda, Anandashram, Kerala.

“What any true Hindu lady aspires for — she has attained — to pass as a sumangali. That too in Arunachala.

After glorious, hearty service to Sri Ramana for years on end; and, moreover, to His dasas . . . . She must have reached the most mangala of lokas: the Atman”.

— Ra. Ganapatı, Madras

“My and my wife’s association with Nagalakshmi Ammal ranges over fifty years. Sow Nago’s motherly love and affection and her care and minute attention for every one of us, considering it as her service to Sri Bhagavan, unmindful of her health or ailment, is beyond expression. The memory of her selfless service to one and all as Sri Bhagavan’s service, will ever pervade the Ashram atmosphere”.

— G.L. Narasinga Rao, Hyderabad

“On March 12, Monday — Punarvasu Nakshatra Day. In our Kendra, Puja was over. We all observed mouna for two minutes, sincerely offering our prayers for the Atma-santi of Smt. Nagalakshmi Ammal”.

— R. Venkatakrishnan, Treasurer, Ramana Kendra, Madras.

“Those of us who have visited Sri Ramanasramam or otherwise come to know her, were struck by her simple life and intense faith in Bhagavan”.

— C.G. Balasubramanayan, Treasurer, Ramana Kendra, New Delhi.

“Words cannot express our deepest feelings of sympathy on the loss of our mother, Nagalakshmi. We pray that we always remember, cherish and emulate the finest example of devotion that Mother Nagalakshmi was and is.”

— Arunachala Ashrama, New York, U.S.A.

“Assure you of our heartfelt sympathy and all spiritual messages for Mother and you”.

— Sylvie and Henri Hartung, FLEURIER, Switzerland.

“Mother’s passing away. I’m sure that it is a very difficult time for you, especially since your mother was a guiding light in your spiritual quest. Our mothers are so precious and important. It is truly a great thing to be a mother; a tremendous responsibility and no easy task. What we owe them can never fully be repaid. The Buddha once said that even if we were to carry our parents around on our backs for the rest of our lives we would still not pay back the tremendous service that they have done for us. No service can repay the immense amount of care, affection, and love they have shown us. Truly they are saints!”

— Richard Warner, Toronto, Canada

“I have met her only once, at the Vidya Homa, and I was delighted with the way she looked; just like a very delicate and shining Devi”.

— Swami Virajananda, Lostallo, Switzerland.

“I was very lucky that I had her darshan whenever I used to visit the Ashram. Though we never understood each other’s language, we used to talk through glances. She used to give such a sweet smile which I can never forget throughout my life. She used to do great puja and service at Bhagavan’s shrine”.

— Smt. Krishna Khosla, Faridabad

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

— Sri Bhagavan

The mystical number 108, the produce of the square of 2 and 3, has great significance in Tantra, Mantra and Agama sastras. Bhagavan’s moving poem celebrating “the love and union between the human soul and God”, The Marital Garland of Letters, contains 108 couplets. Any formal adoration of a deity utters 108 Names by way of invocation of the Presence. 

Ramana Ashtothara composed by Viswanatha Swami in the 30s was well appreciated and approved by Sri Bhagavan. It is chanted twice daily at the samadhi shrine of Sri Bhagavan, during the puja with offering of flowers, once in the morning and again in the evening. If this garland of Names has now become an integral part of the puja in many Ramana Centres all over the world, it can only be because “the choice and the arrangement of the Names provide an exquisite blend of biography, mythology and loving adoration and thus create the proper atmosphere for devotees invoking and enjoying the Presence of Sri Bhagavan”. 

Professor K. Swaminathan, gave a series of talks at the Delhi Ramana Kendra explaining the significance of these Names. He has been persuaded to reproduce the talks and we are happy to have them in a book form.

40. Virajadachalakrith: ‘One whose form is radiant stillness’  
(During the Virupaksha days not only men, women and children but even monkeys and other animals stood transfixed in blissful stillness in the presence of Bhagavan. Arunachala is “frozen fire” and people saw in Bhagavan a human embodiment of this blend of brightness and stillness).

47. Abhayapradah: ‘Giver of freedom from fear’.  
(Fear comes from the presence of “another”. When the sense of duality is destroyed, when identity with all creatures, the unity of all beings, is realized, who is to fear whom?)

49. Dhitar: ‘Intrepid, imperturbable one’.  
(Dhitar corresponds to the Tamil word urun, inner strength. Pure, still, firm awareness knows no change, no disturbance, no movement. Such unshakable firmness, unclouded clarity, heroic self-reliance marked Bhagavan.)

59. Rujumarga pradarsakah: ‘Revealer of the straight, direct path’  
(Since he is no other than the I, the atman within each one of us, and therefore a path near and dear, the goal, the path, the journey and the guide, he can never mislead us. The seeker of jnana through self-enquiry, the follower of Bhagavan, can never miss the way, or be distracted, or cease to grow in wisdom and joy. Bhagavan’s path is the vertical path, the sunward path, the joy path, growth in wholeness, in freedom and responsibility alike. In such growth, one can never lose one’s way. Horizontal movement can be in any direction, but the vertical movement, the inward movement, is deep and high, pure awareness sustaining relative awareness. Bhagavan’s followers grow like giant trees, rooted in actuality and conversing with the Sun of Reality; they are not creepers running in sundry directions. Turning to the eternal Sun, the guru within, and rooted in one’s own soil, time, place and circumstance, one grows straight in and through the strength of joy. One counts one’s blessings and spreads brightness, as one faces the Sun and lets the shadow fall behind.)

75. Rasajnah: ‘Relisher of rasa, of enjoyment’.  
(There is a lot of difference between rasika and rasajna. A rasika enjoys beautiful things, he is a man of taste. A rasajna enjoys enjoyment as a mode of awareness and is therefore free from the tripati (trium) of enjoyment, that which is enjoyed and the act of enjoyment. In every act of enjoyment, his own or anyone else’s Bhagavan saw only a manifestation of the one Being-Awareness-Bliss. He enjoyed not only what he as a person enjoyed but all the joy of all creation. God is rasa. Bhagavan as a rasajna knew God as rasa. Rasovaisah - He Himself is rasa. He enjoys enjoyment. He enjoys knowledge. He knows joy. He does not merely know or enjoy objects. Like a good parent who enjoys the child’s enjoyment of a story, he is sukhikhina)

108. Purushottamah: ‘The Supreme Person’  
(Bhagavan is the supreme person present as sovereign awareness in all persons. He is thus the Purushottama who as Awareness unites all persons in one common being. Awareness-Bliss, the great God Siva, the magnetic Mountain Arunachala, the pure awareness shining as “I”-“I”
in every human heart — all these are names and forms of one Purusha, the only Purusha, whose most glorious vibhuti and active manifestation in our age is Sri Ramana).

These lucid commentaries reveal not only the hidden meaning behind the Names, but also the ripeness of the commentator’s Guru-bhakti.

Once, when a devotee asked for a stotra for daily parayana, Bhagavan took out this Ramana Ashtothara and gave it to him.

The slokas and namavali in Sanskrit as the last part of the book and the transliteration of each Name, are useful additions. — SEIN


Joel Goldsmith’s ‘Infinite Way’, as he calls it, is a form of advaitic Christianity. He believes that “the universe is a spiritual creation, not a physical or corporeal one” (page 9) and that part from spirit there is nothing at all. In the same way the Christ for him is not a man but “the Spirit of God in man” (page 41), the flesh of Christ is “invisible flesh” (page 53) and the Word made flesh is a “state of awareness” (page 55). This Christ “was never born and will never die” (page 68). This Christ is not only in every man but is every man (page 113). Apart from his there is no other person; he is the eternal I AM (page 113). Finally this Christ is God and is identical in every man: “God is your consciousness. God abides in you and I AM is ITS name” (page 123).

There is no need to point out how remote this theory is from traditional Christianity. In the Christian tradition the physical universe is not an illusion but is a creation of God. Every human being is a unique person, an “image of God”. Above all, in Christ God really became man. “The word became flesh” not in a merely spiritual manner but in a body which suffered and died on the cross.

Is there any way of bridging these two contradictory views? I think that there is. One must remember in the first place that Sankara did not say that the world is non-existent, he said that it was neither real nor unreal — neither sat nor asat. This is not far from the traditional Christian view that the universe has a purely relative existence and that apart from God it has no reality at all.

To say that this world is an illusion, that the human person is an illusion, can be misleading. The way in which we perceive this world and the human individual is illusory to a large extent, but the world and the human person have reality in Brahman. As Sankara said in his commentary on the Chandogya Upanishad: “This whole multiplicity of creatures existing under name and form, in so far as it is being itself, is true; of itself it is untrue”. It is the attributing to the world a reality “of itself” which is the illusion; in Brahman the world and the human person have an eternal reality. This is expressed in Mahayana Buddhism by saying that ultimately nirvana and samsara are the same. Samsara is the eternal reality appearing under name and form; nirvana is the absolute reality in itself.

On these lines it would be possible to reconcile advaita with traditional Christian doctrine. Joel Goldsmith was not a philosopher, and the way in which he expressed himself would not be acceptable to the average Christian. But he wrote out of a deep experience and his life testified to the truth of his intuitive insight. It remains important, however, that a way should be found to reconcile traditional Christian doctrine with advaita. No one can doubt the validity of the experience, but how exactly it is to be expressed remains a challenge both to Hindu and Christian.

Father Bede Griffiths

THE TECHNIQUE OF MAHA YOGA. By N.R. Narayana Aiyer. Pub. Ramana Kendra, 11, C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer Road, Madras 600 018. Pp. 66 Price: Rs.3.00

Maha Yoga, as defined by the author of this booklet, is the practice of self-enquiry which was prescribed by Sri Ramana Maharshi. However, the title of the book is somewhat misleading since the bulk of its contents deal with other aspects of Sri Ramana’s teachings such as the nature of the Guru, grace, japa, concentration and breath control. The author is clearly an avid enthusiast of japa for he says on page 20 that “no aspirant can afford to get on with his sadhana without its aid”. Unfortunately, this predilection for japa seems to have affected his interpretations of Bhagavan’s teachings on self-enquiry, for on page 57 he summarizes his ideas in the following words:

“With closed eyes and with the mental eye or the mind centered in the Heart, repeat ‘Who am I?’ in your own language without stopping for at least fifteen minutes, gradually increasing the period to one hour. You must on no account get up till the fixed period is over. Do the same in the evening for the same period”.

The author seems to be under the impression that the practice of self-enquiry begins with breath control and then progresses to a form of japa in which the repetition of ‘Who am I?’ is co-ordinated with the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. He also insists that the mind should be simultaneously fixed on the Heart-centre in the right hand side of the chest. Once this has been mastered the author recommends that one should try to dive into the Heart by forcibly holding the breath for 30 seconds or more while simultaneously repeating the words “Who am I?”. Another eccentric idea is that one must get up at 4 a.m. every morning and sit facing north or east in order to do self-enquiry properly.

All these interpretations are so completely alien to Bhagavan’s own teachings, and to all the published interpretations of them, that a refutation of them is hardly necessary. However, in order to prevent people from being led astray by such ideas it should be pointed out that self-enquiry as taught by Ramana Maharshi is not a step by
step practice incorporating japa and pranayama, but a one-step process which involves being continuously aware of the 'I'-thought. The other techniques which the author mentions may be useful aids for concentration but they are not self-enquiry.


This book purports to be collection of parables given out by such spiritual giants as Ramana Maharshi, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Sai Baba and Swami Ramdas. The compiler's usual technique is to tell a story and then to cite a spiritual authority who shows the esoteric significance of it. In adopting this format the compiler seems to be trying to create the impression that both the parable and the comments on it emanate from the same spiritual source. However in many cases this is simply not true. Sometimes the compiler tells a well-known parable and then finds an appropriate comment on it from the works of a famous teacher, and sometimes he just invents a story in order to use an interesting quotation by a saint. Unless one is familiar with the teachings of all the saints cited in this book, and with all the stories they were fond of telling, it is impossible to discern which stories were really given out by the teachers whose comment is appended. No references are given, for even when the stories are genuine, they have been retold in the compiler's own words.

The stories themselves and the spiritual truths they convey are narrated in an entertaining manner.


The life story of Swami Ramdas and the events which led to his Self-realisation have been chronicled in several of his autobiographical books. Although in these books he gives detailed accounts of his travels, his constancy to Ram mantra and his total submission to God, he is not so forthcoming about his own inner experiences. The explanation for this can be found in a short quotation which introduces this brief collection of poems:

"Ramdas, spiritual experiences have reached such a stage that he can hardly give expression to them. However, in the poems in The Vision (his ashram journal) from month to month he is struggling to give utterance to them."

These inner experiences form the subject matter of the hundreds of poems which have been collected in this volume. I doubt if they will ever find a niche in English literature, for Ramdas was no great poet. But as intimate records of a jnani's experience of the Self they are destined for a more enduring fame. The following two examples indicate the types of experience that Ramdas was trying to describe:

"I am all that exists. Am beyond all conception - The inception, root and origin. In me everything is and is not. Am the whole and the part, An acme of perfection, Am the blessed Truth or God — The supreme Mother, Master, Friend. Speech has come from me. It vainly tries to reach me. Thought is a bubble of my mind. It bursts when it aims to catch me."

"Going to the source I met my Ram. Then I found Him also on the surface And everywhere, on all faces, in all forms. Now I am lost in Him, losing my 'I'. What a sublime consummation — a beatific end! I look as if into a reflecting mirror; Wherever I turn it is myself; I am bewitched. I live in a strange ecstatic intoxication. My life is fulfilled in a cosmic and infinite Consciousness. My being is merged in the all-pervading Bliss. I am joy and peace in carnate — vibrating the rhythm of eternity".

D.G.


Though born in London "within the sound of Bow Bells" and to quote her words, "when three-quarters of my blood and all my heart are Irish", Annie Besant adopted India as "her Motherland of ages" and strove ceaselessly till the last breath of her life to recapture the immemorial spirit of Aryan culture. No Hindu, for example, could have made a better advocacy for his religion than the following one made by the author:

"Without Hinduism India has no future. Hinduism is the soil in which India's roots are struck, and torn out of that, she will inevitably wither, as a tree torn out of its place. Her history, her literature, her art, her movements, all have Hinduism written across them. India lived before other religions came; India could live after their passing. But let Hinduism go, Hinduism that was India's cradle, and in that passing would be India's grave".

It is fascinating to read that her mother traced her family tree to the seven kings of France whose shadowing forms influenced her childhood and exercised over her a power that made her shrink from anything that was unworthy, petty or mean. To quote the author again:

"To her (the author's mother) the slightest breath of dishonour was to be avoided at any cost of pain, and she wrought into me, her only daughter, that same proud
and passionate horror at any taint of shame or merited
disgrace. To the world always a brave front was to be
kept and a stainless reputation, for suffering might be
borne, but dishonour never.

Surely such a training in self-restraint and pride was a
strange preparation for this stormy petrel whose variegated
ends, her own account, covering less than half her
these other biographies cover the stirring period of her
career, has an immense value to the earnest student,
in two big tomes. Although
Nine Lives of Annie Besant
says:

"it may well be that the story of one may help all, and
the story of one soul that went out alone into the
darkness and on the other side found light, that
struggled through the storm and on the other side
found peace, may bring some ray of light and of peace
into the darkness and storm of other lives".

INTEGRAL YOGA TODAY: By Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda.
Pub. Yoga Research Foundation, 6111, S.W. 74th
Avenue, Miami, Florida 33143, USA. Pp. 83. Price: $2.50

Although the title 'Integral Yoga' is usually associated
with Aurobindian philosophy, which talks of evolution as
neither straight nor physical but a spiral curve in which
everything that went before must be taken up and
integrated, Swami Jyotir Maya Nanda does not belong to
the Pondicherry School but is a disciple of Swami Sivananda
of Rishikesh ashram. "A self-made yogi and a dynamic
exemplar of my teachings" was the tribute paid by Swami
Sivananda to the author. In 1962 he went abroad to
spread the message of Vedanta to the west, and this book
found peace, may bring some ray of light and of peace
into the darkness and storm of other lives".

THE LATEST ARRIVALS
AT
SRI RAMANASRAMAM BOOK DEPOT

1. TREASURY OF SPIRITUAL TRUTHS Rs. 13.00
by M.M. Lahevala
Tales, Parables and Sayings of Sri
Ramana Maharshi and other Sages and
Saints (a IAIICO Publication)

2. THE TECHNIQUE OF MAHA YOGA
(SELF ENQUIRY) Rs. 3.00
by N.R. Narayana Ayer
(Published by RAMANA KENDRA,
MADRAS)

3. RAMANA VANI
(in TAMIL & Sankrit) Rs. 2.50
(containing Upadesa Undhivar, Upadesa
Saram, Ulladu Narpadu, Sat Dashana and
Arunachala Aksharamanamalai
(published by RAMANA KENDRA, Madras)
Copies can be had by VPP from
Sri Ramanasramam Book Depot,
Sri Ramanasramam P.O.
Tiruvannamalai 606 603
S.India

Price: Rs.150/-. This admittedly polemic book is a long tirade against all established religions and their founders and spiritual movements old and new. The gravamen of the charge is that all these paths turn away from the world of men and seek solace in the world of gods. God, to the author, is no more than a superstition which had better be discarded by people with a conscience and courage. What are they to hold on to? The author offers the highest religion as one based on
the teaching of his guru, Devatma (1850-1929).

This Deva Dharma, as he calls it, "is the only complete
humanistic religion. It places the origin of the human
personality, both the body and the soul in human society.
It places the human ideal in human society. It evolves a
system of sadhanas called yajnas to reshape and refine the
interpersonal relationships. Through the development of
appreciation, gratitude, altruistic love and service in various
interpersonal relationships". (P.302) This religion has got a
belief system too.

"Explanation of every event is in other events in Nature.
There is no place for God in the world of events in Nature.
God is a superfluous hypothesis. The entities in Nature are
embodied. They are matter-force units or body and mind
units. There are no disembodied entities like soul or God in Nature... It is false to believe that the soul is an
unborn, eternal, unchanging entity".

And so it goes on. The writer is apparently satisfied with
his "scientific religion"; we doubt if the readers will be.

M.P. PANDIT

ARGUS

ARGUS

ARGUS
Ramana Aradhana Celebrations: Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, releases the new edition of TALKS by giving the first copy to Sri Sadhu Om. Sri Kunju Swami pays rich tributes to Sat-Guru Ramana. Ramana bhaktas galore!

BHAGAVAN'S BRAHMA NIRVANA CELEBRATIONS AT ASHRAM

Sri Bhagavan's Brahma Nirvana day is a holy day for it reminds us that 'He is Here', 'He is Here in our Heart' — just as His Birthday Celebration is an occasion for His children to rejoice and celebrate the event of 'Eternity clothing itself in human form'. Every such celebration confirms the truth that He is our own Self, ever experienced within, as the throbbing 'I'- 'I' — the Heart. Ramana remembrance for us is the 'Eternal Now', and hence the importance of these celebrations.

On the 28th April, the 34th Brahma Nirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan was solemnly observed at His Shrine of Grace, Sri Ramaswara Mahalinga. In addition to elaborate pujas and chanting of His works, a large number of poor were fed.

Latest Ashram Publications: 'The 108 Names of Sri Bhagavan' — a translation and commentary on Sri Ramana Ashtothram, composed in Sanskrit by Sri Viswanatha Swami, by Professor K. Swaminathan, our Chief Editor, was released by the Ashram President Sri. T. N. Venkataraman. The new edition of 'Talks', the cover page of which was so beautifully designed by Joan Greenblatt, was also released on that day.

AT RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS

Ramana Kendra, Madras, celebrated Bhagavan's Aradhana on April 29 by having chanting, puja, bhajans and poor-feeding in the morning and special Ramana-talks in the evening, which were held at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Madras.

The publication wing of the Kendra did well by releasing two books, one in Tamil and the other in English (1) 'Ramana Vani' containing the text of Bhagavan's Upadesa Undiyaar (Tamil), 'Upadesa Saram' (Sanskrit) Ulladu Narpadhu (Tamil) Sat Darshana (Sanskrit) and Aksharamana Malai (Tamil). (2) the Technique of Maha Yoga (Self-enquiry) in English by N.R. Narayana Aiyer (2nd edition), containing his views on the Vichara maarga.

Sri M.P. Pandit of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, and Sri Chidambaram Swaminathan gave brilliant talks, bringing out the uniqueness of Bhagavan's teachings and their relevance for modern conditions. Sri K.K. Namblar, Chairman of the Kendra, welcomed the Ramana-bhaktas. Smt. R. Vedavalli and party gave a scintillating performance of devotional music, rendering in classical style many of Muruganan's songs.
AT MAURITIUS

The Ramana Centre at Mauritius, under the motherly care of Smt. Savitri Cuttaree, is steadily doing Ramana-work. She writes:

"On the 28th April, the Maha Nirvana Day of Sri Bhagavan, I went to give the lesson to the ladies on 'Arunachala Siva'. I was then told that there would be an abishekam to Lord Siva (On Maha Sivaratri day, this year, a Sivalingam was installed at the temple) which greatly pleased me thinking of Sri Bhagavan's day. So, we all went to the temple. 'Arunachala Siva' and other songs on Lord Siva were sung. Having listened to 'Arunachala Siva' once, I was at my seat hoping it would be sung once more when to my great joy, the wish was fulfilled. Sri Bhagavan's Grace is ever present.

I have yesterday received the excellent work of Professor Swaminathan on the 108 names of Sri Bhagavan, thank you so much. I will share it with others.

I am enclosing the photos taken on Sri Bhagavan's Maha Nirvana Day at the residence of one devotee, Mr. Siven Valayen".

* * * *

SRI RAMANA BHAKTA MANDALI, HYDERABAD

Sri Bhagavan's 34th Aradhana was celebrated on 14th April at Sri Ramalayam, New Nallakunta, Hyderabad by Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandal.


RAMANA KENDRA DELHI

Maharshi's Mahanirvana Day was observed with due solemnity on April 14, as well as on April 29. A large number of devotees participated in the programme of Vedaparayana, recitation and devotional music on both days.

May 27 was observed as Mother's Day. Ramanavami was celebrated on April 4.

Members of the Kendra participated in the IXth annual festival of Sitala Devi organised by the residents of the Resettlement Colony, Shakpur, at their Mariamman Temple on April 5.

SECOND KOTI ARCHANA

Showering the Vilva Leaves with Ramana Sahasranama on Rameswara Mahalingam during the course of the second Koti Archana
In our last issue (p. 105) we published an article on 'Alamarathu Guhai', little knowing that Papa Ramdas' Birth Centenary was to be celebrated on 15.4.1984. Pujya Mataji wrote to the Ashram President to arrange on this happy day elaborate pujas at Sri Bhagavan's Shrine and also for feeding the guests and sadhus and inmates and especially the poor on a large scale. After performing these we wrote to Anandashram requesting them to send a report so that it could be published. The following has been received from Sri Swami Satchidananda, Trustee, Anandashram, Kanhangad:

"Pujya Mataji had stopped all celebrations after Beloved Papa's Mahasamadhi. Devotees from different places wrote that they were anxious to be present here on that auspicious day. So arrangements had to be made to accommodate all of them. Many devotees came forward to distribute various prasad-articles. Some wanted to distribute clothes. About 300 devotees, from different places, were present in the ashram. Then the local devotees, workers, their families, and the neighbouring people all gathered in the Ashram right from 7 O'clock. Bhajans went on as usual. After bhajans distribution of prasad of various items, numbering 22, went on for a long time and the distribution of clothes to devotees, sadhus and workers. Sadhus were given aluminium water pots also. About 900 people were fed in the bhajanashala. Thus the day went off very blissfully in the constant remembrance and feeling of the eternal presence of Beloved Papa.

"Pujya Mataji's feeling is that the Celebrations are only external show and real devotees should be working hard to realise the goal pointed out by Beloved Papa and try to aspire to reach it as early as possible. This is the only and most befitting tribute we can give to Papa Swami Ramdas".

"Who is ignorant of what? Ask the question and pursue the enquiry as to who it is that is said to be ignorant. Once you put the question and probe into 'I', the 'I' disappears. Then what survives is Self-knowledge or Self-realization".

— Sri Bhagavan
Sri Joseph Guan, a teacher from Singapore, came to Ashram in May, exclusively to meditate at Bhagavan's Old Hall.

Master Ramanendhu, grandson of late S.P. Mahnerjee. He spent a month's vacation holidays at the Ashram.

Sri L.B. Murthy has met Sri Maharishi; he stayed at the Ashram for ten days in May-June.

Sri Sunil I. Dermania and Smt. Vasanti Dermania.

Sri R.J. Doshi of Hyderabad, with his wife and son. In her very first visit Smt. Doshi is completely enveloped by Sri Bhagawan's Presence.

PILGRIM

Sri R.B. Athreya of Dubai with his wife and son. They performed their son's Upanayanam at Madras.

Sri S. Subramony (Station Director, All India Radio, Trichy) a staunch devotee of Bhagwan is a regular pilgrim.
Smt. & Sri M. Hemamalika Rao of Bangalore spent 40 days (from May 5) at the Ashram in fulfillment of their prayer formulations.

Mrs. & Mr. Vassil Bagyazov of Bulgaria and his two children. Their efforts to help others come closer to Sri Bhagavan and His teachings were highlighted.

Dr. A.P. Venkatesan of Tamil Nadu (second from right) is a great bhasha of Sri Bhagavan, so too his entire family.

Jeep and Matthew Groenblatt have returned from their travels and are seen with Smt. Savitri Mathaji.

Sri K.S. Reddy (to the left of Ashram President) brought a group of 62 devout bhaktas from Guntur.
Sri Joachim Peters, Baden-Baden, West Germany is a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan. During this second visit of his, he could spend a few months at the Ashram. He shares his experience with us:

"Since long Bhagavan's Collected Works and the Talks had been my good companions in the West. So, when I came first time to Sri Ramanasramam, I felt quite familiar with the place. But after I had taken my seat in the famous meditation hall, opposite Bhagavan's sofa, I felt a little empty, facing a 'picture only'. Very soon I became aware, that Bhagavan quietly had stepped in. A soft Bliss welled up from the core and peace grew from deep down, permeating my whole being like a subtle perfume. This was the Presence, Bhagavan's Darshan. When I was leaving the hall, I again bent to the picture 'only', but emptiness had gone and I was in fullness!"

Sri C.B. Lal, of Swanley, England, stayed at the Ashram for nearly three weeks in April. On his return to England he writes as follows:

"I have been living in England for 31 years. As late as January this year I had no plans at all of visiting India. However, some very unexpected developments resulted in my making my first trip to India and I was at the feet of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi from 12 April to 30 April '84. Apparently Bhagavan continues to work as a magnet for his devotees.

"During my stay I was very much impressed by the humane and most friendly attitude of those who are running the Ashram and with whom I came in contact. But of course, the main attraction of the Ashram, is its most inspiring atmosphere. For meditation, the opportunities are available from morning to late at night and in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. A few days before his Maha Samadhi, Bhagavan had himself said 'I AM HERE'.

"I have been thinking about Bhagavan for the last 20 years. My recent stay at the Ashram has settled the future for me. After I retire from my teaching job, in July next year, I will spend the rest of my life at the Feet of Bhagavan!"
Sri Hari Chand Khanna and his wife, Smt. Premvati Khanna, are in our midst for the past few months. They are planning not to go back to Kanpur! Their sons and grandchildren are coming here to meet them. They are so fully engaged in sadhana that Sri Khanna with great pride asserts that they both are actually reliving the 'wonderful days' they were privileged to live in the presence of Sat-Cururu Ramana. Readers' attention is drawn to the following two passages published in Day by Day with Sri Bhagavan pp.229-230, to know the Ramana-joy that inundated the Khannas. "The inundation continues", says Sri Khanna!

28.6.46
In the afternoon Khanna's wife appealed to Bhagavan in writing:

"I am not learned in the Scriptures and I find the method of Self-enquiry too hard for me. I am a woman with seven children and a lot of household cares, and it leaves me little time for meditation. I request Bhagavan to give me some simpler and easier method".

Bhagavan: No learning or knowledge of Scriptures is necessary to know the Self, as no man requires a mirror to see himself. All knowledge is required only to be given up eventually as not-Self. Nor is household work or cares with children necessarily an obstacle. If you can do nothing more, at least continue saying 'I, I' to yourself mentally all the time, as advised in 'Who am I?'. Whatever work you may be doing and whether you are sitting, standing or walking, 'I' is the name of God. It is the first and greatest of all mantras. Even OM is second to it.

Khanna: Is there destiny? And if what is destined to happen will happen is there any use in prayer or effort or should we just remain idle?

Bhagavan: There are only two ways, to conquer destiny or be independent of it. One is to enquire for whom is this destiny and discover that only the ego is bound by destiny and not the Self, and that the ego is non-existent. The other way is to kill the ego by completely surrendering to the Lord, by realizing one's helplessness and saying all the time: "Not I but Thou, Oh Lord!", and giving up all sense of 'I' and 'mine' and leaving it to the Lord to do what He likes with you. Surrender can never be regarded as complete so long as the devotee wants this or that from the Lord. True surrender is love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation. In other words, complete effacement of the ego is necessary to conquer destiny, whether you achieve this effacement through Self-enquiry or through bhakti-marga".

"But the vichara that you are making is itself the Guru's grace or God's grace".

— Sri Bhagavan
Sri A. Dorairaj is the son of A. Devaraja Mudaliar (author of Day by Day with Bhagavan and a few other Ashram publications), is a staunch devotee and visits the Ashram with his wife and children regularly every year. We are always happy to have this devout Ramana-bhakta and his family at the Ashram. He writes:

"We had always heard of Sri Ramana Maharshi from childhood. My aunt used always to talk about a 'Brahmana Swami', whom they had seen sometime in the nineties. My father too would go occasionally to see him. We were however not much interested. In 1938, I got married to my auntie’s grand-daughter and my father brought us both to the Ashram to get Bhagavan’s blessings. From that day in August 1938 we were caught up in Bhagavan’s grace, which has been showered plentifully upon us. My wife used to get filarial attacks, and on one occasion she got an attack while at the Ashram. She got fever and the leg became hot and inflamed and she felt miserable during the Jayanthi dinner. After dinner we left the Ashram and went to some place in the town. After a brief nap she got up and found that the filarial attack was gone. She says that only a Jnani could perform such miracles and her joy cannot be expressed. We have had many troubles during the course of our lives, but Bhagavan has always seen us through all our misfortunes. The fact that we know Bhagavan and the feeling that he will stand by us in our hour of need always buoys us up".

SRI RAMANA KENDRAM, JINNURU

Sri Ramana Sat Sanghs are being regularly conducted at Jinnuru Village of West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, on every Sunday between 1 and 4 p.m. Meditation from 1 to 2:30 p.m. and from 2:30 to 4. Sri B.V.L.N. Raju, the President of the Kendra, gives series of talks on Ramana Jnana Marga. Then, Ramana Sankeertna is being held for ten minutes. After arati to Sri Bhagavan’s portrait prasad is distributed to devotees assembled.

FROM WEST BENGAL

Sri Rati Kanta Roy of Jhakra, West Bengal, brought fifteen devotees, all initiated into Bhagavan’s devotion by Brahmachari Gopal Krishna Maharaj. Sri Santinath had his Upanayanam (sacred-thread ceremony) at the Ashram on May 31. After the function, the party left for Madurai and Tiruchuzhi; thanks to the help extended by Sri S. Ramachandran, President, Ramana Kendra, Madurai, everything was well arranged for them. After visiting Rameswaram, Chidambaram, they returned to Bengal, having completed their pilgrimage successfully.

The devout Bengali devotees brought by Rati Kanta Roy.
Thirty-nine years back in a Village, Fulchak, in West Bengal, an Ashram named 'Paramatma Niketan' was established by a very pious bhakta, Brahmacari Gopal Krishna Maharaj. He had the good fortune of having darshan of Sri Bhagavan in 1949. He is thus deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan. A statue of Sri Bhagavan is installed there.

A few years back Sri Gopal Krishna, along with his friend-followers, visited the Ashram to soak themselves in Ramana-Bliss. Groups of earnest seekers from 'Paramatma Niketan' flock our Ashram often.

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**OBITUARY**

In our issue of January '84, p.48, we had the pleasure of introducing Sri Mahipratram Dave, whose devotion to Him was transparent. We are sorry to announce the passing away of Sri M.M. Dave on 23rd May, 1984, at Hyderabad. In his passing away we have lost a senior devotee.

Sri S. Ganapathiraman's 60th birthday was happily reported on p.286 of our October '83 issue. He has now settled at the Ashram, after his retirement taking up the Ashram Cashier's post. In his teens, his marriage with Alagammal was settled in the presence of Bhagavan. The couple are totally dedicated to Sri Bhagavan. Smt. Alagammal passed away on 18th May, 1984 at Arunachala. May her soul rest at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan.

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**ARTHUR OSBORNE DAY**

On May 8 at his samadhi this memorable day was solemnly observed.

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**S.S. COHEN DAY**

(27-5-84)

**First death anniversary of Mrs. RODA MACIVER**

(17-6-84)