**THE MOUNTAIN PATH**
(A QUARTERLY)

“Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!”
— The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1

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- A.R. Natarajan

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All remittances should be sent to the MANAGING EDITOR and not to the Editor.

— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH is dedicated to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
T HE SHINING of the Self, free from thought, from ‘I’, is tapas, true penance. This is Ramana’s teaching. It is only then that the bliss of existence, the abundant joy of Heart-abidance can be felt. The activity of the ‘I’ and the awareness of the Heart’s sparkle cannot co-exist. We accept Ramana’s words intellectually. We know that Ramana’s words have to be true. Yet we seem hesitant to go the whole way, unwilling to experiment with no holds barred, to negate totally the ego. So wide apart it is from our present way of life, centered on the ego, that there is an unconscious and unsaid fear of ‘losing’ the very fulcrum of one’s existence. Ramana himself recognises the reality of this fear. He, therefore, points out repeatedly that the loss of the ego, would open up new vistas, a life without limitation of identifications, a joyous existence, uncontaminated by thought. ‘When I-thought perishes, then another ‘I’ springs forth as the Heart. It is existence in all its fullness’. 1 One should push within fearlessly to find new life and not stop at the threshold. For this we have to be on guard, wary of the ego’s ways which will wean us away from our right resolve, and deny us our moorings.

Let us just have a look at some of the mind’s deceitful ways to retain its sovereignty over us. In self-enquiry, all our energies are gathered at the source to push the ‘I’ within. But hundreds of thoughts are right there waiting for a chance to intrude, to take hold of us. These intrusions, this thought veil, cannot be lifted, cannot be effectively tackled if we make any distinction between thoughts, being lax to the pleasant ones and battling only against the unpleasant. Ramana makes this point effectively when answering a distraught devotee. Bose drowned in sorrow on his son’s death

1 Upadesa Saram, verse 20

THIEF TURNED POLICEMAN

EDITORIAL

By

A.R. Natarajan

The Mountain Path

Vol.23, No. 1, April 1985.
wanted to ‘have it out’ with Bhagavan. His first question was ‘Is sorrow a thought?’ ‘All thoughts are sorrowful’ replied Ramana. Bose who found it hard to accept this and queried again. Are even pleasant thoughts sorrowful? ‘Yes,’ said Ramana ‘because thoughts take one’s attention away from the Self, which is undiluted happiness’. Anything which comes in the way of Self-attention has to be tackled, and for this all thoughts are on par, they have to be discarded. Attention has to be riveted on the ‘thinker’ for it is only then that the inner journey can begin.

Another ruse which the mind deploys to weaken Self-attention, to dilute our strength of purpose, our single-minded efforts is to suggest a wrong import to some of Ramana’s statements. Some ask “Has not Bhagavan said ‘Be quiet’? Is being still a state of effortlessness”? No. This point was clarified to Natanananda. Being still is not an effortless state of indolence. All mundane activities which are ordinarily called effort are performed with the aid of a portion of the mind and with frequent breaks. But the act of communion with the Self or remaining still inwardly is intense activity which is performed with the entire mind and without a break. Again some ask, has he not affirmed that whatever is not destined to happen will not happen despite every effort. What is destined is bound to happen. This is certain. Then where is the need for effort? Confusion of motivation arises from a misunderstanding of the Master’s teachings. For one thing except for a rare few, the acceptance of the fact of inevitability of the course of events, is only at the superficial level. Action is done with the sense of doership, with the thought that success and failure are products of that effort. When it comes to spiritual sadhana, a different yardstick is applied. Besides, the effort which Ramana emphasises is not concerned with altering fate’s course but to render it meaningless. The bite is taken out of any event, if it does not have the power to elate or cause pain. If the attitude of the individual for whom the event occurs, is detached, all events are neutral, neither good nor bad. This attitudinal change is not the gift of god’s but has to be worked for. Ceaseless self-enquiry alone can bring it about.

Then there is the lure of scholarship, particularly for those who have a natural intellectual inclination. There is no end to the study of scriptures or research into works of Ramana. ‘To what purpose?’ one should ask. Once the path is comprehended it would be a mere waste of time, to endlessly delve into the meaning of words, instead of practicing the path. Endless study of the holy words is bound to be counter-productive. The ego of scholarship, the idea ‘I’-know would take a subtle hold. Hence it is that the master says it may be that wives and children form the family of the unlearned but in the minds of the learned there are not one but many families consisting of books. What matters is practice and experience. All else would lead only to dry polemics.

Another dampener for effort is the feeling which creeps in, along the way, that we are not making any headway. The sense of arrival is not there. Used as we are to tangible results, we feel lost. There are of course some who want fruits in double quick time typified by a casual visitor who said ‘Tomorrow I am leaving this place. Oh! Maharishi, if you give me Self-Realisation I shall always think of you’. But even those who are totally involved are apt to lose heart. Here it is important to remember that right effort would never go waste. When, in time, it would bear fruit can not be postulated with any degree of certainty. For one might be gun-powder ready to catch fire or wet firewood which can light up only slowly. Then there is also the difference in the intensity of effort, in the passion for Self-knowledge. Here it would be worth recalling the conversation which Cohen had with Bhagavan. Bhagavan, you have given me a home for my body, I now need your grace to

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2 Guru Ramana by S.S. Cohen, p. 42
3 Collected Works - Spiritual Instruction, p. 55
4 Bhagavan Ramana and Mother, p. 11-12
5 Guru Ramana by S.S. Cohen, p. 32
grant eternal home for my soul, for which I broke all my human ties and came.' Ramana gazed silently on the calm water of the tank nearby and replied, 'Your firm conviction brought you here; where is the room for doubt?' This loving reassurance is not only for Cohen but for all those on the Ramana way. Having claimed us, will he give us up? We must leave it to him to take care of the results too, once we become his business.

We do not know what austerities observed by us, what facts and prayers of the past lives has brought us to the Ramana way. This rare good fortune is inexplicable. Having come, limitless happiness is within our grasp. Would it not be a tragedy of tragedies to fritter away this opportunity? As we tread the Ramana path steadfastly and vigilantly, the joy of Heart-abidance, the beatitude of just existing is felt. It comes and goes leaving a lingering taste and longing. Then we slip, become externalised. But this is of no consequence so long as Ramana and His way remain as our pole-star, our mariner’s compass. We are bound to get back, feeling as we mature in steady wisdom, the joy of anonymity of egoless living. Then we know the importance of unimportance, and the mind is not there to play its tricks.

I ask you to observe where the ‘I’ arises in your body, but it is not really quite correct to say that the ‘I’ arises from and merges in the chest at the right side. The Heart is another name for the Reality and this is neither inside nor outside the body. There can be no in or out for it, since it alone is. I do not mean by ‘heart’ any physiological organ or any plexus or nerves or anything like that; but so long as a man identifies himself with the body or thinks he is in the body, he is advised to see where in the body the ‘I’ thought arises and merges again. It must be the heart at the right side of the chest since every man of whatever race and religion and in whatever language he may be speaking, points to the right side of the chest to indicate himself when he says ‘I’. This is so all over the world, so that must be the place. And by keenly watching the emergence of ‘I’ thought on waking and its subsidence on going to sleep, one can see that it is in the heart on the right side.

When a room is dark you need a lamp to light it, but when the sun rises there is no need for a lamp; objects are seen without one. And to see the sun itself no lamp is needed because it is self-luminous. Similarly with the mind. The reflected light of the mind is necessary to perceive objects, but to see the heart it is enough for the mind to be turned towards it. Then the mind loses itself and the Heart shines forth.

—Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
LOVED ARUNACHALA

Translated By 'Sein'
from the Tamil of Om Sadhu

Loved Arunachala, serene You stand!
Unmoved as You, grant me to merge in You.
Majestic Hill, you draw me close and bid
Stand with stilled mind, as without thought You stand.

Yearning, my gaze is fixed on You alone,
As magnet-like You draw the heart of me,
You who enthral, who give Your vassals peace,
Rousing desire to be without desire.

As the moth circles the flame,
Persistent to its doom,
Let me go round, go round Arunachala
Till Your Grace my mind consume.

Let me be a prey to You, Arunachala!
So shall my griefs dissolve with my desires:
Arunachala, the final Home of all,
Enslaved by You, what more remains to seek?

Loved Arunachala, serene You stand!
Unmoved as You, grant me to merge in You.

KAVYAKANTA GANAPATI MUNI

In 1907 he (Ganapati Muni) heard of the youthful Sage on Arunachala, known then as 'Brahmana Swami'. "In the heat of the afternoon sun he climbed the hill to Virupaksha Cave. Swami was sitting alone on the veranda of the cave. Sastri fell on his face before him and clasped his feet with outstretched hands. In a voice quivering with emotion, he said: "All that has to be read I have read; even Vedanta Sastra I have fully understood; I have performed japa (invocation) to my heart's content; yet have I not up to this time understood what tapas is. Therefore I have sought refuge at your feet. Pray enlighten me as to the nature of tapas."
The Swami turned his silent gaze on him for some fifteen minutes and then replied: “If one watches whence the notion ‘I’ arises the mind is absorbed into That; that is tapas. When a mantra is repeated, if one watches the Source from which the sound is produced the mind is absorbed in That; that is tapas.”

— Viswanathan Swami

**RECIPE FOR TRANQUILITY**

Once one is able to leave oneself out of consideration there results in one’s life a kind of glad willingness to do what needs doing and to help where help is needed and cheerful enduringness and patience which are of themselves a great reward. For with oneself no longer considered central it’s remarkable how little there is left to fret about.

— L.P. Yandell

**THE DANCE**

By Arthur Osborne

Away, away!
Into the sky I dance!
Bending, swaying lightfoot leapting,
Timeless staying, rhythm keeping,
Up in the air!
The rhythm and sway
Now here, now there!
Swift and smooth as a maiden’s glance,
I sway and I glide
And nimbly I ride.
With never a care.
As only I throb to the cosmic tide;
No outer step, no body stride.

* * * * * * *

Thus the rhythm keeps its track
In a stiff old body with arthritic back.

* * * * * * *

from *The Mountain Path*, April, 1965.
BEGINNERS IN Self-enquiry were advised by Sri Ramana to put their attention on the inner feeling of 'I' and to hold that feeling as long as possible. They would be told that if their attention was distracted by other thoughts they should revert to the awareness of the 'I' — thought whenever they became aware that their attention had wandered. He suggested various aids to assist this process — one could ask oneself 'Who am I?' or 'Where does this I come from?' — but the ultimate aim was to be continuously aware of the 'I' which assumes that it is responsible for all the activities of the body and the mind.

In the early stages of practice attention to the feeling 'I' is a mental activity which takes the form of a thought or a perception. As the practice develops the thought 'I' gives way to a subjectively-experienced feeling of 'I', and when this feeling ceases to connect and identify with thoughts and objects it completely vanishes. What remains is an experience of being in which the sense of individuality has temporarily ceased to operate. The experience may be intermittent at first but with repeated practice it becomes easier and easier to reach and maintain. When self-enquiry reaches this level there is an effortless awareness of being in which individual effort is no longer possible since the 'I' who makes the effort has temporarily ceased to exist. It is not Self-realisation since the 'I' — thought periodically reasserts itself, but it is the highest level of practice.

Repeated experience of this state weakens and destroys the vasanas which cause the 'I' — thought to rise and, when their hold has been sufficiently weakened, the power of the Self destroys the residual tendencies so completely that the 'I' — thought never rises again. This is the final and irreversible state of Self-realisation.

This practice of Self-attention, or awareness of the 'I' — thought is a gentle technique which by-passes the usual repressive methods of controlling the mind. It is not an exercise in concentration, nor does it aim at suppressing thoughts; it merely invokes awareness of the source from which the mind springs. The method of self-enquiry is to abide in the source of the mind and to be aware of what one really is by withdrawing attention and interest from what one is not.

In the early stages effort in the form of transferring attention from the thoughts to the thinker is essential, but once awareness of the 'I' feeling has been firmly established, further effort is counter-productive. From then on it is more a process of being than doing, of effortless being rather than an effort to be.

According to Sri Ramana, being what one is, is effortless since beingness is always present and always experienced. On the other hand, pretending to be what one is not (i.e. the body and the mind) requires continual mental effort, even though the effort is nearly always
at a sub-conscious level. It therefore follows that in the higher stages of self-enquiry effort takes attention away from the experience of being while the cessation of mental effort reveals it. Ultimately, the Self is not discovered as a result of doing anything, but only by being. As Sri Ramana himself once remarked:

'Do not meditate — be!
Do not think that you are — be
Do not think about being — you are.'

Self-enquiry should not be regarded as a meditation practice that takes place at certain hours and in certain positions; it should continue throughout one’s waking hours, irrespective of what one is doing. Sri Ramana saw no conflict between working and self-enquiry and he maintained that with a little practice it could be done under any circumstances. He did sometimes say that regular periods of formal practices were good for beginners, but he never advocated long periods of sitting meditation and he always showed his disapproval when any of his devotees expressed a desire to give up their mundane activities in favour of a meditative life.

Q: You say that one can realise the Self by a search for it. What is the character of this search?

A: You are the mind or think that you are the mind. The mind is nothing but thoughts. Now behind every particular thought there is a general thought which is the ‘I’, that is yourself. Let us call this ‘I’ the first thought. Stick to this ‘I’—thought and question it to find out what it is. When this question takes a strong hold on you, you cannot think of other thoughts.

Q: When I do like this and cling myself, that is the ‘I’ thought, other thoughts come and go, but I say to myself ‘Who am I?’ and there is no answer forthcoming. To be in this condition is the practice. Is it so?

A: This is a mistake that people often make. What happens when you make a serious quest

1. The Secret of Arunachala, p. 73
is that the ‘I’ — thought disappears and something else from the depths takes hold of you and that is not the ‘I’ which commenced the quest.

Q: What is this something else?
A: That is the real Self, the import of ‘I’. It is not the ego. It is the supreme being itself.

Q: But you have often said that you must reject other thoughts when one begins the quest, but the thoughts are endless. If one thought is rejected another comes and there seems to be no end at all.
A: I do not say that you must go on rejecting thoughts. Cling to yourself, that is, to the ‘I’ — thought. When your interest keeps you to that single idea, other thoughts will automatically get rejected and they will vanish.

Q: And so rejection of thought is not necessary?
A: No. It may be necessary for a time or for some. You fancy that there is no end if one goes on rejecting every thought when it rises. It is not true, there is an end. If you are vigilant and make an effort to reject every thought when it rises you will soon find that you are going deeper and deeper into your own inner self. At that level it is not necessary to make an effort to reject thoughts.

Q: Then it is possible to be without effort, without strain?
A: Not only that, it is impossible for you to make an effort beyond a certain extent.

Q: I want to be further enlightened. Should I try to make no effort at all? 1
A: Here it is impossible for you to be without effort. When you go deeper, it is impossible for you to make any effort. 1

Q: How should a beginner start this practice?
A: The mind will only subside by means of the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ The thought ‘Who am I’ destroying all other thoughts, will itself finally be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre. If other thoughts rise one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire ‘To whom did they arise?’.

What does it matter how many thoughts rise? At the very moment that each thought rises, if one vigilantly enquires ‘To whom did this rise?’ it will be known ‘To me’. If then one enquires ‘Who am I’, the mind will turn-back to its source and the thought which had risen will also subside. By repeatedly practising thus, the power of the mind to abide in its source increases.

Although tendencies towards sense-objects (vishaya vasanas), which have been recurring down the ages, rise in countless numbers like the waves of an ocean, they will all perish as meditation on one’s nature become more and more intense. Without giving room even to the doubting thought, ‘Is it possible to destroy all these tendencies and to remain as Self alone?’ one should persistently cling fast to self-attention. 3

Q: The yogis say that one must renounce this world and go off into secluded jungles if one wishes to find the truth.
A: The life of action need not be renounced. If you meditate for an hour or two every day you can then carry on with your duties. If you meditate in the right manner then the current of mind induced will continue to flow even in the midst of your work. It is as though there were two ways of expressing the same idea; the same line which you take in meditation will be expressed in your activities.

Q: If a person is engaged in work there will be little time left for him to meditate.
A: Setting apart time for meditation is only for the merest spiritual novices. A man who is advancing will begin to enjoy the deeper beatitude whether he is at work or not. While his hands are in society, he keeps his head cool in solitude.

Q: Then you do not teach the way of yoga?

2. Sat Darshana Bhashya, (1975), pp. iii-iv
Life has not been born and death has not died. Persistence is dissolved in the now which has no past. No future. No now. The waves of notions is dissolved in the stillness of the sea.

Frederick Beck

A: The yogi tries to drive his mind to the goal, as a cowherd drives a bull with a stick. But on this path the seeker coaxes the bull by handing out a handful of grass.

Q: How is that done?

A: You have to ask yourself the question ‘Who am I?’ This investigation will lead you in the end to the discovery of something within you which is behind the mind. Solve that great problem and you will solve all others problems.  

Q: Seeking the ‘I’ there is nothing to be seen.

A: Because you are accustomed to identify yourself with the body and sight with the eyes, therefore you do not see anything. What is there to be seen? Who is to see? How to see? There is only one consciousness which, manifesting as ‘I’ — thought, identifies itself with the body, projects itself through the eyes and sees the objects around. The individual is limited in the waking state and expects to see something different. The evidence of his senses will be the seal of authority. But he will not admit that the seer, the sight and the seen are all manifestations of the same consciousness — namely, ‘I-I’. Contemplation helps one to overcome the illusion that the Self must be visual. In truth there is nothing visual. How do you feel the ‘I’ now? Do you hold a mirror before you to know your own being? The awareness is the ‘I’. Realise it and that is the truth.

(To be concluded in the next issue)

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THE PATH OF REALIZATION

By Henri Hartung

TODAY TWO facts appear to me to mark spiritual research. On the one hand, many persons who are jostled, oppressed and in any case troubled by the chaos of the modern world — the Kali Yuga turn towards an OTHER, a different research, the research of the inner life. But, on the other hand, many of these persons fail to make a distinction between the genuine spiritual practice and a psychological work, not to speak of those who are following indiscriminately one of various "false prophets" who are fashionable all over the world. In such a situation, Sri Ramana Maharshi’s life, what I call his "presence" ¹ may appear not only as an extraordinary event but also as a testimony that is hard to follow, difficult to catch. But, in spite of that a testimony, an evidence.

Why is it difficult to catch? In the modern world, what seems important is: making noise, forming associations, having disciples, attending conferences, writing books, possessing goods and making money. Nothing, absolutely nothing of all this in Bhagavan. Besides even for the persons who succeed in keeping off these attractions, the problem is to have a master, to receive instructions — upadesha, to follow a practice. The straight direct path, Atma-Vichara — the Royal Path of Being Knowledge — Ulladu Narpadu — presented in silence, what a “challenge”. For the 20th Century’s woman and man, “Who am I?” that enquiry alone is the best means. This is his testament, his testimony. Ramana is “the” perfect witness. With him: the magnificence of the contemplative “not-acting” as against the utilitarian tumult; the silence of the “truth” compared to the noisy manifestation of “decentered” human individuality. As we read at the beginning of “The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi”²: Self-enquiry is the first work the Maharshi ever wrote . . . . . . .

There are two ways: ask yourself “Who am I” or submit.

Bhagavan is. He represents the Reality, the goal and ideal of the human state. He is an evidence . . . even in the crisis of the modern world. Today “the mind always seeks external knowledge, leaving aside its own inner knowledge”³. To look at Bhagavan, to look at his

³ id. p. 51
photograph, is to see the total truth in Him. As Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj says: “It may have either rain or sun, either joy or sorrow, your faith must stay ever in Ramana” 4. Beyond doubt, this direct approach leads to the experience of Unity. Nothing hides the Reality I am — the — Self, I am pure consciousness. The question is in itself the Path of Knowledge. The path is the goal; the question is the answer — “Who am I — is the question . . . . Inquire and thoughts cease. What is, namely the Self, is revealed as the inescapable residue.” 5

All Bhagavan’s devotees have received this valuable message, this teaching which reappears again and again in the few works by the Sage and in all his answers to questions. “Who am I?” I am not this physical body . . . I am not the five organs of sense perception . . . I am not the five vital forces . . . I am not the thinking mind. Above all not the thinking mind! To become aware, little by little, of the place occupied by this restless anxious mind. To be aware of my very nature Sat-Chit-Ananda, Existence, Consciousness, Bliss. To be merged in Maharshi’s glance, which is itself Existence — Consciousness — Bliss.

But, and the human condition is such that the child needs aid to stand and walk. This grasping of the Unity beyond diversity, the practice of Atma-Vichara, can be facilitated by certain disciplines. Bhagavan even while presenting this steep path of pure investigation, lays it down clearly and precisely: “Yama (moral self-control which is the necessary preliminary to the Yogic path; in detail abstinence from lying, killing, theft, lust and covetousness); niyama (disciplinary observances), pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses from external objects), dharana (concentrated attention), dhyana (steady uninterrupted contemplation), samadhi (identification of oneself with the Atman)” 6

On this “yogic path” everyone is led so to pay attention to his whole existence. The inner life governs the outer and the one who treads this path sees everything that concerns him being transformed: his work and his profession, his relation to others, to money, to pleasure. The Jivan-Mukta, who incarnates the Absolute makes known so in every detail in his life the ideal of human “perfection” Can we imagine Sri Ramana being rude or even impatient with his visitors? Being interested in material goods and striving to earn money? Being authoritative and unjust towards the ashram’s inmates? The simple reaction to these questions rouse inside each of us shows very well that it is not possible to look for any verbal answer to the question “Who am I?” Or to go on behaving with others without love and without humility. “To introvert the mind is the prime thing” said Bhagavan but with abstention from lying, killing, theft, lust . . . and so on. And everyone understands that the question is not a moral point of view but it is the necessary transformation of the individuality, the act of going beyond the ego. “Reality must always be real. It is not with forms and names . . . Reality is that which is. It is as it is” 7.

So, it is proper to place oneself in a spiritual perspective. The rehabilitation of the inner life demands work on oneself at every moment. A spiritual existence needs must be different from a material or mental existence. And if, entangled in our desires, in our plans, we except further advice, let us listen to Ramana: “What kind of response do you expect? Are you not there? What more?” 8 And what do we understand by niyama, pratyahara, dharna and dhyana? Once our enquiry is based on the transformation of our daily attitudes, what the occidental people call metanoia or turning inside out of our behaviour, the real work can start. For many Hindus and Europeans, the

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4 Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, Graines de conscience, ed. les deux oceans, 1983, p. 111
5 Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, ed. Sri Ramana-ramam No. 41, p. 47 — lines 16, 17 to 19.
7 Talks with Ramana Maharshi, No. 140.
8 id. No. 320, 322.
Yoga occupies here privileged place. In this matter, Sri Ramana has always been very precise:

— Is Hatha Yoga necessary?
— It is one of the aids — not that is always necessary. It depends upon the person”.

Indeed he adds “Vichara surpasses pranayama”, but it depends upon the person.

For myself, “one of the aids” has taken the “form” of Za-Zen. The words Zen, meditation, corresponds to Chinese Teh’an and Sanskrit dhyana, which is defined by the Maharshi as “steady uninterrupted contemplation”. Za means seated. Za-Zen is thus practice of the motionless meditation. Beginning and ending each day, this silent time rectifies all one’s activities, gives them a MEANING and proves a precious “aid” for the practice of vichara.

This experience of mine for many years explains my interest on Miss Jyotsna Nageswaran’s reflections concerning the Maharshi and Zen. This study would interest many of Bhagavan’s devotees whom I know in Europe and who regularly practice Za-Zen.

Several points for comparison may be found in the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and the Zen Buddhist master. Ramana Maharshi’s very presence is a reminder that the truth is not to be sought outside. Overt Parallels are:

“the uselessness of abstract speculation; the rejection of words; the illusoriness of the mind-body dualism; the discovery of truth here and now; the play of the sense of humour.”

Really, yes, Bhagavan and the Zen masters were children of the same soil!

For those who may wonder at this bringing together, I would only say this: human nature is what it IS; it is neither Hindu, nor Buddhist, nor Christian. Our common experiences are expressed in Hindu, Buddhist and Christian terms according to our surroundings, our education. And vichara, as an inner journey, leads to Harmony and Peace. The practice of Za-Zen teaches how to concentrate and control your mind. Unfortunately this essential training is left out of contemporary education. Za-Zen has one aim: to remind you of your True nature. Such an actualization of your innate Buddha-nature is, to use other words — the Self directly perceived. When you are living such an experience, are you Hindu, Buddhist, Christian or one person discovering true human nature?

What a privilege to know Bhagavan to follow His path, what a genuine “aid” in this so dark period of human history! How blessed the ashram which welcomes devotees to the Holy Mountain Arunachala! And if it seems difficult to identify ourselves with Ramana or with Arunachala, couldn’t we see that the fault is in our imagination?

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WAT IS the purpose of the study of the Upanishads? Is it academic discussion? No. It is purely to attain the experience of internal equilibrium to the point of negation of all theoretical assertions. Experience by whom? Obviously in any experience the experiencing principle, the experiencer, is more important. Thus, the goal of any spiritual system is to know the Self, the ground and substratum of human existence. “Atmanam Viddhi” — “Know the Self”, says the Upanishad. While we have many treatises on pure logic and complicated metaphysics, it is clearly established that the essence and goal is Atma Anubhava (experience of the Absolute Reality, within). Sri Ramana Maharshi confirms this when he says: “The purpose of all Upanishadic teachings is to direct the seeker’s mind towards the One Reality, the Self, underlying all philosophical systems.”

The word Upanishad comes from ‘upa’, ‘ni’, ‘shad’ — “sitting down near”, that is, to sit near the teacher to receive the spiritual instruction.

Sankara, in his introduction to the Taittiriya Upanisad, says: “Knowledge of the ultimate is called ‘Upanishad’ because it leads the pupil very near to the Ultimate Reality”. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan too extols the Upanishads thus: “The aim of the Upanishads is not so much to reach philosophical truth as to bring peace and freedom to the anxious human spirit”.

There are 108 Upanishads. Sankara has written commentaries on Ten of them; which are considered the Major or Principle Upanishads. Mandukya Upanishad, the shortest, having only twelve couplets, is held as the loftiest of them all since it directly deals with different phases of human consciousness, namely, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep and concludes that the Ultimate Reality is the Self, the unborn, the Atman, one’s own Being, unaffected by the three passing variations in consciousness.

Man’s quest is two-fold: objective and subjective — namely, the wonder of the world without and the mystery of the soul within. The Vedas deal with the vast external order and its movement in nature; the Upanishads explore the depths of the inner world. The external world is dependent on Reality and inner experience is reality itself. Hence, the seers of the Upanishads try to lead us from uncertain, divisive knowledge to the Fundamental Reality which is infinite existence (Sat), absolute Consciousness (Chit) and pure delight (Ananda). Thus the prayer contained in the Upanishads, is:

असतो मा सदग्य | तमसो मा ज्योतिर्ग्यमय ||
मृत्युंगम्यामाश्म ||

“Lead me from the unreal to the Real; lead me from darkness to Light; lead me from death to Immortality.”

The concept, content and consciousness of the Self, the Eternal ‘I’ within, is the main theme of Mandukya Upanishad. This Upanishad describes the Self, the Atman, as “unseen, unthinkable, indescribable, the ever peaceful, all blissful.” It establishes this highest state of Being, after considering the three conditions of man’s day-to-day living, namely, waking, dreaming and deep sleep. In the waking state, the external world is cognised. In the dream state the external world does not exist, yet, an inner world of subtle things is perceived. In

1 Based on a talk over A.I.R. Pondicherry on Dec. 30, 1984.
sound sleep neither the gross world nor the subtle dream world appears. But there is bliss in the absence of thought or thinker. A sense of duality caused by the operation of the mind is present in waking and dreaming but is totally absent in dreamless sleep. However, it is a negative state, the freedom from thought is bliss not then felt but recalled later. The Mandukya Upanishad points out that the highest state is not this dreamless sleep but a fourth one which is positive and is actually the substratum for the other three states to come and go. It is called Turiya, which includes the waking, dreaming and sleeping states; and transcends them all as pure Consciousness. This is the Self, Atman, the true ‘I’. This state of Pure Being is not the mere absence of unhappiness, but a positive state of conscious happiness devoid of external and internal contents.

This state is extolled by Mandukya Upanishad, in its sixth mantra as:

एव सर्वं तर्यस्यं सर्वोत्तमं यथान्युपत्तिवर्ग्योऽनि।
सर्वे यन्त्रात्मर्च्छायात्मिह भूनामाम॥

This state is the Lord of all, this is the knower of all; this is the controller within; this is the source of all; and this is that from which all things originate and which they finally merge.

Muktikopanishad asserts: “If the sole object is to attain the Highest truth (the Supreme Goal of Existence) the single Upanishad of Mandukya is sufficient.” Sankara says: “The Mandukya Upanishad embodies the quintessence of the entire philosophy of Vedanta.”

Just as Mandukya Upanishad views man’s daily experience in a spiritual perspective, BHAGAVAN RAMANA builds his teaching on
the rock-foundation of rationalism and man's day-to-day experiences. By juxtaposing the states of sleep and waking. He destroys the myth of the infallibility of the latter, and points out the seer behind these two states of consciousness alone is the Truth.

Bhagavan Ramana compares the waking and deep sleep states to arrive at the truth that man's real nature is happiness. Usually, more importance is given to the waking state, for this is very obviously clear to mankind. In it man strives for recognition, fame, prosperity and plenty. Why? Because the attainment of these 'good things' gives him intense satisfaction, that is, happiness. Also in the other extreme state of daily experience, sleep, what is man's aim? He obviously aims at having sound sleep. That is, there too, man wants only unalloyed happiness and freedom from thought.

This simple logical conclusion — that is, freedom from the tyranny of thoughts and the absence of objective knowledge results in happiness — is the basis of the highest philosophy propounded thousands of years ago by Mandukya Upanishad and confirmed today by Ramana Maharshi, who lived in our midst, leading a simple life of pure bliss.

Synthesising the apparently opposite experiences of waking and sleep state, Ramana arrives at the right conclusion that every effort of man, either consciously in the waking state or unconsciously in the sleep state, is aimed only at having happiness. Because he says: "Man's real nature is happiness. All men, without exception, are consciously or unconsciously seeking it. They ever want happiness untainted by sorrow, a happiness which will not come to an end. This instinct is a true one. Really his search for happiness is an unconscious search for his true Self, within." Mandukya Upanishad terms this final state, the state of transcendence, as 'Turiya' and Bhagavan Ramana simply calls it 'happiness', Ananda!

Whereas Mandukya Upanishad declares that man's real state is Turiya, Bhagavan Ramana

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gives us the Royal road to reach it. In the waking state there is an ‘I’ which experiences the objects, thoughts and the world; and the very same ‘I’ in the deep sleep state records the absence of thoughts and the presence of total happiness. This ‘I’ can only be one and not two; since there is no other entity to which this ‘I’ can report. Maharshi says: “This ‘I’ alone is the self-shining entity or swayam-prakasa-vastu. Therefore, this I AM, the awareness, the Consciousness, which always exists and shines without undergoing any change in waking and sleep and exists without any aid of externals for its support, this alone can be said to be the Real. And that Reality is within you.”

Maharshi gives some further help in our quest. He pin-points a location for this self-shining principle within our body itself. It is the ‘Heart’, on the right side of the chest of everyone of us. (It is not the physical heart on the left side). Bhagavan Ramana clearly states that the three states of waking, dreaming and sleep have their emergence and subsidence only in this Heart. The waking state emerges from the Heart and subsides again in sleep only in the self-same Heart.

The quest whence (where from) these states emerge and where they submerge, leads one to their source, the Heart. This method of enquiry into the source is the original and special contribution of Bhagavan Ramana. This is a fitting finale to the exposition of the Ultimate Truth so well propounded in Mandukya Upanishad. After the clear exposition of Reality, Turiya, as found in Mandukya Upanishad the means of directly experiencing it has also been provided by Bhagavan Ramana in his Atma Vichara.

Great Sages come to confirm, clarify and enrich the already existent spiritual treasures, embedded in the scriptures of our punya bhoomi, Bharat Desa.

“Reality” is what we take to be true. What we take to be true is what we believe. What we believe is based upon our perceptions. What we perceive depends upon what we look for. What we look for depends upon what we think. What we think depends upon what we perceive. What we perceive determines what we believe. What we believe determines what we take to be true. What we take to be true is our reality.

— Gary Zukav in The Dancing Wu Li Masters
An Overview of the New Physics, p. 313

“Inwardness is the eternal, and desire is the temporal, but the temporal cannot hold out with the eternal. Desire glows less and less fervently, and at last its time is over, but the time of inwardness is never over. Inwardness, the need of inwardness for God, has then conquered, and the supplicant does not seek God in the external world, does not create him in his desires, but finds him in his inwardness, and finally believes that he himself never did desire so vehemently, never was so confused, and believes that such as he now has become he was from the beginning. But he does not therefore pray less than before, for that which made him pray was inwardness, and it has now conquered.”

— Soren Kierkegeard’s Journals and Papers
By H.V. HONG & E.V. HONG p. 461
MY GURUDEV

By V. Dwaraknath Reddy

MUST I say in words what I would sooner
cherish in the secret sacred stillness of
my heart — what Gurudev means to me? And
if I must, how shall I do it? How does any one
ever express the transcendental? What can I
express with words, words, that are all fury
and no achievement, words that are mere
pygmies from the petty kingdom of Sound,
gnawing ineffectually at the towering mountain
of Silence? I think there are words in some
deep recess within me that are yet unknown
to language, even unknown to sound . . . . . . . . . 
I feel their embryonic flutter as I struggle for
expression.

I sit upon the bank and watch the river flow
by, carrying in its flood endless variety of
shapes and forms. Some struggle and cry in
fear 'Let me live, let me live' but they go
under, a faint ripple marking momentarily the
end of their pilgrimage on earth. Before long,
even that passes away, and the smooth waters
glide unconcerned with deceptive serenity.
Some go laughing by, happy and playful, till
they and their laughter recede beyond the
horizon, and the sudden silence leaves in
ominous doubt whether they and their laughter
have already ceased, or have yet a little way
to go. Some float by too lost in stupor to know
their fate, much less to care, and they sink
here or yonder, it matters not. Once in a rare
while, mercifully not oftener, there passes the
gnarled countenance of one who grabs a weak
victim and suffocates him as though one alone
will survive, but a moment later that one too
vainly seeks desperate protection as the deri­
sive waters part and unite, and a glossy inno­
cence hides another secret.

I watch this dismal meaningless unending
procession, and suddenly wonder why I am
not a part of it. I realize then that my body is
wet and the water is dripping from my hair. I
must have been drifting all too recently in the
river myself. How was I saved?

I turn round and look up. I look into the
face of Benevolence. Therein is a tenderness
like the soft light of a candle. Therein is a
radiance like that of the eastern sky at dawn.
Therein is a fragrance like that of dew-kissed
roses.

I cling to His Feet, and He smiles for the
dead and the living. He smiles for the saved
and the lost. He smiles for the river and the
bank. Nothing is said. Nothing remains
unsaid.

Gurudev, I know not what you are. I know
but a thousandth part of Thy Grace. Tears in
the eyes must speak for me, not words upon
the lips!

1From his forthcoming book: PAADA POOJA. (Gurudev
is a lovingly reverential address of Guru. Deva is a divine
being.)

As thoughts arise, destroying them utterly without any residue in the very
place of their origin is non-attachment. Just as the pearl-diver ties a stone to his
waist, sinks to the bottom of the sea and there takes the pearls, so each one of us
should be endowed with non-attachment, dive within himself and obtain the
Self-Pearl.

— Sri Bhagavan
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MANIKKAVACHAGAR is one of the four great saiva samayacharyas, the other being Tirujnanasambandhar. Appar (also known as Tirunavukkarasar) and Sundarar. Scholars are not agreed about the date of Manikkavachagar. Saiva tradition reckons him as earlier than the other three, while the trend of modern research is to consider him as later than these. Even if the latter view is confirmed, Manikkavachagar’s Tiruvachagam has influenced the lettered and the unlettered for well over a thousand years now. Its English translation by G.U. Pope was first published in 1900 and has been reprinted twice by the University of Madras. There are two other English translations, one by K.M. Balasubramian and the other by G. Vanmikinathan. The latter was published by Delhi Tamil Sangam, under the title Pathway to God through Tamil Literature — (1) Through the Tiruvachagam. H.W. Schomerus has translated it into German. He has also published in German a comparative study of Manikkavachagar and the German mystic; Eckhart. The American scholar Glenn Yocum has in his Hymns to the Dancing Siva attempted a study of Manikkavachagar’s Tiruvachagam (Heritage Publishers, New Delhi, 1982).

There is a Tamil saying to the effect that one ‘unmoved by Tiruvachagam will not be moved by any other utterance’, i.e. such a person is hard-hearted. In other words, the Tiruvachagam is the touchstone of one’s spiritual sensitivity. Ramalinga Swami (19th century A.D.) has sung about the moving quality of the Tiruvachagam to this effect: ‘When I recite the Tiruvachagam, entering into its spirit and merging with it, it is as if with the juice of sugar-cane, honey, milk and the juice of ripe fruit, my body and soul are mixed, producing a sweetness that does not cloy. When the Tiruvachagam is recited, even birds and wild animals develop spiritual longings. Is it any wonder if I develop such longings?’

The Tiruvachagam is one of twelve sacred works known as Panniru Tirumurai. These are basic works for Saiva Siddhanta. However, followers of other traditions, Hindu and non-Hindu also feel attracted by the Tiruvachagam as it is a record of the basic longings of the human heart for union with the Divine, of the raptures of union and agony of separation. Even the description of the agony has a sweetness about it, because of the sublimity of the theme.

It is difficult to say whether the order in which we now find the songs of Tiruvachagam is the order in which Manikkavachagar sang them. It may be said in general that Tiruvachagam is a record of Manikkavachagar’s spiritual pilgrimage. However, we may not be right in seeing any pattern in it of sustained progress from stage to stage. Even in the same song, the mood varies from verse to verse.

Manikkavachagar sings, ‘Who am I? Wisdom’s lessons — What are they that fill my mind? and me who would know, had not the Lord of heaven made me His own?’ (X, 2) Here is the basic question, ‘Who am I?’ The saint recalls plaintively the many births he has taken in previous lives at various levels — as grass, shrub, worm, tree, beast, bird, stone, man, demon, celestial, ascetic, etc. Wearied and worn out by these countless births, he now finds release and rest at the golden feet of the Lord. The Lord appears to him as a Guru and gives him initiation. After accepting the saint’s total surrender of body, possessions and very soul, the Lord leaves him to remain in the world for some more time. The saint sings feelingly of the pangs of separation and of the utter desolation then experienced. In contrast he sings severely of the ecstatic moments of
union recollected in tranquillity. Like the systole and the diastole of the heart, joy and sadness alternate in most of his songs.

What was it that the Lord had done to Manikkavachagar?

'Like the fragrance of the flower uprising everywhere
Thy greatness without cease all things pervade.
This day to me in condescending grace thou cam'st.
Making this body of destruction fall away, O Being glorious!
To-day to me in condescending grace Thou cam'st I praise Thee!
Thou who did'st fashion this ecstatic*frame
I praise Thee!
As fountain springing in my soul Thou mak'st me glad; I praise Thee!

(* ‘Ecstatic’ is substituted for Pope’s ‘decaying’ which is a mistranslation of the Tamil word ali, (அந்திர்நாதின்), which is different from azhi. (அழி))

In Song III, the saint describes the suffering the soul experiences in the pre-natal state, from the first month to the tenth, the ordeals and temptations after birth through the periods of childhood, adolescence and manhood the doubts and uncertainties in religious and philosophical matters. In the grip of past karma, in ‘the fell clutch of circumstance’, his head is bowed to the Lord in petition and prayer for redemption. When the Lord responds, what happens?

'What to say, I know not, Hail — to Thee complain
I a mere cur cannot endure! What He hath done to me
I understand not! Ah I’m dead! To me Thy slave
What Thou in grace hast given, I know not, tasting am not satiate.
Though I've imbibed I comprehend it not!
Like flowing billows swell from out the sea of milk
Within my soul He made deep waters rise

Ambrosia surpassing speech filled every pore,
This is His gracious work!
In every body in this currish state
He filled me full with honied sweetness:
Ambrosial drops most marvellous
He caused throughout my being to distil
With tender soul, as though He'd make me as Himself:
He formed for me a frame where grace
might flow
And as an elephant explores fields of sweet cane, at last
He sought, and found, and made even me to live in me.
Mercy's pure honey while He mixed,
He gave in grace supernal food: —
Iv'n He whose nature nor Brahma knows nor Mal!

(III, 163 — 182)

Such is the Joy that the Lord is ready to give to every soul. In fact, having made the saint taste in his heart the Joy of His presence, He withdraws Himself so that the saint may seek Him in all likely and unlikely persons, in the holy and the depraved. Thus the Lord floods the saint’s soul with inward light and pours unfailing Joy into it. After making the saint enjoy this experience, the Lord goes farther and farther away from him, so that the saint may seek and find Him outside himself also (XXXVII — 9). In other words, everyone has to realise God’s presence everywhere.

Manikkavachagar says that the Lord in His boundless Compassion is calling upon souls to come unto Him. This call should be heeded.

'Each to himself be his own kith and kin!
each to himself be his own law and way!
For who are 'we' what 'ours?' and what
are Bonds?
illusions all, — let these departing flee!
And, with the ancient servants of the King taking His sign alone for guiding sign, Shake falsehood off: go on your happy way.
unto Bhuyangan's golden foot — our King!

(XLV, 3)
Manikkavachagar repeatedly stresses the need for responding to the Lord’s call. We must not delay when the call is heard. We must hasten before the gates of Sivaloka are closed. We must hurry while the gates are still kept open. Such are the urgent entreaties we find in Song XLV.

In song XXXV, Manikkavachagar says that, while there is yet time, we should respond in Love and save ourselves.

‘While there is time, give Him your love and save yourselves! Hasten ye to Him Who ate the poison, whom ‘tis hard for him who ate the earth And him of faces four, and all the heavenly ones to draw anigh: Who to His servants stores of grace dispenses, our good Pandi-Lord.

Even when the soul is not yet ripe for redemption, the Lord’s grace can lift it out of a state of degradation.

And who am I would reach His foot??
To me mere cur, a throne
He gave enter’d my flesh: mixed with my life leaves not my soul

With crown of honey-dripping locks, blest
Perunturrai’s Lord
On me a gracious boon bestow’d that
heavenly ones know not!’

(XXXIV, 2)

What ensues when there is descent of grace? The saint continues:

‘I know myself no more; nor day’s nor night’s recurrence; He Who mind and speech transcends with mystic madness madden’d me —
(XXXIV 3 — first two lines)

The Tiruvachagam sums up in the last verse of Song LI, the rapturous consummation of the saint’s pilgrimage.

BLESSED SOULS

By Yogi Shuddananda Bharati

BLESSED ARE THE PURE
Their inner strength is sure
Blessed are the peaceful
Their life shall be soulful

Blessed are the truthful
Their efforts shall be fruitful
Blessed are the simple
Their scope shall be ample

Blessed are the dauntless
Heroes victorious
Blessed are the faithful
They shall be successful!

Blessed are the patient
They shall be efficient

Blessed are hearts of love
They get grace from above
Blessed are they that know
Ramana’s Yes and NO
They shall be the Atman
The true man within man.
Blessed are the high
That know the central I
The I shall guide them on
To blissful self anon. .

‘With those that knew not right or good —
men ignorant, I wandered
The First, the Primal Lord Himself
three-fold pollution caus’d to cease
Even me He took as something worth —
like dog in sumptuous litter borne
Twas thus the Mother gave me grace
O Rapture, who so blest as I!

(The quotations are from C.U. Pope’s translation).
SURRENDER MEANS 'super rendering or giving oneself up to another in an especially high degree'. In total surrender, the ego is completely lost. There is no expectation of any reward. There is no seeking of any kind whatsoever. ‘True surrender is the love of God for the sake of love and nothing else, not even for the sake of salvation’, says Sri Bhagavan.

Most of us expect God to do us only good once we have surrendered. We are surprised and pained when, despite our surrender, we are faced with problems. When we expect something in return for our surrender, then we have not really surrendered. Sri Bhagavan says: “Surrender is not an easy thing. Killing the ego is not an easy thing. It is only when God himself by his Grace draws the mind inwards that complete surrender can be achieved.” (Talks, No. 208).

When a person has truly surrendered, he has no cares, no desires, no anxieties. He has no will of his own. When Sri Bhagavan left Madurai, he took just the train fare to Tiruvannamalai. When he reached Tiruvannamalai, he threw away the packet of sweets that had been given to him by Muthukrishna Bhagavat’s wife. He did not think of keeping the sweets for a day or two. He was not ‘anxious for the morrow’. He tore off from his dhoti a strip for his Kaupina and threw away the rest. He did not take an extra Kaupina nor did he think of using the remaining cloth as a towel. This is a total surrender. He had come to his Father and he had implicit faith that his bare needs would be looked after. In the early days, there were occasions when Sri Bhagavan was teased and insulted. But he remained unaffected by them as there was no individual to react. The whole life of Sri Bhagavan is a commentary on Surrender.

No human being can be free from problems. Even after we surrender, we shall have problems. But our attitude to problems will change. Sri Bhagavan says: “If you surrender yourself and recognise your individual self as only a tool of the Higher Power, that power will take over your affairs along with the fruits of actions. You are no longer affected by them and the work goes on unhampered. Whether you recognise the Power or not the scheme of things does not alter. Only there is a change of outlook.” (Talks, No. 503)

Real surrender is where ‘me’ is not. The following Christian hymn tells in simple but moving language what real surrender is:

Make me a captive, Lord,
And then I shall be free;
Force me to render up my sword,
And I shall conqueror be.
I sink in life’s alarms
When by myself I stand;
Imprison me within thine arms,
And strong shall be my hand.
My heart is weak and poor
Until it master find;
It has no spring of action sure —
It varies with the wind.
It cannot freely move.
Till thou hast wrought its chain;
Enslave it with thy matchless love,
And deathless it shall reign.
My power is faint and low
Till I have learned to serve;
It wants the needed fire to glow.
It want the breeze to nerve;
It cannot drive the world,
Until itself be driven;
Its flag can only be unfurled
When thou shalt breathe from heaven.

My will is not my own
Till thou hast made it thine;
If it would reach a monarch’s throne
It must its crown resign;
It only stands unbent
Amid the clashing strife.
When on thy bosom it has leant
And found in thee its life.

The Freedom of Non-attachment
By A Parsee Devotee

“See the lamps,
And, you find many;
Look at the Light,
And you behold but One.”
So truly said the Sufi Master Rumi
Shines everywhere from everyone
and everything.

Know this truth,
And go through life,
Free as the wind,
Unattached to anything.
See the Spirit within,
And not the name and form;
Who is the King, and who the sweeper,
Who the Priest, and who the profligate?
Many are the bottles,
But in all the water is the same.
Who is mother-father,
Who is son-daughter,
Who is brother-sister,
Who is husband-wife,
Who is lover-beloved,
And, who is friend?
In all relationships,
Know that you really love
The Reality within alone,
(i) Invocation to the Guru

1
To save from dire despondency
Those who yearn for, and yet are far,
Far from the goal of the final Freedom.
This Lamp of Guru's wisdom, lit
To put to flight the illusion of "I"
And "mine", shines as the very Self.

2
While I lay writhing in the body
Mistaking it for me, the gracious,
Silent guru took pity on me
And made me see that I was not
This form inert, decaying, but
Imperishable true Awareness.
With His twin Feet I crown my head.

3
The Sage accomplished who reveals
With clarity and certitude
The ultimate Truth which reconciles
All the discordant creeds and doctrines.
His feet my head wears as a crown.

4
Not my poor mind unlit by any
Vision of Truth, but Master Ramana's
Bright, eternal wisdom, is
The flame that shines clear in this Lamp
O being Supreme.

5
The gracious Master, the embodiment
Of the one bright, true Being-Awareness
Uttered many sayings for despelling
Ignorance. Some of these I treasured
In my memory and repeat
Here in this treatise.

6
In the non-dual state, wherein
Abiding Ramana made me his,
Where he and I together shared
A common being, I learnt the Truth
Supreme, transcendent, which I hope
Here to expound a little.

7
My God, my guru, Ramana cleared
My mind of the dense ego-cloud
And graciously revealed to me
The Truth transcendent. 'Tis this vision
Splendid that with loving care
I weave into this Garland fair.
GURU’S SAYINGS

This Treatise

8

The Self supreme stands ever as all
Things everywhere, one does not reach it.
This Lamp of Being supreme only
Reveals what is, free from all waves
Of dharma, and Kama.

9

The Self, pure Being that shines as Bliss.
Is the sole home of all the worlds
Here and hereafter. Prompt and proper
Restoration to the Self
Is what this treatise offers, not
Ways dubious to some distant goal.

Author’s Humble Apology

10

“Garland of Guru’s Sayings”, this rhyming
Treatise was not thought out or sung
By me, this half-wit, Venkata.
The pure one, thought-free sang, it seems,
And so it came to be.

11

For what I have not with my mind
Composed, why humbly apologise?
Responsibility for this
Whole treatise rests with Him, the Master
Known in the pure heart’s blissful silence.

Dedication

12

She gave me birth and gave me thus
Freedom from ignorance, bliss eternal.
To this most innocent mother of mine,
To her dear memory is this treatise
Duly dedicated.

The Author

13

Some sayings of the guru, Kanna
Muruga stored and strung together
As a garland bright of Being supreme.
His Eye of grace at his Master’s Feet,
Had found the meaning, beauty and bliss
Of all the universe.
(This stanza is a tribute from an
admirer of the poet).

Section I

Invocation

14

The ocean-girdled maiden Earth’s
Hard, long penance has borne fruit.
Pure Being, glorious Siva Himself.
Embodied in human form as Guru
Ramana of flawless wisdom
Has come to us. Let us in the heart
Cherish His sacred Feet.

15

One of the benediction fits
This Garland of Guru’s Sayings, which
Seeks to dispel delusion. That
One word is I, the Self, abiding
In every being as the Heart.

To those who look within, the highest
Good gained by the Master's grace
Is wakeful sleep, the turiya state,
The undying flame, the sweet, uncloying
Fruit for ever fresh.

Heart free from liking and disliking,
Form comely with the comeliness
Of perfect wisdom, He, my Master,
The goal of all true goodness, has
Destroyed my ignorance and fear
His Feet are my last refuge.

Considering that the primal cause
Of all three or all seven worlds
Exists unbroken, all these worlds
Have also some reality.
But when this form derivative
Is viewed as infinite and eternal,
The ground, the whole, Awareness pure,
Seems to be non-existent, void.

From your true being as Awareness
Alienated and deluded,
Do not pursue appearances,
Deeming them as real. They
Are false, since disappear they must.
But your own being as Awareness
Is real and cannot cease to be.

The world by the illusive mind
Perceived is not by the mind's source,
The self, perceived. How can it, then,
This poor world, claim reality?

Be not afraid of this base, trivial
Samsara which, like dreams in sleep,
Appears in nescience. A dark shadow
Caused by the minds desires it cannot
Stand the true, loving splendour
Of pure Awareness.

Ye who in fear shrink from the world,
Know that the place has no existence.
Fear of this phenomenal world
Is like being frightened by a rope
Mistaken by you for a snake.

The world appears distinctly only
In wakefulness and dream with concepts
Filled. In concept-free, all empty
Sleep, one sees no world; so then
Conceptual is the world's whole substance.

By names and forms the universe
Is split up into objects. When
These names and forms are whisked away,
Pure Being, Brahma, abides. Concealing
God with these conceptual
Names and forms, the poor fool is
Deluded into seeing a world
Of which, alas, he is afraid.

The mind bewildered which mistakes
The body for oneself conceives
The transient world of names and forms.
Makes it seem real and lovable.
And promptly entraps one in the strong
Illusive bondage of desire.
O worldly minded fool who cannot
Understand the proper teachings
Of great sages, this whole bloated
World beheld by jaundiced eyes,
When closely scanned, is but a trick
Played by your own vasanas, nothing more.

One ever-present pure Awareness,
This alone has true existence.
The world perceived and measured by you
Is but illusion, jaundiced yellow,
Caused by the ego’s concepts false
And treacherous desires.

As yellow fades and disappears
In sunlight, this world disappears
In pure Awareness. Hence it is
Not of the Sun-God’s making. Rather
’Tis a picture seen in the peacock’s plumage,
An image of the lady, Mind.

Seen in the light of Self-experience
All this phenomenal world is mere
Appearance, like the sky’s deep blueness.
What the deluded, body-bound ego
Perceives ‘out there’ is mind-created,
Nothing more.

When in Awareness pure supreme
The mind is merged and lost, then all
Three drives — desiring, doing, knowing —
Are seen as but conceptual movements
In the one Self’s abiding Being
As Awareness, and hence slip
Away and bind no more.

Siva, supreme Awareness-Being
Alone abides, the ground, the screen.
The world of triads is but the picture
Moving on the screen, the play
Of Sakthi, Her supreme Awareness.

The world, like snake in rope, thief in
A stump, mirage in air, has no
Real existence. Seeming to be,
Mere appearance, is its nature.

By This world That world is concealed.
And This world is by That concealed.
Names and forms one sees, or else
One sees pure Being-Awareness Bliss.
Looking at a granite dog,
One sees the dog or else the stone.
Not form and substance both together.

The world that hides the Self is but
A dream. When the phenomenal world
Is hidden by the Self’s bright light,
Awareness pure, the Self, abides.

This whole illusive world of triads
Seeming unmistakeably real
Is nothing but the Self supreme,
Nothing but the form of Sakti,
Play of Awareness, whose eternal
Ground and substance is the Self.

Like the bright flame by smoke concealed,
Awareness is by names and forms
Concealed. When by Its Grace, light comes,
The world is seen as bright Awareness
Too, not a mere cloud of names and
forms.
A Garland of the Sayings of Guru Ramana, gathered and enshrined in 1254 Tamil verses by the poet-saint Sri Muruganar, with a clear Tamil prose-rendering by Sri Sadhu Om. The most comprehensive and authoritative collection of Sri Bhagavan’s sayings.

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How I Came to Bhagavan

By Nagesh Anant Naik

This article, first published in the monthly Ramakrishna Niketan in February 1939, was taken to Bhagavan by N.V. Gunaji, the author of Marathi Ramana Prasathanathraya. Bhagavan seemed to approve of it and asked the attendant to keep the article safe in the revolving bookshelf near Him!

For so many days I had been longing to visit Sri Arunachala and have darshan of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi and I got that opportunity in October, 1938. On 6th October I left Goa, and after halting at Tirupati for 3 days I reached Sri Ramanasramam on 10th October at about 9 o'clock at night.

The next morning at six o'clock I had darshan of Sri Bhagavan. He was seated on a couch in a spacious hall. All round him the devotees, including some Europeans, were sitting in a meditating mood. In this holy atmosphere I prostrated before Sri Bhagavan. He lovingly enquired about me and asked me to take my seat in front of him. I was very much fascinated by Sri Bhagavan's personality, especially his eyes which were glowing like stars. Until then I had only come across the description of such eyes in the scriptures, and I felt that God Himself had appeared before me through Sri Maharshi. Seeing him with my own eyes, I was delighted to have my long cherished desire fulfilled.

Sri Maharshi's mother-tongue is Tamil, but he also knows Telugu, Sanskrit and English. Since I did not know Tamil, Telugu or Sanskrit, I decided to converse with him in English.

After waiting for a while I asked a question: "Maharaj! I cannot have concentration of mind even if I try hard and I do not get peace. What's the way to achieve immediate peace?"

After looking at me for some time Sri Bhagavan replied: "There is nothing to worry about. The easiest way is to constantly enquire 'Who am I?', keeping the mind inward-turned, stop identification, and be as you are. By constant practice your mind will merge in the source and achieve peace."

Then I asked the second question: "Maharaj! The goal which I can achieve through the
inquiry way, can I not attain the same through repetition of holy names?"

Sri Bhagavan said: "Oh! yes. The goal which is attained by the inquiry way is also attained by constant repetition of holy names or the sacred Om. But while repeating holy names one must ask who is repeating the name and whose name is being repeated."

At the end I prayed to him for his grace. Sri Bhagavan nodded, and I felt a peace current flowing through me. I was completely absorbed in it for quite some time. This signified that he had accepted me. That moment my way of life was completely changed and I got a deep and stable foundation for paramartha life.

In this way I spent three days in the delightful and enchanting environment of the Ashram and visited the temple of Arunachaleshwar. Then I went to Madras and after staying there for two days reached Goa on 18th October.

All these years I had only been reading the description of ancient sages and of modern saints like Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. But today I am feeling blessed to have had darshan of a great sage!

---

**THE SWAN**

By Noona Osborne

1. In the never ending sunlight of my soul,
   In the never ending love that's always me,
   There is a yearning that I cannot hide my Lord,
   In the never ending thirst to find my tears;
   But I would cry with a peace that is yours,
   And in my sadness, let the river flow —
   And crack my frozen heart,
   And I can find that Touch of love in nothing but a bird
   O Lord,
   O Lord, in the never ending sadness —
   Of that light, will I but find your smile? —
   Will I but see — that those have seen, O Lord
   My Lord!

2. In the zone of half light there is sadness,
   In the silent time the tears flowed and:
   Gone to gentle rest and your gentleness
   Was in you; were you only touched by the dawn??
   It took you to the peace — in your heart??
   You never waked to see the golden fi’ —
   re in the sky, do you ask me — who am I?
   Did you see the sunlight on the mountain
   Light the light?
   He is only he who sees the light
   Transcending sadness,
   that’s who he is . . . . .
   Bird of beauty, bird of power . . . . .
Moments Remembered
by Managing Editor

LOVELY RAMANA

I am happy to record another instalment of unpublished anecdotes about our Master.

V.G.

HE WORD ‘Ramana’ means ‘the lovely one’. Master Ramana is not only the lovely one but the one who ‘revels in the hearts of us all’. Did He not Himself answer Amritanatha’s query, “Who is this Ramana?” Bhagavan’s answer was clear and certain: “Arunachala Ramana is the Awareness, the Supreme Being, who sports within the lotus-hearts of all beings”.

His form itself was so comely that Paul Brunton wrote: “There is something in this man which holds my attention as steel filings are held by a magnet; I cannot turn my gaze away from him”. His presence and proximity was at once serene and exhilarating. Brunton thus describes his experience in the immediate presence of Bhagavan: “I know only that a steady river of quietness seems to be flowing near me; that a great peace is penetrating the inner reaches of my being, and that my thought-tortured brain is beginning to arrive at some rest” (Maharshi and His Message p. 12). Arthur Osborne too describes Bhagavan’s personality in similar terms: “His face was like the face of water, always changing and yet always the same. He would be laughing and talking and then he would turn graciously to a small child or hand a nut to a squirrel that hopped on to his couch from the window, or his radiant, wide-open eyes would shine with love upon devotees.” (Ramana Arunachala p. 18).

Frank Humphreys, the policeman-cum-mystic, says of the Master: “He is a man beyond description in His expression of dignity, gentleness, self-control and calm strength of conviction.” Major A.W. Chadwick affirms: “To try and describe my reactions when I first came into the presence of Bhagavan is difficult. I felt the tremendous peace of His presence, His graciousness”.

Dr. G.H. Mees, a great scholar-devotee, declares: “If a man were to do the greatest deed in the world and come and sit in the presence of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, he would realise that his deed was as nothing compared to the perpetual Deed of Self-Realisation of this Sage!”

Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, poet-seer, sings rapturously: “In speech He is extremely soft, in look cool and compassionate; His face is like full-blown lotus; His mind is a void like the moon in daylight; He shines in the heart as the Sun in the sky”. (Sri Ramana Gita, Ch. 18, v. 6). The poet-saint Muruganar goes into ecstasy:

In the sovereign Presence where prevails
The stillness of awareness.

Those who enter the circle lit
By the silent guru’s grace un failing
Feast on the fruit of bliss eternal
Far, far beyond the ego’s reach”.

To live the Truth is the true essence of religion, not preaching it. “The Indian tradition has been kept alive by such sages, the living embodiments of God-centred life, perfect images of the life divine in the mirror of human existence”, affirms Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. Ramana lived the Truth, since He was the Timeless in time.

Yes! Truth, Reality did live in our midst, clothed in human form, as Ramana. Devotees like Professor N.R. Krishnamoorthi Aiyar, N. Balarama Reddy, Kunju Swami, Kanakam-
mal. K. Natesan are fortunately still in our midst, having seen Reality ‘face to face’! I appeal to devotees and visitors who happen to be in the Ashram to seek their company, talk to them, and share with them the joy of Reality.

Recently I had been to Bombay to participate in Ramana Jayanti, celebrated by the Bombay devotees. I was delighted to meet Smt. Lalitha Venkataraman, daughter of Manavasi V. Ramaswami Iyer; I requested her to sing her father’s famous ‘saranagathi’ song and she thrilled us all with her melodious voice. This devotional offering was the highlight of that day’s entire programme!

Smt. Lalitha Venkataraman is a reputed and well-known Carnatic singer of the classical type, who had sung over All India Radio songs on Sri Bhagavan even in the forties. I met her in her Bombay home and listened to her talk:

“Rarely could I come to Tiruvannamalai after my marriage, since my husband was employed in north India. Whenever I was in the Ashram I used to sing, playing on the veena myself, and Bhagavan would listen and smile. One day when I entered the Hall, after a long absence from Tiruvannamalai, He said: ‘Look, only this morning we heard her voice on the Radio. Here she is, now!’ I had given a record of two songs on Sri Bhagavan, perhaps one of them had been broadcast on the Radio that day.”

She continued: “As a child I had played with Bhagavan when He was at Virupaksha Cave. But it was my elder sister, Rajam, who as a child had been fondled by Bhagavan. Bhagavan had on several occasions plaited her hair and played with her toys. My sister was so fond of Bhagavan that anything tasty or interesting she came across, she would rush to Virupaksha Cave to share it with Him. Once in our house, a special type of paddy was brought and it was being handpounded. The bran, it seems would be very sweet and tasty. When the pounding lady mentioned this to my sister she took handfuls of the bran and ran to Bhagavan. Bhagavan noticing Rajam’s odd-hour appearence asked her whether she had brought something for Him. She gave him the bran and both ate it. Bhagavan, however, then told her how this bran would be tastier if eaten with certain other ingredients added! My sister enjoyed great privileges. However she knew
she was moving with God; she worshipped Him every moment of her life."

After a pause, she said: "Rajam was a good painter. Though she never learnt painting from anyone or in any art school, her drawings and paintings had real ‘life’ and a special quality. When she was grown up she did paintings of Goddesses. She would show them to Bhagavan and He appreciated them very much. Once Rajam did a beautiful painting of Varalakshmi Devi — a deity worshipped by Sumangalis (married women). When she showed it to Bhagavan He said, ‘Why not print it and distribute it to families?’ Rajam begged and borrowed money and had it printed. In the forties and fifties, in many puja rooms of orthodox families this picture was to be found."

Smt. Lalitha Venkataraman then took me to her puja room upstairs and showed me two lovely paintings by her elder sister — of Madurai Meenakshi and of saint Tyagaraja. Then I remembered a picture at Skandashram of Bhagavan seated on a peacock. Underneath the painting the signature ‘Rajam’ is there! *******

During one of our Sat sang meetings on the Hill, Sri Kunju Swami spoke of some incidents that took place when Bhagavan was living in Virupaksha Cave.

In South India there was then a sadhu who would crush and smear green chillis all over his body, several times a day. He was known as Milakai Siddhar (Chilli Swami). Chilli is such hot stuff that a finger touching it would burn. The Swami having green chilli paste all over his body was naturally famous. This sadhu’s chela came to Virupaksha Cave and saw Bhagavan alone. Palani Swami and Perumal Swami having gone down to town. He told Bhagavan that his master did this chilli bath so very often that he felt he must give such a bath to Bhagavan. Bhagavan would not say yes or no; He kept quiet. Taking Bhagavan’s silence for consent, he prepared the chilli paste and quickly smeared it on every inch of Bhagavan’s body. This is how Bhagavan described the experience: “What to do? He went on smearing the green chilli paste over my body. For the first few minutes my body felt severe burning sensation. But after a while the whole system felt very cool. I actually liked it! It was so pleasant. There was no after affect then or later!”
On another occasion, again when Palani Swami and Perumal Swami had gone to town and when Bhagavan was all alone, a few fierce-looking bairatis (wandering sadhus) came to Virupaksha Cave. Seeing Bhagavan seated alone they told Him, with vehemence: "We are coming straight from the Vindhya Hills. We had darshan of the great siddha there. He has commanded us to bring you over there. So, we are taking you along with us back to Vindhyas, as ordered by the great Siddha". Bhagavan, as usual, remained silent and unmoved. But the bairatis as was their wont, made much noise. Some of the woodcutters who witnessed this drama went and told Perumal Swami about the wild-looking bairatis. Perumal Swami came and saw them. He went back to the town brought a big vessel and tins of oil, put them in front of the ruffians and started gathering firewood. The bairatis and Bhagavan were astonished on the strange behaviour of Perumal Swami. The former did not know who Perumal Swami was. They enquired who he was and what he was doing. Perumal Swami put the big vessel on the oven and said: "I belong to the next village. I had a vision last night of the Great Siddha of Vindhyas. He commanded me: 'Go to Virupaksha Cave. You will find some bairatis there. They are Siddhas too. Having great powers. Pour boiling oil on them and they will be alive and untouched by the oil'. To my great surprise when I came to this Cave, as told by the Siddha, you were all here. What a fool I was to doubt the holy words of the Siddha. Immediately, I rushed to town and brought the vessel and the tins of oil. Would I not incur a curse if I disobey the Siddha?" When Perumal Swami went inside the cave to put his clothes there, the bairatis took to their heels! Bhagavan had a big laugh, and Perumal Swami joined Him.

There was one sadhu, called Bhagavathar Swami, who was living next to Jadai Swami when Bhagavan was at Virupaksha Cave. He was well known for his gimmicks; he had an attractive physique. He would quite often travel...
to north India. There he would impersonate Bhagavan, claim himself to be Ramana Maharshi and collect money. Once he was absent from Arunachala for a long time. Suddenly one day he appeared before Bhagavan, with a long beard and with very strange dresses. He looked very serious and told Bhagavan: "I am coming straight from the Himalayas. I had a dream in which the Lord appeared to me and commanded me: 'Go back at once to Arunachala. My child, Ramana, is there doing nothing. He is wasting his time. He should be taught some spiritual disciplines. To start with, initiate him into this mantra and gave me the mantra very secretly. Tomorrow I will come and initiate you. Have your bath and be ready". The next day, Bhagavathar Swami came with all pomp and with ingredients to commence the initiation ceremony. Bhagavan was seated alone. Bhagavathar Swami commenced the ceremonies. He then urged Bhagavan to come and receive the mantra initiation. Bhagavan was more amused than perturbed. He smiled and said: "You have been told by the Lord in your dream to give mantra initiation to me. Let the same Lord appear to me in my dream and bid me to take mantra initiation from you. And then we will see!" The Bhagavathar Swami felt ashamed; he did not expect such a reply from Bhagavan. Bhagavan remained unmoved, though had full of love and compassion for the ignorant Swami! Of course, nothing more took place.

Sri Kunju Swami narrated further: "This happened at Skandashram. There was a woodcutter, who would come at a particular time every day and stand in front of Skandashram. Bhagavan used to give him sugar-candy. But his coming every day was a nuisance, we felt. When we grumbled, Bhagavan pacified us: 'Poor fellow! He is parched with thirst. Early in the morning he climbs up the hill along with his animal. On the hill he doesn't have anything to eat or drink; even at Mulaipal Thirtham he would not be permitted to drink water. For his parched throat this sugar-candy gives relief. We have a stock of sugar-candy; we all have our food served here. Poor man, should we not help him to quench his thirst?' Bhagavan's words came from a choked throat! The woodcutter used to visit Bhagavan even after Bhagavan had come to the present Ashram and Bhagavan always received him with the same kindness, care and attention."

Sri Vailamur Srinivasa Iyer (introduced to our readers on p. 55 of our January '77 issue) is a silent visitor to the Ashram and many do not know how closely he had moved with Bhagavan. The following was gathered from him.

In those days there was a thick forest behind the Ashram and around the Hill, Arunachala. Woodcutters, returning from the forest would sometimes bring along with them cubs of animals or baby-birds found uncared for, and leave them at the feet of Bhagavan. Bhagavan would take proper care of them. Once the cubs of a tiger was left with Bhagavan!

A baby-deer was brought and left with Bhagavan. It was named 'Valli' and she always stayed with Bhagavan. Wherever He went she would also follow. She grew up and, though Bhagavan had told her not to stray away into the forest, one day she disappeared. After a
few days she came back to Bhagavan, but limping all the way; one of her limbs was so deeply hurt. Bhagavan attended to her wounded leg and henceforth started taking more particular care. Yet, she did not live long. Valli fell sick. It was her last day on earth. In the night, instead of reclining on His sofa, Bhagavan sat down and took the head of Valli on His thigh and went on patting her. Sri Srinivasa Iyer was by His side. From the office Chinna Swami, observing that Bhagavan had not gone to bed, in a loud voice said, “Srinivasa Iyer! You take charge of Valli and make Bhagavan go to bed”. After an hour, again, Chinna Swami voiced the same request; this was repeated again after an hour. What could poor Srinivasa lyer do when Bhagavan sat like a rock taking care of Valli? Some time after midnight Bhagavan got up and went to His couch. Valli had attained ‘mukthi’ at the hands of the Lord of Compassion!

Sri Srinivasa Iyer is in our midst to narrate this beautiful tale of liberation given by Bhagavan to an ‘animal’. Already we know about Cow Lakshmi, the crow, the peacock and the dog whom Bhagavan had liberated.

*B * * * * *

Bhagavan observed a small child going on eating sugar in the dining hall. He called the attendant and told him: “Give a few teaspoons of ghee to the child. Ghee is the antidote for eating too much sugar!”

In moments of uplifted consciousness, the ensuing meditations unfolded from within, reveal the gifts of the Spirit. These meditations follow no established or prescribed pattern, but each one is an expression of the spiritual impulse flowing into form. They are not to be followed slavishly nor are they to be used as a formula. Their only purpose is to serve as an inspiration, so that you may glimpse the beauty and joy of this experience and be encouraged to undertake the discipline required to discover the unplumbed depths of your own withinness and, in so doing, launch forth into deeper and ever deeper experiences of awareness.

— Joel Goldsmith

A man had two sons. The father sent them to a preceptor to learn the knowledge of Brahman. After a few years they returned from their preceptor’s house and bowed low before their father. Wanting to measure the depth of their knowledge of Brahman, he first questioned the older of the two boys. “My child,” he said, “you have studied all the scriptures. Now tell me, what is the nature of Brahman?”. The boy began to explain Brahman by reciting various texts from the Vedas. The father did not say anything. Then he asked the younger son the same question. But the boy remained silent and stood with eyes cast down. No word escaped his lips. The father was pleased and said to him: “My child, you have understood a little of Brahman. What It is cannot be expressed in words.”

— Sri Ramakrishna
WHEN I was in twenties, some one told me of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Then and there I left Kashmir and went to South India. From Madras I took another train for Tiruvannamalai. There I took a cart and reached the blessed Sri Ramanasramam.

As I entered the Hall I saw Bhagavan seated on a sofa with his legs stretched. I was thrilled with joy on having darshan of Bhagavan, who asked me to sit in front of himself. I sat and gazed on the Feet of Bhagavan and entered the blissful state of samadhi.

I felt those golden days were indeed divine.

I used to go on Arunachala Hill with Bhagavan. Bhagavan used to sit on a rock and I would be seated at his Feet.

One day I was overjoyed by the nearness of Bhagavan and composed these slokas to offer them to Bhagavan:

"There are four kinds of body: the gross (sthula), the subtle (sukshma), the causal (karma) and the void (sunya). For Sages (achalanam, lit. those who are motionless) as well (there are four kinds of body).

"Transcending these (four kinds of body) is the great Hill Arunachala, which is praised as the form of the all-knowing Supreme (lit. the form of the supreme Knower).

"We worship Sri Ramana, who blissfully abides in His own true nature (swarupa), which
is named Arunachala, the foremost among the foremost of Hills.”

When these slokas were placed before Bhagavan, He was so pleased that He explained them to the devotees who were seated in the Hall.

Some of His devotees took a camera to take a picture of Bhagavan on Arunachala Hill. At that time Bhagavan addressed me: “Lakshman Joo! Lakshman Joo! Sit here by my side. This man is going to take a picture of us.” I cannot express how Divine were those days of my stay at Sri Ramanasramam and how kind was Bhagavan to me!

I have received the copies of The Mountain Path and also the issue of April ’83 (p.105), in which I am seated at the Divine Feet of Bhagavan Ramana.

Eleanor Pauline Noye, who is seen in the picture of Bhagavan’s group, shed tears of joy when I was seated in front of Bhagavan. Those were golden days for me when I was near Bhagavan, my Divine Lord!

Yours as ever,
In the name of Bhagavan Ramana
Sd. Swami Lakshman Joo

Swami Lakshman Joo is now at Kashmir (at Ishwar Ashram, Gupt Ganga, Nishat, Srinagar — 191 Srinagar-191 121.) guiding spiritual aspirants.

Many are known to do great under stress of some strong emotion. But a man’s true nature is known from the manner in which he does his insignificant daily task.

— Holy Mother Sarada Devi

It is true one can rise to sudden heights in the moments of insight or Bhakti, but it is far from easy to stay on there, defying the earth’s downpull. It is only when one sets one’s teeth, determined to take orders from none but one’s highest insight, utterly disowning one’s self-will that one can successfully maintain one’s attitude and laugh at the downpull.

— Sri Krishnaprem

If you observe a thousand outward rules, and quote a thousand scriptural texts, still, if it has not brought the spirit of renunciation in you, know that your life is in vain. Be earnest over this realization and set your heart on it. Well, you have read enough of scriptures. But tell me, of what avail has it been? Some perhaps thinking of money have become millionaries, whereas you have become a Pandit by thinking of scriptures. But both are bondages. Attain the supreme knowledge and go beyond Vidya and Avidya, relative knowledge and ignorance.

— Swami Vivekananda
44. Why is Sadhana Difficult?

205. When we are lacking in earnestness or sraddha, whatever sadhana we may take to will appear to be equally difficult. But if our earnestness is firm and one-pointed, no sadhana will be felt to be difficult, and without any aid we will be able to remain firmly established in the state of Self-abidance.

206. Where there is a will, there is a way. That is, if a sincere liking to attain something arises in one’s heart, a path whereby one can attain it will also be found, and because of that liking one’s mind will unceasingly seek the goal until it is attained. Only when the liking to attain that goal does not truly arise in one’s heart, will one experience difficulty in the sadhana or means adopted to attain it. Know that this is the secret underlying all sadhanas.

207. To the extent to which one approaches and lives close to true devotees, to that extent will the liking arise in one’s heart to attain salvation, the real goal of human life. By having more and more association with such true devotees, that liking will gradually increase until finally one will attain salvation by abiding firmly in Self.

45. Pramada

208. Know that the world, soul and God have all seemingly come into existence only because of our pramada or slackness in Self-attention.

46. How to Make Thoughts Subside?

209. All thoughts or vrittis arise only because the unreal feeling ‘I am this body’ has become well soaked and firmly established in us. All these thoughts will be destroyed only if we vigilantly practise Self-enquiry and thereby root out the unreal feeling ‘I am this body’.

210. If we feel ‘I am this body’, thoughts either about the world or about God will immediately rise with great vigour and attachment. Having risen thus, those thoughts will multiply and increase in the form of likes and dislikes, and intense misery will then result.

211. During sleep, when one does not rise as an individual who feels ‘I am this fleshy body’, do any thoughts rise either about the world or about God? Therefore, know that the tendency to identify a body as ‘I’ alone is the cause for the appearance of the world and God.

212. The tendency to identify this gross body as ‘I’ (in the waking state) alone is the root which paves the path for ignorance to subsist as the subtle body (in dream) and to hide as the causal body (in sleep). Therefore, if we abide as Self, having repeatedly practised Self-attention and having thereby put an end to this root-tendency to identify the gross

1 Continued from our last issue, pp. 30-35.

2 Compare verse 2 of Atma-Vidya Kirtanam, in which Sri Bhagavan says, “The thought ‘This fleshy body alone is I’ is indeed the one thread on which the various thoughts are strung. Therefore, if one goes within (by keenly scrutinizing) ‘Who am I and what is the place (from which I rise)?’ the thoughts will perish and Self-knowledge will spontaneously shine forth within the cave (of the Heart) as ‘I-1’.”
body as 'I', the tendency to identify with the other two bodies will also be destroyed automatically.

213. So long as any one of the three bodies is identified as 'I', it will be impossible to put an end to all the tendencies or vasanas, which are the seed-forms of thoughts. Know that in order to put an end to all tendencies, any kind of effort other than the elevated sadhana of turning and attending to Self will be of no avail.

214. Among a collection of many kinds of small seeds, it is impossible to detect and remove the thorn-seeds. Only after all the seeds have sprouted in the form of plants, is it possible to detect the thorn-plants and thereby to pluck them out and throw them away. Similarly, only if all the tendencies or vasanas which are hiding in the heart sprout out in the form of thoughts during the time of your meditation, will it be possible to destroy them by the practice of Self-enquiry. Hence the rising of thoughts during the time of meditation is good.

215. The vasanas are the seeds, and the thoughts which rise are the plants. The Grace of God or Guru is the water which makes the vasanas sprout in the form of thoughts. Then in order to destroy those thoughts, which exist in the form of desires, that same Grace crushes them by the power of the clear discrimination which it bestows upon us. Therefore, until

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3 Compare Vichara Sangraham, chapter one, where Sri Bhagavan says, "All the three bodies in the form of the five sheaths are contained in the feeling 'I am this body'. If that (the feeling 'I am this body') alone is removed, all (the three bodies) will be moved automatically. Since all the other bodies (the subtle and casual bodies) subsist only by clinging to this (the feeling 'I am this gross body'), it is not necessary to remove each (of the three bodies) individually." See also lines 27 to 30 of Sri Ramana Vachana Saram on p. 230 of The Mountain Path, October 1984.

4 Compare Maharshi’s Gospel, p. 19, where Sri Bhagavan says, “Yes, all kinds of thoughts arise in meditation. That is only right; for what lies hidden in you is brought out. Unless it rises up, how can it be destroyed?”
you achieve victory in this war of Grace, do not become disheartened and give up your meditation.

216. All the thoughts which we have cultivated due to our worldly desires in many former lives when we did not possess proper discrimination, have been accumulated in our heart in the form of very powerful vasanas. Those vasanas exist in the form of likes and dislikes, and they will be destroyed only to the extent to which we firmly abide in Self.

49. Self-Enquiry and the Passing States

226. Being worried on seeing that sleep is brought about during the practice of Self-enquiry, do not give up Self-enquiry. This sleep is one among the experiences which will arise during the initial stages of Self-enquiry. Have no doubt about this.

227. If sleep comes, sleep well. After sleeping thus, as soon as you wake up, fix your attention with earnest love upon the Self-consciousness 'I am'. When the mind again subsides in that sleep-like state, and when waking returns once again, try gradually to experience the one existence-consciousness which shines in between these two states.

228. When you practise abiding more and more in the experience of this existence-consciousness, which shines between sleep and waking, the sleep which formerly appeared to overcome you will be dispersed, and the waking state in which you identify with the body and cognize external objects will not arise and engulf you again. Therefore, abide in this existence-consciousness repeatedly and untiringly.

5 Compare Nan Yar? (Who am I?), paragraph 10, where Sri Bhagavan says, "Although tendencies towards sense-objects (vishaya-vasanas), which have been coming from the ancient past, rise without limit like the waves of the ocean, they will all be destroyed when Self-attention (swarupa-dhyana) becomes more and more intense"
229. Since there is the consciousness ‘I am’, this state is not sleep. Since there is a complete absence of thoughts, this state is not waking. It is the state of existence-consciousness or sat-chit, which is the undivided nature of God or akhanda-siva-swarupa. Therefore, unceasingly abide in this state with great love.

230. Why is it said ‘Abide in this existence-consciousness repeatedly’ and ‘Abide in this state with great love’? Because until all the vasanas which drive us out of this state have ceased to exist, this state will seem to come and go. Just as the moving of clouds creates the illusion that the moon itself is moving in the opposite direction, the coming and going of the vasanas creates the illusion that our natural state of existence-consciousness is often coming and going of its own accord.

231. When by this practice of abiding in the state of existence-consciousness, that existence-consciousness is always experienced to be effortless and inescapably natural, then no harm will result even if sleep, dream and waking appear to come and go.

232. For those who firmly abide in the unending state of Self-consciousness, which pervades and transcends the three states of waking, dream and sleep, that state of existence-consciousness is the only real state. It is the unlimited Whole or pura. That state, in which even the feeling ‘I am making effort to abide’ does not at all rise, alone is your natural state of being. Be thus.

51. Eleven Verses on Self-Enquiry

239. Thinking is a vritti; being is not a vritti. If we scrutinize ‘Who is thinking?’ the thinking process will stop. Even when thoughts do not exist, do you have any doubt about your own existence as ‘I am’? Abiding in your own existence, which shines as ‘I am’, the source from which all thoughts rise, is the state of Self-abidance. Abide thus.

240. He who thinks is the soul or jiva. He who exists as ‘I am’ without any thought is God. If the thinker thinks with great love of that which merely exists as ‘I am’, this Selfward-turned thought will become the thought-free consciousness which will destroy all thoughts. When the thinker thus dies along with his thoughts, the state of abidance which then remains shining as ‘I am’ is the state of union with God or Siva-sayujya.

241. He who thinks ‘I am so-and-so’ is just a thought like all the other thoughts. But of all thoughts, this thought ‘I am so-and-so’ alone is the first. The soul who thinks ‘I am so-and-so’ is merely a reflection of our real Self. When we abide and shine only as that real Self, the thought ‘I am so-and-so’ will not rise.

242. In dreamless sleep, this thought ‘I am so-and-so’ does not at all exist. In the true state of Self-knowledge, this thought ‘I am so-and-so’ does not at all exist. But in the state of waking and dream, which rise in between the darkness of sleep and the pure light of Self-knowledge, the thought ‘I am this body’ seems to appear and disappear. Therefore this limited ‘I’ is not real; this ‘I’ is only a thought.

243. The flourishing of this ‘I’ is only the flourishing of misery. This ‘I’ is that which is called the ego. This ego — ‘I’ rises and flourishes only because of avichara or non-enquiry. If we enquire ‘Who is this I?’ and thereby vigilantly scrutinize only the feeling ‘I’ without attending to the adjunct ‘so-and-so’ with which it is mixed, this adjunct will disappear, since it is devoid of any real existence.

244. The second and third persons, the known objects, subsist only because of the first person, the knowing subject, who is the root. If the mind, which is ever wavering because of attending to second and third per-
sons, turns and attends to the first person, who rises as ‘I am so-and-so’, the adjunct ‘so-and-so’ will cease to exist and the real Self, which always exists as ‘I am’, will shine forth spontaneously. That real Self, which is the indestructible base of the first person, alone is true knowledge or Jnana.

245. Thinking about second and third persons is foolishness, because when we attend to second and third persons the mental activities or mano-vrittis rise up and are set ablaze. But the act of attending to the first person is equal to committing suicide, because only by scrutinizing the first person will the ego die of its own accord.

246. Attending to any second or third person instead of turning and attending to this ‘I’ the first person feeling which is always experienced by everyone, is only ignorance or ajnana. If you ask, ‘The ego, the feeling ‘I am so-and-so’, is only a product of ignorance, so attending to the ego is also ignorance, is it not? Why then should we attend to this ‘I’?’ listen to what is said below.

247. Why is the ego destroyed when we scrutinize ‘What am I?’ Because this ‘I’ — thought or aham-vritti is a reflected ray of Self-consciousness, and hence, unlike other thoughts, which are devoid of consciousness, it is always directly connected with its source. Therefore, when our attention dives deeper and deeper within by following this reflected ray ‘I’, the length of this reflected ray ‘I’ will diminish until finally it has shrunk to nothing. When the ego, the feeling ‘I am so-and-so’, thus disappears, the consciousness which will remain shining as ‘I am I’ is the true knowledge of Self.

248. Do not do anything thinking, ‘It should be done only by me’. Nothing is done by you, because you are simply nothing. Knowing this truth from the beginning, if you refrain entirely from rising as ‘I am the doer’, all actions will happen of their own accord, and your peace will ever remain undisturbed.

249. If we scrutinize ‘What is the reality which ever exists?’ we will find that nothing in this world is real. Since Self alone is real, let us mentally renounce everything else and ever abide unshakably as that reality, which will remain shining alone as ‘I am’. This alone is the service enjoined upon us by Lord Ramana, who ever abides as the eternal Self.

58. The Dawn of Self-Knowledge

324. Death happens in a split second. Awakening from sleep happens in a split second. Similarly, the destruction of the delusion of individuality happens in just a split second. True knowledge is not something which can be gained and then lost. If a person feels that true knowledge is coming and going, he is still only in the stage of practice or abhyasa. It cannot be said that such a person has attained true Self-knowledge. The perfect awakening into the state of Self-knowledge happens in just a split second. That state is not attained gradually over a long period of time. All the sadhanas which are practised over a period of many years are meant only for attaining maturity. Listen to an apt illustration. After people have placed gunpowder in the iron barrel of a temple-cannon, after they have added broken pieces of brick, after they have packed it tight with a ramrod, after they have placed a wick in contact with the powder, and after they have plastered the open end of the barrel with clay, as soon as the charge is ignited it will explode in a split second with a blast which sounds like thunder; similarly, after one has

7 Abiding in this state, having attained the supreme bliss which is devoid of bondage and liberation, is abiding in the service of God”, says Sri Bhagavan in verse 29 of Upadesa Undiyar.
8 Refer to Sri Ramana Cita 17.5.
9 Refer to Sri Ramana Cita 17.3.
learnt the truth about the real Self through hearing and reading, after one has practised sadhana for a long time, after one has wept and prayed with heart-melting devotion, and after one has thereby attained purity of mind, the knowledge of the reality will instantaneously shine forth in a split second as 'I am I'. As soon as the dawn of Self-knowledge thus takes place, due to the clear shining of the reality this state, which is an empty space devoid of objective knowledge, will be spontaneously realized to be the state of true knowledge, which is our beginningless real nature. When even the effort of attending to Self thereby merges in Silence, that state of mere being, in which there is nothing further to do and nothing further to attain at any time, alone is the real state.

(Concluded)
Zodiac and the Cardinal Points

By Rene Guenon

A book about castes, Mr. A.M. Hocart points out the fact that "in the organization of the city, the four groups are situated at the various cardinal points, inside the quadrangular or circular surrounding-wall". Moreover, this distribution is not particular to India, but a number of such examples can be found among the most varied peoples. Most often, each cardinal point is connected with one of the elements and one of the seasons, as well as with a colour emblematical of the caste situated at this point. In India, Brahmins occupied the North, Kshatriyas the East, Vaishyas the South and Shudras the West. Thus, there was a division into "districts" in the proper sense of this word, which of course originally designated one-fourth of a city. Thus, in the modern usage this precise significance seems to have been forgotten more or less completely. It goes without saying that this distribution is in close connection with the more general question of orientation. As we know, this question played an important role for the whole city as well as for each building in particular in all ancient traditional civilizations.

However, Mr. Hocart is embarrassed to explain the peculiar situation of each of the four castes. After all, this embarrassment results solely from a mistake he makes in considering the royal caste — i.e., that of the Kshatryas — as the first. Thus, starting from the East, he cannot find any regular order of succession, and especially the situation of the Brahmins at the North becomes totally unintelligible. On the contrary, there is no difficulty if one respects the normal order, i.e., if one starts with the caste which is really the first — the Brahmin caste. We must then start from the North, and while going round in the direction of pradakshina, we find the four castes following each other in a perfectly regular order. So, all that remains is to understand in a more complete way the symbolic reasons for this distribution in accordance with the cardinal points.

These reasons are based essentially on the fact that the traditional map of the city is an image of the Zodiac. Here, one immediately finds again the connection of cardinal points with seasons. As a matter of fact, as we explained it elsewhere, the winter solstice corresponds to the north, the spring equinox to the east, the summer solstice to the south and the autumn equinox to the west. According to the division into "districts", each one of these will have to be connected with a group formed by three of the twelve zodiacal signs: i.e., one of the solstitial or equinoctial signs — which can be called "cardinal" signs — and its two adjacent signs. Thus, there will be three signs included in each "quadrant" if the shape of the surrounding-wall is circular, or three each side if it is quadrangular. Moreover, the latter shape is more particularly appropriate to a town, as it expresses an idea of stability suitable to a fixed and permanent settlement, and also because what is in question is not the celestial Zodiac itself, but merely an image, a kind of earthly projection of it. Incidentally, we may add in this connection that ancient astrologers used to draw their horoscopes in a square shape, in which each side was also occupied by three zodiacal signs. Moreover, we shall find this disposition again in the following considerations.
From what has been said till now, it can be seen that the distribution of castes in the city follows exactly the course of the annual cycle, which normally starts on the winter solstice. It is true that certain traditions start the year from another solstitial or equinoctial point, but then the traditional forms in question have a more particular connection with certain secondary cyclic periods. No such question arises about the Hindu tradition which represents the most direct continuation of the primordial tradition; what is more, it insists particularly on the division of the annual cycle into its two ascending and descending halves, which open respectively on the two solstitial “gates” in winter and in summer. This is, as a matter of fact, the point of view that can be properly called fundamental in this respect. On another hand, considered as the highest point (uttara) and also indicating the starting-point of the tradition, the north naturally suits the Brahmans. Kshatriyas are placed at the point which follows in the cyclic correspondence, i.e., the east — the side of the rising sun. On comparing these two positions, one could legitimately infer that, whereas the nature of priesthood is “polar”, the nature of royalty is “solar” — a fact that would be confirmed by many other symbolic considerations. Perhaps even this “solar” nature is not without connection with the fact that the Avataras of “historical” times were born of the Kshatriya caste. Thirdly, Vaishyas take place at the south, and with them ends the succession of the “twice born” castes. The Shudras thus are left with only the west, which is considered everywhere as the side of obscurity.

All this is thus perfectly logical on the sole condition that there is no mistake about the suitable starting-point. In order to justify more completely the “zodiacal” feature of the traditional map of cities, we shall now quote a few facts which show that, if the division of these cities corresponded principally to the quaternary division of the cycle, in some cases a duodenary subdivision was clearly indicated. We have one such example in the foundation of the cities according to the rite that the Romans had received from the Etruscans: the orientation was underlined by two perpendicular streets — the cardo going from south to north, and the decumanus going from west to east. At the ends of these two streets were the gates of the town, which were thus situated exactly at the four cardinal points. The town was thus divided into four districts, which, however in this case did not correspond precisely to the cardinal points as in India, but rather to the intermediate points. It goes without saying that the difference between the traditional forms, which requires various adaptations, has to be taken into account, but the principle of the division is no less the same. Besides, — and this is the point important to underline at present — a division into “tribes” was superimposed upon this division into districts, i.e., according to the etymological meaning of this word (tribe), it was a ternary division. Each one of these three “tribes” involved four “curiae”, distributed in the four districts, so that finally there was a duodenary division.

Another example is that of the Hebrews, quoted by Mr. Hocart himself, although he does not seem to notice the importance of the duodenary: “Hebrews,” he says, knew a social division into four districts; their twelve territorial tribes were distributed into four groups of three tribes each, of which one was the principal tribe: Juda camped at the east, Ruben at the south, Ephraim at the west and Dan at the north. The Levites used to form an interior circle around the Tabernacle and were in turn divided into four groups placed at the four cardinal points, the principal branch being at the east.” To be exact, the question here is not the organization of a city, but first of all the organisation of a camp and later on, the distribution of the territory of a whole country. But of course it makes no difference from the point of view from which we consider it here. To establish an exact comparison with what exists elsewhere, the difficulty lies in that it

4 Les Castes, p. 127.
5 Nombres, ch. II and III.
does not seem that definite social functions had ever been attributed to each tribe; this does not permit to assimilate them to castes in the proper sense. However, at least on one point, a very clear similarity can be noticed with the distribution adopted in India, for, the royal tribe — the tribe of Juda — was to be found also placed at the east. On another hand, there is also a remarkable difference: the sacerdotal tribe — the tribe of Levi — which was not counted among the twelve, had no place on the sides of the quadrilateral, and therefore no land was to be allotted to it as its own. Its situation inside the camp can be explained by the fact that it was explicitly attached to the service of a single sanctuary, which was primitively the Tabernacle, the normal position of which was at the centre. Anyhow, what is important to us at present is the acknowledgement of the twelve tribes being distributed three on each of the four sides of a quadrilateral — sides which are situated as respectively facing the four cardinal points. It is generally known that there was in fact a symbolic correspondence between the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve signs of the Zodiac, which leaves no doubt about the character and significance of the concerned distribution. We shall only add that the principal tribe on each side obviously corresponds to one of the four "cardinal" points, the other two tribes corresponding to the two adjacent signs.

Now, if one refers to the apocalyptical description of the "celestial Jerusalem", it is easy to see that its map reproduces exactly that of the Hebrews' camp we have just spoken of. At the same time, this map is also identical to the horoscopic figure we mentioned above. The town, as a matter of fact, built in a square shape, has twelve gates on which the names of the twelve tribes of Israel are written. These gates are distributed in the same way on the four sides: "three gates at the east, three at the north, three at the south, and three at the west." Obviously, these twelve gates again correspond to the twelve zodiacal signs, the four principal gates i.e., those at the middle of the sides of the square — corresponding to the solsticial or equinoctial signs. The twelve aspects of the Sun related to each sign — i.e. the twelve Adityas of the Hindu tradition — appear under the form of the twelve fruits of the "Tree of Life" which, being placed at the centre of the town "gives its fruit each month", i.e., precisely in accordance with the successive positions of the Sun in the Zodiac in the course of the annual cycle. Lastly, this town "descending from heaven upon the earth" represents rather clearly — at least in one of its significances — the projection of the celestial "archetype" in the constitution of the earthly city; and we think that all that we have just exposed shows sufficiently that this "archetype" is essentially symbolized by the Zodiac.
OW, MURDOCH Kirby, I would like to ask you a question. You have written over a period of some years, in this periodical — which is Hindu — about the Gnostics, the Christians and the ancient Chinese. I would like to know where you stand, what do you really believe?

I have been seeking for a long time and the ideas and sayings from several different beliefs have attracted me. I don’t know if I can say briefly what I believe; and in any case it would be only what I believe now. This is how I put it a few months ago.

There are many different ways we may follow in trying to live a good life. It is not necessary that everyone should be a Hindu or a Christian, a Moslem or a follower of Zen: it is not essential that all Christians should believe in the Virgin Birth, in the Infallibility of the Pope or even in the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of God. We will not be asked about that when our Day of Judgement comes. What will happen then will be that we will be shown back through our life, and we will realise all the times we have hurt and harmed other people; we will see all our own selfishness and pig-headedness, and how often we have failed to be considerate and kind, understanding and loving; and how seldom we have done what we could have done. We will see what kind of people we have been: it is not our beliefs that will be judged, but how we have lived.

Does that mean that it does not matter what we believe?

No, it does not mean that. As human beings it is part of our nature to protect and look after ourselves: we are naturally selfish. If we are to control that selfishness and allow the spirit — which is also part of our nature — to shine through, we need, most of us, a reason for changing our behaviour. All over the world different explanations have developed so that we all follow different paths. Some paths we might think are better than others, but I have the idea that the best one for us is the one we imbibed as children, the one that has become part of us, the one which we fall back upon when overcome by fate.

I would like to finish with a quotation, not in my own words. It is from the introduction to the first translation in 1611 of the English authorized version of the Bible.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God, but a blessed thing it is, and will bring us to everlasting blessedness in the end, when God speaketh unto us to hearken; when he setteth his word before us to read it; when he stretcheth forth his hand and calleth to answer Here am I, here we are to do thy will. O God."

How much interior patience and humility a servant of God may have cannot be known so long as he is contented. But when the time comes that those who ought to please him go against him, as much patience and humility as he then shows, so much has he and no more.

— St. Francis
Dear friend in Bhagavan!

THANK YOU for your letter and books. It is a pity that it took more than 3 months to arrive. The same is with Mountain Path issues.

I was very surprised that you have asked me to bless you, but as you put it 'a strong urge' of yours was a true one. I usually do not speak about my spiritual attainment but since you have glimpsed something I will make an exception not to boast myself but to share my experience for the welfare of both of us.

I have started my sadhana in my 14 years, 1945. I became aware of the pure I am as my real I within. Later on I became conscious of pure Void outside my body which in the course of time became complete plentitude. My consciousness transcended my body and the world is realized in it. I am is not in the world or in the body but the world and the body are in it. Simultaneously the I am penetrates all forms from within them and I can feel it in all creatures and objects. Now the sense of differentiating is also vanishing. I see forms quite normally, there is diversity on their level but this is diversity in unity. The world of opposites is not in contradiction to unity, it does not destroy it.

I am fully occupied. I have a wife and daughter. This is one of the reasons why I often don't remember my true nature but whenever I remember I can enter it. The realisation of bliss is not complete. Very often I suffer with my body even if I am not it. This is a very crucial point of my realization. I have asked Sadhu Om for advice, but he did not answer.

Since you have asked me I will whenever I shall remember you be conscious in you of the all-pervading I AM and so light the light of consciousness in you. This will help you to become aware of it by yourself. The common concentration would be of course far more better. Perhaps it is Sri Bhagavan that prompted all this because the meditator in body has certain possibilities which disembodied Master has not.

You can also think of me but not as a body but remembering the I am in me. In fact when I seek myself I see that there is no 'Vacek', also often feel the presence of Sri Ramana within me in His form. The experience is quite distinct at that time He is in me.

I think that my case can be great encouragement to all earnest aspirants which strive hard and also it proves effectiveness of the Path of Self-enquiry and its openness to all. Everybody who march it can be sure with inner help of Sri Ramana because I have achieved good results in extremely difficult conditions eg. whole day occupation, family life, no satvic food and in environment which is averse to all spirituality.

I wish you great success in your Sadhana.

Yours in Bhagavan,
Ing. Jiri Vacek
Americka 9
120 00 Praha 2
CZECHOSLOVKIA - Europe.

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Man must behave as a hero. During spells of misfortune he must abide in fortitude and patience. Time never stands still.

— Sri Anandamayi Ma
2. To the Abbess of Shinroyo-ji

IN ORDER to become a Buddha you must discover who it is that wants to become a Buddha. To know this Subject you must right here and now probe deeply into yourself, inquiring: “What is it that thinks in terms of good and bad, that sees, that hears?” If you question yourself profoundly in this wise, you will surely enlighten yourself. If you enlighten yourself, you are instantly a Buddha. The Mind which the Buddhas realized in their enlightenment is the Mind of all sentient beings. The substance of this Mind is pure, harmonizing with its surroundings. In a woman’s body it has no female form, in a man’s body it has no apperance of male. It is not mean even in the body of the lowly, nor is it imposing in the body of the noble. Like boundless space, it hasn’t a particle of color. The physical world can be destroyed, but formless, colorless space is indestructible. This Mind, like space, is all-embracing. It does not come into existence with the creation of our body, nor does it perish with its disintegration. Though invisible, it suffuses our body, and every single act of seeing, hearing, smelling, speaking, or moving the hands and legs is simply the activity of this Mind. Whoever searches for Buddha and Truth outside this Mind is deluded; Whoever directly perceives that his intrinsic nature is precisely that of a Buddha is himself a Buddha . . . Every epithet of a Buddha or a Bodhisattva is simply a different designation for the One-mind. If one believes in his own Buddha mind, it is the same as believing in all Buddhas. Thus in a sutra we read: “The Three Worlds are but One-mind; Outside this Mind nothing exists. Mind, Buddha and sentient beings are One, they are not to be differentiated.”

. . . The Mind-essence is intrinsically bright and un-blemished, in it there is no distinction of Buddha and sentient beings. But its clarity is hidden by delusive thoughts just as the light of the sun or the moon is obscured by clouds. Yet such thoughts can be dispelled by the power of zazen, in the same way that clouds can be dissipated by a blast of wind. Once they vanish, the Buddha-nature reveals itself, just as the moon makes its appearance when clouds disappear. This light has ever been present; it is not newly obtained outside oneself . . .

Do not try to prevent thoughts from arising and do not cling to any that have arisen. Let them appear and disappear as they will, don’t struggle with them. You need only unremittingly and with all your heart ask yourself, “What is my own Mind?” . . . When you persistently try to understand what is beyond the domain of intellect, you are bound to reach a dead end, completely baffled. But push on. Sitting or standing, working or sleeping, probe tirelessly to your deepest self with the question “What is my own Mind?” . . . When the intense questioning envelops every inch of you and penetrates to the very bottom of all bottoms, the question will suddenly burst and the substance of the Buddha-mind be revealed, just as a mirror (concealed) in a box can reflect (its surroundings) only after the box is broken apart. The radiance of this Mind will light up every corner of a universe free of even a single blemish. You will be liberated at last from all entanglements within the Six Realms. all effects of evil actions having vanished. The joy of this moment cannot be put into words . . .

1 from Ch. IV: ‘Bassui’s Dharma Talk on one Mind and letters to his disciples’. pp. 163-195
3. To Lord Nakamura, 
Governor of Aki Province

You asked me how to practice Zen with reference to this phrase from a sutra: "Arouse the Mind without its abiding anywhere"... If you but look into your Self-nature directly, not allowing yourself to be deflected, the Mind flower will come into bloom. Therefore the sutra says: "Arouse the Mind without its abiding anywhere."... Mind is the True-nature of things, transcending all forms. The True-nature is the Way. The Way is Buddha. Buddha is Mind. Mind is not within or without or in between. It is not being or nothingness or non-being or non-nothingness or Buddha or mind or matter. So it is called the abodeless Mind. This mind sees colors with the eyes, hears sounds with the ears. Look for this master directly!

A Zen master... of old says: "One's body, composed of the four primal elements, can't hear or understand this preaching. The spleen or stomach or liver or gall bladder can't hear or understand this preaching. Empty space can't understand it. Then what does hear and understand?" Strive to perceive directly. If your mind remains attached to any form or feeling whatsoever, or is affected by logical reasoning of conceptual thinking, you are as far from true realization as heaven is from earth...

The layman Ho asked Baso: "What is it that transcends everything in the Universe?" Baso answered: "I will tell you after you have drunk up the waters of the West River in one gulp." Ho instantly became enlightened. See here, what does this mean? Does it explain the phrase "Arouse the Mind without it abiding anywhere," or does it point to the very one reading this? If you still don't comprehend, go back to questioning, "What is hearing now?" Find out this very moment!...

Your own Mind is intrinsically Buddha. Buddhas are those who have realized this. Those who haven't are so-called ordinary sentient beings. Sleeping and working, standing and sitting, ask yourself, "What is my own Mind?" looking into the source from which your thoughts arise. What is the subject that right now perceives, thinks, moves, works, goes forth, or returns? To know it you must intensely absorb yourself in the question...

... Think in terms of neither good nor evil. Don't try to stop thoughts from arising, only ask yourself: "What is my own Mind?" Now even though your questioning goes deep, you will get no answer, and eventually you will reach a cul-de-sac, your thinking totally checked. You won't find anything within that can be called "I" or "Mind". But who is it that understands all this? Continue to probe more deeply yet and the mind that perceives there is nothing will vanish; you will no longer be aware of questioning but only of emptiness. When awareness of emptiness disappears, you will realise there is no Buddha. Now for the first time you will discover that when you do not hear with your ears you are truly hearing, and when you do not see with your eyes you are truly seeing...

4. To a Dying Man

Your Mind-essence is not subject to birth or death. It is neither being nor nothingness, neither emptiness nor form-and-color. Nor is it something that feels pain or joy. However much you try to know (with your rational mind) that which is now sick, you cannot. Yet if you think of nothing, wish for nothing, want to understand nothing, cling to nothing, and only ask yourself, "What is the true substance of the Mind and of this one who is now suffering?" ending your days like clouds fading in the sky, you will eventually be freed from your painful bondage to endless change.

5. To the Cayman Ippo

... A sutra says: "Mind, Buddha, and sentient beings, these are not to be discriminated from one another." Accordingly, a man who does not believe in the reality of his own
Mind but says he believes in Buddha is like one who puts trust in a symbol while spurning the real thing . . .

. . . Renounce . . . all . . . reflections and see the master directly. What is the master who at this very moment is seeing and hearing? If you reply (with your discursive intellect) . . . you fall into error at once . . . . However much you try to know it through logical reasoning or to name or call it, you are doomed to failure. And even though all of you becomes one mass of questioning as you turn inward and intently search the very core of your being, you will find nothing that can be termed Mind or Essence. Yet should something call your name, something from within will hear and respond. Find out this instant who it is!

If you push forward with your last ounce of strength at the very point where the path of your thinking has been blocked, and then, completely stymied, leap with hands high in the air into the tremendous abyss of fire confronting you — into the ever-burning flame of your own primordial nature — all ego-consciousness, all delusive feelings and thoughts and perceptions will perish with your ego-root and the true source of your Self-nature will appear. You will fell resurrected . . . and . . . experience genuine peace and joy. You will be entirely free. For the first time you will realize that . . . all day long there is speaking, yet no word is ever spoken; that throughout the day there is walking, yet no step is ever taken; that while the clouds are rising over the southern mountains their rain is falling over the northern range; . . . That sitting alone in a ten-foot-square room you meet all the Buddhas of the ten quarters; that without seeing a word you read the more than seven thousand volumes of the sutras; that though you acquire all the merits and virtues of good actions, yet in fact there are none . . .

8. First Letter to the Zen Priest Iguchi

I have read your presentation at length, but it misses the point of the koan. (Two monks were watching a flag blowing in the wind.
One said, “The flag is moving.” The other said, “No, the wind is moving.”) The Sixth Patriarch (coming by) said: “The flag doesn’t move, the wind doesn’t move, only your mind moves.” To realize this clearly is to perceive that the universe and yourself are of the same root, that you and every single thing are a unity. The gurgle of the stream and the sigh of the wind are the voices of the master. The green of the pine, the white of snow, these are the colours of the master, the very one who lifts the hands, moves the legs, sees, hears. One who grasps this directly without recourse to reason or intellection can be said to have some degree of inner realization. But this is not yet full enlightenment . . .

... Destroy all ideas, whether of realization, of Buddhas, or of devils, and all day long pursue the question “What is it that hears this preaching?” When you have eradicated every conception until only emptiness remains, and then cut through even the emptiness, your mind will burst open and that which hears will manifest itself . . .

9. Second Letter to the Zen Priest Iguchi

... In your search for the master that hears and speaks, though thousands of thoughts arise don’t entertain them but only ask, “What is it?” Every thought and all self-awareness will then disappear, followed by a state not unlike a cloudless sky. Now, Mind itself has no form. What is it, then, that hears and works and moves about? Delve into yourself deeper and deeper until you are no longer aware of a single object. Then beyond a shadow of a doubt you will perceive your True-nature, like a man awakening from a dream . . . All of Buddhism, all worldly concerns, all notions of good and evil, will have disappeared, like last night’s dream, and your fundamental Buddha-nature will manifest itself . . .

11. Fourth Letter to the Zen Priest Iguchi

... (Perform self-inquiry) exhaustively . . . and you will surely attain deep enlightenment, cutting away the undermost roots of birth-and-death and coming to the realm of the non-self-conscious Mind. The undermost roots of birth-and-death are the delusive thoughts and feelings arising from the self-conscious mind, the mind of ego. A Zen master . . . once said: “There is nothing in particular to realize. Only get rid of (the idea of a) Buddha and sentient beings.” The essential thing for enlightenment is to empty the mind of the notion of (the individual) self . . .

12. To a Nun

... You must not become attached to anything you realize, you must only search for the subject that realizes. Thus like something burnt to a crisp or slashed to bits, your pre-conceived notions (i.e., vasanas) will all be annihilated. You will perceive the master only after you have probed “What is it?” with your last ounce of strength and every thought of good and evil has vanished. Not until then will you feel like one who has actually been resurrected . . .

The way to be rid of this delusion of the mind is to fix your attention upon the present moment, and not to employ your thoughts on past or future events. The mind is clouded so long as the mist of its desire and fancies over-shadows it the sky is overcast so long as drifting clouds spread over it.

Yoga Vasistha
Rani Padmavati Devi of Khairagarh

Smt. Padmavati Devi, Maharani of Khairagarh, had all a human being could aspire in life. Born into a royal family, she married Raja Bahadur Birendra Singh of Khairagarh, at the age of 17. Living a princely life they raised four children; yet the search for true inner peace led her to Sri Bhagavan’s Presence in June 1946.

Her first meeting with Sri Bhagavan had an electrifying effect on her. The then Sarvadhi-kari, Sri Niranjanananda Swami, was most kind and helpful and made all arrangements for her comfortable stay at the Morvi Guest House. Thereafter she had numerous occasions to remain in Bhagavan’s Presence in the Old Hall. On Mrs. Taleyarkhan’s advice the Maharani’s meditation took the form of concentrating into the eyes of Bhagavan. This had a tremendous effect. During the forty-five minutes of her meditation, she forgot her worldly worries and then the entire outer world, having a clear darshan of her ishta-devata, Lord Shiva, in Bhagavan’s right eye. Thus she felt convinced that Bhagavan was Lord Shiva Himself and that her life’s ambition of serving Shiva would be achieved by staying at the Holy feet of Bhagavan.

She had a strong inclination to renounce family ties and spend the rest of her life serving Bhagavan, yet she could not achieve it. She did her first giripradakshina of the Holy Arunachala, under Bhagavan’s guidance. She was an eye-witness to one of the operations on Bhagavan’s forearm. She was wonderstruck to watch Bhagavan undergo the operation without anaesthesia. During the entire operation, which lasted a considerable time, she observed that Bhagavan was always smiling and He did not feel the pangs of surgery!
As to all of those who had surrendered their lives to the Master, the Mahanirvana of Bhagavan came as a rude shock to the Maharani. Constant remembrance of Him, keeping His pictures wherever she went and offering Him daily puja did give her consolation. Since then she has been attending the Deepam and Jayanthi celebrations at Sri Ramanasramam almost regularly.

She continues to experience the Presence of Bhagavan at the Ashram, which she has been serving all along. She affirms that even now whenever she anticipated trouble and she prayed to Bhagavan, He always answered her prayers. She says: “Is He not the Remover of all obstacles!”

We wish this princely, pious lady the richness of peace of mind, leading her to the bliss of His Ever Presence.

Let not your mind be outgoing; turn in inward; control it just a little and watch for the Self, always remembering that the investigator is himself the essence of being and the Self of Self.

— Tripura Rahasya

Practice and perseverance lead to success. Whatever good one obtains is the fruit of the tree of long-continued practice. This ignorance is the result of the wrong thinking of many incarnations and so it appears strong, but when you work patiently for Self-realization, then ignorance will end.

— Yoga Vasistha

Just as fire is automatically extinguished if not fed with fuel, so does the mind become extinct if not fed with thoughts.

— Devikalottara

Look within, ever seeking the Self with the inner eye, then will (It) be found. Thus didst Thou direct me, beloved Arunachala!

— The Marital Garland of Letters

As long as there are impressions of objects in the mind, so long the inquiry “Who am I?” is required. As thoughts arise they should be destroyed then and there in the very place of their origin, through inquiry. If one resorted to contemplation of the Self uninterruptedly, until the Self was gained, that alone would do. As long as there are enemies within the fortress, they will continue to sally forth; if they are destroyed as they emerge, the fortress will fall into our hands.

— Sri Bhagavan
Unfolding of Grace —  
(To the Managing Editor)

I have completed Sri K.K. Nambiar’s book, The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana, and found it quite inspiring. For those of us who have never had the privilege of basking in Bhagavan’s physical presence, the reminiscences of a devotee who was so blessed are indeed precious. Your series of articles in the “The Mountain Path” “Moments Remembered” are also very much appreciated for this reason. Such recollections seem to draw us closer to our beloved Ramana, and we feel fresh encouragement to continue Self-Inquiry with a more profound understanding. For both my husband Jacques and I have noticed how our understanding of Bhagavan’s teachings has changed over the years. I know that when I first started to read the Collected Works and Talks almost 15 years ago, my comprehension was intellectual, and I had the tendency of using ‘Who am I’ as if it were the essential piece in a vast philosophical puzzle. Needless to say, it never fitted. As time went on and life experience unfolded, I came into contact with different facets of Bhagavan through his poems to Arunachala, the letters of Suri Nagamma, reminiscences written by Osborn and Cohen, the poems of Ganapati Muni and Muruganar. Slowly I began to feel something stronger awaken in me. Even His picture started to have a deeper impact.

After my two visits to the Ashram I feel joined to the powerful current of Bhagavan’s Presence, and Self Enquiry has now become the means of holding on to that current without lapsing into forgetfulness due to problems generated by the ego.

This vigilance takes a great deal of effort because it goes against habits and sometimes there is discouragement and even a sense of hopelessness. During these moments a devotee’s reminiscence found in a book or in “The Mountain Path” picked up by chance suddenly has a tremendous impact even though one already “knows” the story. Bhagavan comes alive, and that special attentiveness He shows a devotee, a smile, a look, a joke or even a scolding becomes very special. It’s good to read these stories aloud with Jacques and my son David and then look more closely at some photos (the Pictorial Biography is precious for that). The Master is among us!

Concerning this daily effort, the recent Mountain Path offers an excellent piece of advice is reply to a letter from a Doctor in Bangalore. “True spirituality is following your dharma quietly and conscientiously day by day without worrying whether you like it or not.” I feel that this reply is directed to me as well. Since I have left the Ashram I have noticed a subtle change in my attitude which is making me more attentive to the day by day — moment by moment — unfolding, and seems to bring with it a greater sense of detachment.

I am really happy that I was able to bring my son David with me to the Ashram, and I pray all three of us will be able to spend some more time there. Bhagavan’s presence made a profound impact on David, and he loves to talk about Arunachala. I believe he has gained an understanding of sadhana which can only deepen over the years.

We are now doing pūja regularly at home, and this was entirely David’s idea. I know that Bhagavan has captured his heart.

— Marve Tonnaire, Courtany, France.

In Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi it is laid down at a number of places, “Think or say ‘I AM’— ‘I-I’ — it is all right for understanding, but repeating ‘I-I’ and ‘I AM’ leads to more egoism.

Then, regarding japa, it is not clear which japa one should do. One cannot say ‘I’ — ‘I-I’ indefinitely; this will again be increasing egoism.

— S.B. Saxena, Bareilly.

Both your questions call for only one answer. You fear that that ‘I’ in ‘I Am’, ‘I-I’ and the japa-I, repeated indefinitely as a sadhana, might fatten egoism. This fear is a true warning signal. The possibility is there, but only if you keep your personal ‘I’ in your mind during sadhana. We are used in our every-day-life to have our personal-I in mind, the ‘I’ with the particular body-mind, name, gender, family, profession, etc. . . . . . . . that ‘I’-person described in passport. This ‘I’ is indeed the source and centre of our egoism and would grow indefinitely if it becomes the object of our japa or ‘I Am’ or the ‘I-I’ which Sri Bhagavan recommends. He meant only the real ‘I’, first of all in His technique of ‘Who Am I’ — that ‘I’ which is alone (‘I-I’) without name and shape, without drives and qualities, in other words: an ‘I’, which is not a separate ego, but the Self! Thus in your sadhana of ‘I Am’ or of ‘I-I’ you have not to direct your mind to the ‘I’, but to keep your mind empty, filled with the question: “Who is the real I?”. Sri Bhagavan sometimes quoted the Sen-Koan: ‘Show me your face before your parents had been born’. This is the same face, which will show you the true ‘I’ of your search.
You can hardly imagine what the contact with Maharshi's Ashram and His teachings means for me. I would like to ask you about Swarupa Dhyana. It is said that Swarupa Dhyana means concentration on the real nature, but I am not sure of its exact meaning.

— Anna Lillinukova, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia.

There is no way whatsoever to 'explain' Swarupa Dhyana, because it is beyond intellectual understanding. We would advise you to read (and re-read) Upadesa Saram and to pray for guidance about which of the stages of Upadesa Saram is most to your liking, and cling to this particular sadhana as 'yours'.

Frequent change of sadhana or change of object of meditation should be avoided. Every sadhana helps to develop subtle new capacities of awareness and leads to higher stages of sadhana, and finally to the experience of Swarupa. As in all growth, it takes its own time and calls for limitless patience and perseverance rather than will-power. And it is even a mistake to choose a level higher than your real ripeness, because natural growth is step by step, not taking leaps.

Don't try to hurry; it makes you only restless and disappointed. There is nothing to attain; there is growth only, and growth is both the Goal and the Way.

You may also start with 'Who Am I?' — but do not identify this 'I' with the concept of your body-personality. The essence of this technique is not the 'I', but the questioning. Imagine you are a spectator in the theatre. The bell before the performance starts has rung. Your state of consciousness between this bell and the lifting of the curtain is a sheer question-mark. You have no idea what will happen — and whatever will happen, it will not happen to you. Because you are merely a witness, and on-looker. This is the proper inner attitude for the sadhaka of 'Who Am I?' of Bhagavan Ramana. Try and see.

A copy of Upadesa Saram goes to you by registered post.

DIVINE MYSTERY

What is meant by the Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, the comforter, helper, guide, etc.? What did Ramana Maharshi tell us. I realize the Christ light appears as Krishna, Buddha, Ramana Maharshi — not only as Jesus, as some claim.

— A Devotee from South Africa

No one will be able to give you a clear cut explanation. The Christian dogma of the Holy Trinity is considered a 'Divine Mystery' not to be analysed intellectually, but to be accepted in Faith.

Your ideas about the Holy Ghost are as near as possible to the Truth. Accepting it as a spiritual Reality, we should look to it as the Inner Guru, guiding every sincere seeker through and beyond the Great Mystery. Why worry about theological enigmas like the Nature of the Holy Ghost? Why not embrace it in love and humility as our Guardian and Guide?

COMPLETE SURRENDER

I long to have complete surrender to Him, though I know, that nothing happens immediately even after surrender. I am not satisfied with myself and many times I feel sad at what I have done or omitted, though at the time it seemed right. I have read Maharshi's statement: "Your business is only to surrender and leave everything to me. Be quiet, Bhagavan will do the rest!" What does it mean exactly in my daily life? Shall I try to rectify my mistakes or only pray to Bhagavan?

— Anna Zilinakova, Czechoslovakia

Never regret something that happened in the past. Simply decide not to repeat the mistake and go on. Regretting the past is sheer waste of the present. But at the same time, remember that 'progress' in spiritual matters demands patience. Never look for 'results'. Expectation too has to be surrendered. Then there will be nothing to regret. 'Surrender' means leaving everything; then you can live in perfect Peace.

THE DARSHAN

Some time in 1947 I had visited Tiruvannamalai and on the day I reached there I had Bhagavan's darshan and a thought came forcibly in me that I was face to face with God. From that moment, I am constantly with the thought that God and Bhagavan Ramana are one and the same and pray God that I should always stick to this one-pointedly. Some two months back I saw Him in my dream just for a second. How wonderful the experience was!

I pray to Bhagavan that He may give me sufficient strength (I am 83 aged) to visit Tiruvannamalai and the Holy Mountain when I may have an opportunity of having further guidance in my spiritual quest from old devotees there.
A Re-Visit

I had the privilege of staying at the Ashram, along with my wife, for a week in January '85. During my stay I did Giripradakshina in the company of Sadhu Om on Makara Sankaranthi Day. I also could see all the holy places like Skandashram, Virupaksha Cave, etc. in the company of Dr. K. Subrahmaniam of Ramana Kendra, Hyderabad. I also met old devotees like Balarama Reddy and Kunju Swami. During my stay I had completely merged in dhyan-dharana and I experienced the same atmosphere which I had found in the divine presence of Sri Bhagavan in 1938. I sincerely pray to Sri Bhagavan to grant me strength to visit there again and again.

— Nagesh Anant Naik, Panaji (Goa)

We are happy to publish your article How I came to Bhagavan in this issue.

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Date: 31-3-1985

New Release!

The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana

In The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana, Sri K.K. Namblar, Chairman of the Ramana Kendra, Madras, has given us an intimate glimpse into his life as guided by His Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramana. These reminiscences which span over five decades of his association with Sri Bhagavan and Sri Ramanasramam have now been collected to form this book. A delicious treat, indeed!

Price Rs. 6[- (Postage extra)

Please write to:
Sri Ramanasramam Book Depot
Sri Ramanasramam P.O.
Tiruvannamalai-606 603.
South India.

In the last ten years or so several books have been published which purport to establish parallels between the world-view being built up by theoretical physicists and the accounts of mystical experiences related by eastern saints and sages. These apparent parallels have caught the public’s imagination and books such as The Tao of Physics and The Dancing Wu Li Masters have become international best-sellers. Occasional dissenting books such as The Cosmic Code seem to have been overwhelmed by a rising tide of syncretism which seeks to validate the mystic’s experience of reality by correlating it with the findings, or rather the implications, of modern quantum physics.

The majority of modern physicists are either hostile or indifferent to such comparisons whereas most of the spiritual writers who have dealt with the subject seem inclined to seek support from the great God of modern science. Ken Wilbur, the editor of this collection, belongs to the small minority of religious writers who are opposing this latter trend. He has outlined his own views on the subject in one of his previous books, The Holographic Paradigm, and to add a little substance and authority to them he has assembled this collection of writings by many of the great names of twentieth century physics. He has managed to muster quite an impressive army of physicists to support his view: Einstein, Heisenberg, Planck, Schroedinger, Eddington, De Broglie, Pauli and Jeans. None of them in these extracts claim that modern science has provided a proof of the validity of mystical insight, the most that they are prepared to admit is that science can no longer disprove the statements of those who claim to have had a direct experience of ultimate reality.

Although all the writers included seem to have been religiously inclined, none of them seems to have had a genuine mystical experience. The sub-title is therefore something of a misnomer since none of them is really qualified to talk about mysticism. Some, particularly Schroedinger, have a good understanding of the vocabulary and concepts of mysticism, but lacking first-hand experience they can only philosophize about the plausibility or implications of the mystic’s experience.

The concept of the book — to reprint the religious writings of the big-name physicists of the first half of the twentieth century in one volume — is a neat way of assembling an impressive body of evidence in favour of the editor’s point of view. It fails to take into account the fact that in the last few years a new generation of physicists has made many new discoveries which have added considerably to the circumstantial evidence which indicates parallels between quantum physics and mystic experience. Few, if any, of these discoveries were known to the contributors to this book when they penned their ideas. Einstein, for example, had great reservations about the whole edifice of quantum theory in the 1930s because it seemed to deny that effects must be preceded by a cause. However, in the 1970s, long after his death, Einstein was proved to be wrong when a series of experiments led to the conclusion that effects in the sub-atomic world were unrelated to local causes. This corroborated the view of many mystics who had stated that cause and effect were mental illusions. A modern mystic’s attitude to this subject can be found in chapter 14 of I Am That by Nisargadatta Maharaj. Had evidence such as this been available to the contributors to this book it might well have caused them to modify their stance a little.

The book is a fine summary of the religious and philosophical beliefs of some of the century’s greatest scientists, but as a contribution to the debate about the relevance of scientific findings to spiritual experience it is too ill-informed on the spiritual side and too out of date on the scientific side. A more productive endeavour would have been to put the writings of more recent physicists such as Priit of Capra and David Bohm, both of whom have written enthusiastically about the parallels between mysticism and science, alongside the writings of physicists such as Heinz Pagels who are known to be critical of all such comparisons.

— D.C.


The holy ministry of Sri Sarada Devi after the passing of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is an important phase in the Ramakrishna movement that has heralded the spiritual renaissance of India. This book, reflecting her stature in the movement, is an intimate picture of her daily life portrayed in the reminiscences of as many as thirty-eight of her devotees and disciples. Originally written in Bengali they are now presented in an English rendering and provide a rich fare for the education of the spiritually inclined.
In an interesting remark the holy Mother recalls: ‘When the Master passed away, I also wanted to leave my body. He appeared before me and said, “No you must remain here, there are things to be done…” He said that he would live for three hundred years in a subtle body.’

Another observation: ‘The image of Sri Govindji of Vrindaban was taken to Jaipur in fear of these Muslim invaders. The priests became upset and insisted that the deity be brought back. At last they heard a divine oracle: “The image is gone, not I. Prepare another image and I shall stay in it!”’

To cite but a few of the important guidelines found in her conversations: Karma: ‘The result of karma is inevitable. But by repeating the name of God you can lessen its intensity. If you are destined to have a wound as wide as a ploughshare, you will get a pinprick.’

Perfect souls: ‘There are different kinds — perfect from the very birth, svatath-siddha, perfect through spiritual disciplines, sadhana-siddha, perfect through the grace of the teacher, kripa-siddha, made perfect all of a sudden, nathat-siddha.’

Japa: ‘If you count while you do japa, your attention will be drawn to the counting. Do japa without counting.’

Pranam: ‘Pranam to a person who is lying down or is ill is prohibited. It fixes the disease in the person. Nobody should be saluted during his illness.’

And so on. The lights and sidelights that abound in this volume make it a considerable spiritual guide-book.

— M.P. PANDIT


The central theme of this well-argued thesis is that reality cannot be found by mental processes, however subtle. The mind and its characteristic power of thought carry an inherent materiality which prevents an undiluted perception and experience of the truth of life. The author, who has a background of earnest studies in the Vedas, the Upanishads and other eastern ways of communion with the divine reality, analyses in depth the current conceptions of nature, matter, energy and mind, and points out how nature is not matter, thought is not awareness. He insists upon emptying the mind before the truth can reflect itself or pour itself into our being. He writes:

‘Life is already divine. All we can do is let it flow through us by giving up, surrendering our vain and personal strivings to that presence that requires no thought, that cannot be produced by anything and needs nothing to propagate itself. All life is sacred, only thought is profane and its materialisation of everything, its reduction of everything to superficial appearance, function and value. The profane is the misconception of the ignorant mind, the false intelligence of matter, in creation where all is sacred, mystery, magic, wonder and delight.’ (p. 73)

To agree with the main argument of the author one has to accept that mind is a product of matter. But that is not easy for those who see the mind as a function — indeed, one of the main functions — of consciousness. Thought is not mind; it is only a process of the mind to which we are accustomed. Once thought is silenced, deeper faculties of the mind awake enabling the thought-mind to develop into the spiritual mind and more.

— M.P. PANDIT

This is a Telugu commentary on Maharshi's Unnadi Naluvadi. For Muruganar and other seekers Sri Bhagavan expounded the one reality. (Sat), where and how to locate, identify, reach and abide therein, in forty verses in Tamil — the Ulladu Narpadu. Urged by Yogi Ramayya he translated it into Telugu prose and entitled it Unnadi Naluvadi. To comment on this work Sri Rajagopal has rightly preferred this Telugu text to Sad Darshan, the Sanskrit version translated by Ganapati Muni.

The commentator, Sri Rajagopal shows himself to be both well-informed and competent. In the first of the mangalacharanams, however, we find no warrant for his disgression on jnana, real and only apparent. The verse only avows that apart from sat there cannot be awareness thereof.

The style is simple, lucid and flowing, a model of grammar and prosody; however, visandhi's and vati-bhanga's could be more discriminate and less indulged in. In several instances a little more care in the choice of words would have helped to give a more accurate meaning. In verse 3 on page 2, for example, it should be vathalu (give up) instead of othalu (grow, increase). Dispute over reality, whether it is one or two, is to be given up, not increased.

The author quotes freely from Sri Ramana Bhashanalu, the Telugu translation of Talks, in support of his elucidations. He should have exercised a little more care with his quotes. On page 155 of Bhashanamalu Maharshi is said to have affirmed that 'Ahankara and atma are one and the same' (see Ramana Hridayam pp. 124-5). Bhagavan affirms this of aham and not ahankara. The latter cannot be without atma but atma exists independently of ahankara.

These occasional errors do not detract from the merit of the effort. Besides the commentary Sri Rajagopal offers Unnadi Naluvadi in Telugu verse and adds Bhagavan's Sukti Sudha in Telugu prose (Appendix I). In the second appendix he juxtaposes teachings of the Hindu religion with those in Unnadi Naluvadi creating an avoidable impression of variance that is not really there.

PROF. O. RAMACHANDRAIYA


These two volumes, running to over 1,200 pages, are excellent source books for students of scriptures, practitioners of yoga sadhana and historians of religion. They purport to form the biography and the teachings of His Holiness Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Mahaswamigal, the present Pontiff of Sringeri Mutt. Though much of the value of the publication is reduced because of lack of editorial care, proper organisation of the gathered material and bad printing, (both the text and the innumerable photographs without convenient captions), there is much in these pages that is of profound import. The experience of devotees, accounts of the Swami's austerities, his talks and tours — all these have an authentic touch that strengthens one's faith in our religious and spiritual tradition.

A few extracts should be enough to give the flavour of the book: 'Acharya made no special efforts to directly arouse the kundalini nor had he been keen on perceiving its ascent . . . . One day as he sat down to perform his meditation and directed his gaze to the middle of the brows, a blue hue was seen as usual. Suddenly he felt something like an electric shock commencing from the centres of the bottom of his soles and proceeding upwards, diffusing through the body. His body jerked sharply and he felt intense heat. As the sensation travelled upwards, his breathing ceased and by the time it reached the region of his head he was deeply in savikalpa samadhi.

Note his remarks on kundalini: 'Kundalini is the embodiment of the divine and is a source of power. There is no serpent actually coiled up at the base of the spinal cord. Nor again are there physical lotuses. Its arousal ascent up the back can be felt . . . . contemplation on the kundalini and the chakras does cause manifestation of power and expansion of awareness. Normally, one will die if one does not breathe for a long time, but one can remain without breathing for a long time during the practice of kundalini yoga. I have seen those who have obtained powers by contemplating on yoga chakras. Some people can lift a heavy weight by merely moving their eyelids. So I have heard.

How to practice meditation on form? 'One can proceed with the notion that one's ishta devata is seated in the lotus of one's heart. If one finds it difficult to concentrate on the form one can begin with the use of the picture of the deity. Japa should be done while looking at the picture. Then with eyes closed one should try to meditate on the deity with the idea that one is seeing the deity there. The mind may focus for a while without wandering. But once the mind starts wandering one can open the picture.'

How to meditate without form? What is to be done when thoughts distract? Which is the best way to practice pranayama in anusthana? These are practical questions and the Swami answers them all very helpfully.

It is to be hoped that greater care will be taken in preparing the next edition of this most interesting and instructive book, especially in pagination, rearrangement of matter, introduction of the several writers who have contributed their reminiscences and experiences, and
above all in uniform printing and better reproduction of
the photos with captions beneath. Noble intentions need
to be backed up with proper execution.

— M. P. PANDIT

PEACE PILGRIM, HER LIFE AND WORK IN HER OWN
WORDS. Pub. Ocean Tree Book, Post Office Box 1295
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501, U.S.A. Pp. 198. No
price given.

Between 1953 until her death in 1981 a woman who
only identified herself as ‘Peace Pilgrim’ walked back­
wards and forwards across the North American continent
on a pilgrimage for world and inner peace. She was not a
political activist but a true sannyasini, a woman who had
already discovered her own inner peace and who had
renounced all ties with the world in favour of a wandering
life of voluntary simplicity. At the outset of her pilgrimage
she boldly proclaimed: ‘I shall remain a wanderer until
continue her walk for peace.

outdoors in «sub-zero temperatures and an investigation
confrontations with would-be muggers, countless nights
go to sleep. She survived periodic arrests for vagrancy,
accommodation, she would curl up under a bridge and
offered her food and at night, if she was not offered
one knows exactly where or when she was born) but she
given shelter and fasting till I am given food.’ She was
renounced all ties with the world in faVour of a wandering
already discovered her own inner peace and who had
political activist but a true
sannyasini,

Was this awareness that sustained her during her long
demic of hate and violence. She herself claimed that
fewer. This has been truthfully said that the world is
equally shocked by one who repudiates Christianity and
by one who practise it.’

— D.C.

SHAMBALA, THE SACRED PATH OF THE WARRIOR
By Chogyam Trungpa. Pub. Shambala, 1920, 13th street,
Boulder, Colorado, USA. Pp. 199. $ 5.95.

This latest work by Chogyam Trungpa — a treatise on
how to maintain a spiritual perspective in the midst of
daily life — may well be a landmark in the development
of Tibetan Buddhism in the west. In a series of essays,
written in a distinctly American style with only the bare
minimum of Buddhist technical terms, the author has
produced an effective synthesis between the contempo­
rary American spirit, with its aspirations for self-fulfillment
and the deeply- rooted Buddhist traditions of Asia.

The book is original in the sense that it is the creation
of a new tradition which is genuinely rooted in the
American way of life. It deals with the secular aspect of a
person’s existence, that is, how he should effectively
orientate himself in order to live a wholesome fulfilled
life which caters both to his own aspirations and to the
needs of others.

Trungpa repeatedly uses the metaphor of the warrior

to symbolize the ideal in human behaviour:

The point of warriorship is to become a gentle and
tamed human being who can make a genuine contribu­
tion to the world. The warrior’s journey is based on
descovering what is intrinsically good about human
existence and how to share that basic nature of good­
ness with others.’

— A.M.

FIRST THOUGHT BEST THOUGHT, 108 POEMS By
Chogyam Trungpa. Pub. Shambhala, 1920, 13th street,
Boulder, Colorado, USA. Pp. 195. Price $ 8.95

This collection of poems, written by Chogyam Trungpa
1968 and 1983, exhibits an exuberance and a worldliness
that contrasts sharply with the religious formality of most
of the author's previous books on Tibetan Buddhism. Apart from a few Tibetan verses and haikus which were written in a traditional style the poems have been composed in a free-wheeling stream-of-consciousness style which repeatedly uses juxtaposed images and non-sequitors to create precise and colourful images of scenes from everyday life. In many instances the fragmentation of the subject matter is so complete that reading a few lines is rather like watching a random sequence of surrealistic slides.

Few of the poems are overtly didactic but Trungpa's vivid use of imagery and his reputation as a Tibetan tulku make even apparently banal lines seem pregnant with meaning. Sometimes he over-indulges in verbal gymnastics in an attempt to explore and illuminate the sounds and energies of isolated words or phrases, but mostly he is giving expression to his inner states, his idiosyncratic view of the world and his overall relationship to it. This world-view is surprisingly vulgar and hedonistic at times, but Trungpa has never been a man to hide his predilections and so his lofty abstractions are frequently peppered with his everyday desires and fantasies.

It is curiously uneven collection with heavy-handed, prosaic political comments alternating with humorous and zany daydreams. Many of the poems are so eccentrically phrased that one feels that Trungpa is playing with English (not his mother tongue) in much the same way that an energetic but uncoordinated child plays with a new toy. It will not be to everyone's taste but those who wish to sample his style and ideas should follow Trungpa's own advice:

Please readers,
Read it slowly
So you can feel
The depth of calmness as you read.
Love to you.

— A.M.


K.K. Nambiar has been closely associated with Bhagavan since the 1930s. Despite following a professional career which involved lengthy postings far away from the ashram, he made frequent visits to Bhagavan throughout the 1930s and 40s. He has been intimately associated with many ashram projects such as the building of the Mother's temple and of the auditorium over Bhagavan's samadhi. During Bhagavan's lifetime he had many opportunities to converse with him.

In this brief memoir Sri Nambiar describes the impact that Bhagavan had on his spiritual development and his career; the anecdotes that he relates concern events in his private or professional life which took place away from the ashram, seemingly miraculous occurrences which the author unhesitatingly attributes to the grace of Bhagavan.

For example, in 1944 when the author was about to leave the ashram to return to Madras by train, he had remarked to a friend of his that by Bhagavan's grace he always managed to find good accommodation in the train he had to catch, despite its bad reputation for overcrowding. His friend was sceptical, decided to make a test case of it and sent someone to observe the attempts of Nambiar's party to find five empty berths on the train. When the train steamed in all the compartments were full and Nambiar resigned himself to losing face in the matter. However, before the train left, he strolled up to the front of the train where passenger accommodation was not normally to be found and discovered a locked and completely empty carriage that was being towed to Madras for a special train. The ticket examiner was as surprised as Nambiar to find an unscheduled carriage attached to the train but he was able to open it with one of his keys and Nambiar's party was able to proceed to Madras in regal comfort.

When similar unlikely coincidences occur again and again, the hypothesis of divine grace becomes credible.

There are some interesting stories about the development of the ashram and a good first-hand account of Bhagavan's last days. Sri Nambiar has a large fund of other unpublished anecdotes and conversations and devotees would be grateful if he brings out a supplementary volume of reminiscences.


The text of three Sri Aurobindo Memorial lectures delivered in Bombay, the booklet sums up in simple language the thesis elaborated in the author's famous works, The Tao of Physics and The Turning Point. During the last few centuries western science has dominated the world and it now threatens to destroy it. Recent developments in physics and biology, however, have confirmed the validity of the insights of the ancient mystics.

The hope for the survival and harmonious co-existence of human beings on this planet rests on a grand synthesis of eastern wisdom and western science. If hard technologies based on coal, oil and uranium give place to soft and benign technologies using renewable resources and the recycling of waste products, peace and prosperity for all mankind are assured. The motive for this radical change in attitude and life style can only come from recognizing the fact that the ultimate Reality is one inseparable Awareness and that the multiplicity of egos and objects is an illusion caused by our measuring and categorizing mentality. A brief, brilliant and persuasive plea for a change of heart and a change of course in human history.

— K.S.
AN APPEAL

"MOUNTAIN PATH FUND"

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

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

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

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

V. Ganesan,
Managing Editor,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai-606 603.
October 1, 1983.
VICE-PRESIDENT OF INDIA
VISITS THE ASHRAM

On Sunday 24th February, the Ashram President, Sri. T.N. Venkataraman welcomed His Excellency the Vice President of India, Sri. R. Venkataraman, with Purnakumbam honour. He was accompanied by Hon’ble Sri. K.A. Krishnaswami, Minister of Labour, Government of Tamil Nadu.

The Vice President is not a stranger to Sri Ramansramam. He has been here even during the lifetime of Sri Bhagavan, has remained a devotee and supported the Ashram throughout his career. Sri. R. Venkataraman and Sri. K.A. Krishnaswami were taken around the Ashram — to Sri Bhagavan’s Nirvana Room, Sri Mathrubhuteswara.
At the Mathrubuthswara Temple.

In front of Sri Bhagavan’s Samadhi: Hon’ble Minister of Tamil Nadu, Sri K.A. Krishnaswami, His Excellency Vice President Sri R. Venkataraman, our Managing Editor and Ashram President, Sri T.N. Venkataraman.

Shrine and Sri Bhagavan’s Samadhi. Following in the tradition of the late Smt. Indira Gandhi on her visits to the Ashram, the Vice President and the party meditated for a long time in the peaceful environs of the Old Meditation Hall.

Lunch was served to the party. Both Sri R. Venkataraman and Sri K.A. Krishnaswami were delighted to share the Ashram food as Bhagavan’s Prasad and that too seated along with the devotees which included many from foreign countries. The Ashram President presented them with important Ashram publications, containing the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan.

His excellency the Vice President was pleased to write in the Ashram’s Visitor’s Book as follows:

“I first visited Ramana Ashram in 1935 when Bhagavan was shedding His inspiration on all His devotees. I, have visited the Ashram several times thereafter and particularly during Bhagavan’s last illness. He demonstrated even during the acute pain that ‘He’ was different from the body.

I am glad that the Ashram is maintaining its pristine sanctity and that the Spirit of Bhagavan is preserved.

LIVES OF GREAT MEN REMIND US THAT WE CAN MAKE OUR LIFE SUBLIME.

The Management has succeeded to a great extent in preserving the spiritual sanctity of the Ashram.”

Although the visit was but for an hour, from 12.30 p.m. to 1.30 p.m. the inmates and devotees of the Ashram felt elated to have in their midst this illustrious statesman and brother-devotee.
Sri Bhagavan’s Jayanthi has and continues to be a day of special grace. When first it was proposed to celebrate His Jayanthi, Sri Bhagavan protested and composed the following poem:

“You who wish to celebrate the birthday, seek first whence was your birth. One’s true birthday is when he enters that which transcends birth and death — the Eternal Being!

At least on one’s birthday one should mourn one’s entry into this world (samsara). To glory in it and celebrate it is like delighting in and decorating a corpse. To seek one’s Self and merge in the Self: that is wisdom.”

However, in Sri Bhagavan’s immense compassion He gave in to the devotees’ wishes and jayanthi began to be celebrated and continues to be a source of joy. Old devotees testify to the fact that Sri Bhagavan shone with special splendour on that day and even in the last years when His body suffered He sat up long hours to accommodate all the devotees who flocked to Him in gratitude.

This year too, Sri Bhagavan’s 105th jayanthi was celebrated in simple grandeur. In the early morning hours, as dawn turned the Holy Hill a crimson red, the devotees were greeted by the lovely flower bedecked Samadhi Hall. Hymns to Arunachala composed by Sri Bhagavan resounded in the hall and pujas continued throughout the morning.

Before the final arti to Sri Ramanaeswaramaha Lingam, two books were released by Sri T.N. Venkataraman, the Ashram President. The first is a beautifully compiled and long awaited book of reminiscences by Sri K.K. Nambiar, President of the Ramana Kendra, Madras. The second is a new rendering of Upadesa Saram with the word for word translation by Viswanatha Swami and English translation of Sri Jagadish Swami. The book also includes Sri Bhagavan’s Sanskrit and Tamil facsimile of the 30 verses. This dedicated effort has been offered by Sri Hamsa DeReede.

Sri Ramanaswara Mahalingam on the Jayanthi day.

105th JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS
AT SRI RAMANASRAMAM

Sri R. Venkataraman fascinated by the large portrait of Sri Bhagavan, started narrating his earlier visits to the Ashram.
Lunch was served to over 1,000 people under a specially constructed pandal as well as the usual Jayanti poor-feeding. In the afternoon a much appreciated talk was given by Sri. K. Sivaraj, President of the Ramana Kendra, Ahmadabad. Sri Ananthaswami, Vice President Ramana Kendra, Madras spoke both in the morning and afternoon and gave an enlightening discourse on the profound and mystical poem of Sri Bhagavan, *The Marital Garland of Letters*.

In the evening Sri Bhagavan’s movies were shown to all present. Thus ended a day of homage to Sri Bhagavan — celebrated in utmost simplicity and devotion.

**RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI**

The 105th Jayanti of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was celebrated with great enthusiasm on January 6 & 7. On the 6th, there was a delectable Ramana Music concert by Shri. T.M. Dandapani Oduvar with accompaniments. On the 7th, the Jayanti day, there was a pro­gramme of Ashtottara pooja, Veda parayana and devotional songs both in the morning and in the evening. On that day, at the Uttara Swami Malai Temple, special pooja and abhisheka am were performed while Bhagavan’s Aksharamanamalai was sung in chorus by the members of the Kendra.

The Annual General Body meeting was held on January 20 when Shri. R. Venkataraman, Vice President of India, was unanimously re-elected as the President of the Kendra for another term of two years, 1985 & 1986.

On January 27, Shri. S. Sankaranarayanan, Author & Scholar, gave a very illuminating talk on Ramana and Sankara.

A new programme of giving Bhagavan’s prasadam daily to the children of the poor workers living in the vicinity of the Kendra was inaugurated on January 21. On Thai Poosam (4-2-1985), sweets were distributed to the children by Smt. Visalakshi Swaminathan.

A start was made to popularise Ramana songs in different localities of Delhi to help devotees to learn the songs and sing them at the Kendra on special occasions. The first programme under this scheme was held on February 3, when the Ladies Group of Netaji Nagar led by Smt. Mahalakshmi Suryanadan gave a fine rendering of the
compositions of Maharshi, Muruganar, Kavyakanta, Ganapati Muni, Sadhu Om, C.N. Sastri, M.R. Srinivasan, and Alamelu Narasimhan.

On February 17, Mahasivaratri was observed with due solemnity with Vedaparayana and devotional songs. Manickavasagar’s Sivapurana was sung on the occasion.

Revered Chote Ma of Arpana Trust, Madhuban spoke in Hindi on Maharshi’s “Who Am I?” at the Kendra on January 16 and February 20.


RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS

The Kendra celebrated the 105th Jayanthi of Bhagavan from 11th to 13th January, 1985. On the 12th, at the Kendra premises, Ekadasi Rudra Abhishekam and Sahasranama Archana were performed. Kumaris Hema and Shoba with great feeling, sang devotional songs on and by Bhagavan, and about 800 poor were fed.

The afternoon sessions on all the three days, were held at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan auditorium, which was illuminated and tastefully decorated with lifesize portraits of Bhagavan and banners carrying stanzas from Sat Darshan and Upadesa Saram.

The proceedings on the 11th commenced with the lighting of the Kuthu Vilakku by Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President of Sri Ramanaasramam, followed by a prayer by Sri. K. Natesan of the Ashram. Rajkumari Prabhavathi Raje inaugurated the celebrations and released the book ‘The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana’ written by Sri K.K. Nambiar, Chairman, Ramana Kendra. Bhakta Prachara Ratna Sri Sundarakumar gave a very clear exposition of the last 10 stanzas of Upadesa Saram. Sri S. Sankaranarayanan, speaking on ‘Bhagavan and Shankara’ pointed out that while Shankara, with his mighty intellect and dialectical skill demolished all rival systems of philosophies and enthroned Advaita, Ramana gave His teachings to suit the modern age of science and rationalism. The day’s proceedings ended with an enthralling dance by Smt. K. Jayalakshmi who rendered Abhinaya to some of Bhagavan’s poems.

The afternoon proceedings on the 12th, started with a talk in Tamil by Dr. N. Veezhinathan. Then, Dr. P.K. Sundaram, Prof. of Philosophy in the Madras University, spoke on Bhagavan’s Vichara Marga. Swami Suddha Chaitanya spoke of ‘The Mind’ as revealed by Bhagavan. He analysed Bhagavan’s concept of ‘mind’ and showed how the mind, which is the undoing of man, is his own creation and really a myth.
The day's proceedings concluded with the music by the famous "Ramananjali", led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan.

On the 13th, after the usual Sunday Veda Parayana, Smt. Prema Pandurangan gave an evocative talk on 'Bhagavan and the Gita', laying stress on the imperatives of the Gita. In his concluding talk, Sri B. Ananthaswami spoke on the quintessence of Bhagavan's teachings. The celebrations ended with a group dance by Ramana Sudha, in which children and young girls beautifully portrayed through dance, the life and teachings of Bhagavan.

The Kendra arranged discourses by Swami Suddha Chaitanya on Bhagavan's Sat Darshan for 16 days from the 1st to 16th December, 1984 at Asthika Samajam Hall, Alwarpet, Madras. The Kendra also arranged meditation classes for 14 days, in the mornings, at the Kendra premises, by Swamiji. Large number of devotees participated in these classes.

MURUGANAR'S RAMANA JNANABODHAM PART IV: This book was released by Smt. Soundaram Kailasam at the Kendra premises on the 20th January, 1985. Sri H. Vaidyanathan referred to his personal association with Muruganar and quoted profusely from Muruganar to bring out his deep scholarship and devotion in interpreting Bhagavan.

The meeting on the 4th was presided by Swami Vimalananda who extolled the greatness of Bhagavan. Swami Chitbhavananda presided over the meeting on the 5th and advised the devotees to follow the teachings of the great Rishi. He said that Bhagavan spoke in silence and devotees had their doubts cleared in His presence without a single word being uttered by Him. Sri V.N. Chidambaram, Thakkar, of Sri Meenakshi Temple spoke on the 6th congratulating Prof. Pranatharthiharan on his lucid exposition of Bhagavan's teachings. Dr. Krishna Menon who presided over the meeting on the 6th expressed his happiness of the efforts the Ramana Kendra, Madurai are taking in propagating the teaching of Bhagavan.

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's 105th Jayanthi was celebrated by Ramana Kendra, Madurai from 4th to 7th January. Puja was performed at Sri Ramana Mandiram, Chokkapa Naicken Street in the morning and the portrait of Bhagavan was taken round the Meenakshi Temple in the evening on 7th January.

The speeches were preceded by melodious music by Ramana Sangeetha, Madurai and Ramana Bala Sangeetha, Madurai. The songs, in Tamil, were the compositions by Bhagavan and on Him by, Muruganar and Sadhu Om.
JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS

AT PALGHAT

Bhagavan Ramana's 105th jayanthi was celebrated at Vijnana Ramaneeya Ashram, Palghat on 5th, 6th and 7th January with a variety of programmes.

The celebrations commenced with Ganapathy Homam in the early hours of 5th Jan, followed by puja, Akhanda Japa and Sat Sang. In the evening there was a spiritual discussion led by Sri. P.K. Rajagopala Menon and also discourses by H.H. Swami Nityananda Saraswathi (President, Sivananda Ashram, Olavakkot) and Sri. T.L. Eswaran.

The second day's Sat Sang, in the morning was led by Sri. K.P.D. Nair and the evening discussions by Sri. M.K. Subramaniam which was followed by discourses by Prof. T.R. Subramaniam and Sri. K.M. Unni.

On the third day the Sat Sang was led by Sri. T.Rama Varier and discussions by Sri. Sankara Narayanan. In the evening, H.H. Swami Saxranandaji (President, Sri Rama-krishna Ashram, Trichur) and Sri A.B. Shannugham spoke. On all the three days there were Akhanda Japa, poor-feeding and chanting of kirtanas.

AT ERNAKULAM

Bhagavan’s 105th jayanthi was celebrated on Jan 7th at Ernakulam Gramajana Samooham Auditorium. Sri. C.L. Narasingarao spoke at length on the life and teachings of Bhagavan on both the days interspersing his own experience at the Ashram of which he had the good fortune of staying in 1949. Sri Somayajulu organised the pujas. Recitation of Aksharanamala and Upadesa Saram were done, both in the morning and evening. The programme closed with the reading of Telugu poems written by Bhagavan. Large number of devotees gathered for the puja and meetings.

VIZAKAPATANAM

The Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on the 6th and 7th of January. Sri. C.L. Narasingarao spoke at length on the life and teachings of Bhagavan on both the days interspersing his own experience at the Ashram of which he had the good fortune of staying in 1949. Sri Somayajulu organised the pujas. Recitation of Aksharanamala and Upadesa Saram were done, both in the morning and evening. The programme closed with the reading of Telugu poems written by Bhagavan. Large number of devotees gathered for the puja and meetings.
Sri Ramana Jayanthi was celebrated at Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashramam TADPATRI on Jan 7th '85. Sri Ramana Sahasanamavali and Upadesa Saram were recited and puja was done at 7:30 am. Many devotees participated in the worship and poor-feeding for about 2,000 persons was conducted.

At 6:00 pm 54 Pradakshina were done with Bhagavan’s photo, singing ‘Arunachala Siva’ and ‘Sri Ramana’ re-sounded as the procession went around the Buggaramalingeswara Swami Temple, the Temple is very near the Ashram on the Pennar River. It took 2½ hours to completed the Pradakshina. Bhajans were held throughout the night.

MAHA SIVARATRI — AT ARUNACHALA

The day on which Vishnu and the other devas worshipped the Lord Siva in the form of effulgence (Arunachala) is the day of Maha Sivaratri.

Sri Bhagavan

Sivaratri — the night of Siva was celebrated on 17th February 1985 in an impressive manner. Beginning at sundown, the first puja to Siva at Sri Bhagavan’s Samadhil ended with the lighting of Vibhuti — which is made on this night for use during the whole year.

Four pujas followed throughout the night while devotees, in small groups, went around the Holy Hill. Since Sivaratri is during a moonless night, Arunachala seems to illumine itself by its inner light and a tangible presence of Siva is felt by all.

NEW RAMANA KENDRA

Sri Ramana Kendra is being established at Jinnur village at a cost of about ten lakhs of rupees in West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. The work is proceeding quickly. Those who wish to send donations to the Kendra can send the same to this address:

B.V.L.N. Raju
President: Sri Ramana Kendram
Jinnur P.O. 534 265
West Godavari District (A.P.).

RAMANA SAT SANG — ANANTAPUR

Started only a few months ago, the Ramana Sat Sang at Anantapur has been doing laudable service to spread the message of Bhagavan.

Ganapati Muni’s Jayanthi was observed on 17th November and Uma Sahasranam with Telugu commentary was released on the occasion.

Bhagavan’s Jayanthi was celebrated on 30th December with the chanting of Upadesa Saram and Akshara Mani-mala. Mr. M. Narasimham and Mr. T. Kodandaram Rao explained the direct method of Bhagavan.

It is praiseworthy that officials Sri D. Subrahmanyam (Sub Judge) and Sri Y. Sreeramulu (Dist. Registrar) are taking interest in the spread of Bhagavan’s message at Anantapur.
The Ramana Cultural Festival on the 2nd & 3rd of March, in New Delhi, is an event which is bound to linger long in memory. It was an exhilarating inner experience. Dance, Drama and Music centred on the compositions by and on Ramana Maharshi was, at once a feast to the eye and the soul. A blissful atmosphere prevailed throughout. Inaugurating the festival, Smt. Pupul Jayakar, Chairman, Indian Advisory Committee, Festival of India said that the voice of Ramana Maharshi is indeed the voice of all humanity. It springs from the depth of the ocean of silence and reaches out to everyone who seeks freedom. In his welcome address, Shri A.R. Natarajan, President, Ramana Maharshi Centre, Bangalore, said that the mighty Ganges of Ramana’s compositions are steadily enriching the rich cultural heritage of India.

Then came a thrilling presentation of three Ramana Dramas, ‘A Ramana Evening’, ‘Mother’, and ‘Ramana and Animals’. Kum. Sarada, who presented these dramas said that the purpose was to convey through every dramatic devise, music, lights, dramatic narration, symbolism, and ballet effectively ‘the overwhelming silence, peace and power of Ramana’s Presence’.

Swathi Mahalakshmi’s special dance presentation, stoodout for the artistic way in which some of his compositions of Ramana Maharshi, particularly his famous Arunachala Pancharatnam were rendered. Vanashree Rao’s beautiful Kuchipudi Dance, featuring a number of Ramana’s compositions, was heightened by Guru Jayarama Rao Nattuvangam.

Ramanajali, fresh from their tour to Nepal were at their enchanting best regaling audience with their elevating music. Many new and fascinating items were very much appreciated.

Shrimathi Sulochana Natarajan of the Bangalore Ramana Centre presented a masterly paper bringing out how the raga ‘yamuna kalyani’ could be rendered beautifully in different languages and ways.

In many ways Kumari Ambika’s inspired Bharatanatyam Dance of the Ramana compositions choreographed by herself was one of the highlights of the festival. While her dance itself flowed with flawless grace, what stood out was the total experience and communication of each motion and mood. The skillful use of ‘Sanchari Bhava’ to depict some of the incidents in Ramana’s life requires special mention. The total effect was something ethereal.

The thirty two member Ramana Nritya Kala Ranga, Bangalore produced a most thrilling fare ‘Skanda Ramana’ a dance drama. The sets were lavish, the costumes rich, music scintillating and action superb. So complete was the identification of each actor with their respective roles that it ceased to be a mere drama. It was as if a real life event was happening before our very eyes. The dances in the ballet, choreographed by Kumari Ambika were simple, graceful and well rendered. The script and direction by Kumari Sarada was top class.

The final was the Bharatanatyam by the reputed danseuse S. Kanaka. The Varnam in Kalyani and the padams were a real treat. The other notable items were the music performance by TR. Subramanian of Delhi University, Prof. K. Swaminathan’s paper on Muruganar and fine exhibition of the Maharshi’s life.

The citizens of Delhi should be thankful to The Ramana Maharshi Centre, Bangalore and Ramana Kendra, Delhi, for introducing a breath of fresh air through the rich, varied and elevating fare provided in this Ramana Cultural Festival. We can only hope that this would become a regular annual feature in the capital.
Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswathi visited the Ashram on 7.3.1965 accompanied by Smt. Narsimhan. Though Swamiji stayed only for an hour the Ashramites were very happy to have him in their midst.
K.V. Nagarajan, son of K. Venkataraman (Echchammal's grandson), celebrated the tonsure ceremony of his granddaughter in the presence of Bhagavan on 27.7.1985. K.V. desires that his succeeding generations should serve the Ashram in no less a measure than his grandmother, Echchammal did.

Staff members of J. Srinivasan, Ashram Auditors.

Members of Ramana Kendra Hyderabad on a recent visit to the Ashram.

Sri K. Padmanabhan and his family members along with Ashram President Sri T.N. Venkataraman.

N.N. Rajan and his family.

Monique Rossel, Brigitte Schmidt.


Raj Kumari Prabhavati Raje, with family members.
VISITORS

I want to express my deep gratitude for all the kindness and consideration which was shown to me by you (the managing editor) and also many other inmates of the Ashram. Those wonderful days are unforgettable for me. I had the most joyful experiences. I miss my daily walks and sitting for hours on the Holy Mountain which had never before attracted me with such magnetic power as it has this time. I will miss the hours on the boulders of Arunachala at sunset in your company together with Sri Kunju Swami and others. I also miss the silent hours in the Old Hall and the beautiful pujas in front of Bhagavan’s shrine — and yet everything is present before me here also. I feel this as a vivid experience, every day and every hour. Can anyone describe the mighty working of Bhagavan’s grace? There was not the deep sadness inside myself when I had to leave as there has been in past years, but instead I felt as if I were taking all these wonders of Arunachala with me. But the pull for returning to ‘my home’ (in India), is as strong as always. Arunachala is really a wish-fulfilling Mountain, but in a way as one would never imagine it. My daughter came on December 25th and went immediately to the Old Hall, as this place means so much to her.

— Annie Alt, Vienna, Austria

Mr. N.H. Thakker and family.

Mrs. Kumud M. Joshi, Mrs. Seetha Shridharsapre, Mr. S.K. Mullarpattu, Mr. Mukund K. Joshi.

Mrs. and Mrs. Vira.

To me Sri Ramanasramam, especially the Old Meditation Hall as well as Sri Bhagavan’s Samadhi Hall, is a supreme heaven on earth. Here the Master’s magnanimous Grace makes it easier to turn inwards. I feel deeply grateful to all those running the Ashram in such a superb way, making it a home for every earnest devotee of Sri Bhagavan.

— M.S. Vira, Bombay.

Having read Arthur Osborne’s Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge some years ago I finally found myself in a position to make my first visit to Sri Ramanasramam and Arunachala in late 1981. The experience of being in such sacred precincts had a profound inner effect and the attraction both to Bhagavan and Arunachala has not diminished but has increased since then. I followed my inner promptings and eagerly seized the opportunity to return in December of 1984 staying until January 18, 1985.

I feel it a great privilege to again spend time in these peaceful surroundings where His grace and presence are most tangibly felt. Each moment I considered precious and I feel that my own personal efforts at sadhana cannot but have benefitted from having been here once again.

I extend a warm ‘thank you’ to all at Sri Ramanasramam for their courteous, friendly and kind service at all times during my visit and I hope that with Arunachala and Bhagavan’s Grace I will be able to spend further happy times at the Ashram in the not too-distant future.

— Noel Sheehan, Dublin, Ireland.

Noel Sheehan.

The spiritual service provided by Sri Ramanasramam and its staff — with their care, their offering of a quiet retreat, the Presence of Bhagavan at the feet of Lord Arunachala — is immeasurable!

— Soma Hemingway, Toronto, Canada.

Soma Hemingway.
SRI SADHU OM

Sri Sadhu Om is now absorbed in Arunachala (17.3/85). A poet-devotee of Bhagavan, he was a standing example for eka bhakti; he was so dedicatedly and one-pointedly devoted to his Master, Bhagavan Ramana. The thousands of verses in Tamil that he had composed in praise of Bhagavan and in elucidation of His teachings will ever remain as permanent monuments for his surrendered devotion to Him. Whoever went to him never returned empty-handed — either they would be taught how to practise Bhagavan’s vichara Marga, path of Self-Enquiry or initiated into going round Holy Arunachala (giripradakshina), or as in most cases, both.

His close association with the poet-saint, Muruganar, made him dive deep into the Ramana-ocean. His scholastic talents were well reflected in his editing the several thousand Tamil verses composed by Muruganar. The printed works of Muruganar trumpeted the single-handed, qualitative hard work of Sadhu Om.

It would be superfluous to say that the wide circle of Ramana-bhaktas have lost in him a brother-devotee, since Sadhu Om will ever live and shine in our hearts as a precious gem adorning the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan Ramana!

Wolter A. Keers passed away on January 7. He was at the Ashram during the last months of Bhagavan’s life. Bhagavan sent him on to Sri Krishna Menon. Since his return to Europe he has given many talks on Advaita in Holland, Belgium, France and Germany and regularly contributed articles to The Mountain Path.

Dr. Shrikumar T. Nair, a faculty member of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, U.S.A. passed away on November 8, 1984, Thursday at 4.55 a.m. at McCullough Memorial hospital, Oxford, Ohio. He was the founder of Ramana Maharshi Center in Oxford, Ohio, U.S.A. in 1980.

Mrs. Feroza Taleyarkhan, hailing from a wealthy Parsee family from Bombay, came to Bhagavan in the later thirties. Her devotion and surrender to Sri Bhagavan was so intense that she constructed a house opposite the Ashram and started living at Arunachala even when Ramana Nagar was yet to be born! She proved to be of great help to the Ashram in many aspects of its administrative wing, and she was instrumental in bringing many royal and aristocratic families to the Presence of Sri Bhagavan.

Mrs. Taleyarkhan was introduced to our readers as far back as January 1965 issue. She passed away on 30.12.1984 at the ripe old age of 92 years. May she rest in peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

Sadhu Trivenigiri Swami, a senior devotee of Bhagavan attained samadhi in Tirukkoliur on Maha Shivarathri night February 17-18, 1985. He was 90. He came to Bhagavan Ramana in 1933 and served the Ashram, under Chhna Swami, in various capacities. Known for a long time as Sadhu Sundara Anya, he was given sannyasa diksha by Gnananandagiri Swami of Thapovanam. An Upasaka of Gayatri and Sri Vidya, Trivenigiri Swami was an auster and self-effacing person, always bubbling with joy to narrate to yearning listeners anecdotes about the Maharshi, to whom he had total dedication. A few days before his samadhi he was saying repeatedly that Bhagavan was calling him and that he had to go.

May he attain, by his Master’s Grace, the culminating Beatitude of mergence in the Transcendent Formless Arunachala!

Sri. S. Kuppuswami, an advocate, did not pursue his professional career but chose to dedicate the rest of his life for Sadhana. He passed away at Arunachala on Jan. 27 '85. He was in our Ashram for a few years and was very helpful to The Mountain Path in its circulation and despatch wing. After staying in other Ashrams he came to stay for a good at Arunachala a few years back. His devotion to Bhagavan was strong.

Mrs. Taleyarkhan.

Mrs. Taleyarkhan.