

THE MOUNTAIN PATH



VOL. 24 No. IV OCTOBER 1987

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The moment Thou didst
welcome me, didst enter
into me and grant me Thy
divine life, I lost my individuality, Oh Arunachala!

*The Marital
Garland of Letters
Verse 95*

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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—Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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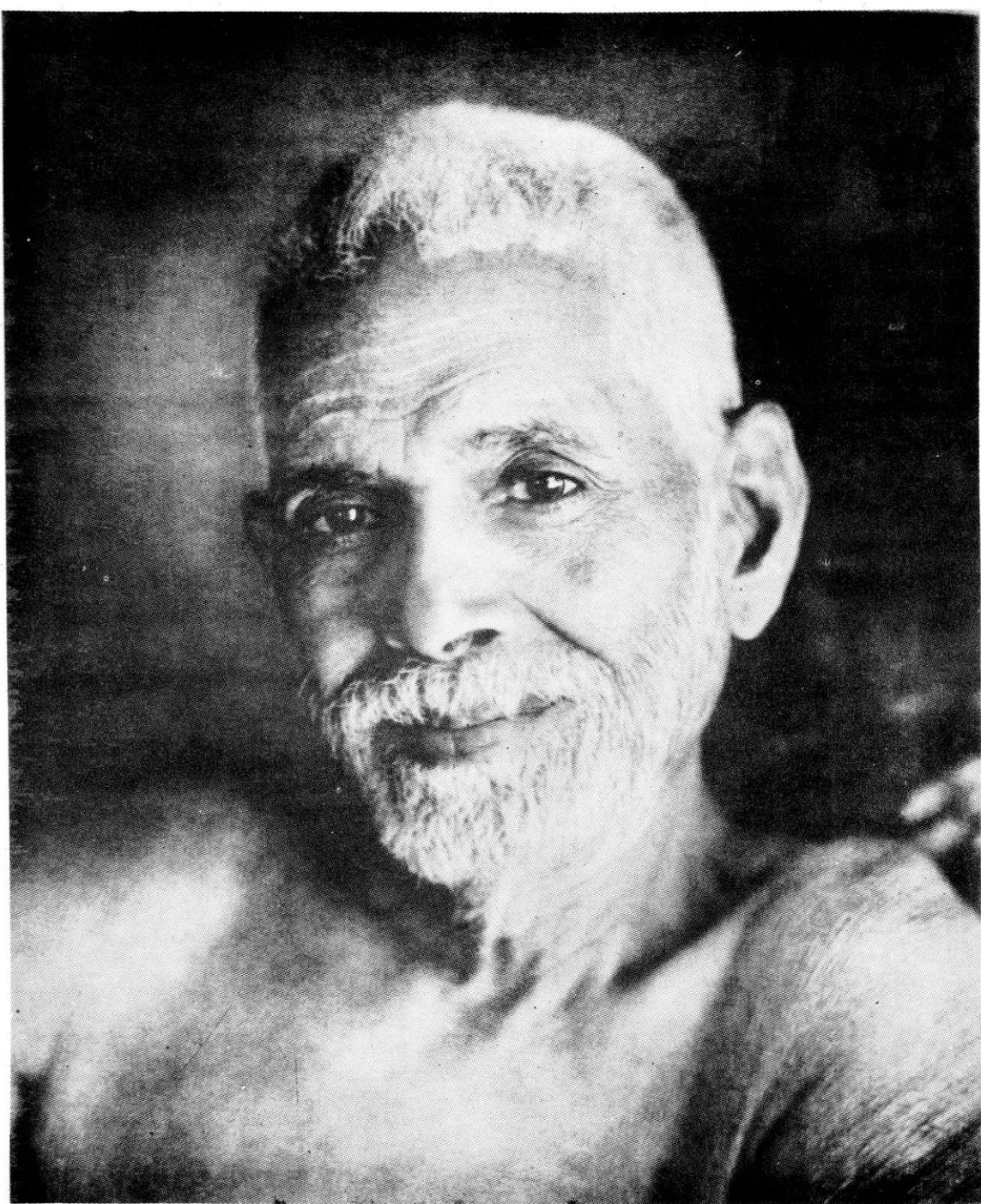
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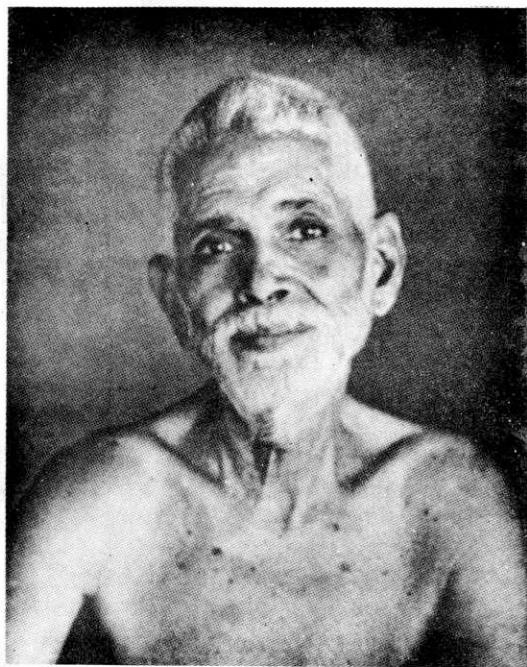
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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SUPERFICIALLY, it might seem that Maharshi's statements about God are inconsistent, since He would sometimes enjoin complete submission to God and sometimes speak as if God were non-existent. He conceded that God is personal: "If you have a body, why cannot God also have one!" but also asserted that God is impersonal, Pure Being, Awareness, Bliss. Obstacles are on the earth; the bird knows the transcendence of flying high above. The flight is inward. "God is personal, He is always the first person, the 'I'. Because you give precedence to worldly things, God appears to have receded to the background. If you give up all else and seek Him alone, He will remain as the 'I', the Self." Gurus is but a theoretical approach; He wanted us to be practical and merge in the reality of Being. He said: "The devotee, his efforts

BHAGAVAN ON GOD

to reach God, and God are all the same. It is the Self."

Some statements of Maharishi might upset orthodox persons. For example: "Why worry about God? We do not know whether God exists or not. Let God worry about His own existence...." When a missionary argued: "But God is perfect and I am imperfect. How can I ever know Him fully?" He said: "God does not say so. It is you who ask this question. After finding out who you are, you may know what God is." Like the Buddha, Bhagavan did not theorize about the existence of God.

Again, when a devotee said: "Bhagavan, I do not believe in God, is there no sal-

Editorial

The Mountain Path
Vol. 24, No. 4 October, 1987

vation for me?" Maharshi graciously, replied: "It doesn't matter. Do you believe that you 'are', that you exist?" The devotee said "Ye". Bhagavan continued: "Dive deep inside and see who IS that you say 'exists'."

Yet another example: A devotee narrated to Bhagavan how he was blessed with the vision of Lord Subramanya in all His glory. Maharshi, however, commented: "You saw a vision of God! He appeared and disappeared. Visions are illusory. Reality is within and not without. Do not be taken in by visions!"

But then there are other statements affirming not only the existence of God but also the nature of God. "Natural laws are manifestations of God's will and they have been laid down. All you need to do is to trust God". Again, "Everyone is looked after by God. He created all. You are only one among the two thousand millions. When He looks after so many, will He omit you? He knows what is best and when and how to do it." "God's Grace is absolutely necessary for spiritual salvation."

A riddle?

Bhagavan Himself provides a 'synthesis' of these opposites:

"They say that there is God and that one must worship and meditate until ultimately the individual merges in God. Others say that the individual and the Supreme Being always remain separate and never merge. But let us not worry now about what happens at the end. All agree that the individual exists now. So let a man discover it—that is discover his Self. There will be time enough afterwards to find out whether the Self is to merge in the Supreme (God) or is a part of it or remains separate. Let us not forestall the conclu-

sion. Keep an open mind, dive within and find the Self. The truth will dawn upon you all right, so why try to decide beforehand whether it is absolute or qualified unity or duality? Your decision would have to move by logic and intellect; but the intellect derives its light from the Self (the Highest Power), so how can its reflected and partial light envisage the entire and original light? The intellect cannot attain to the Self. The Self alone is Real. All else is unreal. The mind and intellect have no existence apart from you. The Bible says: 'Be still and know that I am God'. Stillness is the only thing needed to realise that 'I am' is God".

Another quotation will make this very clear:

Devotee: "Is there a God apart from ourselves? Naturally there must be a Creator of this Universe."

Bhagavan: "If by 'ourselves' you mean your body, there is a Creator; but if you mean the pure Self, then there is nothing but IT. If you objectively see a universe, then you are bound to see many things besides yourself and postulate a God, the Creator. Body, God and world rise and set together from and into the Self. If God is apart from you, the Self, then He must remain a Self-less God, that is non-existent."

Bhagavan believed in praxis; *sadhana*, not mere theory. He gave primacy to the direct knowledge of one's sense of Be-ing over mere inferences and scriptural assertions. In a hurdles-race, only the spectators consider the hurdle-stands as obstacles. For the runner they are part of the game. The runner accepts and overcomes the hurdles; how else can he win the race?

Yes, we have a similar situation here; for those who wish to be spectators only, Maharshi's teachings have contradictions; but for the runner, the one-pointed sadhak they are true in their own time and place,

and the hurdles, the conflicting metaphysical pronouncements, are not obstacles. They do not deflect him from his course of running, flying, onward, ever inward.

BHAGAVAN AND PRASAD By Suri Nagamma

People occasionally bring to Bhagavan prasad consisting of Vibhuti (holy ashes) and Kumkum (vermilion) from various places such as Tiruchendur, Madurai and Rameswaram. Bhagavan accepts it with the greatest reverence saying, "Look, Subrahmanya from Tiruchendur has come. Here is Ramalingeswara from Rameswaram. Here is this God, there is that God." Others bring holy water saying, "This is from the Ganga, that is from the Gouthami, this is from the Cauvery, that is from the Krishna." Whenever such water is brought in Bhagavan accepts it, saying, "Here is Mother Ganga, there is Gouthami, this is the Cauvery and that is Krishnaveni."

At first this used to puzzle me. When Ramana himself is the embodiment of that Eternal Being, who is the origin of all thirthas (holy waters) and who is shining in his abode as himself, how foolish of these people to bring him prasad of water from thirthas as if they had done a great thing! Are they mad? I wondered!

Sometime back someone brought sea water (sagara thirtha). Bhagavan accepted it saying, "Upto now all the rivers have come to me, but not the sagara, the ocean. This is the first time it has come. That is very good. Give it here."

When I heard that, I suddenly remembered all the ancient lore where it is stated that all thirthas (rivers), samudras (seas) and devatas (gods) go to such Sages as Ramana to pay respects to their lotus feet. I then used to feel that they were all hyperboles because stones and waters cannot walk to the places where great people live. But now, what I find is that without anybody desiring it, all these holy waters, holy ashes and the like are brought by bhaktas and Bhagavan accepts them, saying, "They have come". I could now see from incidents that occur in the immediate presence of the Mahatmas that one should read the inner meaning of things carefully. If that is done, it becomes clear that dharma is one thing and dharma sukhsha (the underlying principle of dharma) is another.

Since Bhagavan accepts all these waters with evident pleasure, it should be interpreted as his accepting the service of all thirthas and prasadas. This inner meaning occurred to me when sagara thirtha i.e. holy water from the sea, was brought in.

from LETTERS, dt. 4-1-1946.

FRAGMENTS OF A TEACHING...

By The Ven. ACHARN CHAH¹

Question: I am trying very hard in my practice but I don't seem to be getting anywhere.

Answer: This is very important. Don't try to get anywhere in the practice. The very desire to be free or to be enlightened will be the desire that prevents your freedom. You can try as hard as you wish, practise ardently night and day, but if it is still with the desire to achieve in mind, you will never find peace. The energy from this desire will cause doubt and restlessness. No matter how long or how hard you practise, wisdom will not arise from desire. So, simply let go. Watch the mind and body mindfully but don't try to achieve anything. Don't cling even to the practice or to enlightenment.

Question: What about sleep? How much should I sleep?

Answer: Don't ask me, I can't tell you. A good average for some is four hours a night. What is important, though, is that you watch and know yourself. If you try to go with too little sleep, the body will feel uncomfortable and mindfulness will be difficult to sustain. Too much sleep leads to a dull or a restless mind. Find the natural balance for yourself. Carefully watch the mind and body and keep track of sleep needs until you find the optimum. If you wake up and then roll over for a snooze, this is defilement. Establish mindfulness as soon as your eyes open.

Question: How about eating? How much should I eat?

Answer: Eating is the same as sleeping. You must know yourself. Food must be

consumed to meet bodily needs. Look at your food as medicine. Are you eating so much that you only feel sleepy after the meal and are you getting fatter every day? Stop! Examine your own body and mind. There is no need to fast. Instead, experiment with the amount of food you take. Find then natural balance for your body. Put all your food together in your bowl. Following the ascetic practice is just this. There is nothing special you should do. Only watch. Examine yourself. Watch the mind. Then you will know what is the natural balance for your own practice.

Question: If putting everything together in our bowls is important, why don't you as a teacher do it yourself? Don't you feel it is important for the teacher to set an example?

Answer: Yes, it is true, a teacher should set an example for his disciples. I don't mind that you criticize me. Ask whatever you wish. But it is important that you do not cling to the teacher. If I were absolutely perfect in outward form it would be terrible. You would be too attached to me. Even the Buddha would sometimes tell his disciples to do one thing and then do another himself. Your doubts in your teacher can help you. You should watch your own reactions. Do you think it is possible that I keep some food out of my bowl in dishes to feed the laymen who work around the temple?

¹ Excerpts from "Fragments of a Teaching and Notes from a session of questions and answers" by the Ven. ACHARN CHAH, Buddhist monk from Northern Thailand.

Wisdom is for yourself to watch and develop. Take from the teacher what is good. Be aware of your own practice. If I am resting while you must all sit up, does this make you angry? If I call the colour blue as red, or say that male is female, don't follow me blindly.

One of my teachers ate very fast. He made noises as he ate. Yet he told us to eat slowly and mindfully. I used to watch him and get very upset. I suffered but he didn't! I watched the outside. Later I learned. Some people drive very fast but carefully. Others drive slowly and have many accidents. Don't cling to rules, to outer form. If you watch others at most ten percent of the time and watch yourself ninety percent, this is proper practice. At first I used to watch my teacher, Acharn Tong Raht, and had many doubts. People even thought he was mad. He would do strange things or get very fierce with his disciples. Outside he was angry, but inside there was nothing. Nobody there. He was remarkable. He stayed clear and mindful until the moment he died.

Looking outside the Self is comparing, discriminating. You will not find happiness that way. Nor will you find peace if you spend your time looking for the perfect man or the perfect teacher. The Buddha taught us to look at the *Dhamma*, the Truth, not to look at other people.

Question: I feel sleepy a great deal. It makes it hard to meditate.

Answer: There are many ways to overcome sleepiness. If you are sitting in the dark, move to a lighted place. Open your eyes. Get up and wash your face, slap your face or take a bath. If you are sleepy, change postures. Walk a lot. Walk backwards. The fear of running into things will keep you awake. If this fails stand still, clear the mind and imagine it is

full day light. Or sit on the edge of a high cliff or deep well. You won't dare sleep! If nothing works then just go to sleep. Lie down carefully and try to be aware until the moment you fall asleep. Then as soon as you wake up, get right up. Don't look at the clock or roll over. Start mindfulness from the moment you wake up.

If you find yourself sleepy everyday, try to eat less. Examine yourself. As soon as five more spoonfuls will make you full, stop. Then take water until just properly full. Go and sit. Watch your sleepiness and hunger. You must learn to balance your eating.

You must examine yourself. Know who you are. Know your body and mind by simply watching. In sitting, in sleeping, in eating, know your limits. Use wisdom. The practice is not to try to achieve anything. Just be mindful of what is. Our whole meditation is looking directly at the mind. You will see suffering, its cause and its end. But you must have patience, much patience and endurance. Gradually you will learn. The Buddha taught his disciples to stay with their teachers for at least five years. You must learn the value of giving, of patience and of devotion.

Don't practise too strictly. Don't get caught up with outward form. Watching others is bad practice. Simply be natural and watch that. Would you get upset at a small tree in the forest for not being tall and straight like some of the others? This is silly. Don't judge other people. There are infinite varieties. No need to carry the burden of wishing to change them all.

So, be patient. Practise morality. Live simply and be natural. Watch the mind. This is our practice. It will lead you to unselfishness, to peace.

WILL YOU NOT LET ME GO?

By Major A. W. Chadwick

Overcome by a mood of disappointment Chadwick addressed a poem to Sri Bhagavan. He made no specific plan about a return to England before he wrote it. It was what one might just call spiritual disappointment which had taken a momentary grip. With his usual frankness he gave vent to his feelings. Bhagavan saw the poem and did not directly disapprove of the idea of Chadwick's return. He however explained to Chadwick at length that England or India did not matter if one could control the mind. One's mind is the problem and that matters—it would still have to be tackled even if one goes to England. Bhagavan's words brought tremendous consolation to Chadwick who abandoned for ever the thought of return. The poem is reproduced below:

Will you not let me go?

Will you not let me go?

Like some insidious druggist you would
make
Me come with craven pleading to your
door,
And beg you of your mercy let me take
From out your potent wares a little more.

And so,
You will not let me go.

Will you not let me go?

Here, in an alien land I pass my hours,
Far from my country and all former ties.
A restless longing slowly me devours
That me all worldly happiness denies.

And so,
Will you not let me go?

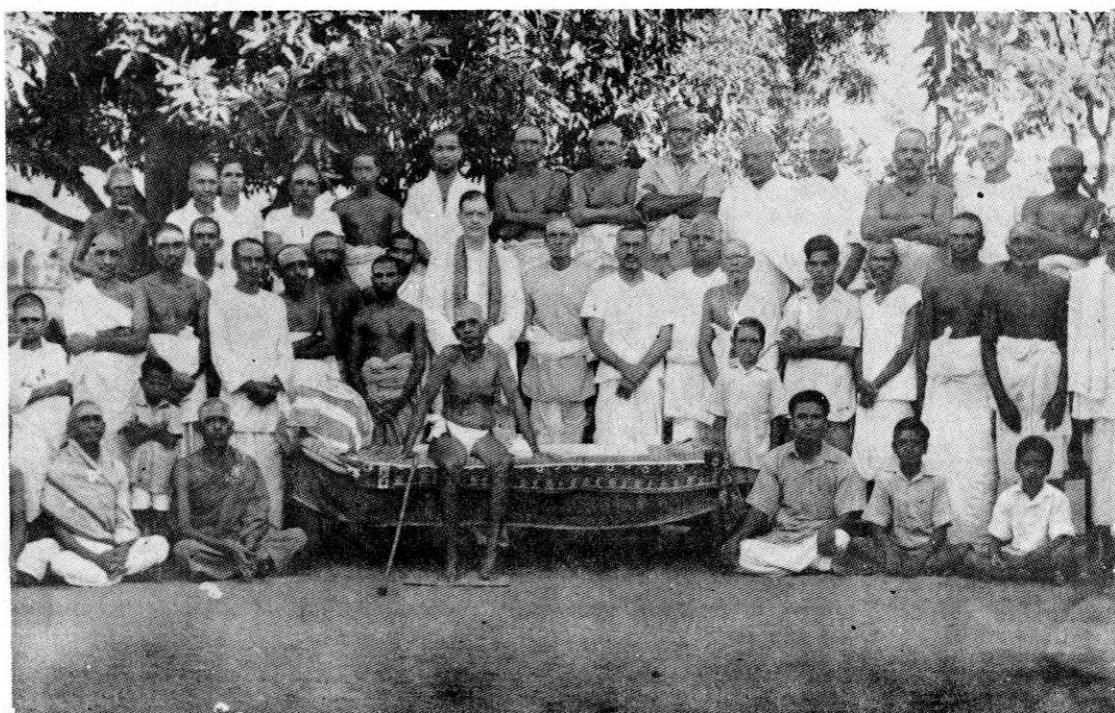
You tell me, 'Yes, I do not keep you here.'
That's but your fun. Why else then should
I stay?
While months pass by and mount up
year by year
So that it seems I'll never go away.

And so,
You do not let me go.

Will you not let me go?

Nay, I'm a fool,, I cannot if I would.
I am your slave, do with me what you
will,
That you should all deny, well, that is
good
If so it pleases you. I'll speak no ill.

And so,
Refuse to let me go?



Sri Chadwick is seen standing behind Sri Bhagavan

Will you not let me go?

I'm only sorry wax beneath your hands,
You've striven long to mould me into
shape.
Your endless patience no one under-
stands;
Your boundless love there's no one can
escape.

And so,
You'll never let me go.

Will you not let me go?

I am a fool that I should try to flee;
For here, there is a peace I'll never find
When I the least am separate from Thee;
Then I'll be but a slave to caitiff mind.

And so,
I do not wish to go.

“Place your burden at the feet of the Lord of the universe who accomplishes everything. Remain all the time steadfast in the Heart, in the Transcendental Absolute. God knows the past, present and future. He will determine the future for you and accomplish the work. What is to be done will be done at the proper time. Don't worry. Abide in the heart and surrender your acts to the Divine.”

— SRI BHAGAVAN

TWO DECADES OF

ARJUNA'S DILEMMA

By Prof. M. K. Venkatarama Iyer

The Lord had first to tear aside the two cloaks, one of compassion and the other of renunciation, before he could make Arjuna see that what withheld him from doing his duty was really its unpleasant nature. Few people like killing others, but duty is a hard taskmaster. It is no respecter of persons and its voice is imperious. Its path is more often strewn with brambles than with roses. It may or may not lead to success; or it may lead to death. In any case, there is no running away from it. This is the central theme of Lord Krishna's discourse to Arjuna, and through him to mankind as a whole. The instruction is not meant for Arjuna alone, nor is it confined to a particular time or place. It is truly universal.

KRISHNA, TEACHER OF DHARMA

By Arthur Osborne

However, Krishna's teaching went farther than this. It was that the spirit of dharma was to override the letter. A scoundrel was not to be allowed to tie the hands of the righteous by technical rules of dharma in order to establish adharma. So hard do people find to understand this, to put the spirit above the letter, that even now, after all these centuries, there are still some who put themselves on the side of Duryodhana, accusing Krishna of violating dharma. Actually, in the Gita no less than in practical examples, he denounced fixation on the letter of the law.

"The ignorant, being attached to the letter of the Vedas, declare in flowery language that there is nothing beyond."

"No more use than a well in flooded land are the Vedas for an enlightened Brahmin." (Gita Ch II, v.42 & 46)"

PATHWAY TO PERFECTION

By Sri Rama Devi

"The unfoldment of spiritual personality calls for resignation to the Supreme and worship of Perfection".

Resignation means identification with the spiritual core of your true being, which presupposes the negation of everything that does not stand the test of reality. It is the extrication of self from all its limitations.

Liberated from limitations, the human personality becomes the emblem of Infinite Perfection, "Poornam".

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

THE IDEA OF NEW ENERGIES IN BUDDHISM

By Mark Wilding

It is sometimes forgotten that all religions emphasise the need for a 'turning round', or a metanoia or change of outlook, or in the case of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings, the need for Self-enquiry. All the religions emphasise the need for this change of direction, first in one's thinking, and then in the feeling of 'I'. And all come to the same stumbling block in the fact that, as we are now, we have not sufficient energy of quite a new type or level to carry this new direction very far. We are bound to 'ourselves'. We may be told day after day for half a century that "the Self" is other than ourself, our everyday mentality. Being told this we perceive as through a glass darkly, perhaps for a moment or two, perhaps a minute or two, perhaps for an hour, that we have communication with a reality that is in the world but is something quite new for us. Every man or woman who has seen or found this pearl of great price comes back to tell us that it is a peace that comes in the midst of events.

THE SHAKTI IN ZEN AND VICHARA

By Gerald Yorke

It cannot be stressed too strongly that Zen is not a parlour game at which one learns to give slick answers to questions like 'What is Buddha?' or 'What was your original face before your parents were born?' From first to last it has been and still is rooted in meditation, dhyana. But that dhyana is not an end in itself. It is a technique, an expedient and effective means to an end—and a beginning: that is all. It can be compared to a dynamo, for the current or shakti that is generated can be used to kill a pig or charge a battery.

— "THE MOUNTAIN PATH" - October, 1967.

Laughing All the Way to Nirvana

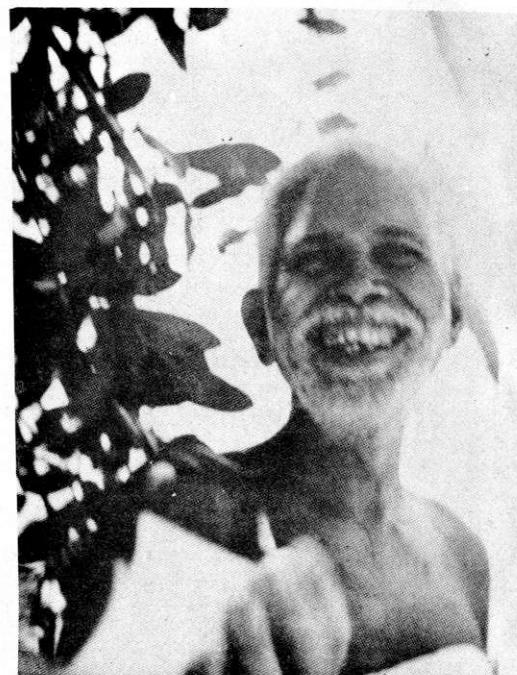
By John A. Champneys

"I thought she was trying to break a coconut!" the Master exclaimed, on being told by his attendant that a certain woman was beating her head against a stone wall because she could not contain her grief, knowing that Bhagavan Ramana's life in his fleshly body was drawing to a close. And in this one short sentence we have a succinct and exquisite exposition about the passion and the suffering of Sri Ramana. It is like a seed, for it embeds itself in the mind, germinating when the time is ripe to develop and unfold ever deeper levels of meaning.

"Oh, I cannot stand the pain! what shall I do?" the unenlightened ones amongst us cry, when we are subjected to pain and suffering. And yet the pain caused by the Master's sarcoma (which he quietly admitted as being akin to the stings of a thousand scorpions) was far greater than the transient ailments which visit the rest of us and about which we incessantly wail and weep.

We can see in this, as in all the passings of the world's spiritual masters, that suffering does ennoble the spirit, although in Ramana's case it is important to point out that as the man had already attained the summit of perfection, there could be no further ennoblement for him. It is our spirits which are edified by the Master's passion, not his.

But Bhagavan Ramana is not unique in showing intense care for others when his earthly life was hanging on a thread: Christ whilst in his Agony on the Cross



showed deep love for those crucified alongside him, and during the Buddha's last hours on earth, when the disciples were beside themselves with grief, the Gautama said, "When the Tathagata's supreme hour of triumph has arrived, why do you weep?"

What does set Ramana's case apart, however, is the laughter and humour which accompanied the teaching throughout his whole life, the smiles, the sheer *joie-de-vivre*, and the gentle fun-poking at the unenlightened which was, and is, the hallmark of his *upadesa*. For in the opening remark of this essay, Ramana expresses on one level an almost flippant attitude to his own physical dilemma. On a

deeper level he is saying, "It doesn't bother me what happens to this body, so why should it bother her?" and on a deeper level still he is saying, "Has no-one amongst you yet realised? Has Bhagavan not been saying all these years that he is not this body?"

Ramana tells me, furthermore, that with my own journey to enlightenment, there is no particular reason why I should be 'po-faced' about it and indeed, here at the foot of Arunachala, there is plenty to smile about. My attendant David and I must seem a strange couple in our perambulations around the mountain and in the township, but wherever we go the wheelchair proves to be a big source of intrigue and merriment.

One day was particularly memorable: As we journey'd into the town the usual chorus of children's voices greeted us, and out of the ragged group a boy of perhaps eleven years old danced and smiled, performing cartwheels like a little Nataraja. He expressed desire to push the chair and this David let him do, but no sooner did he get behind the wheels than he and the goddess of speed became firmly wed, and so he pushed and raced and pranced, jolting over the rickety cobbles and I, one quarter smiling and three quarters terrified, held on for dear life and it was not until later that, stationary and safe and sound, I could see the funny side of it.

Later on in the Arunachaleswar Temple we trundled wheeled amongst the beggars and the pilgrims and after a while David decided that he would like to visit the inner shrine. I am cast out from this part of the temple, for wheelchairs are not permitted to enter the inner sanctum, so he parked me at the bottom of the long flight of steps, and soon a crowd of twenty or so indigenes had gathered aro-



und me, curious to know the whys and wherefores of my existence.

From the midst of this motley group an old lady emerged, approaching the chair and then running her fingers around my deformed elbows, fingers and wrists. What happened next was so sudden and so surprising that I was left speechless and gaping: Removing an old towel from amongst her garments she gyrated it over her head, and when the cloth had gathered up speed she proceeded to strike me with it, and with each beating she called upon Dakshinamurti, Ramana Maharshi and a host of others as she attempted by her magic to drive my disability away.

After what seemed like an eternity of chanting and thrashing from the old lady, David, returning from his trip to the Holy of Holies, cut in with "That won't cure him, love, he'll be like that for the rest of his life!" And so she stopped and put her impedimenta away and then we slowly meandered back to the Ashram, the Old Hall, and evening meditation.

The following morning it was rather cold, and after our ablutions we somewhat sleepily paced from our room in the Ramana Library compound across to the Ashram itself. Circling the coconut grove where the Sarvadhidhikari lies buried, we walked on round and behind the kitchen, and so towards the graves of the animals who received the blessings of Ramana Arunachala in abundance. Firmly swathed in shawls and warm wraps, I cast my gaze aloft as we waited for the breakfast gong to sound. A fine filigree of web-

bed cloud drifted across the pale morning sky and a chill wind blew across my face.

"Well, my dear departed one," I whispered to Lakshmi the Cow, a shiver running down my spine. "If my body be maimed and fettered and sometimes racked with pain, then by Bhagavan's Grace let my spirit be gliding, soaring, prancing, flying, laughing, as the title goes, all the way to Nirvana...."

TRUE PERCEPTION

"*Atmanusandhana* has been compared to churning curds in order to make butter, the mind being compared to the churn, the heart to the curds, and the practice of concentration on the Self to the process of churning. Just as butter is made by churning the curds and fire by friction, so the natural and changeless state of *nirvikalpa samadhi* is produced by unswerving vigilant concentration on the Self, ceaseless like the unbroken flow of oil. This readily and spontaneously yields that direct, immediate, unobstructed, and universal perception of Brahman, which is at once knowledge and experience and which transcends time and space.

"This perception is Self-realization. Achieving it cuts the knot of the heart. The false delusions of ignorance, the vicious and age-long tendencies of the mind which constitute this knot are destroyed. All doubts are dispelled and the bondage of karma is severed."

— SRI BHAGAVAN in His *Introduction to Vivekachudamani*

SRI BHAGAVAN'S GRACE

By V. Ganesan

"Grant me your Grace before the poison of delusion (ignorance) grips me and, rising to my head, kills me, Oh Arunachala!"

— *The Matital Garland of Letters, v. 64*

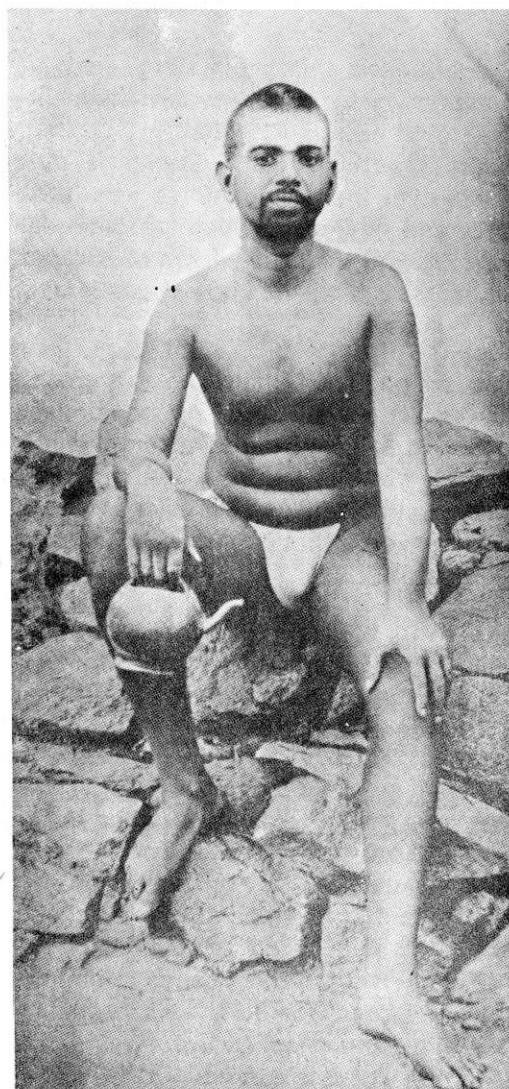
Going beyond thinking by **jnana**, beyond feeling by **bhakti**, beyond self-willed action by **karma marga** means going beyond that which arrogated to itself from the very beginning the thinking, feeling, acting and in short the doership — a 'false I'. It means more and no less than returning to the Source of Pure Consciousness.

Thereafter:

"Your efforts can extend only that far, then the Beyond will take care of itself. You are helpless there. No effort can reach It!" (*Talks, No. 197*)

Here we meet the Great Experience of Ramana, the Maharshi, in its second aspect, as the pure Power of the Beyond, Sakti: "Some force, call it atmic power or anything else, rose within me and took possession of me. I became a new man—" (*Day by Day, 22-11-45*)

This 'power of the Beyond' Bhagavan calls elsewhere 'Grace'— among hundreds of other names for it. "Grace is ever-existing, ever-flowing", says Sri Bhagavan. While adoring Arunachala, He says: "Ocean of Nectar, full of Grace". "Grace is the Self. You are never out of its operation. Grace is always there". "You are neck-deep in It and yet you cry for Grace. It is as if one neck-deep in water



should feel thirsty!" That which exists is Grace, it is always there, it is available to all and it fills the entire universe since it is Existence itself. That which eternally IS is the I AM and is the inmost nature of all and so is available to all, at all times. This pure I AM in everyone of us is Grace. Bhagavan identifies Grace with Guru. Grace as Guru within, pulls you, while Grace as Guru without, pushes you within into the Self. The transformation of the seeker into an adept is done by this operation of Grace — both from within and from without.

The confluence takes place in the human Heart, which Sri Bhagavan calls both 'உள்ளது' and 'உள்ளம்', 'That which is' and 'what is within'. This Being is the Awareness ever there to embrace you into a Silence and Stillness which transcends all duality. "The highest form of Grace is Silence. It is also the highest upadesa", says Sri Bhagavan.

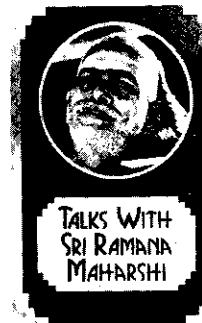
This assertion of Sri Bhagavan is a great change from the age-old, common belief that Grace is to be obtained after strenuous efforts, that it has to come from somewhere above and beyond, that one has to deserve it, that it has to "choose" one. And so on.

Sri Bhagavan affirms: "Grace is within every human being. It is the state of true Being, true Awareness, devoid of otherness. It is the Self."

Bhagavan says that to make an effort to know one's real existence is due only to Grace: "Your very desire for Grace is due to Grace that is already within you." "Grace is that which always exists." The true 'I'-P is pure Being, pure Awareness and pure Bliss. The sat-chit-ananda in one is nothing but Grace itself. The Aham sphurana is Grace; the Aham swarupa is Grace, the Hridayam itself is Grace!

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Let us see how Sri Bhagavan deals with this Grace in His written works.

In *Five Hymns to Arunachala*, Sri Bhagavan uses profusely the word 'Grace', 'அருள்' and describes it in twenty different ways: "All-kindness, Love, Saving, Moon of Grace, Benign Treasure, Adornment, Mercy, Blessings, Divine Life, Grace-war-fare, Grace-Love-Arrow, Grace-partner, net of Grace, cords of Grace, light of Grace, ocean of Grace, effulgence of Grace." Particularly in *Aksharamanamalai* He has used the word 'அருள்', 'Grace', 59 times! In *Navamanimalai* thrice, in *Padhikam* 5 times, in *Ashtakam* twice and in *Arunachala Pancharatna* and *Arunachala Mahatmiyam* once each. 'Grace' is obviously everything for Him in the devotional hymns spontaneously written by Him, while up on the Hill, Arunachala.

Strangely, when we come to His philosophic treatises, like *Upadesa Undiyar* and *Ulladu Narpadu*, He has not used the word 'அருள்' even once! His magnum opus as far as His teachings are concerned, are *Upadesa Undiyar* and *Ulladu Narpadu*, and imagine Bhagavan conveying His essential teachings in them without using this word 'அருள்', Grace, so pervasive in His devotional outpouring, *Five Hymns to Arunachala!*

Does it mean that there is any conflict between the *bhakti* of the *Five Hymns* and the *jnana* of *Upadesa Undiyar* and *Ulladu Narpadu*?

What are the key words in these two seemingly variant texts? In the *bhakti grantha*, it is 'அன்பு', 'அருள்' (Love and Grace) and in the *jnana grantha* it is 'உள் ஏற்று', 'உணர்வு' (Being and Awareness). What do these four words mean? Love and Grace seem to belong to the warm realm of emotion and duality. While Being and Awareness belong to the realm of non-duality. At the superficial level these two sets of words seem to differ.

The *bhakta*, like the blue lotus, basks in the cool moonlight of Grace, while the *jnani*, like the red lotus, rejoices in the fierce fire of non-duality.

Grace comes from surrender: *Jnana* demands the effort of self-enquiry. Even Grace seems hidden to the common man. Why? Sri Bhagavan says: "Grace is not manifest because of ignorance prevailing. With *sraddha* (perseverance) it will become manifest. *Sraddha*, Grace, Light, Spirit are all synonymous with the Self." (Talks, No. 381). As Sri Bhagavan equates Grace, God, Guru and Self.

Self or Grace appears in outer form as the Guru. For us Sri Bhagavan is the Sat Guru, manifested in a human body for our sake; to guide and strengthen us and awake us to the Being that lives eternally in us as the Self. The Guru is like a mother. "Guru's Grace is like a hand extended to help you out of water, or it makes your way easier for the removal of ignorance." (Talks, No. 398).

Sri Bhagavan explains clearly: "Grace is necessary for the removal of ignorance. But Grace is all along there. Grace is the Self. It is not something to be acquired. All that is necessary is to know its existence. For example, the sun is brightness only. He does not see darkness. Whereas others speak of darkness fleeing away on the sun approaching. Similarly, ignorance also is a phantom and not real. Because of its unreality, its unreal nature being found, it is said to be removed. Again, the sun is there and also bright. You are surrounded by sunlight. Still if you would know the sun you must turn your eyes in his direction and look at him. So also, Grace is found by practice alone although it is here and now." (Talks, No. 354)

Bhagavan gives the master key to obtain Grace. "Surrender", "Self-surrender"

— is that key. The sense of duality which doubts and demands proofs is stilled. The doubter, the mischief-maker, slowly disappears. In surrender the mind which doubts is dissolved, as in its mother's lap; the mind which fears is lost in surrender!

Devotee: Is Grace necessary for knowing the Truth?

Bhagavan: Yes.

D: How to gain Divine Grace?

B: By surrender.

D: Still I do not feel Grace.

B: Sincerity is wanting. Surrender should not be verbal or conditional. Prayer is not verbal. It is from the Heart. To merge into the Heart is prayer. That is also Grace." (*Talks*, No. 318)

In another place, Sri Bhagavan emphasises; "Surrender will make one understand the Grace." (*Talks*, No. 317). "That which is - is only Grace; there is nothing else." (*Talks*, No. 287) "Grace is both the beginning and the end. Introversion is due to Grace; Perseverance is Grace; Realisation is Grace." (*Talks*, No. 319). Sri Bhagavan quotes *Sri Bhagavad Gita*: "mamekam saranam vraja", "only surrender to Me". If one has entirely surrendered oneself, is there any part left to ask for Grace? He is swallowed up by Grace!" (*Talks*, No. 320).

A devotee appealed to Sri Bhagavan that when he remembered His form his mind should be strengthened and that response should come from His side; and that he should not be left to his individual efforts which he knew to be very weak. Sri Bhagavan graciously replied: "Grace is the Self. I have already said: 'If you remember Bhagavan, you are prompted

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to do so by the Self (Grace). Is not Grace already there? Is there a moment when Grace is not operating in you? Your remembrance is the forerunner of Grace. That is the response, that is the stimulus, that is the Self and that is Grace." (*Talks*, No.251).The very doubt 'Will I have Grace?' is to be eschewed. Bhagavan says this very doubt 'Can I have it' or the feeling 'I have not got it' are the obstacles. "Be free from these also," encourages Sri Bhagavan!

One may need further assurance to take the plunge of final surrender. And here it is: "The Guru is both within and without. So he creates conditions to drive you inward and prepares the interior to drag you to the Centre. Thus he gives a push from without and exerts a pull from within so that you may be fixed at the Centre. This is the Grace of the Guru." He further asserts: "God, Guru and Grace are really one and identical. He that has earned the Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken, just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger will never be allowed to escape. Nevertheless, the disciple, for his part, must unwaveringly follow the path shown by the Master.'

Are surrender and self-enquiry inconsistent with each other? "No", says Bhagavan. "What the **bhakta** calls surrender, the man who does **vichara** calls **jnana**. Both are trying to take the ego back to the Source from which it sprang and make it merge there." Both surrender or **bhakti** and strenuous self-enquiry help to dissolve one's ego. So, both by **bhakti** and **jnana** the final result of destroying the mischief-maker, the mind, the ego, is realised.

A devotee, even after much discussion and Bhagavan's ample clarifications, had doubts about the grant of His Grace.

"Lord whose being is all Awareness, you who reign in glory and enhance the glory of the Golden Hill, forgive all the grievous faults of this poor fellow and, with your glance of grace, benignant like the rain cloud, save me from falling once again into the void. If you fail me, I shall never cross the cruel river of *maya* and reach the other shore. Tell me, what can match a mother's care for her child? (You are my mother. Now come to my rescue like a good mother.)"

— Sri Bhagavan in Necklet of Nine Gems,
v. 5

Bhagavan patiently but emphatically replied: "Are you asking this question without Grace? Grace is the begining, middle and end. Grace is the Self. Because of false identification of the Self with the body the Guru is considered to be with body. But from the Guru's outlook the Guru is only the Self. The Self is one only. He tells that the Self alone is. Is not then the Self your Guru? Where else will Grace come from? It is from the Self alone. Manifestation of the Self is manifestation of Grace. All doubts arise because of wrong outlook and consequent expectation of things external to oneself. Nothing is external to the Self." (*Talks*, No. 157).

Then, what is meant by Sri Bhagavan's Grace? The answer is the counter-question: Is not Sri Bhagavan Grace itself?

Every word He spoke, every word He wrote, was Grace. He was Himself "Ocean of Grace Nectar Supreme"! His Light eternal guides His devotees from within, from His seat of sovereignty, the Heart, "Arunachala Ramana is the Supreme Being sporting within the Lotus-hearts of all beings."

An elderly devotee wanted to express gratitude to sat Guru Ramana for having revealed to him the realm of the Self, by quoting a verse from *Kaivalya Navaneeta*: "Lord, you are the Reality abiding as my

inmost Self, ruling me during all my countless births! Glory to you who have put on this human form in order to redeem me through your *Upadesa*! I do not see how I can repay your Grace for having liberated me. Glory! Glory to your holy feet!" Sri Bhagavan claimed and took the repayment by Himself quoting the next verse from the same text: "To stay fixed thus in the Self, without the three clouds (ignorance, uncertainty and wrong knowledge) obscuring your experience, is the highest recompense you can render to me!"



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Sri Niranjanananda Swami

By Viswanatha Swami

Sri Bhagavan's younger brother, Nagasundaram, came to Sri Bhagavan when He was up on the Hill. He took sannyasa and was given the name of Niranjanananda Swami. Later, when Sri Ramanasramam was founded he became its Sarvadhikari (ruler). He attained samadhi on Thai Poosam day January 29, 1953. This is the centenary year of his birth (1887). Remembering Swamiji with appreciation and gratitude we offer below a tribute found among the papers of Sri Viswanatha Swami.

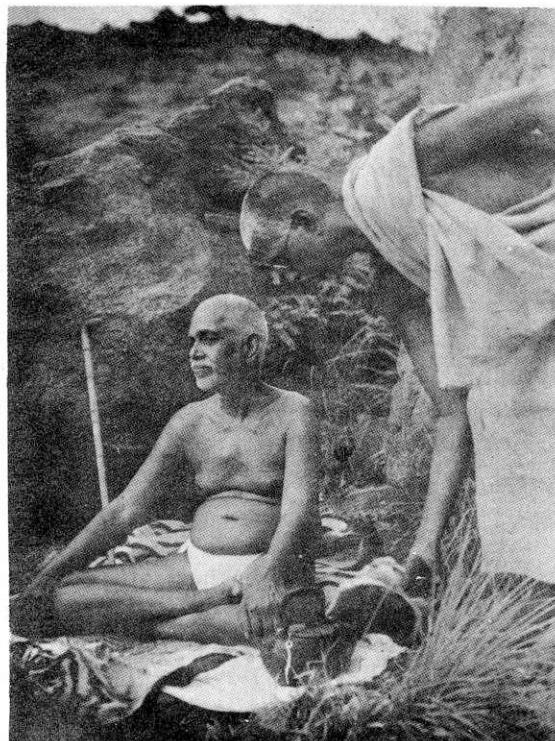
Sri Niranjanananda Swami has a unique place among the devotees of Sri Bhagavan. If all devotees had chosen to meditate and neglect practical aspects there would have been a gap. If the gap was not there it was entirely due to Sri Niranjanananda Swami. He carried on the noble task of attending to Sri Bhagavan's devotees as well as the publication of books on His life and teachings. For such tasks a person filled with the ideal of karma yoga is needed, and Niranjanananda Swami was the best Karma Yogi among the devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

He was greatly devoted to his Mother and did notable service to her which was well combined with service to the Ashram also. Since the Mahasamadhi of the Mother in 1922 the Ashram grew up steadily. Bhagavan's Hall, the dining hall and the gosala were all constructed one by one under his supervision. The kumbhabhishekam of the Mother's shrine in 1949 was the crowning event of all his efforts. Such tasks needed money, material and skilled manpower in a big way. One can unhesitatingly say that the success in securing these was entirely due to the zeal, sense of responsibility and untiring work of Swamiji. He set a good example himself and proved an inspiration to willing and

enthusiastic devotees who joined the task. With absolute dedication to Sri Bhagavan and unwavering faith in Him Swami told devotees who were in close contact with him that he never imagined that he was the doer of all this. It was entirely Sri Bhagavan's work in which he was only 'an instrument'. Such was his humility.

Other achievements of his are the acquisition of the house at Tiruchuzhi in which Sri Bhagavan was born ("Sri Sundara Mandiram"), and the house at Madurai ("Sri Ramana Mandiram") where He had His illuminating experience. Regular Puja to Bhagavan is being performed at these holy spots since their acquisition by the Ashram. They have now become places of pilgrimage for devotees of Bhagavan. (These two shrines are being renovated now. — Ed.)

Devotees who had close contact with him readily testify to the fact that his reverence for Sri Bhagavan was profound and his own personal relationship with Him was never assumed or brought in. He earned the reputation of being a hard task master. In his situation no one could have been otherwise. He considered it a great privilege open to devotees to serve Bhaga-



Sri Niranjanananda Swami with Sri Bhagavan

van and fellow-devotees. Because of this firm belief he often summoned devotees to help him in various strenuous tasks. He believed that by serving Bhagavan and His devotees the highest spiritual good can be achieved. To the last he kept up this attitude of absolute surrender and that was the secret of his success. Since taking up sannyasa in the presence of Bhagavan he conducted himself as a *sanyasin* should. He went to the town for *bhiksha* (begging for food) as advised by Bhagavan. Later, with close relatives around, including his own son (the present Ashram President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman) it was no easy job to maintain the ideal and attitude of a *sanyasin* but he succeeded in that. The son and other relatives could not claim greater privilege than other devotees. On many occasions he had come out with specific instructions as to what should and should not be done in the Ashram by them. He impressed

upon them that the duty they owed to the Ashram was much more because of their relationship with Bhagavan and that they should not claim any special privileges on that account.

Swamiji had a clear understanding of the tenets of Bhagavan's teaching and was particularly fond of Sri Bhagavan's *Arunachala Ashtakam* (Eight Verses on Arunachala) full of devotional fervour and deep philosophic thought. He was very peaceful in his last days undisturbed by anything mundane and his last moments and end were also remarkably calm, revealing the truth of his faith that Bhagavan would take complete charge of those who serve Him with utter self-surrender in whatever way they could.

Thus he was a true devotee, a model administrator, a perfect Karma Yogi and an ideal *sanyasin* rolled into one.

HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By Sishtla Subba Rao

I came to know of Ramana Maharshi early in 1936 from Sri N. Ramarao Pantulu, my first guide on the spiritual path. He related an incident that had happened in Sri Ramanasramam which showed the mysterious powers of Bhagavan. A cobra crawled into a room occupied by a post-master. Several people gathered together and were trying to drive it out when Bhagavan came upon the scene. He addressed the serpent and said, "Please, move away, these people are frightened by your presence." The serpent at once went out. After narrating this incident, Sri Ramarao Pantulu suggested that I might get relief from my eye trouble if I went to Sri Ramanasramam.

Immediately I wrote a letter to the Ashram describing my physical, financial and mental condition. A reply was soon received with Bhagavan's blessing. On 1st June, 1936 my wife and I left Amalapuram for Tiruvannamalai. On the 3rd morning, we entered the Ashram and met a middle-aged lady, Santhamma, who was then serving in the Ashram kitchen and knew Telugu. I asked her if I could represent my case to Bhagavan. She replied that I could do so, but representation to Bhagavan was as good as representation to Lord Arunachaleswara in the Temple.

At about 8' O clock, when Bhagavan was seated in the hall, I prostrated before him and gave him an account of my situation. Bhagavan said, "I think there was a letter from someone, with a similar case from Amalapuram." I answered that the

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letter was from me. Bhagavan then remarked that my outer sight would cease to trouble me if and when I would get my inner sight. I did not understand and requested him to clarify the matter. "Not to have outer sight is to acquire inner sight" was his answer. This does not mean that blindness is the means for developing inner vision, but that one should become indifferent to the outer world and its attractions or develop perfect detachment. This was a turning point in my life: Maharshi's talk brought about a change in my outlook. From that time, the question of improving my sight receded into the background and I started in right earnest on my sadhana for getting the inner eye opened.

Several devotees of Bhagavan counselled me to stay on there and in the evening I asked, Bhagavan for his advice. But Bhagavan in his own impersonal way answered, "Things will happen as they are bound to." My wife and I stayed in the Ashram for three days. We bade good bye to Bhagavan, purchased a number of books and photos and returned home to Amalapuram, after having visited Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, and Tirupati.

At home I studied Bhagavan's life and teachings and meditated regularly. Soon, there was a great yearning in me to spend some time with Bhagavan in his Ashram and do my sadhana in his presence. On 1st March 1937, my wife and I left for Tiruvannamalai, this time with the intent and purpose of a fairly long stay in the Ashram. As ladies could not stay in the Ashram at night, we put up with Mr. S. Seshu Iyer, an Advocate who had practised for some time at Kakinada and had now settled down at Tiruvannamalai. Every morning, we used to go to the Ashram at 8 a.m. come home at 10 a.m., have our food and rest; again leave for the Ashram at 2 p.m. and return home at 5 in the evening. This

"In a bamboo forest the bamboos move in the wind, rub against one another and produce fire, which burns down the parent trees. So also knowledge born of maya burns maya to ashes."

— Advaita Bodha Deepika.

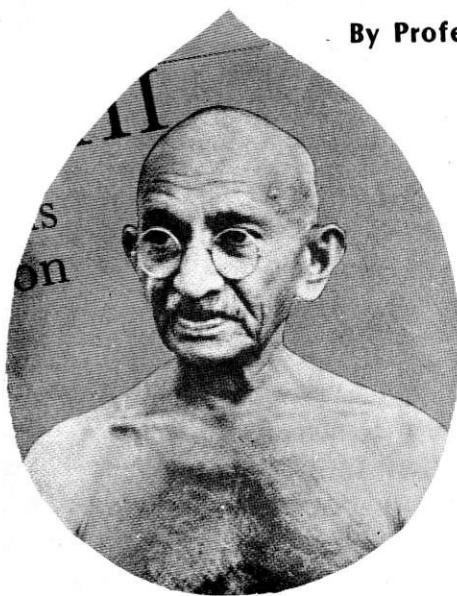
programme involved four trips, two in the hot sun. Later after our morning meal at 8, we would go to the Ashram and return home at 5 p.m. I would sit in meditation regularly for long periods.

Man proposes and God disposes. I was obliged to leave suddenly under very distressing circumstances. On the afternoon of 27th April at 3 p.m., I received a telegram stating that my father was seriously ill and I should go home immediately. We ran to the Ashram to take leave of Bhagavan. As I prostrated and tried to tell him what had happened, I burst into tears and said, "Bhagavan, I thought of staying here till I could achieve Atmanubhuti, but unfortunately I have to leave before I could attain my goal." Maharshi observed, soothingly, "Is there a time when we do not have Atmanubhuti or experience of the Self? As it is our own Self, we are never without its experience. To imagine that we do not have it, is ignorance. All sadhana is only to get rid of this false notion". In a half-choked voice I bade Bhagavan good-bye, and left that night for Amalapuram.

(Sri Sishtla Subba Rao was a Lecturer in English in Hindu College, Machilipatnam. He lost his sight, but visited the Ashram many times before he died in 1980. —Ed.)

Dharma and Moksha : Gandhi and Ramana

By Professor K. Swaminathan¹



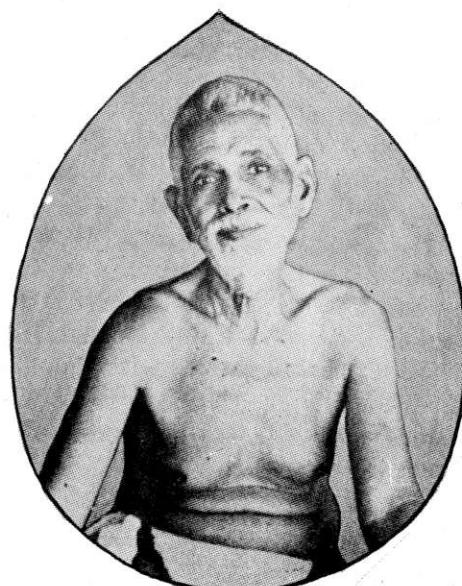
Mahatma Gandhi

This systematic study and lucid exposition of Gandhi's ethico-religious thinking is a work of outstanding excellence as it satisfies several different requirements rarely met by any writers so far. It strictly follows Blake's injunction to all moralists: 'Go! put off holiness, and put on intellect.' The academic philosopher and the general reader will find it equally persuasive.

Instead of idolizing the Mahatma as a charismatic miracle-monger or God-sent messenger, Dr. Khanna explains clearly the many steps which, deliberately chosen and steadily followed, raised a very ordinary person into a world-famous herald of the New Age. While Fischer, Sheean and Erikson and even Indian writers like Raghavan Iyer and Bandyopadhyaya study Gandhi *in vacuo* and apart from his ancestral Vaishnavism, Dr. Khanna

views him against his Indian background and presents him, not as a prodigy or a freak, but as a normal, natural flower appearing in due season on the old, sturdy tree of Hindu culture. His **Experiments with Truth** proves in a scientific manner how the acceptance of *dharma* and its practice in daily life does lead to the experience of peace and bliss, which is *moksha* in this very life, here and now. Gandhi was a *sanatani* Hindu, as he repeatedly claimed to be, and Dr. Khanna demonstrates how his undoubted heroism sprang from patient, persevering practice of the *swadharma* which he learnt from his mother religion. Dr. Khanna's compa-

1. A review by him of the book: *Gandhi and the Good Life* by Dr. Suman Khanna. Pub: Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi. Price: Rs. 100/- (Review reproduced from JOURNAL OF THE INDIAN COUNCIL FOR PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH.



rative study of Gabriel Marcel, the French philosopher, and Gandhi, the Karmayogi, or spiritual athlete, serves to establish the basic identity of traditional Vedanta and modern existentialism. The plan of the entire work is to show that the Hindu scheme of life does succeed in divinizing the individual and harmonizing society if one attaches 'more value to action than to mere words'.

The words and concepts are, of course, precious and worth preserving. But their practical application to changing situations is of paramount importance. Dr. Khanna first examines the words and concepts by linguistic analysis, and proceeds to explain and recommend the *praxis* through the existential-phenomenological method of philosophical enquiry. However, by scrupulously avoiding technical jargon, she clothes her arguments, profound and moving, with the charming simplicity of a Socratic dialogue.

With his firm faith in the scriptures, in the Upanisads which extol *moksha* and the Gita which extols *dharma*, Gandhi, like the ordinary Hindu, accords to *artha* and *kama* a merely instrumental value. Survival no doubt comes first in time, but Being-Needs, the intrinsic values, beckon us to the timeless Awareness-Bliss. For the Vaishnava as for the pure Advaitin, realization is not knowing but becoming god, the one being which is in all beings, and this actualization of our real, divine nature is available for all human beings. Today, Gandhi says, this realization is 'impossible without service of, and identification with, the poorest.' (Sri Ramana agrees, but would reverse the order, identification first and service to follow.) Whether *dharma* follows *moksha* or vice versa, *moksha* is timeless, *dharma* is time bound. *Dharma* changes with time, place and circumstance. Hence both Gandhi and Ramana reject any doctrine repugnant to reason and morality.

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It is only *sat*, the sole Reality, that is manifested as *satya* in thought and speech, and as *sattva* in action. Hence morality has a metaphysical basis. The moral law within obeys the same divine imperative as the starry heavens above. If, as Bertrand Russell says, the good life is inspired by love and guided by knowledge, why not place more reliance on the warmth of the human heart and the light of human reason than on any sudden, blinding revelation? The Hindu gods are not wholly other, awe-inspiring beings, but comely and lovable friends and companions. Good conduct, thus, is not discipline imposed from above, but an enjoyable exercise like swimming or cycling. And the reward is not in some remote *post mortem* heaven, but in the inward peace and outer harmony it brings about. The athlete of the spirit, by self-control shrunk into a zero, springs up unawares a hero, strong and free and happy. While love of power is a deadly malady, the power released by *prema* is the ontic power of Reality. Hence *ahimsa*, in its positive and dynamic form of love, serves both as means and end. Like the sun and sunlight, *sat*, the ultimate truth, and *satya*, *sattva*, the relative truth now wholly ours, are in substance one and the same. Truth, the goal, the best, is no enemy of love, the path, the good. For the pilgrim on the path, the truth of love and the love of truth are 'beacon, shield and buckler'. *Ahimsa*, the means supreme for Truth, the prime concern of mankind, is no namby-pamby sentiment; it is 'the largest love, the greatest charity' towards all creatures. It is a potent force, a law as fact, like gravitation, rather than a prescribed norm. Self-active, if unobstructed, it binds and holds together the human race, and ensures its survival. Deriving its strength from the basic identity of all selves, *ahimsa* works as a healing agent through conscious suffering for the faults and failings

of 'others'. On the contrary, an act of violence disrupts human unity and removes us a step away from truth. 'In fighting the imaginary enemy without one only neglects the enemy within.' The universal truth can be seen face to face by any one who learns to 'love the meanest of creation as oneself'.

But this lesson is not easy to learn. To err is human, to forgive divine. We see the mote in our neighbour's eye, but not the beam in our own. To love one's enemy, to love the wicked and the tyrannical, one has to depend on the grace of god. Perfect *ahimsa* is impossible without a living faith in the god of love. One discovers *ahimsa* through *satya* and *satya* through *ahimsa*.

To the doer of the word of god, this interdependence of love and truth is a matter of experience, while it is only a logical conclusion to the speaker and hearer of the word. The pure, egoless person who suffers lovingly and prayerfully for 'others' finds peace and bliss in this very suffering.

There is no wall of separation between means and end, between *dharma* and *moksha*. As the seed, so the tree. As I am now, others will be tomorrow. The fact of the identity of all selves is proved experimentally through the active love of others as oneself.

Love demands the laying down of one's life for one's friends. Fasting, 'the laying down of one's head on God's lap in utter helplessness', when undertaken in obedience to the inner voice, shifts our common burden from man to god. One surrenders one's last and most precious possession, one's life, to the god of love, whose other face is truth. In this *yajna* where the ghee of love feeds the fire of truth, the weaker the body the stronger the spirit

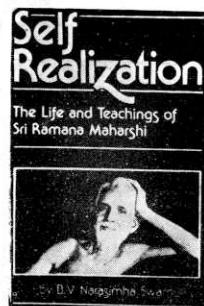
grows. The astonishing mental vigour and energy displayed by Gandhi during prolonged fasts sprang from his mounting concern for the welfare of others. When he fasts, he prays better; body and mind are now offered as oblation to the eternal goodness. Dr. Khanna thus brings out the inner logic behind the all-round efficacy of *upavasa*, fasting as nearness to god: 'Since we are really identical in being, when anyone is purified through prayerful suffering, the good in others tends freely to surface'. The hidden seed hears the summons of the sun. Christ on the cross is, like the lotus, a symbol of the power of light to raise a blossom from the slush. The silent appeal to the heart is not coercion; it is an attempt to open up the inner understanding in every human being. Fasting as self-abandonment to divine providence does transform a tense situation by unclenching fists, joining palms and restoring human unity.

A vow or *vrata* is not like a fast, an encounter with truth, a wrestling with god, an event. It is rather a course of discipline or training to maintain one's fitness. A commitment to a self-imposed injunction saves the aspirant from the agony of repeated choice, and enables him to reach a higher state of being. Taking the road of *sreyas* winding uphill, one leaves behind the lures of *preyas*; the self as a friend assumes assured mastery over the ego, one's only foe.

These vows appear various and numerous, but in actual conduct form a single upward thrust helping the evolution of our nature from human to divine. What holds the many vows together, the sap that makes soil and sunlight meet and merge as a single life-force, is humility, the self-critical self-knowledge, the teleological urge questing for perfection which sustains our growth from good to better daily self-surpassed. Hanuman embodies this

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virtue rooted in the future, not the past. Born a monkey like any other monkey, the humble servant of Sri Rama equals any god. Humility makes for continuous self-renewal by supplying strength and courage for unwearied service.

For Gandhi as for Sri Ramana self-realization is the highest value, the ultimate end of human existence, observes Dr. Khanna, but the means are different. Gandhi relies on self-control and selfless service, on dharma as the path leading to moksha, the goal. Ramana prescribes self-enquiry as the method for discovering the moksha which is already and for ever ours. Dr. Khanna notes the contrast, but does not presume to express a preference, unlike the valiant Dr. Arun Shourie who, in his *Hindusim: Essence and Consequence*, exalts Vivekananda and Gandhi above Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana, mere 'seekers of personal salvation'. In this rare-

fied region where angels fear to fly, wisdom lies in silent listening to a real jnani-like Meister-Eckhart who declares: 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. More blessed are those who hunger and thirst after the Presence of God. But most blessed are those who, having attained the Eternal Now, hunger and thirst after nothing at all'. The road winds uphill all the way, each step is bliss, and the view from every slope is, like every colour of the spectrum, lovely to behold. All views are summed up at the summit and all colours merge in the whiteness of Advaita, pure jnana. At the top there is no more climbing, only seeing.

A word of praise is due to the Gandhi Peace Foundation for publishing this study to mark its silver jubilee. A work of permanent value is a better tribute to Gandhi than mere ephemeral sound and fury.

TRIBUTE TO THE EGO By Anbumalai

O ego! Down the ages men have condemned and maligned you, but Anbumalai has nothing except praise for you. You aren't the ordinary mischief-making type of ego. You are a good purified ego and Anbumalai has much to thank you for.

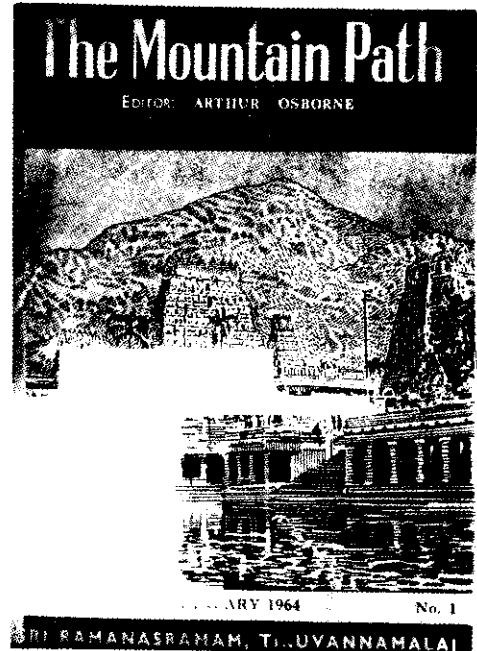
Your lack of ambition and greed made Anbumalai turn his back on worldly success, and made him probe into the mysteries of life and death.

If you had been satisfied with the ways of the world, where would Anbumalai be today? Eating grass with the rest of the herd! Luckily your 'mad' Love for Arunachala-Bhagavan made Anbumalai lose all interest in human bonds and earthly pleasures. Your 'mad' Love was an all-consuming fire which burnt to ashes all things, including you.

You are now as good as a charred piece of rope which has the form but not the binding power of a rope. You are not part of the world of 'maya'.

You are no more a cloud hiding the sun of Self, but a clean transparent glass through which the sun shines bright and clear. O ego! When you are thus a mere appearance, why should not Anbumalai write all this in praise of you?

O ego fully dead! May you live long thus!



1964 SILVER JUBILEE OF THE MOUNTAIN PATH

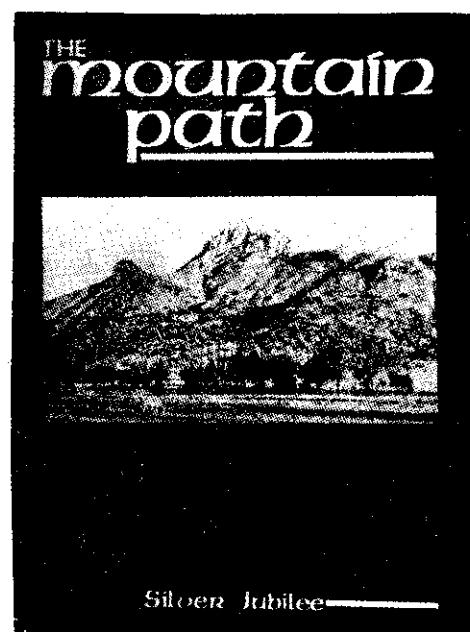
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Await the exquisite four issues of 1988

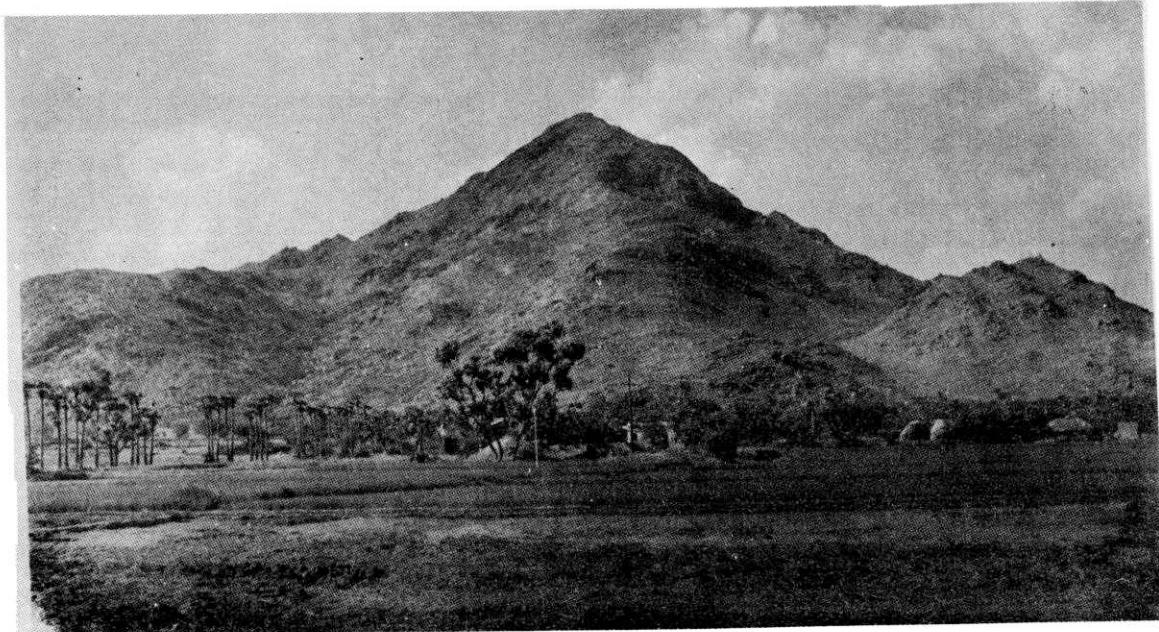
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A Pilgrimage to the Sacred Mountain of Inner Silence

By Joan Greenblatt

Emerald green, vibrant in the late afternoon sun of February, the rice fields of South India roll on, mile after mile, before our gaze. As we approach Arunachala, the Sacred Mountain, the landscape begins its arid changes. Boulders and scrub-brush, dot the land and small hillocks abruptly appear. Soon dusk approaches, sending torrents of orange and crimson shades on the canvas-like horizon, and suddenly Arunachala lifts its lofty head. The first sighting of the peak of the hill is a feeling beyond expression; the Mountain, like a magnet draws its unsuspecting prey, back again and again. A journalist, Ann Marshall, in 1950, once expressed it this way: "I had seen the Taj Mahal by moonlight and the vast expanse of the snow-clad Himalayas stretching for a hundred miles, but in all India I never saw anything to equal this

first glimpse of the holy hill, rose-crowned by the glory of the morning light."

To look at it, it appears as an ordinary boulder-strewn hill, brown and barren. Yet there is nothing ordinary about this Mountain, its mysterious, awe-inspiring presence is immediately felt by all who have either stumbled upon it on their Indian wandering, or meticulously planned for years to reach its rocky slopes.

At the southern slopes of the hill, Sri Ramanasramam greets us. Hands pressed together, smiling faces welcome us within the compound. We first return to the Shrine, where Sri Ramana is buried, its potent environs continue to inspire and deepen one's meditation practices.

According to the size of the vessel one brings, that much will be filled. So the secret is to bring the vessel empty.

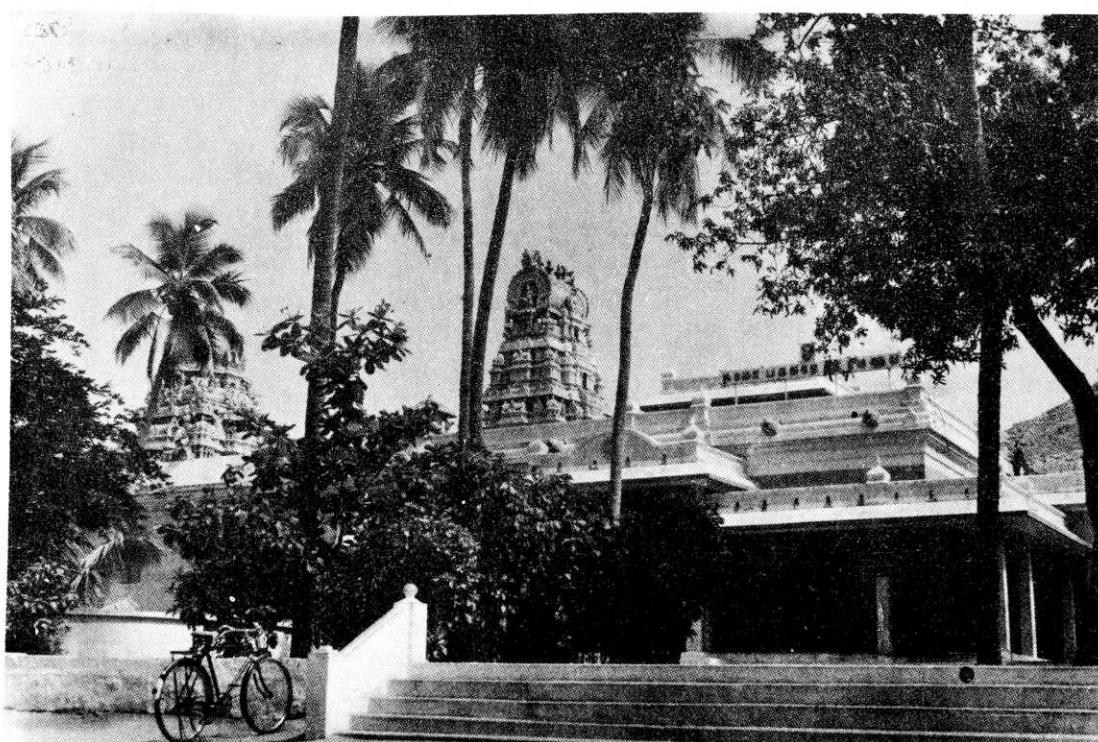
We soon find ourselves unpacking our bags in the cottage provided for our stay. The sun has set, quickly, as always, in the tropics. The song of cricket and barking of dog break into the silence, now and then. For a moment I walk outside. The guest compound surrounded by small yet comfortable cottages is quiet and in the moon and starlight the outline of Arunachala etches itself against the night sky. —

It is now morning. The sun has yet to rise and the stars still brighten the sky. Arunachala follows one to the hall where Ramana lived. Here, a few silent figures sit cross-legged upon the stone-slabbed floor, as they did with Sri Ramana himself. A simple milk puja (worship) is offered in the Shrine and then the breakfast bell rings. We enter the dining hall where rows of banana leaves are spread on the floor. We take our seats in front of a leaf and soon the cooks place steaming rice-cakes

(iddlies) on them and pour a cup of coffee or milk into each stainless steel cup. We eat with our hands quietly, slowly. A marble pedestal with a picture of Sri Ramana eating in the dining hall remains to remind us of his continued presence.

A young monkey arrives at the bars of the open window to our right. "Oooohhh" he screeches long and loud. Someone stands up and walks to the window to give him a bit of the rice cake. The monkey reaches out and takes it tamely from the hand of the giver, then scampers away. They remain, the progeny of the monkeys Ramana himself befriended and defended.

With breakfast over, we wash our hands under the water taps, at the entrance to the dining hall. Veda Parayana, the recitation of the Vedas, is soon to begin and a few Brahmin boys scurry past on their way to study. The morning sun is now high in the blue sky, a few clouds float by. The mountain is now rained with light and



in this first morning glimpse, is radiant, and very clear; it beckons.

I walk up the few steps at the back of the Ashram and soon am climbing the rough-hewed steps upon the mountain's edge. A shepherd, and a young girl with a empty brass water pot sitting lazily on her head, pass. I walk on, climbing gently but steadily. I find the rock, where I have often sat gazing upon the vast landscape at the mountain's feet.

It is an eternal scene of rural India. Flatlands, a few scattered rice fields, hills in the distant, a flock of goats, the rhythmic sound of the bullock and cart on the now tarred road. Head wrapped, turban-style to shield against the merciless sun, face weathered with hard work and toil, yet smiling and calm, and remarkably carefree are the Tamilians who walk leisurely down the road.

The silence engulfs me, here again in Arunachala's lap—its silence. The familiar song of birds enter and become the silence too. A few pilgrims wajk up the steep path towards the caves. These remarkable caves, Sri Ramana's home for many years, have retained their powerful vibrations and bring a deepened sense of peace and meditation to seekers who endure the heat of these airless caverns.

The pounding of their steps continue far up the mountain and they too fade away. Alone, yet the presence is there, a mother's embrace and father's solemnity. The sun is climbing fast and even in February becomes powerfully strong. It will not be long before I will be forced to leave the sun's fury.

The lunch bell will ring and, as in breakfast, we will take our seats, upon the floor, row after row. Midday will make us retreat to our cottage for a rest.

"Silence is never-ending speech. Vocal speech obstructs the other speech of silence. In silence one is in intimate contact with the surroundings. The silence of Dakshinamurti removed the doubts of the four sages. Mouna vyakya prakatita tatvam (Truth expounded by Silence.) Silence is said to be exposition. Silence is so potent."

— Sri Maharshi in TALKS, p. 75

There is no fixed program at Sri Ramanasramam. An inner discipline leads one. But there never seems enough time in the day. The places associated with Ramana are everywhere, and exploring the mountain caves, paths and slopes keeps one busy. But perhaps the greatest journey is inward. For the mountain and Ramana guide in a mysterious and unique way, making one feel that it is not enough to be aware of the inner silence but one must let the current of awareness enter deep within, every moment, then all that one does become the all-pervading silence of awareness.

The words of a long-standing devotee of Sri Ramana reverberate: "Arunachala had always been a religious centre, but because of Sri Bhagavan it is now a spiritual centre. His presence is everywhere in this place. In other Ashrama's the power is quick to enter the seeker, bringing with it many experiences, since it enters the mind. Here, Sri Bhagavan's path is through the Heart, and one's experience comes slowly, but the benefits are permanent."

The sun has become very strong. I feel the heat burn my skin. I rise to walk back down the bouldered steps and glance once more on the Sacred Mountain peak, "Arunachala, yes, home again."

ON HAVING NO HEAD!

By Douglas E. Harding¹

Douglas Edison Harding is no stranger to the readers of The Mountain Path. But to Prof. Huston Smith of Hamlin University, Minnesota he was, John Blofeld who recommended this book to Prof. Smith also confessed to a similar ignorance. "I have no idea who this man Harding is", said Blofeld, "he may be a London cabbie for all I know. But he has got it just right." On reading the book Prof. Smith too found that "Harding had indeed gotten it just right," as he writes in the Foreword to the book.

This delightful little book was reviewed in The Mountain Path of Oct. 1986. Here is an excerpt for the delectation of the readers.

I shall have to revert to straight autobiography. I cannot of course remember in detail the early episodes in my..... love-affair with the Mystery of Existence. Nevertheless the following reconstruction of that four-stage adventure..... is the best way of conveying... the actual feel of it.

(i) I am a young teenager, in conversation with an older friend:

DH: All right, God made the world, but how did he come to be there in the first place? Who made God?

Friend: No-one. He created himself.

DH: But how could he do that? Was there nothing at all, a great big blank, and then — BANG! — there he was? He must

have been flabbergasted! I can hear him shouting: "Look, I've just made myself happen? Aren't I clever!"

Friend: You are being irreverent. God is so great that he always was, he always had to be. Why should he be flabbergasted at this own existence? It's his nature.

DH: Well, I think he must get goose pimples every time he notices what he's done — producing himself like that out of thin air (not just as a sleepy old lump of something but wide-awake), with no outside help at all! It's not just magic, it's impossible! After that he can do any thing: make billions of worlds all complete, with his hands tied behind his back!

Friend: You don't understand There has to be Someone, creating everything.

DH: But not Someone creating himself! He didn't have to happen. He might not have got round to it. Or if he did have to happen, there must have been Someone else in the back-ground, making him happen-which means he isn't God after all. The real God is that Someone else-again busy inventing himself!

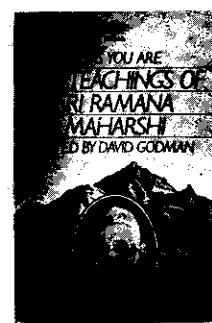
Friend: (getting up to go): These things aren't our business. God and the beginning are mysteries we aren't meant to probe-mysteries to us of course, but not to him.

¹ Pp. 66 to 69 from *On Having No Head* by Douglas E. Harding, Published by ARKANA PAPER BACKS.

DH: (to himself): Then why ever did he make me a prober? I still think it's very funny-funny-peculiar—that there's anyone and anything at all. There ought to be just—nothing! Not a speck, not a twinge, not a glimmer of awareness.

(ii) The time is some years later. Now grown up - but not yet consciously headless - I reflect further on the subject of Self-existence, which will not let me alone.

It is God himself who is the arch-unknower ! God (or whatever you call him or her who is No-thingness and Source and Awareness and Being) can't possibly understand how he gave rise to himself, how he pulled himself up by his own bootstraps out of blank non-existence, how he woke himself from that deepest of sleeps, from that long and dreamless night. To understand himself would be to stand under himself in an infinite and futile regression. An absurd and self-defeating contortion! He loves being an absolute mystery to himself—a God who had himself eternally taped would suffer eternal boredom. Nor is this divine ignorance a shortcoming in his nature. Quite the reverse; it's the reason why he stands forever in rapturous awe of himself, beyond all measure. It's the reason for his much-more-than-human humility, his trembling in the face of his own unspeakable grandeur, his vertigo as he gazes into his own bottomless depths. (Only we complacent humans are conceited enough to claim Being as our natural right, as much in the bag, and to be taken for granted as if we had it served up regularly for breakfast!) And, when at last our ridiculous pretension wears thin, it's the ultimate reason, not only for our adoration of him, but also for unlimited trust and optimism. After this initial and only real Miracle, what miracle can be ruled out? All things are possible for the One who has achieved the Impossible. The One who has the great know-how—which



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is knowing and not knowing how to be—is no bungler. His world has not gone wrong. All is well.

(iii) I have now come to my early thirties, and have "lost my head". As a result my childhood and youthful wonder at Existence begins to take on new dimensions. I stumble with delight on that luminous and inspired saying of St. John of the Cross:

"They who know God most perfectly perceive most clearly that he is perfectly incomprehensible". And this leads to the startling thought: What validates our knowledge of him (as perfectly incomprehensible), what makes it true knowledge, is that it is really his knowledge of himself, going on in us. For it isn't as these little, opaque, headed, all-too-human creatures that we are stunned, bowled over, by the wonder of Self-creation, but as the Self-creator himself. (No: We aren't indulging in delusions of grandeur! On the contrary, we are dismissing as ludicrous all our claims to personal divinity.. The real arrogance, the real blasphemy is the pretence that this human being as such can climb to the giddy heights from which God can be viewed at all - to say nothing of

the under-lying pretence that this human "being" at its own level has any being of its own apart from the One who is.) The stupendous fact (at once infinitely exalting and infinitely humbling) is that our amazed delight in his achievement is nothing less than his own amazed delight-the real thing and no reflection of it, or even participation in it. At this level what others are there for him to share it with?

(iv) Finally all of a sudden the crowning (and at last perfectly obvious) truth dawns on me. Self-origination isn't an impossible feat pulled off by some one else, far away, once and for all, long ago, but is going on right here and right now! The Impossibility is sustained, inexhaustible and ever-present. Here in this despised, they tell me tiny, overlooked place, supposedly bunged up with a head, here the whole wildly extravagant drama of Self-creation is being enacted as if for the first time (omit as if!) in all its pristine wonder, at this very instant! Right here and now, this mind-blowing mystery -This shout "I AM"! is my shout, is—my mystery, is my Self. I have to take it on board. Right here and now, I can no longer evade my responsibility for Isness itself-let alone for all that is.

"There is the world perceived, the perception is only apparent; it requires location for existence and light. Such existence and light are simultaneous with the rise of mind. So the physical existence and illumination are part of mental existence and illumination. The latter is not absolute, for the mind rises and sinks. The mind has its substratum in the Self which is self-evident, i. e., its existence and self-luminosity are obvious. That is absolute being, continuous in sleep, waking and dream states also."

— Sri Bhagavan in TALKS, p. 347

MAHARSHI, THE POET - III

By Ra. Ganapati

Before we embark upon that supreme song, the Bridal Hymn, *The Marital Garland of Letters*, let us touch a stray flower—a single stanza that brings out the Reality behind Ramana.

Ramana as Child or Bride may be beautiful, bewitching, soul-warming. But, all said and done, they are only the assumed forms of our Advaitin parexcellence. It is really a marvel that the Advaitin could accommodate so fully the *dvaita* of the Child, Bride or Devotee. But marvel though it be, it does not portray the essential Ramana of the Direct Path, or to be more precise, the Pathless ever-present Goal of the Absolute. So, before dwelling on him as the poet of bridal mysticism and as the hymnist in devotional moods, we may first have his poetic assertion of his identity with the Absolute, so that we do not lose sight of his silent core while tasting the sweetness of its surrounding sounds of music.

* * *

Sri Ramana lived in the Virupaksha Cave from 1899 to 1916 with intervals in between. The incident occurred before he finally shifted from there in 1916.

Amritanatha Yatindra, a Swamiji fairly well advanced in the Path, had taken refuge in Ramana for quite some years then. A Keralite by birth he used to converse with Ramana in Malayalam.

But a certain question, he was sure, would not be answered by Ramana when put in the 'prosaic' language of conversation. So he gave the query a metrical form in

Malayalam and wrote it down on a slip of paper. When Sri Ramana was somewhere away, he tucked the slip in his (Ramana's) seat and bolted away (from that unbolted cave!)

On return Ramana saw the slip protruding, took it and read the poetic question. A smile flickered on his angelic face as the reply formed within him, in chaste Malayalam poetry. He did not search for paper to write it down. With his innate frugality he wrote the poetic reply on the back of Amritanatha's slip itself, and left it at a place that would easily catch the eye of Amritanatha. Amritanatha did find it and was thrilled at the revelation it contained.

The query was :

Who is this,
living in a cave in Arunachala,
this God and saint,
Ramana,
eulogised, the Mine of Grace?
Vishnu? Siva Guru¹? Vararuchi²?
Or the Sannyasin Supreme³?
My heart in curiosity yearns
the glory of the Guru to learn⁴.

Our hearts also yearn in curiosity to learn the great mystery, the more so, as

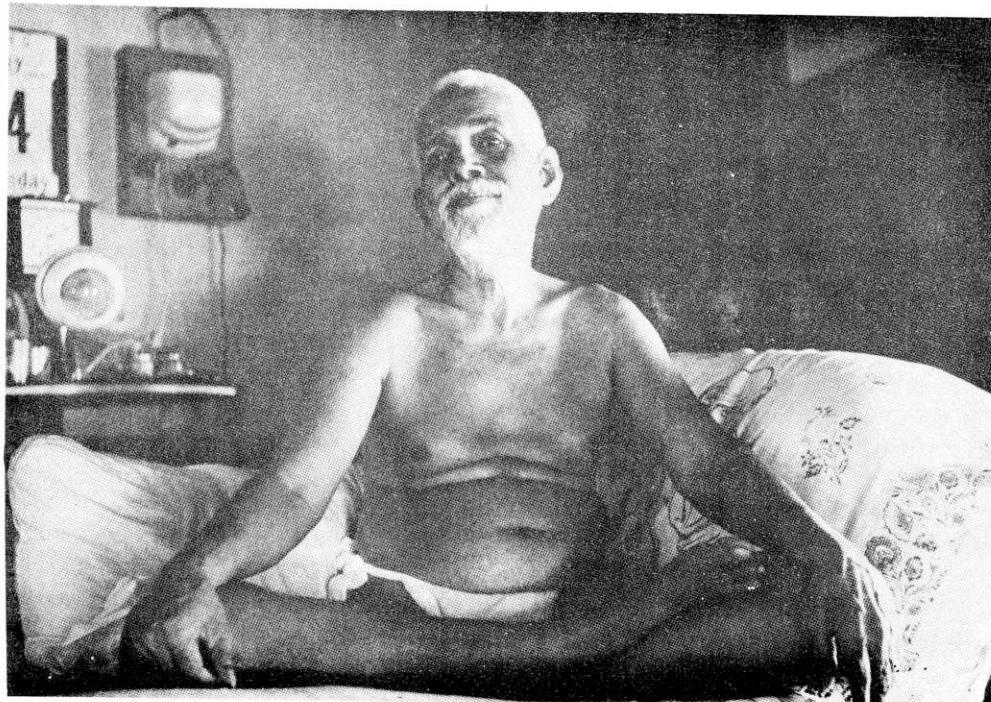
* Continued from April'87 issue.

¹ may be either Siva as the Guru Dakshina-murti, or Kartigeya who played Guru to Siva Himself.

² a great grammarian of the remote past.

³ Sankaracharya

⁴ This 'query' is not given in *The Collected Works*.



it is from the mouth of the Mystic Poet himself.

Sri Ramana unravelled the mystery, in astounding openness: a direct reply to a direct query.

**In the inmost cavity of every heart-lotus
From Vishnu onwards
there does revel as Consciousness
the Supreme Self
That, indeed, is
this Arunachala Ramana.
When in His love the mind does melt
and reach to the cave,
the abode of the Supreme,
Wisdom's Eye will open wide in you
to reveal Him as yourself, Awareness. 5**

Thus, though Sri Ramana donned the roles of Child, Bride and Devotee, and allowed himself to be called the Avatar of the personal God, in particular Kartikeya—when he was directly confronted with the question about his real identity he revealed Himself as only the Awareness

Absolute, which subsumes and sublates the duality of child, bride, devotee, servant.

There are, of course, other "stray flowers", where he seems to declare his identity with Kartikeya. As in his debut-poem on Ganesa, where he relates himself to Him as the younger brother. But that was a regular dualistic poem on a personal deity. Ramana must have felt that a note of intimacy would addn to the fact that Kartikeya had revealed Himself through him to many devotees. So, in the at-one-ment effected by the poetic mood he declared himself as Ganesa's younger brother.

There are other verses also where he strikes the note of Kartikeya-identity. For instance, when K.V. Ramachandrayyar asked him, in good humored banter, why the appurtenances of Kartikeya, such as the

5. This translation differs from the one given in *The Collected Works*.

spear and the peacock were not to be found with him, he replied (in verse) proving how they were all very much with him in a symbolic way. But the discerning reader will see that in all these contexts the omni-sympathetic Ramana was only accepting and approving his dualist devotees' premise about his being the avatar of Kartikeya and encouraging them to have their maximum "fill and feel" of him.

The "sympathetic dualism" of Sri Ramana is one of the most fascinating facets of his multi-faceted personality. It is this that accounts for the natural ease with which this Monarch of Monism gets absorbed in the spirit of the child or bride. Love, which is at the heart of dualistic realisation, is never absent in Ramana's Wisdom. Love is so near,nay, sometimes even identical with, wisdom. There is so much of bhakti in the *jnanin* that, like Suka and Manikkavachaka he too can be called a *bhakta-jnanin*.

The earliest outpourings of the Poet Ramana took shape as five luminous stars in the firmament of spiritual realisation and all of them are moving devotionals, though breathing the spirit of non dualism. They are collectively called *Arunachala Stuti Panchakam*, Five Hymns to Arunachala. Only later on he wrote his poems totally pertaining to the philosophy of non-dualism.

Mark that even in the astounding self-revelation of himself as Awareness Absolute, he could not leave off the love of God which melts the mind and leads it to the cavity, wherefrom springs the "I".

Having now had a peep into the essential non-dual identity of Ramana, and also of the essence effervescing in enchanting duality, let us turn to the *Marital Garland* which is one among the luminous stars—the brightest according to some.

— to be continued

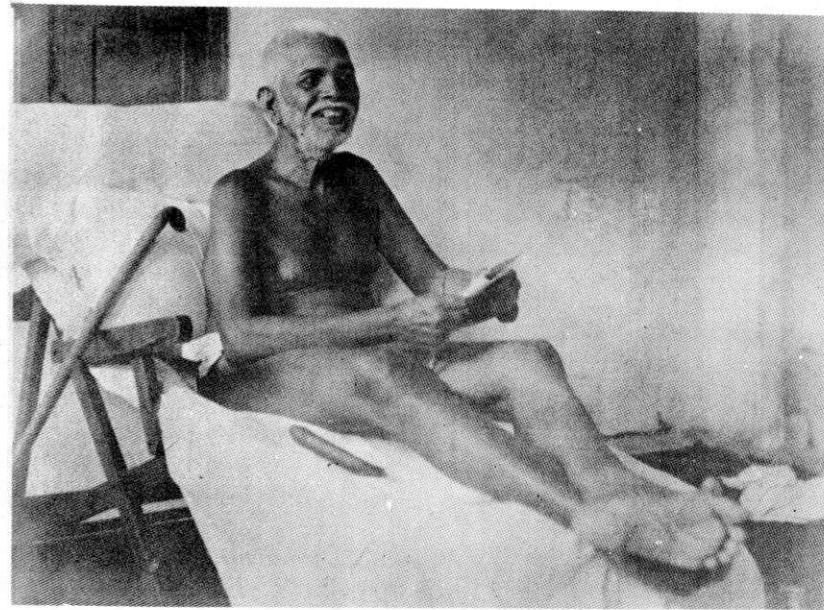
NETI

By K. Subrahmanyam¹

Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II. 3.6: "Now therefore there is the teaching, 'not this, not this' for there is nothing higher than this, that That is not this." "Neti, Neti" does not ask us to negate superciliously the things of this life: That would be frustration and morbidity. It merely states that none of the satisfactions of this life are more than pointers to the SATISFACTION, *Purnam*. The satisfactions which even the best of us derive in life are appetisers, not the spirit's pabulum. The Spirit's pabulum is Spirit. An aperitif is most often some habit-forming alcoholic indulgence, making us oblivious of the food which is waiting to be eaten. "Neti, Neti" only says that one should look out for food, not wallow in aperitifs. The satisfactions of life are "tantalizing", in the etymological sense of the word. That is the sense

of "the Platonic experience", that the joys of life, even the better ones, suggest and stimulate and do not satisfy. A satisfaction fills a pre-existing void. That is the nature of bliss, that it fills the deepest void, of which we tend to be ignorant till it comes to be filled. Till bliss comes, we do not know our misery. "Restoration came knocking at the door of unacknowledged weariness, strength came where no weakness was known to be" (Wordsworth). "Neti, Neti" reminds us of the void, the weariness, the weakness, which we forget in the idealistic titillations of life. It is the concealed "Asti" that proclaims Neti, Neti.

1. Extract from a letter to Professor K. Swami-nathan.



Moments Remembered
by Managing Editor

Victorious Ramana

This is the final instalment. I am grateful to the readers who have appreciated this column and have encouraged my effort in bringing to their notice some of the reminiscences of the old bhaktas of Sri Bhagavan.

— V. G.

"East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet"..... thus sang Kipling. But this was falsified in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. Intellectual or intuitive, modern or orthodox, white or coloured, all who came stood merged in the

truth of that one Being present in the form of the Sage of Arunachala. The early devotees from the west are not to be treated lightly, they were ripe souls rather than mere seekers. Humphreys, Paul Brunton, Grant Duff, Chadwick, Maurice

Frydman, Arthur Osborne, Cohen and Duncan Greenlees found in Sri Ramana guidance and strength according to their need and admired in Him what they cherished: the Englishman perhaps the Sage's politeness, the German his punctuality and the Frenchman the cheer and grace that He exuded as a flower its fragrance.

There certainly was a mysterious force which drew these matured souls to the feet of Bhagavan. And who can unravel this 'secret' better than Bhagavan?

Once, while talking about Major A. W. Chadwick, Bhagavan remarked: "Chadwick was with us before he was one of us. He had a desire to be born in the West, and that has been fulfilled!"

When Maurice Fryman, as reported already in these columns, composed a verse, the substance and style of which were the same as Appayya Dikshitar's, someone near Bhagavan wondered how a westerner, far removed in time and culture, could have echoed the very words, Bhagavan remarked: "Why not? Those who were here, were born there and have only returned!"

* * *

I take pleasure in giving below a few instances from the lives of western bhaktas who found in Bhagavan the end of their quest.

The sat sang I have had with Mr. Arthur Osborne, our Founder - Editor, is a very green patch in my spiritual career. He guided me more through his silent presence than through words!

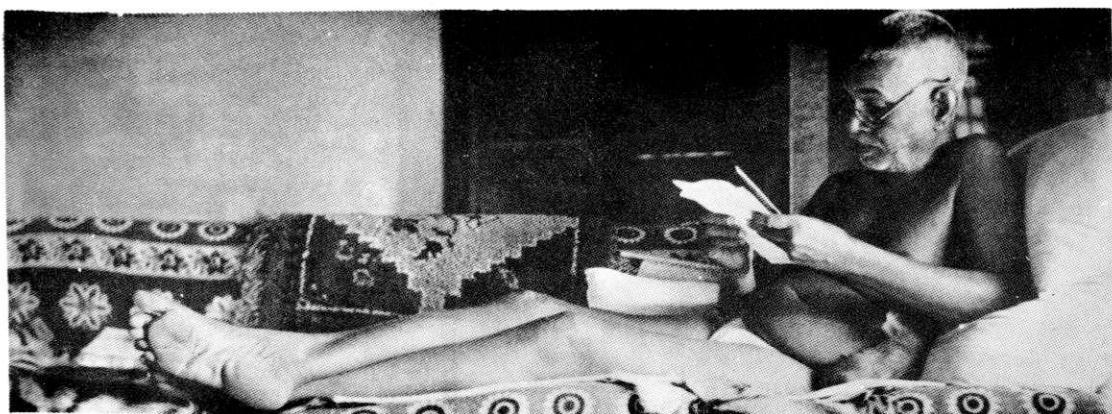
One day I went to him with a personal problem. I had had an experience which could be a dream, a vision or reality. He asked me to describe the whole experience in the minutest detail. After listening care-

fully, he said with a smile: "Ganesan! This is a genuine spiritual experience. You are fortunate. You have been given the mantra: 'Om Namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.' This is what they call ajapa-japa. I shall tell you about my own experience. Listen!"

"When Bhagavan was in the body, we who belonged to the circle of Rene Guenon, the French philosopher, were drawn to Sri Bhagavan like iron filings to a powerful magnet. Among this group, Mr. David McIver was fortunate enough to stay with Bhagavan and under His guidance translate into English almost all the works of Sri Bhagavan and also works like *Tripura Rahasya* and *Advaita Bodha Deepika*, recommended by Sri Bhagavan. Then, he was attracted to a yogi near Trivandrum, took him as his guru and settled down there.

"David who was very fond of me and my wife, felt very strongly that we should also go over there and take his guru as our guru too. His contention was that for spiritual fulfilment a 'physical' guru was absolutely essential and that since Bhagavan never claimed Himself to be a guru, we should leave Him and accept a guru who was prepared to accept us as his disciples. There was a spate of correspondence between us in this regard. All these letters—from and to David—were shown to Bhagavan without fail. My replies claiming Bhagavan as my only guru were all approved by Him, with a nod of His head.

"One day, I received a nasty letter warning me of dire consequences if I did not immediately leave Ramana and go over to his guru. I did not show this letter to Bhagavan. I was terribly upset over it. I thought I might show it to Him that evening. In the afternoon, I was doing some weeding work in the garden, head bowed and knees bent. Suddenly, I heard a 'thud' sound behind me - some animal jumping



down a tree and approaching me from behind. In no time, it got on my back and sat down. I felt it should be a bear for it had a lot of hair and was holding on to me with its hind legs gripping me around my chest from behind. "Ganesan! My feeling at that time was not one of curiosity to know what it was, nor fear, not even unpleasantness; it was calm detachment. I was undisturbed and continued the weeding work. Noticing my indifference, the animal started increasing its size and weight. Soon I had to bend forward owing to the burden of the back—the weight became unbearable. Still I was undisturbed and felt no fear. Suddenly, it gripped my throat with its hairy hands and started throttling me. I was becoming breathless, the grip was tightening more and more. All this did not produce in me a tinge of fear; I remained mentally fully alert and undisturbed. I felt I could breathe no more. The grip still continued to be tightening. Without any trace of fear, I felt I was going to die. Then, the miracle took place! At the thought of death I heard within me a sound 'Arunachala Siva! Arunachala Siva!' I was not making the sound but something else within me was doing it. The intensity, volume and speed of chanting of the *japa* increased. It was a delightful experience to hear within you a *japa* pronouncing itself and at the same time your being aware of the grip of death! As the *japa*

continued, the grip on my throat started loosening. The size and weight of the animal grew less and less. All the while the *ajapa-japa* within me was going on of its own accord. Suddenly the animal jumped away from my back and started running towards the tree—I could hear its steps rushing back. It climbed the tree and disappeared. Immediately, I got back to my normal senses. The *ajapa-japa* continued, uninterrupted. I got up and searched for the beast, but could not find it. I was very happy, listening within me to the chant, 'Arunachala Siva'.

"The next day, while Bhagavan was returning from His stroll up on the Hill, I met Him and showed Him the letter and then narrated to Him what had happened the previous evening. Bhagavan with His benign smile, listened to me and when I stopped, He said: "That is all 'they' can do. Everything is all right!" By 'they' He must have meant the guru who was a pastmaster in black-magic and who made David write to me that threatening letter. Bhagavan was a *purna-jnani* (Perfect Sage). When you come under the protection of a perfect Sat-Guru even a bad experience caused by black-magic proves a blessing in disguise. I had thus the good fortune of being initiated into the *ajapa-japa* of 'Arunachala Siva'!

* * *

Sri S. S. Cohen was a man of sharp intellect and an excellent sadhak as well. He often used to tell me: "Ganesan! It is all right you spend your time in service to the Ashram. But, remember! without sadhana there is no spiritual progress. Bhagavan has repeatedly stressed the need for steady sadhana. So, let sadhana be the centre and service the periphery."

His last days Sri Cohen spent inside the Ashram. Every evening I would meet him and listen to him as he spoke about our Master and His teachings. Physically and mentally he was becoming very weak, especially after a fall, he imagined he had become lame, though the doctors who examined him said that there was no fracture or other defect in his leg.

I had to be away from the Ashram for nearly two months and when I returned I saw Sri Cohen in much worse condition and moving about only in a wheel-chair. He could no more talk coherently: "See, Ganesan, I am maimed. Yet, the management has suddenly shifted me to a room in the seventh floor and there is no water there. What can I do?" - "They say they have given me an exclusive room for myself, but see, in the night nearly 12 people sleep here, squatting around me." - "Don't think there is only one Kannan (servant), there are nine Kannans, all looking alike!" ...)

I cried on seeing his pathetic condition and told him: "Mr. Cohen! You are the most intelligent sadhak I have met. Why are you talking so incoherently?" He then adjusted himself and squarely looked at my face and said: "When the body becomes old, you lose control over it. And so over the mind also. You are not the body and you are not the mind! So, don't give any importance to how the body or the mind behaves. They are not 'me'." I was astounded when he said that since

Dhyana is concentration on an object. It fulfils the purpose of keeping away diverse thoughts and fixing the mind on a single thought, which must also disappear before Realisation. But Realisation is nothing new to be acquired. It is already there, but obstructed by a screen of thoughts. All our attempts are directed for lifting this screen and then Realisation is revealed."

— Sri Bhagavan in TALKS p. 357

just a few minutes back he was talking sheer nonsense! Then, I asked him. "If you are not the mind nor the body, who is speaking to me, replying me? Who are you? In which state are you, now?"

"I am pure spirit, witnessing what takes place through the body and mind. I have nothing to do with them. I am in the presence of my Master: Guru Ramana, enjoying His benign and blissful presence! I am pure ananda!" As he uttered these words I saw a different Mr. Cohen, the one we had known for years with all his brightness and serenity.

After some time, he again started talking incoherently. It was a great revelation, a clinical laboratory demonstration of the fact 'I-am-not-the-body-mind'!

* * *

Maurice Frydman was in Bombay during his last illness. Except an old lady, his close friend, who herself was an invalid and much older to him, there was no one to attend on him. How could Bhagavan see His devotee suffer unattended?

A professional nurse dreamt a dream in which an old man in a loin cloth urged her to go to Maurice Frydman and attend on him in his last days. The next day, moved by curiosity, she went to Maurice and offered her professional services. The offer was turned down. Disappointed, she started walking out of the house. Lo! when she lifted her head, she saw the face of the 'old man' of her dream, in a picture hanging on the wall, over the exit door! It was Bhagavan Ramana. She again came back into the room and told him, the moving story of his Master commanding her to take care of him. Maurice gladly agreed. Till the last moment of his earthly life Maurice was most peaceful and serene, in body and mind.

* * *

While Mr. Cohen thus saw the light in the midst of darkness, Mr. Chadwick showed his mature state in a different way. Major Chadwick was admitted in the C.M.C Hospital in Vellore. His tongue had swollen so much that it filled the entire mouth, preventing him from even making noises. The Doctors put questions to him and he

could not reply. His end was nearing. A few devotees from the Ashram went to Vellore to see him and comfort him. Surprisingly, Sri Chadwick started speaking to them: "Today is Easter!" he said. When it was pointed out to him that Easter was a few days hence, he clearly answered them, in his usual loud, clear voice: "Yes! I know. But, for me, today is Easter!"

Yes! That was the day of resurrection for this Ramana-bhakta. Who spoke those words but the Spirit within?

* * *

When Mr. Arthur Osborne was in Bangalore and the end near, he could not speak at all: As a ritual farewell Mrs. Lucia Osborne went round (clock-wise) the prostrate body of her beloved husband. Suddenly, she heard distinctly in her husband's voice: "Thank you!". Who spoke those words? His Spirit alone!

Spiritual being beyond name and form mind and body, is our real nature, affirms Victorious Ramana, Conqueror of Death.



SURRENDER

SARANAAGATI

By Ilaya Raaja

The author placed his new book “வெட்டவெளிதனில் கொட்டிக் கிடக்குது” (*Splatters in Space*) on Sri Koti Swami's hands. When the Swami opened it, it was on page 108, wherein this poem on 'Surrender' is printed. (English tr. by J.J.)

Every male
considers himself
Manly.
Then, an obedient Son
Now, a tame Husband.
To become tame is
not Manliness
or Bravery.
If it be so what then is to be tamed?
To tame the untameable
is Heroism and Manliness.
The world by the body;
The body by the world;
Manhood by femininity,
and vice versa - such is
the tale of the tamer and the tamed!
Victory surrenders to defeat
as the latter does to the former -
Does not a sudden failure
Crush the constant Victor?
Pursue in this strain and
Perceive that there is nought
to be tamed - But yet,
is there not a mind that

sees all this simile?
Mind is the Master, the
Mastery of whom
makes for true merit.
But how?
See where he quietens.
He does so in the absence
of an opponent - so
lose to him!
Surrender to the mind!
If Victory be the mark of valour
To lose thus is valour sure!
Countless are they that failed
to tame the mind
May you at least win!
In that state of Mental
Quiet, of your surrender to the
Mind,
understand clearly that it
was not you but the
mind itself that
remained as itself
having restrained
itself!

SADHANA CHATUSHTAYAM

By J. Jayaraman

For anyone serious about the "business" of *Jnana*, four tools-of-the-trade are indispensable. He who would weave a cloth must not only have a loom but also acquire the skill for weaving. So too for gaining *Mukti* four practices are prescribed. These are enumerated below.

1. NITYA-ANITYA VIVEKAM: Discrimination:

The maxim of the ornament being nothing but gold is oft quoted in Vedanta. The doubt may arise that though the gold be the basis, still differences are perceived and even graded within a set of gold ornaments, giving rise to different values.

Two gold ornaments may differ in the quality of their workmanship. One may be superbly crafted while the other only poorly so. Still the goldsmith agrees to evaluate the two on the basis of their differences, only because of the solid fact that they are both really gold. Were he asked to evaluate two superbly crafted ornaments, one of gold and the other of wood, he would assuredly excuse himself.

Viveka is the ability to differentiate what is Changeless from what is temporary or mis-leading. Viveka is the ability to discern that which underlies all names and forms, the One because of which differences acquire value. By Viveka one moves from the certainty that one is this body to the certainty that one is bodiless.

2. VAIRAAKYAM: Dispassion:

When *Viveka* is not ripe, *vasanas* acquire domination from time to time during which one's discrimination behaves as if blunted, and one succumbs to the illusion of tasting pleasure through sensory stimulation. The seeker, *Mumukshu*, then cultivates *Viraaga* which is the disinclination to seek happiness in evanescence, however subtle such enjoyment may seem. *Vairaagya*, the state of *Viraaga*, is the indifference towards enjoyment of acquisitions and fruits, in this world or those that may follow. When one sees all as oneself, *Vairaagya* is ripe, for there is then no other to attract or repel.

3. SHATSAMPATTI: Six-pronged asset:

i) Shama: Equanimity:

The *Mumukshu* sees in direct experience that he perceives his legs, hands and various other parts as one whole calling that his Body. Though the parts differ in form, function and capacity, he exhibits no prejudice towards individual parts, being common to them all as the experiencer. By cultivating the outlook that the same indivisible Being exists permeating all things moving or fixed, *Shama* ripens. As *Shama* ripens, all differences acquire secondary value and dissolve and are seen as the countless limbs of the Cosmic Body whose Being is the seer.

ii) *Dama:* Restraint :

Cultivation of *Shama* is made easy by restraining the mind while dwelling on sense-objects. Sense-experience is harmless. The enjoyment of, or taste for, the objects of sense experience is to be avoided. This restraint will need to be exercised at the mental or sensory level upto the organs of action, depending upon one's maturity.

iii) *Uparati:* Renunciation:

Uparati is non-attachment to ownership or better still, doership. While it is necessary that not even a particle or instant be wasted, one should be ever ready to leave behind **anything** as mere dust of ephemera. As *Uparati* ripens, the *Mumukshu*, oblivious of non-Self, rests in the Self as Self.

iv) *Titiksha:* Forbearance :

Without languishing or bemoaning and without resort to the slightest means for relief from the ill that has befallen, he who bears it all with courage, the strength of understanding, is said to have perfect forbearance, *Titiksha*.

v) *Samaadaana:* Mouna, Quietude or Peace:

When the mind is not allowed to roam where it pleases but made to dwell only on the Self, the import of the sayings of the wise, *Samaadaana* develops. When the mind stilled by *Vichara*, of its own accord vanishes in its source, perfect *Samaadaana* results.

vi) *Sraddha:* Faith:

Sraddha is the conviction that the Guru and the *Srutis* speak the Truth. Such faith leads on to identification with Truth itself.

The above six are regarded as one *Sadhana* since they complement one another.

THE ALONE STATE

By Anbumalai

When you are on the human ego level,
Outward flows your energy,
Your attention goes to things external,
Without contact with other humans you
can't live,
Aloneness is impossible to bear,
To abide within, quiet, still, at peace,
Apart from everyone and everything,
Is beyond reach.

But when so the summit you approach,
With complete surrender to the Master,
The ego in you the veil
That hides your true Being,
Falls away and you rise above the personal
level,
You fly into the freedom of the ALONE state,
Where there is neither 'me' nor 'you', 'this'
nor 'that',
Only the Self, one without a second.

In the realm of Reality,
All alone you are, as said by Bhagavan—
"Self is the sole Reality; there are no 'others'."
When in such Non-duality you dwell,
Who is there apart from you to meet or talk
with,
And what is there to interest you in the
world?
You are simply what you are,
In your natural state, ALONE.

As 'Anbumalai' stepped out of his room at Ramanashram, an elderly European walking past suddenly fired a question at him—"Tell me something. Are you human?" "Anbumalai" shot back a counter-question—"What makes you say that?" Said the European, "Well I have marked you for quite some time. You don't act like a normal human. You don't pay any attention to the world and people around you nor do you meet or talk to anyone. You are an island unto yourself. You don't seem to live on the human level at all. Am I right?" "Well you aren't wrong there." "But how on earth is it possible to live like that?" The answer — 'The ALONE State'.

4. Mumukshutvam: Thirst for Freedom:

This is the desire for that True Knowledge which can rid one of the terrible bondage of birth and death connected with Egoism (down to the physical body), which was born due to primal Ajnana, the illusion without beginning. *Mumukshutvam*, when intense, is associated with *Vairaagya*. In such a seeker the *Shadsampati* appear of their own accord leading him on to Truth. When one's body is set aflame, one searches only for water and chancing upon it plunges into it without the prelude of ascertaining the propitiousness of the time or the sacredness of the water. So too the intense *Mumukshu* forges resolutely ahead and realises the Truth without delay or doubt. Consumed by the forest fire of impas-

sable *Samsara*, a fire fanned devilishly by the winds of deeds born of ignorance and terrified by its continuing torments, the seeker takes refuge at the feet of the Guru, the accomplished One, who having crossed the ocean helps those across that seek His refuge.

All the four *Sadhanas* are necessary to gain the Truth. They are acquired by effort and the Grace of the Guru. If perchance there is an exception, it should be inferred that the necessary work was completed in times gone by.

Mind by nature is that which does not stay, but strays. By wandering within the seeming multiplicity of the *Saadhana Chatushtaya*, stability is assured. *Atma-Vichara* is then efficient and automatic.

NIRANJANA PANCHAKAM

By Adi Annamalai Sastrī¹

1. Oh Niranjana! You have proved the adage that the mother acquires greatness through her sons. Brave one, endowed with lofty qualities your wondrous service will stand as long as does this world.
2. Oh supreme ascetic that you are, holding fast to Ramana with a mind that cares for aught else. By the grandeur of the love of thy faultless mother have you erected a fitting temple.
3. You Niranjana, who serve the Lord that cleanses all those that surrender unto Him, have by this sovereign service made a monument to thy mother's fame which would outlast the march of the Yugas.
4. Born brother to Golden-handed² Ramana who vouchchafed Self-hood to his mother, you have won the title "Diamond-Armed" this day by virtue of erecting this temple of glittering stone.
5. Oh ascetic son of Alagamma the Mother Beautiful; thy holy accomplishment praised by all the gods has lead thy mother, greater than the *Trimurtis*, to confer immense good upon all for all time.

1. Composed on Sri Niranjanananda Swami in Tamil (*Venba metre*) on the occasion of the *Kumbhabhishekam* of Mathrubuteswara Temple. English tr. by J.J.
2. Bhagavan's boyhood nick-name.

**LEAVES FROM DEVOTEES'
DIARIES**

NAMASKARA

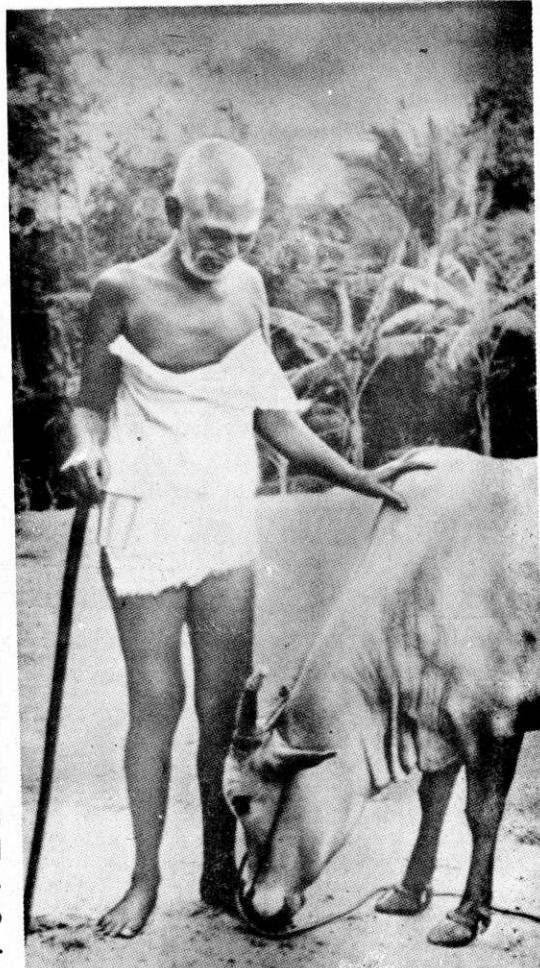
"Prostration means 'subsidence of the ego'. What is 'subsidence'? To merge into the source of its origin."

— SRI BHAGAVAN

At about 3 O' clock this afternoon a young boy, four or five years of age, came with his mother. She prostrated before Bhagavan and sat down. The boy prostrated likewise, but continued the salutations over and over again. Bhagavan laughed at that and told his attendants: "Just see. He is prostrating to me over and over again. Perhaps he thinks that if he does so, he may afterwards do whatever he pleases. He is a young lad. What does he know? He is just imitating his elders. He must however be rewarded. All that he wants is a plantain. If he gets it he will stop. Give him one." On being given one, the boy went and sat down.

After some time, someone came and did sashtanga namaskara (reverential salutation by prostrating with all the eight limbs of the body touching the ground), but did not get up for a long time. People nearby finally made him get up. He somehow got up but began saluting again and again. He was ultimately prevailed upon to stop saluting and sit down. Bhagavan told the people near him: "Namaskara means prostrating a number of times according to some. What can be done? The real meaning of Namaskara is the dissolving of the mind.".

"What is the meaning of 'Sashtanga Na-maskara', Bhagavan ?" asked the devotee.



Cow Lakshmi's Prostration

"It means that eight limbs of the body, namely, two hands two legs, two arms, chest and forehead, touch the ground while saluting. The idea behind this type of obeisance is that the person doing it says, 'the body which touches the earth, will resolve itself into that earth ultimately, and the 'I' in me will continue to be 'I' alone'. That idea must be known to oneself by enquiry. Without knowing it, there is no use in doing these *namaskaras*. With meaningless *namaskaras* people want to secure all the benefits: 'Swami must give them whatever they desire, be it a bag of clothes or money'. Whenever they do *namaskara*, I feel afraid I must be beholden to them. I must act according to their wishes. I must fulfil all their desires. I must conduct myself carefully after knowing their minds. Not only that. Just by bowing to me, they get a sort of right over me. When people like us suffer like this; what about *Ishwara* Himself? He must be beholden to ever so many; he must act according to the wishes of people; he must give boons to people. When *Swamitvam* itself has so many troubles, what about *Ishwaratvam*? If anyone refrains from prostrating before me, I feel very happy because I need not be beholden to him. A *jnani* need not prostrate before anybody. Nor need he give his blessings to anybody. That is because his mind remains always submerged. He is deemed to be doing *namaskara* at all times. Some people feel offended when they prostrate before a *jnani* and he does not respond with another *namaskara* nor even raise his hand and bless them. But the fact is, before the others have prostrated, the *jnani* will have already prostrated lower, his mind having been dissolved. Even blessing (*asirvadham*) is similar. The submerging of the mind itself is a blessing. The *jnani*'s mind remains always

HURRY HOME

By "Hari Om"

Obeisance to thee, our Lord and Master
Awareness! Fount of death and life;
Author alike of triumph and disaster;
The Sole preceding substance and
strife.

Out-facing, drunk on borrowed light
And thought-and-pun-wrought!
Noumenon;
Intellect! Phantom! Feigning flight
Through symbol-stuffed oblivion.

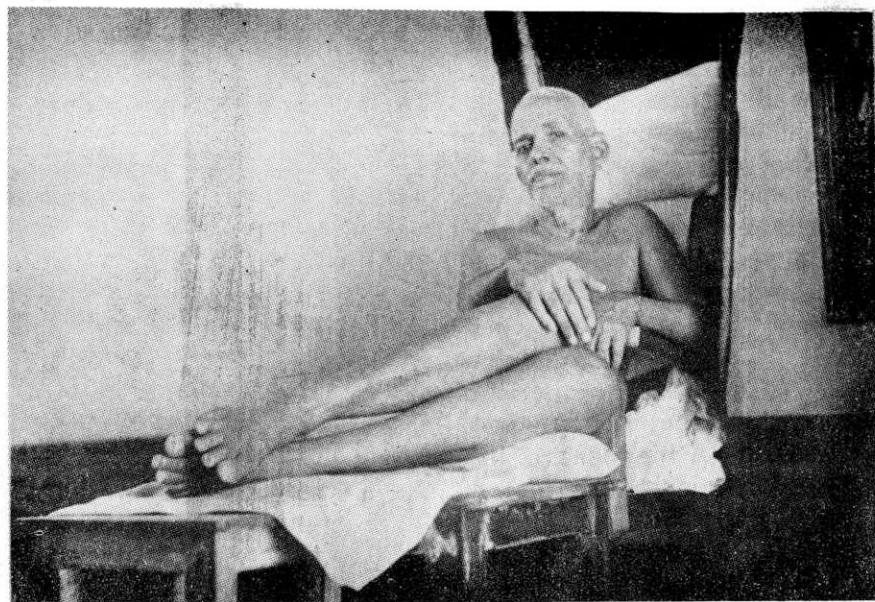
Intellect sharp through crossing swords
In world of play or play of words;
Intellect honed in harmless tussle
With crossword, chessboard, cosmic
puzzle.

By God! Then seized with growing fear
That all is shadow—far and near;
Pre-sense now tracks its own presence:
Whither, whence, Efflorescence?

O when the filmy veil is rent
Rejecting Landlord and Tenant;
The Rope remains, the Knot a nought
Be-holding seeker as the Sought.

At Home at last! At Home! At Home!
You give up self before you're shown
At Home at last! At Home! At Home!
The open secret! Hoary Om.

1 Self seemingly conditioned by thought or dual sense.



submerged: That being so, who is the one to bless? What is it that is done?" said Bhagavan.

— from LETTERS
by Suri Nagamma, p.300-301

* * *

"Some go on doing a number of namaskaras, e. g., that Janaki, she goes on striking her head down countless times along with namaskaras. She goes round a number of times. At each window she falls down and does a number of namaskaras. However much I tell her, she won't leave off such practices", said Sri Bhagavan.

Somebody here interjected: "It seems she is known to Bhagavan since her childhood."

Sri Bhagavan said: "Yes, Yes," and continued: "There are others who come and fall before me while I am moving. They lie prostrate for some minutes. I cannot stand for them on account of my physical infirmity. So I walk on, telling myself: 'Only if we do namaskaras we will be bene-

fited. After all, true namaskara is only the giving up the 'I'-sense, or killing the ego'."

— from DAY BY DAY
by A. Devaraja Mudaliar, p. 173

* * *

Sri Bhagavan often speaks of namaskara (prostration) in the following strain: "This namaskara was originally meant by the ancient sages to serve as a means of surrender to God. The act still prevails but not the spirit behind it. The doer of namaskara intends to deceive the object of worship by his act. It is mostly insincere and deceitful. It is meant to cover up innumerable sins. Can God be deceived? The man thinks that God accepts his namaskara and that he himself is free to continue his old life. They need not come to me. I am not pleased with these namaskara. The people should keep their minds clean; instead of that they bend themselves or lie prostrate before me. I am not deceived by such acts."

— from TALKS, p. 516-517

Devotee: What is *namaskara* (prostration)?

MAHARSHI: Prostration means 'subsidence of the ego'. What is 'subsidence'? To merge into the source of its origin. God cannot be deceived by outward genuflexions, bowings and prostrations. He sees if the individuality is there or not.

— from TALKS, p. 333

* * *

As Sri Bhagavan was descending the Hill, one of the workers just outside the Ashram stopped work and was about to prostrate before the Master. Then the Master said "To engage in your duty is the true prostration."

The Master's attendant asked: "How?"

Master: "To perform one's duty carefully is the greatest service to God. (Then, smiling, he entered the hall.)"

— from TALKS, p. 187

* * *

When I returned to the Ashram after spending some days at Kovilur Mutt, Sri

Bhagavan asked me in detail about what I did, where I went and so on. I said: "Mahadeva Swami made kind enquiries about Sri Bhagavan and the Ashramites. The day I went there, Raja Sir Annamalai Chettiar and his relatives came to visit Mahadeva Swami." Sri Bhagavan asked me what Chettiar did there. I said that he prostrated with great reverence before Mahadeva Swami and accepted *vibhuti prasad* from him. Sri Bhagavan asked: "Did you prostrate before Mahadeva Swami?" When I said no, he asked me why. I said: "I don't want to do *namaskar* to anyone except Sri Bhagavan." Sri Bhagavan said: "What an intelligent, wise fellow! Is your Bhagavan only within this body on the sofa? Is he not elsewhere? If a person is devoted wholly to one person, he should not go anywhere. If you go to another place, you must do what the people in that place do. Wherever and whenever you prostrate, you should think of your guru or your favourite god. If you do like this, your *namaskar* will reach the person you have in mind. That is the proper thing to do." I realised my mistake. From then on I think of Sri Bhagavan whenever I do *namaskar* to anyone.

— from REMINISCENCES
by Kunju Swami (unpublished)

"As a mirror from which all dirt has been removed and made clean cannot properly reflect an image if it is shaky, so has the mind, made pure by desireless action, to be made steady by one-pointed Devotion. It goes without saying that that Devotion also must be desireless. If it is thus made pure and stable, it becomes qualified to receive and reflect easily the knowledge of the Self in all its true glory."

— Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami
(of Sringeri) in OUR DUTY, p. 39.

INTRODUCING...

.....Assistants in Ashram work

Mani:

Mani came to stay permanently in the Ashram only in 1966. But among the workers now in the Ashram, he was perhaps the earliest to come to Sri Bhagavan.

Born in Kalasapakkam near Mettuppalam, he remembers the great storm that occurred in the year of Nala (1916). He came to Tiruvannamalai in his late teens to work as the cart-driver in Eesanya Mutt. Every Saturday he would drive the then **Mathadhipati**, Sri Natesa Swami down to Sri Ramanasramam. This must have started around 1927, for he recalls that Bhagavan used to be seated in those days on the tiger-skin on a bench east of Mother's shrine. It was just a thatched shed then: Sri Natesa Swami would be given a seat and the two would joyfully confer. After about an hour Sri Natesa Swami would take leave.

Mani served in Eesanya Mutt for several years. Towards the mid-forties he came to work in Sri Ramanasramam. During this time he served first in the President's old house in town near the temple and later in the Ashram garden. During this period of over a year he had occasion to obtain Bhagavan's blessing nearly every day. Like the others he would rise early, bathe and then go before Bhagavan and do **namaskara**. On rising he would stretch

out the palm of his hand and Sri Bhagavan would take from the vessel nearby a pinch of **vibhuti** and give it to him. Sometimes He made enquiries about his work or He asked: "How are the cows?" Enquiries about the cows would be addressed even to workers not directly assigned to the **goshala**.

He left the Ashram after a year or so, and saw Bhagavan again when he attended the **Kumbhabhishekam** of Mother's Shrine in 1949. He returned only after Bhagavan's **Brahma Nirvana**. He served again in the President's present house for about five years before getting married. He had been a bit of a nomad and would not stick to a job for long. After many such gaps, he came to serve the Ashram in the '70s and has stayed on since.

A dignified man of quiet temperament Mani was till recently attending on Sri Adi Annamalai Sastrigal for some time. In his seventies but nevertheless robust, he is now serving in the **goshala**.



Mani

* * *



The following three who are being introduced hail from Chettipattu, a village just three miles from here. It is interesting to note that Sri Niranjanananda Swami would make it a point to engage labour only from this village. **Krishna Konar**, now leading a retired life, was the first from this village to have served Bhagavan. A stream of relations, brothers, nephews and sons have followed this 'piper' to the Ashram. The Mother's Shrine was erected using the labour-force of forty to fifty men from this village who had broken the stone boulders, and carted the cut stones to the site. It had indeed been a family affair!

* * *

Pachaiappan :

Pachaiappan, a nephew of Krishna Konar, was about 16 years old when he came to Bhagavan around 1941 from Chettipattu. Prior to this he had studied upto the sixth class and was tending sheep at home. He

served first in the garden and later began helping in the construction of Mother's Shrine. It was then just above ground level. He recalls the loading of huge stones cut from the hillock nearby, tied with chains on to carts drawn by giant bulls.

Once in a while as he passed by the window near Bhagavan's sofa, He would singal to him to come. As he entered the Hall and stood near Bhagavan, He would hand him the kamandalu asking him to get it filled. On one occasion Bhagavan advised him: "Never steal; never utter a lie; if you are in need of something ask for it." On another occasion when he was feeling ill, Bhagavan told him: "Whenever you feel ill, lie down and rest for a couple of hours. That would be enough." Pachaiappan says he has followed this advice faithfully. When the temple construction was completed he had to return to his village, as there was no more work for temporary hands like him.

Pachaiappan was married when he was 25, about a year after Sri Bhagavan's **Brahma Nirvana**. He returned to the Ashram to serve permanently, a short while after. He has two daughters, both given away in marriage. He is presently a caretaker of the Morvi guest-house complex.



Pachaiappan

As a young boy in the Ashram in those days, he recalls how Bhagavan would take a walk daily to the room east of the goshala. Seeing Him approaching, Cow Lakshmi would invariably lift her head and "Moo" affectionately to Him. Pachai-

appan once saw Sri Bhagavan walk up to Lakshmi who had called out to Him very tenderly. He went near her, stroked her affectionately and then going down on His haunches, eased out a few drops of milk from her full udder into the vessel in His hand. He then raised the vessel and drank the contents. It was as if Bhagavan had acceded to Lakshmi's desire to feed Him!

Bhagavan had told him that he could help in cutting the vegetables at the kitchen. Even now he does this on and off, besides his chores in the guest-rooms. He recalls the way tooth-powder was prepared then by roasting Iluppi (Mahua) leaves black and pounding them to a powder and mixing with salt, later to be folded in small packets for Ashram use. He would also go to the market to fetch fire-wood for the kitchen fire. Bhagavan had told him that Iluppi wood was ideal for the kitchen fire.

Mannu:

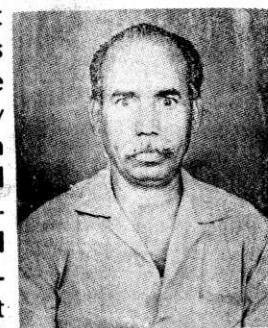
Mannu, another nephew of Krishna Konar and cousin of Pachaiappan, used to

"There are four ways in which a disciple can serve a Guru:

- (1) **Aapta:** The disciple employs his body, speech and mind in such a way that his behaviour conduces to the spiritual growth of visiting-sadhaks.
- (2) **Anga:** is when a disciple anticipates and attends the physical comforts of his Guru.
- (3) **Sthaana:** The upkeep and protection of the precincts of the Guru's Ashram.
- (4) **Sadbhava:** Looking upon his Guru as being none other than the Lord Himself."

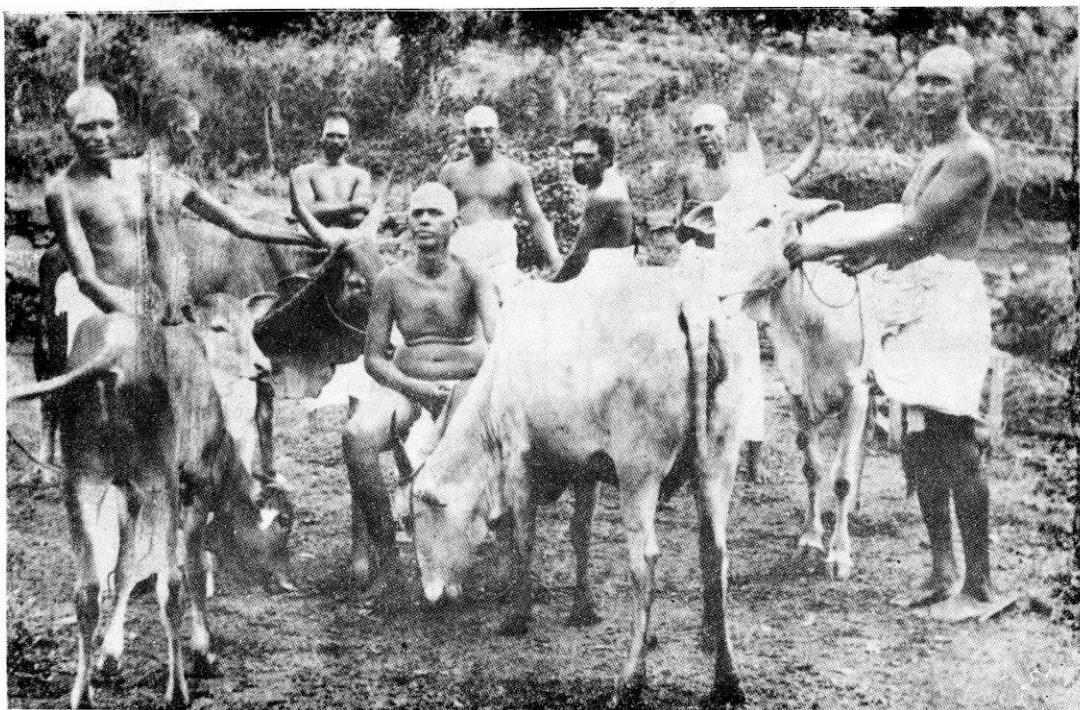
— from *Vedanta Chudamani*

visit Bhagavan, in the company of his elders, when he was about 10. This was around 1948. He spent his time then playing marbles and the like in the company of others of his own age in the Ashram. He recalls that Bhagavan sometimes would walk past the spot where the play was on. Seeing Him they would stand by respectfully. Bhagavan had once asked Mannu if he was studying in school. It was after several years after Sri Bhagavan's **Brahma Nirvana** that Mannu came to stay permanently in the Ashram, though there had been many short visits in between.



Mannu

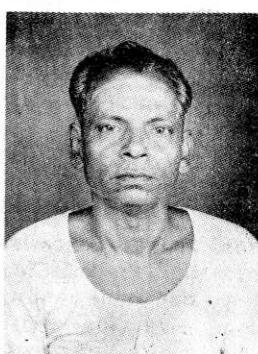
Mannu who is cheerful, rough and tough has remained a bachelor, dedicating himself to the service of Bhagavan's Ashram. He is presently in the packing section of the Ashram Book Depot.



Sri Bhagavan with Cows and Ashram workers

Natesan:

Natesan, also from Chettipattu, belongs to the generation following Pachaiappan's. His father had earlier served in the Ashram. He had many occasions to visit the Ashram as a youngster in those days. His first visit was probably around 1948 when he was about 10 years old and studying in the fourth class. Bhagavan used to sit out in the thatched enclosure



Natesan

north of the Old Hall. Once while Bhagavan was on His way towards the goshala, Natesan's father had prodded him to prostrate to Bhagavan. As he lay down in supplication at His feet, Bhagavan asked: "Enna? Oon paiyanaa?" (Your son, is

he?) When his father replied in the affirmative Bhagavan blessed with a "Sari, Sari" (All right).

Natesan is married and has two daughters both given away in marriage. Like the others mentioned earlier he too has served in all areas of the Ashram. He particularly earned the reputation of being an excellent gardener. He is now attached to the Ashram Office, as well as attending on an elderly devotee.

* * *

All the four mentioned above are now permanently in the Ashram and have had the rare opportunity of conversing with Bhagavan Ramana. The world without holds little charm for them bound as they are to Bhagavan and His devotees!



*YOGA AND ZEN (Encounters in): By Trevor Leggett. Pub: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Broadway House, Newtown Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 1EN, England. Pp. 108. Price: £ 6.95.

Dedicated to Dr. Hari Prasad Sastri, the widely respected Yoga-teacher and philosopher in U.K., this fascinating selection of instructive legends and recollections from the Japanese and Indian traditions provides happy reading to those interested in the higher values of life. Unlike the koans which always have some unusual features about them, these incidents and stories are from everyday life and evoke situations which touch the common man, whether he is a seeker or a layman. There is a fine delicacy about their narration: no morals are underlined, no lessons drawn explicitly. The brush drawings accompanying many of the stories make a powerful visual impact.

We all know the story of the hare and the tortoise. But do you know of the sequel? Read on:

"After the tortoise had won the race against the hare, the other animals began to consult him about improving their running speeds. They had not seen what had happened during the race: half of them had been at the start, and the other half at the finishing tape. The first group had seen the hare dashing off into the distance, and the other group had seen the tortoise crawl across the finishing line, and the hare running up second. No one had actually seen the tortoise moving fast, but they came to believe, as the only explanation, that he must have gone into some sort of over-drive during the main part of the race, slowing down when he had passed the hare and was leading by a huge margin. As the animals had

no watches, none of them knew just how long the race had taken.

"No one listened to the hare's story—a loser always has an excuse.

"The tortoise, at first, used to deny that he had any special powers, but they said so often, 'Oh, that is your modesty', that in the end he began to believe in them himself. His friends made him a Victory Medal, which he always wore round his neck. He became more and more confident, and then arrogant, and finally got himself into a situation where he more or less had to challenge the hare to a new match.

"'I have done it once, and I will do it again', he confided to his friends.

"Only the cockatoo, who had flown over the course during the first race and seen what happened, thought the tortoise would lose. The others said to him, 'You are mad; look what he did last time,' and he replied, 'Look what he is. He may have won the race, but he is still only a tortoise.'

"The day of the race came. When the hare crossed the finishing line, the tortoise had gone six feet three and a half inches. The animals dispersed without looking at each other, as the cockatoo screamed with laughter."

And there are other stories focussing on the intriguing relationships between the Guru and disciple, the 'capriciousness' of Grace, impressive conceits of philosophers and so on. Open any page, you will have laughter - and tears!

— M. P. Pandit

THE HIDDEN HERITAGE: By S. K. PANDIAN. Pub: Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd. L-10 Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110 016. (24 Race Course Road, Bangalore 560 001) Pp. 125. Price Rs. 80/-

As Collector of Kurnool and as Education Secretary to the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh Mr. S. K. Pandian is well-known; but none knows him as a man of revolution in religion and a vehement critic of Brahminism, Sanskrit and Hinduism. His authorities are not our scriptures but the westerners, he likes most.

The Foreword to the book sums up Mr. Pandian's ideas as follows: (1) Both Telugu and Tamil are older than Sanskrit. (2) Saivism is a democratic, ethical, humanistic, egalitarian and tolerant religion while Brahminism is an authoritarian, ritualistic, life-and-world-negating, hierarchical and divisive religion, (3) Brahminism and Sanskrit distorted and degraded Hinduism, (4) "Most of the interpretations, contentions and conclusions contained herein do not have the support of the majority of leading authorities on Indian History, Religion and Philosophy."

"The history of Indian religious thought is shrouded in mystery." "Sanskritization, like an octopus, entangled the ancient languages of Prakrit, Pali and Telugu along with their respective religions and squeezed them to extinction beyond recognition." "Swami Vivekananda was perhaps not right in saying 'Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses'." "Golwalkar a past-master in distorting history indulges in his usual lies and black lies." "De-Sanskritization of the present day Indian religion is therefore a condition precedent to ushering in a full-fledged socialistic society in India." These are some of the ideas of the author. He always quotes the westerners to prove that he is right in his tirade against the Upanishads, Hinduism and Sanskrit, without which the world would have been in utter darkness.

Everybody has a right to have his own views, and a duty to be impartial to Truth. The Upanishads, Hinduism and Sanskrit flourish and remain eternal.

Any mockery hurled at the Sun merely falls on one's own face. The Sun is least affected. The book is well got up.

— Vidvan Bulusu Venkateswarulu.

SRI ANDHRA MAHA BHARATAM (English Poetic rendering of the Telugu Epic): Virata and Udyoga Parvas. By late G. V. Subbaramayya M. A. (Hons) (Copies can be had from Sri G. V. Subbrahmamyan, Advocate, Vedamvari Agraharam, Nellore, A. P.) Pp. 285. Price: Rs. 40/-

The original Mahabharata written by Sage Vedavyasa in Sanskrit was translated into many

languages rarely in full and mostly condensed. The Andhra Maha Bharatam was one such. It was unfortunately not done in full by a single poet at a stretch. There was a long gap between the three poets, Kavitrayam who translated the great Epic. Every language has its own translations and all languages are proud of their editions. The glory and greatness of Maha Bharata was best expressed in the original. No translation can bring out the original beauty, however great the translator be. Vedavyasa was the incarnation of Lord Vishnu and the sage of the highest metal. None can come near him let alone excel him. He ever remains beyond comparison. One must study Sanskrit, read the text in original and appreciate in full. Those who are ignorant of the original can derive some satisfaction by the other language-renderings. By the omissions and subtractions of the translators one will miss the original author's intentions.

As far as the Telugu rendering of the Maha Bharata, concerned in classical poetry, the Kavitrayam's was the best, though the late Sri pada Krishna Murji Sastri and this reviewer occupy the second and third places among the translators of the Mahabharata into classical poetry. Late G. V. Subbaramayya well known among devotees of Ramana Maharshi, belonged to Nellore, where Tikkana, the translator of the major part of the great Epic flourished. The English rendering of Tikkana's Virata and Udyoga Parvas into blank verse by Subbaramayya, both Nellorians has its own significance. Almost in every page, we see the fitness of the late Subbaramayya for the task undertaken by him. This is a true rendering of Tikkana into English poetry, lucid and luxurious. The Foreword, the Preface, the Appreciation and Tribute, which the volume contains are enough to show that the work is monumental. A glossary and an index of proper names would have added to the usefulness of the book. With the bringing out of the other volumes the publisher would be rendering invaluable service to the English readers who do not know Telugu or Sanskrit but who desire to know Tikkana's greatness.

— Vidvan Bulusu Venkateswarulu.

HINDUISM: By Swami Mukhyananda.. Pub: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Puranattukara, 680 551 (Trichur, Kerala) Pp. 114 Price: Rs. 20/-

In this compact, authentic presentation of the way of thought and life styled as Hinduism, Swamiji who is known for his constructive mission with a spiritual background, expounds the fundamentals of this Sanatana Dharma in the light of the findings of modern science. He stresses the need to do away with the extraneous growths that have disfigured the true body of Hindu thought and practice and modify certain features in order to keep pace with the rapid changes in social structures that have taken place during the last few decades.

It is instructive to follow the author in his analysis of the truths that underlie the system of Varnashrama Dharma and the artificial forms it has taken in the course of history. He advocates restoration of the principle of mobility from class to class that was current during the early ages of the Indian people. He would call it the Vritti-ashrama-dharma in which the station in life is determined by the occupation of the individual in keeping with his temperament. He calls for a horizontal reform in society in the place of an exclusively vertical ascension.

The author holds that the Tantras, Agamas "are non-Vedic in origin, but were later affiliated to the Vedas, and were transformed and permeated by Vedic and Upanishadic thought and ideals." "The Agama literature is theistic in approach and conserves the non-Vedic traditions centering round the Deities Vishnu, Shiva and the Devi." (Pp. 76-77) This is an approach which is not accepted by all. There was a time when the Veda itself was known as Agama.

Shruti, Upasana, Yoga, Dharma, interaction between the individual and the society—these are some of the more important themes dealt with precision in these pages. With charts and appendices, the book is a handy manual on the subject.

— M. P. Pandit.

THE BHAGAVAT GITA: By Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao. Pub: the Author, 54 Rangachari Road, Mylapore, Madras-600 004. Pp. 200. Price : Rs. 20/-.

Sri Ramana As He Is

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

Awakening Grace, absolute Power,
Delightful Presence, enlivening Humour,
Enlightening Effulgence, eternal
Saviour,
Devotees' Friend, desires' Giver,
Divine Teacher, Silent Preacher,
Poverty's Servant, sufferings' Curer,
Opulent supplier, all-renouncer,
I-AM-THE-WAY's untiring farer,
Source of Life and Truth-enforcer,
Love-as-it-is, Harmoniser,
Heart-dweller, mind-Gazer,
Shining Beacon for the seeker,
My devotion's spring and merger,
My prayer's instant answer.

Tender grass and far-off quasar
Spin around THY central Bhaasa!
Radiations of great grandeur,
Glowing stars of beaming candour,
THOU provide this super picture,
Self-preserving, Self-absorbing,
Keep it going, keep it moving,
For I see YOU Self-enjoying.

— I splendour

The Gita, acclaimed as one of the great best three or four books of the world and containing more true psychology than many trea-

tises, is a perennial source of inspiration to every aspirant of truth. Being a universal scripture, whose appeal cuts across all frontiers, the Gita asks all men and women through Arjuna the representative typical man, to wake up, and fight to the finish the fierce battle of life to usher in the Kingdom of Heaven, which is one of peace and goodwill on earth. The distinguished author has lectured in several Universities, such as Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Mysore, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Benares and Tirupati, on this great scripture, to affirm the eternal values of life so that man can recover his lost faith. This book is a collection of all these lectures constituting the harvest of his studies and understanding of this immortal classic. Rightly has he given the sub-title to this valuable collection as a quest for the moral ideal, religious values and the affirmation of faith.

— ARGUS.

STORIES AS TOLD BY SWAMI RAMDAS: By Swami Ramdas. Pub : Anandashram Kasaragod, (P.O. 670531) Kerala. Pp. 139. Price Rs. 15/-

TALES OF WISDOM: By K. P. Shivkumar. Pub: Vyomanath Publications, M-15 A, First Avenue, Ganga Colony, Ashoknagar, Madras. Pp. 23. Price: Rs. 2/-

Sages and saints of this land have left footprints on the sands of Time, which are in the form of divine instructions, commentaries on the scriptures, hymns and prayers which are primarily for the learned and earnest aspirants. But the sages have not forgotten the illiterate and the laity for them were given many stories and tales by these great souls. For wisdom, the light of spirit, is not only for the Jew but for the Gentile too, for as W.Q. Judge puts it: It is an "ocean of knowledge which spreads from shore to shore; unfathomable in its deepest parts, it gives the greatest minds their fullest scope, yet shallow enough at its shores, it will not overwhelm the understanding of a child." The stories in these two books move elliptically and allusively. The conversations are pointed and lively—all signifying a moral unforgettable. They stay in the young minds deeply impressed, carrying a lesson as to how to live through the tensions at work, through the youthful days and years which lie ahead, building up a network of obligations, responsibilities and perplexities.

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As Swami Ramdas remarks: His book contains in addition to his own "either heard or read on various occasions" other stories also by Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramana Maharshi and others, altogether 108 in number. Similarly valuable are the tales by K. P. S. conveying pearls of wisdom which have a lasting interest and significance not only for the child but for the aged as well.

— ARGUS

RAMANA MAHARSHI: By Prem Lata. Pub: Sumit Publications, New Delhi-110 002. Pp. 148. Price: Rs. 100/-

As with Krishna, anything and everything touching whom was sweet (*akhilam madhuram*), so with Bhagavan Ramana. Naturally, the present book, which analyzes chapter-wise his penetrating views on such fundamentals as Self-enquiry, Destiny and Freewill, Silence, God and the world, Guru, occult powers etc., provides a sweet fare to the reader. But, surely, the fare could have been much sweeter and should have had a greater depth.

It is regrettable that such an inordinately priced book should abound in printing mistakes.

— R. C.

SRI VISHNU SAHASRANAMAM with text in Devanagari, Transliteration and commentary of Sri Sankaracharya: Translated by Swami Tapasyananda; Pub: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-600 004, Pp. 216. Price Rs.20/- (Deluxe: Rs. 25/-)

The experienced, erudite and respected translator has gifted to the English-educated world of devotees another of religious treasures in Sanskrit. It is a highly rewarding experience for one to understand the deep import of the sacred names of the Lord, and the more so when the import is as understood by the intuitive mind of the great Acharya Sankara. The Translator's rapportful ability in truthfully (and lucidly) presenting the original is amply demonstrated throughout the work.

Amplly but not fully. There is a point which gives rise to the question: Is a translator justified in 'polishing' the original author—especially one of the stature of Sankara—so as to make

him more acceptable to a world with changed perspectives? We raise the question here because the respected translator is apparently particular not to present the orthodox views of the Acharya on caste distinctions, as is evident in the slight twisting of the meanings of certain names and in the condensations and deletions of parts of the original commentary, e.g. names 385, 670 and 834 and deletion of the sloka beginning 'Vedantago' in the 'Concluding Verses'. By the way, contrary to what the title, as given on both the cover page and the title-page, would lead one to think, this is not a translation of Sankara's commentary in full, but one with deletions and condensations here and there—a fact mentioned only in a footnote on p. 42.

— R. G.

THE VEDANTA DOCTRINE OF SRI SHANKARACHARYA: By A. Mahadeva Sastri. Pub.: Sri Satguru Publications, 40/5 Shakti Nagar, Delhi 110007. Pp. 168. Price: Rs. 90/-

Appearing after a gap of 87 years, this valuable translation of one of the key-works of Shankaracharya on the Advaita Vedanta by a scholar of the eminence of Sri A. Mahadeva Sastri is very welcome. This includes the Dakshinamurti Stotra of the Acharya, the Pranava Vartika by Sureshwaracharya and the Dakshinamurti Upanishad (text and translation). In the course of his introduction, Sri Sastri, underlines the importance of the Guru in spiritual life and writes:

"A true conception of the lofty nature and the high functions of a spiritual Teacher will necessarily end in an utmost reverence and exalted love for him, without which none can fully realise the truths taught by him. To perceive a truth as fully as the Guru does, one should look at it from as many standpoints as the Teacher does; the disciple's mind must be in rapport with that of the Teacher. A complete resignation on the part of the disciple to the will of the Teacher and an unbounded love for him, feeling of Bhakti or devout love to the Teacher, cannot but serve to remove the barrier which arrests the flow of wisdom from the Teacher to the disciple. Once the barrier is removed they come so close together that the truths which are stored up in the Teacher's mind will flow, as it were, in a continuous stream to the mind of the disciple through the conduit of complete sym-

pathy opened by love It may not be that the typical Guru, the Teacher who originally delivered the teaching, is always present in the physical body before the student's eyes. Still, when one wishes to learn anything from the accredited record of his teaching, one must image the true typical Guru and revere him in the heart"

While on the Ashtanga Yoga, Acharya Suresh-wara states :

"Control over the five elements may be gained by practising Dharana on their respective seats

in the body. The seat of earth extends from the foot to the knee; the seat of water, from the knee to the navel; the seat of fire, from the navel to the throat; the seat of air, from the throat to the region between the eyebrows; and the seat or Akasa, from that region to Brahma-randhra."

Accurate and instructive, this work is of definite help to seekers of the Reality.

— M.P. Pandit

"PATHWAYS"

RAMANA PUBLICATIONS Announces "PAHWAYS"

— A Newsletter and Forum for devotees in the USA and Canada—

The temple bells were ringing in the distance. As my husband and I were about to attend the morning worship (*puja*) at Sri Ramana's shrine, in Sri Ramanasramam, the question to return to America and distribute Sri Ramana's books was answered. It was not a verbalization or decision on our part, but a silent recognition or feeling of acting upon that which was already ordained.

Since its inception on that morning in 1984, Ramana Publications has grown with the continued interest in the teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Besides the daily inquiries for the catalog we have also received many requests from individuals seeking to find others in their area with similar interests in Sri Ramana. Although we had been thinking of this Newsletter for quite awhile, to bridge these connections, we have only been able to put it together now.

We hope to have your participation in this experiment in which we will be publishing excerpts from your letters in a section called 'Reflections'. Also included will be short reminiscences and teachings of Sri Ramana. As the Newsletter continues will we publish names of individuals who would like to be in touch with others; this will help link up devotees throughout the country.

As Sri Ramana touches each one's life in a unique way, your comments are most welcome. "Pathways" hopes to be a little light upon the golden path within.

Anyone wishing to receive 'Pathways' or a Ramana Publications catalog of books on Sri Ramana may write to us at:

RAMANA PUBLICATIONS, PO Box 77- VICTOR, New York 14564, U.S.A.
or call us at (716) 924-5087.

— Joan Greenblatt, U.S.A.

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BABA SATYA SAI—Part I: By Ra. Ganapati
Pub: Sairaj Publications, 1 Tenth cross st.,
Mandaveli, Madras-600 028. Pp. 456. Price:
Rs. 50/-

This is the first part of the English translation by the author of his own Tamil original "SVAMI" a very popular and scholarly work on the life and teachings of Sri Satya Sai Baba of Puttaparti. The author himself needs little introduction being widely known for his well researched and thrilling biographies in Tamil, of Adi Sankara, Sri Rama-krishna, the Mother and Swami Vivekananda, to name a few. His youth belies his encyclopaedic learning, prodigious memory, the "rich lore of devotion that is in his heart"; the deep scholarship of the scriptural texts in Tamil, Sanskrit and English and the facility with which he displays consistently his penchant for the felicitous phrase.

Sri N. Kasturi observes in his foreword, "this book is a Madurai many-gopuramed Temple, resonant with chants from many tongues, resplendent with sculptures, carvings and paintings of many ages and styles, where Sai Baba is installed in all his glory of Love, Wisdom, Compassion and Power."

The book is saturated with instance after instance of the flamboyant power that Satya Sai has been displaying through the years over matter, men and mind. The author in fact cautions in his scintillating introduction that the narration is meant "only for Sai-devotees" even though he has allowed full reign to the questioning intellect to analyse many a controversy hurled at this Avatar. The narration proceeds in a chronological fashion till about half the book stopping short of Satya Sai's entry into Prasanthi Nilayam. Beyond the 31st chapter it takes the shape of a subjectwise sequence, dealing with particular types of His Grace or particular aspects of His excellences. The translation, done with principal contribution from Mr. H. Ramamoorthy, retains the bountiful flavour of the Tamil original and abounds in homely homonyms, puns of fun and amazing alliterations. ("Curing the diseased and securing the deceased", "this is not an exact translation of the Tamil original because that would have made it exacting to the non-Tamilians", "the Master of the Athma became the Medico for his Asthma etc.")

Ra. Ganapati takes daring yet devotional excursions speculating on several curious aspects of Baba—the 'materialisation' of legal tender bearing the authentic marks of the mint, the hair-raising spectacle of His hirsute halo, the silken robes and sleek automobiles of Svami the Atyasrami and many more. He is quick to point out that "you may miss the feel of His spirit-

ually 'nutrient' Grace because of the distorted functioning of your own 'gland' of intellect" and that "Gall is of course required for digestion, but it must not exceed its measure".

The author confesses that his view of Sai Baba matured over a period of time from a healthy curiosity regarding the many things "good, bad and indifferent that the writer had to hear and read so much about Svami" to a whole-hearted acceptance of Him as "our Hero, Bhagavan Sri Satya Sai Rama". Even this seems to have been "because of the subtle and imperceptible, yet sure pull from Svami Himself". For, as the author admits with such candour, "if the author needed divine forms to pray to and love, he had Kamakshi and Kartikeya already. If in addition he must have a walking, talking embodiment of Divinity there was, large as life, the Sankaracharya of Kanchi, Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati. He was simply not in need of Satya Sai Baba. But God as Satya Sai Baba seems to have needed some amusement — so He wove this web of leela ... (which) did serve two purposes. One, of working out the Karma through the purgatory that he was made to pass through. Two, of giving rational validity to Svami's avatar-hood, to the extent reasoning is valid in such a matter".

The author points out certain peculiarities, two of which I may mention: (i) Sri Aurobindo terminated his outside activities and went into complete solitude on the 24th of November 1926 as the embodiment of the Over-mental Delight Consciousness, Lord Krishna had once again come down to the terrestrial sphere. "The advent of the Lord of our narrative was just on the previous day". (ii) Other holy men, in spite of all their realisation of Oneness, are moved in profound devotion towards God once in a while at least. "Ramana Maharshi, who was rooted in non-duality without any differentiation of God and devotee, also displayed feelings of deepest devotion towards the sacred Hill—the mountain Arunachala—and Siva as the God Arunachaleswara. But Baba, from His birth, has never had such a devotional fervour towards God. For more than three decades now He has not made obeisance to any of the forms of God even as a formality. This is mentioned to highlight the diversity existing among divine personages, and not even remotely to hint that one is superior to the other." (ital. ours)

This is a bold biography that seeks to show Satya Sai Baba's "supreme state of unqualified and unbounded Love" through His leelas.

A book indeed, as the author says, "for Sai devotees".

— J.B.

Letters to the Editor

EGO AND ENQUIRY

I have one confusion. I beg of you to clear it. Atman or Self is said to be Existence-Knowledge-Bliss.

1. If it has knowledge then why does it allow ignorance of the mind to creep in?
2. Are jiva and Atman one and the same or are they different entities in an individual?
3. Maharshi says that jiva is ego plus reflected light of the Self. So then if ego is annihilated then what will remain is reflected light of the Self. Will this be then called as Real 'I' or will it be the pure Self that is called Real 'I'?
4. Ego is insentient. Then how does this dead thing become active?

— Hiten M. Buch, Bombay.

Words like 'reflected light' etc., are only aids. Bhagavan says: "Isn't it comic that we should say, 'I don't know my self' or 'I know my self'? Are there two 'I's (or selves) so that one can become an object for the other? It is one alone by common experience."

Instead of trying to imagine mentally the relationship between jiva and 'I' and Self etc etc. one should listen to Bhagavan's advice. Without uttering by mouth, hold fast to the 'I'-current to see where from within it arises. Holding and waiting thus, the 'I' (which is holding to the 'I'-current) sinks of itself into the Heart-cave. This is the practise of jnana. Repeated

and continuous practice destroys the 'I' (which rises and sets) in the Heart-Source. This Source is ever-present Self. The ego is neither fully sentient nor fully insentient. It is neither fully existent nor fully non-existent. It is an appearance which persists as long as it does not seek itself. It vanishes upon self-enquiry.

— Editor.

THE REAL GURU

I have only two questions:

1. Do you think that it is possible to realise the Self without a Guru or a spiritual Master? I ask this because today there are many persons who say that they are Gurus, Yoga or Kundalini teachers.
2. How can I know who is really a bonafide spiritual Master?

— David Har Tzion, Isreal.

1. The Self is all there IS. So the Self itself is the Guru. As the seeker plunges within in search of Self, the Guru within pulls while the Guru outside pushes in.
2. The spiritual Master is one who treats all beings as his Self. In the presence of such a Master one feels an effortless, lasting inner peace.

— Editor.

'I AM' and ENQUIRY

If I go on asking the question 'Who am I?' shall I get the reply within me that 'it is I AM'?

Are Brahman, Atman and jiva, one and the same or are they different?

And if I receive the answer 'I AM', then can I also know from where I came, who I am and where I will go?

By merely repeating 'I AM' for a long time shall I attain Self-Realisation?

By asking 'Who I am' what probable answers should I receive?

— Hiten M. Buch, Bombay

All other enquiries use the mind and the answers obtained are available to the mind in the form of thoughts or ideas. This chain is endless.

In enquiring into the Self, the mind (the enquirer) is made to look at itself and in the process sinks into the Heart-Source. There are no answers (to this enquiry) in the conventional sense, because here the enquiry grasps the enquirer by the throat, as it were, and prevents further questioning. In due course the enquirer is eliminated. What remains upon elimination of this false entity is Mauna, a fullness, a matter beyond mind.

— Editor.

To Managing Editor - 1

In the July issue, your article was nice and instructive. Also I found the letter from a Czech devotee interesting and relevant. In the course of my conversations with persons who are inclined to the path of the spirit I naturally refer to the words of Sri Ramana which are not only guidelines but also the goal. Being so saturated with His advice and doing sadhana on these lines, I automatically mention the eternal and universal path of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Many people consider this path straight compared to the other ways. So I give them some books published by SriRamanasramam. I tell some of them to write directly and get their requirements. A person from Mexico also got interested and he said that he would like to translate some of your publications in Spanish. So, I told him to write to you to seek your permission.

Occasionally, I am asked to speak to small gatherings. I naturally speak Who am I? as enunciated by the Maharshi. At times I don't even mention the name of the Master, depending upon the type of persons, but most of them know that I have spoken of the great teaching of Sri Ramana. Ramana was the greatest impersonality. Time may come to an end but the Truth taught by HIM will remain for ever.

In January'73 issue of *The Mountain Path* the main picture at the beginning is very beautiful. I have not seen it in your book *Purushottama Ramana*. So I request you to send a photographic copy of that picture to me. Of course, I shall pay for it. Your encouragement in this pursuit is very helpful.

— Ratan Lal, Bangalore.

To Managing Editor - 2

Through these many years you have taken care of this sister of yours. Quietly, but carefully; humbly, never asking for, never expecting response or reply; and lovingly, sending to her the most important words you knew. Every quarter came the "Mountain Path" to her. And yesterday by special certified mail came your two books, *Be the Self* and *Purushottama Ramana*. My heart and eyes fill at your sincere devotion and kindness to one Ramana-bhakta! Thank you for these beautiful offerings. What pleasure it must have given you to lay them at the Lotus Feet of Our Master!

SRI T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, releasing the book: 'Ramana Sannidhilo' in the function organised under the auspices of 'Samskriti Samstha' and 'Ramana Kendram' Hyderabad, at Central Library on July 1, 1987. (1 to r) Dr. M. Subba Rao, the author, Dr. Modigonda Siva Prasad, Sri M. V. Narayana Rao, Sri K. V. Bhaskara Rao, Sri T.N. Venkataraman and Sri M.V. Subba Rao.



Through the years I have often been lonely and often has the heart been filled with human error and trouble... but never for longer than the time it takes to say to God, "I love You". His help is then always there for me and you are one of the channels through which this help comes. Some day I will again come to India. I still don't know when, but it is nearer than it was.

I loved the "Birth of an Upanishad", short story in Oct.'86 issue!

-- Barbara Rose - Lawrence, Mt.Horeb, USA.

To Managing Editor - 3

It was July 15th Wednesday. Afternoon at work was unusually smooth and pleasant. A very vexing technical problem which was worrying me for several days got resolved. Lo and behold a set of books and a very beautiful 'Ramana Calender' was awaiting me at home. Brother! Blessed Be Duality because without it one cannot suffer and enjoy the Benign Glory of our Great Master.

I read with great joy the two books *Puru-shottama Ramana* and *Be the Self*. Thoroughly enjoyed the anecdotes about the visit of the king of Ramanad and Bhagavan saying 'Engey Oy Irrukku Ajnanam'. Our Bhagavan's insistence that ignorance is never apart from knowledge is a very powerful line to the Reality though at times it is not very convincing or satisfactory to the devotee.

Your book *Be the Self* has many pointed and precious reminders of the aspects of Sri Bhagavan's unique teaching which are in danger of being forgotten with the passage of time. Ramana-devotees have to be indebted to you for your kind compilation of those aspects of the teaching which serve as a life-line to worldly people sunk in ignorance. The quotation from Bhagavan where He says "Grace is found by practice alone though it is here and now" contained personal instructions for me. As devotees we are apt to grow overconfident and take Him for granted. I find it a very timely reminder: "no practice no Grace" though it is said to be here and now. Our Lord is very very rich, Gracious and over-flowing with Mercy for His devotees.

-- T. S. Vaidhyanathan, Redmond, U.S.A.

To Managing Editor - 4

I am Lalitha Ramesh, wife of Sri K. S. Ramesh, Advocate, High Court of Bangalore. My husband's grandfather, Sri S. Narayan Rao, Retd. Revenue Commissioner, Bangalore, used to formerly visit your Ashram and had been a subscriber to *THE MOUNTAIN PATH* for many years.

Sri S. Narayan Rao passed away about 3 years ago. He left behind a big and rare collection of spiritual books. Some time ago, I happened to read the books: *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* (three volumes), *In Days of Great Peace* and ever since my entire

RAMANA MAHARSHI ROAD, MAURITIUS:
The name plate was fixed in the Street bearing the name of Sri Bhagavan. (l to r) Mr. Rajesh Bhagwan (Mayor in 1984 who moved the Council to name it). Mrs. Shirin Aumee-ruddy Cziffra (the present Mayor who caused the name-plate to be fixed), Sri M. Thancanamootoo and Sri Somasundaram Appavou.

The street is in Belle Etoile, a residential area in the town of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill, Mauritius.



outlook towards life has changed. So powerful has been the impression that I feel convinced that in my previous birth I must have definitely had the darshan and guidance of Sri Ramana as my Guru. My husband and I wish to stay in the Ashram for atleast two days, in quiet prayers and peace. Kindly let us know if you can provide us accommodation in the Ashram itself.

— Mrs. K. S. Ramesh,
Bangalore.

To Managing Editor - 5

I thoroughly enjoyed my stay there. During my stay I did *giripradakshina* in the company of Sri Michael James. I also met old devotees like Sri Kunju Swami and Mrs. Lucy Cornelissen, and received their blessings. I imbibed the great spiritual atmosphere that prevails there, and completely merged in *dhyana dharana* and experienced the same *Ananda - Bliss* which I found in the divine presence of Sri Bhagavan, in 1938. I humbly and sincerely pray to Sri Bhagavan to grant me strength to visit there - the abode of Sri Bhagavan, again and again.

— Nagesh Anant Naik,
Panaji, Goa.

To Managing Editor - 6

Thank you for your beautiful article in *The Mountain Path* of April '87, in particular for the insights into Bhagavan's teachings, specifically on p. 85 at bottom left "Such self-analysis, the quest into the root of 'I'-thought breaks the barrier between waking and sleep states and enables one to arrive at the wakeful sleep state, the natural state of our True-Being."

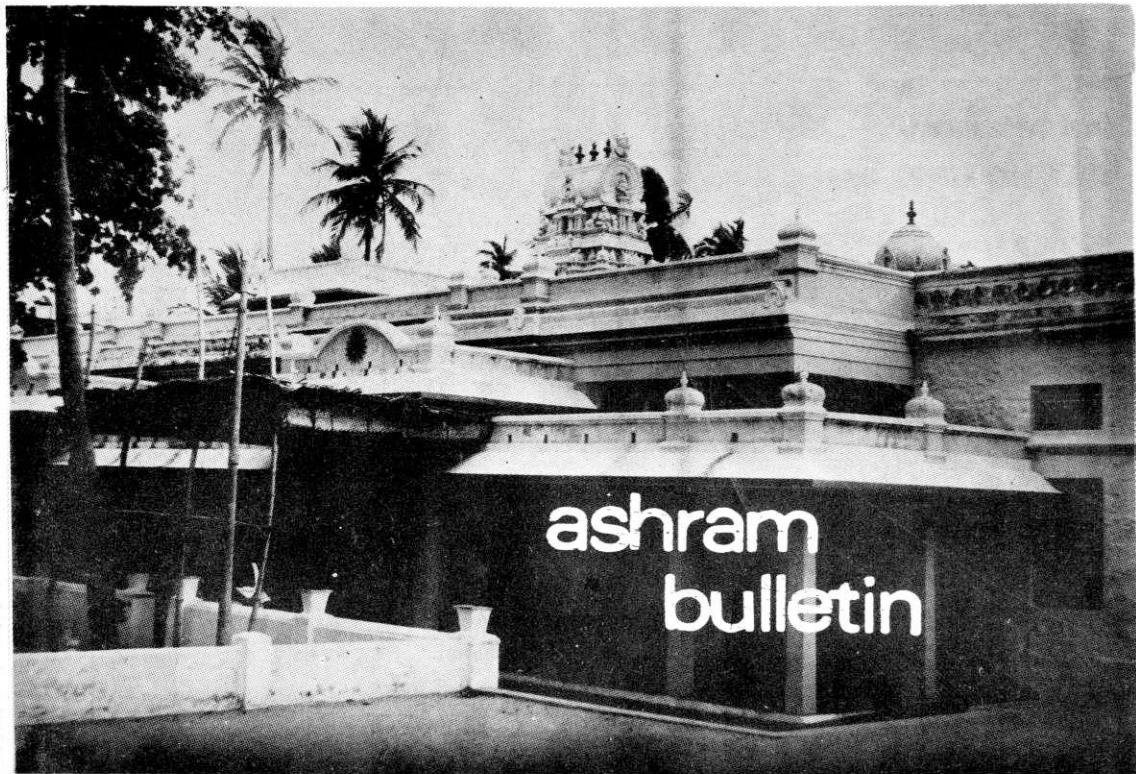
I have noticed extensions of dreams into the waking state which also is covered by your statement quoted above. In this regard please also see pp 116-117 of Professor Subbaramayya's *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* where he relates a dream and the Ashram reply of July 1942 - no doubt Bhagavan's reply which is most illuminating - I read and re-read it all the time.

— Dr. K. C. Rajah, Paris.

A few days later I had a peculiar dream. I dreamt that I was in the Ashram but could not see Sri Bhagavan anywhere. I searched and searched, and wept and wept at not finding him till fatigue overcame me and plunged me into slumber. Then I again had a dream (within the dream) that I sat face to face with Sri Bhagavan. In that position I recollect the previous disappearance of Sri Bhagavan and dismissed it as a dream. I felt that my being then in the presence of Sri Bhagavan was the only reality. This vision was so vivid and realistic that by comparison the waking-consciousness after I awoke seemed hazy. The hard core of reality seemed to melt and dissolve. The dreaming and waking states having submerged their boundaries seemed to flow into each other, to mingle and become one. As I related the above experience in a letter to the Ashram, I wondered whether I was really awake, whether the so-called waking activity including the writing of that letter was not part of an extended dream. As I recall that incident now, I may be pardoned for confessing a doubt whether even this writing is not also a continuation of the dream from which the final waking will be into the one Reality that is Sri Bhagavan. The Ashram reply dated July 24, 1942, was illuminating. It stated:

"The experience you refer to is not uncommon. To some of those for whom the world of sense-perception has lost its claim to exclusive reality (it is neither real nor unreal) either through intense, whole-hearted cogitation as to what is abiding in this impermanent world or through undistracted adherence to ideals of conduct or as a result of having seen what life is, to those few...the distinction between the dream of the world and the world of the dream is only apparent, so that even the long span of outward life is totally transformed by ever so short an experience of the inward life of a dream. What is happier than to be a mere spectator of all the states of the mind? What else is Wisdom but to be That?"

— from *SRI RAMANA REMINISCENCES*
By G. V. Subbaramayya, P.116-117



Pranams.

1. The next four issues of 1988 are going to be special issues—without advertisements, with exquisite colour portraits of Sri Bhagavan on both sides of the cover pages and with a number of beautiful, and some rare, photos of Sri Bhagavan. This volume 25 will be a treasure! All efforts are being made to make it a valuable and attractive volume.

Professor K. Swaminathan is taking special interest in giving finishing touches to this unique volume.

I request each one of the readers to enrol ATLEAST ONE MORE SUBSCRIBER on seeing this humble appeal of mine.

If you do enrol one 'gift' subscriber the enclosed M.O. form can easily be altered from Rs. 20 to Rs. 40/-; you can give the address of your friend in the M.O. coupon itself.

Suppose someone takes a 'gift' subscription in your name (not knowing you are already a subscriber), please don't return the subscription to us! Entertain that additional subscription too. Just inform us and we would send the extra copy to another friend of yours!

Please co-operate with me to DOUBLE the number of subscriptions for 1988.

2. An appeal on the facing page is very important.

I humbly request the readers to comply with it and thus enthuse me.

— Managing Editor.

Managing Editor's Appeal To The Readers

It has been my privilege to shoulder the management of the journal for 24 years, beginning with its very first issue. Issues of 1988 will form the 25th Volume of "The Mountain Path" its SILVER JUBILEE. I have done my best, all these years, for the mobilisation of subscriptions, advertisements and articles. By Sri Bhagavan's grace, I have had the privilege of receiving cooperation from the best of Editors.

However, we have now to appeal for fresh articles on Sri Bhagavan's life and Teachings and on Vedanta, in theory and practice. Friends are also earnestly requested to help raise a permanent fund and also enrol new subscribers.

Articles for publication in "The Mountain Path" may be sent direct to:

Professor K. SWAMINATHAN
(Chief Editor: The Mountain Path)
'Dharmalaya', 246, T.T.K. Road,
MADRAS - 600 018

Soliciting your co-operation,

yours Ever,

The Mountain Path,
Sri Ramanasramam,
1st October, 1987

V. GANESAN
Managing Editor.

*Supplement to
The Mountain Path, October 1987.*

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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