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THE SIMPLICITY OF IT ALL

WE ALL know we are.

Abidance as Pure Being is the whole crux and climax of the varied religions of the world. Saints of yore bore tortures only to prove their faith in this highest Truth. 'Simple Being is the Self', is the simple teaching of Sri Ramana Maharshi.

From the meanest worm to the mightiest emperor, being alive means being oneself. Fortunately, for us human beings, this truth of existence is readily available as the feeling of 'I' in every one of us. Man is gifted with this notion of 'I'.

This word 'I' is the centre of a multitude of relationships. 'I' am the son of parents, 'I' am the husband of a wife, 'I' am the father of children, 'I' am the officer to subordinates, 'I' am a citizen of the nation. In the emotional
field, again, this one ‘I’ refers to many states. ‘I’ am hungry, ‘I’ am angry, ‘I’ am sleepy, ‘I’ am happy, ‘I’ am content. Amid these different facets and moods, which is the real ‘I’?

Now, pinpoint this ‘I’.

The ‘I’ is the same whether one is young or old, maimed or whole, sane or mentally deranged. Changes in body or memory, growth or decay, ignorance or knowledge, do not affect the ‘I’. While changes galore take place outside oneself, this central ‘I’ which is oneself remains the same, absolutely changeless. Its existence is as inerutable as its real nature is the least certain! We all know the ‘I’ and yet none of us really know the ‘I’ as clearly as we know a table, chair or a cow. Why? Are we really positively ignorant about the ‘I’? How can it be? ‘I’ is the one and only thing we are sure of and to a large extent proud of, too. It is the only enduring reality of our lives.

‘I’ is an awareness. When it becomes aware of something, Being weakens into becoming, perceiving, having, and then the principle of ‘my’ or ‘mine’ steps in. The mention of ‘my’ denotes a sense of possession by the ‘I’—‘my’ car, ‘my’ clothes. Two things follow from this: (i) the notion of ‘I’ is different from ‘my’; an ‘I’ always remains the same content-wise, while the content of ‘my’ varies enormously; (ii) ‘my’ can never be independent of the ‘I’.

The world of ‘my’ is full of objects and in a limited sense, of modifications of the subject too, but ‘I’ is ever unalterably the subject only. Each one—every one of the forty-thousand million people in the world—refers to oneself only as ‘I’. This powerful, purely subjective ‘I’ therefore holds the clue to the mystery of existence. It points to the whole truth of Being, to the nature of God, creation, birth, death—all!

If the ‘I’ is so common to all, and binds all, why is there still strife in life, why so much multiplicity and struggle for the non-dual Reality, Peace, Bliss?

The boy of sixteen was fully alive to all situations around Him, and enjoyed them all, during His school days. The ‘I’ in Him was as alert and assertive as in anyone else. Yet, He became a Maharshi. How? On that momentous day, His normal ‘I’ faced boldly the fearsome phenomenon, Death. Instead of flying in fear (which is the natural course of the ‘I’), the ‘I’ in Him stood firm. In that encounter, His ‘I’ instantaneously recognised its limitations, its total unreality. That very moment of surrender by the ‘I’, Being Awareness entered the boy and made Him a God. The ‘I’ became the ‘food’ for the full force, the steady flame of ‘Awareness Supreme’. The destruction of the ‘I’ did not result in void, but in Plenitude of Awareness. Maharshi calls this Awareness by various names, chief among them being ‘I’—‘I’, the Self. The death of the ‘I’ resulted in the birth of the ‘I’—the Self. “Absorption in the Self has continued from that moment right up to this time”, said Bhagavan, while giving a vivid description of the great change.

Here we have a standing example of one who has ‘done’ it! This dheera, Sri Ramana, not only accomplished it, but calls on us all to follow Him, assuring us His continued guidance and grace.

The only step—that too the simplest—expected of us is to plunge boldly within, that is, to face one’s own ‘I’ and its total extinction.

Normally, it may be argued, no one gets a chance to face the ‘I’ squarely as Bhagavan did in the form of Death. Perhaps, that is why Sri Bhagavan induces us to ‘raise the dust only to put it down’, to meet the bogey of the ‘I’ only to see it vanish. This is the golden method of Vichara, the quest: Who Am I? Each one has to create the situation for oneself. How? Thoughts are the manifestations of the ‘I’. Pierce them one by one, raising the question: “To whom does this thought arise?” The answer
would be: "To me". Who is this 'me'? WHO AM I?

When this question Who Am I is raised, what results is silence, an ending of the entire thought-process. Be watchful: cling to this silence. This silence, though temporary, is the link between the 'I' and the Self. "True Silence where no thoughts exist, is the real state of Realisation," says Sri Bhagavan. The 'I' is a distortion of this state of quietude, being a movement, a wave in the ocean of stillness.

Chittam sindosya samsaaram,
Chittam nilai nirka mukti.
(In movement it is samsara, and in stillness it is Moksha, Liberation." — Devikalottara, v. 10)

Just as the 'I' is the link between the body and the Self (chit-jada-granthi), this temporary silence during the Who Am I enquiry, is the link between the 'I' and the Self, the 'I': 'I'. With each spell of silence, the need of the 'I' for movement grows weaker.

As one proceeds thus in the sadhana of vichara, a revelation takes place! Yes! Repeated enquiry results in the realisation that the 'I' is only a wave with name and form, not the ocean, the ever-present Being as Awareness-Bliss. These are not two distinctively different things; the wave is nothing but the ocean. "Giving up of loka-vichara (worldly thoughts) lands one in Atma-vichara (Self-Awareness)!", said Sri Bhagavan. The disappearance of the 'I' and the vision of 'I': 'I' are simultaneous, affirms Sri Bhagavan. The disappearance of the pseudo-'I' is as serious as its appearance. Firmly established in Pure Awareness, one sees the illusory nature and non-existence of the 'I'. Bhagavan has given us a picturesque story to explain this. The 'intruder' in a marriage party, who neither belonged to the bride's party nor to the bridgroom's, takes to his heels when an enquiry starts as to which party he really belongs. Likewise, this 'I' neither belongs to the body nor to the Self!

To identify oneself with one's body is a common mistake; but, equally prevalent and equally erroneous is the identification of oneself with this 'I'. In the deep sleep state one exists though one is not the body. Repeated experience, gained through self enquiry of the stillness where there is no 'I', convinces one that one is not the 'I'. Just as description of the sweetness of sugar is no substitute for the actual tasting of it, this Self Awareness in the Blissful Absence of the 'I', has to be and can be experienced by every one of us.

"When the 'I' turning inward, enquires Who Am I and reaches the Source, that which is 'I' sinks crestfallen and the One (Self) appears of its own accord as 'I': 'I'. Though it appears thus, it is not the 'I'; it is the Whole. It is the Reality." — Forty Verses on Reality, v. 30.

To encourage and guide seekers in this quest, Sri Bhagavan gives the following authoritative pronouncements: —

"Liberation is the destruction of the 'I'".

"This state of Liberation is eternal".

"The state in which the 'I' does not arise is the state of being 'I': 'I'".

"To remain as 'I': 'I' (Self) is to know the Self, since there are no two separate 'I's. That is true Self-Abidance".

"This state where there is no 'I' is agreeable to all.".

"This is the direct path for all."

"That state which ever IS, is available to all with perfect natural ease."
IN HIS PRESENCE

By Professor K. Swaminathan

In the early forties Professor Madan Gopal (of Jubbulpore) was a frequent visitor to the Ashram. He knew German and would translate into English articles in German. In one such article the famous psychologist Carl Jung had contrasted Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Bhagavan and saw in this succession the progressive advance from bhakti to jnana. On hearing this Sri Bhagavan promptly sat erect and protested against the comparison, saying: "When one has reached the mountain-top, no matter from what side or by what path, one knows and understands all other paths. What is there that Sri Ramakrishna did not know?"

In like manner he deprecated comparisons (attempted by Prof. G.V. Subbaramiah and other devotees) between Himself as a Jnani and the Mahatma as "a mere Karma yogi." The eye that sees and the hand that works are alike organs of one and the same Eternal Goodness. He saw only one adhyatma sakti working everywhere. Different persons perform different functions. Arranging them in an order of merit is "the mischief of the ego."

Sri Bhagavan preferred to speak in Tamil, Telugu or Malayalam. But he corrected mis-translations in English and freely used where needed phrases like "regressus ad infinitum" and "automatic divine activity." This latter phrase he used while explaining prarabdha through the analogy of the electric fan which goes on slowly moving after it is switched off before it finally stops. And he added smiling, "But you can stop it straightaway with a stick if you want."

A frequent topic of discussion, especially when Muruganar was in the Hall, was the peculiar power of some Tamil words in helping one’s sadhana. As stated at p-91 of Ramana Maharshi, published by the National Book Trust, New Delhi, the first invocatory stanza of the Forty Verses dwells lovingly on the Tamil root ul common to being, thinking, heart and inner space, all connoting indivisible
The verb *ul* (to be) admits of no past or future tense and stands for Being beyond time as well as in the present time. The repeated use of the words *Ulladu* (that which is) *ullu* (think) and *ullam* (heart) pulls the mind to pure Being Awareness. Likewise the pronouns *naan* (’I’ the singular and *naam*) and *taan* (itself, the Self) force the Tamil speaker unawares to stay tethered to one’s universal Being as all-inclusive Awareness. Sri Bhagavan and Muruganar love to play on the words *naan, naam* (’we’ meaning you and I’). Sri Bhagavan laughingly claimed Nammalwar as “our own, the Advaitin’s own”, not merely ‘theirs’ (the Vaishnavite’s alone). Far from differing from or being opposed to advaita, Vaishnavism or *visishtadvaita* is “specialised, modified, applied advaita, Being as Becoming or action.”

When someone insisted on the separateness of the two modes of *advaita*, he said: “You may claim proudly that you live in Mylapore, not Madras. But where is Mylapore if not in Madras?” And have not the Alwars themselves sung of the oneness of Siva and Vishnu and recognized both identity and difference between devotee and God? Does not Tirumizhisai Alwar rejoice in this dual role: “Myself you are and yet you are my Master too, O Rama!”

Differing from Malayalam which has adopted *yaan* (’I’ as distinct from ‘you’) even in the nominative case, Tamil uses the forms excluding the second person only in the oblique cases, Tamil uses *naan* (the singular of *naam*, the inclusive ‘we’) in the nominative case also. It is therefore easy and natural for Sri Bhagavan to assert and all Tamils to recognize “unarve naamaai ulam.” (“We are all awareness”).

While in English we speak of the first, second and third persons, in Tamil we speak rather of “Places”, as all persons are one Person in essence. The person speaking (I), the person spoken to (you) and the person or thing spoken of (he, she, it) may occupy three different places, but they are not totally different persons. All beings are one Being. The personal pronouns are named and function in Tamil.
to distinguish places rather than persons. "Tanmai" (Being as such, suchness, essence) is the first person. "Munnilai" (standing in front, what I see before me) is the second person and "Padarkkai" (extension) is the third person. This usage implies that T or the Self is the origin, the starting point and permanent core of all being.

To descend from the sublime to the merely personal. On December 3, 1948, Sri Bhagavan, glancing as usual through the morning newspaper, remarked in the hearing of those present in the Hall, "Look, our Swaminathan has been promoted as Principal of the Muhammadan College." This notice of and reference to a news item, duly reported to me by several devotees, amounted to a gracious blessing to which I owed the very happy and successful tenure of a difficult job. Apart from the willing co-operation of staff and students, I take it as His powerful, prevenient grace that provided for me good friends in Vivekananda College, Mylapore, New College, Royapetta and Government Colleges in Lahore and Dacca, so that I could oblige all parties who came to me for help!

Another thrilling incident is worth recalling. One afternoon in 1949, two highly esteemed senior devotees, Dr. V. Srinivasa Rao and Mr. T.P. Ramachandra Iyer, stepped into my house, Dharmalayam, formally "prostrated" before me and presented to me two copies (fresh from the press) of Anma Bodham, Sri Bhagavan’s Tamil rendering of Adi Sankara’s Sanskrit work. Speaking with unusual respect they said, "Bhagavan wanted us to go and give these copies to you. They contain some corrections in His own hand."

How did I deserve this shower of grace? A few weeks earlier, my friend Minna Nuruddin (a good Tamil and Sanskrit scholar) had gone to the Ashram and given to Sri Bhagavan a copy of M.N.’s Tamil rendering of Adi Sankara’s Sanskrit work. Speaking with unusual respect they said, "Bhagavan wanted us to go and give these copies to you. They contain some corrections in His own hand."

Apart from the weekly meetings of Ramana Kendras and Ramana Bhakta Sabhas, there were occasions when two or three met and talked of something deeply moving and there He was “in the midst of us”. T.K. Chidambaram Mudaliar was fond of Tamil poetry and during his visits to Dharmalayam was delighted....
to discover that his favourite Venbas from Guhai Namassivayar\textsuperscript{1} and Karaikkal Ammaiyar\textsuperscript{2} were often quoted by Sri Bhagavan and His devotees. Is not Siva present in every moment of ananda?

One early morning in January, 1959 I was shivering in the freezing cold in the aerodrome in Minsk. A lady, standing beside me and trying to cheer me up, took out from her handbag a photo of Sri Bhagavan and asked me, “Do you know this Indian sage?” In fact there were devotees of Sri Bhagavan in Warsaw and Prague.

These were casual “appearances”. But Sri Bhagavan was a constant upadrashta, anumanta, bharta, bhokta (observer, encourager, sustainer, enjoyer) in my many meetings and dealings with fellow-devotees like Muruganar, Viswaratne Swami, Sadhu Om, Osborne and A.R. Natarajan.

When I met Muruganar for the last time, he composed for me a kural couplet, a veritable passport to the whole world of Sri Bhagavan with its infinite inner and outer dimensions.\textsuperscript{3}

Through Osborne too Sri Bhagavan spoke to me clearly once. In reporting for the Mountain Path the proceedings at an annual meeting of Ramana Kendra, Delhi (held in a Madras School Hall and attended by hundreds of devotees) I mentioned the “miracle” performed by the Chairman, Sri Panrimalai Swamigal. He showered flowers into my outstretched upper cloth and they became ashes before a thousand eyes. While sending the typed report, I noted in the margin of this paragraph, “Print or omit as you deem fit.” Osborne cut it out and wrote to me, “Don’t you know that Sri Bhagavan wouldn’t like it mentioned at all?”

Sri Bhagavan speaks through many voices to those who have ears to hear. Silence, of course, is His most moving unheard melody, the silence of the starry sky, the splendour of sunrise and sunset. But He also utters words and tells us to utter words which are unudgarga-koram, satyam, priyam, hitam (unexciting, true, pleasing and beneficial). Indeed Bhagavan’s presence is everywhere, as light and bliss and as the darkness and sorrow which remind us of light and bliss. Our one unfailling friend, Guru, Self and God, He shows the way and walks with us throughout the journey of our life.

\textsuperscript{1} \textbf{Chennai} \textbf{Orissa}:

\textit{a) Narayana within the Heart has come before us as the noble path of righteousness.

\textit{b) }As the noble path of righteousness Narayana has come to us and in the Heart abides.

\textsuperscript{2} \textbf{Chennai} \textbf{Orissa}:

\textit{a) }As adjective qualifying Narayana gives the sense:

Narayana within the Heart has come before us as the noble path of righteousness.

\textit{b) }As adverb modifying \textit{Sri} in \textit{Sri Siva} gives the sense:

As the noble path of righteousness Narayana has come to us and in the Heart abides.

\textsuperscript{3} \textbf{Chennai} \textbf{Orissa}:
WHO IS WHO?

By Arthur Osborne

We ask 'Who am I?'; but is there one? First we presume that there is an 'I', then we ask who or what it is. There just is — not I, he, it or anything, but just IS. We try to divide up this simple IS by pronouns — I, he, you — and by this' and 'that', but is it really divisible? I feel being and use the word 'I' for it; but that does not mean that there is any separateness about it.

Outwardly it takes form as a world of things and events. It cognizes this world by means of the faculties of me; of every 'me'. So there are three aspects of it: first, just IS; and this is the same whether the other two are or not, this always is. Second, what is manifested. Third (or perhaps this should be put second) the focal point, that is the cluster of faculties called 'me', through which the manifested is cognized.

To say that there is a subjective 'me' and an objective 'me' would open the door to misunderstanding, because all technical terms do that; but it might at the same time point the way to understanding. Technical terms do that too; that is why we find it so hard to renounce them. 'Me' as the focal point between what-is and what-is-manifested could be called the subjective 'me'. The 'me' which appears as part of the manifested, on a par with you and Susan and James and John, could be called the objective 'me'. The subjective 'me' (when true to its nature) sees every objective 'me' equally, that is to say loves its neighbour as itself. It is attracted exclusively, totally back towards what-is, that is to say loves God with all its heart and mind and strength.

Some considerable practice in meditation may be necessary before it even begins to feel the impersonal I-ness, the unity of being. Even when it does it is likely to continue also to feel the restricted individual I-sense. Every time I feel a thrill of pleasure at being praised or annoyance at being criticised, or take the corner seat in a train, leaving my companion a less comfortable place, or take a second cup of tea when there is not enough to go round, or imagine myself in some role or dread some eventuality, I am proclaiming the individual me in action. And actions speak louder than words. It is no use saying that there is not an ego and behaving as though there is. It is living on the assumption that there is an ego that prevents one from realizing that there is not, that is from attaining Liberation.

Many great Teachers, including the Maharshi, have said that we are not bound, so there can be no liberation; and yet paradoxically they have also urged us to seek Liberation. We must be careful of the meaning of the words we use, so as not to get tangled up in them. Liberation from what? From the ego or our belief in an ego or illusion of an ego. If there is no ego then, of course, there can be no bondage to it and no need for Liberation from it. But so long as I live as though there were an ego and take offence at a slight or want a cake there is an ego for me and I am bound by it or by the service I render to it. The true Self of me is not bound but my bondage to the (real or illusory) ego obscures the true Self of me. Realization of the Self is the same as Liberation from the ego.

What does it matter if I do believe in a separate, individual self, an ego? Why do spiritual teachers speak of it as a sort of crime? Because it is. It is 'original sin'. All technical terms mislead — Self, ego, sin, God, mind — all get personified like characters on a stage and need to be re-examined from time to time. I have a mental faculty which is used by what is to correlate and
report the apperceptions of what-is-manifested submitted to it by my other faculties. But very early in life this mental faculty begins to find some of the reports made to it (by warm milk or laughter) pleasant and others (by a too hot drink or sudden loud noise) disturbing and it builds itself up into a fictitious person demanding the pleasant ones and rejecting, or trying to reject, the unpleasant. For this purpose it uses and disposes of the other faculties. The fictitious person it is that is called the 'mind' or 'ego'. They are the same. When it is said (and the Maharshi said it as well as other spiritual masters) that the mind of the Sage is dead, it does not mean that His mental faculty is in any way impaired. If he looks at the calendar he can tell the date like any one else. It only means that the mental faculty no longer acts as the ruler of the other faculties, and indeed of the life, planning the future, regretting the past, hoping, fearing, exulting.

The next question might be: “Suppose I like the ego-state, why shouldn’t I be left at peace in it?” The answer is that you don’t like it—nobody does; and it doesn’t leave you at peace. Solomon listed “a servant when he ruleth” as one of the great calamities. The mental faculty is a servant; the mind makes itself the ruler. It is insatiable; however favourable one’s circumstances it always craves more—more pleasure, more admiration, more success—and it is eternally insecure, vulnerable to sickness, bereavement, old age, destitution, and ultimately unavoidably, to death. Yet although plagued by this ego-self, although worried and insecure, and driven to consider even death to escape from it, how few have the clear sight and steady determination to renounce it! That is the perpetual mystery.

The question may arise: how do I know that I shall be better off, more contented, less distressed, if I reject the ego? That who will? Who am I? The ego asks that question and likes to imagine himself engaging in a valiant war against himself and enjoying the rewards. The ego-free state is the natural state; it is what by nature I am. It is the care-free and deathless state. Without the ego, who is there to feel grieved or frustrated?

Are there positive gains also, new powers or experiences? Who for? The faculties, set free from the tyrant mind, are free to grow naturally, no longer warped and stunted, no longer shut off from the sunlight. And the mind, the usurper, gioats at the prospect of the powers and experiences that will accrue to him as a reward for his fictitious death, so he asks if there are positive gains. That is one of his strongest lines of defence or counter-attack.

Then suppose one does decide to abjure the seeming-self for the true? And spiritual aspirants are supposed to have already decided. How is one to set about it? The mere declaration won’t carry one far.

The next essential would be to live each day as it comes on the assumption of the unreality of the individual self. That would imply complete renunciation of egoism, of boasting and craving and domineering and other encroachments. A technique is usually needed for it. The one that Krishna enjoined in the Gita is cool, efficient, impersonal activity, doing what is right because it is right, irrespective of gain or loss, or of pain or pleasure. That does not mean, of course, that there must be no profit and no pleasure. A merchant naturally sells at a profit because that is his living; a man naturally expects pleasure from his marriage; only profit and pleasure should not override duty and become the dominating motive in life.

But even a discipline of disinterested activity seldom suffices to dissolve the ego-sense. It is an attempt to starve out the ego but needs a more violent campaign to destroy him. This can be surrender or enquiry. Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita enjoins surrender and devotion; Vasishtha in the Yoga Vasishtha enjoins enquiry; the Maharshi said: “There are two ways; ask yourself ‘Who am I?’ or submit.” The mind acts as though it were the ruler of the faculties. It has to abdicate and surrender them and itself to pure Being which is the Self. Or to look inward and find out who it is, what it is, what really IS.
SRI MURUGANAR

By T.K. Jayaraman

Sri Muruganar was one of the foremost and closest devotees of Sri Bhagavan. He lived and breathed Bhagavan every moment of his life ever since he came to Arunachala permanently in 1926 abandoning practically every material attachment. Thousands of devotees coming from all parts of the world to Sri Ramanaszramam have seen him or have heard of him. Yet, the commanding heights of his greatness have not been perceived and recognised by the world at large, masked as they were by his extreme humility and self-effacement.

Born to Sri Krishna Iyer of Ramanathapuram in 1890, the child was originally named Sambamurthy. However the official name was C.K. Subramania Iyer. He who in later years could sing and pour out verses in a torrent, could
hardly speak and was almost dumb till the age of five. Having lost his father early, he lived with a relative in Coimbatore and had his education there.

He evinced a deep love for Tamil. He studied the Tirukkural thoroughly and tried to follow its edicts meticulously in his life. Out of love for Tamil he changed his name as Mugavai Kanna Muruganar, corresponding to his official name. He soon became a great scholar in Tamil and worked as a Tamil pundit in the Norwich Girls High School, Madras, and the Hindu Theological High School for Girls, Madras. He was taken as a scholar-member in the Tamil Lexicon (Sol Aharathi) Committee and worked with great masters of Tamil like Rao Saheb M. Raghava Iyengar. He was well known to such doyens of Tamil literature as Mahamahopadhyaya Dr. U.V. Swaminatha Iyer, V.S. Chengalvaraya Pillai, Meenakshisundaram Pillai, Yogi Suddhananda Bharathi and Sachidanandam Pillai. All of them have appreciated his works and have hailed him as a poet of classic excellence and pure devotion to Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

He was an ardent patriot and was highly influenced by Gandhiji’s national liberation movement. He wore only Khadi on which Gandhiji laid great emphasis as being a direct means for the amelioration of the poor. Gandhiji swore by Truth and Non-violence (Ahimsa) and Muruganar too became an earnest follower of these principles. That was the reason why he would rather walk than engage a bullock cart (the mode of conveyance generally available then) to cover the two to three miles of distance from the railway station to the Ashram, as he would not want to hurt the animals by riding in the cart. He composed several songs in praise of Gandhiji and his activities, which were later published as Swatantra Geetham.

Sri Muruganar heard about Bhagavan through some devotees and his own father-in-law who took to sannyasa and became known as Dandapaniswami. He set out from Madras to meet Bhagavan when his school closed for September holidays in 1923. On reaching Tiruvannamalai, he went straight to the Arunachaleswara temple. There he composed eleven verses titled Desika Pathikam in one of the meters of Thevaram set in Raga Kampothi in praise of Sri Ramana, each verse ending with Desika Ramanamaadeve (Guru Ramana—my Lord).

He begins the Pathikam by addressing Sri Ramana thus: “In days of yore you came down from Kailasa (abode of Lord Siva) to Thirupperunthurai to listen to the sweet words of the great Manikkavachakar. But now you have come to Arunachala to hear the prattle of this simpleton, Oh my Lord and Master Ramana.”

Later when he visited Bhagavan in December of the same year, he brought a set of verses beginning Annamalai Ramanan written in the pattern of Tiruvembavai of Tiruvachakam. On seeing these songs Bhagavan enquired whether he could compose songs like Manikkavachakar. Anyone else in the place of Muruganar might have felt highly elated and might even have considered himself a shade superior to the great saint himself. So great was the humility of Muruganar that his reaction was just the opposite. “Where is Manikkavachakar and where am I?”, he started thinking. However, by and by he felt that he should take it as a hint and command from Bhagavan that he should also express whatever he could in writing. The result was his copious outpourings of thousands of verses straight from his heart.

The magnificent and thrilling songs were patterned not only after Tiruvachakam of Manikkavachakar but also after the Thevaram of Thirugnanasambandar, Appar and Sundarar in the styles of Arunagirinathar and Thayumanavar and other poet saints also.

The primary credit for his writings to see the light of day in print should go to Sri Ramapanpadananda. He it was who after realising the immense value of Muruganar’s writings, took upon himself the task of publishing them. His
tireless efforts, particularly in finding the funds for the job, took him to several places not only in India but in the Far East. My father, Sri T.V. Krishnaswami, was also a great admirer of Muruganar. I remember the flurry of activity in our small house in Mylapore, Madras, when several people used to visit us and work throughout the day. As a young boy I did not realise the full significance of what was going on. Muruganar’s Ramana Sannidhi Mural was going to the press! The book was released in 1933 containing over one hundred songs running to over 500 pages praising, paying obeisance, surrendering, admiring, seeking the grace, experiencing, extolling and explaining the greatness and glory of the Master of Masters, Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Posterity owes it to Sri Muruganar again for making Bhagavan write Upadesa Undiyar (Essence of Teaching) and Ulladu Narpadu (Forty Verses on What Is), as Bhagavan never used to preach. His bliss is to be experienced and to be That. Muruganar was writing on Siva’s Leelas in the Tamil metre Undiyar. When he came to that part where Lord Siva was to give His Upadesa (Teachings), he requested Bhagavan to do it. Bhagavan graciously complied and gave in his own words in the same metre the eternal upadesa which was compiled under the heading Upadesa Undiyar. We thus have this rare philosophical treasure.

There were some stray verses composed by Bhagavan on different occasions. Muruganar arranged them in a coherent order with the blessings of Sri Ramana and requested the latter to compose more verses to complete the series. Thus Ulladu Narpadu—Forty Verses on Reality—came into being.

Muruganar wrote Sri Arunachala Tatvam (the Significance of Arunachala) and showed it to Shri Ramana. He not only approved it but wrote in the same metre Deepa Darsana Tatvam explaining the significance of seeing the Karthigai Deepam (the huge flame that is lighted on top of the Arunachala hill every year on the Karthigai day witnessed by lakhs of devout people).

Glance of Grace

By Muruganar

Let us meditate on Ramana,
The Teacher of Reality
Who dwells within my inmost self
As I, as I,
Bringing in full measure
The joy of silence
Ending the delusive pride
Of a divided self’s self-love.

In one unbroken silence let us dwell
On the twin feet of the Guru
Glorified above all kings
Because His glance of grace revealed
The Hill of bright Awareness
Shining in a world
Troubled by darkness of desire.

Dear devotees, avid for grace,
Our Master is an ocean,
Take and hold your fill.
Approach him freely,
Minds and hands wide open.
Drink to your heart’s content.
Defeated and frustrated, do not reel
Beneath Fate’s blows.
Turn your eyes, your thoughts
Towards those sovereign Feet
Which can transmute a devotee
Into Siva radiant.

Like a tree which on a scorching day
Offers cool shade to every corner
By nature, not by choice,
Even so He stands
Calm, immutable, impartial,
Liking or disliking none,
But saving all who reach His feet.

*Translated into English by Professor K. Swaminathan.
“Atma Vidya — Learning the Self — is easy, Oh it is so easy,” exclaimed Sri Muruganar in a song of his. He wrote the Paliulai and Anupaliulai (the first two refrains) but could not proceed further. Sri Ramana wrote the Charanam (subsequent stanzas) fully endorsing Muruganar’s idea.

Muruganar had great rapport with Bhagavan. People of different countries, religions and traditions sought from Sri Bhagavan answers to their problems and guidance on various matters. Muruganar compiled Bhagavan’s verbal teachings given out on these occasions, in Tamil verse form. These were approved by Bhagavan and were later published as Guru Vachaka Kovai containing 1254 verses. These were translated into English by Professor K. Swamianathan and have been serialized in The Mountain Path as Garland of Guru’s Sayings.

During the sixties two substantial volumes entitled Sri Ramananubhuti were brought out by the Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Madras, thanks to the enthusiasm of Sri Ramanapadananda. There are thousands of more verses written by Muruganar which are being published by Ramana Kendra, Delhi, in 9 volumes under the title Jnana Bodham. Sri Sadhu Om, another scholar-devotee of Sri Bhagavan, has laboured hard and done much to make Muruganar’s works more widely known and better understood by editing with scrupulous care the 9 volumes of Jnana Bodham and by producing a detailed commentary on the Kovai.

Muruganar’s commentary on Bhagavan’s Aksharamanamalai was written when he was staying in Isanya Madam invited by Sri Natesaswami, Head of the Mutt. Although Bhagavan gave Muruganar full freedom in making the comments, the latter would consult Him wherever he had doubts and get His approval. The Adhyatmic significance of the seemingly straightforward poems brought out by Muruganar can lead one directly to Enlightenment. I may mention that my father too was so much drawn to this work that he used to spend hours with Muruganar for several days in the Isanya Mutt to learn from him the full meaning and import of Bhagavan’s words.

Sri Muruganar lived a very simple life. He took a cue from Sri Ramana and went to Bikshavandan (collecting alms) as a means to subdue one’s ego and lose body consciousness. He had close contact with the other great disciple, Viswanatha Swami, and with that Colossus, Kavukkantha Ganapati Muni, who with all his Vedic scholarship and penance sought shelter under Sri Ramana and hailed Him as Bhagavan.

Our gratitude should go to persons like Dr. T.N. Krishnaswami, Mylapore, Madras, who encouraged and assisted Muruganar whenever he could and Kanakammal, Padma Ammal and Nomba Ammal, who served him with devotion.

Muruganar spent his entire life thinking only about Bhagavan, His power, glory and grace. He merged in Him on the eighth August, 1973. His samadhi is within the Ashram premises.

Sri Muruganar was a many-hued spectrum, a bright shadow of Bhagavan. He has written over forty thousand lyrical stanzas in pure classical Tamil inspired by devotion and inspiring devotion, and at the same time illustrating the infinite power, beauty and opulence of the Tamil language. It is up to us to drink the nectar and experience the bliss. The legacy he has left behind is twofold. The Hymns of Praise from a flower-filled garden of divine delight, while his Garland of Guru’s Sayings is a systematic collection of perfect diamonds radiating the light of the theory, the practice and the experience which make up the Teachings of Sri Ramana, the Lord.
THE FOUR FATAL LIES

(iv) "I'm mortal."

By Douglas E. Harding

HERE am I, all of eighty years old, surrounded by intelligent and caring people telling me (though hardly in so many words) that I've had it, that it is probably more a matter of months than of years before I die and disappear altogether and for ever. And other intelligent and caring people telling me (with all the persuasiveness and conviction at their command) that this is a lie, and that I have it and will never cease to have it—to have abundant life, life everlasting!

What an intriguing situation this is! What a lark! I could say "How funny!" or even "What fun!" (like being reliably informed I have and haven't won The Pools, or am the Ruler of the world and his boot boy, or Methuselah and a mayfly)—if it were not for the fact that the joke is on me. And if it were not for the fact that the difference between a live me and a dead me is a lot greater and more poignant than the difference between me-qua-man and me-qua-mayfly. That difference—that poignancy and urgency and gravity, that bite—is the reason

* The author’s conclusions are set out at length in The Little Book of Life and Death, Arkana (Routledge & Kegan Paul), 1988.

that I have, on top of a lifelong interest in settling this great question of my life—its transience or its permanence—spent the past couple of years giving it all the attention I’m capable of.

The purpose of this article is to share some of my findings with you.
By way of introduction, let’s sample what those who are so sure I’m eternal have to say:

You have squeezed yourself into the space of a lifetime and the volume of a body, and thus created the innumerable conflicts of life and death.

Have your being outside this body of birth and death, and all your problems will be solved. They exist because you believe yourself born to die. Undeceive yourself and be free. You are not a person.

— Nisargadatta Maharaj

God made the senses turn outwards, man therefore looks outwards, not into himself. Now and again a daring soul, desiring immortality, has looked back and found himself. He who knows the soundless, odourless, tasteless, intangible, formless, deathless, supernatural, undecaying, beginningless, endless, unchangeable Reality, springs out of the mouth of Death.

— Katha Upanishad

Owing to I-am-the-body notion, death is feared as being the loss of Oneself.

Birth and death pertain to the body only but they are superimposed on the Self.

— Ramana Maharshi

I’m on trial for my life. What follows is a summary of the proceedings, of the lawsuit in which I’m the Judge and Jury as well as the one standing trial. The Prosecution pleads that I’m mortal, in fact already under sentence of death by a higher court. The Defence vigorously contests this. If, as His Honour the Judge, I’m not impartial, if for any consideration or bribe — whether of earthly or heavenly treasure — I favour either side, and also if I rule out new and unheard of evidence, I’m dishonourable and corrupt. Injustice will be done, and done to me.

To the evidence, then. The Prosecution takes the floor:

I don’t have far to look for clues, it says. Plainly I’m dying on my feet—fast. Witness those ever-multiplying and deepening wrinkles; those ever-baggier bags under eyes and chin; those too-pearly and too-regular teeth; that snow-white hair falling like sheet through my life’s long winter, leaving me balder daily and my baldness blotchy with senile lentigo—the freckles of age. (It’s as if the freckles had migrated from around the child’s nose to the old man’s dome and the backs of his hands, where they go on growing and darkening. Will they continue to do so when, soon, those hands clench in death?) What more resounding evidence of that death’s relentless approach do I need than this crescendo of warning signals? If I am too cowardly to heed them, and go on hoping against hope that my story will end as happily as a novelette, why then I have lost—all remaining dignity and become pathetic indeed.

All of which the Defence readily admits. In fact, insists on. Honesty about that mounting senescence, and the climax it’s obviously leading to, is indispensable.

Honestly about what that evidence is, but no less about WHERE it is. About where those
signs of ageing and dying are actually given. The what without the where is a half-truth that isn’t just lying, but the lie. Repeat: the lie.

They are presented over there, some three to ten or more feet from me here. In fact, just about the same distance from me as people are—people who show very similar evidence of ageing and dying. That’s where I find mortals and mortality, and evidently that’s where they belong; and where that all-too-mortal Douglas Harding is domiciled, appropriately, among his kind-way out there. I see this with a seeing that is a thousand times more convincing than any thoughts or feelings could ever be.

And I see he can’t come here, neither the whole nor any part of him. When I bring my mirror, slowly, right up to this spot—to my eye—I lose him, I watch him being progressively dismantled and dissolved—signs of age and all. Well before he can touch me, he’s abolished altogether. It’s the same with his age-freckled hands. I find that they belong out there and won’t stand up to close inspection here. And if there ever was a case of a miss being as good as a mile, this is it. Here, I’m as safe against all that mortal stuff as if it were light years away.

Well may St. Paul exclaim in a kind of ecstasy: “O Death, WHERE is thy sting? O grave, WHERE is thy victory?” I see Death off. I see the perisher D.E.H. off from here, every particle of him and every hint of his mortality. Death can’t ever get to me in any form or disguise. By nature and constitution I’m forever short of that enemy.

What a bad joke, what needless and self-inflicted misery it is, what blindness to the obvious, that we should go on rummaging in books, and chasing teachers, and burning the midnight oil—trying, trying so hard to find out how death can be warded off: when all one has to do is see how it wards itself off, how it rockets from this launching pad of the deathless I AM! If only, instead of using our mirror for self-deception, we used it for Self-revelation, and let it put the usurper Death in his place—instantly! The very device that once planted humanness and mortality so firmly on us stands ready to take them off us—instantly and forever!

At this juncture the Prosecution intervenes to accuse me of a treble misuse of language—for purposes of special pleading, of dividing the indivisible, and of dodging responsibility. It maintains that in ordinary life and not just to make my case, I wouldn’t dream of thus washing my hands of D.E.H., artificially distinguishing and separating myself as “1st person here” from myself as “3rd person there”. Nor in ordinary life I answer unhesitatingly to his name and, bringing his 1st person and 3rd together, take full responsibility for what he gets up to. Thus when he walks and eats and sleeps I walk and eat and sleep, and when he ages and sickens and dies I do the same. Where’s the difference? In short (says the Prosecution) if I were to use language to inform and not deceive myself and others, to take and not evade responsibility, I would have to admit that I’m precisely the sort of thing which perishes.

This the Defence at once flatly contradicts: maintaining that, directly I cease letting language make a fool of me, I discover that I’m precisely not the sort of thing that perishes, that I’m not remotely like that. In fact, the Prosecution supplies the Defence with all the examples it needs. When I snap out of my language-induced coma, and see what I see, I can find no resemblance between what this 1st Person Singular gets up to and what those 3rd persons (and that includes D.E.H.) get up to—between “I walk” and “he walks”, or “I eat” and “he eats”, or “I sleep” and “he sleeps”. As for “I die” and “he dies”, the difference between them is that whereas the second is certain the first is impossible—if not meaningless.

Take walking. When he walks it’s he that moves and not the world, but when I walk it’s
the world that moves and not me. (This came out in an earlier article). Again, when he eats the food's inserted into that head and doesn't taste, but when I eat it's inserted into this no-head and does taste. And when he sleeps he's a sleeping organism, but when I sleep I'm nothing like that.

It's unbelievable how almost all of us go through life without ever noticing that there are two altogether different sorts of life going on: two sorts of eating round the dining table, two sorts of taking a walk; two sorts of whatever's being done. Incredible the power of language to stupefy, to trick, to blind, talking us into believing that, because the predicates of the sentences "I eat", and "he eats", and so on, are the same, the experience—the feel and taste and look of it—must be the same! Is it any surprise that our lives crack and crumple all out of shape, built as they are on a base so insubstantial, so non-existent?

When it comes to the day-to-day living of life the practical consequences of this self-deception-by-language are damaging enough. But when it comes to facing the end of life they are disastrous. Turning a blind eye to the distinction between the dying in "he dies" and in "I die" is attempting suicide.

What, exactly, is that sharpest and most vital of distinctions?

When he dies, what happens? His breathing becomes irregular and stertorous, and presently ceases; his body goes cold and rigid, and before long starts to smell... And when I die? Well, I don't have to wait to see. Right now I turn the arrow of my attention round 180°, once more looking in at what I'm also looking out of, and see—with a seeing that couldn't be clearer or more decisive—that here I'm reduced to Nothing whatever, nothing but Awareness of this Nothing.

But that (the Prosecution butts in) isn't dying; it lacks the sting, the awesomeness, the inevitability, the devastation of the real thing, and is little more than a meditation upon death.

On the contrary (says the Defence) it is much more thorough and much more profound than death as it is generally taken to be. That far-less-real public dying leaves plenty of body stuff, of chemistry and physics, in situ, and probably plenty of mind-stuff too. On the other hand, this wholly-real private dying, which leaves Nothing in situ, instantly wipes out all of me; as I can see now, perfectly and at will, by simple in-seeing. This is the dying before-one-dies, the hidden practice of death this side of one's official and unhidden death, in fact that DYING TO LIVE or DEATH OF DEATH which is the theme of so many Seers—notably, of course, Ramana Maharshi, who saw death off by 'dying' at the early age of 16.

This won't do at all (counters the Prosecution)—it goes against all-common sense. I admit to living now. Very well, I must then admit to dying one day. For of all certainties the death of those who live is among the most certain.

Well (comes back the swift reply) how's this for a surprise? I do not admit to living now, any more than to dying one day. To say I shall die is to flatter myself! Here, where I see there's Nothing, I see there's nothing to body forth or sustain life, nothing to live, not a particle of a particle of even the most primitive animate and inanimate forms. To be void at all, this Void that I am has to be void of all, and certainly void of all that could live. My eternal safeguard against death is that I have nothing here to die. Nor is this any ordinary deprivation or come-down. For right here is What's infinitely superior to life and death, namely the Source of both, that Origin of all which is
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THE FOUR

nevertheless clean of all — as the start of a race is still, and the spring of a river is dry, and the hub of a wheel does not turn.

And anyone who doesn’t believe me is invited to come and see: warmly urged to come all the way up to me here, armed with all the optical and electronic aids he or she can muster: and to discover that, well before arrival, every trace of what’s under inspection is lost.

My visitor is my executioner. And how well this fits in with the common sense which the Prosecution was invoking! I have only to look down now to see that I’m beheaded, topped — drastically décolleté, so to say — and what more summary mode of execution is there than that? And what surer safeguard against future dying?

But the Prosecution isn’t quite silenced yet. All this ingenious special pleading (it points out) might do something towards persuading my mind, nothing towards persuading my heart. Knowing the precise formula of this medicine against death, and seeing what it looks like and how it behaves in the laboratory, is valueless unless it is taken, unless it gets down to my guts, unless it is felt. Superficially, I may be persuaded I’m immortal; deep down I’m sure I’m not. No-one is.

And again the Prosecution isn’t simply wrong, says the Defence; it has its fact upside down, and moreover goes on supplying the Defence with valuable ammunition. It’s a strange and amusing — but also highly significant — fact that, though in theory I know that, at 80, I have very little time left (not much more than one fortieth of what I had at 40, and not much more than one sixtieth of what I had at 20) in practice I feel that I have just as much time ahead of me as ever, that I have all the time in the world, that essentially I’m timeless and indestructible. I don’t even, inside, feel a day older now than then. No; this isn’t evidence of senile wishful thinking, of self-deception, but of the most searching candour and realism working at some level below normal consciousness. For these strong intimations of immortality apply only to the One here, to this 1st Person Singular, present tense, and not at all to those 3rd persons over there. Thus I find myself looking round the circle of my companions (generally much younger than the one I see in my mirror) and noting new symptoms of ageing; and sometimes I sense the cold finger of Death getting very near to one or another of them. But never to this one, whom I put in a different category altogether. And I find myself scanning the obituary columns in the newspapers with the same curious detachment: I just don’t see me there, ever! In brief, I diagnose all 3rd persons as suffering from a terminal condition which only this 1st Person is immune from.

And of course I am right. I alone — unique, all Reality and no appearance — I alone am deathless. Of course, for I alone AM.

* * * * *

Well, that about wraps up this sketch of my trial, of the case for and the case against my mortality. It only remains to say goodbye to my reader.

If you have been reading this article as primarily or only about my experience, about the question of D.E.H.’s mortality or immortality and not about yours, you would have been better employed cultivating your garden. It won’t do you or anyone any good to play Judge in my case, and pass verdict on which side has won. This article is about you — you as 1st Person Singular, present tense, and as such under sentence of death most assuredly. For all you know, it may have been carried out before you read this.

If you haven’t already done so, will you please read this article the way it’s meant to be read — as a summary of your trial. A purely tentative summary, for you should not believe a word it says. Test everything for yourself.

I can’t say it too loud or too often: you are the Sole Authority on you — on whether you are, in sober fact, the ONLY IMPERISHABLE.
RAMANA MAHARSHI: A PROFILE

By G. Narayan

SRI Ramana Maharshi's life is a story of great spiritual adventure in modern times. As a school boy Venkataraman had not read any religious books. When an elderly relative told him that he was returning from 'Arunachala', Venkataraman was thrilled. Subsequently he borrowed a book from his uncle and read the life stories of the 63 Tamil sages. A current of awareness began to awaken in him. One day when he was in his uncle's house a sudden and inexplicable fear of death overtook young Ramana. He simulated death; lay stiff like a corpse holding his breath. Ramana realised that the body might die but the spirit could not be touched by death. And he was in a state of contemplation.

Ramana lost interest in studies or in living with his brother and mother at home and decided to travel to Tiruvannamalai, to be with the holy hill Arunachala. With barely enough rupees to cover the expenses, Venkataraman, sixteen years of age, undertook the journey. He left a note to his elder brother not to worry about him and spend any money searching for him as he was going on a virtuous enterprise. When he arrived at Tiruvannamalai he went into the temple and sat in meditation. He was already established in a state of silence and bliss.

After sometime Ramana moved up the sacred hill of Arunachala. He lived in the Virupaksha cave, and in the Mango tree cave during the hot months. During the early years on the hill Ramana observed silence, his radiance had already drawn a few devotees who started an ashram. Notable among them was Echammal, a bereaved mother, who prepared some food every day and carried it up the hillside. In these early years Ramana was known as Brahmna Swami, and many devotees including Arthur Osborne have written interesting and moving accounts of this period of his life.

Ramana Maharshi had an extensive contact and communion with Nature including animals, birds and trees. A group of monkeys visited him on the hills frequently; Ramana talked with them and settled their quarrels. A tiger was sighted when he was sitting in front of a lonely temple with a devotee; Ramana sat quietly while the devotee ran and closed the door. Years later, at Skandashram...
a snake passed over his body where many people were seated along with him. He did not move and when questioned by the devotees as to how he felt, Maharshi answered that it was cool. "A Sparrow refused to go out of the Hall till she had audience with Bhagavan. Bhagavan listened to her and replied: 'What can I do? They have disturbed you by throwing away your nest. They will not allow you to build again within the Hall. So, please go and build it elsewhere'. The sparrow flew out merrily'. Bhagavan is an endearing title only given to a sage who has attained to Truth and Godhead. Dogs, cats and squirrels received the affection of Bhagavan. The most favoured of all the animal devotees was the cow Lakshmi. She visited Bhagavan regularly and was given a banana or some other delicacy. She bore a number of calves, and a stone cow-house was built for her in the Ashram premises. Bhagavan attended to her, on the day of her passing away, holding his cheek against her, gazing into her eyes and placing his hand on her head.

I had the rare privilege of seeing Ramana Maharshi in the nineteen forties before Independence. Around fifteen years of age, I had attached myself to my maternal uncle and two of his friends who were going to Pondicherry. They planned to stop at Tiruvannamalai on the way. As we entered the Ashram hall we saw over two hundred people sitting quietly in front of Bhagavan who was seated on a couch. We were at the back of the hall and Bhagavan saw us as we entered the hall. All of us felt a great presence, and a sense of silence and warmth. After sitting quietly for over ten minutes, we got up and proceeded on our journey.

Many years later an elderly English friend whom I met in Bombay told me that he had
gone to Ramanashram many times and had Bhagavan’s darshan. He felt it was a total embrace he experienced, an embrace of love and joy. Many devotees felt that they received initiation through Bhagavan’s glance of grace. There were no problems, and no questions to ask and no replies to receive. Yet Ramana Maharshi expounded an approach which was simple and yet profound. ‘Who am I?’ Who is it that is caught in pleasure and pain, in hopes and fears? Who is it that is suffering and is lost in ego-centric activity? In this inquiry into the ‘I’ thought is exposed in its subtlety and deception reaching its vanishing point. This requires energy and attention and in this process the ego is destroyed or transcended. What remains is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss and a new wave of insight proceeding from that integrally. Vichara or inquiry was not confined to the Hindus, it had global appeal. Men and women from all over the world, of different religions and races came to see Maharshi and be in his presence. He never expected any of them to change their religion, but to inquire and look within. To simply be, without the thought of being or becoming.

Sri Ramana did not favour the search for siddhis (occult powers). It is said that by means, by severe austerities or tapas of a certain kind these powers can be acquired. They are within the field of the mind and can boost the ego. The highest Siddhi is the realisation of the Self or Reality, for once you realise the truth you cannot be drawn to the path of ignorance. The enlightened sage has siddhis which are the outcome of normal and natural tapas and meditation. They come of their own accord, they are God given. They appear according to one’s destiny and whether they come or not, the Jnani, settled in supreme peace, is not attached to them or disturbed by them.

It is important to study ‘The Forty Verses on Reality’ to understand Sri Ramana’s teaching on meditation. The Invocatory verse is as follows: ‘If the reality (‘I’) did not exist, could there exist the consciousness ‘am’ (the consciousness of one’s own existence)? Since that reality exists in the heart devoid of thought, how to (or who can) meditate upon that reality, which is called the Heart? Know that abiding in the Heart as it is (that is devoid of thought, as ‘I am’) alone is meditating (upon the Reality).”

As thought forms cannot reach the Heart, it is the quiescence and negation of thought that is of importance in meditation. Thought control is not meditation, as it implies the duality of the thinker and thought. Division leads to friction and conflict.

The fifteenth verse reads as follows:

“Only with reference to the present, can the past and future exist. They too, while current, are but the present. Trying to determine the nature of the past and the future, unaware of the present, is just like trying enumeration without the unit, one”.

Living in the present, without the cobwebs of thought and day-dreaming, is of great relevance. This demands attention and the energy that comes in its wake. The present is timeless and so, eternal.

The 40th Verse: “If it is said that liberation is of three kinds, with form or without form or with and without form, then let me tell you, the extinction of the ego which ensues into the three forms of liberation is alone liberation.”

The emphasis is on the extinction of the ego which is synonymous with freedom. In the wake of freedom there is clarity and perception of what is, which is virtue. The study and contemplation of these forty verses is of absorbing interest.

All seekers and indeed all human beings will find solace and direction in the life and teachings of Sri Ramana. He was a rare phenomenon. At the moment he passed away many saw an enormous meteorite travelling across the sky, even as far away as Madras. It is heartening to visit Sri Ramanashram at Tiruvannamalai. The campus is clean and you feel at home. There is a benediction of silence and beauty.
LIFE, DEATH AND REINCARNATION

By Robert Powell

AFTER having examined in depth various fundamental matters—and all such issues are ever closely interrelated—is it now possible to put the questions of death, the fear thereof, and reincarnation in proper perspective?

We have seen that space and time occur only in the body-mind sphere, the unfolding phase of the enfolding-unfolding Universe. We are using the latter term here in the sense that David Bohm uses it and, which, it seems, is essentially the equivalent of Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj's concept of "objectivation" of Reality. Thus, space and time are real as internal issues—that is within the domain of Maya—but are totally unreal without that domain. Therefore, one who has totally understood this is no longer "afflicted" with "life" and "death"; and the fear of either or both. One might say that the fear of death is the fear of losing continuity. But this continuity—which derives from Time—has never been real in the first place, has always been imaginary (literally, a question of being based on images, which are memories).

Now what, in this context, could Reincarnation be? Antagonists argue that reincarnation cannot be a reality because there is no self; thus, there is nothing (i.e., no "thing") that could possibly recur. But whatever may be the truth, the argument is patently false. If there is no self, what am I then at present? I cannot very well deny my own existence, for this very denial is predicated upon it.

I am an apparent individuality, a proposition with which, at a minimum, most of us will agree. Now, there is no logical reason preventing that apparent individuality from re-emerging in a continual recycling process. I think this conclusion adequately disposes of the argument.

But the real clincher in all this, overriding insight, is that both antagonists and protagonists of reincarnation have missed the point. Let us for a moment assume that the reincarnationists are right in their world view. Because there is no real continuity, but only the deceptive feeling thereof, what is the "I" that has reincarnated? Even within my present life time, am I not now an entirely different entity from what I was as an infant, an adolescent, a young adult, and will be as an elderly man? Any identity of these individuals is merely incidental—through name, sex, property, profession, etc., which are all artificial labels but do not touch upon the real "self". So if I cannot clearly identify myself while in my present life, how could I possibly do so when I return? The
answer is, of course, that I cannot. Were it otherwise, I would now have a memory of, at least, my most recent past existence. The majority of people have no remembrance of such past lives. As to the minority who claim otherwise, their claims have not proven out when checked for veracity. But even if one day evidence were found to stand up to scrutiny, would it change anything in the human condition? It would prove only the reincarnation—or here, perhaps, a more appropriate term is "recycling"—of empty body-mind entities ("empty," because they have no real substance). The Self, on the other hand, does not need to reincarnate, for it exists timeless.

In practical terms, reincarnation means only that there are memories of worldly experiences in previous bodies in addition to those in the present body. What difference does that make to the quality of our lives? What bearing has it got on the ending of suffering? The "fact" of reincarnation would leave intact the need for self-transcendence as much as ever. It is not "reincarnation" that matters but the belief therein, our clinging to memory (time), that keeps us to our "limited" stature and establishes us as "mortal" beings.

We must see beyond all that. Much of our problem stems from the mixing of two levels, that of Maya and the Real, which have not even got any point of contact. Bodies appear and disappear in the now. Owing to the illusion of a Universe that has unfolded into space-time from the dimensionless Infinity, we see "body"—a multiplicity of bodies; through the unfolding of "time," these bodies appear and disappear. Having as much reality as our perception of the Indian rope trick, all this has nothing to do with my real Self, which is That in which all this activity—this coming and going of bodies and objects—is observed but which in itself remains unaffected and is, therefore, immortal.

THE MAN IN THE GLASS

By D.

When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you king for a day,
Just go to a mirror and look at yourself
And see what THAT man has to say.
For it isn't your father or mother or wife
Who judgment upon you must pass;
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
Is the one staring back from the glass.
Some people may think you a straight-shootin' chum
And call you a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you are only a scum
If you can't look him straight in the eye.
He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest,
For he's with you clear up to the end.
And you've passed your most dangerous, difficult test
If the man in the glass is your friend.
You may fool the whole world down the pathway of life
And get pats on your back as you pass.
But your final reward will be heartaches and tears
If you've cheated the man in the glass.
THE passing away of the Founder-Editor was so severe a blow that for some time I could not even think of who would follow him as Editor: so stunned and benumbed was I. It was then Sri Bhagavan’s Grace that gave Mrs. Lucia Osborne the courage and willingness to volunteer to shoulder the entire responsibility herself. We could count on the help of M.C. Subramaniam and Ramamani who were often consulted even by Mr. Osborne. Editorship was something quite new for her, since she had never before in her life written anything, except personal letters, and she had done no “vetting” of others’ articles at all. She, however, had learnt much by observing her husband during Mountain Path work. Her courage, the memory of her husband and her devotion to Sri Bhagavan enabled her to prove a worthy successor to one who was an adept in this line.

I need not say that she not only edited the journal well but, as time passed on, became a
seasoned writer herself. One noted a mother’s tenderness in her writings. Some not too intellectual readers even found her editorials better than Mr. Osborne’s, saying “she is one among us and as such we are able to follow what she says!” While all the reputed writers came forward to cooperate with her, as they wholeheartedly did with her husband, she shifted the emphasis from topics of academic interest to those of practical value, from scholarliness to simplicity. However her difficulties were genuine. The strain was too much. From October 1970 to January 1974 she had borne the brunt. She pleaded with me: “Ganesh! It is really too much: I can’t do it any further. You will have to find someone else to shoulder it.” Seeing my predicament, she herself came out with the suggestion: “Why not our Viswanathan?”

Sri Viswanatha Swami

The name sounded splendid to me! But, who is to bell the cat—who dare rope in this wild elephant? I could only pray to Bhagavan. And lo and behold! Sri Viswanatha Swami himself came forward, one day, and volunteered to take up the editorship. But he laid down a condition. He should be helped by Professor K. Swaminathan. The latter was in Delhi, already burdened with the colossal task of bringing out The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi. The Professor who was all along a staunch supporter and good friend of the journal, readily agreed to work with the Swami but suggested the formation of an Editorial Board. The Editorial Board was formed in July 1974, with the additional members: Ronald Rose, T.P. Ramachandra Aiyer, M.C. Subramaniam, Philip Pegler and Ramamani. The final work rested with Swami only. There was now a beautiful blend of Sanskrit, Tamil and English scholarship which the readers enjoyed. The articles, selected initially by me, would be forwarded by Swami to Delhi. Professor would do all the detailed editing in pencil and add a remark: “To be revised and approved by Viswanatha Swami”. The Swami, after going through a few of the edited articles, mastered the art of editing!

Our readers who had welcomed the simplicity in the writings of Mrs. Osborne, rejoiced now in the blend of Jnana and Bhakti in the writings of Swami. His profound knowledge of Sanskrit, particularly Vedas and Upanishads, enabled him to quote from the ancient texts, ample authority in support of Sri Bhagavan’s teachings. The emphasis now shifted from articles on other religions and other teachers to articles on Bhagavan and His teachings. This shift was very smoothly effected by the Swami since he had lived with the Master for so many years: the readers openly welcomed it. There was a stamp of authenticity when he wrote about Bhagavan and His teachings. Bhagavan used to consult Viswanathan in dealing with spiritual writings while correcting, confirming or commenting on them. So, the work of Viswanatha Swami as the new Chief Editor brought about a welcome change reminding one of the old days in Bhagavan’s presence.

Many topics of interest and importance would have never seen the light of day but lain buried in the bosom of Swami had he not brought them out as Editorials and special articles from his pen, like Dasamaha Vidyas. For full five years the Swami joyously kept the journal on a bright, ascending path. It was recognised in India and abroad as an authoritative spiritual journal, answering the questions of modern minds. The Swami’s spiritual stature encouraged readers to scale new peaks of spiritual fulfilment.
As time passed, Dr. K. Subrahmanian, Lucy Cornelssen, Jim Grant, and David Godman joined the Editorial Board and contributed fresh substance and style. When the devotees were building up momentum to celebrate Sri Bhagavan’s Birth Centenary in 1980 and the journal was making efforts to reflect the great event in its pages, suddenly and peacefully Viswanatha Swami dropped his body. This was a very great setback, for his friendly love and cooperative approach which dissolved so many problems, were no longer there. Again, I was thrown into despair.

I blame myself for such diffidence. For, is not Sri Bhagavan everywhere extending His Helping Hand? David Godman, who was doing the Book Reviews column, came forward to shoulder the responsibility. He had merged the two separate libraries within the Ashram compound (the Ashram Library and The Mountain Path Library) into one “Sri Ramana Centenary Library” in a new building in the Morvi Complex. Jim Grant gave him sustained assistance. Now, on top of this Library work, Godman undertook the Editorship; this is proof of his enthusiasm and efficiency. He took the journal along a different route. He wrote searching Editorials having delved deep in the Archives of the Ashram, and penned several authentic documents on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings. Some provoked controversy; but his articles made one sit up and take note of other viewpoints, and of contradictory reports found in old records.

I have to record here my immense debt to David Godman and Jim Grant, but for whose responsible handling of the journal and other literary works, I could not have devoted my time and energy to the Birth Centenary Celebrations.

In July 1981, we switched from letter-press printing to offset printing. The next year David Godman had to go home to England. I consulted, as usual, Professor K. Swaminathan. He promptly named K.K. Nambiar, one of the old and staunchest devotees of the Master! “Yes, he is the person”, I agreed. Here again, I saw the Guiding Presence of Sri Bhagavan! With the new Editor at the helm, a different orientation was given to the journal. Articles on Bhagavan and His teachings dominated its pages. With offset printing coming handy, I gave more importance to the display of Ashram Bulletin: this column suddenly became the favourite of the readers since I ventured to put in as many photos of visiting pilgrims and of functions connected with Ramana-celebrations. I defended my move (as a few opposed such a “propaganda touch”) by citing Bhagavan who always expressed gratitude for help rendered. These pilgrims and function-organising bhaktas deserved grateful mention in the columns of Bhagavan’s journal.

Sri A.R. Natarajan contributed brilliant Editorials which helped readers follow the Master’s teaching with clarity and certitude. After the passing away of K.K. Nambiar, the whole brunt fell on Professor’s broad shoulders. Dr. K. Subrahmanian provided lucid Editorials which were very well received because of their directness and simplicity.

Thus, twenty-four years rolled by!

For various reasons, I suddenly felt tired and wanted to quit or close down the journal. I thought that the journal had more than fulfilled the purpose of its creation—all the aspects of Sri Maharshi’s Teachings and the practical as-
pects of other religions had been brought out and all old devotees of the Master had been given due recognition. There was a dearth of fresh articles on Sri Bhagavan and His Teachings. I was also tired of begging for advertisements. I felt I should quit.

However, I also felt strongly that I should do my utmost to make the issues of the Silver Jubilee year a grand success.

I sought Professor Swaminathan’s counsel. He fully realised my predicament, but yet said: “Sri Bhagavad Gita has been commented upon all these centuries by various scholars, yet still new commentaries are coming up, every day! The teachings of Masters like Bhagavan never become stale, the more you write about them the fresher they are.” After some time, he continued: “All right! Don’t worry. I shall take the entire responsibility of the journal. I will help you, first, to complete the four issues of the Silver Jubilee, and then let us leave it to Bhagavan!” This 91 year ‘youngster’ came to the relief of a 51 year ‘old man’!

The purpose of the journal has never been to propagate a cult. In January 1964, in the very first para of his Editorial, Arthur Osborne has explained the purpose of the journal:

“It is related that after attaining Enlightenment the Buddha’s first impulse was to abide in the effulgence of Bliss without turning back to convey the incomunicable to mankind. Then he reflected: ‘Some there are who are clear­sighted and do not need any teaching, and some whose eyes are clouded with dust who will not need it though given, but between these two there are also some with but little dust in their eyes, who can be helped to see; and for the sake of these I will go back among mankind and teach.’ It is for those with little dust in their eyes that this journal is intended.”

“The purpose of the journal is to show that there is a more satisfactory state than that of ignorant, confused, unguided, frustrated modern man, and a higher, more satisfying and more durable alternative for him than any provided by wealth or luxury, art or music, or the love between man and woman; that such a state can be attained in this lifetime and that the purpose of all religions has been to lead men towards it, although in many different ways. I say ‘towards’ rather than ‘to’ because even though the supreme state may not be attained in this lifetime, the mere approach to it can bring a peace of mind and sense of well being not otherwise attainable.”

The Mountain Path is Sri Bhagavan’s journal.

V. Genesan
HELP YOURSELF AND OTHERS

A Zen Talk from Korea’s KoeSeung Beopohr Jibb,
(Collected Talks of Great Teachers)

AT Sudeck Monastery, Zen Master Marng-Gong (1872-1946) took the High Seat, struck his staff three times and said:

"My old master, TaeHur, used to say ‘listen to a talk as if crossing thin ice,’ as if treading on a frozen pond. This means be alert, focus on what is being said. If one is alert even a four-second phrase is a lesson. But if one is not alert one learns nothing, even by sitting in dreamy or drowsy states for 84,000 years!

"Reflect on what one learns, then apply it in daily life. If one does not do so then no matter how fine the teaching, it goes to waste. Look at the lives of Enlightenment-Resolved-Ones, and like them, help oneself and others. This is the only rule: help yourself and others. The more one sees beings drifting in and out of the Six Worlds (over-enthusiasm, rivalry, discontent, fear, want, hurt), the more that compassion arises. One then makes things no worse but perhaps better, truly helps oneself and others.

"Confucius says: ‘Parents are disappointed if one fails to have offspring.’ Teachers must train other teachers, and masters must guide students, relay Bright Wisdom.

"What is ‘Bright Wisdom’?

"After six years’ study in the Snow Mountains (Himalayas), Shakyamuni Buddha saw the morning star and realized Bright Wisdom. It is neither short nor long, has no starting or ending points. It has no sharp edges, but neither is it smoothly rounded. It does not decline.

"Through generations till the present, people have embodied Bright Wisdom. Does anyone here embody it?... Since Bright Wisdom is invaluable how could one not try to realize it, or relay it?

"After an inner stirring one realizes Bright Wisdom. Within and without are then calm, sense of distance from others ceases, and one is a descendant of the masters. Those in whom there has been no spiritual revolution are not descendants. Having human form and admirers does not make one a descendant. Wearing a buddha-robe and fasting after noon do not make one a descendant; nor does having one’s head shaved, even if one’s eyebrows were also shaved. One is a buddha-after-the-
Buddha only by staying free of the Six Worlds and realizing Bright Wisdom.

"Some of the laity believe Bright Wisdom is beyond them, that it is the concern of monks and nuns only. Is that true? Buddhas are revered as teachers of those in the Six Worlds and Three Times (past, present, future), so how can study be beyond anyone? Everyone has innate Bright Wisdom: no one lacks it. One can realize it amid an ordinary, decent life.

"Donning one’s temple jacket, going to chantings, giving cash and reading sutras do not form the Dharma World! But seeing great masters, living in rural zen halls, repairing sacred images, building pagodas for holy relics, working in monastery kitchens and eating vegetarian meals do not form the Dharma World either! Actions of the good yet unenlightened need not be the Dharma World, but actions of the enlightened, wise and good are the Dharma World. When one embodies Bright Wisdom, moving an arm and smiling, wearing one’s temple jacket and going to chantings are the Dharma World.

"Some city temples are shady haunts and those who reign it then gather fame and money, then struggle to hold their thrones. Is that Buddhism! Do not support it.

"The focus of study is Bright Wisdom, which is unborn: Dharma is not new. Bright Wisdom does not age: Dharma is not old. Bright Wisdom is constant and without fixed seat: Dharma is not Chinese, Indian, Korean.

In order to stop going in circles within the Six Worlds and so realize Bright Wisdom, one sits before a wall and meditates. People differ. So Shakyamuni Buddha taught many meditation methods, none of which is more direct, less complex or is claimed to go beyond Huatou Study (inquiring ‘What is the mind?’). It works perfectly well for people, monastic or lay.

"How do you study the Huatou? The important thing is to generate a Spirit of Inquiry. Ask ‘What is this that hears sounds, sees colours and forms, produces and knows mental speech? Not knowing the very nature of that which is called ‘mind,’ a Spirit of Inquiry arises. Keep this all the time until it can neither be driven away nor put aside, even if one wants to. Then one will suddenly discover that the Spirit of Inquiry has been crushed and broken into pieces. One then knows that just as one stands, one is buddha.

"Bright Wisdom is realized in a flash, often after long study. It is easy since there is no gap between Bright Wisdom and actions of dressing, eating, adjusting one’s cushion and reclining. Doing these things and raising the Huatou is as easy as realizing Bright Wisdom. Yet study is also difficult. Before realizing Wisdom, which is the very nature of mind, Shakyamuni met blocks and trials. How could one hope to find realizing Bright Wisdom very easy! It is hard-yet-easy.

"Bright Wisdom is not only beyond words but also before them, so speech is basically superfluous in the houses of Zen and Tao. Clinging to words of the Buddha, Laozi and Confucius, is wrong. The more one moves from view to view and problem to problem, the further one is from Wisdom.

"Bright Wisdom is not only beyond but also before words, so thought too is basically superfluous in Zen and Tao schools upholding that which is prior to the forming of words, Mind-in-Itself. The less one moves from thought to thought and conflict to conflict, chasing round and round inside one’s skull, the better.

"According to the Clear Realm Sutra, delving into concepts is the hobby of devils! Papers explaining Buddhism for people come from devils’ hands! Yet are they merely devil-talk if, by using them, one realizes Bright Wisdom and it could be said that there had again appeared a Sage, Person of the Tao, Buddha?"

Master MarngGong struck his staff and retired to his room.

October
It was September 1923. Ramana had already come to stay near his mother’s samadhi on the southern slopes of Arunachala. Among the inmates was Dandapani Swami. He took a copy of Ramana’s Five Hymns to Arunachala and Who Am I? as a gift to his daughter Meenakshi and son-in-law Muruganar, who were residing at that time in Madras. What a gift it was to be! These books filled Muruganar with a frenzy of divine love. He was consumed by the passion for the compassionate one, for Ramana. It is difficult to believe that books can ignite such a longing, but they did. He could hardly wait to reach Sri Ramanasramam. The Master too seemed to be waiting, for he came out to greet Muruganar and accept his guru dakshina in the form of ecstatic verses, the first few lines of which read as under:

Guru Ramana, Siva, as once you left Mount Kailas and the company of Gods And came to cool Perundurai to drink in The sparkling words of Vachagar, Now again you have come to fair Aruna Town Wishing to hearken to this fellow’s puerile words.1

Ramana was Siva, and he, Manickavachagar, was the necessary implication. Only the setting had changed, not the bonds of love between them. Later when Muruganar composed ‘Thiruvempawai’ Ramana remarked that it was in the style of Manickavachagar, as if it was his turn to hint about their relationship stretching beyond time. The instantaneous madness of Muruganar for Ramana, his being possessed totally by Him could well be because of this ancient tie. We could only guess. It seems to be the best possible explanation for Muruganar’s state from the very beginning when he heard of Arunachala Ramana till the end when he cast off his body in 1973.

Muruganar himself tells us what happened to him when he came to Ramana. Who can better his words?

With blazing, bright, unwinking eyes He gazed and drank in my life through His twin eyes, Sweep off by such enchanting beauty His utter slave I have become.2

2 Ramana Samadhi Muni—Verse 317—Decade of Service—Translation: Prof. K. Swaminathan who has rendered nearly all the verses into English.
This ‘quick mercurial magic’ transformed Muruganar into a Jnani.

From then on for a span of fifty years ceaseless outpourings of breathtaking poetry cascaded from the perennial spring of Muruganar’s love for Ramana. Thirty thousand verses and not one is a second to the other. Muruganar enjoys Ramana’s beauty of form and the uniqueness of His state in a thousand and one ways. He is able to communicate the same mood till one is immersed in that vast Presence. It is evident that Ramana had clothed Muruganar with his own state of bliss so that he could be the nightingale of the Ramana Way.

Ramana Sannidhi Murai, comprising about one thousand four hundred verses, was composed by Muruganar with the avowed purpose of enabling one to abide at the feet of the bounteous Guru Ramana and to get illumined thereby. This purpose is served in full measure for each of the verses has the power, the potency of doing precisely that.

Muruganar was a rare combination of a mystic poet with razor sharp intellect. It is the second aspect, his gigantic intellect and his experience of the natural state that we see so clearly in the monumental work Guruvachaka Kovai³. This Garland of Guru’s Sayings was woven over twentyseven years spanning between 1923 and 1950. Each important statement of Ramana was put down by Muruganar in a Tamil verse, shown to Ramana and finalised. Ramana would not only correct, but also add when required. As a result we have a systematic statement of the Maharshi’s teachings with an unmistakable stamp of authenticity.

The Master’s Maha samadhi made no difference to the perennial flow of priceless poetry from Muruganar’s pen as Ramana Jnana Bodham⁴. Scene after scene of Ramana’s glory came before Muruganar’s mind and what we have is the versification of its majesty and depth.

³ Sri Sadhu Om has written a commentary — ‘Ural’ which is a special contribution to the spiritual literature, and Guruvachaka Kovai — Michael James — The Mountain Path, January, 1983.

⁴ Ramana Jnana Bodha — This is being published in a number of volumes by Ramana Kendra, New Delhi.
Muruganar would sit in the old hall, literally open-mouthed, lost in the ambrosial form of Ramana. He would never be away from Ramana’s physical presence except during his rounds in the streets of Tiruvannamalai for alms. If Ramana was absent from the hall he would instinctively know where he could find him and would reach that spot post-haste. We have the moving story of his tracing Ramana in the forest. Once at Ganapathi Muni’s request to be shown the deep forest round Arunachala, Ramana slipped away with Viswanatha Swami. Muruganar on not finding Ramana in the hall managed somehow to trace him. Ramana was surprised and enquired how Muruganar could find them in that unfrequented spot which even forest guards would find hard to do.

Another beautiful story told by Kunju Swami is also worth narrating in this context. One day Bhagavan was looking intently at Muruganar, who suddenly got up and went out. Bhagavan signalled to Kunju Swami to follow him, which he did. When asked for the reason for this hurry, Muruganar said, ‘Don’t you see, he is the robber chief. He has taken three — my body, my mind and life itself — and given in return one only, that One, Indivisible Supreme! Is it not daylight robbery?’ Ramana had left Muruganar ‘wordless, deedless, prone, helpless on death’s brink’ — only the vast beatitude endured.

The beautiful interplay of love between the disciple and the Sadguru gave us ‘Ramana Puranam’, ‘Upadesa Undiyar’ and ‘Anma Vid-dhai’ (the Song of the Self). Muruganar wrote two hundred verses in praise of Ramana modeling it on Manickavachagar’s ‘Siva Puranam’ and left it in Ramana’s Presence without giving it a title. Ramana gave it the title ‘Ramana Puranam’ and completed the remaining three hundred verses. Again in ‘Thiru Undiyar’ Muruganar wrote about one hundred verses extolling Ramana as the manifestation of various Gods. He stopped when it came to the point where Siva was to advise the misguided sages of Daruka forest. Ramana then composed the remaining thirty verses. In the ‘Song of the Self’ Muruganar wrote only the preliminary words ‘Self Knowledge is easy, the easiest thing’ and left the rest to Ramana. Muruganar felt that the direct way of self-enquiry would best be stated by Ramana Himself. All this was possible because Muruganar was fully conscious that he was ‘nothing and could do nothing’ and that the power was Ramana’s only.

As one sat with Muruganar the aroma of love for Ramana would overflow. The very mention of the name ‘Ramana’ would bring tears to his eyes. With tears trickling down his cheeks he would talk of Ramana’s Grace. If asked about the efficiency of the path there would be quick reassurance that for liberation, the Ramana Way is ‘enough! enough! hundred per cent enough! More than hundred per cent enough!’

Muruganar’s self-effacement was complete and he sat immortal in the shadow of Ramana’s feet. Ramana had claimed him completely. Hence he was Ramana’s Muruganar. When we start reading his verses we too are transported. To begin with one is drawn by the rich beauty of the poetry itself with its similes, imagery and the choice of words and without knowing it we would have taken off to a world beyond where words end and peace endures.

7 Ramana Siva—Muruganar—Kum. Sarada—an unpublished Drama.
HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By Mercedes de Acosta

The following is an excerpt from the book "Here Lies the Heart" by Mercedes de Acosta. Published in 1960 in the U.S.A., this book has been dedicated to "Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi, the only completely egoless, world detached, and pure Being I have ever known". In her book, she says that she arrived at Sri Ramanasramam on 22nd November 1938 from Pondicherry and stayed for three days and three nights. Upon her return home she sent a list of questions to Guy Hague, a friend who was staying at the Ashram then. (In "Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi", there is a record of answers given by Sri Bhagavan to these questions.)

... At one of these dinners I met Paul Brunton who had written a book called A Search in Secret India. When I read this book it had a profound influence on me. In it I learned for the first time about Ramana Maharshi, a great Indian saint and sage. It was as though some emanation of this saint was projected out of the book to me. For days and nights after reading about him I could not think of anything else. I became, as it were, possessed by him. I could not even talk of anything else. So much so, that as a joke, Adrian made a drawing of me peering out from behind a group of Indians and wrote under it A SEARCH IN SECRET INDIA. But nothing could distract me from the idea that I must go and meet this saint. From this time on, although I ceased to speak too much about it, the whole direction of my life turned toward India and away from Hollywood. I felt that I would surely go there although there was nothing at this time to indicate that I would. Nevertheless, I felt I would meet the Maharshi and that this meeting would be the greatest experience of my life.

In Madras I hired a car and, so anxious was I to arrive in Tiruvannamalai that I did not go to bed and travelled by night, arriving about seven O' clock in the morning after driving almost eleven hours.

... The ashram was a small place. I remember only a stone hall where day and night Bhagavan sat on a couch. Not far from this hall, scattered around the hill, were small houses where some of the disciples lived, including his brother.

... When, dazed and filled with emotion, I first entered the hall, I did not quite know what to do. Coming from strong sunlight into the somewhat darkened hall, it was, at first, difficult to see. Nevertheless, I perceived Bhagavan at once, sitting in the Buddha posture on his couch in the corner. At the same moment I felt overcome by some strong power in the hall as if an invisible wind was pushing violently against me. For a moment I felt dizzy. Then I recovered myself. I was able to look around the hall but my gaze was drawn to Bhagavan, who was sitting absolutely straight in the Buddha posture looking directly in front of him. His eyes did not blink or in any way move. Because they seemed so full of light I had the impression they were gray. I learned later that they were...
brown, although there have been various opinions as to the color of his eyes. His body was naked except for a loincloth. I discovered soon after that this and his staff were absolutely his only possessions. His body seemed firm and as if tanned by the sun, although I found that the only exercise he ever took was a twenty-minute walk every afternoon at five o'clock when he walked on the hill and sometimes greeted Yogis who came to prostrate themselves at his feet. The rest of the time, day and night, and for over half a century, he had been sitting on his couch. He was a strict vegetarian, but he only ate what was placed before him and he never expressed a desire for any kind of food. As he sat there he seemed like a statue, and yet something extraordinary emanated from him. I had a feeling that on some invisible level I was receiving spiritual shocks from him although his gaze was not directed toward me. He did not seem to be looking at anything, and yet I felt he could see and was conscious of the whole world.

I looked around: squatting on the floor or sitting in the Buddha posture or lying prostrate face down, a number of Indians prayed — some of them reciting their mantras out loud. Several small monkeys came into the hall and approached Bhagavan. They climbed onto his couch and broke the stillness with their gay chatter.

After I had been sitting several hours in the hall listening to the mantras of the Indians and the incessant droning of flies, and lost in a sort of inner world, Guy Hague suggested that I go and sit near the Maharshi. He said, “You can never tell when Bhagavan will come out of samadhi. When he does, I am sure he will be pleased to see you, and it will be beneficial for you, at this moment, to be sitting near him.”

I moved near Bhagavan, sitting at his feet and facing him. Guy was right. Not long after this Bhagavan opened his eyes. He moved his head and looked directly down at me, his eyes looking into mine. It would be impossible to describe this moment and I am not going to attempt it. I can only say that at this second I felt my inner being raised to a new level — as if, suddenly, my state of consciousness was lifted to a much higher degree. Perhaps in this split second I was no longer my human self but the Self. Then Bhagavan smiled at me. It seemed to me that I had never before known what a smile was. I said, “I have come a long way to see you.”

... I had stupidly brought a piece of paper on which I had written a number of questions I
wanted to ask him. I fumbled for it in my pocket, but the questions were already answered by merely being in his presence. There was no need for questions or answers.

To write of this experience with Bhagavan, to recapture and record all that he said, or all that his silence implied, is like trying to put the Infinite into an egg cup. One small chapter cannot do him justice or give an impression of his Enlightenment, and I do not think that I am far enough spiritually advanced—if at all—to try to interpret his Supreme Knowledge.

On me he had, and still has, a profound influence. I feel it presumptuous to say he changed my life. My life was perhaps not so important as all this. But I definitely saw life differently after I had been in his presence, a presence that just by being was sufficient spiritual nourishment for a lifetime. It may have been that when I returned from India undiscerning people saw very little change in me. But there was a change—a transformation of my entire consciousness. And how could it have been otherwise? I had been in the atmosphere of an egoless, world-detached, and completely Pure Being.

Before leaving the ashram I wrote down several questions for Guy to ask Bhagavan that I had not had a chance to ask myself. I had been bothered by the fact that so many saints and enlightened people had been ill and suffering physically. I asked, should they not have perfect bodies and why do they not cure themselves? In Europe I got a letter from Guy saying he had discussed my question with Bhagavan. He wrote, "Bhagavan told me to tell you that the spiritually perfect person need not necessarily have a perfect body. The reason, as he explained it, is very simple. You see, the ego, the body and the mind are the same thing. The spiritually perfect person, like Bhagavan, is above these three things. Consequently he has nothing to heal, nor is there a mind or ego to heal it with. He is beyond all this because it is illusion. He is living in Reality. Christian Scientists can take the mind and heal the body—for they are the same thing. American Indians heal, too, in this manner. It is faith healing. But if the spiritually perfect person is sick in body it is because the body is working out its Karma. Bhagavan gave an illustration of Karma, which he says is like an electric fan and must just run its course, only gradually ceasing even after it has been turned off. He says the mind is born into illusion and builds a body and a world to suit it—that is, a world that it has earned and deserves (by its Karma). Bhagavan, knowing the body and the mind to be illusion, cannot experience any bodily ailment or discomfort. We make him suffer pain, loss of weight etc. It is in our minds, not his. He is bodiless, actually is, though you and I cannot realize this as a fact."

In another letter Guy answered my questions, which led to others. He wrote down my questions and Bhagavan's answers.

Question: Is reincarnation a fact?
Bhagavan: You are incarnated now, aren't you? Then you will be so again. But as the body is illusion then the illusion will repeat itself and keep on repeating itself until you find the Real Self.

Question: What is death and what is birth?
B: Only the body has death and birth, and it (the body) is illusion. There is, in Reality, neither birth nor death.

Question: How much time may elapse between death and rebirth?
B: Perhaps one is reborn within a year, three years or thousands of years. Who can say? Anyway what is time? Time does not exist.

Question: Why have we no memory of past lives?
B: Memory is a faculty of the mind and part of the illusion. Why do you want to remember other lives that are also illusions? If you abide within the Self, there is no past or future and not even a present since the Self is out of time—timeless.

Question: Are the world, the mind, ego and the body all the same thing?
B: Yes. They are one and the same thing. The mind and the ego are one thing, but there is no word to explain this. You see, the world cannot exist without the mind, the mind cannot exist without what we call the ego (itself, really) and the ego cannot exist without a body.

Q: Then when we leave this body, that is when the ego leaves it, will it (the ego) immediately grasp another body?
B: Oh, yes it must. It cannot exist without a body.

Q: What sort of a body will it grasp then?
B: Either a physical body or a subtle-mental-body.

Q: Do you call this present physical body the gross body?
B: Only to distinguish it — to set it apart in conversation. It is really a subtle-mental-body also.

Q: What causes us to be reborn?
B: Desires. Your unfulfilled desires bring you back. And in each case — in each body — as your desires are fulfilled, you create new ones. You must conquer desire to be absorbed into the One and thus end rebirth.

Q: Can sex change in rebirth?
B: Oh, surely. We have all been both sexes many times.

Q: Is it possible to sin?
B: Having a body, which creates illusion, is the only sin, and the body is our only hell. But it is right that we observe moral laws. The discussion of sin is too difficult for a few lines.

Q: Does one who has realized the Self lose the sense of ‘I’?
B: Absolutely.

Q: Then to you there is no difference between yourself and myself, that man over there, my servant, are all the same?
B: All are the same, including those monkeys.

Q: But the monkeys are not people. Are they not different?
B: They are exactly the same as people. All creatures are the same in One Consciousness.

Q: Do we lose our individuality when we merge into the Self?
B: There is no individuality in the Self. The Self is One — Supreme.

Q: Then individuality and identity are lost?
B: You don’t retain them in deep sleep, do you?
Q: But we retain them from one birth to another, don’t we?
B: Oh, yes. The ‘I’ thought (the ego) will recur again, only each time you identify with it a different body and different surroundings around the body. The effects of past acts (Karma) will continue to control the new body just as they did the old one. It is Karma that has given you this particular body and placed it in a particular family, race, sex, surroundings and so forth.

Bhagavan added, “These questions are good, but tell de Acosta (he always called me de Acosta) she must not become too intellectual about these things. It is better just to meditate and have no thought. Let the mind rest quietly on the Self in the cave of the Spiritual Heart. Soon this will become natural and then there will be no need for questions. Do not imagine that this means being inactive. Silence is the only real activity.”
TO WITHDRAW AS PURE BEING

OZHIVIL ODUKKAM

By Kannudaiya Vallalaar

8.1 That a person sunk deep in sense-pursuits and always seeking to take up one body or another for the sake of enjoyments either in this world or beyond, should on the rise of Grace look down upon them in disgust—O, how is this! I am lost in wonder!

8.13 People laugh at the sage and he laughs at them. When from his resting place, he is told “Get out, you devil” and he wanders away naked into the forest taking it as home; there too he sings songs of bliss, and like a wanderer in the ether, claps his hands and dances in ecstasy.

8.14 Grotesque with their beads, ashes and scant clothes, fanatical talking, fussy habits, ceremonies to look like austerities, fixed gaze without knowledge of the Self — the heart of those who sport all this, can be known only to the Lord of Chidambaram!

8.15 At the present grandeur and ultimate end of Brahma, Vishnu and Indra, the true sage nods his head; at the befogged merry-go-round activities of worldly people he laughs shouting “Oho!”, and seeing the Self, he dances, dances, keeping time.

8.17 Do not consider him to be blissful because he sees no world and is unaware of pleasure and pain. The sage who is liberated while alive can see the sufferings of the world and the Bliss beyond it, like a cat seeing in darkness, as well as in daylight; or like a man on the bank of a lake seeing the lake and what lies beyond; or like a man on a high hill seeing the plain below, or the noon-day Sun poised between rising and setting.

8.19 Can those who are glum with bile act up to good advice from others? Will not the ignorant who esteem the darkness of illusion as the light of knowledge call sages goblins? Surely, milk is distasteful to the sickly and sunlight is blinding to the prowler of night?

8.25 What religion can they profess who are free from desires, use their hands as begging bowls or water-carriers, sleep on the ground with their arms and legs folded in against cold, and remain unconcerned with their names, family, caste or profession?

8.32 To the Blissful One unaware of pain, the burning-ground is verily heaven. He has likewise found within his own heaven (“I am pure Consciousness”) and hell (“I am the body”). His non-dual sport is free from results; they go to his devotees.

8.33 Speaking of the Bliss of the non-attached sage, the sum of all the bliss of Brahma, Vishnu, and Indra, cannot equal it. Perhaps the Perfect Bliss of Siva equals it, or rather, the sage’s Bliss has no equal. Even the Vedas cannot describe it.

8.36 When even the Vedas marvel at the true ones who steadfastly observe the grand vow of (ego’s) death, who dare impose on them, hymns, worship at set time, meditation, virtue or sin, and do’s and don’ts?

8.41 Cannot hypocrases who, concealing desires within, pretend to be desirless, be distinguished from true sages who are desire-free? Oho! Wait and note them seeking places of choice food and shelter, speaking in low tones like a shy girl (in order to command admiration),

*Continued from previous issue*
but readily stretching out their hands to receive gifts. (No true sage will do all this.)

8.42 As a boat reaching the shore is rocked again when it is met and shaken by waves, so too the false ego arises amidst sense contacts and surely will shake your will. As a hero, determined to gain victory, jumps into the battle fray (either to return victoriously or die in the battle), so too hold on to your renunciation with determination, for the world renounced will again hold you down; therefore be steady in alertness.

9.1 There is no merit in mere indifference to the world unaccompanied by Knowledge of the Self. Tribals, the sick and the thieves are indifferent in a way; how do they profit by it? However, wherever placed, whatever he enjoys—how can a true sage be affected? The ego's absence is his blissful state.

9.3 Giving up the household, the mind continues to dwell on it; the mind controlled, the ego remains; the ego eliminated, the Bliss of unity with Siva supervenes. (None of these can truly be renunciation.) Beyond all this is Perfection. (O, how rare is Perfection!) Who is it that considers himself to be imperfect?

9.5 Can a King's subjects be molested by others in the same kingdom? Similarly, how can the mind and the senses of the all-pervading sage be affected by dwelling on objects, all his own subjects? Can he like an ignorant person be caught up by them as dust by mud? No, these sense-contacts will float away like the shadow of a kite over land.

9.6 Just as ghee-mixed food is not retained in a dog's stomach but is thrown out as vomit, enjoyments leave no impression on the sage. Just as gentle patting lulls a child to sleep or wakes it up; just as darkness hides a pebble but not a lustrous emerald; (so also the family tie will taint the ignorant but leave the sage untainted).

Just as the diamond shines more in the night than by day, so also the sage shines more in the world than in solitude.

7. Just as gentle patting lulls a child to sleep or wakes it up; just as darkness hides a pebble but not a lustrous emerald; (so also the family tie will taint the ignorant but leave the sage untainted).

Just as the thief joins the pursuers and walks in their footsteps;

The sage only plays the role of a householder. How can he be subject to rebirth?

10.1 Like an ignorant traveller who finds out the way from others, then travels on it assuming (proudly) that he is guided by his own knowledge; like one who goes out into the pouring rain, umbrella in hand but unopened, trying "on his own" to avoid getting wet; (such is the seeker who tries to eliminate the ego without the aid of ever-ready Grace.)

10.3 Tirumana Sambandar said to me: "But for my grace how can you succeed in warding off veiling and multiplicity? My grace can keep your mind from spreading out as the Sun engulfs the light of the lamp, and (my Grace can) keep sense-contacts from diverting you as the Sun overhead prevents the prism from displaying the many colours. According to your past karma, my grace dispenses to you food, sleep, and the rest. Give up all sense of doership to unite with me."

10.8 All that you know as "this" and "that" is only your deluded self. If you seek to remain as Siva free from delusion, you sink into the sleep of ignorance. When illusion and ignorance disappear, Intuition arises and in that pure state Siva-yoga results.

10.12 As a poor wretch licking the soil of a sugar cane farm for sweetness, leaving it all when sugar is suddenly dropped into his mouth, so the seekers adopting rituals for Liberation, should give them up to follow these instructions. Leaving behind doership, be liberated. Instead of this, should you say "We will accomplish it by our own efforts", these are words of ignorance, not at all of knowledge.
WHITHER MODERN SCIENCE—
WHAT IS CONSCIOUSNESS?

"Pure Consciousness, which is the
Heart, includes all—Sri Ramana

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

Many modern scientists are of the view
that the origin of the universe and the
reality behind it can be explained as follows:
(1) that the language of mathematics can reveal
the reality behind all phenomena, (2) that such
revelations can be expressed in terms of funda­
mental natural laws, (3) that such laws are
simple. "We hope to explain the entire universe
in a single, simple formula that you can wear
on your T-shirt", says Leon Lederman, director
of the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory
in Batavia, Illinois, U.S.A.

Explaining the origin of the material universe—
let alone the reality behind it—mathematically
has run into difficulties. According to the
standard big-bang theories, the initial condition
of the universe was a point of infinitesimal
circumference and infinite density and tempera­
ture. Even this condition is not acceptable to
some scientists of repute. Nobel laureate Steven
Weinberg laments: "Unfortunately I cannot start
the film (his colourful description of the big
bang) at zero time and infinite temperature". Assuming that this is the initial condition of
the universe, this is beyond mathematical descrip­
tion. All calculations go haywire. Technically
such a phenomenon is called a "singularity".

"In the approach to physical description of
the beginning of time, we reach a barrier at this
point". Sir Bernard Lovell wrote of singularity:
"It seems to be a good principle that the predic­
tion of a singularity by a physical theory indicates
that the theory has broken down— the results
we have obtained support the idea that the
universe began a finite time ago. However, the
actual point of creation, the singularity, is out­
side the scope of presently known laws of phys­
ics." Stephen Hawking, Lucian Professor of
Mathematics at Cambridge University, and G.F.R.
Ellis, Professor of Mathematics at the Univer­
sity of Cape Town, explain in their book, The
Large Scale Structure of Space-Time: "Unable
to overcome the singularity problem, some
scientists have proposed the so-called infinitely
rebounding universe. They say that the universe

1 Richard Wolkomir, Quark City, Omni (February 1984),
p. 41.
2 Steven Weinberg, The First Three Minutes (New York:
3 Sir Bernard Lovell, The Universe: the Random House
Encyclopedia (New York: Random House, Inc. 1977),
p. 37.
4 S.W. Hawking and G.F.R. Ellis, The Large Scale Struc­
ture of Space Time (Cambridge: Cambridge University
5 Ibid, p. 360.
expands and contracts to singularity, and then expands and contracts continually through the course of unlimited time. Accordingly the universe oscillates perennially and there is no origin or end. But such an explanation does not solve the problem. Physicist Steven Weinberg points out that with each successive bounce progressive changes must take place in the universe. This takes us to the situation that at some point there must have been a beginning, and not a regress extending over an infinite period of time." The question of origin thus remains unsolved.

The scientists are confronted with many other related problems too. To predict the distribution of matter we observe within the universe according to the big bang theory, the initial state has to be fine tuned to an incredible degree. Physicist Alan H. Guth of M.I.T. has come up with the so-called inflationary model that automatically produces the required fine tuning. But Guth and his collaborator Paul J. Steinhardt hasten to add: "Calculations yield reasonable predictions only if parameters are assigned values in a narrow range. Most theorists (including both of us) regard such fine tuning as implausible."

Further, Guth's theory does not solve the singularity problem. Guth also does not satisfactorily explain the origin of the superheated expanding condition necessary for his inflation to take place. He and Paul J. Steinhardt wrote in Scientific American: "The inflationary model of the universe provides a possible mechanism by which the observed universe could have evolved from an infinitesimal region. It is then tempting to go one step further and speculate that the entire universe evolved from literally nothing." The nearest to "literally nothing" that the physicists have come up with is a kind of quantum-mechanical vacuum which contains a sea of virtual particles that almost but not quite exist. To prove the existence of such a vacuum requires chapters upon chapters of highly abstract mathematics. Such an entity is certainly "something". The question arises where such a "something" might emerge from.

Further, quantum mechanics takes us to a hitherto unnoticed situation. "It turns out that we can no longer talk of the behaviour of the particle apart from the process of observation. In consequence, we are finally led to believe that the laws of nature which we formulate mathematically in quantum theory no longer deal with the particles themselves but with our knowledge of elementary particles." Nobel laureate physicist Werner Heisenberg says. Thus the need to bring the observer into the analysis as an explicit element is recognised and this is a very significant development indeed. I shall deal with it later in this article.

Some scientists believe that a proper description of the universe and its origin can be given by combining the theories of general relativity and quantum mechanics. Such a Grand Unified Theory (GUT) is expected to describe all the forces at work in the universe by a single mathematical expression. According to Nobel laureate physicist Steven Weinberg, "It may take a century or two to get the mathematics together."

I have given above a very brief survey of the attempts made by modern scientists to explain the origin and nature of the universe. Before I suggest a possible solution, let us see what scientists have to say about the origin of life on earth.

According to chemical-evolution theorists, the scenario begins more than four billion years ago. The primal atmosphere was formed out of gases and dust; activated by ultraviolet light and electric bolts, this atmosphere gave birth to organic chemical compounds, which accumulated in ancient seas for some 1.5 billion years. Out of the interaction of these organic com-
pounds primitive polypeptides (proteins), polynucleotides (DNA and RNA), polysaccharides (cell sugars) and lipids (fatty acids) were eventually formed. And finally, from this primordial organic soup, the living organisms are believed to have arisen.

To determine the probability of random interaction resulting in the proteins required for the simplest cell, Sir Fred Hoyle and mathematician Chandra Wickramasinghe calculated a mathematical probability of $10^{4000}$ to 1. These odds are so incredibly great that no one could conceive such an event to occur in the relatively brief few billion years that earth has existed. Nobel laureate Francis Crick, codiscoverer of the DNA structure, says: "An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now, could only state that in some sense the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going." 13

Crick himself almost in desperation has proposed that the genetic code may have been carried to earth by intelligent life from another planetary system. So far, modern science is not able to explain the origin of the universe or the origin of life on planet earth. Now, let me propose a solution.

I think, the first step (see 9 above) is to bring into the analysis the observer himself as an explicit element distinct from the experimental apparatus.

Take for example Bertrand Russell’s case of a physiologist examining the brain of his patient. The physiologist undoubtedly believes himself to be looking at the brain of another person. But Russell says: "Light waves travel from the brain that is being observed to the eye of the physiologist, at which they arrive after an interval of time, which is finite though short. The physiologist sees what he is observing after the light light waves have reached his eyes; therefore, the event which constitutes his seeing comes at the end of a series of events which travel from the observed brain to the brain of the physiologist. We cannot, without a preposterous kind of disunity, suppose that the physiologist’s percept which comes at the end of these series, is anywhere else but in the physiologist’s head.” 12

I think the scientists have not appreciated the significance of Russell’s observation. Suppose I am looking at Sirius which is many light years away. The light waves which started from Sirius many light years ago have “now” reached my eyes and the optic nerve leading into my brain. Suppose Sirius had ceased to exist a century before my birth. Yet, in effect, I see Sirius because the rays of light which emanated from Sirius a few light years ago before its extinction will still reach my eyes and the optic nerve leading into my brain and will create an ‘imaging’ of Sirius. So are the cases with all objects depending upon their ranging from the “now” of the brain which receive the sensory information.

We have considered events occurring in the external world. Now let me take an event related to my body. I scratch my head. Actually, this is not any different from my scratching the surface of my desk. What happens according to the physicist is that an energy transition is taking place between particles (and hence energy states) composing my finger and those composing my head or those composing my desk as the case may be. These energy transitions set up in the nerve cell at the end of my finger a current sense which reaches my brain. Thus the energy transitions are “now” located in my brain. Hence events like scratching my head, listening to the radio, seeing Sirius etc. are events referenced and ranged about the “now” in my brain. The body is perhaps a few nanoseconds, the sun about eight minutes, Sirius several light years and so on from the “now” of the brain. I think it forms a mathematical structure of symmetry that can be formulated in modern mathematical concepts.

The second step is to examine the nature of “now.” Events constituting the brain —

the events of the 'subjective now' — are events at the very nearest end of the subjective past. Mark, they are not of the real now or the very present. When I say 'now' or think 'now', it is the end of the modulating process in the brain where the 'now' is acknowledged. In other words, it becomes the very immediate past, the 'subjective now', i.e. the "now" of the brain. The world-building or the construction of a 'name-form' imaging of the world occurs in the subjective now. The world has no origin, it is just an imaging referenced and ranged about the subjective now or the "now" of the brain in mathematical symmetry.

Now, let us see where the 'subjective now' leads us to. I must standardize the terms I use. World cognition means the feeling that the world of imaging is real. I-awareness is the innate awareness that I-AM-ALIVE or I-AM-ness. The 'subjective now' and hence the world cognition arises after the rise of the I-awareness. The I-awareness must be there to acknowledge the 'subjective now' and the subjective past. That from which the I-awareness rises is the real now or the very present. The real now is as-it-is. Any use of the word 'time' in the normal sense is completely out of the question, for there is neither space nor time. It is not the super-space formalized by John A. Wheeler, Princeton University's professor of physics and co-inventor of the hydrogen bomb. There is no separate mysterious region. The I-awareness, the subjective now, 'the world cognition' are all modulating events in the real now.

The third step is to examine the characteristics of the real now or as it is-nis. Clearly there cannot be anything antecedent to real now. Since everything else rises out of the real now, it is the fundamental energy. Since it is ALL THAT-IS, it must have intrinsic conscious-

I know that I am treading on very sensitive ground. Many modern scientists and philosophers take a strictly mechanistic approach to consciousness. John B. Watson, professor of psychology at Johns Hopkins University wrote: "It has never been seen, touched, smelled, or moved. It is a plain assumption just as unprovable as the old concept of soul". The famous behavioural psychologist B.F. Skinner writes about what he calls the "inner man": "His abolition has been long over due — he has been constructed from our ignorance, and as our understanding increases, the very stuff of which he is composed vanished". Such views are based on ignorance.

On the other hand Professor Planck declares: "I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as derivative from consciousness. Everything we talk about, everything we postulate as existing, requires consciousness." "Pure Consciousness wholly unrelated to the physical body and transcending the mind is a matter of direct experience. Sages know their bodiless, eternal Existence just as the layman knows his bodily existence. But the experience of Consciousness can be with bodily awareness as well as without it. In the bodiless experience of Pure Consciousness the sage is beyond time and space", says Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Here I should once again emphasize the difference, particularly for the scientists. Pure Consciousness is integral with the real now. Mental awareness is integral with the "now" of the brain. The world cognition is referenced and ranged about the "now" of the brain which can be formalized in mathematical symmetry.

To conclude, with Sri Ramana's words of grace:ful wisdom: "Pure Consciousness, which is the Heart, includes all; and nothing is outside or apart from it".
SRI Ramana’s life-spark entering into and becoming one with the Light of Arunachala—visibly seen by many as a meteor-like object moving towards the peak of the mountain and getting lost there—just while the devotees broke into a choral singing of the *Marital Garland*! One may find a touching appropriateness in this particular poem becoming, in a way, his swan-song, the song of the Supreme Swan: Parama Hamsa. For there are suggestions in the poem pointing to Ramana’s wish that his life-force must finally merge in that Mountain Bridegroom.

"Clinging to Thee as I did and becoming prey to Thee (getting swallowed by Thee), may I rest in Peace." (28)

"To leave Thee is grievous. Bless me that as I quit life I do not lose hold of Thee." (96)

We have the Sruti (Smrti) pramaana (verbal Testimony) that the vital airs (life-force) of the Jnani do not depart to any such outside destination as the Abode of Liberation, since he had attained Liberation the very moment Jnana dawned (*Brihadaaranyaka*: 3-2-11 and 4-4-6; *Brahma-Sutra*: 4-2-12 to 16). Sri Ramana’s own emphatic testimony is there too in support of Verbal Testimony. He has, on experiential knowledge, corroborated the Testimony and further stated that on physical death the Jnani’s life-force merges in what he called the Heart, the source from which breath and thought spring, that can be apparently given a location physically on the right side of the chest. We further hear from him that he was not successful in bringing the Grace-force to effect this final subsidence of the life-force within the Heart in the case of his devout servitor, Palani-swami whereas he succeeded in the case of his mother.

How then can we say that his own life-force departed from the body to reach the outside destination of Arunachala? How, in addition, can we interpret some of his verses in the *Marital Garland* as conveying his longing to be thus united with Arunachala? We find that Parasakti enacted through him the most impossible things, in the most inconspicuous way. A little c. l how She wove paradoxes within his impersonal personality, we shall see presently.

As to the question of the life-force moving out: We have seen the paramount paradox of Ramana’s realising at once both the non-dual Reality and the dual Appearance in the Sahaj, a realisation that became permanent with him throughout his life in the body. If this impossibility could happen, why not the other impossibility of both an inside and outside, non-dual and dual mukti (Fulfilment) when life quitted the body—the non-dual Peace-force (which is
no ‘force’ at all) subsiding in the Heart and the
dual Love-force departing to unite with the
Low-Source, that is the Anurachala Bridegroom?

Is there really an “impossible” for the
Supreme Power? Is not Her play called
“aghāttita-ghatana”, “accomplishing what
could not be accomplished”? Remember that
spiritual stalwarts like Guenon and Schuon
used to call God the “All-Possibility”.

So, if while living, Ramana could be on both
the Absolute and relative planes at once, while
dying too he could have had both a merger
within and one without! Having sung so much
of the bridal love in his Marital Garland, he
must naturally have expressed therein his long-
ing for its consummation in union with the
Beloved in death.

The Marital Garland was, in Bhagavan’s own
words, “composed partly at the Virupaksha
cave and partly on my walks round the hill”.
It is moving to think of the supreme compassion
by which he was moved in writing out the ver-
ses for our sake, even as he was swept off by
the powerful surge of emotion. He knew, for
sure, that he was imbued with the dualist bhava
of bhakti only in order to make its harvests over
to the world. The erstwhile recluse now did
relish meeting the world on its own wave length.

Any lesser man would have found it utterly
impossible to put into words and write down for
the world such overwhelming emotions as are
behind these verses:

—

2 Day by Day with Bhagavan, entry dated 7-12-45.
"Sweet fruit within my hands! Let me be mad with ecstasy, drink with the Bliss of Thy Essence, Oh Arunachala!" (23)

"Tear off these robes, expose me naked, then robe me with Thy Love, Oh Arunachala!" (30)

"Let us enjoy one another in the House of Open Space, where there is neither night nor day, Oh Arunachala!" (91)

"Watching like a spider to trap me in the web of Thy Grace, Thou didst entwine me and when imprisoned fed upon me, Oh Arunachala!" (103).

His gift to the world, no doubt. But not to the world at large. Not all can understand all his verses. Many verses there are that are simple, yet sublime, which even the commonest man can understand and be deeply moved by. But equally many are there that bear the scholarly stamp, above the heads of the common people. It is one more of the seeming paradoxes that the Supreme Power, Parasakti, wove around this simplest of men who at the same time was the sublimest too. The vast, immaterial Aakaasa, that he was, Parasakti could accommodate any material in him! Though they were in him he was both in and not-in them. Thus he could be both the celibate immaculate and the passionate paramour of the Eternal Bridegroom; an ati-Varnaasrami totally beyond the rules of society, yet setting an example to people in the minutest norms of conduct and character; and now—one with the common man at heart, and in his day-to-day movements and conversations and one with the pundit in his literary exercises!

Ramana’s poetry was really a treat to the learned. So terse, yet transparent, it was to them. Though scholarly it was spontaneously so and not affected pedantically. The precision and elegance of his expression and the profoundness and authenticity of his thought confer a pride of place to his poetry in the literature of the spirit. In addition to the scholarly style, the common man might often find it difficult to mark out the words clearly, since they were strung together by Ramana according to the strict rules of grammar where the consonant ending of a word and the vowel-beginning of the next word were fused to form a single sound thus smudging the separate identity of the two words. Also, he meticulously observed the rules governing the mutations in conjoining any two sounds, sometimes giving rise to an entirely new sound (as when I plus a becomes na). Furthermore, he was particular about rhythmically making off the lines into parts by the metrical division (n) which need not conform to dividing the line by its constituent words: a metrical division can be just part of a word or one word plus a fraction of the next word etc. (It is amusing, even amazing, that our commonest Ramana would so much insist on this prosodic division as against division by the constituent words whenever the Ashram inmates recited from the religious texts before him, that on days when he was deeply in-drawn and silent and they longed to hear his divine voice, they deliberately made the prosodic slip in the recitation, provoking him thereby to immediately open his mouth to correct them!)

Perhaps, Parasakti had her justification! The content of his devotionals was Love, that of his philosophic poems, the Self. Both Love and Self are plain and simple. So, when they had to be conveyed, as against being naturally felt, they had to undergo some sophistication!

All said and done, not all of Sri Ramana’s superb verses make for easy reading, except to the well-versed. To quote Arthur Osborne on the “Five Hymns”: “The literary Tamil in which the hymns were written can be used in an extremely cryptic manner and the first hymn (the Marital Garland) abounds in passages which can be understood in more than one manner”.

The common Ramana could afford to be a hard-boiled scholar, because in truth, he was neither common nor uncommon.

Do I contradict myself? 
Very well then I contradict myself. 
I am large, I contain multitudes. 

—Walt Whitman

To be continued
SOMERSET
MAUGHAM
AND
'The Razor’s Edge'
By David Godman

I N JANUARY 1938 Somerset Maugham, the British novelist, visited Sri Ramanasramam for a few hours. The brief contact that he had with Bhagavan inspired Maugham so much that he decided to use him as the model for a fictional Guru in The Razor’s Edge, a novel of his which was published a few years later in 1944. Maugham also wrote a non-fiction account of his visit in an essay called 'The Saint', which was published twenty years after the event in 1958. The following account, which is taken from this essay, records Maugham’s impressions of his meeting with Bhagavan.

"In the course of my journey to India I went to Madras and there met some people who seemed interested to know what I had been doing in India. I told them about the holy men who had suffered me to visit them, and they immediately proposed to take me to see a Swami who was the most celebrated and the most revered then in India. They called him the Maharshi."

"I did not hesitate to fall in with the suggestion and, a few days later, early one morning,"
we set out. After a dull hot drive along a dusty, bumpy road, dusty because the heavy wheels of ox-drawn wagons had left deep ruts in it, we reached the ashram. We were told that the Maharshi would see us in a little while. We had brought a basket of fruit to present to him, as I was informed that it was the graceful custom, and sat down to the picnic luncheon we had been sensible enough to put in the car. Suddenly I fainted dead away. I was carried into a hut and laid on a pallet bed. I do not know how long I remained unconscious but presently I recovered. I felt, however, too ill to move. The Maharshi was told what had happened, and that I was not well enough to come into the hall in which he ordinarily sat, so, after some time, followed by two or three disciples, he came into the hut into which I had been taken.

"What follows is what I wrote in my notebook on my return to Madras. The Maharshi was of average height for an Indian, of a dark honey colour with close-cropped white hair and a close-cropped white beard. He was plump rather than stout. Though he wore nothing but an exiguous loincloth he looked neat, very clean and almost dapper. He had a slight limp, and he walked slowly, leaning on a stick. His mouth was somewhat large, with thickish lips and the whites of his eyes were bloodshot. He bore himself with naturalness and at the same time with dignity. His mien was cheerful, smiling, polite; he did not give me the impression of a scholar, but rather of a sweet-natured old peasant. He uttered a few words of cordial greeting and sat on the ground not far from the pallet on which I lay.

"After the first few minutes, during which his eyes with a gentle benignity rested on my face, he ceased to look at me, but, with a sidelong stare of peculiar fixity, gazed, as it were, over
my shoulder. His body was absolutely still, but now and then one of his feet tapped lightly on the earthen floor. He remained thus, motionless, for perhaps a quarter of an hour; and they told me later that he was concentrating in meditation upon me. Then he came to, if I may so put it, and again looked at me. He asked me if I wished to say anything to him, or to ask any question. I was feeling weak and ill and said so; whereupon he smiled and said, 'Silence is also conversation'. He turned his head away slightly and resumed his concentrated meditation, again looking, as it were, over my shoulder. No one said a word; the other persons in the hut, standing by the door, kept their eyes riveted upon him. After another quarter of an hour, he got up, bowed, smiled a farewell, and slowly, leaning on his stick, followed by his disciples, he limped out of the hut.

"I do not know whether it was the consequence of the rest or of the Swami's meditation, but I certainly felt much better and in a little while I was well enough to go into the hall where he sat by day and slept at night. It was a long, bare room, fifty feet long, it seemed to me, and about half as broad. There were windows all round it, but the overhanging roof dimmed the light. The Swami sat on a low dais, on which was a tiger skin, and in front of him was a small brazier in which incense burnt. Now and again a disciple stepped forward and lit another stick. The scent was agreeable to the nostrils. The faithful, inhabitants of the ashram or habitual visitors, sat cross-legged on the floor. Some read, others meditated. Presently two strangers, Hindus, came in with a basket of fruit, prostrated themselves and presented their offerings. The Swami accepted it with a slight inclination of the head and motioned to a disciple to take it away. He spoke to the strangers and then, with another inclination of the head, signified to them that they were to withdraw. They prostrated themselves once more and went to sit among the other devotees. The Swami entered that blissful state of meditation on the infinite which is called Samadhi. A little shiver seemed to pass through those present. The silence was intense and impressive. You felt that something strange was taking place that made you inclined to hold your breath. After a while I tiptoed out of the hall.

"Later I heard that my fainting had given rise to fantastic rumours. The news of it was carried throughout India. It was ascribed to the awe that overcame me at the prospect of going into the presence of the holy man. Some said that his influence, acting upon me before I ever saw him, had caused me to be rapt for a while in the infinite. When Hindus asked about it, I was content to smile and shrug my shoulders. In point of fact that was neither the first nor the last time that I have fainted. Doctors tell me that it is owing to an irritability of the solar plexus which press my diaphragm against my heart.

"... Since then, however, Indians come to see me now and then as the man who by the special grace of the Maharshi was rapt in the infinite, as his neighbours went to see Herman Melville as the man who had lived among cannibals. I explain to them that this bad habit of mine is merely a physical idiosyncrasy of no consequence, except that it is a nuisance to other people; but they shake their heads incredulously. How do I know, they ask me, that I was not rapt in the infinite? To that I do not know the answer, and the only thing I can say, but refrain from saying for fear it will offend them, is that if it was, the infinite is an absolute blank. The idea of theirs is not so bizarre as at first glance it seems when one remembers their belief that in deep, dreamless sleep consciousness remains and the soul is then united with the infinite reality which is Brahman...

"The interest aroused by this incident, unimportant to me, but significant to Maharshi's devotees, has caused them to send me a mass of material concerned with him, lives, accounts of his daily activities, conversations with him, answers to the questions put to him, expositions of his teachings and what not. I have read a great deal of it. From it I have formed a vivid impression of the extraordinary man he was..."  

1 The Saint, pp. 2-5, published by Heinemann, 1958.
Major Chadwick has written about this visit on pages 37-40 of his memoir A Sadhu's Reminiscences. His account of Maugham's brief darshan is substantially the same. However, he criticised Maugham for inventing a trip to the old hall which never took place:

"After [giving darshan to Maugham in my room] Bhagavan returned to the hall [while] the rest of the party remained in my room for tea. After tea, Somerset Maugham, who was wearing a large pair of boots, wanted to go to the hall and see where Bhagavan usually lived. I took him to the western window through which he looked for some time with interest, making mental notes. He says in his indifferent and quite uninspired article The Saint, published in a series of essays twenty years after the event, that he sat in the hall in Bhagavan's presence, but this is untrue, because he could not enter with his boots; he only gazed into the hall from outside. He has also tacked a certain amount of philosophy onto Bhagavan which Bhagavan would never have uttered in his life. But such is the habit of famous authors, to put their own opinions into the mouths of others.

"In his recent article Somerset Maugham says that because of his fainting fit, which some Indians regarded as a high state of samadhi, which he denies, he has been sent a mass of literature concerning Maharshi. This may be true, but it is certainly true that he wrote to the Ashram and told them that he was going to write about Bhagavan and asked for as much material as they could send. He pointed out at the time that, of course, if he wrote anything it would be a wonderful advertisement for the Ashram and the Maharshi. As if it were needed!"

There is one other brief account of Maugham's visit in Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi. That version concludes by saying: "The author [Maugham] attempted to ask questions but did not speak. Major Chadwick encouraged him to ask. Sri Bhagavan said, 'All finished. Heart talk is all talk. All talk must end in silence only.' [Talk no. 550]."

This account was written by Annamalai Swami on the day that the darshan took place. When I spoke to Annamalai Swami recently about this meeting he told me that he, Bhagavan, Chadwick and Maugham were sitting in silence for about half an hour in the room. He also told me that Bhagavan's remarks were uttered in English, rather than Tamil, because there was no interpreter there at the time.

Maugham left India about two months later and returned to his home in the South of France. In 1940, after Germany invaded and conquered France, he went to America and lived there for the remainder of the war. He settled in South Carolina where he completed the writing of The Razor's Edge, the novel in which the fictional Bhagavan appeared.

The hero of the book, Larry Darrel, is a young American drifter who wanders around the world in an attempt to find peace of mind and answers to some of the fundamental questions which have traditionally perplexed spiritual seekers. He comes to India and finds what he is looking for in a South Indian ashram which is presided over by a Guru who is clearly Bhagavan masquerading under a different name. After staying for several years at the ashram, a contented Larry Darrel returns to America at the end of the book with the aim of living, so far as it is possible in the west, the life of a sadhu.

There has been considerable speculation among Maugham scholars as to whether the life and character of Darrel is derived from a real-life devotee of Bhagavan. The question appeared to be settled a few months ago when Wilmon Menard, an American author who has written a play based on Maugham's life, wrote an article which was published in the May-June issue of Namaskar, the in-flight magazine of Air India. Menard stated in the article that he had spoken at length to Maugham about the writing of The Razor's Edge. In an interview which he gave in the South of France, Maugham apparently told him that he had met an American devotee called Guy Hague at Sri
Ramanasramam and had immediately decided to use him as a model for the main character in his next book. A friend of mine sent a copy of this article to a Mr. Dennis Wills, an American researcher who had previously written to Sri Ramanasramam asking for information about Hague's stay there and Maugham's brief visit to Bhagavan. I also wrote to Mr. Wills since I had collected a few facts about Maugham and Hague which I thought would be of interest to him.

In his reply Dennis Wills told me that he had spoken to Wilmon Menard about his article. Wills wrote: "... any conversations between Maugham and Hague in this article are completely non-existent. Wilmon told me that the text used was from his play on Maugham, a work of fiction; but this is not the impression given in the article." In a subsequent letter he told me, "I have suggested to Wilmon that if he receives any letters in response to his article he should indicate that his publication was based on a play he has written and that this was a work of fiction."

Dennis Wills has been researching the lives of Maugham and Hague for many years. Although he clearly believes that Menard's dialogues between Bhagavan and Maugham and those between Maugham and Hague are fictitious, there are still a few compelling reasons for supposing that Hague was the person who had inspired the character of Larry Darrel. Hague was an American mining engineer who travelled widely in many parts of the world before coming to Sri Ramanasramam in 1938 for a stay of 2½ years; the fictional Darrel was an American who had travelled round Europe doing odd jobs, one of which was in a Belgian mine, before coming to India in the 1930s to spend several years at a South Indian ashram.

The similarities are striking but there is no evidence that Maugham met Hague either in India or anywhere else. Hague was not at Sri Ramanasramam, or even in India, on the day that Maugham visited Bhagavan, and Dennis Wills informs me that despite intensive research he has been unable to come up with any evidence that Maugham met Hague in the years prior to the publication of *The Razor's Edge*.

A few people have told me that Christopher Isherwood, the famous English novelist, was the model for Larry Darrel. Although he was neither an American nor a miner, he was a keen student of Vedanta who spent many years in California studying Indian philosophy with Swami Prabhavananda. When I mentioned this theory to Dennis Wills he told me that he had also heard the story and that he had taken the trouble to talk to Isherwood himself about it. Isherwood informed him that he had never visited Bhagavan, nor had he ever spoken to Maugham about Bhagavan's life and teachings. This testimony seems to eliminate him as a possible candidate.

The current consensus among Maugham scholars is that Darrel is a composite character derived partly from different people Maugham had met and partly from Maugham's imagina-
Maugham had been inventing characters who dropped out of the mainstream of life to pursue spiritual or artistic quests long before he began work on *The Razor's Edge*. Most scholars now feel that Darrel is yet another fictional embodiment of a theme which fascinated Maugham throughout his life.

In his preamble to *The Razor's Edge* Maugham makes the following statement: "To save embarrassment to people still living I have given to the persons who play a part in this story names of my own contriving, and I have in other ways taken pains to make sure that no one should recognise them."

Bhagavan was still alive when *The Razor's Edge* was first published. 'To save embarrassment' he was renamed Shri Ganesha, and Sri Ramanasramam was located on a lagoon near Trivandrum. Despite these disguises, and a few other minor distortions of facts, both Bhagavan and the Ashram are clearly recognisable in many passages in the novel. The following extracts are all taken from the 1944 edition published by William Heinemann.

> [Larry Darrel speaking] "It was three or four miles from the nearest town, but people used to come from there, and even from much farther, on foot or by bullock cart, to hear the Yogi talk when he was inclined to or just sit at his feet and share with one another the peace and blessedness that were radiated from his presence as fragrance was wafted upon the air by a tuberose." [pp. 137-8]

> [Darrel in conversation with Maugham, the narrator] "What was your Yogi like?"

> "In person d'you mean? Well, he wasn't tall, neither thin nor fat, palish brown in colour and clean shaven, with close-cropped white hair. He never wore anything but a loincloth and yet he managed to look as trim and well-dressed as a young man in one of Brooks Brothers' advertisements."

> "And what had he got that particularly attracted you?"

Larry looked at me for a full minute before answering. His eyes in their deep sockets seemed as though they were trying to see to the depths of my soul.

> "Saintliness."

I was slightly disconcerted by his reply. In that room [in Paris], with its fine furniture, and with those lovely drawings on the walls, the word fell like a plop of water that has seeped through the ceiling from an overflowing bath.

> "We've read all about the saints, St Francis, St John of the Cross, but that was hundreds of years ago. I never thought it possible to meet one who was alive now. From the first time I saw him I never doubted that he was a saint. It was a wonderful experience."

> "And what did you gain from it?"

> "Peace," he said casually with a light smile. [p. 139]
selflessness. I was hot and tired after my journey, but gradually I began to feel wonder­fully rested. Before he'd said another word I knew that this was the man I'd been seeking.

[pp. 256-7]

[Darrel speaking] “I was given as a dwelling place the shack in which Shri Ganesha had lived in when he first came down to the plain. The hall in which he now passed both night and day had been built when disciples gathered around him and more and more people, attracted by his fame, came to visit him... I read a great deal. I meditated. I listened to Shri Ganesha when he chose to talk; he didn’t talk very much, but he was always willing to answer questions and it was wonderfully inspiring to listen to him. It was like music in your ears. Though in his youth he had himself practised very severe austerities he did not enjoin them on his disciples. He sought to wean them from the slavery of selfhood, passion and sense, and told them that they could acquire liberation by tranquillity, restraint, renunciation, resignation, by steadfastness of mind and by an ardent desire for freedom. People used to come from the nearby town three or four miles away, where there was a famous temple to which great crowds flocked once a year for a festival. They came from Trivandrum and from far off places to tell him their troubles, to ask his advice, to listen to his teaching; and all went away strengthened in soul and at peace with themselves. What he taught was very simple. He taught that we are all greater than we know and that wisdom is the means to freedom. He taught that it is not essential to salvation to retire from the world, but only to renounce the self. He taught that work done with no selfish interest purifies the mind and that duties are the opportunities offered to man to sink his separate self and become one with the universal self. But it wasn’t his teaching that was so remarkable; it was the man himself, his be­nignity, his greatness of soul, his saintliness. His presence was a benediction. I was very happy with him. I felt that at last I had found what I wanted.” [pp. 246-7]

When The Razor’s Edge was published it immediately became a best seller. Wilmon Menard says that 1½ million copies were sold but I have read other reports that put the figure as high as three million. Whatever the figure, there is general agreement that it was Maugham’s most successful novel. Shortly after it was published he sold the film rights to Twentieth Century Fox for $250,000. Darryl Zanuck, the head of Twentieth Century Fox, asked Maugham to work on the screenplay, and Maugham agreed. Maugham wanted to work for nothing, but Zanuck insisted on paying him with a Matisse painting. It was an expensive present because when the film was finally made not a single word of Maugham’s dialogue was used!

Although Maugham’s screenplay was not used by Zanuck the film was a critical and financial success. It was nominated for four Oscars and it made so much money that Zanuck asked Maugham to write a sequel to The Razor’s Edge so that he could film it. Maugham, understandably disenchanted with Hollywood after his script was thrown away, declined the offer. He never worked in Hollywood again and never wrote a sequel.

“Not to possess anything is an extraordinary state; not even to possess an idea, let alone a person or a thing!”

— J. Krishnamurti
The Supreme Lord made man in his own image. Ever since then man has sought him in images. All search presupposes ignorance. By a strange mechanism, man who is none other than Being-Awareness does not immediately, directly perceive this. This is Avidya, ignorance. There arises a separation, a questioning, "If I am indeed the Supreme One, why do I not experience it as undifferentiated Bliss?". This is Aavarana, covering or obscurity. Every name signifies an objective representation of five connected senses or sensations. Any new name can be directly associated with the related five sensations. But what if direct experience is not possible, or is obscured? Then the only way out is the vicarious, as for example, "It feels like a ball, tastes like sugar, looks like a sannyasi, and smells good." This description of a mango which sounds great may even help a person to recognise a mango in future on his own. Such knowledge is relative, that is, one thing is understood in terms of abstractions of other things. Though this cannot substitute for actual experience, it does provide the only alternative, a heuristic approach to the real thing in the absence of direct cognition.

So, coming to Aavarana, how are we to know the One we are told we are, when we see only multiplicity?

Like a thorn used to remove a thorn, similes from within the world of multiplicity are pointed out so that we may begin to understand the nature of relative knowledge as a whole, and hence our roots.

UPAADHIS THREE: Just as that which looks like a seed today, looks like a plant tomorrow, and later a tree, so too Avidya leads to Aavarana which immediately leads to Vikshepa, false projection: "Since I am not able to feel the One, I must be something else, trying to seek the One". Avarana and Vikshepa are classed as Upaadhi. Though the conventional equivalent of this is "adjunct" or "limitation", it makes more sense here to take it as "a de-}

1. Avacchinna Upaadhi: (Disintegration): The seeker asks, "If I am the One, I ought to experience it as such. Since I don't, I can only conclude that the Self does not exist." He is then told a simile: Just as a cloud obscures the sun and seemingly negates its existence, just as sleep swallows all names and forms and even obscures the nameless, formless residue called Self, so too Aavarana obscures the Self, the pure "I" even now.

2. Pratibimba Upaadhi: (Reflection): The point is subtle; overlooking this the sadhaka says, "Aavarana obscures the Self from me. So I must be something other than the Self, which seeks to know it." This arising of an entity seemingly separate from the Self, is like a separate moon seen (reflected) in water. As the simile, so the sadhaka.

3. Adhyaasa Upaadhi: (Superimposition): Missing the point, the sadhaka may erroneously conclude, "I fail to see how Avacchinna or Pratibimba similes apply to me, considering that I have a will and intelligence on the one hand, and also experience pleasure and pain on the other, all quite real. So I couldn't be a mere reflection, a Pratibimba, could I?" Just as silver is seen where the mother-of-pearl alone exists, just as a snake is seen where a rope alone lies, and just as the venomous nature of the snake is superposed on the real rope, or just as a movement in the reflecting medium is foisted on the moon (above), so too the experience of pleasure and pain of a false entity (Ahamkara) is being superposed on the Self, the pure "I". The feeling, "I experience pain, pleasure" and so on, is thus foisted on I, the Being-Awareness.

THE FAMILY OF ADHYAASA: Ahamkara is the witness-ego, the principle of duality. This is the Upaadhi of Being-Awareness.
3.1 Satya Adhyaasa: The superposition of the 'I' of Being-Awareness on Ahamkaara, is called True Superposition. All the Adhyaasas that follow, have this 'error' as the basis.

3.2 Itaretara Adhyaasa: (mutual superposition): Just as formless fire acquires form in a red-hot iron ball, and just as the dull iron ball by proximity to fire, gives out heat and light, so too the feelings of doership and enjoyership (Karma-Bhoktva) are foisted on the Self, as are the qualities of Being and Awareness foisted on the dull inner instruments, Antahkarana. Strictly speaking, the mutual superposition is between the Antahkarana and the witness-ego. But the latter, like a self-effulgent moon, is itself a stand-in for Self, the pure I (see Satya Adhyaasa). So, in effect:

"I do, I enjoy" (Antahkarana foisted on i, the Self). "I along with Thoughts, Objects, exist; I am aware of them" (Being-Awareness foisted on Antahkarana).

3.3 Iiara Adhyaasa: (one-way superimposition): Just as water, when proximate to fire displays the quality of fire, so too the organs of knowledge (Indriyas) seemingly see, hear, and so on. This activity is superposed on the Antahkarana which is superposed on the Self, pure I, as before. In effect, "I see, I hear". The superimposition is one-way because the Antahkarana assume the activity of seeing and hearing but the Indriyas do not assume the activity of thinking and knowing.

3.4 Mithya Adhyaasa: (false superposition): The gross body which is nothing but a group of sensations, appears in the same way as an incense stick burning at its tip, when rotated, appears as a ring of fire in the dark. Just as water, when proximate to fire, displays the quality of fire, so too the body though false, appears enlivened, and seemingly moves and talks. In effect, "I walk, I talk."

Mithya Adhyaasa and Iiara Adhyaasa (3.4, 3.3) inevitably lead to identification with a particular place, people and time. "I am so-and-so, this is my dear family" and so on, are called Sambandha Maya Adhyaasa (adhyaasa limited to relationship). They are as transient and incidental as one's co-passengers on a ferry.

The enjoyership foisted on Self by Itaretara Adhyaasa (3.2) leads inevitably to Tat Dharma Adhyaasa, the transference to the Self, of the Vasanas that lend nature, give colour to the Antahkarana. Thus: "I crave this, I must avoid that". This is like saying, "The moon is all broken up", when it really happens to the reflection in the flowing water.

The doership foisted on Self by Itaretara Adhyaasa, leads to Sopaadhika Adhyaasa (Adhyaasa which lasts as long as the adjunct remains) which is like the clear crystal looking all red as long as a red object lies beside it or like a mirage continuing even after insight into its nature. Thus: "I ought to get the credit. I did it," and so on, continue as long as doership continues.

Satya Adhyaasa (3.1), the progenitor of all the above, refers to the superposition on the ego, of the reference 'I' of Self. This is called Nisopaadhika Adhyaasa (negative sopaadhika): that is, the adhyaasa continues only as long as insight into the adjunct does not take place, but vanishes thereupon. The superposition of 'I' onto the ego vanishes upon enquiry into the ego itself. This is realization, the removal of Upadhi. This is like the rope losing for ever its venomous, fear-inducing nature, immediately upon insight regarding the snake which was seen in it.

SIMPLE: USE AND ABUSE: The Reality that is unique to each one is really built on a common Consensus-Reality. The ten who crossed the river individually committed the same error of counting themselves. Their Consensus-Reality said: "All are so-and-so, the tenth man is lost." Based on this, they all began sobbing. So much for their consensus!

Similes belong to the realm of Consensus-Reality, and so they have their limitations. If the Self and ego are likened to water and its wave, it would be stretching the simile if we wondered how the Self could be composed of hydrogen and oxygen. On the other hand, any scepticism or suspicion about the veracity of a higher truth is neatly removed by observing the same relationship or effect in a real-life simile. The world we know is really the world of our mind. Similes are readily verifiable thought-experiments that yield consistent results every time. To the sadhaka they provide reliable anchor points, nay weapons, to counter the gale of Guna and the whirlpool of Vasanas, which frustrate Sraddha and cloud Buddhi.

Approached with thirst for Truth and an abhorrence for mere display of learning, Vedanta with its foolproof system of similes provides the earnest sadhaka the keys to self-wrought iron handcuffs. Any other motive will only help trade iron for gold.
Devotee: How should a beginner start enquiring?

Bhagavan: The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry 'Who am I?' The thought 'Who am I?', destroying all other thoughts will itself finally be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre. If other thoughts rise one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire 'To whom did they rise?' What does it matter however many thoughts rise? At the very moment that each thought rises, if one vigilantly enquires 'To whom did this rise?', it will be known 'To me'. If one then enquires 'Who am I?', the mind will turn back to its source (the Self) and the thought which had risen will also subside. By repeatedly practising thus, the power of the mind to abide in its source increases.

D.: On enquiry into the origin of thoughts there is a perception of 'I'. But it does not satisfy me.

B.: Quite right. The perception of 'I' is associated with a form, maybe the body. There should be nothing associated with the pure Self. The Self is the unassociated, pure reality, in whose light the body and the ego shine. On
stilling all thoughts the pure Consciousness remains.

D.: If I go on rejecting thoughts can I call it vichara?
B.: It may be a stepping stone. But really vichara begins when you cling to your Self and are already off the mental movement, the thought waves.

D.: Then vichara is not Intellectual?
B.: No. It is antara vichara, inner quest.

D.: What will be the result of doing that?
B.: As you go on you will find that your attitude towards people, events and objects gradually changes. Your actions will tend to follow your meditations of their own accord.

D.: Why is concentration ineffective?
B.: To ask the mind to kill the mind is like making the thief the policeman. He will go with you and pretend to catch the thief, but nothing will be gained. So you must turn inward and see from where the mind rises and then it will cease to exist.

D.: In turning the mind inwards, are we not still employing the mind?
B.: Of course we are employing the mind. It is well known and admitted that only with the help of the mind the mind can be killed. But instead of setting about saying there is a mind and I want to kill it, you begin to seek the source of the mind and you find the mind does not exist at all. The mind, turned outwards, results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards, it becomes itself the Self.

D.: I meditate neti-neti (not this-not this).
B.: No—that is not meditation. Find the source. You must reach the source without fail. The false ‘I’ will disappear and the real ‘I’ will be realised. The former cannot exist apart from the latter. There is now wrong identification of the Self with the body, senses, etc. You proceed to discard these, and this is neti. This can be done only by holding to the one which cannot be discarded. That is it (that which is).

D.: Am I to keep on repeating ‘Who am I?’ so as to make a mantra of it?
B.: No. ‘Who am I?’ is not a mantra. It means that you must find out where in you arises the ‘I’-thought which is the source of all other thoughts.

D.: Shall I meditate on ‘I am Brahman’ (aham Brahmasmi)?
B.: The text is not meant for thinking ‘I am Brahman’. Aham (‘I’) is known to everyone. Brahman abides as aham in everyone. Find out the ‘I’. The ‘I’ is already Brahman. You need not think so. Simply find out the ‘I’.

D.: How can I get peace? I do not seem to obtain it through vichara.
B.: Peace is your natural state. It is the mind that obstructs the natural state. If you do not experience peace it means that your vichara has been made only in the mind. Investigate what the mind is, and it will disappear. There is no such thing as mind apart from thought. Nevertheless, because of the emergence of thought, you surmise something from which it starts and term that the mind. When you probe to see what it is, you find there is really no such thing as mind. When the mind has thus vanished, you realise eternal peace.

D.: Do these tendencies go gradually or will they suddenly all disappear one day? I ask this because although I have remained here for a long time I do not perceive any gradual change in me.
B.: When the sun rises, does the darkness go gradually or all at once?
THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA

By Dr. Paul Carus

Pub.: Samata Books, 573, Mount Road, Madras-600 006.

pp. 232 + 44, Rs. 50/-

This book has been compiled by Paul Carus, a distinguished philosopher, from the Buddhist records and published in 1894. It is approaching a hundred years since it was first published.

"The Gospel of Buddha" is written in lucid and simple English and is very readable. It is comprehensive, from Prince Siddhartha becoming a Buddha to the consolidation of Buddhist religion and philosophy. The parables and stories are well arranged and illustrate the teachings of the Buddha. Krisha Gotami is stricken with grief due to the death of her child and through Buddha's guidance discovers that sorrow is universal, and she is appeased.

Buddha's farewell address is moving and is stated in one long sentence: "Those who, either now or after I am dead, shall be a lamp unto themselves, relying upon themselves only and not relying upon any external help, but holding fast to the truth as their lamp, and seeking their salvation in the truth alone, shall not look for assistance to anyone beside themselves, it is they, Ananda, among my bhikshus, who shall reach the very topmost height! But they must be anxious to learn"

In the concluding chapters of the book, the three personalities of the Buddha are explained clearly; Dharma Kaya, Nirmana Kaya and Sambhoga Kaya. This book will be a useful companion to the beginner as well as the scholar in Buddhist studies.

The exposition is in Theravada style, easy to read and grasp the essential significance of the teachings of the Buddha. There is a glossary of names and terms followed by an index which will be of help to the reader.

— G. Narayan

THE SILENT MIND (The Ramana Way): By A.R. Natarajan

Pub.: Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, 40/41, II Cross, Lower Palace Orchard, Bangalore-560 003.

pp. 62, Price Rs. 15

Bhagavan Ramana says: "Bring your mind to the Self and refuse to think further." When the mind remains at its source, the Heart (Self) the real Eternal 'I' shines. The Egoless state is achieved. Infinite consciousness arising from the Heart (Self) in the form of reflection causes the phenomenon which is called the mind. When thoughts vanish one ascends the throne of consciousness where ignorance and distortion are transcended. Just as the waves dissolve into the ocean, the mind dissolves into the Self. The extroverted mind leads to activity, but the same when introverted rests in the Self.

According to Bhagavan, the entire problem is the mind. It is the foremost obstacle. The eminent author has wisely selected this aspect for threadbare analysis. It is not an easy task to present the unique teaching of the greatest sage of our time, so precisely. The author, well-known to the Ramana circle, is a very staunch devotee of Ramana.

The author says—Our struggle always is only to make the mind silent. The silent mind never survives. It is at once pushed into the Heart (Self). On reaching the Self it is no longer termed as mind. Self only is there. An eloquent silence.

The book laid out in 23 short chapters abounds in hints for mind 'control' for beginners, and charts out many a signpost on the Heart-ward way 'for those in the Vichara manga.'

Charged with the eminent author’s direct experience, the book is yet another important addition to the growing literature on the Way of Sri Ramana.

— N.N. Rajan

THE MIRACLE OF EXISTENCE: By Henry Margenau


The title would lead most people to assume its author to be a professor of philosophy. Henry Margenau, a well-known physicist, is Professor Emeritus of Physics and Natural Philosophy at the Yale University.

The greatest of scientists have always regarded the mystery of life and consciousness, and therefore of our existence, as the central focus of their investigations. Both Albert Einstein and Erwin Schroedinger went to the extent of defining science in these terms:

"To put it boldly, [science] is the attempt of the posterior reconstruction of existence by the process of conceptualization." (Albert Einstein)

"I consider science an integrating part of our endeavour to answer the one great philosophical question that embraces all others, the one that Plotinus expressed by his brief: Who are we? And more than that: I consider this not only one of the tasks, but the task of science, the only one that really counts." (Erwin Schroedinger)

But despite what the Einsteins and the Schroedingers have spelt out so boldly, the world of science has tended to ignore all fundamental questions of the 'why' of existence, the purpose of life. Instead, it has sought to explain away
our feelings, our mind, our consciousness, life itself as meaningless consequences of the interaction of molecules. It is this reductionistic, materialistic approach to science that the author sets out to demolish.

Prof. Margenau delves deep into the question "What exactly is life?", including its physical, biological, and evolutionary aspects, and the knotty problem of body-mind interaction. Detailing the methods of scientific knowledge, he observes that the primary facts (P) of sense experiences suffer from subjectivity, variability and lack of quantification. Science gets around this by employing concepts (like temperature, time) that have a correspondence with the P system of constructs of the mind, available for study by relating the pair by rules of correspondence called operational definitions (the reading of a thermometer; the reading on a clock). But the choice of the operational definition (say the choice of an atomic clock over a pendulum clock) is found to depend on which of these measures leads to "the simplest, the most convenient or aesthetically most appealing law of nature... Our mind has apparently originated these principles... and hence our recognition of reality of the world depends on compulsive features that are not of our choice... As they change, the face of reality changes."

Going deeper into the operational definitions, the 'currency' of science, he observes that some constructs in every science are not operationally definable in a direct way. While the concepts of charge or mass of an electron can be defined operationally, the electron itself is only defined as a system constituting such constructs. It is interesting that Prof. Margenau designates the brain as one such system of constructs of the mind, available for study by established methods of physical, chemical and biological sciences. The Professor concurs that electrons and protons are too small to be seen and must therefore not be endowed with visual properties. "The mind is intrinsically invisible and therefore equally unsuited for representation by a physical model."

"The methodology of physical science, its total epistemology, makes use of only one aspect, one observable of the mind: sensation, the 'observable' we have denoted as P. Feelings, memories, moods, desires, hopes, volitions, and many other mental states have not entered the scene. For them, we have found as yet no universally accepted operational definitions, no satisfactory rules of correspondence. There are numerous proposals, such as one that asks an individual to rate the intensity of his feeling, his interest in a specific event, or the strength of a wish on a scale of 100 and proceeds using the quantitative rules and the metaphysical principles of established science. Here lies the main problem of psychology, social science, and related disciplines... The aspects of consciousness, its 'observables' cannot be treated by ordinary scientific methods. New approaches must be found."

"The mind is a non material field: its closest analogue is perhaps a probability field. It cannot be compared with the simpler non material fields that require the presence of matter (e.g., flow fields, acoustic fields)... it is not an energy field... nor is it required to contain energy in order to account for all known phenomena in which mind interacts with brain... the uncertainty principle ensures that the lighter an entity... the more it resembles a field (electron) or becomes itself a field (photon). The mind has no mass at all. Hence it is not surprising that it-partakes of the properties of a field: immateriality, lack of position, or even spatial confinement... abstract features that require novel methods of investigation."

It is when Prof. Margenau attempts to specify these 'new approaches' that his conclusions become really exciting. He makes use of ancient Indian Texts to support his thesis of a 'World Formula' based on a Universal Mind. Replete with references drawn from eminent works presenting various viewpoints on evolution and consciousness, the book compels careful reading, taking the reader into an understanding of this Universal Mind which has no need for memory, since all things and processes —past, present and future are in its eternal present. About this Mind he says, "... Of all ancient writings the Vedas and especially their successors, the Upanishads, come closest to the interpretation of existence toward which this book is heading. Far more philosophical and also more emotive than western sacred writings — and admittedly also more vague and diffuse—they contain many affirmations of the action of a Universal Mind, usually called OM or Brahman."

Prof. Margenau has very courageously taken the concepts outlined in his two earlier books, THE NATURE OF PHYSICAL REALITY AND EINSTEIN'S SPACE AND TIME, and PLANET SKY, and drawing from his well-rounded understanding of modern science, lead them to their logical conclusion. Few other contemporary thinkers possess the breadth of understanding to attempt the synthesis achieved in this slim volume—a seminal contribution amidst the present spate of publications that seek to link modern science with ancient wisdom.

The first book is a recording of the talks given from April 1980 to July 1981. The second covers discourses given from January to November 1980.

Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj named Manju by his parents was born in Bombay in 1897, married in 1924, became a...
cigarette trader in Bombay where he led the life of an ordinary grhastha. At age 34, he met his Guru and at age 37 realised himself. He died from cancer of the throat on 8, Sept., 1981.

All his discourses were given in his mother tongue Marathi, taped and transcribed into English. The single thread that holds together all the answers to questions in both the books is that self-enquiry denuded of all concepts, with faith in an external Guru at the initial stages, and above all faith in the Grace that is available to all who will seek it, self-enquiry without asking or seeking for crutches is the only way to self-liberation in this very life. The body is made up of the five elements and upon death dissolves back into these elements. But there is no death to the Consciousness which upon dissolution of the body merges with the Universal Consciousness. The Universal Consciousness has no Cause and so knows no End. It is from Everlasting to Everlasting. One who has understood this will stop becoming and plunge into Being unscarred by any kind of affliction suffered by the body or the psychological entity called the self. So delve within and know for truth the eternal 'I', the timeless, spaceless Being that has been there 'prior to Consciousness'. Spiritual striving is to taste this Nectar of the Lord's Feet. The Lord's feet is symbolic of the deathless 'T'.

The answers to questions are often times given brusquely like a severe slap on the cheek of the questioner. This tactics wondrously reminds one of Seshadri Swami.

The talks of Maharaj are caviar to the general. There was something magnetic in the presence and personality of this sage which the printed word does not capture. Otherwise persons of intellectual calibre and fiery scientific temperament would not have been so easily drawn to him.

S. Jayaraman

SREE YOGA VASISTHA—Vol. Four (Sthiti Prakarana).
By Bulusu Venkateswarulu, Gandhinagar, Kakinanda, Andhra Pradesh, Price Rs. 25.
The SUPREME YOGA (Yoga Vasistha)—A new translation By Swami Venkateswarulu, Published by Chiltern Yoga Trust (Australia), P.O. Box 2, South Fremantle, Price $12.50.

These two books should receive a wide welcome at the hands of the devout public as these seek to introduce Sadhaks to one of the greatest classics of the Advaita Siddhanta philosophy and help awareness of the one Supreme Reality that is the goal of all spiritual effort.

Sadhaks may be scholars and scholars sadhaks—though not every scholar is a sadhak—and the interests of these two classes of men seldom coincide. Scholars seek information about dates of composition and the lives of authors of classics, not from any impertinent curiosity but with a view to assess the real quality of a work and to place the work in an authentic tradition of philosophic speculation. A work attributed to Valmiki, whose Sri Madam Ramayana is definitely of a wholly different tenor, raises a few important issues about the characterisation of Rama, Valmiki's philosophic affiliation and even Vasishtha's. A work which is cited in the later Upanishads, Vivicakhachoodamani, Hartha Yoga Pradipika, Panchadasi (Vidyaranya), Jnanamuktai Vivicak (Vidyaranya) and Ramapita, and of which the author of Brhadaranyak says that it is so unique that the like of it cannot be written by anyone hereafter, certainly stands in a class of its own. But why does Sankara Bhagavatpada not refer to it at all directly? It raises doubts about Sankara's authorship of Vivicak Choodamani itself. If it is Pre-Sankara—and there are those who think it pre-dates Gaudiyapada himself—Sankara could hardly have ignored so powerful and decisive an anticipation of his own thesis. But Bulusu Venkateswarulu and Swami Venkateswarulu are, we think wisely, not concerned with dates, authorship, influence, etc.

In Sthiti Prakarana, Professor Venkateswarulu continues the story he has so well told in these earlier volumes. Notable in this volume is Suka's initiation in the doctrine of the manifold appearances that lure the seeker before he becomes truly and ineffably 'Aware'. There is an artlessness, a directness and a moving simplicity in Prof. Venkateswarulu's narrative which underlines his earnestness and devotion to his self-chosen task.

One is indeed troubled by the numerous printing mistakes—a few of which seem to have been corrected by the author. Though the English of the translation depresses one occasionally, Professor Venkateswarulu clearly looks upon these weaknesses of his achievement as irrelevant to his main goal of sharing his knowledge of the great classic with fellow-sadhaks.

Swami Venkateswarulu, a disciple of Swami Svananda of the Divine Life Shatabana of Rishikesh is presumably very well placed in most aspects of publication of a work of this kind. His translation is close to the text and his English leaves little to be desired. Production standards are as high as one could wish. And, being a sannyasin, he concentrates on the central theme of the work, helping the true sadhak by arranging the matter in the form of a daily meditation piece, leading the seeker, slowly but surely, to comprehension of the message and Awareness. This is one's own experience and one is deeply thankful that a book of this kind exists and is available.

— S. Ramaswamy

PROFILE IN GREATNESS: By Swami Svananda (Ramakrishna Math, Madras-600 004. Price Rs. 15.)

The 'Greatness' interestingly illustrated in these sketches is spiritual excellence, not mere worldly power. The heroes and heroines held up for admiration include Buddha, Socrates, Guru Nanak, Savitri, Bhishma, Draupadi and Sri Kesava, besides a dozen saintly figures of recent times, like Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples. Well chosen and well told, the stories are bound to help the
character building education of our young people which was the special mission of Swami Vivekananda.
— Prof. K. Swaminathan

KELTIC FOLK AND FAEBIE TALES: By Kaledon Naddair

In the centuries before the Roman Empire the religious practices of most European countries were shamanistic in character. The Roman rulers, and later the Christian Church, made strenuous efforts to wipe out the native beliefs and practices of the whole continent. They succeeded so well that most scholars believe that there is not enough extant evidence to draw up firm conclusions about the spiritual practices of these early people.

Kaledon Naddair has made himself an expert on the Celtic shamanistic traditions which flourished in the British Isles and Northern France in pre-Roman days, and to a lesser extent in the centuries that followed. Undeterred by the lack of hard evidence, he embarked upon an odyssey to get at the truth of Celtic lore by analysing all the surviving linguistic, mythological and artistic evidence and by contacting the same spirits that his Celtic ancestors had worked with. As a result of this enterprise he claims that he has discovered a new master-key which unlocks the hidden secrets of all Celtic lore. Though not verifiable by any acceptable method of scientific enquiry, the author claims that his discovery has made all other theories redundant. Spirits, whom he calls 'wildmen' have accorded to the author passed on a few of their secrets to him. The author was ‘staggered by the cretinous level of dis­cernment’ shown by Bruno Bettelheim in his famous Freu­adian analysis of fairy tales. And the various theories of other workers in the same field because he is convinced that the ‘mistaken’ way is the right way for them, since only through taking many wrong ways will they come to seek the right way in the end. This attitude towards sin robs it of all opprobrium and also purifies the minds of those who adopt it. For, conversely, intolerance tarnishes the mirror of reflection and being an insidious form of hatred, inhibits the rays of Love.

Virtue, motives, marriage, sexuality, organisations, re­nunciation: the value of humour, the value of joy, all come under the scrutiny of Scott’s benign, level-headed approach. Scott ends the book with Ramana Maharshi’s declaration to Brunton about the sense of T, the brain and the Self-awareness beyond these.

BOOKS RECEIVED
i. Words of Grace (German translation)
ii. Be As You Are (Italian translation)
iii. Upadesa Saran (Italian translation)
iv. Arunachala Stuti Panchakam (Telugu versification by Dr. O. Ramachandraiah)
v. Arunachala Ramana (Telugu translation) by M. Subba Rao.
vi. Five Hymns to Arunachala and other poems of Sri Ramana Maharshi (English translation by Prof. K. Swamisatham, reprint.)

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The aim of this deceptively simple book is to unfold step by step the philosophy of spiritualism or occultism, and how it can be effectively put into action. It has been presented from a western slant and is a reprint of the 1936 original. At times the presentation is slightly dated but nonetheless the topics discussed are very relevant to our day. The author is well-known in western occult circles, especially for his trilogy ‘The Initiate’. Scott is a practical visionary and behind his disarming approach lies serious food for reflection.

The basic premise of the book is that there is a potential ‘great awareness’ in each individual ‘to be aware of God in everything’. This being the evolutionary aim of true occultism. The achievement of this greater awareness is explained through the development of the various essential factors inherent in Man: Love, Understanding, Con­sciousness, Joy. The author presents a unified approach which recognises the need in each individual to develop all his higher capacities. Scott is a believer in the ‘round individual’ and has no time for the person who denies the joys of life just for the sake of a vague asceticism conceived more out of vanity than anything else. His is the common-sense approach.

“When the mirror of the mind is cleansed desire is trans­formed into an aspect of love. This occurs when tolerance has been developed. For example, the incentive to all action is search for happiness... to realise that all so termed sinners are merely those who search for it in a mistaken way. Nor is that all. For he should also realise that that very ‘mistaken’ way is the right way for them, since only through taking many wrong ways will they come to seek the right way in the end. This attitude towards sin robs it of all opprobrium and also purifies the minds of those who adopt it. For, conversely, intolerance tarnishes the mirror of reflection and being an insidious form of hatred, inhibits the rays of Love.”

— A.M.
Dear Readers,

Through your extensive co-operation and goodwill it was made possible for me to carry on managing the journal all these 25 years. Throughout this period I felt the protective Hand of Sri Bhagavan. Of course, the guiding presence of senior editors, from Arthur Osborne to Professor K. Swaminathan, is the backbone behind this successful venture. I owe my thanks to all those who helped the journal in various capacities.

I thank the Publisher, my father, for having given me this golden opportunity. Now, I am resigning my Managing Editorship.

Sincerely,

October 1, 1988.

(V. Ganesan)
We had appealed earlier for contribution for renovation of Sundara Mandiram (the birth place of Sri Bhagavan) at Tiruchuzhi, and Ramana Mandiram at Madurai. Following a very encouraging response, this work was commenced in April 1987. We are happy to report that by Sri Bhagavan’s grace this major task has been completed successfully. The pristine atmosphere of the Sacred room in Madurai and of the room of His birth at Tiruchuzhi has been kept intact.
Entrance of RAMANA MANDIRAM Madurai.

Puja Shrine in the front hall

Sacred room of Realisation (1 floor)

Newly added Meditation Hall adjoining the sacred room.
Major repairs and white washing etc. have now been completed and Skandasramam where Bhagavan stayed from 1915-1922 now wears a new look.

THANK YOU!

By V. Ganesan

Prof. P. Krishna, Rector, Rajghat Education Centre, Krishnamurti Foundation India, Varanasi, helped me by allowing me to stay at this Centre, giving me separate cottage and arranging to send food there, thus affording me total independence to be "alone" in retreat.

These six months spent at Varanasi helped me in my inward journey thereby stabilising myself in an all-round way. I thank him and the Krishnamurti Foundation India for this more than a warm hospitality.

Book Release

Arunachala Ramana of Osborne, translated into Telugu by Dr. Maddali Subba Rao was released on 1.7.88 at Hyderabad in a well attended function organised by Yuvakalavahini and Sri Ramana Kendra, Hyderabad.
Sri N. Sambasivan, the celebrated water-diviner, and staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan was absorbed in Arunachala Ramana on 24.6.1988. For a detailed background of this exemplary devotee, see INTRODUCING... of our April 1984 issue.

Sri Coroth Mukundan reached the Feet of the Master on 9.6.88 at Pondicherry. His first darshan of Bhagavan was in 1933. He was a regular visitor here on Jayanti or Aradhana days in later years when he was Head, Dept. of Dental Surgery, Government Hospital, Pondicherry. He retired as Joint Director, Ministry of State in charge of Social Affairs, Paris.

Dr. (Mrs.) Purnima Sircar came from an erudite and noble family in Calcutta, and was drawn to the scriptures from an early age. Soon after her marriage to Dr. Pratap Chandra Sircar she went to the U.S.A for specialization in Medicine. She met Paul Brunton there. Upon her return she visited the Ashram while serving at Vellore. Since 1955, she surrendered totally to a spiritual life, translating all of Bhagavan’s works into Bengali in addition to Maharshi’s Gospel and Osborne’s Path of Self-Knowledge. She also wrote Ramanayan, a short life-sketch of Bhagavan, in Bengali. In Sri Ramana she was convinced she had reached the Real. She was nearly sixty-six when she finally merged in the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan on 9.7.88.

Sri Henri Hartung is no more. This has been rather sudden as he and his wife, Sylvie, were to arrive here on their annual visit in October. A serious seeker, he was influenced early in life by de Carfort and Rene Guenon. It was in the end of 1947 that he came face to face with the Goal of his quest in Sri Bhagavan. The immense peace of silence that He emanated, engulfed him. The Master’s potent look of initiation let loose a perennial spring within. Reserved but nevertheless very warm-hearted, Hartung often stressed the silence, the smile and the look of the Maharshi when recalling His influence.

The centre at Fleurier started by the Hartungs has been “a small island of resistance to the materialism of the modern world by clarifying the various spiritual paths and providing brotherly support to all those who embark on the path of self-discovery.” Hartung has written a few books in French on Sri Ramana’s teaching and has also published a French translation of Ulladu Naarpadu which has gone into several editions.

Henri Hartung passed away on 26-7-88. Our heartfelt condolences to his near and dear. May he find the resting source in the Heart of Bhagavan.

STAY STILL

"Whenever one has the desire To move the body or to say something, First of all examine the mind, Only when it is stable is it fit to act. Whenever there is attachment in the mind And whenever there is the desire to be angry, Don’t do anything, don’t say anything, Remain like a piece of wood. Whenever I desire material gain, honour or fame, Whenever I seek attendants or a circle of friends, And when my mind wishes to be served, At these times remain like a piece of wood.”

— Bodhisattvacaryavatara
# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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