

THE  
*MOUNTAIN*  
*PATH*



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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1

May-June 1989

Aradhana Issue

Vol. 26, No. 1 & 2

EDITOR:  
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PUBLISHER:  
Sri T.N. Venkataraman

Letters and remittances  
should be sent to:  
The Publisher,  
"THE MOUNTAIN PATH"  
Sri Ramanasramam P.O.  
Tiruvannamalai-606 603.  
S. India

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Cover design by:  
Joan Greenblatt

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— Editor.

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## The Mountain Path

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

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

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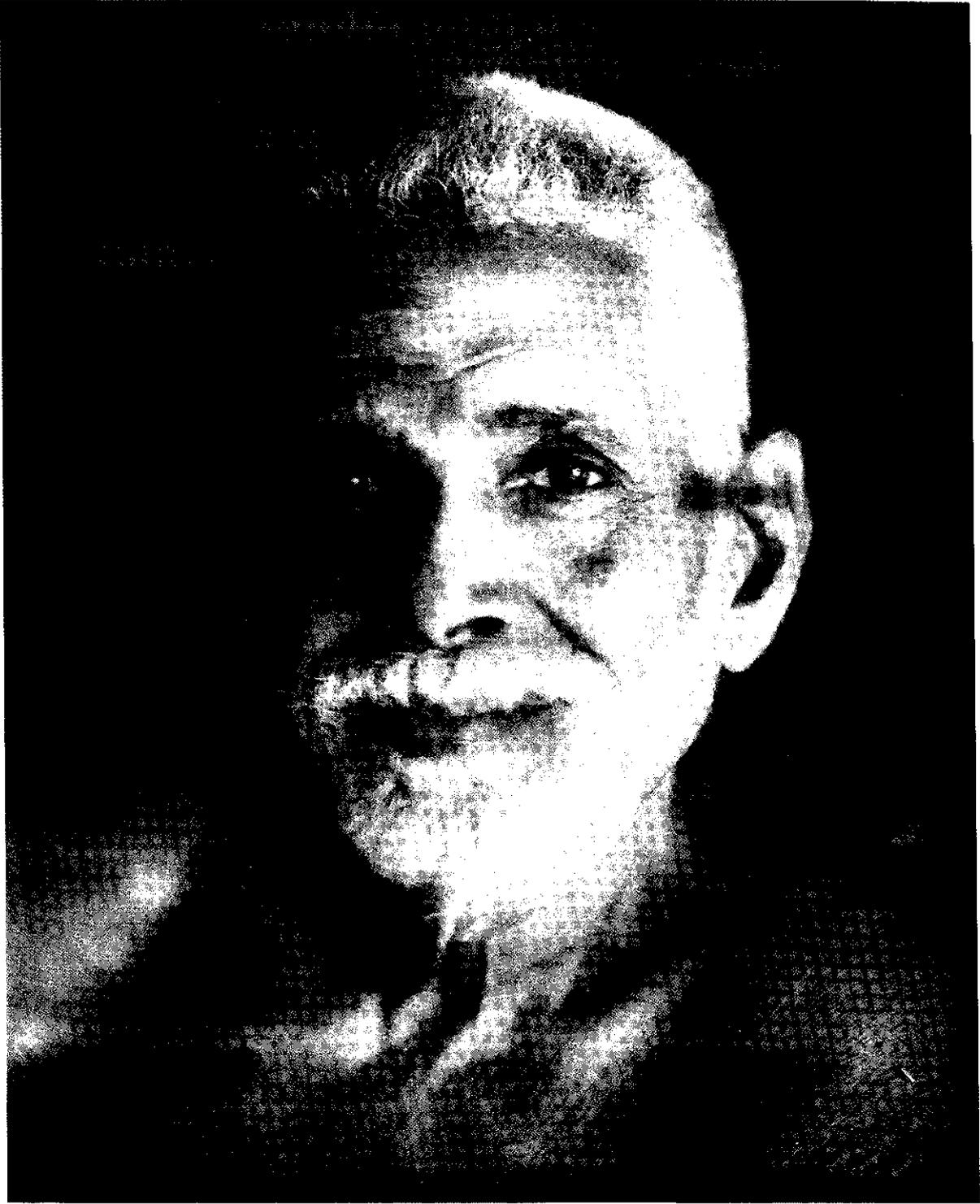
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### THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**

CU



ARADHANA ISSUE

(MAY-JUNE 1989)

VOL. 26 NOS. 1 & 2

EDITORIAL

## THE GIFT OF SLEEP

**P**ARODYING and refuting a refrain in the story of Nandanar, the Harijan Saint, Sri Bhagavan declares:

Easy, very easy is Self-knowledge.  
Even for quite ordinary folk  
The Self is far more real  
Than the gooseberry in the palm.

The sun within the Heart, it shines  
Ever and reveals itself  
When the I-thought, the false notion  
That one is but the body, is  
Removed and does not hide it.

Saint Manikka Vachakar too sings of Siva's gift of *Moksha* as "The Sun rising in my heart today dispelling the dark delusion that anything save You has any being."

Sri Bhagavan's central teaching, firmly founded on His own experience and further confirmed by many former seers, is that *Moksha* is our inborn, inherent nature, already and for ever ours, and that *Dharma* reciprocal, *paraspara*, complementary and cooperative

social behaviour is the normal, natural and necessary mark of human beings. The alienation from one's real identity, the erroneous belief that one is the ego in a body, the deviation from our destined evolution from *Sisu* to Sivahood, it is this aberration from our *paraatpara* or spiritual being, which degrades us even below our animal nature and leads to conflicts within the human species itself. To explain and enforce the teaching that all persons while asleep are drops in one ocean, rays of one Sun, cells in one living organism, reflections of one moon in a million pots, that bodies are many but the Self as Being-Awareness-Bliss is *one* alone, Muruganar devotes a brief but brilliant section in the *Garland of Guru's Sayings* to the meaning and message, the poetry and creative power, of sleep.

Indeed poets and philosophers all over the world have celebrated the virtue of sleep as nightly restoration to our natural being as pure, remembered Bliss. It is in sleep that all of us experience (though even without our conscious knowledge) that all selves are *One Self*, one still

and silent sea of Bliss. Imprisoned as the body-mind is in this actual maddenning world of time, space and circumstance, the easiest and most common means of escape is through the dark but welcome nescience of sleep, or living for a while in the imagined and enjoyable world of poetic truth and beauty. And we say that Vishnu slumbers on the milky ocean and so worships Siva, whose bright, white light subsumes all colours. As dream creatures in this world of Vishnu, we share His own creative freedom and so perceive the world of Nature and conceive also our own worlds of poetry.

Poets everywhere and at all times have sung the praises of healthy, wholesome, healing sleep and given him sweet names in many a mused rhyme. The Bible says, "God gives His beloved sleep"; and Browning defines the earth so full of dreary noises and its cursed life of strife, for

"God strikes a silence through you all  
And giveth His beloved sleep".

Trees always sleep and birds and animals also sleep, but they are unaware of the relief and joy it brings. Man knows (as Cervantes says) that sleep is the food that cures all hunger, the make-weight levelling the shepherd and the king, the simple and the wise. Sidney too finds in sleep "the balm of woe, the poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release, the indifferent judge between the high and low." The modern poet Henley thanks God for "Night with her train of stars and her great gift of sleep". Wordsworth lauds "the silence of the starry sky, the sleep among the lonely hills". At a deeper level, Sir Thomas Browne welcomes sleep as a daily rehearsal of our ultimate death, and prays, "O make me try by sleeping what it is to die, Let me gently lay my head in my grave as now my bed". Shakespeare, as usual, utters the final word: "We are such stuff as dreams are made of and our little life is rounded with a sleep". Indeed this downy sleep, Death's counterfeit, is for each day's life its welcome death. And so at last we come to Montaigne's thesis, so close to that expounded in Muruganar's 'Garland' (verses

455-462): "Life is a dream; when we sleep we are awake, when we awake we sleep".

As if expanding this thought of Montaigne, Muruganar sings "Sleep is bliss supreme by otherness untouched. Cherish it. Do not long for the bitter sorrow of *samsara* deeming it as more dependable". The ignorance of sleep is but the absence of objects known to the frenzied ego. It is *not* the absence of the luminous self. The absence of the outer light and the separate 'I' (*Yaan*) restores us to the inner light; the real self (*naan*, which is also *naam*). *Upadesa Sara*, verse 21, states and stresses this truth clearly, *jaagrata* (waking state) is not real Awareness. It is wakeful sleep that brings to us all the non-dual bliss of pure Being.

Sri Bhagavan is a seer, a steady luminous sun in our firmament, a coconut palm, a lotus plant, growing straight upward in the vertical, spiritual dimension. *Moksha* was his birthright. He knew it and enjoyed it and radiated it. We are cucumber creepers, and needs must grow by clinging to the Timeless with the power of timely *dharma*. This natural way, both human and divine, of blending the bliss of *moksha* and the strenuous pursuit of *dharma*, this alchemy of transforming *vyavahara* into *parama-artha* has been expounded by Muruganar. He has brought to us the Master's light as the cool, comely beauty of a thousand moons, his songs of praise. He has also brought to us for our safe daily use and intellectual nourishment the manageable *agni* of the Master's teaching in the systematic and authoritative treatise *Guru Vachaka Kovai*.

Human beings now seem to grow loose as mere runners, having lost the cucumber plant's instinct for adhering to true Being and organic growth. In sleep (as in *samadhi*) we discover our vertical, spiritual dimension, inescapable though, alas, often forgotten. This has happened because our psychosomatic structure has branched off into body and mind, and we mind only the body as if mind did not matter.

In the Indian scheme of *dharma*, *artha* and *kaama*, due place is provided for the evolution of both body and mind, each in its own way.

The body demands cooked food and the mind has learned to make fire to cook our daily food. As *Atmabodha* says, the mind needs and should learn to nurse and use the *agni* of spiritual knowledge. This is the sole, direct path to *moksha* here and now, in this our world, in this our age. Without wisdom (Higher knowledge) one cannot feed the human mind divine, as without cooking one cannot feed the body of this ape now walking on its two hind legs

It is here, in the discovery and use of two kinds of knowledge, the scientific and the poetic — the diabolical-dualistic, besides the symbolical, holistic — and in the blending of both in our spiritual *sadhana* that the Indian genius excels. Our myths and metaphors, our music and drama, images and rituals, sculpture and architecture, have kept alive the poetry of earth. We still cherish and listen to the voice of poetry in daily converse and seasonal celebrations.

Recognising and enjoying as we do the “negative capability”, the poetic power of sleep to refresh, renew and reinspire our normal, natural, evolving human life, we learn both consciously and unconsciously the lesson that our busy, fussy waking life is only “a watch and a vision between a sleep and a sleep”

In the blissful oblivion of sleep, “noisy years seem moments in the Being of the eternal silence”. As the historian Toynbee says, “The cause of sin, suffering and sorrow is the separation of sentient beings, in their brief passage through the phenomenal world, from the timeless reality behind the phenomena. The reunion with this reality is the sole but sovereign cure for all the ills of the aching world”

Let us then gratefully enjoy this nocturnal relief from appearances and timely return to our timeless Being as egoless bliss.

## SRI BHAGAVAN'S FATHER<sup>1</sup>

By T.P.R.

**BHAGAVAN** rarely spoke about his father. But what little he told me about him is worth recording. He said that his father was a courageous and generous man. All day and night, his house would be filled with guests, poor and needy. He was never tired of feeding people. In his office he commanded very great respect and as a lawyer he had to move about places and conduct his cases. The magistrates, wherever he went, paid him very great respect. His fame was so great and he was so much renowned for his upright character that both the parties, the accused and those who accuse, would come to him with a request to represent them. On several occasions what he told them was law and both the parties reconciled with equal happiness. Once Bhagavan went with his father to face a camera in a group photo; but unfortunately when they took the shot a fly crossed over his eyes and in an effort to drive it out he waved his hand and so he could not be seen in that photo. I made frantic efforts to get that photo but it could not be got anywhere.

<sup>1</sup>The photo of Sri Sundaram Iyer adorns the cover page of this issue



'Sri Sundara Mandiram', Tiruchuzhi.  
(Inset) Sri Sundaram Iyer, Bhagavan's Father.

### FROM ASHRAM ARCHIVES — 1

*From this issue onwards, we begin a new feature: "From the Archives of Sri Ramanasramam", in which we publish reminiscences of people who had known Sri Bhagavan till about 1930, recorded very painstakingly and meticulously by **Sri B.V. Narasimha Swami**, the first biographer of Sri Maharashi. In this issue, we publish the reminiscences of Sri Sundaramier, who was a clerk employed in the Devasthanam Trustee's Office, Madurai, till he retired in the thirties.*

— Editor.

**I** WAS studying in the 3rd standard in the Taluk Board School at Tiruchuzhi when Maharshi was studying in the fourth standard. He was about 10 or 11 then. His father was well known as the prominent Vakil of the place. There were no certified pleaders then. He was obliging and

sweet and agreeable in speech and manners. He was also handsome. His complexion was very fair and he was of medium stature and size. Those who wanted to have *vaideeki* meal or quarters for a while to stay would go to him and be invited as a matter of course. His house was

terraced and had two compartments. His practice and income were good. He was not specially religious. There were no readings of *Puranas*, *Kalakshepams* etc. in his house so far as I know. I was, as brother of Srinivasier who was a teacher in that school, invited to Mr. Sundaramier's for a dinner on the occasion of Nagasundaram's (*Chinnaswami's*) *aksharabhyasa*. There was no hotel at that time. I have known his maternal uncles: (1) Ramalingier, who went away to Malabar and led a life of pleasure in company with some *achis*; (2) Ramachandrier, Landlord, Pasalai, near Manamadurai, and (3) P.N. Kistnier, who is still a Vakil's clerk at Dindigul. These or rather (3) can give a good deal of information about the early life of Maharshi. I had lost touch with him (Maharshi) after he went to Madura to study. I had heard of his being suddenly missed and of his being found at Tiruvannamalai. I saw his features (as at 30) in a print with some one and was well impressed. Gopichetty at Chidambaram spoke highly of him. I heard also from others.

I went and saw Maharshi first at the Skandasram about 1917, one or two years after he had moved finally to that Asram. I stood and wept and did not take a seat though bidden. I felt too shy and nervous. Maharshi did not recognise me. Then I went outside and saw his mother. I asked her if she recognised me. She did not. I then told her I was the younger brother of Srinivasier, the teacher at Tiruchuzhi and she then enquired about all of our relations and I answered. Maharshi overheard me and said, "I thought I saw some familiar face. I now see why." I visited Maharshi three or four times but did not query him at all as I was not sufficiently learned or experienced to possess doubts. Later I went on reading Advaita works in Tamil such as *Vicharasagara Prakaranam*, *Panchadasa Prakaranam* etc. They had all been dazing to me. By Maharshi's kindness, they began to get clearer in my mind.

I asked him once why *Pranayama* and *Yoga* were so superficially touched and taught at the

## THE TRAVELLERS

By Dr. M.C. Mehrotra

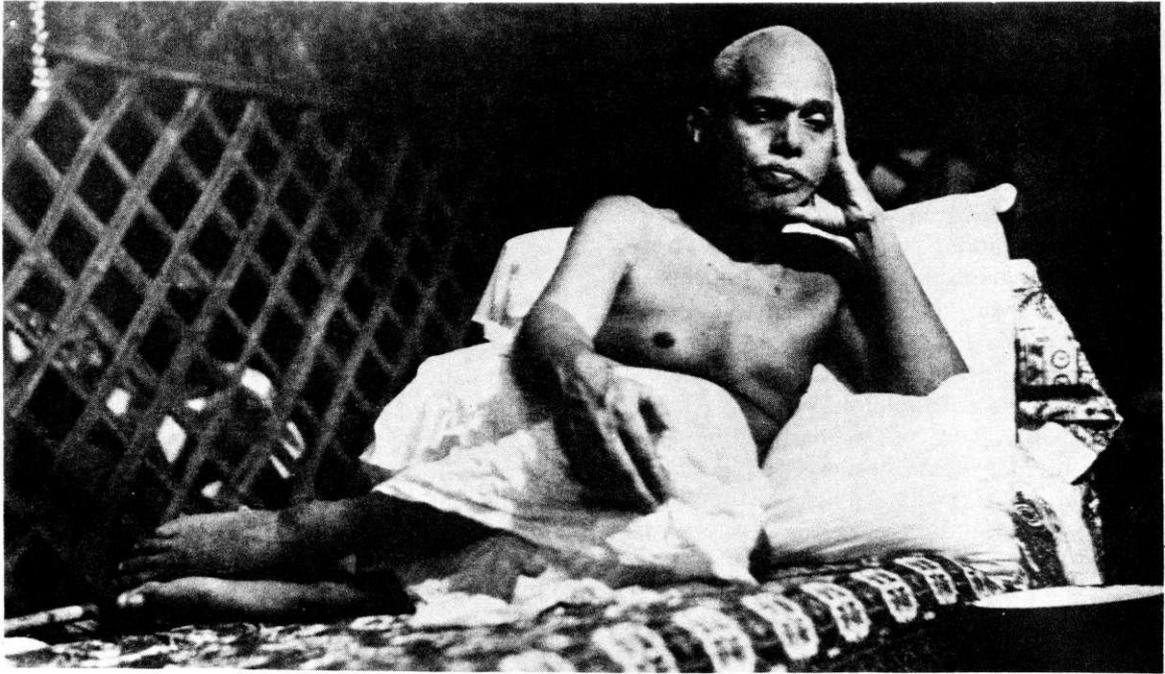
In the meandering by lanes  
Joining the Mountain Path,  
Travellers bleary-eyed  
With stooping gait,  
Groping in semi-darkness  
Stumbled on the Road Royal,  
Blinking at the Lightning's flash  
Cascading from the Hill's Top.

*Upanayanam*, and wanted to learn more. Maharshi answered that just a fore-taste was then being given and symbols were taught, e.g. touching nose, ears etc. in infancy so that later in the serious period when attention is turned towards higher things, these form the starting points from which developments can be obtained. "You are now getting interested in that for instance." But *Pranayama* is not all of one sort. It is not for all *adhikaris* either. For Maharshi himself, he had not been attracted by that. If however anyone should be strongly drawn to *hata yoga* or *laya yoga* etc. he will find the necessary teacher to guide him onward in his path. But for the royal road of *Jnana margam*, *pranayama* is not necessary.

I never saw or heard from himself or reliable sources of any *siddhis* vesting in him such as clairvoyance etc. One or two have however said things of a sort but I do not consider their general character reliable.

I knew his uncle Nelliappier, who also became a pleader. We entrusted some cases to him. He also was very fair in complexion but a big burly figure like Dandapani Swami though very quiet.

Neither the mother's side nor father's side of Maharshi could be considered rich; nor were they poor. They had a modest competence and were in easy circumstances.



## OLD ASHRAMITES

BY ANU and K.V.S.

*"The Mountain Path" has in the past introduced in each issue an old devotee of Sri Bhagavan to its readers. To our great good fortune, quite a few of them are still amongst us living in and around the Ashram.*

*It would be appropriate to present penportraits of these, beginning with Sri G. Ramaswamy Pillai, the oldest among the old devotees living in the Ashram, and also the earliest to come to Bhagavan.*

### SRI G. RAMASWAMY PILLAI

Sri Ramaswamy Pillai came for the first time in 1917 when Sri Bhagavan was at Skandashram. Young Ramaswamy had just completed his school final examination. Everything was robust about him: health, voice, physical work and views. Sri Pillai writes: "... I fancied I saw a royal hunter in the forest; His personality was striking and I thought of Him as a hunter hunting down the senses..." Tormented as he was by unruly instincts and a sense of guilt, within a few years he found that these feelings were being hunted away. Some hunter, some quarry! Then in 1921 there was a brief conjugal interlude. Disillusioned, the young man returned to

the Ashram for a marriage of souls which would never break down.

1922 was the year when the present Ashram was being founded and Pillai had not come too soon. He was cut out, with his robust body and zest for work, for the 'spade work' that went on day and night in clearing and levelling the grounds. Later, when some of the present buildings had come up and labourers were employed, it was he who supervised the manual labour, often chipping in himself with tools in hand.

Sri Pillai was the "cycle swami" of the Ashram. He was ever ready to run an errand and he regularly went to the post office which was in the beginning a few miles away. He did the

shopping for the Ashram and collected parcels from the railway station.

Pillai was active in many ways — a strong, stentorian presence in the Tamil *parayana* sessions, gardening, errands to the town, laying a solid good path up the hill which has braved many a monsoon rain, membership of the Ashram Committee set up to assist the management after Bhagavan's *Mahasamadhi* — but the inspiration behind all this activity was his devotion to the Master of whom he says: "To me He is more than father, mother, king, country, guru and God!"

Pillai has written a booklet called "As It Is". He is still an avid reader and conversationalist. He is accessible to visitors who seek him out. Often, when they leave him, they are wiser than when they came to him.

The cycle-swami of these days is now a cycle-rickshaw-riding-swami. Pillai, who is 94, walks inside the compound but goes out often in a cycle rickshaw, around the Hill.

One is tempted to conclude by quoting a paragraph from an old article written by Sri Pillai:

"From my experience, the best way to communicate with Bhagavan is to gaze into His eyes when He is in the silent *samadhi* state. Then peace of mind comes spontaneously, and the inward search is made much easier. When He is in such a state, merely to be near Him is to experience pure happiness."

Sri Pillai adds: "Bhagavan's Presence and Guidance are still here at the Ashram — at the Old Hall, at the Nirvana Room, at the Samadhi Hall."

### SRI KUNJU SWAMI

"Ripeness is all". This Shakespearean phrase sums up the personality of Sri Kunju Swami who came to Sri Bhagavan in 1919 all the way from Palghat as a young man of 20 years. Quoting Shakespeare again one can say Kunju Swami was born ripe, while most people achieve ripeness, if at all they do. Ripeness,

maturity came very early indeed to young Kunju. As a boy he had the gift of some *siddhis*. That is not ripeness, no. But he had the much greater, rarer, mature gift of outgrowing these *siddhis*. He was destined to be much more than a miracle-peddler. He had a thirst for the miracle of Self-Knowledge and he found the One who could grant it.

Young Kunju's way to Sri Bhagavan was paved with miracles — the way he got the exact extra amount he needed to buy the ticket, the way he managed to reach the town which was in the grip of bubonic plague — but at the end of it he found in Bhagavan the Miracle beside which all other miracles paled into insignificance.

Kunju Swami could have made himself an erudite scholar if he wanted to, but he took seriously the advice of Sri Bhagavan who told him: "There is no end to study. Knowledge is always limited. But there is something complete and unlimited and that is in the Heart. If you enter that Heart, answer to any question will come from there like an echo." He steered clear of all extravagant reading. Today Kunju Swami has at his finger tips all that came from Sri Bhagavan's lips and pen. He knows His teaching and this is all he needs to know. He does not analyse them nor annotate them. He lives them.

Kunju Swami has a phenomenal memory but all his reminiscences pertain to Sri Bhagavan. So complete is his surrender to his Master. He has no past of his own and when he dwells on the past days with Bhagavan, he is in the eternal Present, the Now Here.

Apart from Bhagavan's works and some works on Bhagavan, perhaps the only other literature that Kunju Swami assimilated are the traditional Vedantic texts which formed part of the *parayana* routine at the Ashram during Sri Bhagavan's days. Thanks to Kunju Swami, more than to anyone else, this corpus of wisdom has become part of the mental equipment of many devotees both in the Ashram and outside.

Kunju Swami is a consummate *raconteur*. But the tales he recounts are not like the ones

which grand-aunties in days gone by elaborated to help the listeners pass time, but short stories which drive home a spiritual truth. This talent probably came to him from Sri Bhagavan who was superb in narrating and, with His great power of empathy, enacting incidents from ancient lore.

To know Kunju Swami, to move with him, is to come closer to Sri Bhagavan. Sri Bhagavan's *saubhaya*, accessibility, is not of this world. As Sri M.P. Pandit writes, it is a record in human history. But one can have some idea of it from the immense and joyful accessibility of Kunju Swami to devotees and visitors during almost all his waking hours. That keeps me going, he says.

Yet another aspect in which Kunju Swami is very much his Master's disciple is the way he never claims bondage or release. Thus his life is a silent exposition of *Upadesa Sara*, verse 29:— "Remaining in this state of Supreme Bliss, past all thoughts of bondage and release, is abiding in the service of the Supreme."

Kunju Swami is an inspiring presence at the Tamil *parayana* sessions at Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi Shrine. Devotees are eager to visit him often because he transports them to the days of Bhagavan and in him they find the paragon of a disciple. The great spiritual significance of coming to Arunachala and to the Ashram is convincingly explained by him to new visitors.

It is a joy to see Kunju Swami drink constantly at the perennial fountain of Ramana's teaching. His *bhakti*, his *jnana*, is a thing of beauty, dignity, inward harmony.

### SRI T.N. VENKATARAMAN

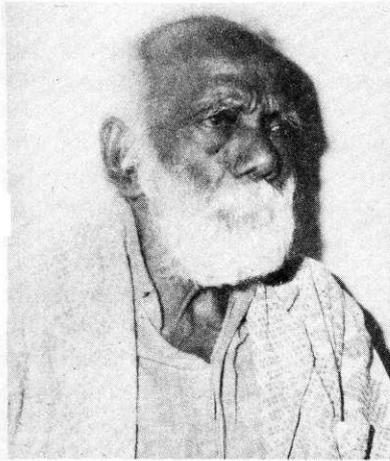
Ashram President Sri T.N. Venkataraman is many things to many people. To almost everyone he is a hardworking, capable President; to his children a very loving but non-pampering parent; to the Ashram workers at various levels he is a non-interfering but vigilant boss whose eyes observe everything; to the visitors who come for a brief stay, he is a pious man who never misses the *pujas* at the shrines and his

regular *pradakshinas* of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine during the *Veda Parayana*, at other times working away in his room; to the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan, he is a worthy successor to a great father, Sri Niranjanananda Swami who built up the Ashram during the quarter century of his wise stewardship and who was totally surrendered to Sri Bhagavan; to his boyhood friends in the Ashram, he is a worldly man innocent of Bhagavan's teachings. One wonders how many people would discover that behind a deceptive exterior of worldliness, there is so much mental strength, courage, undivided devotion to the Master and the basic, unobtrusive spirituality of a *karma yogi*.

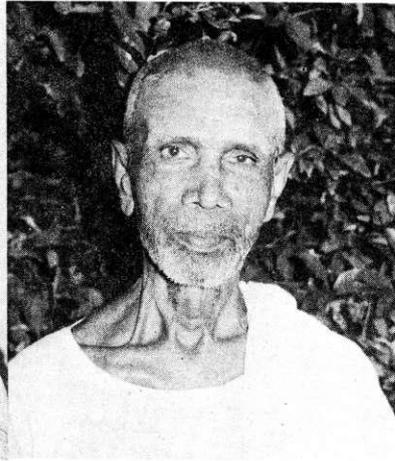
It is much easier to underestimate Sri T.N. Venkataraman ('Venkatoo' to his friends) than to overestimate him. He has succeeded during 35 years of his management of the Ashram to pull it out of the red it was in when he took over, to build it up to its present dimensions and to remain a mere managerial head of the institution, without laying the least claim to any spiritual leadership.

Sri Venkataraman does his part of the work with irreproachable industry and efficiency and lets others do their work trusting them to do it equally well. He knows that it is Sri Bhagavan's Grace which runs the Ashram, having seen the miracle of Ramana functioning without fuss or force, without the least sense of doership.

At 75, Sri Venkataraman, who is a tireless worker, has a physical charm and vitality that a man half his age would covet. He has an amazing memory for dates. He abounds in social grace and is a sure and benign presence in all functions in devotees' homes. He is accessible to all people, ever ready to help them in their genuine needs. He may seem once in a way to crow over his physical stamina, mental courage, and so on, but he beams with joy too when he talks about any excellent work of members of his personal family or those of the larger Ashram family. His occasional gasconades conceal his innate shyness and modesty.



**Sri G. Ramaswamy Pillai**



**Sri Krishna Swami**



**Sri Kunju Swami**



**Sri T.N. Venkataraman**



**Sri N. Balarama Reddi**

**Sri Sampurnamma**

**Sri Kanakamma**

**Sri Satyananda Swami**

**Sri Annamalai Swami**



Sri Venkataraman is a stickler for accuracy in accounting. He is often seen surrounded by voluminous account books which receive his closest scrutiny. His natural financial acumen has been honed to increasing sharpness over the years, which is an asset to the Ashram.

Uncompromising in his position where Ashram's interests are concerned, Sri Venkataraman never rides the high horse of intransigence in other matters. He delegates responsibilities very judiciously and accepts other viewpoints if convinced of their soundness.

A great moment in Sri Venkataraman's life of hard work to make the Ashram a residential one, was when the Nagammal Memorial was completed because it was almost the last wish of that noble lady, his life-partner, to have a block erected within the Ashram compound to house visiting lady-devotees, particularly from Andhra.

There is no doubt that Sri Bhagavan's Grace is abundantly on this good man!

### SRI ANNAMALAI SWAMI

A Sanskrit *Sloka* says: "He who walks goes far. But he who sits goes everywhere." Annamalai Swami, one of the seniormost devotees of Sri Bhagavan, seems to have been consciously or unconsciously inspired by this verse. For over half a century, the Swami had stayed cloistered in Palakottu, the *sadhu*-settlement adjoining Sri Ramanasramam, never stepping out except for a little walk on Arunachala. It is not certain whether he had the example of his Master, Sri Bhagavan, in mind, but there is no doubt that this is an awesome *kshetra sannyasa*.

Sri Annamalai Swami came to Sri Bhagavan in 1928 at the age of 25, as Chellaperumal the mason and found in Him a "builder of houses not with human hands". He renamed himself Annamalai Swami after hearing a casual remark of Sri Bhagavan that Chellaperumal's coming was like the return of His disciple Annamalai

Swami who passed away in 1919. It looks as though Chellaperumal had come to fill the Ashram with buildings. He supervised the building of the Veda Patasala, the cow-shed, the store-room, the kitchen and dining hall and the hospital. He was very mindful and obeyed Sri Bhagavan's spoken and unspoken instructions to the minutest detail.

As Annamalai Swami was by nature more a contemplative than an activist, he craved for leisure to sit and commune with his Master. One day as he and Sri Bhagavan were erecting a little *samadhi* for Valli the deer, Sri Bhagavan told him, as He was handing over brick after brick, that work (*karma*) and wisdom (*jnana*) were not different. Re-inspired, Annamalai Swami continued his *karma yoga* even as he pursued the royal path of self-enquiry.

Buildings were coming up but Annamalai Swami who for more than 10 years had put his nose to the grindstone was wearing himself out. He believed in the *dharma* of *karma* but his heart thirsted for *jnana* through *dhyana*. True, Sri Bhagavan was imparting *jnana* to him even as He discussed building work with him, by His gracious look, by His most eloquent silence, but the Swami told himself: Bhagavan is within my Heart. In aloneness and in inward contemplation, I shall have Him fully. After informing Sri Bhagavan, he retired to the seclusion of Palakottu to contemplate on Ramana immanent in his Heart.

Annamalai Swami recollects many incidents which reveal Sri Bhagavan's great love for him. It was a guru-disciple, builder-mason, father-son, mother-son, friend and friend relationship. Once when Annamalai Swami was unusually obtuse and failed to catch a point about construction of steps, Sri Bhagavan gently slapped him on the head. Another time on the back. On a third and last occasion, he lightly tapped his head with His stick. Annamalai Swami, self-interned in Palakottu, had a brief talk every afternoon during Bhagavan's walks through it. He luckily recorded the talks and some portions have already been published in *The Mountain Path*.

A quiet little ashram has grown where the Swami, clad in loin-cloth and with a towel over his shoulder, lives in fellowship with kindred spirits, fellow-devotees of Bhagavan. True to his Master, he has avoided weaving a web of guruhood around him because it would lead to bondage.

The Swami is Sri Ramanasramam's good neighbour Sam. Flowers come from his garden to the Ashram's shrines for *puja*. The octogenarian Swami, ever amiable, amiable and joyous, says: "Bhagavan was the simplest and humblest of people. He was the Self and saw everybody as the Self."

### SRI SAMPURNAMMA

It looks as though Providence reduced some chosen women to early widowhood, often childless, to turn them to Sri Bhagavan's feet. Akhilandamma of Tesur had been thus prepared even a year before Sri Bhagavan was born. Then there was Echammal. Later came a few others. Sampurnamma came to Bhagavan somewhere around 1930 as a sorrowing young widow but during her service in the Ashram kitchen for about two decades, she learned to transmute her sorrow into the wisdom of joy in service and love, thanks to the alchemy of Ramana's tutelage, both culinary and spiritual.

In the Ashram kitchen, Sri Bhagavan had the fullest scope to manifest his unparalleled genius for teaching through silent action. As he "peeled and cut vegetables, soaked lentils, ground spices, scrapped coconuts," stirred and stewed steel-hard brinjal stalks to tenderness, turned wild plants, bitter roots and pungent leaves into delicious dishes, achieved great effect with frugal resources, "cooking became a deep spiritual experience" for Sampurnamma. He taught her and others how to cook and how to be cooked too. "You must cover your vegetables when you cook them. Then only will they keep their flavour and be fit for food. It is the same with mind. You must put a lid over it and let

it simmer quietly. Then only does one become food fit for God to eat."

Sampurnamma was blessed in getting a copy of Sri Bhagavan's first book "*Naan Yaar?*" ("Who Am I?") from His own hands. Later He gave her a copy of *Ribhu Gita* and, when she confessed to drawing a blank from it, He advised her to keep reading it even if she did not understand it. Sampurnamma was indeed lucky in coming to one whose eyes had the power to quell unruly minds, to douse the fires of thoughts and emotions. Transmutation of energy became a relatively easy matter for her and she could devote her energy, undissipated by inner struggles and conflicts, to the joyous task of serving Sri Bhagavan and His devotees and make headway in her spiritual *sadhana*.

Sampurnamma, once referred to by Bhagavan, as "our best lady cook", learnt from Him lessons in perfection in work, economy and non-waste, unself-conscious work, care, artistry, mindfulness, impersonality ("It is cooking that matters, not the cook..."), sense of proportion and balance, and equality of vision.

In Sampurnamma's pantheon, Sri Bhagavan is the only deity. "He is a *yuga purusha*. Who can be like Him?", she asks.

Sampurnamma at 90 is a lively presence in the Ashram. She is active despite a slight stoop and her walk is brisk. Occasionally she helps in stringing flowers for the Shrine and, once in a way, when she snatches a chance, she sings a song during *Puja* in Sri Bhagavan's *Samadhi*-Shrine. In her daily interaction with other members of the Ashram community, she offers a varied fare: sweet, bitter, pungent and, less often, sour. If she ever seems to prick, she pricks only the bubbles. Really there is more sugar than salt in her fare. In any case, she can disarm anybody with her sweet, benign, unartificial smile. Above all, her devotion to Ramana is unquestioned.

### SRI N. BALARAMA REDDI

One morning, around the ides of March in 1933, 22 year old Balaram, who had just arrived from Pondicherry, sat next to Sri Bhagavan for breakfast. Bhagavan nodded his head to Balaram as a sign to start eating. Balaram was thrilled. He felt that he had at last arrived where he truly belonged. He had excellent education, both classical and modern, both in Sanskrit and in English, he had been with great teachers and had imbibed much spiritual wisdom, but, for the first time the deepest chord in his heart was touched.

Balaram was to leave the same evening. Sri Bhagavan asked him: "Where do you come from?" Everyone was surprised because He seldom put such personal questions. It did not take Balaram long to realise that it was not the usual question it sounded like. It was a question which, like Adi Sankara's "*kuta aayaatah?*" (Whence have you come?), was taking him to his roots, to his source, to the Self.

Balaram started coming to Sri Ramana-sramam frequently and for increasingly longer stays. A few more questions and answers, spoken or unspoken, which he was too alert to miss, completed the process which that question had started. He was then close to two great Masters of Protean genius, two of the finest spiritual teachers who ever worked together. "Can one change one's guru?", he asked. It was known that a few devotees of great mental calibre had gone from here to there. But is it right to change one's guru? Sri Bhagavan's bewitching smile seemed to say, *a la* Seshadri Swami, "What if one is there or here?" Balaram was re-assured. "But," he asked again, "is it true that realisation will only be partial here because there is no attempt here at a grand synthesis of all wisdom?" Now Ramana spoke: "Realisation can never be partial. It is total." That was a great moment in Balaram's life. The doors of perception were opening, the scales falling from his eyes. He moved into the Ashram.

Balarama Reddi once took a look at the sage: sitting statue-like, His eyes aglow with a dazzling

brilliance, "peace within and calm around". Ecstasy flowed into Reddi. "My Lord," he said softly, "This is *Sarvesvara*. This is *Dakshinamurti*. *Tasmai Sri Gurave Namah*."

Sri Bhagavan who was more accessible and available than any parent or *guru* would be, was to Sri Reddi "*maataa, pitaa, guru, sakhaa, bandhu* and *deva*." (mother, father, teacher, friend, relation, god). Sri Reddi, alert, brilliant, erudite, self-disciplined, independent, shunning limelight, had the good fortune to be with marvellous teachers but in Sri Ramana he found the Self. In Him, he found the Truth which Rabindranath Tagore apostrophized in his three thousand songs, with which Gandhiji experimented ceaselessly, the Truth to which Sri Aurobindo said, with the Vedic seers: "*Aayaahi, Satya aavirbhava*." (Come, Truth, manifest.) Sri Reddi reveres all these Masters and his final Master Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Reddi who could have written articles and books on Sri Bhagavan and on his own experiences, if he wanted to, prefers not to write, though he is ever willing to share inspiring insights and anecdotes with earnest devotees. A wealthy ascetic, a practical idealist, a scholar who is loth to lecture or write, his feet firm on the ground while his gaze is on the boundless space, Sri Reddi is very much a member of the Ashram community.

### SRI KRISHNA SWAMI

Sri Krishna Swami came to Sri Bhagavan in the early 30's. He was one of the group of devotees who attended on Sri Bhagavan after Madhava Swami left. He was called the "*Hall Sarvadhikari*" because he was blunt-speaking and monitored the entry of visitors into the Old Hall with a firm hand during the last years of Bhagavan.

Krishna Swami never minces his words. It is not as though he is soft towards some and hard towards others. Age has mellowed him a bit now, but in those days he spared none. He could be stern and stiff even with Sri Bhagavan, or perhaps especially with Bhagavan. For,

was He not most understanding of men? Krishna Swami says that Bhagavan once told him: "You talk very bluntly. One day someone will take it out on you and you will learn the hard way."

Krishna Swami was one of the handful of lucky people who personally attended on Sri Bhagavan. At the end of the day, when everybody — the functionaries of the Ashram, devotees, visitors high and low, rich and poor, from West and East — had left the Old Hall, Krishna Swami would often be alone with Bhagavan. Once Bhagavan told Krishna Swami known for his disdain for rituals, temples, religiosity and so on: "None of these is necessary. Be yourself. Do not depend on anyone, not on me either."

The only time when Krishna Swami comes anywhere near performing a ritual is when he, even at the age of 86, goes round Arunachala with some devotees, especially those from Andhra. But such occasions are very few.

Sri Bhagavan taught mostly in silence and by his own personal example. He was perfect in every way and he gave everything to everyone but each took according to his capacity. Sri Bhagavan's simplicity and special concern for the poor and the underprivileged rubbed off on Krishna Swami. He does not keep much money, but if he is ever seen collecting money, one can be sure that he shares it with the poor or uses it to feed the peacocks, monkeys and dogs in the Ashram.

Even those who did not approve of his hard-hitting speech and forbidding attitude, liked him for his honesty and his unquestioned devotion to Sri Bhagavan. He is rarely seen talking about Bhagavan and one wonders if he has ever heard about His works, let alone read them. But when one overhears him talking about Sri Bhagavan to a visitor, it is quite an experience. Here is a sample from an eavesdropper's memory: "Nobody can be simple like Bhagavan. Would He ever complain of mosquitoes even when we were all scratching ourselves away? Would

He ever talk about any physical discomfort or pain? Why, He wouldn't even have milk because everybody couldn't have it."

Krishna Swami lives in a nice little hut without doors in Palakottu which includes the poky little room where Sri B.V. Narasimha Swami once lived. The hut is right on the border between the Ashram and Palakottu. This is symbolic of Krishna Swami being an outsider among insiders and insider among outsiders. Truly his heart is neither inside nor outside but with Sri Bhagavan. He will not let that blessed epoch of *saameepya* (closeness) with Sri Bhagavan in the Old Hall be a thing that is past. Those days are too sacred to fade. To him they are the present, the actual. The rest is a circus, a fantasy, a mirage! That is what the bemused smile on his stern wrinkled face seems to say.

### SRI KANAKAMMA

Still waters run deep. Kanakamma, who came to Sri Bhagavan in the 1940's, is still like a mill pond but much deeper. The slight frown on her forehead, almost constant, might seem to put off strangers, but devotees of Sri Ramana who know the depth of her Ramana scholarship do seek her out and find in her a true friend and an able teacher.

Kanakamma was a precocious child. The precocity lay in her sad Socratic discontent, her constant companion for many years. The discontent was like an inner *sphurana*. Born with the proverbial silver spoon in her mouth in an affluent Tamil family settled in Andhra, Kanakamma evinced from her early girlhood a natural indifference to things mundane and materialistic, and later a distaste for married life.

Kanakamma had all the makings of a true spiritual seeker. There was search for a Master but no groping from guru to guru. There was discontent but no desire; aspiration but no ambition; a gentle sadness but no grief; righteousness but no self-righteousness; tears of love but no sobs of self-pity. Her sights were

being set for her and when they were set, she saw the *Jnani* supreme!

Thanks to her father who understood her noble aspirations, she finally came away in 1946 to Tiruvannamalai and settled down in an apartment near Sri Ramanasramam. There were no residential facilities then for women in the Ashram.

In Sri Bhagavan's Presence, Kanakamma's sadness diminished gradually and then vanished. A joy she never knew before was now hers. When one day in 1949 she was sitting in front of Sri Bhagavan with lots of other devotees in the New Hall, His gaze focussed on her. She closed her eyes and then opened them after a while. The luminous gaze was still on her and the penetrating gracious look of the Master took her mind to the innermost depths to be dissolved at the source. This rare benediction was repeated for a longer time later, a few months before Sri Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana*. She was immersed in peace and bliss. Kanakamma rarely talks about this event. While she avoids talking about herself, she is always willing to talk on Sri Bhagavan.

Kanakamma comes to the Ashram every morning and evening around *Puja* time and keeps an open house for serious students of Ramana's teaching. An eager group of devotees listens in rapt attention to her informal talks on Ramana's *Collected Works (Nool Thirattu)*. When her manuscript of commentary on Bhagavan's *Collected Works* is published by the Ashram, it will be a great boon to Tamil-speaking devotees. Characteristically, she disowns any credit for it and passes it to Sri Muruganar who explained the entire "*Nool Thirattu*" to her during the years when she served this devotee extraordinary and poet *par excellence*. Kanakamma is conversant with every one of the nearly forty thousand exquisite verses that Sri Muruganar composed on Sri Bhagavan and His teaching.

Sri Ramanasramam's boundary extends to wherever devotees like Kanakamma live. The

like of her make the Ashram a fraternity and sorority of souls.

### SRI SATYANANDA SWAMI

Sri Bhagavan called him Satya. Others called him Satyananda or Satyananda Swami. While most people at the Ashram talked to him in Tamil, Bhagavan talked to him in Malayalam which he understood better. Born in 1916 in Mavelikkara in South Kerala, Satyananda came first to Sri Bhagavan in 1938 after hearing about Him during a pilgrimage with some sadhus to Rameswaram.

Sri Bhagavan who was perfect in His use of language, depended little on the written or spoken word for communicating or teaching. He used silence with immense effect. Besides, he had used two other languages which worked miracles where even His words and silence might not have been effective. One was what Arthur Osborne called "the most beautiful smile in the world" and the other, in the words of almost everyone, His most luminous gaze. When Satyananda came first to Him, this is what happened: "He looked at us and smiled. I can never forget that smile." Young Satya was a lucky victim of that unforgettable smile which made one forget oneself!

But with Satyananda who became one of His attendants in 1946, Sri Bhagavan used yet another language of grace which He probably never used before nor after. Listen to Satyananda Swami:

"One day Sri Bhagavan described to me how one Sadguru Swami from Kerala, under the influence of some intoxicating drug, kept on embracing Him tightly, saying 'You are a good boy. It is a pleasure to see you.' Sri Bhagavan acted the part of the sadhu in His inimitable way while narrating the incident. I was alone with Him at the time and still remember the scene with joy!" Though, truly speaking, everything that Sri Bhagavan did was an act of love and grace, that was indeed a unique gesture. The

special graces which Sri Bhagavan showed to humble folk were of a piece with His equality of vision.

Sweet, soft-spoken, simple at heart and in dress, innocent of the subtleties of language and thought, reticent and receptive, methodical and mindful in his work, Satyananda Swami, like some of his fellow-attendants, kept his heart fully open for Sri Bhagavan to pour His boundless love.

Satyananda Swami was among the few devotees who had the sacred opportunity of serving Sri Bhagavan during His last days. He

was in the *Mahanirvana* Room when Sri Bhagavan left His body. For several years thereafter he took care of this sacred Room and was also looking after the embryonic library of the Ashram. For about 13 years, starting and ending on the *Mahanirvana* day, the Swami observed *mouna*, a language most commended to all by his Master.

Satyananda Swami now lives in Palakottu adjoining Sri Ramanasramam which takes care of him. Though slightly unwell these days, he is a sprightly, elegant septuagenarian, so dapper in his ochre robes.

### KUDOS FROM BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

(To Ganesan)

This is just to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading the instalments of "The Story of *The Mountain Path*". In the course of telling the story of the magazine, you have brought out the true greatness of Arthur Osborne. Has an account of his life been published? If not, please do it. I also read the news item about the passing away of Mrs. Lucia Osborne, on December 2, 1987, in London. What a great pair they made!

Your account of the history of the magazine is truly inspiring and the grace of Bhagavan Ramana is evident in each issue of *The Mountain Path*. I have no doubt that the magazine will grow from strength to strength and give joy and solace to people by carrying to them the message of Arunachala Ramana.

K. Subbarayan, Associate Editor, *Bhavan's Journal*, Bombay.

## MOTHER KRISHNABAI, THE “JNANA-MATA”

By V. Ganesan

*“Mataji is pure and innocent as a baby, but a gentle and loving mother too to all the devotees that visit Ananda Ashram. More than all, she is a symbol of true renunciation.”*

— K.K. Nambiar, in his article on Swami Ramdas in *Sannyas Silver Jubilee Souvenir of Swami Ramdas, Published in 1947.*

**I**T was 19th October - exactly one month after my arrival at Anandashram of Sri Swami Ramdas at Kanhangad, Kerala. I was sitting at the foot-side of the cot of Pujya Mataji Sri Krishnabai, now bed-ridden for the past few months. She is 85. It was the morning *darshan* time, when devotees could go to her in a queue and receive her blessings.

A girl of six years offered to Mataji a pale pink rose, which she received with care. Next another child also gave her a similar rose. Mataji was keeping a small white cloth rolled up in her hand to wipe her face. She put it down and held the two roses in her beautiful hands. She went on steadily looking at and admiring their freshness and beauty. One of the girls asked them back, as *prasad*. Mataji was so immersed in her admiration of the treasured possessions that it looked as if she was reluctant to give away even one of them! I was happy Mataji chose to keep the happy roses in her holy hands. Not a minute would have passed by. A grown-up girl in the queue tried to move away after doing her *pranam*. Noticing her pointedly Mataji called her and most gently, carefully, put the two flowers in her hands. Mataji's face, which had reflected a child's pride of possession a minute back, then turned into a stern but, glorious picture of nothing-can-touch-my renunciation!



*Pujya Mataji Sri Krishnabai*

### HOMAGE TO HOLY MOTHER

Some eight months before her *Mahasamadhi*, Pujya Mathaji, one day said all of a sudden: "Oh! The battle begins tomorrow!" The next Mathaji was laid up in bed, never to return to normal health. She bore untold suffering with immense patience. One could feel that she was not only battling but was waiting for something!

Both the battle and the wait were over on Sunday February 12, 1989, *Rathasaptami Day*, the day the Sun changes its direction, marking the birth of *Uttarayana*. (Bheeshma of yore, lying on a bed of arrows, was known to have waited for this auspicious moment to give up body).

Drowning innumerable *bhaktas* all over the world in an ocean of sorrow, Pujya Mathaji left her earthly home — 'Anandashram' — for her eternal Home, the ANANDA LOKA, which for her was the Bliss of RAMNAM, the heart of Papa Swami Ramdas. The Light returned to the Light!

Our humble homage to the Holy Mother to whose sacred memory this article is dedicated.

(Later I came to know that the girl was very fond of roses and even in her simple cottage she has grown a small thicket of rose bushes).

Mother Krishnabai is the life-force behind this love-throbbing Ashram. It is impossible to describe her, since she is simply Mother in all a mother's holiness. Though she imparts no verbal teaching, yet every movement of every limb is a treasured teaching! So, how to present her in an article?

Fortunately for me, Sri Swami Satchidananda handed over to me the *Silver Jubilee Souvenir of Mother Krishnabai's Renunciation (1955)*. While going through it, I found my job made easy by *Sri Rani Lalita Devi*, a beloved child of the holy mother, the spiritual sun that Mataji ever is! A few leaves I cull out from her picturesque presentation:

A friend once asked me as to how Mother Krishnabai looks and how we can know that she is a saint? There is nothing usual in this question. It is just a piece of curiosity.

I said, "Mataji is fair and beautiful like a lotus.

Her height is about 5 feet and she weighs 108 lbs which go to make an ideal Indian woman. She has dark, curly hair and her face shines like the full moon in the dark sky. Her eyes radiate light and tenderness. Her voice is sweet and soft. She always dresses in white. She is humble, silent, unassuming and rather bashful and modest. Always she has a blissful smile on her face. A divine soul lives in this beautiful, slender and pious frame. She looks delicate, but she has a giant's strength. You will see her working in the Ashram right from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Hardly she gets half an hour's rest in the afternoon."

"What kind of work does she do?" asked my friend.

"She does all kinds of work," I replied. "She sweeps the floor, cleans the vessels and washes the clothes; she also toils in the kitchen. Not only this, she supervises the

cultivation of lands and construction works in the Ashram. She looks to the health of the cows in the *goshala*; she also gives useful instructions in the hospital and in the industrial school. You will sometimes see her in the library too, giving some needful hints. To your surprise, you will also find her sometimes cleaning the lavatories. She keeps the whole Ashram spotlessly clean. All this she does smilingly. She never says, nor looks, she is tired. She feels that by serving people she serves herself and God, because she has identified herself with the whole universe. None leaves the Ashram without receiving her love and blessings."

All her toil, day in and day out", I told my friend, "is to make others happy. Orphan children in the Ashram find a mother in her, sick folk find a nurse in her and the sorrow-stricken find consolation in her. She does not discriminate between the rich and the poor, high and low, or between the evil-natured and the good natured."

"I would like to hear about some of her teachings", my friend asked me.

"Well," said I, "she is no preacher. She is a silent worker. She never gives any speeches unless you provoke her, or she is impelled to do so. She gives good lectures to individuals when she is put out. Then she uses her own original expressions. She never gives any quotations from any authority. She mixes words and sayings from all the languages and gives you good home-thrusts and sound counsel which you can never forget."

I once asked her, "How can a person renounce the world?"

The Mother said, "One should repeat the Name of God at all times and at all places. One should try to see one's spiritual Master,

Guru, in all beings. One should serve the poor and get rid of the ego, forgetting 'mine' and 'thine'. One should not harm even one's enemies and have no illwill towards anybody. Envy, jealousy, pride, wrath and hatred should be given up. When a vessel gets empty, you can fill it. If it is full, the liquid that you pour into it only flows out; it cannot get into the vessel."

Usually *chelas* shower praises on their gurus. Here is an unusual compliment from the Master to his chosen disciple! Swami Ramdas, Mataji's Guru, fondly and reverentially addressed by all as "Papa", said the following about her.

"Mataji first came to see Ramdas with a friend of hers. Ramdas was then standing on a hillock. He could see a pure celestial soul coming towards him."

When Mother Krishnabai came to Swami Ramdas, she saw her *Sat Guru* face to face. She was totally transformed. Her intense desire to stay with her *Sat Guru* was put to an acid test.

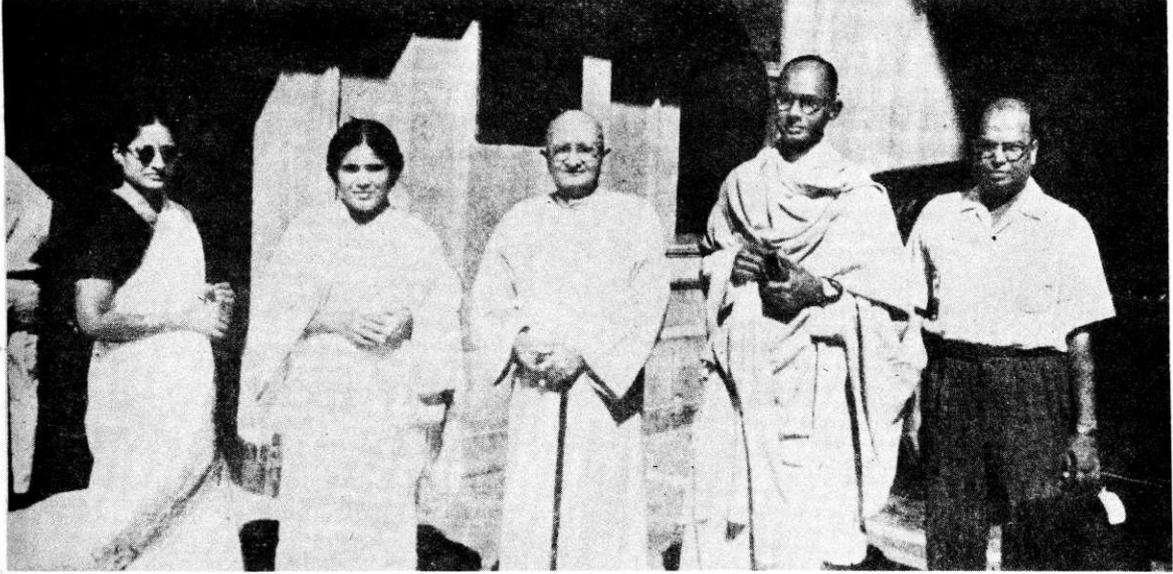
as it were, by her Guru himself. He told her that if she could see her Guru, Ramdas, in each and everyone she met, then she would be fit to stay with him. From that day onwards Mother saw only Swami Ramdas in all the men, women and children — they all appeared to her as only different *rupas* of her one and only Divine Master, Swami Ramdas!

No wonder Master Ramdas so wholeheartedly paid the following glowing tributes to this illustrious Mother:

"Mataji came prepared for achieving the blessed state. She is perfectly selfless and egoless. She came to look upon Ramdas with great reverence. She was looking for a peg on which to hang up her ego. She saw Ramdas was the right peg. As soon as she saw Ramdas, she at once put her ego round his neck, as it were,



Beloved Papa, Sri Swami Ramdas.



(1 to r) Sri Rani Lalita Devi, Mother Sri Krishnabai, Sri Swami Ramdas, Sri Swami Satchidananda, Sri Sagarlal Gupta

and became free. So she says everything is done by Papa. That is how it happens when you free yourself from the ego. To surrender to God means to lay the ego at the feet of God.

"Yes. A peg is necessary on which you can put the ego. In that way Ramdas was helpful to her, but she put the ego on it of her own free will and choice. The peg was there for many years, but she was the only one who made use of it. The supreme self-abnegation, self-surrender, renunciation — that utter dedication — whereby every minute of her life is lived for others, and not for herself, constitutes the glory of her existence. She is the servant of the universal Self. She turned back to the world until she fully realised God in His various aspects. When she turned her face again to it, she did not see the world but God. Verily, the world disappeared and God was revealed before her!"

The following are Mataji's own words of how she received the grace from her chosen God:

"O compassionate Papa! Accepting me as your child, you initiated me with the holy *mantra*: OM SRI RAM JAI RAM JAI JAI RAM. You also advised me: 'Repeat always *Ramnam* and consider the service you do to anybody as service and worship of Ram. This practice will easily enable you to realise your oneness with the universal Being, Ram.' After you initiated me with the *mantra*, within a short time, the feeling arose in me that you were my own. As my love for you enhanced, I began to look upon all beings as my own."

It is *Guru-bhakti* at its highest and best; it naturally culminated in Mataji's final fulfilment of *atmanubuthi*. This fully surrendered 'pure celestial soul', in her fullness of bhakti, even today dazzles in all divine splendour as pure *Jnana-mata*.

Has not Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi said:

"*Bhakti is Jnana-mata*"?

# Knowledge and Insight in Education

By Professor P. Krishna

**T**HE HUMAN mind has several capacities and functions but our education and culture emphasise only those based on memory and thinking because of their utilitarian value. For the purpose of discussion one may categorise the various capacities of our mind into the following groups based on similarity within each group :

- Group 1 : Perception, observation, attention and awareness.
- Group 2 : Memory, information, language, knowledge, conditioning, instinct.
- Group 3 : Thinking, reasoning, planning, technique, logic, mathematics, concentration, inquiry, imagination, invention, humour, intelligence (of thought).
- Group 4 : Feeling, emotion, sensitivity, sentiment, beauty, romance, art, poetry.
- Group 5 : Insight, vision, intuition, intelligence (not of thought), silence, creativity.

One can add other functions under each group and also find many that are combinations of two or more functions listed above because the brain has the capacity to function in an integrated manner. To that extent these groups, though differentiated from each other, are not exclusive. One differentiates them for the convenience of discussion and analysis but one is also aware that all these functions taken together form one composite whole, which is our brain-mind combination. Right education should ensure a balanced development of all the functions of the mind and body; but that is not what we are doing right now, thereby creating lop-sided individuals, whose mind functions acutely only in a very limited area.

We have cultivated, admired and worshipped knowledge, memory and the intelligence of thought, but neglected the other functions our mind is capable of. It is important to remind ourselves of the limitations of knowledge and thought, however useful these may be in our life. The scholar of Buddhist philosophy does

not have the same consciousness as the Buddha though he may have a knowledge greater than that of the Buddha. One can study all the literature on non-violence and still remain a very violent or aggressive person. The description and analysis of a poem cannot capture the actual feeling with which it was written. The description is not the described and unless one experiences the real thing, words have very little meaning. Even in the field of Science, the Professor who can deduce all the equations derived by Einstein does not necessarily have the insight which Einstein had into the nature of time, space, energy and matter. The human mind is capable of a deep and direct perception which is quite different from the outcome of an intellectual thought process. Ramanujam is an outstanding example of a mathematician who intuitively came upon correct answers to several problems without being able to logically think out the proof. Several great discoveries have been made through sudden flashes of insight, during which the thought-process is temporarily in abeyance. For such an insight to come into being there has to be a certain freedom from the known which is totally different from ignorance. Therefore, while it is obviously necessary to impart knowledge and the skills of clear thinking, it is equally important to let the mind lie fallow and experience a deep silence in which alone there exists the possibility of an insight to occur. Keen observation, wide awareness and a deep sense of beauty and order are all essential for this.

Our present education system, even at its best, burdens the mind of the student with too much knowledge and assiduously promotes constant and intensive thinking by rewarding him for being clever in this thought-processes. Such activity is counter-productive unless it is coupled with moments of silence, of deep reflection, and with activities that involve the slowing down of the thought process. The mind must not be constantly in a hurry or working feverishly with ambition if it is to be capable of deep perception, observation and attention. It must have time to "stand and stare". The ability

to have a perceptive awareness of the entire field is as essential, if not more, than the ability to focus or concentrate one's thoughts on a fragment of the field. One must not only explore a mountain by getting close to it, but also see its beauty from afar.

The constant pressure that is put on the student by our demand for better and better achievement in examinations destroys creativity and inquiry both of which are absolutely essential for right education. Let me quote here what two great educationists of our time have had to say in this regard. Ivan Illych says in his book on *Deschooling Society*, "The pupil is schooled to confuse teaching with learning, **grade-advancement with education, a diploma with competence and fluency with ability to say something new.**" Elsewhere, Einstein has stated, "**It is, in fact, nothing short of a miracle that the modern methods of instruction have not yet entirely strangled the holy curiosity of inquiry, for this delicate plant, aside from stimulation, stands mainly in need of freedom; without this it goes to wreck and ruin without fail.**" In order to nurture talent and promote excellence it is necessary to expose a student to a wide variety of subjects and activities, help him to discover where his natural interest lies and let him pursue his intrinsic talent. The demand of parents and society to force the child into a particular course of study, such as Engineering or Medicine, and compulsorily cultivate talents in that direction is short-sighted and destructive of the natural intelligence of the child. Education with such a self-projected and limited objective is bound to produce mediocrity. It also causes a lot of psychological damage by creating conflict and **inferiority in a student, which are inevitable when we expect him to fit into a pre-set pattern or direction.**

There has been, of late, a lot of talk about imparting human values in education. While this is a laudable objective if it is attempted intelligently, it can be disastrous if it is reduced to **sermonizing or trying to get the students to memorize "good" thoughts.** Thoughts are superficial things that can be acquired from any

book, memorized and then repeated. We actually are what we feel deep down within us and not what we think. Mere knowledge of good thoughts does not create virtue; it ends up creating hypocrisy. For example, a knowledge of the concept of non-violence does not help to eliminate violence. It is only a deep understanding and awareness of the causes of violence in one's own psyche that can bring about the ending of violence and this needs a lot of observation, examination and inquiry into **oneself. Without that, to only practise non-violence outwardly, while remaining aggressive, violent and domineering from within is not only superficial but also generates a constant conflict between what one is and what one should be. One is then not completely honest with oneself and gets caught in image-building. Virtue has very little significance unless it is spontaneous. Cold, calculated and pre-meditated practice of virtue is really a facade behind which the real self hides itself. It is important to realize that self-knowledge cannot be acquired from books**

alone. One has to come upon it through constant observation of and reflection on one's thoughts and activities in everyday life and in relationships. The mere acceptance of the thoughts of great people does not bring self-knowledge. It is only a deep insight into our own psyche (or self) that naturally alters our values and **outlook on life, thereby cleansing our feelings at the source.**

**In this field it is very important for the student to learn by observing himself and to question and doubt what others have said. Unless he discovers the truth for himself it does not become a part of him. The knowledge of the truth is not the same as a direct perception of the truth and only the latter has value. Human values must therefore be taught by arousing the interest of the child and creating in him a deep sense of inquiry — not through conformity and acceptance of what others have said. In this field, even more than in others, knowledge has little value if it is not coupled with insight.**

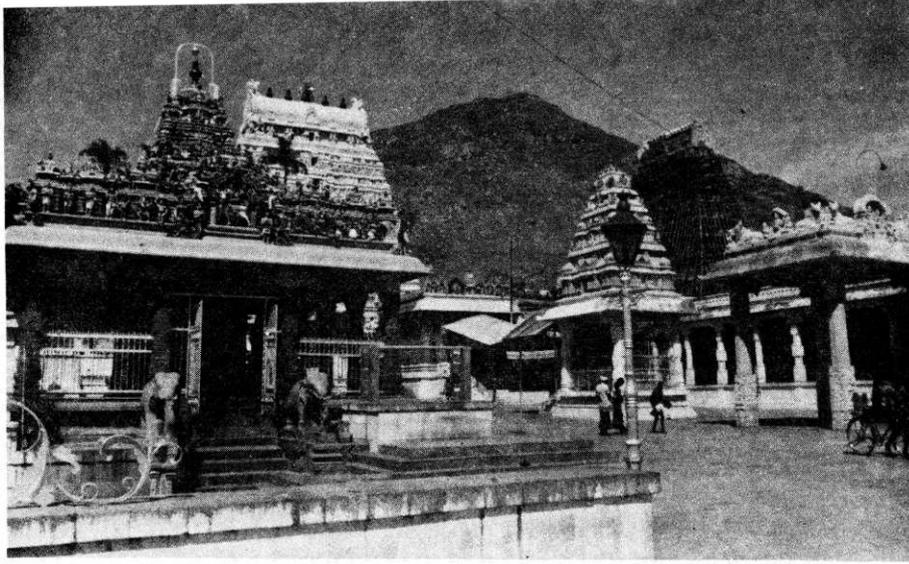
### LEARN YOUR OWN THINKING

**"To go for a walk in the fields with the cattle and the young lambs, and in the woods with the song of birds, without a single thought in your mind, only watching the earth, the trees, the sheep and hearing the cuckoo calling and the wood pigeons; to walk without any emotion, any sentiment, to watch the trees and all the earth: when you so watch, you learn your own thinking, are aware of your own reactions and do not allow a single thought to escape you without understanding why it came, what was the cause of it. If you are watchful, never letting a thought go by, then the brain becomes very quiet. Then you watch in great silence and that silence has immense depth, a lasting incorruptible beauty".**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**"... I am not pushing you, directing you, persuading you. What is your future? Will you mature rapidly or slowly, gracefully, sensitively? Will you be mediocre, though you may be first class in your profession? You may excell, you may be very, very good at whatever you do, but I am talking of mediocrity of the mind, of the heart, mediocrity of your entire being."**

— J. Krishnamurti to himself, in *His Last Journal*



## SRI ARUNACHALA PURANAM – VIGNETTES

By J. J.

**S***thala Puranas* record divine events, royal deeds and people's piety, all relating to a particular *sthal*, region. The incident of Lord Siva appearing as a column of light, thus baffling the forces claiming absolute doership, is perhaps the primal (and eternal) act of Grace; for it contains Time itself in its womb. This story finds mention in some form or the other in *Vedas* and various *Puranas*.

Specific references to Arunachala occur in various Sanskrit texts of antiquity. In the year 1938 a question arose as to whether the Holy Arunachala Hill came under the jurisdiction of the Arunachala Temple or the Government. The temple authorities approached Sri Bhagavan and requested him to depose before a tribunal regarding this matter. It was in this context that the Maharshi gathered references to Arunachala from five sources in Sanskrit and copied out the 2659 verses in his own hand. This Sanskrit collection, which may be called *Arunachala Mahatmya*, was translated into Tamil prose and published by Sri Ramanasramam in 1957 under the same name.

The five major Sanskrit sources are given below:

1. The *Skanda Mahapurana*, one of the eighteen great *puranas*. It consists of a hundred thousand verses, each of 32 syllables. They are distributed among six *Samhitas* of which *Rudra (Sankara) Samhita* alone has 30,000 verses. The *Maheswara Khanda* is one of the twelve *Khandas* (divisions) of this *Samhita*. The third *Kanda (Part)* of this *Maheswara Khanda* treats of Arunachala Mahima. This major text, rendered into Tamil verse by Saiva Ellappa Naavalalar, forms nearly the first half of *Arunachala Puranam* <sup>1</sup>.

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1. The latter portion of this Tamil Purana is translated from *Linga Purana*. The poet mentions this fact in the beginning of the latter portion. Bhagavan's court deposition also mentions that *Linga Purana* contains references to Arunachala. However, the *Arunachala Mahatmyam*, compiled by Bhagavan, does not include *Linga Purana* references. Presumably the Sanskrit text of the *Purana* was not available.

The greatness of the sacred spot, the contest between Brahma and Vishnu, the destruction of Daksha's sacrifice by an angry emanation from Siva, the wedding of Siva and Parvati, her playful sport and her *Prayaschitta* by penance, the destruction of Mahishasura, the merger of Parvati in Siva's left half, the greatness of *Pradakshina* of the Hill, the Grace accorded to kings Vajraangada Pandya, Ballala Chera and Pradatta, and the story of the civet cat are all narrated here.

2. *Siva Rahasya*, an *Ithihasa* nearly as long as the *Mahabharata*, contains twelve *Amsas*. (This *Siva Rahasya* is different from the work of the same name which is in *Skanda Mahapurana*). The sixth *Amsa* (portion) of this contains the incomparable *Ribhu Gita*. The ninth *Amsa* contains references to the Saint Jnanasambandha's hearing of the greatness of Arunachala when he camped near it.

3. The *Vidyeeswara Samhita* of *Siva Mahapurana* refers to the significance of worshipping Siva alone as Linga, in addition to the *Vigraha* (idol) worship by which all gods are extolled. There are references to *Lingodbhava*, and the five *Krityas* – activities – of Sadasiva, viz., Creation, Maintenance, Destruction, Delusion and Grace.

4. The *Vidyaasaara Samhita* of *Siva Mahapurana* has a reference to the immense efficacy of feeding the poor in Arunachala.

5. The *Kshetra Khanda* of *Skanda Upapurana* (a minor *Purana*), speaks of incomparable benefits of observing vows during the month of Kartigai, and the attainment of *Mukti* by any one who has a glimpse of the Holy *Deepam* on that day.

The first of the above five and also a portion from *Linga Purana* were translated into Tamil verse by Saiva Ellappa Naavalara a few hundred year ago during the reign of the Tanjore Naiks. Running to 649 verses, it is known as *ARUNACHALA PURANAM*. It excels the original in many a place, especially where the poet revels in a description here or brings to light there a subtle point easily ignored by the reader in the original. In addition, the metre changes now and then, providing instantaneously the atmosphere and rhythm which blend with the events the poet seeks to convey through words. It is hoped that a reader not acquainted with Tamil would get a taste of the *Puranam* through these vignettes.

After the verses offering prayer to Ganesha and Nataraja, the poet extols Arunachala as the fertile and sacred region where the Suns and Moons, the Bhairavas, Vidyaadaras, Devas, and those in charge of the Eight Directions, the Nagas, great

Tapasvins and Munis, and Brahmas and Vishnus gather in such proximity that there is no place left to prostrate, and so their wave-like cry of "Hara, Hara!" drowns even the roar of oceans. The spectacle of the youthful women of this place, tender breasted, with pleasing mien, and ornament on either ear, makes one wonder whether a shining, cool, ambrosial moon (their face) had arisen in day-time accompanied by two suns (two ear-ornaments)!

Then follow verses praising Arunachaleswara, Unnamulai Amman, Ganesa and Subrahmanya. These are followed by obeisance to the Tamil saints and finally to Nandi, Durga, Gautama and Chandikeswara. The poet then ridicules his own attempt at singing a few songs in the presence of eminent pandits skilled in composing songs pregnant with the eight *Rasaas*<sup>2</sup>. He likens his bravado to that of a mosquito trying to show a thing or two about flying, in the presence of the Swan, mount of Brahma, and Garuda, mount of Vishnu.

The wise, however, would accept without ridicule his feeble attempts, because Arunachala is the theme of the songs, the same way as water by virtue of admixture with milk becomes elevated, or as a common thread becomes acceptable by virtue of being strung through fragrant flowers.

### **On the Glory of the Arunachala Sthala:**

Once, the sage Maarkandeya, leading a group of *Rishis*, prayed to Nandikeswara to tell them about easy ways to cross the Ocean of *Samsara* and reach *Mukti*. The Lord deigns to reply that a dip in the holy Ganges at Kaasi (Benares) done in full faith, or, shedding one's mortal coils there; being born in Tiruvàaroor (Kamalaalaya); a glimpse of the Dance of the Three-Eyed One at Chidambaram; a visit to Vriddhaachalam where Vishnu offered worship to Siva and received the Chakra as boon; a pilgrimage to Kedarnath; Darsana of the Lord at Mallikarjuna whom Brahma worships prior to every creation — all these are ways to *Mukti*. Further, there is Kaalahasti where Siva stands as a hill in order that Vishnu, wearer of the fragrant Tulasi garland, and Lakshmi, resident of the cool, honey-dripping Lotus, may have His direct Darsana from their holy abode on the Tirupati Hill. Not only that, He also resides on the hill of Kaalahasti as the Linga worshipped of yore by the hunter-saint Kannappar. Further there are Kaanchipuram of great renown, Kumbhakonam, Seerkaazhi, Madurai, Rameswaram and many more which lead to *Mukti* by mere virtue of birth or death there, or by worship of the Lord therein.

Hearing these words of Nandikeswara, Maarkandeya addressed him as follows: Visiting these diverse places and offering worship and engaging oneself in allied activities is quite a task even for the long-lived gods and *siddhas*. What then can mortal men hope to gain in a life-span brief as a flash of lightning? Worse still is the

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2. Romance, Valour, Humour, Compassion, Ferocity, Disgust, Wonder and Fear.

plight of animals and birds, and hopeless indeed the fate of trees and shrubs. I request you therefore to enlighten us about a place with power to grant Release not only for trees, beasts and birds, but also for the old, the infirm and the lame among men for whom bathing in rivers, *Pradakshina*, ritual worship and *namaskara* are out of the question. Please enlighten us about such a place in which *any Jiva* could be confident of *Kaivalya*, Release.

When thus the sage Maarkandeya, the vanquisher of Death, worshipped with the other sages the Lotus-feet of Nandikeswara, the Lord raised his palm in benediction as if to say: "I shall tell you!" However the very remembrance of Arunachala in his Heart, prior to his uttering that word, struck Nandikeswara himself speechless in non-dual Bliss! He sat still for long, with palms joined as if in prayer, hair standing on end all over the tingling body, with tear-filled eyes, and in a trance. Then as if awakening, he sang forth: "O Lord of Arunagiri, wearing the Ganges in your matted hair! O Lord of Flaming Eyes, who ever overwhelms us with your Grace!" He then proceeded to address the sages: "Listen. There is a place on earth which grants Deliverance to any created being, moving or unmoving, by the mere remembrance of its sacred Name. It has innumerable names. Some of these are: Gowri Nagara, Tejo Nagara, Arunachala, Sivaloka Nagara, Mukti Nagara, Jnana Nagara, Sthaleswara (the Supreme among sacred spots), Suddha Nagara, Dakshina Kailasa, Sonagiri and so on. Being the Spiritual Centre of Creation it draws the gods, sages and *tapasvins*, in short anyone who thinks of it, to itself. There is a Hill there which stands in *Krita Yuga* as a Hill of Fire, in *Treta* as one of Diamond, in *Dvaapara* as a Golden Hill and in *Kali Yuga* as a Hill of Stone. When even Vishnu as a boar and Brahma as a swan had to abandon their long-drawn search to find its beginning and end, can we hope to find a hill to equal Arunachala? The Sun, thirsting to sip from the springs on this Hill, the water of which even the celestial Ganges considers holy directs his chariot-horses to leap over Arunachala daily! When dense clouds of white surround its base, it appears as though Arunachala were a rising peak amidst a snow-clad Himalayas! To cap it all, the *Deepam* which is lit on its summit during the cool month of Kartik, seems like a prominent diamond on a grand crown worn by Mother Earth. Why, even Himavaan, the god of the Mountains, was once crest-fallen that he had to give his daughter Uma in marriage to a mendicant, the skull-carrying Siva. But leaping with joy when informed of how Siva had once silenced Brahma and Vishnu by assuming the form of a Hill, Himavaan exclaimed with obvious relief, "How wonderful to know that our son-in-law-to-be belongs to our race after all!"

Reiterating the greatness of Arunachala, Nandikeswara tells the assembled sages that even murderers, those of easy virtue, or the disabled and those that live far away, are assured of *Mukti* if they but remember well the holy Arunachala once. The place *Sivaloka* itself and its every pebble the holy Linga; every tree and shrub there is a wish-fulfilling *Kalpaka*; every spring therein is the holy Ganges issuing forth from the matted tress of Siva; to eat a morsel there is to partake of the *Amrta* of gods; a mere perambulation of it is *Pradakshina* of earth itself. Any sound uttered therein is to utter *Sruti* profound! Need we add that even to sleep there, is to be in *samadhi* supreme? Abandon therefore any possibility of finding an equivalent to Arunachala!

Saying these words of praise Nandikeswara remained still, where seated, immersed in Bliss. The sages prostrated again and again to the Lord, themselves lost in it.

Then Maarkandeya, son of Mrkandu, came forward and begged the Lord to narrate to them all, how the Arunachala Hill came to be formed. Nandi was pleased to say, "If a wretch should contemplate committing the *Pancha Paatakas*, (the five sins of murder, theft, falsehood, intoxication, and abuse of Guru)<sup>3</sup> in that sacred place, he would purely by virtue of his remembrance of "Arunachala", be saved somehow, and led to Liberation. Such is the undisputed sanction of the sacred scriptures. Would this Supreme Grace be then withheld from those devoted, who seek to hear more and more about the Holy Hill? The benefits are assured for my own self too!"

In what follows, Nandi describes Involution of *Samsaara*, as the process of merger of Brahma into Vishnu into Rudra into Maheswara into Sadasiva. This entity in turn relapses into *Bindu* that into *Naada*, and finally into *Sakti* which is Awareness inseparable from Being, called Supreme *Siva*, *Parama Siva*. *Srishti Krama*, the process of Evolution, appears in reverse, due to the very nature of Supreme Being. During such an Evolution, when Brahma appeared, he held in mind the idea of "many". Almost instantaneously the *Prajaapatis*, progenitors of races, came into being. Through them arrived in ordered succession the races of *Adityaas* (Gods); *Daityaas* (*Raakshasaas*), and *Daanavaas* (the demonic races of Asuraas); the intermediate beings called *Kaalakeyaas*, *Gandharvaas* and nymphs, *Garudaas*, *Panis* (serpents), *Kinnaras*, and Anthropoids and the great races of *Rishis* and humans.

All this creation taking place by his mere contemplation of it, was sufficient to turn Brahma's many heads. Puffed up with the pride of omnipotence that seemed to be his, he decided to put Vishnu in his place once and for all! (This was undoubtedly and oft-repeated occurrence throughout the cycles of Creation. Forgetfulness of one's source has a lot to do with this, surely. For, there are other accounts of a nascent Brahma venturing out of the Lotus in which he found himself. After climbing over many a row of petals and then sliding a while down its seemingly endless stalk, he soon lost courage. Vishnu, from whose navel the divine Lotus grew in the first place, restores Brahma to his 'abode' with full paternal concern. It was a very grateful Brahma who went ahead with Creation on that occasion!) But things were obviously very different now.

Deciding to take matters into his own hands, Brahma confronted Vishnu, as the latter lay on his bed of snake, and taunted him thus: "It is very clear to me now that I am the cause of all this creation that is taking place. So abandon any idea you may have that you are my parent. If it were not for my act of Creation, you would be unemployed! Useless!" Vishnu spoke out: "My dear son! It does not befit you to talk

3. Murder: To ascribe birth to oneself. Theft: Illegal appropriation of false individuality. Falsehood: To believe "I am this limited, evolving body-mind". Intoxication: Self in search of happiness and Self-realization. Abuse of Guru: Not surrendering individuality.

disrespectfully to your parent." Brahma, inflamed, let forth much abuse: "Enough of this. Give up rightaway the hallucination that you are the Great Preserver! Otherwise I shall create another one and entrust him with your job." When Vishnu replied rather casually as if tolerating an errant junior, Brahma blew up in anger. "Oho! So you seem to have forgotten that the wonderful Ocean on which you reside is merely the accumulated sweat of my toils. Better hide yourself in it before the Cosmic powers that I might well create, surround you and destroy you! By such foolish ignorance you incurred the wrath of the great Rishi Bhrigu, and by his curse had to take repeated births. Ingrate, have you forgotten that all this only added to my work? Did I not have to create for the sake of every Avatara of yours, a body that suited you? Look at my hands blackened by all that needless toil!" Hearing these words, Vishnu replied that, for one born of a mere lotus which had sprung from his navel, Brahma was making too much noise. Brahma then let loose another torrent of scorn: "O Vishnu! Have you forgotten that you sprang from a mere pillar once. A worse beginning if you ask me! Pray tell me, was that pillar your father or was it your mother? I shall accept you as my parent if you have no hesitation in accepting the inert pillar to be your parent! Even if I do concede that you are my father, why should I dance to your tune? Don't you know that fire which springs from rubbing bamboo sticks, burns up the parent sticks? So behave yourself lest I should destroy you!"

Hearing these wicked words Vishnu felt as if red-hot spears had been driven through his ears. With mounting anger he laughed spewing smoke, and after some thought replied, "Foolish fellow! You have neither bothered to enquire about your origin, nor shown inclination to accept my navel as your mother. Perhaps you assumed that as your parent I would tolerate any amount of mischief from a toddler like you. Beware! There is a limit to everything. Madhu and Kaitabha opposed me, and, though they were born of my body-sweat, I destroyed them. One cannot show mercy even if it be one's own child that did wrong. Does anyone shy from surgically removing a painful boil on one's own body? It is indeed comic that you consider yourself to be at the head of all creation, when you are unable to fashion for yourself a head and replace it — the fifth head, once plucked by Siva! Is it with these unenviable credentials that you set about creating this world, which after all is held aloft by Adishesha, my servant? And have you forgotten so soon that you squealed for help when an Asura ran away with the Vedas, and it was I who came to your rescue? I took the form of a fish then, out of my own sweet will. Innumerable have been the times when I have rushed to your succour by routing the Danavas whenever they tormented you. One who has planted a tree is reluctant to uproot it even if it turns out to be a poisonous one. Though I hesitate on account of your being my son, I shall have to punish you if you persist in your invective."

Can fire subside by adding fuel to it? The exchange of hot words culminated soon in each drumming on his own chest, and the two circling each other like ferocious wrestlers, now advancing, now retreating, now leaping to the ground, now getting close, and piercing each other with gimlet-eyes aflame with anger. All of creation went hay-wire. Mountains crumbled to powder, galaxies blew up in explosion, hot suns and cool moons disappeared enmasse. Rivers turned dry in a trice, stars and nebulous

clouds scattered like confetti and the guardians of the Eight Dimensions (*Ashta Dik Paalakaas*) feared the worst. Even the gods, who are of steady gaze, found themselves wincing, shocked by this sudden cataclasm. The fight for supremacy took a higher pitch with the combatants delivering blows to each other in the cosmic arena. Punching each other, lifting the fallen one by his thighs and twirling him rapidly before throwing him far and high, the two, near equals, kept switching roles of victor and vanquished. The rise and fall of the dark-hued Vishnu and bright-hued Brahma looked like night following day amidst a pugilistic pell-mell.

What followed this is well known: the sudden appearance of a blazing column of light growing beyond the seven worlds below and the seven above; the search for its limits by the proud pair, which reminds one of an ignorant child reaching out to grasp the moon reflected in the water, Brahma's lie; the eventual humbling of the two by the appearance of Siva from the effulgence; his command proscribing all worship of Brahma on earth, and His appeasement by the contrite couple, who sing his praise.

(To be concluded)



Lingodhbhava

**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi: (Sri Bhagavan in his deposition for Arunachaleswara Devasthanam, 1938)**

“There is an *aitihya* that this hill is Linga Swaroopam, that is to say, that this hill itself is Swamy. This *aitihya* is not to be found anywhere else. That is the cause of the glory of this place. The *aitihya* of this place is that this hill is Easwaraswaroopam and that the Swaroopam is full of *Tejas*. Every year Deepothsavam is celebrated in the form of Deepam.”

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

“That this hill is Iswaraswaroopam is said in the Upanishads and the Skanda, Linga and Siva Puranas. I cannot say without referring to the books, in which Upanishad and at which place it is stated so.”

# THE PEACOCK AND THE SAGE

Reflections on the *Advaita* of Architecture<sup>1</sup>

By Dr. Ramachandra Gandhi

**T**HIRTY seven years ago Maharshi Ramana lay dying in a hut in his *ashrama* in Tiruvannamalai. Perched on the roof of the hut was a white peacock who shrieked through the night as life drained away from the sage's cancer-devoured body, the blessed body through which for more than half a century Sri Ramana had transmitted the saving truth of self-realisation to a self forgetful age steeped in the delusion of otherness, the powerful uncaring, enveloping otherness still with us as the century—and doomsayers would quip, humanity too—draws to an end. Who is this peacock, and what is the significance of his shrill lamentation? And what does all of this have to do with architecture?

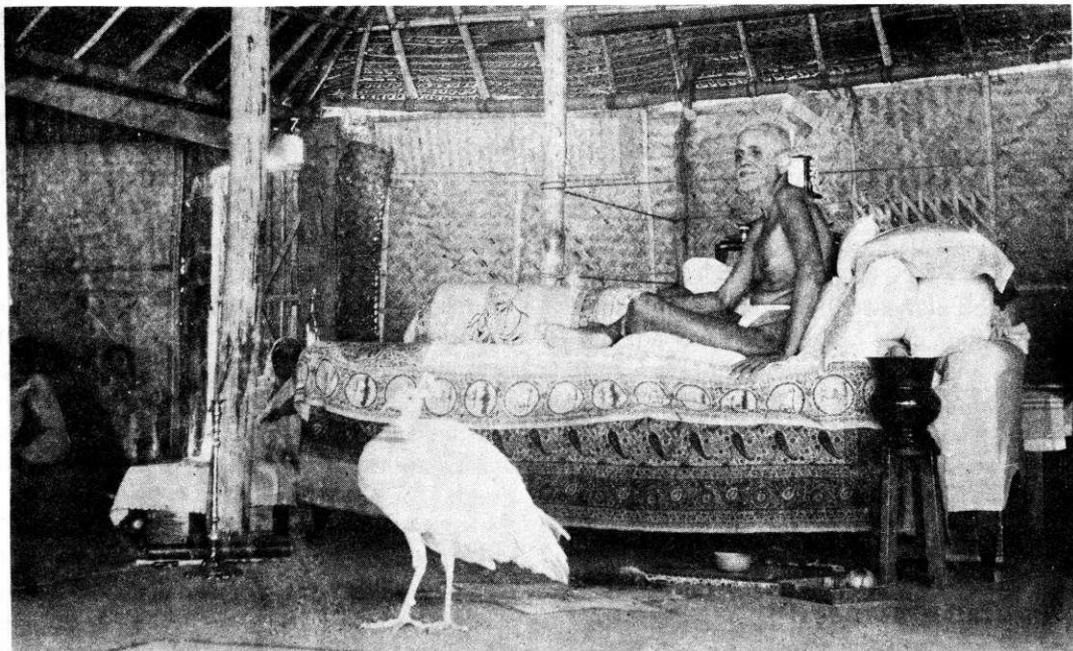
The peacock is an intimate disciple of the sage, one among numerous non-human creatures—lucky leopards, monkeys, dogs and cows, sparrows and squirrels and snakes and

at least one golden mongoose—who had sought the proximity of the sage and no doubt received confidential *Upanishadic* instruction from him. The disciple cries because he fears that his beloved master will soon be dead, but this cannot be the whole message of his wailing. From the 'rooftop', i.e., to the whole world, the peacock announces the impending calamity and summons a spiritually starving world to the sage's feet while there is still time. Cosmic weather-man is the creature! But even this is not all that he is communicating, not the whole truth of his torment.

The peacock is a prophet who foresees the crisis of survival all life on earth faces today, the dark fantasy of world-annihilation having been converted into grim probability by runaway militarisation and unecological industrialisation, mindless reproduction and heartless fanaticism. Imploring the sage to postpone his passing sufficiently to enable humanity to grasp his message of *advaita*—non-duality—more

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1. Courtesy *India International Centre Quarterly*, summer 1988



adequately, the prophet stridently demands of us that we ensure the survival of the world by learning to love it as ourselves.

Expressing its enviroing power, architecture fashions worlds within the world. Indeed on reflection it becomes clear that architecture is *avataric*; it is the Absolute incarnate as ambience; it is the perfect image of the world teaching us silently and yet ceaselessly, as do sages, that we and it are one. Architecture is Guru. Is it surprising that Sri Ramana's peacock pupil should draw attention to the connection between architecture and *advaita* by choosing as his pulpit the roof of a piece of sanctified architecture, the sage's hut? But the peacock is panicking. Without Guru's grace he is afraid that the sky will fall down upon him. So he howls. (He need not have been anxious, for it is on record that one of the Ramana's last utterances was a solicitous inquiry regarding the plumed *muezzin's* dinner. Grace is unfailing)

The sage himself is untroubledly happy inside the hut even as he is dying. For he knows that the hut's diminutive interior is continuous and identical with the infinite sky above and around,

the contours of the hut dramatising — not denying — this truth. The hut does not imprison Ramana, the sky does not overawe him. The earth is rich and large enough for our growth, not for our greed. And we need not succumb to existential anxiety in relation to the apparent nothingness of the cosmos, for it is not other than ourselves; it is self-consciousness itself symbolising the limitlessness of its sphere of manifestation. Life on earth need neither be deprived nor desolate.

Architecture is the incredible realisation of enclosure as disclosure, and while this may well be regarded as proof of its profundity, the essential *divinity* of architecture is revealed in the following morally and metaphysically extraordinary feature of it: Even the meanest architectural form, say a dungeon, which permits only a trickle of light and air to come in from outside, intensifies for that very reason the contrast between outer and inner space and all the more poignantly, for the same reason, suggests their continuity and identity and holds out the hope of freedom not only from incarceration but also from ignorance, duality. No architectural form can wholly seal off the

inner space it fashions without ceasing to be architecture. A coffin or a tomb may be a sacred construction, but it is not architecture. Barely unsealed torture-chambers are shockingly still architecture, but they ought of course gallantly to suffer the metamorphosis even of destruction in atonement for their desecration and attempted annihilation of the truth that interiority and infinity of space are one! (Nuclear winter is the condition of the earth as an unredeemable torture-chamber, sin unexceedable against architecture and *advaita*). Architecture is a Zen Master, liberating and scandalising at the same time.

The inner space, interiority, fashioned by architectural form symbolises intimacy and inwardness, the warmth and security of unembattled life. Interiority cannot, self-evidently, afford to be so small and oppressive as to frustrate or distort this sacred task of symbolisation. Architecturally unsanctified smallness can batter intimacy into desperation and out of warmth ignite incendiary frenzy and hatred. There is clearly a limit to the economy of inner space — whether of individual dwellings or of neighbourhoods — that architecture can truthfully fashion. Likewise, no architectural form can be so extravagant of size as to bury its suggestion of infinity under the weight of its own gigantic finitude, be it skyscraper or metropolis. Such bigness of indulgence mocks the idea of authority and nourishes tyranny. The idolatry of big and small in architecture or in any other sphere of art or life can only be overcome with the aid of the image of a crying bird, an unceasing sky, and the thatched roof of a sage's small hut. Realisation, not reification, is what is needed for the unfurling of truth's many-splendoured plumage, says the peacock.

It is appropriate here to recall Christ's saying that "in my Father's house", i.e., on an *advaitin* view, *within the matrix of the unity of self-consciousness*, "there are many mansions", an inevitable creative variety of forms of manifestation of truth. It is only in self-realisation that we attain to true love of variety and

faithfulness to unity, as opposed to anarchy and authoritarianism, whether in art and architecture or in politics and society. Also of profound importance for a philosophy of architecture is Christ's remark that while birds have their nests, and the fox his hole, the "Son of Man" has "nowhere to lay his head upon." It is only in civilisation and realisation, and not in the barbarism of dualism, old or new, that the troubled spirit of humanity can hope to find rest beyond uncertain lodging and unquestioned belonging, beyond mere nesting and digging in. Resurrection is entrance into the architecture of self-realisation, beyond the imprisonment of womb and tomb, beyond the duality of birth and death.

The *advaita* of architecture is illumined by the architecture of *advaita*. Indubitable ultimate reality is the pure reflexivity of self-consciousness, that which we are, essentially; that which whatever is, is, essentially: *Atman*, selfhood, heart, centre, matrix of all manifestation. Self-consciousness is not consciousness of this or that inner or outer object, grand or subtle, concrete or abstract, but our *sahaja*, spontaneous, uninstructed, consciousness of ourselves as ourselves; and is thus formless, *niraakara*, not being consciousness of any object whose form it might acquire or represent. *Pure being*, it is perfectly symbolised not only by the concentrated catacomb intimacy of the shrine of Lord Vishvanatha at Varanasi imaging formless creativity, soul; but also by the extra-mural all-inclusive university of the sky over Sarnath imaging formless compassion, under the banner and within the architecture of which, more than two thousand five hundred years ago, Lord Buddha took his stand and turned the wheel of *Dharma*. Formlessness is one. Lord Vishvanatha and Lord Buddha are one; creativity and compassion are one; inner and outer space, soul and sky, are one; *Atman* and *Brahman* are one. Singular formless self-consciousness, intimate infinity, *Atman-Brahman* is creative and compassionately inclusive of all forms, natural and cultural, archetypal and architectural, concrete and

abstract, static and dynamic, and throbs with an infinite reserve of creativity, as AUM,AUM,AUM! Sacred symbol and substance of ultimate reality, AUM is also the structure of the universal experience of architecture as *indwelling*, **comprehending** — and **exceeding** — wakefulness, dream, and the reserve power of deep sleep; blessed gifts of home. AUM is home.

The deepest truth of architecture is the truth also of our embodiment. Analogously to architecture, our bodies open out through the senses and the outgoing mind into the vastness of space and time and circumstance suggestive of the infinity of Godhead or *Brahman*. And again strictly analogously to architecture's disclosure of interiority, the inwardness which our bodily life makes possible in its poise of yoga or contemplation reveals the truth of self-consciousness, *Atman*. And like Lord Vishvanatha and Lord Buddha, the limitless space within which we situate our bodily life and the interiority of self-consciousness where we situate ourselves are continuous and identical, in the way the *angan*, inner courtyard, of a traditional Indian house is continuous and identical with the visible sky above it (It is the

*angan*, heart-centre of domesticity, that initiates Indian family life into the *advaita*, non-duality, of immediacy and infinity, *samsara* and *nirvana*, destiny and freedom.) The body too like architecture and *angan* is Guru. We cannot honour our body and not want to honour our environment. But who cares? Besides the peacock on the roof, who cares?

The fixity of architecture powerfully images being, the autonomy of self-consciousness, finality of *Atman-Brahman*. Architecture *is*; like God, it is *that* it is. But architecture is also an unfurling and environing power, *spider-power*, drawing out from its existential stillness, and yet situating within itself, all the rhythm of life's action and imagination and renunciation; work and play and rest; wakefulness and dream and sleep. Most singularly *advaitin* among the arts, architecture unalienatingly dramatises being and power, reality and its circumambient manifestation, the spider and his weaving, the peacock and his wailing, the sage and his teaching. Who knows what the architecture of existence will unfurl in the years and century and millenium ahead? Who besides Sri Ramana and the screaming peacock on his roof?

### PAPA ANSWERS

**Devotee** : How to control the mind?

**Swami Ramdas** : One of the ways of controlling the mind is to let it go wherever it pleases and to see in every object the underlying Reality. The whole universe is a manifestation of God. We have to remove, as it were, the outer coating of each object and see the Divine seated at the centre. By such practice, the mind becomes quiet. Ramdas has tried it himself. Another method is to stand apart and be a witness of the mind, you inadvertently posit that you are not the mind. All therefore that you need to do is to watch the mind in its antics and stand apart. The mind will then gradually run itself out and get stilled.

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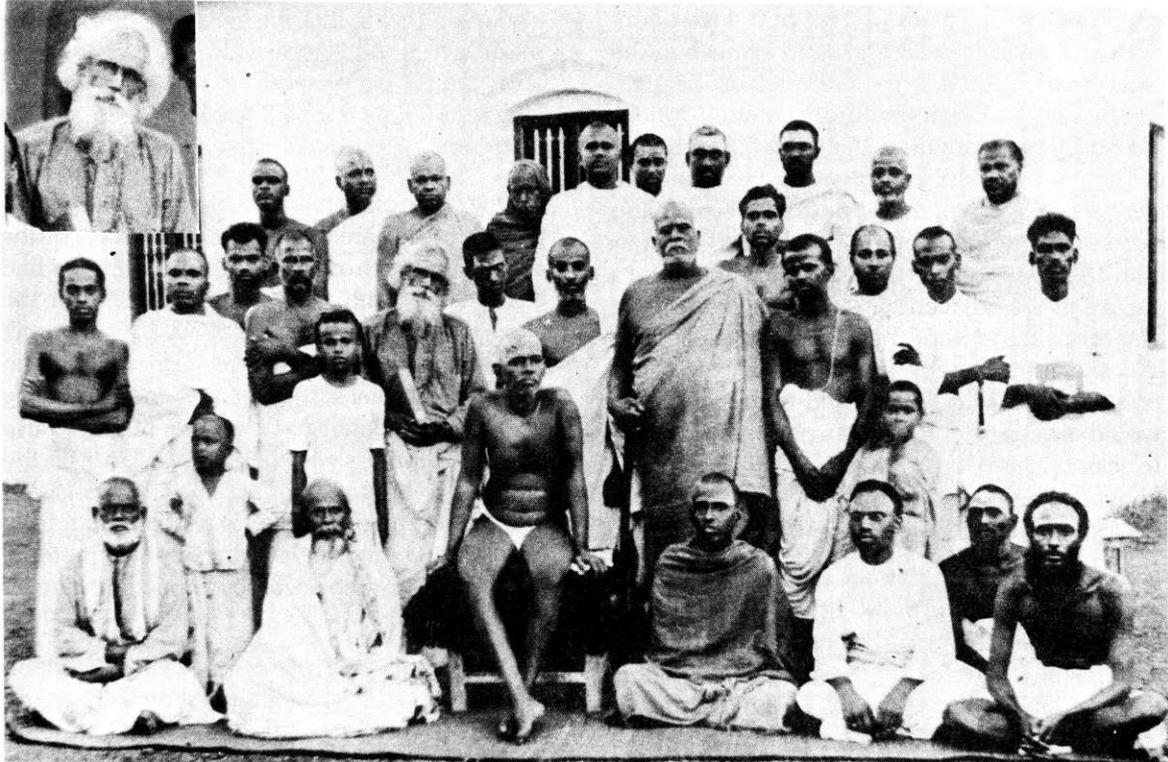
## Ramana's Biographer— B.V. Narasimha Swami

By A.R.N.

**A**FTER his arrival in Arunachala in 1896, Ramana observed silence till 1907 when compassion for the *tapasvi* Ganapati Muni made him break it. Till then Ramana was revered as the *Brahmana Swami* but except during the festival seasons he was alone with his 'Man Friday', Palaniswami. The Muni proclaimed that the sage should be known as '*Bhagavan*' and '*Maharshi*' and did his best to broadcast Ramana's natural state of bliss and steady wisdom. Even though the aura of Ramana's unique state evoked universal admiration, there were only a limited number of persons with him in the 'Virupaksha' and 'Skandashram' days. Later when he, compelled by an inner urge, moved to Sri Ramanasramam, regulars and visitors were only a small circle of 'fortunate' ones. Was the 'Voice of Truth' to be heard only by a few? Could the human embodiment of the 'Hill of Light' be born

to waste its fragrance? Surely his advent was for universal welfare. Why then was the divine so tardy, so slow in spreading his life, his message? Would an authentic biography help to spread his name and teachings? These must have been the thoughts of those who were basking in the sunshine of Ramana's grace. When B.V. Narasimha Swami arrived at Sri Ramanasramam in 1928, it was as if the time for fulfilling the crying need had come.

Who was he? What was his background? What was his title to this sacred assignment? Born to a pious Brahmin couple in 1874, he was named Narasimhan, because he was born in response to the ardent prayers of his mother to God 'Narasimha' at Sholingir. His father was a lawyer in Salem. After a brilliant academic career, Narasimhan joined his father at the



Salem bar and soon developed a lucrative practice and came to be known as Narasimha Iyer. He exhibited qualities of a born leader in his multi-faceted activities connected with Salem Co-operative Bank, Salem Municipal Council, Literary Society, Madras Legislative Council and the Home Rule Movement for India's freedom. The like of him however, are not meant for life's humdrum, but marked for special purposes by the divine. The call came most unexpectedly when death, cruel death, took a hand. Two of his children, son and a daughter were drowned, that too in a well in his own house. When life itself was so transient, what was the point in attaching any importance to anything other than finding its purpose? Benumbed by the sudden thunderbolt, Narasimha Iyer took it as a signal, as a warning to him not to be taken in by the immediate, not to be taken in by ceaseless activity even if it be for the welfare of the society and the country. Without the slightest-regret he bid good-bye to everything which he had held

dear till that moment. He withdrew from all worldly activity, returned his lawyer's 'sanad' and relinquished his vast property. Overnight, Narasimha Iyer was transformed into Narasimha Swami. Thereafter he was detached, concerned only with liberation, with search for God. He was filled with a longing to find out, from a Sad-guru, what life was all about.

After completing the renovation of the Lakshmi Narayana Perumal temple, which was midway when the tragedy happened, he immediately proceeded to Sri Ramanasramam, to Ramana. He had heard glowing accounts about him from his colleague and classmate Sundaram Chetty (who was to write the foreword to the Swami's biography later). He had no idea about the divine purpose which drew him there. Was he not to be the first biographer of Ramana?

In those days one could literally have Ramana to oneself in the leisurely and serene

atmosphere prevalent at Sri Ramanasramam. True, Ramana was accessible to all even in the later years but the rush of the forties peaking in the last two years before Ramana's *Maha-Samadhi* made intimate contact difficult unlike when Narasimha Swami arrived. He made the best possible use of the opportunity by soaking himself in the atmosphere. Wishing to be near the Maharshi round the clock, he moved into a cave in the adjacent garden 'Palakkottu'; He also encouraged and helped other seekers to do likewise. Except when drawn to some *bhajans*, whose pull he could never resist, he would always be in Ramana's physical presence to clarify his doubts and record important conversations, be it with A.S.K., Subba Reddi or some other devotees.

It would appear that in the beginning the Swami was not fully aware of why he was constantly at the work of gathering a lot of material. It was only later that it dawned on him that he had been 'chosen' to be Ramana's biographer. He also collected a lot of information about Sri Seshadri Swami, perhaps because of the close relationship between Seshadri Swami and Ramana. Narasimha Swami would, with mother-like patience record statements from practically every one who had some link with Ramana since the beginning of this century. The format was like a deposition in a court of law. Each statement would be duly signed and dated by the person concerned. The Swami wanted to ensure the authenticity of the basic source material to which one could return in the decades and centuries to come. Was he not writing the biography of the timeless one? Hence the care about the validity of every shred of evidence gathered by him.

The Swami was particular about equipping himself for the task. He requested Ramana to teach him *Kaivalya Navaneetha*, a core book on Vedanta. Ramana explained to him its contents in just one week and remarked that this was possible because of the Swami's ripeness. Otherwise, a lot of preparatory reading of a number of Vedanta texts would be needed before lessons in Vedanta could be usefully

imparted. With this background, the Swami made a thorough study of Ramana's teachings and could even write a commentary on *Upadesa Undiyar* which has later been a guide to several generations of seekers.

One has only to go through the Swami's papers in the archives to be reinforced in the conviction that from the word 'go', Ramana had clothed him with the strength needed for the task. This was made easier by the Swami's intellectual stature, his research orientation and above all his total surrender to Ramana. Having perfected his data base, the Swami had to use all his editorial skills to sift and sort out the material to limit the size of the biography. Yet one cannot help longing for a fuller biography of Ramana using the invaluable material collected with such accuracy and loving care by the Swami.

He regarded his role of Boswell to Ramana as a sacred trust. His interview with Ramana about the famous 'Death Experience' is itself a rare experience. There are two lengthy notings about this. We find that the Swami would cut out a word, insert a word, or make the necessary change wherever he had the slightest doubt about the accuracy of his recording of Ramana's statement. When one reads this graphic first-hand account, one becomes possessed at least momentarily, by that *avesham* which devoured Ramana on that memorable occasion. Such is the transmuting grip of the Swami.

The biography was published in 1931. With this his special assignment too was over. His earlier strong inclination towards *bhakti* took him to Shirdi for another divine assignment, to be the apostle and biographer of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi. As long as he was in Sri Ramanasramam, the Swami 'lived, moved and had his being in Ramana.' Thanks to this, one cannot open his biography, '*Self Realisation*', without delight, or close it without the regret that it is over so soon. By being the first biographer of Ramana, and the perennial inspirer of the future ones, the Swami's name too has become immortal.

# RITUALS: ACTED POEMS

By K.V. Subrahmonyan

THE word 'ritual' derived from the Latin word '*ritualis*' and the word 'rite' from '*ritus*'. These Latin words invite a comparison with the Sanskrit words '*rtu*' and '*rita*'. '*Rtu*' means season, any right time, fixed order; '*rita*' means sacred law or custom. A ritual is defined as "prescribed order of performing religious service". To the ancient Indian, the cycle of seasons and his sacred laws and customs were cognate. His gods were themselves lords of the seasons and the natural elements. Varuna was the rain god, Madana the lord of spring, Indra the chief of thunder, Surya the architect of summer, Vayu, the father of Hanuman, the wind-god. Kalidasa says in *Rtusamhara* (The Cycle of Seasons):

"Monsoon means the rivers are in spate, the clouds shower, the forest elephants trumpet ... the peacocks dance and the monkeys seek refuge in caves .. the Kadambari flowers are in full bloom all over .. Look at the Ketaki creepers, O the woods are wreathed in a big smile."

Here at one stroke, we have the '*rtu*' (season) and '*ritus*' (ritual). For, are not the birds, animals, flowers, forest and rivers engaged in a spontaneous act of ritual, shorn of any ritualism?

A proper ritual to welcome the *varshartu*, the monsoon!

The ancient Indian picked up lessons in music and dance from birds and animals. He learnt the musical note '*gaandhaara*' from the bull and '*panchama*' from the cuckoo, and so on. As Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer, danced, it was Nandi, the bull, who played the drum. The pantheist was in empathy with all nature, he worshipped nature and its creations and learned from them. He learned the majestic art of the ritual from nature. Francis Thompson said in his '*Corymbus to Autumn*', "All nature sacerdotal seems". Kabir sang: "Within the Supreme Brahma, the worlds are being told like beads, Look upon that rosary with the eyes of wisdom." The Indian of yore had those eyes of wisdom. The whole universe, he knew, was His Shrine. Who was the Priest? Those who heard "the music of the spheres". Listen again to Kabir:

"Day and night the chorus of music fills the heavens...  
Do you know how the moments perform the adoration?  
Waving the row of lamps, the universe sings in worship  
day and night,  
There are the hidden banner and the secret canopy;  
There the sound of the unseen bells is heard.

Kabir says: "There the adoration never ceases; there the Lord of the Universe sitteth on His throne,"

The cosmos, then, is a ceaseless ritual in celebration of the Unknowable. We cannot gather the Unknowable in the cognitive cup, though cognition may be part of the sport of the Unknown. The Vedic Indian, like his fellow-humans in other parts of the world, let his cognitive faculty collaborate with and have its role in his over-all ritualistic culture. It is amazing how the Vedic seers could lose themselves in lofty metaphysical speculation and enjoy also the ritualistic acts. A Vedic *sloka* says:

"On the inner seat of their soul, purified by Sacrifice,  
Was the Self — the One born in the Beginning  
To it, divinities offered Sacrifice,  
And so did sages and seers as well."

Obviously, to our ancestors, the *Yagna* (sacrifice), was a special language, in which they, the *Yajamanas*, communicated with the One (the *Purusha*), the Self, the Brahman. And the gods themselves offered Sacrifice to the Supreme Self, which is both the microcosm and the macrocosm, immanent and transcendent, within and without.

Man is a ritual being. No wonder; because he is part of the Whole which is both spiritual and actual, which receives and offers worship. To ask man to drop his rituals is an invitation to the peacock to drop its dance, to the elephant to quit its trumpet, and the Kadambari flower to lose its hue and fragrance. As we use verbal language to communicate with one another, the ancient used their rituals to commune with an unknown Power, which they located in idols, temples, churches and mosques, and so on. Man makes God human, so that he, through Him, can grow divine.

The ancient Indian was a paradox. At the metaphysical level he would revel in the Attributeless, Formless Supreme, the *Nirguna Niraakaara Brahman*. At another level, he would deal with a mind-boggling multitude of divinities, giving them each a thousand and eight attributes. He was at home with the One

### TRUE NATURE

"Only by taking refuge in Him can sorrow be removed. The troubles and difficulties one encounters as the fruit of one's actions are but the grace of God. If one can accept them, as such, one will progress towards one's real welfare."

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"In wealth and property there is certainly no peace. What then does give peace? Your own true nature is peace, knowledge, divine consciousness — unless and until this is realised, how can there be peace? In order to find your Self you must become revealed to yourself. How beautiful!

— Sri Sri Ma Anandamayi Ma

formless Infinite and with myriad gods whom he adored with a vast repertory of rituals.

What is more, he could give the Formless a form, as in the *Linga*, a marvellous blend of *rupa-arupa*. So, when, to all appearances, he was worshipping an idol, he might have been mentally roaming in the rarefied region of the formless. As Bernard Shaw has said, Hinduism "is the most tolerant and transcendental of religions. The crudest of idolators and the profoundest of Methodists can be equally at home in it."

For people who revere scriptures but scoff at idol worship, reading the scriptures is itself a ritual act. To worship at a shrine bereft of idols is not to transcend idolatry. A true iconoclast is one who has broken the only idol worth breaking, namely, the ego, his own ego, that is. If idol worship helps one to forget oneself completely, then worship is a liberating act. If rituals help you to find inner peace, harmony and order, then, by all means, use them. But if rituals lead you to dreary sand of dead habit, then drop them. When the mind becomes

subtle, *rupa arupa* worship becomes possible. Then the mind is neither bound by the ritual nor does it condemn it. To condemn rituals is a negative ritual act. We may call it a catabolic ritual. The ritual of the devotee, of the faithful, is anabolic.

The rituals of a people are highly symbolic. Though they come down from the past, but they can be the vehicle to the timeless. To each his vehicle, to each people their own vehicles. Man consciously or unconsciously performs rituals, visible or invisible. Anything repetitive is itself a ritual. A liberated person may seem to be engaged in repetitive acts but he is repeating a poem, knowing it is a poem. Ritual releases one from bondage to the little self. Truly emancipated beings like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Ramakrishna, Jalaluddin Rumi and others had danced all through their lives in spiritual ecstasy. What a lovely ritual was the *charkha*-spinning of Mahatma Gandhi! It emancipated a whole country, and perhaps, what was more, liberated a few human beings too!

Ritual is a special language. Each people use their own special language. It cannot be imposed on any one. The Eucharist conveys a meaning to one who loves Jesus, one who has sensed the mystery of transubstantiation. The frenzied fervour with which people beat their breasts and mourn the martyrdom of a thousand years ago has special message to those who would live down the agony of a great psychic trauma. Through such rituals one symbolically offers oneself along with the offering of leaves, flowers and fruits. Though the rituals of various peoples may seem to be unrelated to one another, self-offering is the common theme of all these forms of worship.

It is easy to dismiss other people's rites and rituals as mumbo-jumbo if one lacks imagination and insight. Abbé Dubois, the scholarly but prejudiced French priest, writing a book on Hindu manners, talked about "the extravagant and barbarous idolatry which forms the religious system of the modern Hindu". The Hindu

religious scenario has not changed much since the learned Abbé wrote, but an English priest, Father Bede Griffiths of Shantivanam, who is a shining symbol of inter-religious dialogue and amity, writes thus in one of his recent books, *The Marriage of East and West* :

"What holds Hinduism together with its bewildering variety of gods and goddesses, of castes and sects, of doctrines and philosophies, of ways of prayer and meditation, of worship and devotion, is ultimately this mystical experience coming to birth in the Vedas, flowering in the Upanishads and bearing fruit in the innumerable saints and sages and devotees in poetry, art and philosophy, dance and ritual down to the present day. Of course, this Hindu myth is now constantly threatened by the destructive forces of Western civilisation and with that the mystical experience which has sustained the myth is endangered."

The myth-mystical experience correlation is not mythical but real. It cannot be in doubt to those who have had moments of mystical experience. A French Catholic priest who wrote with great depth of understanding on India, lived for some time in the early fifties in a couple of caves on Arunachala's slopes. When he was told about the spiritual benefits of going round the Hill, he thought that it was yet another superstition of the Hindus, but he did go round the Hill a few times, and later he wrote in one of his books that he realised that the *giripradakshina* had a great significance. The age-old belief of the Hindus that the Arunachala is a Sivalinga has the look of a myth, but many who began doubting this belief ended by feeling that the doubter was a myth and not the faith. In our century, Arunachala's spiritual peak has attained world-wide visibility, thanks to Sri Ramana whose life and teaching centred round the sacred Hill which, He said, symbolises the Self. Bhagavan Ramana, who recommended *giripradakshina* as a salutary practice, encouraged devotees to raise the ritual to the spiritual by holding up *atmapradakshina* (circumambulation of the Self) as the true, ultimate *pradakshina*. "The ego which goes round like a whirlwind must get destroyed and must get absorbed in *Atma*. That is *Atmapradakshina*", says Sri Ramana.

The ancient Indian perhaps learnt *pradakshina* from the heavenly bodies. He had a keen mind for cosmology and had searching eyes. Aryabhata and Varahamihira represent this investigative tradition of the Hindus. The morning clouds covering the hill-top suggested perhaps the smearing of the head of the *linga* with ash (*vibhuti*, *bhasma*). The ash, the cloud in the sky, was the symbol of body which one day must turn into ashes. The *vibhuti* reminds one of the transience of all created things which turn to ashes, an incessant process of catabolism ending as earth and ashes, the last stage of burning. *Vibhuti* indicates *Kaala* (time). It reminds us to make an effort to reach the *Kaalaatita* (Lord Siva, the Timeless One), by turning our mind towards the Unchangeable amidst the changing. Fire inherent in all objects becomes visible only in objects consumed by fire. It is Formlessness manifested amidst forms.

In *Arunachala Mahatmyam* it is said that the fire first makes the cowdung cake take the form of flame and then remains as sacred ash, so does the Lord give His form to one who attains Him in the fire of meditation. Merging in Him, one abides as Infinite Wisdom. The *vibhuti*, the ash to which the body is reduced, inspires *vairaagya*, dispassion.

Sri Bhagavan's daily routine of applying *vibhuti* after His morning bath has a special significance for His devotees, since He advocated neither orthodoxy nor its opposite. The Maharshi, freest of beings, "accepts and uses", as Professor K. Swaminathan points out in his biography of Ramana, "the myths and symbols, the arguments and images, made familiar by the world religions; nor did he discourage people from continuing the *sadhanas* they were used to, although he took good care to bring self-enquiry as a supplement or alternative."

Along with *giripradakshina*, worship of the form and the formless, and the *vibhuti*, other symbols and rituals like *archana*, *abhisheka*, *aarati*, and so on, have their own psychological, social and spiritual meanings. Their common

significance is the worshipper offering himself totally to the divine Being.

In his book *At the Feet of Bhagavan*, T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, brings out the deeper meaning of some of these symbols:

Here is the true form of worship: "I am the Ocean of Bliss that is full" — this beatitude is the true bath in holy water (*abhisheka*) for the divinity of the Supreme Lord. "I am the unbounded expanse" — this beatitude is the offering of cloth to the Supreme Lord Siva. "I am the Self" — this beatitude is the real offering of ornaments to the Supreme Lord Siva. Discarding the thought forms leading to the qualities (*guna*) — this is offering of the candles to Siva, the Supreme Lord. The annihilation of the sense of difference between the Self, the Guru and the Lord — this is the offering of *bel* leaves to Siva, the Supreme Lord. Casting away the tendencies of the past (*vasana*) — this is the burning of incense to Parama Siva, the Supreme Lord. "I am the attributeless Parama Siva, the Supreme Lord" — this beatitude is the waving of light (*aarati*) before the Supreme Lord Siva. Realising that the Divine and the Self are one, is the burning of fragrant gums before Siva the Supreme Lord. That alone is offering of flowers in which one abides as the Self, the Supreme Bliss.

The great myths, the grand rituals, song and dance, may have had their genesis in the mystical experience of our ancestors. Sri Ramana once said in answer to a question that the great musician-saints sang *after* Self-Realisation, they did not sing their way to Self-Realisation. Sri Ramana did not however mean that song and dance were not means to *Jnana*. In fact, *puja*, *japa*, *paaraayana*, *dhyana* all find their precise place in Sri Bhagavan's teachings, even as He pointed out Self-Inquiry as the most direct means to Self-Knowledge. Saint Tyagaraja sang that through *Naadopaasana* great devotees like Narada had realised themselves. In another song, he says that mere knowledge of music without *bhakti* has no meaning. So, *bhakti* is the life-breath of true ritual. If song, dance, *abhisheka*, *archana*, *aarati*, *pradakshina*, burning of camphor, offering of *vastra* to the image are accompanied by *bhakti*, they can lead one up to the mystical experience. It is *bhakti* which makes rituals significant spiritual practices. They are actions which move us to our depths as words do in the poems which we cherish as the means to and the fruit of *satchidananda*.

# HUATOU MEDITATION

By Zen Master Kusarn of Korea

Recorded by Bhikshu Hahm Wol

## Stage One, Introduction

WHEN students come to SongKwarng Monastery I make it clear that meditation is not set apart from daily life, and that the quality of the latter affects that of meditation. Unhappy or frustrated people cannot meditate. So to live a happy and fulfilled life which both allows and supports Dharma, people need cultivate the Seven Factors of Enlightenment: Giving, Caring, Tolerance, Energy, Poise, Learning-Knowing, Co-Operation. These must be examined, memorized and developed always.

In turn, regular meditation helps improve life's quality.

To introduce meditation, I lift my staff overhead then knock it on the floor, saying: "You see and hear this staff, but what exactly is it that sees and hears?"

People reply: "Me, myself...the 'I'...spirit...mind."

I teach that the aim in Zen is to awaken to that which sees and hears, a bright and aware nature called Essence-of-mind. As regards Essence-of-mind there is no difference between any man, woman or child today and Shakyamuni Buddha of India or Grandmasters HuiNeng and HyoBong of East Asia. Essence-of-mind is complete in itself and lacks nothing. It is also known as Buddha-nature or One-mind.

On awakening to it, people as if see with the same eyes and hear with the same ears as Enlightened Ones.

No works can compare with breaking free from cherishing imagination and gaining insight into Essence-of-mind.

Some academics uphold a long path and graduated studies. That appeals to certain people, and if balanced is not harmful, but it is not necessary. Endless debate, irrelevance, semantics and neglect of practice are traps of scholasticism.

Zen study does not call for years of book learning. Instead, students are taught right from the start to inquire into the *huatou* (pronounced 'whar-tow'): "What is this that sees and hears?"

Essence-of-mind is likened to a lamp called *Substance* whose light is the *Functioning* of senses. It is to be seen along with the working of senses and thought, so it is not sought apart from them. To look into the *huatou* is to turn the light of the mind toward itself, but this does not imply alienation from surroundings.

Essence-of-mind has various names: Vivid-awareness, Substance, True-nature, Wisdom, Spirit, Tao... These names are not the reality, of course. It is apart from them and the Chinese character *Shim*, or (Korean and Japanese) words *Maoeum* and *Kokoro*. Whatever ideas

you have about it are clouds, obstructions. Putting aside names and ideas, inquire "What is this that sees and hears?"

In sutras it is said that Essence-of-mind knows neither rising nor ceasing, birth nor death; that it is beyond categories of being and non-being. Before awakening to Essence-of-mind, such statements are the experience of others, not your own. Putting aside concepts such as "Mind is Buddha, Buddha, Nirvana," inquire "What is this that sees and hears?"

Essence-of-mind has no particular shape or colour. It is not yellow, white, red or brown; it is not oblong, round, or in the form of a pyramid. It cannot be traded, has no set location, is not a physical object. Putting aside any view of Essence-of-mind being a material dharma or large or small, investigate "What is this that sees and hears?"

Since Essence-of-mind manifests in seeing, hearing and feeling it is not a void nothingness. Emptiness cannot know or distinguish wholesome from unwholesome. Putting aside any suspicion that Essence-of-mind may be a type of voidness, investigate "What is this that sees and hears?"

After putting aside thoughts that Essence-of-mind is captured in print, that it is Buddhahood or a physical reality or voidness, a question arises as to what it is. What is this, closer than fingers or lips, which functions in seeing, hearing, knowing?

When working on Zen, try to raise the *huatou* again and again, gently yet steadily. The main lesson I learnt as a novice under Grandmaster HyoBong was: "In the four postures (walking, standing, sitting, reclining) hold the *Huatou* as perfectly as possible." The late master was an inspiration and devoted himself to studying closely the *huatou*, no matter whether he was coming, going or staying.

Hearing orioles chirping and a stream running, for example, raise the *huatou*. Do not simply repeat the phrase "What is this that

hears"! Do not think about the vividly aware nature: only at the very start does *huatou* meditation involve reflecting on such things and the previous four negations. Concentration is not brought to the head nor taken to any one point in the body.

Hearing a gong and drums playing, for example, you raise the *huatou* but do not grasp that which hears. You do not find anything which distinguishes those sounds. Continuing to search, you evoke a spirit of inquiry or questioning-feeling. The immediate goal is to maintain that doubt-sensation which gathers in the general area below the chest both within and without your body in a large sphere.

If you find yourself dwelling on everything but the *huatou*, pause and take in what has happened: the *huatou* has been evicted by diversions and needless thoughts. Recall the pointlessness and eventual utter boredom of dwelling too much on past and future, then return to nourishing the *huatou* in the present. Time passes like an arrow, so do not let yourself be upset by worldly cares.

Before sitting down once or twice a day, hands folded in the lap and eyes half closed, people assume they can concentrate quite well. With nothing to do but try to meditate, however, they get a slow shock. Churnings of thoughts and constant mental stirring becomes the most obvious fact. It dawns at last that this agitation underlies waking hours. Only then do people realize that ease and freedom is offered by an ancient meditation technique. Toward the end of a meditation course at SongKwarng Monastery, sharp students really begin to meditate!

Those who have never once joined a meditation course are very much the poorer. It is a tremendous pity that thousands go through life so often overlooking their minds while absorbed in externals.

Using the *huatou*-question, work at staying as steady as ChoGyae Mountain. Try to keep calmly focussed second by second, second after

second. The absence of an inquiry is almost an illness for students. If a monk or nun dreams away while crossing the courtyard I walk up behind, poke him or her in the ribs and say: "Huatou, please!"

Study is not extremely easy, but it is a *human* pursuit and not complicated. With time you can focus better and relax more. After a shorter or longer apprenticeship you learn to keep the *huatou* alive while eating and dressing, coming and going. It is your own: nobody can take it from you! Holding the questioning-feeling amid stillness and bustle does not feel forced but comfortable and natural. The *huatou* has become internalized.

The *huatou*, often called Green-Dragon Precious Sword since it slashes through nets of thought, need never be laid aside. It is not like

a golf club, needle, pen, fishing rod, novel; nor is it like watching a play or dancing. *Huatou* study is a *spiritual* practice in the true sense of the term and has its own great charm.

When in mind you neither abide with nor cling to things, you have your seat of penetrating enlightenment.

There is a poem by Grandmaster Bodhidharma:

"No seizing upon thoughts or scripture.  
Direct pointing to the human mind,  
Seeing into the very heart of mind,  
And thereby realizing Buddhahood".

The above is what I first teach students. After some six months of sincere study they reach stage Two and are ready for more specific instructions.

(To be continued)

## THE BLESSING

A celestial deva came to Buddha in the shape of a Brahmana; he asked questions which the Blessed One answered :

1. "A word spoken in wrath is the sharpest sword; covetousness is the deadliest poison; passion is the fiercest fire; ignorance is the darkest night."
2. "He is the greatest gainer who gives to others; and loses most who greedily receives without gratitude. Patience is an invulnerable armour; wisdom is the best weapon."
3. "Evil thought is the most dangerous thief; virtue is the most precious treasure. The mind takes possession of everthing not only on earth, but in heaven; immortality is its securest treasure-trove."
4. "Good is attractive; evil is disgusting. A bad conscience is the most tormenting pain; deliverance is the height of bliss."
5. "Ignorance causes the ruin of the world. Envy and selfishness break off friendships. Hatred is the most violent fever and the Buddha is the best physician."
6. "BLESSING! Neither fire, nor moisture, nor wind can destroy the blessing of a good deed, and blessings reform the whole world."

44

# PILGRIMAGE TO KASHI

By V. G

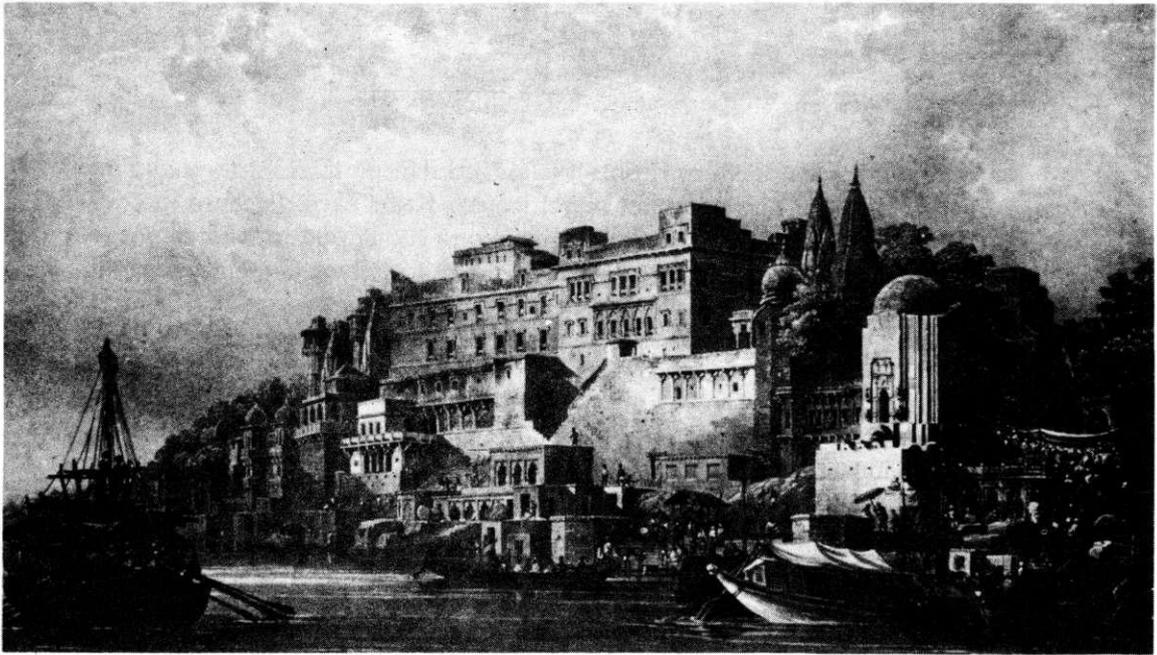
Kashi, Kanchipuram and Arunachala form a holy triangle of pilgrimage. According to *Arunachala Puranam*, Parvati, the Consort of Lord Shiva, came down to Kashi from Kailash, worshipped Lord Visweshwara, stayed in the Holy City freely distributing food (*anna*) to all in that drought-stricken land and became well-known as *Annapoorna*. She then went to Kanchipuram in the South where she performed severe penance in atonement of an error committed by Her while at Kailash. Shiva, propitiated by her perseverance and devotion, bade her to go to Arunachala. At Arunachala she was united with her Lord as the left portion of his body, whence He has been named *Ardhanareesvara*.

Beginning with this issue *The Mountain Path* takes its readers on an arm-chair pilgrimage of these three holy centres.

— Editor

Pilgrimage is an earnest quest, a voyage of discovery of the Self. It can be an inward movement or an outward one, or both, each complementing the other. It can take the form of a retreat to a quiet place where one lives in aloneness. Or it can take the form of visits to places where great sages live or lived or to spots which symbolise the religious and spiritual aspirations of a people. A true pilgrim experiments with truth all his life. Experiment means to test, to examine, to enquire, and also to go through and experience. Rabindranath Tagore sings to the pilgrim: "Walk alone, O pilgrim, walk alone; if after listening to your call, none comes along, walk alone." The earnest pilgrim walks alone even in company. And, as in the story of Ephim and Elisha of Leo Tolstoy, the true pilgrim is seen in the Jerusalem Temple even if he gets stuck on the way physically. Pilgrimage is indeed a spiritual odyssey.

A pilgrim is a *mumukshu* who desires only liberation. He is a *jijnasu* who wants to know himself, the Self. He is not just a footloose traveller nor a sight-seeing tourist gathering mementos. What marks out a pilgrim from a tourist is not the itinerary but



the quest and the accompanying fervour, his readiness to shed skins, not eagerness to acquire things. The great pilgrim that he was, Rabindranath Tagore, says in another well-known song: "I went around to see oceans, I went far to see chains of mountains, but it never occurred to me that a couple of steps away from my house, keeping both eyes open, I could see a dew drop on a leaf."

A pilgrim might or might not wander physically, but he learns to check his wandering mind. The pilgrimage ends only with the ending of the mind.

A visit to a great place of pilgrimage does help one in one's spiritual *sadhana*. If Arunachala is "the centre of the universe", Kashi is the religious capital of India, its Jerusalem or Mecca. It was a tremendous experience to go on a retreat for several months to this Eternal City, and it was thrilling to find parallels between that City of Light and Arunachala where stands the Hill of Fire.

In India, down the ages, all roads have led to Kashi. It is the dream of every Hindu to die in Kashi. For it is said that liberation is certain if one is born in Tiruvarur, or sees Chidambaram, or thinks of Annamalai, or dies in Kashi. Death in Kashi is death transformed. It is dying that unleashes the great holy power of Kashi, the power of bestowing liberation, *Moksha*. "Death, which elsewhere is feared," says Diana L. Eck in her brilliant book *Banaras: City of Light*, "is welcomed in this city as a long-expected guest. Death, which elsewhere is under the terrifying jurisdiction of Yama, is here free from terror, for Yama is not allowed within the city limits of Kashi. Death, which elsewhere is polluting, is here holy and auspicious. Death, the most natural, unavoidable, and certain of human realities, is here the gate of *Moksha*, the rarest, the most precious, most difficult to achieve of spiritual goals. Kashi Khanda says, "Brahma said: Many

times I have created the world. But Kashi is of another sort, created by Shiva Himself." So, here it is not Yama who snatches one's life but it is Shiva who liberates.

Every pious Hindu covets death at Kashi. It is indeed difficult to resist the temptation of dying there. However, one need not regret leaving Kashi alive, because the deeper meaning behind the popular belief is that at Kashi one should die to what is not real; seeing Chidambaram signifies seeing the vast empty space which is eternal realizing that the phenomenal world is transitory; and as Arunachala represents the Self, one should think there of the Self alone and be free from all other thought.

As one arrives at Kashi, one realises that the discovery of the holy city has just begun and might not end at all. So unfathomable is the depth of its mystery. There is much more to Kashi than geography. A verse in *Kashi Khanda* says:

"Are there not many holy places on this earth;  
Yet which of them would equal ...  
one speck of Kashi's dust?..  
Shiva, the Ganga and Kashi  
Where this Trinity is watchful,  
Little wonder that here abounds the Grace  
That leads one on to Perfect Bliss."

Kashi is the epitome of India's religious history, a mirror of her psyche. If in the words of Lewis Mumford, "a city is energy converted into culture," Kashi sums up the spiritual aspirations of Indians and stands as the symbol of their fulfilment. To Mark Twain it was as old as time: "Banares is older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together!"

The very name of Kashi is lustrous. The word 'Kashi' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'kaash' which means 'to shine'. "*Kaashate iti Kaashi*" It is Kashi because it shines. *Skandha Purana* says: "because that light which is resplendent Shiva shines here (*kaashate*), it is called Kashi." So Kashi is the City of Light, the Light of Enlightenment, the Light of Liberation (*moksha-prakaashika Kashi*). Lord Visvanatha and Mother Annapoorna are the presiding deities of this holy city. *Kashi Rahasya* says: "For happiness there is no home like Kashi; there is no Father like Visveshwara; there is no Mother like Annapoorna; there is no Purity like the Ganga."

Kashi is picturesquely situated on the banks of the Ganga, the River of rivers, and on three hills: Omkara, Kedar and Visveshwara, as it were, the three points of Shiva's Trident! It is said in the Puranas that Kashi existed in the first three *Yugas* and disappeared in the fourth this *Kali Yuga*. What meets the eye now is only the earthly city. A recent scholar-saint, Sri Karapatri Swami, has explained this very well thus: "Kashi has a subtle form too. All of us alike can see Her obvious earthly form, but only the pure of heart can see this special, subtle form of Hers, the City of Enlightenment. To them Kashi shows Her subtle form, and that is the form of Shiva Himself, because all of Kashi is a great Linga of Light."

So, blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see the subtle form of Kashi which is God Shiva Himself. One recalls Saint Tirujnanasambandar seeing Arunchala as an expanse of Light and Bhagavan Ramana seeing it as the 'Supreme Self' ("Arunagiri Paramaanmaave" *Arunachala Pancharatnam*, v. 1). While according to *Kashi Rahasya* "In Kashi one realises one's own Self," to Bhagavan Ramana, at Arunachala the Self reveals itself as Pure Being.

Kashi figures in the lives of many illustrious sons of India: Sages Kapila and Patanjali, Buddha and Mahavira, Adi Sankara, Guru Nanak, Guru Govind Singh, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Swami Dayananda Sarasvati, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramtirtha. Kabir, Ramananda, Vallabhacharya, Raidas, Goswami Tulsidas and Ayurvedic master Susruta lived in Banares. Poet Subrahmanya Bharati spent some months at Kashi at his aunt's house. J. Krishnamurti's earliest school in India is located in Rajghat, Varanasi, and he visited Kashi every time he was in India. Pupul Jayakar in her biography of Krishnamurti is at her eloquent best when she writes about Kashi.

"The house in which Krishnaji lived at Rajghat in Varanasi, the luminous city of pilgrimage, was built on the site of ancient Kasi on the high ground that arose near the Sangam, the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Varuna. It was here, at the most sacred point of its journey to the sea, that the river took a great curve and swept north towards its source. It was here near the ancient site of the temple Adi Kesava that the Buddha, having attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, is likely to have crossed the sacred river, travelling by ferry, to set foot on the riverbank. Along this ancient road of the pilgrim the Buddha had walked to the deer park at Sarnath to preach his first sermon.... A city known for learning and seeking, for skepticism and doubt and the hard brilliance of the dialectic mind, it was to Kasi that Adi Shankara had come to establish his supremacy... the seed of doubt, of enquiry, and the essence of the great teachings... had been held by scholars and priests... they kept alive and resonant the petals of a perennial wisdom. Along the banks of this river, dialogue and probing into the "within" of nature and mind had evolved... Every dawn Krishnaji stood in darkness on the veranda of his house and watched fire enter the rising sun, creating the world anew...

In adi Sankara's *Five Verses on Kashi*, the refrain runs:

"I am that Kashi whose essence is Self-knowledge".

He says:

"Where the magic of the world is made,  
Where the whole world of moving and non-moving  
things seems the dalliance of the mind  
Is the One Place with the nature of the Supreme Soul —  
Truth, Luminous Wisdom and Bliss,  
I am that Kashi whose essence is Self-Knowledge."

The magic of Kashi which brings to earth the highest heaven has cast its spell on countless devotees, poets and novelists. It is perhaps the most written about city of India and certainly the most revered. Indeed, in Kashi, one sees the phenomena of life and death, appearance and reality, the past and the present, in fresh light. Writes Diana L. Eck evocatively: "Banaras is a magnificent city, rising from the western bank of the River Ganges... The temples and shrines, ashrams and pavillions that stretch along the river for over three miles are golden in the early morning. They rise majestic on the high riverbank and cast deep reflections into the waters of the Ganges. Long flights of stone steps called *ghats*, reaching like roots into the river, bring thousands of worshippers down to the rivers to bathe at dawn. In the narrow lanes at the top of these steps moves the unceasing earthly drama of life and death which Hindus call *samsara*. But here from the perspective of the river, there is a vision of transcendence and liberation, which Hindus call *moksha*."

If everybody seems to rhapsodize on Kashi, it is because Kashi is itself a rhapsody, a canticle, a hymn, a chronicle and an epic. There is something in this city which touches a deep chord in every human heart. To countless sensitive souls, it is at once mother, father, teacher, God. Count Keyserling, German philosopher and a descendent of Bismark, writes in his exquisite travelogue "India: Travel Diary of a Philosopher":

"Banaras is holy. Europe, grown superficial, hardly understands such truths any more. I feel nearer here than I have ever done to the heart of the world; here I feel every day as if soon, perhaps even today, I would receive the grace of supreme revelation. The atmosphere of devotion which hangs above the river is stronger than in any church that I have ever visited..."

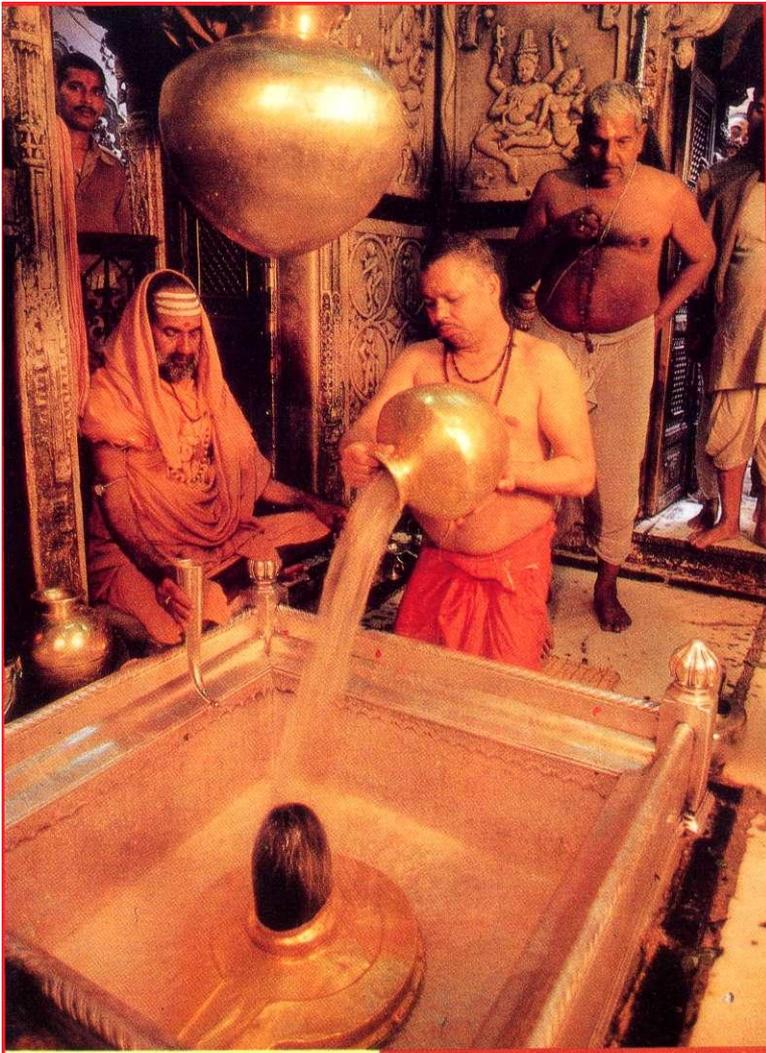
Kashi's magic and holiness are matched, if at all, only by those of the Ganga. Mark Twain, reports how some tests made by an expert scientist on the water of Ganga revealed that, while cholera germs flourished in every other sample of water, in Ganga water they always died within a few hours down to the last sample:

"For ages the Hindus have had absolute faith that the water of the Ganges was utterly pure, could not be defiled by any contact whatsoever and infallibly made pure and clean whatsoever thing touched it. They still believe it and that is why they bathe in it and drink it. The Hindus have been laughed at these many generations, but the laughter will need to modify itself a little from now on. How did they find out the water's secret in those ancient ages?"

Kashi Khanda asks:

"Are there not many rivers running to the sea?  
Yet which of them is like the River of Heaven in Kashi?"

Kashi, Ganga and Visveshwara are then a formidable trinity of holiness. To be at Kashi is to be transformed. Like Arunachala, Kashi stands as the eternal symbol of Man's quest for Self-knowledge and its fulfilment. It may not fall to every pilgrim's lot to die in Kashi, but, what is really important, one can certainly die there and everywhere to one's past and be reborn in spirit.



# KASHI

THE SACRED CITY

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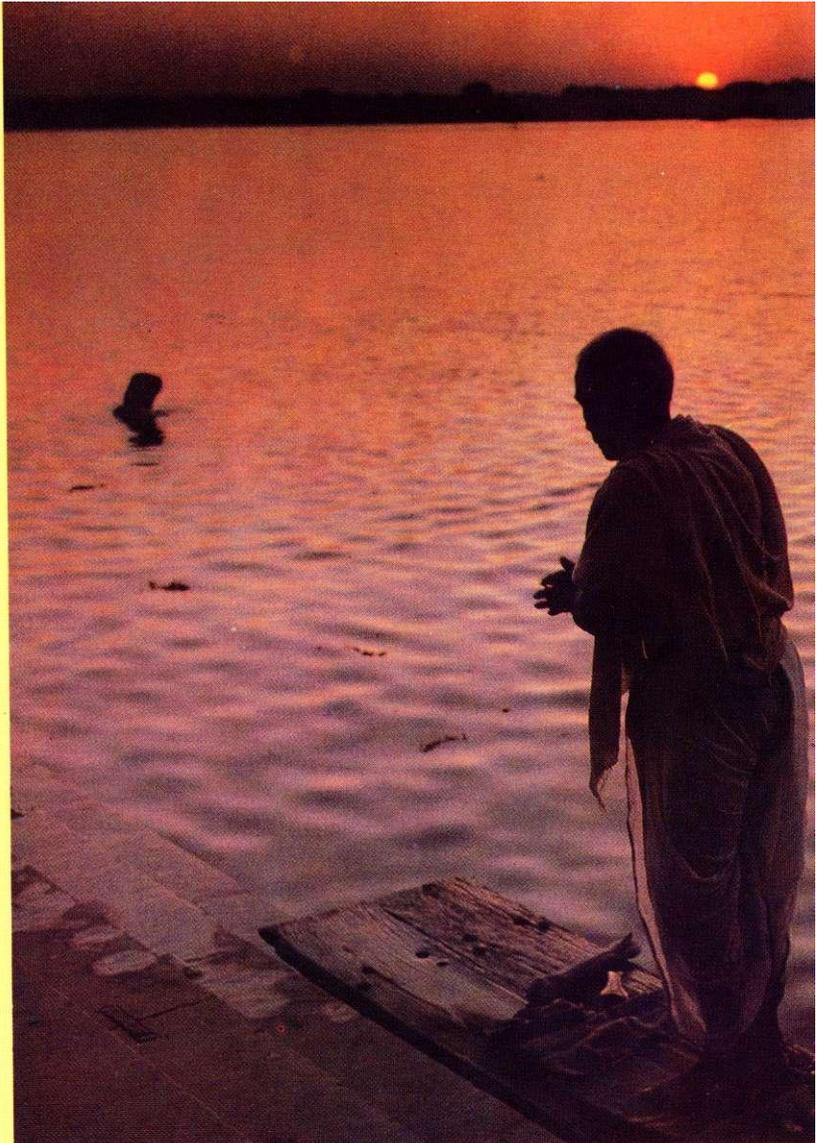
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The Sacred Ganga  
Water bathes Sri  
Visweshwara, who is  
the devotional focus of  
millions of *bhaktas*  
flocking to Kashi.

According to legends  
*Kashi* stands on the  
trident of Lord Shiva,  
the Great Yogi.



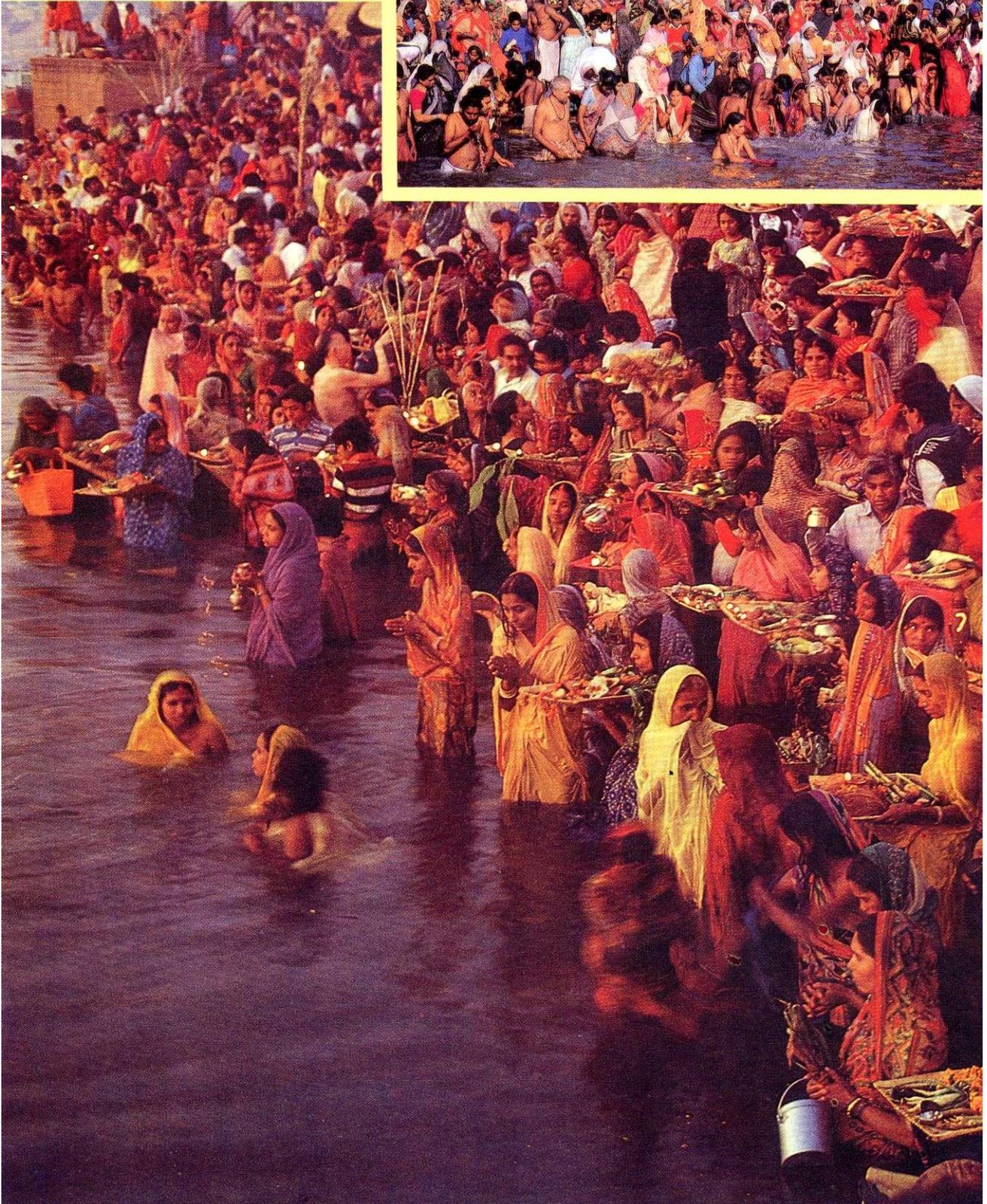
Oblutions offered to  
Mother Ganga at sun  
rise.

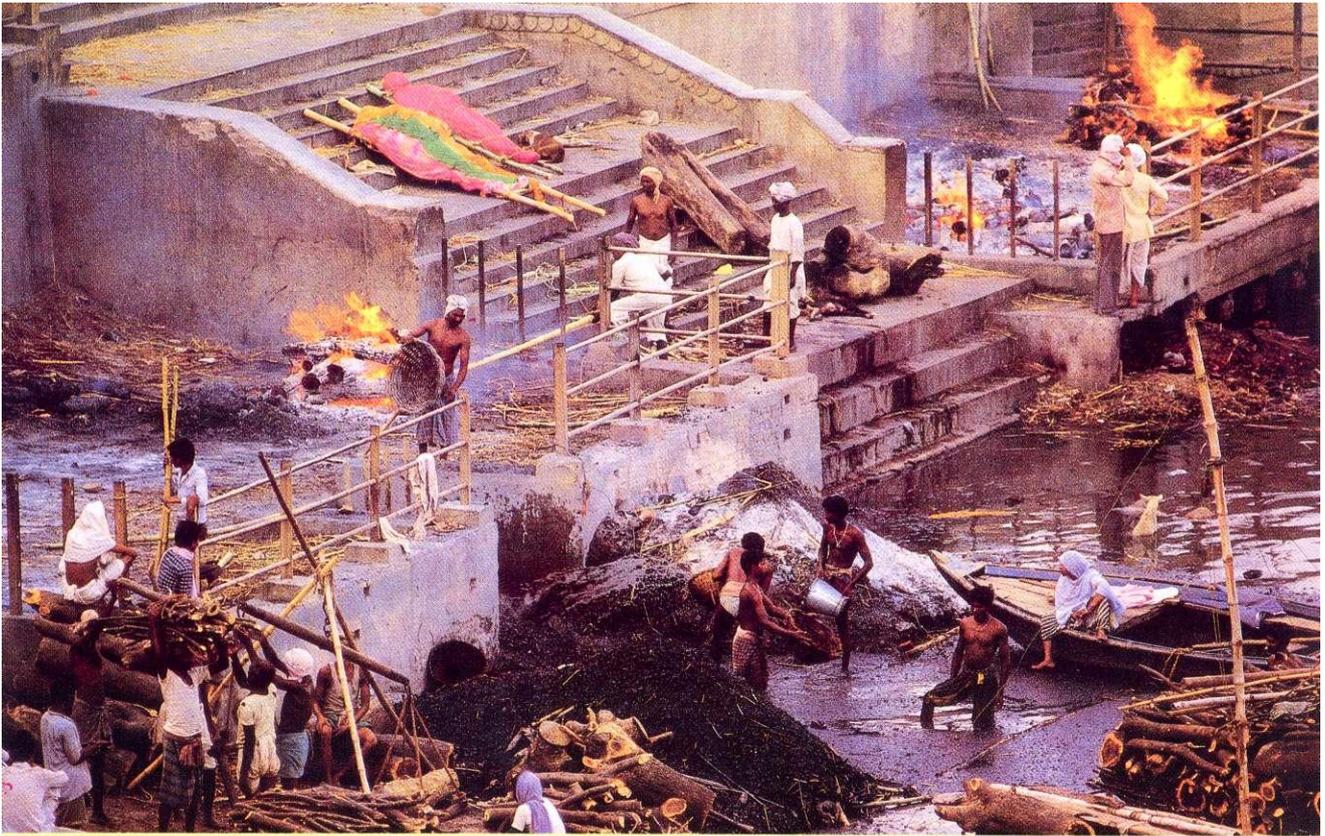


The last journey,  
sanctified by the Holy  
Water.



Devout-offerings to the Sacred 'River of Heaven', on a festive occasion.





Manikarnika Ghat: "Where death is Liberation."

A picturesque monument on the banks of Ganga.





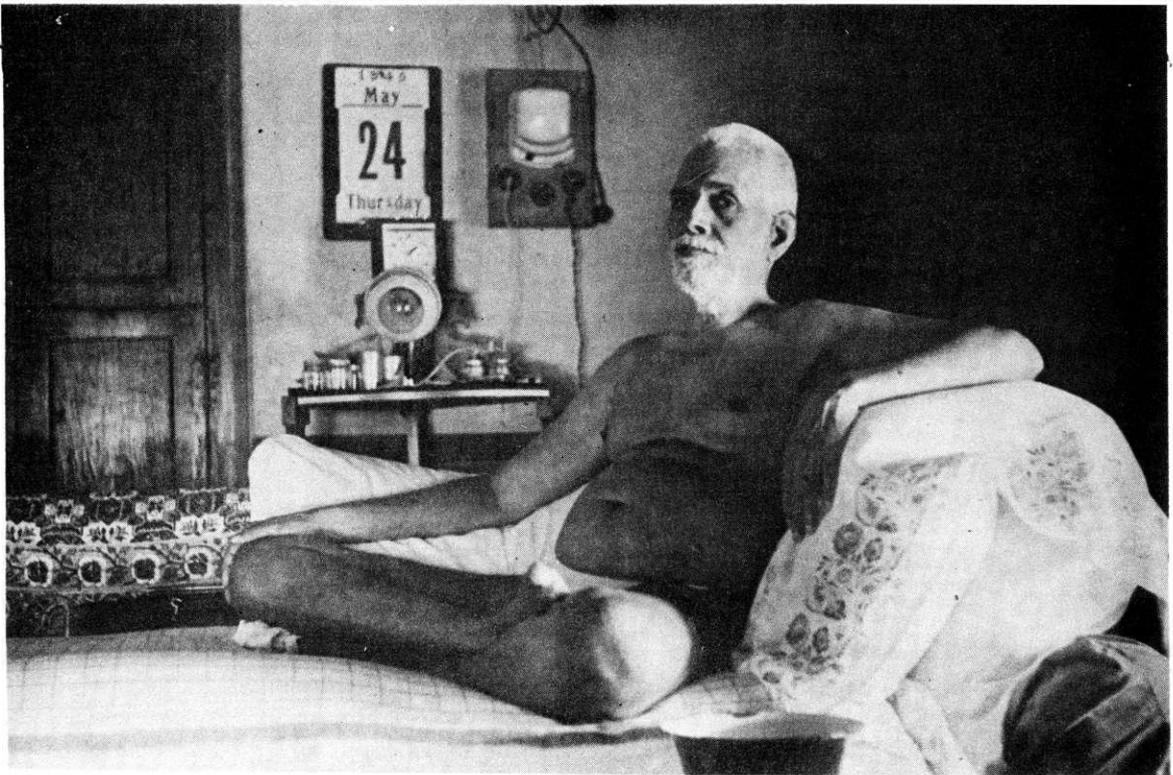
## MAHARSHI IN OUR MIDST...

*Sri M.J. Kalyanarama (alias Jayarama) Iyer, Rtd. Head Post Master was here on Vijayadasami day (20.10.1988). He is the nephew of Echammal and brother of Chellammal. He recalled the earliest memory he had of Bhagavan. He said, "Sri Bhagavan who was serious and detached amidst scholars, was playful amidst children. He joined a group of us, toddlers, playing marbles. I was barely six then. His soulabhya (ease of accessibility) cut across all barriers." Sri Kalyanarama Iyer narrated to a small gathering here an incident which was narrated to him by Venkatasubbier (the renowned upanyaasa exponent of Ramayana, who always brought out its Adhyatmic significance and relevance to Atma-Vichara. This was in turn narrated to him by the latter's mentor G. Venkatramier (a contemporary of Nayana and himself a Sanskrit scholar and poet of eminence). — Ed.*

**T**HIS happened during the early Skandasramam days. Sri Bhagavan is seated in his usual place on one side of the verandah. Sri Easwara Swami is seated nearby. Sri Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni is a little distance away while G. Venkatramier is seated near him. Venkatramier addressed Bhagavan thus: "Whichever way one turns, one finds that the mind has to be subdued. We are told it has to be controlled. Can this really be done when on the one hand the mind is an entity not easily grasped and on the other one continues to have worldly worries?" Kavyakantha moved his head slightly towards Venkatramier as if registering surprise that he should have chosen to enquire about something quite general. Sri Bhagavan remained silent for a while and then said, "Hmm. A person who has never seen an ocean must make a trip to it to know about it. Standing there before the huge expanse of water, this person may wish to bathe in the sea. Of what

use is it if, seeing the roaring and rolling of the waves, he were to just stand there thinking, 'I shall wait for all this to subside. When it does, I shall enter it for a quiet bath just as in the pond back home?' He has to realize either by himself or by being told, that the ocean is restlessness and that it has been so from the moment of Creation and will continue likewise till *Pralaya* (destruction). He will then resolve to learn to bathe in it, as it is. He may wade into it by and by, and perhaps, through prior instruction, learn to duck under a wave and let it pass over him. He would naturally hold his breath while doing so. Soon he would be skilled enough to duck, at a stretch, wave after wave, and thus achieve the purpose of bathing without coming to grief. The ocean may go on and though in it, he is free from its grip."

Bhagavan then added, after a pause, "So too here."



## THE OPTION?

(A One Act Play based on the Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi)

By Kumari Sarada

### Scene I

*A courtroom. The undertrial is being escorted to court.*

*Undertrial (to himself):* Take heart. I am sure all will be well. Have I not argued well in my own defence, made it clear that if I be at all held guilty, the offence was only to protect myself? People are even pardoned murder if it has been committed in self-defence. My offence is only impersonation. Besides, it is said the judge is compassionate, he looks compassionate.

*The guard gently, yet firmly holds him by the elbow and leads him into the courtroom. The*

*judge enters, takes his seat and looks at the undertrial, eye to eye. There is an unnameable wisdom in his look. His very presence seems to fill the courtroom with a magical peace. As he looks, the desolation gradually drops away from the undertrial, new confidence seems to fill him. Then, quietly, the judge begins to speak.*

*Judge:* Today we are to deliver judgement on your case. But it is ever our practice, before we accord the sentence, to give the accused a choice. It is a simple choice yet most crucial. Think well before you make it. This is the option given to you. To be or not to be, to live or not to live. You are free, absolutely free, to exercise this option.

**Undertrial:** (to himself) To be or not to be ... to live or not to live... Is he asking me whether I would prefer a life sentence or a death sentence? 'Not to live' can only mean a death sentence. But 'to live', what does that mean? To serve for life in prison? What will I do when I come out again into the world an old man, broken by long years in prison, with none to call my own, nothing to live for. No, it is far better to choose death now and at least escape this prolonged torture.

*He turns to the judge.*

**Undertrial:** Your honour....

**Judge:** Yes.

**Undertrial:** I do not wish to die, but if I must live in prison, life would be worthless. If I live, I should be free...

**Judge:** Where is the room for doubt? To live is naturally to be free. Life is freedom. Have you not understood this as yet?

**Undertrial:** (with great joy) Then ... Then my choice is naturally to live. I ... what can I say of your compassion? I can hardly believe my good fortune ... to live, to be free...

**Judge:** Are you very sure of your choice? You need no time to think over it?

**Undertrial:** No ... No! How can I be unsure of this? I am sure. A hundred per cent sure!

**Judge:** (smiling with great joy) You have chosen to be, to live. Therefore the court awards you this sentence, appropriate to your choice... You will die. And you may choose the means of your own death. Are you satisfied?

**Undertrial:** (looks shocked, stares in disbelief) Your honour, I seem to have heard what I feared, not what you spoke. Forgive me my inattention. What did you say?

**Judge:** Exactly what you heard.

**Undertrial:** (now angry) Are you mocking me? Is this the way to play with the feelings of a wretched man? Why this farce of giving me an option? (He mimics the judge): "It is ever our

practice to give the accused a choice." Give him a choice so that you may have the sadistic pleasure of granting him the opposite? Is that compassionate smile you wear only a disguise? Ha! A master of disguises trying and sentencing another to death for impersonation!

**Judge:** (seriously, yet calmly) You rave on and on. Only your own choice has been granted. Do you not know that, to be, to live, is to die? Only if you die can you live. Not to be, not to live, is not to die. You chose to live, so you must choose to die.

**Undertrial:** Oh! Now he talks to me in riddles! Perhaps he is word-blind. I have heard of people being 'colour-blind'. Perhaps there are some who are 'word-blind' or 'word-deaf' who understand 'to live' as 'to die' and 'not to live' as 'not to die,' and this judge is one of them...

Sir! Forgive me, I was unaware of these meanings. I have made the wrong choice. If 'to live' is 'to die', then let me not live. I implore you, having given me one chance, give me but one more.

**Judge:** I told you repeatedly to choose with care. And yet, had you made the wrong choice, I would surely have let you change it. But you have made the right choice, knowingly or unknowingly. It is my duty now to make you live that option.

**Undertrial:** 'Option'? 'Choice'? What words! What words from the lips of a murderer. Yes, you are a murderer masquerading as a judge. How many innocent men have you killed before me with this pretence?<sup>1</sup> I must die. Well, let me at least justify my death. Let me kill you before I die...

1. "How many are there who have been ruined like me for thinking this Hill to be the Supreme? Oh men who, disgusted with this life of intense misery, seek a means of giving up the body, there is on earth a rare drug which, without actually killing him, will annihilate anyone who so much as thinks of it. Know that it is none other than this Arunachala!"

— Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, *Eleven Verses to Sri Arunachala*.

He attempts to strangle the judge. The guards drag him away as he screams 'madman ... sadist ... murderer ...'

### Scene II

*The prison. The convict is seated in a posture of utter dejection; head between his knees; exhausted by his hysterical outburst. After a long while, he slowly looks up, walks to the door and holds the bars, listlessly placing his head on them. Then comes back into the room, moving his hands along the wall. Thinks of something and stops suddenly in his tracks, excitedly snaps his fingers:*

My goodness! Why didn't I think of that! All my disguises put together would pale before this one! I hid myself in crowds, used threats and persuasions. But never have I tried this master disguise, the *disguise of death*. Had I known of it, I might never even have got caught! It is not too late. This is the best time to use it. Perhaps this is what the judge really meant. He is compassionate, but it was not possible for him to let me go scot-free. He was bound in justice to give me a life sentence. However, if I 'died' I would be taken away from here and I could escape at any point.

I shall feign death by heart attack. Hmm... now, how should I die? It is a good thing I'm such a wonderful actor. But what if they should bring a doctor to certify my death? I think I can fairly well control my breathing; even my heart and pulse. If there is any danger of their guessing, the door will in any event be unlocked and I can run for it, and it will be years before they catch me. Once I am out I can get into any of my million disguises and my people will protect me. Only now that I am all alone, I have no means of hiding myself. Well, never mind, I have found the way. I must have a heart attack...

*Suddenly he begins to laugh loudly as if mad, then abruptly as if in great pain he holds his chest. Two guards have come to the door and are watching him. 'Water, water!' he gasps and somehow crawls to the barred door. Water is handed to him through the bars. He drinks*

*some of it. Pretends to feel relieved, walks into the cell, drinks some more water, chokes on it and falls flat as if dead. Voices from without.*

*Voice 1: He's dead I think, choked on the water.*

*Voice 2: Perhaps a heart attack killed him. He was desperate.*

*Voice 1: Some of them die from fear of the noose. You know, don't you, that he was sentenced to die? Perhaps it is better he died this way. Anyway, you wait here, I'll fetch the doctor.*

*Voice 3: There's no need.*

*Voice 2: Your honour! He seemed to have a heart attack, asked for water, choked and fell. He looks dead. No sign of breathing for quite a while now.*

*All this while the convict lies absolutely still like a corpse.*

*Judge: (the third voice) He is not dead.*

*At this the convict starts slightly but quickly regains the stiffness.*

*Judge: Let me in.*

*He comes in. He has a book in his hand. Sitting beside the convict, he quietly speaks to him:*

*Judge: You are not here to prove your acting prowess. Has that not got you into enough trouble already? I have asked you to die, not to pretend death.*

*Convict: (Opening his eyes, looking at the judge, almost frightened).*

*How did you know that I would try this? Did you come here on purpose to prevent my escape? You frighten me.*

*He gets up and moves away from the judge.*

*You really want to drive me mad thinking of the various ways in which I could kill myself. What have I done to you? Have I cheated you sometime unknowingly? Have I harmed any of your people?*

*Judge:* You have never cheated me, for you cannot. But you have cheated yourself and I do not want you to do so any longer. I am prepared to suggest a way, a simple way to die and thus to live, based on my own experience.

*Convict:* Indeed, your own experience! Do you mean to say the experience of death itself? Perhaps you did kill yourself and now I'm only talking to a ghost. Sorry to disappoint you, I don't believe in ghosts.

*Judge: (Smiling)* Don't tell me you don't believe in yourself?

*Convict:* What?!

*Judge: (now serious)* Never mind. If you will believe me and live, do. If you're really interested, if you have the courage to conduct an experiment with death, the way is outlined here. Go through this book and give it a try if you feel inclined. Otherwise choose your own method, any method. But die you must, and time is now.

*As the convict stares at the Judge bewildered, he gets up and quietly walks away. The click of the lock of the prison door is heard. Only then the convict realises what has happened. His ruse to escape has backfired. He is back to square one.*

*Convict:* "Give it a try!" As if death were a new dish or the latest fashion that one could try! Or perhaps he has found some easy way to death and wants to try it on the criminals before patenting it. These days they patent all sorts of things, may be they can patent "How-to-die in 30 seconds" too. Perhaps he'll get an award for inventing an inexpensive and painless method for executing the death sentence. And I am to be a guinea-pig to his theories... Yet, he has given me a printed book. Which means he has already publicized his methods. So I am not the first or the only victim. Nor is it meant only for prisoners like me. Let me just see what the book says.

*He looks at the cover and reads aloud: 'Forty Verses on Reality'. So, it's a poem on 'reality'. But what has reality got to do with death? Of*

*course, death is very real, yet, it seems an unlikely title for the theme of death.*

*Suddenly he puts the book away.*

*After a pause, he continues his soliloquy almost in a whisper:*

Perhaps there is something in this book, some trick by which I can escape. Who knows? Otherwise why would he come here himself and bring me the book? Well, he has given the verdict and I would anyhow have to find a means to kill myself. There was no need for him to come. Does he intend to help me after all? Oh! How he tempts me into laying my faith in him!

*He picks up the book again.*

All right, I will obey him. I will conduct the experiment. I know of no means to escape now. I have to die. It is inevitable. Let him have the pleasure of seeing me die his way.

*The scene ends.*

### Scene III

*The convict gives up trying to read the book in the meagre light. He puts it aside and sits still.*

*Voice: (outside)* Up and about, you lazy boors! It's past four. Do you think this is your father's house for you to eat and sleep in?

*Convict:* Oh! It is morning already. I will have to attend to the prison duties now....

*Guard: (entering and placing a lighted lamp in the cell):* Hey you, No. 13! You need not attend to the regular prison duties. The Judge has ordered some 'special work' for you that is 'most important' I believe! *(Laughs cruelly)*. Special work indeed, sitting and reading a book. Come on, the rest of you, get on with it! What are you waiting for?

*Leaves locking the cell. The convict opens the book and reads:*

**"For those who, out of fear of death, take refuge**

**In the Lord, Conqueror of Death,**

**The first to die is the 'I'-thought.**

**Then, they are naturally immortal.**

**Can there ever again be room for fear of death?"<sup>2</sup>**

How puzzling! If I am afraid of death and take refuge in the Lord, I die, and then am naturally immortal. How can one die and therefore become immortal? Unless it be a promise of immortal after-life. But no. It is not that. Here is not simply the spiritual idea of the immortality of the spirit after death. Doubtless, the immortality of the spirit is implied, yet the emphasis seems to be elsewhere. This is not the dichotomy between body and soul. In fact, the body seems to be nowhere in the picture, not even with respect to its transience, its perishing on death. What dies, he says, is the 'I'-thought, no mention of the body. A strange approach to death. Why does he pick on the extinction of the 'I'-thought alone? With what assurance he writes of death, as if he has known it intimately. He did say it was his experience....

*The convict reads a verse aloud:*

*Flips through the book and reads at another page.*

**"Without the 'I' the second and third persons cannot exist.**

**When the 'I' is destroyed through awareness of its source,**

**The second and third persons too disappear,**

**Our own natural state of the Self shines forth,**

**Devoid of the divisions 'they', 'you' and 'I'!"<sup>3</sup>**

The 'I'-thought is singled out for attention because it is the central thought. Only when I am aware of myself as an individual do I become

aware of the other. Awareness of myself and awareness of the world arise together, yet I know the world because I am. If I cease to exist, there is no world for me. This sense of myself that I have, this 'I' feeling, is what he calls the 'I'-thought. I say there is no world for me without this 'I'. And yet he says when you question the nature of this 'I' it 'flees', it is destroyed. He assures that what remains then is not a void, it is fullness. Again and again, he calls it the One, the Blissful, the Immortal, the Natural, the Truth that is one's own Self.

How does he say this? How is one to believe that this sense of 'I' that we have is not the truth about oneself? Why should we think there is another, not this, that is the 'Truth', the Self which he calls the source of this 'I'-thought?

*He pauses and thinks a while.* 'Source' -yes that word contains the clue. Not long back did I think that awareness of myself and of the world 'arise' together. (*Gets up slowly*). Now this body has arisen; from this bench. Likewise, if awareness of myself 'arises', two questions must be answered — When? Where from? It arises when one awakes. There is no awareness of anything at all in deep sleep, not even of myself. In any case, there is no sense of 'I' as in waking, no sense of a particular identity, only recollection of happiness. So, there must be an 'I' that continues through sleep to permit consciousness of that unawareness. But it is not this identity. That means 'I', with awareness of my body, all my thoughts, am as good as dead in sleep. Yet I do not fear sleep rather I welcome it. I really enjoy a state when I am practically dead as I know myself. Perhaps this is because I am sure that identity will return as it is on waking. But then, where does this identity go to in sleep? Where does it rise from on waking? Into that aspect of myself that continues even in sleep. Then, I do not really know myself. Not completely. For, I am not aware of the 'I' that

2. (Tr.) Adapted from A.R. Natarajan's, Sat-Darshanam — Forty Verses on Reality: Prayer Verse 2.

3. *Ibid* Verse 14.

exists, minus my identity, in deep sleep. How can I know that I? Naturally, by tracing the identity back to its source even while awake. Yes. This is what he explains (*looking at the book*).

This must be the clue to the mystery of death! My identity goes back to the source, he says, and this source he refers to as the Self. In another verse he describes the Self as unborn and calls the body insentient. Then how does the body have an awareness? In fact, a very important part of my identity is my body with its reactions, its pains and pleasures. How could it experience all this if it were insentient? Let me read again. Ah! He says, within the body an entity rises which binds the two, the unborn, Self that is consciousness and the lifeless body. This binding factor is variously named ego, knot between body and self, bondage and so on...<sup>4</sup> This link is the 'I'-thought. Thus the 'I'-thought draws its awareness from the Self but superimposes it on the body to which the 'I'-thought attaches itself. Then, thinking itself to be the limited body and its own source of awareness, lords it over all else, preserving its illusion. How can it be made to return to its source, to give up its illusory sovereignty?

*(He ponders for some time.)*

Aha! I know! It must be isolated. It is totally dependent on forms, he says, that's the catch<sup>5</sup>. If it is separated from them, it will be weakened. Isolated, robbed of every opportunity for disguise, severed from all relations, alone, all, all alone, only this isolation has forced me to look into myself. So must it be for the sense of identification that is the crux of me, the 'I'-thought. First to make it utterly alone, next, rattle its confidence by questioning its very nature, take care that it does not 'pretend death' like I did, and then watch it intently as it falls 'headlong back' into the source. That is the experiment with death, the threshold of life...

*He goes into meditation. A long time passes. His face becomes radiant, he gets up and moves around, oblivious of his body, his surroundings, of everything. Tears of ecstasy roll down his*

## STILL AMIDST MOVEMENT

By Ann Keogh

Oh Arunachala,  
Burning with love  
Pierce my longing heart  
As I humbly gaze above.

Oh Arunachala,  
The world busy at thy feet —  
Thou dost stand in silence,  
Stillness complete.

Oh Arunachala,  
The beauty will ever be.  
May thou who art Ramana  
Live for ever in my heart  
Whispering 'That Thou Art'.

*cheeks from his half open eyes, joy wells forth in his smile. Then slowly, as if with great effort, he speaks:*

What can I say.... my Master, of the sentence you awarded me? You asked me to execute myself and I called you merciless, little knowing that you wanted me to hang by the neck, not me, but my ego, with the noose of self-enquiry. Is that not really the meaning of death? I called you 'madman', 'murderer'. Indeed you murdered the 'I' in me and made me mad as yourself<sup>6</sup>. What madness is this, Lord, where bliss wells in every pore, in the very marrow of every bone?<sup>7</sup>

4. *Ibid*, Verse 24

5. *Ibid*, Verse 25.

6. "You made me give up craze for the world and made me crazy for you, O Arunachala. Now give me a medicine to cure every kind of madness."

7. In Verse 2 of 'Arunachala Padigam' Bhagavan calls Arunachala the 'great nectar that seeps in the very being of devotees' 'anbar ahathinil oorum aaramude'. Muruganar repeatedly sings of this Bliss, this 'perinbam' which Manickavachagar thus describes:

You come to me yourself, uninvited, <sup>8</sup> to show me the way, saying, "This is the way I died and live, but you need not take it on my word, try it for yourself".

When I needed light to read, you had it sent to me, when I needed time for self-enquiry, all the time was made mine ... With love and care, with laughter and sternness, you kept me to my option, the option to live, to be the Self, to die as the 'I'-thought — 'My choice', made unknowingly right! But the next moment, when I pleaded that I should be allowed to change it, you would not relent. You said, "had you made the wrong choice, I would surely have let you change it." Tell me the truth. Had I then failed to 'choose' aright, would you not have reserved the judgement and waited till you had made me understand what to choose? Would you not have done so? Where then is 'my choice' in this? You gave the option, you chose for me, and you alone made me live the option and know your infinite Grace, as the Bliss of the

Self, Ramana, my Master, what words can describe this miracle?<sup>9</sup>

*He is lost in silence,*

*The scene closes.*

---

"Don't eat honey from a flower,  
That's only a trifle like a millet seed.

But go to the Dancer who pours forth the honey of bliss.  
So that your very bones will melt.

Wherever you think of Him, see Him, or speak of Him."

(Tr.) Glenn E. Yocum, *Hymns to the Dancing Siva*.

8. 'A rare, unlooked for guest he came,  
Right in he came, of his own accord,  
This Venkata, Lord of my own self,  
And ate up the whole of my fond mind  
As if it were uncloying nectar."

Muruganar's Decad of the Journey (Tr.) Prof. K. Swaminathan, *Songs from Sri Muruganar's 'Ramana Sannidhi Murai' Set to Music*, p77

9. Muruganar in *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*, With Grace He governed me, that I became He  
What know I of this wonder?"

## THE LIVING GURU

By Swami Ramdas

**"In Spiritual matters the best rules are those which are not made by others but self-imposed by the *Guru* from within. A tree does not grow in the shade of another tree, but gets stunted. It can grow full only in the open. So also you must have a free and open atmosphere for your spiritual growth ...**

**"So get inspiration from saints, but do not think of taking shelter permanently in any *Ashram*. Live alone in free and open atmosphere. Then the God within will lead you. The indwelling God is none other than your *Guru* who initiated you from outside as a human being. *Guru* is the immortal, all pervading spirit. Never look upon him as a mere person. If you develop this attitude from the beginning you will realize that the *Guru* never dies."**

# THE "TWO COOKS"

By Rosalind Christian

*"It is only to help people give up regarding the unreal as real that all the religious and the practices taught by them have come into being."*

— *Day by Day with Bhagavan, 7-3-46*

SOME time ago I came across a story from the little island of South Uist off the rocky West Coast of Scotland (U.K.). Without the help of the Maharshi it is unlikely that I could have made much sense of any of it, and it is quite certain that I should not have understood one word of the episode of the Two Cooks. Here is that part of the story (simplified) along with my interpretation of it. The main story is from one version of a huge family of stories about Three Brothers who set out to win their fortunes. The story delineates the characters of these 'brothers' so clearly that we can give them names — Body, Mind and Spirit. After diverse experiences each wins a 'Kingdom' and marries a 'Princess'. Here is an episode from the adventures of the middle brother.

The Clever Brother, Mind, came to a great palace and took service in the King's kitchen. His position was humble. He was only the under-cook for he had to take orders from the Head-cook or Chef. However, he worked hard

and was in fact the most inventive and resourceful servant the King ever had!

As the lad went about his work he was surprised that he did not see any women at all, but, at last, he learnt that there was a Princess who dwelt in a lonely and well-guarded tower. Moreover, he was told that it was quite impossible to see her. But, of course, being what he was, nothing would deter him.... So, one night, when everybody was asleep, he turned himself into a dove (he was very good at making himself into different shapes) and flew down the chimney into the Princess' room.

(The golden rule in dealing with such ancient stories is to put *all* the characters inside one person — the *sadhaka* himself. The heroine, true-wife, or Princess, then becomes the Guru, *Atman* or Self. 'Woman' seems to symbolise the inner or intuitive side of life. Hence the dearth of womankind in this castle. The Kingdom of Mind is, for the most part, a determined enemy of intuition. The Princess is hidden in some remote turret or underground citadel, to suggest

the difficulties that mind has, to penetrate the inner or intuitive region of experience.)

Directly she saw the strange lad in her room the Princess asked him,

"Who are you?"

"I am your father's head-cook," said he.

"That you are not," she replied.

"However," she continued, "if you come again I will give you a gift, for such is the custom of the country." So, of course, the Clever Lad returned the next night and she gave him a most beautiful coat. "Wear it," she said, "when you go to the fair tomorrow."

Next morning the lad started to make himself smart for the fair. "You can't go," said the Head-cook. "You're on duty. I'm going." The lad said nothing, but he spread out his beautiful coat. When the Head-cook saw it he was terribly envious! "I'll give you a good price for that," he said. "Well," said the other, "I won't be hard on you. If you give me a good feast before we go to the fair and a good feast when we come back, you can have the coat." So the lad got lots to eat and the Head-cook got the coat and went to the fair. The Princess watched to see who wore her gift and when she saw who it was, her hands fell down by her sides and she went straight home.

Late that night when all were asleep the lad flew as usual to the Princess' room.

"Why were you not at the fair?" she asked.

"Was not I?" he said.

"No," said she, "and I wish you would tell me who you are."

"Am I not your father's head-cook?" said he.

"Not you," she replied.

In spite of the fact that he seemed to have lied to her, she gave him another gift to wear, but the next day and the next it was exactly the same story: the Head-cook took each lovely gift and strutted up and down and the poor Princess

felt so sad and faint that she had to go straight home!

#### Comment

As any devotee of the Maharshi will see, there is a constant return to the question "Who are you?". I had read Arthur Osborne's *Ramana Maharshi* where he writes that Bhagavan's method of Self-enquiry was the revival of a very ancient teaching. Here in this episode from the "Three Brothers", I felt I had confirmation of this. Putting *all* the characters inside *one* person, we see that the Princess, *Atman*, Guru or Self is teaching Mind to ask the question:

"Who am I?"

"What is my real identity?"

Each day (or each life-time, if you like) we take the gifts that come from the Centre or Self and parade them in the world's market, forgetting, or never bothering to enquire, whence these 'gifts' come. Ego-mind loves to put on new personalities; to 'try on a new hat'! It is an excellent phrase because head-dresses have so often been symbolic of profession and status. Ego-mind tries on a soldier's helmet or a scholar's robe — the permutations are endless — and walks out into the world, to show his prowess. But the poor little 'Princess' who is the origin of all this finery looks on with dismay. As Ego-mind gets more and more puffed up, 'She' gets fainter and fainter, which is only a humorous way of saying that man is divided from his true Self or Centre by these worldly egotistical antics.

An editorial by Arthur Osborne, 'Who is Who' (*The Mountain Path*, July 1969), is all about this fictitious individual whom our story-teller calls the Head-cook. Mr. Osborne quotes Solomon as saying that "servant when he ruleth" is one of the great calamities, and comments: "The mental faculty is a servant: the mind makes itself a 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." How aptly this comment fits the picture of the Head-cook!

Happily, mind, of its nature, can divide and observe itself.

"Only with the help of the mind the mind has to be killed. But instead of setting about saying there is a mind, and I want to kill it, you begin to see 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."

- *Day by Day with Bhagavan* (8.11.45)

True mind (the Clever Brother) observes how absurdly and selfishly the Head-cook behaves. Moreover, as we have seen, he returns each night to the tower where the Princess lives. (Is it not in deep sleep that mind returns to its true Centre?) At each meeting the Princess asks the same question.

"Who are you?"

Gradually his false sense of identity fades and dies, or is pricked like a balloon. No wonder that when this lad marries his Princess the Head-cook disappears entirely!

Some say that the Head-cook was hanged! Surely this is a witty and oblique look at breath-control, which fits in well with *sadhana* of this 'brother', Mind. Hanging is slow death by asphyxia, and so it is a suitable 'death' for Ego-mind. Devotees returned time and again to the efficacy of breath-control, and always the Maharshi seems to have accepted it as a tool, a partial solution to the problem of overcoming mind. It is discussed towards the end of No. 54 of the *Talks*:-

The mind is the rider and the breath the horse. *Pranayama* is a check on the horse. By that check the rider is checked.

Or again, in *Talks* No. 371:

*Pranayama* is meant for one who cannot directly control the thoughts. It serves as a brake to a car.

## HILL OF FIRE

By Kamaladevi

Hill of Fire  
You are my one desire  
O Hill of Fire  
Shining from Heaven to earth.

Wisdom's flame  
My only aim  
Wisdom's flame  
Shine, shine as my Self.

Hill of Fire  
Grant me peace  
O Hill of Fire  
Gem within.

Hill of fire Grant me peace  
O Hill of Fire  
Let all thought cease.

I believe that this ancient story says:

If you are having a lot of trouble with your 'Head-cook', threaten him with 'hanging'.

The old story is witty and full of humour in its symbolism. The choice of the symbol 'Cook' is an example of this. How splendid are his creations — and how ephemeral!

How well the story of the Two Cooks fits the Maharshi's method of Self-enquiry! True it is only one episode in the longer story of the adventures of the Three Brothers; but it is very central, and explains a lot about the middle 'brother', Mind. Cooks and kitchens often appear in folktale and derivatives from ancient folktale — for example, the famous stories of King Arthur and in the *Mahabharata*. Certainly the Celtic peoples, who live on the extreme seaboard of Europe, had a strictly disciplined oral tradition of story-telling which may have served to keep this tiny allegory intact.

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# THE PORTALS OF SELF-ENQUIRY

By V. Dwaraknath Reddy

**T**OSSED and tormented by the waves of hope and desire, that entice us as sunny ripples but change unknown into vicious breakers and transform the moment of frolic into the hour of despair, some of us somehow regain the tranquil shore, and begin to contemplate the occurrence in order to prevent a recurrence.

Such a one am I, and if such you too be, we will keep company through this page, or else we part here, to go each his way.

Tell me now, my friend that have chosen to stay with me, whether if in this instant a benevolent dispensation grants us the fulfilment of all the hopes earlier withheld and all the desires earlier denied, our minds will know abiding peace? How long will it be before we are enmeshed again in demand and despair, in hope and fear?

When we see the banality of our method in seeking happiness through satiated desire, while in truth desire fuels further desire, a resentment starts of the travesty we have made of our lives so far, and the mind withdraws into itself to consider with earnestness and urgency: What is my true nature? In what lies fulfilment? What, indeed, am I?

The enquiry looks critically at the concept I have had of myself, wherein I am this body solely or essentially. I may be accommodative

and concede that I am this body with a special capability. I recognize as consciousness or awareness or mind or life. With this faculty I am alive (a live body) and without it I am dead (a dead body). The unquestioned implication so far is that the special attribute of mind or life is a function of the body; that is, structured as it is, this conglomerate of insentient flesh, skin, bone, brain and blood, has biochemical capabilities to generate the energy that is experienced by itself as sentiency, or consciousness.

The contradiction between an insentient mass giving rise to sentiency now focusses attention upon itself, till it is seen beyond further dispute that it cannot be thus. The energy of consciousness must be a self-existent and independent truth; energy is not produced (created) by matter, howsoever structured, but only manifests as a force that acts upon and moves matter. It follows that energy which exists independent of matter, and manifests its properties as a force when related to matter, cannot be destroyed when its association with material vestures is ended.

It further follows then that life in me, understood as the energy that manifests as consciousness or activity in me, cannot be destroyed by the phenomenon called death. My

death can only signify that my life-energy (my mind-capability) can no longer manifest in that body, and lacking that support the body has turned into an insentient corpse. When the flow of electrical energy has been switched off, the moving (living) fan has become the still (dead) fan. But did electricity die?

This moves us to a perception of the subtler truth of oneself as the energy that abides in, or constitutes one's mind, which is the totality, or else the essence, of its experiences, feelings, responses, memories. My mind is my own (as yours is yours) with its circumference of which I (my I-ness) am the centre, a circle that may expand or contract, but always a limited separate entity. So it seems.

Till again the enquiry, being earnest and urgent, re-examines the early acceptance of a life-time's habit, and arrives at the question: what can limit consciousness? make of it a fragmented entity? My mind has to answer this question, and obviously any answer can only give verbal shape to what the mind perceives, and whatever is perceived is only a mode of consciousness, a thought within the mind. So it becomes akin to drawing a circle upon the sea with water to demark a small area of the sea! The mind can conceive of nothing that can be its *container*, for whatever is conceived is already its *content!*

The prompting of a totally new dimension to one's being (reality) is felt within the mind that has turned its gaze upon itself. I-ness is not circumscribed, it cannot be. When the frontiers of my mind are seen to be non-existent, its

unbroken identity with the Total-Mind, the Total-Consciousness is sensed. If this body of mine was the limited equipment with which my limited mind identified, in the expanded reality of the total mind it is obvious that the universe constitutes its body-equipment.

Then there is in truth a unitary consciousness, expressing through a unitary equipment (universe), and the whole phenomenon is a unitary movement.

And you my friend, still by my side in shared discovery, are to me not other than me, as in another dream where I was the dreamer and you were my friend in the dream, were both inherent in one dream-movement that arose in one dream-consciousness of one ME. In the restored reality of myself as the waker when the dream had ended, there was only one architect, one experiencer of the dream, he that could say: I dreamt, I was there, you were there, but in truth nothing was there. It seemed I was that one, but I am this one, and have never been other than this one. Do you see, my friend, that you cannot in the morning assert your presence in my dream of last night? That therefore there is only one I into which all the 'me' and 'you' and 'they' and 'it' must resolve?

To have sensed that as the ultimate Truth of oneself is to have arrived at the portals of Self-Realization. It is the entrance through the arch upon which are inscribed the immortal words with which Bhagavan Ramana launches the earnest seeker upon the final voyage of delight and discovery:

WHO AM I?

### KUDOS TO "THE MOUNTAIN PATH" - 2

At the Third Decennial Convocation of the VISHWA YOGA SAMAJ (World-Wide Yoga Congress), Pondicherry, convened by Yogashiromani Dr. Swami Gitananda Giri, from January 13 to 17, 1989, its *Swarna Padma* (Golden Lotus) Award for "Vedanta and Guru Bhakti Journals" for the years 1980 to 1989 was given to The Mountain Path.

# ONE LIGHT: MANY RAYS

By Rosalind Sharp Wall

IN the summer of 1933, when I was 14 years old, I was staying in Ojai with the Max Wardalls. Max Wardall had been with Annie Besant in India and was very close to Krishnamurti. It was Uncle Max, as I called him, who gave Krishnaji his Ojai property, Arya Vihara.

Every Sunday we listened to K. speak in the Oak Grove. On one or two occasions, I came over for dinner at the Wardalls. During the week we meditated on his sayings of the previous week which had been quickly transcribed and printed.

I was a person with no religious or philosophical background (both my parents were atheists) but I found myself totally spell-bound by Krishnaji who, indeed influenced me for life — he who preached against influence.

One afternoon, resting and meditating in the guest-house after a particularly moving address by K, I became aware of — not exactly a presence in the room but, let us say, a vibratory beingness or state of being. Even as I began to sense this, I found myself asking the question: 'Who am I?'

The answer came immediately. Not on an intellectual level but one of absolute knowingness. I was the deathless one. I had never been born and would never die. I was eternal I had always been and would never not

be. I was beyond the realm of personality, beyond the world of form. My personal egoic self — the 14 year old girl — was included in this (more or less) but was of no account in itself. The little 'I' simply did not exist.

From this moment on, my entire life and attitude towards life changed. When I returned to my home and family in Carmel I was all but a stranger.

I had never heard of Ramana Maharshi at the time and so had no idea that this was my first contact with him. (Anyway it was beyond personality).

Later that same year, when I was sharing a room with my mother who had just returned from the hospital after a major surgery, I was reading *The Face of Silence* by Dhan Gopal Mukerji. This was about Sri Ramakrishna. I had just come to the part in which it was said that Sri Ramakrishna could communicate *Samadhi* by a touch when the disciple was ready. When it was 9 O' clock and lights out — on account of my mother's health, in the darkness, I found myself asking the question: "What is Truth?"

There followed a psychic experience commencing with vision (I had never had a vision before). First there appeared above my head a huge translucent blue bell. It was at once sounding and moving and light moved through it. This disappeared to be replaced by an ancient

tarnished gold crown; a small cross surmounted it. Next there appeared before me a huge dark mountain, as high as the sky. It was very nearly black. No light could be seen. Then I heard a great rumbling and cracking and crashing sound. It became a roar! The mountain was crumbling to dust before me. Then a voice said, "These are the bones of your past lives."

I then saw a great river with many tributories flowing into it and this river flowed into the sea. *All the walls broke down.* That is to say, the walls that separated and defined every single being human, animal, plant, etc. — simply disappeared and all flowed into one. From this state my body seemed to become a single cell of light and I was both within it and without it at the same time. The state I entered into — seemingly above me to enjoy the state of

ecstasy, but rather to bring this light to mankind. So I chose to return to my body and 'attest' to the light in the field of fire — which is to say the plane of suffering mankind. But I was not the same afterwards. My friends at school would say to me, "Rosalind, what is this light that is all around you?" "It must be your imagination" I said. Years later it came to me that the thread of connection — or center — was Ramana Maharshi.

I did not know of his existence until I was 45 years old, some 30 years after he had touched me in Ojai — and way after his death. He has stayed with me ever since — I don't mean spiritualistically but in the inner sense — and his photograph dominates my living room.

His *sadhana*, 'Who am I?' changed my whole life.

## THE SECRET POWER

By Duncan Greenless

O Secret Power, that silently fulfils  
 This mindborn universe with beauties rare,  
 And stirs the heart to seek Thee everywhere,  
 Amid the billows and the singing rills,  
 The mighty mountains and the ancient trees,  
 The crystals of the snowflake, and the star,  
 The magic links between the near and far  
 And the unnumbered cosmic mysteries  
 That lie around us and within, — Great King,  
 Creating all the senses know, and more,  
 Themselves, their clamant lord, and, that which wore  
 Them all in ages past imagining, —  
 Inspire the Word of Power that shall stay  
 Our foolish wanderings, and awake that peace  
 Wherein we know our Being as thoughts cease  
 To obtain the whiteness of the Soul's true ray.  
 Give us that quietness that shall unveil  
 The silent shrine whose key sleeps in the heart;  
 From shadow pleasures call us now apart  
 To swoon with rapture in Thy Holy Grain.

# LETTER TO A FRIEND

By a Czech Devotee<sup>1</sup>

Dear comrade in consciousness,

You must take it for granted in your investigation that your I is consciousness. You are not only consciousness, but for the purpose of *jnana marga*, you start with the fact that you are consciousness. Further you must know that the ego is not an entity but just the consciousness which became limited to your individuality created by your mind and body and which is immersed in them to such a degree that it became unaware of itself and identified with them. In other words the ego is consciousness which has lost its infinity and feels itself bound in the body and the mind. The Self is the same consciousness which knows itself in its truth — as pure consciousness. Pure here means “just consciousness and nothing else”. The ego is consciousness which does not know itself, that it is consciousness, and mistakes itself for the body and the mind. The Self is the same consciousness in the state of *jnana*, in the state of self-knowledge. That is why Sri Ramana says that there are not two selves — one in search of the other. There is only one I - consciousness which must realize itself in its essence. It is most important to know that the consciousness is the common Being, Truth, both in the ego and the Self. Through *Atma Vichara* we grasp this consciousness which is common to the ego and the Self and try to be fully aware of it.

It is quite fundamental to know that consciousness is the principle, the very ability to be aware, to be conscious, and that the empirical consciousness, consciousness of objects is only activity of that conscious principle. Empirical consciousness does not and cannot exist without the base of pure consciousness, it is a mere manifestation. We are conscious of various objects in time and space only because there is only one, single and constant consciousness which is conscious of everything. Since we know that the I is the same throughout our life we can conclude that the I is pure consciousness. You are consciousness, be aware therefore you are consciousness. Only consciousness is your true I. To know your true I, to know yourself, you must know this consciousness which you always are and are just now and here. To know it you must become conscious, aware of it and that means you must focus all your attention on the I - consciousness. You are your true I, you are pure consciousness, but you are not aware of it. You are consciousness always even now, but due to your inattentiveness you do not realize it. The only hindrance is your inattentiveness to it. The only help is to be attentive to it, to focus on it with your full attention. Therefore do not pay attention to anything of which you are aware, but apply all your attention to that which is aware, to consciousness, awareness itself.

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<sup>1</sup>See our issue of July 1987, p. 160

Conscious-consciousness is your true I. It is that which sees, not that which is seen.

The first step to this self-aware state of being is the differentiation of our consciousness from the mind and the body. For this purpose we assume the position of the witness, the seer. Witness is consciousness which is turned to objects but is not immersed in them and keeps consciousness of oneself: "I am consciousness which observes all objects". We begin our observation with our body. We realise its existence, movements and experiences, but we are detached from it in watching-consciousness. The aim is to experience directly, the functioning of consciousness itself: "There is the body and its activities and experiences and here I am the consciousness which is aware of the body". We have now the fully conscious experience "I am the seer, witnessing consciousness". Next comes the mind with all its movements — thoughts, images, feelings and so on. We realize all of them but we are detached from them in the consciousness of the seer. Again there must be strong and indubitable consciousness: "There is the mind with all its activity and here I am, consciousness which is aware of them."

If we are fully aware that we are not the body and the mind, or their activities, but the consciousness witnessing them, we may proceed further, but not before we experience the difference of the body and the mind from the witnessing consciousness. This experience does not lie in mere intellectual understanding but in direct consciousness. The mere idea "I am not the body nor the mind" is not enough. You must identify yourself with the witnessing consciousness and experience directly the difference between you — consciousness — and the body and the mind. *Atma Vichara* is not a work of the mind but of consciousness. We realize and do not think.

As the witnessing consciousness, we must turn all our attention from objects — body, mind — on this consciousness and realize it fully. Witnessing consciousness is not the final state of consciousness. Its attention is still in objects

## BEYOND WORDS

By Lord Tennyson

"A kind of waking trance I have often had, quite from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individual itself seem to dissolve and fade away into boundless being; and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming not extinction, but the only true life. I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said that the state is beyond words? This is the most emphatic declaration that the spirit of the present writer is capable of transferring itself into another state of existence which is not only real, clear and simple, but is also infinite in vision and external in duration".

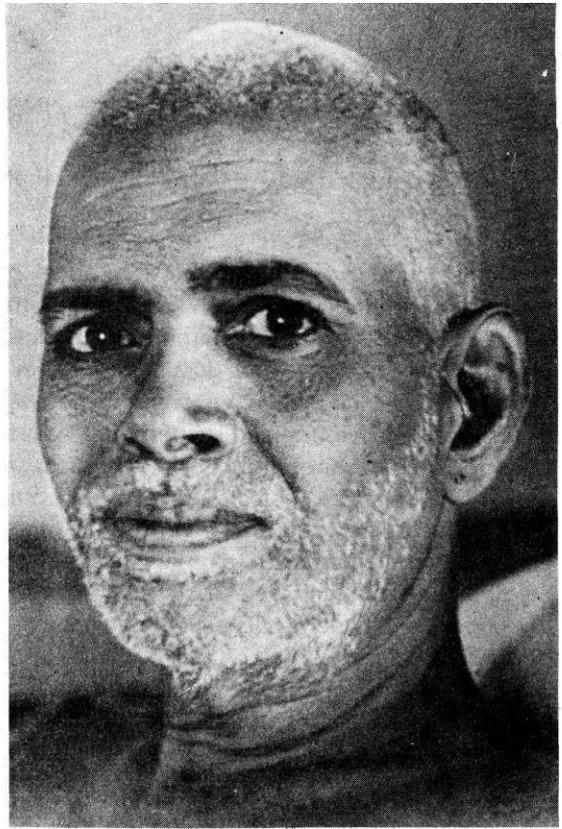
and not in itself. There is only consciousness aware of its difference from objects and their witnessing. We now change the focus of our attention. We are attentive to the very source and not the objects of empirical consciousness, but to consciousness alone.

It is thus obvious that in *Atma Vichara* we do not use the mind to find the "I", but we focus all our attention on our consciousness until we become aware of our Self as pure consciousness.

Yours fraternally,  
I.J.V.

# INWARD JOURNEY

By A.R. Natarajan



**WE** HAVE to talk of movement, of journey, because we do not feel unfettered. We are ignorant of our natural state of silence. The starting point is the present state of the mind, dull, chaotic and out of control. The destination is the state where the mind is free from the tyranny of thought. In the beginning there is variety, multiplicity and a mind riven by division. In the end there is unity in the Heart.

While the objective is clear enough, one finds a reluctance to go all along the way, a reluctance to give one's heart and soul to it. The reason for this is not far to see. To us the mind is the only source of consciousness. Only thoughts and feelings give one of the feeling of being alive. We wake up with thoughts. The mind is active throughout the waking hours. Though the thought content may vary, there is no break in thoughts. Even during our best meditative periods, we are only bravely attempting to hang on to a single thought and are not altogether free from mental movements. True, all of us have moments of self-forgetfulness, but they come about not due to freedom from thoughts

but by the intensity of particular thoughts and feelings.

One might say that at heart we are scared, very scared indeed of the state of *mano nasa* or the state where the mind is dead. We do chant the verses in *Upadesa Saram* relating to it and read the clarification of Ramana in the *Talks* but we find it difficult to comprehend it. This fear is put squarely to Ramana by Brunton when he expresses the apprehension whether one would become an idiot, acting without a sense of direction and cohesion, if one travels beyond the reaches of the mind. Again we find Chadwick also voicing this misgiving when he talks about the fear which used to grip him after he had meditated for some time. The mind is ready to put in a last-ditch battle by creating fears of what might happen when it is not functioning. One cannot be rid of this fear by logic, by analysis, by intellectual conviction. We have to look to Ramana for guidance and support.

Ramana says that while by habit we believe that it is natural to think, the opposite is the truth.

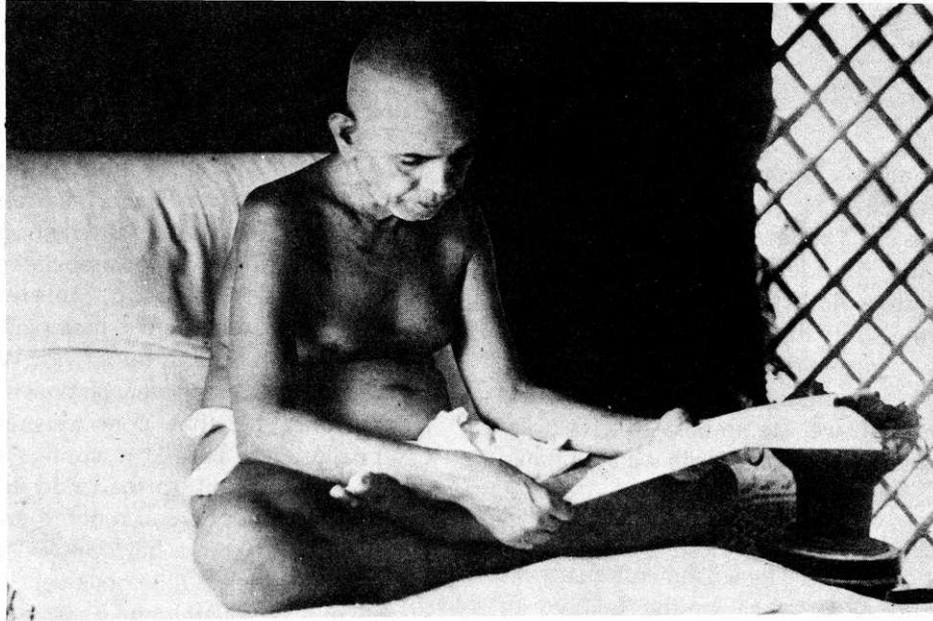
Silence is natural and thinking is not. This only means we function in a state in which the thought continuum is cut. Thoughts will arise as and when required and subside when their purpose is served. There is no before and after. Thinking would be freed from the dead-weight of the past, for when we operate through the mind, the past is our constant companion in the form of latent tendencies. So, we are unable to give total attention to anything exclusively; we are unable to live fully in the present.

When the mind has subsided we do not become unconscious. The limited consciousness of the mind gives place to the fullness of consciousness. Ramana compares the mind to the moon and the mind's source to the sun. When the mind is anchored in its source, it is like the moon during midday. Where is the need for it when one can tap the sun at its brightest?

To drive home this point, Ramana would draw one's attention to the lives of Jesus and Buddha. Their natural state of silence did not at all come in the way of their having the thoughts necessary and appropriate for the occasion. The difference would be that their thoughts would have a purely functional purpose with no psychological add-on. The rising and ending of thoughts would be automatic. Ramana's life illustrates this tellingly. Sab-Jan, the class-mate of Bhagavan, arrives after many years. Ramana recognises him and talks to him about their school-days. For Ramana's sarcoma Devaraja Mudaliar arranges a consultation and visit to Sri Ramanasramam by a famous physician Dr. Guruswami Mudaliar but the devotee is not present. Ramana asks for him recognising his special service. A sick devotee would be unable to come to the Hall. Ramana would step in, unnoticed, and make tender enquiries about his health. In the early hours of the morning Ramana would be in the kitchen giving deft help and converting unpalatable dishes into '*manna*' from heaven. Or one would find Ramana explaining patiently to a visiting *sadhu* the hall marks of different types of *samadhi*, before emphasising that what matters is only the '*Sahaja*' or natural *samadhi*. In the evening

hours he would be in the 'transcendental' state simply radiating His Peace. His relationships were so utterly normal, so utterly human in the sense that all the faculties associated with the mind, memory, reason, inference and discrimination, were there in their perfection. Yet his mind was rooted in the Heart. What is the conclusion which can safely be drawn from this? It can only be that consciousness is not essentially mind-based. It springs from that which gives strength to the mind itself — the spiritual Heart. Once you reach there you can talk, walk and act in a harmony of symphonic orchestra at its best. Quite obviously, the ending of the mind's sovereignty does not usher in blankness. It is a myth which experience can and will shatter. On the contrary, while one is engaged in the activities which the body is destined to go through, the cup of inner bliss is full and brimming.

Once we are rid of this basic fear springing from locating consciousness in the mind only, half the job is done. How does one arrive at the state beyond the mind? For this we have Ramana's direct path. Thought flow and conceptualisation are nipped in the bud by enquiry about the truth of one's individuality. Such enquiry, if constant and vigilant, is bound to cut at the root of identification with a particular name and form, the identification 'I am *this*'. One can say that the mind consists of two parts, the pure consciousness 'I am' and the thoughts beginning with 'I am *this*'. The effort is to cut across the thought barrier and reach the pure portion of the mind. Once we are linked to the consciousness in the 'I', it would lead us on to its source. Just as it is natural for the birds flying in the sky to get home to earth, just as it is natural for rivers to reach the ocean, it is natural for the pure 'I' to fall back to its source which is the fullness of consciousness. One can say that as surely as gravitational laws apply to the physical world, consciousness is reflected unhindered in an intuned mind. The magnetic pull of the source would take the mind within effortlessly. The journey ends in the abundant bliss of the spiritual Heart.



## Work and Family are no Impediments to Sadhana

By Dr. K. Subrahmanian

A: You look worried, what's the problem?

B: I'll tell you. You may consider me crazy. All the same, I'll tell you. I have a genuine problem. It's like this. I have told you how I came under the influence of Bhagavan. By his Grace, I am doing *sadhana*. Occassionally I feel very strongly that I should resign my job and take to *sannyas* and do intense *sadhana* without any interruption. Bhagavan says that meditation should be uninterrupted like the flow of a river, like the flow of ghee. I should like to have uninterrupted meditation.

A: I agree that meditation should be uninterrupted. I know this is what Bhagavan has said in *Upadesa Sara. Aariyadhaarayaa srotasaa samam, sarala chintanam viralatah param*. Like the flow of ghee, like the flow of a stream, uninterrupted meditation is better than interrupted meditation. Uninterrupted meditation must be our goal. But Bhagavan never said that you should give up your family or job in order to attain the goal.

B: But he gave up everything and went to Arunachala.

A: But he himself has said that he didn't plan to go to Arunachala. He didn't discuss it with anyone. One fine morning, he was forcibly dragged by Arunachala to Arunachala. Even the previous evening, he didn't know that he'd be leaving for Arunachala the next day.

B: So what does Bhagavan say about giving up the world to do uninterrupted *sadhana*?

A: You have all the books by and on Bhagavan with you here. I'll look into them and tell you his view in his own words. Let me see. Here it is. About work, Bhagavan says: "It is the feeling 'I work' that is the hindrance. Ask yourself 'Who works?' Remember who you are. Then the work will not bind you. It will go on automatically. Make no effort either to work or to renounce; your effort is the bondage. What is destined to happen will happen. If you are destined to work, you will not be able to avoid it; you will be forced to engage in it. So leave it to the Higher Power. It is not really your choice whether you renounce or retain". So what he says is work will not be a hindrance when there is no feeling that 'you'

are working. There is bondage when you feel 'I am the doer'.

*B:* What he says is true. But people like me cannot do *sadhana* unless we renounce the world. The world is too much with me.

*A:* Bhagavan has answered this also. He says that true renunciation is renunciation of the ego. You cannot choose to renounce or not renounce. We must do what we have to do, to the best of our ability. Solitude isn't outside of us. A man attached to desires cannot get solitude wherever he may be, whereas a detached man is always in solitude, says Bhagavan. So if you do your work with detachment but with devotion, work will not bind you. It will purify your mind. When you work with devotion and detachment and leave the fruits of action to Him, your mind will get purified.

*B:* So you don't think I have to give up my work? How about my family?

*A:* There is no need for that either. Bhagavan is categorical on this. He says, "Why do you think you are a householder? The similar thought that you are a *sannyasi* will haunt you even if you go forth as one." Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to live in the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world and makes you think of being a householder. If you renounce, it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of the family and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? So why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever be the environment.

So you don't have to give up your work, you don't have to give up your family. Real

## AN S.O.S. TO RAMANA

By N.N. Rajan

**Bhagavan Ramana**  
**Graciously Bless me with**  
*Not Food*  
**But insatiable Hunger and Thirst**  
**for Thy Grace.**  
*Not clothing*  
**But shameless stripping**  
**of ego-garments.**  
*Not Shelter*  
**But deliberate exposure**  
**To Thy Resplendent proximity.**  
*Not Wealth*  
**But poverty**  
**of all tormenting thoughts.**  
*Not Health*  
**But incurable contagion**  
**of Devotion and Awareness.**  
*Not Peace*  
**But restless passion**  
**for merger at Thy Lotus Feet.**  
*Not Wisdom*  
**But ignorance**  
**of all save Thy Grace and Light.**

renunciation is renunciation of the ego, real solitude is solitude of the mind. We can't meditate of our own accord. We can't think of Bhagavan, only he can make us think of him. So be grateful that he makes you think of him, makes you meditate on him. So leave everything to him. Don't worry when your mind is disturbed during meditation. Don't ever feel that Grace is wanting. Bhagavan has said that Grace is always flowing. And he has also made the most extraordinary statement that even the feeling of lack of Grace is due to Grace. Meditate on this statement and you will never worry about meditation or its effects.

*B:* Thank you. I feel greatly encouraged now

# SEVEN STEPS FROM HEAVEN:<sup>\*</sup> A Grim Fairy Tale

By J. Jayaraman

**O**NCE upon a time, there was a king called Philosophy who had a minister called Science who spoke for him occasionally. When asked why a body moved, Science said that a body moved as long as force acted on it and that when the force was removed, the body returned to rest, the preferred state. So Science had reduced the *WHY* to a *HOW IT HAPPENED*. When asked why the heavens went round the earth, Science didn't know and it was left to the king to say that such was the divine will. But slowly Science kept learning and usurping regions reserved for Philosophy. For example, Science willingly changed its idea about motion and said that rest

and uniform motion were identical and that a body continued in this state till a force acted on it to change it. This new idea is preferred as it explains more phenomena, while using a simpler model. Amber was a strange material which when rubbed with fur exhibited a strange force that attracted light matter. While this was in the domain of Science, lightning continued to be the wrath of God. But the atomic model with its positive and negative charges is now preferred as it explains why amber attracts, and why lightning 'strikes'. Why does the electron continue to go round the attracting proton instead of collapsing in a curve into the nucleus? Why is every one of millions of galaxies flying away from us? Science has continued to explain,

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\* *Sapta Ajnana Bhurnika: Yoga Vaasishta: Utpatti Prakama*

using increasingly comprehensive models, (of the Quantum Theory and the General Theory of Relativity). HOW these things happen, thus reducing the quizzical WHY to a satisfactory HOW. Why the universe is expanding is now made clear by how a Big-Bang started it all. Why there should be a Big-Bang at all would probably be explained by the continuing research on Black-holes which are mysterious objects in our own expanding universe. And so on. The ultimate question of why, there should be a WHY at all, can never be answered by Science, (which by then cannot be differentiated from Philosophy), from its standpoint of duality, implied even in an Ultimate Physico-Mathematical model, since such a model still requires one who understands it to be so. The scope of this article is to encompass this range. So finally to the 'beginning'!

## PART I

### The World

That the Universe of evolving galaxies came into existence a finite time ago was an uncomfortable hypothesis once, but is now largely accepted as an irrefutable inference. Let us go into this a bit, in order to understand at every stage its connections with Vedanta.

A galaxy is a vast number of stars clustered in space. Our sun is one among several billion stars in our galaxy. Galaxies, separated by vast distances, cluster as local groups. Billions of these groups are found distributed throughout the unimaginably vast space of the universe. All distant galaxies in the universe are observed to be receding from us and from one another. The farther a galaxy, the greater its speed of recession from us. It is as if we were witnessing the aftermath of some explosion from a single, super-dense, primordial centre. Does this mean that our neighbourhood is the centre from where this expansion began? No and yes!

Due to the requirement of the Cosmological Principle (explained in the following paragraph),

it seems that one would find galaxies receding from us, regardless of where in the universe we were situated! An analogy would help clear this: Picture a chessboard with its lines criss-crossing at right angles. Suppose their points of intersections to be an inch apart to start with. If this board were to magically start expanding, such that it doubled its size every hour, what would be the view from any one point (of intersection)? Its immediate neighbour (one inch away initially) would be two inches away after an hour. The neighbour next to that would have, from an initial two inches, moved away to four inches from our reference; and so on. In effect, the first neighbour receded from us at one inch per hour while the second receded at two inches per hour. The farther the point to start with, the greater its speed of recession from us. This view would hold true from any point on the board. Any two standing at any two points on the expanding board would each see the same pattern of recession.

It turns out that Einstein's General Theory of Relativity (which has continued to explain and predict cosmological phenomena successfully) is based on the assumption called the Cosmological Principle. This principle states that to an observer the universe presents the same large-scale picture regardless of which direction he peers out into the universe or where he is located in the universe, at a given time. That is, though the universe may evolve from moment to moment, at any instant the view you get is direction-free and location-free. This implies that the Big-Bang origin occurred not at a particular point in space but rather *throughout space, at the same time.*

This expectation is supported by the evidence of a background radiation, the remnant 'ringing' of the early Big-bang. This radiation has been measured and found to be of the same strength and coming from all directions of the universe and all around us and all the time. This means that prior to the Bang not only was all the universal *matter* jammed close, but also 'space' itself! In the magic board analogy, if we could

imagine the board itself as contracted to a pin-point size, the intersecting points of the board would still be within it but jammed one over the other. If the board were to start expanding (the Big-Bang) then this would have taken place throughout the pin-point sized board simultaneously. Similarly, the Big-Bang, though it must have originated from one point only, also occurred throughout space because space itself was only a point then! It means that from a condition beyond concepts of space and time, a Big-Bang occurred.

From it space, as the principle of accommodation, proceeded and kept 'bloating' as time progressed alongside. Matter, the curvature of space, appears as events recording the subject-object duality as time progresses.

In the analogy, all the chessboard points get jammed indistinguishably as one point but separate out when the board 'bloats'. We said that from the Big-Bang proceed Space and Time too. It would be more accurate to say that the projection of space-time <sup>1</sup> is itself the Big-Bang. It marks the appearance of space-time from a singularity beyond space-time. Since the latter is beyond space-time (that is beyond events), it cannot be negated (for that would be an event too and hence *in* space-time) upon appearance of the Big-Bang space-time. This is the principle of Vedanta itself, and we shall link the two firmly as we proceed.

There was a time then, about 15 billion years ago, before which there was no 'time', and simultaneously no 'space' either. The universe, along with 'time' and its counterpart 'space', including the laws governing its evolution, was born from that point, a singularity — a something, about the development of which nothing could be predicted as laws themselves proceed from it <sup>2</sup>. The singularity is of course not a thing. There is a tendency to ask, "Well, what happened before the singularity? What was it like before the Big-Bang?" This question is as wrong as one about a barren woman's son. This time-related question is analogous to the space-related one of asking, "What lies to the North

of the North Pole?" At the pole all conventional rules regarding directions fail — whichever step you take away from the North Pole, can only be Southwardly.

The scientist therefore is now willing to accept as quite reasonable and true, the idea that 'time' itself was born only from the Big-Bang. The condition prior to that would, by our very contemplation of it, destroy the duality of thought and the thinker, in much the same way as the duality of corresponding markings along 'two' foot-rules is destroyed at the point of their intersection on a reflecting mirror. Singularity is something <sup>Similar</sup> as much Big-Crunch as a Big-Bang. The Scientist (in self denying humility?) is engaged in getting to 'know' what the Big Unknowable Bang or Crunch (the Black-hole) is, as an object of thought<sup>3</sup> than take the final crunch of being the unknowable. And so, the dreaming must go on..... this expanding universe with all its whirling galaxies and collapsing stars, contains many mini Black-holes which (imitating their parent?) tend to go *Bang!* once in a while themselves; so we are told. Perhaps the Parental Big-Bang (an explosion as we see it from within it) is nothing but the implosion (the continuing crunch) of a Big Black-hole! And perhaps this Big Black-hole is part of a Super universe peopled with expanding galaxies and other Black-holes. The Super universe would be strikingly similar to ours—in fact it should be impossible to tell which is which as long as you are inside any one, but possible to differentiate only if and when you consciously transit from one to the other. As observers within that Super universe, we would observe, among other things Big Black-holes, each undergoing an inferred inward crunch, an implosion. As observers from within one such Big Black-hole we would see 'our' universe peopled with galaxies and Black-holes, and expanding outwardly as the effect of an ancient Big Bang. Seen from without, the phenomenon is an in-going Black-hole, and seen from within it, it is an out-going Big Bang.

There is something peculiar about this hierarchical nesting of 'our' universe within Big

Black-hole within Super Black-hole... The transit point from one universe to the other is the Black-hole/Big-Bang singularity, where objective knowledge (space, time and the laws) vanishes. That which happens at a given place and a given time is called "an event in space-time". Space-time links events within the universe. Similarly, the discontinuity called singularity (absence of space-time) could form the link between space-time universes. Prior to the Big-Bang that created this universe, there was no time-space. But as we have just said, this singularity exists as a Big Black-hole within a Super universe. We are then led to the contradiction that space and time exist (in the universe) as well as not-exist (in singularities) simultaneously! Scientists have now tuned their reason to accept and live with the conundrum that an electron exists in space-time both as a particle (present in one place) and a wave (present everywhere) simultaneously. It is then not a tall order to Reason to accept the simultaneous existence and non-existence of space-time itself. Since all thinking takes place in space-time, is it sensible to talk about discontinuities in space-time and about universes of space-time which these discontinuities link? Let us see.

It seems quite sensible to talk of this, considering that such happenings are the norm, and not the exception, even in our daily lives. In my wakeful period (my space-time universe) I observe a boy in deep-sleep, (no space-time for him; the Black-hole singularity) and another who starts dreaming (which I infer from certain radiations from him like REM<sup>4</sup> etc.) These observations belong to my space-time only. They are interpreted by me as an inward activity within him. The dreamer however has projected (the Big-Bang of) his own space-time universe, and moves about in it believing himself to be awake (expanding Universe). While thus awake, ('dreaming', according to me), he may observe others (of whom I can have no idea as there is always a discontinuity between the dreamer's space-time and mine) who are awake, asleep or dreaming other space-times. So here we have

a very normal scenario where different space-times exist as a hierarchy, one within the other (with my space-time always as the kernel of reference). These space-times are mutually insulated by discontinuities called sleep (a singularity where experience of objects ceases along with space-time and the knowing ego).

## PART II

### The Masquerade of Mithya

#### DUALITY:

The world-universe Reality interfaces with the body Reality in the medium of mind, in the same way as a small wave rides on a big wave in the medium of water. The waves have no existence separated from the medium; in fact the waves which interact with one another cannot interact with the water. None of a wave's 'constituents' can be separated from water to enable an interaction. It is always water and merely has an appearance as a separate phenomenon.

The water-wave appears in water, is totally based on water and is in fact nothing but water when investigated. This relationship is called curvature of water.

Water (and all matter) appears in space, is totally based on space and is in fact nothing but space when investigated. Science today works comfortably with the idea that matter is nothing but 'curvature' of space.

The Space-principle likewise is the 'curvature' of the Mind, and the Mind-principle is the curvature of non-dual Self. The Self is the curvature of itself. This is because the Mind principle is 'I', which is the principle of duality itself. The Self, non-dual as it is, is therefore the 'curvature' (is Aware) of itself. The analogy in space-time is of the light of a lamp that is needed to see other objects; but to see the light itself, no other light is required!

It is amazing that modern science can commit the childish error of believing that mind and

brain, subject and object, can have a one to one correspondence. The fallacy arises when the process of induction is extended to include oneself. Induction is the arriving at general principles from the study of individual phenomena. Through my mind I am aware of my five senses (sight etc.), which are somehow related to the respective organs (eye-ball etc.). With this I devise instruments that act as extensions to my sense-organs. With this set-up, the long-arm of "my mind-senses - sense organs-instruments", I study mangoes out there. I then devise principles about mangoes which I can apply to a mango I have not even seen or even to other similar objects. This is because the same long-arm of mind is used to check the latter mango too. This process becomes tricky when I start studying the brains of others, through the long-arm of mind (as above). The laws thus derived by me, relating brain (observed external phenomena) and mind (inferred as occurring within that), are true only for all brains and minds seen as other through my mind. To conclude that these laws explain my mind too, would be wrong. Why? Because for such an induction, the same "my mind-my senses-my sense organs-instruments" set-up ought to be used to verify my mind. (Wasn't this the process of induction we applied for the mangoes, for example?)

The loan given by me to a friend in my dream, can only be reclaimed from him in dream, and not when I am awake.

Though ten of us may each study the brains of the other nine and reach identical results, this is only a consensus-Reality, and cannot fully explain away subject-consciousness. A mango represents the cross-referencing in my mind, of the five groups of sensations. The mango seen in a mirror represents the visual portion of the integral mango. By a study, solely of the mirror mango, I can learn to identify a mango elsewhere. But only from visual input. If I were to study the taste, touch and other attributes of the mirror-mango, I would only learn to associate that mango with glass elsewhere. Just as the mirror-mango is a one-sense extract of

the five-senses mango which we call real, so too this five-sense 'real' mango and other brains and other minds are five-sense extracts of the Seer in the mirror of mind.

### THE BODY

We should do well to remember that in and out acquire meaning only with reference to a body — my body. The body itself is an idea, a working model whose approximate boundary is determined in one's childhood, based on one's sensitivities (vasanas), and continually updated by the ego (the I-sense). That which is one universe is thus partitioned by identifying a portion as 'I' and the remaining as 'not-I', the environment which is left over. The interaction with environment is through sensations, (by and by categorised as five types: sight, touch, etc. — each independent of the other). Reality of the body here and of the environment out there is then a subjective construct of the ego. At any time, it is the outcome of simple rules (using which are derived more complex rules) which provide the most reliable cross-reference between the five groups of sensations. How do we learn the rules as children?

*(To be continued)*

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### Notes

1. An event is a point in space-time. It is that which happens at a given place (denoted by 3 dimensions), at a given time (denoted by one dimension). Space-time therefore requires four dimensions. Human beings are not generally prone to perceive beyond three dimensions taken together. While the mind perceives the length, breadth and thickness of a seed concurrently, in the form of a seed, it does not seem capable of perceiving *at one go*, the "4-dimensional object" which is *now* seen as seed, *later* on as seedling, *further on* as plant and so on. 4-dimensional space-time is therefore graphically represented in 3-dimensions by sacrificing one space-dimension and substituting the time-dimension therein as the third. A soap bubble one foot across, and not changing with passage of time represents a 4-dimensional situation. How is this conceived of graphically? By sacrificing one dimension, the bubble can be seen as a circle one foot across. Using the passage of time as the third spatial dimension, one can conceive of circle stacked upon circle (representing the unchanging size of the bubble, over a time period), and thus forming a

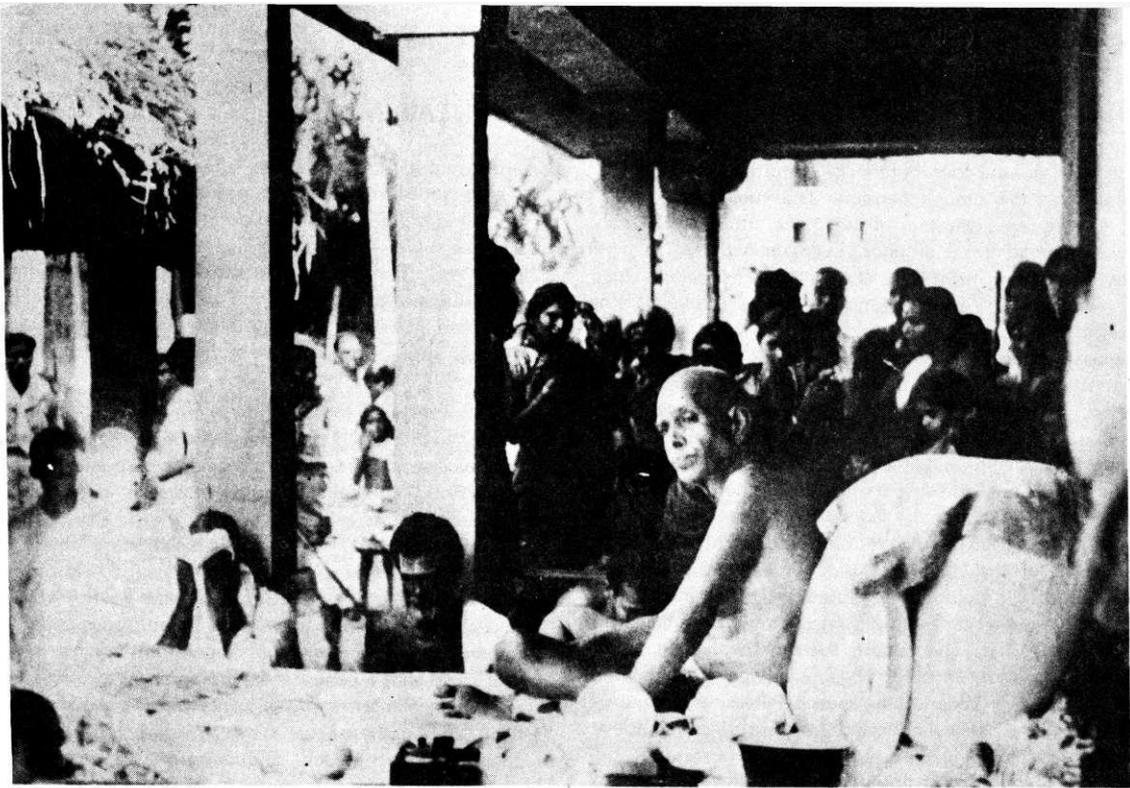
cylinder of one-foot bore. The length of the cylinder represents the time dimension. The "object" cylinder is a graphic representation of the space-time bubble. Light takes time to travel distance. Light emitted from a point travels outward from it in all directions. Its leading edge is seen as an ever expanding spherical wave. This expanding bubble can be understood only in terms of a series of snap-shots freezing the bubble as it appears at various instants. This is due to our dimensional limitation talked of earlier. Doing away with one dimension and replacing it with time as before, what we get is a cone with the light-source forming the apex and ever increasing circles (the real-life bubble) stacked one on the other (representing times and thus forming the body of the cone. This is technically called the 'light-cone' and is much used to conceive of the nature of Black-Holes and singularity. An important point to be noted from the above two examples is that time-dimension is interchangeable with space-dimension. The bubble, fixed or expanding, is, in every snap-shot, an object in physical space. This is the *Bhuta Akasa* of Vedanta, the space wherein we experience sense-objects. The cylinder and the cone explained above are 'objects' perceived in hyper-space, a 3 dimensional space which has the time-element of the *Bhutaakasa* included as a spatial extension. This is hyper-space *Mana Akasa*. The space-time which is said by the scientist to be born at the Big-bang singularity, refers to *Bhutaakasa*.

2. Every object in *Bhutaakasa* 'curves' the space around it. What does curvature mean? The shortest distance on land between two points is a straight line. Any other route is curved and longer. But the straight line itself has the inherent curvature of the earth's surface to which all paths are confined. Transferring this concept to space itself, the shortest distance between two points in empty space, is the path taken through them by a ray of light. This path though perceived as straight, is said to be curved as much as the inherent curvature of the space to which the light ray is confined. The extent of curvature of space is determined by the presence of dense matter in its vicinity. The denser the matter, the more curved the space nearby. In very large masses the gravitational attraction between the particles can initiate a relentless un-stoppable 'crunch' of matter into an ever decreasing volume of space. The limiting case of this is of matter confined to a point in space! This makes the space around it curve upon itself. This is the phenomenon of singularity as for example occurring in a Black-hole. The expanding Universe, the whole *Bhutaakasa* with Time, is said to have proceeded from singularity, in the form of a Big-Bang. The General Theory of Relativity in fact predicts such bizarre singularity. However, unable to handle infinite quantities, it breaks down completely when it comes to making any prediction about what pattern immediately follows the Big-Bang. The Quantum Theory of Gravitation (a unification of the Quantum and the Relativity Theories) is believed to be able to provide the answers for the space-time singularity from which space-time proceeds as an expanding Universe,

and to which it collapses after full expansion. The Uncertainty Principle which operates at all levels, allows a minimum possible non-uniformity even at the singularity. The early Universe therefore cannot have been uniform completely. During the initial rapid expansion these initial small departures from uniform density would have been amplified and caused the formation of groups, of galaxies, of stars and so on, as seen by us now.

3. We have seen (note 1) how a growing bubble could be conceived of as a stationary cone in hyper-space by perceiving time as a spatial extension. Since space-time itself is now understood to have 'bloomed' from a dimensionless singularity, the scientist gets down to viewing this 'growing' space-time (*Bhutaakasa*) itself as a stationary 'object' in a hyper-space. The form of this 'object' is the field of much current theoretical research. A space-time (Universe) which had a beginning, could either have continuous expansion through infinite time (a sort of conical form in hyper-space), or it could after a period of expansion begin to contract and reach a singularity once again (conceived as a sort of spherical form in hyper-space). The arbitrary poles of this sphere would represent singularity points, The latitudes growing in size away from the pole represent space-time expansion. The 'equator' represents the state of maximum expansion of the universe. The latitudes lying further on represent the phase of shrinking space-time. Further on lies the other pole representing the singularity of the Big-Crunch. These are concepts at the forefront of research today, and for further depth refer A BRIEF HISTORY OF TIME By Stephen W. Hawking, Pub:Bantam, 1988. The point that is invariably missed is that, though the evolutionary cycle of the Universe (*Bhutaakasa*) is seen as a stationary 'object' in hyper-space (*Mana Akasa*), that does not wrap it all up. For, *Mana Akasa* itself suffers evolutionary cycling, issuing forth as it does from the singularity remembered as deep sleep. It daily goes through a Big-Bang outward phase of waking and dreaming before collapsing to a Crunch. The evolutionary cycle of *Mana Akasa* can therefore be observed to be an 'object' in a hyper hyper-space! No, this 'story' does not regress ad infinitum. For, this hyper hyper-space (*Chit Akasa*, Self etc.) though intimately connected with *Mana Akasa*, is as distinct from its qualities, as *Bhuta Akasa* is from the sense-object, or the *Mana Akasa* is from the *Bhuta Akasa* objectified in it. Since *Mana Akasa* is the principle of movement itself (thought, feeling, states of projection, or state of dreamless sleep), *Chit Akasa* is that which is beyond movement. It is therefore pure Being which remains unchanged whether *Mana Akasa* proceeds from it or not. It is that which ever is. Awareness therefore is not of it, for Awareness too is. The Self is being-awareness.

4. Rapid Eye Movements which signify dreaming. The eyes of the sleeper dart hither and thither while the muscles controlling the eye-lids remain frozen. This combined condition when observed in the sleeper is a sure indication that dreaming is in progress.



LEAVES FROM DEVOTEES' DIARIES

## BRUNTON ON BHAGAVAN

A major reference to Sri Maharshi occurs in "*The Note books of Paul Brunton*", Volume 10 "*The Orient Its Legacy to the West*", where a whole chapter is allotted to Sri Maharshi. Some interesting notes are given below. (-Ed.)

**T**HE white loincloth which Ramana Maharshi usually wore served him for most of the year, except during the cooler nights of the mild South Indian winter, when he added a shawl. He had few other possessions. I remember a fountain pen, the old-fashioned liquid ink filling-with-a-glass-syringe type. With this he did his writing. There was also a hollowed-out coconut shell or gourd painted black, in which he carried water for ablutions. He had little more and did not seem to want anything else. The most impressive physical feature about him was the strange look that came over his eyes during

meditation and he usually meditated with open eyes. If they looked directly at you, the power behind them seemed quite penetrative, but most often they seemed to be looking into space, somewhat aside from you, but very fixed, indrawn and abstracted, and yet aware.

When he went into these meditative abstractions, the expression in his eyes and even face changed markedly. The eyes shone strangely, mystically, and testified, so far as any bodily organ could, to awareness of the Reality behind this world-dream.

When Ramana Maharshi was displeased with anyone, he kept his eyes averted and looked to one side of or away from that person. It was as though he did not want, even by accident, let alone purposely, to meet his glance and give him *darshan*.

Gazing upon this man whose viewless eyes are gazing upon infinity, I thought of Aristotle's daring advice, "Let us live as if we were immortal." Here was someone who had never heard of Aristotle, but who was following this counsel to the last letter.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Restricted as he voluntarily was to the couch, the Maharshi varied his position on it at different times of the day. Sometimes his was recumbent figure, sometimes a seated one. He sat, reclined, squatted, leaned forwards or backwards. Sometimes he assumed the pose of chin

cupped in his hands which always reminded me faintly of Rodin's sculpture *The Thinker* ... In the Rietberg Museum at Zurich there is an unusual marble twelfth-century figure of a meditating Chinese Buddhist monk. His head and neck are twisted quite askew towards the left side, the left elbow rests on the top of his left knee, the left palm supports his left cheek. This is exactly the position into which Ramana Maharshi eventually moved and in which he long remained after the memorable interview at our first meeting.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ramana would not, could not, leave Arunachala, the hill, so he had to take what came with it, the devotees. The place chosen was no longer his own; the time belonged to them. He was reluctant to stay but far more reluctant to leave. His was truly a surrendered life.

## GRACE

By Patrick Roberts

**Arunachala Shiva!**

You brought me to this most sacred place,  
Won't you now save me by your fathomless grace?

**Arunachala Shiva!**

Cure me of my blinding disease!  
Lost and separate brand me with your burning spear!

**Arunachala Shiva!**

Guide me through the hypnotizing maze,  
Hunting out the ancient mocking vasanans.

**Arunachala Shiva!**

I'm so in tune with the Tamil dream  
Yet now repair I must to the nail biting West.

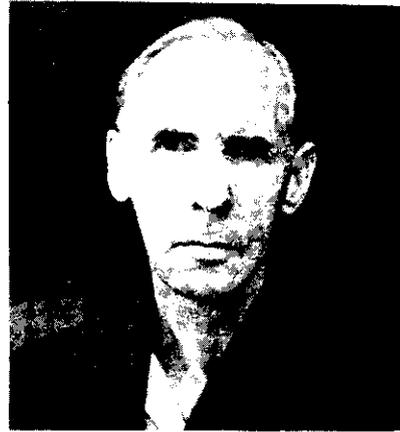
**Arunachala Shiva!**

Let me not complain for beloved Ramanachala has revealed  
You to be the absolute Self within me concealed.

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## ARTHUR OSBORNE'S ANSWERS

(Selected questions and answers  
from our 1964, First Volume)



FOR the last two years I have been searching for the Self. I attain stillness within three or four minutes but the voice of the 'I' is not yet found. Kindly help me and instruct me how to proceed further.

— Vasu Bhatia, Lucknow

*Never mind about the voice of the 'I'. There are not two selves in you, for one to hear the other. There is only one Self, and that is pure stillness, which is the same as pure consciousness or pure being. Try to hold on to that. Or rather, since 'holding' is an individual act, try just to let it be without interfering, without stopping it by thinking.*

— Arthur Osborne

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

It is natural for a Realized Man to advise others to remain in samsara while following the quest, but is there any one who has realized his Self while simultaneously carrying on with all the responsibilities of samsara?

Doesn't the sense of 'non-doership' obstruct the whole-hearted attention of the actor to his actions? How can he work efficiently unless he considers himself the doer? On the other hand, can't a murderer defend himself on the plea that he is not the doer?

Latent tendencies, pure and impure, come out in me when I sit in meditation and impede my concentration or holding to one thought. What is still worse, they bring a sense of despair and helplessness and undermine my faith. My mind tells me: "What is the use of doing all this? You won't be able to reach the goal till the end of your life owing to your inherent weakness and faults." Please advise me what to do about this.

— K.K. Ghosh, Calcutta.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

*There have been saints in all religions who have carried on a normal life in the world. In India King Janaka is the classical example. It is not your work that binds you but your false idea that it is you who are doing it — as if the Brutus in Shakespeare's play were to forget that it is a play and think that he was really the enemy of the stage Caesar. If he did he would have the 'I-am-the-doer' illusion and would be shut up in a mad-house. And he would not act his part any more efficiently; rather less so, because his ego-illusion would break through. In the same way efficient action in your allotted role in life is not at all dependent on the false idea you are the limited individual who acts. As to your example of a murderer claiming impunity on the plea that he is not the doer, why does he commit the murder? Necessary and harmonious actions can be performed without the intrusion of the ego, without any egoistic motive; but if a murderer has some ego-based motive or believes himself to be judging and deciding that the murder should be committed he also believes himself to be the doer.*

*Can you imagine somebody who is full of vasanas or latent tendencies attaining Realization? Of course not. Therefore it follows that in the course of practice they must be squeezed out. It is a good thing to see them; it enables you to recognize them and determine not to be influenced by them any more. In that way they are gradually cast out; but it often takes time and requires great perseverance.*

*One should never give way to despondency. It is one of the worst obstacles to progress and has to be fought. Religiously it is represented as a sin, a temptation of the devil; metaphysically it is an error. The whole purpose of the practice is to realize that you are not the individual self; so as long as you believe that you are and that this individual self is weak and sinful, how can you realize that you are not?*

— Arthur Osborne

I cannot help but feel that to the Realized Man the phenomenal world must also be a different place. Would you agree that, the source of all being perfect order and harmony, the realized man would express that order and harmony in every aspect of this phenomenal world — that is apart from certain operations of karma? Would you agree that all such phenomena are but a deformation of Pure Consciousness operating as lesser powers?

The Maharshi said that concentration was holding to one thought but even that thought must go before realization. Did he mean by this realization of the Self or the realization of that last and single thought, which would appear to be in accord with psychological teaching?

— Dr. A. Colin Corah, Keswick, England.

*Certainly a realized man, having perfect order and harmony in consciousness, finds order and harmony reflected in the phenomenal world also — not even excluding the operations of karma. Many saints have undergone sickness, poverty or imprisonment, but has any one ever heard of a saint complaining of them or calling them a disharmony?*

*All powers and phenomena are, of course, particularisations or deformities of Pure Consciousness. What else is there?*

*Concentration, according to the path of Self-enquiry which the Maharshi taught, does not mean holding to one thought but eliminating all thoughts. He did, however, sometimes refer to other less direct paths in which the mind is trained to hold to one thought in order to keep it still and keep other thoughts out. In either case the state to be aimed at is pure thought-free Consciousness, and this is the Self.*

— Arthur Osborne

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

My first question is: *Who am I?* This question has been eluding me for many years past, as I am sure it has quite a few others. My problem consists of this that, having used that question as a starting point according to the instructions of Bhagavan, the question recedes into a feeling (as maybe inner quests must of necessity) or sensation moving around a vacuum-like centre. Presuming that this is not too stupid a procedure (if we can call "setting the dogs on the scent" a procedure), I am struck by the phenomenon that when the monkey-mind returns to the scene he does so with a slight but, for me, striking variation of the question from 'Who am I?' to 'What is I?' (never 'Who is I?' or 'What am I?'). To me the sound of 'Who am I?', pronouncing it inwardly and waiting in the stillness that surrounds the questioner, seems just a tinge too logical and grammatically correct, whereas its sense is, of course, neither.

And, coming out of the stillness, the monkey experiences greater peace and satisfaction and the dogs seem to sniff more intensely with that variation 'What is I?' in the air.

In short, if it weren't preposterous to think so, I would feel that variation to be an improvement — for myself. Since I understand that Bhagavan on numerous occasions expressed

himself in English, giving instructions for the use of the query 'Who is I?', curiosity has been aroused as to the Tamil and Sanskrit forms of the question as compared with the variant 'What is I?'. Are they, either grammatically or otherwise, near to each other in either language?

— J.J. de Reede, Elba.

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*It is often helpful to vary the words of a formula, as they may become a fetish. In this case, however, neither the question nor the answer is really verbal. The question is a turning inwards to the reality of oneself and may or may not be accompanied by a form of words; the answer is an indefinable consciousness of I-ness. The expression "a sensation moving around a vacuum-like centre" shows that the writer is certainly on the track of it.*

*As a point of fact, the Tamil would be 'Naan yaar?', literally 'I — who?'*

— Arthur Osborne

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

When I go on asking myself (of course, not verbally) *Who I am?* (I become silent and enter the state of non-knowing), I do not know anything. And I don't go further. May I ask you whether there is any further step. After a time I become normal and my ordinary mind starts functioning.

— Raja of Bhor, Poona.

*Surely this not knowing anything does not mean becoming unconscious like a block of wood? The 'I' which knows things objectively as separate from itself may cease to function, but in its place a state of pure awareness arises — or you could call it pure being, pure conscious being. This is normal. To lose it again is abnormal, even though usual. It can be retained side by side with, or rather underlying, what we call 'normal' consciousness of an apparently objective world. That is what we aim at. It is to be accomplished by persistent steady effort and while retaining consciousness.*

— Arthur Osborne

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

You can imagine how bitterly I regret not to have sat at the great Sage's feet in his lifetime! I envy those happy souls whom he initiated by a look, allowing them to have a flash of realization of the Truth through his Grace and blessing.

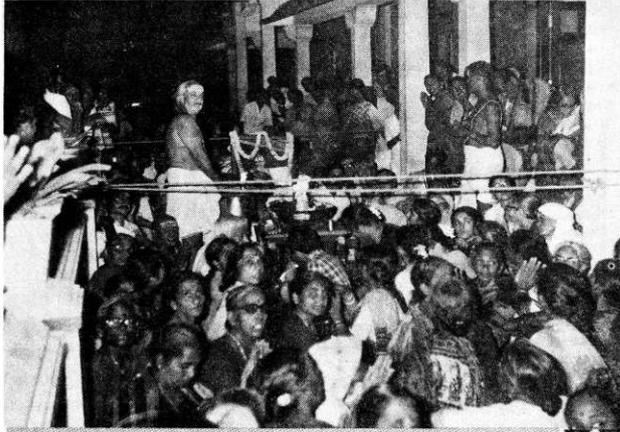
— Mary N. Kanny, Bombay.

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*Yes, it was a tremendous experience; but remember that the Grace and the blessing are still the same. As S.P. Mukherjee wrote in his poem in our January 1964 issue: "The body-presence, the presence in the heart, These are the same."*

— Arthur Osborne

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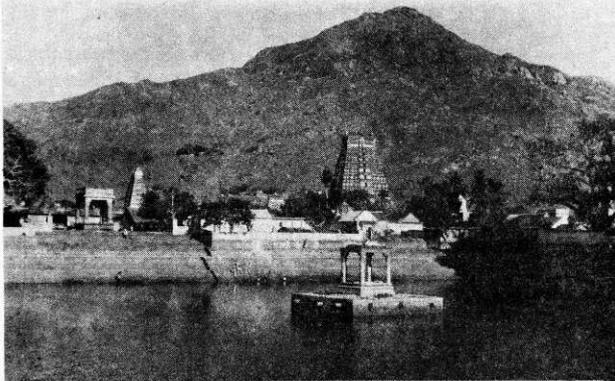


# ASHRAM BULLETIN

## HAPPENINGS AT ASHRAM

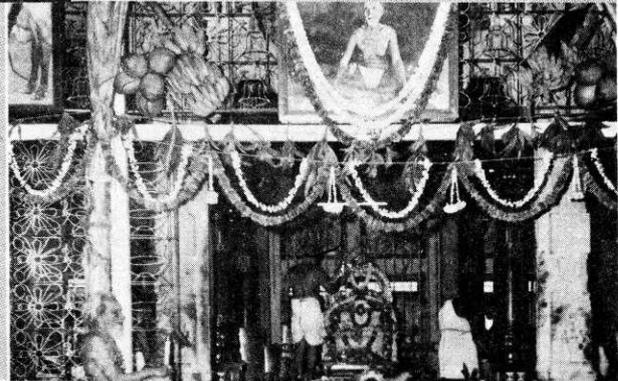
*Karthigai Deepam (24.11.1988)*

*109th Jayanti of Sri Bhagavan (25.12.1988)*



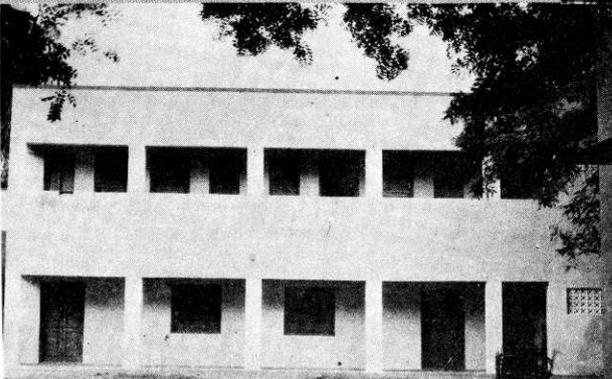
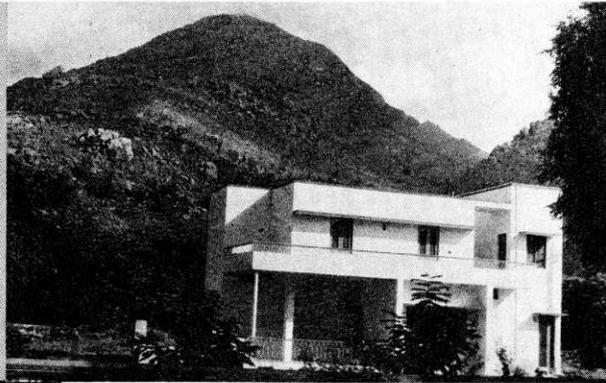
*"Maha Sivarathri" (6.3.1989)*

*Sri Bhagavan's Aradhana (3.5.1989)*



### ADDITIONS TO ASHRAM BUILDINGS

*"Devotee's Cottage", at the foot of Arunachala.*

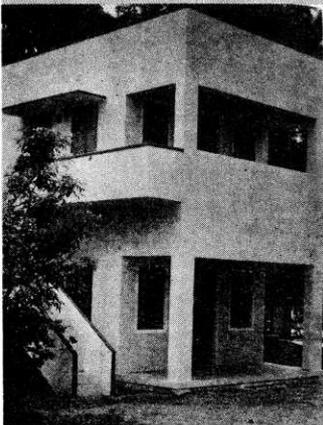
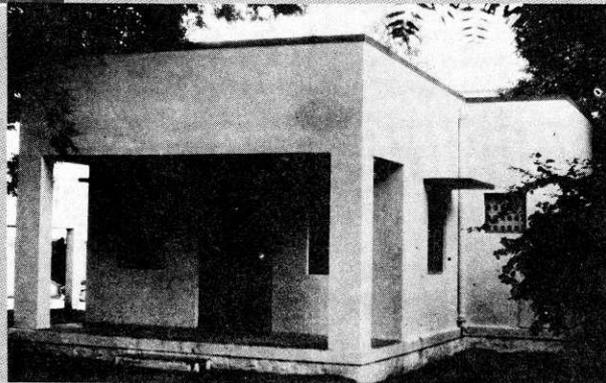


*Ground Floor (Dormitory): "Nagalakshmi Memorial", in memory of Ashram President, Sri T.N. Venkataraman's late wife. Smt. Nagalakshmi Ammal*

*First Floor: (Four single-rooms): Three rooms donated by Sri Satyanarayana Tandon, Kanpur, in memory of his late wife Smt. Krishna Kishori Tandon.*

*One room donated by Sri B.N. Mehra, Amritsar, in memory of his parents late Sri L. Shivcharan Das Mehra and Smt. Gian Dal Mehra.*

*'Love-Peace-Happiness' Cottage, donated by Sri Berzin M. Lahevala, Bombay*



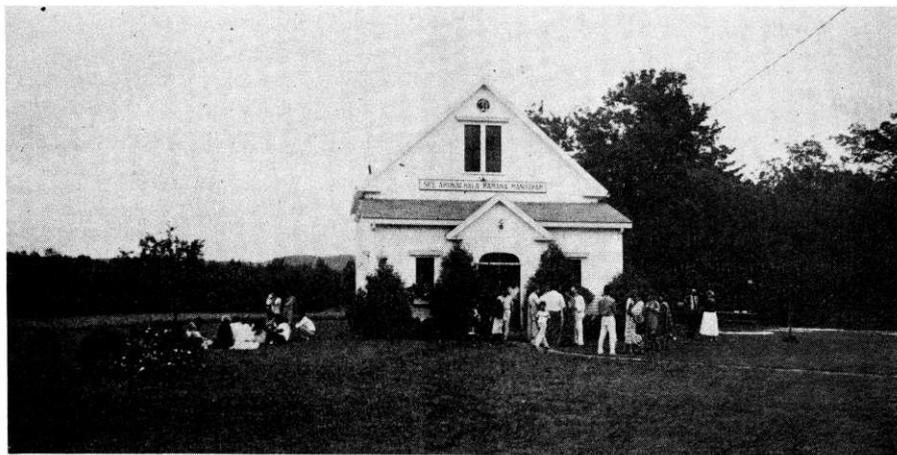
*Ground Floor: 'Echamma': Donated by Sri K. Venkatraman in memory of his grand-mother Echamma, who served food to Sri Bhagavan throughout her life.*

*First Floor: 'Sri Kamala': Donated by Sri H.S. Suryanarayana, Bangalore, in honour of his parents Sri Srikanta Aiyer and Smt. Kamala.*

*Sri R. Anjaneyalu began his Sadguruseva by participating in the building of Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi in its final stages. This steadfast Ramana-bhakta is going strong in his construction service at the Ashram as could be seen from these pictures.*



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Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram at Nova Scotia, Canada

### ARUNACHALA ASHRAMA IN AMERICA AND CANADA

The New York City *Arunachala Ashrama, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Center* was incorporated and registered as a non-profit religious organisation in 1965. *Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawat*, the founder, still heads the Center, today at its present location: 72-63, Yellowstone Blvd., Forest Hills, Queens, New York 11375. (Tele: (718) 675-3215, (718) 854-0322)

From its inception the Ashrama has been open daily, providing encouragement and services to Westerners seeking a meaning and purpose in life. Every night, following the chanting and meditation, portions are read from the teachings and life of Sri Bhagavan, who stands out as a perfect example of peace and understanding; and He is the center from which all the activities of the Ashrama issue forth.

A library is maintained at the Ashrama and also all the books from Sri Ramanasramam, presently available in English, are kept in stock for distribution.

Besides the nightly public programme, the Ashrama conducts *Sri Chakra Puja* every Friday and Full Moon Day. Also, Sri Ramana Maharshi's 'Advent at Arunachala' and Jayanti are annually celebrated.

The New York City Ashrama has been steadily pursuing its ideals of service and the practice of the teachings of Sri Bhagavan. With limited resources the daily activities of the Ashrama continue by His Grace.

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The *Nova Scotia Ashrama* has been blessed with Nature's gifts. Seated on a slope overlooking the scenic Annapolis Valley, its soothing meadows and forest are a tonic for the world-worn minds.

Four buildings are maintained on the 130 acre site: a guest-house containing six bedrooms, two bathrooms, a library, a photographic darkroom, a sitting room, and kitchen; a large barn used for animals and supplies; an independent cottage fully equipped; and *Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram*, the Ashrama Temple.

Although the Nova Scotia Arunachala Ashrama was inaugurated on September 1st, 1972, it was not until September 1st, 1975 that *Sri Arunachala Ramana Mandiram* was completed. It contains an entrance room, a large hall and shrine on the second floor, a sitting room, guest room, office, kitchen and two bathrooms on the first floor.

Through the kindness of the President of Sri Ramanasramam, Sri T.N. Venkataraman, a *Sri Chakra* was made and sanctified in Sri Ramanasramam and then sent to be installed in the Nova Scotia Temple in May of 1976. Since then daily worship with the recitation of *Sri Lalitha Sahasranamam Stotram*, and special worship on Fridays and Full Moon days have been going on. Also, the daily *Veda Parayana*, as in Sri Ramanasramam, has been conducted for nearly fifteen years now. Besides these activities that begin very early in the morning (4.30 a.m.), devotees meet nightly for recitations, *bhajans*, chanting, silence and end with a reading from Sri Bhagavan's teachings.

Those earnest seekers who wish to deepen their spiritual experiences and stabilize themselves in the practice of Self-awareness and Self-surrender are always welcome at the Nova Scotia Ashrama. The retreat is open to all races and also to those who adhere to any of the various creeds or religious beliefs — even to those of no beliefs who sincerely seek peace. Individuals and families can be accommodated, and we request that those intending on visiting please call or write in advance.

Facilities are provided to guests without any formal rate of charges. The Ashrama does accept donations from those who value our ideals and work.

Any one requiring further informations is requested to write or call:

ARUNACHALA ASHRAMA  
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Center  
R.R.P. 1, Bridgetown, Nova Scotia,  
CANADA, BOS ICO (Tel: 902-665-2090)

### RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

The 109th Jayanti of Bhagavan was celebrated at the *Delhi Ramana Kendra* on December 25, 1988, with great enthusiasm, both in the morning and in the evening, with *pooja*, *Vedaparayana* and devotional songs. Despite the severe cold weather and a steady rain, the functions were well attended. Presided over by *Shri T.N. Chaturvedi*, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, *Professor Ramachandra Gandhi* gave the key-note address on Bhagavan. There was a Ramana music concert by *Shri K. Vageesh*, accompanied on the violin by *Shri Chakrapani* and on the mridangam by *Sri V. Chandrasekharan*.



*Mr. Justice S. Natarajan*, Judge of the Supreme Court of India, presided over the annual Children's Day which was celebrated on October 14 and gave away gifts, consisting of stitched school uniforms, books, instruments boxes and stationery articles to 72 poor and deserving school-children. A special feature this year was the distribution of an informative pamphlet of topical interest concerning the care of children's health during epidemics, donated by the Chief of the Health & Nutrition Section of the UNICEF, New Delhi. In addition, scholarships were awarded to two poor and deserving young men for undergoing vocational training.



*Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha* of Narayanasrama Tapovanam, Trichur gave a series of five discourses from October 22 on Bhagavan's *Sat Darsanam*. His discourses were in continuation from where he had left off last year. The lectures drew large audiences and were well appreciated.



On November 23, *Karthigai Deepam* festival was celebrated with much gaiety. The large gathering of devotees went round the brilliantly lit *Ramanachala* singing 'Arunachala Siva' in chorus. The traditional items of *Prasad* were distributed at the close of the function.



*Maha Sivaratri* was observed on March 6, with *Vedaparayana* and devotional songs. *Thiru Muruganadimai Kovai Padmanabhan* and his students gave fine renderings from *Thevaram* and *Thiruvachakam*.



The Annual General Body meeting of the Kendra was held on January 22. The meeting was presided over by *Dr. V. Gauri Shankar* and most of the members of the Managing Body were present. Among other items, the biennial election of office-bearers was conducted. *Shri T.N. Chaturvedi*, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, was unanimously elected as the President of the Kendra for the two-year tenure 1989-91. *Dr. V. Gauri Shankar*, *Professor M.L. Sondhi* and *Shri S.K. Sachdeva* were like-wise elected as the Vice-Presidents of the Kendra.



**Mr. T.N. Chaturvedi**, Comptroller & Auditor General of India speaking on the 109th Ramana Jayanti (1 to r)  
**Mt. T.M. Subramanian** and **Prof. Ramachandra Gandhi**.



**Hon'ble Justice S. Natarajan** giving gifts to poor children.



**Shri Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha**



**Shri Swami Ishwarananda Giri** of Samvit Sadhanalaya.  
Mt. Abu.

**RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS**

The 109th *Ramana Jayanti* was inaugurated by Sri **T.N. Venkataraman**, President, Sri Ramanasramam, by lighting the *Kuthuvilakku*. on January 22, 1989, at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mylapore, Madras.

After the inaugural address by **Swami Devi Vasantananda** on "The Teachings of Sri Ramana", other eminent speakers, including **B. Ananthaswami, Swami Paramarthananda, Pranatharthiharan, S. Sankaranarayanan, T.G. Narayanaswami, Kum. Sarada** and **Vaidyanathan**, spoke on Sri Bhagavan's works like *Ulladu Narpathu* and *Aksharamanamalai*.

The programme concluded with a melodious Carnatic music concert by Alleppey Venkatesan and party in the evening.



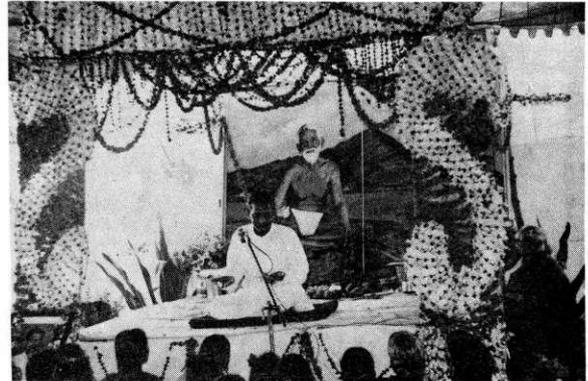
**ANANTAPUR RAMANA SATSANG**

*Sri Ramana Satsang, Anantapur*, observed the day of Bhagavan's advent to Arunachala on 1st September '88, which synchronised with the fifth anniversary of the Satsang. *Sri B. Achyuta Rao* presiding, *Professor S.R. Sarma* of S.K. University released "*Indrani Saptasati*" of Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni. *Dr. N. Krupanandam* said that during this year they had conducted 40 Sastangs besides publication of four books. *Sri S. Narayana* spoke on Bhagavan's life and message. *Sri R. Sreeramulu* proposed a vote of thanks.



**RAMANA MAHARSHI SATSANG, BOMBAY**

RAMANA SATSANG included Vedic prayers, *Aksharamanamalai*, *Upadesa Saram*, meditation and *Puja* to Sri Bhagavan on Saturday 28.1.1989 at 5.30 p.m. at Gita Mandir Hall, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpathy, Bombay.

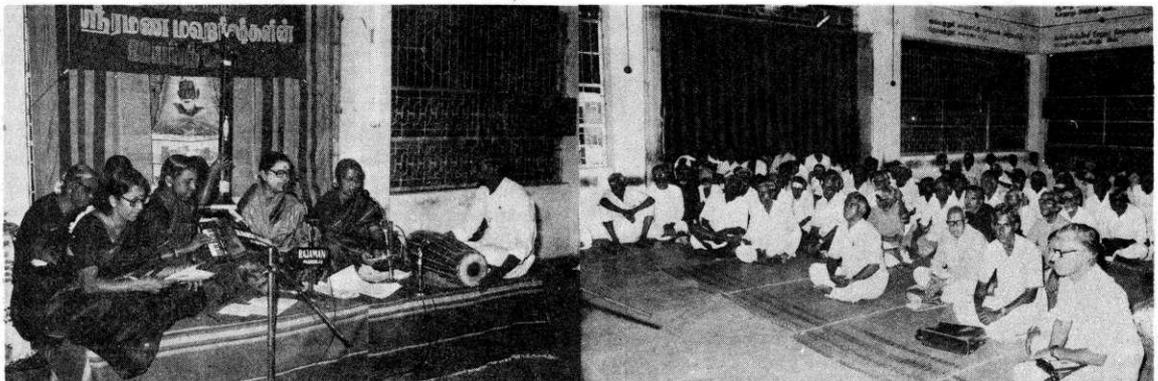


**RAMANA JAYANTI AT SRUNGAVRUKSHAM:** The 109th Birth anniversary of Sri Maharshi was celebrated at Srungavruksham on December 25, 1988. *Sri Nannagaru* (Sri B.V.L.N. Raju of Jinnur) spoke for 3 hours on the life and teachings of Bhagavan Ramana. In the same village Arunachala Karteeka Deepotsavam was also celebrated on November 23, on a grand scale.



**ARUNACHALA RAMANA SATSANGAM, VIJAYAWADA:** *Sri Karamsetty Guru Prasada Rao* reports that the 109th *Ramana Jayanti* was celebrated on February 5, 1989, with *Puja, bhajan* and discourses, at Vijayawada.

RAMANA JAYANTI AT SRI RAMANA MANDIRAM, MADURAI: (24.12.88):  
'Ramana Music' by Smt. Alamelu & party. A view of Ramana-bhaktas.





**Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, lighting the Kuthuvilakku to mark the inauguration of SRI RAMANA VIDYA BHAVAN NURSERY SCHOOL, Vegikkal, on 20th October 1988.**

## SRI RAMANA KENDRAM, HYDERABAD

**Sri S. Diwakara Rao**, President, *Sri Ramana Kendram*, Hyderabad, reports the following main activities of the *Kendram*:

1. *Satsang* every Sunday at the Gandhi Centenary Hall in the Andhra Mahila Sabha Women's College from 9 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.
2. **Meditation at the residence of Dr. K. Subrahmanian** from 7.30 a.m. to 8.15 a.m. on other week days.
3. Publication of a bilingual (English/Telugu) monthly "*Sri Ramana Jyoti*".
4. Poor-feeding once in a month.
5. "*Punarvasu Puja*" every month in the residence of one of the devotees.

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## SHREE RAMANA MAHARSHI ACADEMY FOR THE BLIND, BANGALORE

Nearly 50 boys and girls of *Shree Ramana Maharshi Academy for the Blind, Bangalore*, visited Sri Ramanasramam as a thanksgiving to Sri Ramana, as their Academy was given the top National Award of Rs. 1 lakh (for training and rehabilitation of the visually impaired). The Academy topped among all institutions engaged in the welfare of the handicapped. Started in 1969 the Academy now has a strength of 200 students and 27 dedicated staff. It has been doing yeoman service by implementing a number of rural-bound programmes to overcome visual impairment and rehabilitate the afflicted in society.

The children gave a programme of music and dance which captivated everyone's heart!

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### THE GREAT MUSICIAN

*Padmasri Pandit Ramnarayan* (who had earlier visited during *Deepam* in 1985) gave a breath-taking and moving rendition, in spite of a badly swollen finger, on the *Sarangi* at the Ashram on 5.2.89. He related later in private conversation that it had been his longstanding wish to play again before Sri Bhagavan and that Sri Bhagavan's Presence had inspired him to play as he had done never before.



*Padmasri Pandit Ramnarayan*



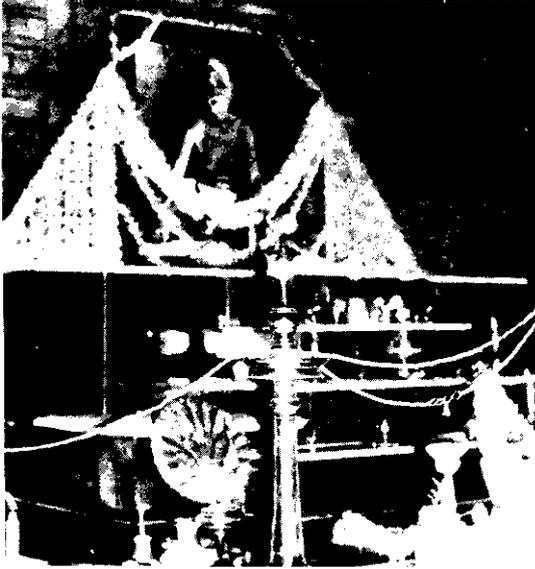
### SRI SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA OF ANANDASHRAM

*ANANDASHRAM*<sup>1</sup> of Swami Ramdas is situated in Kerala State of South India. After '*Papa*' Swami Ramdas, '*Mataji*' Krishnabai took over the mantle and now it is the turn of 'their child' *Sri Swami Satchidananda*.

*We pray that Sri Swamiji be blessed by Pujya Papa and Pujya Mataji to shoulder this heavy responsibility, successfully.*

<sup>1</sup>ANANDASHRAM, P.O., Via Kanhangad, Kerala State, Pin: 670 531.

**RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING, BANGALORE**  
(OCTOBER '89 – MARCH '89)



**The Cultural Scene**

Ramananjali performances were given at various places in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Nine cassettes of Ramana Music (seven by Ramananjali) were released during this time. Monthly programmes of Ramana Music and Dance at the Shrine and two cultural festivals were held — one in December and the other along with the National Seminar in March. Classical Ramana Dance by Smt. Ambika Kameshwar, ballets by Ramana Nritya Kala Ranga and group dances by Ramana Bala Kendra and students of the Ramana Maharshi Academy for the Blind were some of the special programmes. Concerts of classical and devotional Ramana Music, both vocal and instrumental, were also a significant part of the festivals. A new ballet 'Sri Ramana Prabha' was specially produced for the March festival, scripted by the famous Kannada poet Pu. Thi. Narasimhachar.

**Celebrations**

Karthigai Deepam, Bhagavan's Jayanthi and Sivarathri were celebrated at the Ramana Shrine.



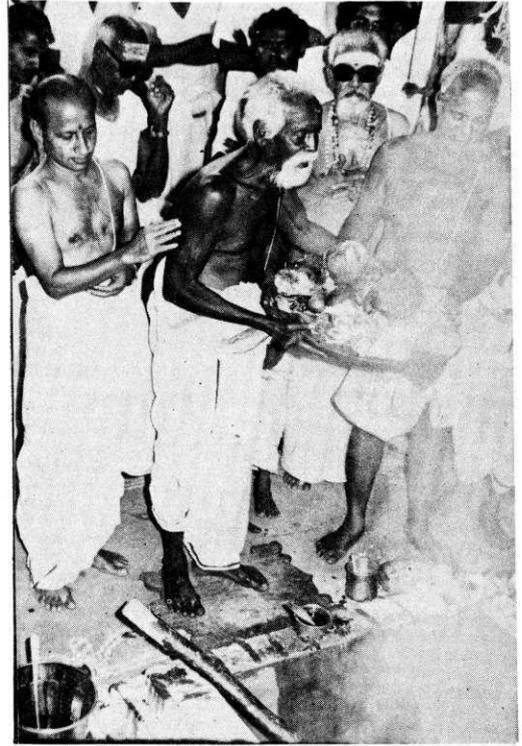
**National Seminar**

Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President of Sri Ramanasramam, inaugurated the seminar. Talks in English on Bhagavan's life and teachings: V. Ganesan, Pranatharthiharan, T.G. Narayanaswamy, Haridas and Kum. Sarada. Swami Chidroopananda, Swami Brahmananda and Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao spoke in Kannada. Talks by Sant Keshav Das and Dr. Venugopal Rao were held at the Shrine and Sri Haridas is currently conducting Saturday classes on the 'Ramana Gita'.





Sri Chinnaswami Aradhana Day was observed on 21st January 1989 at his Samadhi shrine.



Purnahuti at Sri Vidya Homam (24.3.1989)

#### FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

<b>GURU POORNIMA (Vyasa Puja)</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>18.7.1989</b>
KRISHNA JAYANTHI (Gokulashtami)	Wednesday	23.8.1989
VINAYAKA CHATHURTHI	Monday	4.9.1989
DAY OF BHAGAVAN'S ADVENT TO ARUNACHALA	Friday	1.9.1989
NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL (Commences on)	Saturday	30.9.1989
SARASWATHI PUJA	Monday	9.10.1989
VIJAYA DASAMI	Tuesday	10.10.1989
DEEPAVALI	Saturday	28.10.1989
SKANDASHASHTI	Saturday	4.11.1989
<b>KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (Commences on)</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>2.12.1989</b>
<b>KARTHIGAI DEEPAM</b>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>11.12.1989</b>
<b>SRI BHAGAVAN'S JAYANTI</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>11.1.1990</b>
PONGAL	Sunday	14.1.1990
CHINNASWAMIGAL ARADHANA	Friday	9.2.1990
<b>MAHA SIVARATRI</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>23.2.1990</b>
TELUGU NEW YEAR'S DAY	Tuesday	27.3.1990
TAMIL NEW YEAR'S DAY	Saturday	14.4.1990

## OBITUARY

### Sri N. Venkataraman

**Sri N. Venkataraman**, grandson of Sri Nelliappa Iyer, Sri Bhagavan's paternal uncle, passed away at Madras on 24th August, 1988, with Sri Bhagavan's name on his lips. After serving in the office of Sri Ramanasramam for some time, he took employment at the Central Bank of India at Madurai. He ably served *Sri Ramana Mandiram*, Madurai, as its honorary secretary from 1947 till 1981. His devotion to Sri Bhagavan was total. He now rests at the Lotus Feet of his chosen Master: Bhagavan Ramana.



### Sri K. Hari Prasad

**Sri K Hari Prasad** (66 years) passed away at Secunderabad on August 27, 1988, after a brief illness. He is survived by his wife, three sons and four daughters. He was in the Defence Ministry from where he retired about eight years ago.

Mr. Hari Prasad, grandson of the late Swami Pranavananda (Sarvepalli Narasimhayya of Vellore), found solace in meditating on Arunachala Siva and chanting the divine name till his last breath.

### Major I.J. Taneja

**Major I.J. Taneja**, a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan and an active member of the Ramana Kendra, Delhi, passed away at New Delhi on March 15, 1989. 'Major Saheb' had his *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan in 1949 when he first visited Sri Ramanasramam. He served the Indian Army in different parts of the country, but he would invariably spend his annual leave at the Ashram. He had a unique experience of bliss during one of his visits here, which he had vividly described in an article in the January 1969 issue of *The Mountain Path*. His last visit was in 1988.



### Dr. Nagendra Singh

Ramana Kendra, Delhi reports, with deep regret, the sudden demise of their President, **Dr. Nagendra Singh** (President of the International Court of Justice) on December 11, at the Hague. The Kendra was eagerly looking forward to his active participation in the 109th *Jayanti* of Bhagavan on the 25th of December. In fact, he told the doctors attending on him when he was critically ill that he must be free to go over to New Delhi to take part in the *Ramana Jayanti* Celebration. When the end came, the names of Ramana and Mahadeva were on his lips.



Dr. Nagendra Singh was an intellectual who served the country and the international community with distinction in several spheres. He had an abiding faith in religion and in the higher values of life. He was a great devotee of Bhagavan. In his passing away, we have lost a distinguished legal luminary.

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### Sri S.B. Mukherjee

**Satya Bilas Mukherjee**, who was absorbed in Arunachala in the early hours of 9th January, 1989, was very much the brother of Sri S.P. Mukherjee in his total devotion and surrender to Sri Bhagavan. When he came last year with his entire family to his house "Sadhana" near Sri Ramanasramam, on his annual pilgrimage to Arunachala, Satya Bilasda made up his mind not to return to Calcutta though return tickets had already been booked.



On the night of January 8, Sri Mukherjee felt shooting pain in his chest and by midnight he knew that the end was nigh. He called his family members to his bedside, sat in Padmasana facing Arunachala and Sri Bhagavan's Shrine, and asked them to chant "Arunachala Siva". He left his body at 2 a.m. on the 9th January with Arunachala resounding in his ears and Ramana nama on his lips!

That is how the end came to this remarkable Ramana-bhakta — such a peaceful, serene and blissful end!

Statement about ownership and other particulars about THE MOUNTAIN PATH according to Form IV, Rule 8, Circular of the Registrar of Newspapers for India:

1. *Place of Publication* — Madras-18; 2. *Periodicity of its Publication* — Quarterly; 3. *Printer's Name* — T.V. Venkataraman; *Nationality* — Indian; *address* — The Jupiter Press Private Limited, 552, Mount Road, Madras-18; 4. *Publisher's Name* — T.N. Venkataraman; *Nationality* — Indian; *Address* — 552, Mount Road, Madras-18; 5. *Editor's Name* — Professor K. Swaminathan; *Nationality* — Indian; *Address* — Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai; 6. *Name and Address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than 1% of the total capital* — SRI RAMANASRAMAM, Tiruvannamalai-606 603.

I, T.N. Venkataraman, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: 31-3-89.

Signature of the Publisher: (Sd.) T.N. Venkataraman.

## BOOK REVIEWS

SITAYANA: By Dr. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, Samata Books, 10, Kamaraj Bhavan, 573, Mount Road, Madras-6, Pp. 686, Price Rs. 250.

Like the Veda, the Ramayana is the saga of the eternal unfolding of a divine Consciousness. It lends itself to a number of interpretations and approaches, for the reality that is at the core is infinite. Popularly understood, this epic is the story of Lord Rama conquering the host of the titans blocking the progress of humanity. All else is subsidiary. There may be several notes that have not been fully articulated in the cosmic song. One of these is the spirit and personality of Sita who is nonetheless revered as the supreme ideal of Indian Womanhood. How did Sita feel about it all? What were her inner reactions to the utterances and actions of Rama after the war was won? How did she bear the ignominy of the second exile, particularly after the deceitful strategy adopted to take her to the forest? These and similar questions arise in the mind of every reader of the Ramayana even as the glories of Rama and the exploits of Hanuman are celebrated. It is a matter of special gratification that a mature philosopher, literary artist and spiritually sensitive elder like Dr. K.R.S. should apply himself to this aspect of the story.

*Sitaayaah caritam mahat*, that is what the epic is in an important aspect and it is in this spirit that the author proceeds to tell the tale in English verse—in unrhymed quatrain measure which he has used so successfully elsewhere too. He keeps to the original structural plan of seven books but his narration sums up to just one-fourth of the work of Valmiki. By and large he keeps close to the Adi Kavi, though here and there he may draw from Kamban or Tulsi. Occasionally he lets his own aesthetic and poetic inspiration embellish the work, to the delight of the discriminating reader.

In keeping with his approach of treating the epic as a recordation of the role of Sita in the evolution of Womanhood, he renames some of the books, *kandas*. They are: Mithila, Ayodhya, Asoka, Yuddha, Rajya, Ashrama. He covers the main part of the Uttara Kanda as well. It is this last part that is specially moving and reaches rare heights of spiritual pathos. Explaining the lines of his departure from the original narrative, Dr. Iyengar writes: "In Valmiki's *Aranya* while the earlier and later phases of the 14 year period of exile are delineated with considerable particularity, the long interim is disposed of summarily with the remark that Rama, Sita and Lakshmana moved from

Ashrama to Ashrama, and stayed in them for periods long or short totalling ten years. This blank I have tried to fill in the Cantos 'Around the Ashramas' and 'Designs for Living'. Likewise hardly anything is said in Valmiki's 'Sundara' about Sita's life in Asoka grove during the first ten months of her imprisonment there. Here, again, I have ventured to fill the lacuna by emphasising the roles of Trijata, Anala, and their mother, Sarama. There is a good deal of self-probing too, on Sita's part, inevitable in her intolerable loneliness and feeling of helplessness. Finally the twelve years in Valmiki's Ashrama, mainly curtailed by silence, receive due consideration in my last Book, 'Ashrama'."

The writer is no doubt familiar with the arrogant spirit of the sophisticated gentry in the present-day literary world dismissing the 'supernatural' as superstition. He has the courage to maintain this element without glossing over it. For, as he puts it, it has gone deep into the race consciousness and a Ramayana or Mahabharata without the supernatural would turn into prosaic narratives. A reader of these epics freely participates in the supernatural without any feeling of oddness about it. In any narration of the life of Rama or Krishna, these elements must be left untouched.

The *Sitayana* is a document of the evolution of the Shakti Consciousness, as distinct from the Purusha-Consciousness embodied in Sri Rama. And consciousness is eternal; and what transpired in the being and times of Sita is relevant to us even today. That is why the author is eminently successful in 'relating some of the issues raging in our present-day world with the perennial values and verities of the world of Rama and Sita'.

Sita's musings in her last days at the hermitage (Canto 73) deserve special mention. She recalls the events of the past, looks into the future with doubtful eyes and exclaims:

Or perhaps, the crucial final battle  
will be waged another time,  
Other actors will play their assigned roles  
and structure the Next Future.  
And we may come down again, leaving our  
far Home in the Transcendent,  
And then at least render whole and wholesome  
this errant unfinished world!

The Notes at the end of the volume are a mine of information—mythological, literary, cultural. On page 665, the author informs us, "The noted Sanskrit scholar, Vasishtha

Ganapati Muni, in his *Mahavidyati Sutragranthavali*, describes the Ramayana as essentially a musical composition of 7 Books representing the sapta-swaras (sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni)."

A remarkable work most satisfying in every way. Here is a standing example of how the English language can be used successfully to articulate the most ancient and profound feelings and thoughts of an Indian mind.

— M.P. Pandit

THE EASE OF BEING: By Jean Klein, Pub.: The Acorn Press, 1318 Broad Street, P.O. Box 4007, Duke Station, Durham, North Carolina 27706, U.S.A. pp. 102, Price not stated.

After his two books, BE WHO YOU ARE (1978), and NEITHER THIS NOR THAT I AM (1980), this the third, being a collection of talks between 1980 and 1985, is bound to prove a delight to the discerning. A musicologist and doctor, Jean Klein met his Guru in South India and was eventually sent back to Europe to teach Advaita. The dialogues in the book under review employ the "direct approach", beyond mental striving, to that timeless awareness, our being. This of course requires in the seeker, a maturity that is able to accept that the Seen is in the Seer, and that this coin of two sides appears and disappears in the metal that is Being.

The book abounds in refreshing restatements of facts that one tends to forget — "There are two types of effort, a volitional kind belonging to the "I" and another which transcends the personal will and which flows directly from the effortless, for its origin is Self. The motive behind all effort is to be effortless. The sole desire is for desirelessness. You see this when you look at what happens the moment a desired object is obtained. There is desirelessness but nobody who is desireless, so at this point there is no object as its cause. You live your real non-dual nature. Later however, you leave it and the "I" enters, saying, "I was happy because I bought a new house, or met a new friend" and so on. But a time comes when this object no longer suffices. So you begin anew to search for some other object. And this vicious circle continues until you finally see that desirelessness has absolutely nothing to do with any object. It is in you."

Klein lays stress on "listening" to the body and mind, a return to the all-accepting curiosity of childhood in order to *feel* one's body as an unbounded organic whole, and *observe* mind, not as a strumpet that needs setting right, but nakedly, without motive, for what it is. "In this acceptance develops a space between your accepting position and whatever you accept... a space between your real nature and your projected image. In accepting all that appears, you are free from it. At first you are free from what you accept. But later you'll find yourself in acceptance itself."

His observations on the side on the curative aspects of sound, the various techniques for movement of energy from one *chakra* to another and the nature of intuition are interesting.

Open anywhere, and one hears in the words, the music of mastery and the gentle authority of the accomplished. A beautiful book, and I'm sure, a beautiful person.

— J. Jayaraman.

SRIMAD BHAGAVAD GITA: By Swami Jyotirmayananda; Pub.: Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, 217, Deerfield Drive, Berlin, CT 06037 U.S.A.; distributed free.

This Bhagavad Gita with text in Sanskrit transliteration, English translation and a brief introduction to each chapter by Swami Jyotirmayananda, of Yoga Research Foundation meets the felt need for establishing and reinforcing contacts with Hindus all over the world with a view to instill in them devotion to the principles and practices of Hindu way of life. The Gita is the most widely studied text among the Vedic scriptures and the Viswa Hindu Parishad is to be lauded for its noble aim.

The popularity of the Gita is due to its universal message and catholicity. It is concrete in its details and in the implementation of the ideal. Its lessons are graded to the ability, inclination and temperament of men. Hence it continues to exert its influence on many of the great thinkers of today — irrespective of colour, creed and religion. The Parishad rightly feels that the study of the Gita should be introduced early in a child's life at home and considers that "if only one family is benefitted from this publication, it will consider this attempt a success."

— Dr. D. Sri Rama Rao

SAUNDARYA LAHARI OF SRI SANKARACHARYA, Sanskrit Text, Translation and Notes by Swami Tapasyananda, Pub.: Ramakrishna Math, Madras-600 004, Rs. 20/- p. 181.

The authorship of Saundarya Lahari is traditionally attributed to Adi Sankaracharya and the various learned commentaries on the text have been on this basis. The text is made up of a total of 100 stanzas. The first 41 stanzas constitute the so-called "Ananda Lahari" portion and, according to legend, were found by Sankara inscribed on the wall of Mount Kailas and were transcribed by him. The remaining 59 stanzas which describe Sri Tripurasundari's physical form in detail were composed by Sankara himself, making up a total of 100 stanzas.

The Ananda Lahari stanzas are replete with the Bija-Mantras of Sakti worship and form the essence of the work. In these slokas, the doctrine of Siva Sakti samatva is expounded, as also the claim that Sakti-worship by itself can confer on its votaries all the Purusharthas of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha.

Sakti-worship could be either internal wherein all rituals are performed by the aspirant in Chidakasa or Daharaakasa (the spiritual sky in the heart) or external, wherein the Sri Chakra is installed and worshipped. The internal form of worship by deep meditation is most difficult and is rarely achieved, whereas Sri Chakra worship is relatively easier for ordinary persons.

The Sri Chakra is a diagrammatic representation of Siva-Sakti in both the cosmic and individual aspects; positioned in it are all the gods and goddesses. It is the Yantra *par excellence* for pooja. The diagram consists of a series of nine triangles (four Siva chakras plus five Sakti chakras) around a small central circle, the Bindu; their interaction results in 43 triangular projects. The unified Siva-Sakti becomes diverse in manifestation by means of three stresses—Naada (inchoate sound), Kalaa (desire to create) and Bindu (potential universe ready to separate into various categories). The Bindu is the creative Sakti and is termed the Maha Tripurasundari.

The Sri Chakra is also identified with the thousand-petalled lotus or Sahasraara vital centre. The Yoga propounded is that of arousing the dormant Kundalini energy and making it ascend progressively through the six Chakras or plexuses in the human body, which are but the gross manifestations of the Sahasraara.

The opening stanza of the Saundarya Lahari is itself a grand declaration that the Supreme Reality is the inseparable Siva-Sakti, or Being-Will (Pure Consciousness-Energy). This is followed by a few magnificent stanzas (No. 2 to 6) glorifying the greatness of the Divine Mother in her love and graciousness. External worship of Sakti in the Sri Chakra as well as internal worship by meditation in the Chidakasa are then described. The divine Tripurasundari is seated in the Bindu in the centre of the Sahasraara and is both immanent and transcendent. By meditation on her or by worship of her in the Sri Chakra, all objects are attained and all siddhis are achieved. Her supremely gracious nature makes her most accessible to all, including persons in distress or suffering of every kind.

The Pancha-dasaakshari Mantra of Sri Tripurasundari is set out succinctly in stanza 32 as made up of three groups of syllables—

the group Ka, e, i, la, hreem —  
the group ha, sa, ka, ha, la, hreem —  
the group sa, ka, la, hreem.

Lakshmidhara's recommendation that Sreem (Sri-Bija) should be added in the last group is supported by long tradition. With this addition emerges the full Sodasaakshari Mantra which is the prime means of Sakti-worship.

Swami Tapasyananda has rendered a signal service to all spiritual aspirants and to Sakti-worshippers in particular,

by his faithful translation of the Saundarya Lahari stanzas and his illuminating notes thereon.

— A.V. Venkateswaran

THE FREE MIND: The Inward Path to Liberation: By Robert Powell; Pub.: Sun Books P.O. Box 5588, Santa Fe USA; Pp 175 + 7; \$12

The central theme of this stimulating book is Freedom—“not Freedom from something or even from everything but a release of the mind from its inherent bondage.” The unstated central figure through whom the whole theme is articulated is J. Krishnamurti. Thought, a material process issuing from experience recorded as memory, ties the mind up and holds it in the bondage of Time. In fact Time is thought. Meditation is the emptying of the mind of the known which is always in the past. The known must cease for the ‘other’ to be. Observation without the censoring observer brings about a Freedom which is its own discipline and in that state of Freedom the mind is ever in the Now, ever learning, never accumulating and this vibrant living in the present opens the inward path to Liberation.

Robert Powell has given us in this excellently printed paper back a scintillating paraphrase of the essence of J.K.'s teaching. However Powell's exposition also shows that even those who have a deep understanding of J.K.'s investigation and exploration of the troubled psyche of man are unable to present his teaching without either repeating him verbatim or almost unconsciously imitating his mannerisms.

A ruthlessly critical investigation of J.K.'s contribution to philosophy is yet to come. To succeed in this attempt one must see the glaring contradictions between J.K. as a private person and J.K. as a Socratic gadfly on the platform. The two biographies of J.K. expressly written at his behest by Mary Lutyens and Pupul Jayakar respectively will clearly bring out these contradictions if the reader comes to J.K. not as one of his worshippers but as one of his co-worshippers in the Altar of Truth.

Powell, like Maurice Frydman, sees an identity between J.K. and Ramana Maharshi. The identity is more apparent than real. Ramana Maharshi, like good marble, was all of one piece, J.K.'s personality on the dais (Powell points out in the book that the word ‘personality’ is derived from the Latin ‘persona’ which means ‘a mask’) was different from J.K. as a private person. The biographies very clearly show this to the discerning reader.

Powell's powerful pen will perhaps take account of this in the next edition. If he does, the new perspective will profoundly alter his premises. Powell is a fearless critic and so will not shrink from revising his stand.

— S. Jayaraman

YOGA OF ENLIGHTENMENT, Srimad Bhagavad Gita Ch. XVIII: Swami Jyotirmayananda, Pub.: Yoga Research Foundation, Florida, U.S.A. Pp. 376, \$4. 99.

THE GITA AND ITS CULTURE: R.K. Chatterjee, Pub.: Sterling, L-10, Green Park Extension, New Delhi 110 016. Pp. 93, Rs. 100.

Swami Jyotirmayananda, author of the first book under review is widely popular in the U.S.A. and has established the Yoga Research Foundation at Florida and published many books on Yoga and spiritual matters. His lectures and publications are full of insight and inspiration.

The book under review contains the text of a series of lectures delivered at Orlando, on the eighteenth chapter, the last and the longest in the Gita, the one conferring Enlightenment. He summarises the whole chapter both from the point of view of non-theistic Vedanta of the Upanishads based on the Brahman (Self) as the absolute Godhead, as well as the theistic outlook of the average man.

The many stories and analogies in this book and the inspiring commentary alongside the original text are sure to leave an indelible mark in the minds of seekers. The get up and printing are excellent.

The second is a delightful book on the Gita, with a difference. The learned author has selected 310 verses out of the total of 700, with the Sanskrit text accompanying 194 of these. In his Introduction he quotes archaeological evidence on the consanguine battle at Kurukshetra. A scholar in Sanskrit, English and Hindi, Sri Chatterjee takes abiding interest in Vedic culture. The author records a marvellous and thought-provoking dialogue between the Lord and Arjuna.

Krishna and Arjuna were the incarnations of Nara and Narayana, two ancient sages. The Gita was delivered by Sri Krishna first when he was in deep meditation, as told by Himself. Long after the war, once Arjuna requested the Lord to repeat it, but Krishna pleaded inability to repeat it in its entirety then (p. 7). Lord Krishna is not included among the ten Avatars because Vishnu himself came to tread the earth as Krishna — not a mere partial manifestation like in the others.

Many points like Varnasrama Dharma, Sannyasa, Householder's duty, and injunctions of the Sastras are dealt with. There is an appendix with glossary and index. The get up and the printing deserve special mention.

— N.N. Rajan.

SANATSUJATIYA — By Swami Amritananda, Pub.: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4. Pp. 94. Price Rs. 10/-

Sanatsujata, one of the mind-born sons of Brahma and an uncompromising champion of spiritual aspirations, got

his spiritual illumination from Lord Dakshinamurti, ever teaching in silence.

Dhritarashtra in deep distress, due to his estrangement with the Pandavas, approached Vidura, the wise one, to teach him the way to Peace. This teaching on ethics and worldly virtues according to Manu's Neetisastra is called Vidura Neeti. As the eager pupil wanted to know about Death and Moksha, Vidura directed him to Sage Sanatsujata.

Sanatsujata opens his discourse with the declaration that there is nothing like death. It is only a delusion. The *jiva*, essentially *Atman*, neither takes birth nor dies. Identification of the self with the false body brings misery. The feeling of 'I' and mine should be eschewed. The Brahma Jnani (Self-Realised sage) is greater than all the Devatas. There is none greater than him. To be dead to the *atman* within, is real death. Awareness of the Self within is immortality. Ignorance of Truth is death. Eternal vigilance in being fixed in one's true nature is Self-Realisation. The Self is ever present and so death cannot mean non-being.

Sage Ramana's victorious confrontation with Death is a standing example validating this Truth in our times.

The dialogue between the king and Sanatsujata is very interesting. The author Sri Amritananda of the Ramakrishna Order has made available in English this not too familiar scriptural text for which he deserves all praise. The text in Sanskrit alternates with a translation faithfully rendered with quotations from *Srutii* and *Smritii*. The crowning point is Sankara's commentary which adds lustre to the work.

— N.N. Rajan

AWAKENING FROM THE DREAM OF ME: David Manners; Non-Stop Books, P.O. Box 24732, Minnesota 55416; Pp. 78, \$7.95.

"How can one recognise a 'Knower', a person of 'steady wisdom'?" When Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni asked this of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi (*Sri Ramana Gita*, I, 7), Bhagavan replied "By his mark of equality to all creation others infer that he is a Knower" (*Sri Ramana Gita*, I, 16). This wondrous experience of oneness with all creation, which gives rise to the equal vision, forms the core of David Manners' book *Awakening from the Dream of Me* (presenting a "collection of aphorisms from an American sage" as the book-cover tells us, referring to Manners) — Vividly Manners describes this awakening:

"Now I am free, alive, and awake! I listen for the voice of the Self and find it everywhere — in the twittering of the robins, the squawk of a jay. I see its reflection in the face of a young child, in the petal of a roadside flower, and in the silence of trees in the forest. Love . . . expands my heart to include the universe.."

The immediacy and vibrancy of the experience is directly conveyed to the reader because it is lived by the author and not merely explained as an intellectual conviction. The writings of one who has such intimate experience of Truth hold great value as they carry the fragrance of Truth, they hold the 'badge of authority'. 'How can we too be awakened to the Truth?' And David Manners answers:

"Before awakening, you must give up everything... Through relinquishing old concepts, we finally come to the real and eternal Self."

The limited identity would likely struggle for survival, but one must give it up completely if one is to be fully aware of the Self. One must eventually put away even the desire to become Self-aware, as this desire is also linked with the 'dream me'. If one surrenders all and just is, the Self experience shines forth, as the 'isness'.

Manners also deals with the question that haunts many serious people. How does one deal with suffering? What are the solutions to violence and negativity that rear their heads everywhere in a thousand forms? These are the burning issues of the day. But the answer to every problem lies within, not without, says Manners. The vision is faulty, not the objects seen:

"The unknowing ones call for peace at every street corner. Isn't this a search for peace outside the Self? . . . If we wish to see change for the better externally, we must first see change within ourselves. Peace begins in the heart . . . Life is not to blame for our blindness to truth. It's up to each of us to turn away from our conditioned thoughts and discover the wonder of life and awareness."

It is especially in the expression of this wonder that the beauty of the book lies.

For followers of the Ramana Way, the book holds the added attraction of bearing a deep impress of Bhagavan Ramana's teachings.

— Kumari Sarada

YOGA FOR THE MODERN MAN: M.P. Pandit, Rs. 50/-

TRADITIONS IN MYSTICISM: M.P. Pandit; Rs. 225/-

Both Pub.: Sterling Publishers (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi-16.

Hundreds of books on Yoga have been published in recent decades, most of them being more enthusiastic than authentic. It is, therefore, doubly pleasing to see a book on the subject written by an experienced *sadhaka* and a well known exponent of yogic knowledge. "The Yoga for the Modern Man" gives a concise account of the right perception of the philosophy of yoga, which is the science of spiritual life.

Mr. Pandit has compressed many facts in this little book giving details about Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Tantra Yoga and the Integral Yoga of Sri Aurobindo.

"Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shall thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"

The answer is to be found, says the author, in the three Mantras of the Integral Yoga, namely, Aspiration, Rejection and Surrender. The Divine Shakti will take over from the stage when all that the human will can do is done by self-surrender, aspiration for the Divine and rejection of all things that obstruct this aspiration.

The second book on Mysticism is a bigger one, divided into eight sections, the first of which gives a detailed account of the Indian mystic tradition, our spiritual heritage, "one of the oldest in the world", its main elements entering into every spiritual effort during all these centuries. The fundamental concepts underlying this ancient tradition are gleaned from the Vedas and Upanishads, the scriptures and stotras, as well as the tantras and agamas, which comprise the theme of the second section. This is followed by the many-sided light thrown by the author on the concept, practice and application of yoga and meditation. Stress is laid in this section on concentration on the impersonal being which is immutable, standing aloof within each one of us.

The fourth section deals with saints, mystics and philosophers of the Indian renaissance from Dayanand Saraswati to Radhakrishnan, ranging through Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Sri Aurobindo, Ramana Maharishi, and others, all told twentyone in number.

The other four brief sections deal with articles relating to Buddhism, Jainism, Jewish mysticism, Sufism and Theosophy. More than a half of the book consists of reviews contributed by the author to various magazines in the country. In view of the high price marked for the book, it would not seem critical if the publisher's attention is drawn to the several printing errors such as "all" for "Ali", "Gandharva" for "Gandhara", etc., etc., and the glaring one in the footnote of the last review, attributing the authorship of three devotional books — "At the Feet of the Master", "The Voice of the Silence" and the "Light on the Path" to Sir Edwin Arnold.

This is a very enjoyable book appealing to mystics, philosophers and the laymen like.

— Argus

THE PATH FINDERS: By Swami Vijnananda, Sri Ramakrishna Math; Madras-600 004; Pp. 66, Rs. 6/-

In this booklet are presented the noble truths lived and preached by such pathfinders as Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, and Sri Ramanujacharya. Two more essays on the message of the Gita and the nature of true Religion are also included. This collection of writings by Swami

Vijnananda, a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order, brings the reader closer to these noble personalities whose central message is the realisation of our identity with the Divine Self that we are at the core.

— Argus

**THE MIRACLES OF LIVE JUICES** — By Kanti Bhatt and Manohar Dr. Shah; Pub.: Nature Cure Ashram, Uruli Kanchan, Pune: Pp. 144, Rs. 20/-.

This is a book on nutrition and gives a detailed exposition on the right kind of food to be taken for maintenance of health. In the opening page itself is the warning that cooking destroys all nutritive properties in natural food-stuffs and turns them into dead, unnatural and poisonous substances. Natural food substances, it is urged, contain various enzymes which are needed for their digestion in the intestinal tract. As they are destroyed by heat, the book puts in a strong plea for the use of freshly pressed juices for restoring vigour and vitality. Giving detailed statistics of the nutritive content of the various fruits and vegetables, the authors emphasise the fact that, being alkaline in nature, these natural products help in maintaining the acid-base balance of blood. They are rich in vitamins and minerals, and to obtain the benefit of these constituents, they must be raw as far as possible. While only 35 per cent of cooked food is assimilated in the body tissues, it is raised to 92 per cent if the raw diet is taken. Recommended by such leaders as Morarji Desai and Nani Palkhivala, the book will have a wide popularity among all those who are health-conscious.

— Argus

**YOSHITSUNE**: — A Japanese Poem; and **ATRI** — A Vedic Poem. By Jesse Roarke, Distributor: VAK, The Spiritual Book Shop, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry-2. Pp. 110, Price Rs. 65/-.

The Japanese and the English are overcrowded insular races with taste for tradition and ceremony. Both have military energy, maritime abilities and industrial skill. With a Buddhist background, Jesse Roarke, a soldier, merchant mariner, and Columbia graduate, transports us in the first poem to the heroic ages when great warriors faced the worst ordeals,

“Ready ever for death and life in the turn and the flashing.

Standing clear on the edge with the deep — in smile of beauty.

Ravishing all, is the way of the hazard.”

There is a sensation of groping towards an understanding, as one reads the first poem, but the background material provided by Ravindra Khanna provides the context of the story happening in the twelfth century, when the monarchical system was transplanted in Japan by the military

powers. This is the story of the *harakiri* performed by Yoshitsune, “the most illustrious and beloved hero of Japanese history and legend”, due to the persecution by his half-brother Yoritomo, the founder of the early seven hundred years of feudal Japan.

Roarke is not really a modern poet but seems to be rather a survival of the first decadence of the romantic tradition, as there are echoes of Poe and Baudelaire, full of lines like

“Man is a dream and a shadow,  
man is the care of the light’s seed;  
Love that irradiates all  
is the bridge and the opening splendour.”

The second is the Vedic poem on “Atri” which is a sacred hymn of symbolism and mysticism. Based probably on the second *sukta* of the fifth Mandala of the *Rig Veda*, the seer applies the image of the stolen cows to himself in a language which clearly betrays its symbolism. It refers to the inner battle, even as the Kurukshetra battle in the *Bhagavad Gita* is the battle for Dharma, that goes on in the life of a spiritual aspirant.

— Argus

**INDIA — GREAT AND FREE**: Compiled and edited by Shyam Sundar, Pub.: Sri Aurobindo’s Action, Pondicherry; Pp. 97; Price Rs. 10/-.

Shyam Sundar Jhunjhunwala, the compiler of “Human Unity and the Spiritual Age” being an abridgement of the two books of Sri Aurobindo’s “The Ideal of Human Unity” and “The Human Cycle”, has now brought out yet another “India — Great and Free”. This is a compilation from Sri Aurobindo’s writings on India on various occasions, giving an account of the opulent vitality and intellectuality of India’s heritage, emphasising the fact that spirituality was the master key of our civilisation. This publication is most topical now, for, as the author says: “The present level of Indian polity cannot last long if India wishes to continue to be free and to become great.” Although Sri Aurobindo did not plot out a detailed scheme of action for free India, the author points out that “some basic programmes and guidelines can be had from his and the Mother’s later writings and actions, which ought to be made known to the serious-minded countrymen for thinking and acting.”

The book contains valuable extracts from the writings of Sri Aurobindo covering nearly half a century from 1907 till his passing away as also from the Mother’s voluminous works. Of chief importance are those culled from the series of articles on the renaissance in India which appeared in the “Arya” during 1918. Here Sri Aurobindo has given the essence of the rebirth of the soul of India into a new body of energy. Spirituality, the sage of Pondi-

cherry warns, does not take away material happiness thus inhibiting national progress. On the other hand, it is urged, spirituality creates in man the proper perspective of a wholesome life.

— Argus

**FACETS OF VIVEKANANDA:** Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras-600 004; Pp. 300, Price Rs. 20.

This is a reproduction in book form of the special number of the "Vedanta Kesari" brought out on Swami Vivekananda's 125th birth anniversary in 1987. The nearly twenty articles contributed by an array of scholars and thinkers, on the several facets of the Swamiji "inspire us to make our own lives sublime". Most of the readers know that in less than forty years of his life, the Swamiji had packed missionary activities, writings and lectures of great magnitude and depth, and travelled far and wide as a true Parivrajaka, trying to build up a new world on a foundation of spirituality, universal love, renunciation and service. More than a quarter century ago, Dr. Radhakrishnan hailed the Swamiji as "the voice of the inspired Logos", giving utterance to the Eternal dwelling in each individual. All the articles in this book mark out Swami Vivekananda as the spokesman of this divine Logos, taking hold of the requirements of his age and presenting it so as to make a fervent appeal to the hungry heart and the searching mind of his generation, which is as valuable and relevant now as then.

— Argus.

**GLIMPSES OF ABHIDHARMA:** By Chogyam Trungpa, Shambhala Publications, 314 Dartmouth Street, Boston, Mass 02116 USA, Pp. 117, \$ 10.95.

Abhidharma is that part of the Buddhist canon dealing with mind and consciousness. It lends itself to endless classification of knowable phenomena. Senses, for example, have bases, entrances, elements and consciousnesses.

Into this jungle of long and dreary lists comes Chogyam Trungpa's application of these ideas in daily life, Focussing on the subject of *skandhas* or aggregate, i.e. form, feeling, perception, volition and consciousness he demonstrates how they arise, to use his own phrase, at the "kitchen sink level." For example (p. 27) "The mind aspect of feeling is like being high on marijuana or L.S.D.; and the body aspect is like being high on alcohol."

It is a basic tenet of Buddhism that all teachings are to be taken as personal advice but it could perhaps be said that Trungpa's explication is so personalized and subjective as to be no longer traceable as theory. However, it has a purpose. Mohammed told his followers to speak to each at his own level and this is what Trungpa is doing. His presentation is specifically aimed at his own middle-American students and takes for granted a common ground of American

idiom of speech, thought and life style. There is also an almost total lack of Sanskrit which creates great difficulties. To give just one example among many, there are two kinds of 'Cloudy mind' presented: one as "the *skandha* of form" and one under the heading of "consciousness". Two Sanskrit words would tell us what he is talking about.

These language problems are predictable outcomes of the movement of the Buddhadharmas to English speaking countries. Different sects and teachers are presenting the teaching in their own way which is natural. I only hope that in time some sort of standardization such as Tibetan/Sanskrit-English Dharma dictionaries can be developed. Otherwise the differences may grow into communication barriers breeding suspicions and sectarianism.

Trungpa describes this book as an 'introduction' and a 'rough survey'. Within these boundaries he has made enjoyable, enlightening reading out of what is normally a dull subject.

— Sunyata

**SRI SANKARA'S GITA-BHASHYA:** Translated by Sri C.V. Ramachandra Iyer, Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7, Pp. 642, Rs. 100.

Sri Sankara Bhagavadpada's Gita Bhashya is a world classic of timeless validity and vitality. Perhaps the earliest of the Bhashyas—though Sri Sankara speaks in his *upodgata* of many previous commentaries which did not interpret the Gita aright. Sri Sankara's Bhashya has penetrated to the heart of the Lord's message and extracted from this great scripture the all-comprehending soundness of the Advaita Siddhanta that Brahman alone is real and identical with the Jivatman while the world around of phenomena is *mithya*. *Nivritti marga* is the sadhana the Gita really emphasises. *Pravritti* may be a stage on the route but one must not, one need not cling to it. Sannyasa, properly understood and practised is the truest and most efficacious Moksha sadhana, leading to Jnana which is Moksha. Inner Vairagya and not an outward show of it is the sadhana for Self-awareness.

Sri C.V. Ramachandra Iyer has ventured most courageously to give to the interested reader, a 'working' translation into English of the Gita Bhashya. Sri Iyer does not aim at literary elegance but at fidelity to the sacred text. There will be, inevitably, much to complain of in regard to the English of the translation. Translation from any language into another is always a tricky exercise and though Sanskrit and English belong to the same Indo-European family of languages, English is nearly as intractable as Sanskrit and modern English, for all its world-wide vogue, does not seem to be even a tolerably manageable medium for the transmission of the highly intricate but magnificently articulated argument of Sri Sankara who has transformed what seems on the surface a *bhakti sastra*

into a vibrant call to that *Brahmanubhava* which *nishkamya karma* and rigorous *niritti* will yield.

We heartily commend the book to all lovers of the Bhagavad Gita and especially to those who seek contact with perhaps the greatest of the master minds the world has ever known.

— Prof. S. Ramaswamy.

**FULFILMENT THROUGH LEPROSY:** By Prof. T.N. Jagadisan; Pub.: Kasturba Kushta Nivaran Nilayam, South Arcot dt. 605 701. Pp. 421 + 16. Rs. 250. £12. \$20.

Life is a continuous exercise in Atma Sadhana and Atma Vichara, a succession of spiritual opportunities. An autobiography is or should be a narrative or chronicle of one's Atma Vichara and the findings and, more especially the fruits and the transformation wrought by this meditative exercise. Jagadisan, like most men, began very early in life in patient confrontation of the numerous, inescapable privations of lower middle-class life. But poverty though a continual brake on the growth of personality, was not so severe in operation in Jagadisan and a vivid consciousness of a dread affliction reinforced a rare blend of courage and faith in the young man. This early struggle for bare survival is narrated without a trace of self-pity. Forced to seek a bare livelihood, and in distant Karachi, Jagadisan made his very affliction a means of strengthening his spiritual stamina. In South India, Madura offered and Trichy seemed to offer hope but eventually despite expert testimony, the disease stood in the way of securing a Lecturer's job. The Rt. Hon. Sastri, then Vice-Chancellor of Annamalai University, offered young and disconsolate Jagadisan the grand opportunity of his life, not in the form of a mere lecturer's post, but of contact with a mind powerfully attuned to high ideals and values. Sastri's example of talent enlisted in the selfless service of society made Jagadisan discover his life's mission, and the means of self-fulfilment in dedicated service to the most hapless and helpless of men, the victims of Hansen's disease. And he realised that the disease posed problems on the social front far severer than on the medical front. Gandhiji was attracted to the young idealist and the national and international fight on both the essential fronts thereupon had no more effective or dedicated a fighter and leader.

Awards for outstanding achievement in his chosen field have left Jagadisan still in the role of the Karma Yogi resolved to give of his best—and that is a great deal—and indeed his all, in the service of his cause. Jagadisan ought really to tell us in a supplement to this book, of the many and fruitful contacts he was lucky enough to have which helped to enrich his moral life and make him the sincerest friend of a community of persons who till recently had to "walk alone."

— Prof. S. Ramaswamy

**THE ACHARYA SANKARA OF KAALADI (a story):** By I.S. Madugula; Pub.: Motilal Banarasidas, Madras-4, Pp. 142, Rs. 80.

A careful reading of the Introduction reveals that this book is not a biography of Acharya Sankara. The story of the Acharya is here told as the author imagines Padmapada would have told us. Padmapada is not known to have written a biography of the Acharya. But he is admittedly the earliest and foremost of the Acharya's disciples. Hence the author's imagination pitches upon Padmapada as the narrator of the story. We also understand from the Introduction that the material for this imagined story is gathered from biographies, especially Vidyanarya's work.

Thus the book is a product of the fact and fiction, of history and imagination. Such a combination no doubt sustains the interest of the reader, especially when the author's style is felicitous. But there is also in it a difficulty which the author might not have realised. The biographical works on Acharya Sankara do not agree on certain details of his life. Some of these details are even of a degree of serious controversy, e.g., the date of the Acharya, the number and location of the spiritual centres (*mathas*) he set up, and the place where he attained *siddhi*, i.e., left his mortal frame. The treatment of these controversial elements would be in place only in a work which is avowedly biographical. But in an imaginative construction like the present work such elements had better be omitted or idealized. Madugula rightly avoids any reference to the date of Sri Sankara. But on the other points of controversy he sides with one biographical version as against others (see Chapter 31). This, the reviewer feels, is not fair to unsuspecting readers of the book.

There is another dimension to the work which, however, is to be commended. The author has interlaced the events in the master's life with the principal elements of his teachings. The questions posed to the master by inquiring disciples and carping opponents and the way the master responds to them are of lasting interest to humanity. Madugula's non-technical rendering of what might have been the Acharya's dialogues in such contexts has its own appeal to the reader.

— Prof. T.P. Ramachandran

**THE INTUITIVE PHILOSOPHY: (Krishnamurti's Approach to Life)** By Rohit Mehta, Chetana, Bombay Pp. 405, Price Rs. 150.

**EXPLORATIONS INTO THE ETERNAL: (Forays from the Teachings of Nisargadatta Maharaj)** By Ramesh S. Balsekar, Chetana, Bombay Pp. 261, Price Rs. 150.

Down the ages India has given birth to a number of saints and sages whose experiences and teachings have enriched her philosophical and religious schools. The ad-

vent of modern civilization has not affected this trend. Among the exalted souls which contemporary India has produced there are many whose paths to inner peace are not exactly the same as the methods prescribed by traditional schools. And the example and teachings of these contemporary masters have their own attraction to the modern mind. The two books under review belong to this mystic genre.

Rohit Mehta's *The Intuitive Philosophy* was first published in 1950. The book is an exposition of the teachings of J. Krishnamurti by one who was for long intimately associated with him. Modern man's distress is his loss of personality and perspective on life. The author feels that Krishnamurti's teachings are relevant in restoring the integrity and vision of the individual. The different facets of Krishnamurti's teachings and their significance are presented here in eighteen chapters. Apt illustrations in support of the thesis are given from a variety of sources including modern science.

*Explorations into the Eternal* by Ramesh S. Balsekar is an exposition of the teachings of Nisargadatta Maharaj, a saint of western India. In the present book of seventeen chapters, the author traces the teachings of Nisargadatta to Saint Jnaneshwar. In expounding and elaborating the teachings of his master, the author takes every opportunity to show that the conclusions of the saint find indirect support in the findings of modern science.

— Prof. T.P. Ramachandran

**THE KUNDALINI EXPERIENCE:** By Lee Sannella. Integral Publishing, P.O. Box 1030, Lower Lake, California. Pp. 168, \$ 9.95

*Kundalini* has become a focus of keen interest in the West—both with believers and non-believers. The latter tend to explain away the phenomena associated with the Kundalini as physiological aberrations; the former would have us believe that no spiritual fulfilment is possible without the arousal and activation of that Power. The author of this well-documented study has had a background of a psychiatrist and ophthalmologist besides his interests in LSD experiments, healing, counselling etc. He brings an open mind to bear on the subject. He presents a large number of case histories, some which have absolutely no connection with spiritual life and some with a religious background. He brings out the common features of the manifestation of the Kundalini—by whatever name it may be called—and describes how heat, energisation, pain in case of blockages, outbursts of joy and bliss for brief spells, are to be observed in almost all cases. His approach is scientific and even clinical but without disparagement of the spiritual elements in life.

He raises the question whether the Kundalini experience is a must for all spiritual fulfilment as asserted by Dr. Gopi Krishna or it is not indispensable. He also discusses a viewpoint put forward by Da Love-Ananda that Kundalini is

only a local experience and not part of the self-transcendence which goes beyond the body-mind complex. This touches the larger question whether the liberation has got to be beyond the body-mind self or *here* in life. He does not come to any definite conclusions and leaves the questions open. All the same the book is informative, statistically well-organised, establishing the fact of Kundalini in the human system—and perhaps in the lower orders as well.

— M.P. Pandit

**LIVES OF ANCIENT INDIAN SAINTS Vols. 7 & 8:** By Vidwan Bulusu Venkateswarulu, 8-22-14 Gandhinagar, Kakinada 533 004, Rs. 10/- each.

With these two volumes the learned author completes his encyclopaedic project on Indian saints of yore. From Samvarta to Svetaketu, Tandi to Yajnavalkya, these volumes cover an interesting ground in Indian mythology and history. The writer has a way of fusing legend, story and fact in an engaging manner and one likes to refer to these accounts whether one believes in them fully or not. An immense labour has gone into this production and we are sure that it will inspire more efforts in the same direction in the world of scholars. Indeed these volumes have a multiple appeal and the author is to be thanked for his labour of love.

— M.P. Pandit

**I HAVE NEED OF YOU:** By J.P. Vaswani. Mira Pubs. 10 Sadhu Vaswani Rd. Poona-411 001. Pp. 117, Rs. 80/-.

A charming book of touching themes beautifully produced. Here are sixty-six poems which are in the nature of communions of a seeker with his Maker. Dada Vaswani celebrates the presence of God not only in his Heaven but in the market-place among the lowly and the decrepit. LOVE is the underlying theme with the constant note of 'I need you'. It is interesting to observe the slow change of stance of the poet. In pleading for *his* need, he forgets the 'he'.

"I have need of you!" is gradually transformed into "I need no longer be."

— M.P. Pandit

**JESUS CHRIST AND THE HINDU COMMUNITY:** By Hans Staffner. Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, Anand-388 001. Pp. 253.

The author, a Jesuit Father who has worked for nearly fifty years in India, believes that a synthesis between Hinduism and Christianity is not only possible but desirable. He traces the various attempts made in this direction by men like Keshub Chandra Sen, Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya and others. He describes how Hinduisim is not a religion like others of Semitic origin but a culture which 'has room for many religions'. He regards Hinduism as a fertile soil in which the seed of the Message of Christ can flower for the

benefit of mankind. His analysis of the elements like caste-system, worship of many gods, acceptance of essential identity between man and God, as standing in the way of synthesis is too superficial to merit serious attention. Whatever be the merits of the Message of Christ, there are certain features of Christianity as formulated by the Church that are not acceptable to other approaches. It is exclusive, it limits the manifestation of the Divine to one Saviour, it does not admit the truth of rebirth. These points have not received attention in this treatment.

Indeed there are common grounds between Christian Mysticism and Indian spiritual experience and perhaps that is the area to be explored in depth.

— M.P. Pandit

PATANJALI'S MODEL OF HUMAN MIND: By H.C. Mathur. Jain Book Depot. Agra Rd. Hathras 204101. Pp. 335, Rs. 300/-

"Our discussions over, I heard Maharshi say, 'He is concentrating on the reflection and complains that he cannot see that original.' It struck me forcefully. What did he mean by reflection and what was the original? I shut my eyes and tried to find out the meaning. Immediately after, I felt a pull in the region of the heart, similar to what I felt two days previously but much stronger in intensity. My mind was completely arrested—stilled, but I was wide awake. Suddenly, without any break in my consciousness, the 'I' flashed forth! It was self-awareness, pure and simple, steady, unbroken and intensely bright, as much brighter than ordinary consciousness as is sunlight brighter than the dim light of a lamp. In ordinary consciousness the I-sense dimly remains in the background,—as a matter of inference or intuition,—the whole of the consciousness being occupied by the object. Here 'I' came to the foreground, occupied, or rather became the whole consciousness, displacing all objects. I was, but I was neither the subject nor the object of this consciousness. I was this consciousness, which alone existed. There were no objects. The world was not, neither the body nor the mind, no thought, no motion; time also ceased to exist. I alone existed and that I was consciousness itself, self-luminous and alone, without a second.. Suddenly, and again, without any break in my consciousness, I was brought back to my normal, ordinary consciousness."

Citing this experience of a devotee of Bhagavan, the author states: "The state of Self-realisation is reached when the bandwidth of our consciousness expands to cover all frequencies upto and including the frequency of our Atmic vibration.' An authority in telecommunications, Dr. Mathur seeks to bridge the present gulf between scientific approach and the spiritual, on the basis of the pattern of vibrations that obtains in the cosmos. The narrower the framework of our reception of these vibrations, the more limited and ignorant we are. At a certain level of our consciousness it should be possible to tune in to the

universal rhythm; then only can we get the first-hand knowledge of the reality. He studies the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali from this angle and describes how all the yogic phenomena in Raja Yoga are scientifically explainable. He presses into service the latest developments in disciplines like Holography, Para-Psychology, Computer-science to support his argument. His analysis of the workings of the brain is stimulating. One may or may not accept the terminology of his presentation; but it is clear he comes very close to the Indian understanding of Consciousness and its vibratory power, *chit-shakti*, as the central truth of our life.

— M.P. Pandit

THE PUPPET-MASTER: By Liz Greene. Pub.: Routledge & Kegan-Paul (Arkana), London EC4 P4EE, Pp. 304 £5.95.

A powerful novel set in strife-ridden 15th century France. This is the story of France's gradual reunification of the brutality and senseless quest for dominance by both the British invaders and the various splinter kingdoms inside France, greedy for power and glory. The central character is King Louis XI, known as the Universal Spider for his unscrupulous, cunning use of any weapon—sword, poison or person—to further his demonic urge to weave together the disparate forces raging in France. As long as the end-result is fulfilled, no means is too devious in his efforts. In his quest fuelled by his malevolent shadow, fed upon the two impulses, fear and hatred, he is confronted by the subtle knowledge of Rene, Duc d'Anjou, who has renounced power whatever the apparent good it may bring; and Rene's daughter, Yolonde de Bar, who is in tune with the vital life force pulsating, breathing beneath the rational surface of people and events. It is she who gropingly attempts to bring into human reality the sense of instinctual rightness. Life unfolds when there is neither the rigid interference of Louis's tortured conception of what the State should be and do, nor the dream-like world of Rene whose wisdom is unable to find a footing in the harsh reality of greed and deception.

There is a fourth principal character to this quarterternity around whom the action swirls and resolves itself. He is the Puppet-Master, a phantom figure with a legendary character descended from Charlemagne and beyond. He holds the secret flame alive—the torch of true knowledge, and seeks a suitable vehicle through whom the higher powers in man's destiny may flow and flower into the true glory of an earthly divinity.

Ultimately Louis gathers all powers to himself in the blindness of his shadow's craving. France is united but at great cost to her psychic well-being. And the Puppet-Master? He is an entity almost inhuman as Louis. His vision of a harmonious world is trampled upon and he slips back into nothingness. He is as unsatisfactory as Louis who is everything human that's been denied. Louis cannot love (can the Puppet-Master love?), so he craves

power in order if not to be loved, at least feared. For the mind of a person who has never experienced the saving grace of love, fear—the craving to exist—is an acceptable sensation.

The authoress, a noted Jungian analyst and astrologer, has created a compelling drama. It is not a book a person lightly takes up in the hope of entertainment. The story has the power to lead a reader through the dark labyrinth of one's own motives.

Two points: Rene as a character lacks depth. He has no voice in which to express his soul. Secondly, the novel ends up as an over-kill in its impact. At times it deadens rather than enlivens through the inexorable turnings of the bloody wheel of Fate. However, this defect is redeemed in the last pages which reveal a miracle of understanding about the magic of death and life.

The book surprises; it stuns.

— A.M.

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY IN "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"—Argus. Pub.: The Theosophy Centre, Indira Nagar, Madras-600 020, Pp. 132, Rs. 35.

The author of this concise work displays a great love and depth of knowledge concerning Blavatsky's "The Secret Doctrine". This appreciation covers many aspects; from cosmology to modern physics; from aspects of esoteric teachings to the understanding of signs and symbols. The author selects salient passages from that difficult, densely-packed work and succeeds in illuminating Blavatsky's writings by giving them an intelligent commentary and placement in context to the world of historical, sacred knowledge. There is at times a cerebral flatness about it, but this is pardonable when one considers the range that has been encompassed in this slim volume.

For a modern person wishing to understand the basics of Theosophy this book is an admirable introduction.

— A.M.

THE SEARCH FOR OMM SETY:— A story of eternal love: By Jonathan Cott, Pub.: Rider/Century Hutchinson, Covent Garden, London WC2N 4NW; Pp. 256, £10.95.

This charming book tells the story of an English woman Dorothy Eady, born in 1904. Since the age of three, she felt irresistibly drawn to Egypt and its ancient civilisation. Arrived in Egypt in 1933, her attention was centered, in particular, upon the Pharaoh Sety-I (father of the great Ramesses II) and the temple he had constructed at Abydos around 1295 B.C. Omm Sety, as Dorothy came to be called after she bore a child in Egypt,—a social appellation meaning "mother of Sety"—believed herself to be the reincarnation of a young vowed priestess of Isis in the temple built by Sety-I. The Pharaoh became enamoured

of her much to the horror of the high priest. The affair ended tragically with her suicide under pressure while the Pharaoh was away. He never forgot her and sought her ceaselessly through various worlds in the 3,000 years which intervened until she was born again on earth, and contact was resumed, and as well, their love.

Omm Sety became a highly respected researcher and scholar of Egyptian religion and antiquities. Single-handedly she began the reconstruction work on the Abydos temple which contained some of the finest wall-reliefs known in Egypt. She died in 1981. Whether this adept in Egyptian lore and magic was indeed the lover of Sety-I 3200 years ago, and he of her in this century, is up to each reader to decide. Omm herself would be the first to recommend keeping an open and enquiring mind.

The author is a well-respected American journalist who became fascinated by her life. They never meet. There is a deliberate simplicity in the telling of her story—it is fascinating enough as it is. In fact the dry, objective writing highlights how exceptional this woman was in her dedication to an ideal.

This book will definitely interest anyone who feels an attraction to ancient Egypt.

— A.M.

FIRST MEETINGS WITH SRI RAMAKRISHNA: By Swami Prabhananda; Pub.: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras - 600 004. Pp. 413; Price Rs. 23.

This is a bunch of articles originally published in *Prabudha Bharata* and *Vedanta Kesari*. Now brought together, the above volume of Swami Prabhananda is an authentic and valuable research oriented record of the reactions and responses of various visitors when they met Sri Ramakrishna for the first time.

Countless were the visitors, sceptics and spiritual aspirants. But except the solitary Devendranath Tagore and partly Pratapchandra Hazra none remained unwon by the Master's utter humility and simplicity, the radiant innocence of his face and his overwhelming and transforming love that brooked no "No" from any. The process is nowhere in greater evidence than in the case of Girish Chandra Ghosh. Swami Prabhananda excels in the delineation of the conflict that raged in the heart of Girish between faith and doubt, temptation to sensuality and attraction for higher life, head and heart, and atheism and belief, and the ultimate triumph of virtue in him helped by the infinite and unobtrusive sympathy and patience of Sri Ramakrishna.

The book teems with such indelible pen-pictures of the Great Teacher working up and on the spiritual potentialities of those about him from the moment they met him

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 first. One hopes Swami Prabhananda will go on to make a trilogy of this with "First Meetings with Sarada Mayi" and "First Meetings with Swami Vivekananda."

— Dr. O. Ramachandra Kaundinya

THE DIFFERENT DRUM: — By M. Scott Peck. Published by Rider & Co., An Imprint of Century Hutchinson Ltd., Brookmount House, 62-65, Chandos Place, Covent Garden, London WC2N 4NW, Pp. 334, £4.95.

WHAT RETURN CAN I MAKE: By M. Scott Peck, with Marilyn von Waldner, O.C.D. and Patricia Kay, Published by Rider & Co., An Imprint of Century Hutchinson Ltd., Brookmount House, 62-65 Chandos Place, Covent Garden, London WC2N 4NW, Pp. 170, £5.95

Although we have developed the technology to make communication more efficient, we are yet to make communication serve to lower or remove the walls of misunderstanding which separate man from man. If we are to prevent civilisation from destroying itself, we must urgently rebuild community at all levels — local, national and international — and this is the first step to spiritual survival, and this is where communication has a paramount role to play. Dr. Peck ably presents how communities work, how group action can be developed on the principles of tolerance and love and how we can start to transform society into a true community.

Those who cannot think of the future in terms other than of extrapolation from the *status quo* will probably shout: "impractical". But the author warns that we must face the reality that the *status quo* is murderous. If mankind is to survive, the matter of changing the rules is not optional.

The most extraordinary result of our nuclear technology is that it has brought the whole human race to the point at which physical and spiritual salvation are no longer separable and it is no longer possible for us to save our skins while remaining ignorant of our own motives and unconscious of our own cultures.

The second book is a celebration of the Christian message, in music and hymns composed by Sister Marilyn von Waldner of the Order of Carmelites Discalced, drawings by Patricia Kay, and essays on aspects of Christian belief by Dr. Peck. Dr. Peck brings to the essays spiritual insights which have come to him during the course of his psychiatric work and as a result of his encountering the music and songs of Sister Marilyn at a time of deep religious questioning. No Christian can remain unmoved by the quality of Sister Marilyn's compositions nor indifferent to the depth of Dr. Peck's spiritual insights.

This book will be primarily read, seen and listened to by men and women who identify themselves as Christians; it reveals much about the doctrines of Christianity. It would

also appeal to anyone interested in music, dance, contemplation and so on.

— Prof. K.S. Ramakrishna Rao.

"CHOOSE LIFE" A Dialogue: By Toynbee and Ikeda;

"HUMANITY AT THE CROSSROADS" A Dialogue: By Karan Singh and Ikeda

Pub.: Oxford University Press. Price Rs. 125. and Rs. 100

The first dialogue is of profound significance as it brings together two great and powerful traditions for mutual understanding and friendly co-operation in the urgent task of building a safer and better world for all mankind. The old Semitic (dualistic) attitude of *either-or* exclusiveness has somehow to give place to the holistic, heuristic, irenic *and-also* temper of the Indian, Chinese and Japanese peoples. The book is interesting, because two real persons speak, and is highly educative, because the speakers are very learned, very earnest and truly altruistic.

The second dialogue, apart from its historical interest has immense, immediate practical value, because the Vedantic and Buddhist traditions have a great deal in common, their differences being merely superficial. The message of the book is that the peoples of India, China and Japan should more vigorously put into actual practice their common *dharma* in their political, economic and social life. In this process India can learn much from the experience of China and Japan. Gandhi's ideas are by no means Utopian. They can and should be made to work by our learning the art of social organization from our Eastern neighbours.

— Prof. K. Sivaminathan

MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI: By Br. Amritatma Chaitanya. Pub.: Mata Amritanandamayi Trust, Vallickavu, India-690542. Also 1182-D, Market Street, San Francisco, CA. 94102. Pp. 308, Price not stated.

In a detailed account of the life of this saint from Kerala the author leads the reader through all the stages of the spiritual development of Mata Amritanandamayi. The "crazy fishergirl" whose unexplainable behaviour nobody could understand and who was hardly loved by anybody, underwent great transformations until finally the wonder and beauty of her path of devotion stood revealed. Though at times repetitive, it is the sincerity and deep devotion of the writer which shines throughout the book. One of the chapters at the end of the book deals with "the meaning of the divine *bhavas*", which may be of some help in understanding Mata's transformation and trance during her *darshan*. Sometimes one feels that one is reading a legend from Puranic times and not a life-story of our hectic days. The charm of this book lies in its innocence and its approach. A big chapter on "experiences of devotees" is

interesting and helps to understand the nature of the guru-disciple relationship.

— Annie Alt

**THE POWER-PLACES OF CENTRAL TIBET: The PILGRIM'S GUIDE:** By Keith Dowman, Pub.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, EC4 P4EE, Pp. 345, £7.95.

For some people, one place is just like any other. For others, there are specific points on earth which exert an inexorable influence fathomless to the mind, giving rise to unshakeable deeply-held convictions. Ergo, power places.

Steeped in religion and mysticism, Tibet boasts a "dragon's share" of power places, perhaps more than mere geography would allow—mountains, lakes, caves, and river valleys marked for mortal eyes by monasteries, temples or simple shrines.

Keith Dowman undertook the perambulation based on Lama Jamyang Kyentse Wangpo's nineteenth-century *Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*. The result is a detailed, fact-filled guidebook covering some 170 spots and also with suggested itineraries, with the accent on information of practical value for the pilgrim tourist.

There are maps of how to get there, photographs of what to see, descriptions of the location, history and significance of the sites. A compact introduction includes neat thumb-nail sketches of pilgrimage as yoga, the history of Central Tibet and schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Additional arcane data are set in appendices.

An invaluable planner which serves to light the outer journey, and a companion to the yogin's peripatetic serendipity.

— Dev Gogoi

**MORAL IDEALISM AND THEISM:** By Jadunath Sinha. Pub.: Jadunath Sinha Foundation, 39, S.R. Das Road, Calcutta-700 026, India, Pp. 221, Price Rs. 40/-, Paper Back Rs. 25/-.

All who desire greater understanding and inspiration of humanism enlightened by Theism can find it in Jadunath Sinha's *Moral Idealism & Theism*. Sinha has summarised his philosophical insights, acquired by life-long study of all the major philosophies and religions of the world in ten succinct chapters.

He first examines the arguments for the existence of God as Truth, goodness, beauty and the holy, and men as naturally religious.

Then he discusses nature and its laws as products of God's will and purpose including its characteristics such as time, space, causality, and evolutionary development and the problems of natural and moral, evils in relation to God.

He devotes a whole chapter to the nature of self, its finitude, and its freedom, including its freedom to sin as

evil and its purpose to realize consciously the bliss of being an eternal part of God.

He extends through three chapters his ideas and ideals about the moral order and how reason can enable man to freely achieve both the knowledge and active behaviour that assures attainment of personal integral unity that leads to immortality. But personal achievements of moral ends is not enough. Each person lives in the whole world and his duties to himself as a citizen in that world. Sinha advocates a world Federation of free states that will have a small army of peace to prevent conflict amongst the states, and a policy of promoting human equalities needed for social welfare. He idealises permanent peace maintained by a spirit of non-violence and love for all mankind. He concludes by showing how, through his moral idealism and theism, a self may realise the highest goal of life, before leaving it on earth, and enjoy the benefits and bliss of final liberation in its present embodiment. When a self achieves contentment through intuition of Divine Spirit, it becomes a self that is fulfilled and has no further duties to perform. In this book, Sinha has finalized his life's work and has presented his ideals about God, man, values, society and world peace in ways that demonstrate the wisdom of his deep understanding making them available to all in a clear and inspiring summary.

— Archie J. Bahm.

**CATHOLIC ASHRAMS:** Adopting and Adapting Hindu Dharma. Preface by Sita Ram Goel. Published by Voice of India, 2/18, Ansari Road, New Delhi-110 002. Pp. 68 + 100. Rs. 40/-.

The Gospel according to Mark says, "Go into the world and preach the Gospel to all creatures. He who believes and is baptised will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned." Sita Ram Goel in his illuminating and well-researched preface to *Catholic Ashrams* writes, "The Church describes its drive for world domination as a divinely ordained mission. . . Christianity is losing its hold in western countries, but they still keep it for export to the Third World." *Catholic Ashrams* is divided into three sections. The first contains several articles which originally appeared in *Hinduism Today*. These articles show how Christian missionaries are using Hindu ways of worship, Hindu philosophy and symbols, and Hindu religious dress as a cover and means to proselytize Hindus.

Section two has a lively dialogue in the form of letters between Swami Devananda Saraswati and Father Bede Griffiths. The Swami questions the Father about his right as a Roman priest and a Benedictine monk, to wear the cloth of a Hindu sannyasi.

Section three contains a list of Catholic ashrams, an incomplete account of foreign finance to the missions and two pieces on missionary organisational ability.

*Catholic Ashrams* conclusively demonstrates how Hindu doctrines, rituals and symbols are being used to disguise the missionary intentions of so-called Catholic ashrams. Unfortunately, the book contains numerous printing errors, but the work of Sita Ram Goel and Voice of India is most timely and of compelling interest to all thinking Hindus and students of comparative religion.

— Swami Satyananda

UNFOLDING MEANING: A Weekend dialogue with D. Bohm. Pub.: Routledge & Kegan Paul (Arkana), London EC4P 4EE. Pp. 177, £3.95.

Of late, many scientists have been engaged in the task of unfolding a new paradigm whose basis can be justified using the concepts of relativity and quantum theory. This paradigm has many parallels with the world-view of the mystics and sages of all lands, especially India. Criticism has often taken the line that those who speak of such a complementarity do not understand the theories of twentieth century science properly.

Dr. Bohm is a forceful advocate of the new paradigm against whom it is very difficult to justify such a criticism. A favourite associate of Einstein, his books are standard reference material in the academic world of the physicists. Therefore, his advocacy of a new paradigm has attracted considerable attention.

Unfortunately, Bohm's seminal book "Wholeness and the Implicate Order" is a little too difficult to understand, even for the physicist. Therefore, "Unfolding Meaning: A Weekend of Dialogue with David Bohm", is very welcome for those who wish to grasp the essence of what he is trying to convey. The book is a transcript of a dialogue that Bohm had with a group of people in May, 1984, at a village in England. The difference between the mechanistic and organismic world-views, a difference so central to an understanding of his concepts, Bohm explains so simply and lucidly:

"I'll begin by listing the principal characteristics of mechanism to make this idea more clear, and contrast its main features with those of an organismic type. Now firstly, the world is reduced as far as possible to a set of basic elements. Typically, these have been taken as particles, such as atoms, electrons, protons, quarks, and so on. But you can also add various kinds of fields that extend continuously through space, such as electromagnetic and gravitational. Secondly, these elements are basically external to each other, not only in being separate in space but, more important, in the sense that the fundamental nature of each is independent of that of the other. Therefore, the elements don't grow organically as parts of a whole, but rather, as I suggested earlier, they may be compared to parts of a machine. The forms are determined externally to the structure of the machine in which they're working. Now finally, as I also pointed out earlier, the elements interact

mechanically, and are therefore related only by influencing each other externally— for example, by forces of interaction that do not deeply affect their inner natures.

"In contrast, in an organism, the very nature of any part may be profoundly affected by changes of activity in other parts, and by the general state of the whole, and so the parts are basically internally related to each other as well as to the whole. Of course in a mechanistic view the existence of organism is admitted since it is obvious. But it is assumed, in the way I just described, that ultimately you can reduce it all to molecules such as DNA and proteins, and so on. So eventually the organism is a convenient way of talking about a lot of molecules. They may even say that some new properties and qualities have emerged, but they are always implicit in the molecules. In addition, it's admitted that this goal of a complete mechanistic description is yet to be fully achieved, as there is much that is still unknown. So it's essential for the mechanistic-reductionist program to assume that there is nothing that cannot eventually be treated in this way."

Bohm goes on to explain Enfoldment and Unfoldment, and the related theory of the implicate and explicate orders. This is followed by a question-answer session that takes up 150 pages of the book. For anyone trying to understand Bohm's theories, this book is a must.

— Dr. T.S. Ananthu

THE RING OF THE WAY: By Taisen Deshimaru, Pub.: Century Hutchinson, London WC 2N 4NW Pp. 130, £5.95.

Taisen Deshimaru belonged traditionally to the Soto Zen School and he was something of a rebel. He made it his life's mission to propagate the teachings of Zen Buddhism to the West. His earlier volumes "Questions to a Zen Master" and "The Zen Way to the Martial Arts" have already become classics.

What is *hishiryō*? Thinking without thoughts. You think unconsciously, with the thalamus, the central brain. What comes out is true thought, beyond thought.

Zen is just sitting; recreating oneself, understanding one's real self, and not austerity or mortification. The word Zen is derived from *Dhyana*, in Sanskrit. Zen is beyond dualism. It is simplicity; it opens the door to wisdom. The full meaning of *Zazen* is, only sit; sit and do no other thing at all. In *hishiryō*-consciousness there is no illusion or attachment.

"The moon is me, I am the moon.  
What is moon? Which is me?  
No way to tell them apart.  
My mind and this moon have flowed together.  
This night's moon has cleared my mind  
Just as it has cleaned the sky."

Dogen's Zen does not end with experiencing Satori. Between me and the Buddha there is no dividing line. The whole cosmos enters me. I enter the whole cosmos.

“Dear friend, don’t you see  
 The man of satori  
 Has closed his book  
 And is still.  
 He does not try to push away illusion  
 He does not try to ferret out the truth.”

At the time of his death in Paris in 1982, Taisen Deshimaru had published some fifteen books and gathered a following of many thousands from all over the world.

This book, the result of selection from his various manuscripts, talks and magazine articles, has many an insight into Buddhist thought and Zazen.

— G. Narayan.

THE I CHING AND YOU: By Diana Farington Hook, Pub.: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE; Pp. 149, £3.95.

The I CHING is not merely a book of divination, but is rightly called a book of wisdom. Based on the truth that change is the eternal law the I CHING through its counsel in meeting every possible situation or eventuality, develops in the enquirer the qualities of the superior man. Patience, freedom from desires, enthusiasm under all circumstances, indomitable courage, humility and alertness are the means to meet destiny and thus further one’s progress towards sagehood, or intuitive harmony with life.

The book under review is a guide book to the I CHING both for the beginner as well as for one well on the way. (It is therefore necessary to have a copy of the I CHING alongside). First published in 1973, this book is now available as an ARKANA Paperback. Keeping track of all the correspondences and affinities, between the lines of the hexagram, or between the two trigrams that constitute each hexagram, or even between the hexagrams — moving, unmoving and nuclear — can all be very trying for anyone groping for the symbolism that underlies the cast hexagrams while consulting the I CHING. The mass of this data has been compiled from the distributed references in the monumental Wilhelm/Baynes translation as well as a few other translations of the I CHING, and made available here. Of particular use is the section on the symbolism of the eight trigrams arranged under categories like Family Relationship, Weather, Points of the Compass, Time of Day, Animals, Health, Parts of the Body, Signs of the Zodiac, Animals, Farming and Gardening; Building, Machinery and Repairs; Psychology and Mysticism. There is an interesting table of a sixty-year cycle relating sixty of the sixty-four hexagrams. There is also a useful table linking each hexagram with three others, by transposing each hexagram from the King Wen diagram to the Fu Hsi diagram and repeating this process to its cyclic end. Altogether a very useful guide to meaningful I CHING interpretation.

— J. Jayaraman.

MIND IS A MYTH: Disquieting Conversations with the Man called U.G. Pub. Dinesh Publications. Post Betim (Volant) Goa-403 101; Pp. 159; Rs. 60/

“Look, I tried everything to find an answer to my burning obsession: ‘Is there such a thing as enlightenment at all or have we all been fooled by abstractions? That utter frustration and complete failure to answer that question created an intensity. The first third of my life was spent in India around all the associations that could benefit one interested in spiritual matters. I found out for myself that it was all bogus, nothing to it at all. Totally disillusioned with the whole religious tradition of both east and west, I plunged myself into modern psychology, science, and whatever the material world could give me. I found out for myself that the whole idea of spirit and psyche was false. When I experimented with and studied the material world I was surprised to find that there was no such thing as matter at all. Denying the spiritual and material basis of things, I was left with nowhere to turn. I began drifting on my own, unable to find an answer from any source. Then one day the futility of what I was doing dawned upon me, and the question which had obsessed me for almost my entire life got burned, then disappeared. After that there were no more questions. The thirst burnt itself out without ever satisfying itself. Not answers, but the ending of questions is the important thing. Even though everything got burnt there, still embers remain to express themselves in a natural rhythm. What impact this expression may have on the society around me is not my concern.” (p. 152).

Uppaluri Gopala Krishnamurti is a remarkable entity — or shall we say non-entity? — “with the heart of a butcher”, towards the “hypocrisy of the holy business”. By the age of 21, a quasi-atheist, he visited Ramana Maharshi in 1939 and put him three questions:

“Is there,” asked U.G., “anything like enlightenment?”

“Yes, there is,” replied the master.

“Are there any levels to it?”

Bhagavan replied, “No, no levels are possible, it is all one thing. Either you are there or not there at all.”

Finally U.G. asked, “This thing called enlightenment, can you give it to me?”

Looking the serious man in the eyes, he replied, “Yes, . . . but can you take it?”

U.G. says that this encounter changed the course of his life and “put me right back on the track”.

To U.G., who flaunts his allergy to the holy Quest, the body is the greater reality, harmonious in itself, and extraordinarily intelligent, and quite capable of meeting its survival needs. Thoughts hooked up one to the other create a false continuity. It is *this* continuity that is the problem. This I-virus hijacks the harmonious, glandular, biological system to further its own ends, its own continuity at all costs. Awareness choiceless or otherwise, Mano-nasa and Moksha, are

all its inventions. "The menu without the meal." Thought is constantly propelled beyond physical survival needs to give continuity to the separative self. It is a sign of neurosis to talk of controlling thoughts or of living in the present when all that exists is the past. Any means, adopted for effecting any transformation can only be from the past and hence only guarantees further lease for the search. The body by itself is peaceful. Wanting to impose a fictitious, uninterrupted state of happiness on it (which can only destroy it as it is not designed for it) is a serious neurological problem of thought trying to give itself continuity. U.G. talks of the falsity of the demand to change the self and the world. "Anything you do to try to bring about peace and harmony .... is like using war to create peace in a peaceful world. Peace is something that cannot be practised or taught." (p. 142)

In U.G.'s world, "after the continuity of thought is blown away ... you find an extraordinary sensitivity of the senses. There is simply no isolated, separate existence of its own here, only the throb of life." And life for U.G. is no more than "eating, sleeping and breathing. That is all that is there" (p. 39). The U.G. organism goes through a near clinical death several times a day. Ordinary breathing stops. A state of near death sets in with coldness and stiffness. Just before the point of no return, somehow the body begins to 'come back'. (Sri Ramana himself underwent similar non-volitional death experiences during his years in Virupaksha cave, one of which was in the presence of Vasudeva Sastri.) U.G. finds this process very intriguing: "It just happens out of nowhere. Even the thought of self or ego has been annihilated. Still there is *something* there experiencing this death, otherwise I would not be able to describe it here." (p. 146) The *something* and the *I* that he admits to above are obviously identical with the Silence that he refuses to call Self, and even denies in conversation.

Elsewhere (p. 84) U.G. challenges a questioner that, not he but, only a Gaudapada could demolish U.G.'s nihilism.

These two instances point to an unsaid, positive element in U.G.'s message. Beatitude is finally a question of balance. As the Isa Upanishad says, "Those who fumble in ignorance enter the great Darkness. But those who remain thrilled with the search for knowledge enter a greater Darkness."

There must come a stage even in honest striving, when the presumption of a goal itself becomes the bluff. This is the point of surrender, of throwing to the winds the worthy too. Taken in the right spirit, U.G.'s message, a poison in itself, can be the specific for the delirium which shadows the fever of spiritual searching.

Denouncers of tradition and teaching often plan lecture tours and publications, and organise to protect the 'purity' of their teaching. U.G. "has no following, gives no public talks, writes no strictures. .. and offers no solutions to man's mounting problems. He is a private citizen living in a house by the side of the road, talking informally with those who appear at his door. No one is asked to come and no

one is asked to leave." U.G., says of this book, "My teaching, if that is the word you want to use, has no copyright. You are free to reproduce, interpret, misinterpret, distort, do what you like, even claim authorship, without my consent or the permission of anybody." A book of vibrant talks with a babe bellicose in its innocence. A standpoint which has still to include rejection itself in its ambit of sweeping rejection, in order to be indistinguishable from sweeping acceptance. And so, a half-baked *Ribhu-Gita*. But still a full-fledged knock-out.

— J. Jayaraman.

DRavidian THEORIES: By R. Swaminatha Aiyar. Motilal Banarasidas, Delhi. Pp. 546 + 29, Rs. 150.

R. Swaminatha Aiyar was an amateur linguist. He was a Professor of Mathematics for sometime and later worked in the Revenue Department of the Board of Revenue of Madras Presidency.

This book deals with different aspects of Dravidian languages. It contains articles on the Tamil alphabet, Dravidian suffixes, Tamil dialects, Telugu dialects, Aryan present participle suffixes, causal formation, etc. This scholarly book containing a wealth of information will be of great use to linguists and of interest to the general reader. This is a rare scholarly work that can be understood by the layperson also. It is marked by simplicity, clarity and precision. Most linguists these days are inoculated against clarity and simplicity.

— Dr. K. Subrahmanian.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED:

TRADITIONS IN SADHANA: By M.P. Pandit; Pub.: Sterling Publishers, New Delhi-110 016; Pp. 289; Rs. 175/- (Reviewed in July 1967 under original title SHINING HARVEST).

STUDIES IN THE TANTRAS AND THE VEDA: By M.P. Pandit; Pub.: Sterling Publishers, New Delhi - 110 016. Pp. 168, Rs. 100. (Reviewed in April 1965).

THE QUINTESENCE OF YOGA VASISHTHA: By Prof. B. Kuppaswamy; Pub.: Satsangha Seva Samiti, Gandhi Bazaar, Bangalore-4; Pp. 174, Rs. 15 \$3. (Reviewed in April 1979).

SAT-DARSHANAM (Spanish): Pub. Editorial Sirio, S.a. — Malaga 29005, Spain.

THE SPIRITUAL TEACHINGS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI (Spanish); Pub.: Editorial Kairos, Numancia, Barcelona 08029, Spain.

**CORRIGENDUM (p. 186 of July'88): The third para of the review of TALKS ON UPADESA SARAM, Should read: "The Foreword.," and not as wrongly printed.**