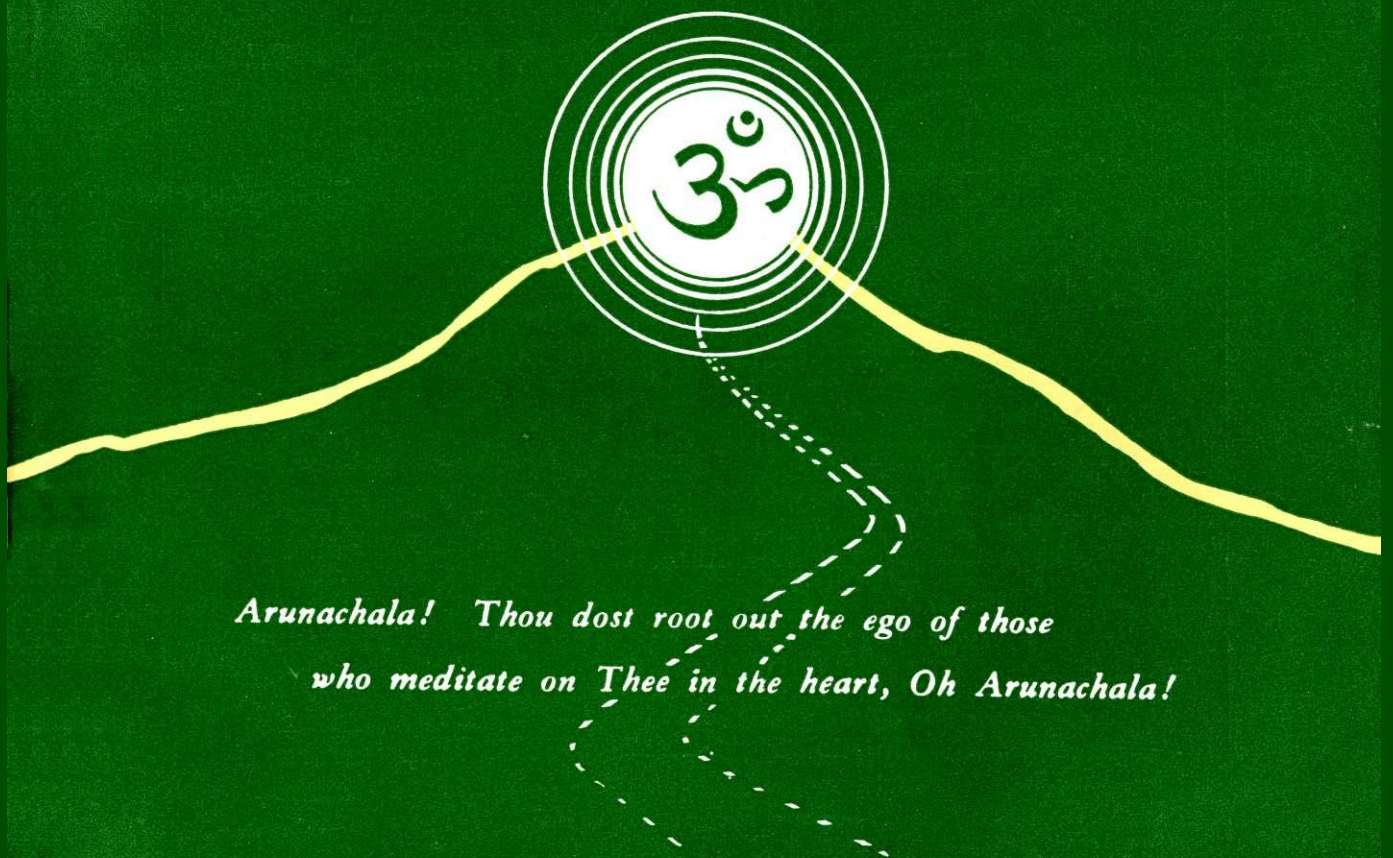


the  
Mountain  
path



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

*vol. 9, no. ii, april 1972*

Unless Thou embrace me,  
I shall melt away in tears  
of anguish, Oh Arunachala!

— *The Marital Garland  
of Letters*, verse 34

**Publisher :**  
**T. N. Venkataraman**  
*President, Board of Trustees,*  
**Sri Ramanasramam,**  
**Tiruvannamalai.**

\*

**Editor :**  
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Annual Subscription :

INDIA		Rs. 6
FOREIGN	£ 0.65	\$ 1.50

Life Subscription :

Rs. 125	£ 12.50	\$ 30
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Single Copy :

Rs. 1.75	£ 0.20	\$ 0.45
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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

Vol. 9 APRIL 1972 No. II

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— Editor.

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**The Mountain Path**

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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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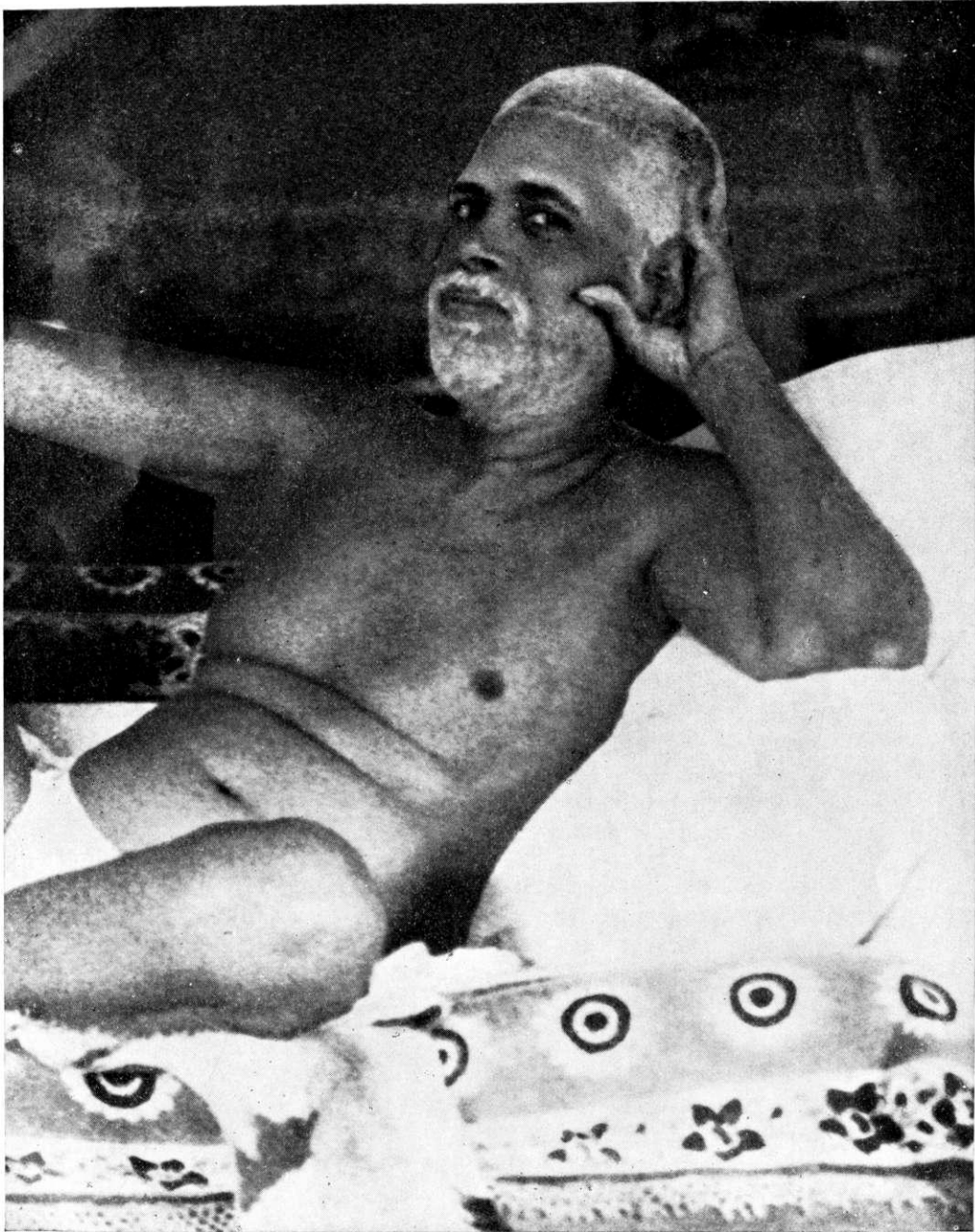
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**THE MOUNTAIN PATH**

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**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**





BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI



## *The Mountain Path*

Vol. 9. No. II, April 1972

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Editor : LUCIA OSBORNE

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Editorial

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# HIS UPADESA

## A RESUME

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Based on *The Teaching of Ramana Maharshi  
in His Own Words* by Arthur Osborne,  
embodying some of his comments.

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A DEVOTEE asked the Maharshi : "What is that one thing knowing which all doubts are solved?" The reply was : "Know the doubter. If the doubter is known, doubts will not arise. . . . It is only the mind which entertains doubts. Doubts must be uprooted. The method for accomplishing this is the investigation *Who am I?*"

Having understood intellectually that one is not 'my' body nor 'my' thoughts nor 'my' name nor anything else with this pronoun implying an entity to which they belong, the question arises 'who am I then?', since nobody doubts that he exists. This preparatory mental version of the quest leads to the real quest which is more than mental questioning or a repetition like a *mantra*. It involves an intuitive, one-pointed alertness of the entire mind to keep it poised and a wordless urgency to know. When our effort has reached its limit it subsides of its own accord and Grace takes over. Until the effortless supreme state is attained it is impossible for a man not to make effort compelled by his own nature, as Lord Krishna pointed out to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Bhagavan's teaching hinges on Self-enquiry but seekers found guidance on whatever path they followed from their level of attainment. The guidance given to each disciple was intensely direct and adapted to his character ultimately leading to surrender or Self-enquiry. The theme of Self-enquiry or surrender recurs like a refrain in varying stanzas or the cadence in a symphony ending in Silence. It implies discrimination between the Real and the unreal, the Self and the ego. In His own words: "An examination of the ephemeral nature of external phenomena leads to *vairagya* (dispassion). Hence Self-enquiry is the first and foremost step to be taken. . . . *Vichara* is the process and the goal also. 'I-AM' is the goal and final Reality. To hold on to it with effort is *vichara*. When spontaneous and natural it is Realisation. . . . That which is, is the One Reality. It may be represented by a form, a *mantra*, *japa*, *vichara* or any kind of attempt. All of them finally resolve themselves into the One single Reality. *Bhakti*, *japa*, *vichara* are only different forms of our efforts to keep out the unreality. The unreality is an obsession at present. Reality is our true nature."

Various opinions are put forward as to Bhagavan's teaching. Some hold that He taught the *vichara* and nothing else. Others act as if a complementary guru was necessary to be able to follow Bhagavan's path. In one case occult practices were also recommended! As pointed out above Bhagavan guided seekers on all paths ultimately converging on the *vichara* or surrender.

Of late articles have appeared and a book expressing the view that Bhagavan's teaching is the same as J. Krishnamurti's. This is far from true except a few sayings with Taoist or advaitic connotations but not so the relative expositions. However, it is not the scope of this editorial to enlarge upon this subject. A summary of the essential teaching of Bhagavan will *sui generis* clear misconceptions of

those with discernment. The majority of people tend to believe what they like to believe.

Self-enquiry is not psychological probing into the faculties, urges, memories or tendencies of one's conscious or subconscious mind but a quest for pure I-AM-ness which is pure awareness that lies behind all these. One is not looking for anything 'new' or rejecting the 'old' or anything outside oneself. 'New' as against 'old' implies diversity and is not choiceless. Bhagavan taught us not to be carried away by thoughts, or try to understand the workings of the mind, but to still thoughts and then full awareness, unclouded by thoughts, will result. Psychological probing into the nature of various emotions feeds the mind instead of stilling it. "Who asked you to think about all that?", Bhagavan admonished an aspirant. "All those are also thoughts. What good will it do you to go on thinking about memory and perception, etc.? It will be endless. . . . Ask who has this perception and memory, whence does it arise? Find this out." Reality is not limited to the 'new' nor 'constant change' but is the Unchangeable underlying all change, the new and the old. It is — "Existence underlying all forms, all changes, all forces, all matter and all spirit; Existence everywhere, endless, infinite, without beginning or end," Bhagavan said. "It is as IT IS."

About effort Bhagavan said in reply to a question: "Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature but one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-long *vasanas* carry the mind outward and turn it to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inward and for that effort is necessary. . . ." When the mind is silent in choiceless awareness there are no problems, which are always bound up with thoughts. This is the state of Enlightenment, the state of a *Jnani*. All *sadhana* or investigation

start from the relative plane of a mind in ignorance of its true state, a mind in confusion (*ajnana*) in order to reach clarity. "Earnest effort never fails", Bhagavan used to say. This is great encouragement and those who have the necessary strength to persevere on the paths indicated by the Guru find that it works.

Bhagavan taught that the different *margas* or paths lead to the same goal. "What is once a means becomes itself the goal. The four *margas*: *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jnana*, are not exclusive of one another. They are described separately in classical works only to convey the idea of the appropriate aspect of God to appeal readily to the seeker according to his temperament."

On one occasion the famous singer, Dilip Kumar Roy, poured out his heart in songs of devotion before Bhagavan and asked Him whether his way was right. "Yes, what you are doing is just what you have to do. Carry on and it will lead you to the goal. Through devotion to God we discharge our emotions and that is a sure way to reach Him!", Bhagavan said. He also added that the Tamil saints have designated *bhakti* as the mother of *jnana*.

Whether one followed the path of *jnana* or *bhakti* Bhagavan taught that this should not interfere with the proper and effective discharge of whatever duties the body has. In other words it is combined with the path of *karma* in the conditions of domestic and professional life. It is not advisable to create an artificial vacuum for the mind by depriving it of its natural occupation. When a seeker is ready for renunciation or a life of pure contemplation a change in outer circumstances takes place spontaneously to make this possible.

Just as concentration on the heart establishes a point of contact with yoga, so also Bhagavan pointed out the affinity with *bhakti* and said that the two paths lead to the same goal. Perfect devotion means complete surrender of

the ego to God or Guru, while Self-enquiry leads to the dissolution of the ego, so the two paths converge. Bhagavan mentioned that all paths are approved in the *Bhagavad Gita*, which says that the *jnani* is the best *karma yogi*, the best devotee or *bhakta*, the highest *yogi* and so on. There is no true wisdom without love nor true love without wisdom. Bhagavan agreed with a visiting swami that 'God is required for *sadhana* for most people. But the end of the *sadhana* even in *bhakti marga* is attained only after complete surrender.' "Whatever path one may choose, the 'I' is inescapable, the 'I' that does the *nishkama karma* (selfless service), the 'I' that pines for joining the Lord from whom it feels it has been separated, the 'I' that feels it has slipped from its real nature. When the source of that 'I' is found out all questions will be solved."

There are, no two 'I's, one seeking another. The embodied Self under the veil of ignorance of its true nature illumined by the Light of that very Self seeks itself to discover that it never ceased to be the Self. To quote Sri Bhagavan: "The Self always is. There is no knowing it. It is not some new knowledge to be acquired. What is new and not here and now cannot be permanent. The Self always is, but knowledge of it is obstructed and the obstruction is called ignorance. Remove the ignorance and knowledge shines forth." The Self is Pure Consciousness. Yet a man identifies himself with the body which is insentient. . . . A spurious 'I' arises between Pure Consciousness and the insentient body and imagines itself to be limited to the body. Seek this and it will vanish like a phantom. The phantom is the ego or mind or individuality." The whole *sadhana* consists in the illusory limited self — the individuality — finding out that it never was, that it never ceased to be the Self!

Bhagavan also admitted of *pranayama* as a legitimate help towards attaining thought-control, though he never actually enjoined it.



“Breath-control can also help the wandering mind and attain one-pointedness. But one should not stop there. Quiescence lasts only so long as the breath is controlled. So it is transient. Control of mind spontaneously effects control of breath.” Their source is the same.

Preoccupation with occult powers was also not encouraged by Bhagavan and He even warned the first Western devotee, Frank Humphreys, not to indulge in them. Humphreys also outgrew the almost universal fallacy in the West that it is possible to help the world only by outer activity. ‘The Kingdom of Heaven is within you’, Christ said. To the pure in heart all is pure. The world is only a projection, a shadow-play and it will be according to the state of one’s mind. Even the apparent chaos is only a part of a vaster harmony just like an isolated tune in a symphony may be jarring but completely in harmony with the rest.

Questions about renunciation were asked frequently and the explanation that Ramana Maharshi gave usually was that true renuncia-

tion is in the mind and is neither achieved by physical renunciation nor impeded by the lack of it. The life of action need not be renounced. If one meditates in the right manner for an hour or two every day the current of mind induced will continue to flow even while at work. All the activities of life performed tend to follow and express the line taken in meditation.

When Ramana Maharshi came to the small temple at Pavalankunru on one of the eastern spurs of Arunachala He was already followed by devotees though still in his teens. He never gave talks as such nor did he set out to teach. Devotees had doubts and asked questions. The replies constitute the teaching. They were *ad hominem* adapted to the level of receptivity and understanding of the questioner.

Bhagavan was always ready to clear the doubts of sincere seekers avoiding unnecessary discussions. His explanations are clear, terse and to the point and so very simple. However, what is simple may appear most difficult for some complex minds. Bhagavan’s words carried power. But the most powerful impact of His teaching was in Silence. By Silence eloquence is meant, he used to say. It is a direct transmitting of the knowledge, depending on the disciple’s receptivity. He is identified with Lord Dakshinamurti, the primal Master of Silence. These times of Silence, sitting at His Feet, devotees found most precious and the effect most potent; truly wonderful moments when time ceased to matter! “The Guru’s Silence is more vast and more emphatic than all the *sastras* put together,” Bhagavan said. It induced a feeling of true well-being, ‘worries left-out amongst the lilies.’

“God, Guru and the Self are the same”, Bhagavan affirmed. Grace is always there. We are never out of its operation. It is only the clouded mind which does not feel it. Yet, through effort, it can experience Grace. We

**Devotee :** Why should the path to release be differently taught? Will it not create confusion in the minds of aspirants?

**Maharshi :** Several paths are taught in the Vedas to suit the different grades of qualified aspirants. Yet, since release is but the destruction of the mind, all efforts have for their aim the control of the mind. Although the modes of meditation may appear to be different from one another, in the end all of them become one. There is no need to doubt this. One may adopt that path which suits the maturity of one’s mind.

—*Self Enquiry*, p. 34.

cannot attain realisation of the Self unaided by Grace, Guru or the Self. The physical guru leads one back to the inner guru to Grace, a living Presence always abiding with us, whether we know it or not. We do not exist apart from It, apart from the Christ in us; and to speak of rejection is a paradox.

Bhagavan's initiation was in Silence and formless as it still is, the guidance straight to the heart, by-passing words and thought. Discrimination, perseverance and devotion is what is needed. The path is there and the Guide ever-present, ever-watchful. His Grace supports His devotees on whatever path they follow, be it *jnana*, *bhakti*, *karma* or surrender, whether fortified by rituals or not. If

any forms or techniques or methods are outgrown and cease to be of help, guidance will come in some form or other at the right moment.

Bhagavan's Presence continues as before and devotees find guidance and help as before, if anything, even in greater measure. Christ's saying, 'Blessed are those who have seen and believe, but more blessed are those who have not seen and believe', cannot be repeated too often. It applies. From all corners of the world seekers come nowadays to *Sri Ramanasramam* even in greater numbers than before testifying to the continued Presence of *Arunachala-Siva-Ramana*, the eternal Source where everybody finds what he needs and what he can carry!

## "Question Contains the Answer"

By N. Balarama Reddiar

"The answer is contained in the question itself, for the answer is always the ever-existing Self and the question is only a modulation of it." This remarkable saying of Sri Bhagavan finds an apt illustration in the following instance.

One of our old devotees, the late Sri A. Bose, lost his only son, a bright boy of 20. Upset very much by this loss he had a private interview with Bhagavan, which was arranged during His resting time between 12 and 2 in the afternoon. At one stage in the interview he asked Bhagavan in what appeared a challenging mood: "What is God?" For a devotee of such long standing the question looked incongruous!

Bhagavan kept silent for a while and then gently said: "Your question itself contains the answer: What is, (is) God." This illuminating answer was amazingly the question itself!

One should note here that it is not merely a clever or well-thought-out answer. That may be so in the case of ordinary men. A *Jnani's* utterances are free from the intermediary action of the mind, which colours and often distorts the truth. In the case of the seers, it is said: 'sense follows speech'. Also, Bhagavan's silence before answering the question was evidently meant to prepare the questioner to receive the full impact of the answer!



## The Essential Teaching of The Maharshi

*By Arthur Osborne*

**Herein an important point is driven home.**

**Mysticism is the essence of Hinduism.**

**And Sri Ramana Maharshi gave the key  
to the very heart of mysticism.**

**H**INDUISM is not a proselytising religion.

Indeed, it is by no means easy for any one not born a Hindu to become one, since it is not only a religion but a social structure into which a newcomer could not easily fit. The religion of a Hindu consists of two elements (and indeed, he has no word corresponding at all exactly to 'religion'): a pattern of life and worship and a path to Beatitude.

Hinduism is also not an intolerant religion. By no means all follow a path to Beatitude, though many recognize that they ought to. Even for those who do there are many paths to choose from. One who follows a devotional path may, for instance, worship God in the form of Rama. If he does it will never occur to him to refuse recognition to those who worship God in the form of Krishna or try to convert them. Why then should he try to convert those who worship God in the form of Christ? If told that they or the Buddhists believe theirs to be the only valid path to Beatitude he is likely to smile pityingly.

Mystics in any religion, that is those who know from experience, perceive that the experience is universal and beyond doctrine and usually find it easy to understand that it can be approached through other religions also. And Hindu doctrine is openly mystical. It declares plainly: "The unreal has no being,



the Real no not-being.”<sup>1</sup> The whole Truth is in that sentence. The Real is not something that has been in the past or will be in the future; it does not depend on religion or doctrine; it cannot be made real, it just IS, now and eternally.

Since Ramakrishna Paramahansa a remarkable change has taken place in Hinduism. The gurus have separated the path to Beatitude from the Hindu pattern of life by giving initiation to non-Hindus. It was Swami Vivekananda who was most spectacular in introducing this change with Vedanta Societies in America; but it was not his innovation. Ramakrishna himself had a dream which he interpreted to mean that he would have many followers in the West. Sri Sarada Devi, wife of Sri Ramakrishna, whom all his disciples revered as ‘The Holy Mother’, had foreign disciples. She and all the other disciples approved of Vivekananda’s action. Since then the saints and gurus have continued the practice. It culminated in Ramana Maharshi.

This development is of tremendous importance for it means that they can not merely appreciate the wisdom and beauty of it but find actual guidance on the path of Beatitude.

In his lifetime the Maharshi initiated his disciples silently, with no forms or ritual. We see the wisdom of this now, because the same silent initiation continues although he has shed the body. This is not just theory; there have been many cases of it.

The Maharshi’s teaching too was independent of any specific religion. This does not mean that he deprecated ritual or religion. He appreciated them for those who are helped by them; but in our modern, materialistic, individualistic world there are many who are outside their pale or can find no guidance in them, and yet seek. It was for such that his guidance came. And it was not for one generation only.

## A Humorous Episode

A few days ago when Bhagavan, after supper, was resting on his cot in the verandah, east of his hall, something funny took place. He was facing south. Chadwick was sitting behind Bhagavan’s back. Soon after Bhagavan took his seat and leaned on the cushions, Chadwick from behind stealthily and unnoticed, fanned Bhagavan. When Bhagavan turned and looked, Chadwick withdrew the fan and remained still. When Bhagavan turned his face south, Chadwick resumed fanning again. Bhagavan turned round and Chadwick stopped. Bhagavan was left wondering how he got the breeze! Chadwick then laughed and Bhagavan joined in the laughter. This shows how even with such an eminent master a devotee can play and both can enjoy the joke like children!

—Day by Day with Bhagavan

His instruction was of the most simple: to seek Reality through the enquiry ‘Who am I?’. However, this is not a mere mental enquiry. It is not philosophy or psychology. He indicated this by saying: “No answer that the mind gives can be right.” It is rather clinging to one’s actual sense of being, of I-am-ness, and experiencing that in full consciousness while suspending thought. One sign that it is not mental is that the Maharshi advised, while meditating in this way, to concentrate not on the head but the heart at the right side, the spiritual heart. The ancient Hebrews knew of this: “The wise man’s heart is at his right

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, II, 16.

hand, but a fool's heart at his left."<sup>2</sup> Not to think about the heart but to experience with or in the heart.

He taught the Unity of Being; but it is not a question of whether God exists apart from you but of whether you exist apart from God, as he showed in his *Forty Verses on Reality*, his great exposition of doctrine. "All religions postulate the three fundamentals — the world, the soul and God; but it is only the One Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say, 'The three are really three' only so long as the ego exists. Therefore to inhere in one's own Being, where the 'I' or ego is dead, is the perfect state."<sup>3</sup>

But it is no use arguing about it; it has to be experienced: "It is due to illusion born of ignorance that men fail to recognize That which is always and for everybody the inherent Reality dwelling in its natural Heart-centre and to abide in it, and that instead they argue that it exists or does not exist, that it has form or has not form, or is non-dual or dual."<sup>4</sup>

Doctrine must be transcended, because the only answer is experience and the ultimate experience is Identity: "Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute Reality, it is only a means for realizing It without name and form. That alone is true Realization wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with It."<sup>5</sup>

There are many, however, whom this path of direct inner quest does not suit. They are drawn to a more devotional way. For them too the Maharshi provided guidance. He often said: "There are two ways: ask yourself 'Who am I?' or submit." And indeed, if the mind cannot realize its own nothingness and universality, the only thing is for it to submit to the Universal. If it does it will eventually be absorbed ("I came to devour Thee, but Thou hast devoured me; now there is peace, Arunachala!"<sup>6</sup>), so the two paths

lead to the same goal. For those who are drawn to the more emotional approach the Maharshi wrote the *Marital Garland of Letters to Arunachala*, the supreme mystical love poem, beginning: "Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the heart, O Arunachala!"<sup>7</sup>

But if the ego is eradicated no void remains; pure Being takes its place: "Hast Thou not bartered cunningly Thyself for me? O, Thou art death to me, Arunachala!"<sup>8</sup> What is destroyed is only the illusion of duality, of two separate beings: "Unite with me to destroy Thee and me and bless me with the state of ever-vibrant joy, O Arunachala!"<sup>9</sup> And the mind wonders at the Grace of it: "Thou art the Primal Being, whereas I count not in this or the other world. What didst Thou thus gain by my worthless self, O Arunachala?"<sup>10</sup>

The two paths are not incompatible. Many do in fact combine them. Nevertheless a person is apt to be drawn more to one or the other. Therefore guidance was provided on both.

The Maharshi often said, "The Guru is One." Whatever Guru one may follow it is only a manifestation of the Inner Guru, the Christ in you, and his function is to lead you back to the Source. Nevertheless, until the heart is purified various impulses may masquerade as the inner Guru and it is safer (and indeed usually necessary) to have an outer Guru. In this spirituality dark age an enlightened Guru is not easy to find. Therefore the silent initiation was instituted, for Providence always meets the needs of its children. Those who turn to the Maharshi for help will not be left without guidance.

<sup>2</sup> *Ecclesiastes*, X, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, v. 34.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, v. 8.

<sup>6</sup> *Marital Garland of Letters*, v. 28.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, v. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, v. 62.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, v. 56.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, v. 93.

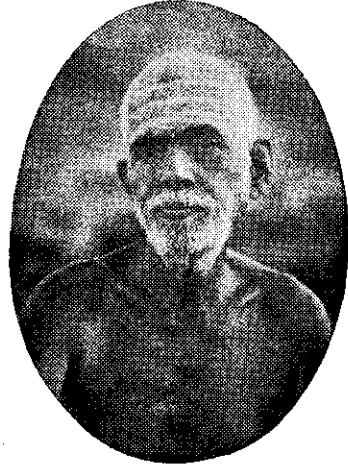
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Sri Bhagavan's detailed explanations of Self-enquiry do not mean that his emphasis on this method was absolute or dogmatic. Sri Kunju Swami shows how all methods were given their due place by Sri Bhagavan, citing concrete instances.

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By Kunju Swami

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## Variety in Bhagavan's Teaching

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**S**RI BHAGAVAN'S presence and teachings gave hope and strength to different classes of seekers at different levels. Thus the teachings were not limited to those who took to pure enquiry as is sometimes assumed. Bhagavan as the Jnani is on a level higher than that of a spiritual master and therefore it followed that on every path one received help and guidance on that very path and no attempt at changing one's chosen line was needed.

An important teaching of his was that intensity of practice and one-pointedness on any path will be fruitful. *Stotra, japa, dhyana* and *vichara* are ascending stages of *sadhana*. While confirming this Bhagavan was also clear that this did not mean that all stages were necessarily to be gone through by all. Certainly there were exceptions as for example in the case of the four great Tamil saints who sang the praises of Lord Siva. With them it was

an achievement of *akhandakara vritti* (unbroken experience of awareness) brought about by constant remembrance of the Name ('Never was there a moment when I did not think of You!'). In that achievement where was the need for *vichara*? Its result was already there.

Dandapani Swami once pleaded with Sri Bhagavan to give him some *upadesa*. It was a Sivarathri Day.<sup>1</sup> The devotee affirmed he had no practice to his credit. But Bhagavan persistently asked him whether he had not done any little practice of any kind. At last the fact emerged that he used to write the *Rama Koi* (a crore of *Rama Nama*). Sri Bhagavan instructed him to do it more and more.

One doubt that often assails people is the relative superiority of *mantras*. Sri Bhagavan

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<sup>1</sup>An article on the significance of *Sivarathri* is published elsewhere in this issue.



explained that the choice of a particular *mantra* purely depended upon one's *samskara*. There is no superiority or inferiority in the *mantras* themselves. In the choice of the *mantra* as in other things it was characteristic of Sri Bhagavan to encourage one in a path already chosen so that it acted like a lever resulting in more progress. A perfect illustration of the effect of *samskaras* was the *Maha Nirvana* of Bhagavan's Mother. In her last moments, under the protective care of Bhagavan, groups of people started altogether different chants not prompted by anyone. A Punjabi Brahmachari and Dandapani Swami chanted *Ram Nam* aloud. Nayana,<sup>2</sup> Sundaresa Iyer and Raju Sastry chanted the Vedas. Myself and Perumalswami chanted the *Aksharamanamalai*. Each kind of chant reflected clearly the *samskara* of the particular individual!

In olden days when we had the benefit of receiving personal instructions from Sri Bhagavan one of them was to get into meditation before going to sleep. Thus sleep overtook one as a natural sequel to fatigue and was not induced or preceded by lying down. Also the first thing in the morning, immediately on getting up from bed was to go into meditation. This ensured a serenity of mind and also a feeling of tirelessness throughout the day. The state of mind immediately before sleep is resumed on waking.

*Parayana* (recitation), *japa*, *dhyana* and *vichara* represent usually different modes of *sadhana*. But it may not be possible for a *sadhaka* to be engaged in any one of these continuously. So Sri Bhagavan's advice was to alternatively try all the four and ensure continued *sadhana* (which would be otherwise impossible). Thus if one is tired of *dhyana* one can do *japa*, following it up with *parayana* and so on. My practice was to recite *slokas* on my walk to Skandashram in the mornings. One day Bhagavan happened to see me and asked what I was doing. When I told him about my *parayana* he encouraged it and said

it was a good way to simultaneously go through one's routine and also do something towards controlling the mind.

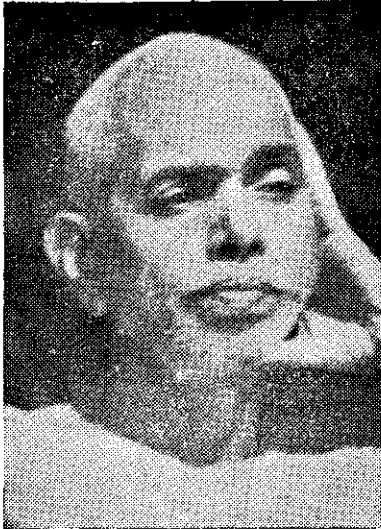
Asked on one occasion how it was that 'Self Knowledge is easy, the easiest thing there is' (Bhagavan's poem *Self Knowledge* is here referred to) while others said it was the most difficult thing there was, and whether the individual can get it so easily and unaided, Bhagavan seemed to sympathise and pointed out the words, 'Grace is needed most', in the same poem. He said it was the key to understanding the poem.

Sri Bhagavan stressed the importance of developing good tendencies likening it to sowing a ripe seed. A ripe seed thrown carelessly on rocky soil will sprout and grow be it even after a thousand years. It will never go to waste. Likewise, good tendencies.

Lastly a word about the different ways in which the grace of a master works. The working of grace is comparable to the ways of the fish, tortoise and birds in rearing their offspring. The look of the fish is sufficient to bring life to the eggs. The tortoise stays at some distance and by the power of its presence as well as its intense concentration life is induced in the young one. Birds sit right on top of the eggs and hatch them using the warmth of their own body. Sri Bhagavan's grace worked like the look of the fish, the most powerful of the three. The effect was tremendous as many experienced.

A devotee once complained that Sri Bhagavan gave the highest teaching to all irrespective of their limitations. He was referring to the necessity of observing certain rules prescribed for a traditional guru. In fact the devotee offered to teach the *sadhakas* the preliminaries. (Certain traditional rules require masters to teach the truth in stages and in a definite order.) Sri Bhagavan replied that doing things on the sly was foreign to him. What mattered was Pure Truth!

<sup>2</sup> Sri Kavyakanta Ganapathi Muni,



# THE ANSWER TO “WHO AM I?”

By Douglas E. Harding

“There is no answer to ‘Who am I?’  
The very asking is the answer.”

—Ramana Maharshi

**N**ORMALLY when we ask a question — unless it is a merely rhetorical one — we look for an answer. And in the case of the most important of all questions — ‘Who am I?’ — surely we expect a particularly clear, satisfying and final answer: otherwise, why bother to put the question at all? Yet Maharshi says there’s no answer, since the very asking is the answer. And even this no-answer seems to be far from final, since we have to go on and on asking the question.

‘Who Am I?’ is not a question that can be answered in so many words. Several implications of this enquiry are analysed by the author.

Why this contradiction, this puzzling or even disturbing paradox? If we can find the explanation we shall be very near the heart of his teaching. If we can’t find it, or if we just ignore the paradox, we shall certainly remain far away from that heart.

Let us consider what kind of answer we naturally seek when we ask *Who* we really are.

First, we look for an intellectual answer, a verbal formula, an enlightening phrase or sacred text which appears to settle the question beyond doubt, which satisfies our need to know the truth, to understand the case. When we ask who the President of the U.S.A. is we expect a concise and conclusive verbal answer like "Mr. Nixon". At another level, when we ask what the purpose of life is we expect a clear (if hardly conclusive) answer like "To

discover Who is living it". Similarly when we ask *Who* we really are we expect some such definite verbal reply as "*Atman-Brahman*, or the One, or the Buddha-Nature, or the Godhead". But obviously the words, whether read or spoken or sung (however repeatedly), aren't enough; it isn't mere information we are after. Going along with the words there must be a genuine understanding of their meaning and implications. We have to know what the term *Atman-Brahman* signifies, as well as know that we are, at root, that same Being.

But clearly this understanding is still not enough. Even if we are continually telling ourselves we are *Atman-Brahman* in reality, and have some idea of what this amazing statement means, our question "Who am I?" isn't settled yet. No formula, however sacred, and no accompanying understanding, however penetrating, is much good if we lack the 'feel' of it. There must also be a deeply felt conviction that this is the central truth, that we indeed are, now and for ever and contrary to all appearances, the very Source of all things. We have not merely to say this with our lips and think it in our heads but to believe it in our hearts, so that the whole man is involved. Otherwise, nothing much happens.

But again, this isn't enough. The belief has to be maintained. It's not much good being deeply convinced now that we are, intrinsically, the No-thing which is the Origin of the world, if the next moment we forget it, and think of ourselves as a mere part of that world and essentially things surrounded by other things. There has also to be a steady realisation of *Who* we are.

Yet again, is this quite sufficient? Profound conviction, steadily maintained, as to our true Identity, needs to be actualised in everyday life, to become fully operative in all we do and say, so that we are manifestly living no

## The Oneness

By Torben Huss

And winter came  
with white white snow  
—the ocean froze  
its face all ice.  
The full moon waned  
its silver glow  
as days went by.  
Its only man  
to Realize  
his Being  
One with All....  
To Live  
and all-ways die....  
All-ready seeds  
are sprouting....

Let Life Still  
Flower  
Within



longer from our imagined human centre but from our true Centre.

So thinking and feeling and living, we might be excused for believing that at last we are truly settling the question "Who am I?". Yet, according to Ramana Maharshi, this isn't so: the question remains unanswered — because it is unanswerable. What can he possibly have meant? What have we neglected to do?

In fact, the kind of answer we have been exploring so far is not at all the kind that he intends, not at all the kind that can really settle our question. We have been going in the wrong direction, working along the wrong lines altogether — along the well-worn lines of the mind, thought, knowledge, feeling, action, lines which branch into ever-increasing complications and make ever-increasing demands upon the traveller. If the discovery of *Who* we are is available only to the kind of person we have been describing, it is only for the very few who are sufficiently intelligent, intuitive, concentrated, dedicated, untiring: in short, it is available to almost nobody. But Ramana Maharshi consistently denied this. He never expected people to become sages or paragons of any sort. Without reservations or conditions he announced: "Whatever your human self may be like, be your real Self. Whatever your problem, the answer is to see *Who* has it, now. What are you waiting for? All the difficulties are imaginary: if *you* can't see your Self, who can? The reason you aren't Self-realised is that you think you aren't."

Here, then, is the clue to what he means. When we ask the question "Who am I?" in the way he intends, what happens is that no idea, no formula, no sacred text, no intuition, no emotional colouring arises in answer to it. Quite the reverse: all these vanish, and we are left in a state of total clarity, openness, no-mind — fully alert, wide awake, but free

from any particular experience, empty of all mental content or process.

Knowledge implies ignorance of what lies beyond the known, says Maharshi. "Knowledge is always limited." But seeing Who I am isn't knowledge: it is ever-renewed discovery, fresh, unconnected with past and future, perfectly simple. And it is seeing the Unlimited, the boundless Clarity which has no beyond. Therefore it provides the wholly convincing and satisfying answer to our question. If it contained the slightest verbal or intellectual or emotional ingredient, it wouldn't do at all. We couldn't rest in it, because such ingredients would demand comment, further study, interpretation, development. The Plainness which lies right here for the seeing, at the Source and Centre of my everyday experience, discovers Itself to be free from all pollution by the world-stream that flows from It. Of another order altogether, this Wellspring remains entirely lucid, transparent, colourless, still, while from It flows with inconceivable abundance the turbid and restless world-stream.

How, then, am I to ask the question "Who am I?" in such a way as to come to that true answer which is no answer? I have just to look right here where I now am, and take seriously what I find. Forgetting what I remember and have been told about myself, I have to take a fresh look at what it's like being me. And when I look at myself here, without preconception or prejudice, what do I find? Darkness, a mass of flesh and blood, a box with two little windows in it, an apparatus or thing of any sort? An observer, a seer, a person? A mind, a system of ideas, feelings, words?

No! When I honestly attend to this very Spot I occupy I find here absolutely No-thing whatever — Simplicity itself, indubitable, obvious, final. This No-thing is the No-answer to the question of Who I am; and, paradoxically, the perfect answer too!

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# P E A C E

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## Your Birthright

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By Swami Omkar

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**H**OW inspiring and illuminating is the following single *sloka*. Let us call it rather a holy *mantra* in simple words. It is indeed the *mantra* of *mantras*. It ends in Silence.

In the wilderness of the world, under the cool shade of a banyan tree in a Holy Hermitage, a young teacher—an Illumined Sage—taught four of his learned and elderly disciples, all in Silence. The Guru was only sixteen and the *chelas* (the pupils) were all at least eighty years of age. There were many doubts. Though the teaching was only in Silence, all doubts were dispelled without the need of words. Such is the glory of an ideal life of Supreme Silence which is waveless and complete.

“That is Complete. This is Complete. When Completeness is taken away from Completeness only Completeness remains.”

Now, coming to the *mantra* of God-Realisation Now and Here :

“Body alone is the Temple of God. The Individual is the Universal. Hence, destroy the ignorance that *Jiva* is separate

or aloof from God, the *Paramatman*, worship Him with *Soham*, the Universal Consciousness.”

*Soham*<sup>1</sup> is both the Manifested and the Unmanifested. When you are silent it is in the Unmanifested State. When you are active, working, *Soham* is in the Manifested State.

Words mean little. Everything dissolves in Waveless Silence.

*Soham* is both the Word and Silence. The wave which is going down in the Ocean of *Satchidananda* is rising again before your very eyes. Inhale and Exhale Peace with each and every breath. *Soham*. THOU ART THAT. *Tat Tvam Asi*.

You are *Soham* in the past.  
 You are *Soham* in the present.  
 You are *Soham* in the future.  
 You are *Soham* eternally.  
*Soham* within. *Soham* without.

All that you have to do is only to follow your own breath, *Soham* ceaselessly, like *taila-dhara*, the oil poured from one vessel into another, without any break!

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<sup>1</sup> *Soham* = I am He.




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## Sri Ramana Maharshi's Song of Poppadum

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Sri Bhagavan employed many indirect methods of instruction to expand the high spiritual potential of his mother, making her transcend the relative and realise the Self. She took his instructions with absolute faith and surrender. Making *poppadum* would seem too commonplace for spiritual instruction, yet Sri Bhagavan used this occasion in a masterly way to show how it reflected the higher spiritual exercise which is the one that should be performed.

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By V. S. Narasimhan

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**S**RI Ramana Maharshi's *Song of the Poppadum* shows how a *jnani* can use a trifling incident as a means for Vedantic instructions. The song has its origin in an incident in the life of Sri Ramana while he was at Skandashram (on the Arunachala Hill). His mother had already followed him there, and was looking after him. One day she thought of preparing *poppadum* (a thin round cake made of black gram flour fried crisp) and she asked him to help her. Instead of doing so, however, he composed a poem giving instruction for spiritual development under the symbolism of making *poppadum* :

"Make *poppadum* and after making fry,  
Eat, so your cravings you may satisfy." (v.1)

This is an invitation to the aspirant to prepare and enjoy the divine *poppadum* which is not the ordinary *poppadum*.

"No need about the world to roam  
And suffer from depression ;  
Make *poppadum* within the home  
According to the lesson  
Of 'Thou art That', without compare,  
The Unique Word, unspoken,  
'Tis not by speech it will declare.  
The silence is unbroken  
Of Him who is the Adept-Sage,  
The great Apotheosis,  
With His eternal heritage  
That Being-Consciousness-Bliss is.

Make *poppadum*....." (v.2)

This is an exhortation to the aspirant to understand that however much one may roam about the world in search of happiness one

will not get it therein (outside of oneself). It is only by turning within that one can get peace which is the same as Bliss. The in-turned mind is absorbed in its source. The First Guru or the Great Sage Dakshinamurti demonstrated such abidance in the stillness of the Self. This silence or stillness is the real instruction for which, however, we believe words are necessary. Therefore silence itself is 'The Unique Word' transmitting wisdom.

The essence of the stanza is that the disciple should truly follow the Master. The Master is all the while anxious that the disciple should reach his state. No need to say that Maharshi himself was a perfect example of such silence and transmission of Grace through it.

"The grain which is the black gram's yield,  
The so-called self or ego,  
Grown in the body's fertile field  
Of five-fold sheaths, put into  
The roller-mill made out of stone,  
Which is the search for Wisdom,  
The 'Who am I?'. 'Tis thus alone  
The Self will gain its freedom.  
Thus must be crushed to finest dust  
And ground up into fragments  
As being the non-self, so must  
We shatter our attachments.

Make *poppadum*....." (v.3)

The five sheaths (the physical, vital, mental, intellectual and blissful aspects which comprise the human personality) serve as the origin, means of growth and sustenance for the ego. An individual feels that he is only an aggregate of these *koshas* and thereby completely forgets his true nature. Sri Maharshi used to stress that the rise of the ego is the root cause of *ajnana*, as all other *vrittis* (modes or modifications) such as body, mind, world etc., are based on this single *vritti* only. Hence an aspirant has to understand at the outset that the ego and other thoughts are not his true nature. Ridding himself of these external constraints he should try to establish himself firmly in his original state. Just as the pound-

ing of the black gram is the first step in making *poppadum*, so also the pounding of the ego form the basis for *sadhana*. Hence Maharshi asks us to crush into fine dust the ego with the roller-mill of the enquiry 'Who am I?'. Every stroke is a reminder that the ego is not the Reality.

"Mix in the juice of square-stemmed vine.  
This is association  
With Holy Men. With this combine  
Within the preparation  
Some cummin-seed of mind control  
And pepper of restraining  
The wayward senses, with them roll  
That salt which is remaining  
Indifferent to the world we see,  
With condiment of leanings  
Towards a virtuous unity.  
These are their different meanings.

Make *poppadum*....." (v.4)

Mere black gram is not enough to make *poppadum*. One requires various other ingredients. So also, several aids to enquiry have their use. These are association with holy men, mind control, restraint of the senses, desisting from getting involved in things of the world and cultivating virtuous propensities. The counter-parts in the physical and non-physical varieties of *poppadum* are described in this verse. If *sadhana* is not based on such firm foundation, Self-enquiry would end in mere repetition of words and Vedantic scholarship would amount to a mass of verbiage. The ego must be attenuated and not allowed to be more firmly rooted with an added conceit, such as 'I am a Vedantin', 'I am a practiser of Self-enquiry', etc. Hence the stress on cultivating certain spiritual observances with the main quest on Self-enquiry, is made.

"The mixture into dough now blend  
And on the stone then place it  
Of mind, by tendencies hardened,  
And without ceasing baste it  
With heavy strokes of the 'I', 'I',  
Deliver with the pestle  
Of introverted mind. Slowly

The mind will cease to wrestle.  
Then roll out with the pin of peace  
Upon the slab of Brahman.  
Continue effort without cease  
With energetic elan.

Make *poppadum*....." (v.5)

The 'I' thought is the basis of all thoughts and one should find the source of it. This practice should be steady, regular and unceasing till the goal is reached. The mind resists all efforts at being controlled. This resistance should itself be resisted. Unceasingly hard stokes delivered with the pestle of the in-turned mind crush distracting thoughts. The mind becomes more and more turned within to find peace and joy. The *sadhaka* can stay in such a peaceful state effortlessly for long.

"The *poppadum* or soul's now fit  
To put into the fry-pan,  
The one infinite symbol it  
Of the great Silence, which can  
Be first prepared by putting in  
Some clarified fresh butter  
Of the Supreme. And now begin  
To heat it till it sputter,  
On Wisdom's self-effulgent flame  
Fry *poppadum*, 'I' as That,  
Enjoying all alone the same ;  
Which Bliss we ever aim at.  
Make *poppadum* of Self and after eat ;  
Of Perfect Peace till you are replete." (1.6)

The frying and tasting of the *poppadum* is compared to the ultimate *sadhana*, the merger of the mind into its source. This is the last step and there is no need for any more *sadhana*.

Only an *ajnani*, ignorant of his true nature, is caught up in a maze of thoughts. But a *jnani* is free from thoughts. His mind is completely merged in the Self. He glows with this *Brahma Jnana* and to the onlookers he is found to observe *mouna* or Silence. *Mouna* indicates the supreme *Brahmic* state and not the external restraint of speech alone. Vow of silence is only for beginners, as Sankara

## To Be

By Kavana

To strive, and become lost  
in That, which permeates All !  
It is to be beyond " knowledge "  
to be in the Knowing . . . .  
To loose yourself to everything,  
to find That . . . .  
which is within Everything.  
What is the mind  
but a centre of Stimulus  
and Response !  
To Respond to the Sublime  
you must Be in the Source !  
. . . . not merely " think " of IT.  
the Flow is to be Contained,  
be Breathed  
to Be . . . .

says. The finale is merger into the true *mouna* comparable to putting the *poppadum* into the frying pan. The fire of *jnana* is set ablaze. The clarified butter which is poured in is Brahman. The ego is so fried that it completely becomes That. Let this *poppadum* so transferred into That be enjoyed by That itself. The ego should be completely annihilated so that there are no two separate entities as the 'I' and 'That'. The divine *poppadum* is enjoyed by 'That'. 'That' enjoying 'That' means the dawn of the realisation that the Self alone exists and nothing else. With this beautiful note, the song comes to an end.

Only a true *jnani* could explain the most intricate metaphysical truths with such simple analogy. Let all benefit by this poem of Sri Ramana and enjoy the *Poppadum* of Pure Consciousness !

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# THE PEDDLER

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By W. J. Gabb

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He stood beside the milling throng  
 And called his wares aloud,  
 He offered all he had and was  
 Unto the careless crowd.  
 Some stopped awhile and listened,  
 Then they too moved away.  
 Shadows lengthened. Now it was  
 The closing of the day.

He thought, "My wares are wasted,  
 The healing in my hands.  
 None come to me for succour,  
 For no one understands.  
 None understands . . ." he brooded,  
 "And I the least of all."  
 He leaned in weary impotence  
 Against the crannied wall.

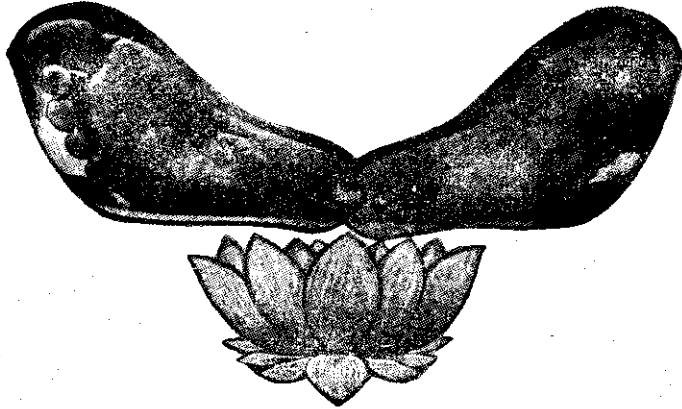
And there within a cranny  
 He spied a single flower.  
 He thought, "You too are wasted,  
 You bloom a single hour  
 And then are gone forever,  
 A pretty 'also ran',  
 With nothing gained, with naught achieved,  
 No good to any man."

"No good to any man," he thought.  
 The words burned in his brain.  
 He turned them over on his tongue  
 Again and yet again.  
 "No good to any man!" he mused,  
 With laughter and with tears,  
 "And this a flower must teach me,  
 And me gone sixty years!"

"As if the will of God is done  
 By good to human kind,  
 By that, and by that act alone!  
 Nay, those who seek will find  
 In truth there's nothing wasted,  
 No flower that ever bloomed,  
 No bud that ere it blossoms  
 By wanton frost is doomed."

"Henceforth I view the good," he thought,  
 "As through the eyes of God,  
 Who sees obscurity and fame  
 As peas within a pod.  
 For wisdom lies in knowing,  
 When all is said and done,  
 The peddler and his wares, the flower,  
 And God Himself are one."





# SRI RAMANA PĀDA MĀLAI

By M. Sivaprakasam Pillai

Back in 1902 Sivaprakasam Pillai queried Sri Bhagavan as to the nature of 'I' and in received the enlightening exposition enshrined in Sri Bhagavan's *Who Am I?*. This great devotee has placed us under a debt of gratitude again in this brief poem which covers a wide range of spiritual questions. It is inspiring to read the poem containing Sri Bhagavan's direct and simple instructions (the original is in Tamil).

REFRAIN :      *Blessed be, blessed be*  
                   (to follow    *The Feet of Lord Ramana,*  
                   each verse)    *Blessed be, blessed be*  
    *And for ever blessed be !!*

1. Blessed be the Feet of the Master, the embodiment of Grace. Blessed be the Knower of the Veda whose Feet remove ignorance and confer Knowledge.
2. Blessed be the Feet of God who attracts the minds of those who see Him. Blessed be His Feet, the One of clear Knowledge who has neither likes nor dislikes.

3. Blessed be the Feet of Him who is all Light. Blessed be the Feet of Him, the true Devotee, who had the Grace of the Lord.
4. Blessed be the Feet of Him the embodiment of Truth, who realised the Truth and rejected all (else). Blessed be the Feet of Him who shows the path of emancipation as it really is.
5. Blessed be the Feet of Him who truly knows but does not show Himself off as a Knower. Blessed be the Feet of Him who teaches the way of highest devotion.
6. Blessed be the Feet of Him who removes the fears of those who take refuge in Him. Blessed be the Feet of Him who regards even poison as nectar.
7. Blessed be the Feet of Him, the Supreme. Blessed be the Feet of Him who lets no danger come (to His devotee).
8. Blessed be the Feet of Him who returns good for evil. Blessed be the Feet of the Creator who melts even stony hearts.
9. Blessed be the Feet of Him who does not expect any reward. Blessed be the Feet of Him, the Lord whose speech is like nectar.
10. Blessed be the Feet of Him who teaches "Seek 'Who am I?' and leave the rest". Blessed be the Feet of Him, the Peaceful One, who says that sorrow will go if one becomes Onself.
11. Blessed be the Feet of the One who gives the knowledge that 'I am not the body which is so dear'. Blessed be the Feet of Him who says 'Throw the burden on the Lord'.
12. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says that the Divine will bear any burdens. Blessed be the Feet of Him who says 'Stick to the Path which is shown'.
13. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says that all is the work of the Lord. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says that the ego and nothing else is the whole trouble.
14. Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches 'That which rises as the "I" is the mind'. Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches that the mind is dissolved in the vision of *Jnana*.
15. Blessed be the Feet of the One who instructs 'Do not think anything and be still'. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says 'Keep your mind fixed in the Self'.
16. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says 'Do not slacken in Self Enquiry but continue it till you achieve Abidance in the Self'.

17. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says 'All evil that hovers around identification with the body will vanish with Self Enquiry'.
18. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says that bliss will surge up and up as one dives deeper and deeper into the 'I'.
19. Blessed be the Feet of the Lord who instructs 'Offer the wandering mind to the Lord. It is the highest devotion'.
20. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says 'Do not dissociate yourself from the Lord who is within but appears separate and without'.
21. Blessed be the Feet of the One who instructs: 'Stop it if the mind goes after sense-objects; this is offering the soul to the Lord'.
22. Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches 'Quell all thoughts which rise; that is *vairagya*'.
23. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says: 'Many are the ways to control the mind. The best among them is Self Enquiry'.
24. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says: 'If controlled by other methods it (the mind) will rise again. This is due to the force of *vasanas*'.
25. Blessed be the Feet of the One who explains: 'By *mantra japa* the mind will be quiescent. *Japa* is a means of enquiry'.
26. Blessed be the Feet of the *Murti* (one with form) who says '(Contemplation on) Form will make the mind one-pointed. Considered well it is also a way'.
27. Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches, 'If *Prana* (breath) is controlled mind is temporarily controlled. *Pranayama* (breath-control) is also a means'.
28. Blessed be the Feet of the One whose teaching is 'The best in the code (for *sadhakas*) is moderate eating. (Also) One word spoken leads to a hundred'.
29. Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches 'Control of mind is the gist of any book (teaching). What book do you need to see yourself!'
30. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says: 'Desire is the play of (material) atoms. Desirelessness is *Jnana*'.
31. Blessed be the Feet of the One who enjoins, 'Get rid of the discrimination between the sexes. Marriage is a way of achieving it'.
32. Blessed be the Feet of the Noble One who explains that giving to others is giving to oneself, if there is the knowledge as to who one is.

33. Blessed be the Feet of the One who stays humble and says 'To humble oneself more and more is good. Avoid contempt towards those who are low'.
34. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says : 'If one wants to overrule (others), others will do the same. If one stays humble others will also do likewise'.
35. Blessed be the Feet of the One who instructs : 'Don't go back on your word. Do not interfere in other's affairs.'
36. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says : 'It is best to let one raise himself by himself. Grace helps where there is effort'.
37. Blessed be the Feet of the Yogi who says : 'It is dangerous to discard traditional rules of conduct. Try to think and understand their significance'.
38. Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches 'Regard everything as the Will of the Lord. Considered well the world is only a dream'.
39. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says : 'It is proper for the wife to act in compliance with the husband. She will derive the same peace as the husband acquires'.
40. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says : 'Fix the mind in the Self. That is respecting the Guru's word'.
41. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says : 'Nothing else is expected of you — be rid of the feeling of difference (between the *jiva* and the Self)'.
42. Blessed be the Feet of the One who says : 'Formal respect is only for the outside world. Where is this consideration when there is unity between man and wife?' (Symbolically the relationship between the master and the disciple though bound by the rule of respect in one sense, is really one of Unity.)
43. Blessed be the Feet of the One who sees merits even in faults. Blessed be the Feet of the *Jnani* who has saved me, possessed of little *tapas*.
44. Blessed be the Feet of the One who like the Sun makes the hearts of the devotees blossom. Blessed be the Feet of the One who lives in Arunachala.
45. Blessed be the Feet of the One who was born in Holy Tiruchuli. Blessed be the Feet of the One who was born through Grace as son to Sundaram Iyer.

*Blessed be, blessed be*  
*The Feet of Lord Ramana,*  
*Blessed be, blessed be*  
*And for ever blessed be!*

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# THE ESSENCE OF RAMANA'S TEACHING

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## An Explanation of "Who Am I?" Enquiry

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By Natananandar

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This is another remarkable devotee who now lives in solitude in Tiruvannamalai wholly devoting himself to the spiritual pursuit. He was responsible for the *Spiritual Instruction of Sri Bhagavan*. A good writer of Tamil prose in the classic style he explains the background in which Self-enquiry can be understood. This is an English rendering of the Tamil version.

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THE Divine Master Bhagavan Sri Ramana ministered to countless devotees in countless ways. One finds in his teachings an immense range and variety suited to the level of the seeker. But one also finds that ultimately he leads every seeker to the crucial question 'Who am I?'

Sri Bhagavan's repeated emphasis on Self Enquiry and his lucid explanations of it drive home the point that it not merely represents a most direct path but is the real aim or goal implied in all spiritual effort. If we are given an unflinching means of finding or discovering the Truth is it not the fruition of having met or having been influenced by as great a master as Bhagavan? To aid us in the task we have not only the teachings of Bhagavan as recorded in his conversations with devotees but his own words as well, in his own original works. An earnest seeker will find all help to make his effort fruitful.

The devotee queried by Bhagavan as to 'who' he was, may think for a while and reply he was either the body or the sense-organs or the mind. To this Sri Bhagavan would say: "In the world of phenomena you call certain things yours. These organs etc. are 'yours' on the same analogy. You are in the position of an owner and since the owner is always different from what he owns, these are not 'you'. In sleep you did exist but not the body or organs or mind." This turns the seeker inward. He realises that he

has merely *assumed* himself to be various things which he has never been and is not — the body, the sense-organs or the mind.

To know intellectually that the body or the mind can be transcended is preliminary knowledge that one is *something* beyond these. That is described as Knowledge or *Kutastha* or Brahman by the Upanishads. But to have concepts of the Supreme Truth is not enough and often muddling, for how can the mind gauge what transcends it?

Taking the body etc. as the Self is due to delusion or ignorance whose origin is timeless. This ignorance is to a man spiritually what blindness is physically. A man who is born blind could not walk freely nor much less run like others even if his sight were to be restored instantaneously. The force of habit is so strong that it cannot be overcome quite suddenly. Practice is necessary. Similarly one cannot dwell in the Self just on knowing one is the Self. Long *sadhana* is needed. The

*sadhana* of enquiry is more subtle and cannot be taken as a routine like *bhajan*, *parayana*, *archana*, *japa* or *dhyana*. It also implies continuous vigilance. Even a moment of inattention means slipping into the state of ignorance.

The aim is to transform oneself completely so that ultimately Self awareness is as natural as body consciousness at the beginning. The following from Sri Bhagavan explains it clearly :

“ . . . When, by continued effort, the conviction ‘I am that *Guhesa*’ (Lord of the Heart Cave) becomes as firm as the sense of ‘I’ in your body and you become that Lord, nescience of the form ‘I am the perishable body’ will disappear like darkness at sunrise.”

— *Supplement to the Forty Verses*, 20

*Dhyana*, *samadhi*, *nishta* etc. appear to represent different stages but all have the common aim of not swerving from Self-consciousness. Sri Bhagavan has explained clearly that not forgetting oneself or one's real nature is the aim of all *tapas*. The *sadhana* of enquiry does not need any special equipment as a special spot or fixed time or room etc. The *Vivekachudamani* of Sankara, *Kaivalya Nava-neeitam* and other works stress the idea of not swerving from the Self. Thayumanavar has a beautiful verse on this : “Can this disease of *samsara* go by merely hearing (of the Self), contemplation or clarity of conviction? This falsehood of birth and death will vanish only for him who plunges into *nishta* with vigour.”

*Nishta* therefore means not to swerve from abidance in the Self. It is not sitting in a fixed place for a fixed time and things like that. When one develops the conviction that one is not the body or sense-organs or mind and is clear about being the Self, one should make the best of it, be alert and not get trapped in the doings of the phenomenal world. This is the fruition of ‘Who am I?’ enquiry : Never forget the Self which ever remains full and undivided !

### LIFE ETERNAL

When the heart of Amaterasu-Omikami and the heart of man are one ; this is eternal life.

When the heart of Amaterasu-Omikami and our hearts are undivided, then there is no such thing as death.

When we know that all things are the activity of Heaven then we know neither pain nor care.

One should make the separated-spirit (*bunshin*) of Amaterasu-Omikami (i.e. the human soul) full and not lacking. When the spirit of cheerfulness is weakened then the spirit of depression prevails. Where the spirit of depression prevails there is defilement. Defilement is a withering of the spirit (*kegare wa ki-kare ni te*). It dries up the Spirit of Light.

— *Sayings by Munetada*  
(a Shintoist Prophet).






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## ABHYASA

### (Practice)

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**Devotee.** What is the method of practice?

**Maharshi.** As the Self of a person who tries to attain Self-realisation is not different from him and there is nothing other than or superior to him to be attained by him, Self-realisation being only the realisation of one's own nature, the seeker of liberation realises without doubts or misconceptions his real nature by distinguishing the eternal from the transient, and never swerves from his natural state. This is known as the practice of knowledge. This is the enquiry leading to Self-realisation.

**D.** Can this path of enquiry be followed by all aspirants?

**M.** This is suitable only for ripe souls. The rest should follow different methods according to the state of their minds.

**D.** What are the other methods?

**M.** They are *stuti*, *japa*, *dhyana*, *yoga*, *jnana* etc.

*Stuti* is singing the praises of the Lord with a feeling of great devotion.



*Japa* is uttering the names of the gods or sacred *mantras* like *Om* either mentally or verbally.

*Dhyana*. When one is in *dhyana* the mind does not contact the objects of the senses, and when it is in contact with the objects it is not in *dhyana*. Therefore those who are in this state can observe the vagaries of the mind then and there and by stopping the mind from thinking and fix it in *dhyana*. Perfection in *dhyana* is the state of abiding in the Self.

*Yoga*. The source of breath is the same as that of the mind, therefore the subsidence of either leads to that of the other. The practice of stilling the mind through breath-control is called *yoga*.

Fixing the mind on psychic centres such as the *sahasrara* (lit. the thousand petalled lotus) *yogis* can remain any length of time without awareness of their bodies. As long as this state continues they appear to be immersed in some kind of joy. But when the mind emerges (becomes active again) it resumes its worldly thoughts. It is therefore necessary to train it with the help of practices like *dhyana* whenever it becomes externalised. It will then attain a state in which there is neither subsidence nor emergence.

*Jnana* is stilling the mind and realising the Self through the constant practice of *dhyana* or enquiry (*vichara*). The extinction of the mind is the state in which there is cessation of all efforts. Those who are established in this spontaneous effortless state have realised their true nature, the Self. The term 'silence' (*mouna*) and inaction refer to this state alone.

All practices are followed only with the object of concentrating the mind. As all the mental activities like remembering, forgetting, desiring, hating, attracting, discarding etc., are modifications of the mind they cannot be one's true state. Simple changeless being is one's true nature. Therefore to know the truth of one's being and to *be* it, is known as release from bondage and the destruction of the knot (*granthi nasam*). Until this state of tranquillity of mind is firmly attained the practice of unswerving abidance in the Self and keeping the mind unsoiled by various thoughts is essential for an aspirant.

Those who follow the path of enquiry realise that the mind which remains at the end of the enquiry is Brahman. Those who practise meditation realise that the mind which remains at the end of the meditation is the object of their meditation. As the result is the same in either case it is the duty of aspirants to practise continuously either of these methods till the goal is reached.

D. Why do thoughts of many objects arise in the mind even when there is no contact with external objects?

M. All such thoughts are due to latent tendencies. They appear only to the individual consciousness (*jiva*) which has forgotten its real nature and become externalized. Whenever particular things are perceived, the enquiry 'Who is it that sees them?' should be made; they will then disappear at once.

D. Since the Self is free from the notions of knowledge and ignorance how can it be said to pervade the entire body in the shape of sentience or to impart sentience to the senses?

M. Wise men say that there is a connection between the source of the various psychic nerves and the Self, that this is the knot of the heart, that the connection between the sentient and the insentient will exist until this is cut asunder with the aid of true knowledge, that just as the subtle and invisible force of electricity travels through wires and does many wonderful things, so the Force of the Self also travels through the psychic nerves and pervading the entire body, imparts sentience to the senses, and that if this knot is cut the Self will remain as it always is without any attributes.

D. What is *dhyana* (meditation)?

M. It is abiding as one's Self without swerving in any way from one's real nature and without feeling that one is meditating. As one is not in the least conscious of the different states (waking, dreaming etc.) in this condition the sleep here is also regarded as *dhyana*.

The excellence of the practice (*sadhana*) lies in not giving room for even a single mental concept (*vritti*).

D. What are the rules of conduct which an aspirant should follow?

M. Moderation in food, moderation in sleep and moderation in speech.

\* \* \*

In the question 'Who am I?' by 'I' is meant the ego. Trying to trace it and find its source, we see it has no separate existence but merges in the real 'I'.

DEVOTEE: Should I go on asking 'Who am I?' without answering? Who asks whom? What is 'I', the Self or the ego?

BHAGAVAN: In the enquiry 'Who am I?' the 'I' is the ego. The question really means, what is the source or origin of this ego?

\* \* \*

BHAGAVAN: Yes, any *puja* is good. 'Om Ram' or any other name will do. The point is to keep away all other thoughts except the one thought of OM or Ram or God. All *mantras* or *japa* helps that.

The mind turned inwards is the Self: turned outwards, it becomes the ego and all the world, but the mind does not exist apart from the Self, i.e. it has no independent existence. The self exists without the mind, but never the mind without the Self.

DEVOTEE: When we enquire within 'Who am I?' who enquires?

B.: It is the ego. It is only that which makes the *vichara* also. The Self has no *vichara*. That which makes the enquiry is the ego. The 'I' about which the enquiry is made is also the ego. As a result of the enquiry the ego ceases to exist and only the Self is found to exist.

\* \* \*

BHAGAVAN: Everything we see is changing, always changing. There must be something unchanging as the basis and source of all this. It is the Self.

# Garland of Guru's Sayings

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SRI MURUGANAR

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195.

Destroy the mental *maya* wallowing  
For ever in worldly pleasures ;  
End the flickering ego ;  
Get rid of the *vasanas* of the world  
And into Shiva's being transformed  
Shine as pure awareness.

196.

Do not eat mere arid sand  
In the hot desert of the non-self.  
Dwell in the mansion of the Heart  
Cool, shady, vast, serene  
And feast on the bliss of Self.

197.

You who with mind intent perform  
Penance to reach the feet of the Supreme  
That love may overflow the heart,  
Give up all greed for powers miraculous  
And enjoy the bliss of Freedom  
Which is Shiva eternal.

198.

Subject to no forgetting, no remembrance,  
Held and controlled by power of grace,  
Dwell in the bliss of Shiva's feet,  
The massive light, the truth eternal  
Of pure awareness.

199.

Leftovers is the pupil's  
Unbroken silence as he stands absorbing  
The bright unspoken message of experience  
Transmitted by the guru.

200.

Offering the ego as a meal  
To the silent guru, the primal Self,  
Let the heart drink in as his gift  
The light eternal, the experience  
Of the pure "I am".  
This is eating of leftover.

(Giving up the notion "I am this, that or  
the other", one should accept as *prasada*  
from the guru the experience of pure being.)

201.

The lives divine lived on this earth  
By *jivanmuktas* are the leavings  
Of the gods divine, the gifts of grace  
Supremely pure destroying every sin.

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## The Essence of All Yogas

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**Devotee:** When I am here I am convinced; I am impressed. But when I go out and think of society or of my country and I remember your answer "Know thyself" . . .

**Maharshi:** What can you do for society or your country when you are weak? You must become strong first. But I tell you, Self-attainment is the supreme strength. Do not fear that you will lose strength to act when you become a *Jnani*.

**D.:** I have that fear.

**M.:** You should not have it. If you are destined or chosen to do a particular thing, it will be done.

**D.:** Then should I resign everything? Can I not perform *tapas* and ask God to grant my desires?

**M.:** You can. But there must be some *abhyasa*, some *sadhana* for *tapas* or for your prayers to reach God. When you are in *sadhana* whether it is meditation or prayer, will you be thinking of your desires or of God?

**D.:** If I think of my desires in meditation, it is no *dhyana* at all!

**M.:** Then take it that there is the same *dhyana*, the same *tapas*, the same meditation, for both *sakama* or *nishkama*, whether it is actuated by desire or is disinterested.

Even when your desires are fulfilled, the *tapas* grows. It does not cease. That is the true character of *tapas*. It is the same in the case of *bhakti* also.

Now I put a question to you. When a man with luggage gets into a railway carriage where does he keep it?

**D.:** He keeps it in his compartment or in the luggage-van.

**M.:** So he does not carry it upon his head or on his lap.

**D.:** None but a fool would do so.

**M.:** If you call him a fool who keeps it on his head, a thousand times more foolish it is to bear your burden when you get into the spiritual life, whether it be *vichara-marga*, the path of knowledge or *bhakti-marga*, the path of devotion.

**D.:** But can I throw off all my responsibilities, all my commitments?

**M.:** Now, look at the temple tower, *gopura*. There are many statues in it and there is a big statue, one in each corner. Have you seen them?

**D.:** Yes, I have.

**M.:** Now I tell you this. The big tall tower is supported by those statues.

**D.:** How can that be? What do you mean?

**M.:** I mean when speaking thus, that it is no more foolish than your attitude when you say that you have to carry and are carrying all cares, burdens, responsibilities etc. . . .

The Lord of the Universe carries the whole burden. You imagine you do. You can hand all your burden over to his care. Whatever you have to do you will be made an instrument for doing that at the right time. Do not think you cannot do it unless you have the desire to do it. Desire does not give you the strength to do. The strength is the Lord's.

**D.:** Am I to understand that you are giving me the essence of *karma yoga*?

**M.:** It is the essence of *karma yoga*, of *bhakti yoga*, why, even of *jnana yoga*; for, even though the paths in the beginning may differ, they all eventually lead to this position.

# NETI NETI

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## THE ULTIMATE NEGATION

(Comment on a statement of  
Sri Ramana Maharshi)

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By Wei Wu Wei

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### I

Perhaps only God can deny 'self'?  
Perhaps only God can *negate*,  
Or only as God can I negate  
Phenomenality?

Man says 'Yes', God alone says 'No' (no thing to affirm).  
'Man' is positive, God is negative,  
'Man' is the positive aspect of 'God',  
'God' is the negative aspect of 'man'.

Who is negating phenomenality?  
Can a phenomenon deny what phenomenally it is?  
Only Noumenon could deny phenomenality,  
Only Absolute (wholeness) could deny relativity (division).  
*Only what is can negate what is not!*  
And the relative cannot deny its own relativity.

That is why the recognition of failure must imply 'succession'.  
Because the *recognising is* what is recognising 'failure'.  
And is thereby what is being sought.

*Note: Man cannot deny man,  
Only God can deny man.*



## II

The Maharshi's words imply "Negate every identification with 'body', 'senses' etc."

But this can only be done by what is responsible (by what is doing it), which cannot be 'discarded' — *because* such is what is negating.

But that — 'God', 'Self' — must go also *as a 'that'* (an object): Best riddance of worst rubbish!

*Note :* To Maharshi there could be no difference between positive and negative other than relatively: he answered each question in the manner most likely to be understood, leaving the essential 'jump' from relative to absolute, to be effected when his questioner had reached the top of the 'hundred-foot pole'.

*It is what you cannot discard which is here, and it cannot discard what it is — which is discarding the rest.*

**Devotee :** What is meant by *Neti-Neti*?

**Maharshi :** There is wrong identification of the Self with the body, senses, etc. You proceed to discard these, and that is *Neti*. This can only be done by holding to the one which cannot be discarded. That is *iti* alone.

— *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, no. 366.

## TRUE DELIVERANCE

**Q. :** There is a *sutra* which says that not to perceive anything in terms of being or non-being is true deliverance. What does it mean?

**A. :** When we attain to purity of mind, that is something which can be said to exist. When this happens, our remaining free from any thought of achievement is called not perceiving anything as existent while reaching the state in which no thoughts arise or persist, yet without being conscious of their

absence, is called not perceiving anything as non-existent. So it is written: 'Not to perceive anything in terms of being and non-being' etc. The *Surangama Sutra* says: 'Perception employed as a base for building up positive concepts is the origin of all ignorance (*avidya*); perception that there is nothing to perceive — that is *Nirvana*, also known as deliverance.

— From the *Zen Teaching of Hui Hai*.



## SRI ARUNACHALA'S WORSHIP DIVINE (The Halo of Arunachala)

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By Madguni Shambhu Bhat

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**I**T was one of the most auspicious Fridays that ever dawned. The full moon, in a very clear sky, was passing through the constellation *Ardra* (the hunter) which according to the scriptures, is Siva Himself, and the Solar month was *Dhanu*, sacred to Jupiter (Guru).

As midnight approached with the dawning of the New Year 1972, a clear-cut snow-white screen of an unbroken cloud appeared behind (i.e. on the northern side of the sky) the Arunachala peak and its side range (East-West of hills) thick and broad, standing above the peak as well as on the

sides, like a silk curtain made to order. I was struck with its grandeur and I was reveling in its natural beauty; I was more elated to find the Great Bear with its seven stars (*Sapta Rishis*) also watching the *puja* function from the heavens on the Eastern flank of the Arunachala peak, on which the Moon was pouring her nectar-like milky rays in full devotion, as if to justify the attribute of Arunachala Siva as *Chandrasekhara* (Siva bearing the Crescent Moon on his forehead). This divine scene lasted for about three hours past midnight on the advent of the New Year 1972. Oh, Glory to the Year!

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## PRAYER BEFORE STUDYING

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By **Kabbalah**

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**M**ASTER OF ALL WORLDS, Supreme L-rd, merciful and forgiving Father, we humbly thank You, O L-rd our G-d and the G-d of our fathers, for having brought us near to Your *Torah* and Your Holy Service, and for having given us a share in the mysteries of Your holy *Torah*. We are amazed that so unworthy as we are given such grace!

We ask You — forgive all our sins so that they should not separate us from You.

Affix in our hearts the fear and the love of You.

Open our unworthy hearts to the mysteries of Your *Torah*.

May this study give joy to You as did the sacred incense in the days of old! Bathe us — all of the aspects of our souls — in the light of the source of our souls.

Let a radiance shine upon us from those of Your holy servants through whom You revealed these words in the world. Let their merit, and the merit of their fathers, and the merit of their learning, simplicity and holiness come to our aid in this study that we be not hurt by it in any way. Let their merit enlighten our eyes in this that we learn. With King David, the joyful singer of Israel, we pray: *Open my eyes and let me see the wonders in Your Torah!*

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart find favour before You, O L-rd, my Rock and my Redeemer!

For the L-rd will give wisdom; knowledge and understanding are from His mouth!

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# VICHARA

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By G. N. Daley

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**VICHARA**, the enquiry "Who am I?", is the simplest, the quickest and the most direct path from ego-consciousness to soul Awareness. The simple act of enquiring "Who am I?" will in time procure for the enquirer a glimpse of true timeless Being which is the natural state of Awareness, and it will result in each enquiry becoming an automatic act of Self recollection. Therefore it is good policy and practice to ask "Who am I?" frequently and earnestly until it becomes one continuous *sadhana*. The enquiry is especially needful after having been swamped by body-mind mechanisms or the attractions or involvements of the world. In the beginning Self recollection will only be occasional and brief but each time it happens the equanimity of Awareness will impart a measure of calmness and stillness to the vehicles, body and mind. This is the real beginning of detachment from ego and the world; it is the beginning of a process which will continue until there is true Enlightenment. The Direct Path is the whole and complete way from the very beginning of the accelerating process of detaching consciousness from its vehicles, and it is soon seen, with the mind at first, that body and mind are impermanent variables and that consciousness is the true spirit, the changeless immortal life. When awareness sees this as direct experience the ego and the ephemeral things of earth begin to lose their flavour. These changing attitudes foreshadow rebirth, the "birth" of conscious-

ness in its "new" body, the soul, or to be more correct the birth of a soul within the consciousness of a man. Jesus said that a man must lose himself in order to find his true Self, and in this manner through the practice of this enquiry are these words fulfilled. The state of soul Awareness is being at one with God, as, "I and my Father are one."

Naturally the ego will for a long time want to go its own way, and this it will most certainly do many times, perhaps often and for long periods, in fact at times it may be seen that there will be no end to it. The mechanism, the habits, the desires and attachments which have been built into the ego over many lives, are strong and vigorous and seem to have a life of their own. Nevertheless soul Awareness is so very sweet that ego and all these other things begin to lose their savour, and consciousness returns more and more frequently and for longer periods of time to the timeless state of soul Awareness where it resides untroubled by the ever changing content of the dream of world appearance. Please then if you are not already practising *Vichara* do begin this enquiry and continue with it until there is a first glimpse of Realization; you will then continue more ardently in order that this first glimpse may eventually become a permanent state. Bhagavan said, "Be yourself and nothing more." How can anyone Be that Self when they are constantly being other things, being them by identification and attachment instead of *just Being*?




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By Roda MacIver

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## How I Came to Bhagavan

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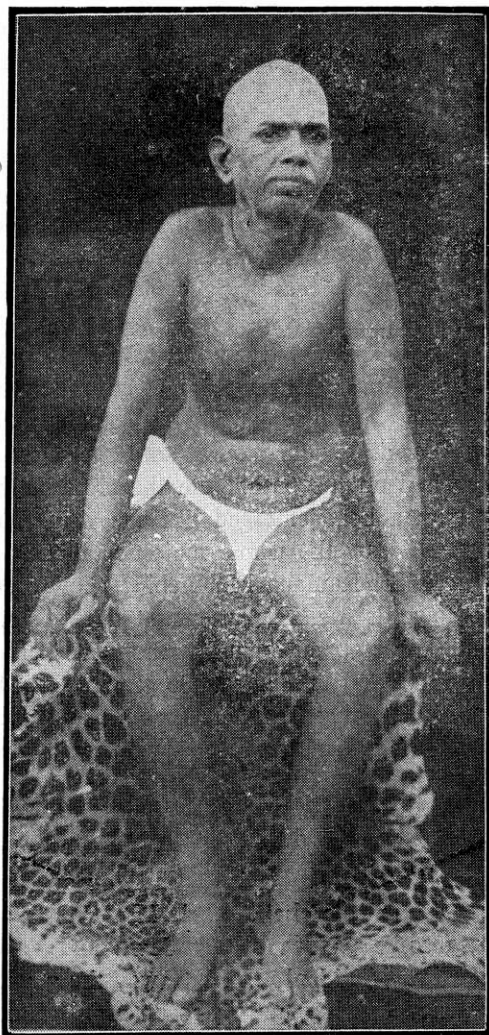
I HEARD about Sri Bhagavan for the first time in 1939 from a friend who showed me His photograph. I was very much struck by His eyes and wished to go and see Him. My desire to go to Tiruvannamalai to Sri Bhagavan's abode could not be fulfilled until 1942. A friend, who had just finished building a house in Tiruvannamalai invited me to stay with her. I eagerly accepted the invitation. When I arrived I was indisposed for a few days and could not go to the ashram. I heard that Sri Bhagavan was in the habit of going for a walk on the Hill of Arunachala every day at regular hours, so I went there and waited on the path. On the crest of the hilly path a head emerged like the rising sun and then I saw the whole majestic tall figure, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi! Slowly He came towards me, His attendant a few steps behind. He stopped for a few moments before me, smiling and looking at me graciously. My heart was beating fast and I could not utter a word. I cannot describe how I felt really. I experienced a coolness.

During the next two years I was visiting the Ashram constantly. Then in 1944 one day I went into the hall. Sri Bhagavan was reading some papers. I sat down and looked at Him. Suddenly He put away the papers and turned His luminous eyes on me. I could not stand His gaze so I closed my eyes, tears streaming down my face. When I opened my eyes He was still looking at me. My heart was flooded with joy and an inner calmness! Later I went to see a friend of mine — Sri Munagala Venkataramiah,<sup>1</sup> and told him in detail about this occurrence in the hall. He said that I was very fortunate to have received initiation from Sri Bhagavan. There was no doubt about it!

Next morning when I was in the hall somebody asked Sri Bhagavan what was the use

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<sup>1</sup> Later known as Sri Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi, the author of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* and a few other books.



of sitting before Him. Does He give initiation? Sri Bhagavan replied that initiation can be given in three ways: by silence, by look and by touch. When saying "by look" He looked at me. Then I remembered what I was told the day before about my experience and had no doubt that I had received initiation from Sri Bhagavan, my most revered Master!

After a month's stay I returned to Bombay, and there was a complete change in my life. Worldly pleasures ceased to attract me and I wanted to be alone as much as possible. I

## The Eternal State

*Dhyana* and *samadhi* are essential to the search for the sacred knowledge of the Buddhas; for without these the thoughts remain in tumult and the roots of goodness suffer damage. . . .

By *samadhi* you withdraw your minds from their surroundings thereby making them impervious to the eight winds, that is to say, impervious to gain and loss, calumny and eulogy, praise and blame, sorrow and joy. By concentrating in this way even ordinary people may enter the state of Buddhahood. When wrong thinking ceases that is *dhyana*; when you sit contemplating your original nature, that is *samadhi*, for indeed that original nature is your eternal mind.

decided to leave Bombay and settle down in Tiruvannamalai but did not know where to stay. It was difficult in those days to get accommodation but I knew Sri Bhagavan was guiding me and so I did not worry much. He would arrange everything. And it so happened that two days before leaving Bombay I met my husband to be. He told me to go and stay in his house in Tiruvannamalai and so I left happily. Soon after, with Sri Bhagavan's blessings, we got married and this house became my permanent home.

By Bhagavan's grace I am now permanently settled here and do not intend to leave. He still helps and guides me as before and often hears my prayers. His Presence now is even more powerful than when He was in the physical body.

My love for Sri Bhagavan sustains me and is of greatest importance in my life!

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# FAITH

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By M. M. V.

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“Those who constrained, perplexed, frustrated  
By dire dilemmas still despair not  
But turn towards our Royal Master  
Are by such devotion straight converted  
Into Shiva's radiant goodness.”

— SRI MURUGANAR

“**S**TILL despair not, but turn towards our Royal Master” is the crux of the matter, a test of true faith!

In a previous article entitled “The Path of Devotion” (see p. 104 of our April 1971 issue). I had attempted to expound that devotion is not contradictory to *jnana*, and that the two paths — both approved of by Bhagavan — converge into one integral Realisation. “There should be One alone, whether we call it God or Self”, said Bhagavan. The ego must be surrendered, whether burnt through *jnana* or melted through *bhakti*.

True faith is the crucible on the path of *bhakti*. Such faith is well described by that great devotee, Sri Krishna Prem, as “the naked smokeless flame that burns in the secret recesses of the heart”. For a devotee of such faith he testifies to “His Light knelling down the doom of centuries of darkness”.

The milk-and-water faith with which many of us deceive ourselves — a mere mental or wishful belief — cannot deliver the goods. Such so-called faith cracks in moments of the least trial. True faith is the bedrock of *saranagati* or surrender. If one who thinks he has surrendered himself to the Lord is still

not immune from fear or anxiety, it only betrays the shallowness of his faith in the Lord. Bhagavan himself has said, “God bears all burdens. . . . Knowing that the train carries all the load, why should we, travelling therein, suffer by carrying our small bundles on our heads instead of leaving it on the train and being happy?”

Some devotees lose patience because they do not see prompt results. That also is a symptom of egoistic sight. Swami Ramdas has said: “In some cases, although outwardly no change is visible, Grace works. You want to break a stone. Suppose, after twenty blows it breaks. After giving a blow if you look at it, there is apparently no change. But the molecules inside the stone are affected. Every blow does its work, and is necessary for the breaking of the stone at the twentieth blow.” To a devotee who protested against his making little spiritual progress, though he had adopted the path of ‘self-surrender’, Bhagavan remarked: “If you have surrendered yourself to the Master, who are you to measure whether you are making spiritual progress or not? Leave that to the Master.” He also observed that the Sad-Guru works from within. Indeed, the true devotee, who has the least vision of the power and greatness of the Lord, or the Sad-Guru in whose form He appears, looks up to no one else but the Lord for his liberation from fear and want, and is absolutely confident of his true well-being being assured under His protection. Indeed, as he realises that his Lord is all in all, he no longer asks Him for anything else but Himself. For He alone is.

Let us conclude with another few lines of Sri Muruganar, with whose verse this short article started:

“Turn your eyes, your thoughts  
Towards those sovereign Feet  
.....  
Be sure, He will not let  
Those who trust Him languish.”

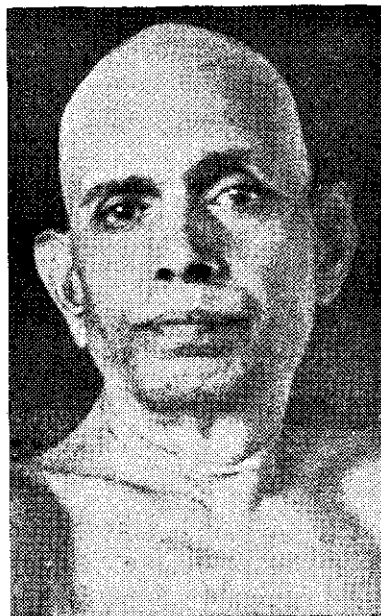


# How Sri Bhagavan Blazed A Trail on the Great Path

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By R. Sadasiva Aiyar

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**T**HE caption of this article needs elucidation. Showing a far easier way on a difficult terrain is from the viewpoint of the *sadhaka*, not of the *jnani*, who is not other than *Brahman*. Sri Bhagavan did not will anything, mind being stilled in him. He did not set up as a Guru, nor did he regard any as a disciple.<sup>1</sup> He was the channel of the Supreme Power. It all happened so. But, here, we are viewing it from the angle of the seekers; who, in spite of priceless heritage from the past — from the *Upanishads* to the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa* — had been badgered with doubts and difficulties.

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One needs the help of a master before setting out on the Quest and later. If it is true that the Quest itself involves problems, it is equally true that Sri Bhagavan has given simple but powerful aids for their solution, which are discussed here by the writer.

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Vedantic literature apart, neophytes all through the centuries generally approached a 'knower of Brahman' for practical instruction, who illuminated the path, now by touch,

<sup>1</sup> See *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 238.

now by word, now by glance, and again, in Silence. But this resource is out of the question in our day. *Jnanis* being rare in any age, are most so in ours. As for the Vedantic scriptures, they are all sublime, and often supremely elevating. Toilers on the path were in the plight of Everest-climbers inching along an icefall riven with crevices.

Ancient seers declare with one voice that when the mind is subdued the goal is reached. Brahman, that is beyond the world of appearance, shines in us as the Self. The truth that we are the Self is veiled by the mind, the power born of the Self, but clouding it. Mind is *Maya*. When the close connection between mind and life became clear, there emerged the two great paths of *Yoga* and *Jnana*, the former with its technique of mind-control through regulation of breathing, and the latter with the four *sadhanas* (*Sadhana Chatusthaya*)<sup>2</sup> to help achieve the elimination of thoughts as the way to Peace and Bliss.

The most formidable hurdle for aspirants, with all their grounding in mystic scriptures, was the achieving of mindlessness with awareness. Nothing is so tricky as the mind, its antics being inexhaustible. When one thought is driven out by the front door, another sneaks in by the back door, before we are aware of it. Presently a train of thoughts, related and unrelated, rise up and tumble one over the other, faster than the speed of light. To stop them is a Sisyphean task. Even such an adept as Thayumanavar heaves a sigh in the attempt when he says: "One can tame an elephant in rut, walk on water, make live coals one's seat, acquire the miraculous power of discarding one's body (finally or for a spell) and entering into another form from which life has departed;<sup>3</sup> but most hard it is to still the mind." After doing *mantra-sadhana* of all kinds for many years, and carrying it to the one-crore mark, Kavyakantha Ganapathy Muni was brought to an impasse, and had to learn the meaning of *tapas* from the young

Swami at the Virupaksha cave (in 1907). After gazing at him for fifteen minutes, the Swami, as our readers know, said in memorable words: "If one watches whence the notion of 'I' springs, the mind will be absorbed into that. That is *tapas*. If a *mantra* is repeated and attention directed to the source whence the *mantra*-sound is produced,<sup>4</sup> the mind will be absorbed in that. That is *tapas*." Already, five years before, the Swami then observing *mauna*, had imparted to Sivaprakasam Pillai, as written answers to his questions, the most effective method of slaying the army of thoughts: "As each thought arises, ask 'To whom does this thought arise?' The answer will be 'to me'; asking then who that 'me' is (i.e. that 'I'), the thought will slink away. With the same question strike down each rising thought and the mind will return to its source, the Heart, where the Self shines as 'I-I'. By persistent practice, the mind will merge in its source. So will the ego, for the ego is the same as mind.<sup>5</sup> . . . As *vasanas* are but thoughts they too will vanish. . . . As God Omnipotent masterminds all things and all happenings, we must leave all our anxieties to Him. He who bears the burden of the Cosmos, can He not bear our tiny packet? Self-inquiry and Self-surrender, both result in the extinction of the 'I', and lead to Realization." The imparting of the secret of mind-control to Sivaprakasam Pillai is surely an epoch-making event in man's

<sup>2</sup> *Sadhana Chatusthaya* :

- (i) Discrimination between the Real and the unreal (*viveka*);
- (ii) Giving up the desire for pleasures (*vairagya*);
- (iii) Six qualifications needed for the practice of *samadhi*: tranquillity, self-control, withdrawal, forbearance, faith, and concentration.
- (iv) Intense yearning for Liberation.

<sup>3</sup> Like Sankara and the sage who became Hastamalaka (in *Sankara Vijaya*); and others like Tirumular.

<sup>4</sup> Heard by the inner, not by the outer ear. See B. V. Narasimha Swami's *Self Realisation*, p. 90.

<sup>5</sup> *viddhyaham manah* — *Upadesha Sarah*.

Spiritual Odyssey. The *Vichara* 'Who am I?' is not the same as that enjoined in Vedantic literature — reflection about the why and wherefore of this shadow-show of existence, about the 'dream-stuff' and perilous estate called 'life', which 'offers to deny' — without which reflection, discrimination (*nityānitya-viveka*) and wisdom cannot dawn. The *Annāpurna Upanishad* bids us inquire into the nature of our inward being :

"Who am I? How did this world come about? What is it? How did death and birth come to be? Thus inquire within yourself. Great will be your gain thereby."

Those who find Self-inquiry and Self-surrender a little difficult may practise *pranayama*. The mental quiescence it brings about is, however, temporary — thoughts springing up as exercise stops. It is only a stepping-stone to the further stages of *pratyahara*,<sup>6</sup> *dharana*,<sup>7</sup> *dhyana*<sup>8</sup> and *samadhi*,<sup>9</sup> all of which, taken together have as their aim that very mind-control directly induced by Self-inquiry. Over the centuries *pranayama*, which is a link in the chain of *Ashtanga Yoga*, usurped a place of importance out of all proportion to its purpose, the means being made the end.

Sri Bhagavan cleared all the thickets that had overrun the path of Self-Realization. Things abstruse that had remained unexplained in books were for the first time explained by him in the simplest manner, that went to the heart of the matter, wooing the mind to reflection and further to translation into practice. Even such an axiomatic thing as the mind being but a name given to thoughts is not known to learned psychologists. The 'I'-thought emerges first before all others. Where is that 'I'? Has it an actual existence anywhere in our psycho-physical make-up? A little thought is enough to tell us that it is a mere figment. "If one traces it (the 'I'-thought) to its matrix, the ego would vanish like a ghost conjured up in the dark."

*The finding of a Guru and  
kindred problems*

From very ancient times there has been the tradition of novices seeking a *Guru* for instruction or initiation before setting out on the Quest. In the *Brihadaranyaka*, a long succession of teachers and pupils is given after one chapter, and later comes another bead-roll. In all Upanishads spiritual or mystic truths are set forth as expounded by a teacher to a pupil. In the *Gita*, Sri Krishna bids Arjuna in an early chapter to learn truths from seers, with deep reverence and by intelligent questioning after rendering them service. The *Kathopanishad* says that there is no arriving at the Goal, "unless taught by another who knows Him as himself". Sankara himself found his teacher, Govinda, on the banks of the Narmada. Jnanadev had his brother, Nivrittinatha, for his Guru; several of the chapters of the *Jnaneswari* beginning with adoration to him, invoke his Grace. Kabir stretched himself on one of the steps of the river-ghat, so that Ramanand's foot might but touch him on returning from his bath; and he took that saint's startled cry 'Hare Ram' as *upadesa*. Many ardent spirits travelled far in search of a teacher. Sometimes he sought the pupil, as happened in the case of the 17th century woman-saint, Avadai Akka,<sup>10</sup> whose inspired songs are even today on the lips of many in those parts of South India. Sri Bhagavan's mother used to sing them.<sup>11</sup> Once, when the saint was absorbed in her *japa*, the great sage and scholar Sridhara Venkatesa (otherwise known as Ayyawal), then on his travels, upon meeting her imparted to her the Advaitic truth.

Who could dispel the mist on the minds of seekers but the Master of all Masters, the

<sup>6</sup> Withdrawal of the senses from objectivity.

<sup>7</sup> Fixing the mind (one of the eight stages of Raja Yoga).

<sup>8</sup> Meditation or contemplation.

<sup>9</sup> Perfect Poise.

<sup>10</sup> Of Shencottah (Tirunelveli Dt., Madras State.)

<sup>11</sup> One is given in *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p. 104.

Supreme Being itself in human form? The words of such a Master alone would carry conviction, not of any other. All doubts vanished when they heard from him: "The Master is within; meditation is meant to remove the wrong idea that He is outside. If He be a stranger whom you await, He is bound to disappear. What is the use of a transient being like that? As long as you think you are the body, so long the Master without is also necessary, and He will appear as with a body. When the wrong identification of oneself with the body ceases, the Master will be found as none other than the Self." "But the Guru who is God incarnate works from within, . . . guides him on the right path until he realizes the Self within. You will meet your Master, as he himself will be seeking you." As the entire universe is in the Self, how can you move away from the Master who is your very Self? <sup>12</sup> When he told them that it was the Guru within them that took shape as the external Guru, I wonder whether there was even one among the scores and scores seeking light on the question who did not feel that the all-radiant form from which the words came was the very Guru they had been searching for. Merely to look on that form was to have all doubts solved without the aid of words. His silence is the most eloquent speech I have ever heard.

But there were other bees in the bonnet of seekers: the notion, for instance, that one could not start on a *mantra japa* unless given *upadesa* by one entitled to give it. When falls a shaft of Heavenly sunshine all haze rolls away: "The *mantra* is the person's real nature. That is also the state of Realization." <sup>13</sup>

Aids to meditation, like solitude and *asana* (seat and posture), have often claimed undue attention. Solitude, he pointed out, means that serenity should reign in the mind; one may carry on *sadhana* anywhere, whether far from the madding crowd or in the bustle of cities. How can the woods help the mind

that is tossing about? "Even when engaged outwardly, one can be centred in the Self." The pot-dancer in S. India, as she makes her whirling evolutions, with the pot filled all but to the brim, on her head, has her inmost attention fixed on it all the while. As for *asana*, one can have any easy posture conducive to concentration. "It is nothing but abidance in the Self."

All books, devotional and gnostic, have told us that the Heart is Brahman,<sup>14</sup> that it is *Brahmapurā*, that God resides in the lotus of the Heart. But where is it located? How could it be the blood-propelling organ in the thorax? Thousands must have been puzzled. But it was Sri Bhagavan who, virtually for the first time,<sup>15</sup> cleared this great doubt showing that it is in the right chest where the notion of 'I' springs — a matter of no small consequence in meditation. "*Brahmacharya*", he explained, "is constant dwelling on the Brahman. *Samadhi* is our own essential nature; so is *dhyana*; Heart is another name for the Self. *Kundalini* is the life-current. All the six centres are in the Heart. *Grace is another name for God. It is always in you.* We are never anything but the Self. If you are free from thoughts, and yet are aware, you are that perfect Being." We have here the New Testament of Self-Realization. He took us from the letter to the spirit, from outer crust to inner significance.

"*Vairagya* (non-attachment) and *jnana*," said Sankara, "are the two wings, both indis-

<sup>12</sup> To make this profound truth take hold in the mind, Sri Bhagavan rendered Sankara's famous *Dakshinamurti Ashtakam* into Tamil stanzas whose grandeur and beauty match the original. The first four verses tell us that the Supreme Spirit behind the Cosmos shines as the Guru in the heart of every devout contemplator; the second four show that the Self in every one seeking *jnana* is none other than the Primordial Guru who destroys the delusion in him and restores him to his real nature.

<sup>13</sup> All sentences in quotation marks, when not acknowledged, are Sri Bhagavan's.

<sup>14</sup> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, V, 3. 1.

<sup>15</sup> The *Yoga Vasishtha* says that the *samvid hrdaya* is on the right.

pensable, for the soul to soar to its high mansion of Liberation.”<sup>16</sup> The two, said Sri Bhagavan, are but the obverse and reverse of the same thing; *Vairagya* comes by withdrawing every thought from the ephemeral, and *jnana* by fixing it on the eternal. It implies the burning up of all *vasanas* (good and bad) — the inborn, in-built tendencies that make a man identify himself with his body, think that he is the doer, harbour notions of ‘me’ and ‘mine’, seek delight in sense-objects; good ones that draw him to such things as science, scholarship, loving service. One may engage oneself in these, giving up the idea of ‘doership’. *Nishkama karma* always purifies the mind. In trying to fight impure *vasanas* directly, one tends to dwell on them all the more, which only intensifies their hold. By sustained Self-inquiry, however,<sup>17</sup> every trace of *vasanas* will wear away. *Meta-noia* is turning towards the Light, not looking back.

We see, too, the extinction of the ego in some great scientists who lost themselves in the sublimity, beauty and wonder of the phenomenal world. In the nine hundred odd pages of Mme. Curie’s book on radioactivity there is no such sentence as ‘I found’ or ‘I discovered’. It is all in the passive voice. Again, in vain does one search for a trace of *ahamkara* in the lives of the negro saint-scientist G. Washington Carver — “to whom God showed things” — or Einstein, or Eddington. “He who does not feel the wonder and mystery of the Universe,” said Einstein, “is as good as dead, a snuffed-out candle.” But the Universe and its unspeakable beauty and wonder is but a pale reflection of the Self.

To resume, the *Ramana Marga* takes within its ambit also *Bhakti* and *Karma Yoga*. It takes into account forms and methods of approach suited to all aspirants, whatever their religion, level and temperament.<sup>18</sup> External worship, *japa*, meditation on the form of the *ishtadevata* or Guru, the reading of lauds (*stotras*), and *satsanga* (including

the reading of spiritual literature, the lives, writings and utterances of saints) all have their place, and one can choose the method or methods suited to one’s degree of maturity and temperament.

#### *Ramana Sadhana and worldly activity*

The secularized mind views worldly activity (including humanitarian work) and *sadhana* as antithetical, taking an either-or attitude; our supreme concern is kept on the periphery of interests. But when inner *japa* becomes subconscious, it cannot disturb concentration on, say, scientific or technological research, or organizing an industrial plant. Only one must not think, “I do this”, or “I do that”. The ‘I’-thought should not intervene at any moment. One can throw all one’s worries and anxieties on God. Self-surrender is not refraining from activities. We can always keep in mind that we are not the body. Self-inquiry also comes easy.

Self-realization is not self-centredness. The *Brihadaranyaka*<sup>19</sup> declares: “Whosoever has found and awakened to the Self — he is the Maker of the Universe, his is the world, why, he is the world itself.” Says the *Chandogya*: “The Self is the entire Universe. It is the source of all power, all knowledge, all happiness.”<sup>20</sup> The intense activity of the *jnani*

<sup>16</sup> *Vivekachudamani*, 376.

<sup>17</sup> Jacob Boehme says that by casting off all “which callest ‘I’ or ‘thyself’, all thy evil propensities will grow weak, faint and ready to die; and then thou wilt sink down again into that one thing, from which thou art originally sprung.”

— *Discourse Between Two Souls*.

<sup>18</sup> William Sheldon classifies the pattern of human temperament into three: cerebrotonics, viscerotonics and somatotonics (which correspond to the three types of physiological constitution: the ectomorphic, endomorphic and mesomorphic). The three patterns blend in various proportions. In the intellectuals cerebrotonia predominates; in the emotional, viscerotonia; in the muscularly active, somatonia. *Jnana marga* is suited to the first type, *bhakti* to the second and *karma* to the third. See Aldous Huxley’s *Perennial Philosophy*, p. 171-72.

<sup>19</sup> IV, 4.12.

<sup>20</sup> VII, 26, 1 & 2.

cannot be grasped by the mind; his apparent stillness is like that of a top spinning incredibly fast. The saint, as Bhagavan reminded devotees, helps the whole of humanity, unknown to it. "Realization of the Self is the greatest help that can be rendered to it."

Beyond words is the silent communication, with depth unplumbed and power incalculable. The *Turiya* state embraces the noumenal as well as the phenomenal. Did he not describe vividly to the Christian couple (who, having scrapped up their savings, voyaged from Peru for his *darshan*) — the marble-paved beach, with unpaved strips flanked by coconut trees, of their little town? <sup>21</sup> While being introverted, the least thing going amiss in a remote corner of the hall would draw his notice.

His life, every little movement and action of his, is a study in the art of Holy Living — 'mind' being absent. Wasn't he Arunachala Himself? Bhagavan Ramana's compassion — strictly not compassion, seeing that there were no 'others' for him — comprehended all living things. "It is enough if news of any distress falls on these ears," he told T. S. Rajagopala Iyer, who was attendant as well as librarian at the Ashram for some years. His nearness was enough to plunge a great many in *samadhi*. An indescribable something — call it Peace, call it Bliss — permeated and seized every fibre of one's being in his presence. Hard indeed it was to tear oneself from him. So have thousands found it.

Pondering over Bhagavan Ramana's life and teachings, one loses oneself as the salt-doll (of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa's simile) did in the sea, when it went to measure it with theodolite, sextant and what-not; so infinitely does he outsoar all human thought. May His Light engulf the world!

<sup>21</sup> Just to convince them that they could have remembered him from their own home and needed not to have undertaken that arduous voyage. (Copied from T. K. Sundaresa Iyer's note-book in 1959 and summarized here.)

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## The Saviour

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By Natanananda

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SOMETIMES the Lord Himself appears as *guru*, as He did of yore in the form of Dakshinamurti and in our own age in the person of Sri Ramana, who too taught through silence. On one occasion, however, Bhagavan gave a *mantra* direct to a devotee. And this was as extraordinary as it was touching since the recipient was an 'untouchable' and illiterate!

Not daring to enter the Hall or speak to Bhagavan, this humble devotee had put on a string round his neck a picture of Bhagavan which he used to hold in his hand and gaze at as he circumambulated the Ashram. One day, as he neared the entrance gate of the Hall, he saw Bhagavan coming out, and fell prostrate at His feet. Bhagavan stopped and the devotee prayed with tears in his eyes: "Save me!" Bhagavan looked with great compassion on the poor man who obviously would not be able to meditate or follow a ritualistic path of worship, and uttered the words: "Go on saying, 'Siva, Siva'. That will save you."

As a rule Bhagavan advised seekers to go beyond *puja* and *japa*, ritual and *mantra*, and to trace it all back to the source. But on this occasion he made a grand exception, and taught a simple *mantra* straight and clear. And what he taught was a *mantra* highly praised by masters, like Tirumular and Thayumanavar, as it spells out and stands for the oneness of 'Si' and 'va', of *Brahman* and *jiva*, of Being and Awareness.

— from *Ramana Darshan*.

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# FROM DEATH TO IMMORTALITY

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By Sunya

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“Lead us from the unreal to the Real!  
Lead us from darkness to the Light!  
Lead us from death to Immortality!”

**T**HIS Upanishadic prayer denotes a *satvic* mood and attitude in us — egojis — says Wuji, if we have an ego-humble urge to pray for our needs, rather than for our wants, desires or lust-fulfillments. But are we, as consciousness, starkly sincere, single-minded and mature to court such Reality-modes of awareness, which implies the shedding of ego-consciousness, like a serpent shedding its slough or as dead tissues dropping off from living flesh, or living Spirit? It implies the death of egoji, or duality-consciousness, into integral Self-awareness. In the above prayer-mood there is an ego-humble awareness, that we, as consciousness, are unreal, in darkness and a kind of death-state, floundering in bewildering doubts and perplexities, and that a rebirth, or awakening, is due or at least desirable.

St. Paul, or Saul of Tarsus asks, “Who will deliver me from the body of this death?” Perhaps this was before he could say: “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me”, though there is still duality-mode in the naughty word-symbols: I-, me- and mine-

Christ spoke of “The quick and the dead” among the so-called living. Very few egojis seem to be quickened into integral awakening or conscious Self-awareness. “Ye must be born again into Spirit or Truth-Awareness (or integral Self-awareness). Art thou a Sage in Israel, Nikodemus, and unaware of this crucial and esoteric gospel-truth? Thou fool: that which thou soweth doth not live, or fructify, unless it dieth.” Death is the secret of Life and not the opposite. Life, Self, or Godhead, has no complementary opposite, while birth and death are opposites, constantly alternating in this Life-play.

“Unless a grain of wheat falleth into the earth and dieth . . .” (as a grain). This rebirth, this transformation, translation, transmutation and finally transfiguration, are discernable in the *Maya-Lila* Self-interplay. So many good Christians seem to emphasize the ego-pitiful ego-crucifixion, and get stuck there, while there is the resurrection “Christ is risen” in our conscious awareness, and then follows the transfiguration and transubstantiation into other modes of dimensions and values. So the dis-eased and unreal mind, or ego-consciousness must ‘die’ — fade and vanish — for Spiritual consciousness, pure Self-awareness, to manifest or to be aware

integrally, also in actual play and interplay : The Real is also in the actual and ever-changing forms and phenomena.

“From the unreal lead us to the Real” — Yes, egojis, but such aim or goal implies your ‘death’. Your mature ability to say Yes to this annihilation — or this awareness of your own illusoriness. Only the Eternal is Real enough, integrally whole, and you are not very real. Uma Devi had visions of Shivaji, and his Shaktis, and she asked Ramana Maharshi : Are these visions, apparitions and theophanies — a Reality ?” He answered briefly : “They are as real as you are.” A Bible-truth says : “He (or She) who ‘sees’

Jehovah dies.” Inevitably so, if it is a Real, integral *darshan*, *Swa-darshan* or Theophany. The sense of duality and of ego-identity fades and vanishes. So Mohammed could advise : “Die before ye die !”

“From death lead us to Immortality” — Yes, but are you mature, ready and able to endure a salutary death, dear egojis ? It is ego-consciousness that is the unreal, the darkness, the deathly mode of consciousness. Few egojis seem to be quickened for mature, abiding awakening. “Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting.” We forget our Self, our Real state of Immortality.

## The Messenger

*By K. Forrer*

*“I came from the Father, and am come into the world :  
again I leave the world and go unto the Father, for my Father  
is greater than I.”*

(ST. JOHN, XVI.28, XIV.28)

‘I’ as the Messenger, who is Universal Consciousness taking a form enters the world in order to address the ‘I’ of all who are clothed in forms. ‘I’ speaks to ‘I’ so that the greater shall absorb the lesser, leaving but the Father who is the Self of all.

Then alone has the Message been completed, then there is but One alone since the world is never more seen apart from Self.

While in ignorance the Universal ‘I’ as Messenger is seen as having form.

Since form is limited by nature, that which is shown by means of form appears to bow to limitations.

So that we should be free from such error, Jesus says, ‘the Father is greater than I’ meaning : Pure Consciousness, from the point of view of unenlightened existence is greater than its formal manifestation though in essence the same.

To shed the ego then, which depends upon the world of forms for its existence, is verily transcending limitations.

There, dissolved in the Sea of undifferentiated, boundless Bliss, ‘I and the Father are ONE’.



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THERESA  
OF  
AVILA

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A MYSTIC

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*By Gladys de Meuter*

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ON the 28th March 1515, Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada was born in Avila, Spain.

The possessor of a warm, attractive personality, Teresa of Jesus as she is sometimes called, entered the Carmelites where she employed her vigour, dynamic energy and determination to restore spiritual beauty to an order grown lax and degenerated. Teresa felt this to be her duty, a divine mission which she recognized and attempted to accomplish within the limits of her powers.

This reform was no easy task, and, to Madre Teresa's joy, a young man, destined to become known as one of the great mystic-poets of Spain, St. John of the Cross, came to aid her in this work. They formed a unique combination and it is together that their writings should be studied. John of the Cross is the brilliant, keen and analytical mind which gives in lucid, concise terms a profound description of the 'inner life', whereas the writings of Teresa of Avila reflect the intui-

tive and non-reasoning aspect of the 'Way' leading to Beatific Unity. Both saints were mystics, and have contributed in masterly fashion to the enrichment of 'mystical' literature.

The purified and refined intellect of St. John of the Cross, allied to the warm, tender heart-quality of St. Teresa of Avila provides a 'whole' which greatly enhances the truth-seeker's understanding of the inner stirring of the soul, its pilgrimage and attainment.

Some criticism has been levelled at Madre Teresa's writing in which it is asserted that they reveal a lack of intellectuality which detracts from their worth. A true assessment of Madre Teresa's works however, can only be made when those of St. John of the Cross are studied in conjunction with her own. There will then emerge a spiritual tableau of rare beauty, drawn with exquisite care and detail.

Madre Teresa did not spare herself in her efforts to combat the apathy, intolerance and belligerence which she met among the ecclesiastical authorities. Undaunted, she pitted all the resources at her command and waged a determined battle to reform the Carmelite Order. The story of her struggles, the tiring journeyings over dangerous terrain in order to execute her self-imposed task, the frustrations encountered, the anguish and disappointments when her efforts appeared to be futile and fruitless; these must remain in the background as shadow-pictures of a great personality. In the foreground looms her voluminous writings, the greatest of which is 'The Interior Castle'. This work deals with the purgation of the soul as it undergoes the stages of purification termed the 'seven mansions', and the soul's ultimate ecstasy experienced in divine union.

Teresa of Avila does not seek to be regarded as clever or wise; her experiences are recounted with transparent honesty and intense

sincerity. They are the true intimate autobiography of a remarkable soul. She died in 1582.

From the 'Life' of St. Teresa are taken the following gleanings :

#### SIMILITUDE OF A WATERED GARDEN

The beginner should take himself to be as one preparing to set out a garden, in most unfruitful soil and in which there are many weeds; a garden in which Our Lord is to delight. His Majesty removes the weeds and will replace them with good plants. Let us assume that this has already been done—that a soul wishing to practise prayer has already begun to do so. With the help of God, we now have to be capable gardeners and cause the growth of these plants; to water them with care, so that they will not perish, but may bring forth blooms which will be fragrant and fresh for Our Lord, so that He may find His delight in coming into this garden and find pleasure among these virtues.

Let us now consider the manner in which this garden can be watered, so that we may learn what we shall have to do, how much toil it will represent for us, if the gain outweighs the labour, and for what duration this toil must be borne.

... I now come to my point, which is how these four methods of watering the garden are to be applied, in order that it be kept fertile and without which it will be destroyed. In this manner I think I can explain something about the four degrees of prayer to which the Lord, in His Goodness, has brought upon occasion to my soul.

... We may say that beginners in prayer are those who draw water from the well; as I have already mentioned, this is a very hard task, for it will tire them to keep their sense recollected, which is extremely hard for them as they have been used to a life of distraction.

Beginners must train themselves to pay no heed to what they hear or see, and they must practise this while praying; they must go away on their own and reflect over their past life in their solitude — we must all do this, whether in fact, we are at the beginning of the road or near its termination. The differences exist however, in the measure in which it must be done, as I shall show at a later stage. At first this causes distress to beginners, as they are not always certain that they have repented of their sins (although clearly they have done so, since they are anxious to serve God to the best of their ability). Then they must endeavour to meditate upon the life of Christ, which tires their minds. Thus far we are able to progress by ourselves — with God's help of course, for without that, as it is well known, we are not capable of thinking a good thought.

... What then, will be the outcome when a person discovers that for many days he experiences nothing but distaste, dislike and aridity, and has so feeble a desire to draw water that he would give it up altogether had he not the consciousness that in so doing he is serving and pleasing the master of the garden; also, were he not anxious that all his services should be for nought, to say nothing of the reward which he hopes to reap for the toil involved in lowering the bucket into the well and then withdrawing it without water? It will happen often that, even for that purpose, he feels he is unable to lift his arms — unable, that is, to think even a single good thought, for working with the understanding is of course as though one were drawing water from the well. What then, do I ask, will the gardener do here? He will take heart and be glad, considering it the greatest of privileges to labour in the garden of so great a King; and the knowledge that he is pleasing Him by doing so (his purpose must be to please the King and not himself), let him praise the Lord for having bestowed such trust in him because He sees that, without receiving any reward he

is taking such tender care of that which has been entrusted him: let the gardener, then, help Him to carry the Cross and bear in mind how He lived with it all His life; let the gardener not long for his kingdom to be on earth or ever cease from prayer; and so let him make the resolve that even should this aridity persist his whole life long, not to let Christ fall under the weight of His Cross.

#### PRAYER — THE SECOND DEGREE

... the soul begins to lose the appetite for earthly things — and no wonder! It sees clearly that not even one moment of this bliss is to be had no earth; and that there do not exist honours, riches, estates, or delights that can give it such satisfaction even for the twinkling of an eye. For this is the true bliss, the content that can be seen to satisfy. It appears to me, that those of us who are on earth rarely comprehend where this satisfaction lies. It is always up and down. At first we possess it, then it leaves us, and we discover that it has all disappeared and that we cannot get it back, since we have no idea whatsoever how to do so.

This satisfaction is lodged in the innermost part of the soul, which is ignorant of how or from whence it came. Very often it does not even know what to do, or desire or ask for. It appears to discover everything at once, and yet remain ignorant of what it has found. It is difficult for me to explain this...

... this prayer, then, is a tiny spark of true love for Him which He enkindles in the soul. It is His desire that the soul comes to understand the nature of this love and its attendant bliss.

... now this God-given spark, however small it may be, causes a great tumult, and if we do not put it out through our own fault it begins to light the great fire which — as I shall relate in due course — brings forth flames of that mighty love of God, which His Majesty bestows upon the souls of the perfect.

This tiny spark is a sign or pledge which God grants this soul to show that it is destined for great things, if it will be receptive. It is a great gift, indeed far greater than I can describe. In these periods of calm the only thing which is required of the soul is to remain tranquil and silent. By silence I mean refraining from working with the intellect to find many words and reflections with which to thank God for this benediction, and adding up its sins and errors to prove to itself that it does not merit it. When the noise starts, the intellect is active and the memory is in turmoil. Indeed these faculties fatigue me, for although I have a very little memory, I cannot control it. The will must be wise in understanding that we cannot deal violently with God; and that our efforts may be likened to great logs of wood piled indiscriminately one upon the other, which will cause the spark to die out. The will must admit this and in humility enquire: 'Lord, what can I do now?'

#### PRAYER — THE THIRD DEGREE

... but now it pleases the Lord to come to the aid of the gardener in such a manner as to be, as it were, the gardener Himself. It is He who does everything. The faculties of the soul are lulled to sleep; they are not entirely quieted nor yet entirely aware of how they are working.

... the soul is ignorant of what next to do; it is ignorant of whether it should speak or remain silent; whether to laugh or to weep. Yet it is a glorious bewilderment, a heavenly madness, in which is acquired true wisdom, and the soul experiences a fulfilment of delightful plenitude.

... although it was not a complete union of all the faculties, it was nevertheless clearly higher than the previous state of prayer.

... the faculties are able to retain only the power of occupying themselves wholly with

God — here, at any rate, the intellect is of no value whatsoever.

... It may appear to be the same, yet this is different to the prayer of quiet, of which I have already made mention. In the first state the soul does not feel the desire to move or to stir but delights in the blessed repose of Mary, whereas in the second state it can also be like Martha. It is thus, as it were, leading both the active and the contemplative life at the same time, and can apply itself to charitable works, to professional activities, and also to reading. And yet we are not wholly masters of ourselves, but are well aware that the better part of the soul is somewhere else. It is as though we were speaking to one person, while someone else were addressing us, so that we cannot properly attend to either.

#### PRAYER — THE FORTH DEGREE

In this state, the soul still experiences that it is not yet dead, we may say, although it has already died to the world — it retains the knowledge that it is still here and continues to experience solitude.

Here there is no sense of anything but bliss, without any knowledge of what is its delight. The soul is aware that it is enjoying some good thing which contains all good things together yet it is unable to comprehend this good thing. The senses are caught up in this joy in such a way that none of them is free to act in any way; either outwardly or inwardly.

... I cannot tell how what is called union takes place. The explanation is given in mystical theology, but I am ignorant of the proper terms; I cannot comprehend what mind is, or how it is different to soul or spirit. They all appear one to me, though the soul is lifted beyond itself like a burning fire which has become one whole flame and increases with great velocity.

... it is clear enough what union is; in union two separate things become one.

... as one stage follows upon the other, the Lord takes up this tiny bird and places it into the nest where it may remain quiet. He has watched its fluttering for some time, essaying with its understanding, its will and its strength to find God and please Him; and now it pleases His Majesty to give the bird its reward in this life. And what a reward: One moment of it suffices to repay all the trials it has endured.

While seeking God in this manner, the soul is aware that it is swooning almost completely away in a kind of faint, with a very great tranquillity and joy. The breath and all bodily powers progressively fail it, so that the soul can barely stir the hands without great effort.

... physical strength disappears and the strength of the soul is increased for the better enjoyment of its bliss.

... Let us now arrive at the soul's inward sensations in this state. These should be spoken of by those who know of them; for, being beyond understanding, they remain beyond description.

... It is no longer itself that lives; it is I. As it cannot take in what it understands, the soul understands by not understanding.

... and so it is that the restless little moth of the memory has its wings singed, and can therefore flutter no longer. The will must be wholly occupied in loving, and yet not understand how it loves.

Should it understand, it does not know how it understands. I do not think that it understands at all, as I have already said, because it does not understand itself. Neither can I myself, understand this.

(To be continued)

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## Erudition And Grace

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By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

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In 1903 there came to Arunachala a great Sanskrit scholar and savant, Ganapati Sastri, known also as Vasishta Ganapati Muni, because of the austerities he had been observing. He had the title *Kavyakanta* (one who had poetry at his throat), and his disciples addressed him as *Nayana* (father). He was devoted to the worship of the Divine as the Mother. He visited Sri Ramana in the Virupaksha Cave quite a few times.

Once in 1907, he was assailed by doubts regarding his own spiritual practices. He went up the hill, saw Sri Ramana sitting alone in the cave, and expressed himself thus: "All that has to be read I have read; even *Vedanta-Sastra* I have fully understood; I have done *japa* to my heart's content; yet I have not up to this time understood what *tapas* is. Therefore I have sought refuge at your feet. Pray enlighten me as to the nature of *tapas*."

Sri Ramana replied: "If one watches whence the notion 'I' arises, the mind gets absorbed there, that is *tapas*. When a *mantra* is repeated, if one watches whence that *mantra* sound arises, the mind gets absorbed there; that is *tapas*."

To the great scholar this came as a revelation; he felt the grace of the sage enveloping him. He it was that started the appellation of Sri Ramana (earlier known only as *Brahmana Swami*) as *Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*!

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We publish here the concluding portion of Chapter XXVI as well as six other verses selected by Sri Bhagavan from Chapter V.

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## RIBHU GITA

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### Inhering in the Undifferentiated and Non-dual Reality

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Chapter XXVI—(Contd.)

25. Abide as That, on realizing which to be oneself, there is nothing else to be known, everything becomes already known and every purpose accomplished—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

26. Abide as That which is attained easily when one is convinced that one is Brahman, that which results, when that conviction becomes firm, in the experience of the supreme bliss of Brahman, that which produces a sense of incomparable and complete satisfaction when the mind is absorbed in it—and be always happy without the least trace of thought.

27. Abide as That which leads to the complete cessation of misery when the mind is absorbed in it, and the extinction of all ideas of 'I', 'you' and 'he' and the disappearance of all differences—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

28. Abide as That in which, when the mind is absorbed in It, one remains without a second, nothing other than oneself is seen to exist and incomparable bliss is experienced—and be always happy, without the least trace of thought.

29. Abide as That which is undifferentiated Existence, undifferentiated consciousness, undifferentiated bliss, absolutely non-dual, the undifferentiated Brahman and with the firm conviction that you are That, be always happy.

30. Abide as That which is 'I' as well as 'you' as well as everyone else, is the basis of all, is one without anything else whatsoever, is extremely pure, the undifferentiated Whole and with the firm conviction that you are That, be always happy.

31. Abide as That in which there are no concepts or anything else whatsoever, the ego ceases to exist, all desires disappear, the mind becomes extinct and all confusions come to an end and with the firm conviction that you are That, be always happy.

32. Abide as That in which there is no awareness of the body etc. and no perception of objects, that in which the mind is dead, the *jiva* become one with the Reality, thoughts dissolved and even one's convictions no longer hold and with the firm conviction that you are That, be always happy.

33. Abide as That in which there is no longer any *dhyana* or *yoga* or ignorance or knowledge or activities of any kind, that which is the Supreme Reality and with the firm conviction that you are That, be always happy.

34. Abide as That in which, when one is completely merged with it, one experiences pure bliss, never experiences misery, sees nothing, does not take birth again, never thinks oneself to be a separate individual, becomes the Supreme Being and with the conviction that you are That, be always happy.

35. Abide as That which is truly the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Siva, the absolutely pure Being, the Supreme State, absolute consciousness, the Supreme Truth and with the conviction that you are That, be always happy.

36. Abide as That which is the absolutely pure Supreme Being, absolute bliss, the supremely subtle Being, the Self-Effulgent, non-dual and undifferentiated one and with the conviction that you are That, be always happy.

37. Abide as That which is absolute truth, supreme tranquillity, eternal being, absolutely attributeless, the Self, the absolutely undifferentiated supreme being and with the conviction that you are That, be always happy.

38. Abide as That which is everything from the empirical point of view and nothing from the absolute point of view, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss, always tranquil, with nothing separate from it, the self-existent being and with the conviction that you are That, be always happy.

39. I have thus, O Nidagha, clearly explained to you the state of being one with the Supreme Being. By constantly thinking that you are the undifferentiated Supreme Being you can attain that state and enjoy constant bliss. Thereafter, having become Brahman, you will never experience the misery of *samsara*.

40. "Everything is the Supreme Being which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss and I am That." By constantly cultivating this pure thought, get rid of impure thoughts. Then, my son, discarding even that thought and always inhering in the State of Fullness, you will become the non-dual and undifferentiated Supreme Being and attain liberation.

41. Pure and impure thoughts are a feature of the mind. There are no wandering thoughts in the Supreme Being. Therefore abide as That and, free from the pure and impure thoughts of the mind, remain still like a stone or a log of wood. You will then be always happy.

42. By constantly thinking of the undifferentiated Supreme Being and forgetting thereby all thoughts including the thought of the Supreme Being, you will become the all-comprehensive Supreme Brahman. Even a great sinner who hears and understands this teaching will get rid of all his sins and become the undifferentiated Supreme Being.

43. The endless Vedas have already prescribed meditation for attaining purity of mind. In order that those who have become pure in mind may easily attain liberation and, realiz-

ing that they are absolute and boundless bliss, remain still like a stone in the undifferentiated and all-comprehensive Supreme Siva, the nature of this immaculate state has been expounded by me.

44. Therefore, attaining purity of mind by constantly thinking that everything that is known is Siva and that that Siva is oneself, and thereafter abiding in the state of complete identity with Brahman, liberation can be attained here and now. I have spoken the truth. In this manner, Sage Ribhu expounded the state of being all to Nidagha.

45. When one is convinced that one is always that which is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss and abides as that in a state of complete identity, one casts off the unreal bondage of *samsara* and attains liberation. This is the significance of the highly blissful dance of our Supreme and undifferentiated Lord.

### NON-DWELLING

**Q.:** Whereon should the mind settle and dwell?

**A.:** It should settle upon non-dwelling and dwell there.

**Q.:** What is this non-dwelling?

**A.:** It means not allowing the mind to dwell upon anything whatsoever.

**Q.:** What is meant by 'a mind delivered'?

**A.:** Having a mind free from concepts of delivered and undelivered is called real deliverance. This is what the *Diamond Sutra* means by the words: 'Even the Dharma must be cast aside, how much more so the not-Dharma!' Here Dharma implies existence and not-Dharma implies non-existence—disengagement from both of which results in true deliverance.

— From the *Zen Teaching of Hui Hai.*

## Six Verses Selected By Sri Bhagavan

1. The concept 'I-am-the-body' is the sentient inner organ (i.e. the mind). It is also the illusive *samsara*. It is the source of all groundless fears. If there is no trace of it at all everything will be found to be Brahman.

2. The concept 'I-am-the-body' is the primal ignorance. It is known as the firm knot of the heart (*hridayagranthi*). It gives rise to the concepts of existence and non-existence. If there is no trace of it at all everything will be found to be Brahman.

3. *Jiva* is a concept. God, the world, the mind, desires, action, sorrow and all other things are all concepts.

4. Abiding without concepts is the undifferentiated state. It is inherence (in Brahman). It is wisdom. It is Liberation. It is the natural state (*sahaja*). It is Brahman. It is Siva. If there is no concept at all everything will be found to be Brahman.

5. The body, etc. are only concepts. Hearing, etc. (i.e. hearing, reasoning and contemplating) are concepts. Self-Enquiry is a concept. All other things are also concepts. Concepts give rise to the world, the *jivas* and God. There is nothing whatever except concepts. Everything is in truth Brahman.

6. The mind is unreal. It is like a magic show. It is like the son of a barren woman. It is absolutely non-existent. Since there is no mind there are no concepts, no Guru, no disciple, no world, no *jiva*. All concepts are really Brahman.

(Concluded)



# VEDAPARAYANA

## PURUSHA SOOKTAM

### Hymns to the Supreme Being

1. The Purusha (*lit.* person, the Supreme Being) who has thousands of heads, thousands of eyes and thousands of feet enveloped the earth on all sides and stood beyond it in the ten directions<sup>1</sup> of space.

2. All this is the Purusha only ; all that has been and all that will be. And He is the Lord of Immortality which (also) grows by food.

3. Such is His greatness, but the Purusha is greater than this. All beings make up only one-quarter of Him. Three-quarters of Him which are immortal are in heaven.

4. Three-quarters of the Purusha ascended high ; one-quarter was here, again and again.<sup>2</sup> And, diversified in form, it moved to the animate and inanimate world.

5. From That was born Virat (the totality of beings). From Virat was the Purusha born. As soon as He was born He spread over the earth both in front and behind.

6. When the devas (gods) performed a sacrifice with the Purusha as the offering, the season of spring was the molten butter (used in all sacrifices), summer the sacred fuel and autumn the oblation.

7. When the devas performed the sacrifice, in which they bound the Purusha as the sacrificial animal, there were seven (poles) in the sacrificial enclosure and three times seven logs of sacred firewood.

8. They placed Him, the Sacrifice, Purusha, the first-born on the sacrificial grass and

besprinkled Him (with the sacred water). Then the devas, the sadhyas and the rishis performed the sacrifice with Him (as the offering).

9. From that sacrifice, in which everything was offered as an oblation, was collected fresh butter. Creatures living in air (birds) and those living in forests and villages came into being.

10. From that sacrifice, in which everything was offered as oblation, came the Riks (Vedic hymns) and the Samans (hymns which are sung). The Chandases (Vedic metres) came from it ; and from it the Yajus (mantra for the ritual) was born.

11. Horses were born of it, and animals with two rows of teeth. Cows were born of it, and so were goats and sheep.

12. When they cut up the Purusha, into how many parts did they divide Him ? What did they call His mouth, His two arms, His two thighs and His two feet ?

13. The Brahmana was His mouth, the two arms became the Kshatriya, and his two thighs became the Vaisya. Of His two feet was the Sudra born.

14. The moon was born of His mind. The sun was born of His two eyes. Indra and Agni were born of His mouth. Vayu was born of His prana (life-breath).

15. The antariksha (the middle region) came from His navel. The sky appeared out of the head, the earth from the two feet and the quarters from the two ears. Thus they created the worlds.

16. I know that great Purusha, lustrous as the sun beyond darkness. The Wise One, having made all the forms appear, gave them names, and uttered these as they were.

17. One who knows Him whom Dhata (Creator) first revealed, and so did Sakra

<sup>1</sup> *lit.* 'fingers'.

<sup>2</sup> *lit.* — came into existence again.

(Indra) who fully knew the four quarters, becomes immortal here. There is no other way.

18. The devas performed sacrifice with the Sacrifice.<sup>3</sup> These were the first dharmas. They, the mighty ones, attained the height of heaven where the ancient sadhyas and devas abide.

#### NARAYANA SOOKTAM

1-2. (I worship) the Lord who has thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, who is the source of happiness in the world, the eternal, Hari. All this is nothing but the Purusha. All this lives by Him.

3. (I worship) Him who is the Self and the Lord of the Universe, the Eternal Isvara, the benign and undecaying Narayana, the Supreme Being who is to be known, the Self of all, the Supreme Goal.

4. Narayana is the Supreme Brahman, Narayana is the Supreme Reality, Narayana is the Supreme Light, Narayana is the Supreme Self, Narayana is the Supreme Meditator, Narayana is the Supreme (Object of) Meditation.

5. Narayana abides pervading whatever is seen or heard in this universe, whatever is within and without.

6. (I worship or meditate upon) the Infinite and immutable Seer who is the other end of the ocean (of samsara) and the source of all happiness.

The *Hridayam* (the heart which is the place of meditation) resembles an inverted lotus bud.

7. A span below the throat and above the navel there burns a fire from which flames are rising up. That is the great support (basis) of the Universe.

8. It always hangs down from the arteries like a lotus bud. In the middle of it there is a tiny orifice in which all are firmly supported.

9. In the middle of it there is a great fire with innumerable flames blazing on all sides which first consumes the food and then distributes it to all parts of the body. It is the immutable and all-knowing.

10. Its rays constantly shoot upwards and downwards. It heats the body from head to foot. In the middle of it there is a tongue of fire which is extremely small.

11. It is dazzling as a streak of lightning in the midst of a dark cloud and as thin as the awn at the tip of a grain of rice, golden bright and extremely minute.

12. In the middle of that tongue of flame the Supreme Self abides firmly. He is Brahma, He is Siva, He is Hari (Vishnu), He is Indra, He is the Immortal, the Supreme Lord of all.

13. I bow down again and again to the Eternal Law, the Truth, the Supreme Brahman, the Purusha who is dark blue and reddish, the pure celibate, with extraordinary eyes who has assumed all forms.

14. We shall try to know Narayana, we shall contemplate on Vasudeva, let Vishnu be pleased to guide us.

15. Lo! I proclaim the valorous deeds of Vishnu. He penetrated<sup>4</sup> even the tiniest particles of dust composing the earth. He made the world of the devas stand in the heavens steadily and perpetually. He covered the three worlds in three strides. His glories are sung by great sages.

Thou art<sup>5</sup> the forehead of Vishnu, Thou art the back of Vishnu. Thou art established in the mouth of Vishnu. Thou art the penetrating power<sup>6</sup> of Vishnu. Thou art the firm abode of Vishnu, Thou belongest to Vishnu. Obceissance to Thee that art Vishnu.

OM PEACE ! PEACE ! PEACE !

<sup>3</sup> i.e., Purusha.

<sup>4</sup> lit. 'counted.'

<sup>5</sup> i.e., 'representest.' These and the lines that follow are supposed to be addressed to the rope of *darbha* grass strung across the entrance to a sacrificial hall, or, the cross pole under it.

<sup>6</sup> lit. thread.

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# GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

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CHAPTER VII—(Contd.)

THE GLORY OF VARIOUS TIRTHAS

Sacred Tanks or Rivers on Arunachala

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## *Arunachala Mahatmyam*

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**S**RI Parvati enquired : How did this linga of fire come to exist on the earth ? How did it become cool and easily visible to all beings ? How are the holy waters rising from this sacred hill withdrawn into it ? You must tell me all this.

Gautama said: This hill was a mass of fire in the *Krita Yuga*, jewels in the *Treta Yuga*, gold in the *Dvapara Yuga* and emerald in the *Kali Yuga*. In the *Krita Yuga*, when it spread out for several yojanas as a mass of fire, Maharshis circumambulated it. Thereafter, at the humble prayer of the devas, Bhagavan Arunachala slowly became cool.

Gowri asked the sage: How did the Lord of Arunachala become cool? How did the devas pray to Him?

On hearing this Gautama praised her devotion and, as she desired to know the truth, said: The Devas prayed thus; “Bhagavan ! Lord of Arunagiri ! You who bless the whole world ! Although your nature is fiery you must shine in the world in a cool form. The Vedas regard you as the embodiment of Siva and proclaim you as ‘that which is

copper-coloured, bright, crimson, red and wholly auspicious'. Obeisance to the copper-coloured and crimson Siva, the Supreme Self ! Salutation to You who are known by the Vedas and who are Soma and pure bliss. The whole world, moving and unmoving, is your form. Therefore it is your form that is seen as the hosts of devas. You are capable of producing at the end of yugas cloudbursts, flooded streams and overflowing oceans and drying them up. For it is said by the Vedas : ' From fire water came into existence.' It is therefore said that the world came into existence from you who are the Supreme Self endowed with wonderful qualities. O Mahadeva ! Sonachala ! Ocean of Compassion ! Kindly become cool. O Lord ! Let all men know you."

When all the devas thus very humbly prayed the Lord who loves his devotees immediately became cool and visible to all. Thereafter rivers and streams began to flow. Rains falling from the clouds were no longer withdrawn into the hill. Nevertheless an effulgence bright as millions of rising suns and the world-destroying fire (*kalagni*) can be seen in the eyes of the intelligent individuals (*jivas*) who worship it. In accordance with the prayers of the Dikpalas, Devas, Maharshis and other great souls all the *tirthas* full of water wander around it without seeking the sea.

Brahma continued: On hearing these details Gowri enquired with great enthusiasm about the true origin of the *tirthas*. She said: O Bhagavan ! Which of the *tirthas* here are invisible and which are visible ? Please tell me ! When Parvati said this Gautama recollected what Girisa (Siva) had formerly told him and said: The Indra Tirtha is situated on the east. Indra got rid of the sin of killing a Brahmin by bathing in it. The Brahma Tirtha is situated in the quarter of Agni (southeast), Agni's sin of seducing the wives of others was removed by (bathing in) it. On the south is the Yama Tirtha. Yama was saved from the fear of Brahmastra (a divine weapon) by (bathing in) it. On the southwest is the Nairta

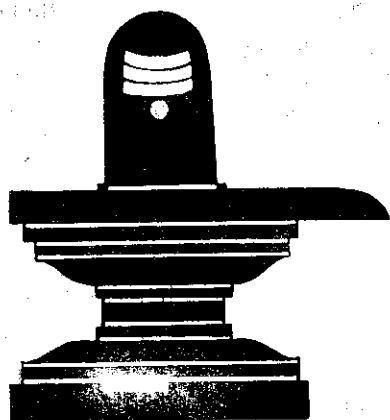
Tirtha. The Rishis conquered the Bhutas and Vetalas by (bathing in) it. On the west is Varuna Tirtha. Varuna obtained an ever-full quiver by (bathing in) it. On the northwest is the Vayu Tirtha. Vayu attained the power of becoming the life-breath of the world by (bathing in) it. On the north is the Soma Tirtha. Chandra (moon) was cured of consumption by (bathing in) it. On the northeast is the Isana Tirtha. Vishnu got Goddess Sri for his wife by (bathing in) it.

In olden days Markandeya bowed down to Isvara and prayed: Sadasiva ! Mahadeva ! Deva of devas ! Lord of the world ! Sankara ! Bhagavan ! You must tell me the means of bringing together at this place all the various *tirthas*. On hearing this the Lord of Uma was greatly pleased and described to him the means : "All the *tirthas* abide unseen in my presence at the time of my worship and adore me. Great sage ! You need not go anywhere seeking *tirthas*. At the time of my worship all the *tirthas* come together to this place. Therefore devotees and all sages and devas may see the congregation of all *tirthas* here immediately after food is offered (to me)."

Goddess ! In olden days Sankara described to Markandeya in this manner the means of seeing all the *tirthas*. All the sacred *tirthas* are visible in front of Siva at the time of worship. One attains the fruits of vows (*vrata*), *tirtha*, *tapas*, Vedas, sacrifices, scriptural laws, yogas etc. by merely looking on the Lord of Sonasaila.

On hearing these words of the sage the daughter of the king of the mountains was pleased and said : The goal of my life has been attained by me by duly learning from you the means of worshipping the wonderful *tirthas* on earth. O glorious performer of austerities ! (The benefit of) all the *tirthas* has been obtained. I thank you. Siva Himself has commanded me to do penance here. How shall men worship on earth the Supreme Lord (Parameswara) who, although really terribly fiery, is also cool in the form of a hill ?

(To be continued)



Siva Linga

February 13 was the day of Holy Sivarathri observed at the Ashram on a grand scale. Residents were joined by devotees living outside as well as by visitors who came even in greater numbers than usual. Groups of devotees witnessed the pujas during the night at Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace and also went round the Hill. The vibrant atmosphere testified once again to the tremendous significance of this occasion thus described by Lord Siva Himself :

“By doing *puja* to Me (Lord Siva) on this holiest day one gets the result of (doing) *puja* for a whole year. Even as the moon causes the rising of the sea, this sacred hour (time) enhances the prowess of My manifestations.”

— *Arunachala Mahatmyam.*

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## THE HOLY NIGHT

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### *Sivaratri*

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By Viswanatha Swami

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“The day on which Lord Siva took the form of the mysterious Hill Linga known as Adi Arunachala was the day of *Arudra* (constellation) in the month of *Margali* (*Margasira* or *Dhanus*—coinciding with Dec.-Jan.) ; and the day on which Vishnu and other *devas* worshipped Him manifested in that Hill of Light was on *Siva Rathri* in the month of *Masi Magha*, Feb-Mar.)”

— SRI BHAGAVAN

THIS is the second of the introductory verses composed by Sri Bhagavan to His *Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala*. The idea is taken from *Siva Purana*. The contents of the other verses are taken from the *Arunachala Mahatmya* (Greatness of Arunachala) in the *Skanda Purana*.

It is interesting to the devotees of Sri Bhagavan that He Himself was born on the night of that day (*Arudra* in *Margali*, i.e. Dec.-Jan.).

There is an account found in the *Siva Purana* that there was a fight between Brahma, the Creator, and Vishnu, the Protector, as to who of them was greater and as a result everything went wrong in the Universe. At that juncture, Lord Siva appeared there as an endless column of extraordinary Light and a voice was heard saying : "Whichever of you two is able to find either the top or bottom of this column of Light is the greater one." And so Brahma took the form of a swan and soared up to find the top and Vishnu went down searching for the bottom, taking the form of a boar. After a long long time, both of them had to return unsuccessful in their attempt and they realised that there was a great God Siva of whom they were only instruments existing and functioning only by His Grace. At their request Lord Siva took the benevolent form of Arunachala, so that every one could have *darshan* of Him, go round Him, think of Him and worship Him and be blessed. And the first day on which Vishnu and other *devas* praised and worshipped Lord Siva (manifested from that column of Light) was on the fourteenth day of the dark-fortnight in the month of *Masi* (*Magha*, Feb.-Mar.).

This is the account of *Siva Rathri* we find in the *Puranas*. *Siva Rathri* is the holiest of the days sacred to Lord Siva and the devotees fast the whole day and keep on worshipping Him during the four quarters of the whole night.

Ceremonial Puja is performed at temples and houses also to Siva Linga (the emblem of Lord Siva) clothed and adorned with ornaments and flowers after bathing it with holy water, milk, curds and honey accompanied by the chanting of *Sri Rudra* and other Vedic Hymns. His Thousand Names are chanted in worship. Various offerings are made of food-preparations and fruit. There is prolonged

beautiful waving of lights and the Puja finishes with the waving of burning camphor, denoting the complete melting of the mind in the Fire of Pure Awareness, known as Lord Siva.

At Tiruvannamalai many devotees go round Arunachala (a distance of 8 miles) that night either meditating on Lord Siva or chanting His Name and Hymns of Praise of Siva. Going round the Hill at dawn or dusk or at night alone silently, the Presence of Arunachala becomes a living experience.

Here I am reminded of the best *Siva Rathri* of my life in the year 1924. Sri Bhagavan sat down at about 8 at night near His couch where He used to rest. A small desk was in front of Him with a soft light nearby and there were only a very few devotees seated in front of Him. One of them requested Sri Bhagavan on behalf of some others to explain the meaning of Sri Sankara's *Hymns to Dakshinamurthi*, which Sri Bhagavan Himself had rendered into Tamil verse. Sri Bhagavan was silent with a very gracious, gentle smile. A few minutes passed. The devotee repeated his request to Sri Bhagavan. There was no answer and Sri Bhagavan remained silent with the same expression of remarkable grace. Within a few minutes all the devotees including the questioner understood that Sri Bhagavan was teaching them in silence what Lord Dakshinamurthi did ages ago to the four sons of Lord Brahma, viz. Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatkumara and Sanatsujata.

(The story is well-known that these four sons of Brahma were created by him out of his mind to assist him in the creation of world systems. But the sons wanted rather to find out the source of the mysterious universe around them and went about with one-pointed mind in search of such knowledge. Lord Siva appeared to them seated under a banyan tree wrapt in glorious silence and they got enlightened at the very sight of Him, and sat at His Feet in silence. This aspect of Siva is known by the name *Dakshinamurthi* and we find this image of His in every temple of Lord Siva



on the southern side facing the south. Moreover, *Dakshina* means knowledge and He in whose presence knowledge of the One Self of all spontaneously dawns is known as *Dakshinamurthi*.)

The passing of the hours of that night went by unnoticed by any of us as Sri Bhagavan had drawn our minds and kept them in tune with Himself. Suddenly there was dawn and Bhagavan got up smiling and went out with His *kamandalu* for His morning walk. All of us came out of our wonderful *samadhi* in the presence of Bhagavan that whole *Siva Rathri* night.

It may not be out of place here to say that every day and every night was like that with Bhagavan. I have often experienced the power of His dynamic silence especially during the still hours of the night. *Siva Rathri* really means Absolute Pure Awareness of Lord Siva in which all else gets dissolved.

There is also another account found in the *Puranas* of Siva swallowing up the terrible

poison which rose up as the Ocean of Milk was being churned by *devas* and *asuras* to get *Amrita* (divine ambrosia), and thus saving the universe from annihilation. And as He sat a whole night with the poison retained in His throat, He was worshipped by all *devas* and *asuras* for His great act of grace to save them all. Siva is known by the name *Nilakanta* (blue-throated) on account of this.

The poison coming up during the churning (*sadhana*) is the process of latent unspiritual tendencies of the mind being brought out to get destroyed by Divine Grace!

## The Supreme Being

*Devotee* : When I do like this (Self Enquiry) and cling to my self i.e. the I-thought, other thoughts do come and go, but I say to myself 'Who am I?' and there is no answer forthcoming. To be in this condition is the *Sadhana*. Is it so?

*Maharshi* : This is a mistake that people often make. What happens when you make a serious quest for the Self is that the I-thought as a thought disappears, something else from the depths takes hold of you and that is not the 'I' which commenced the quest.

*Maharshi* : What is this something else?

*Devotee* : That is the real Self, the import of I. It is not the ego. It is the Supreme Being itself.

—from TALKS

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## THESIS— ANTI-THESIS

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By "Sein"

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"**T**HROUGH effort alone can one reach effortlessness," Bhagavan has said. Does it not seem to be a contradiction in terms? Bhagavan's sayings may contain occasionally apparent contradictions: "With the mind alone can we make effort to transcend the mind", "Only by destroying the 'I' can you reach the 'I' (I-I)", and so on.

When we try to put theory into practice such contradictions come into focus in our spiritual life. What is the purpose of great saints and scriptures in presenting these riddles? Obviously on the relative plane truth cannot be expressed in absolute terms and has to be adapted to different levels of receptivity and understanding like so many different paths leading ultimately to the same peak.

In Vedanta the '*dehatmabuddhi*' ('I-am-the-body'-idea) is affirmed as the cause of all suffering and illusion and thus has to be given up. What does it mean and how to give it up? There is the physical body and a sense of attachment to it. So long as it persists it is difficult to aim at the 'I-am-not-the-body' idea, so that both 'I-am-the-body' and 'I-am-not-the-body' ideas could be transcended resulting in pure 'I AM' without any concepts. However, as Bhagavan has said we have to start somewhere, somehow and break away from indifference (to the Real) to confusion (between the Real & the unreal), and from confusion to clarity (of what is Real); as only from a state of confusion does one seek clarity and make *sadhana*. Clarity leads to

experience of Oneness which takes time to steady itself. So all this effort starts from the state of '*dehatmabuddhi*'. In Buddhism 'non-annihilation of the worldly' would be an approximation in a more absolute sense. In *Yoga* the real *prana* is held by some *yogis* to be the vibrant vital force within and the real *pranayama* inhaling from the Heart and exhaling into the Heart, its real purpose being to retain the vital force at its Source, the Heart. This is a more esoteric interpretation with which practical *hatha yogis* may not agree.

In *bhakti*, one starts with the duality of the devotee and the Lord — *dwaita bhava*. True *bhakti*, however, means total surrender where both merge, thus transcending the duality! Ordinarily a man thinks that by giving free reign to his inclinations he is in total freedom. However in truth, by asserting ourselves and following our inclinations we only become more enslaved to our *vasanas*, resulting in bondage. Only in total surrender to Him, who takes over the burden of our temporal life, do we gain true freedom. Jesus says: "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."

Bhagavan emphasized the enquiry 'Who am I?' leading first to intellectual understanding that we have falsely identified ourselves with the body. So there is the experience of identification and non-identification with the body leading ultimately to pure 'I-am-ness'. The crux of the matter lies in the fact that intellectual conviction alone is not enough. It has to be a living experience and then only can one speak of it with authority. The enlightened Hui Hai says: "To speak as though having arrived without having arrived in practice is called arriving without arriving."



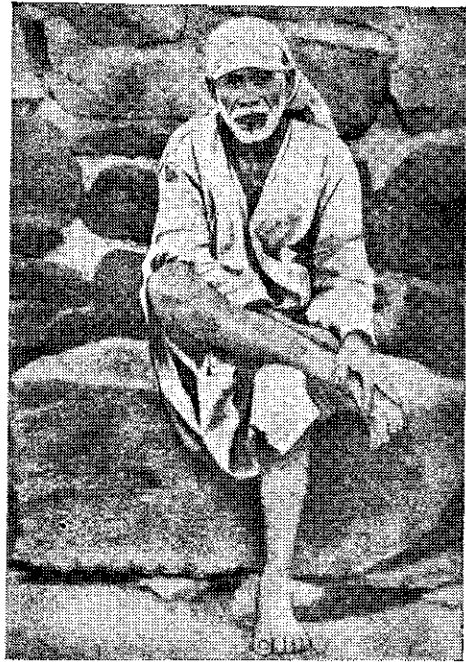
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## STEPS TO REALITY

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The following important instructions of Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi have been culled from the book on his life and teachings :  
SHRI SAI SATCHARITA (pp. 89-90).

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**S**RI SAI BABA OF SHIRDI affirms the following qualifications as necessary for *Brahma Jnana* or Self Realisation. Very few see or realise Brahman in their lifetime. Certain qualifications are absolutely necessary.

(1) *Mumuksha* or intense desire to get free. He who thinks that he is bound and that he should get free from bondage and works earnestly and resolutely to that end and does not care for any other thing, is qualified for the spiritual life. (2) *Virakti* or a feeling of disgust with the things of this world and the next. Unless a man feels disgusted with the things, rewards and honours which his actions would bring in this world and the next, he is not qualified for the spiritual life. (3) *Antar-*

*mukhata* (introversion): Our senses have a tendency to move outward and so man always looks outside himself and not inside. He who wants Self-realisation must turn his gaze inwards and seek his inner Self. (4) *Catharsis* (purging) from sins: Unless a man has turned away from wickedness and stopped doing wrong and has gained serenity of mind, he cannot attain Self-realisation even by means of knowledge. (5) *Right conduct*: Unless a man leads a life of truth, penance and insight, a life of celibacy, he cannot get God Realisation. (6) *Preferring shreyas (the good) to preyas (the pleasant)*: There are two sorts of things, viz., the good and the pleasant, the former dealing with spiritual affairs, the latter with mundane matters. Both these approach man for acceptance. He has to think and choose one of them. The wise man prefers the good but the unwise, through greed and attachment, chooses the pleasant. (7) *Control of mind and senses*: The body is the chariot and the Self is its master; intellect is the charioteer and the mind is the reins; the senses are the horses and sense-objects their paths. He who has no understanding and whose mind is unrestrained, his senses unmanageable like the vicious horses of a charioteer, does not reach his destination (get realisation), but goes through the round of births and deaths; but he who has understanding and whose mind is restrained, his senses being under control, like the good horses of a charioteer, reaches that place, i.e. the state of Self Realisation, hence he is not born again. The man who has understanding as his charioteer (guide) and is able to rein his mind, reaches the end of the journey, which is the supreme abode of the all-pervading Vishnu (Lord). (8) *Purification of the mind*: Unless a man discharges satisfactorily and disinterestedly the duties of his station in life, his mind will not be purified and, unless his mind is purified, he cannot get Self Realisation. It is only in the purified mind that *Viveka* (discrimination between the unreal and the Real) and *Vairagya* (non-

attachment to the unreal) develop and lead on to Self Realisation. Unless egoism is dropped, avarice got rid of, and the mind made desireless (pure), Self Realisation is not possible. The idea that 'I-am-the-body' is a great delusion and attachment to this idea is the cause of bondage. Discard this idea and attachment if you want to attain the goal of Self-Realisation. (9) *The necessity of a Guru*: The path of Self Realisation is so subtle and strenuous that no one by his own individual effort could ever hope to attain it. So the help of a Self-realised Teacher is absolutely necessary. What others cannot impart with great labour and pains can be easily gained with the help of such a teacher; for he has walked on the path himself and can easily take the disciple step by step on the ladder of spiritual progress. And lastly (10) *The Lord's Grace* is most essential for gaining *Viveka* and *Vairagya*, which take one beyond the ocean of mundane existence. He grants *Viveka* (discrimination) to an earnest aspirant. "The Self cannot be gained by the study of Vedas, nor by intellect, nor by much learning. He whom the Self chooses, by him It is gained. To him the Self reveals its nature" says the *Katha Upanishad*.

"Bhagavan: The 'I' casts off the illusion of 'I' and yet remains as 'I'. This appears to be a paradox but it is not. Take the case of the *bhakta*. His 'I' prays to the Lord to unite it with Him, which is its surrender. What remains as residuum after this surrender, is the eternal 'I', which is God the Absolute. What has happened to the 'I', which originally prayed? Being unreal, it simply vanished!"

—from GURU RAMANA

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## My First Visit To Arunachala

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By Vishwas Gaitonde<sup>1</sup>

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I HAD heard such a lot about Tiruvannamalai from my friends and relatives and read so much about it from many books like *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge* by Mr. Arthur Osborne and *Self Realisation* by Sri B. V. Narasimha Swami, that I longed to go to Tiruvannamalai and Arunachala and see all the places myself.

We had made plans to go to Tiruvannamalai on several occasions, but always something or the other cropped up and spoilt our plans. It is said that one goes to Tiruvannamalai only when Arunachala calls you. Well, Arunachala chose to call us on *Krishna Jayanti*, August 14, 1971.

Our little group consisted of my father, mother, younger sister and me. We left Madras at about 11 o'clock in the morning and slowly passed through the beautiful countryside on the 120-mile journey to Tiruvannamalai. We didn't hurry, but went at a moderate speed in our car, enjoying the beautiful scenery and for the hundredth time marvelling at the wonderful creation of God.

We reached Tiruvannamalai at about 4 o'clock in the evening and I gazed at Arunachala Hill with a mixed feeling of thrill and awe. On the outskirts of the town a gay fair was in progress with a small merry-go-round and other items. The people were wearing gay, bright and catchy dresses and were in a jolly mood, talking non-stop. I thought that this fair might be connected with *Krishna Jayanti*.<sup>2</sup> It was indeed a gay and cheerful crowd.

In Tiruvannamalai, we stayed with Mrs. Lucia Osborne, a very good friend of ours. Mrs. Osborne's house was a delightful and exciting place, with Bonzo the dog, a little pussy cat, a cow Lakshmi and her newborn calf, only a day old and looking cute beside its mother, to say nothing of some wild

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<sup>1</sup> A school-boy of 14 years!

<sup>2</sup> It was the big *Arunagirinathar* festival.—EDITOR.

pigs which suddenly invaded the garden but were chased away by Bonzo. At one end of the large and spacious compound is the Samadhi of Mr. Arthur Osborne. When we went there we could feel the calm and peaceful atmosphere.

I went into Ramanasramam with a feeling of joy, knowing that I was treading on the soil which was blessed by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, whose lotus feet had hallowed it. There was a nice surprise in store for me in the forms of beautiful peacocks.

We spent the evening on the Holy hill, watching the sunset. It was a beautiful sight to see the flaming red rays of the dying sun bathe the countryside in their fiery light. Soon the sun sank below the western horizon and twilight set in. Here and there, there were pinpricks of light where people had illuminated their houses.

Twilight gave way to night. We sat for sometime in the serene and peaceful atmosphere of the Ashram's Meditation Hall. We had our meal in the Ashram and then decided to go for a *pradakshina* (circumambulation) around the holy hill by night.

It was 9 o'clock when we started, and now the moon shed her pure, white light. We proceeded slowly, taking little rests now and then. We drank the cold water from the well at Gautama Ashram on the way, and for some distance from there a friendly Ashram dog accompanied us and then disappeared.

Throughout the *pradakshina*, the shape of Arunachala was constantly changing. Mrs. Osborne told us some delightful and interesting stories as we went around the hill. It is said that in one place if we call upon Arunachala, He answers our call. We tried to find the place but we could not. When Mrs. Osborne first called, my father suddenly felt something clutching at his hand. It turned out to be my sister who was startled at the call!

The beginning of Independence Day, August 15, found us on the other side of the hill — such a nice place to be in on our Independence Day. We reached Mrs. Osborne's house at 2 a.m. I had expected to arrive in a state of complete exhaustion on being told that it was an eight-and-a-half-mile trip, but I was quite all right except for a little pain in my feet. But the grace of God as well as a homoeopathic Arnica soon put an end to that pain!

When we got up later on that day, I wanted to go and see Skandashram. But my father, mother and sister said that much as they wanted to come, their feet did not allow them to. Mrs. Osborne then directed me to some of her friends in the Ashram who would take me to Skandashram.

When I went to the Ashram, I found them seated in the Meditation Hall. So I went up by myself. The sun was beating down but the cold, strong winds were most refreshing and I did not feel the heat of the sun at all. The view from there was fantastic. The whole countryside lay like a map and down there people and cars were moving about like ants.

I sat for some time at Skandashram — and I almost spoiled my peace there when I realised that we were going away that afternoon. But I consoled myself saying that Arunachala will be with me even in Madras, and even if I am suddenly taken off to Russia or America, He will be with me.

After that, time seemed to fly fast. Soon it was lunch time and after that we left, our hearts heavy with sadness. As our car sped towards Madras, I turned behind and saw Arunachala slowly receding in the distance. Then it was hidden from my sight.

Although this, my first visit to Tiruvannamalai was a very short one, I am hoping to come again soon for a much longer stay. And I am eagerly waiting for the call of Arunachala!

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## NOTE ON CHUANG TZU

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By Father Thomas Merton

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CHUANG TZU (4th-3rd century B.C.) is in many respects the greatest and most spiritual of the Chinese philosophers. He is also the chief authentic historical spokesman for Taoism (Lao Tzu being legendary and known to a great extent through Chuang Tzu in any case). Therefore Chuang Tzu stands in opposition to the traditional Confucian philosophy, and has been regarded by the orthodox Confucians as a rather dangerous thinker, the professional boat rocker of Chinese thought. The reason for this is that Chuang Tzu wanted to insist that there was something more to life than the piety, the order, the rites, and the humanitarian feelings which contributed to the social harmony preached by Confucius. Chuang Tzu looked on life as a whole — and as a mystery — that could not be grasped merely in a clear doctrine, with logical explanations for the way things are, implemented by orderly social customs and patterns of behaviour. He reached out to something more, something which could not be expressed, and yet could be lived: the ineffable *Tao*. Anything that falls short of *Tao* is limited and fallible. Yet *Tao* is not totally out of man's reach. On the contrary, by humility, simplicity, childlikeness and what we would call a spirit of faith, one can live in union with *Tao*, even though one may not be able to understand just how this comes about, or give a clear explanation of the fact. It is this holy and sometimes humorous simplicity that is at the heart of Chuang Tzu, and strange to say, it has made his doctrine seem, to some people, terribly difficult!

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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**THE WORLD IS NEW:** By Joel Goldsmith.  
Pub.: George Allen and Unwin. Pages: 206.  
Price: £ 1.50.

The numerous followers of *The Infinite Way* are sure to welcome the re-issue of this book. Without any display of erudition or philosophical terminology Joel Goldsmith manages to express in simple language pure advaitic teaching in a Christian setting.

"Nothing is more important in the working out of problems of human existence than the knowledge of who and what we are, a knowledge that we exist in consciousness as life eternal."

"We are really God fulfilling Itself as individual being."

His teaching does not seem to stem from theory or mere intellectual understanding but has a ring of truth revealed in meditation or in practising the Presence of Christ within so as to become consciously aware that I AM THAT I AM.

"God appearing individually as me constitutes all there is of me. God is the substance of all being even of a stone," he reminds us. "Brahman sleeps in the stone" is the *vedantic* analogy.

Some of his teaching has great affinity with that of Ramana Maharshi but the paths differ. *The Infinite Way* includes spiritual healing which accords with the Christian tradition. It amounts to practising the Divine Presence, to allow Divine Grace to flow through the healer without making a conscious attempt to heal. Ramana Maharshi's teaching has nothing to do with spiritual healing or dwelling on vedantic texts, whereas *The Infinite Way* makes use of pregnant biblical texts for meditation.

In *The World is New* there are sayings which have already appeared in other books of Joel Goldsmith yet this is not dull repetition but much needed reminders retaining their vitality and urgency.

When it comes to stilling the mind Joel Goldsmith presents it from the experience of his individual unfoldment which does not admit the possibility of stopping our thinking processes. This is a stumbling block for many for whom such a state amounts to being insentient whereas Ramana

Maharshi's path and the ancient seers show the way how to still the mind. We can make effort up to a point and when it has reached its limit, Grace takes over. A still mind is the very source of thought, omniscient without being obscured by conceptual thinking. Joel Goldsmith seems to understand this intuitively when he says that "But to those who practise meditation there does come a time when the human mind of itself stops and extraneous thoughts no longer intrude . . ." which amounts to the same.

**BUDDHISM FOR THE WEST:** By Dorothy C. Donath. Pub.: The Julian Press Inc., New York.  
Pages: 136. Price: \$ 6.00.

The author, a practising Buddhist, reviews all the three great branches of Buddhism from the standpoint of a seeker who has found the Buddha Dharma a deeply satisfying way of life.

The book deals with the basic principles, origin, history and doctrines of *Theravada*, *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* Buddhism with a comprehensive resume of the life and teaching of Milarepa, a disciple of Marpa and co-founder with him of the Tibetan Kargyudpa School of which the author is a devoted follower. It provides a simple presentation of the basic teachings of the three variants of Buddhism "in an order of growth mental and spiritual" which as Dorothy Donath points out "cannot fall into any logical set pattern . . . in the framework of time and space." In the true spirit of Buddhism which emphasizes *Karuna*, that is compassion, for every living being and shows the way to Enlightenment Dorothy Donath wishes to share the "priceless truths" she has been privileged to learn through spiritual striving and intuitive insights over a number of years. She speaks of Enlightenment in varying degrees and at minor or partial levels till Ultimate Enlightenment (*Paranirvana*) dawns. It is not clear what is meant when she says that meditation can be developed into a continuous substratum of thought. "It leads to spiritual illumination and an ultimate realization of the meaning and purpose of life." Meditation aims, as taught by seers, at stilling the mind in pure awareness and realisation or understanding of the meaning and purpose of life and is not a culmination of spiritual illumination but a preliminary leading to it. May be by spiritual illumination the author has in mind a minor or partial level of it. According to Ramana Maharshi there are no stages in realisation.

The resume of the life and teachings of Milarepa contains many quotations, poems and songs which greatly enhance the value of this book whose language is particularly adaptable to the background

and needs of beginners in the West for which it is primarily intended. We can repeat with the author that it "merits the attention of all who feel the need of a new life-basis and a new point of view."

**HINDUISM IN A NUTSHELL:** By K. Ramachandra. Pub.: MacCallum Press, Colombo. Price: Rs. 2-50.

A series of lectures on Hinduism given by the author to Roman Catholic nuns of various orders form the substance of this book. It is published as a Supplement to the *Religious Digest* under the able editorship of the author.

Sri K. Ramachandra is himself aware of the fact that this is not a scholarly or philosophically and intellectually discursive approach to Hinduism, which would obviously not fit into a nutshell, but a free rather individualistic rendering of a vast subject more in the nature of a simple communication "of the essence of some important scriptures as applied to day-to-day practical life" adapted to the special background and needs of his audience.

Sri Ramachandra stresses the need of religious unity, one would say rather religious tolerance since exoterically religions differ in their outer forms and application according to the needs of their followers. Esoterically there is unity in all major religions which converge at a certain point like so many paths leading to the One summit.

The book is interspersed and enlivened with personal reminiscences of a spiritual nature and should prove very popular with readers particularly in the West who would be satisfied to have *un coup d'oeil* of Hinduism.

L. O.

**MANU: THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL THOUGHT:** By Kewal Motwani. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 29. Price: Re. 1.

In the short introduction the author depicts a dismal picture of the modern civilisation dominated by the discoveries of science and expresses his concern over the attitude of modern India in imitating this Western way with all its evils. He hopes that the memory of the way of life as given by Manu will restore the balance of the world and awaken India from spiritual slumber.

In a short span of 29 pages, Sri Motwani, distinguished sociologist and thinker, gives a brilliant account of Manu's greatness, his contribution to human thought and his universal influence. He states that Manu's vision as a Rishi pervaded the whole gamut of human life. Further he explains in depth the *dharma*. Usually, emphasis is placed

on the ethical aspect of *dharma*. We are here concerned with its psychological and sociological significance. But the significance of the word *dharma*, says the author, "extends far beyond the human plane; it has a cosmic connotation. It represents law or the principle of Integration operating in the biological, psychological, social and spiritual realms."

While discussing the word *shastra*, the author rightly points out that the English translation of *Manusmriti* as a 'code of Laws promulgated by Manu' is misleading. Manu is concerned with Universal Law which includes other laws. He is a teacher of the fundamentals of life and shows the direction in which they should be applied to various states and situations of life (not only in the ancient past, but even now). Equally deep is his treatment of *varnas* which are again wrongly referred to as castes. *Varnas* are not rigid castes but are elastic divisions based on psychological factors in man. Manu's concept of *ashramas* indicates that they are the places of rest and relaxation and man should welcome a change from one stage to another. Life should be lived on the wing. He points out the evolutionary character of these.

It is astounding to find the universal influence and impact of Manu's teaching on the world. Almost in all parts of the world Manu is venerated as a great human being, a genius and a great thinker.

In conclusion the author remarks that Manu's teachings depict a period of human history when the social life of man as portrayed by him actually existed. Sri Motwani deserves hearty congratulations.

PROF. G. V. KULKARNI

**GITA MY GUIDE:** By P. S. Tolani. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 102. Price: Rs. 5.

The author of this book has had more than his share of misfortunes in the world but he has, we learn, been able to withstand all shocks and keep up his chin because of the constant help and strength derived from the Gita. He writes with feeling on the role played by the Gita in his life and expounds in simple language his understanding of many of the key-concepts of the scripture.

The Gita is to Sri Tolani essentially a Book of *Bhakti*, Devotion. He is aware that different scholars have given different expositions of the philosophy of this work, but he finds here a synthesis of *jnana*, *karma* and *bhakti* with a stress on Love, love for God and God's creatures. He recalls the message of the Upanishads and writes on the nature

of the Gita as the quintessence of all the Upanishads.

In the course of his study he draws attention to the emphasis on self-giving. No one can live in this world all by himself. There is a continual interchange going on with others, at every level of life. With most, however, it is an unconscious giving. As one grows in consciousness, one participates in this cosmic *yajna* more and more willingly and fully. This self-giving is symbolised on the physical plane by the act of *dana* which has three ingredients: "There should be giving; the giver should not desire anything in return; the giving should be to a worthy person, at the proper time and at the proper place." (P. 7).

Renunciation is demanded, but it is an inner renunciation of which the first step is *relinquishment*, a giving up of one's personal claim over things that properly belong to the Lord. Some of the best pages in this book are devoted to this subject. Faith, *karma*, rebirth, worship, meditation and yoga are the other topics touched upon.

**SUFIS, MYSTICS AND YOGIS OF INDIA :** By Bankey Behari. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 384. Price: Rs. 4.

The Reality can be approached as *murta* and *amurta*, Form and Formless. Spiritual experience testifies to the validity of both. In his earlier work, *Minstrels of God*, the author dealt with the adoration of the Divine as the supreme Person; in this treatise he expounds the worship and realisation of the Divine as the Impersonal. The study proceeds through narrations and analyses of the life and message of Sufi saints and the *Advaita*, *Nirakara*, *Shabda* and *Yoga* exemplars (like Shankara, Jnaneswar, Nanak, Kabir, Ramdas etc.). The author quotes profusely from the original utterances of the saints (translated in English) and discusses the several ways in which the pursuit has been undertaken.

In the course of an elaborate introduction, he traces the several stages in the Path of the Sufis: (1) *Talab* (Yearning) for union with God; (2) *Ishq* (Love) for the Beloved; (3) *Marfat* (Enlightenment) resulting in the perception of the Divine in every particle of creation; (4) *Istaghraq* or *Fana* (Absorption); (5) *Tauhid* (Unity consciousness); (6) *Hairat* (Amazement) at the Divine Glory everywhere; (7) *Fuqr Wa Fana* (Annihilation) of ego and rebirth into God-consciousness.

Bankey Behari objects to the adoration of the Guru as God and makes some pungent remarks which are open to contradiction. All, however,

would appreciate his summing up of the Path of the Impersonal as follows:

"Constantly pondering on the vanity, mutability and evanescence of the world, and in setting for themselves the eternal as the Goal (2) vowing themselves to poverty and celibacy (3) passing most of the time in meditation or contemplation in solitude, *samadhi* or *japa* or *kirtan* of the Name of the Lord as above, or in company (4) if necessary, doing religious and charitable acts, especially *satsang* (association with saints)."

**KRISHNAVATARA VI :** By K. M. Munshi. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 218. Price: Rs. 12.

In this Volume, the sixth in the series on Krishnavatara, the author seeks to reconstruct the birth and life of Vyasa Dvaipayana, the traditional author of the Mahabharata, redactor of the Vedas and the custodian of Aryan Dharma. As with other books, here too there is a good deal of romance, imagination and sense of history on the part of the writer introduced to give flesh and blood to the bones of legends and episodes found in the epics and Puranas. Vyasa is projected in the middle of the supposed rivalry between the *Trayi Vidya* (Rig, Yajus and Saman) on the one hand and Atharvan-Angirasa on the other and given the role of the harmoniser of the two traditions. Shukadeva emerges as a married householder. On the whole the narrative is absorbing and portrays the mores and customs of that age in Aryan history with success.

M. P. PANDIT

**IMMORTAL INDIA (Vols. I, III & IV):** By J. H. Dave. Pub.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay. Price: Rs. 3 each.

The various articles on the several shrines and holy rivers of India contributed by Shri Dave, a former Judge of Rajasthan, are brought together as Bhavan's Book University publications. It is undoubtedly true that annual pilgrimages to the rivers, shrines, mountains and holy spots in the land by millions have helped to strengthen the religious foundations of this vast sub-continent; but one wonders whether in these days of modern travel with easier means of communication, the pilgrimages retain that sanctity which they were originally intended to possess. If the virtue of pilgrimages arises mainly from the sacred character attaching to the place itself, then the feeling that prompts the undertaking of the journey is not a very great advance on the animistic basis of the people's beliefs attributing awe and reverence for certain



places as the abodes of departed spirits. One vainly tries to find in the long, learned introduction on the significance of the *tirthas* the wise and yet modern interpretation of the *tirthas* given by Bhishma, while lying on the bed of arrows awaiting death, to Yudhisthira in the Anushasana Parva of the *Mahabharata* :

"Listen with attention to me as I tell you what the *tirtha*, the cleanser, is of man gifted with wisdom. Following eternal Truth, one should bathe in the *tirtha* called Manasa, which is unfathomable, stainless and pure, and which has Truth for its waters and the understanding for its lake. . . . That man whose limbs only are wet with water, is not considered as one that is washed. He, on the other hand, is considered as washed who has washed himself by self-denial. . . ."

ARGUS

THE REVELATION IN THE WILDERNESS.  
AN EXPOSITION OF TRADITIONAL PSYCHOLOGY.  
Vol. I. The Book of Signs ; Vol. II. The Book of Battles ; Vol. III. The Book of Stars, Key to Genesis, Evolution, Paradise and the Fall : By G. H. Mees. Pub. : Kleuwex, Post Box 23, Deventer, Netherlands. Price : Rs. 18-75 ; 34/8 sh. ; \$ 5.

The modern world, that is the world which came into being with the Renaissance, is under the dominion of the rational mind. Its science and technology are the product of human reason working on the material world and seeking to bring the whole universe into subjection to man. The success of this movement in building up a material civilisation is without parallel in human history, but gradually people to-day are beginning to realise the price at which this success has been attained. By concentrating his reason on the material world and seeking to make himself self-sufficient, modern man has become estranged from the higher powers of his soul, the powers which are above reason. As a result he has lost the true balance and wholeness of his life and the lower powers of the soul, which refuse to be subject to reason, are more and more asserting themselves in violent opposition to the rational order which science and technology seek to impose. In other words, modern man has re-enacted the mystery of the Fall. He has rejected the authority of the Spirit which should rule his life and eaten of the tree of knowledge, which promises to make him 'like God' but ends by subjecting him to the powers of nature which reason cannot control. He has sought to be master of the universe in the place of God and now finds that he cannot control the forces which he has released. Like Prometheus he has stolen fire from heaven, and is now beginning to suffer the torment which that presumption brings.

The direct result of this 'fall' of man is that he has lost the capacity to understand the spiritual wisdom of the ancient world. This wisdom was the product not of the (lower) rational mind but of the intuitive or spiritual mind, and it expressed itself not in abstract concepts and logical deductions but in the myths and symbols. It is this language of myth and symbol, the language of all the great religious traditions of the world which is the subject of these volumes by Dr. Mees. He has made a comprehensive study of this traditional symbolism, which underlies all ancient religion and is the basic pattern of human thought before the Renaissance. The development of the rational mind was, of course, a necessary stage in the evolution of human consciousness and took place in ancient Greece and in ancient India at about the same time ; the disaster only occurred when the rational mind broke away from the deeper consciousness of the spiritual mind and lost the meaning of the ancient wisdom. It is the purpose of Dr. Mees to recover the meaning of this ancient symbolism for the modern world.

It is impossible to summarise the contents of these volumes ; they have to be studied in depth. Dr. Mees' range is immense and covers all religious traditions, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, Islamic and Chinese, together with the ancient Greek and Roman, Norse and Germanic, and the interesting symbolism of the Tarot. But behind all these lies the universal cosmic symbolism, which gives an inner unity to the whole and makes it a universal language. This is the fundamental fact to which Dr. Mees draws attention. There is ultimately one universal tradition from which all these particular traditions derive, so that all traditions are ultimately one. The purpose of all this complicated language of symbolism is to lead one back to the ultimate Truth which is one in all. But this ultimate Truth or Reality cannot properly be expressed in human terms, and all the language alike of symbolism and of philosophy is but a complicated way of pointing through signs to the one Reality.

Dr. Mees deals at considerable length with Christian symbolism, both in the story of Creation, Paradise and Fall, in the symbolism of the path of return in the Ten Plagues of Egypt and the Ten Commandments and in the story of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection. In all this he brings a great deal of light to the subject by showing the connection of these themes with the universal themes of all religion. But there is one point in which I feel that Dr. Mees does not do justice to the Hebrew-Christian tradition. Though there can be no doubt that the Bible drew on this universal, cosmic symbolism, yet it should also be recognised

that the Jews attached a particular importance to history. Hebrew and Christian symbolism is essentially a historical symbolism, the revelation of the supreme Truth not only in the cosmos but also in history. It is probable, for instance, that the author (or authors) of Genesis was to some extent reacting against the mythological view of Creation and Fall and deliberately asserting that both creation and redemption are acts of God in history. In the same way I think that it is to miss the point of the stories of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection to treat them simply as symbols. They are symbols, but they are symbols which are based on historical fact. They mark the historic fact of man's ascension to a higher mode of being, in which the present limitations of matter are transcended.

BEDE GRIFFITH

**LORD HARANATH, Vol. 2, Madhya-Leela :**  
By A. Ramakrishna Sastri. Pub. : M/s. Girija Sankar Ghar and the author. Price : Rs. 7.

The first volume of this book was reviewed in the July, 1971 issue of *The Mountain Path*. This second volume deals with the life of Haranath from 1893 to 1912. It contains extracts from some of his letters which will be of interest to those who follow the path of devotion. The book is based on previous publications and articles about Haranath by his devotees.

M. C. S.

**FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS OF INDIA :** By P. Thomas. Pub. : Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd., Bombay. Price not given.

It is a good attempt by the author to bring within the covers of this book an account of the festivals and holidays of India covering all the major religious groups. Nothing of importance has been omitted but such a work has necessarily to be sketchy in view of the limited space (100 pages). Chapter 3 'Main Centres of Hindu Pilgrimage' is too short to cover the complex demography of India. A number of photographic plates enhance the value of the book which should prove useful, particularly to foreign visitors interested in seeing such places.

RAMAMANI

**CONTEMPORARY ESSAYS :** By Karan Singh. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 178. Price : Rs. 3.

There is a spiritual void and inner discontent among the young people of today, who are in open revolt and have taken to violence in some

parts of the world. Traditional beliefs are collapsing and no new ones have emerged to take their place. If this trend is to be checked we should have faith in ourselves and the vision of a new world to strive for.

Such a new faith and hope can be constructed, Dr. Karan Singh believes, on the foundations of the eternal truths enshrined in the Upanishads and dynamically reinterpreted by Swami Vivekananda and Ramana Maharshi, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi. Among these truths are the divinity of man, the harmony of religions, and the unity of the human race.

Dr. Karan Singh pleads eloquently for secularism which is true spirituality, for democracy which is true brotherhood and for social justice without which no nation can survive.

The author, who has just turned forty, is a unique combination of youth and wisdom, of enthusiasm and erudition, of idealism and practical achievement. He is eminently fitted to bridge what is called the generation gap which is wider today than ever before because of the rapid growth of science and technology in recent years.

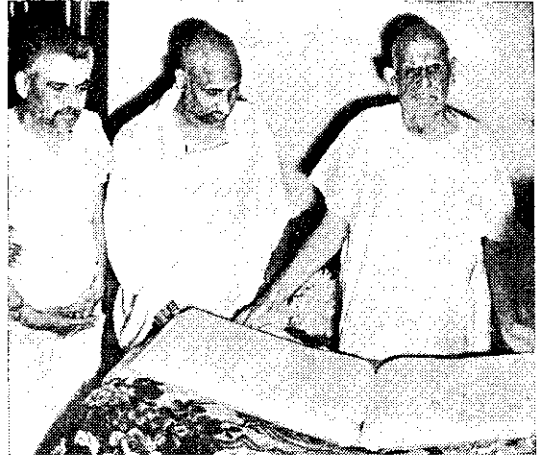
All our students can read this book with profit.

**RAMANA DARSHAN — Souvenir produced on the occasion of a benefit recital by Sangita Kalanidhi M. S. Subbulakshmi on Feb. 13, 1972, Ramana Kendra, Delhi (Available at Sri Ramanasramam Bookstall.) Rs. 6.**

This substantial and sumptuously got-up souvenir carries a large number of interesting and instructive articles and beautiful illustrations. The contributors are all scholars or *sadhakas*, most of them well-known to readers of the *Mountain Path*. While the Kendra's first souvenir *Ramana Manjari* was virtually an anthology of earlier writings on Bhagavan and served as an introduction to the subject, *Ramana Darshan* is an excellent collection of original essays which can meet the requirements of more advanced students who are ready to view Bhagavan's personality and teachings from various angles. Both the selection and the arrangement of the articles bring out the basic unity of purpose and experience amidst a wide variety of approaches. As Sri C. Subramaniam, Chairman of the Souvenir Committee, observes in his Foreword, the various contributors "like pilgrims circumambulating the holy hill on *kartikai* night, behold the same blazing fire and full moon illuminating different sides of the one Arunachala-Siva."

K. S.

# ASHRAM BULLETIN



H.H. Sri Swami Gangeswaranandaji (extreme right) installing the 'Book of Vedas'.

## INSTALLATION

### OF THE

### 'BOOK OF VEDAS'

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His Holiness Sri Swami Gangeswaranandaji Maharaj of Udasini Mutt arrived at the Ashram with a large number of his devotees on Feb. 21, for installing the 'Book of Vedas', which they reverentially address as *Veda Bhagavan*, at the Ashram.

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**T**HE Swamiji aged 91 years is totally blind. His life is a total dedication to learning and spreading the Vedas. A moving encyclopaedia of the Vedas, he tours extensively giving talks on the importance and significance of the Vedas. The Swamiji has taken upon himself the task of reviving the interest of the common man in the Vedas and also to present to him their real worth. As a first step towards that aim, Swamiji has brought out a book containing all the four vedas, for the first time in a book form, which he presents to spiritual institutions and religious centres.

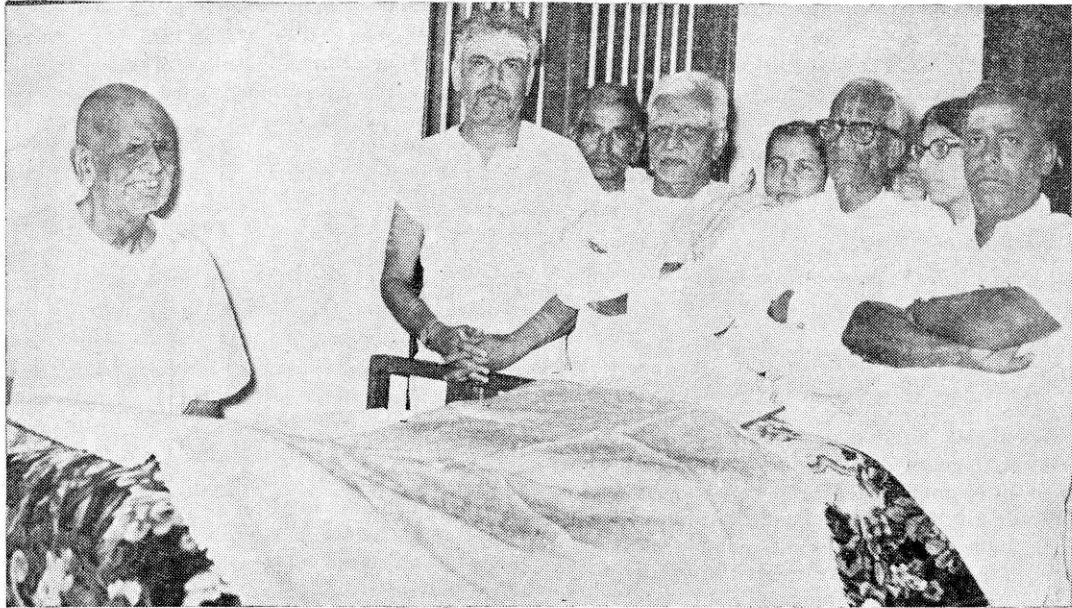
On arrival the Swamiji and party were received in an appropriate manner by the President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Trustee Sri P. S. M. Thirthagiri Chettiar, and other inmates of the ashram. At 3 p.m., a function was arranged in the Ramana Auditorium. A copy of *Veda Bhagavan* (20" x 15", weighing 20 kg) was placed on an elevated pedestal in front of Sri Swamiji, seated on a couch. Sri T. N. Venkataraman presided over the function.

After a brief invocation by Sri K. Natesan, Sri Veda-charya E. J. Kumaraswamy Dhikshitar, presented to Sri Swamiji a welcome address in Sanskrit verses composed by him for the occasion. Sri Swamiji then installed the *Veda Bhagavan* and briefly addressed the gathering. He said:

"'Guru' means dispeller of ignorance. But all cannot become gurus. *Veda Bhagavan* says that whoever causes good, always at all times to the world and all of us, is the 'Guru'—the real Guru and God. Therefore installation of this Book comprising the four Vedas is tantamount to founding *Dharma-prathishta*, all over the world.

"The *rishis* are most important in the Vedas; more important than that is MAHARSHI. By the Grace of Maharshi Ramana and my Guru Ramana I am privileged to render this sacred service at the Maharshi's Ashram.

"All the six folds of Hindu theism, the syllables symbolising their respective deities, (viz., the five syllables of Shiva, the eight of Vishnu, the twelve



The Swamiji is seen with (l to r) Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Ashram President, Sri P. D. Mannar Chettiar, Sri P. S. M. Thirthagiri Chettiar, Trustee of the Ashram and Sri Srinivasa Gupta.

of Aditya, the nine of Ambika, the two of Ganapathi, and the six of Muruga, are all contained in it (the word 'Veda').

"I pray to *Veda Bhagavan*, that the entire world may prosper by it."

This was followed by a brief recital of portions from all the four Vedas, by well-versed scholars

and pundits. The President Sri T. N. Venkataraman accepted the *Veda Bhagavan* presented to the Ashram and the function was successfully concluded. The Swamiji and party who were earlier taken round the Ashram, Sri Bhagavan's shrine and that of Mathrubutheswara, left the very same evening for Madras.

## Sri Ramana Jayanthi Celebrations

### AT THE ASHRAM

Sri Ramana *Jayanthi* is a solemn occasion when the presence of Sri Bhagavan is felt powerfully. One could feel it even the day before, this time also.

The ninety-second *Jayanthi* of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on January 2, at the Ashram in an impressive manner and a large gathering of devotees, Indian and foreign, attended. The new Ramana Auditorium, which comfortably accommodated all the visitors who turned up for the day, wore a festive look decorated with buntings and was well-illuminated.

Commencing at five in the morning with group singing of Tamil songs in praise of Bhagavan and

followed thereafter by *Ekadasa Rudra Mahanyasa* the celebration reached the further stage of *Upanishad Parayana* at eight. This went on till ten when *abhishekam* commenced. Water consecrated by the chanting of *Ekadasa Rudra* was poured over the *Ramaneswara Mahalingam*, along with milk, juice of different fruits, sandal paste, *panchamrita* and finally, *vibhuti*. The *Lingam* was well decorated with a number of garlands specially made and ornaments. The puja culminated in *arati* (waving of lights) at about 11-30. The assembled guests were then treated to a special lunch. A distinguished visitor was Sri B. D. Jatti, Lt. Governor, Pondicherry, who managed to come in spite of the pressure of his official duties,

There is the joy of reunion when old faces show up after a long time. Katya Douglas (known to old devotees as 'Kitty') was present this time with her three children. She is the daughter of our Editor and has since returned to London.

A large number of the poor were fed as usual. During the morning puja and again in the afternoon Sri Sekkal G. Ranganathan and party provided good *nagaswaram* music.

With *bhajan* by Brahmasri Jagadisa Iyer and his party from eight to ten in the night, the functions came to a close.

#### AT CALCUTTA

The Ramana Kendra, Calcutta, celebrated the Jayanthi on January 2. That holy day dawned with a *bhajan* by a group of devotees carrying the photo of Sri Bhagavan, starting from Ved Bhavan at 4-30 a.m.; they passed through a number of streets and ended at 16, Jatindas Road. At 11 O'clock there was poor-feeding, including sweets, near the Sai Samaj premises, at Rash Behari Avenue.

In the evening at 3-30 the function commenced in the specially arranged Bajrang Hall, with the chanting of 'Arunachala Siva' and an *arati* to Sri Bhagavan's decorated portrait. The meeting was largely attended by devotees and the public. Hon'ble Mr. Chief Justice P. B. Mukherjee, the President of the Kendra, presided over the function. Sri P. S. V. Iyer, welcomed the gathering.

Sri H. R. Chadha narrated instances from his experiences with Bhagavan and concluded saying: "Nothing was to be asked for from this Great Master; but everything was granted even without asking; all that is needed, was complete surrender and faith."

Sri S. M. Banerji, outlined the life history of the Master and His teachings. Smt. Anusuya Subramaniam, opened her speech saying it was really difficult to speak on the Master who taught through Silence. *Jayanthi* and *Aradhana* celebrations of a Great Saint, who has no birth and death, is just to make mortals realise the glorious teachings taught for the uplift of humanity. Sri P. N. Thyagarajan spoke in Tamil. Among the junior group, Mr. Ratin Mitra, Miss Prema Thyagarajan and Master Sankar spoke about the greatness of the Guru.

Sri P. B. Mukherjee, in his final address, analyzed the simplicity and loftiness of Bhagavan's teachings. He called upon the younger generation to give more importance to spiritual matters, to study the teachings of religious masters, and lead a life of *dharma*.

Sri Radhika Mohan Sen proposed a vote of thanks. Booklets received from Sri Ramanasramam were distributed to the audience. The function came to a close with a *bhajan* conducted by Smt. Lakshmi and party.

#### AT DELHI

*Ramana Jayanthi* was celebrated on January 2, in the Satsang Hall of Vinayak Mandir, Sarojini Nagar, New Delhi, under the auspices of Ramana Kendra, Delhi. The function began with the chanting of *Sri Rudram* and *Upadesa Saram*.

Sri M. L. Sondhi spoke in appreciation of the activities of the Kendra and mentioned the issue of a commemorative postage stamp of Sri Bhagavan. He reminded the audience that India's victory was the victory of truth and justice which people of goodwill upheld by the grace of sages like Sri Bhagavan, whose ever-living presence at Arunachala, the sacred heart-centre of the world, worked silently in their hearts.

Sri K. C. Subbiah spoke about self-enquiry 'Who Am I?' which helps one to reach the source from which the mind issues and one realises that the power which pervades the universe is no other than the reality present in one's own heart. The path of surrender is easier and demands only absolute faith in the grace of Sri Bhagavan who takes on himself the burden of looking after all aspirants.

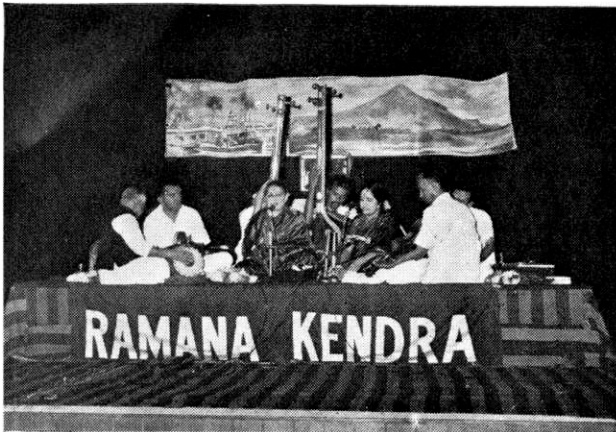
Sri A. K. Iyer explained how the practice of Self-enquiry with patience and faith destroys *vasanas* and guides one gently and surely on the path of progress. The function came to a close with the chanting in chorus of *Arunachala-Siva*.

#### AT BOMBAY

The *Jayanthi* celebrations this year in Bombay on Sunday, March 5, was attended by a very large number of Sri Bhagavan's devotees, under the distinguished auspices of Justice K. K. Desai, Judge of the High Court, Bombay. H.H. Sri Swami Chinmayananda delivered an instructive address on Sri Bhagavan's life and teaching, delineating Sri Bhagavan's state of *sahaja samadhi* and His message through 'Silence'. The function was a great success.

#### AT HIS BIRTH-PLACE

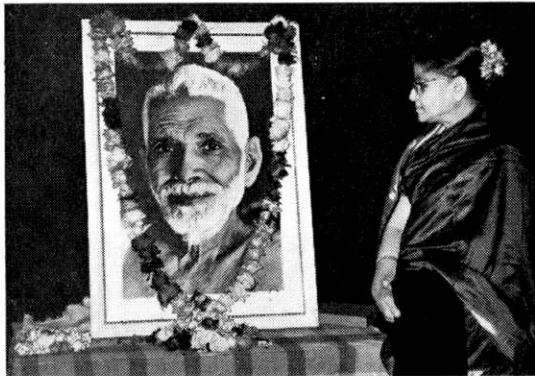
The celebration took place at *Sundara Mandiram* the house hallowed by the birth of Sri Bhagavan. The authorities of Sri Bhuminatheswara temple took part in the function which concluded with a speech by Dr. Kuppuswamy Sharma of Madurai.



*A brilliant music recital by the famous singer, Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi, kept the big audience spell-bound.*



*Sri Subramaniam, Central Minister for Planning, releases the RAMANA DARSHAN Souvenir. Next to him is Prof. K. Swaminathan, Secretary of the Kendra, who spares no pains to see that soon a Ramana-Centre is established at the Indian capital.*



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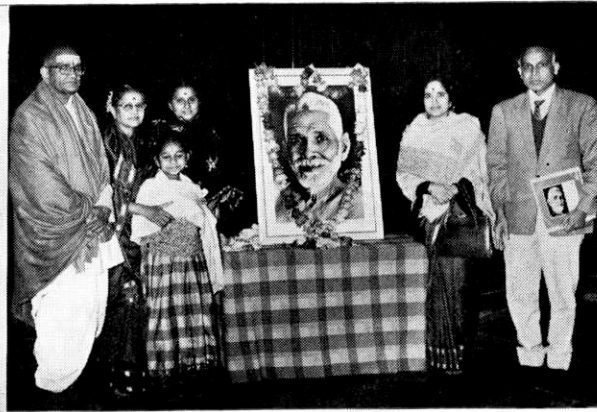
*Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi stands spellbound by the Grace and Power of Sri Bhagavan's smiling portrait.*

MF

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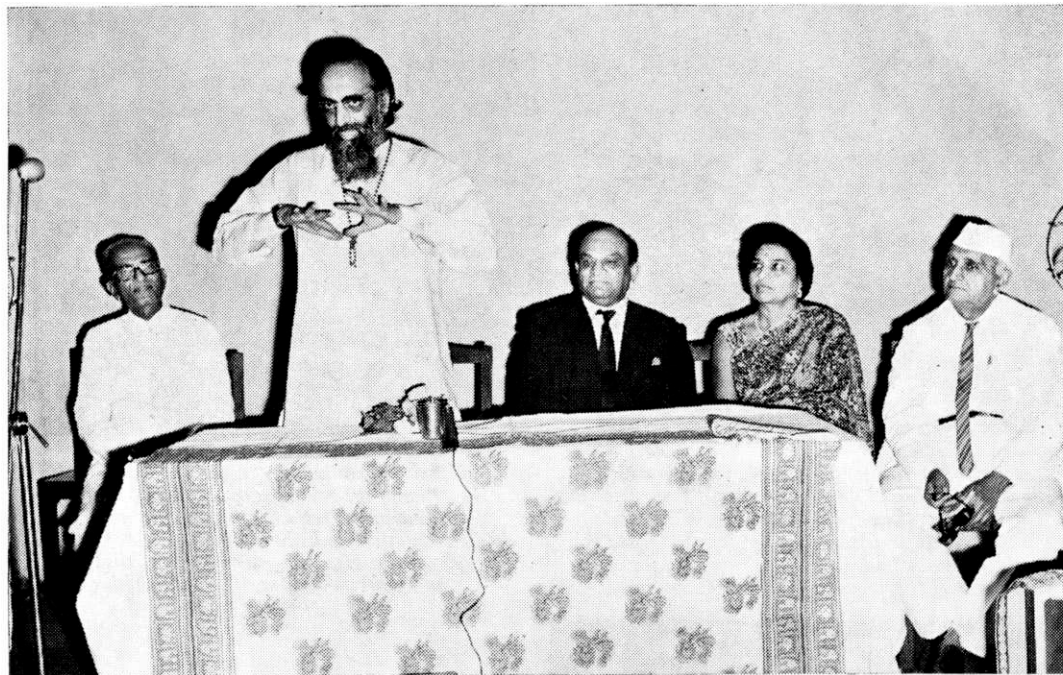
*Smt. Subbulakshmi seen with Smt. and Sri A. R. Natarajan, who were mainly responsible for the success of the function. (l. to r.): Sri T. Sadasivam, Managing Director, Kalki, Smt. Subbulakshmi, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Kum. Ambika — Sri Bhagavan's large portrait — Smt. Radha Viswanathan and Sri A. R. Natarajan.*

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*Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi receiving a presentation from Smt. Swaminathan.*



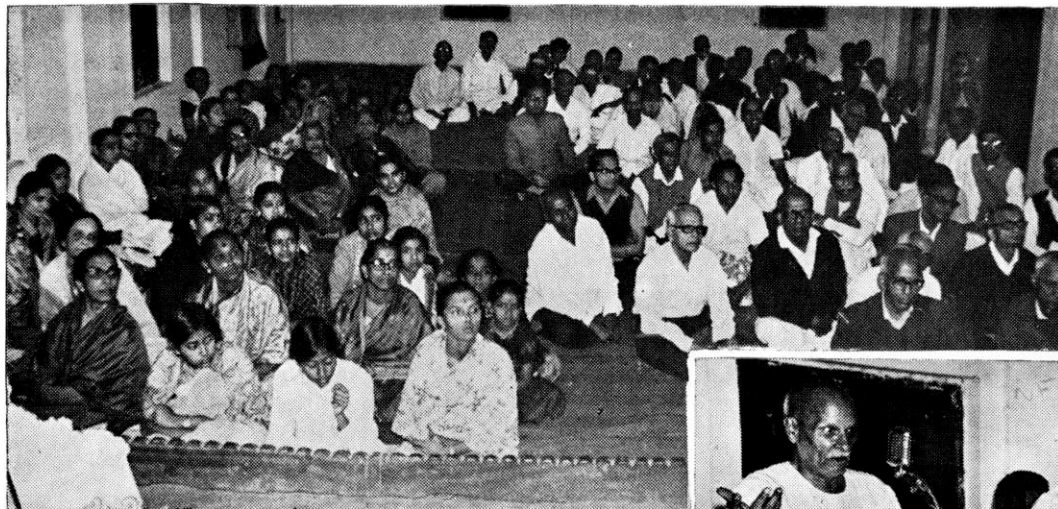
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#### JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS AT BOMBAY

*H.H. Sri Swami Chinmayananda speaks. Others seated are (l. to r.): Vice-President Sri Jamnadas Ladiwalla, Justice Kapil K. Desai, Mrs. Desai and Sri N. H. Kotak.*



#### CALCUTTA KENDRA

*The gathering of devotees, listening with rapt attention to Sri H. R. Chadha's inspiring talk on Sri Bhagavan. Chief Justice Sri P. B. Mukherjee is to his left.*



## AT MADURAI

It was a two-day celebration on the 1st and 2nd at *Ramana Mandiram* where Sri Bhagavan attained Realisation. Speeches on the teachings of Sri Bhagavan, a special puja and a procession in which the picture of Sri Bhagavan was taken out through the main streets, formed the programme. Among the distinguished participants were Sri Swami Rengananda of Ceylon, Sri T. K. Sundaram of the Divine Life Society, Sri A. V. Jayachandran, the Information Officer, Sri Swami Ramananda of Rishikesh and Sri Swami Yogananda, President, Divine Life Society, Madurai.

## AT MADRAS

Sri Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Madras, observed the *Jayanthi* on January 2, with Vedic chanting, puja, distribution of prasada and a speech by Dr. Nagaraja Rao, Tagore Professor, Madras University. Smt. Sulochana Natarajan sang songs by Muruganar.

\* \* \*

At 'Sankara Vihar', Ayanavaram, the function comprised recital of *Aksharamanamalai* (the Marital Garland of Letters) and *Ramana Sannidhimurai* and speeches by Dr. N. Sanjeevi and Brahmasri V. Jagadeesa Sastri.

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The members of Ramana Bhakta Sabha, Chempak, celebrated the *Jayanthi* on January 2 at two places, one at West Mambalam and the other at Triplicane. At both these places *Rudra Abhishekam* and *Siva Sahasranama Archana* were performed. 'Forty Verses in Praise of Sri Bhagavan' and Taittiriya Upanishad were recited. A booklet of songs in praise of Bhagavan Ramana, compiled by the late Sri T. V. Seetharama Bhagavathar, was released.

## AT KOLHAPUR

The *Jayanthi* which was celebrated by the devotees residing at Kolhapur at the Sat Sangh Mandal, included various programmes, like recitations, puja and abhisheka. *Naivedya* at noon was followed in the afternoon by an informal meeting of devotees. There was meditation, prayer and talks by devotees, like, Pundit Khuperkar Shastri, Sri G. S. Kulkarni, Prof. Mudholkar, and a song specially composed for the occasion by Mr. Page. The function concluded with *arati* and *prasada*.

## AT NEW YORK



ARUNACHALA ASHRAMA, New York, celebrated Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanthi* with devotees participating in chantings and prasada. A large portrait was adorned and worshipped.

## AT VIJAYAWADA

The 92nd *Jayanthi* was celebrated at *Ramana Sadanam* on January 2, with *Ashtothara Sahasranama Puja* and *Upanishad Parayana* by the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, led by Smt. Suri Nagamma. *Prasada* was distributed after puja. In the evening at 4 there was *Vedaparayana*, followed by inspiring talks on Sri Bhagavan by Sri S. V. L. Narasimha Rao and Sri G. Krishna. The function concluded with a musical recital by Sri Kutumba Rao.

## AT DAR-ES-SALAAM (Africa)

Inspired by the 92nd birthday of Sri Bhagavan, prominent devotees and their families residing at Dar-es-Salaam, celebrated the occasion at the residence of Sri Hari Prasad B. Patel, with great enthusiasm and devotional fervour from 6.30 a.m. *Pujas* and *Prasada* were followed by Meditation for half an hour. Devotional songs were sung till 10 a.m., then light refreshments were served to all and the function terminated. A sum of Rs. 625.30 being the devout offering of devotees in Dar-es-Salaam was received by the Ashram through Sri J. L. Mahajani, chartered accountant, towards the *Jayanthi* expenses which was gratefully acknowledged. Prominent among those who organised the



function were Sri & Smt. P. K. Beri, Sri & Smt. B. D. Rathod and family, Sri Hariprasad and family, Sri Hansrajbhai and family, Sri Natubhai Pandya, Sri Tulsibhai Vora and Sri Jaisingh Mahajani.

#### AT BHADRAK

The devotees assembled at the residence of Sri C. H. J. Rao. Puja to Ganapathi and the picture of Sri Bhagavan which was well decorated was followed by recitation of *Tulsi Ramayana*, *Ramana Gita* and *Sad Vidya*. Later on Sri Somayajulu spoke on the method of Self-enquiry taught by Sri Bhagavan. Sri P. V. Rao gave an account of his unusual experiences while he was at Arunachala last year. *Bhajan* at night lasted up to the early hours of the next day.

#### AT PALGHAT

At Nochur village near Palghat the members of *Prem Sangh* celebrated Sri Bhagavan's birthday. After *Upanishad Parayana*, *Sahasranama Archana* was performed to Sri Bhagavan's picture. *Prasad* was distributed. In the evening there was group recitation in chorus of devotional songs composed by the late Dr. Padmanabhan, a great devotee of Sri Bhagavan.

#### GRAND MUSIC RECITAL AT DELHI

*Sangita Kalanidhi* Srimati M. S. Subbulakshmi's music performance in aid of the Building Fund of RAMANA KENDRA which took place on February 13, the Mahasivarathri Day, in Sardar Patel Auditorium, was a great success in every way. The large audience was thrilled to hear the celebrated singer rendering Sanskrit *slokas* by and on Sri Bhagavan and Tamil verses by Sri Muruganar and Sadhu Om.

In the words of the music critic of the *Hindustan Times*, the memorable recital "Celebrated man, sage and God in a triple pean of fervid prayerfulness. . . . There was a memorable elaboration of *Vachaspati*, ample in its scope, leisurely in its treatment and sparkling in its effect, culminating in a passionately rendered *Paratpara Parameswara*. As usual, the aptness of M. S. Subbulakshmi's choice of *Kritis* could not be better illustrated than in the lines which referred to the towering 'flame that neither Hari nor Aja (Brahma) could explore'. Here was a tribute both to Shiva, as the Lord of Arunachala and to the sage, Bhagavan Ramana, who by making it his home, made it also the spiritual home of thousands of seekers."

In the course of a brief speech, Sri C. Subramaniam, Central Minister for Planning, thanked the artist and announced that one lakh of rupees would be collected through sale of tickets and advertisements in the souvenir *Ramana Darshan*,<sup>1</sup> which he released on the occasion. He also released a volume on *Ramana Maharshi and J. Krishnamurti* by "Alone".

#### HONOURED AWARD TO Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN

Sri Bhagavan's devotees, Ashramites, and *The Mountain Path* convey their happy felicitations to Prof. K. Swaminathan on the Presidential Award of PADMA BHUSHAN conferred on him by the Government of India, this year, for his many-sided activities. He is one of the oldest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, widely known as an eminent educationist and distinguished writer. What is more his life of aspirations, and service to humanity as a great social worker, is inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's noble ideals. He is the Chief Editor of *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. His devotion to Sri Bhagavan is great and so is his admiration for Sri Muruganar. Readers of our journal know him well for his excellent translations of Sri Muruganar's Tamil verses. He has been instrumental in making known Sri Bhagavan's teachings through the Ramana Kendra, Delhi in its weekly *sat sanghs* and promoting the Ashram's welfare. We wish him many more years of a happy life of devoted service!



Prof. K. Swaminathan

\* \* \*

We offer our felicitations to Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, who is a devotee of Sri Bhagavan and a great collaborator in the progress of Ramana Kendra, Delhi, on whom has been conferred the Presidential Award of PADMA BHUSHAN, this year. Dr. M. S. Swaminathan has distinguished himself also as Director of the Indian Agricultural Institute and winner of the 1971 award for community leadership. We wish him great success!

<sup>1</sup>A review of this souvenir is published in this issue.

## SRI VIDYA HAVAN

This annual function in commemoration of the commencement of worship of *Sri Chakra Meru*, consecrated by the TOUCH of Sri Bhagavan was performed at the Ashram, on a grand scale as usual, on Friday, March 17. The function lasted the whole day, attended by a large number of devotees.

\* \* \*

## THE ROYAL VISITORS

Princess Irene of Greece had visited the Ashram twice before (see *Ashram Bulletin* of January 1967 issue, p. 79 and of January 1969 issue, p. 63) in the company of the Queen Mother Frederika. It was a great pleasure to receive her again at the Ashram on Feb. 2. She was accompanied by Princess Sophia of Hanover, Prince Karl and Princess Yvonne, Dorothea and Christie. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Director, Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras,



*The Royal Family* : Princess Irene is seen fourth from right. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan (2nd from r.) and the Ashram President.

was with them during their visit for two days on the occasion of the *samadhi* anniversary of Sri Swami Rajeswarananda (for a note on whom see April, 1964 issue, p. 119) on Feb. 3.

## SWAMI CHIDANANDA VISITS THE ASHRAM

H.H. Sri Swami Chidananda, President, Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, visited the Ashram from Jan. 18 to 21. He had a busy time giving interviews to a number of people and his programme included a visit to the Arunachaleswara temple and *pradakshina* of the Holy Hill.



In a short but impressive talk to a limited group of inmates just before he left Swamiji stressed that tolerance was an absolutely essential virtue in spiritual life. Swami Chidananda One should never get offended however disagreeable or provocative others' actions might be. He also sang a bhajan song of Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj. It was a happy experience to have the Swami in our midst. He was quite happy over the improvements in the Ashram, since his last visit in 1967, during the *Kumbhabhishekam* of Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace.

\* \* \*

## PILGRIMS

There was practically a German invasion of the Ashram, as it were, this year! Apart from Mr. & Mrs. Hibschenberger, the following devotees from Germany came for longer or shorter stays (duration are given in brackets):

Albert Frahm (3 months), Paul Rheinbay and his family (5 days), Wilhelm Schnecken Burger (1 month), Kurt Maser (1 month), Horst Rutkowski (1 month), Dr. & Mrs. Heyken Eberhard (1 day), Peter Hoffman (2 days), Gunthur Kowalski (2 days), Wolfgang Weiss (1 day), Karl Pfauter (2 days), Eckart Schulze (2 days).

\* \* \*

We have had the pleasure of having amidst us a group of sincerely devoted seekers from the west in the year 1971 (till the end of March 1972) who stayed for upto eight months in the Ashram. By the time this issue is published they will all have returned to their respective countries!



ANANDA

*Mr. & Mrs. Charles Reeder* from the States stayed with us nearly for 15 months. Their first child was born here. It was a lovely sight to see little ANANDA walk round the Samadhi shrine of Sri Bhagavan all by herself though barely eleven months old! We wish this youngest member of 'Ramana-family' all the best!

*Mr. & Mrs. Reeder*

*Miss Essie*, who came on a visit to her sister, *Mrs. Anne Reeder*, has also been drawn to Bhagavan as a seeker in all earnest. May this spiritual current continue in her busy life in the States.

As stated already, *Misses Jacqueline* and *Yvonne* of France stuck to their schedule of yearly visits to Arunachala for their earnest *sadhana* and we are happy to see them more and more drawn to Sri Bhagavan.

*Mrs. Brigitte Sundin* was happy to have her daughter, *Diane*, brought into the 'Ramana-fold' as a sincere devotee though barely out of her teens.

*Mrs. Hibschenberger's* husband joined her at the Ashram in her *sadhana*. He was sorry not to be able to stay longer than six weeks!

*Hugo Maier*

Last but not the least, *Hugo Maier*, has also left for Germany, to comfort his ailing mother, after a stay of a year at the Ashram. We always wished him *au revoir* during his previous journeys to Germany, but not this time, since now we know he cannot but return HOME! He is a prominent figure at reunions of devotees.

*Mr. Charles Reeder* and *Mrs. Anne Reeder*, U.S.A. (a stay of 15 months):

"Returning to one's old home and quietly getting settled' is an old Zen saying that tells some of our joy in being at Arunachala for this long living time. But of course we come with so much mental luggage that the 'quietly getting settled' calls for a remarkable amount of house-cleaning that makes the devotee keen on returning to the fundamental immovable foundation. In this way Bhagavan graciously and slowly ripens the lives of his green devotees!

Approaching the Hill, we saw it from a long way off. It draws the eye naturally especially when it stands stark and unshakable in the hot season, the lemon grass all burnt out. But at first we could only see it through the rattling and shaking iron bars of the old bus from Madras and from the horse-cart and only after we were graciously received and had a good scrubbing were we free to wander like children across its long brown slopes.

On April 14, 1971, we were overjoyed to be joined by a fellow-pilgrim and wanderer, ANANDA. Learning to study her and respond to her has been itself a good and often jolly *sadhana*!

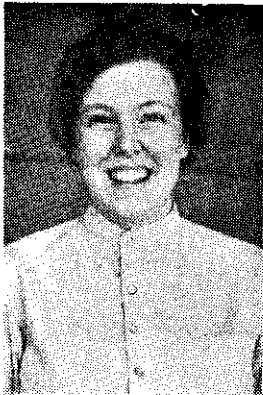
After about fifteen months here the direction is clear to return to everyday life and let the spirit of Arunachala express itself there in whichever way it will. On leaving we can only make many *namaskarams* to Bhagavan and to those who reflect his eternal presence here.

Of Arunachala the saying fits that we once saw painted on a Zen monk's incense box: 'remarkably high peak!'

Miss Essie Tomlinson of U.S.A. (a stay of 3 months):

“For now we see through a glass, darkly,  
but then face to face.” (1 Cor. 13 : 12)

“In ignorance, I came, but in the light of Bhagavan, I met Truth, face to face. So naturally and quietly did It reveal Itself to me, that I felt it has always been with me! Its countenance was Love expressed within every living thing, all expressing the name of the One Self. I felt I was waking up from a deep and heavy sleep, into a stream of cool consciousness, where everything glistened with joyful Light flowing in endless themes and variations. Such joy and peace I had never known before!



Miss Essie Tomlinson

“After this initial revelation, no day was ever the same, each having its characteristic of highs and lows, and occasional plateaus. But by the grace of Bhagavan, the strength of Arunachala, and the love of many, I was able to continue on the path. Seeing an entirely new life pattern unfold before me was, at times, very painful. This pain drew me inward, though, to seek its source which, later, I realised was the Divine Peace. Where there is growth, there is pain; where there is laughter, there is sorrow; where there is love, there is hate; where there is living, there is dying. All is God, the Universal Reason for all being. Only through His Grace could I have come to this realisation.

“I know my journey inward has just begun. Even so, I feel my life has a new direction now, and a more definite purpose — that of spiritual practice in an everyday sense. I know that even though I will be leaving Arunachala soon, my experiences of the Heart will continue to be a source of strength and reassurance for me, until the Lord wills for me to return.

“Before closing, I would like to share one more first impression of Arunachala. It happened to be my first *pradakshina* around the Hill. We had gotten off the paved road and had been walking for awhile when I saw, standing at the foot of the Hill, a tree. There were no other trees or bushes around it, which made me study it even more closely. It was so

beautiful in its solitude — the essence of simplicity. I became an observer of this perfect servant of Nature and later these words solidified my impression :

“Knotted bark and limb  
Sending in the breath of God;  
Whose hands rooted deeply in this hill :  
The days of winded fury and frozen  
light for growing.  
All I ask of thee is to sit at thy feet,  
Striving upward and inwards  
Toward the Light,  
Clinging to nothing  
At the foot of this sacred hill, thy Home.”

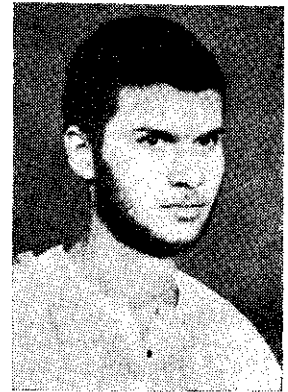
\* \* \*

Hansa (Johannes J. de Reede) spent about a month with us *en route* from Italy to his place in Kerala. He came here for the first time 22 years ago and has been visiting the Ashram practically every year. This year he was accompanied by a young *sadhaka* from France, Gangaji (Jacques Albohair) who for a few years followed the teachings of J. Krishnamurti but having been introduced to the teachings of Ramana



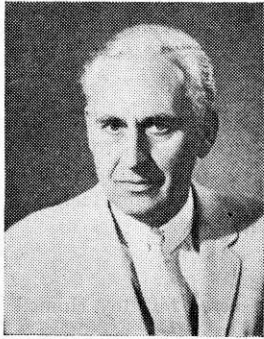
Sri Hansa

Maharshi and Anandamayee Ma he realised that he had found what he was seeking for. He is naturally of an introverted disposition and his experiences at the Feet of Arunachala; the *pradakshinas*, a trip to the top, a number of *darshans* at Arunachaleswara temple and particularly meditation in the Old Hall confirmed his certainty that the One Search has started in real earnest. His intuition helped him to see this to-day at the age of seventeen and “Bhagavan will see to the rest”, he says!



Sri Gangaji

Dr. and Mrs. Werner and Helga Keller came to Tiruvannamalai intending a long stay at Sri



Dr. Werner Keller

around, saw them overawed in the Arunachala temple at the foot of the Mountain where they felt 'embraced by and embracing a great Presence'. The chanting of the *Vedaparayana* at the *Samadhi*, which they heard for the first time, impressed them greatly. In the late afternoon sunset on the path to Skandashram the Silence of being still became eloquent. A longer stay to deepen those first impressions is being contemplated. Dr. Werner, a famous author on traditional and religious subjects is best known for his *The Bible as History* and his books *On the Origin of Russian Culture*, *On the Riddle of the Etruscan People*, *On the Jewish Exile*, et al. His books have been translated into many languages including Braille. His wife is a co-writer.



Mrs. Helga Keller

Sri N. T. Saraf, Additional Sessions Judge of Nagpur, spent a few days in the Ashram in the beginning of February. On his return to his native place he writes :

"I beg to record with all pleasure my gratitude to the management of the Ashram for providing me with a good room and for all the hospitality and kindness it has shown me. I consider myself fortunate in having been able to visit this holy place. The Ashram has an ideal setting for *sadhana* and one feels Sri Bhagavan's gracious presence and guid-

ance almost tangibly. On Maha Sivarathi day (Feb. 13) I made *pradakshina* round Arunachala Hill at night along with other devotees. It was an unforgettable experience. I long to come back to Sri Ramanasramam soon. I pray that the happiness I have found here may never be 'lost again.'

\* \* \*



Mr. Khanna



Smt. Premvati Khanna

Sri Hari Chand Khanna of Kanpur (introduced to our readers in our issue of April 1970, p. 109), came to the Ashram on February 27, together with his wife, Smt. Premvati Khanna (in whose name a big guest house has already been built and donated to the Ashram), his only daughter and son-in-law and their lovely little grandson. They spent five days and the inmates of the Ashram were happy to have them amidst them. His son-in-law, Mr. Kapoor, unfortunately was ill and hence could not actively participate in the Ashram activities. We hope he will return soon, with his family for a longer stay!

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Mrs. Brigitte Sundin of France (a stay of 5 months):



Mrs. Sundin

"This is my third long stay here, at the Ashram. Every stay has been different from many points of view.

"Arunachala is always inspiring. He becomes more and more uncompromising and does not leave anything undone. The same difficulties come up again and again till they are solved and disappear, not by will but by non-will.



"This time the realisation has come that explaining matters accruing during *sadhana*, with the intellect, is useless. Only with the heart can you understand. In stillness there is nothing to ask, nothing to explain, there is only Peace. In silence you let me know . . . thank you, Arunachala!"

\* \* \*

Miss Diane Sundin of France (stayed for 3 months): "I have been staying now about three months in Sri Ramanasramam and I may say that the meaning of my life has been transformed. I used to take my spiritual path rather through the intellect than the heart and it created conflicts within myself. Here — by Bhagavan's Grace — a little bit of that missing link has been found. I am soon going back but I carry in my heart the seed which may sprout more



Miss Diane Sundin

into the light of being, from the underground of thinking. I thank everybody in the Ashram for their kindness and the peaceful atmosphere that surrounded them. I hope to be able to come back here for a longer stay in order to go deeper — by Bhagavan's Grace — into my search and discovery of my Self."

\* \* \*

Mrs. Marlies Hibschenberger of West Germany (a stay of six months): "In spring-summer 1971 I was one of the thousands of busy office-employees in Germany. Again and again I had the urgent feeling to come to the feet of Arunachala for *sadhana* for a longer time guided by Bhagavan. It is difficult for westerners to do proper and serious *sadhana* in the conditions of our modern life.

And at that time I went through a serious mental crisis lasting nearly one and a half years which made that inner urge even more pronounced. I remember how one evening I sat in front of Bhagavan's picture and from the depth of my heart came the plea: 'Please, Bhagavan don't let me go one step away from you.' But then the reply came clearly: 'Once you are in the tiger's jaws there is no escape any more!' And I felt completely reassured. After months later I had the chance to come for the fourth time to the Ashram, and my husband let me go without a fixed time for coming back.

While in the Ashram I spent most of my time

in meditation and occasional fights with my *vasanas* when they got stirred up as it happens in *sadhana*. Whatever happens can be taken as Grace of the Sat-Guru who knows what is best for us!

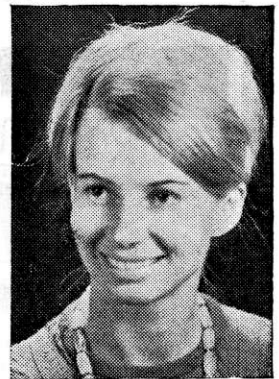
Meanwhile in Germany my husband was longing to come, and by His Grace he also got the chance to do so for a stay of six weeks. As soon as he came he felt at home, and benefitted much from his stay.

We are thankful that we could stay here. By Bhagavan's Grace He is always forever in our hearts, sometimes brilliantly shining and sometimes deeply hidden but it is upto us to keep the door to the heart open!"

\* \* \*

Misses Jacqueline and Yvonne, when approached by our Managing Editor to express their views to be published, said:

"We have already given in writing on two former occasions what we felt (see *The Mountain Path*, April 1968, p. 161 and April 1970, p. 106); now we have no urge to write anything. Perhaps it is due to our feeling in our heart that each of us is 'one of the Ashramites' and no more a guest or a visitor!"

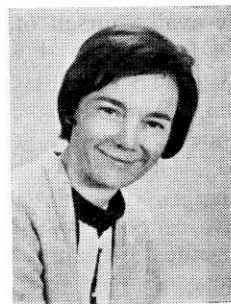


Mrs. Hibschenberger



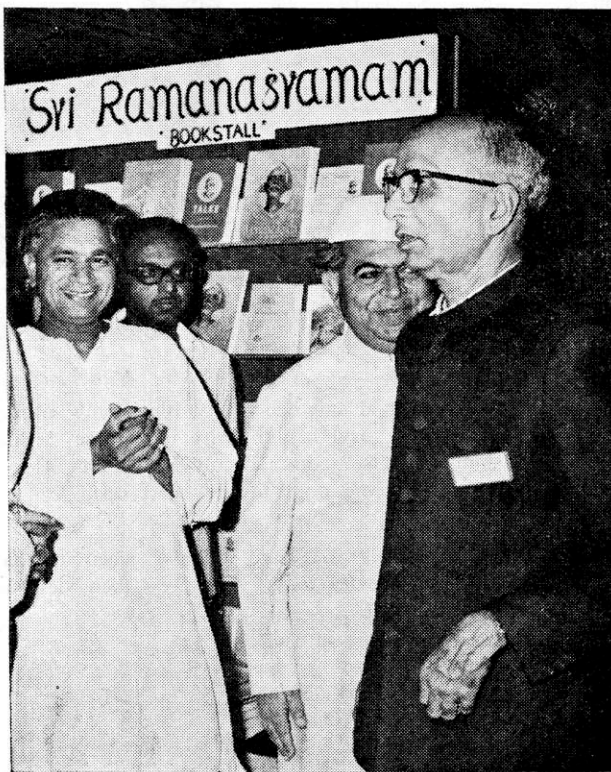
Miss Jacqueline

Yes, even in the days of Sri Bhagavan visitors felt as guests only during their first visit; on subsequent visits they would feel like hosts and inmates of the Ashram. Sri Bhagavan's solicitude is like that of a Father and Mother, now as before, and the Ashram is HOME!



Miss Yvonne

## Ashram Participation in World Book Fair



WORLD BOOK FAIR : Sri Ramanasramam Book Stall is visited by the Chairman of the National Book Trust, Dr. B. V. Keskar (*extreme right*) and Prof. Nurul Hasan, Minister of State for Education, Govt. of India (*second from right partly hidden*).

Owing to the keen efforts and enthusiasm of Sri A. R. Natarajan and also the help of the members of the Ramana Kendra, Delhi, Sri Ramanasramam had pleasure in participating in the WORLD BOOK FAIR organised by the National Book Trust of India, this year in New Delhi, from March 18 to April 2. The centrally situated STALL in the main pavilion secured for the Ashram attracted great attention, particularly the coloured photograph of Sri Bhagavan kept near the Stall. The Ashram publications in English and various Indian languages kept in the Stall drew the interest of an exceptionally large number of persons, including many old devotees and revived their interest in the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. On the opening day Dr. B.V. Keskar, Chairman, National Book Trust and Prof. Nurul Hasan, Minister of State for Education, Government of India, visited the Stall. One of the fast selling items in the Stall is, of course, the beautiful Bust Photo of Sri Maharshi !

## The True Tao

A disciple said to Lu Chu : "Master I have attained to your Tao. I can do without fire in winter. I can make ice in summer."

"You merely avail yourself of latent heat and latent cold," replied Lu Chu. "That is not what I call Tao. I will demonstrate to you what my Tao is."

Thereupon he tuned two lutes and placed one in the hall and the other in the adjoining room. And when he struck the *kung* note on one, the *kung* note on the other sounded ; when he struck the *chio* note on one, the *chio* note on the other sounded. This because they were both tuned to the same pitch.

But if he changed the interval of one string, so that it no longer kept its place in the octave, and then struck it, the result was that all the twenty-five strings jangled together. There was sound as before, but the influence of the key-note was gone.

— CHUANG TZU.

## PILGRIMS FROM U.S.A.

When Master Subramuniya of U.S.A. visited our Ashram in November, 1971 and could stay for a short while only, he expressed his intension of bringing a party of his students and disciples to our Ashram to give them an opportunity to experience the powerful spiritual vibrations here. Nearly a 80-member party in three buses came to the Ashram on March 15 in the late afternoon after having visited Palani, a pilgrim centre dedicated to Lord Subramanya. They were all cordially received by the President, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, and served coffee.

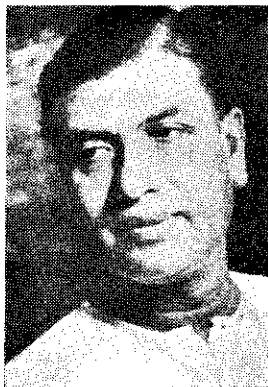
After going round the Ashram they all assembled in the spacious *Ramana Auditorium* where at their request arrangements were made for a talk on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings. The gathering was welcomed by Sri T. P. Ramachandra Aiyar, who introduced Sri Viswanatha Swami to the audience and requested him to give a summary of Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings for the benefit of the visiting pilgrims. Also the film of Sri Bhagavan was screened later on.

The visiting party were all treated to dinner. Next morning they visited Skandashram on the Hill and left for Madras by about 10. The members of the party expressed their appreciation and said that they felt very much benefited by their pilgrimage to Arunachala and to the abode of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The party also received help and assistance from Sri Saldas, one of the Ashramites.

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## OBITUARY

*Sri Heramba Mukherjee*, an old and distinguished devotee of Sri Bhagavan passed away in Calcutta on December 14, 1971. A lawyer by profession, he



*Heramba Mukherjee*

took an active part in the freedom movement in the thirties and had been interned for some years. Later on, deeply imbued with spiritual aspirations he travelled widely in all parts of India and contacted saints and ascetics. From the first day of his *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan he remained a fervent devotee of Sri Bhagavan for more than two decades. He was one of the pioneers who spread the teachings of Sri Bhagavan among the educated people

“Cry to the Lord with an intensely yearning heart and you will certainly see Him. People shed a whole jug of tears for wife and children. They swim in tears for money. But who weeps for God? Cry to Him with a real cry..... God reveals Himself to a devotee who feels drawn to Him by the combined force of the three attractions : the attraction of worldly possessions for the worldly man, the child's attraction for its mother, and the husband's attraction for the chaste wife. If one feels drawn to Him by the combined force of these three attractions, then through it one can attain Him.”

—*Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa*

in West Bengal and it was through his efforts and patronage that the first Bengali biography of Sri Maharshi, written by his friend, Sri B. P. Kirti, was published. He has left in different parts of India a large number of friends and admirers to mourn his loss. May he rest in peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

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## THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIBRARY

## New Additions

- Krishnavatara VI — The Book of Veda Vyasa the Master* : By K. M. Munish. Pub. : Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. (Rs. 12).
- Saddharma Pundarika or the Lotus of the True Law* : Translated by H. Kern. Pub. : Dover Publications, Inc., New York. (\$ 3).
- A Message from Arunachala* : By Paul Brunton. Pub. : Rider & Company, London. (£ 0.70 in U.K.).
- Autobiography of a Saint* : By Therese of Lisieux. Translated by Ronald Knox. Pub. : Fontana Books (Collins).
- Saint Francis of Assisi* : By Elizabeth Goudge. Pub. : Hodder & Stoughton, London.
- Lives of the Saints* : Translated with introduction by J. F. Webb. Pub. : Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England.
- Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda* : By Sister Nivedita. Pub. : Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Baghbazar, Calcutta-3.
- Letters on Yoga* : By Sri Aurobindo. Pub. : Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. (Rs. 15).





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## INTRODUCING...

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Mrs. Eleanor Pauline Noye

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*Mrs. Eleanor Pauline Noye* having reached a crisis in her life in 1939 decided to leave her home in California to make a trip around the world in search of mental peace. In poor health and almost a nervous wreck due to continuous mental anguish and sleepless nights she was in no position to face the hazards of a long voyage. Much against the advice of her doctor to abandon the trip she braved it saying, "I want to find myself." No wonder when the ship approached the Indian peninsula, something made her change her mind and she got off at Madras instead of going on to Calcutta as originally envisaged. Being unable to bear the heat of Madras, she left for Kodaikanal next morning on the advice of the proprietor of the Connemara Hotel. First day at this hill station, while conversing with some residents, she asked them if they knew any "Seers"? They mentioned to her Sri Ramana Maharshi as the greatest Seer in India. She left for Tiruvannamalai the next day. Traveling by car and train and then by bullock cart from the railway station, she reached the Ashram where she was cordially received by Sri Niranjanananda

Swami. Bhagavan was on the hill at that time and on his return Mrs. Noye was taken to the hall.

As she entered it, to quote her own words in an article contributed by her to the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, she "felt that the atmosphere was filled with Bhagavan's purity and blessedness. One feels a breath of the Divine in the Sage's Presence." She was immediately drawn to him. To quote her again: "As I looked upon Bhagavan's serene face and into His eyes, so full of grace and mercy, my soul was stirred." It was after the evening meal that she got an opportunity to speak a few words to Sri Bhagavan about her journey.

Later she went to the Travellers' Bungalow in the Town, as ladies were not allowed to stay in the Ashram at night. Mrs. Noye, who was suffering from sleeplessness for years, slept profoundly that night and arose next morning feeling quite refreshed. There was no more trouble with sleeplessness on subsequent nights too, though she lacked the many comforts she had been accustomed to in her home in North Hollywood!

After spending some months at the Ashram, she took leave of Bhagavan to return to America. When Bhagavan saw her shedding profuse tears, He consoled her saying that He would always be with her wherever she went. Before proceeding to Calcutta to sail home, she made a trip to Srinagar, and then having reached Calcutta, as though beckoned back by Bhagavan, she changed her plans and entrained for Tiruvannamalai which was "like returning home" to her. This time she spent eight months at the Ashram, basking in the sunshine of Bhagavan's presence. On the day she was to leave, she had a picture taken with Bhagavan and other devotees and had her supper with Him as a special case, as already stated ladies were not allowed to remain on the Ashram premises at night.

On her return to California she kept in continuous touch with the Ashram by correspondence. As she cherished meeting devotees of Sri Bhagavan, an opportunity arose in the year 1946 when Sri K. K. Nambiar<sup>1</sup> was touring that part of America. The Ashram authorities wrote to him to pay a visit to Mrs. Noye at her home in San Fernando Valley, North Hollywood. A detailed account of two visits he made to her home is given in an article contributed by Sri Nambiar to the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* (second edition) with the caption 'My experiences of Maharshi'. To quote Sri Nambiar's words: "From my hotel in the centre of Los Angeles, I went to Van Nuys, where Mrs. Noye awaited me with her automobile. Clad in a simple ochre-coloured frock and looking for me eagerly, she

The scholar asked his master saying :  
"Whither goes the soul when the body dieth?"

His master answered him : "There is no necessity for it to go any whither."

"What not! Must not the soul leave the body at death, and go either to heaven or hell?"

"It needs no going forth. Only the outward mortal life with body shall separate themselves from the soul. The soul has heaven and hell with itself before, according as it is written 'The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation,' nor shall they say, 'Lo here! or Lo there! For behold the Kingdom of God is within you'. And whichever of the two, that is, either heaven or hell is manifested in it, in that the soul standeth....."

Boehme—"Of Heaven and Hell"

burst into profuse tears as soon as she saw me. She could hardly speak a few words of welcome, for such was her emotion on seeing one who had come from Sri Bhagavan!"

She lives with her married twin sister, Betty, in a quiet house in San Fernando Valley where many of the Hollywood stars have their residences. Difficulties in getting a visa, on account of more stringent travel restrictions had prevented her from coming to India again. When the Ashram authorities and Sri Nambiar helped her to secure the visa she visited the Ashram again in 1950 during Sri Bhagavan's illness. After His *Mahasamadhi* in the month of April, she returned to Madras and before sailing home, stayed for about six weeks with Sri Nambiar and family at their residence, *Ramanalaya*, in Gandhinagar, Adyar, where Smt. Janaki Nambiar looked after her comforts.

During the two decades that have elapsed since then, she has been keeping in touch with the Ashram by correspondence. Though living so far away, she is feeling Sri Bhagavan's Presence there even today, for, hasn't He told her that He would be with her wherever she went?

<sup>1</sup> Introduced to our readers in our issue of Oct. 1965, p. 274.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### TRUTH IS ONE

Since the statement 'The Chan and Zen teaching of the Mind Transmission' is liable to mislead readers it would seem to be an obligation to point out that this is erroneous. The last words of Ch. 23 of the great Huang Po's Chun Chow Record, p. 50 state "in fact, however, 'Mind is not Mind and transmission is not really transmission'" which is emphasised by him several times elsewhere. 'Transmission' is a common and dangerous illusion, dear to publicists. Whatever could there be to 'transmit' and from 'whom' to 'what'? If any service can be rendered, may it not be in the indication of vital conceptual illusions? Nor, of course, is Truth even 'One': if 'Truth' could be any conceptual number, it must surely be 'Zero' — the basis and origin of all numeration and of all multiplicity. If Ch'an is to be understood no place remains for illusory positive concepts.

Those remarks are far indeed from implying lack of sympathy for the writer of the letter.

WEI WU WEI.

P.S.: The phrase 'Transmission of Mind' occurs even on the cover of an edition of Huang Po's text. Alas, it does, but Huang Po was not responsible for this!

True, Huang Po was not satisfied with the expression 'One Mind' to symbolize Reality which cannot be expressed in words.<sup>1</sup> Huang Po used the term 'One Mind' which has been used by his predecessors for lack of anything better. After all there has to be a 'a finger pointing to the moon' or there will be no pointing and seekers need some pointing till they realize that there is nothing to "point at" or to "transmit", in other words, that they never ceased to be the Self. The Buddha said that things in themselves are void and that there are no sentient beings to be delivered and yet his last words were: 'Decay is inherent in all compounded things. Strive unceasingly!' And as quoted in the preceding issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH from the Tibetan Vajrayana in one of his songs Milarepa says that before the great illumination one should not expect our troubles to vanish without effort because though

*All that manifests  
Is unreal as an echo  
Yet never fails to produce  
An effect that corresponds.  
KARMAS and virtues therefore  
Should never be neglected.*

Bhagavan made an analogous statement in reply to a question: 'All this is as real as we are to ourselves'. From an absolute point of view there is nobody to transmit anything to anybody else. In that case this would apply also to 'service rendered', which you seem to prefer. Though it may sound more acceptable, still who is to render service to whom or indicate conceptual illusions? Great Masters expound 'Truth' from the absolute point of view, 'Truth' which is beyond the reach of conceptual thought, and also point the way for those for whom unreal echoes still produce effects that correspond.

EDITOR.

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### NO CONTRADICTION

I find seeming discrepancies of the Master's sayings mentioned in your various issues. For instance, in your January issue the Master says on page 19 to have the habit of reading 'always' and on page 6 'why waste time reading'.

D. B.,  
Bombay.

*The Master's sayings were adapted to the special needs of the seekers. For someone who has not a sufficient grasp of the Truth or needs constant reminders reading the 'Gita always' instead of detective*

<sup>1</sup> In Chinese 'hsin' means also heart, spirit mental processes, etc., as pointed out by J. Blofeld in his translation of *The Zen Teaching of Hui Hai*.

*tales or novels would be of great benefit whereas having understood intellectually the truth of Advaita it would be a waste of time to go on reading book after book without making one-pointed effort to realize it.*

EDITOR.

\* \* \*

### STILLNESS

Two years ago I visited Sri Ramanasramam... I felt the stillness of Silence mastering me. Now I feel the same at home. Do you think it is just a 'feeling' without any intuitive justification? How am I to proceed?

Again one doubt. When I was standing in meditation in front of Bhagavan's shrine I found to my happy surprise two peacocks with their wings spread out standing on my left and right... Can you tell me whether this 'omen' the remembrance of which creates a feeling of happy expectation in me has any significance?

C. NARAYANA,  
Kerala.

*To still the mind is the goal of SADIHANA. The feeling of stillness is not mere imagination and should be practised as far as possible wherever we are without giving much scope for thoughts to disturb it.*

*Peacocks usually spread out in a magnificent display their tails — not wings — when wooing peahens. If there were no peahens present and yet the peacocks spread out their tails in front of the Samadhi it may symbolize wooing Truth instead of SAMSARA. Peacocks also stand for mind or the world of maya so either you were hemmed in by SAMSARA or wooing the highest Truth.*

EDITOR.

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### SIVARATHRI

(To the Managing Editor)

Your note<sup>2</sup> and the enclosed *prasad* on the occasion of Maha Sivarathri — February 13, arrived yesterday — Ash Wednesday in the Latino Catholic calendar. What a coincidence! Would you believe it? On Sunday the 13th I had to go out to a Christian Ashram to say mass for a Sister who is staying there. At mass there was a high school Hindu girl. She sang a *bhajan*. When some *prasad* was given at the end of it, she did not take it at once because she said, she was fasting, it being Sivarathri. At once my thoughts went to Arunachala and Sri Ramanasramam and my own *pradakshina*. I sang 'Arunachala Siva...' for the girl.

From this divine eminence we see the lowness and insignificance of creatures. We feel an inkling of the perfection and stability of eternity, for there is neither time nor space, neither before nor after, but everything present in one new, fresh-springing NOW where millenniums last no longer than the twinkling of an eye.....

—Meister Eckhart

\* \* \*

Verily if slaves and recluses experience desolation in everything, it is owing to their absence from Allah in everything; for if they witnessed Him in everything they would not find desolation in anything.

—Ibn'Ataillah

The refrain was haunting me for long that night until I went to sleep — I didn't keep vigil. Two nights later I read a short article about Maha Sivarathri in its conception! In Maharshi its meaning<sup>2</sup> is at its deepest!

FR. I. JESUDASAN, S.J.,  
Poona.

\* \* \*

### HIS GUIDANCE CONTINUES

I am writing this letter to pour out all my troubles.....

You see I have become spiritually barren. I feel empty, useless — I just can't seem to make any progress in my meditation . . . and there are doubts whether despite endless seeking I will ever find the truth. It seems a formidable task — insurmountable . . . I have doubts, doubts, doubts and my faith seems to dwindle . . . and I seem to end up against a blank wall.....

Yesterday I received the October issue of THE MOUNTAIN PATH in which Lama Anagarika Govinda's

<sup>2</sup> The verse by the Maharshi on *Sivarathri* is quoted on page ....

article on meditation only made my heart sink even lower. I don't think I will ever be able to take all those steps that he points out in meditation. To add to that I read about Bhagavan saying that a guru is necessary to still our *vasanas* . . . and what guru do I have but Bhagavan; but I just do not seem to be feeling His guiding hand. . . .

Oh, it all seems to be so confusing. I thought if I could meditate near Arunachala, where Bhagavan's Presence is so obviously felt, things would soon iron themselves out as they should but then as the Ashram President informed me there is no place available at present because of an influx of visitors so I am left struggling in a sea of confusion. . . .

Now that I have got this load off my back I feel much easier. . . .

A devotee from Bombay.

(A second letter with the same post!)

You may be surprised to receive a second letter so soon after the first but I have just had a dream that explained to me what Reality actually is and of course dispelled my doubts about it. I thought

I should write to you about it when it is still fresh in my mind.

In the dream it occurred to me that all matter is energy, and if you take away this energy there would be no matter. It is energy therefore that forms the common substratum of all that we see, hear and feel. Hence there is a basic unity in diversity. Then I saw Bhagavan and He said to me very softly and graciously: "That is why I asked you to investigate the ego, because when you seek for it there is NONE!"

This really shows that Bhagavan is guiding me. Doesn't it?

Same devotee from Bombay.

*Yes, it does. Bhagavan guides now as before. Once He told a story comparing the ego to an impostor who had attached himself to a marriage party. Each side thought that he belonged to the other and so put up with his impositions till he became such a nuisance that they started enquiring: 'How could you invite such a fellow?' As soon as the impostor got wind of the investigation he vanished. And so it is with the ego as Bhagavan told you and others.*

EDITOR.

## THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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, 109-C, Mount Road, Madras-18; 4. *Publisher's Name* — T. N. Venkataraman; *Nationality* — Indian; *Address* — 109-C, Mount Road, Madras-18; 5. *Editor's Name* — Lucia Osborne; *Nationality* — British; *Address* — Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai; 6. *Names and Addresses of individuals who own the newspapers and partners or shareholders holding more than 1% of the total capital* — SRI RAMANASRAMAM, Tiruvannamalai.

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

Date: 26-3-72.

Signature of the Publisher. (Sd.) T. N. VENKATARAMAN,