

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

The Mountain Path

VOL. 18, No. II

APRIL 1981

Mere thought of Thee
has drawn me to Thee, and
who can gauge Thy Glory
(in Itself), Oh Arunachala!

—The Marital Garland
of Letters, verse 70

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1.

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— Editor.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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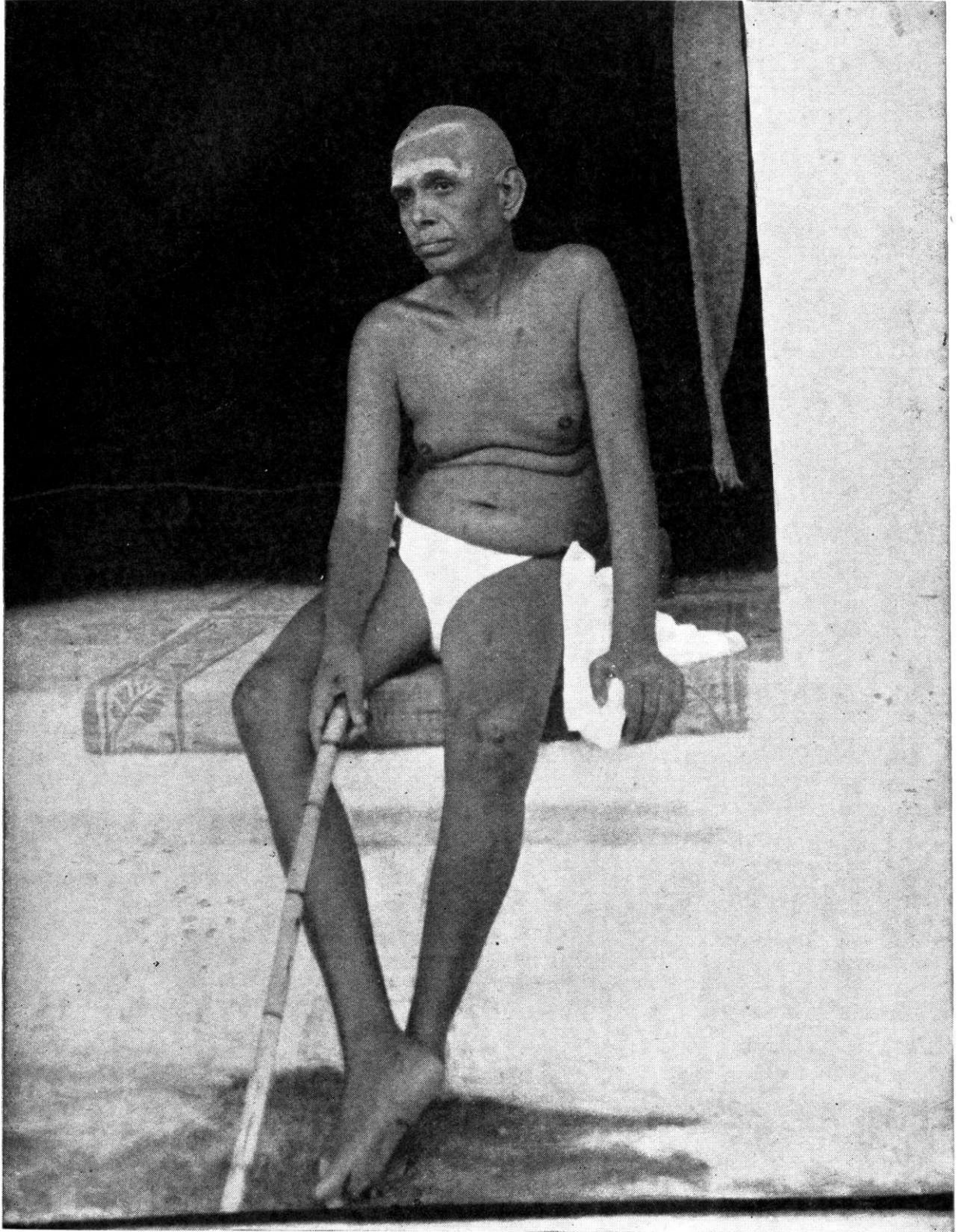
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



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EDITORIAL

PITFALLS ON THE PATH

PILGRIMS on the spiritual path rarely have an easy or uninterrupted passage. Problems arise at almost every step, and there are numerous *cul-de-sacs* or branches to tempt the unwary. Bhagavan's standard advice to anyone who had recognised a spiritual problem was "Find out who has the problem." Thus, anyone who encountered unpleasant mental states such as fear, uneasiness or hallucinations would be asked to switch their attention from the experience to the experiencer; that is, from the mental and emotional states to the feeling of 'I' which perceived them. Bhagavan prescribed this solution as a panacea for all perceived spiritual problems with remarkable success, but it can only be utilized if the problem is recognised to be a problem. Unfortunately, many obstacles to progress are not perceived as such. The subtlety with which the imagined self defends its territory and the wrong attitudes and practices which result are frequently overlooked by the spiritual seeker, so in many cases the opportunity never arises to face the problem and to solve it in the classical prescribed manner.

The imaginary individual self is quite capable of converting everything, even spiritual practice to its own use in an effort to prolong its apparent existence. As an example of this, meditation often produces pleasurable side effects such as feelings of bliss, stillness and serenity, but without the clarity of purpose which brings about

detachment, the states end up in becoming experiences of the imagined self which are pursued and prolonged as pleasures in their own right. By indulging in, and becoming attached to pleasurable states of meditation, the individual self is not only prolonging its own existence, it is strengthening it. By clinging to such states, a feeling of pride and achievement is generated which confirms the reality of the individual self enjoying them: "I have achieved this; I am making progress; I am a spiritual person." It must be remembered that all these experiences are only mental states, and however pleasurable and ennobling they may appear to be, they should be treated in the same manner as all mental phenomena; attention should be switched from the experience to the experiencer, that is, to the feeling of 'I' that is within us. The same holds true for the more spectacular side effects of meditation such as visions and psychic powers. These are in no way indications of spiritual progress, they are merely manifestations of latent tendencies in the mind. However, any attachment to these phenomena is such a great potential source of self-identity, that they should be considered liabilities rather than gains.

Another subtle barrier to Self-awareness is attachment to "spiritual" life styles and "spiritual" activities. Many people feel that living in an ashram, or living a quiet secluded life, would be helpful to their spiritual growth.

More often than not, though, such life-styles become ends in themselves rather than aids to Self-awareness, and the consequent attachment to the outer form inhibits the continuous self-attention which is essential to the practice of Bhagavan's teachings. The notion "I am living a spiritual life" gets deeply rooted, and even if it is not openly expressed or consciously felt, it tends to nourish the idea of an individual self rather than facilitate the discovery of its non-existence. Bhagavan often pointed out that the mind accompanies us wherever we go, and that we cannot escape from it by adopting a particular life style or retreating from the world. He repeatedly said that the mind is only left behind when attention is switched from thoughts to the pure Being-Awareness from which they arise and into which they subside. The twin approaches of cultivating an awareness that the individual self has no existence except as a mental concept and repeatedly returning to pure Being whenever attachments to thoughts arise, are infinitely more important than maintaining a way of life. With proper understanding and correct application, these approaches are quite sufficient to destroy the concepts which separate us from an awareness of what we really are, and when they are pursued earnestly, no life style will be an impediment to their success. Bhagavan said many times that living a normal life in the world is not a hindrance to effective *sadhana* provided one constantly reminds oneself that one is not the doer of the action performed. Many devotees tend to regard this advice to live a normal life in constant remembrance of the true Being as a less effective and inferior option, only to be taken up by those who are unable to devote themselves to full-time spiritual *sadhana*. However, this practice of normal egoless activity is of fundamental importance to all who are attempting to follow Bhagavan's teaching. It is in order to stress this point that Bhagavan quotes in verses 26 and 27 in *Supplement to the Forty Verses on Reality* the instruction given by Vasistha to Sri Rama that one should cheerfully and courageously

play one's role in life, but always established at heart in one's true Being. Without this understanding and the repeated awareness that there is no individual self, dangerous misconceptions can arise even in so called spiritual *sadhana*. If one is following the path of surrender, one may have the erroneous impression that there is a self to be surrendered and if one is pursuing self-enquiry, one may be under the illusion that there is a self to be destroyed. Both these ideas are false, and if one is constantly reminding oneself that there is no real entity acting or thinking, then one can see more clearly that there is nothing to be given up or destroyed except the false idea which one has about oneself. If, on the other hand, one retains the notion that there is a 'doer' of the *sadhana*, then this 'doer' will persist indefinitely, for nothing he does will eliminate himself.

This concept of an individual self is the root of all problems on the spiritual path. Even though there may be an intellectual understanding that it is only a mental concept, the assumption is so pervasive and deeply rooted that it often operates without our being aware of it. This is particularly noticeable when one examines the relationship which many devotees have with Ramana Maharshi the *Guru*. From Bhagavan's point of view there was no relationship at all, a fact which was clearly brought out in his examination by a court official in 1936. To one question, "Have you disciples?" he replied:

"The person may call himself my disciple or devotee. I do not consider anyone to be my disciple or devotee. . . . If the people call themselves my disciples, I do not approve or disapprove. In my view all are alike. They consider themselves fit for being called disciples. What can I say to them? I do not consider myself a disciple or a *Guru*." (*Talks*, No. 281).

Despite this unequivocal statement which was repeated in various forms on several

occasions, many devotees feel that they have a personal relationship with their *Guru*, Ramana Maharshi. That which has the relationship is the conceptual self subtly transformed for the occasion into a 'spiritual' self to give it an aura of respectability. This is one of the more pleasurable pitfalls one may stumble into on the spiritual path, and because it is rarely recognised as such it can be very dangerous. When a devotee receives a smile or a kind word from Bhagavan, or when Bhagavan apparently causes a miraculous change of circumstances which seems to benefit the devotee, this imagined self swells up with pride, as if to say, "I have been favoured with this manifestation of Grace, therefore, I must be making progress to be the recipient of such a great honour." All that has really happened is that the conceptual self which has subtly adopted a spiritual garb has been further nourished by the invention of a fancied relationship. The *Guru*-disciple "relationship" is an intensely emotional one, and since detachment from emotions is far more difficult than from thoughts, this relationship provides an area of great potential danger. Emotional attachment, whether to a *Guru* or to any other person or cause, is one of the self's most potent means of self-preservation, and when the attachment is for a spiritual figure, or particular doctrine, it assumes legitimacy and comes to be regarded as beneficial rather than counter-productive. Attachment to the creations of the non-self is never beneficial, and what is needed to counteract it is the clarity and the discrimination which sees all such attachments as mind games to be avoided.

The conceptual self has still more tricks up its sleeve to waylay the unwary traveller. When the endless chatter of the discursive mind and the attachment to the emotions have been seen for what they really are, the self can still take refuge in its attachment to concepts. When spiritual seekers first encounter Bhagavan's teachings, they soon become acutely aware they have travelled through life with an enormous quantity of useless mental baggage. As

they begin to assimilate and to accept Bhagavan's teachings, old concepts about the world, about meditation, and most of all about themselves, drop off in the light of Bhagavan's words. This discarding of old concepts is essential as a preliminary step on the spiritual path, but without proper understanding of what Bhagavan is trying to tell us, there is a great and often unperceived danger of simply replacing outworn concepts by a new, improved, logically consistent set, derived and formulated from Bhagavan's own words. All concepts are only mental structures, and if one regards Bhagavan's words and ideas as "The Truth", then one is feeding the conceptual self, confirming its existence and furnishing it with a new spiritual world-view. Nothing that is read, heard or understood is "The Truth", and that includes Bhagavan's words. Philosophies, systems of belief and all spiritual ideas are mere mental structures, and it is mental structures more than anything else that obstruct awareness of what we really are and distract attention from Reality. Bhagavan's words are not to be taken as a formulation of truth or incorporated into a philosophy; they are signposts pointing the way to an experience which can never be verbalised. They are meant to be taken as a manual of instruction, which, if followed correctly, progressively destroys all concepts and culminate in Self awareness. If, instead, one puts together Bhagavan's words so as to form a systematic body of teaching and accepts them as a statement of truth, without seeing that they are only signposts to the truth and not the truth itself, then there is the danger of covering up awareness of the Self with yet another set of words and concepts. A familiar analogy makes this point clear. When a person first sets out on the spiritual path, he has a feeling that he is bound and held fast by a network of strong iron chains consisting of false ideas and beliefs. He comes across a teacher who points out the falsity of his previously accepted beliefs, and then shows him how to discover the truth about himself. The disciple happily throws away his old iron

chains, but instead of using his teacher's words as pointers to discover his real nature, he accepts them as a new and dazzling revelation of truth, and thus finds himself in bondage again. This time, though, the chains are of bright precious gold; new glorious concepts about the Self, the nature of the world, the non-existence of the individual self. But the new chains of gold bind him as securely as the old iron ones. The new concepts such as the immanence of the Self and the efficacy of self-enquiry and surrender seem so all-embracing, so logical, so intellectually irrefutable that the disciple lives out his life happily and even proudly fingering his new golden chains, and advising others to discard their iron chains.

The story of this disciple may appear comical, but it contains a stern warning to all who imagine themselves to be other than what they really are, and who follow some spiritual path in order to get rid of their illusions. In other words, it is relevant to all of us who seek an awareness of our real nature, for if we were not attached to our concepts and our beliefs, we would all be aware of the Self here and now, and we would know that concepts such as paths to tread and goals to be achieved are mental structures which neither describe Reality nor assist in its discovery.

Bhagavan was acutely aware of the power of words and concepts to distract attention from the Self, and for this reason he preferred to transmit his teachings through the dynamic medium of silence. Although he was always willing to answer simple questions with simple answers, he would only indulge in conceptual discourses with those who, in his own words "were addicted to much thinking" (*Self Enquiry*). His dislike of the verbal medium is best expressed in a passage in *Talks* when he says that words are the great-grandsons of Reality (No. 285). In the unmanifest, the idea of the self appears; the imagined self then has thoughts, thinking itself to be the thinker of the thoughts, and the thoughts are eventually articulated as words. The articulation of

words and thoughts are phenomena of the mental realm and as such, cannot transmit an understanding of the Self. All they can do is deceive, and if one accepts the deception by becoming attached to the verbal structure of a teaching, then one is setting up something called "The Truth" outside the Self and establishing an individual self which believes in that "Truth" and pretends to understand it. It is hardly surprising that Bhagavan preferred silence, for as a rule words and concepts have far greater power to corrupt and deceive than to enlighten.

This brings us to what is perhaps the most subtle danger on the path. The idea that one needs to do *sadhana* at all is as much a "concept" as any other. Bhagavan repeatedly stressed that we are all realised here and now and that it is only the idea that we are not realised that prevents an awareness of the fact. In one of his stray verses which he translated from Gaudapada's *Karika* he states: "There is neither creation nor destruction, neither destiny nor free-will, neither path nor achievement; this is the final truth." (*Collected Works* Stray Verse No. 9), the same idea is repeated in No. 1227 of the *Garland of Guru's Sayings*.

"There is no coming into being,
No extinction; no one bound
And no one making effort;
No one for perfection yearning, no one
Attaining freedom.
This is the truth supreme."

The idea that we are in bondage and need to be liberated through *sadhana* is the very thing that separates us from Self-awareness. To discuss the problems of *sadhana* and the ways to overcome them nourishes and sustains this wrong idea and covers up and conceals our true natural Being with the garbage of the imaginary non-Self. On the other hand Bhagavan also stressed that effort was essential if Self-awareness was to be discovered. Concepts need to be dropped and in the initial stages of *sadhana*, determination, earnestness and

repeated efforts are required to break the patterns of a lifetime. But as *sadhana* proceeds, the concept of effort undergoes a radical change. By continually practising enquiry and surrender, and by repeatedly reminding oneself that there is no "doer" of actions, a conviction is generated that there is no individual self, and egoless living becomes natural and spontaneous. This current of awareness radically alters one's perspective on *sadhana* and one's attitude to the whole business of living. As one becomes convinced that the ego is unreal and needs no elimination, there is also the understanding that there is no doer of *sadhana* or any other action. From a starting point which assumes that *sadhana* is something that one must do in order to discover some spiritual objective, one has moved to the

understanding that the spiritual life is an impersonal process operating in consciousness without a doer. Like all other action, effort is suddenly seen to be proceeding under its own momentum, and the previous idea of someone making the effort drops away. The imaginary subject which pursues spiritual goals, which makes imaginary progress, and takes pride in the progress made along an imaginary way is suddenly seen for what it really is: a conceptual structure designed by the imagined self with the sole purpose of prolonging its own existence. The relation between early effort and the final effortless spontaneity is clearly seen in verse 3 of *Upadesa Saram*, prescribing disinterested action and the last verses which extol egoless living beyond all thought of bondage and freedom.

The milk of the cow in reality pervades the whole body of the animal through its blood, but you cannot milk it by squeezing the ears or the horns. You can get the milk only from the teats. Similarly, God pervades the universe, but you cannot see Him everywhere. He manifests Himself more readily in those sacred places which are charged with the spirituality of great souls that have done *tapas* and *sadhana* there for long years. In such spiritual centres, one's awareness is spontaneously and effortlessly awakened to greater intensity and becomes conditioned to concentrated *sadhana*.

— SRI RAMAKRISHNA

SADGURU AND GUIDANCE¹

By
Matthew Greenblatt

THE subject given to me is "Sad-Guru and Guidance." To speak about one's master is something very sacred. There are of course many types of *Gurus*. They operate from different levels—the Sad-Guru being the highest; for he is one who has realized his oneness with the spirit that is the Self of all. The one whose Birth Centenary we are now celebrating, and in whose name we have all come together, belongs to this last category.

To have had the good fortune of learning the name of such a great Sage, to realize the worth and uniqueness of His profound yet simple teachings and to be aware of the great gift bequeathed to mankind by this incomparable Rishi is in itself a great blessing. Until now I have felt that the best way to serve such a Master is by quietly living one's life devoted to his remembrance, and to the practice of His teachings. In addition to carrying out his injunctions with regard to our spiritual life, let this centenary year be a beginning, let it be a foundation upon which the Message and Glory of Sri Bhagavan is firmly established and implanted in the world. Let each one of us be a Ramanuja in his own right, proclaiming the 'open secret' of the path of Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

At the beginning of one's quest the earnest devotee prays: "Lord, lead me from darkness to light, from unreality to truth, from death and suffering to immortality." At the end of such a quest the devotee proclaims: "O Master, I now realize you lived in my innermost heart as the one reality in all my countless births and have now come before me in human shape and lifted this veil of ignorance."

Somewhere in between these statements lies the actual treading of the path, the ups and

downs of *sadhana*, the dense darkness veiling the ever-present light of the Sad-Guru. It has been said that treading the spiritual path is like walking on a razor's edge. In many ways it is true. Identified with body, mind and senses, our perception of things as they are in truth is not very clear. Our own efforts and strivings can only take us so far. They can only take us to the feet of the Sad-Guru. Having come to His Presence there is nothing more to be done. We have to stop doing and start being. We have to make ourselves fit receptacles for the grace and guidance of the Guru to operate.

In Spiritual Instruction, Sri Bhagavan has given us a beautiful description of the Guru: "The Guru is one who at all times abides in the profound depth of the Self. He never sees any difference between himself and others, and he is completely free from the false notions of distinction—that he himself is the enlightened or the liberated while others around him are in bondage or the darkness of ignorance. His firmness or Self-possession can never be shaken under any circumstance and he is never perturbed."

Bhagavan also tells us that the Sad-Guru is not limited to the body and His Grace is always flowing whether his body is present or absent. Not being physical. Bhagavan puts the role and place of the Guru in its highest and purest place. He says: "God, Guru and the Self are not different. Not being physical form, His contact will continue after His form vanishes. Always mental contact is best. He who instructs an ardent seeker to do this or that is not a true master. The seeker is already

¹A paper presented at the New Delhi Seminar on Bhagavan's Teachings, November 1980.

afflicted by his activities and wants peace and rest. If activity be advocated the adviser is not a master but the killer. He cannot liberate the aspirant but strengthens his fetters."

If we look upon the Master as our very own being, the true reality that lies within all of us, then we need only to try to be in tune with this 'inner Guru' to be able to experience his guidance. Hence, Bhagavan always stresses that 'mental contact is the best.' And what else is his guidance but the grace flowing within us? When one is in tune with this grace, guidance follows as a matter of course. He says: 'Guru's grace is always there. You imagine it is something, somewhere high up in the sky, far away, and has to descend. It is really inside you in your heart, and the moment you effect subsidence or merger of the mind into its source, the grace rushes forth spouting as from a spring, from within you.'

Have you ever watched a small branch or twig being swept downstream by a river? Having no will of its own it flows along the way of the river. If you have observed this closely, it rarely gets stuck or lodged at a particular place. Having been put into the hands of the river of grace that very grace guides the twig, easing and moving it around any obstacles that may help to lodge it. Although it may get caught up for a short while, eventually the flow is too powerful, and twig once again is set in motion.

To be a recipient of this guidance is not something just for the asking. Bhagavan tells us that such grace is vouchsafed to him who has striven hard on the path, thereby making himself a fit receptacle for the flow of grace to operate. In verse 19 of the *Marital Garland of Letters*, Sri Bhagavan sings: 'Shine as my Guru, making me free from faults and worthy of Thy Grace, Oh Arunachala!'

Bhagavan is very clear in telling us that "Realisation is the result of the Guru's Grace more than of teachings, lectures, meditations etc. These are only secondary but that (Grace)

is the primary and essential cause." Bhagavan continues: "After your Bhakti to God has matured you, God comes in the shape of Guru and from outside pushes your mind inside, while being inside as Self he draws you there from within." The Guru, guiding the devotees tells him that God is within you; your own Self. The devotee's mind becomes introverted and in due course submerged in the Self.

A devotee was once despondent at seeing no progress in himself. He told Bhagavan: "I am afraid if I continue like this I shall go to hell." Bhagavan immediately replied: "If you do Bhagavan will go after you and bring you back." This is a beautiful example of the wonderful compassion that Bhagavan exemplified in His life. Where else is hell but in the forgetfulness of our true aim and aspiration. Who else but the Sad-Guru, the very Self of ourself can offer such a response? When we are lost in the realm of forgetfulness, all of a sudden a reminder will come from within or without. What else is this but the guidance of the Sad-Guru?

The purpose of a Sad-Guru like Sri Bhagavan is to help us overcome the illusion of the ego and abide in the bliss of the Self. Many types of people benefit from the presence of the *Jnani*, the true seeker after truth will find in him his raft for crossing the ocean of becoming. Thayumanavar has said that the Guru appears as a man to dispel the ignorance of a man, just as a deer is used to capture the wild deer. He has to appear with a body in order to eradicate our ignorant 'I-am-the-body' idea. In the case of a Sad-Guru like Bhagavan, he need only be silent and the minds of the seekers get purified by themselves.

The beauty of the path that Sri Bhagavan has taught, is that it is so direct — not allowing the fostering of the ego but utilizing it as a means to eradicate itself. Once the inner Self-Awareness is awakened the ego begins to submit to the power from which it springs. The primal 'I' thought, rising first and giving

rise to all else in return, goes back to its source. The Inner Guru shines forth as one's own Self, and in the light of Its grace the shadowy ego flees.

Arthur Osborne writes about the Guru: "Devotion to the Guru and the flow of His Grace leads to the deeper reality of every religion, and Self-enquiry to the ultimate truth behind all religion."

In conclusion, I would like to narrate a small story told by the late Sri T. P. Ramachandra Iyer, an intimate devotee of Sri Bhagavan. In the poem *Atma-Vidya*, Sri Bhagavan has begun with the lines: "Self-knowledge is an easy thing, the easiest thing there is. This led

T.P.R. to remark: "Bhagavan, you say that *Atma-Vidya* is an easy thing, but I find it far from being so easy." Sri Bhagavan thereupon remarked: "Of course it is not so easy. The key to understanding the whole poem is contained in the line 'But Grace is needed most'." So if Bhagavan will forgive me, by taking the first two lines and the last two lines of His *Atma-Vidya* we have a new verse which gives us all the needed encouragement and faith to tread the path to Arunachala. It would read something like this:

"Self-Knowledge is an easy thing,
The easiest thing there is.
But Grace is needed most. So faithful be
Unto the Self and Bliss will then result."

Reminiscences—A Glimpse of Bhagavan from my Diary

By

N. N. Rajan

Tuesday, 2-11-1943, Morning, 8-30

The attendant Sivanandam offered drinking water to Sri Bhagavan.

BHAGAVAN: "No, I do not want it now."

But Sivanandam persisted.

Attendant Krishnaswamy: "Why trouble Bhagavan when he says water is not required.

Sivanandam got annoyed and grumbled.

BHAGAVAN: "I do not want water at all. Don't bring it. Why bother? I have got water in my *kamandalam* (water jug)."

Then Bhagavan, turning to the devotees seated around, said: "Look, people call me Swami, Swami, and are under the impression that sagehood is a bed of roses. See the trouble encountered by the Swami now. Whoever asks me to do anything I have to obey and satisfy him; whatever visitors say, according to their likes and dislikes, I have to patiently follow. Look at the way a sage is under the control of these people around him! *Iswara* himself is under the beck and call of His devotees."

The Death Experience of Bhagavan

The most detailed account of Bhagavan's Realisation experience is to be found in B. V. Narasimha Swamy's biography, "Self Realisation". It was the first major biography to be written, and all subsequent accounts have relied heavily on his version, either quoting it verbatim or summarising its contents. The account in the book was not a direct transcription of Bhagavan's words, and the author makes this clear in a footnote which has appeared in most of the editions of the book. He said that he was merely summarising, in his own words, a series of conversations which he had with Bhagavan over a period of six weeks in 1930. The following account gives two of the conversations on which his account was based. They are the only records of the conversation which are still in existence, but fortunately they cover all the known aspects of the experience, so it is unlikely that much valuable material has been lost. The first conversation took place on 8-1-30 and the second a few weeks later on 5-2-30.

*There are two important points in this account which are not brought out in the published version. The first is Bhagavan's repeated use of the word *avesam* to describe his initial perception of his experience. In Tamil, the word means "possession" in the sense of being taken over by a spirit. For the first few weeks Bhagavan felt that he had been taken over by a spirit which had taken up residence in his body. The second point is that the feeling persisted until shortly before he left home, and his discovery that the *avesam* was the Self and not some external being residing in his body may have been a contributory factor in his decision to leave home.*

The account is in Bhagavan's own words, and though there are strong traces of the translator's style and preferred terminology, it is still a more accurate version than the ones which have been printed in all of the published biographies.

"MY fear of death was some six weeks before I left Madurai for good. That fear was only on one day and for a short time. At the time there was a flash of excitement, it may be roughly described as heat, but it was not clear that there was a higher temperature in the body, nor was there perspiration. It appeared to be like an *avesam* or some spirit possessing me. That changed my mental attitude and habits. I had formerly a preference for some foods and an aversion to others. This tendency dropped off and all foods were swallowed with equal indifference, good or rotten, tasty or tasteless. Studies and duties became matters of utter indifference to me and I went through my studies turning over pages mechanically just to make others who were looking on think that I was reading. In fact my attention was never directed towards

the books, and, consequently, I never understood their contents. Similarly, I went through other social duties possessed all the time by this *avesam*, i.e., my mind was absent from them, being fascinated and charmed by my own Self. I would put up with every burden imposed on me at home, tolerating every slight with humility and forbearance. Periodically, interest in and introspection on the Self would swallow up all former feelings and interests.

"That fear was only on the first day, that is, the day of the awakening. It was a sudden fear of death which developed, not merely indifference to external things. It also started two new habits. First, the habit of introspection, that is, having attention perpetually turned on my Self, and second, the habit of emotional tears when visiting the Madurai

temple. The actual enquiry and discovery of 'Who I am' was over on the very first day of the change. That time, instinctively, I held my breath and began to think or dive inward with my enquiry into my own nature. 'This body is going to die' I said to myself, referring to the gross physical body. I had no idea that there was any *sukshma sarira* (the causal body) in human beings. I did not even think of the mind. I thought of the gross physical body when I used the term body, and I came to the conclusion that when it was dead and rigid, (then it seemed to me that my body *had* actually become rigid as I stretched myself like a corpse with *rigor mortis* upstairs, thinking this out) I was not dead. I was, on the other hand, conscious of being alive, in existence. So the question arose in me, "What was this 'I'? Is it this body? Who called himself the 'I'?" So I held my mouth shut, determined not to allow it to pronounce 'I' or any other syllable. Still I felt within myself, the 'I' was there, the sound was there, and the thing calling or feeling itself 'I' was there. What was that? I felt that there was a force or current, a centre of energy playing on the body, continuing regardless of the rigidity or activity of the body, though existing in connection with it. It was that current, force, or centre that constituted my Self, that kept me acting and moving, but this was the first time that I came to know it. I had no idea of my Self before that. From that time on, I was spending my time absorbed in contemplation of that current.

"Once I reached that conclusion (as I said, on the first day of the six weeks, the day of my awakening into my new life), the fear of death dropped off. It had no place in my thoughts. 'I' being a subtle current, it had no death to fear. So further development or activity was issuing from the new life and not from any fear. I had no idea at that time of the identity of that current with the personal God, or '*Ishvara*' as I used to call Him. As for Brahman, the Impersonal Absolute, I had no idea then. I had not even heard the name

Brahman. I had not read the *Bhagavad Gita* or any other religious works except the *Periapuranam*, and in Bible class, the four Gospels and the Psalms from the *Bible*. I had seen a copy of Vivekananda's Chicago Lecture, but I had not read it. I could not even pronounce his name correctly; I pronounced it 'Vyvekananda' giving the 'i' the 'y' sound. I had no notions of religious philosophy except the current notions of God, that He is an infinitely powerful person, present everywhere, though worshipped in special places in the images representing Him. This I knew in addition to a few other similar ideas which I picked up from the *Bible* and the *Periapuranam*. Later when I was in the Arunachala temple, I learnt of the identity of my self with Brahman, and later with Absolute Brahman, which I had heard in the *Ribhu Gita* as underlying all. I was only feeling that everything was being done by the current and not by me, a feeling I had had ever since I wrote my parting note and left home. I had ceased to regard the current as my narrow 'I'. That current or *avesam* now felt as if it was my Self, not a superimposition."

"While on the one hand, the awakening gave me a continuous idea or feeling that my Self was a current or force in which I was perpetually absorbed whatever I did, on the other hand, the possession led me frequently to the Meenakshi Sundaresa temple. Formerly I would visit it occasionally with friends, but at that time that produced no noticeable emotional effect, much less a change in my habits. But after the awakening, I would go there almost every evening, and in that obsession I would go and stand there for a long time alone before Siva, Nataraja, Meenakshi and the 63 Tamil saints. I would sob and shed tears, and would tremble with emotion. I would not generally pray for anything in particular, although often I wished and prayed that. . . ."

(The rest of this particular manuscript is missing, but a few weeks later, on 5-2-30,

Narasimha Swamy questioned him again on this topic, and Bhagavan gave the following answer:)

“It was not fear of death that took me to the Madurai temple during those six weeks in 1896. The fear seized me for a short while when I was upstairs in my uncle’s house, and it gave rise to that *avesam* or current. That obsession made me introspective and made me look perpetually into my own nature, and took me also to temples, made me sob and weep without pain or joy or other explanation, and also it made me wish that I should become like the 63 saints and that I should obtain the blessings or grace of *Isvara* — general blessings, specifying and expecting nothing in particular. I had no thought or fear of death then, and I did not pray for release from death. I had no idea before those six weeks or during those six weeks that life on earth was full of pain,

and I had no longing or prayer to be released from *samsara*, or human life or lives. All that idea and talk of *samsara* and *bandha* I learnt only after coming to this place and reading books. I never entertained either the idea that life was full of woe or that life was undesirable.

“That *avesam* continues right up to now. After reading the language of the sacred books, I see it may be termed *suddha manas*, *akhandakara vritti*, *prajna* etc.; that is, the state of mind of *Isvara* or *Jnani*.”

Question: How is it that there was a perception of difference and prayer that “I should become like the 63 saints and get *Isvara*’s grace?”

Bhagavan: The *akhandakara* current was sporting with these and still remained despite that desire.

One morning in September, one Maurice Frydman, a consulting and electrical engineer announced himself before Sri Bhagavan. He entered the Hall, hat in hand but with shoes on. The Maharshi ordered a stool for him on which he seated himself cross-legged for a short time and then he withdrew. After a wash and light refreshments he came back without shoes and squatted on the floor. He stayed three days and was quite social and genial and friendly to everyone who responded similarly towards him. He tried to learn our ways and adapt himself to them. His clumsiness often evoked the good-humoured laughter of the Maharshi who always put him right as a father would a child. He tried to learn from Maharshi something about Realisation, raised doubts and had them cleared. Once he asked why there should be illusion if the individual soul is identical with the supreme. Bhagavan gave him the usual answer (the answer is not given in the text) and then began to chew betel leaves. In the meantime, Mr. Frydman was ruminating and with dramatic gestures wanted to know why the ego should not be cut down at one stroke and destroyed so as to gain Supreme Bliss. The Maharshi stopped chewing his betel leaves long enough to smile, and then broke out into laughter and asked the questioner to hold out his ego so that the Maharshi could strike it down. Everyone in the Hall laughed including Mr. Frydman, and at the conclusion of the laughter Mr. Frydman addressed the Maharshi and said, “Yes, now I understand.”

(The author of this reminiscence is not known, but the events took place in 1935. Maurice Frydman eventually became a resident of Sri Ramanasramam for a period of nearly three years and during the later stages of his stay, he compiled “Maharshi’s Gospel.” —EDITOR)

The Treatise on Singleness

By
Mohyiddin Ibn Arabi

Ibn Arabi, who is called in Arabic "The Greatest Master", is one of the best known figures in the Sufi world. Born in twelfth century Spain, his writings exerted an immense influence on both the Christian and the Islamic world, and he was particularly famous for his contribution to Sufi mysticism.

This work, sometimes known as "The Treatise on Self Knowledge" or "The epistle concerning knowledge of the Lord by knowledge of oneself", is traditionally ascribed to him, although there are other claimants for the authorship. It is one of the most monistic works to come out of the Islamic world, and ever since its appearance, it has been widely circulated and read in Sufi circles. In this version we have eliminated unnecessary repetitions, and on occasion, edited the text to improve the clarity of expression, but we hope that we have done no violence to the meaning. We are presenting this treatise in two parts; the second and concluding part will be published in our next issue. (EDITOR).

**In the name of Allah, the Good the Gracious.
We implore His aid.**

GLORY to Allah, before the oneness that knows no predecessor other than Allah who is that first. With Him there is no before nor after, no high nor low, no near nor far, neither how, what, nor where, no state or succession of moments, no time, no space, no becoming. He is as He was, the One, the Subduer without Oneness. He is the Alone without aloneness. He is not composed of name or given a name, for the name is He, and that which is named is also He. There is no name but His, and there is nothing named outside Him. He is the first without firstness and the last without lastness; He is the manifest without outwardness and the unmanifest without inwardness. I mean by this that Allah is the being in the manifest and He is the being in the unmanifest, but there is no outer or inner which is not Allah. It is important to understand this mystery properly for fear of falling into the error of those who believe in the localisation of the Divinity. Allah does not enter into anything and nothing enters into Him; neither does He

issue forth from anything and nothing issues forth from Him. This is the only way that He can be known, for He cannot be known by learning, intelligence, imagination, sagacity, the senses, outward vision, inward vision, understanding or reason. No one knows Allah but Allah Himself, and no one sees Allah but Allah, not even a prophet, a perfect saint or an angel. His prophet, His messenger, His message and His word are all Allah. By Himself, Allah has sent forth His selfhood, from Himself to Himself, with no intermediary but Himself. There is no difference between He who sends the message and its recipient. Nothing other than Allah has any expression, and so being non-existent, it cannot be annihilated. This is why the prophet has said: "He who knows his selfhood knows his Lord." On another occasion he said: "By my Lord I have known my Lord." The prophet of Allah wished to convey by these words that you are not you but He, and that Allah does not enter into you and you do not enter into Allah; that Allah does not issue forth from

you, and that you do not issue forth from Him. In saying this, I do not mean that you exist, and that you possess such and such a quality, what I mean is that you absolutely do not exist, and that you will never exist, either by yourself, or by Allah or in Allah or with Allah. You cannot cease to be for you do not exist. You are Allah and Allah is you without any dependance or causality. If you grant your existence this quality, then you know Allah, otherwise not.

Most initiates say that Gnosis, or knowledge of Allah follows upon extinction of existence and of the extinction of that extinction. Now this opinion is completely false, for it contains a visible absurdity. Gnosis, or Knowledge, does not require extinction of the existence, or extinction of that extinction, for these things have no existence, and what does not exist cannot cease to exist. To say that a thing has ceased to exist, that it no longer exists, amounts to affirming that it once existed, that it has enjoyed existence. If, then, you know your soul, that is, yourself, if you can conceive that you do not exist, and consequently that you do not extinguish yourself, then you know Allah, otherwise not. To ascribe knowledge to extinction and to the extinction of that extinction is an idolatrous creed, for if you assert this, you assert that something other than Allah can enjoy existence. This being so, you deny Allah Himself and you are expressly guilty of idolatry.

The prophet has said: "He who knows his selfhood knows his Lord." If one cannot affirm the existence of something other than Allah, one cannot speak of its existence, for one may not speak of the extinction of something that cannot be affirmed. Your existence is nothingness, and nothingness cannot add itself to anything. The prophet has said: "You do not exist now as you did not exist before the creation of the world." The word "now" signifies eternity without beginning as well as eternity without end. Now Allah is the existence of eternity without beginning, of

eternity without end as well as what precedes them. These three aspects of eternity are all Allah. If it were not so, His solitude could not be and He would not be without partner. However it is required that Allah be alone, with no companion. If Allah had a partner, the partner would have to be one who existed by himself, not by the existence of Allah. Such a one would have no need of Allah, and would in consequence be a second Lord God, which is impossible; Allah has no partner, like or equivalent.

He who sees a thing with Allah, of Allah or in Allah, even if he makes it derive from Allah by Lordship, makes that thing a partner of Allah deriving by him by Lordship. Whoever asserts that a thing can exist with Allah (it does not matter whether that thing exist by itself or with Him), that it is extinguished from its existence, such a man is far from having the least perception of knowledge of his soul and of himself. For he who asserts that anything other than Allah can exist and then disappear and be extinguished, and then be extinguished in its extinction etc., such a man turns in a vicious circle through extinction after extinction indefinitely. All this is idolatry upon idolatry and has nothing to do with knowledge. Such a man is idolatrous and knows nothing either of Allah or of himself or of his soul.

If one asks by what means one comes to know one's selfhood and to know Allah, the correct reply is that the way to these two knowings is contained in the following words: "Allah was and nothingness with Him. He is now as He was." If someone says: "I see my selfhood other than Allah, and I do not see that Allah is my selfhood", the correct reply is: "The prophet means by your selfhood your existence, that which you call 'myself'. He means by selfhood all that is other than Allah." When the prophet said, "Make me see things as they are", he meant, "Make me know what is not Allah, so that I may understand and recognise things, whether they are Allah or

other than Allah. Are they without beginning or end or have they been created and will they disappear?" Then Allah made him see that all that is not Allah is man himself, and that all that is not Allah has no existence. And the prophet saw things as they are, he saw that they were the natural essence of Allah, beyond time, space and every attribute.

What you think is other than Allah is not other than Allah, but you do not know this. You see Allah but do not know that you see Him. From the moment that this mystery has been unveiled from your eyes that you are no other than Allah, you will know yourself that you are your own goal, that you have no need to annihilate yourself, that you have never ceased to be, and that you will never cease to exist. All the attributes of Allah are your attributes. You will see that your outward is His, and that your inward is His, that your beginning is His and that your end is His, and you will see it incontestably and without doubts. You will see that your qualities are His and that your inmost nature is His, and you will see it without you becoming Him or He becoming you; you will see it without any transformation, diminution or augmentation whatsoever.

It is said: "Everything perishes save His face." This means that nothing other than Allah exists, and that other than Allah has no existence but is fatally lost, so that only His face remains. In other words, nothing is stable except His face. The following example will illustrate this. A man is ignorant of something and then he learns it. It is not his existence that is extinguished but only his ignorance. His existence remains, it has not been exchanged for another, nor has the existence of the learned man come to add itself to the existence of the ignorant. There is no question of any mixture of these two individual existences, it is only that ignorance has been removed. Do not therefore think that it is necessary to extinguish your existence, for then you veil yourself with this very extinction, and you yourself become the veil of Allah. In this example, since the veil is

now other than Allah, it follows that other than Him can vanquish Him by turning back the gaze that seeks Him, which is an error and a grave misapprehension.

The *Wacil*, that is, he who has arrived at the Reality is allowed to say: "I am the true Divine" or "Glory to me, how great is my exaltation." Such a *Wacil* has not arrived at such a stage without having seen that his attributes are those of Allah, and that his inmost being is the inmost being of Allah, without any transformation of attributes, or transubstantiation of inmost being, without any entry into Allah or any exit out of Him. He sees that he is not extinguished in Allah any more than he persists with Allah. He sees that his soul does not exist at all, not as having existed and then having been extinguished, but he sees that there is neither soul nor existence save Allah's.

The prophet says in a *Qodsi* tradition (these traditions contain what Allah said directly to the prophet. The *Qoran* is the word of Allah revealed by the agency of the angel Gabriel), "Allah said, My servant, I was ill and you did not visit Me, I was hungry and you did not give Me any food. I asked you for alms and you refused." He meant that He was the sick man and the beggar. As the sick man and the beggar can be Allah, so you and all things of creation, accidents or substances, can also be He. When one solves the enigma of a single atom, one can see the mystery of the whole creation, inner as well as outer. You will see that Allah has not only created all things, but you will see further that in the invisible as well as the visible world there is only Allah, for these two worlds have no independent existence of their own. You will see that Allah is not only their name, but also He who names them, and He who is named by them, as well as their existence. You will see that Allah has not only created a thing once and for all, but you will see that "He is every day in the state of sublime Creator" by the expansion and veiling of His existence and His attributes beyond all intelligible condition. For He is the first and the

Last, the Outer and the Inner. He appears in His singleness and is hidden in His aloneness. He is first by His autonomy and He is last by His eternal permanence. What we think other than Him is not ultimately a bi-existence, for His own existence implies that a bi-existence does not exist. Other than Allah cannot exist, so He is exempt from anything other than Him being outside Him. This 'other' is still Allah without any difference, inner or outer, and he who is thus possesses attributes without number or end.

He who is thus qualified possesses un-numbered attributes. As he who dies in the literal sense of the word is separated from all that is his whether laudable or blameworthy, for one who dies while alive, Allah (may He be blessed and exalted) takes his place in every circumstance. The inmost nature of Allah takes the place of his own inmost nature, and the attributes of Allah take the place of his own. This is why the prophet (Allah pray over him and greet him) has said: "Die before you die,"

that is "Know yourselves before you die." On another occasion he said: "Allah said, My worshipper does not cease to approach Me with selfless works until I love him, and when I love him, I am his hearing, his sight, his tongue, his hand." By this the prophet means, he who kills his selfhood, that is he who knows himself, sees that all his existence is Allah's existence. He sees no change in his inmost nature or in his attributes. He sees no necessity for his attributes becoming Allah's, for he has understood that he was not himself the existence of his own inmost nature and that he was ignorant of his selfhood and of his fundamental being. When you get to know what is your selfhood, you are freed from your dualism, and you will know that you are not other than Allah. If you had an independent existence other than Allah, you would not have to efface yourself not to know your selfhood. You would be a Lord God other than Him. Allah he praised that there is no Lord God other than Him.

(To be concluded in our next issue)

Bhagavan Ramana gave no initiation as such and had no disciples. In fact this was the main problem for many of the foreign-visitors who came in search of a Sad-Guru. Having read Vedantic literature and eager to learn more about eastern mysticism they came to Tiruvannamalai, to Bhagavan's Presence, hoping to get direct initiation and Guru-Sishya relationship, only to find that there was no such thing as formal initiation undertaken. One of these visitors asked: Bhagavan "May I believe that there is nothing more to be known now, so far as the technique of *sadhana* is concerned, than that which has been written in your books from time to time? This question arises from the fact that in all other systems of *Sadhana*, the Sadguru unfolds some secret technique of meditation to his disciple at the time of initiation or *diksha* as it is called."

Bhagavan: "There is nothing more to be known than what you find in the books. No secret technique. It is all an open secret in this system."

— SRI K. K. NAMBIAR
(in his address at Ramana Centenary Celebrations in New Delhi)

Autobiographical Reminiscences of Ramana

(From an account recorded by
B. V. Narasimha Swami
in February 1930)

In the appendix of Narasimha Swami's book "Self Realisation" there is an account of the Maharshi's second death experience which took place on the mountain in 1912. The account finishes with Bhagavan's comment that this was the only occasion on which both blood circulation and respiration stopped. After concluding his description of the experience, the Maharshi continued to reminisce about his early days on the hill. This account was edited out of the book and has never been published before.—(EDITOR)

"ON a later occasion I started from Virupaksha cave to Skandashram. Kandasami had gone down somewhere and no one accompanied me except A. Mahadevan, the son of Ganapati Muni. As soon as I reached Skandashram, I sat on the pial, leaned against something and became unconscious. Mahadevan noticed later that I was foaming at the mouth. After some time I regained consciousness.

"I had no fits after that, unless one includes my exhaustion during an attack of diarrhoea in Skandashram. I had been given some irritating medicines, including purified sulphur, and I was having continual motions for several days. On the first night I found it troublesome to move up and down for each motion so I moved down to the *Koradu* (outside the ashram) and lay on the stone there. Eventually I became too ill to move, and motions were being passed as I lay there. There was no sense or idea of cleansing. For some time I lay there with no one seeing my condition. Later, about midnight, I was discovered and taken into the ashram.

"These fits came on and off at Madurai. They came on even when I was at Tiruvannamalai in the early years. I had it at Vahana Mantapam often, also in the Vazhaithottam of the temple and also in Gurumurtham.

"At the Vahana Mantapam, I would edge through the narrow passage between the

vahanas and the tatties in front of that mantapam to the interiormost vahana to escape attention and I would seat myself under the belly of the vahana on a sort of supporting plank. I would lose consciousness there and sometimes when I woke up, I would find myself on the tenth row (of vahanas) instead of the fifteenth having got there via a very narrow passage under one of the vahanas. I must have crept into it like a lizard. Whether I did so or something carried me, I never knew. But strangely enough, at no time did the crawlings and movements produce even a scratch, much less any hurt, to my person.

"Similarly in the Vazhaithottam, there would be a dense alley of oleander trees with cut-off stumps projecting. Occasionally, I would sit under one and wake up many fathoms further inside. I must have passed through these projecting stumps in my unconscious condition, yet I was not hurt at any time.

"At Gurumurtham I was very much constricted. I would pass hard, solid, steel-hard square blocks. I would just sit somewhere and after sometime try to rise. I would raise myself from my haunches and at once feel faint and giddy and resume my old position. Sometime later I would endeavor to get up, raise myself a foot or so, then feel the same reeling sensation and sit down again. On one occasion after such failures I got up and

tried to go out and was clutching the front door. When Palaniswami came and held me in his arms, I turned to him and wished to know (through silence) why he was behaving in this manner. He said that he noticed that I was about to fall and so he seized me to prevent the fall. But I was holding on to the door with both hands outstretched and was not aware that I was about to fall. This difficulty in getting up on account of reeling was a constant feature of my life at Gurumurtham. Days and nights would pass without my being aware of their passing. I entertained no idea of bathing, cleaning my teeth or other cleansing even when I had defecated. The face got begrimed, the hair became one clotted mass like wax and the nails grew long. When anyone thought that I should take food and called, I would stretch a hand. Something would drop on it and I would eat it and then rub my hand on my head or body, and then drop again into my continuous mood. Sometimes people would pull out my hand and place food on it and I would swallow it. This was my condition for some years from the time of my arrival. For many years, I ate only off my hand without using any leafplate."

Question: Who fed Bhagavan all this time? Did there exist any who undertook to provide you with your daily food?

Bhagavan: Yes, almost from the outset there were such people. First there was Jadai T. Mounaswami of Chidambaram; Uddandi Nayanar and Thambiram to see to my daily supply of food when I was in the thousand-pillared hall, Vahanamantapam, Gopura

Subramania temple and Vazhathottam. Even then some pious people resolved to see to my daily food supply. Nagappiar's grandmother and others did so. A young and beautiful dancing girl named Rajammal used to go there and feed me, even under the Sivaganga Illupai tree. She and I were sometimes all alone and the situation would be considered delicate. But she would throw food on my hand and I would eat it without any objectionable thoughts arising in me, even though for one month in the Gopura Subramania temple I was naked.

"At the first Karthikai festival, when innumerable pilgrims flocked here, just a few came and saw me, and after that, the number of those who came to see me steadily increased. By the time I was at Gurumurtham I had a fairly large number calling to see me, and in a sense, a reputation had been established. A number of persons wished that I should eat the food which each of them brought every day, but there was a difficulty in eating all that was brought. Each day a bit of what each had brought, solid or liquid, sweet or salty, fruit or rice, would be taken and mixed up into a sauce and given to me in a cupful. The rest would be given back to the donors as *prasadam*. This would be my night meal and I would drink it off, not minding how this compound mixture tasted.

"When I came up the hill, occasional food offerings from the casual visitors coupled with these daily supplies kept me up. But, soon, Palaniswami and others who were with me would go to the town and beg for food and bring up the begged food and eat it with me."

The people most separated from God are the ascetics by their asceticism, the devotees by their devotion and the knowers by their knowledge.

— BAYAZID AL-BISTAMI

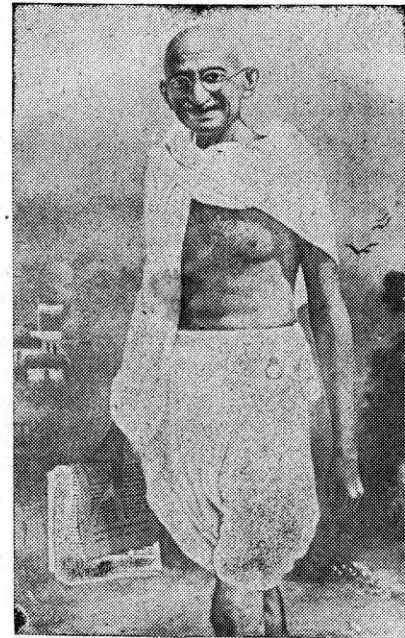
GANDHIJI AND RAMANAMA

By
K. S.

GANDHIJI'S repeated reference to the efficacy of *Ramanama* (repetition of *Ram* as a *mantra*) as an unfailing remedy for all ills, physical, mental, and moral, deserves careful study on the part of orthodox Hindus as well as of rationalists who dismiss all *mantras* as mere superstition. Why was *Ramanama* Gandhiji's chosen *mantra*, and how could it possibly perform all the miracles that this sensible, practical man persistently claimed that it could?

Of all the Hindu Gods, each of whom stands for some special psycho-social reality, Sri Rama is the one outstanding exemplar of normal human *dharma*, the most attractive and popular model of heroic goodness in family and social relations. Gandhiji was convinced that there was no conflict between *moksha* and *dharma*¹ and that the bliss of *moksha* came unsought by the voluntary practice of *dharma*. Hence, the one sole value which we must pursue with all our strength and in all our activities is *dharma*, which should govern *artha* and *kama* (material possessions and desires) and is bound ultimately to ripen into *moksha*, the timeless bliss which is both the cause and consequence of normal, human conduct.

Because Gandhiji accepted the sovereignty of *dharma* in the public sphere as in private life, he dared to dream of a free India as *Ramarajya*, a State where righteousness would prevail by



Gandhiji

the free choice of its citizens. Though Gandhiji was well aware of the transcendent power of Shiva, the embodiment of pure awareness, and also of the infinite charm of Sri Krishna, the Master of Yoga, the God he recommended for universal acceptance by the masses as well as the elite, by others as well as Hindus, was God under the name of *Rama*.

From the very beginning, the Mahatma's religion was the religion of a poet rejoicing in the beauty of both goodness and truth, and it remained so till the very end. Though he had outgrown literal belief in the *Ramayana* story, the spell of Rama's figure on his imagination remained. Speaking at a meeting of missionaries in London in September 1931, he said

¹*moksha* is Liberation or spiritual freedom, *dharma* in this article is taken to mean the correct performance of the duties and responsibilities which arise from the God-given role that has been allocated to each of us from moment to moment.

that he could not adore God as God. "To me", he said, "that name makes no appeal, but when I think of Him as Rama, He thrills me. There is all the poetry in it." And a few years later he reminded an audience in Andhra Pradesh that the name of Rama had been familiar to the birds and animals and the very stones of India for thousands of years, and urged them to recite that name with such music that the birds would pause in their singing and the trees would bend their leaves to listen to the melody of that sweet name.

He made it clear, however, that this Rama whom he worshipped as God was not a historical or legendary figure, the son of Dasaratha and husband of Sita, but the eternal, the unborn *Sat*, the spiritual Being who belongs equally to all. Asserting that *Ramanama* and *Omkar* were identical, Gandhiji drew attention to the strengthening and the purifying power of the Name, which reminds us of the Supreme Being pervading and controlling the universe and also shining in every human heart and guiding it from within. The utterance of *Ramanama* is not a substitute, but an inspiration and incentive for right conduct; not a means of escape from our human and social responsibilities, but a call and an inspiration valiantly to accept and honestly to perform the duties that devolve on us as individuals and as citizens.

The rationalists' opposition and our young people's indifference to temples and *mantras* may stem from ignorance, but they derive much strength from the unworthy or hypocritical behaviour of many who proudly and pompously parade their love of Rama, but do not in their personal and social life practice the virtues which the name of Rama represents.

Every religion makes stern demands on the adults who profess it, even as it promises motherlike protection to the children born in it.

Our approach to the mighty *mantra* of *Ramanama* and our application of it to concrete life situations should, according to Gandhiji, be a combination of *Jnana* and *karma*, of wide-awake awareness and egoless action. In the recent past Sri Aurobindo, a staunch devotee of Sri Krishna, has set an example of strenuous yoga; Ramana Maharshi, a worshipper of Siva, has prescribed self-enquiry as a dynamic means of enjoying and exercising ever higher and wider awareness; and Gandhiji, as a lover of Rama, pleads for the service of *Daridra Narayana* (God in the poor) as the *dharma* of today. All three hold out the hope that a time may yet come when the true values of *sanatana dharma* (the eternal truth, the original name of Hinduism) will permeate the whole of Indian life and govern our conduct, public as well as private, and that religions in this ancient land will no more be imprisoned in temples, mosques and churches, in doctrines and rituals.

It is idle to look to government or politicians to improve people and prepare the ground for the kingdom of righteousness. In a democratic polity it is for the people to purify politics and keep politicians straight. For this difficult but necessary task, for each one of us to perform our *dharma* or perish in the attempt, we need clarity of mind and courage of heart. To acquire and exercise these qualities, Gandhiji tells us, we should know how to tap and use the inexhaustible spiritual resources of our race. The lesson that he learned from Hanuman and Sita, and that he tried in turn to teach us, is reliance on *Ramanama*.

Rememberance of the Name restores one to the centre of one's moral being, where *karma* and *jnana* meet and where service of one's neighbours becomes not only service of the world, but the *sadhana* for one's own growth from strength to strength in Being.

Sri Seshadri Swami of Tiruvannamalai

(Compiled from the writings of B. V. Narasimha Swami
and R. Kalyana Sundaram Iyer by David Godman)

SRI Seshadri Swami was an older contemporary of Sri Ramana Maharshi, who like the Maharshi, left home at an early age to come to Arunachala; like the Maharshi, he stayed there until his death. Brief accounts of him have appeared in the biographies of Ramana Maharshi, but these have tended to give a rather sketchy picture of a well-loved local figure who is best remembered for his spiritual eccentricity.

He was born in 1870, and the attendant astrologers immediately prophesied a saintly life, a prophecy he proceeded to justify from his earliest childhood. As a young boy he would offer flowers to the deity in his house and would remain with closed eyes for hours as if in prayer. There is a famous story told about him when he was only four years of age. A street hawker was spreading his wares on a festival day, and they included thousands of images of various deities. The young child wanted to buy one for himself and selected the one he wanted, but the stall owner refused to take any money from his parents because he was so impressed with the young child's eagerness to buy. Next day, the seller appeared before them in front of the temple, and, falling at the young child's feet, exclaimed that on account of the touch of the child, he was able to dispose of all the images in a few hours, whereas he would not normally expect to have sold them all for several days. This "golden touch" manifested itself many times in later years, and from the time of this incident onwards, the term "Golden Hand" came to be a familiar term for Seshadri.

Being a highly precocious child, he soon became his parent's favourite child. Able



Sri Seshadri Swami

teachers gladly taught him all the arts when he was initiated in his seventh year. The rapidity with which he assimilated what he was taught was astounding and he soon rose head and shoulders above his classmates. By the time he was fourteen, he had become a master of the *Vedas* and the *Sastras* and could ably out-debate all learned opponents.

Seshadri used to spend long hours in meditation, sometimes in a temple, but at other times he used to lock himself up in the family prayer room. In both places he was

frequently disturbed, so he made a point of going to the cremation grounds at night and returning home the next morning after meditating throughout the night. These excursions soon became known to his relatives at home, but their attempts at dissuasion only resulted in Seshadri spending most of his time away from home.

The climax to the dispute came on the anniversary of his father's death in 1889. Seshadri was then 19, and he was brought by force to the family house and locked up in a room to ensure his stay during the ceremony. When the religious functions were over, his uncle unlocked the room only to find that he had mysteriously disappeared. His family attributed the escape to super-human powers, but whether this was true or not, the event signalled Seshadri's final break with his family. After this incident, he left his home in Kanchipuram and never returned.

Seshadri's aim was to visit Tiruvannamalai. He made a slow walking pilgrimage to Arunachala, but once he arrived he never left the town again until his death nearly forty years later. During these forty years, thousands saw him and knew a few details of his external life, but no one could account for or predict his eccentric behaviour. He would run to numerous places every day and rest for the night in some deserted corner of the town or temple. He would avoid rich food from wealthy people and instead beg for some cold gruel at a poor man's house, or share the beggars' food at the beggars' choultry. He would never accept money. Costly clothes, if accepted, would either be immediately transferred to some poor passer-by, or be torn to shreds and utilised for decorating the horns or tails of a passing calf. Occasionally he would take an oil-bath; he would pour out a whole pint of oil on his body, and with the oil still glistening on his body, roam about in the street for days. He had the rare faculty of picking out evil-minded people from the crowds which would gather around him, and he would single them out by their

names and tell everyone of their past misdeeds, even though he had never seen them before. Sometimes he would go without food for days, and at other times he would devour enough food for ten people at a single sitting. Even if he sat down for a meal, he would often scatter it about, saying that he was offering it to the *devas* who were waiting for it around him. He would rarely sleep soundly, but would remain at midnight in meditation. He even tried to dissuade other people from sleeping, saying that they would be caught by the god of death if they slept.

He always came to the rescue of his devotees who were ardent worshippers of God. A clerk in Tiruvannamalai once asked his superior for permission to take six months leave of absence because he had a strong desire to take a bath in the Ganges. His superior misunderstood his intentions and thought that he had misappropriated office money and that he was asking for leave on that account. The request was refused without reasons being given and the officer started to write out a report against the clerk. Seshadri unexpectedly appeared while he was writing the report and told him that if he persisted in writing it and ruining the poor and honest clerk, he himself would be ruined instead. The officer, who had consulted no one about writing the report was startled enough to drop his proposed course of action.

There are numerous other similar anecdotes connected with Seshadri. He had the power to cure diseases and many devotees brought their health problems to him instead of seeking conventional medical advice. His cures were often as eccentric as his behaviour. One devotee came to him and implored him to cure his wife who was suffering from a chronic disease which had caused her body to swell to an enormous size. The Swami simply gave her a handful of earth and asked her to swallow a pinch and smear another handful of it on her body. On the fourth day she was freed from her disease. Seshadri himself seemed to be immune from all diseases, and on one occasion

he accidentally drank two full bottles of chlorodyne and iodine while he was visiting a devotee's house. Seshadri laughed at the devotee's frantic attempt to find an antidote and walked away from the house unharmed.

He used to take great liberties with shopkeepers. Once, he entered a cloth shop, picked out the costliest lace sari on the premises, tore it to pieces and threw it away. The proprietor, knowing Seshadri's ways, was not annoyed, and that evening he unexpectedly recovered a long-standing debt, worth several times the sari's value, which he had actually written off from his accounts. Similarly, he would often visit food stores and throw out large quantities of food into the street. Such vandalism was greatly sought after, for the injured party would invariably make huge profits in the succeeding days.

Perhaps the most astonishing exhibition of his powers was a demonstration he gave during a hot mid-summer day. Several people had gathered around him complaining about the heat and asking him to make it rain. Seshadri acceded to their request and the next moment there was a torrential downpour and the entire town was flooded with water.

Seshadri identified himself with the Goddess Parvati, and this identification is illustrated by several instances in his life at Tiruvannamalai. On one occasion a boy was going to the temple and Seshadri accosted him in the street and asked him where he was going. When the boy replied that he was going to pay homage to the Goddess, Seshadri asked him to close his eyes. On reopening them, the boy found himself in the presence of the image of the Goddess. The boy immediately went to the temple and found to his astonishment the image of the Goddess identical in every way. In his role as Parvati, Seshadri regarded Ramana Maharshi as his son Skanda, and when he drove away the trouble-makers from the Patala Linga during Ramana Maharshi's residence there, he expressed to those present the high qualities and greatness of his son Skanda.

Ramana Maharshi had arrived at Arunachala six years after Seshadri, and Seshadri immediately recognised his high spiritual attainments and he did his best to shield him from the attacks of the young boys who were persecuting him. Later Seshadri came to visit Ramana when he was staying at Pavala-kunru, a habit which he continued when Ramana moved to the Virupaksha Cave. Occasionally on such visits they would eat together, but contrary to his normal behaviour, Seshadri would try to remain as unobtrusive as possible. His high opinion of Ramana can be grasped from the conversation he had with Subrahmanya Mudaliar, a man whose family had spent most of their time and wealth on feeding sadhus. Despite this activity, Mudaliar was still deeply enmeshed in worldly activities and Seshadri tried to wean him from them. He said, "You see, my younger brother is earning Rs. 10,000, I am earning Rs. 1,000, why do you not earn Rs. 100 at least?" Mudaliar immediately understood that by earning, Seshadri meant spiritual attainment and by younger brother, the Maharshi, but he was deeply involved in agrarian litigation, and he was hoping to acquire more land and money, and so he never followed the advice.

Seshadri usually tried to avoid people who wanted to see him, but if they were devotees of "Ramanaswami", he discovered it at once, and gave them help, encouragement or instruction. He rarely gave spiritual advice, but he made a notable exception with Echammal, the lady who daily brought food to Ramana. Seshadri was once visiting her when she was entertaining a famous pandit, and the pandit was obviously less than impressed with Seshadri. Addressing Echammal he said, "How can people like this attain liberation even in a thousand lifetimes?" Echammal felt embarrassed for Seshadri and mentally wished that he would give some demonstration of his powers to put the pandit in his place. Almost immediately, Seshadri embarked on an erudite and eloquent lecture on the *Mahavakyas* and

completely dazzled the pandit with his vast learning and spiritual insight. On another occasion he visited her when she was worshipping a picture of himself and "Ramanaswami", and he asked her why she did not practise meditation. Echammal had already been taught meditation by another guru and she could spend two days in an ecstatic trance with a total loss of consciousness. Ramana Maharshi disapproved of this practice and told her so, but she still persisted with it. She asked Seshadri for instruction in meditation and specifically asked him how the practice should proceed. Seshadri made no answer, but he sat down on her floor, and sitting bolt upright in the full lotus position, immediately sank into *samadhi*. When he came out of it, he gave Echammal a long searching look and said, "Did you see, Echammal, did you see?"

At other times his advice was more orthodox, and he always advised people to stick to the particular path they had chosen for spiritual development. He was an adept in *mantra sastra*, and by constant repetition of *mantras* had obtained a vision of the Goddess Kamakshi. He had practised numerous other *mantras* and occasionally initiated people who came to him for advice by giving them an appropriate *mantra*. However, he would never advise or initiate anyone who had faith in "Ramanaswami". He would tell them to stick with Ramana and follow his advice exclusively.

An interesting incident took place at the Mango Tree Cave in 1908 when Seshadri tried to read the Maharshi's thoughts. He normally had no problem in reading another person's

thoughts, but on this occasion he had no success. He looked at Ramana and said, "It is not clear what this person is thinking." The Maharshi said nothing, and so Seshadri continued, "If one worships Arunachala, Arunachala will grant salvation." Ramana then broke his silence and said, "Who is the person who worships and who is the worshipped?" Seshadri burst out laughing and said, "That is just what is not clear." The Maharshi then expounded at length on the advaitic theory of the unity of God, the world and the individual souls. Seshadri listened patiently and at the end of the talk he got up and said, "I cannot say anything, all this is dark to me. I at any rate worship". After saying this, he faced the crest of Arunachala, prostrated himself ten or fifteen times and then left. Unless Seshadri was playing one of his elaborate games and being deliberately deceptive, this conversation would seem to indicate that at this stage of his spiritual career, he was still attached to the idea of a personality existing separate and distinct from God.

After a long and colourful career, Seshadri died suddenly in 1929 when he was still only 59 years of age. A large part of the town turned out for his funeral and he was buried at the foot of the hill, about 400 yards from Sri Ramanasramam. Ramana Maharshi himself attended the last rites and watched in silence as the body was finally laid to rest. The townspeople have never forgotten him, and even today, over fifty years after his death, his anniversaries are celebrated in great style by large crowds who come to the small ashram which has now been built over his tomb.

Love that One Who, when you shall cease to be, will not Himself cease to be, that you may become one who will never cease to be.

— ABU SA'ID IBN ABI'L-KHA

Garland of Guru's Sayings

By SRI MURUGANAR
Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

PART III

EXPERIENCE OF REALITY

OF APAROKSHA (DIRECT) KNOWLEDGE

898

When we with mind serene and still
Experience pure unbroken Being,
That is Samadhi. In this state,
The mind, abiding as the Self,
Supreme, shares God's own being.

899

Listen how to reach and Be
The truth which is the ground and substance
Of all knowledge, pure Awareness.
To draw the mind away from objects
And press it in to probe itself
Takes one straight to the goal within.

900

Awareness moveless and unbroken
Amounts to attaining Sivahood
For is not mere awareness, Being
Without a knower or known,
The purest form of Siva.

901

What is that primal Ground whose Being
Is *mouna* and the bliss supreme
Declared by sages as the ultimate
Goal ineffable of all *jnana*?
It is the radiance bright in which

"In here" and "out there" merge as but
One sole Awareness (When the identify with
the body is transcended the self as awareness
fills the universe).

902

That primal ground whose Being is silence
That am I, why take the trouble
To utter this? stillness of mind
Is *nishtha* extinction of the "I".
With "I" gone, where is the room for
thought?

(Meditation on phrases like 'I am Brahman,
Soham, Sivoham' is not self enquiry. The quest
"Who am I" leading to extinction, of "I" is true
self enquiry).

OF 'CHANGELESSNESS'

903

Wise men rare and noble, tell me
How real is this changing world?
And the rising and the setting
Of this phenomenal universe
Real changes that occur
In the Real? Or are they mere
Appearances that come and go,
What is your firm and final view?

(Verses 903 to 907 repeat and re-inforce the state-
ment in verses 63-65. There are some who think
that this world subject to birth, growth, decay and
death is the result of some change in the Real.
This view is refuted in these verses which assert that
the sole Reality which is Pure Being — Awareness

is ever changeless. The change and variety we perceive are the creation of our own mind and senses and do not affect real Being which is changeless).

904

The rise and setting of this world
Depend on the flawed bodies birth
And death. To attribute these changes
To the Self of pure awareness
Is sheer folly like the notion
That the clouds that come and go
Are changes in the sky itself.

905

Is there a greater folly than
The aching folly of supposing
That the Self, the I of pure awareness
Which does not see this changing world
At all is subject to some change.

906

The troubles that result from change
Can never touch the Self at all.
Changes and flaws in earth and water
Fire and air do not affect
The element ether which pervades them
And transcends them all.

907

The same woman is thought of
By various people variously
As wife, mother, sister-in-law
Or niece and so on. But does she
Really suffer change of form?

(Even so the one unchanging Self appears variously as the world, the *jiva* and God)

OF 'SOLITUDE'

908

Of all the many qualities
That are desirable in a earnest
Seeker of imperishable *moksha*,

That one that is essential is
Love for the bliss of solitude.

(Note: Compare verse 912 — By solitude Shri Bhagavan means freedom from all attachment. The seeker after moksha should rejoice in freedom from all vasanas, that is from all thoughts, memories and expectations).

OF 'NON-ATTACHMENT'

909

O heart, 'tis by the mighty power
Of your presence that all *tattvas*
Meet in mutual love and sport
And dance away. But even so
You stand aloof and as a witness
Watch the show, yourself unmoved
Firm fixed in true identity.

(The *tattvas* are all entities like bodies, thoughts and principles).

910

No matter what however big or small
May come to one or go away from one,
'tis wisdom to stand quite aloof and yet
Supporting all, instead a being a wisp
Of weak straw fluttering in the wind.

(The Self is like the screen on which a film is projected untouched by flood or fire in the picture. Compare Verse 1 of the forty verses where the support is screen, the spectator, the light and the film are all identified with the Self).

911

Within without and through and through
All objects the ethereal sky
Is present and is yet by none
Bound or affected. And unless
One knows one self as the pure Self
Transcendent one cannot but get
Caught in the world's illusive bonds.

(In the absence of Self knowledge, it is impossible to live in the world a life of perfect non-attachment).

How I Came to Bhagavan

By
Muruganar, and Meenakshi Ammal, his wife

Muruganar is well known as one of the leading disciples of Ramana Maharshi, but his early years at the Ashram were marked by both spiritual and personal turbulence. We are presenting two accounts of these early years, the first written by Muruganar, and the second by Meenakshi Ammal, his wife. Muruganar's account was written in February 1930 and was translated into English by B. V. Narasimha Swamy. Meenakshi Ammal's account was not written until 1972, and the passage of time may have affected her memory a little. On those matters which can be checked, we have discovered one or two minor errors of fact, such as the wrong name of her husband's school and an incorrect recollection of the first book on Ramana Maharshi which was given to Muruganar, but there is little doubt that the essence of the account is substantially correct. Meenakshi Ammal's account has been translated by Narasimha Iyer, and the two quotations from Muruganar's works have been translated by Professor K. Swaminathan.—(EDITOR).

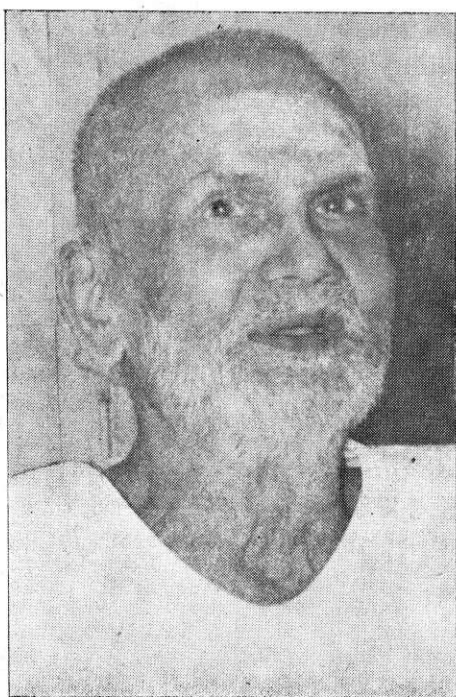
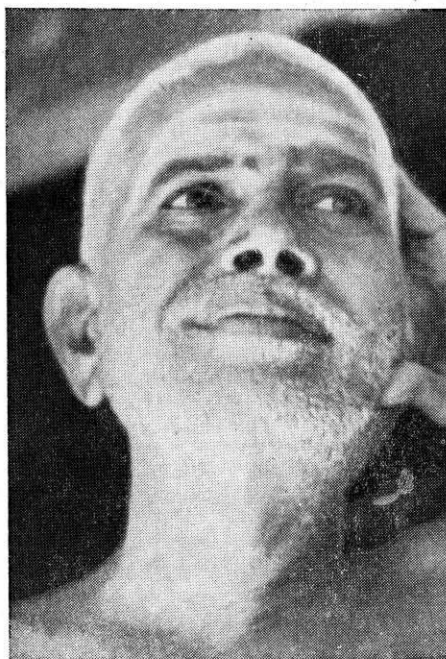
MURUGANAR'S ACCOUNT

I have known Maharshigal since 1923. I had heard of him as a daring person who left home in his youth and lived a hermit's life at Tiruvannamalai with severe penances. Manager Aiyasami Pillai came with my father-in-law to Madras and saw my nationalistic Tamil poems and said they were good and should be taken to the notice of Sri Ramana Maharshigal at Tiruvannamalai as he was interested in such literature, and his blessings would develop my muse and ease the further flow of such poetry. I read Maharshi's "Aksharamanamalai", but read it with a mere literary eye. Aiyasami Pillai invited me to visit the Maharshi. After persuading my mother with some difficulty, I got her permission and came here (Tiruvannamalai) in Michaelmas of 1923. On my way to Tiruvannamalai, I composed ten Tamil stanzas on the Maharshi. One of these was a query to the Maharshi asking him what he had done for national uplift, a thought which was uppermost in my mind then. The verse ran, "Don't you know how many spiritual leaders with one voice summon us to patriotic service? What have you done to help this cause?"¹

Two or three days after my arrival I was given some medicine. I do not know what it was, but it excited me and overpowered me. I sat in front of the Maharshi and concentrated my mind on his person. After a few minutes I had a vision of brightness. It was a suffused brightness all over his body and around it. The body was, however, distinct from the surrounding light. How long it lasted, I personally do not know, so wholly lost was I in contemplating the vision. Kunju Swami, Dandapani Swami and Arunachala Swami were present while this was going on. Maharshi then appeared to me as Christ, for what reason I cannot say, and again as Mohammad and other

¹A fuller account of Muruganar's first visit to Bhagavan can be found in *The Mountain Path*, October 1973, p. 202. On his arrival in Tiruvannamalai, Muruganar went straight to the Arunachala temple, and after bowing to the image of Arunachaleswar, composed eleven verses in praise of Bhagavan. Extracts from these verses are printed in the aforementioned article. These verses are full of devotion to Bhagavan, and it is strange that Muruganar should refer to the only secular verse in the collection, for it is clear from the verses that he already regarded himself as an ardent devotee of Bhagavan.

great souls for similarly inexplicable reasons. I lost my former personality during this period, for it was submerged and lost in a huge ocean wave of a new state of spirituality. I was feeling that all my experience was dream-like vague and insubstantial, mysterious in spite of the feeling that I was still in the waking condition. I was obsessed by this fear that my former worldly waking state was being smothered and my former self plundered of its sense of reality and individuality. I felt that as a consequence I might be perpetually held down to this strange life in Tiruvannamalai and be for ever lost to my mother whose sole support I was. So I bawled out some words to this effect: "Here are a band of robbers called *siddhas* at whose head is this Ramana Maharshi. They are all intent on capturing souls who approach them in the waking condition and rapidly charming them into this mysterious *siddha's* sort of life and adding them to their group. As it would not be within the power of my mother or anyone



Sri Muruganar

else to see me or take me back from their iron clutch, I must start off from here at once." I also added, looking at this bright dazzling figure of Maharshi and addressing him: "So here I am, unable even for a few moments to endure this light. How wonderful it is that a woman, your mother, should have carried you in her womb for nine long months." In this high-strung state, and in this unique strain, I went on haranguing for over an hour, punctuating it by repeated prostrations to Maharshi. After that, I wandered about here and there with Kunju Swami and Arunachala Swami, mostly around Palitheertham and the Chengam Road until 3 a.m. I felt that all attempts to escape from the Ashram were futile, as the whole of Tiruvannamalai was giving me the same oppressive feeling, submerging my personality, and that Tiruvannamalai and the Maharshi were co-extensive and synonymous.

A few days later, during the same trip to Tiruvannamalai, when I had no medicine to excite me, I again sat before the Maharshi and had a similar experience. Once again, the

figure of the Maharshi became brilliant, and my sense of personality was again submerged. Again my fears were roused that should I continue in his presence longer, I should be lost to my mother. So at midnight, I hurried from the Ashram into the town and spent the night in the house of one of my pupils. This was probably in the Christmas vacation of 1923-24.

I brought my mother in 1924, around the time of *Sivaratri*, to see the Maharshi and she had a good reception. I had begun the habit of meditation, and my meditation was mostly *niramabalam* and not personal.

In the succeeding months I came to visit on many occasions. I used to listen to people's queries to the Maharshi and his replies to them. I was gradually influenced by him and my outlook on life was getting altered. After my mother died in 1924, I left my job in July 1926 and I came to Tiruvannamalai, making it my permanent residence in the middle of 1926. I have continued here ever since, coming daily under the Maharshi's influence, and I have now written over a thousand verses about him.

SRIMATHI MEENAKSHI MURUGANAR ON HERSELF

I was born the sixth daughter of Sri Periyakulam Krishna Iyer and Kanakammal on the fourth day of Panguni month, Saleevagna Sahabdha, 1823 (17-3-1902). My parents and elders called me Meenakshi. I was happy with my parents.

When I was eleven years old, somebody told my father that there was a good boy named Subramanian in Ramanathapuram who was available for marriage. His parents were Sri Krishnamurthy Iyer and Srimathi Subbalakshmi Ammal. My father went there and talked with them about giving me in marriage to their son, and this was accepted. My marriage took place in the Melmangalam village near Periyakulam and was celebrated for five days on a grand scale.

My husband was a tutor to the third Rani's mother in Ramanathapuram palace. After my marriage, he served as Tamil *vidvan* in Thirumalai Nayakkar Mahal, Madurai. Then we left that place, came to Rayapuram and settled in Kollava Agraharam. My husband became Tamil pandit in Northwick School, Rayapuram.

In the meantime, my father took *sannyasa* and became one of the leading devotees of Sri Ramana Bhagavan. (The father's name was Dandapani Swami). Later, my father went to Palani with Bhagavan's permission, constructed an ashram in South Giri Street, and lived there for some time. While he was there he came to our house in Rayapuram. During his visit, he gave a copy of *Aksharamanamalai* (The Marital Garland of Letters) to my husband. My husband went through them and after four days informed me that he was going to Thirukazhi Kunram. However, instead, he went straight to Tiruvannamalai.

When he saw Bhagavan, he felt that his whole body was burning. He wept and cried out complaining of a burning sensation without knowing what it was. The attendants around Bhagavan thought that he was mad. One attendant, Sri Ramakrishna Swami rubbed lemon juice on his head and poured pots of water over him. He stayed there for several days doing *tapas* and having Bhagavan's *darshan*. Then he returned to Madras and his job, but he had little interest in his work.

Then he began to go to Tiruvannamalai on all Saturdays and Sundays for one year. After my mother-in-law's first annual ceremony, and without informing me, he resigned his job and went to Ramanathapuram. My neighbours telegraphed to my brother about my problem and he came to see me. Both of us went to the school and met the headmistress who was an English lady. She said that he had resigned his job and left. I began to weep and she consoled me by saying that God would help me.

Then I went to Ramanathapuram with my brother and Muruganar came to visit us the

night we arrived. I held his feet and wept. I requested him to point out my faults if any that made him leave me alone. He gave me no reply. Then I went to Raghava Iyengar, a great Tamil scholar in the town and told him about my troubles. Raghava talked to my husband but his words had no effect.

Then Sri Muruganar left for Tiruvannamalai, and after ten days, I also went there. Santhammal also came to the Ashram. I told all my sufferings to Bhagavan and wept and Bhagavan consoled me. I stayed in the Ashram for six months. At that time the Ashram was very small; Chinnaswami, Bhagavan, Palani Swami, Ramakrishna Swami, and Dandapani Swami used to cook. I helped them in the kitchen and it was a very happy time for me.

Daily Bhagavan used to give me ten verses from Muruganar's works and instructed me to recite them to him the following day. I did it regularly. Sometimes I helped Bhagavan in grinding *iddlies* etc. Once a week Bhagavan used to go around the hill with Kunju Swami, Dandapani Swami, Ramakrishna Swami, Santhammal and others. I also used to accompany them. We used to recite "*Aksharamanamalai*" during our *pradakshina*.

Bhagavan never allowed anyone to be idle. All disciples used to sit in meditation with closed eyes in the hall. I did not know how to meditate, and when I mentioned this to Bhagavan, he taught me how to do it. One day I came to the hall with my hair full of flowers and bowed before Bhagavan. Santhammal saw my decorations and said "Your husband has become a *sannyasi*, why do you dress up like this?"¹ After hearing this, I removed the flowers and I went up to Bhagavan weeping and bowed down before him. He noticed me and asked, "Why did you remove all your decorations?" I said that it was on the advice of Santhammal. Immediately, Bhagavan called Santhammal and asked, "Why, has she no husband? Why should she not decorate herself if she wants to?

When anyone comes to the Ashram and takes a ladle in their hand, they immediately think that they are wonderful.² While I was trying to pacify her, you have hurt her heart."

On one occasion, while others were doing meditation, I was more interested in some coffee which was due to be served. Bhagavan noticed me, laughed and said: "Everyone is doing meditation on the Self, but Meenakshi is doing coffee meditation." At that moment Saranagathi Ramaswami Iyer who came in a bullock cart entered the hall with coffee and *iddlies* and Bhagavan asked him to serve me first.

Muruganar stayed near the temple in town with Eswaraswamigal and Gopal Rao. They used to go begging for their food at noon. Muruganar used to sit alone in Subramaniya Temple in the evening. One evening, acting on Santhammal's advice, I caught hold of his feet and asked, "What mistake have I done? Why did you leave? What will be my future?" In response he opened neither his mouth nor his eyes.

Soon after this incident, someone brought a piece of verse to the hall and put it before Bhagavan. Bhagavan wanted Muruganar to read it and said: "Muruganar has been absent for the last two days. What is the reason?" In response to this I went to Bhagavan and told him what I did at the temple on Santhammal's advice. Bhagavan got angry with me and said; "Why did you act like that on that woman's advice. You see, while he was here, you could see your husband. But now he has disappeared, what will you do? Hereafter, don't take other's advice and don't give trouble to Muruganar."

Then he asked Viswanatha Swami, and Ramakrishna Swami to search for Muruganar and bring him back. They found him in

¹ It is traditional for widows and wives of *sannyasis* not to dress themselves up in any way.

² Santhammal was the Ashram cook.

Skandashram and brought him back to the Ashram telling him that Meenakshi had gone to her village. He came and sat by the side of Bhagavan and I went before Bhagavan and did *namaskaram*. Then Bhagavan asked Muruganar why he had run away instead of advising her to do some meditation. Muruganar remained silent.

Then Bhagavan picked up a book. I was sitting in a corner and he called to me to come near him. "Meenakshi, come here, there is a story in this book, I shall read it to you. Listen. Once a husband and wife lived happily for some time. One day her husband disappeared without telling anybody. Many years passed but she could not find him. Eventually she joined a hospital as a nurse. In the same hospital, her husband was also working as head compounder, but they did not recognise each other. After some time they became close friends and the nurse became pregnant. When her mother came to help her, he saw her and realised that his present wife was the same one whom he had earlier deserted." After finishing the story Bhagavan asked, "Why don't you act like her?" and everyone in the hall laughed, including me.

One day, all the devotees were sitting in the hall. I was in tears again. Bhagavan asked me. "Why are you crying again? Did somebody tease you?" I said "No one talked against me, but I thought of my miserable life and the tears just came." Bhagavan said, "Why don't you take my advice? What is there in the family life. See, your father has ten children, but they are not helping him.

What is the use? I am always here with you. Nothing will happen, don't worry." Thus Bhagavan consoled me. He said, "Go only to the house who calls you affectionately 'Meenakshi'. The Ashram will take care of you."

Another day he called me 'Meenakshi' and gave me ten verses by Muruganar to memorise. In these verses he describes Bhagavan as his bridegroom with Muruganar being his bride. He complains that Ramana has left the bride in the streets after marriage without proper care. The verses are *Nayaki Nayakabaya*. The verse says, "You were once with me my wedded Lord, but now for a long time you have abandoned me. And if I complain, you call our old friendship a dream that I had dreamt." In the version given to me, Bhagavan changed the last line, changing *Ramana mayavane* to *Muruga mayavane*. He then asked me to recite these verses in the hall in the evening while Muruganar was there.

I sang these ten verses in the hall while Muruganar was sitting by the side of Bhagavan, Bhagavan then told Muruganar that he has not left him in the streets, but Muruganar has left Meenakshi in the streets. Muruganar got up laughing but Bhagavan asked him to give a reply before getting up, but he went away without saying anything.

Then Bhagavan said, "I tried in so many ways. It is of no use. God alone will look after you."

Bhagavan was very kind to me.

His grace must be with me for ever. . . .

The ignorant reject what they see, not what they think; the wise reject what they think, not what they see.

—HUANG PO.

* * * * *

Who is it that repeats the Buddha's name? We should try to find out where this "Who" comes from and what it looks like.

—HSU YUN.

Sri Ramana Gives Rama Darsan

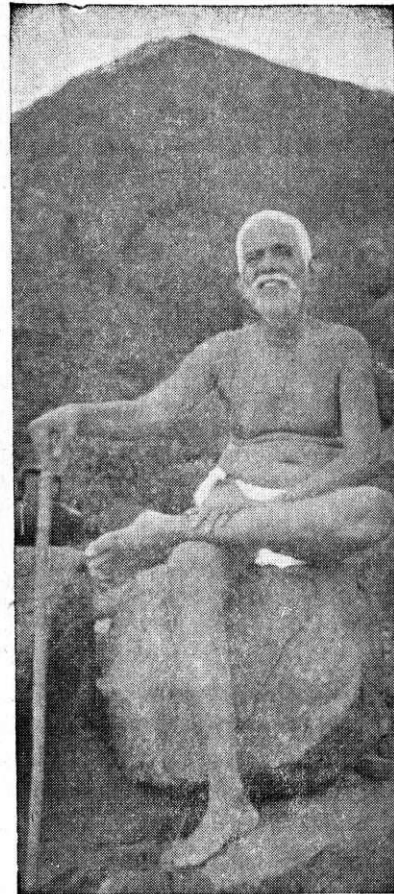
By

T. K. Sundaresa Iyer

IT was 1908 when I, as a boy of ten, first contacted Sri Ramana Maharshi in the Virupaksha cave. Had you seen Him in those days, you would hardly have taken Him for a mere human being. His figure was a statue of burnished gold. He simply sat and sat, and rarely spoke. The words He spoke on any day could easily be counted. He was an enchanting personality who shed a captivating lustre on all and a life-giving current flowed from Him, changing all those nearby. His sparkling eyes irrigated those around Him with the nectar of His being.

Peace, peace, peace. Now you have lost your individuality in Him: He absorbs you, is your all, is the All. I remember it all so well. The first song I sang before Him was the famous *Namasivaya-padikam*, the gift of the great saint Sri Sundaramurti Swamigal. From then on He had me linked inseparably to Himself. I know only one thing, and that is that He alone exists as the Divine, and all else has only the appearance of existence, but in Reality is not.

I never had to leave Tiruvannamalai after my nineteenth year. Ganapati Muni was at that time in Tiruvannamalai; His *Vaidika Sabha* society was very active, and he gave a series of discourses on the Vedas. His magnetic personality and exposition of the greatness of Bhagavan so deeply impressed me that I decided to study the *Vedas* at his feet; I was gladly accepted as a student. He was then living in the Mango Tree Cave below the Virupaksha Cave on the hill. Eight years I studied the scriptures under him, and daily we visited the Maharshi together and enjoyed the benefit of His presence.



After the Maharshi's mother passed away and the Maharshi came down the hill, Ganapati Muni and his pupils would come down to the Maharshi's abode and there would be memorable and scintillating discussions. When the Muni was in the hall, Sri Maharshi could be seen in the full bloom of His being. The discussions ranged over various schools of thought and philosophy, and it was a period of great literary activity at the Ashram. Besides

Ganapathi Muni, there were Kapali Sastri, Muruganar, Arunachala Sastriar, Lakshmana Sharma, Ramananda Saraswathi, Sivaprakasam Pillai and a host of others, all sitting in the hall which in those days was open throughout the day and night. Our lives were based and turned upon that one central personality. Nothing gave us greater joy than to be in His presence as often as possible and to do his bidding.

Thus did time pass until 1929, when on leaving Tiruvannamalai for good, Ganapathi Muni made me over to the care of Sri Maharshi and in the first letter he wrote to Bhagavan, he asked Him to take particular care of me. I was at school when that letter was received, and the Maharshi tucked it under His cushion. When I returned from school he pulled it out and read it and then said: "Look, you must not run away from here, I am answerable to Nayana (Ganapati Muni); he may come at any time and claim you from me."

Our happiness in the presence of Sri Bhagavan was comparable to the hosts of Siva on Mount Kailas. Sri Bhagavan used to say: "Kailas is the abode of Siva, Arunachala is Siva Himself. Even in Kailas things are as they are with us here. Devotees go to Siva, worship Him, serve Him and hear His talks day in and day out."

In May 1933, on my 36th birthday, after the usual bath and prayers, I sat in Sri Bhagavan's presence in a pensive mood. I addressed a prayer to Sri Bhagavan complaining: "O Bhagavan, I have completed three and a half decades, and yet have not had the experience of the real you. Pray let me have this day the touch of your Grace." Handing over this slip of paper, I prostrated to Him.

Bhagavan told me to sit down and gazed steadily at me; I was still in a pensive and meditative mood. Suddenly I lost body consciousness and was absorbed in Sri Maharshi. I was turned inward and the voice of Bhagavan bade me see whatever I desired. I felt that if

I could have the *darsan* of Sri Rama, my life would have been fruitful, for I was very much devoted to Sri Rama. I had then immediately a *darsan* of Sri Rama with Sita, Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrugna and Hanuman. The ecstasy of the vision defied description. I simply sat on, with perhaps the Maharshi gazing at me without my being aware of His gaze. Two hours may thus have passed in pin-drop silence, I was lost in the vision until it vanished. I prostrated at the feet of the Maharshi with tears of ecstasy in my eyes and my hair standing on end. To Bhagavan's enquiry I replied that I of course had seen my dear Rama.

Bhagavan asked me to fetch the book *Dakshinamurthy Ashtotra*, which I had not read and opening a page he gave it to me to read. The fifth name from the last read "*Om Sri Yoga Pattabhiramaya Namaha*". Bhagavan then said: "Sri Rama is Dakshinamurthy, and Dakshinamurthy is Sri Rama. Do you know where Ayodhya is? The *Vedas* say that it is in the sun and describe it as '*Ashtachakra navadwara devanam purayodhya*' (the God's city is Ayodhya with eight corners and nine gates). Arunachala is also '*ashtachakra puri*' (eight cornered city), and Arunachala is Sri Rama as well as Dakshinamurthy. One has no need to go to the sun to see Ayodhya or Sri Rama, but one may see them here and now."

Thus did Sri Ramana once appear to me as Sri Rama, proving once again the age old adage that *Mahatmas* can give *darsan* in any beloved form. In the Sri Krishna *Ayatara*, did not Bhagavan grant Hanuman the vision of Sri Rama? Later I realised that the vision was given to me as painted in Sri Tyagabrahman's picture of Sri Rama though not for a moment can I equate myself with Sri Tyagaraja.

(This account, along with many other reminiscences by the same author, is being published as a book. It will be available from the Ashram later this year.)

Nama-japa in Christianity

By

Dr. R. De Smet, S. J.

WHEN after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Peter, whom he had made the head of his twelve apostles, cured the cripple before the Beautiful Gate of the Jerusalem Temple, he professed loudly to the Jewish authorities, who requested an account of his action: "It is the Name of this same Jesus, it is faith in this Name which has cured this man." (*Acts* 3:16).

The apostle Paul witnessed to the cosmic power of that Name: "God has given him a Name that is above all names, so that at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bend in heaven, on earth and under the earth." (*Phil.* 2:9-10).

This faith in the power of the Name of Jesus has been handed down to us from the early Christian community. All along the centuries the Good News is preached in the Name of Jesus. Baptism in the Holy Spirit makes Christians vividly aware of the saving power of this Name. Martyrs die pronouncing it reverently. This is not belief in magic. The source of this reverence is the Christians' deep conviction that the risen Christ is alive and leads all men to a share in his glorious life in eternity.

The proclamation of Jesus as saving Lord was joined early to the cry of the two blind men on the road to Jericho, "Son of David, have mercy on us," (*Matt.* 9:27), and to the humble request of the publican, "O God, have mercy on me, a sinner," (*Luke* 18:13). The result was a simple prayer that the later Christians called the Jesus Prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner." In the Eastern Christian world especially, this formula was adopted for repetition (*Japa*), often supported by a rhythmical control of the breath (*pranayama*).

About fourteen centuries before the birth of Christ, God had revealed to Moses that His proper name was YHWH, probably pronounced *Yahweh* and meaning "He who is." Out of respect for that sacred Name, the habit was taken in the course of time of no longer pronouncing it but saying instead either 'Adonai' (Lord) or *Shem* (the Name). Accordingly, just as *Om* is identified with *Brahman*, the Name received the very predicates of *Yahweh*, namely holiness and glory (*Tob.* 8.5). It designated God in His merciful manifestations (*Exodus* 23.21) and His sanctifying presence in the Temple (*Deut.* 12.11).

Jesus himself did not fear to pronounce God's name or to call Him more filially *Abba* (father) but he did not repudiate that Jewish habit. Thus he prayed, "Father glorify thy Name," (*John* 12.28), and taught his disciples how to pray, "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name," (*Matt.* 6.9). His attitude is reflected in the canonical writings of the New Testament especially when they quote from the Old Testament, where the Name is used absolutely. In the non-canonical writings of the early Judeo-Christians, the centrality of the Name in the religious language and in the first attempts at theological speculation is everywhere evident.

Another early Christian usage connected with the Name is the 'Sphragis', that is the signing of the newly baptized Christian with a cross sign on his forehead. This cross sign was not originally a symbol of the cross upon which Jesus had died on Calvary, but the Hebrew letter *Tav* which was at that time written as + or sometimes as × *Tav* being the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet had on that account been

selected to represent the Name. *Revelation* 7.2 looking back to *Ezechial* 9.4 states that the saints are to be marked with this seal on their brow.

As to the interpretation of the Name, a novelty distinguishes the Christians from the Hebrews. For the Christians, Jesus is the very embodiment of the Name. In him, indeed, the Word (*Logos*) of the Father is incarnated for the divine purpose of the merciful salvation of all men. When the earliest writers, Paul or John, designate him as the Name, they wish to signify his divine nature. In the writings of the next generation of Judeo-Christians, the Name designates him more definitely as the second Person of the divine Trinity. Christians do everything in this Name and they bear it on their foreheads in the form of a + or a × so that, reborn in the Name, they may attain salvation through Jesus, the Name.

Later on, as Christianity progressed in the non-Hebrew milieu of the Greek and Roman world, the vigour of the conception of the Name became attenuated for lack of antecedents in that world. It became almost restricted to signifying the name of Jesus whose etymological meaning is 'Yahweh saves,' and simply expressed the saving power of Jesus as Son of God. But it remained one of the main invocations used in the public liturgy as well as in the private prayer of the Christians. In Western Christianity, the piety of the middle ages owed much to St. Bernard's frequent invocation of the Name of Jesus in his sermons. It embodied itself in the beautiful hymn, *Jesu dulcis memoria*, and in the *Litany of the Holy Name*.

In Eastern Christianity, this devotion to the Name developed into a whole method of monastic spirituality. It is known as the *Hesychastic* method of the prayer of the heart, or the Jesus prayer. The Greek word *Heschia* means silence and the *Hesychast* is the monk who devotes himself to external and internal silence as a means of constantly remembering God. Alone in his cell, he should sit in a

relaxed position, oblivious of all secular affairs, concentrate his mind on one point (often on the heart) and constantly remember God and His mercy in Jesus Christ. In order to attain to this day and night constancy of memory, he is advised to regulate his breath and rhythmically repeat (first orally, then mentally) the Jesus prayer. Such directions are found already in the fourth century A.D. in the writings of the famous fathers of the desert, Makarios and Evagrius Pontikos. The method of breath control is explained by Theodoretus of Kyros. The prayer formula or *mantra* is given as "Lord Jesus" by Diadochos of Photika, as "Jesus Christ, Son of God, have pity on me" by Hesychios of Batos, as "Son of God, have pity on me" by Gregorios of Sinai. The fuller formula is popularised by the monks of Mount Athos, probably beginning with Petros Hagiorites who died in 734 A.D. From Mount Athos, it spread to the whole Byzantine world, and then to Russia.

The similarity of this method with Indian Yoga and *nama-japa* seems to point to some influence of the latter at some stage in this development. But on the one hand, no such influence has so far been documented, and on the other hand, the coalescence of the Hebrew Christian invocation of the Name with the monastic endeavour of the Hesychasts towards an exclusive and constant memory of God the saviour may perhaps suffice to explain the growth within the Christian world of this Indian-like method of spirituality. Such a possibility seems to be confirmed by the fact that a similar method of *nam-japa cum pranayama* is proposed in the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola (16th century) at a time when he surely knew nothing of the Indian practices and probably had not discovered anything of the hesychastic method in those writings of the Fathers of the Desert with which he was then acquainted.

The growing acquaintance of western men and women with *yoga*, *mantra-japa* and kindred methods of Hindu or Buddhist *sadhana* has had the effect of turning many towards a rediscovery

of the Christian tradition briefly sketched above. The literature concerning it has increased constantly in bulk and in depth of insight in the course of the last forty years. Among Indian Christians also this tradition is becoming better known and this helps them to develop forms of Christian spirituality and prayer more akin to those of their Hindu brethren. The younger generation with its Jesus people is not alone in discovering the power of the Name of Jesus. Older Christians are also rejecting jaded spiritual practices and are turning to what promises them a living encounter with God in the risen Lord Jesus. What the Jesus Prayer contributes towards this living experience may be summed up in the following three elements.

The accent in the Jesus Prayer is placed first on the awesomeness and the complete transcendence of God in the Godman Jesus. It first recognises this amazing fact: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God." Traditionally its aim is to obtain the divine uncreated Light which overwhelmed the apostles on Mount Thabor, when Jesus was transfigured before their eyes, and Paul when he was blinded by it on the way to Damascus.

Secondly, the Jesus Prayer is a humble avowal of our sinfulness and yet our trust in the

healing power of Jesus: "Have mercy on me a sinner." This double attitude of a sense of personal unworthiness and a strong hope of Divine mercy is characteristic of Christianity. The apostle James wrote, "Realise that you have been disloyal and get your hearts made true once more. As you come close to God you should be deeply sorry, you should be grieved, you should even be in tears. You will have to feel very small in the sight of God before He will set you on your feet once more," (*James 4:7-10*).

Thirdly, the Jesus Prayer expresses our hunger for the merciful effects of the Lord's constant presence in us as the very ground of our being. Paul told the Athenians, "He is not far from any one of us. Indeed, it is in Him that we live, move and have our being," (*Acts 17:28*). And St. Augustine wrote, "You are more interior to me than my innermost and superior to my uppermost."

As we repeat the holy Name or the Jesus Prayer, we become more and more what God created us to be, images of His own divine Son. We become aware of our true Self as children of God, destined as St. Peter wrote, to share in the divine nature.

FROM THE DIARY OF N. N. RAJAN

7/9/1948: 3-45 p.m.

Bhagavan asked attendant Sivanandam: "You are changing duty at 3-45 p.m. and again at 5-45 p.m. and so on. Is it not?" The attendant replied that this was so. Bhagavan then said: "You all have at least have some change, but I am fixed up here throughout the day without any freedom. I am unable to move about freely like you. This is the fate even of Maharajas and other famous people. They have to take medical advice for choosing items of food even while they are normal and healthy. This is the case with me also. I like food made with wheat, but the people here will not allow me to take it. Also, will anyone advise me to eat only rice gruel and pickles and to drink only hot water?" (Bhagavan indicated on many occasions that he preferred to eat rice gruel instead of the food he was normally served. EDITOR)

A voice in the Hall said "No, no," and T. P. R. added, "No one would like Bhagavan to take this food."

Bhagavan replied: "Anyone who wants to eat delicious food may eat whatever they want, but why should they compel me to take only some specified items of food. See how it is."

INTRODUCING....

..... Sri Sadhu Om

SRI Sadhu Om is a great Tamil poet and one of the staunchest followers of Sri Bhagavan's path of Self-enquiry. His grasp of Sri Bhagavan's teachings is profound, and his adherence to them is unswerving.

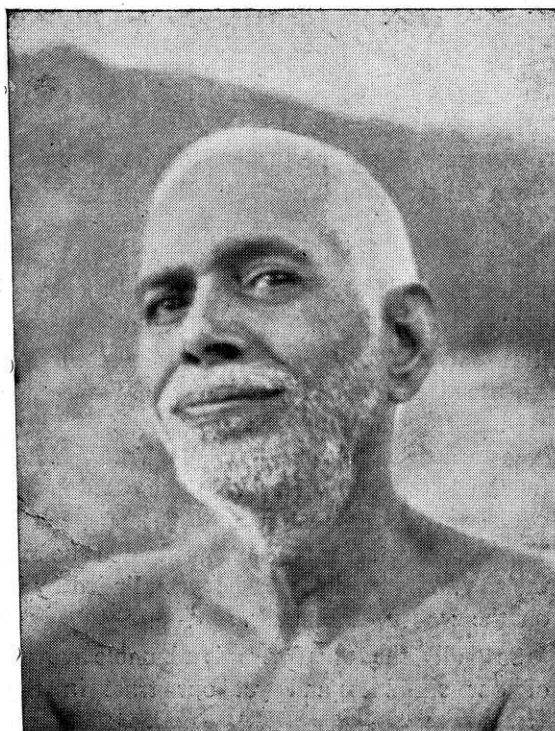
Though one of the foremost devotees of Sri Bhagavan, Sri Sadhu Om remains little known to the public, except perhaps to a small circle of Ramana-*bhaktas*. A man of many gifts and talents, he nevertheless chooses to live unnoticed by the world, for he whole-heartedly follows the principal precept taught and exemplified by Bhagavan Sri Ramana, namely that one should deny oneself at every step and turn of life, should give no importance to one's individual entity, and should thereby completely erase the ego.

Sri Sadhu Om's attitude of shunning any kind of public appreciation or prominence is expressed clearly in the following prayer he wrote to Sri Bhagavan:

“Not to teach the world, the myth,
Not to gain a mass of wealth,



Sri Sadhu Om



Not for name and fame that hails,
' There a Sage in *samadhi* dwells,
Flock you all and worship Him ',
'Tis not for these I sing this hymn;
Only for the great reward,
The death of ego, I pray, my Lord! ”

— Sri Ramana Guruvarul Antadi, verse 68

Such humility is indeed praiseworthy, for Sri Bhagavan has said in the concluding paragraph of *Who am I?* “To the extent to which we behave humbly, to that extent only will good result.”

Sri Bhagavan has taught only two paths, namely self-enquiry and self-surrender (both of which necessarily imply and stress the non-

rising of the ego), and both these paths find rich and happy expression in the thousands of Tamil songs and verses of Sri Sadhu Om. On reading these verses, we find that they are filled not only with fervent and one-pointed devotion to Sri Arunachala-Ramana, but also that His teachings are deftly and beautifully woven into them. The books of Sri Sadhu Om's songs, *Sri Ramana Geetam* and *Sri Ramana Varnangal*, have recently been published by Sri Ramanasramam.

However, it may be said that, rather than any of his poetical works, it is his prose work, *Sri Ramana Vazhi*, which together with its English translation, *The Path of Sri Ramana*, has earned Sri Sadhu Om the lasting gratitude and appreciation of many of the devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

No article introducing Sri Sadhu Om would be complete without making a mention of his intimate and long-standing friendship with Sri Muruganar, the great poet-saint and the foremost devotee of Sri Bhagavan. On the very first day that Sri Sadhu Om came to Sri Bhagavan, he was sent by Him to meet Sri Muruganar and to show him his verses. Through his association with Sri Muruganar, Sri Sadhu Om was able to gain a deep insight into the abstruse and cryptic style of Tamil used by Sri Bhagavan in His works, and also to perfect his own innate poetic genius. In return,

Sri Sadhu Om did singular service to Sri Muruganar in helping him to finalize his verses and to preserve them for posterity.

Consequently, Sri Sadhu Om has been entrusted with the task of editing the fourteen thousand unpublished verses of Sri Muruganar into a massive nine-volume work under the title *Sri Ramana Jnana Bodham*, which is now being published volume by volume, by the Ramana Kendra, New Delhi, with financial assistance from the Government of India. Another notable service performed by Sri Sadhu Om in recent years is to write a clear, simple and lucid Tamil prose-rendering of the abstruse and mystical verses of Sri Muruganar's *Guru Vachaka Kovai*, and to provide some brief but apt explanatory notes to many of them. This task he undertook at the request of Professor K. Swaminathan, and the fruit of it is now much appreciated and valued by the Tamil knowing devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

Sri Sadhu Om's continued and valuable service to Ramana-*bhaktas* in general and Ramana-literature in particular, is a great asset. It is our duty to see that this fusion between his literary genius and his utter dedication to Sri Bhagavan is fully utilised for the benefit of posterity, and especially for the ever-increasing number of people who are newly coming to the Path of Sri Ramana.

Those who dream of the banquet wake to lamentation and sorrow. Those who dream of lamentation and sorrow wake to join the hunt. While they dream they do not know that they dream. Some will even interpret the very dream that they are dreaming. Only when they wake will they know that it was a dream. By and by comes to great awakening, and then we find out that this life is really a great dream. Fools think they are awake now and flatter themselves they know if they are really princes or peasants. Confucious and you are both dreams, and I who say you are dreams, I am but a dream myself.

— CHUANG TSU

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BOOK REVIEWS

PANCHADASHI: By Vidyanaraya, translated by Hari Prasad Shastri. Pub.: Shanti Sadan, 29, Chepstow Villas, London W. 11. Pp. 486. Price £ 4.00.

Swami Vidyanaraya flourished in the fourteenth century A.D., as the friend, guide and philosopher of Harihara and Bhukka, the founders of the Vijayanagara kingdom.

The *Panchadashi* is a classic in Advaita Vedanta, the *magnum opus* of Vidyanaraya, though there is a tradition that it is the joint work of Bharati Tirtha and Vidyanaraya. There is also another view that Bharati Tirtha and Vidyanaraya are one and the same person.

Panchadashi is a comprehensive manual containing a clear presentation of the tenets and truths of Advaita Vedanta. As the name indicates, it consists of fifteen chapters, grouped into three parts of five chapters each. The first part is known as the *viveka prakarana* and deals with the *sat* (existence) aspect of Brahman. It teaches how the reality (*sat*) should be discriminated from its false coverings. The second part known as the *dipaprakarana* deals with the *cit* (consciousness) aspect of Brahman and shows that the light of consciousness under the name of *Kutastha* acts as the unchanging witness of man's personality. The third part known as the *ananda prakarana* deals with the *ananda* (bliss) aspect of Brahman and demonstrates that bliss is the warp and woof of the texture of the whole creation.

All earlier Vedantic writers beginning from Padmapada and Sureshvara used the words *Maya* and *Avidya* as synonyms. It is to the credit of Vidyanaraya that he draws a meaningful distinction between these terms. The Brahman in his triple poise of Existence—Consciousness—Bliss (*Sat-cit-ananda*) is reflected in *prakriti* constituted of the three qualities *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. When the pure *sattva* element of *prakriti* is unsullied by *rajas* and *tamas*, Vidyanaraya calls it *Maya*; and when *sattva* is sullied by an admixture of *rajas* and *tamas*, he calls it *avidya*. Brahman reflected in the medium of *Maya* is called *Ishvara* and reflected in the medium of *Avidya* is called *Jiva*. And he defines *Jiva* as "the pure consciousness on which the subtle body is superimposed together with the subtle body itself and the consciousness reflected in the subtle body." Vidyanaraya follows Sureshvara in upholding this *Abhasavada*, that the individual selves are regarded as appearances of the pure consciousness. He does not

subscribe to the *Avaccheda vada* of Vacaspati Misra, the theory of limitation ascribed to the *Jiva*, on the model of the pot limiting the space within it from the space around. Neither does he agree with the *prati-bimba vada* of the Vivarana school wherein the reflection is held as real. According to Vidyanaraya, the reflection is wholly illusory, an appearance, *abhasa*. But it has to be noted that in this text Vidyanaraya's exposition of the philosophy follows more closely in the footsteps of Padmapada and the Vivarana school, though he quotes Sureshvara several times with approval.

In the *Panchadashi*, one cannot but be struck with the skill of the author in explaining intricate philosophical concepts with apt analogies: Here are some examples :

"The Self is evident but is not recognised owing to certain obstructions just as the voice of a particular boy in an *Adhyayana* class though heard in the chorus cannot be recognised. An intelligent man should read all Sastras in his search for knowledge. After the attainment of knowledge, he should leave all his books just as a man who is after the corn leaves the husk. The habit of meditation when well formed need not interfere with one's secular duties just as a woman in illicit love, though engaged in household duties, will all the time be tasting inwardly the pleasure of her paramour's company. Just as a lamp set on a dramatic stage sheds light on all during the performance and continues to shed light after the performance when everybody has left the stage, the *Kutastha* shines as the witness to the man's personality. The love of one's own Self makes one love others—a father with a prickly beard goes on kissing a crying child unmindful of the pain he is inflicting on it. Though the Atman is of the nature of *sat-cit-ananda*, the *ananda* aspect is not evident in things manifested as the *sat* and *cit* aspects just as fire imparts heat alone to the water it boils, but heat and light to an iron ball it burns."

The verses in the Sanskrit Text are printed in Roman letters with proper diacritical marks and each verse is provided with a lucid and chaste translation in English and helpful notes wherever necessary. The analytical table of contents and the index add to the usefulness of the publication.

Sri Hari Prasad Shastri has done a great service to the cause of Advaita Vedanta in making the contents of this classic available in English. The production of the book is excellent.

THAT THOU ART: By Sri Sankaracharya, translated by A. J. Alston. Pub.: Shanti Sadan, 29, Chepstow Villas, London W.11. Pp. 123. Price: £1-80.

The book under review is a translation in English of the eighteenth chapter of the verse section of the *Upadesa Sahasri* of the great Sankaracharya. The Sanskrit text is not provided but a versewise translation in English along with valuable notes in the light of Rama Tirtha's commentary is given. The translator has provided a lucid and informative introduction along with a useful analysis of contents which enhances the value of the exposition.

According to this chapter, liberation is not a mental cognition of any kind. "It is the emergence of the Self as unobscured consciousness which takes place, when, after preliminary theoretical reasoning, the text 'That thou art' is heard and understood by an enquirer who has purified his mind." The Prasankhya-navadins hold that no permanent liberation results from the mere statement "That thou art", prolonged meditation and reasoning are acts that have to be performed until there is direct experience of the Self. The whole chapter is a refutation of this theory. Liberation dawns through knowledge alone and involves only the cancellation of an illusion. Mere theoretical insight or mental cognition of the text "That thou art" is liable to change and does not lead to permanent liberation. The highest knowledge of the Self cannot depend directly on meditation, which is only a form of activity. When the text is understood, 'That' and 'thou' put in opposition point to the Self of the hearer without actually characterising it positively. Then liberation is founded on a firm foundation.

The publication is a positive contribution to the spread of Advaita Vedanta.

S. SHANKARANARAYANAN.

ARUNACHALA, HOLY HILL: By Skandananda. Distributed by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai. Pp. 31, Price: Rs. 4.

This small booklet has been compiled to meet the needs of devotees who would like information about the shrines, temples and tanks on and around Arunachala. A map of the mountain containing all the known sites of religious importance is supplemented by brief notes which outline the historical or legendary accounts connected with each site. The book will be of particular interest to devotees of Bhagavan, since all the places which have connections with him from his stay here have been clearly marked and annotated. One or two minor errors have been noticed in the text, but not enough to detract from the value of the book. The author hopes to include more information in a forth-

coming second edition, and for this he is seeking the co-operation of anyone who can contribute reliable information to add to the material already printed.

TALKS WITH AMMA, ANASUYA DEVI: Edited by Rodney Alexander Arms. Pub: Matrasi publication Trust, Station Road, Bapatla, A.P. 522 101. Pp. 256. Price: Rs. 20.

This is the first account, in her own words, of the teachings of the lady who has come to be known as "Jillellamudi Amma." Previous publications have given extensive details of her life and the growth of the ashram over which she presides, but none has given such an extensive and comprehensive selection of her conversations.

Amma was a simple Hindu housewife who attracted people to her presence by her sanctity and her innate spiritual wisdom. Although she was not educated in any formal traditional way, and although she herself says that she never underwent any formal spiritual training, she deftly deals with all questions, whether secular or spiritual, with a degree of simplicity and insight that can only come from the highest spiritual awareness.

The questions range from the mundane problems of family life to the most elevated philosophical abstractions, but sooner or later Amma always tries to direct the conversation and the attention of the questioner to what she calls the "Sakti", the Divine force which sustains the universe and which manifests as creation. There is no specific teaching incorporated in her answers, for her replies are always geared to the needs and to the understanding of the individual questioners. But underlying all her answers there is a repeated emphasis on maintaining a spiritual outlook on life, of seeing the one behind the many and remaining attuned to it.

The book has been admirably assembled and edited, and it should bring about a greater appreciation of this little-known saint of modern India.

D.G.

THE AWAKENING OF INTELLIGENCE: By J. Krishnamurti. Edited by George and Cornelia Wingfield-Digby. Pub.: Gollancz, London. Pp. 538. Price: £ 4.00.

This valuable contribution to Krishnamurti's literature was first published in 1973, and is now available in an Indian edition. The London edition contains interesting photographs of places associated with Krishnamurti such as Saanen in Switzerland, Brockwood Park in England, Rishi Valley and Rajgat in India, as well as excellent informal photographs of the great

teacher himself. It is a record of discussions and conversations held in these places and in Bombay, Madras, and America. Especially interesting are conversations with eminent individuals.

Of particular interest to students of Vedanta will be the conversations with Swami Venkatesananda, in Saanen. The four schools of Yoga are scrutinised and the "*Mahavakyas*" from the Upanishads discussed.

The Swami describes Vedanta as meaning the end of the Vedas, the end of all knowledge, where knowledge matters no more. Krishnamurti asks, why go through the laborious process of acquiring knowledge and then discarding it? "If I see from the very beginning what knowledge is, then each day I discard, every minute I free myself from what I have learnt. Every minute is the end of knowledge. Vedanta means the end of accumulating knowledge."

Of the Bodhisattva ideal he questions, "The Matraiya Bodhisattva, the idea that he has relinquished the ultimate in life, enlightenment, and is waiting for all humanity.... Is it not an invention of our own, a desperate hope, a desire for some sort of solace?"

A long book, of 538 pages, it is inspiring, thought-provoking, and will be helpful to all true aspirants, especially his advice on meditation. "You watch while eating, when you are listening to people, when somebody says something that hurts you, flatters you. That means, you have to be alert all the time — when you are exaggerating, when you are telling half-truths.... To watch, you need a very quiet mind. That is meditation. The whole of that is meditation."

The essence of Krishnamurti's message is to be found in this well-produced book.

MEDITATIONS: By J. Krishnamurti. Pub.: Victor Gollancz, London, and The Krishnamurti Foundation, 65, Greenways Road, Adyar, Madras. Pp. 62. Price: In India Rs. 25/-, abroad £ 3.50.

"Man, in order to escape his conflicts, has invented many forms of meditation. These have been based on desire, will and the urge for achievement, and imply conflict and a struggle to arrive. The conscious, deliberate striving is always within the limits of a conditioned mind and in this there is no freedom. All effort to meditate is the denial of meditation. Meditation is the ending of thought. It is only then that there is a different dimension which is beyond time." What better way of describing the import of this book than to give Krishnamurti's own foreword. For Krishnamurti, meditation is the essence of life.

In 1969 a small book of his "*Meditations*" was published; the present volume, published in 1980,

includes a few passages from that original collection but is mostly a new selection from his later writings, particularly the gems from his "*Notebook*."

The Frontispiece is a recent portrait which is a true work of art in its own right and is a fitting introduction to a beautiful book. A book for all seasons, it is an ideal bedside companion, and makes an excellent gift.

Beautifully presented, it has been printed in England on fine art paper, while a less costly production, with the same Frontispiece, has been printed in India.

D. W.

THE INWARD ODYSSEY: By Edith B. Schnapper. Pub.: George Allen and Unwin, London. Pp. 235. Price: not indicated.

This is a reprint of a book which first appeared in 1964. It is a fascinating account of symbolism on the spiritual path drawn from all the main religious traditions of the world, and it shows the extraordinary unanimity of the different religious traditions concerning the way to enlightenment. It begins with the symbol of the labyrinth which is found in myth and folklore all over the world along with the ladder of perfection, which is no less universal. The author then distinguishes the cyclic and the linear view of time, which are characteristic of the oriental religions on the one hand, and the semitic religions on the other, and she shows how the spiral is a symbol which reconciles the two apparently conflicting views.

She then shows how the three ways of purification, illumination or transformation, and union or fulfilment mark the main stages of the path in all traditions. What distinguishes this book is the extraordinary skill with which the different themes drawn from so many different traditions have been woven together to form a coherent whole. It is rarely that the riches of religious symbolism have been explored in such depth and the gradual changes in the symbolism of the path revealed, as the soul undergoes transformation. It is a book which shows not only wide reading but also deep experience and a sensitivity to the inner process of spiritual transformation which can only come from actual experience. It is a great blessing that it has now been reprinted so that more people can discover the spiritual riches which it contains.

THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF GESHE RABTEN: Translated and edited by B. Alan Wallace. Pub.: George Allen and Unwin, London. Pp. 202. Price: £ 7.50.

Geshe Rabten is a Tibetan monk who escaped from Tibet at the time of the Chinese invasion. After

spending several years in a Tibetan monastery in West Bengal, he was called by the Dalai Lama to act as his assistant, and finally was sent by him to Switzerland to give instructions to western students; he has now established a Tibetan monastery in that country. It is one of the ironies of history that the Chinese occupation of Tibet, which has extinguished monastic life in Tibet, has opened the Tibetan Dharma to the rest of the world, and it is now possible to know more of the secrets of Tibetan Buddhism than has ever been made known before. This book gives a unique insight into the training of a Tibetan monk and the conditions of life under which they lived. It also gives a detailed account of the master's teachings on the various stages of meditation leading to final enlightenment. The book has been translated by an American disciple who has become a member of the Buddhist order. It thus forms an interesting link in the train of transmission of the Buddha Dharma to the West.

There can be no doubt about the immense value of Tibetan methods of meditation, but it is equally clear that they are not for everybody. One is struck by the vast elaboration of physical and psychological techniques, and above all by the rationalising process which accompanies them. Thus, we are told about the 'nine progressive states,' the 'six preparations for mental quiescence,' the 'six states of attention,' and the 'four mental absorptions.' It is also disconcerting to be told that 'emptiness is realised from a thorough investigation, using many subtle lines of reasoning.' This sets Tibetan practices apart from most other Buddhist techniques which are usually aimed at setting one free from mental activity and putting a stop to the process of reasoning. But there are clearly different paths to Realisation, and it is good to see that the master concludes by saying that there are many ways to enlightenment, and that each person must follow his own path while not despising that of others.

BEDE GRIFFITHS.

HINDU SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY: By S. Gopalan.
Pub.: Wiley Eastern Ltd., Ansari Road, Daryaganj
New Delhi. Pp. 293. Price: Rs. 48/-.

Although the history of social philosophy can be extended to cover the whole range of human reflection from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* in the western tradition and Manu's *Dharma Shastra* or Tiruvalluvar's *Tirukkural* in the east, it is only now in recent decades that it has assumed special importance as a necessary field of enquiry due to rapid progress made in political changes, technological developments and the consequent social ideals that are taking place everywhere. The moral basis for an

examination into individual man's capacity for harmonious relationships with their fellow men is provided in the first sentence of Aristotle's classic:

"Every art and every enquiry and finally every action and pursuit is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has been rightly declared to be that at which all things aim."

This social ethic might have influenced the west from St. Augustine to John Dewey, the latter being the greatest single force in reshaping our concepts in the fields of psychology, sociology and pedagogy. His is a dynamic concept of ethics, in which change and growth decide what is socially valuable. Experience and intelligence determine the goals toward which our society aims. Rightly does the author emphasise that man, above everything else, seeks, creates and achieves values which give meanings to social facts, his actions or relations in society and his institutional set-up. He remarks:

"In substance, social philosophy can be described as treating of man's quest for values and his efforts to incorporate them in his life. Since the search for values is a deliberate act of human choice and presupposes a discriminating knowledge of the good and the bad, social philosophy, in treating them, adopts the normative and not the positive approach."

The author in this scholarly study has taken what he calls the axiological approach by taking due note of the system of values accepted in the Hindu tradition and analysing them creatively and interpretatively by a detailed analysis of the fundamentals of Hindu Social Philosophy and the four-fold *purusharthas*: *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, *moksha*. This is a closely argued exposition which should appeal not only to sociology students, but to the layman as well.

THE HIDDEN WISDOM OF HOLY BIBLE: Vol. IV.
By Geoffrey Hodson. Pub.: The Theosophical
Publishing House, Adyar, Madras 20. Pp. 375.
Price: Rs. 50/-.

From the days of St. Paul, Origen and other church fathers and medieval Kabbalists, down to the recent times of Eliphas Levi and Madame Blavatsky, it has been urged that spiritual wisdom and a practical philosophy of life have always been available to mankind, however hidden our scriptures may be by the veils of allegory, parable and symbol. They have pointed out that the gods of the ancient people are not mere superstitious beliefs, but are personifications of forces and phenomena of nature as well as being symbols of a divine principle in man. By these means, many archaic legends seem to have been preserved and vitalised, having become imbued with religious or philosophic

meanings. If initiates of occult schools refashioned the mythologies of ancient civilisations into new systems of cosmogony, cyclic evolution and involution, have not our modern psychologists like Jung and Freud found in them symbolic archetypes of human responses with their 'Oedipus complex' and 'Achilles heel'?

By undertaking a detailed study of the whole text of the Bible, the author has in his three previous volumes patiently attempted to prove that the narratives of the *Old Testament* contain far more treasures of wisdom than is apparent on the surface. Of the thirty nine books of the *Old Testament*, the author has so far only completed the first book *Genesis*, but he is now in his fourth volume of commentary. In his most recent book, he examines the events of the first few chapters

of *Exodus*, including the position of the Israelites in Egypt, their crossing of the Red Sea after its division by Moses, and their onward journey towards the promised land.

As one reads the occult interpretations of these pedestrian events of the Jews in ancient times, one can discern in them abstract phases of human evolution and their associated psychological and mystical experiences, which evoke wonder and hence initiate enquiry. Exposed to this search in the mind and heart of another vital race, any earnest student will be exalted and feel the cleansing breath of truth itself, even though the other's point of view may differ from his own.

ARGUS.

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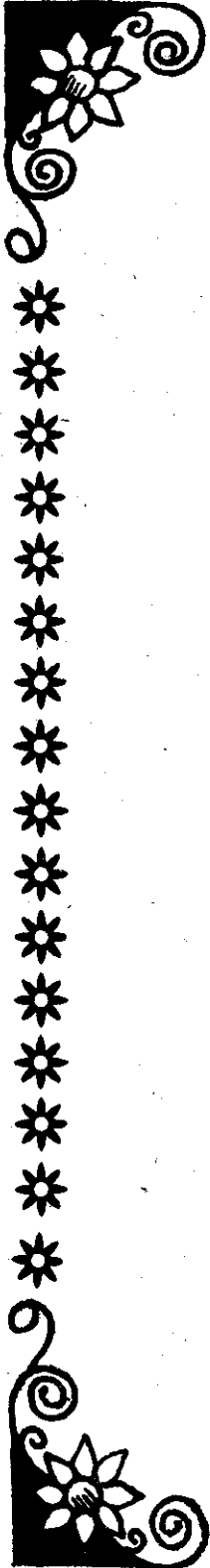
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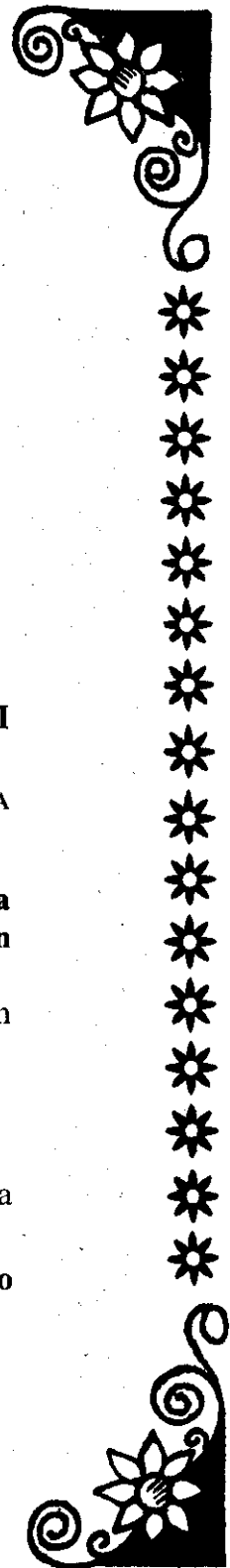
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Letters to the Editor

ROOT OF 'I'

There are two methods which I have tried and I would like you to tell me which of the two is better. The first method consists of sitting erect, watching the breath and mind, next discovering the 'I'-thought and lastly enquiring into the root of the 'I'-thought. When I reach the point of discovering the 'I'-thought I feel relaxed, silent and happy. But I cannot proceed to the last stage of enquiring into the root of the 'I'-thought. The second method is to enquire and concentrate on the right hand side of my chest. While doing this, I go into ecstasies and before long I feel as if my body has disappeared.

— SOZO HASHIMOTO,
JAPAN.

The first method is definitely the proper one. You need not worry about not reaching the root of 'I'-thought; there is nothing like an objective root which is in a tangible form. What is called the 'root of I' is simply the experience of forgetting your individual 'I' person; if you succeed, then you are beyond the 'I-thought' and need not care for anything else. Your feeling of being relaxed, silent and happy is a symptom that your inner attitude is all right. Don't try to force yourself into further so-called 'progress'. What is required in spiritual training is not will-power, but 'to let go'; be patient and persevere.

AS IT IS

I have been finding myself unable to continue my ordinary life-in-the-world as I used to. I now feel like adopting a more simple and retired life. I know I cannot go to your lovely Ashram. I have now been looking for a simple room—a place where I could perhaps teach a little about Bhagavan's spiritual methods—or do some other simple tasks—perhaps, with the poor.

— REGINA PEREIRA,
BRAZIL.

We do not feel quite happy about your suddenly giving your life a new outer direction in the way you described it, though we understand quite well your inner urge behind it. One has actually to accept cheerfully the outer circumstances of life exactly as they are—and live it just as it is, in the way of love and dedication as taught by Bhagavan, until circumstances may change of their

LONDON RADIO HOMAGE

You may already have heard but I am writing in case the news has not come to you that on Sunday the 15th February at 11 p.m. a Talk was given on Sri Bhagavan from Radio 4 from London. The talk was well presented and lasted for a quarter of an hour. Most of it was from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*.

What joy!

— MRS. BARBARA TONER,
ENGLAND.

own accord. If they do, they usually show quite clearly what is meant; whereas if we interfere according to our ideas and urges, we find ourselves often getting struck. There remains only to wait for what will happen; and only in this way will you know whether your change was really meant the way you believed it so.

GUIDANCE OF THE MASTER

Could you please explain to me the practices and disciplines which are to be followed by an aspirant in my western circumstances, and also things which should be avoided as an impediment to meditation of SELF. I am thirty-four and married and we have a ten-month old son (who we named *Christopher David Ramana*). I intend to bring him up in the light of Sri Bhagavan.

— TONY NORRIS-ANANDAMAYA,
ENGLAND.

There are no courses and disciplines other than those which the Master Himself has recommended in the few treatises which are available in print, along with elaborate comment on them in His 'Talks'. For an attentive reader all the necessary instructions are contained in these works. To follow the guidance of the Master means nothing else than to live a clean and orderly life in the Light of Truth, with the sincere and unswerving desire for a full Enlightenment about this Truth—which is Realisation of the Self.

With books, like The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi and Talks, you have all and everything which

is needed to find His guidance for treating each and every problem which may emerge.

The core of Sri Ramana's way of life is the search for our true identity — Who am I? The answer to this question is only to be found within yourself; so who else is there to tell you? When you see the real meaning of a spiritual life and how it is put into practice, then you will become a true guide for your little Christopher Ramana up to a future time, when Sri Ramana Maharshi may take him over directly as His own — like his Father.

SPIRITUAL CHALLENGE OF ARUNACHALA

Enclosed is a (very old) photograph, which I had copied, of a hill on the isle of Arran in Scotland. I was up there last winter, reading the *Bhagavat Gita*; this hill had a tremendous pull so much so that I could not pass it without standing and staring at it and wondering what its attraction was. When your quarterly came, the photo of Arunachala immediately struck a chord and I compared it with my photograph of the hill of Arran; it looked quite similar. Since it was shortly after the trip to Arran that I started meditating and became interested in Sri Bhagavan, it made me think that may be the Arran Mountain helped to trigger something off.

I very much wish I could come to the East. I seem to have a root impulse to ramble about, however, it only dissolves when I turn to the Self. There is freedom in the realization that if I am to be moved, I will be moved and if not, not!

— JANE GILL,
ENGLAND.

The copy of the hill of Arran (Scotland) shows certainly a strong likeness to our Arunachala. However, this might not be the moving power behind the strange magnetic impression of Arran on you; there will be other and even more striking likenesses of hills to Arunachala all over the world. The fascination of Arran will have been rather a symptom that your inner condition is ripe for the great spiritual challenge of Arunachala, the hill and its Master. Therefore you reacted on the hill of Arran as you did. When everything is one only — the Self — then Arran is Arunachala... in the same sense, as you experience, that both of them are within you. Thus this beautiful mystic experience will work on you further more as long as you are as responsive, as you are presently.

You need not worry about your tendency to ramble about if you look at it with detachment. May be this tendency will bring you one day to India though, of course India too is within you.



SATSANGH

(To Managing Editor)

I would like you to know that we now have a regular meditation group dedicated to Bhagavan at our house. The members are Philip Pegler and his wife, a lady called Lali Dearden who lives nearby, my wife and myself. We meet at 7-30 p.m. every Wednesday.

We also have a group dedicated to Bhagavan which meets on the third Sunday every month at Flat 'A', The Wood, Sydenham Hill, Crystal Palace, London. The flat belongs to a lady, Wynn Chapman, who has set aside a room which she has dedicated to Bhagavan.

Last Friday, I was privileged to give a talk to some seventy seekers on the life and teachings of Bhagavan. I was greatly helped by Philip Pegler and Wendy who read out many quotes from Bhagavan and Philip helped me to answer several questions from the floor.

— VICTOR FORTE,
6, Hillcrest, Withdean
Brighon, BN1 5 FN
England
(Tel. (0273) 55 3113)



THEORY AND PRACTICE

After so many years of pursuing all the wrong things, I find I am very much drawn back to the teachings of Maharshi, and I am trying to practise the *vichara* each day. I know *theoretically* that the body, the world etc., are unreal, but it is so difficult to really experience it especially here in a busy, noisy town.

Some years ago, I had a wonderful experience when completely relaxed... Suddenly, the room disappeared before my open eyes and there was nothing but glorious light. The feeling was utter bliss, oneness with all things, complete trust in something (yet I seemed to be that something) because there was no sense of being separate. It has never been repeated. Do you think it was a glimpse of Reality and could I now be ready to try again and perhaps, the miracle may be repeated if I persevere?

Do you still feel the Maharshi's presence in His Ashram: I have a beautiful photograph of Him.

— MRS. WINIFRED DEARDEN,
ENGLAND.

Theoretically understanding His teaching alone is not sufficient, as you feel now yourself. One has to change

one's attitude to life by 180 degrees in thinking, feeling and action. Only: to live the teachings of Bhagavan is no ordinary game — to turn to Him is no mere chance.

Your beautiful experience of the primordial Light seems to be a glimpse of Inner guidance that you are now ready to start a life in the Spirit. But don't put your hopes on the repetition of this or similar spiritual experiences.

You need some more time for preparation by prayer and meditation, details of which you find so beautifully expressed by Sri Bhagavan Himself, in Upadesa Saram. You should also read daily a few portions from Sri Bhagavan's Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi.

It is very helpful at least in the beginning of your new sadhana, to limit your contacts with people who are

deeply engrossed in the so called worldly life. Because they will easily draw you out of your new indrawn mood even without their intention. You have to be very attentive that these external attractions do not interfere in your life, at the cost of your inner peace. Above all you have to be patient and perserving in your spiritual pursuits. Don't expect quick results, though you will certainly get hints of your continued Inner Guidance. Be sincere to yourself and to your sadhana.

Sri Bhagavan's Presence is still felt here as strongly as ever before. But He is not limited to this place only. He is available anywhere, where a sincere heart is longing to meet Him. Make the photo of Sri Bhagavan your constant companion, meditate on it; and you will experience Him.



RAMANA SMRTI

(Souvenir)

A Birth Centenary Offering to

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Eminent scholars have contributed interesting articles on the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The cream of the Souvenir is, however, found in the reminiscences of the kitchen-assistants of Sri Bhagavan recorded over 30 years ago in Telugu and never before printed in English.

Every Ramana-devotee should possess this invaluable Souvenir.

Price : India : Rs. 15/- (including postage)

Foreign : By Surface Mail : £ 1.50 or \$ 3.00

By Air Mail : £ 3.00 or \$ 6.00

Please write to :

SRI RAMANASRAMAM BOOK DEPOT

SRI RAMANASRAMAM P.O.,

TIRUVANNAMALAI-606 603 South India

ASHRAM BULLETIN

Sri Sadiq Ali
(Governor of Tamil Nadu)

visits
the Ashram



The Governor of Tamil Nadu is being presented with the Ashram traditional honours and Ashram publications, including 'Ramana Music' cassettes and L. P. records.

SRI SADIQ ALI, Governor of Tamil Nadu, visited Sri Ramanasramam on March 27. He was accompanied by SRI GANGAPPA, Collector of North Arcot District.

In the absence of the Ashram President SRI T. N. VENKATARAMAN, the Governor was received at the Ashram entrance by the trustees of the Ashram — SRI P. THANDAVARAYAN, SRI P. S. VAIKUNTAVASAR and SRI K. MOHABUB SHERIF, the Tahsildar, Tiruvannamalai and SRI K. VENKATARAMAN, Treasurer, Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee.

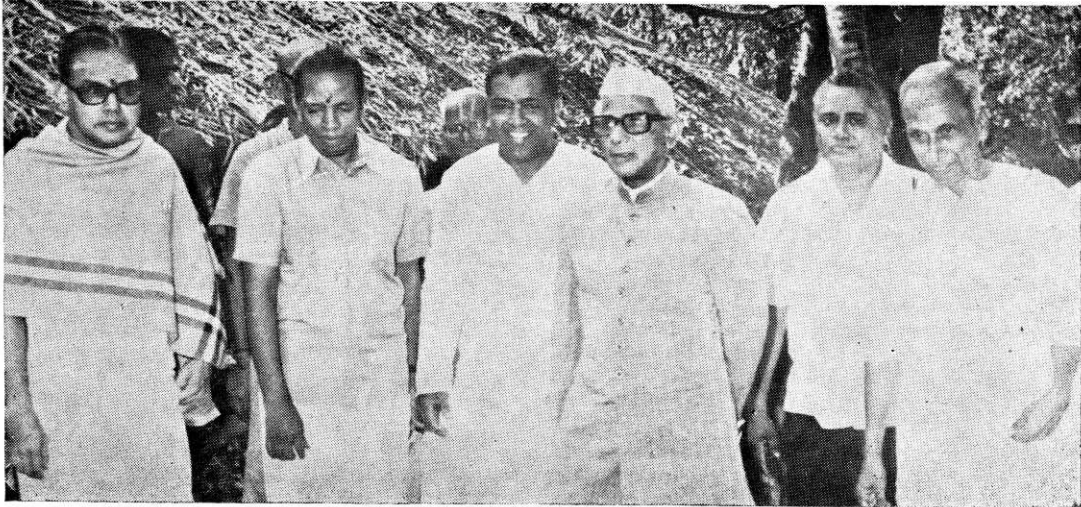
During a stay of over half-an-hour, the Governor showed keen interest in visiting places hallowed by the Presence of Sri Maharshi. He was particularly drawn to the sage's devotion to His mother by constructing a Shrine for her and was also appreciative of the architectural beauty of Sri Mathrubutheswara Temple. Sri Sadiq Ali was observant while he was told of the greatness of the Holy Hill, Arunachala, which so powerfully drew Sri Maharshi and the legend about the holy hill — how Lord Siva as a column of Light stood, which even Brahma and Vishnu could not fathom and how the holy hill came to be worshipped by them; the religious importance of the Karthigai Deepam Festival, and the efficacy of circumbulating this sacred hill on that holy day. He was pleasantly surprised to know that this Hill is the oldest creation on the earth, even confirmed by the geologists.

The Governor paid his homage to the Sage at His *Samadhi* shrine, at the Old Hall and at the *Nirvana* Room.

Ashram honours were presented to him, as also the latest publications which [included *Ramana Music* Cassettes and LP records. Sri Sadiq Ali, while visiting the Ashram Book Depot, appreciated very much the '*Ramana Bhajans*' (Hindi) cassette, which was played on. He also showed keen interest in knowing about the activities of the Ashram. He was very appreciative of the fact that more importance is given to meditation as taught by Sri Bhagavan at this Ashram.

We are happy to reproduce the Governor's impressions which he was kind enough to write in our *visitors' book*:

"I am happy to pay a visit to this Ashram, where the Sage Ramana contemplated and imparted his teachings which have great meaning to man-kind".



Sri Sadiq Ali, Governor of Tamil Nadu, being received at the Ashram. (l to r) Sri K. Ramaswamy, Sri T. R. Srinivasan, Sri P. Thandavarayan (Trustee), Sri Sadiq Ali (Governor), Sri K. Mohabub Sherif, Tahsildar (Trustee) & Sri K. Venkataraman, Treasurer, Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee.

SRI RAMANASRAMAM VEDA PATASALA

This important limb of the Ashram — *Veda Patasala*, which was started in 1937 with the approval of Sri Bhagavan — was being conducted very successfully till the *Mahanirvana* of Sri Bhagavan. After that when there was some difficulty in maintaining this Institution, SRI SADHU ARUNACHALA (Major A. W. CHADWICK), took it upon himself and ran it to the entire satisfaction of everyone concerned.

With the active cooperation of the devotees of Sri Bhagavan this Institution was again revitalised and revived on October 27, 1979. SRI VAIDYANATHA GANAPATIGAL ('MYSORE GANAPATIGAL') deserves praise

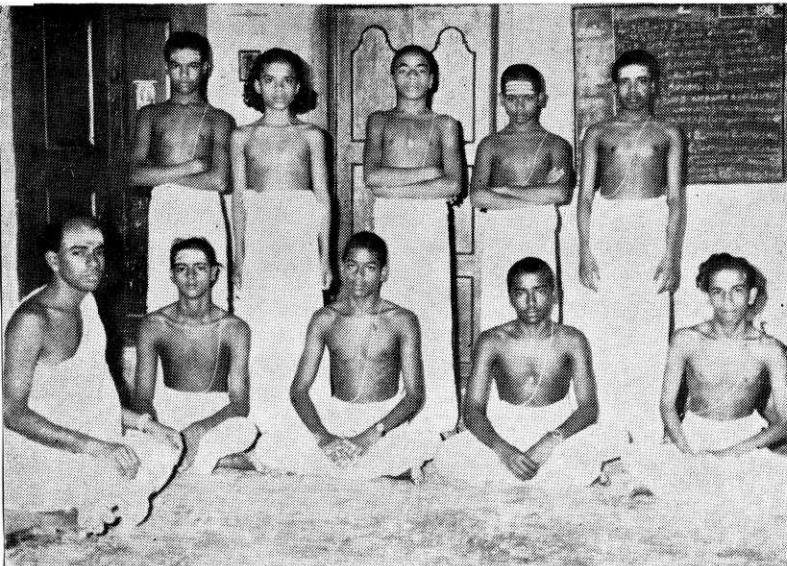
for this. It is now being run under the able guidance of SRI T. S. RAMASWAMY GANAPATIGAL, who teaches Yajurveda to the nine boys.

The boys are given free boarding and lodging, in addition to clothes and other conveniences. They are also given a stipend of Rs. 25/- every month, which is being deposited into a bank in their names.

We need financial assistance and support in running this sacred Institution. Thus we appeal to philanthropists to come forward and generously contribute for the upkeep of this '*Sri Ramanasramam Veda Patasala*'.

Contributions to '*Sri Ramansramam Veda Patasala*' are exempt from Income-tax and Gift tax under Rule No. 69/17/63/I.T. of 19-11-1963. Cheques may be drawn in favour of '*Sri Ramansramam Charities*' and sent to:

The President,
Sri Ramanasramam Charities,
Sri Ramanasramam P.O.,
Tiruvannamalai-606 603.

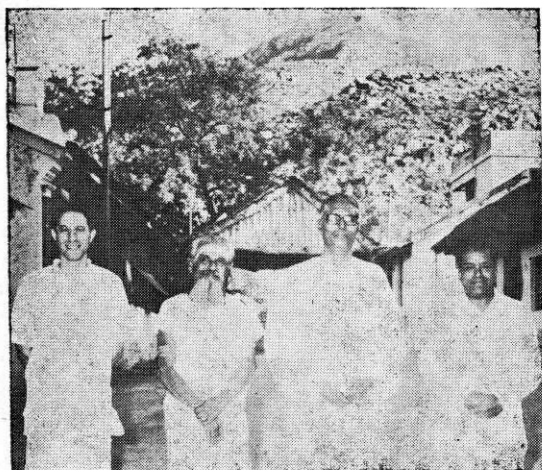


SRI RAMANASRAMAM
VEDA PATASALA:
(Sitting l to r)
Sri Ramaswamy Ganapatigal
(Teacher), *V. Venkataratnam*,
B. Sridharan, *C. Muralidharan*,
R. Sambasubramanian.
(standing) *K. Agoramurti*,
S. Sathyanarayanan,
C. Ramesh, *H. Srinivasan*,
K. Balasubramanian.

BIHAR REVENUE MINISTER AT THE ASHRAM

The Revenue Minister of Bihar State, SRI LAHTAN CHOUDHARY, paid a visit to the Ashram on February 20 and spent three days at the foot of Arunachala, as the guest of the Ashram.

He was received and taken round the Ashram by Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President, Board of Trustees and Sri P. Thandavarayan, Trustee of the Ashram.



In front of Arunachala Hill. (l to r) Mr. Matthew Greenblatt, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Sri Lahtan Choudhary, Minister for Revenue, Bihar, Sri P. Thandavarayan.

Sri Lahtan Choudhary was pleased to say:

"I am deeply impressed. For long I have had a desire to come here and pray, but this desire could not be fulfilled before. Now I have had an opportunity to stay here for three nights. This is an Ashram which inspires one to a great extent; the affection shown by persons here, is admirable and unforgettable. I pray to the Maharshi to lead us and the country to the spiritual path so that we may be able to march towards prosperity."

SRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA, paying homage to Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi Shrine. (l to r) Sri P. S. Vaikundavasar, Sri P. Thandavarayan, Sri V. C. Shukla, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, Sri Vallam Krishnaswami Naidu, Sri V. Ganesan.

Sri V. C. SHUKLA VISITS THE ASHRAM

We were happy to receive on March 8, SRI VIDYA CHARAN SHUKLA, who came specially to pay his Homage to the Shrine of Sri Maharshi.

Immediately on getting down at the entrance of the Ashram, he said: "I had the great privilege of having darshan of Sri Maharshi". SRI T. N. VENKATARAMAN, President, SRI P. THANDAVARAYAN and SRI P. S. VAIKUNDAVASAR, Trustees of the Ashram, received SRI SHUKLA and took him round the Ashram. Sri Shukla showed keen interest in knowing details about the running of the Ashram and about the inmates and visitors to the Ashram.

At the Shrine of Sri Bhagavan he was presented with the important publications of the Ashram, including copies of *The Mountain Path*. Then, he spent ten minutes in meditation at Sri Bhagavan's Old Hall.

Sri Shukla reminisced that along with his father, SRI RAVI SHANKAR SHUKLA, he had visited the Ashram in 1944 and received the gracious blessings of Sri Bhagavan. His father was a devotee of Sri Bhagavan and visited the Ashram again in the later forties.

He praised the excellent upkeep of the Ashram and thanked the Ashram President, Trustees and every member of the Ashram for having received him with love and affection. He wrote the following in the Ashram *Visitor's Book*:

"It is only lucky persons who can visit this holy place. I am one of those fortunate ones who had darshan of Maharshi in early forties. In a real sense He was 'Bhagavan' who by His teaching and benevolence brought about happiness and peace in millions of hearts."



RICH HOMAGE PAID TO THE MASTER

101st Jayanthi Celebrations in Bombay

"The teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi give us strength to adhere to the ethical and moral values of life", said SRI V. S. DESHPANDE, the Chief Justice of Bombay High Court, while presiding over the 101st Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan, in Bombay, on March 25.

Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi Centre, Bombay, who have been regular in celebrating Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi in Bombay every year, made good arrangements at the Birla Kreedha Kendra, Chowpatty, Bombay, for this unique celebration. There was a good gathering of devotees who were engrossed in listening to the enlivening speeches given by SRI V. S. DESHPANDE, SWAMI NIRAMOYANANDA, SMT. MANI SAHUKAR, RAJKUMARI PRABHAVATI RAJE and SRI V. GANESAN.

SRI SWAMI NIRAMOYANANDA, looking at the large portrait of Sri Bhagavan (presented by Sri Ramanasramam to the Bombay Kendra), with tears in his eyes, said: "Whoever can say this as a simple portrait since Maharshi is so alive looking at everyone of us from whichever angle one looked at it". He extolled Sri Maharshi's very high spiritual attainment and prayed that His Grace should guide the entire humanity in the right direction.

SRI NARIMAN D. SAHUKAR, Managing Trustee of the Centre, welcomed the Chief Guest, the Swamiji and the distinguished speakers and the audience and assured that soon the Kendra Building on its own site would come up.

SMT. MANI SAHUKAR stressed the importance of Sri Bhagavan's advent on the earth. RAJKUMARI PRABHAVATI RAJE narrated in a moving tone of how she came to Sri Bhagavan and how she was accepted by Him. She added that such Jayanthi celebrations would enable devotees to imbibe the gracious blessings of the illustrious Master.

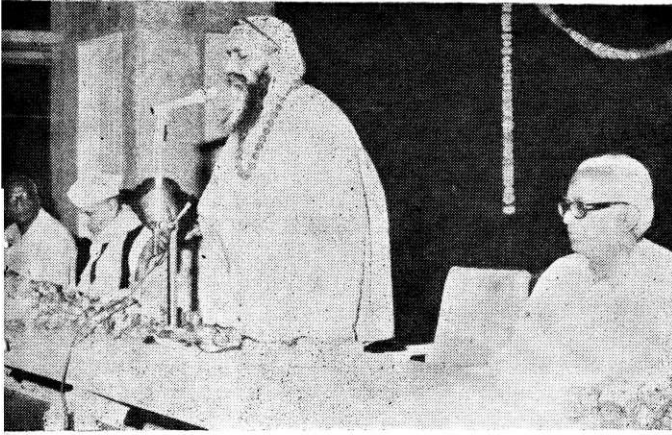
SRI V. GANESAN, our Managing Editor, spoke with authority on the importance and uniqueness of Sri Bhagavan's 'Who am I?'. He pointed out how everyone of us everyday, at every minute, refer to oneself as only 'I', thus simplifying the apparent multiplicity to a single truth of Oneness. He pleaded with emotion that everyone should first delve into oneself and experience the 'I' within and thus give credence to the great teaching of Sri Bhagavan.

SRI P. V. SOMASUNDARAM proposed a vote of thanks.

The Celebration concluded with the screening of a film of Sri Bhagavan's life, recently released by the Government of India.



BOMBAY : (l to r) Sri P. V. Somasundaram, Sri V. Ganesan (who speaks on 'Who am I?') Smt. Mani Sahukar, Sri V. S. Deshpande (Chief Justice, Bombay High Court), Sri Nariman D. Sahukar, Sri Swami Niramoynanda (President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Khar, Bombay), Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje, Sri Jagdish K. Munshi (Trustee: Bombay Centre).



AHMEDABAD : Sri Swami Ishwarananda Giri of Mount Abu extolling the greatness of Sri Bhagavan. To his left is seated Sri P. G. Mahadevan, President of Ramana Kendra, Ahmedabad.

AT AHMEDABAD

SRI SWAMI ISHWARANANDA GIRI of Mount Abu, who graced the 101st *Jayanthi* celebrations of Sri Bhagavan, at Ahmedabad on January 25, said: "Sri Ramana Maharshi, the self-realised Sage, has shown the path to Self-Realisation. His teachings transcend all barriers of caste, creed or religion". He further added: "Truth cannot be defined — it just IS. One who sincerely searches for it can find and experience it within oneself."

SRI B. J. DIVAN, Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court, who presided remarked that while *avatars* hailed from the north, all the great *acharyas* — Sri Adi Sankara-

charya, Sri Ramanujacharya and Sri Ramana Maharshi among them — were born in the south. He added that the role of the *acharyas* was important because they showed the path by following which devotees could attain self-realisation.

SRI P. G. MAHADEVAN, President of Ramana Kendra, Ahmedabad, welcomed the gathering and SRI N. S. SUNDARAM, Secretary of the Kendra, proposed a vote of thanks.

AT MADURAI

Sri Bhagavan's 101st *Jayanthi* was celebrated at 'Sri Ramana Mandiram' Madurai, for three days from December 22, 1980, with great eclat.

On December 22, PROFESSOR S. VENKATARAMAN of Saurashtra College, Madurai, spoke on Sri Bhagavan's *Who Am I?*. On *Jayanthi* Day (23-12-1980) the celebrations commenced with *Veda Parayana* in the morning, followed by speeches on Sri Bhagavan. *Maheswara Puja* (feeding of the poor) was conducted on a large scale. In the evening Sri Bhagavan's portrait was taken round through the four main streets, accompanied by Nadaswaram.

In the night, H. H. SWAMI VIMALANANDA SARASWATI, President, Sivananda Thapovanam, Madurai, delivered a lecture on Sri Bhagavan's philosophy.

The third day function was conducted at Gujarati Samaj Hall. SRI A. R. RAGHAVAN presided. SMT. SIVANANDA VIJAYALAKSHMI gave a musical discourse on 'Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings' and the large crowd listened with rapt attention.

Sri Bhagavan's Portrait being taken in procession in Madurai.



AT KOLHAPUR

Sri Bhagavan's Sat Sangh Mandal at Kolhapur, celebrated Sri Bhagavan's 101st Jayanthi on December 23. The activities included *puja*, *abhisheka*, lectures, *bhajana* and narration of anecdotes from the life of Sri Maharshi. PANDIT JERESHASTRI, PROFESSOR M. A. KULKARNI, SRI G. S. KULKARNI and others spoke on Sri Bhagavan's teachings.

On January 8, 9 and 10, RAJKUMARI PRABHAVATI RAJE delivered a series of lucid talks on Sri Bhagavan and His *Upadesa Saram*.

AT BELGAUM

MAJOR K. S. ABDUL GAFFAR, who is popularly known as SRI OM SWAMI, the founder-president of Sri Ramana Arunanachala Sadhanalaya and Mission, Belgaum, arranged for celebrating Sri Bhagavan's 101st Jayanthi on January 29. Sri Bhagavan's decorated photo placed on a palanquin was carried by the devotees and taken in a procession through important streets of the city. Throughout the procession, in addition to Nadaswaram, the devotees were singing 'Arunachala Siva' which was led by Sri Om Swami. In the evening, a small Seminar was arranged in Samarthy Mandir, under the chairmanship of SRI CHANDA PAI. SRI MOGHE spoke on Sri Bhagavan's life and teachings. Sri Om Swami narrated vividly the incidents in the life of Sri Bhagavan. He also conducted the 54th Ramana Jnana Yagnam.

AT HYDERABAD

The 101st Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on December 23, 1980, at Hindi Arts College, Hyderabad by *Sri Ramana Kendram*, in the midst of a large gathering of devotees. Enthusiastic participation by children was the highlight of this year's celebrations. They rendered songs on and by Sri Bhagavan and also from *Bhagavad Gita*.

PROF. SHIV MOHAN LAL, read out an article on Sri Bhagavan. DR. K. SUBRAMANIAN spoke about 'the accessibility of Sri Bhagavan to all at all times and His compassion'. SRI K. R. SUBRAMANIAM explained the significance of *Sri Ramana Ashtotara Saranamvali*. The function concluded with *arathi* and distribution of *prasad*.

AT SRI RAMANA KSHETRA, VARKALA

At this simple, forest hermitage Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi was celebrated in an unique way — the president, speakers and audience remained silent and thus eloquently paid homage to the Silent Master: Bhagavan Ramana!

AT PALGHAT

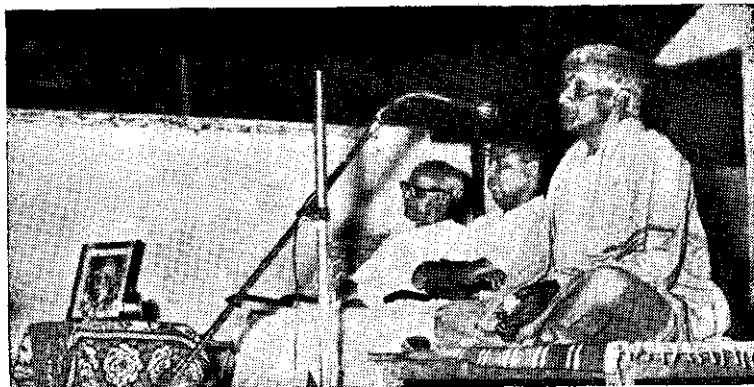
The 101st Birth Anniversary of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated in a most fitting manner at Vijnana Ramaneeya Ashram, Palghat, Kerala, for three days from December 23, 1980.

The celebrations commenced on the first day, with *Ganapati Homa*, which was followed by *puja*, *akhanta japa* and feeding of the poor. In the afternoon, there was *parayana* of *Sri Ramana Gita* and *Sat Darshan*. There was also a public meeting presided over by BHAGAVATHOTHAMA SRI VAISRAVANATH RAMAN NAMBOODIRI. SRI BALARAM, SRI MAITRANANDA SWAMI of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Trichur and SRI PASUPATHI of Nemmara, spoke on the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan. On the second day, SRI T. R. SUBRAMANIAN, Principal, Government Victoria College, presided. MAHAKAVI SRI OLAPPAMANNA, SRI SUKUMAR AZHIKKODE and PROFESSOR V. K. EZHITHACHAN spoke.

The celebrations concluded on the third with a charming *Kathakali* performance by the Kerala Kala Mandalam.

Throughout the entire proceedings of the celebrations, the Presence of Sri Bhagavan was visibly felt.

PALGHAT: Swami Maitrananda expounding Sri Maharshi's teachings. To his right: P. A. Pasupathinathan and Vaisravanath Raman Nambodiri.



AT NELLORE

BIRTH CENTENARY SOUVENIR RELEASED

SRI RAMANA SATSANGAM, Nellore, has been propagating Sri Bhagavan's Life and Teachings for the past many decades.

Under the able guidance of SRI B. S. RANGANADHAM, this *Sri Ramana Satsangam* had arranged for celebrating Sri Bhagavan's Birth Centenary at Nellore, for two days, March 1 and 2.

One of the important features of the celebrations is bringing out of an attractive Souvenir on this occasion. The Souvenir contains thought-provoking articles, in addition to attractive pictures of Sri Bhagavan on art paper. Special mention has to be made about the contribution, '*Ramana Yoga Sutras*' written by SRI KRISHNA BIKSHU, which gives in essence the tenets of

Sri Bhagavan's unique teaching. There is a section containing articles and poems in Telugu.

On March 1, the celebrations commenced with distribution of prizes to nearly 200 boys and girls, who came successful in various competitions held, viz. elocution, recitation from Sri Bhagavan's works and Yogasana. SRI ANAM VENKATA REDDY presided over the function. There was 'Ramana Music' by SRI I. KAMESWARA RAO. There were also talks on Sri Bhagavan by SRI PARAVASUDEVAN, DR. O. RAMACHANDRIAH, and SRI H. JANAKIRAMA SARMA.

On the Second day, SRI P. SAMBAMURTHY GARU kept the vast audience spellbound, for nearly three hours, with his excellent '*Sri Ramana Katha Gana*'.

A number of publications on Sri Bhagavan in Telugu were released on this occasion.

There was also feeding of the poor on a large scale.

RAMANA KENDRA. DELHI

The 101st Jayanthi of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on December 23rd. with Satsang both in the morning and evening and at the temple at Uttara Swami Malai with Trikala Puja.

The Birth Centenary Souvenir was released on March 15th by Smt. Sushila Rohtagi, Chairman, Central Social Welfare Board who presented the first copy to



Smt. Sushila Rohtagi presenting the first copy of the Centenary Souvenir to Shri O. P. Goyal.

Shri O. P. Goyal, Managing Director, Haryana Steels and Alloys. Shri Goyal takes very active interest in our Seva Samiti work.

On January 26th, Sri Seshadri Swami's Jayanthi was celebrated.

Kaviyogi Swami Suddhananda Bharati visited the Kendra on February 22nd and gave an eloquent talk on Sri Ramana, and heard his own compositions sung by the Kendra members.

Devotional music recitals were given at the Kendra on three occasions: On December 22nd, Ardra Darshanam Day: Shri S. V. Margabandhu and party gave a Kathakalakshepam on Bhakta Nandanar. On January 18th, the Delhi Tiruppugazh Anbargal held a grand Tiruppugazh Bhajan. On the next day, Thai Pusam, there was a concert by Smt. Saraswati Sekhar and party who sang Saint Ramalinga Swamigal's songs.

Mahasivaratri was celebrated on March 4th, with recitation of *Rudram* and *Chamakam* and singing in chorus of Arunachala Siva.

On February 15th Ma Yogashakthi Saraswathi, Founder and Head of Yogashakthi Mission, New Delhi gave a talk on Meditation.

At the General Body meeting held on February 22nd, Shri R. Venkataraman, Union Minister of Finance was elected President of the Kendra and Shri S. Ramakrishnan, Secretary for 1981-82. The Kendra placed on record the valuable help and encouragement given by its former President Shri Morarji Desai.



**NATIONAL SEMINAR
AND
FESTIVAL OF RAMANA MUSIC**

ON

18th, 19th & 20th of July, 1981
(Saturday, Sunday & Monday)

AT

**RAVINDRA KALAKSHETRA,
J. C. ROAD, BANGALORE.**

1. Free boarding and lodging will be provided by the Centre for out-station delegates;
2. Delegate fee will not be charged.

For details Contact :

**RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING
40/41, FIRST FLOOR, II CROSS ROAD.
LOWER PALACE ORCHARDS
BANGALORE 560 003**

RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING, BANGALORE

“RAMANA DIGVIJAYAM” SOUVENIR RELEASED

The first *Jayanthi* of Sri Bhagavan at Sri Ramanasramam was performed on *January 3, 1923*. The Birth Centenary Jayanthi, celebrated so historically at Sri Ramanasramam last year, also fell on *January 3, 1980*. On this unique day—*January 3, 1981*—*Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore*, paid rich Centenary homage to the Master by arranging a huge gathering at the Chowdiah Memorial Hall and by releasing a deluxe Souvenir: “*Ramana Digvijayam*”.

H. H. Sankaracharya of Sivaganga, who presided, released the Souvenir by handing over a copy to *SRI T. N. VENKATARAMAN*, President of Sri Ramanasramam. His Holiness referred to Sri Ramana Maharshi as comparable to *Dakshinamurti*, the first Guru and the greatest among teachers.

‘*Ramananjali*’ group’s *Ramana Gana* on that evening was an inspired one. The response was overwhelming as the audience swelled beyond the capacity of the hall, many stood outside throughout the entire performance!

‘*Ramananjali*’ paying homage to Sri Bhagavan on 3-1-1981 at Bangalore. *H. H. Sankaracharya of Sivaganga Mutt* graced the occasion.



The attractive cover page of ‘*Ramana Digvijayam*’.



KUMARI MEENAKSHI of Veena G. Visalakshi Art Centre, deserves praise for her original and creative choreography of songs on Sri Ramana and by Him, in *Ramana Vaibhavam*, dances by girls. The skill of Kumari Meenakshi as a dance teacher was evident in *Ramana Suprabhatham* which was danced by KUMARI AMBIKA, with great feeling. KUMARI SUMATHI'S '*Arunachala Siva*' will be long remembered.

FULFILLING ACHIEVEMENTS

The Bangalore 'Ramana Centre' — *Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore* — is marching ahead in triumphant strides by fulfilling one after another landmarks in the 'Ramana Movement'.

We pray to our Master that He soon crowns their efforts to find a central place to build the 'Ramana Temple' within the heart of Bangalore City, for which happily they have enough financial resources.

Significant among their recent accomplishments are their starting of a monthly journal: "RAMANA" and of the '*Ramana Bala Kendra*'.

"RAMANA" FAMILY JOURNAL

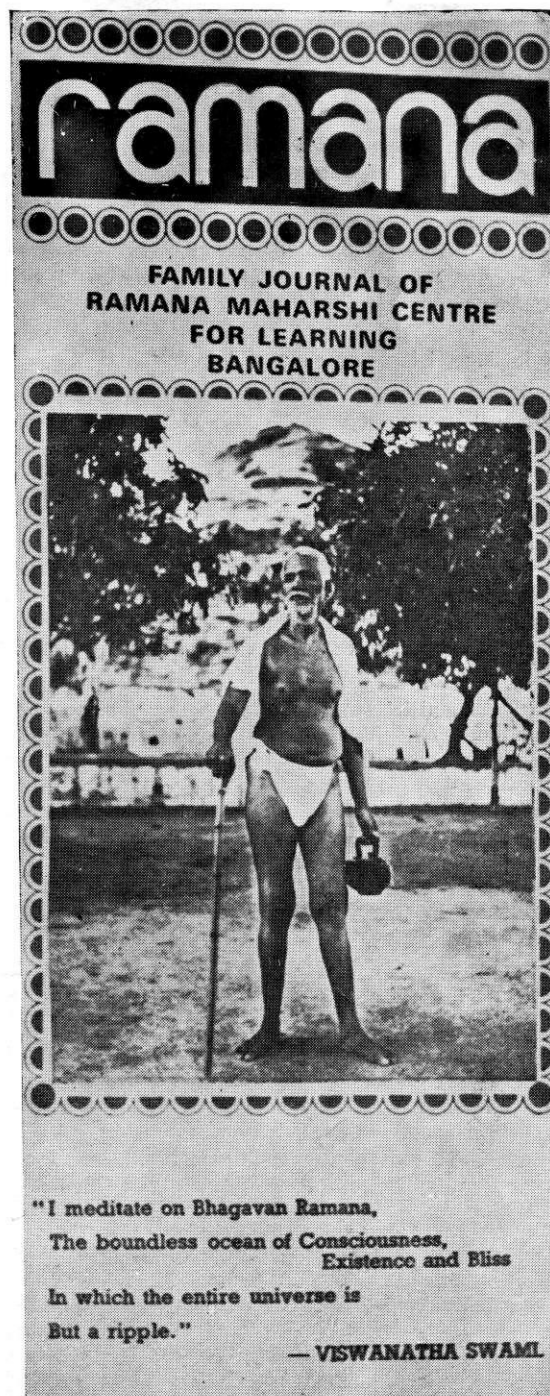
This beautiful brochure: "RAMANA", is brought out by RMCL, Bangalore, as a family journal 'to promote a sense of participative union' among devotees of Sri Bhagavan in Karnataka. The Centre arranges every month a Talk on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings and 'Ramana Music' concert by an eminent musician who will sing songs on and by Sri Bhagavan. This journal will report such details of activities, in addition to giving particulars about conduct of *Ramana Satsangs* (for example, on *Punarvasu*, birth-star of Sri Bhagavan) and 'Ramana Music' classes. It is a non-profit publication, free to the members of RMCL.

Its first issue, released on February 24, is excellently brought out. The Editor, KUMARI SARADA, deserves right-ful praise for the attractive get-up and interesting contents of this single-sheet monthly-folder.

We wish other 'Ramana Centres', in India and abroad, follow suit and start similar *Bulletins* to enhance the Ramana-family ties among the Ramana-devotees.



Kumari Sarada (Editor)



The delightful front page of 'RAMANA', monthly journal.

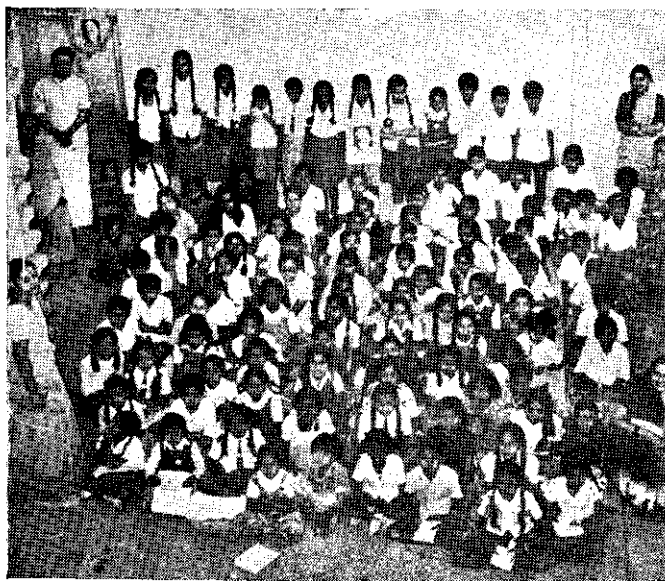
RAMANA BALA KENDRA

To encourage and develop interest mainly in students between the 6th standard and 10th standard in schools, in Sri Ramana's teachings and in Ramana Music, RAMANA BALA KENDRA has been started in Bangalore on January 17, by RMCL, Bangalore.

The response, it is reported to us, has been unbelievable, revealing the wealth of talent we have among students! In one school — KARNATAKA EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SOCIETY, BANGALORE — alone, over hundred children have joined this RAMANA BALA KENDRA. The excitement with which the children greet each other: ' *Namo Ramana* ' and the enthusiasm with which they chant Sri Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram* are indeed thrilling. Their syllabus consists chiefly of 'Ramana Music', Ramana Painting and the narration of Sri Bhagavan's story. Classes are held once a week.

We wish devotees in other cities, particularly in district headquarters, should start such RAMANA BALA KENDRA in their own towns. Details of how RAMANA BALA KENDRAS are to be conducted can be had from:

Smt. Sulochana Natarajan,
40/41, First Floor, 2nd Cross,
Lower Palace Orchards,
BANGALORE-560 003.



RAMANA BALA KENDRA, BANGALORE: *A Section of the young students who so joyfully sing and dance the glory of 'Ramana'; also paint and narrate enthusiastically the incidents in Sri Bhagavan's life.*

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Just Released !!

"RAMANANJALI IN CANADA"

A multi-language musical delight was released on March 1. This is taped from a live-programme given by 'Ramananjali' group in Moncton, Canada, for over two hours to a packed audience. This was fully televised and shown on TV several times in Canada, on public demand.

The special release price will be Rs. 28.50 only per cassette!

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A vast section of the enthusiastic audience at the Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore.

RAMANANJALI CONCERTS

After their successful global tour, both in the West and in the East, the 'Ramananjali' group is now actively giving 'Ramana Music' concerts in South India, particularly in Karnataka State. 'Ramananjali' is enthusiastically received by the music-loving people wherever they go.

Saintly persons who preside over these enchanting music performances shower their blessings on and praise this dedicated group of singers, led by SMT. SULOCHANA NATARAJAN.

AT MANGALORE

The citizens of Mangalore had a rare treat of devotional music on February 14, when the 'Ramananjali' group gave two thrilling performances of 'Ramana Music'. The first performance was under the auspices of *Rama Sakti Mission*. The Mother, SRI TARA DEVI, after the concert said: "This music is really divine. It transported me to a state of *samadhi*!" The second performance was on the same night under the auspices of *Sangeetha Kala Prasaara Sangh*. The revered SRI VEERENDRA HEGGADE of Dharmasthala presided. The hall was packed to capacity.



MANGALORE: 'Ramana Music' being rendered with all devotion and dedication. (l to r) Sri Keshav Kumar, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Kumari Sarada, Kumari Ambika, Sri H. K. Narayana.

The appreciative audience in Mangalore who joined in the chorus singing of the Holy Name of 'Ramana', along with 'Ramananjali' group. ↓



AT TUMKUR

The following is an excerpt from a review by a music critic, 'Ravi', published in 'Deccan Herald':

"The Forum of Music Lovers, presented 'Ramananjali', led by SMT. SULOCHANA NATARAJAN and SRI H. K. NARAYANA, at the Woodlands Conference Hall, Tumkur, on February 21. It was the total involvement of the artistes in presenting the compositions of Sri Ramana Maharshi and those on Him, set to ragas, in classical and light tunes, that held the audience engrossed for over three hours."

AT UDUPI

The Golden Jubilee Hall of the Syndicate Bank was very tastefully decorated when the 'Ramananjali' group gave its performance for over two hours, under the auspices of Sangeetha Sabha, Udupi, on February 15. H. H. VISWESHA THIRTHA SWAMIJI OF PEJAVAR MUTT presided. SRI R. RAGHUPATHY, Chairman of the Syndicate Bank was the Chief Guest. In his speech, the Swamiji warmly praised the role of the 'Ramananjali' group in promoting interest in devotional music, particularly among the young. Sri Raghupathy, in a very fine talk, dealt with essential aspects of the teachings of the Maharshi and of the role of



UDUPI: H. H. Viswesha Thirtha Swami of Pejavar Mutt blessing Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, leader of 'Ramananjali' group.

the 'Ramananjali' group in spreading His message throughout the world. SRI H. N. RAO, General Manager of the Syndicate Bank, proposed the vote of thanks.

A RARE OPPORTUNITY!

Sri Ramanasramam invites you to join the DAILY BIKSHA SCHEME

Devotees who wish *Biksha* (food-offering for the inmates of the Ashram) to be held in their name, on a specified day, every year, can do so, by a contribution of Rs. 2,000/- (Rupees two thousand only) which will be kept in Fixed Deposit. The interest thereof will be utilised for such *Bikshavandana* on that day. After the *Biksha*, Prasad from the sacred shrine of Sri Bhagavan will be sent to the Donor.

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(40 verses in praise of Sri Ramana)

by

KAVYAKANTA GANAPATHI MUNI

&

'RAMANA ASHTOTHRAM'

by

SRI VISWANATHA SWAMI



* Await Release on Sri Bhagavan's Aradhana day,
on Tuesday, the 5th May, 1981

OBITUARY

Smt. K. K. MADHAVI AMMA

SMT. K. K. MADHAVI AMMA (elder sister of Sri K. K. Nambiar, Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras), wife of late Dr. P. C. Nambiar, attained the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan, in the early hours on February 13, at her residence in Bangalore. She was 83 and leaves behind a son, Sri K.K. Prabhakaran and a daughter, Smt. Janaki G. Menon.



Smt. K. K. Madhavi Amma

Smt. Madhavi Amma, one of the staunchest devotees of Sri Bhagavan, was introduced in the October, 1971 issue of *The Mountain Path*. She came to Bhagavan in 1933. Her article, 'Light Gives Light', published in our January, 1972 issue, recounts the mystic experience she had on March 12, 1934—the day when she almost wrested the *upadesa* from the Guru through sheer perseverance. She had the privilege of visiting the Ashram, almost daily and ministering to Bhagavan, when her husband was the Assistant Surgeon in charge of the Tiruvannamalai Hospital in the middle of the thirties.

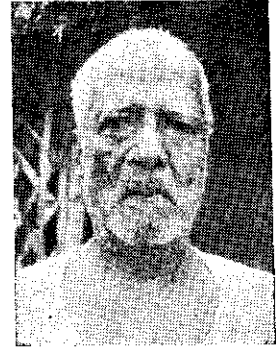
She is the author of several Malayalam publications on Sri Ramana Maharshi and His teachings. She has also composed poems and songs on Bhagavan. Her Malayalam translation of *Geetha Hridayam* of Vidya-prakshananda Swamigal is widely read and appreciated.

In her, the devotees of Sri Bhagavan have lost a precious *bhakta* totally dedicated to her Master.

Sri K. R. RAMANATHA IYER

SRI K. R. RAMANATHA IYER retired from Burmah Shell in 1935 where he was serving as an accountant.

For one year he studied in the traditional way *Brahmasutra Bhaskya* from the Sringeri Mutt in Varanasi. In 1937 he came to Sri Bhagavan, while his brother, Sri K. R. Venkatasubramanian Iyer was already a confirmed devotee of Sri Bhagavan. From 1941 to 1949 Sri Ramanatha Iyer was serving in the Ashram Book Depot. He was a great adept in dhyana and Vedantic discussion. He spent his last years in a house in Ramana Nagar. Due merely to ripe old age (89), he passed away on December 7, 1980, peacefully having Sri Bhagavan's Name on his lips.



Sri K. R. Ramanatha Iyer

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

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