



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

# The Mountain Path

**VOL. 19, No. II**

**APRIL 1982**

Show me the warfare of  
Thy Grace, in the Open  
Field where there is no  
coming and going. Oh  
Arunachala!

—The Marital Garland of  
Letters, verse 74.

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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!"

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1

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— Editor.

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## The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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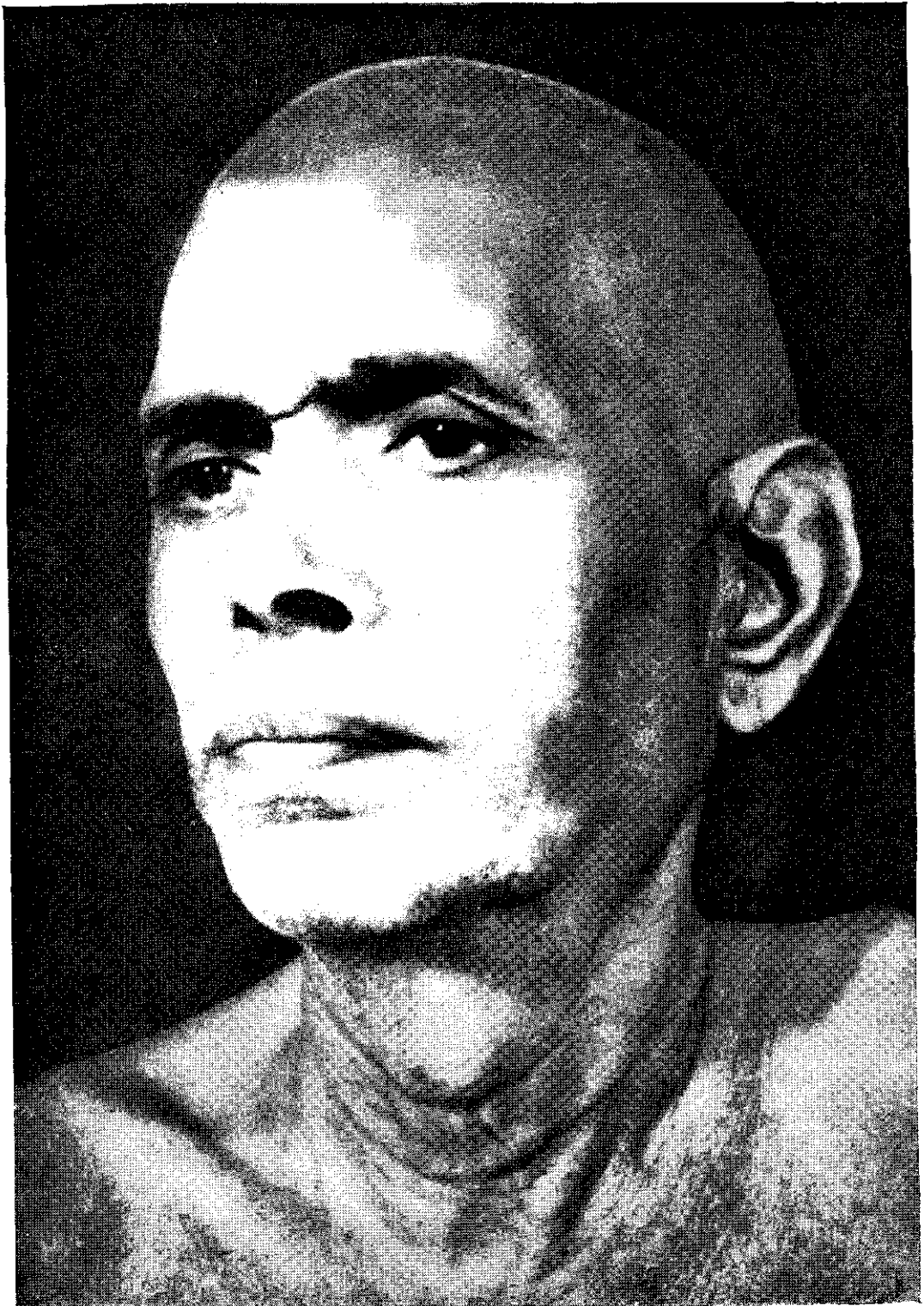
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**THE MOUNTAIN PATH**

is dedicated to

**Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**



EDITORIAL

## The Power of Arunachala

Michael James

### THE THOUGHT OF ARUNACHALA

**BY** seeing Chidambaram, by being born in Tiruvarur, by dying in Kasi, or by merely thinking of Arunachala, one will surely attain Liberation".

"The supreme knowledge (Self-knowledge), the import of Vedanta, which cannot be attained without great difficulty, can easily be attained by anyone who sees the form of this Hill from wherever It is visible or who even thinks of It by mind from afar."<sup>1</sup>

Such is the assurance given by Lord Siva in the *Arunachala Mahatmyam* about the power of the mere thought of Arunachala, and this assurance has received striking confirmation from the life and teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

In the second line of the first verse of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam* (The Eight Verses) Sri Bhagavan tells us that from His very earliest childhood, when He knew no other thing, Arunachala was shining in His mind as the 'most great'. And this thought of Arunachala so worked in His mind that at the age of sixteen a great fear of death arose in Him and turned His mind Selfwards to drown forever in its source.

In His writings Sri Bhagavan has repeatedly confirmed the mysterious power that the thought of Arunachala has over the mind. In

His Tamil *Collected Works*, under the picture of Arunachala, there is a verse which can be considered as His *dhyana sloka* (verse of contemplation) upon His *Sadguru*, Arunachala Siva; in this verse He sings, "This is Arunachala Siva, the Ocean of Grace that bestows Liberation when thought of". In the first verse of *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanamai* (The Marital Garland of Letters) He sings, "O Arunachala, You root out the ego of those who think of You in the heart as 'Arunachala'". In the 102nd verse of *Aksharamanamai* He sings, "O Arunachala, the moment I thought of Arunai (the holy town of Arunachala) I was caught in the trap of Your Grace. Can the net of Your Grace ever fail?" And in the last line of the second verse of *Sri Arunachala Navamanimalai* (The Necklet of Nine Gems) He sings, "*Mukti ninaikka varul Arunachalam*" (Arunachala, mere thought of which bestows Liberation).

But only in the tenth verse of *Sri Arunachala Patikam* (The Eleven Verses) does Sri Bhagavan actually reveal how the thought of Arunachala works in the mind to root out the ego. In this verse He sings:—

"I have seen a wonder, a magnetic Hill that forcibly attracts the soul. Arresting the activities of the soul who thinks of It

<sup>1</sup>This verse is the fifth of the seven verses which Sri Bhagavan selected from the *Arunachala Mahatmyam* and translated into Tamil.

even once, drawing it to face Itself, the One, making it thus motionless like Itself, It feeds upon that sweet (pure and ripened) soul; what a wonder is this! O souls, be saved by thinking of this great Arunagiri, which shines in the mind as the destroyer of the soul (the ego)!"

The words "*oru tanadu abhimukhamaha irttu*" (drawing it to face Itself, the One) used here by Sri Bhagavan are a mystic way of saying 'drawing the soul to turn inwards and face Self, the one reality'. Thus in this verse Sri Bhagavan reveals how the thought of Arunachala works within the mind to arrest its activities, to attract its attention towards Self and thereby to make it still. In other words, Sri Bhagavan assures that the thought of Arunachala will lead the mind to the path of Self-enquiry, the "direct path for all", as indeed happened in His own case. Knowing from personal experience this unique power of Arunachala, Sri Bhagavan confidently advises us in the last line of this verse, "O souls, be saved by thinking of this great Arunagiri, which shines in the mind as the destroyer of the soul!"

### THE FORM OF ARUNACHALA

Sri Bhagavan has said that Arunachala is the supreme Self that shines as 'I' in the hearts of all living beings. In other words, Arunachala is truly the non-dual reality that transcends time, space, name and form. Hence many of the verses in *The Five Hymns to Arunachala*, being very mystic in nature, can well be interpreted as applying to the nameless and formless Self, rather than to the name and form of Arunachala. For this reason, some devotees tend to view Sri Bhagavan's revelation about the power of Arunachala as being purely allegorical, and a few even ask, "When Arunachala is the Self, why should we attach any particular importance to this Hill?"<sup>2</sup>

In order to understand more fully the importance that Sri Bhagavan attached to the name and form of this Hill, it is necessary for us to take a broad view of His teachings. In verse 4

of *Ulladu Narpadu* (The Forty Verses on Reality) Sri Bhagavan says, "If oneself is a form, the world and God will also be likewise (i.e. will also be forms) ...". And in the first line of the third verse of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam* He addresses Arunachala and sings, "When I approach You regarding You as having form, You stand here as a Hill on earth".

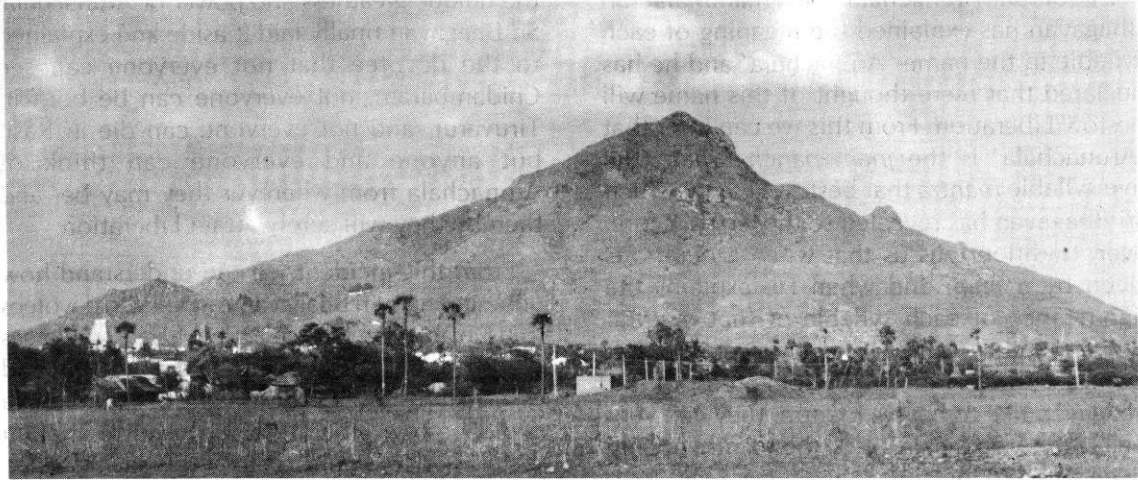
That is, so long as we identify the body as 'I', it is equally true that this Hill is God. Indeed, Sri Bhagavan used to say that because we identify the body as 'I', Lord Siva, the Supreme Reality, out of His immense compassion for us, identifies this Hill as 'I', so that we may see Him, think of Him and thereby receive His Grace and guidance. "Only to reveal Your (transcendent) state without speech (i.e. through Silence), You stand as a Hill shining from earth to sky", sings Sri Bhagavan in the last line of the second verse of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*.

So long as we feel the name and form of our body to be 'I', we cannot conceive God as being anything but a name and form. Even if we think that God is formless, that very thought about God itself is a form — a mere mental conception. That is why Sri Bhagavan says in the second line of the third verse of *Ashtakam*, "If one tries to think of Your nature (*lit.* form) as formless, he is like one who wanders throughout the world to see the sky".<sup>3</sup>

Being the perfect spiritual Master that He was, Sri Bhagavan knew well how important and necessary is the form of God for the human mind, which is ever attached to forms. And from His own personal experience He

<sup>2</sup>In *Talks* No. 273 (p. 228) it is recorded that Dr. Syed once asked a similar question to Sri Bhagavan, who in reply pointed out that the Hill had attracted to Itself all the assembled devotees, including Sri Bhagavan Himself, and that *the power of the Hill therefore could not be denied*.

<sup>3</sup>The futility of trying to conceive God as being formless when we are unable to know ourself as the formless Self, is well illustrated by a dialogue that Sri Bhagavan once had with some Muslims, which is recorded on p. 28 of *Maha Yoga* and in *Talks* No. 121.



*The Hill of the Holy Beacon*

knew the unique power of the form of Arunachala, a power which cannot be found in such abundance in any other form of God, namely the power to turn the mind towards Self and thereby to root out the ego. In verse 11 of *Sri Arunachala Patikam* Sri Bhagavan exclaims with joy and wonder, "Lo! How many are there like me who have been destroyed by thinking this Hill to be the Supreme ...", thereby assuring us that if we regard this Hill as God, our ego will surely be destroyed.

Though Arunachala appears outwardly as a Hill of mere insentient rock, the true devotee understands It to be the all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful Supreme Lord, who is guiding him both from within and without at every step and turn of life, leading him steadily and surely towards the goal of egolessness. "What a wonder! It stands as if an insentient Hill, (yet) Its action is mysterious — impossible for anyone to understand", sings Sri Bhagavan in the first line of *Sri Arunachala Ashtakam*.

#### **THE NAME OF ARUNACHALA**

Of all the names of God, the name most dear to the heart of Sri Bhagavan was 'Arunachala'. Every one of the 108 verses of *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanalai* ends with the name 'Arunachala', and the refrain is 'Arunachala Siva, Arunachala Siva, Arunachala

Siva, Arunachala!' From the great love which Sri Bhagavan had for this name, it is clear that He regarded it as being no less powerful than the form of Arunachala. This fact is confirmed in verse 70 of *Aksharamanalai*, in which Sri Bhagavan sings, "O Arunachala, the very moment I thought of Your name, You caught me and drew me to yourself. Who can understand Your greatness?"

There are many incidents in the life of Sri Bhagavan which illustrate His great love for the divine name 'Arunachala', but perhaps the most striking of these incidents occurred during His last moments. About twenty-five minutes before He left His body, the assembled devotees began to chant *Aksharamanalai*; hearing the name of His beloved Arunachala, Sri Bhagavan opened His eyes, which shone with love, and tears of ecstasy rolled down His cheeks.

Though Sri Bhagavan never gave *mantra-diksha* nor formally accepted anyone as His disciple, many devotees believe that 'Arunachala' is the *nama-mantra* which He has bestowed upon the whole world. When a Guru formally gives a *mantra* to his disciple, he explains to him the meaning and significance of each letter of the *mantra* and tells him the fruit to be gained by meditating upon that *mantra*. In the same manner, in the second

verse of *Sri Arunachala Navamanimalai* Sri Bhagavan has explained the meaning of each syllable in the name 'Arunachala' and he has declared that mere thought of this name will bestow Liberation. From this we can infer that 'Arunachala' is the *jnana-panchakshari* (the five syllable *mantra* that bestows *jnana*) which Sri Bhagavan has revealed to the world. Moreover, tradition tells us that when a *mantra* is given by a *jnani* and when He explains the significance of each syllable of that *mantra*, He is actually putting His own power into that *mantra*. Therefore, if any devotees of Sri Bhagavan like to have a *mantra*, they can very well take 'Arunachala' to be the *mantra* openly given to them by Him.

The power of the name 'Arunachala' was once directly confirmed by Sri Bhagavan. In 1948 a certain devotee came to Him from Bombay, and with him he brought a notebook in which he had written the name 'Arunachala Siva' many thousands of times. On the last page of this notebook the devotee wrote a prayer to the following effect, "O Bhagavan, in the life of Saradamani Devi (the wife of Sri Ramakrishna) it is written that she has said that if even an animal dies in Kasi it will attain Liberation. Therefore, graciously bestow upon me the boon of death in Kasi", and gave the notebook to Sri Bhagavan. Bhagavan looked through the notebook and when He came to the last page He read out loud the devotee's prayer; at once He expressed the greatest surprise and exclaimed, "*Smaranat Arunachalam!*" (the words '*Smaranat Arunachalam*' mean 'by remembering Arunachala', and they occur in the very same Sanskrit verse which says that by dying in Kasi one will attain Liberation). Bhagavan then turned to the revolving bookcase by His side and took out a book (probably the *Arunachala Mahatmyam*); opening it as if at random, He read out a sentence in Tamil which said, "One *Arunachala* is equal in power to one crore *Om Nama Sivaya*" ('*Om Nama Sivaya*' is believed by Saivites all over India to be the most sacred and powerful *mantra*). After reading out a few other portions of this book which emphasised

the unique greatness and power of Arunachala, Sri Bhagavan finally laid it aside and explained to the devotee that not everyone can see Chidambaram, not everyone can be born in Tiruvarur, and not everyone can die in Kasi, but anyone and everyone can think of Arunachala from wherever they may be, and thereby they will surely attain Liberation.

From this incident we can understand how unhesitatingly Sri Bhagavan encouraged devotees to have absolute faith in Arunachala. If devotees of a sceptical frame of mind came to Him and asked Him how mere thought of Arunachala could bestow Liberation, He used to explain the allegorical significance of this saying, since that alone would satisfy their mind<sup>4</sup>. But if devotees came to Him with simple, child-like faith, He would strengthen their faith and confirm the literal meaning of this saying, since He knew from personal experience the great power of the name and form of Arunachala.

#### THE UNIQUE SANCTITY OF ARUNACHALA

In India there are countless holy places (*Kshetras*) which are sacred to Lord Siva or to some other name and form of God, and many of them are more well-known and popular than Arunachala. Yet there is a verse in the *Arunachala Mahatmyam* which has been selected and translated into Tamil by Sri Bhagavan that says :-

"Arunachala is truly the holy place. Of all holy places It is the most sacred! Know that It is the heart of the world. It is truly Siva Himself! It is His heart-abode, a secret *kshetra*. In that place the Lord ever abides as the Hill of light named Arunachala."

Whenever Sri Bhagavan asked about the special sanctity of Arunachala, He used to explain that other holy places like Kailas, Kasi and Chidambaram are sacred because they are the abodes of Lord Siva, whereas Arunachala is Lord Siva Himself<sup>5</sup>. However,

<sup>4</sup>An example of how Sri Bhagavan used to give this type of explanation can be found in *Talks* No. 473 (p. 448).

<sup>5</sup>See similar comments recorded in *Talks* No. 143, and *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*, p. 37



as the above verse of the *Arunachala Mahatmyam* says, Arunachala is a secret *Kshetra*. Because It is the place which bestows *Jnana* and because most people have so many other desires and do not truly want *Jnana*, Arunachala has always remained comparatively little known. But to those few who truly seek *Jnana*, Arunachala always makes Itself known through some means or other.

The unique sanctity and power of Arunachala-*kshetra* was once confirmed by an incident that happened in the life of Sri Bhagavan. Because of his great love for Sri Bhagavan, a certain devotee wanted to take Him to his native place, Chidambaram. But rather than directly ask Sri Bhagavan to come to Chidambaram, he began to ask Him if He had ever been to see Lord Nataraja in Chidambaram temple. When Sri Bhagavan replied that He had not, the devotee began to describe the greatness of Chidambaram, saying that it was the most sacred Siva-*kshetra* in south India, that so many saints and sages had lived there and had sung in praise of Lord Nataraja, and so on and so forth. Sri Bhagavan listened to all he said with patient interest, but showed no signs of wanting to visit Chidambaram. Seeing this, the devotee at last said, "Chidambaram is even greater than Arunachala, because among the *Panchabhuta-lingams* (the *lingams* representing the five elements) Chidambaram is the space-*lingam* while Arunachala is only the fire-*lingam*<sup>6</sup>. Since the four elements, earth, water, air and fire, finally have to merge in space, space is the principal element".

Hearing this, Sri Bhagavan smiled and said, "All the five elements come into existence only when Sakti seemingly forsakes Her identity with Lord Siva, the Supreme Self (*paramatman*). Since the five elements are thus only the creations of Sakti, She is superior to all of them. Therefore, more important than the place where the elements merge, is the place where Sakti Herself merges. Because Sakti is dancing in Chidambaram, Lord Siva has to dance before Her and thereby make Her become motionless. But in Arunachala Lord

Siva remains ever motionless (*achala*), and hence Sakti automatically and effortlessly merges in Him through great love. Therefore Arunachala shines as the foremost and most powerful *kshetra*, because here Sakti, who has seemingly created all this manifold appearance, Herself merges into the Lord. So for those mature aspirants who seek to put an end to the false appearance of duality, the most powerful help is to be found only in Arunachala-*kshetra*".

Subsequently, on 24-7-1928, Sri Bhagavan summarised this reply of His in the form of a verse, which later became the first verse of *Sri Arunachala Navamanimalai*. In this verse He says, "Though He is truly motionless by nature, in the court (of Chidambaram) Lord Siva dances before Sakti, thereby making Her motionless. But know that (in Tiruvannamalai) Lord Arunachala shines triumphant, that Sakti having merged in His motionless form".

#### THE GURUTVAM OF ARUNACHALA

Arunachala has always been renowned as the bestower of Liberation, the destroyer of the ego, the remover of the false notion 'I am the body' — as the *Jnana-Guru* par excellence.

When Brahma and Vishnu began to quarrel, being deluded by pride and egoism, Lord Arunachala Siva appeared before them in the form of a column of fire, thereby vanquishing their egoism and teaching them true knowledge. When Sakti (Goddess Parvati) wished to attain a state in which She could do no wrong, Lord Siva sent Her to Arunachala, where She merged and became one with Him. Thus, even to Brahma and Vishnu Arunachala was Guru, and to Parvati It was the place where She lost Her separate individuality.

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<sup>6</sup>Though Arunachala is generally considered to be one of the *panchabhuta-lingams*, Sri Bhagavan used to point out that It is truly not a *lingam* of ordinary fire, which is one among the five gross elements, but is a *lingam* of the Fire of knowledge (*janagni*), the Fire that burns the ego to destruction.

Throughout the ages Saints and Sages have sung verses in Sanskrit, Tamil and other Indian languages extolling the unique power of Arunachala to root out the ego and to bestow Self-knowledge. All the four great Saivite Sages of Tamil Nadu, Manikkavachakar, Sundaramurti, Appar and Jnanasambandhar, have sung in praise of Arunachala. In one verse often pointed out by Sri Bhagavan, Jnanasambandhar describes this Hill as being *Jnana-tiral*, a dense mass of *Jnana*. And Sundaramurti, singing in Tiruvanaikka, remembers Arunachala and sings, "O Annamalai, You can be known only to those who give up the attachment to the body".

These puranic stories and songs of ancient Sages all confirm the fact that Arunachala is the supreme *Jnana-Guru*. But this fact has received its most striking confirmation from Sri Bhagavan. In verse 19 of *Aksharamanamalai* He explicitly states that Arunachala shines as the form of His Guru; and in the same verse He reveals the function of the real Guru, namely

to destroy all our defects (including the root-defect, the ego), to bestow all good qualities upon us and to rule over us.

In many of His other verses Sri Bhagavan has clearly indicated that the role of Arunachala is the role of the *Sadguru*. For example, in *Aksharamanamalai* He sings that Arunachala roots out the ego of those who think of It (verse 1), that It annihilates those who approach It as God (verse 48) and that It destroys the attachment of those who come to It with attachment (verse 77); He also reveals that Arunachala instructs through Silence (verse 36) and that It teaches the path of Self-enquiry (verse 44); and He shows us the way of praying to Arunachala to bestow *Jnana* (verse 40), to reveal Self as the reality (verse 43) and to make us give up the attachment to the body (verse 75). He has also confirmed from His own experience the power of Arunachala as Guru. In verse 8 of *Sri Arunachala Navamanimalai* He sings that, in order to put an end to His sufferings in the world, Arunachala "gave

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#### A CORRECTION

In the editorial of our last issue we gave an account of the genesis of *Who am I?* which was largely based on information Sadhu Om had received from Manikkam Pillai, a disciple of Sivaprakasam Pillai. The editorial noted that the first two answers of *Who am I?* contained interpolations by Sivaprakasam Pillai and it went on to say that portions of the other answers were also added later by Sivaprakasam Pillai. Sadhu Om has informed us that Manikkam Pillai only gave him information about the extra material which was added to the first two answers and he has asked us to point out that he feels there are no grounds for assuming that any of the other answers of Bhagavan have been interfered with. The editor wishes to apologise for misinterpreting Sadhu Om's written account of this incident which was contained in his new edition of *The Path of Sri Ramana*.

By authenticating the bulk of the original text of *Who am I?* Sadhu Om has added further substance to the main thesis of the editorial which was that *Who am I?* is by far the more reliable of Bhagavan's two earliest works since it contains Bhagavan's teachings in a pure and undiluted form. Sadhu Om has also given us information which authenticates the extra 15 questions which appeared in later editions of the work. It seems that the original 13 question version was printed as an appendix to Sivaprakasam Pillai's book *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* in 1923. This proved to be so popular with Bhagavan's devotees that an expanded version was published which contained extra questions which had also been asked in 1901 and 1902. We are grateful to Sadhu Om for correcting this misunderstanding.

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me His own state"; and in verse 9 He describes the wonder of Arunachala's Grace saying, "You entered my mind, drew me and established me in Your own state".

All that Sri Bhagavan has said about the power of Arunachala tallies exactly with what He has said about the power of the Guru. In verse 268 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* (The Garland of Guru's Sayings) He says that the Guru is He who possesses the supreme power to make any soul who comes to Him merge into Self, the knowledge beyond all speech. The Guru works in many ways to make the disciple merge into Self. "He gives a push from 'without' and exerts a pull from 'within', so that you may be fixed in the Centre", says Sri Bhagavan in *Maharshi's Gospel*, p. 36. From 'without' the Guru gives verbal instructions to turn the disciple's mind towards Self, and He also enables the disciple to have association (*sat-sang*) with His form and thereby to gain the necessary strength and love to turn within and attend to Self. To give verbal instructions it is necessary for the Guru to be in human form, but to give *Sat-sang* and subtle inner guidance He may be in any form.

Sri Bhagavan has come as the Guru in human form to give us all the necessary verbal instructions, and He has revealed that Arunachala is the Guru in the form of a Hill with which we can always have *Sat-sang*. Like any human body, the human form of the Guru will inevitably pass away one day, whereas the form of Arunachala will always remain. Thus, though Sri Bhagavan has left His human form, He has provided us with all the requisite outward help: He has left us with a permanent record of His verbal teachings, and He has shown us a form with which we can always have *Sat-sang*. Therefore, for the devotees of Sri Bhagavan there will never be any need to search for another outer Guru, because all the necessary help and guidance is ever available for us in the form of the teachings of Sri Bhagavan and the *Sat-sang* of Arunachala.

The power of the *Sat-sang* of Arunachala was often confirmed by Sri Bhagavan. Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy records in the *Ramana Pictorial Souvenir*, p. 7, that Sri Bhagavan once said to him, "The whole Hill is sacred. It is Siva Himself. Just as we identify ourselves with a body, so Siva has chosen to identify Himself with this Hill. Arunachala is pure Wisdom (*jnana*) in the form of a Hill. It is out of compassion to those who seek Him that He has chosen to reveal Himself in the form of a Hill visible to the eye. *The seeker will obtain guidance and solace by staying near this Hill.*"

#### ARUNACHALA-PRADAKSHINA

Arunachala is the physical embodiment of *Sat*, the reality, and hence to have contact with It in any manner is *Sat-sang*. To think of Arunachala is *Sat-sang*, to see Arunachala is *Sat-sang*, and to live near Arunachala is *Sat-sang*. But one very special way of having *Sat-sang* with Arunachala is to do *Arunagiri-pradakshina*, that is, to walk barefoot round the Hill keeping It to one's right side.

The great importance that Sri Bhagavan attached to *Giri-pradakshina* is well known to all the devotees who lived with Him. He Himself did *pradakshina* countless times, and He actively and spontaneously encouraged devotees to follow His example. "Bhagavan, who scarcely ever gave advice to devotees unless asked, wholeheartedly encouraged their going round the Hill as conducive to progress in *sadhana*", writes Lucia Osborne in *The Mountain Path*, January 1974, p. 3. And Devaraja Mudaliar records that the importance of *pradakshina* became evident to him "from the frequent references by Bhagavan Himself to its great significance, and from the fact that thousands of people do it, including almost all the close disciples of Bhagavan, even those who may be considered the most advanced among them" (*My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana*, p. 64).

Though comparatively little has been recorded of what Sri Bhagavan used to say

about the power of *pradakshina*, there is no doubt that He considered it to be an act having great spiritual efficacy. In fact He used to say that the benefits which can be gained by meditation and various other forms of mind-control only after great struggle and effort, will be effortlessly gained by those who go round the Hill. "Bhagavan often said that those unable to meditate would succeed in their endeavour by circumambulating Arunachala", writes Suri Nagamma in *My Life at Sri Ramanasramam*, p. 144. And Kunju Swami records on p. 108 of *Enadu Ninaivugal* that Bhagavan once told him, "What is better than *pradakshina*? That alone is sufficient".

While extolling the spiritual efficacy of *pradakshina*, Sri Bhagavan sometimes used to narrate the story of King Vajrangada Pandya, which is told in the *Arunachala Mahatmyam*. Vajrangada Pandya was a powerful monarch who ruled over most of South India, but one day he was told by some celestial beings that in his previous birth he had been Indra, the ruler of heaven, and that if he worshipped Arunachala he could regain his former position. On hearing this, he at once renounced his kingdom and, with the intense desire to become Indra, he began to worship Arunachala by going round the Hill three times a day. After three years of such worship, Lord Siva appeared before him and offered him any boon he wished to pray for. Though his original ambition had been to become Indra, his mind had been matured by doing so many *pradakshinas*, that he now realized that it was worthless to pray for such a transitory pleasure. Therefore he prayed to Lord Siva for the eternal happiness of Self-knowledge. This story thus aptly illustrates that even if a person begins to do *pradakshina* for the fulfilment of worldly desires, his mind will in time be matured and he will gain proper discrimination (*viveka*), desirelessness (*vairagya*) and love for Self (*swatma-bhakti*).

Generally whenever Sages or scriptures prescribe any form of dualistic worship, whether for the fulfilment of worldly desires

or for the attainment of Self-knowledge, they always say that it must be done with faith. But Sri Bhagavan used to say that the power of Arunachala is such that even if one does *pradakshina* with no faith, it will still have its effect and will surely purify the mind. Devaraja Mudaliar records on p. 64 of *My Recollections* that Sri Bhagavan told him, "For everybody it is good to make circuit of the Hill. It does not even matter whether one has faith in this *Pradakshina* or not; just as fire will burn all who touch it whether they believe in it or not, so the Hill will do good to all those who go round It."

Because Arunachala is the Fire of Knowledge (*jnanagni*) in the form of a Hill, the out-going tendencies (*vasanas*) of the mind are automatically scorched when one goes round It. When damp wood is brought close to a fire, it will gradually be dried, and at a certain point it will itself catch fire. Similarly, when the mind which is soaked with worldly tendencies goes round the Hill, the tendencies will gradually dry up, and at a certain point the mind will become fit to be burnt by the Fire of *Jnana*. That is why Sri Bhagavan said to Kunju Swami, "This Hill is the storehouse of all spiritual power. Going round It you benefit in all ways" (*The Mountain Path*, April 1979, p. 75).

The spiritual benefits of *pradakshina* have been described by Sri Sadhu Om in one of his Tamil poems, *Sri Arunachala Pradakshina Manbu*. In verse 6 and 7 he says, "A cow grazing round and round its peg, does not know that the length of its rope is thereby decreasing. Similarly, when you go round and round Arunachala, how can your mind know that it is thereby subsiding? When the cow goes round more and more, at one point it will be bound tightly to its peg. Similarly, when the mind lovingly goes more and more round Annamalai (Arunachala), which is Self, it will finally stand still in Self-abidance, having lost all its movements (*vrittis*)". In verse 8 he says, "It is a well-proven truth that the minds of those devotees who ever go round Anna-

malai, achieve great love to turn within towards Self. Annamalai is the blazing, wild Hill of Fire (the fire of *Jnana*) which burns all our worldly desires to ashes". And in verse 9 he gives the simile of a piece of iron being rubbed against a magnet; just as the scattered atoms of iron are all aligned by the magnet to face in one uniform direction, thereby transforming the iron into a magnet, so when a man goes round Arunachala, the divine magnet, his scattered mind is turned towards Self and is thereby transformed into Self.

Sri Muruganar, who was a great Sage and one of the foremost disciples of Sri Bhagavan, was noted as a staunch lover of *pradakshina*. In the days of Sri Bhagavan he used to write to any friends who were coming to see him, "You will find me either in Bhagavan's hall or on the *Giri-pradakshina* road", and it is said that at one time he even used to go round the Hill daily. How he first came to know about the greatness of *Giri-pradakshina* is related by Kunju Swami in *The Mountain path*, April 1979, p. 83, as follows:-

"Some time after he came here, Sri Muruganar asked Bhagavan about the spiritual benefit of going round the Hill (*giri-pradakshina*). Bhagavan asked him to go round It first and then come to him. Sri Muruganar followed His advice and told Bhagavan that he lost his *dehatma-buddhi* (sense of identification with the body) after a while and regained it only after reaching Adi Annamalai (a village on the way). He reported to Sri Bhagavan that the experience was unexpected and unique. Sri Bhagavan smiled and said, 'Do you now understand?'"

This incident proves very clearly the power of *pradakshina*, and it shows that mature souls can even lose their sense of identification with the body by going round the Hill. It also illustrates what Sri Bhagavan meant when He used to say that while going round the Hill one can experience *sanchara-samadhi* (a thought-free state of bliss while walking).

Though such a thought-free state is not

experienced by all devotees when they go round the Hill, that does not mean that their *pradakshina* is not yielding fruit. The main benefit of *pradakshina* is that the tendencies (*vasanas*) are slowly made to lose their grip over the mind; but just as a child cannot easily perceive its own growth, so the mind cannot easily perceive the weakening of its own *vasanas*.

However, one very notable feature about *pradakshina* which can be perceived by anyone and which clearly indicates its spiritual efficacy, is the extraordinary power of attraction it exerts over the minds of devotees. For no special reason one feels attracted to go round Arunachala again and again. "Go round the Hill once. You will see that it will attract you", said Sri Bhagavan to Devaraja Mudaliar (*My Recollections*, p. 65). "Bhagavan used to say that if one went round the Hill once or twice, the Hill itself would draw one to go round It again. I have found it true. Now this is happening to Dr. Syed", writes Devaraja Mudaliar in *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, 19-12-45. And in *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, vol. II, letter 98, Suri Nagamma records Sri Bhagavan as saying, "The *dhyana* (meditation) that you cannot get into while sitting, you get into automatically if you go for *pradakshina*. The place and atmosphere here are like that. However unable a person is to walk, if he once goes round the Hill he will feel like going again and again. The more you go, the more the enthusiasm for it. It never decreases. Once a person is accustomed to the happiness of *pradakshina*, he can never give it up". Just as the mind is automatically attracted to the Guru, knowing intuitively that He can bestow eternal bliss, so for the same reason the mind feels automatically attracted to *Giri-pradakshina*.

#### ARUNACHALA—RAMANA

To understand the power of Arunachala, it is first necessary to understand the relationship that existed between Arunachala and Bhagavan. To Bhagavan, Arunachala was Mother, Father, Guru and God — It was His all in all, His own Self.

Sri Bhagavan often said, "God, Guru and Self are one and the same", and to Him Arunachala was all three of these. In verse 48 of *Aksharamanamalai* He refers to Arunachala as His God, in verse 19 as His Guru, and in verse 5 of *Atma-Vidya Kirtanam* (The Song on the Science of Self) as "Annamalai, my Self".

Truly, Arunachala is Ramana and Ramana is Arunachala. The two are inseparable. Arunachala is Ramana in the form of a Hill, and Ramana is Arunachala in human form. The oneness which Sri Bhagavan felt with Arunachala is disclosed in many of His verses. When a devotee enquired about His true nature, He replied, "Arunachala-Ramana is the Supreme Self who blissfully abides as consciousness in the heart-cave of all souls beginning with Hari (Lord Vishnu) ...". The same name 'Arunachala-Ramana' which He used while referring to Himself, He also uses while addressing the Hill in the last verse of *Aksharamanamalai*, and in verse 90 He calls the Hill as 'Ramana'. When Sri Bhagavan composed *Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam* (The

Five Gems) in Sanskrit, a devotee composed a concluding verse in which he said that these five verses were an *Upanishad* revealed by Srimad Ramana Maharshi; later, when Sri Bhagavan translated this hymn into Tamil, He adapted this concluding verse and substituted the name 'Arunagiri-Ramana' for the name 'Srimad Ramana Maharshi', thereby indicating that it was Arunagiri (Arunachala) Itself in the form of Ramana who sang this hymn. From all this, it is clear that Sri Bhagavan experienced no individuality or existence of His own separate from Arunachala.

Though Bhagavan Ramana has left His human form, He will always remain shining here in the form of Arunachala, giving guidance and solace to His devotees. Therefore, the power of Arunachala is the power of Ramana — the power of the *Sadguru's* Grace.

O Arunachala, Ocean of Grace in the form of a Hill,  
bestow Grace upon me."  
— *Sri Arunachala Aksharamanamalai*, verse 17.

#### *Bhagavan on Sleep*

**I then asked Bhagavan to lie down on the bed and not to recline on the pillows as he usually did. I told him that he would get more rest by lying flat. He smiled at me and said in his usual way that he had not slept flat on the ground or on the couch since he came to Tiruvannamalai. He also said that he could get in a few moments as much or more rest than we could by sleeping on a nice bed for hours at a time.**

— Dr Anant Narayanan Rao

**One attendant of Bhagavan was reading out loud to him during the night. The attendant heard snoring and stopped reading thinking that Bhagavan was asleep. Immediately Bhagavan questioned him as to why he had stopped. The attendant continued reading until a similar snoring sound made him stop again. However, Bhagavan was quite alert and asked him to continue. Is it not a job to find out when Bhagavan is inattentive?**

— K.R.K. Murti

**When someone questioned "How much sleep does a *jnani* require?" Sri Bhagavan replied: "Sleep is necessary to one who thinks 'I have risen from sleep'. But to those who are ever in the changeless state, what need is there for some other sleep. When the eyelids feel strained, it will do to close the eyes for a while. The three states of waking dreaming and deep sleep are for the mind and not for the body."**

— G.V. Subbaramayya

## The Notebook of Gambhiram Seshayya

An edited transcript by B.V. NARASIMHA SWAMI

In the editorial of our last issue we gave a lengthy account of the origin of **Self-Enquiry**, Bhagavan's earliest written work. It was mentioned that many of the teachings in this work were not Bhagavan's own, but were translations or comments on other teacher's works. In the printed versions of this work, the circumstances under which each question was asked are not given, and it is difficult to distinguish which are Bhagavan's teachings and which are quotations from other teachers. The following article contains extracts from Gambhiram Seshayya's notebook (the man who asked the original questions in 1901-2). These extracts were copied down and translated by B.V. Narasimha Swami in 1930 and they represent the only record we have of the circumstances under which the questions were asked. Many of the answers are identical to those found in the published version, but we feel that this version will be of interest to **The Mountain Path** readers since several of Bhagavan's replies have not been printed before, and because it attributes the sources of many of the quotations which otherwise might be taken to be Bhagavan's own words.

B.V. Narasimha Swami intended to publish this article under the title "**Raja Yoga and Vedanta**" in a book entitled **Talks with the Maharshi**, but the book was never printed. We are printing the information in the order in which B.V. Narasimha Swami intended to print it, although it bears no relation to the order in the published version. The account is a little disjointed, but we have decided not to edit it as it represents an important source of some of Bhagavan's earliest teachings. To assist readers in comparing the two versions, we have put the numbers of the equivalent passages in the two printed versions of **Self-Enquiry** in italics at the beginning of each section.

Gambhiram Seshayya requested the Swami to give him the gist of Vivekananda's book *Raja Yoga*, along with his explanations and comments. The Swami therefore wrote out in around 1901-2 a short account of it. In this account he described *manas* or mind as the perceiving faculty and distinguished it from *budhi*, the intellect or reasoning faculty (though both together are described later as

mind). The Swami stated that the mind is finite and inert unless and until the light of consciousness (*chaitanya*) falls upon the mind; then it is transformed into the *Atman*, and this is called Self-Realisation.

(*Question 27, Chapter 9*) On the 19th April, 1902, the Swami again wrote down some of the essential truths from Swami Vivekananda's book:

1. That the practice of breath regulation lightens the body and makes the mind steady and happy.
2. That the next step in yoga is *pratyahara* (the withdrawal of the mind from external objects). This is achieved either by fixing the eyes on the tip of the nose or between the eyebrows, by the repetition of *Om* or other *mantras*, or by closing the ear and hearing the *nada*, the internal sound.
3. This is followed by the practice of *dharana*. This is the fixing of the mind on one point such as the imaginary lotus just above the head or a similar one at the heart; this lotus can be visualised as enclosing one's favourite deity or the supreme *Atman*.
4. The next stage is *dhyana*, or meditation on the object selected (either the chosen deity or the *atman* in the form of light) as being nothing but one's own Self. This is called *soham-bhava* (the 'I am He' idea).

"The scripture says '*Brahman* is everywhere and in the human heart as witness of the mind.' To enquire 'What is that mind', that is to say, 'Who am I?' is the enquiry started on the basis of that scriptural text. The result of this enquiry is that *Brahman* is found to be in the heart, and is felt as 'I-I'. All this is meditation.

5. *Samadhi*, the final stage, is reached when meditation becomes perfect, and the aspirant forgets that he has a separate individuality, or that he is doing anything, and his mind is completely lost in *Brahman*.<sup>1</sup>"

(Chapter 9) Swami adds: "You must see that yoga does not degenerate into sleep. These are but short notes on a great subject which has been dealt with at length in *Yoga Sastras*. If you want further information, you must refer to those books and to the great souls that have personal experience of yoga."

On another occasion Seshayya, who was a married man, wished to discuss questions of celibacy and sexual energy, and the Swami wrote down that celibacy or moderation in sexual habits was good. He also wrote that sexual energy is transformed by yoga into general

vitality, and that consequently, the yogi's life-period is prolonged. On another occasion he wrote that food taken by the aspirant should be *sattvic* (see the conclusion in the essay version), and that he should avoid egoism, the root of all ills. The next writing, called 'lecture VI' in Seshayya's notebook is an account by the Swami of how he reached Realization in 1896, unaided by books or men. Later in the notebook he explains how *bhakti* or devotion can be a means to Self-Realization. The Swami says: "The Vedas say that our thoughts constitute our bondage. Therefore, let us take this mind which consists of thoughts and place it at His feet, and constantly remember Him alone and keep quiet. This is the best course (*sadhana*)."

(Question 31, Chapter 1) "Let us not begin to exercise our intellect upon *Atman* by trying to find out what is this self-effulgence of the *Atman*, whether it is of this sort or that. It is such discursive thought that constitutes bondage. *Atman* is past light and darkness also, so do not think of it as a kind of light. Such thoughts are bondage. *Atman* shines of its own accord and is therefore not classifiable."

(Question 28, Chapter 9) Asked by Seshayya on another occasion about *pranava*, that is, the sacred word '*Om*' the Swami explained the symbolism of the *mantra* by quoting from the *Mandukyopanishad* (*mantras* 8 to 12) and he concluded by saying: "It is this *mantra* that has been recommended for *Japa* (repetition) in the *pratyahara* (the withdrawal of the mind from external objects) stage. Its realisation is a blissful *samadhi*." The Swami then quoted *Vivekachudamani*, verse 31, 'of all aids to liberation, the chief is *bhakti* or devotion. The fixing of the mind on the nature of the Self is termed devotion.'

The Swami continued: "It is this contemplation of the Self that leads to Realisation. The

<sup>1</sup>All the passages which are in double inverted commas, i.e. ".....", are the original words of Bhagavan as written in Gambhiram's notebook. All the other passages in this article contain B.V. Narasimha Swami's summaries of Bhagavan's words.



eightfold path of yoga consisting of rules on self-restraint (*yama*) and rules of life (*niyama*) are only steps leading to it. The steps aimed at breath control are referred to as aids to yoga (*yoganga*) whereas those aimed at the control of the mind are referred to as *jnananga*, aids to realisation. People choose either one or the other of these paths according to their *vasanas* or inclinations, and find one particular course easiest for them. But if one controls the mind, one controls the breath, and *vice versa*, and the two paths coalesce at the end. However, the ultimate aim is mind control."

(Question 34, Chapter 10) The Swami went on to explain the symbolic *pranayama* which is practised in *jnana-ashtanga* (the eight-fold limbs of knowledge).

(a) *Rechaka* (expiration) is the expulsion of the names and forms which comprise the external world.

(b) *Pooraka* (inhalation) is the perception and acceptance of the underlying truth of the universe which is perceived after the names and forms of the world have been expelled.

(c) *Kumbhaka* (retention of the breath) is the dwelling on *sat-chit-ananda* (being-consciousness-bliss).

The Swami concluded by saying that "*asana* (physical posture) is not necessary for the path of *jnana*. It can be practised in any place or posture."

(Question 34, last paragraph) "Forgetting the Self is stated to be death" adds the Swami, alluding to the opening lines of *Sanatsujatiyam* which state: 'It is forgetting oneself that I call death; similarly, it is the remembering of oneself that I call immortality.'

(Question 35, Chapter 10) Seshayya seems to have then asked: "Is then the practice of *pranayama* (breath control) unnecessary?" The Swami realising the questioner's standpoint, wrote that it was necessary for the beginner, and that even later on it was useful as it would facilitate thought control. He also added that once the mind is brought under control, *pranayama* is no longer necessary.

The Swami wrote on one occasion that the fact that people touch their breast when they say 'I' is sufficient proof that *Brahman* resides in every heart. Later, referring to the Tamil *Vashistam* Swami wrote:

(Question 29, Chapter 5) "Vasishtha points out that those who see Gods outside, when they have *Atman* in their own hearts, are like persons who cast away the precious gem *kaustabha* and set out in quest of inferior stones."

(Question 29, Chapter 6) When Seshayya requested an explanation of the terms *Brahmapuram* (the city of Brahman), *hridayakasa* (the expanse of the heart), *soham* (I am He), and the worship of the soul as a Siva-Lingam in the heart, the Swami quoted the *Skandopanishad*, stanza 10, which states: "The body is the temple; the *jiva* is God (Siva). If one worships Him with the 'I am He' thought, one will gain release." As a further support for his explanation that the body was the city of Brahman, the Swami quoted the *Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter V, stanza 13 which speaks of "the embodied soul in the city of the nine gates." The Swami further explained that the expanse of the heart (*hridayakasa*) is synonymous with *Brahman*, and that both ultimately reside in the expanse of the mind (*mana-akasa*).

Seshayya was very much attached to *pranayama*, and could summon up little enthusiasm for *vichara*. He felt it himself, and wrote one day as follows: 'Swami's current is occasionally experienced in this body's mind. There is a great desire to develop in *Vedanta marga* (the path of *Vedanta*). Yet that is not possible without your daily grace, though the way has been pointed out. I am fully believing in Swami alone.' So the Swami again wrote what he had already written (Question 36, Chapter 10) that the *jnana* and yoga paths have the same aim of ultimate mind-destruction and Self-Realisation, and the final experience of *soham* (I am He) crowns the enquiry 'Who am I?'. The Swami explained that the yoga path is like beating a bull to drive it to its post, whereas the *jnana* path is like leading it by stroking it and showing it a handful of grass. He added

that the practice of *pranayama* can be stopped when the breath can be stopped by merely willing it (*kevala kumbhaka*), and it is for each aspirant to choose whatever path suits him. The Swami, however, significantly pointed out that in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the devotee is preferred to all yogis. 'Of all yogis, I consider him the best who is devoted to me with whole-hearted faith.' (Chapter VI stanza 47)

(Question 18, Chapter 2) A copy of the Tamil *Vedanta Chudamani* was brought to the Swami and he was shown the section explaining the three *avasthas* (states of the soul) and a passage dealing with the interrelation of God, the ego and the world. When Gambhiram asked him to explain, the Swami drew a diagram in the notebook and gave him an explanation.<sup>2</sup>

(Question 37) Seshayya asked the following question in writing: "When the mind retires into the heart, consciousness alone remains. That alone is *atma-swarupa* (the nature of I) How can there be any enquiry into the nature of the I there? Would it not be like a man searching for a goat which lies upon his own shoulder? And how can one worship the Self? Is it not like a man worshipping his own feet?"

(Question 37, Chapter 8) The Swami wrote in reply: "The quest of Self is really like a man searching for a goat upon his shoulder, but at the time of the search, the *Jiva* or mind does not know or realise yet that he is himself the *Atman* that he seeks; hence the search which continues until he discovers the goat upon himself. But to make this discovery takes a long time. There are *vasanas* (mental tendencies) developed from time immemorial by reason of which the Self identifies itself with the body. These have to be constantly rubbed off by the recollection 'I am not the body'. Only after this are the *vasanas* conquered and the Self realised. This enquiry about the nature of the Self is itself a mental operation, but it destroys the mind just like the stick used in lighting the funeral pyre is itself destroyed after it has set fire to the pyre and the corpse.

It is not by a single hearing of the statement

that I am not the body but the *Atman* that the goal is reached. Do we gain a high status simply by seeing a king or a similar person of high rank? One must constantly enter into *samadhi* and realise one's Self, and completely blot out the old *vasanas* and the mind before one realises the Self.

(Question 10, Chapter 3) Question: 'The Vedas contain much of cosmogony and also the statement that the universe is a fiction. How are these reconcilable?'

The Swami replied: "This is the reconciliation! The main object or central teaching is that *Brahman* is real and that the world and all other things are unreal. But before proceeding to that conclusion one has to appeal to all kinds of aspirants, the stupid and the intelligent alike. To enable the lower class of aspirants to follow the central teaching, a graded cosmogony is given. But to the sharp intellect of other aspirants the Vedas say: 'It is by the Self being clouded by *avarana* (a covering of ignorance) that this dreamlike, illusory or phenomenal world appears. In reality, however, the Self is not covered. It only appears to be covered to the eye of persons who are under the impression that they are the body.'

(Question 33) Seshayya requested the Swami to render into easy Tamil prose, the Tamil verses of the *Ribhu Gita* dealing with *Nirguna Puja* or the worship of the Attributeless, and the Swami accordingly wrote the gist in some five or more pages in Seshayya's notebook. Later, when Seshayya was disturbed by various mental forms during his meditation, he came to Swami and asked what he should do. The Swami wrote out the following instruction: "Forms which interfere with the main course or current of meditation should not be allowed to distract the mind. Bring yourself back into the Self, the witness, unconcerned with the

<sup>2</sup>The diagram and Sri Bhagavan's rather long technical explanation can be found in all the various editions of *Self-Enquiry*. The summary of B.V. Narasimha Swami adds nothing to the published version so we have omitted it here. (Editor)

distractions. That is the only way to deal with such interruptions. Never forget your Self."

Seshayya seems then to have asked 'What is a witness?' and the Swami wrote as follows: (Question 16, Chapter 4) "The universe is only an idea. It is the Heart that takes all these forms. It is the light of the *Atman* that shines in every body. Hence it is called *sakshi* (the witness) or *turiya* (the real), wherein no ego or sense of personality remains." The Swami then wrote about the analogy of the red-hot ball to explain the relationship between *Jiva* and *Brahman*, saying that *Brahman*, like the fire, is both inside and outside all objects, but is capable of appearing to take a form (as in the case of the red-hot ball). Swami concluded by writing, "If the mind is subdued, everything is conquered."

(Question 30, Chapter 7) "The mind is the *Kundalini*,<sup>3</sup> the representation of the *Kundalini* as a serpent is merely to assist duller minds. The various forms of representing the six *chakras* are also imaginary. It is the one *Atman* that creates, maintains and destroys. He is *Ganapati*, *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, *Rudra*, *Maheswara*, and *Sadasiva*. Vedantins say that it is a great sin to divide the one into many forms. By realising the one, we know all these. In fact when we worship images, we are really worshipping ourselves in the images."

(Question 15, Chapter 3) One day Seshayya wanted to know about *drik* (the seer) and *drisya* (the seen), and the Swami wrote as follows: "*Drik* is the seer and *drisya* is the seen; but what is seen in one aspect becomes the seer in another. For example, a pot is seen by Rama. The pot and Rama are seen by the eye. The eye acts by reason of the inner organ which in turn is enlightened by the mind; the mind is enlightened by the ego and that in turn derives its light from the Self. Thus we are the seer and all are seen. But as the seen does not exist apart from the seer, we are both seer and seen, and that which transcends both."

On another occasion, the Swami wrote out further instructions in the notebook: "All paths

meet in realising the Self. If the mind wanders, we must at once realise 'we are not the body' and enquire 'Who am I?'. And the mind must be brought back to realise the Self. Thus all evils are destroyed and happiness is realised."

(Question 12, Chapter 8) Seshayya asked the Swami how he could realise the Self in the midst of business activities and the Swami replied: "Take the case of a brahmin on the stage. Just as the actor's faith in his own brahminhood is strong whichever part he plays, so also we must get a strong realisation that we are the Self whatever we may be doing. This is the way to kill all sorrows. All affairs would then appear dream-like. Do not indulge in thoughts such as 'Is this good or that?' 'Is this to be done or that?' These must be crushed out as they arise. If you allow them to lodge in your mind, like a false friend they will kill you."

(Question 40, Chapter 8) Seshayya brought a big English book, a translation of the *Rama Gita*, and after reading portions of it, the Swami wrote in the notebook what *Rama Gita* says about *Brahman* without attributes. "A *Jivanmukta* (one who is realised while still in the body) may, by reason of his destiny, have occasional feelings of sorrow. A *Videhamukta* (one who realises on leaving the body) cannot have these." When Maharshi was requested later to explain how a *Jivanmukta* can be touched by sorrow, he said: "The distinctions of the four classes of *Jivanmuktas* are distinctions based on the views of outsiders to whose eyes these appear to have touches of sorrow or grades of joy or happiness. In truth, there is no difference in realisation or *mukti*." □

<sup>3</sup>The statement that "the mind is *kundalini*" does not appear in the question and answer version, but it is incorporated in chapter 7 of the essay version which was written some years later by Sadhu Natanananda. This seems to indicate that some of the new material which was incorporated in the essay version by Natanananda came from the original notebook and is not therefore a later addition. (Editor)

## Sri Ramana's Divya Upadesa!

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## VERSES FROM THE RIBHU GITA

Selected and translated by Prof. N.R. KRISHNAMURTI AIYER

*The Ribhu Gita is an ancient religious text that was often mentioned and recommended by Bhagavan. In the July 1981 issue of The Mountain Path (page 146) we published the following statement by Ramaswami Pillai: "During my stay of ten months at the Ashram, we often used to read the Ribhu Gita. There would usually be six or seven of us, including Bhagavan, and we would each read a few verses in turn, going all the way through the book until we had finished it. Bhagavan used to tell us, and on occasions we used to feel and experience it, that to read the Ribhu Gita is to be in Samadhi. Viswanathan, Muruganar, Chinna Swami, and anyone else who was present would all squat together in a ring with Bhagavan and take it in turns to read. No other book was read so often..."*

*The original Ribhu Gita forms the sixth part of a large Sanskrit work known as Siva Rahasya. The following verses have been translated (from the Tamil version of this work) by Prof. Krishnamurti Aiyer, an old devotee who has been associated with Bhagavan since the 1930s.*

### Benedictory Verses

"Salutations to the Supreme Lord Siva, the pure Awareness in the sky of Consciousness in the Heart, by meditation on whom, Ganesha, Guha, Mother Shakti, who is the embodiment of Divine Grace, and myriads of Devas, saints and devotees attain their cherished goals." (Chapter 1, verse 1)

"From the sky of Consciousness of the Heart springs forth the dancer Nataraja with his blissful consort freedom, to the delectation of His devotees who are liberated for ever. Unto that Ananda-Natesa do we render our devout salutations." (Chapter I Verse 2)

*The guidance of the Jnani is indispensable for the attainment of liberation.*

Devout and loving service rendered to the Sat-Guru, the Self-Realised Jnani helps a person

to attain the blissful state of *jivan-mukti* (liberation while still conscious of the body) and further on to *Videha-Mukti* (liberation without body consciousness) which is the state supreme. By close contact with that *Sat-Guru*, the aspirant matures his wisdom to the high degree needed for liberation. The aspirant must therefore seek the *Jnani* and worship him with loving devotion. Without the *Sat-Guru's* help, liberation is unrealisable. (Ch. 19, V.13)

### *The Greatness of the Sat-Guru-Jnani*

The *Sat-Guru-Jnani* is *Siva-Self-Brahman* incarnate. He is ever poised rock-firm in *mounam*; the state of deep still silent peace, alert awareness, sole being, eternal bliss. Even as water and milk shaken together, he is one with Brahman, the Self. The grandeur of his state can be vividly felt, but cannot be conceived and much less expressed in words. (Ch. 19, V. 21)

*Sat-Chit-Ananda, the Siva-Self and His worship*

On the eternal and infinite screen of *Sat-Chit-Ananda-Siva-Self*, by His own power *Shakti* is projected the moving shadow picture of the world in manifestation, and into the screen again, it is absorbed in dissolution. All luminaries like the sun, the moon, fire, the stars and lightning derive their luminosity from the *Shakti* (power) inherent in that screen, *Siva-Self*. Though bright in themselves, they can only obscure and cannot reveal the screen *Siva* on which they abide and move about.

Out of fear of that *Siva* their creator, *Devas* and *Asuras* (inhabitants of the spirit world) who are constituents of the moving picture are ever alertly engaged in their ordained duties.

That *Siva-Self* must be meditated upon and realised by making the restless mind stay still and alert, and after it has given up its pursuit of the sense objects of the world, *Siva-Self* reveals Himself as the screen-Self which is the sole being, pure Awareness, the still, blissful, peaceful, Self eternal.

*Self-Enquiry constitutes meditation on the Siva-Self*

The conscious introspective concentration of Self-Enquiry (Who am I?) kills all thoughts and destroys the dense darkness of nescience; it effaces all worry; it illuminates the intellect with the radiance of pure awareness; it wipes out all conceptual confusions; it fixes one in the effulgent *Siva-Self*; it transforms a host of impending disasters into auspicious events; and lastly, it destroys the ego-mind utterly with all its afflictions. (Ch. 32, V. 24)

*Self-Enquiry ends in Atma-Nishta, or abidance in the Self*

By abiding in the Self, the wandering mind is reduced to perfect stillness after being freed (by Self-Enquiry) from all nescience and thought-currents. It gets lost in the universal *Sat-Chit-Ananda-Self* in the same way that water is lost when mixed with milk, and it is declared to be *Atma-Nishta* (abidance in the Self) by

the wise who have attained perfection in the Self. (Ch. 26, V.2)

*Sahaja-Nishta, or the natural state*

Having realised (by Self-Enquiry) that the world picture on the screen of the Self is non-existent and the Self-screen is the sole existence, one should ever remain still and blissful in the firm conviction that one's being is ever the *Brahman-Self* alone. (This conviction should be maintained) even while functioning as an individual in the world of name and form. (Ch. 26, V. 3)

*The Self alone is real and the world picture is a fiction*

In fact the world was never created, neither was it maintained, nor was it dissolved; everything concerned with the world picture is purely a conceptual fiction. The Self-screen is the sole Reality, and I am that Reality, the Self. In this firm conviction one should ever abide in blissful peace in the state of alert awareness free from thought (Ch. 2, V. 33)

*The true Samadhi*

To hold on to the conviction born of Self-Enquiry that "I am beyond doubt the screen-*Brahman-Self* and the world picture, though evanescent, is no doubt the same I-am-Self only", and to abide still and blissful in that conviction is the acme of all *sadhanas* like divine worship, charitable gifts, spiritual austerities, *mantra japa* (repetition of sacred syllables) and *Samadhi* as well. (Ch. 16, V. 41)

*Sahaja Samadhi*

Remaining alertly aware and thought-free with a still mind devoid of any differentiation of Self and non-Self, even while being involved in the activities of worldly life is called the state of *Sahaja Nirvikalpa-Samadhi* (the natural state of abidance in the Self when all differentiation has ceased). This is also called *Akhanda-Akara-Vritti* (the I of infinite perfection as contrasted with the 'I am the body notion' held by those who think that they are not Realised). (Ch. 18, V. 40)

### *Maturing of Sahaja Samadhi*

The abidance in *Sahaja-Samadhi* is the hallmark of the *Jivan-Mukti*. With the progressive development of this state, the intensity of blissful peace attained improves leading on to the four successive stages of perfection in *Mukti*. Nothing short of this technique of Self-Enquiry will be of any avail in destroying the fearsome cycle of births and deaths. (Ch. 18, V.41)

### *On Mukti (liberation)*

Unbroken abidance in the state of still, alert awareness, unruffled by thoughts is Self-Realisation. That is at once the spotless *Jivan-Mukti* and the magnificent *Videha-Mukti*. The state is easily attainable only for those who have earned the divine Grace of Siva by deep devotion to Him, and not for others. What is stated here is the import in a nut-shell of the message of that charming crest-jewel of the Vedas known as the Upanishads. (Ch.29, V.37)

Those who listen to this message and abide in accordance with it will forthwith attain *Moksha*. (Liberation) They will not suffer from the least particle of affliction; they will enjoy a bliss far greater than the bliss attained from this and other worlds; they and their environment will be filled with the plenitude of auspicious events. Totally free from all trace of fear, they will never again enter the cycle of birth and death. They will become the immutable *Brahman-Self*. All this we swear is the truth beyond doubt. By our Lord Siva, again and again we swear that this is the fundamental truth. (Ch.29, V.40)

The state of still, pure, effulgent awareness is *Moksha*, the state beyond compare. Those who maintain an unbroken abidance in that supreme state will never more be touched by suffering or confusion, will be eternally steeped in bliss and will be absolved from all duties; such duties will by themselves be completed to perfection without any volition on their part. They will eternally abide as the sole supreme Self (Ch. 30, V. 31)

The Self alone is self-effulgent awareness; that alone is eternal bliss; that alone is Being everlasting; that alone is all-embracing perfection, the sole Godhead without a rival and the sole primordial stuff of the universe. In the conviction born of this experience one should ever abide in the sole I-am, the Supreme Self. (Ch. 17, V. 29)

### *There is no God other than the Self*

You are the sole supreme God, the Self. There is nothing apart from you. This we declare to be the ultimate truth after a complete analysis of all the scriptures. By the holy feet of Siva we swear this to be the truth beyond all doubt. By the feet of the *Sat-Guru* we declare again that this is the truth declared by the Upanishads. (Ch. 38, V. 9)

### *Effortless abidance in God, the Self*

Steady abidance in the Self is the rock-firm conviction I-am-the-Self, Brahman. Abidance in that firm conviction is true divine worship, meditation on God, incantation of *Mantras*, practice of right conduct in life, contemplation, integral yoga, *atma-jnana* and *Moksha* as well. (Ch. 33, V. 15)

### *Maha-Mounam, the profound silence of the Jnani*

The profound stillness of thought-free abidance in alert awareness of the sole being, the Self, is perfect bliss, *atma-nishta* (abidance in the Self), *Jnana*, *Moksha*, *Sahaja Samadhi* (the natural state of *Samadhi*), *Brahma-Swarupa*, (the real form or nature of *Brahma*), *Siva-Swarupa* (the real form or nature of *Siva*), *Atma-Swarupa* (the real form or nature of the Self), all in one. In that supreme state there is no trace of thought. (Ch. 5, V. 26)

### *The Jivan-Mukta, the one who is liberated while still alive*

The *Jivan-Mukta* is a liberated person who continues to have consciousness of a body and the world along with his firm abidance in

the Self. He ever abides in the blissful peace of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. He is poised rock-firm in the conviction that his being is the sole existence, pure alert awareness, bliss, the Self. (Ch. 8, V. 1)

#### *The Videha-Mukti.*

(The *Videha-Mukti* is a liberated one who continues to inhabit a body, but is totally unaware of the body and the world).

The *Videha-Mukta* is the pure embodiment of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, all-pervasive as ether, infinite as the sky, the embodiment of pure, alert awareness, spontaneously abiding as the perfect *Brahman-Self* in a state of unbroken blissful peace. (Ch. 9, V. 15)

With all objective knowledge banished, with no trace of thought or nescience, with all the three states of wakefulness, dream and sleep wiped out, with all thought of death and birth abolished, and ever established in the spontaneous blissful state of *Brahman-Self*, the greatness of the *Videha-Mukta* cannot be conceived much less expressed in words. (Ch. 5, V. 39)

#### *The sine qua non for Mukti is Siva's Grace*

That in which the whole universe is born, and into which it is absorbed in dissolution is *Siva-Self*. Devoted worship of that *Siva* and meditation on that *Siva* of pure consciousness leads to Self-Realisation. (Ch. 19, V. 60)

#### *Salutation to the Sat-Guru, the Self*

Salutations to the Sat-Guru who is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, the Self, who is ever poised rock-firm in the Self, who is devoid of all qualities, who is of spotless purity, who is clear and infinite as the sky, who is all-pervasive awareness, who is the sole unique embodiment of the perfection of all existence. (Ch. 44 V. 20)

Salutations to that *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, the Self.  
Salutations to that undisturbed peace, the Self.  
Salutations to that integral perfection, the Self.  
Salutations to that eternal awareness, the Self.  
Salutations to that qualityless, blemish-free Self.  
Salutations to that indivisible unity, the Self.  
Salutations to that pure sky of consciousness, the Self.  
Salutations to that supreme integral existence, the Self.

(Ch. 44 V. 51)

#### *On Truth and Falsehood*

**How can there be knowledge or ignorance in Me who am eternal and always of the nature of Pure Consciousness.**

— Sankaracharya

**Since I have known God, neither truth nor falsehood has entered my heart.**

— Abu Hafs Haddad (Sufi Mystic)

**There is in reality neither truth nor error, neither yes nor no, nor any distinction whatsoever, since all, including the contraries, is One.**

— Chuang Tzu (Taoist Sage)

**The very nature of the Great Way is voidness of opposition.**

— Huang Po (Zen Master)

**The Self is beyond knowledge and ignorance.**

— Ramana Maharshi



## SRI BHAGAVAN'S LETTER TO GANAPATI MUNI

Michael Spenser

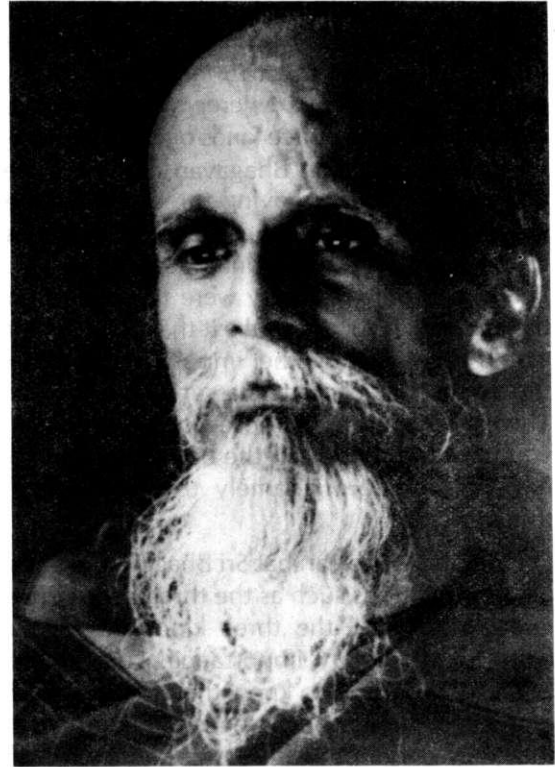
### Introduction

Between March and August 1931 Ganapati Muni was living mostly in Anandashram on the outskirts of Sirsi, a town in the North Kannada District. During this period he wrote a series of more than twenty letters in Sanskrit to his Guru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana. All of these letters have been printed in the original Sanskrit together with English renderings by Viswanatha Swami in a booklet entitled *Epistles of Light* which was published in 1978 by the Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni Trust, Madras.

Since Bhagavan never replied to letters, the replies which were sent to Ganapati Muni were all drafted by the Ashram office. Although Bhagavan would have inspected them before they were posted, except on one occasion, he could not be held responsible for their contents. This one occasion was the reply to Ganapati Muni's letter dated 20.5.31. Ganapati Muni expressed a doubt in his letter about the ego, and he particularly requested a devotee named T. K. Sundaresa Iyer to convey to him in writing the answer of Sri Bhagavan. Bhagavan gave a verbal reply to the doubt raised in the letter, and this reply was then incorporated in a letter and sent to Ganapati Muni. This reply containing Bhagavan's answer was published by Sri Ramanasramam in 1980 in a small Tamil booklet entitled *Precious Words and Stray Verses of the Maharshi*.

### The Doubt of Ganapati Muni

Ganapati Muni begins his letter by saying: "A doubt. Except Bhagavan, whom else can we ask? Who else can reply? It is clearly known



*Kavyakantha Ganapathi Muni*

from the teachings of Bhagavan that the ego is of three kinds." Ganapati Muni is here alluding to the three bodies, the gross, the subtle and the causal, and in his letter he expounds on their various characteristics. He was particularly interested in the subtle body which is said to contain the intellect, and his main question revolved around the use of the intellect as a means to attain Realisation. He writes: "Is that abidance in the intellect a means for gradually attaining the perfect

experience, or is it not? If it is not certainly a means for that, then for what purpose is it? Or is there any arrangement that, according to the particular outlook of the aspirant, it is sometimes a means and sometimes not? My dear child Sundara (T. K. Sundaresa Iyer) may kindly write to me the decision of Bhagavan regarding this matter."

Before proceeding to give Bhagavan's reply, it should be pointed out that Ganapati Muni's assumption that Bhagavan taught that there are three kinds of ego is incorrect. This is best illustrated by referring to *Maharshi's Gospel*, (Book 2, Chapter 5), where, in answer to a question about the three kinds of egos mentioned in *Yoga Vasishtha*, Bhagavan replies: "The ego is described as having three bodies, the gross, the subtle and the causal, but that is only for the purpose of analytical exposition. If the method of enquiry were to depend on the ego's form you may take it that any enquiry would become altogether impossible, because the forms the ego may assume are legion. Therefore, for the purposes of self-enquiry, you have to proceed on the basis that the ego has but one form, namely that of the 'I'-thought."

From this it is clear that Sri Bhagavan regards all classifications such as the three bodies, the five sheaths and the three kinds of ego as being of secondary importance. For earnest aspirants who seek to know the ultimate truth of the ego (i.e. its nonexistence), it is sufficient that they enquire into the one basic form of the ego which is the 'I'-thought.

Bhagavan's disinclination to subdivide the mind or ego is also shown in chapter 4 of *Self Enquiry* where he gives the following answer: "The mind is nothing other than the 'I'. The mind and the ego are one and the same. The others, (i.e. the other two *antahkaranas* or inner organs) the intellect and *chittam* (the storehouse of tendencies) are only this. Mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), the storehouse of tendencies (*chittam*) and ego (*ahankara*); all these are only the one mind itself. This is like different names (such as son, husband, father, clerk, Hindu,

etc.) being given to a man according to his different functions. The individual soul is nothing but this mind or ego..."

Whereas the tendency of the scriptures is to classify the non-Self into more and more different categories, the tendency of Sri Bhagavan is always to simplify things and to reduce them back to fundamentals. As Sri Bhagavan has said in *Who am I?*, it is futile to scrutinize and classify the garbage (i.e. the non-Self), all of which is to be cast aside. Therefore, though the intellect is given many names such as *vijnanatma*, *vijnana* (the terms used by Ganapati Muni in his letter), *buddhi* and so on, according to Sri Bhagavan, all these terms refer only to the one mind.

#### The reply of Sri Bhagavan

Contrary to his usual practice while replying to devotees, throughout this reply Sri Bhagavan uses many obscure scriptural terms and concepts, partly because Ganapati Muni was a pandit well-versed in the scriptures and partly because his doubt was rooted in the concepts which he had learned from them. Because of this, Bhagavan's reply will be easier to understand if it is split up into several sections, with an explanatory note following each section. In order to make this reply intelligible to readers who do not have a good grounding in Sanskrit terminology, it will occasionally be necessary to give a free paraphrased rendering of Bhagavan's words. Bhagavan's answer will be given in bold type and the author's comments will be given in ordinary type.

**"Though it is a fact that scriptures like *Vasishtham* say, as you have mentioned, that the ego is of three kinds, you should take the 'I-thought' to be truly only one. When the mind which is the 'I-thought' rises, it can only do so by catching hold of something. Since this ego rises between the insentient body and the reality it is given such names as *chit-jada granthi* (the knot between consciousness and the insentient), *jiva* (the individual soul) and so on".**

In this opening paragraph Bhagavan confirms that the ego should be taken to be a single entity and not three or more entities, and that the various names such as *chit-jada granthi* and *jiva* are merely different names for the same thing. However, in the next section Sri Bhagavan abandons this stance and replies to Ganapati Muni in his own terms. According to traditional Indian philosophy the mind is compounded of three characteristics; *sattva* (harmony or purity) *rajas* (activity or restlessness) and *tamas* (dullness or inertia). Since Ganapati Muni structured his letter around the assumption of the reality of these three *gunas*, Sri Bhagavan adapts his answer to this assumption. He says:

**"The 'I-thought' which rises in this manner appears in the form of the three *gunas*, and of these three, the *rajas* and *tamas* aspects cling to and identify with the body. The remaining one which is pure *sattva* is alone the natural characteristic of the mind, and this stands clinging to the reality. However, in this pure *sattvic* state, the 'I-thought' is no longer really a thought, it is the Heart itself.**

**'The wise understand the apparent meaning of *prajnana* (consciousness) to be the mind, and its true meaning to be the Heart. The Supreme is not other than the Heart.' Ramana Gita, V. 18"**

In this section Sri Bhagavan begins to outline the nature of the mind and to show how it is possible for it to subside into the Heart. In doing so, he indirectly answers Ganapati Muni's question concerning the role of the mind in *sadhana*. Sri Bhagavan is saying that when the mind is active, that is, dominated by *rajas* and *tamas*, identification with the body takes place, but when the mind is quiet and still, that is, in its pure *sattvic* state, it subsides into the Heart until only the Heart remains. Sri Bhagavan has stated in the quotations from *Maharshi's Gospel* and *Self Enquiry* which were given earlier in this article that the mind is nothing other than the 'I'-thought. When this 'I'-thought identifies itself with objects, the *rajasic* and *tamasic* mind arises, but when the 'I'-thought alone

remains it can be termed the *sattvic* mind. However, Sri Bhagavan states in this section that the term '*sattvic* mind' is something of a misnomer, for when only the feeling of 'I' remains, the mind has ceased to exist. This is what Sri Bhagavan means in the last line of his own comments and in the quotation from *Sri Ramana Gita* when he states that the feeling 'I' is not really a modification of the mind but the Heart itself.

Sri Bhagavan often stated that the biggest obstacle to Self-Realisation is the 'I am the body' idea, and so since he states that a mind dominated by *rajas* and *tamas* identifies with and clings to the body, a *rajasic* or a *tamasic* mind is obviously an unproductive vehicle for *sadhana*. According to Sri Bhagavan, Realisation is only attained by abiding in the *sattvic* state. However, since the mind has ceased to exist in this state, one cannot say that abidance in this state is abidance in the mind; rather, it is an abidance in the state where the mind is absent. The solution to Ganapati Muni's question lies in this distinction between the clinging and identifying characteristics of the *rajasic* and *tamasic* mind, and the absence of mind in the *sattvic* state. Ganapati Muni's question was, "Is that abidance in the intellect a means for gradually attaining the perfect experience?" He uses the word *vijnana* to describe the intellect, and in his letter, he defines this term still further by calling it the thinking faculty (*vrutti-jnana*). Sri Bhagavan is saying in this reply that one should not abide in this thinking faculty; instead one should abide in the *sattvic* state where thought has ceased and only the 'I' feeling remains.

Having answered the question in this somewhat oblique manner, Bhagavan goes on to give a description of the state in which the 'I' feeling clings to and identifies with the Self.

**"When the mind, the distinctive knowledge which rises from the non-distinctive state of 'I' clings to and identifies with the Self, it is called true knowledge. It may also be called 'knowledge which is the movement of the mind in the form of the self' or 'knowledge in**

**an unbroken form'. The state in which this pure *sattvic* mind shines clinging to the Self is called '*aham-sphurana*'."**

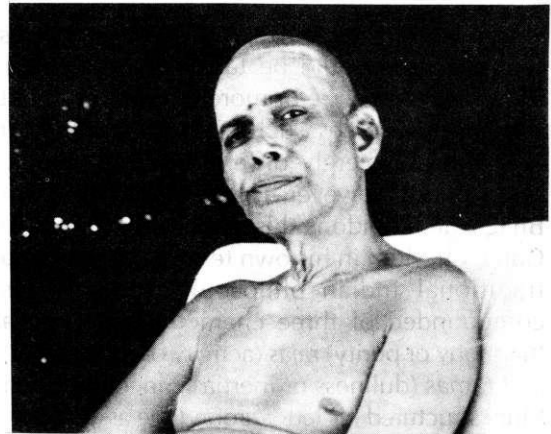
In this passage Sri Bhagavan is describing the state where the 'I' feeling alone remains and clings to the Self. This state is not the final state of Realisation, for in this state there is still the dualistic feeling that there is an 'I' which is clinging to the Self. Sri Bhagavan calls this state the '*aham-sphurana*' and it may be described as the subjective experience of the feeling of 'I' which manifests when the mind is quiet and still. In the next section of the letter Sri Bhagavan gives a detailed description of the *sphurana* and shows how it is related to the Self.

**"This *sphurana* cannot remain independently apart from the reality, but it is the correct sign which indicates the forthcoming direct experience of that reality. The source to which this *sphurana* clings alone is called the reality or pure consciousness. In Vedanta this is expressed by the saying '*prajnanam Brahma*', or pure consciousness is the absolute reality. When the pure *sattvic* mind abides in that *sphurana* and attends to its source, it is called *upasana* or meditation; when one is firmly established in the state which is the source of that mind, this is called *jnana*.**

**'During the time of practice the natural state is called *upasana* (meditation), and when that state becomes firmly and permanently established it is called *jnana*.'**

**Ramana Gita, 1.13"**

The term *aham-sphurana* denotes the new, clear, and fresh knowledge of one's being which is experienced when the 'I'-thought attends to and identifies with the Self. The nature of this *aham-sphurana* was explained by Sri Bhagavan in the answer to question 32 in *Self Enquiry*, and he described it in phrases which are almost identical to those used in the letter. "...The state in which this mind clings to the Self and shines as the form of the Self is called the *aham-sphurana*. This *sphurana* cannot remain independently, leaving the reality. This *sphurana*



is the correct sign of the forthcoming direct experience of the reality. However, this *sphurana* cannot itself be the state of reality. That source to which this *sphurana* clings, alone is called the reality..."

Reality will be directly experienced only when this *sphurana* subsides or comes to an end. This process is described in the answer to question 3 in *Self Enquiry* as follows:

"...Therefore, leaving the corpse-like body as an actual corpse, and remaining without even uttering the word 'I' by mouth, if one now keenly enquires 'What is it that rises as I?', then in the heart a certain soundless *sphurana*, 'I—I' (that is, an awareness which is single and undivided, the thoughts which are many and divided having disappeared), alone will shine forth of its own accord. If one remains still without leaving it, even the *sphurana* (having completely annihilated the sense of the individuality, the form of the ego, 'I am the body'), will itself in the end subside, just like the flame that catches the camphor. This alone is said to be liberation by great ones and scriptures."

In the same way that a piece of camphor, once it has caught fire, will not subside until the last trace of camphor is burnt, so when the *aham-sphurana* is experienced it will not subside until the last trace of the ego is destroyed. That is, when the mind or 'I'-thought turns 180 degrees away from the non-Self and turns towards the Self, it is caught in the grip of the

Self, and after this, it cannot turn towards the non-Self again. This is the state of *sphurana*, which is the correct sign indicating that the reality is about to be experienced directly. But since in this state there is still a feeling of attending to the Self, this *sphurana* is not actually the Self, the reality; the reality is the source to which this *sphurana* attends or clings. When even this feeling of attending to the Self subsides, the *sphurana* itself subsides, and only being remains. This state, in which even the slightest trace of the ego or individuality has been completely annihilated, is called liberation, the direct experience of the reality, or the natural state of the Self (*sahajatasthiti*).

In the concluding portion of his letter Sri Bhagavan explains how unbroken awareness is a consequence of the subsidence of the *sphurana* and he relates it to the heart-centre which he locates on the right side of the chest.

**"Concerning this unbroken awareness, in Vivekacudamani, verse 380, it is said:**

**'Self, which is self-effulgent and the witness of all ever shines (as 'I-I') in the mind. Taking this Self, which is distinct from what is unreal as the target (of your attention), experience it as 'I' through unbroken awareness.'**

**The non-existence of the sense of limitation is the fruit of meditation. This is indeed the unbroken experience. This is natural to God and liberated souls.**

**When the mind, having pure sattva as its characteristic remains attending to the *aham-sphurana*, which is the sign of the forthcoming direct experience of the Self, the downward-facing heart<sup>1</sup> becomes upward-facing, blossoms and remains in the form of that (the Self); (because of this) the aforesaid attention to the source of the *aham-sphurana* alone is the path. When thus attended to, Self, the reality, alone will remain shining in the centre of the Heart as 'I am I'."**

After describing the Heart as being a

downward-facing lily-bud that exists two digits to the right from the centre of the chest, Sri Bhagavan says that by attending to the source of the *aham-sphurana*, this lily-bud will be made to face upwards and blossom. In this context it is worth noting that in *Spiritual Instruction* (Chapter 2, Question 9) Sri Bhagavan explains that although the Heart is described in this way in these two verses, the true import of the word Heart (*hridayam*) is only the Self in which there are no differences such as 'in' and 'out' or 'up' and 'down'. In *Maharshi's Gospel* (Book 2, Chapter 4) he states that people "cannot help thinking in terms of the physical body" and "it is by coming down to this ordinary level of understanding that a place is assigned to the Heart in the physical body."

Therefore, the description of the Heart as a downward-facing lily-bud which must be made to face upwards and blossom, is only figurative and not literal, and it is given only for those whose minds are much inclined to *raja yoga*, which abounds with such figurative descriptions. In *Self Enquiry* (Chapter 7) Sri Bhagavan says; "The mind alone is the *kundalini*. It is described otherwise as a serpent only for those having a gross outlook. The six yogic centres and so on are all only mental imaginations and are meant only for beginners in yoga." The same comments apply equally well to the description of the Heart as a downward-facing lily-bud. As Sri Bhagavan says in *Sri Ramana Gita* (V. 2), "That from

<sup>1</sup>In the middle of this sentence Bhagavan quotes in full verses 18 and 19 from the *Supplement to the Forty Verses*. Since this quotation makes the sentence extremely long and difficult to decipher, the two verses are given below as a footnote. "Between the two breasts, below the chest and above the stomach, there are six things of many colours. Among these the one thing which resembles a lily-bud and which is within, two digits to the right (of the centre of the chest) is the heart. Its face is inverted (turned downwards). In the tiny hole within it there exists the dense darkness (of ignorance) together with desire and so on. All the major nerves are connected with it; it is the abode of breath, the mind and the light (of consciousness)."

which all the thoughts of embodied beings issue forth is called the Heart. All descriptions of it are only mental conceptions".

As regards the true significance of this figurative description of the Heart, since Sri Bhagavan says that attention to the source (i.e. the Self) is the only way to make the downward-facing Heart turn upwards and blossom, it is reasonable to infer that the downward-facing Heart signifies our power of attention being turned towards the non-Self, that the turning upwards of the Heart signifies that same power of attention turning towards Self, and that the blossoming of the Heart signifies the dawn of Self-knowledge which results from such one-pointed Self-attention.

#### The Response of Ganapati Muni

The following is an extract from Ganapati Muni's letter dated 3.6.31 which is of interest in this context on account of the inferences which he draws from the reply of Sri Bhagavan.

"Sundara has written in his letter the explanation given by Bhagavan. By that, all our doubts here are dispelled. The saying of Bhagavan that the experience of the non-existence of the sense of limitation is the same in God and liberated souls has removed some other doubts of ours also. From this saying we have understood that there does exist *Iswara*, the controller of the universe, that there does also exist individuality for liberated souls and that their experience is the same only in respect of the non-existence of this sense of limitation. By this, the party which says that Bhagavan's *Sat-Darshana* gives room for the theory of simultaneous creation has also been replied to. A reply to that party is in *Sat-Darshana* also."

Two particularly interesting points are worthy of note in this letter of Ganapati Muni: (1) His conclusion that Bhagavan taught that liberated souls have individuality and (2) His statement that Bhagavan's reply is an answer to those who say that *Sat-Darshana* supports the theory of simultaneous creation.

With regard to the first point, the question of whether a liberated soul retains his individuality even after the destruction of the ego, was for long a point of contention among the devotees of Sri Bhagavan. The question is discussed in *Talks* (No. 446), *Sat-Darshana Bhashya* and *Maha Yoga*. The verdict of Sri Bhagavan on this question is given in verse 119 of the *Garland of Guru's Sayings*:

"Ascribing individuality  
To realized *Muktas* is only  
Learned folly. In the pure sky  
Of being their separateness is but  
The shadow cast by the separateness  
Of lookers-on still bound."

With regard to the second point about creation, in *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* by G.V. Subbaramayya, Sri Bhagavan explains the difference between the theory of gradual creation which appears to have been espoused by Ganapati Muni and the theory of simultaneous creation which was held by other devotees. Sri Bhagavan concluded his explanation in favour of simultaneous creation by saying: "Without the seer, the seen, be they worlds or gods, cannot exist. All those objects of sight depend upon the seer."

Since this is one of the major differences between the philosophy of Ganapati Muni and that of Sri Bhagavan, it will be helpful to examine these theories in greater detail.

The debate revolves around two Sanskrit terms, *Srishti-drishti vada* and *Drishti-srishti vada*.

*Srishti-drishti vada* means the theory of gradual creation, that is, the theory that God created the world and the soul. There are many different theories to explain how this took place, but the particular theory of gradual creation espoused by Ganapati Muni appears to have been the theory of transformation (*parinama vada*), since this is clearly supported in *Sat-Darshana Bhashya*. According to this theory, *Brahman* does not appear as the world and the soul, as a rope appears to be a snake, but it actually undergoes a change

and becomes them in the same way that clay becomes a pot. This theory maintains that *Brahman* has actually (and not merely apparently) undergone transformation and change. It also maintains that the effects, namely, the world and the soul, are as real as their cause, *Brahman*. Ganapati Muni believed that individuality was real and not imaginary, and that individuality survived even Self-Realisation. It was for this reason that he was tempted to interpret Bhagavan's words to mean that the soul retained its individuality after liberation. However, a close reading of this section of Bhagavan's letter reveals that there is no mention of realized beings retaining individuality; all it says is that realized beings experience 'the non-existence of the sense of liberation' and that this is 'natural to God and liberated souls'.

*Drishti-shrishti vada* means the theory of simultaneous creation, and is also known as the theory of false appearance. According to this theory, *Brahman* is the sole reality that never undergoes any change, and the world, the soul and God are false appearances which rise into existence simultaneously with the seer. This theory maintains that all objects depend for their apparent existence upon the seer. Whereas in gradual creation, objects are seen because they have been created, in simultaneous creation, objects are created because they are seen.

Ganapati Muni also concludes from this letter that *Sat-Darshana*, which is a translation of Sri Bhagavan's work *Ulladu Narpadu*, does not support the theory of simultaneous creation. The question of which creation theory is taught in *Ulladu Narpadu* has been answered by Bhagavan himself in verse 83 of the *Garland of Guru's Sayings*. In this verse Bhagavan states that since he wrote *Ulladu Narpadu*, it is understood that he teaches only the doctrine of false appearance, or simultaneous creation, and that he has set aside all other theories. It should also be clear from reading the text of this work that Sri Bhagavan is teaching that the seer and

the seen rise together; in verse 7 it states, "Although the world and the mind rise and set together, it is by the mind alone that the world shines" and in verse 26 it states "If the ego comes into existence, all else will come into existence. If the ego does not exist, all else will not exist."

Although Bhagavan taught the theory of simultaneous creation, this theory should not be elevated to the status of an absolute truth. Sri Bhagavan's actual experience is *ajata*, which is a denial of all creation theories, simultaneous or otherwise, since it is the experience that neither the world, the soul nor God has ever come into existence. *Ajata* is the final experience, not a theory that can be taught, for there is no room in this experience for such differences as a teacher and a person to be taught. Bhagavan's teachings assume that we are aware that the world rises and sets with the rising and setting of the seer. The first words of *Ulladu Narpadu* are 'Because we see the world', and this assumption that we see the world becomes the basis for his teachings on creation. If he was intending to attempt to teach *ajata*, he would not have admitted the existence of the world at all, and if he had intended to teach gradual creation he would have said, 'Because the world is created.'

Although Sri Bhagavan sometimes used to speak from the standpoint of gradual creation while replying to questioners, in his main works (for example, in *Who am I?*, in verses 6, 7, 14, 23, and 26 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, and in verses 6 and 7 of *Arunachala Ashtakam*), he clearly teaches only the theory of simultaneous creation. As he has explained in *Self Enquiry* in the answer to question 10, the theory of gradual creation is taught only for immature aspirants, while the theory of simultaneous creation is taught to mature aspirants. The same idea is expressed by him in *Day by Day* (15.3.46, afternoon) and in *Talks No. 651* where he concludes: "But the true seeker can be content with *yugapat srishti*, instantaneous creation". □

## Sri Ramana Gita, A prose Reconstruction

B.V. NARASIMHA SWAMI

While B.V. Narasimha Swami was collecting information for his biography **Self Realisation** from 1929 to 1931, he collected a large amount of material which was never published. Over the last two years, **The Mountain Path** has published several items from these unpublished manuscripts which are now preserved at Sri Ramanasramam. The first draft of **Self Realisation** indicates that it was the author's original intention to publish a much larger book than the one which finally appeared. Much of the material which was removed in the editing process consisted of conversations which various devotees had had with Bhagavan. Narasimha Swami intended to publish these conversations later in a companion volume entitled **Talks with Maharshi**. Unfortunately, this book was never printed. One of the manuscripts which he had planned to publish in this book was an edited version of Gambhiram Seshayya's notebook, part of which is printed on page 85 of this issue. Another portion of this book was to have been a prose reconstruction of **Sri Ramana Gita**, a Sanskrit rendering of certain teachings given by Bhagavan to Ganapati Muni in 1913 and 1917. The translations contained in this version of **Sri Ramana Gita** are not merely prose renderings of the original Sanskrit verses, for the author seems to have taken considerable trouble to track down those who participated in the original conversations in order to find out exactly what was said. As a result, many of the answers in this version contain replies by Bhagavan which are not given in the original text. Some of these additional answers were given by Bhagavan at the time of the original conversations, but some are answers to questions asked at a later date. Unfortunately, it is not now possible to distinguish which are the later interpolations. However, since all the answers contain the recorded words of Bhagavan, and since they are all relevant answers to the questions which were asked, those which were incorporated later can be seen as Bhagavan's own commentary on the text. In addition to the expanded answers there is much background information about the circumstances surrounding the conversations and about the people who were asking the questions. Since there is so much material in this version which complements and enhances the material found in the Sanskrit text, we shall be serialising extracts from it in the next few issues of **The Mountain Path**.

Since this manuscript was not a final draft, we have to edit it in places to improve the style and the clarity of expression; however, we have taken great care not to change the meaning of either the questions or the answers. At the beginning of each section, the chapter number in **Sri Ramana Gita** has been



given, and in order to make it easier for the reader to compare the material with the verses in the original text, the original chapter and verse numbers have been incorporated in brackets in the appropriate places. Some notes by the editor have also been added to clarify the text or to provide additional information.

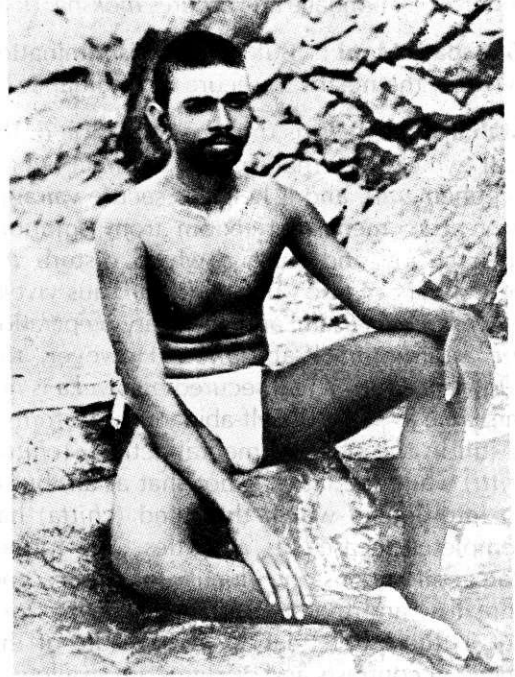
## CHAPTER ONE

IN 1913, a well-read pandit, Arunachala Sastri, lectured for over an hour in the Maharshi's presence on *Maya*, and this raised a number of doubtful points. On the 29th December 1973 Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni addressed some questions to the Maharshi, and his example was followed by others four years later. The answers obtained from the Maharshi were embodied in Sanskrit verse by Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, and the resulting book was named by him *Sri Ramana Gita*. The questions and answers in their natural flow of easy unconventional conversation have an interest of their own, and hence the original form is sought to be restored here, and may be taken to be fairly accurate. Information gleaned from the Maharshi by subsequent questions has also been added in places.

(Editor's Note : There appears to be some doubt as to who actually asked the questions and who gave the replies recorded in this first chapter of *Sri Ramana Gita*. In his introduction to the 1966 English edition of *Sri Ramana Gita* Krishna Bhikshu wrote :

"In 1913 one Arunachala Sastri came to Virupaksha Cave. He wanted to discuss and win over Bhagavan, and he raised a number of points on which he held forth some views; the Maharshi, knowing his motive kept silent as usual. But Ganapati Muni who was present could not. He controverted Sastri's views and there was a bout of discussion. The Maharshi concurred with the position taken up by the Muni. This dialogue forms the substance of Canto I. To keep in line with the rest of the book, all the questions raised by Arunachala Sastri are reported as questions of the Muni himself, and the replies of the Muni are put in as the answers given by the Maharshi."

There seems to be no evidence either in B.V.Narasimha Swami's version, or in any of the other Ashram publications to support this view, and it is not known where Krishna Bhikshu received this information. On the contrary, there is some evidence to refute it; for example, it is recorded in *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* (Vol. II, letter 42) that



Bhagavan explained how *Sri Ramana Gita* came to be written in the following words: "...In 1913, he (Ganapati Muni) asked me some questions and learned something..." Ganapati Muni himself in verses three and nine of the first chapter stated that he asked the questions and the Maharshi gave the answers. Although it is clear that Arunachala Sastri had some connection with the questions asked in this chapter, it seems probable that the account given by B.V. Narasimha Swami that Ganapati Muni's questions were asked to clarify some points that arose from Arunachala Sastri's lecture represents an authentic account of what took place.)

**Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni :** For *Moksha*, means or *sadhanas* have to be considered. Some seem to be of the opinion that all that is necessary is *satya-asatya viveka*, the discrimination between what is real and what is unreal. Is that sufficient, or is it necessary to adopt other means also? (I.4)

**Maharshi :** *Moksha* is release from bondage; bondage is really ignorance, and ignorance

can be dispelled only by knowledge. If the expulsion is to be complete and permanent, the knowledge must also be complete and permanent. That is, one must always remain realizing that THAT. Remaining in realization of THAT is called Self-abidance. This alone removes all bondage and secures *moksha*. (I.10)

**Ganapati Muni :** But is not discrimination (*viveka*) the means to secure Self-abidance?

**Maharshi :** *Viveka* is the discrimination of the real (which is eternal) from the unreal (which is ephemeral), and it helps to secure *vairagya* (non-attachment or freedom from emotions such as joy and sorrow, which disturb the equanimity of one's mind). (I.10) Thus *viveka* proves to be a useful and necessary preparation for attaining Self-abidance. However, the knowledge of the real secured by *viveka* is not the same as *jnana* or Self-abidance. The former is still in the stage of mental activity (*chitta-vritti*) while the latter is not that at all, but is an intuition in which the mind (*chitta*) has completely ceased its activities. The former state still retains the duality of reality and unreality, and the contrast between the two. But in the latter, that is, in the state of the *Jnani*, all contrasts and dualities are swallowed up and there is only ineffable Self-abidance. The intellectual *viveki* knows and reasons through a medium (*paroksha*). The intuitive *Jnani* feels the real directly and without a medium (*aparoksha*). The *Jnani* does not, like the intellectual, regard the world as unreal or as in any way different from himself. (I.II)

(Editor's Note : The *Jnani* does not experience himself as the body, which is only name and form, but as Self, which is existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). Hence, according to the principle established in verse 4 of *Ulladu Narpadu* he does not see the world as names and forms but only as himself, *sat-chit-ananda*. This is also explained in *Ulladu Narpadu* verse 18 where it is stated: "...to those who have known Self, the reality shines devoid of form as the substratum of the world...". Thus, since the *Jnani* knows that he, the reality, alone exists, he cannot see the world as something unreal or apart from himself. And since the unreal names and forms are non-existent in his view, there is no such duality as 'real' and 'unreal' for him to discriminate between. However, since one who is not a *Jnani* sees the

world as names and forms, it is right and necessary for him to discriminate between the unreal names and forms and the real *sat-chit-ananda*, and to regard the world as unreal. (ch. *Maharshi's Gospel* pp. 60-61, "There is no alternative for you but to accept the world as unreal, if you are seeking the Truth and the Truth alone"). In this context it is worth noting that in verses 50 and 51 of the *Garland of Guru's Sayings* Sri Bhagavan says that those who lack Self knowledge cannot understand the meaning of the statement 'The world is real', the truth of which is known only to *Jnanis*, who have given up the world of names and forms.)

**Ganapati Muni :** Is *sastra-charcha*, the study and exploration of the scriptures, sufficient to attain *moksha*? Or should one seek the aid of a Guru and practise meditation (*upasana*), in order to attain *jnana*? (1.5)

**Maharshi :** Mere scriptural learning is insufficient. Practice of meditation is certainly needed for realization (1.12). But what does the term 'practice' (*upasana*) denote? It denotes that the aspirant is still conscious of his separate individuality and fancies himself to be making efforts to attain something — some *Jnana* not yet known to be himself. Finally, however, he realizes the truth that all the time (including the time of practice) he has been, he is and he will be himself, the Self, past the concept of time. Though it was this *sahaja sthiti* or natural state of the Self that he was in throughout the time of practice (since there is never anything else in existence), yet he called it *upasana* or practice of meditation, since his realization was then still not perfected. That is, he, the thinker or subject, fancied that he was going through a process of thinking or meditating upon an object, namely God. When perfected, his state is called true knowledge (*Jnana*), the natural state (*sahaja sthiti*), firm abidance in one's own nature (*swabhava samstithi*) or steadfast knowledge (*sthita-prajnavam*) (1.13). The latter may be described further as the state in which *vishaya-jnana* (the knowledge of the objective world, the non-Self) has been entirely effaced and nothing remains but a blaze of consciousness of the Self as the Self (1.14).

**Ganapati Muni :** Does the aspirant retain a sense of his personality after he attains firm

enlightenment? Is he aware then that he has attained perfect, firm enlightenment, and does he recognise that either from (1) the entire effacement of his knowledge of the objective world, or from (2) the perfection of his enlightenment (*paripurnatvam*)? (1.6)

**Maharshi :** Yes, the perfectly enlightened *Jnani* certainly knows himself as such. There can be no doubt in that state (1.15). Doubt or uncertainty is for the mind or intellect, and has no place in that perfection of Realization. Perfection is seen (1) by the negative sign, the cessation of all *vasanas* (tendencies of the mind), and (2) by the positive sign of his incessant consciousness (*chidatmakaratha*), which is also known as Silence (*mounam*). The *Jnani* is said to be not merely *Jnana-swarupa* (the form of knowledge), but also *Swatmarama* (the enjoyer of Self) and *Anandamurti* (the form of bliss), which means that he is experiencing the *Jnana* or *Ananda*. But this is a dualistic metaphor. In fact, that which is (*sat*) is but one. There is no separate thing as its enjoyment, or an object or quality for it to enjoy. But thought has to be expressed to others in forms of speech, and so we proceed into finer and finer analysis by means of metaphors and so on, since reality defies expression. On account of the use of such metaphorical language, however, the question is raised whether the *Jnani* experiences or realizes his *Jnana*. What remains after all elimination is best described as *Sat* (that which is), *Chit* (consciousness) and *Ananda* (happiness) — all three terms referring to one and the same substance (*vastu*). That substance is not really existence, consciousness, happiness or substance as we conceive them now. But these are the expressions or ideas which suggest to us that supreme state.

**Ganapati Muni :** Well, the *jnani* knows himself as such, i.e. as the fully attained. But can others know him to be such, and if so, by what indication? (1.7)

**Maharshi :** Yes. The mark by which perfect realization is indicated is '*sarvabhuta samatva*'

which means equality or sameness towards all (1.16). When one finds the same *Atma* or Self in all the various moving and unmoving things, and when his behaviour indicates that sense of equality that constitutes the hallmark of the *Jnani*, *Gunatita* or *Brahmana*, as he is variously styled. Equality means here in practice the accordance of treatment appropriate to each, without undue avoidance (cf. *Bhagavad Gita*, 6—32, 14—24, 14—25).

**Ganapati Muni :** Does the practice of yoga culminating in *samadhi* (absorbed concentration or ecstasy) lead only to Self-realization, or can it be utilized also to secure other and lesser objectives such as the attainment of temporal ends? (1.7)

**Maharshi :** Why, *samadhi* serves both purposes — Self-realization and the securing of lesser objectives! (1.16)

**Ganapati Muni :** If one begins his practice of yoga and develops *samadhi* to secure lesser objects, and before attaining these, attains the goal of Self-realization, what happens about the lesser objects? Does he attain these also or does he not? (1.8)

**Maharshi :** He does. The *karma* or effort to reach lesser objects does not cease to produce its result, and he may succeed in achieving these even after securing Self-realization. Of course, on account of such realization, there will be no exultation or joy at the lesser successes (1.17). For that which feels emotion, namely the mind, has ceased to exist in him as such, and has been transmuted in *Prajna* (pure consciousness).

## CHAPTER TWO

On a certain day during the winter of 1915, Sri Ramana was sitting in Virupaksha Cave and before him sat Jagadisa Sastri, a young man well-versed in Sanskrit. Jagadisa Sastri had written on a piece of paper as part of the first line of a stanza the words *Hridaya-kuhara-madhye*, but in spite of effort (or perhaps on account of it) his mind could not proceed

further to complete it. Sri Maharshi then asked, "What is it you are writing?" and Sastri handed over his paper. "Go on, complete the verse", said Maharshi. "I am trying, but my mind refuses to work", replied Sastri. Maharshi then took up the verse and completed it as follows:—<sup>1</sup>

"Hridaya-kuhara-madhya kevalam  
brahma-matram  
Hy-aham-aham-iti sakshat-atma-  
rupena bhati  
Hridi visha manasa swam chinvata  
majjata va  
Pavana-chalana-rodhat atma-nishtho  
bhava tvam.

"In the centre of the Heart-cave, the pure Brahman alone shines directly as 'I', the form of Self. Enter the Heart with the mind seeking Self, (or) by diving, or by controlling the movement of the breath, and be thou an *Atma-nishthah* (one who abides in Self)" (2.2).

This verse was later taken to Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni at Mandassa, who afterwards incorporated it in chapter two of *Sri Ramana Gita*. In fact, strictly speaking this is the *Ramana Gita* as it was sung by Sri Ramana.

On a later occasion Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni requested the Maharshi to explain fully the meaning of the term 'Heart' as used in this verse. The Maharshi's reply is embodied in chapter 5 of *Sri Ramana Gita*.

(Editor's Note:) The Sanskrit words used in this verse can be interpreted in two different ways: either that there are three paths (the mind seeking Self, diving, breath control) or only two paths (making the mind dive to seek the Self and breath control.) In his commentary on this verse in chapter two of *Sri Ramana Gita* Ganapati Muni takes it to mean that there are three paths. However, when Bhagavan translated this verse into Tamil as verse 8 of *The Supplement to Forty Verses*, he mentioned only two paths. Bhagavan again mentions only two paths in his own verse translation of the stanza into Malayalam. However, some years later, in 1936, in his translation of the whole of *Sri Ramana Gita* into Malayalam prose, he mentioned the three paths given by Ganapati Muni in his commentary. This shows the complete egolessness of Sri Bhagavan in allowing his devotees to interpret his teachings in different ways. □

<sup>1</sup>A fuller account of how this verse came to be composed is given in Sri Bhagavan's own words in *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, Vol. II, letter 42 (pp. 314 to 315). —Ed.

**That which is real is nearer than the artery in one's neck, but you have shot the arrow of thought far afield. The philosopher kills himself with thinking. Let him run on (after his arrow of thought); his back is turned to the treasure. Most of those destined for Paradise are simpletons, so that they escape from the mischief of philosophy. While the clever ones are pleased with the argument, the simple ones rest, like babes, in the bosom of God.**

**We and our existences are non-existent; You are the Absolute appearing in the guise of mortality.**

**That which moves us is Your gift; our whole being is of Your creation.**

**You showed the beauty of Being to non-being, after you had caused non-being to fall in love with You.**

**Do not take away the delight of Your bounty; take not away Your dessert, wine and wine-cup.**

**But if You take it away, who will question You? Does the picture quarrel with the painter?**

—Jalalu'l-Din Rumi (Persian Sufi-Poet)

# Garland of Guru's Sayings

PART III  
**EXPERIENCE OF REALITY**  
 OF SAT-CHIT-ANANDA

971

When the intellect withdrawn  
 From questing after outward objects  
 Returns to its own natural home,  
 The Heart, our Being-Awareness-Bliss  
 Restored to us abides for ever.

972

When the mind which is Awareness  
 Ceases its movements, then it sees  
 Itself as Being. The bliss enjoyed  
 When Being with Awareness blends,  
 Is it other than the Self?

Identified with the body, the mind is in movement and knows pain. Identified with pure Being as Awareness, it merges in the Self which is pure Bliss.

973

When the body-bound ego dies  
 The *jiva* once to matter wedded  
 Shines now as mere Awareness which  
 Abides as Being only, and hence  
 The Bliss eternal of the Self.

974

Unbroken Self-awareness is  
 The true, bright path of devotion or bhakti.  
 Knowledge of our inherent nature  
 As indivisible bliss supreme  
 Wells up as Love.

975

The ego false and transient makes  
 The transient world seem real and lasting;  
 And if it dies, the Self abides  
 As the sole Being and the ground  
 Of this phenomenal universe.

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 By Sri Muruganar
 

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Translated from Tamil by  
 Professor K. Swaminathan

976

The ignorant ego-demon thinks  
 That awareness is in living beings;  
 And if it dies, the Self abides  
 As the sole Awareness and the ground  
 Of the awareness in all creatures.

977

The miserable, proud ego thinks  
 That bliss is found in pleasant objects;  
 And if it dies, the Self abides  
 As the sole Bliss, the ultimate ground  
 Of every joy wherever found.

978

"Enjoying bliss is better than  
 Being bliss," the dualists argue.  
 But the Bliss of Self is not like sugar  
 An inert object. And we are the Self.

979

Though we may speak of Being, Awareness  
 And Bliss as of three different things,  
 They are but one in Self-experience,  
 As water pure when tasted feels  
 Liquid, sweet and cool at once.

## OF BEING

980

Pure Being, our Self-nature, that  
 Alone Exists eternally.  
 Apart from that all objects we  
 Perceive are clusters of illusive  
 Appearances that come and go,  
 While that unmoving and unchanged  
 Abides the same for ever.

981

There never is non-being for  
The Self which is Awareness pure.  
When relative knowledge ends, when false  
Conceptual duality is no more,  
The Self whose being is Awareness  
Does not cease to be.

982

In our true Self, which is supreme  
Being-Awareness, we conceive  
A little 'self' and so create  
A world of ignorance in which  
The Self supreme seems non-existent.

983

He who does not delude himself  
As the beholder of outer objects,  
But knows his real status as  
The mighty Self supreme, rejects  
The eightfold *Siddhis* and attains  
The plenitude of blissful peace.

984

The strong one who in being abides  
Knows neither fear nor doubt.

(Where there is no 'other' fear and doubt can never arise)

#### EVERYTHING IS BRAHMAN

985

It is our Being, pure Awareness,  
Which appears as relative knowledge  
Mirroring various false phenomena.  
To those who have known and reached the  
Self,  
The Whole Awareness, all objects are  
But that one Self alone.

986

The ever-abiding Self alone  
Exists. Apart from that supreme  
Being-Awareness nought exists.  
Whatever in that Shiva-state  
Appears is but the Being supreme,  
That and nothing else.

987

Whether true or false, and whether

Knowable or unknowable, and whether  
Pleasing or unpleasing, all,  
All are Brahman, nothing else.

988

Faith, neglect; thought, thoughtlessness  
Liking, dislike; knowledge, ignorance;  
High, low; laudable, despicable;  
All, all are Brahman; nothing else.

#### OF HARMONY

989

Since *mouna* is the end of wisdom  
And the very nature of Vedanta,  
All creeds conform and serve as means  
To true, unique, bright, clear *advaita*.

990

If some mean, narrow minds in anger  
Should invent a brand new creed,  
This too belongs to Shiva who shines  
As the embodiment of pure  
Irrefragable Awareness.

991

Whatever creed you may believe in,  
Turn inward with true faith, live up  
To it, instead of setting out  
To hate or attack the faith of others.

992

Giving up sundry controversies  
'Twixt *dvaita*, modified *advaita*  
And pure *advaita*, choose the best,  
Self-knowledge. Make your *tapas* ripe,  
Meditate on God and win His grace.

993

While mind exists, creeds too exist.  
When mind turned inward in self-quest  
Gets caught up in the heart, no creed  
Can in that peace serene survive.

994

Among the millions of mankind  
Only the childlike sages free  
From movements of the ego-mind  
Are cherished with consistent care  
By our universal Mother-Father.

## Gurdjieff, Ramana and Self-Remembering

David Godman

GEORGE I. Gurdjieff was an enigmatic spiritual teacher who disseminated his own distinctive teachings for over thirty years, first in Russia and later in Europe and the U.S.A. During his lifetime his teachings were restricted to a select few, but since his death, his writings and those of his disciples have become widely known, and this has resulted in establishing him as one of the major spiritual figures of the twentieth century.

He was born in Georgia in 1877 in what is now the Soviet Union, and in his youth he became interested in all types of magical and occult phenomena. His interest in such matters became so all-consuming that it led him to join a company of several like-minded people on an extended pilgrimage across Central Asia and the Middle East in search of what he thought was the lost spiritual knowledge of the ancient civilisations. A patchy description of his travels is given in his autobiography, *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, and it is clear from this book that he met many spiritual teachers and visited many religious institutions, but it is also clear that he never fully accepted any of their teachings or attached himself to any of them. When he finally emerged in Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1912 as a teacher in his own right he was expounding a unique but eccentric system of philosophy and spiritual practice which owed much to the Sufi monasteries of Central Asia, but was still nonetheless very much his own.

His teaching was a strange mixture of occult philosophy and cosmology coupled with the

practice of mystical dances and two exercises which he called "self-observation" and "self-remembering." It is not the purpose of this article either to explain or endorse Gurdjieff's cosmological or philosophical theories; instead it will restrict itself to an examination of Gurdjieff's ideas on self-remembering and self-observation, and it will try to relate them to the more familiar ideas of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Followers of Gurdjieff would probably object to this approach since Gurdjieff often claimed that his teachings must be viewed as an integral whole, and that no part of them could be studied in isolation. However, Gurdjieff himself was once quoted as saying that all his theories and exercises were only for those who could not remember themselves, and Ouspensky, one of his more prominent disciples, has written that "Self-remembering was the central idea in Gurdjieff's whole system of thought." Because of this there is some justification for studying his more practical ideas separately without reference to the bulk of his theoretical teachings. However, before embarking on such a study, it should be pointed out that while Ramana Maharshi had no interest in systems of philosophy or theoretical discussions, such expositions occupied the major part of Gurdjieff's teaching career, and this must therefore constitute one of the major differences in approach between the two teachers.

Since Gurdjieff was not an advaitin, the theoretical background and justifications for self-remembering were couched in an entirely different vocabulary to the one used by Ramana Maharshi, and so some of this background

theory must be explained before any understanding of the practices can be attained.

The most important thing to understand is that according to Gurdjieff's system there are four levels or states of consciousness. The two lowest states of consciousness are (1) sleep and (2) the normal waking state. The third state, which is a higher state than the normal waking state is self-remembering, self-consciousness, or consciousness of one's being. The fourth state he calls the "objective state of consciousness" and he defines it by saying that in this state a man can see himself and the world as they really are. This final state seems to correspond to the terms "enlightenment" and "Realisation" as they are used in the world's major religions.

It is clear from this structure that state three, the state of continual self-consciousness, occupies a crucial position between the normal waking existence and state four which is the objective state of consciousness, or the state of Realisation. Gurdjieff emphasises the importance of this third state by maintaining that this state of self-awareness is the only bridge between the normal waking experience and the state of Realisation. He states that unless one can establish oneself in the state of continuous self-awareness, it is impossible to make the transition from the normal waking state to the fourth state of Realisation. This basic thesis is in fundamental agreement with the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Sri Ramana often said that ultimately all must come to self-enquiry as the last step before Realisation, and that without this step, no final success can be achieved. As self-enquiry can also be explained by saying that it is the practice of continuous self-attention, it is clear that there is a large overlap in the theoretical background of the two teachers.

To understand precisely how one moves from one state to another in Gurdjieff's system, it will be necessary to explain a little more theory. According to Gurdjieff, man is nothing more than a machine which is almost permanen-

tly in a state of sleep. Ouspensky, in his book *In Search of the Miraculous* explains it as follows: "A man wakes up. At first glance this is quite a different state of consciousness (from sleep). He can move, he can talk with other people, he can make calculations ahead, he can see danger and avoid it and so on. But if we go a little more deeply into things, if we take a look into his inner world we shall see that he is in almost the same state as when he is asleep.... He does not remember himself, he is a machine. He cannot stop the flow of his thoughts, he cannot control his imagination, his emotions, his attention. He lives in a subjective world of "I like", "I do not like", "I want", "I do not want", that is, what he thinks he likes or dislikes, or what he thinks he wants or does not want. He does not see the real world. The real world is hidden from him by the wall of imagination. He lives in sleep." Ouspensky later goes on to say that "only by beginning to remember himself does a man really awaken".

The vast difference between Gurdjieff's notion of the machine-like waking state and his final state of objective consciousness is graphically shown in an extract from one of his talks given in New York in 1924. He said: "If a man were deprived of his illusions and all that prevents him from seeing reality, his expectations and hopes, all his strivings would collapse. This would be the death of 'I', the death of everything it consisted of, the destruction of everything fake collected through ignorance and inexperience."

This explanation that we live in a world constructed of our own desires, fears and imagination has much in common with the vedantic point of view and it has already been shown that both teachers recommended self-attention or self-remembering as the means of extricating ourselves from the suffering caused by our ignorant misperceptions. One other similarity should be noted at this point. Gurdjieff never describes his fourth state or "Ultimate reality" as a mystical, super-conscious state, he simply describes it as the state where things

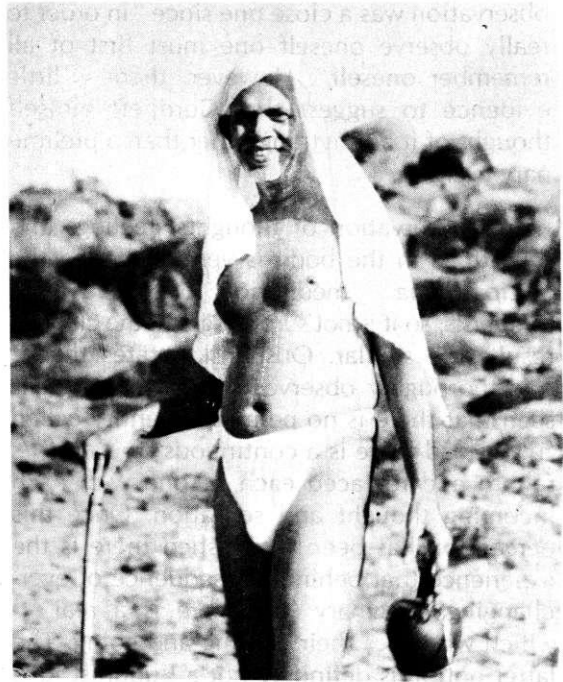


are seen "as they are". This is reminiscent of Sri Ramana's favourite term the "*Sahaja state*" which means the natural state. There is nothing new, special or original about this state in either Sri Ramana's or Gurdjieff's explanations. It is simply that you see yourself as you are and that you see the world as it really is.

Although it is clear from the foregoing statements that Gurdjieff had a high opinion of self-remembering, he was also of the opinion that it was unsuitable for beginners. In this respect he was echoing the traditional Hindu approach that one should first cultivate concentration and mind control before moving onto self-remembering or self-enquiry. One of the mottos inscribed on the walls of his headquarters in Paris was "remember yourself always and everywhere" but in practice it seems that his pupils were nearly always given mental or physical exercises to perform which had little or no bearing on self-remembering.

Ramana Maharshi on the other hand maintained that his version of self-enquiry could be profitably practised by anyone. There are a few scattered references in early Ashram publications where Sri Ramana states that the path of self-enquiry is for advanced devotees only, but in practice, everyone who was not attached to another form of spiritual practice was advised to take up self-enquiry, and there is no record of Sri Ramana ever refusing to allow a devotee to follow this path. Sri Ramana's attitude was that since self-enquiry was not a mental activity, no preliminary exercises designed to strengthen the mind could be of any use.

Gurdjieff always maintained that it was necessary to develop the mind in order to speed up spiritual development, whereas Sri Ramana maintained that since the mind itself did not exist, what was the point of developing it? In *Upadesa Undiyar*, Verse 17 Sri Ramana wrote: "If the nature of the mind is uninterruptedly subjected to investigation, it is found that there is no such things as mind. This is the direct path for everyone." Further evidence



on this point can be found in *Maharshi's Gospel* where Sri Ramana states "Only self-enquiry can reveal the truth that the ego-mind or *Jiva* has no existence whatsoever".

There seems to be no point of contact between Gurdjieff and Sri Ramana on the question of the necessity of preliminary exercises, but the gulf between them is not as wide as it seems on this point since the main preliminary exercise that Gurdjieff prescribes could be described as a distant relative of self-enquiry, and as such it deserves a brief explanation and commentary. The exercise was called "self-observation" and it consisted of witnessing, without attempts at analysis, the functioning of the body and the mind; that is, putting attention on thoughts, feelings and sensations without making any effort to stop, modify or analyse them in any way. Gurdjieff thought so highly of this technique that in a talk he gave in New York in 1924 he said: "the exercise of self-observation is sufficient for several years. Do not attempt anything else." One of his prominent disciples, Ouspensky, thought the relationship between self-remembering and self-

observation was a close one since "in order to really observe oneself one must first of all remember oneself". However, there is little evidence to suggest that Gurdjieff himself thought of it as anything other than a preliminary exercise.

The observation of thoughts, feelings and sensations in the body is very similar to the *Sattipatthana* meditation of Theravada Buddhists, so it is not surprising that the claimed results are similar. Ouspensky states that if one thoroughly observes oneself, firstly it is seen that there is no permanent entity called 'I'. Instead there is a continuous series of 'I's reborn and replaced each second with each incoming thought and sensation. Once this perception has been established there is the experience that behind the sequence of ever-changing imaginary 'I's, there is a real 'I' which witnesses their coming and going. The latter notion is definitely not a Buddhist idea but is more in harmony with Vedantic theories. On closer examination though, this witnessing 'I' does not correspond to the Self in vedantic terminology; Gurdjieff called it the "Essence" in man, and it has no exact oriental equivalent. It is a quality which he claimed was born in man, and is capable of being developed and expanded, but it bears no relationship to either the mind or the personality.

Bearing in mind both the similarities and the dissimilarities between the theories of the two teachers, it will now be productive to examine the more practical aspects of their teachings. The most obvious apparent difference seems to be that in Gurdjieff's approach there is no mental formula such as "Who am I?" or "*neti-neti*" to introvert the outgoing mind and take it back to its source. This difference is more apparent than real, for whenever one becomes aware that self-attention has been lost, attention can be redirected to the self without resorting to any verbal formula.

This transferring of attention from thoughts to the thinker of the thoughts is the essence of both teachings, and with a little practice, it

can easily be achieved without resorting to a formula such as "Who am I?"

Gurdjieff was always opposed to doing things mechanically and it may be for this reason that he always avoided advocating the use of a mental formula which could have been repeated by the mind without ever taking the user beyond the mental level. He once told a group of his disciples: "I must not say 'I' mechanically as a word, but I must note in myself its resonance. This means in saying 'I', you must listen carefully to the inner sensation and watch so as never once to say the word 'I' automatically no matter how often you say it." This is classic self-enquiry, and as a practical hint to spiritual seekers it could not be faulted by Sri Ramana Maharshi himself.

Ramana too was opposed to the mechanical approach, and he frequently had to remind devotees that the formula "Who am I?" was not to be used mechanically as a *mantra* and that it was only a tool to redirect the attention to the feeling of 'I' within us.

Moving now to the results of self-attention, Gurdjieff regarded continual self-awareness as a state of consciousness one could be in, but he maintained that being in such a state does not mean that one is Realised. According to him, it is an intermediate state attained by hard continuous effort. Gurdjieff maintained that it is possible for Realisation to happen when one is in this state, whereas it is not possible that Realisation can occur in the normal waking state. Gurdjieff makes no mention of any technique or method which can take one from stage three which is self-awareness to stage four which is Realisation, but he seems to imply that stage four merely happens if one is firmly established in stage three. This echoes two aspects of Sri Ramana's teachings, Firstly, that self-awareness is the only route to Realisation, and secondly that effort alone cannot result in Realisation. Ramana Maharshi always maintained that effort could only take one to a certain point and that final release from ignorance is effected by the Self, and it is

interesting to note that Gurdjieff, who was a great believer in hard intense effort, should concede that effort had its limitations and that the final step to Realisation was beyond the control of the individual aspirant.

Another point of contact between Gurdjieff and Sri Ramana is that both insisted that their teachings could be carried out in the world, and that there was therefore no necessity to give up worldly activities to carry them out. This was a major distinguishing characteristic of Sri Ramana's teachings, for the accepted tradition in India was that the practice of self-enquiry required one to live a detached life in solitude. Sri Ramana's attitude was that self-enquiry must be done at all times, even when physical activities are taking place; for him, it is not simply a meditation technique, it is an attitude to life. This attitude was bluntly stated in *A Search in Secret India* when he told Paul Brunton that formal meditation was for spiritual novices only, and on another occasion, when he was asked how often one should practice self-enquiry, his answer was "always". Gurdjieff's attitude to practice was identical. His aphorism "Remember yourself always and everywhere" has already been mentioned, but he never allocated times when this practice was to be pursued exclusively. Instead, his followers were normally subjected to a rigorous physical routine, and if they had been told to practice either self-observation or self-remembering, they would have to do them in conjunction with the arduous physical tasks which had been assigned to them.

Since the practices that the two teachers advocate have so many similarities, it is not surprising that their views on the main obstacles to success and the means to overcome them should also be similar. According to Gurdjieff, the greatest obstacle to self-remembering is the mind's habit of constantly identifying with

external objects, that is to say, one has one's attention fixed on external objects, forgetting the I which sees them. Judging from the written records of Sri Ramana, this seems to be one of the more popular complaints of his devotees too, but the only solution which Sri Ramana offered was persistence. Each time that one becomes aware that attention has wandered to thoughts and feelings, one must revert to self-attention again. Gurdjieff has a slightly different approach which fits in neatly with another aspect of Sri Ramana's teachings. He states: "A man who identifies with anything is unable to remember himself. In order to remember oneself, it is necessary first of all not to identify. But in order to learn not to identify, man must first of all not be identified with himself, must not call himself I, always and on all occasions."

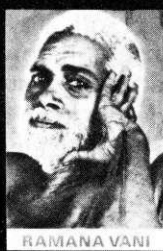
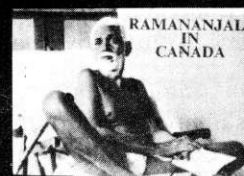
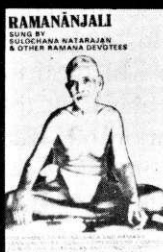
This is an aid which Sri Ramana himself favoured, for he would often say that while one is engaged in activities one should always cultivate the idea that there is no I doing the actions, actions are simply being done without a doer. Since the purpose of self-enquiry is to establish that there is no individual I orchestrating the activities of the mind and the body, such an attitude, if pursued persistently, is bound to be of great assistance to the successful execution of self-enquiry.

In this comparative study of self-enquiry and self-remembering the evidence has been assembled in such a way as to point out similarities rather than differences. There is much in Gurdjieff's philosophy that flatly contradicts the teachings of Sri Bhagavan Ramana, but it cannot be denied that on the practical level there is enough of an overlap to suggest that the followers of both teachers are engaging in similar practices, encountering similar problems, and producing similar results.

**When one attains ecstatic love, one has the rope to tie God.**

**— Ramakrishna**

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## Gaudapada and Non-origination

T.M.P. MAHADEVAN

*Continued from the previous issue.*

WHEN Gaudapada establishes the non-reality of the world, it does not mean that this great teacher of advaita subscribes to the view of ontological unreality or *sunya-vada*. We have already noted how in the *Agama-prakarana* he expounds the meaning of the *Mandukya-upanisad* and shows through an investigation into the nature of the three states of experience that the Self is the sole reality. To show that it is so, the great philosopher argues through reasoning in the *advaita-prakarana*.<sup>15</sup> In support, he cites the evidence of passages from other scriptural texts as well.

The Self is undivided and the same throughout, like ether. The *jivas* are merely apparent distinctions therein, as pots etc., produce distinctions in ether, as it were, so in this case also these distinctions are not real. Just as we may speak of pot-ether, pitcher-ether and so on, we speak of a plurality of souls and a multiplicity of material objects, but in reality there are no such things. The one Self appears as many *jivas* in the same way as the ether seems divided and enclosed in the different containers and things. When these are destroyed, the distinctions also in ether vanish, so too when the *jivas* are realised to be illusory manifestations due to *maya*, what remains unaffected and changeless is the Self alone. There is no contingency of the defects of one *jiva* being occasioned in the other *jivas* or the defects of the *jivas* defiling the purity of the Self.<sup>16</sup>

By the defilements of the *jivas*, the Self is not affected just as dust, smoke etc., to be seen in pots or pitchers do not make the ether

foul. Forms names and functions may differ from object to object, but there is no difference in ether as such. So also, the *jivas* may vary in their physical structure and moral endowment, in station and status, but the Self is unvarying, formless, functionless, and nameless. In the same way that children attribute dirt to the sky when dust is in the air, the ignorant superpose on the unsullied Self defects such as birth and death, pleasure and pain.<sup>17</sup> These are changes that are not real and do not touch the Self. The appearing and disappearing of *jivas* and their births and deaths do not alter the *Atman*. They are not produced by the Self, nor do they form any part thereof. The non-dual Reality neither causes anything nor is caused by anything. It is partless.

In many places in the scriptures, the non-duality of the Self is proclaimed, and duality is denounced. The *Taittiriya-upanisad* exhibits the Self as the non-dual bliss by an enquiry into the five sheaths (*kosas*) which cover the soul. By this method of inquiry it shows us that the Self is not to be confused with these mutable coverings. In the 'Honey section' of

<sup>14</sup>The Scripture chapter, the first section of the Karika

<sup>15</sup>The non-duality chapter, the third section of the Karika

<sup>16</sup>(3.5) Even as when one pot-ether is associated with dust, smoke etc., all pot-ethers are not affected, even so (all) the *jivas* are not affected by happiness etc. (when one is so affected).

(3.6) Form, function and name differ here and there but there is no difference in ether. The same is the determination in regard to the *jivas*.

<sup>17</sup>(3.8) Even as with children the sky appears to be rendered impure by impurities in the same way for the ignorant ones the Self too appears to be made impure by impurities.

the *Bṛhadaranyaka-upanishad* the principle behind the cosmic elements is identified with the Self which is the substratum of the body and its functions. What is without is within as well. The same 'honey' pervades all beings. *Brahman*, the all, is the immortal Self. Just as the spokes are fixed in the nave of a wheel, so are all beings centered in the Self. Scripture denounces plurality and declares the non-difference of the *jiva* from the Self. Difference is illusory, the one appears as if many through *maya*. Here are some declarations from scripture: "Indra through *mayas* assumes diverse forms." "Though unborn, he appears variously born."<sup>18</sup> The *Isavasya* even denies the birth of the Self, and the *Bṛhadaranyaka* asks "Who indeed could produce him?" Gaudapada proclaims: "Of what is real birth is incomprehensible; and what is unreal cannot ever be born."

We need not hesitate to admit that in some contexts scripture does speak of creation. By using the illustrations of clay, metal, sparks and so on, creation of the many from the one is described. However, this is only to make it easier for those who are dull-witted to understand the fundamental unity of Reality.<sup>19</sup> In some parts of scripture we come across declarations of creation and in others non-creation. Obviously, the two sets of passages cannot have equal validity. We should take that teaching as the purport of scripture which is ascertained through inquiry and is reasonable.<sup>20</sup> If birth is predicated of the real, it can only be in the sense of an illusion, and not in the primary sense. In reality, the Self is unborn. It is sleepless, dreamless, nameless and formless, self-luminous and all-knowing.

Gaudapada seeks to demonstrate that the Self is unborn and that there is nothing else which is born, through a dialectical criticism of the causal category in the fourth chapter. Like all other relations, causation falls within the realm of nescience. This is because on analysis we find it to be unintelligible. There are two rival views on causation which are totally opposed to each other. The one is the Sankhya<sup>21</sup> which is that the effect is pre-

existent in the cause, and that it is not produced afresh. The other is the Nyaya-Vaisesika<sup>22</sup> view which holds that the effect is non-existent prior to its production. On either of these hypotheses there will not result causation. If the effect is already existent, there is no need for any causal operation. If the effect is non-existent, it can never be produced; what is non-existent, like say a barren woman's son is at no time seen to be born.<sup>23</sup> The rival schools of *satkarya-vada* and *asatkarya-vada*<sup>24</sup> are seen to support the view of non-origination or non-creation even without their knowing it.<sup>25</sup>

The disputants argue and predicate birth of what is unborn. How can that which is unborn and therefore immortal become subject to temporality and death? It is impossible for a thing to change its nature. What is by nature immortal cannot become mortal for then it would cease to be changeless and it would become artificial and illusory.<sup>26</sup> The Sankhya thinks that the unborn and beginningless *Prakṛti* evolves itself into the manifestations that make up the universe. No canon of logic will justify

<sup>18</sup> These quotations are used by Gaudapada himself in chapter 3 verses 11, 12 and 24.

<sup>19</sup>(3.15) The creation which is taught through the examples of clay, metal sparks etc., or otherwise, that is only a means to introduce (non-duality) there is no difference howsoever.

<sup>20</sup>Whether what is being created is real or unreal—in this matter scripture is equal (neutral). (Of these) what is stated conclusively and is in keeping with reason that is the truth, not the other.

<sup>21</sup>One of the six systems of Hindu philosophy,

<sup>22</sup>Another of the six systems of Hindu philosophy

<sup>23</sup>(3.28) The birth of what is unreal is not possible whether in reality or through *maya*. The son of a barren woman is not born whether really or through *maya*.

<sup>24</sup>The two viewpoints outlined above.

<sup>25</sup>(4.4) Nothing that exists is born. What does not exist verily is not born. In this manner the dualists (the sunyavadins and the sankhyas respectively) quarrelling among themselves, indeed make known non-origination.

<sup>26</sup>(4.6) Even of that entity which is unborn, the disputants say that there is birth. The entity which is unborn and immortal, how indeed can that attain mortality?

(4.7) The immortal does not become mortal, and likewise the mortal immortal. What is one's nature can by no means become otherwise.

this. If *Prakṛti* becomes the world how can it be unborn (*aja*) and eternal? Another problem the Sankhya offers is that the effect, according to this school of thought, is non-different from the cause. But is the effect born or unborn? If it is unborn, then it cannot be called effect, because the effect is a thing which is produced. Further if the effect is produced, and is non-different from the cause, the cause cannot be permanent and unchanging. There is no illustration that could be given to prove the production of the effect from the unborn cause. To avoid the difficulty, if it is said that the cause too is born, then there has to be cause for that cause, a still further cause for that other cause, and so on a *ad infinitum*.<sup>27</sup>

The school of Mimamsa maintains that the cause and the effect are mutually dependant. They say that merit and demerit are responsible for producing the body; and the body in turn gives rise to merit and demerit. There is no beginning for the chain of cause and effect and each alternates with the other, like the seed and the sprout. Insurmountable difficulties show up here. If what is before a cause is its effect and the antecedent of an effect is its cause then both cause and effect are begun. Thus they cannot be considered beginningless. This very thesis seems paradoxical. To maintain that the effect precedes the cause is like saying that the son begets his father.<sup>28</sup> A definite sequence must be recognised as between cause and effect. There is no use in believing that the two are reciprocally dependant. There would be no distinction between them if the cause and the effect were to be indifferently antecedent or consequent. Moreover, to call one a cause and one an effect would be quite arbitrary and void of any meaning. The ways of stating the sequence can be done in three ways: we can say that first there is the cause and subsequently the effect takes place (*purva-krama*) or it may be said that the effect is followed by the cause (*apara-krama*); or it may be thought that the cause and the effect are simultaneous (*saha-krama*). None of these alternatives is intelligible. We have seen already that the cause cannot produce the effect. If

the cause is not born, it cannot change, and thus no production from it is possible; if it is born, then there results infinite regress. The opposite too is impossible, because, as we said, it is like the son preceding the father. By definition, the effect is that which is produced by the cause, and if the cause is not there prior to the effect, how can the effect be produced at all? Further, is a cause possible as rising from an unproduced effect? The third alternative is also without basis. Is it necessary for events which are simultaneous to be causally related. Judging by this, there should then also be a relation between two horns of an animal. Experience shows that the two horns are not related in this way.<sup>29</sup> Now we have reached the crux of the problem. If we cannot settle the sequence, the distinction of cause and effect would become unintelligible. It is impossible to settle the sequence. In despair one might appeal to the illustration of the seed and the sprout. But a little reflection reveals that seed and sprout cannot be used as an illustration. Only when the causal sequence has been established can the relation between seed and sprout become intelligible. Since this is a particular case, falling under the wider relation of cause and effect, it cannot serve as an illustration. It still remains to be proved.<sup>30</sup>

A thing is not produced from itself nor from another. A pot is not produced from that very pot, nor from another one. One may argue that a pot is produced from clay, but is there a relation between clay and pot? Is it non-different or different, or both different and both non-different from it? If the pot is non-different

<sup>27</sup>This line of logic is pursued in Chapter 4 verses 10, 11, 12, 13

<sup>28</sup>(4.15) Those for whom the fruit (effect) is the source of the cause and the cause is the source of the fruit—for them origination becomes like that of the father from the son.

<sup>29</sup>(4.16) If the origination of cause and effect is desired by you must state the sequence. If the origination is simultaneous there would be no relation between them (as cause and effect) even as for the (two) horns (of an animal).

<sup>30</sup>Chapter 4 verses 17, 18, 19, 20

from the clay, it cannot be produced, since clay already exists. If it is different then why should it not be produced from another pot or a piece of cloth even, both being different. It cannot be both different and non-different because of contradiction. So also, neither the existent nor the non-existent, nor what is existent and non-existent can be produced. It is meaningless to maintain that what exists is produced. The question does not even arise for the non-existent to be produced because of its very non-existence. The third alternative involves us in contradiction.

Empirical distinctions, it is true, are observed between the knower and the known, pain and its source etc. From the standpoint of reasoning based on relative experience (*yukti-darsanat*) there is difference as also causal relation governing the different. But from the standpoint of the Absolute (*Bhuta-darsanat*), difference is not there and the concept of cause is unintelligible.

In the empirical sphere Gaudapada admits creation. But according to him, creation is neither *de novo*<sup>31</sup> nor transformation of an original stuff. It is illusory, *maya*, it is manifestation or transfiguration. The world is not related to the Self any more than a piece of cloth to threads or curds to milk. In fact no relation could be conceived of. Somehow the one Reality appears as the pluralistic universe by its own *maya* (*atma-maya*). The intricate structures that constitute the world are projections, just as in dream. These are effected by the illusions of the *Atman*. From the empirical standpoint we can say that things are born. They have, however, no permanence.

Creation theories are many. There are some philosophers who favour materialistic origins of the world. There are thinkers who attribute the origination of the universe to time. But theists regard God as the first cause of things. Some of them ascribe to Him efficient causality only, while others say that He is the efficient and material cause. The former say that creation is by the mere will of God, and the latter believe that it is his expansion. Some hold

that God creates for the sake of His enjoyment. Others there are who maintain that creation is His sport.<sup>32</sup> But how can there be desire for God who is desired but desireless and who has no ends to achieve? In our limitation owing to ignorance we must rest content with the idea that creation is His nature or *Maya*. It is illusory, like dream or magic. The non-dual is imagined to be the manifest universe. It is neither different from the Self nor identical with it. The only thing one could say about it is that it is indeterminable.

The thinkers of the different traditions characterise the real in different ways and give their own theories with categories and schemes. Each stresses one particular point about reality and clings to his theory as if it were the whole truth. The Self has been conceived of in so many ways, as life, elements, constituents of primal nature, things, worlds, Vedas, sacrifice, what is subtle, gross, with form, with form, formless etc. The Sankhyas say there are twenty four *tattvas* or principles. The followers of the Yoga system add to these one more: God.<sup>33</sup> The Pasupatas tell us that there are twenty one categories. There are other schools which make the categories endless in number. However, all these theories are but the imaginations of their respective advocates. There is only one Self which appears as many through Self delusion, as it were. First the *jivas* are imagined and then the numerous things, external and internal. All this is a superimposition on the Self. It is just like the snake form being superimposed on the rope substance owing to insufficient light.

There is no final purport to the teaching of creation. Let us remember what has already been shown, viz. that what is real cannot really be born. If it is maintained that it is born it can only be in the sense of an illusory appearance. Usually it is said that the cycle of

<sup>31</sup> In this context, creation of something from nothing.

<sup>32</sup> All these possibilities are discussed in chapter 1 verses 7, 8, 9

<sup>33</sup> Gaudapada lists all these categories in chapter 2 verses



birth and death, which has no beginning, comes to an end when release is obtained. But this can only be maintained in a figurative sense. If *samsara* is beginningless, then it must be endless too. Also, if release is gained, it is liable to be lost at some other time. If the universe really were to exist, then it would be destroyed. But we have seen that duality is mere illusion. Removal of *samsara* and attainment of release are figurative. These are taught in

language which must necessarily relate to duality. When the real is known, there is no duality whatsoever.

It will be clear by now how the teachings of the two great Masters, Gaudapada and Ramana are identical. They do not stop with proclaiming the highest truth, but they provide the seeker guidelines, by adopting which, he will at least come to the point where he can appreciate the truth of non-origination. □

#### THE RAMANA MAHARSHI ESSAY COMPETITION

The **Ramana Maharshi Essay Competition**, sponsored by the **Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore**, received an encouraging response of over 50 entries from devotees and scholars all over the country. The competition was widely advertised, and since our advertisement stated that the results would be published in *The Mountain Path*, we were pleasantly surprised to receive several enquiries from people who had never heard of *The Mountain Path* and who wished to subscribe.

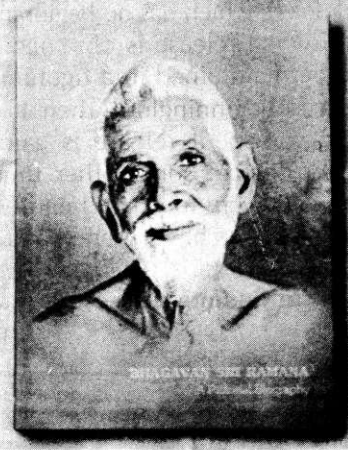
Among the many entries that we received, there was one of such outstanding merit that there was no doubt in the judges' minds as to whom the first prize should be awarded to. The winning entry, entitled 'The Power of Arunachala', was submitted by **Michael James**, a resident of Ramana Nagar at Tiruvannamalai for over five years. Mr James is a full-time student of Bhagavan and for the last few years he has been assisting Sadhu Om with his translations of Muruganar's works. The judges were impressed not only by the scholarship and understanding shown by the author but also by the almost lyrical style in which it was written. In addition to his studies, Mr. James has been doing a daily *pradakshina* of Arunachala for several years and his love for both Bhagavan and Arunachala is clearly evident in this prize-winning entry. The editors of *The Mountain Path* were also so impressed with the essay that we have decided to feature it as a guest editorial for this issue.

Since there was a large difference in quality between the winning entry and the others, the judges have decided to withhold the second prize, and instead, they are awarding consolation prizes of Rs. 200 to the following five entries.

1. **R. Sathiamurthy** of Pudukkottai for his comparative study of the teachings of Bhagavan and J. Krishnamurti.
2. **I.S. Varghese** for his essay on Bhagavan's teachings and life in the world. Readers may remember Sri Varghese as a regular contributor to *The Mountain Path* in the 1960s and 70s and they may also recall his article entitled 'The Call' which appeared in the birth centenary souvenir 'Ramana Smrti'.
3. **Major B.T. Reddy** from Ganjam Orissa for his essay entitled "The Problem of Self-Discovery."
4. **N. Abhiraman** of T. Nagar Madras for his essay on "The Sadhana as Taught by Ramana Maharshi".
5. **Miss Jyotsna Nageswaran** of the Radhakrishnan Institute for the Advanced Study of Philosophy, Madras for her comparative study of Ramana Maharshi and Zen Buddhism.

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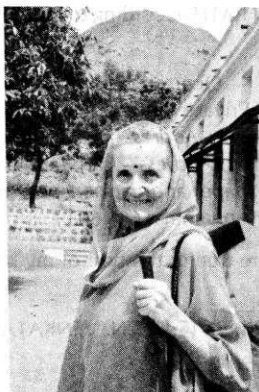
**Sri Ramanasramam Book Depot  
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# Introducing....

Lucy Cornelssen will need no introduction to our German speaking readers, for during the last 25 years a steady stream of German books on Sri Bhagavan has flowed from her pen.

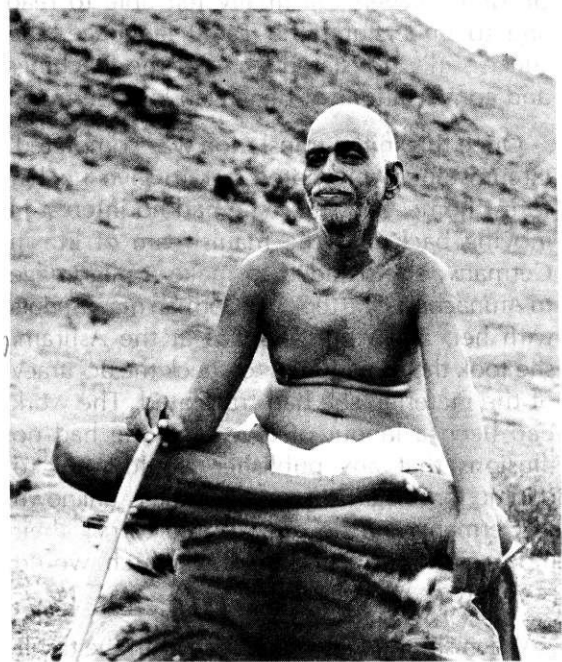
She was born in Germany at the end of the last century, and though Eastern religious thought had barely penetrated Europe at that time, she soon found her spiritual inclinations turning towards the East rather than the West. A copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* made a deep impression on her when she was still in her teens, and while she was in her twenties and working as a journalist in Berlin, she had a certain mystical experience of Lord Siva which influenced her for the rest of her life. As a consequence of this, her interest in Oriental teachings grew even stronger, and she began to devote more and more time and energy to studying the ideas of the East.

With such a background, it was not surprising that she eventually discovered the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi, though the discovery did not take place until shortly after the second



Lucy Cornelssen

## Lucy Cornelssen



world war. The only German book on Sri Bhagavan which was available at that time was one by Professor Heinrich Zimmer, a well-known German Indologist, and a copy of this book found its way to the forest hermitage where she was staying. Having thoroughly immersed herself in the ideas of the East, the teachings were not entirely new to her, but what impressed more than the teachings was that here was a man who had actually *realized* the truth of these teachings for himself. This made a great impression on her, and when she felt the spiritual power emanating from the pictures of Bhagavan which were included in this book, she realised that here was the model of the true Nature of man she had been looking for.

During her youth she had travelled widely, learnt many languages, and had supported herself by being a professional writer. After hearing about Sri Bhagavan, she decided to utilize her linguistic and writing talents to translate more of Bhagavan's ideas and words into German. With no Tamil teacher to help her, she spent two years in her hermitage in a German forest struggling with the intricacies of Tamil. When she finally felt able to read and to understand the Tamil language, she successfully translated some of the teachings and conversations of Bhagavan into German.

Once this initial translation was completed, circumstances prompted her to give up her forest home, and since she had no interest in moving back into the mainstream of life in Germany, she decided to make a pilgrimage to Arunachala. She took her German manuscripts with her, and while she was at the Ashram, she took the opportunity to check the accuracy of the material, she had translated. The work had been a labour of love, and she had no illusions that any publisher would want to print it, for Bhagavan was still virtually unknown in Germany and no one wanted to risk their money on publishing books which would probably never be sold.

When she was finally satisfied with the result of her work, she laid the manuscript on Bhagavan's *samadhi* and told Bhagavan that her work was finished, adding half jokingly,

that if Bhagavan wanted the book published, he would have to find a publisher himself. Five days later, the Ashram received a letter from a publisher in Germany asking for permission to print some of the Ashram's books in German. Bhagavan had provided the publisher and the book was soon in print!

After the completion of this book Lucy Cornelssen embraced *sannyasa*, giving herself up once and for all to Arunachala-Siva.

During her first stay at the Ashram, she spent several months living alone in a small shrine near the *Pradakshina* road, a few miles from the Ashram, in a wilderness that was then still a 'jungle' of cacti and prickly pears; she now considers these months of *sadhana* in the deserted shrine to be one of the happiest periods of her life.

In the years that have passed since then she has produced a number of books on Bhagavan, among them a new selection of 'Talks' which includes a short biography, a complete translation of 'Talks', and 'Hunting the I' which has appeared in both English and German editions. Now in her eighties, she has finally decided to give up writing, and she is now living quietly in a small house near the Ashram. She has now settled down here for good, and although she lives a quiet secluded life, she always makes herself available to the many visitors who want to consult her about the teachings of Sri Bhagavan.

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

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

Date : 31-3-1982

## Reminiscences of Sri Bhagavan

CHHAGANLAL V. YOGI

I was a printer by profession, and in 1945, I decided to wind up my printing press at Bombay in order to go and settle permanently at Sri Ramanasramam. I had no pre-arranged plan for closing down my business; I did not know how this would be brought about, and I relied on the Grace of Bhagavan to attend to the details. Some days later while I was lying in my bed half awake I had what can only be described as a vision in which Bhagavan appeared before me. By his side stood a gentleman whom I recognised as a friend of mine who had not been to the Ashram and who had no faith in Bhagavan. The following conversation took place between Sri Bhagavan and myself:

*Bhagavan:* You want to sell your press don't you?

*Myself:* Yes Bhagavan, but I need to find a buyer.

*Bhagavan:* (Pointing to my friend who was standing by his side) Here is the buyer. He will buy your press, so sell it to him.

I then asked Bhagavan how much I should sell my press for, and by way of a reply, Bhagavan pointed to some figures on a wall which were shining like a neon sign. The amount indicated was quite reasonable, neither low nor exorbitant. Sri Bhagavan then disappeared from my sight along with my friend and the vision ended.

At 11 a.m. the next morning the friend from the vision came to see me at the press, and he listened to me very attentively while I related to him the story of my vision. When I had finished he simply replied: "I shall buy your press at the price indicated by your Guru." It was all over within a minute and my spirits soared at this manifestation of Bhagavan's Grace.



*Sri Chhaganlal V. Yogi*

My original plan was to get a house in Bangalore and then later on move to Sri Ramanasramam itself. However, soon after I arrived in Bangalore, I was approached by a few devotees and asked if I would consider opening a press there for the purpose of executing the printing work of the Ashram. I happily accepted the offer and the same Grace that enabled me to wind up my affairs in Bombay manifested again to find me a suitable press.

Sometime after I had agreed to do this work for the Ashram I found a very old press in a good locality. It was for sale and it had been lying idle for over six months. I saw the owner and he agreed to sell it to me but we could not agree on a price. I told him that I was proposing to do the printing work for Sri Ramanasramam and I suggested that we both visit the Ashram, and after having Bhagavan's *darshan* we could discuss the price again. He agreed to the suggestion at once, and soon afterwards, we both made the trip to Sri

Ramanasramam. I took him into the holy presence of Sri Bhagavan and I informed Bhagavan that I was planning to buy my friend's press. Bhagavan said nothing, he simply acknowledged my decision and nodded. Within a few hours of this *darshan* there was a wonderful change in the attitude of my friend from Bangalore, and instead of arguing about the price he said that he would accept whatever I thought was reasonable. Of course, I did not want to exploit him, so I offered him a reasonable amount and he immediately accepted. Though he had insisted that no business talks should take place at the Ashram, it was he himself who proposed that the deal should be settled in the Ashram. His wish was carried out, and the agreement of sale was executed and signed there and then.

Within a week the press came into my possession, and since it was a fairly big one, I was able to undertake the printing of all the Ashram books in English, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Gujerati and Kannada. It was named "Aruna Press" by Sri Bhagavan himself.

Throughout the period I ran the Aruna Press, I felt Sri Bhagavan's Grace extending to me on many occasions, but I felt it particularly strongly during the printing of the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* in 1946. Before then, the press had only printed small books for the Ashram and I felt a little diffident about accepting the job, particularly since the time given to me was very short. However, I put my trust in Bhagavan's Grace, and soon afterwards, help and co-operation began to pour in from the most unexpected quarters. Despite this, when there were only ten days left before the Jubilee day I realised that the major portion of the souvenir was yet to be printed. I temporarily lost courage and retreated to the Ashram to seek Bhagavan's guidance. I explained the printing problems to Bhagavan and concluded by saying: "Unless help from some other press is taken, the souvenir will not be appearing on September 1st." After a few moments silence he looked at me and said "Do your work". These three simple words seemed to me at the time to be some secret

magic formula; they rekindled my enthusiasm and filled me with a strong faith that the book would be out on time. I realised that the order had been given to me; all I had to do was to "do my work" and the rest would be looked after by Bhagavan. I returned to Bangalore and told my co-workers of my experience at the Ashram. All of them accepted Sri Bhagavan's order in the same spirit that I did, and for the next few days we worked day and night with faith, zeal and enthusiasm. The amount of work we turned out in those last ten days was quite surprising. For the last three days a party of devotees who were on their way to the Ashram came to assist me. Four of them turned out to be expert book-binders, and with their assistance the work was completed with a day to spare.

Wonderful are the modes and ways of his Grace which made so many impossible things possible, and so many difficult things easy for us. All through the period of our stay in Bangalore, and in the years after, we experienced the beneficial workings of his benign Grace.

### The Health Cure

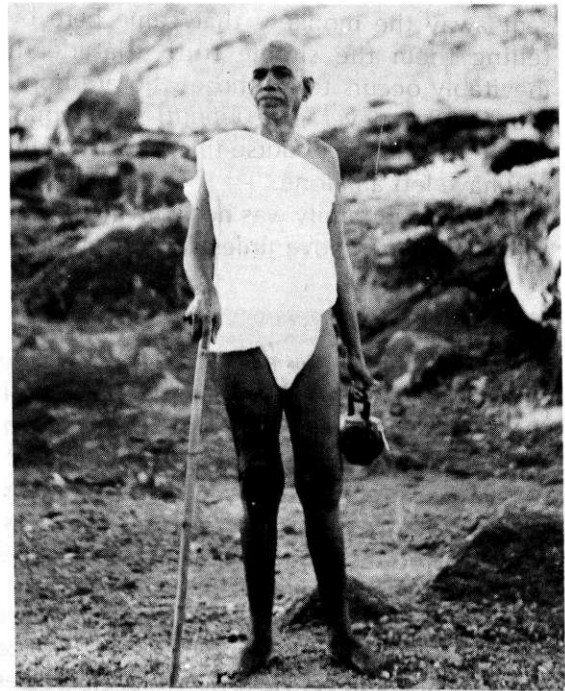
Once when Bhagavan was undergoing a period of ill-health, a devotee attempted to persuade him to take a glass of orange juice every day. Bhagavan replied that if 200 tumblers of orange juice were brought each day for the assembled devotees he might be willing to have some. This was well beyond the means of the devotee but he refused to give up. The next day he appeared in the Hall with a plate of hot chapatis and two tumblers containing milk and orange juice, and he begged Bhagavan to take them for the good of his health. Bhagavan refused again, even when all the other devotees attempted to persuade him to take the offering. One lady, thinking that she was putting forward a telling argument said: "Bhagavan, just as you are kind enough to agree to sit on the sofa for our sake, so also why not favour us by taking this diet?" The lady thought that since he had abandoned his attitude of equality for all

with regard to his seat, he could just as easily do it with regard to his food. Unfortunately, the outcome was quite the reverse of what was expected. As soon as she finished speaking, to everyone's dismay, Bhagavan got down from the sofa and squatted on the floor. The lady, thinking that she was to blame for this retrogressive step burst into tears.

The chapatis, the milk and the orange juice were forgotten as everyone racked their brains to try and find a way to get Bhagavan back on the couch. It was felt that no argument or appeal would persuade Bhagavan to change his decision, so an old devotee who had known Bhagavan for over thirty-five years decided that force was the answer. He went over to Bhagavan and attempted to lift him back on the couch. One or two others, seeing Bhagavan's lack of resistance helped to complete the manoeuvre. Bhagavan, who has often said that a *jnani* has no *sankalpa* or will, neither attempted to resist nor did he attempt to come down again once he had been released.

### Death of a monkey

In 1908, when Bhagavan was staying in Pachiamman Temple, there were many tamarind trees in the surrounding area. The municipality gave the right to collect the tamarind to the highest bidder, and during the period of Bhagavan's residence, the rights belonged to a local Muslim. In order to protect his interests, the Muslim contractor had to guard the trees from the monkeys, and he used to drive them away by firing stones at them from a sling. As he only wanted to scare them away, he took care to see that his stones were not thrown hard enough to injure the monkeys. Unfortunately, one stone hit a monkey on its head and it died immediately. The rest of the tribe gathered up the dead body, and screeching with both anger and sorrow, they took the body to Bhagavan. Their screeches grew louder in Bhagavan's presence and their sorrow caused tears to trickle down Bhagavan's face. Bhagavan's presence finally calmed the monkeys down, and when they



were quiet, he turned to them and said: "For everyone that is born death is inevitable. He at whose hands this monkey died will certainly meet death one day; so there is no need to grieve."

The monkeys seemed pacified by these words and they went away carrying the corpse with them.

Two or three days later the Muslim contractor became seriously ill, and since he had heard what Bhagavan had said to the monkeys, he interpreted the words to mean that Bhagavan had put a curse on him. He told his family about the incident, and since he was unable to travel himself, they went up to the temple to beg Bhagavan to forgive the contractor and to take the curse from him. One of the them said: "It is certain that your curse has hit him, so we beg you to be gracious enough to save him from death. Please give us some *vibhuti* (sacred ash) so that we can apply it to his head and then he will certainly recover."

Bhagavan smiled at them and said: "You are mistaken; I never curse or bless anyone. I

sent away the monkeys that came here by telling them the simple truth that death inevitably occurs to all those who are born. Moreover, I never give *vibhuti* to anyone. Please go home and nurse the patient whom you have left all alone."

The Muslim family was not convinced and they refused to move unless Bhagavan gave

them some *vibhuti*. Finally, in order to get rid of them, Bhagavan took some ashes from the fire and presented them to the family. The family was overjoyed and they rushed home to apply the ash to their ailing relative. Whether by nature or the *vibhuti*, the ailing contractor was back on his feet again within a few days. □

**He (the Pre-Existent) is not an attribute of being, but being is an attribute of Him; He is not contained in being, but being is contained in Him; He does not possess being, but being possesses Him; He is the eternity, the beginning and the measure of existence, being anterior to essence, essential existence and eternity, because He is the creative beginning, middle and end of all things... He is not This without being That; nor does He possess this mode of being without being that. On the contrary He is all things as being the cause of them all, and as holding together and anticipating in Himself all the beginnings and fulfilments of all things; and He is above them all in that He, anterior to their existence, super-essentially transcends them all. Hence all attributes may be affirmed at once of Him, and yet He is no thing. He possesses all shape and form, and yet is formless and shapeless, containing beforehand incomprehensively and transcendently the beginning, middle and end of all things, and shedding upon them a pure radiance of that one and undifferentiated causality whence all their fairness comes.**

— Dionysius (Greek Philosopher)

**In its true state, mind is naked, immaculate; not made of anything, being of the voidness; clear, vacuous, without duality, transparent; timeless, uncompounded, unimpeded, colourless; not realizable as a separate thing, but as the unity of all things, yet not composed of them; of one taste, and transcendent over differentiation.**

— Padma-Sambhava (Tibetan Yogi)

**Those who desire the fruit of Buddhahood should renounce the notion of existence because it is deluding like a magical display, but they should also renounce the notion of non-existence, for it is non-existent. O wise ones, listen to this, for insofar as one renounces both extremes, the state in which one abides is neither *Samsara* nor *Nirvana*, for one has renounced these two.**

— Anangavajra

**As soon as the mouth is opened, evils spring forth. People either neglect the root and speak of the branches, or neglect the reality of the 'illusory' world and speak only of enlightenment. Or else they chatter of cosmic activities leading to transformations, while neglecting the Substance from which they spring.**

— Huang Po (Zen Master)



# BOOK REVIEWS

**UNMAI VILAKKAM:** The Exposition of Truth, By Sri C.N. Singaravelu, Published by the Author, Sivamanam, 31, Second Cross Street, West C.I.T. Nagar, Madras-600 035, Pp. xiv+84 Price Rs.6/-

The book under review is a primer of Saiva Siddhanta and it is one of the fourteen authoritative works on the religious philosophy of the Tamils. Its author, Manavacakam Kadantar is a disciple of Meykandar, the first among the divine line of preceptors known as Saiva Sanaatana Acharayas. This work is regarded as a resume of the spiritual experiences in the line of Meykandar.

The topics discussed in *Unmai vilakkam* are : 1. The thirty six evolvents of *Maya*; 2. The innate evil principle, *Anava*; 3. The deeds which cause worldly experiences; 4. The individual self; 5. The aspect of God-head that confers illumination and bliss; 6. The aspect of God-head that dispels darkness; 7. The unifying formula of the five letters; 8. The nature of the state of freedom and bliss; 9. The means of attainment.

As the author of this book has translated all these ideas faithfully from the Tamil language into English there is very little to be said by way of review.

The English translation of this book will be very useful to scholars whose mother tongue is not Tamil. The author has given the gist of the Tamil verses in easy readable English prose, adding notes wherever necessary. He has taken two extracts from the writings of the late Sir Ponnambalam Arunachalam and late Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy relating to *Nataraja*, both of which enhance the value of the book.

In a nutshell Saiva Siddhanta says that *Sivam* is one; *Jnanam* is knowledge of its true nature; *bodham* is the realisation of such knowledge as advocated by Meykandar in his concept of *Siva-jnana-bodham*. According to Saiva Siddhanta, *Siva* is the supreme reality and the *jiva* is of the same *guna* as *Siva* but is not identical with it as it is in the Advaita Vedanta of Shankara. Saiva Siddhanta further states that the three *padarthas* i.e. God (*pati*), soul (*pasu*) and the bonds (*pasa*), and the thirty-six *tattvas* constituting the world are all real.

It is a small neat book which could be profitably read by anyone seeking a general introduction to the principles of Saiva Siddhanta.

Prof. K.S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

**RAMANA THATHA — Grandfather Ramana:** By Kumari Sarada. Pub.: Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore-560 003. Pp.22. Price: Rs.5/-.

Kumari Sarada is, perhaps, the youngest editor of a spiritual journal. '*Ramana*', the monthly issued by the Bangalore Ramana Centre, has completed already one year and its editorials stand out for her devotion to Sri Bhagavan and her intense involvement in the Ramana Movement and in its popularisation.

In her maiden venture, Kumari Sarada presents here Bhagavan in the aspect of a grandfather — *RAMANA THATHA* — which should be most appealing to children. It is well-known, and children know it too, that a grandfather can be less strict on discipline, more tolerant and forgiving in his love for children than even parents. So, their love for '*Ramana Thatha*' should awaken their love for Ramana without any element of compulsion. The many instances of Bhagavan as *Thatha*, be it in relation to animals, children or grown-ups give an all-round picture satisfying children's love for stories.

The most appealing trait of the narrative and portrayal of Bhagavan as *Thatha* is that Kumari Sarada could do so from the standpoint of a child as coming from a child to children. Children are sure to be interested and appreciative.

This is the first children's book on Bhagavan. Ramana-children all over the world deserve many more such simple but attractive books on Bhagavan. Kumari Sarada has this responsibility!

LUCIA OSBORNE

**HAD SANKARA LIVED TODAY.** By Mathuram Bhoothalingam. Pub.: Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd., Madras. Price Rs.20/- Pp. 120

The two outstanding features of Sankara's teachings are the doctrines that the world is all *maya* and that what truly exists is not duality or multiplicity but unity. Although these two metaphysical principles appear to defy common sense, they are now beginning to attain respectability in the strictly unmetaphysical realms of modern science. Ever since 1927, when the quantum theory was first unravelled, scientists have been reconciled to the

hallucinatory nature of the world. Books such as *The Tao of Physics* and *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* have sought to synthesise western science with eastern thought and now even novelists are elaborating themes that date back to Sankara. Take this extract from Borges' 'Inquisitions' for example:

'I believe that we shall find them in the antinomies of Kant and in the dialectic of Zeno... The greatest wizard would be the one who bewitched himself to the point of accepting his own phantasmagorias as autonomous apparitions. Wouldn't that be our case? ... We (the indivisible divinity that operates in us) have dreamed the world. We have dreamed it as enduring, mysterious, visible, omnipresent in space and stable in time, but we have consented to tenuous and eternal intervals of illogicalness in its architecture that we might know it is false.'

In this context, the title of the book under review is inappropriate as Sankara is more alive today than in his own times.

The author points out, however, that there is an urgent need today for a mental revision and an adaptation of religious principles and teachings to meet "the vastly changing physical and social environment". He notes that Sankara's doctrine of *maya vada* "does not mean the negation of life" but "a single-minded search for truth and self-realisation". The vital message of Sankara is brought out by the author in the following terms:

"In those days we thought of all this as spiritual seeking. The moderns prefer to call it a search for identity. Modern or ancient, to know ourselves as we wish to know, the way remains the same: to look at oneself objectively; to look within with analytical detachment. To meditate."

The book is divided into two parts and takes the form of a meditative dialogue. The hero of this Socratic-type dialogue is Vidya Sankar who takes the part of a university scholar in the first part and then becomes transformed into Sankara himself in the second half and is thus able to answer modern spiritual questions in an authoritative manner. Of course, even if Sankara was alive today, he could not be expected to solve all our problems as long as his message of 'oneness behind the differences' is not taken to heart. The thesis of the book is that no path but the one which establishes the truth of the unity of *Atman* and *Brahman* can avoid strife and suffering; the book maintains that this was true in the past and that it is still true today.

ARGUS

SRI LALITA TRISATI BHASHYA OF SRI SANKARA BHAGAVATPADA. By C. Suryanarayana Murthy. Pub: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulpati Munshi Marg, Bombay 400 007. Pp. xxviii + 125. Price Rs.30/-

The Lalita Trisati is one of the great poems in praise of *Paradevata* as Sri Lalita. It is found in Sri Lalitapakyana of

Brahmanda Purana and Sri Sankara Bhagavatpada has written a commentary on it comparable to his *bhashya* on the Brahmasutras by bringing into play his encyclopaedic erudition, his incisive intellect and his persuasive arguments to illumine the sacred text. The author, Dr. Changaty Suryanarayana Murthy has taken great pains to bring home all the relevant interpretations for the various names (*namas*), and he has pointed out the elements which profoundly enunciate the advaita doctrine of non-duality, even though the names themselves are primarily intended for physical worship (*puja*).

I am confident that the Trisati will be of interest to many as the substance of non-duality peeps through the various names. However, the transliteration into English would have been more easy to read and follow if the lengthy names were split up into separate parts. The details given in the introduction are exhaustive and illuminating.

The worship of the various gods, which are the visible form of the transcendental, point only to the final reality, and they take the devotee gradually from duality to non-duality. The image is only a symbol to help the devotee to concentrate on the formless and nameless reality. The Self of the advaitin is the God of the Dvaitin. *Puja* is for the purification of the mind (*chitta-suddhi*) and is therefore a preparation for God Realisation.

The author maintains that even when one is far advanced on the path of Self Realisation, *pujas* are still worthwhile, for they have to be continued for the sake of other devotees. He feels that such a course will set an example and encourage devotees who are not mature enough to transcend physical worship. As justification for this he states that *nirguna* and *saguna*, the unmanifest and the manifest are not contrary, but taken together, they complement each other and give a better understanding of the real truth of existence. Pursuing this theme he adds that the truth of non-duality, far from being a bar to devotion, is a great aid in the preliminary stages of practice. The names of the Gods and Goddesses give expression to the truth of unity and show that there is no incompatibility between the worship of God with form and the realisation of Brahman without form. The unity is in the transcendental state while devotion is in relativity. However, there are instances of people who perform *pujas* with such intensity that they temporarily immerse themselves in the Self within. The advaitin gives the whole of his love to the Self whereas the devotee turns it outwards to God; in many cases the results are the same.

All these ideas and more besides have been clearly explained by the author in a most captivating way.

PROFESSOR K.S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

PERENNIAL QUESTIONS. By George Grimm. Pub: Motilal Banarsidas, Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi — 7 Pp. 63 Price Rs. 25.00

Such perennial questions as "Where have I come from and where am I going?" are likely to assail any earnest

soul "in an hour of inner stillness", and the answers are to be found, not in the writings of scientists or philosophers, but in the inner experiences of true mystics who speak out from intuitive knowledge. The book under review is a translation from Grimm's *Ewige Fragen*; it is an introduction to the philosophical religions, and in discussing the fundamental problems of philosophy, it turns to early Indian thought for its profound answers. It is gratifying to note that the editor, Max Hoppe, in hailing the spiritual trends noticeable in both Vedanta and Buddhism, states that their highest perfection was reached "in more recent times by Sri Ramana Maharshi, the saint from Tiruvannamalai in South India. The birth of the 'I-thought' is the person's birth, and the death of the former is the death of the latter also. After the 'I-thought' has arisen it comes to the false identification with the body. But once you have ceased to identify yourself with the body and the real Self has become reality, that delusion vanishes."

Where else than in Bhagavan's teachings can the true seeker find an answer to the "perennial questions"?

ARGUS

THE CLASSICS OF WESTERN SPIRITUALITY, A 60 VOLUME LIBRARY OF THE GREAT SPIRITUAL MASTERS. Pub: S.P.C.K., Holy Trinity Church, Marylebone Road, London NW1 4DU

In the last few decades there has been an avalanche of books on the spiritual masters of the orient; the works of almost every major figure are still in print along with numerous commentaries and biographies to back up the original works. In contrast to this, the works of the major western spiritual masters have been sadly neglected. The Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge is currently making a major effort to remedy this gap in the world's spiritual literature by republishing some of the most famous works of Christian, Jewish and Islamic mystics. It is a remarkable sign of the growing interest in both mysticism and ecumenicalism in the west that a Christian publisher should contemplate publishing works by such unchristian figures as Ibn Al-Arabi and Sharafuddin Maneri.

Each book in the series contains an original work of a western mystic and a lengthy introductory essay by a scholar who has specialist knowledge of the mystic concerned. The series is unfortunately limited to those saints and mystics who produced a significant amount of written work, but even so, the whole spectrum of western spirituality is represented. It is not possible in a short review such as this to comment on the contents of such a vast body of work other than saying that all the works in this series have been translated and critically edited especially for this series, and that the standard of scholarship and presentation in the volumes so far released has been uniformly high.

The books have all been issued in paperback and seem to be excessively priced even by the inflationary standards

of 1982. However, they will be greatly appreciated by all those who have an interest in the western mystical tradition, and particularly by those who have been unable to find copies of works which have long been out of print.

D.G.

SEEKING THE MASTER, A GUIDE TO THE ASHRAMS OF INDIA. By Muz Murray. Pub: Neville Spearman, The Priory Gate, Friars Street, Sudbury, Suffolk, England. Pp. 416 Price £ 3.95

Although designed primarily as a guide for foreigners who are coming to India on a spiritual pilgrimage, this book will be of interest to all seekers who are still searching for a teaching, a Guru or an Ashram which will satisfy their temperament and their spiritual inclinations. It is an encyclopaedic compilation of all of India's major spiritual institutions, along with many of its lesser known ones, which aims to give all the information any prospective visitor or pilgrim might require. Arranged on a state by state basis, all the entries on the major ashrams include information on the teacher and the teachings, the daily routine, the style of the ashram, the accommodation, the type of food, the fees charged, how to get there, and much else besides. The editor has scrupulously avoided making any assessments of the ashrams he visited, but at the end of each section he often prints comments from visitors which usually give a penetrating insight into the atmosphere of the ashram, the friendliness of the staff and inmates and the attitude of the management to visitors. It will probably come as no surprise to those who have visited a number of famous ashrams that the managers of these various enterprises seem to alienate a large number of their visitors and prospective devotees by their overbearing attitude, their lack of friendliness and their preoccupation with money. Although it is a book which is designed to be consulted from time to time and not to be read, its pages will provide a fascinating afternoon's entertainment for anyone who wants to contrast the superlative-ridden official accounts which start each section with the views and impressions of the people who have experienced the ashrams first-hand.

The author collected most of the information himself during a three year pilgrimage to India, nine months of which were spent at Sri Ramanasramam. Some of the information is now a little out of date, but despite this, the information contained in this book represents the most comprehensive summary of the spiritual facilities available in India today: highly recommended.

D.G.

THE PATH OF SRI RAMANA (PART ONE). Sadhu Om. Pub: Sri Ramana Kshetra, Kanvashrama, Varkala, Kerala. Also available from Sadhu Om, Ramana Nagar, Sri Ramanasramam P.O. Tiruvannamalai 606 603 Pp. 190 Price Rs. 12.00

"To abide as the Heart as It is, (that is, without thought, as 'I am') is truly meditating upon the Heart, the

Reality', asserts Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, who ever abides in the Heart, beyond thought, and who has graciously shown the direct and simple path for the salvation of humanity." Thus begins Sri Sadhu Om in this excellent book, originally written in Tamil and published under the title 'Sri Ramana Vazhi'. The book is an exposition of Sri Bhagavan's teachings and deals particularly with the practice of self-enquiry. The author supports his arguments with numerous quotations from Bhagavan's works, particularly *Ulladu Narpadu* and *Upadesa Undiyar*, and in doing so, he clarifies many aspects of Sri Bhagavan's teachings and clears away many of the misunderstandings which have arisen with regard to the practice of self-enquiry.

Sri Natanananda Swami points out in the foreword that the author has exposed the defects in several such wrong interpretations with sound reasons and arguments and has "taken great pains to bring forth faithfully in this book the correct meaning of the teachings of his *Inana-Guru*, Bhagavan Sri Ramana". Further he affirms that Bhagavan Himself, residing in the author's tongue gave forth this divine work and that "He has thereby graciously condescended to weed off the funguses in the form of wrong interpretations which have in recent years sprouted and spread in the direct path to true knowledge revealed by Him."

The book has recently been reprinted, with several modifications, the most interesting of which is an appendix which gives a literal word for word translation of "Who am I?" with some interesting background information on the genesis of the work.

The path of spiritual life has always been treated by philosophers and religious leaders alike as an arduous arcane task, but in this book, we find the lion's claws pared, the jungle cleared, and the way to wisdom made not so dreadful after all.

YOGA, ART OF RELAZATION. By Wolter Keers, Jaques Lewensztain, Kumari Malavika. Pub: Watkins, 21, Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London Pp. 143 Price not indicated.

This book on Yoga, part of which was written by Wolter Keers, one of our regular Mountain Path contributors,

is yet another recent publication which is aimed at dispelling the "blatant nonsense" and the "inadequate guidance" found in "ninety per cent of what has been published on Yoga" so far. As the authors feel that most of the books on yoga might actually cause harm, or at the least lead the reader on a long unnecessary detour, they have started this clean-up programme to help us to wake up and discover that man is free, open, beyond time and space, not fragmented, but an integral and indivisible part of the whole of humanity. The yoga that is dealt with in this book is aimed at helping us to drink from the living fountain that is our real nature.

There are two kinds of yoga: the first traces its ancestry to Patanjali and is primarily concerned with developing the mind and the body, whereas the second kind, which is expounded in this book, sees all mental and bodily activities as defence mechanisms which only serve to perpetuate the illusory ego-sense. Instead of prescribing exercises that bolster the dreamed-up image of the personality (an inevitable result of any system whose practitioners still retain the feeling that there is an 'I' 'doing' the exercises), this yoga prescribes the art of relaxation whereby man discovers that he is not an entity within a universe but that he is the universe and he is what surrounds him. This is true liberation or *Moksha*. The following passage interested the reviewer on account of the strong similarity between its ideas and the account which Sri Bhagavan gave of his death experience:

"For, on account of the close identification with this personality-idea or personality-feeling over quite a period of years, the panicky feeling will surge up: 'I am going to die'. That is where a magnifying glass is of great help. Only in looking calmly and clearly, and not allowing any panic to rule us shall we find that *there is no I that could thus die*. This 'I', this personality, is no more than an image, kept alive *only* by our belief in it. And it is this belief that makes the image tell us: 'You are dying', while in truth, only the image disappears". (page 57)

This is a book which deserves a wide audience and it will certainly be appreciated by all those who have enjoyed Mr. Keers' contributions to our magazine.

ARGUS

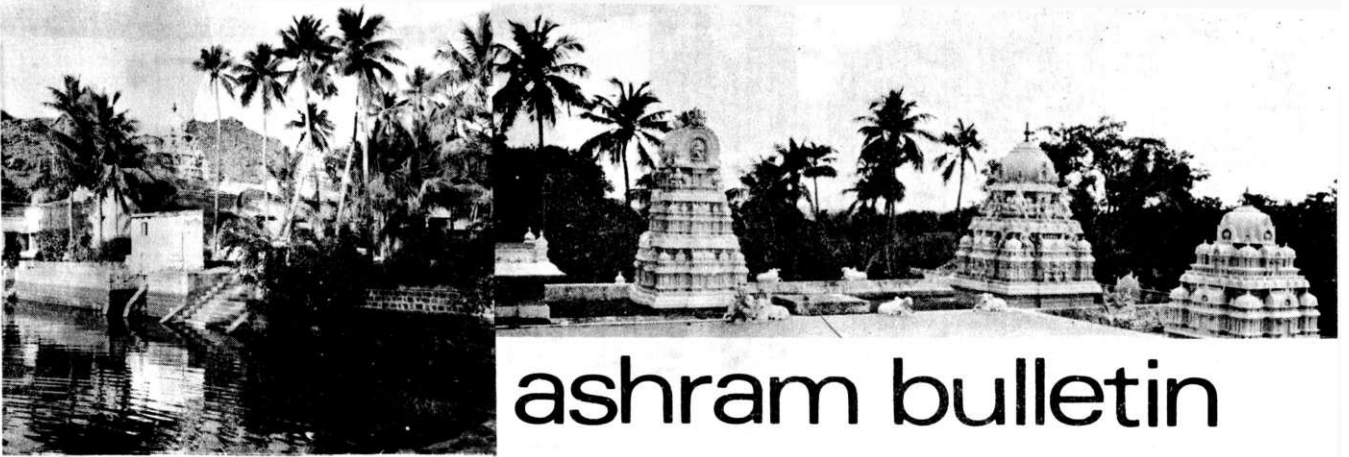
#### RAMANA LITERATURE IN BENGALI

Thanks to the dedicated services of **Dr. (Mrs.) Purnima Sircar**, books in Bengali on Bhagavan have begun to appear. It is solely through her labour of love that the Bengali edition of Arthur Osborne's *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self Knowledge* saw the light of day and now she informs us that its first edition is exhausted and the second edition is already being planned.

In March '82, she brought out *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Vol.1 in Bengali, entitled *Sri Ramana Vachanamrta*, and Volumes 2 and 3 will soon follow.

pp.295 + xv Price: Rs. 16/- available from:

1. Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai 606 603.
2. Dr. (Mrs.) Purnima Sircar, Flat No.Q.3, Vidyasagar Niketan, Salt Lake, Sector 7, Calcutta 700 064.
3. Sarvodaya Book Stall, Howrah Station.



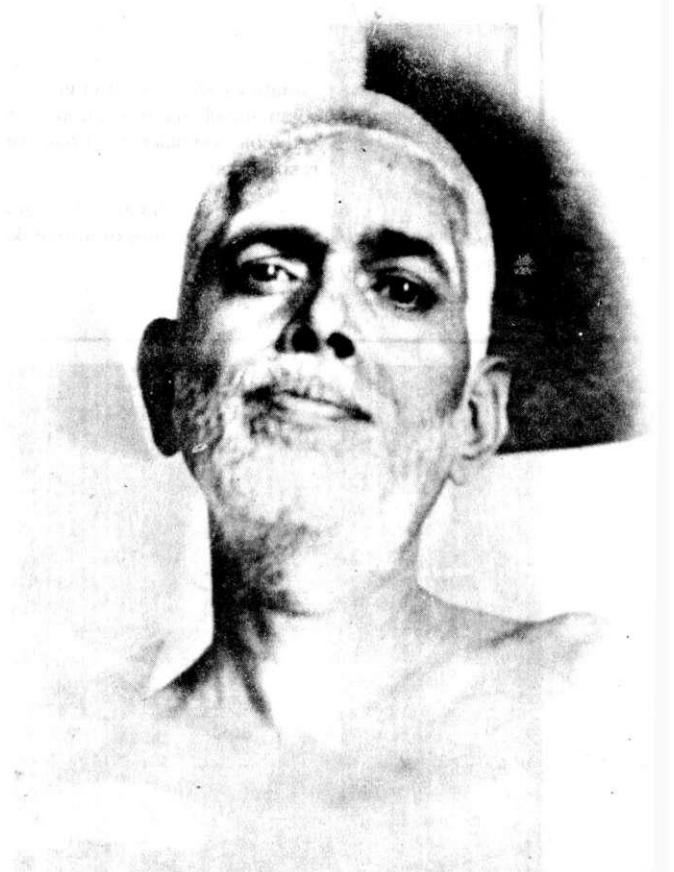
# ashram bulletin

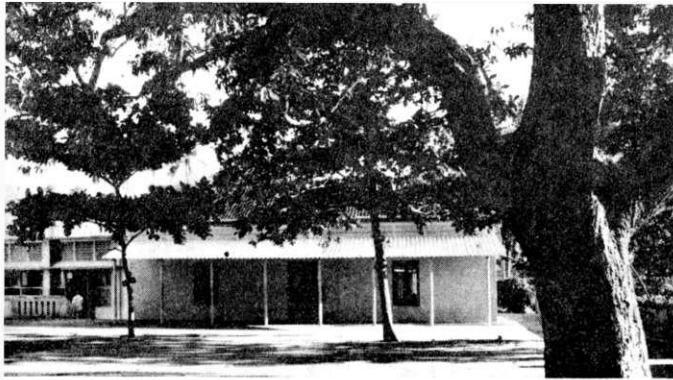
## SRI RAMANASRAMAM TODAY-II

### Sanctified Presence

The atmosphere in Sri Ramanasramam is surcharged with Bhagavan. Wherever one sits, the mind becomes naturally quiet, in-drawn and lost in its source. Even so, there is, in some sense, a special aura about the 'Old Hall', may be because it was here that Sri Ramana held His 'Court' for more than twenty years. No one can forget the serene evening hour after *Vedaparayana*, when Bhagavan sat in solemn silence like Dakshinamurti Himself. "Calm, immutable like a rock", He would recline on the sofa directing grace on the fortunate persons present. On the very first occasion that Paul Brunton walked into this atmosphere, he found a 'steady river of peace' flowing and taking him beyond his mind into the very depths of his Being. How many are those who have partaken of this gracious gift, given unasked! It was in the Old Hall that those conversations took place which are recorded by Munagala Venkataramaiah in 'Talks', by Devaraja Mudaliar in 'Day by Day', by Suri Nagamma in 'Letters', by Cohen in 'Guru Ramana', and by Subbaramayya in 'Reminiscences'. In that sanctified atmosphere one's total attention was fixed on the subject of subjects, the Self, and abidance in it through Self-Enquiry

*"Directing His Grace"*





Old Hall — Bhagavan's "Court"



"retains its virtue"

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Today too, in this hallowed spot, Bhagavan's continued Presence can be felt deeply within if only one is prepared to surrender oneself to Him. Small wonder that many seekers now-a-days are drawn to this Old Hall, where they feel the active and continuing presence of Sri Ramana and discover within themselves the fount of life and light eternal. The place the Master has made holy retains its virtue still.



Betty and Harry O'Hanlon

"Our stay at the Ashram was the most inspiring two weeks we have ever spent. The Old Meditation Hall, particularly is suffused with His Presence".

Betty and Harry O'Hanlon,  
Alberta, Canada.

"We are all having today the experience of immensity and depth of Ramana in His Old Hall".

N.S. Pantsachiv, Poona.

"As I meditate in the Hall, in the all-pervading Presence of Bhagavan Ramana my heart wells up with gratitude for Ramana Ashram".

Mother Yvonne Pemoine, Rishikesh

"At the Hall, at Bhagavan's Feet, the same feet, the same Peace, the same love, the same care, the same Presence".

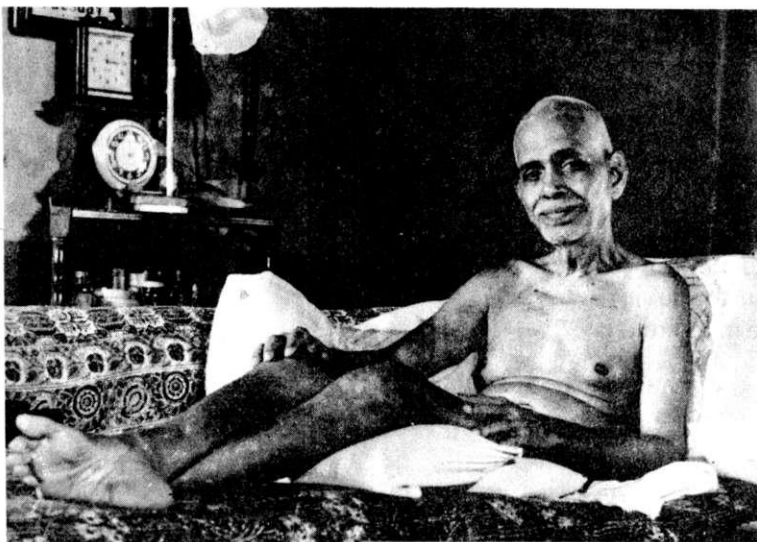
Dr. CH Sharma, London.



Sri Govind Narain

"When we sat in Bhagavan's meditation Hall we could feel His radiations with full strength. For spiritual sadhana this undoubtedly is the blessed place and Bhagavan is still here".

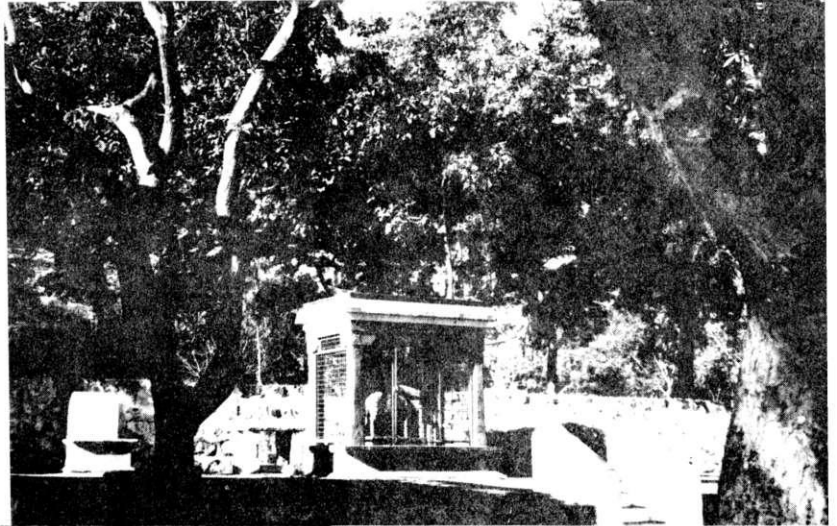
Sri Govind Narain,  
Governor of Karnataka



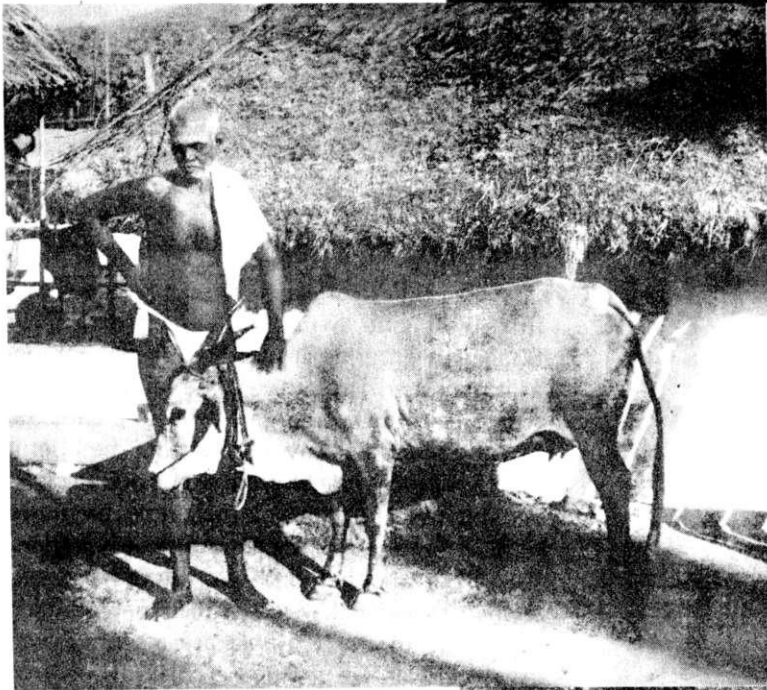
"A steady river of Peace flowing" —  
"Calm immutable like a rock"

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*Samadhi of  
Cow Lakshmi*

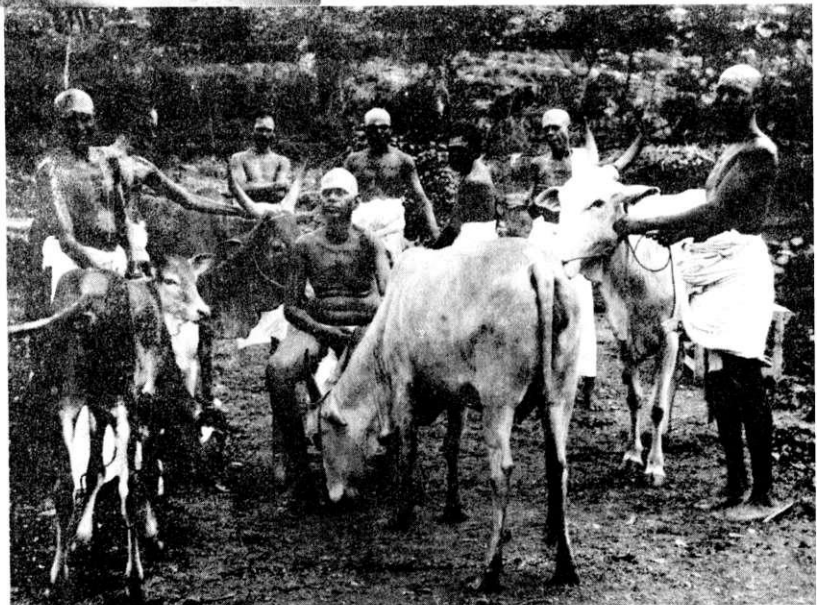


*Cow Lakshmi and  
her "Mother"  
Bhagavan.*

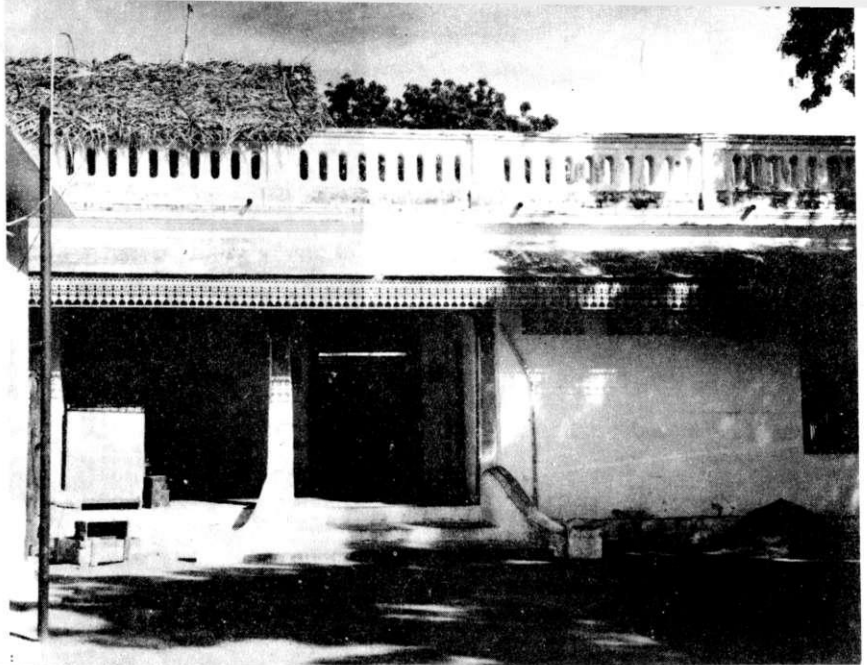


On the other side of the grove lies the *Samadhi* of Cow Lakshmi, reminding us of the liberating power of surrender at his feet. The location of the *Samadhi* is most appropriate. The relationship between Lakshmi and Bhagavan was like that between a calf and the mother cow. Indeed, Lakshmi has come to the Ashram as a calf and adopted Bhagavan, as her mother, and gained free access to the Old Hall for enjoying Bhagavan's loving care.

*"Enjoying  
Bhagavan's loving  
care"*



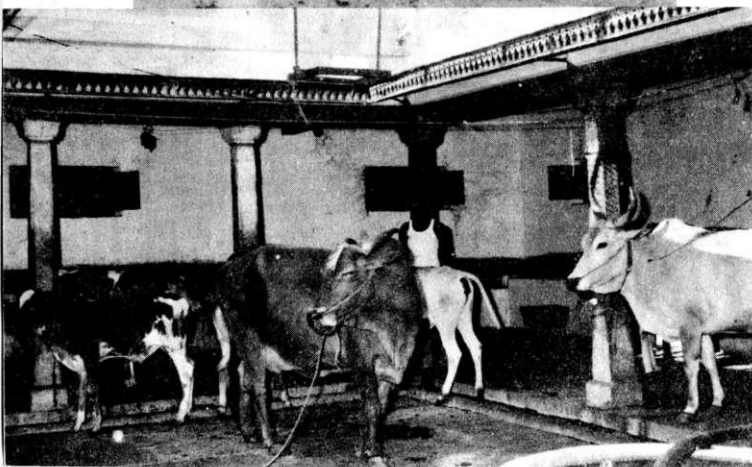
Entrance to Goshala



"Surrender at His Feet"



When the *Goshala* (a shed for cows) was first built, she would not enter it without Bhagavan entering it along with her. Strange as it may seem, many were the *Jayanti* days on which Lakshmi would give birth to a calf! She breathed her last only after getting the liberating touch and tender parting words of Bhagavan. So, when we enter the *Goshala* now, memories of cow Lakshmi come to our minds and we thank her and her progeny for the plentiful supply of good milk we get at Sri Ramanasramam. The cows in our *Goshala* are attended with great care as we remember Bhagavan's own loving ways with all creation of which the cow Lakshmi was for His devotees the symbol and the centre. **Sri Subramania Swami** evinces keen interest in attending to the needs of the cows.



"*Iddlis* were first served to the cow in the days of Bhagavan. *Iddlis* would specially be prepared for cows on days like *Jayanti* when *uppuma* would be made for the ashramites. Bhagavan was particular about it!"



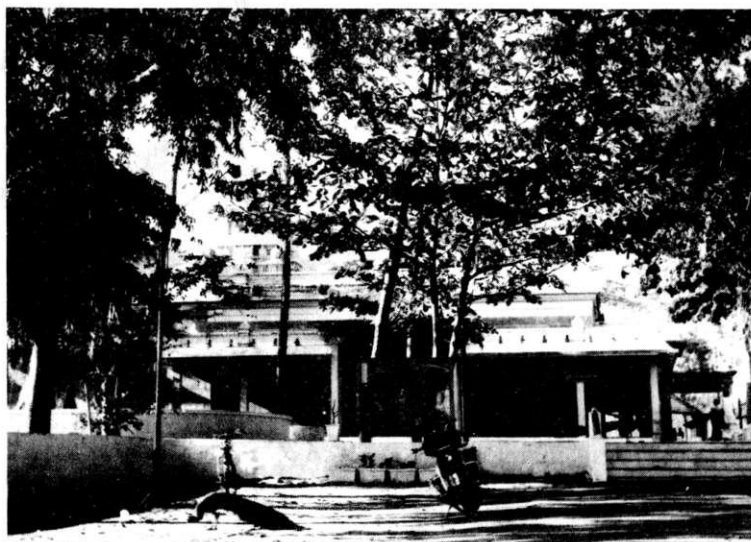
Subramania Swami

Sri Subramania Swami



The presence of old devotees is a 'benediction' to many pilgrims, for meeting them and talking to them makes it more easy for one to gain familiarity with Ramana, the inner Guru. There is **Lokamma Pati**, old and bent with age, but full of sparkle when she starts talking about Bhagavan, recalling the days when she helped Bhagavan in the kitchen and pleasing Him moreover by singing for Him Muruganar's songs. **Lucia Osborne** is ready to give advice and guidance on the 'Quest'. There is **Vaikuntavasar**, who was for many years the attendant

of Sri Bhagavan, recounting how Sri Ramana would not hesitate to break the rules when it came to tender concern for His devotees. He would cite the case of **Prabhavathi Raje**, who wished to bid Bhagavan farewell and secure His blessings before her marriage by holding tight with both her hands Bhagavan's feet, a thing not generally permitted. Sri Bhagavan had cautioned Vaikuntavasar earlier by telling him that she was getting married and leaving the Ashram, as if pleading with him not to prevent her!



Sanctified Atmosphere — inside our Home



Lokamma Pati

"I was only looking and looking at Bhagavan with my eyes full of tears".

— Lokamma Pati



Mrs. Lucia Osborne

"Think only of Bhagavan, Arunachala, ever-present in your heart. He becomes vibrant in the measure you remember Him".

— Lucia Osborne



Sri Vaikuntavasar

"Bhagavan is my only god. He is everything for me".

— Vaikuntavasar



Smt. Prabhavathi Raje

"His written works are the *sabda rupa* of Bhagavan. This *sabda rupa* of Bhagavan is melodiously preserved in these 'Ramana Cassettes'.

— Prabhavathi Raje



Sri Raja Iyer

"Bhagavan showed us tangibly how all devotion will find its way to Him, whatever its level, provided it is sincere".

—Raja Iyer



'Regal walk under the post box'.

Sri Ganesan is always happy in the midst of Bhagavan's devotees — old and fresh! (l to r) our **Managing Editor, Sri N. Balarama Reddiar, Mr. Riaz Padamsee, Mrs. Behroz Padamsee, Baby Ruia and Yashna Maya.**



Sent by Mon. Henri Hartung, **Dominique Bornand**, of Switzerland who enjoyed her two-weeks' stay at the Ashram, as shown by what she wrote after returning home:

"I have spent two weeks with Ramana's blessings, Arunachala's holy strength, with the Peace of the old meditation Hall, as well as the *Samadhi* Hall. I felt privileged to be able to stay more than three days at the Ashram. I have lived with intense emotion the 102nd Ramana's *Jayanti*, on the 10th January. It was a benediction for me to meet N. Balarama Reddy, Mrs. Cornelissen and so many spiritual people living or visiting the Ashram. Now, this pilgrimage has convinced me that Sri Ramana Maharshi is my '*Guru*' and He has given me so much, as well as Arunachala. Ramana's Presence is felt very deeply here at Fleurier and the links between the Ashram and the Center of Fleurier are increasing".

There is **Raja Iyer**, who was the first Post Master of Sri Ramanasramam, acting as a guide for newcomers and explaining the significance of every nook and corner of the place.

To all who come to Sri Ramanasramam, hearing of its fragrance as a spiritual oasis, **Ganesan** is ever ready to extend a warm welcome. An inmate of the Ashram for over 20 years, he lavishes on every devotee and visitor individual affection and care during their stay with Bhagavan at Sri Ramanasramam. None goes back disappointed, because for Ganesan service to devotees is the highest *sadhana*!

And often, the devotees express the immense peace which they feel in the sanctified atmosphere of the Ashram; they express joy at the deep love and care with which they are looked after.

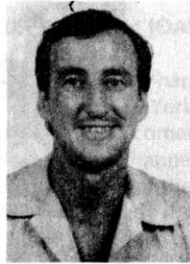
Their words proceed straight from their hearts, though in different forms — from one it comes as a poem, from another as self-analysis!



Dominique Bornand



Sybren van der Meer



Gary James Baird

**Sybren van der Meer** of Holland spent a month in and around the Ashram. His sincerity to help the poor and his devotion to Sri Bhagavan were transparent. He writes:

"I was born in Holland during a highly symbolic struggle between good and evil in the form of the second World War. I was brought up in a non-religious environment. But, surprisingly my deep interests have all along been spiritual in content. In my 24th year through severe shocking incidents in my life I was drawn more deeply inward to spiritual quest. Years of struggle! My wife was a great inspiration to me. It was under her prompting that I came to India and straight to Sri Ramanasramam. The power of Sri Bhagavan's presence helped me make great progress in my meditation. Ramana is a *true living saint*. I have at last reached my destination!"

**Gary James Baird**, hailing from Australia, stayed at the Ashram for a full three months. He enjoyed his solitude, happy in continuous *sadhana*, only occasionally permitting freedom to himself to go up or round the Hill! He writes:

"Oh Bhagavan Ramana  
Lord of my heart  
To Arunachala you have brought me  
To give me my start  
The silent transmission between  
you and me  
Love's divine happiness is  
our inner secret  
As the days go by you root out my  
ego in the eternal presence of Now  
How high the mountain's wonderful  
omnipresent grace  
I fall at your feet in a  
humble state

RAMANA MY LOVE  
I look deep into your eyes  
you have burned away all of  
my lies  
For now I am free in the splendour  
of the wise".

It is always a joy to receive pilgrims from **Arunachala Ashrama!** Their devotion to Sri Bhagavan is total and their interest in devotees of Bhagavan deep. **Sandra and Margo**, were at the Ashram from Karthigai *Deepam* to Bhagavan's *Jayanti* and impressed us all by their simplicity, silent dedication and warmth in relationship. On their return to New York, they wrote:

*Namaskar Ganesan, our dear brother in Bhagavan,*

Please forgive this long lapse without a letter. I have tried and tried to express my gratitude but every time I look at what I have written it has fallen so short of the depth of my experience at Sri Ramanasramam, that I have torn it up and decided to try later.

As Margo and I approached Sri Ramanasramam in a rickshaw after over thirty-six hours of travelling my mind and heart were burning with doubts — was it too late to come to Arunachala so long after Bhagavan had left the body? Was I truly a devotee of Bhagavan or simply a vacationer? Was there any way to know? The tension was unbearable, I thought we would never cover the short distance from the bus stop to the Ashram. Then you so graciously took us directly to the *Samadhi* and Bhagavan simply accepted the burden of all my doubts and washed them away in a flood of tears. It felt like a holy baptism to me and it brings tears to my eyes even now as I remember it. It was Bhagavan's grace that took us immediately to stand in silence before our Master: Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Then, during *Deepam* I experienced a tremendous reassurance that Bhagavan was indeed my spiritual Master and that all I need do is surrender completely to Him. As *prasad* was being distributed after the lighting of the Holy Beacon, I was melted in a special awareness of Bhagavan's Grace and Love. I felt that He was assuring me: "and not just this *prasad* but *all* things are provided for you".

— **Sandra & Margo**  
Arunachala Ashrama,  
New York

#### "RAMANA GEET" — (Hindi)

Sri Bhagavan's original verses in Tamil and verses on Him, translated into Hindi, have delightfully been set to music by **Sri P.S. Dixit**, the reputed Music Director and melodiously sung by "**RAMANANJALI**", led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan.

#### "RAMANA GEETHAM" — (Tamil)

Tamil verses of praise on Bhagavan Ramana by Sri Muruganar and Sri Sadhu Om, have captivatingly been set to music by **Sri Elaya Raja**, the famous Music Director, and scintillatingly sung by "**RAMANANJALI**", led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan.

"Sri Bhagavan's teaching has been and still remains as Silence. His Presence, Guidance is ever present powerfully and in full force too at His abode. Fortunate as we are, we have luxuriated this Grace for the past three months".

*Smt & Sri Satyanarayana Tandon, Kanpur*

"Visit to the Ashram always means, drinking deep of the Grace of Ramana not only in meditation but in the loving care and company of devotees there".

*Ra. Ganapati*

**Sri Gokarn Prasad Sharma**, Principal of L.N. Dubey College, Motihari, Bihar, came to the Ashram, along with Dr. Sashibhusan Verma, and spent three quiet days in March. He is willing to share his experiences at the Ashram :

"I am grateful to the management of Sri Ramanasramam for their love, affection and care bestowed on casual



*Sri Gokarn Prasad Sharma*

visitors like us. The three exquisite days spent at this Ashram, where the Path of Realisation through "Who am I?" was revealed and expounded by Bhagavan Ramana, are unforgettable ones. Inmates — Jagadish Swami, Mrs. Osborne and others — gave me valuable information regarding *sadhana* and glimpses of Bhagavan's life. The entire Ashram is surcharged with the Presence of the Great Master — wherever I turned a thrill pervaded me. Bhagavan Ramana is present not only in Ashram but in the whole of Arunachala. I pray to Ramana to grace me with the knowledge and realisation of *Who am I?*"

*"Ramana Group from Argentina"*



*Smt & Sri Satyanarayana Tandon*

#### RAMANA GROUP FROM ARGENTINA

A group of 13 devotees from Buenos Aires, Argentina, South America came to the Ashram for the first time attracted by Sri Ramana Maharshi's Teachings from books like *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge* by Arthur Osborne. They are:

**Rodocfo Bercovich, Clara Bercovich, Ana Maria Bercovich, Silvana Bercovich, Victoria Schneerson, Nester Sulkin, Carolina Muchnick, Susana Debernardi, Rina Bellinger, Nelly Padovan, Adriana Otero, Felicitas Adan, Ana Maria Delorenzini.**

Having felt the magic of Arunachala and the pervading Presence of Sri Bhagavan, they asked Mrs. Osborne questions about Arunachala and Bhagavan's teachings. The explanations were in the form of stories which they seemed to enjoy.

"The power of Arunachala is so great and yet so subtle that without compulsion people are drawn to it from near and far as if by the force of some invisible magnet ...

People are overwhelmed by the mere presence of Arunachala, the form taken by Siva so that mortal eyes could behold Him and express their worship by going round the Hill. Arunachala pulsates with life. It is the Heart of the universe, also a signpost that points beyond our earthly concerns towards the Infinity from which we have originated".

**A LETTER FROM JOAN GREENBLATT, NEW YORK.**

"An interesting experience of His grace happened just the other day while we were in one of the spiritual/philosophical bookstores in New York. We had noticed, on an earlier visit that they had only two of Sri Bhagavan's books hidden in a corner on a top shelf. We felt it would be nice to introduce a few more books to them, but it never happened. This time also we found the books in the same inconspicuous place. As I stood in front of the shelf, looking at Sri Bhagavan's picture on the cover of the book, a boy began to ask the Saleslady if she could recommend a book on the life of a Saint. He seemed so utterly sincere. She handed him a book on Swami Rama (one of the many contemporary guru's to recently flood the States). The boy looked at the book and did not seem interested. The lady then directed him to another section of books. Even though I knew how Sri Bhagavan's books were amongst the others I mentally prayed that this sincere young man would find it. To my surprise and joy when I looked up again I found him holding Sri Bhagavan's book and telling his friend that he had found what he was looking for!"

**A LETTER FROM A NON-VISITOR.**

"Dear Ganesan,

I have been posted to lecture in Irkutsk University for the next two weeks.... some most beautiful landscapes (Lake Baikal and river Angara) and a feeling of being some thousand miles nearer to you than now and here".

— Tonu, Leningrad

**Br. Prasanna Chaitanya** with members of Chinmaya Mission, Madras who had a spiritual retreat at the Ashram in February.



**Br. Suddha Chaitanya**, who gives talks on Sri Bhagavan's 'Sat Darshana' and 'Upadesa Sara', spent a whole day, along with 30 devotees at the Ashram in March — "Soul-fulfilling day!"





Takao Yamada (first from right) and his friends in all smiles in the company of Lucy Cornelissen and our Managing Editor.

#### 'NIPPON RAMANA KENDRA'

We are very happy to hear from **Sri Sozo Hashimoto**, (2-28-2-, Komazawa, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo, Japan) that a group of dedicated seekers meet every month. They will

name it as the '**Nippon Ramana Kendra**' and plan to conduct it in the following manner: Basic course (in self-enquiry) and Sat Sangh.

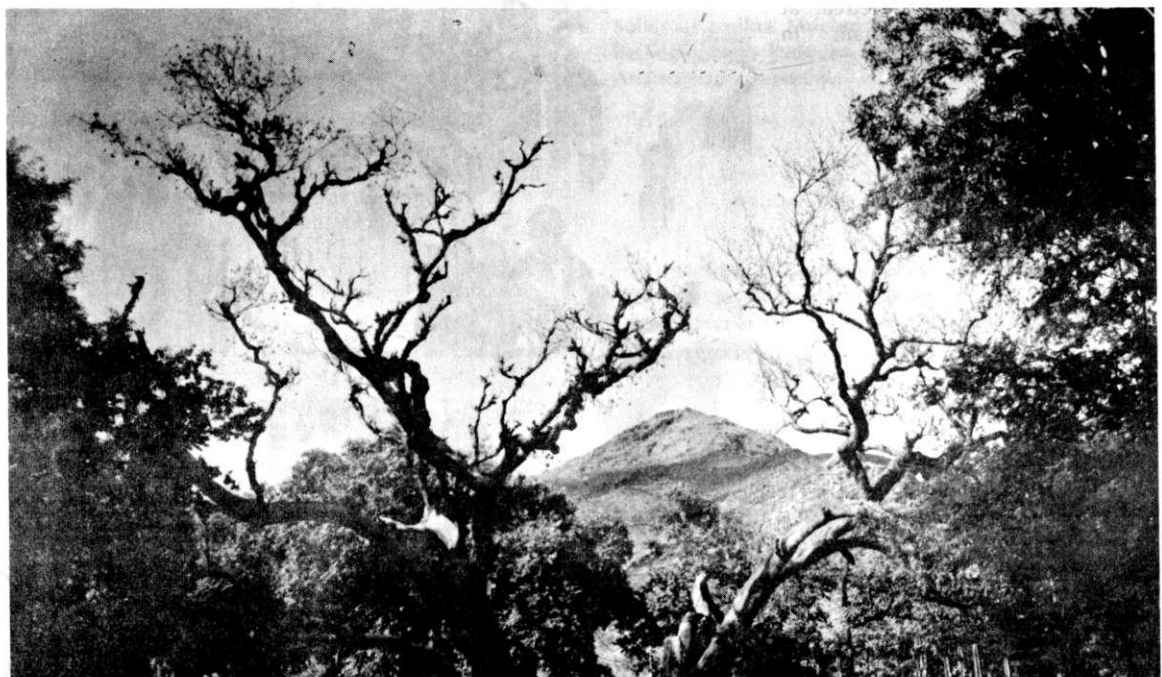
Sri Sozo Hashimoto sought help to found a Ramana Kendra in Japan. **Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning**, Bangalore, (Smt. Sulochana Natarajan) has already a scheme ready for conducting such *Ramana Sat Sanghs*<sup>1</sup>. It was sent to him.

We congratulate Sri Hashimoto heartily! We pray that Sri Bhagavan's Gracious Blessings be on the '**Nippon Ramana Kendra**'.

**Sri Takao Yamada** (Tadao-Part Heights B505, 1231-19, Hatsuawa, Hachioji-Shi Tokyo, Japan) came with his friends and spent a few meditation-filled days at the Ashram. He is deeply interested in Sri Bhagavan's specific teaching about the Heart. He is keen in spreading Sri Bhagavan's teaching in Japan. We wish our Japanese brethren come soon into the fold of Sri Ramana, visit Arunachala and imbibe more fully the Grace of Sri Bhagavan!

<sup>1</sup> This can be obtained from her at 40/41, 2nd Cross, Lower Palace Orchards, Bangalore 560 003.

*"Arunachala, the Heart of the universe"*





Kumari Sarada  
(Editor, "RAMANA")

# Ramana Movement in Bangalore

By Kumari SARADA

For those who delight in basking in Ramana sunshine, Bhagavan has been providing plenty of opportunities for service. The event of the year was the allotment of the 'blessed site' for the construction of Bhagavan's Shrine/Meditation Hall/Research Library and October 29, 1981, the day when the *Bhoomi Pooja* was done, the foundation stone laid, will always be a day to remember. The most satisfying was the first entry into the world of children



Free Ramana Library



"Ramana" "Ramana"

through the **Ramana Bala Kendra**. Under the Free Library Scheme, already five **Free Libraries** have been started; thus making Bhagavan's life and teachings easily accessible to many. "RAMANA", the monthly family journal, has been promoting the ideal of brotherhood through equality. The flow of 'Ramana Music' through cassettes, '*Ramananjali*' programmes and through Carnatic music concerts, has been steadily growing. Thus, Bangalore too is becoming '*Ramana Bhoomi*'!



"Ramananjali"

## RAMANA CHILDREN



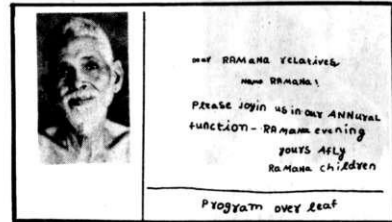
The delightful children in Arunachala Temple.

Beaming faces of 'Ramana Children' shone from the pages of *The Mountain Path*, exactly a year ago! RAMANA BALA KENDRA is now in full bloom. The children have participated joyously in a whole year of Ramana Activity. Once every week, they have listened to Bhagavan's story, sung Ramana songs and danced Ramana dances. And the other days of the week, they have carried Bhagavan in their hearts. Their deep involvement in Bhagavan was particularly evident in their annual function and during their visit to Sri Ramanasramam.

All the way to our Home — to Ramanasramam — the children kept singing, singing over and over again the ten Ramana songs which they had learnt, interspersed with choruses of *Namo Ramana* and the chanting of *Upadesa Saram*. Reaching Tiruvannamalai, they were overjoyed, and though tired from the week's rehearsal, the previous night's *Ramana Evening* and the long road journey — they would not rest a minute. Climbing up to Skandashram and Virupaksha Cave, visiting the temple, going round the Hill — they were eager to visit every place associated with Bhagavan.

At the Ashram, every tree, every stone meant something and started a story. One question was: 'Where is the mango tree which someone was beating to bring down the fruits and the leaves also fell off and Bhagavan got very angry?' Akka, is this the kitchen-garden where Bhagavan had the peanut party with monkey, goat and squirrel?' 'Mama, please tell us the story of the deer and the crow!' They were thrilled to see the grinding stones in the kitchen used by Bhagavan and the place in the dining hall where He used to sit and eat in the midst of devotees. The visit to *Goshala* was full of excitement, as they had just read and enjoyed the story of Cow Lakshmi.

*Their chance now to give Akka! (On their way round Arunachala Hill.)*



Invitation card written by a Ramana Bala Kendra kid!

"I enjoyed the 'Ramana Drama' immensely".

N. Balarama Reddiar

"I could see that the children were very well trained and acted naturally. They seemed to have enjoyed their performance as much as the audience. The children's lively dancing was an additional artistic enhancement".

-Lucia Osborne

"The children are blessed to act the 'Ramana Drama' in the immediate presence of Sri Bhagavan and that too on the holy Maha Sivarathri night! The blessings of all the old devotees of Sri Bhagavan are fully on them".

-Kunju Swami

"The children brought before our eyes the beauty that is Ramana"!

-Ramaswami Pillai







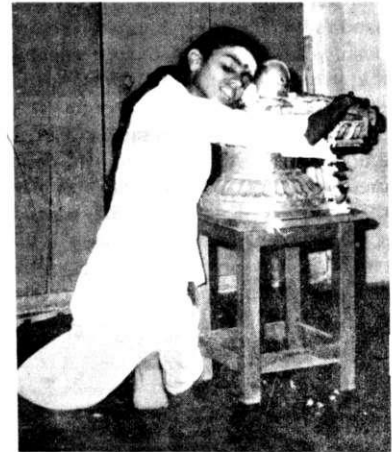
"I'll tell you the story of Ramana, listen. Many years ago....."



Venkataraman : "Uncle scolded me. So I came to **Amma.**"



"Arunachala! Arunachala is a place on earth?!"



"Father..... I have come".

So full of Bhagavan, these children naturally gave a very moving performance at the Ashram on the evening of the second day there. Bhagavan's presence, the auspicious occasion of *Sivaratri*, the children's total involvement and the appreciation of the devotees made the evening's performance a thrilling experience.

That night as we left Sri Ramanasramam, the children had tears in their eyes and were reluctant to return to Bangalore. But they soon cheered up with the thought that they were taking Bhagavan with them to their own RAMANA BALA KENDRA.

And we look forward to the starting of many more RAMANA BALA KENDRAS!

Ramana Bala Kendra at "Home"



Dear Ramana Relatives,

Reading about our RAMANA BALA KENDRA, you must have realised what a joy it is to us and how great an experience it is! Many of you too may be eager to start RAMANA BALA KENDRAS like this. Do write to Sarada Akka and find out the details.

'Ramana Children'  
(Ramana Bala Kendra, Bangalore)

the Maharshi. **Sri S. Sankaranarayanan's** scholarship and deep devotion was evident in all his three talks on *Sat Darshan*. **Prabhavati Raje's** speech on *Upadesa Saram* held the attention of all and her second talk while releasing the *Sat Darshana* cassette at Bangalore, was an equally moving one. **Prof. K.B. Ramakrishna Rao's Sri Ramana Gita** was scholarly and uplifting. **Swami Pranavananda's** homely talk in Kannada on the simplicity and the beauty of Bhagavan's Life and Teachings went straight to the listeners' hearts. **Dr. Pranatarthi Haran's** talk on *Upadesa Saram* was full of emotion and meaning. The special talk of **V. Ganesan** on '*Sri Bhagavan — Man among men*' stood out for its depth and clarity of presentation. **Sri A.R. Natarajan's 'Ramana Jyoti'** continued the same wave-length. **Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao**, while speaking on Bhagavan Ramana's *Who am I?* explained clearly how the modern theories of consciousness were

**JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS —  
SEMINAR ON HIS TEACHINGS —  
RAMANA MUSIC FESTIVAL**

For the devotees of Bhagavan and for seekers of Truth, the 24th, 25th and 26th January, '82 were three Ramana-filled days.

The Seminar at Bangalore was inaugurated by the Ashram President, **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**. **Swami Harshananda** in his inaugural address spoke of the transformation of our daily lives through putting into practice the teachings of



Ashram President, **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, inaugurated the Seminar by lighting a lamp. **Sri Swami Harshananda** looks on with reverence.



Ramana — speakers : **Sri A.R. Natarajan, V. Ganesan, Princess Prabhavati Raje, Sri Sankaranarayanan.**

Smt. Vedavalli's '*Ramana Music*'



The '*Golden Voiced*' **H.K. Narayana** (left) is honoured by **Sri Dharmajvani** (right).



veering round to the fundamental truths which had been so clearly enunciated by Bhagavan.

**Smt. Vedavalli's** 'Ramana Music' concert on the 24th evening evinced the immense care she had taken in preparing Sri Muruganar's songs and **Sri H.K. Narayana's** on the 25th brought out his deep devotion. Both were accompanied on the violin by Sri S. Seshagiri Rao and on Mridangam, Sri S. Rajagopal. The "*Ramana Geetha Mala*" by the "**Ramananjali**", led by **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan**, predictably enthralled the audience.

Release of 'RAMANA VANI' — Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning's first Kannada cassette — by **Sri K.P. Pandey** and that of 'RAMANASRAMADA PATRAGALU' (A translation of Smt. Suri Nagamma's Letters) by **Sri N.N. Katavi** were other highlights of the celebrations.

The two films, one on the Centenary Celebrations at Sri Ramanasramam and the other the Documentary on Sri Bhagavan, were screened to the delight of large audiences.

*'Ramananjali' at its usual best!*



## RELEASE OF "RAMANA THATHA"

The release of *Ramana Thatha* on the 28th February, '82 was an event of events! The world of children with their vivid imagination and unpolluted innocence is indeed the Kingdom of God on earth and the best place where Bhagavan can shine. **Dr. Shivaram Karanth**, the celebrated winner of the *Jnanpeeth* Award, the *Sahitya* Academy Award and the UNESCO Award takes special interest in children's books. Praise from him for Kumari Sarada's *Ramana Thatha* was indeed a great blessing and encouragement. Such was his appreciation of the effort that he graciously agreed to translate it into Kannada, so that more children could enjoy its beauty. The Bangalore Centre is hopeful of following Dr. Karanth's advice to the children's appetite for more and more Ramana books.



Release of 'RAMANA THATHA'. Dr. Shivaram Karanth blessing Kumari Sarada by giving her a copy. Smt. Narasimhan is in the middle.

**'RAMANANJALI' AT MUSIC ACADEMY, MADRAS**

Music Academy, Madras, stands for the best of traditions in music, particularly Carnatic Music. An opportunity of praising Bhagavan's glory at this prestigious auditorium was provided by the **Nārada Gana Sabha** and the Department of Kannada and Culture of the Government of

Karnataka. The '*Ramananjali*', led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, was on this great occasion at its inspired best. *Sat Darshana* chanting, '*Annamalai Ani*', '*Seerar Valam Ser*', '*Ninaithalum Inippurude*' stood out in a programme in which every item was a hit! The fortunate listeners will long remember the concert of March 6, 1982!



**"RAMANA BHOOMI"  
"RAMANANJALI" — '100'**

"I feel Sri Bhagavan's presence here completely" said **Sant Keshavadas**, while talking on the occasion of the 100th performance of "*Ramananjali*" at the Chowdaiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore, on the *Ugadi* day — the Kannada and Telugu New Year Day — the 26th March '82.

It was a truly happy *Ugadi* day indeed, for the fortunate 1300, who could get accommodation in the hall! There was some special uplifting quality that day in the musical offering to Sri Bhagavan by the "*Ramananjali*" led by **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan**.

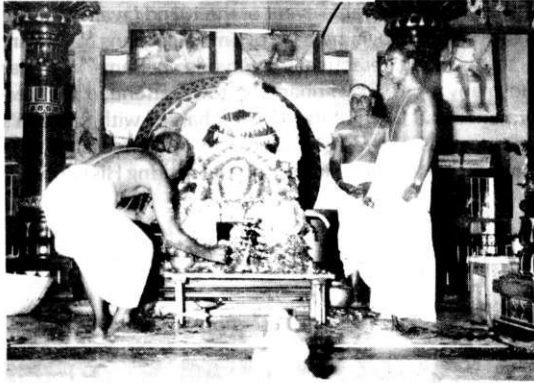
**Sri Govind Narain**, Governor of Karnataka, speaking on the occasion referred to the "*Ramananjali*" as the harbinger of Bhagavan's blessings to every nook and corner of the world. The governor also released "*RAMANA BHOOMI*", a special souvenir for the free library scheme of the Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore. The Centre plans to make Bhagavan's teachings accessible through a chain of libraries — a scheme which has already caught on.

**Smt. Chandra Narain** graciously presented gifts to the members of the "*Ramananjali*" — the glorious voices which not only have sung holy Ramana's Name and Fame hundreds of times but also will continue to sing many more hundreds of times on behalf of Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri Govind Narain, Governor of Karnataka, released the Souvenir "*RAMANA BHOOMI*" and congratulated the "*Ramananjali*" on its 100th '*Ramana Music*' concert. (l to r) Sri S. Krishnaswamy, Dr. R. Shankaranarayanan, Smt. Chandra Narain, Sri Govind Narain, Sant Keshavadas, Sri A.R. Natarajan and our Managing Editor.



## GLORIOUS 102nd JAYANTHI AT SRI RAMANASRAMAM



Aarti to Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam.

Jayanti days are special occasions at Sri Ramanasramam when one feels more tangibly the Presence and Grace of Sri Bhagavan. The Birth Centenary of Sri Bhagavan, celebrated so joyously throughout the world in 1980, took His Name and Message to many thousands. Thereafter, more people evince eagerness to be at Sri Ramanasramam and participate in special functions like Jayanti. This year the attendance was so large that many old devotees recalled with great happiness the Jayanti days in the forties when Sri Bhagavan was physically present.

Pooja to Ramaneswara Mahalingam and Matruboortheswara were performed in all solemnity.

This was followed by a function organised for formally releasing two Ramana-Cassettes, "RAMANA VAIBHAVAM"

**Sri Sadhu Om** receives from **Sri Kunju Swami** 'Ramana Vaibhavam' Cassette.



and "SAT DARSHANA". Speaking on the occasion, **Sri Kunju Swami** expressed gratification that with the growth of Ramana Music, a felt need of many devotees was being met and blessed **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan**, for having pioneered this effort. Smt. Prabhavati Raje said that in spreading the message of the Master the "Sat Darshana" cassette would play a very useful and important role. Receiving these cassettes on behalf of the devotees, **Sandra** and **Margo** of "Arunachala Ashrama", New York,



**Sri Kunju Swami** blesses **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan** after presenting her with the 'Ramana Vaibhavam' Cassette.



**Sri Sandra** of 'Arunachala Ashrama' receives 'Sat Darshana' Cassette from the Ashram President (l to r) **Sri A.R. Natarajan**, **Sri Sandra**, **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, **Sri Kunju Swami**.

thanked the Ashram authorities for spreading Ramana's Presence in every possible way.

Sri Sadhu Om emphasised that the beauty and charm of Bhagavan's Verse compositions should be made easily available to all. In this task, he applauded, the huge strides already successfully made by '**Ramananjali**'.



'Tiruvannamalai Ramana Music' group singing Ramana's glory.

"Tiruvannamalai Ramana Music Group" (having learnt Ramana Music in classes for just a month) had the good fortune of giving their first concert on Bhagavan's Jayanti.

The most memorable event of the 102nd Jayanti was the 'Ramananjali' programme led by Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, in the evening. practically everyone in Ramana Nagar and many from Tiruvannamalai town attended the performance and felt that the air was charged with Ramana's Presence, as the artistes and the audience shared a common joy and pride in singing and hearing His Glories.

A section of Ramana-bhaktas.



#### RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Bhagavan's 102nd Jayanti was celebrated with great enthusiasm on January 10. Early in the morning, Pooja was performed at the shrine followed by Vedaparayana. In the evening, there was an enjoyable music concert by Smt. Saraswathi Santhanam and party. At the Uttara Swami Malai Temple, trikala Pooja was performed in which the members participated and sang 'Arunachala Siva' in chorus before the deity.

On February 14, Sri A.V. Subramanian, Addl. General Manager, Southern Railways, Madras gave an interesting talk on bhakti as expounded in Ramana Gita

Sivaratri was observed with due solemnity with Vedaparayana on February 22.

On March 10, Sri Swami Chinmayananda visited the Kendra. The large gathering who had assembled in the auditorium listened with rapt attention to Swamiji's inspiring talk on Maharshi Ramana, whom he hailed as the contemporary embodiment of the eternal Wisdom revealed by the Upanishads, the Gita and Adi Sankara.

**Sri H.K. Narayanan, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan, Kumari Ambika and Kumari Sarada** — on the sacred 102nd Jayanti day-sharing RamanaPresence.





Sri Swami Chinmayananda speaks at Ramana Kendra, Delhi. Next to him is Professor Swaminathan, our Editor.



Sri Swami Chinmayananda offering Pushpanjali to Sri Bhagavan.



Sri K.K. Nambiar, Chairman, Ramana Kendra, Madras, welcoming the guests.



Ramana Jayanti at Madras. (l to r) Sri B. Ananthaswamy, Sri T.N. Venkataraman, Sri K.K. Nambiar, Professor K. Swaminathan and Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan.

#### RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS.

Ramana Kendra, Madras, celebrated, on a grand scale, Sri Bhagavan's Jayanti on January 17th.

The programme began at 6 a.m. with group chanting of *Aksharamanamalai* and other hymns followed by *Sahasranama Archana* and *Rudrabhisheka*. In the noon, about a thousand poor people were fed at the Kendra premises.

In the afternoon, there was a public meeting at the 'Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan' at 5 p.m. Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan lucidly expounded the philosophy of Sri Bhagavan in his own inimitable style. Sri B. Ananthaswamy spoke on *Aksharamanamalai*.

Professor K. Swaminathan gave the principal talk, in which he extolled Bhagavan as *Purushottama*, the Supreme Person, and as such the only Real Person of our age. At the same time, he was the pure Impersonal *sat*, Absolute Being. In his thought-provoking speech, he dwelt at length on the timeless and transcendent truth embodied by Bhagavan and on the timelessness of his message to modern man. He asked: "Do we turn in gratitude and adoration to Madurai where he realized the Self, or do we think oftener of Tiruvannamalai where the Sage lived for 54 years and where His Ashram still stands and retains in some mysterious way His very presence?"

The Chairman of the Kendra, Sri K.K. Nambiar presided and welcomed the chief guests. There was a devotional music programme by the Krithika Bhajana Mandali.

Justice K.S. Venkataraman Vice-Chairman, proposed a vote of thanks.

**AT BRIGHTON, U.S.A.**

"This year, my wife and I had a small ceremony honouring Bhagavan's Birthday. It filled us with great joy!"

—Paul Hacoen Antokolsky  
Brighton, MA 02135.

**AT JAFFNA**

"Bhagavan's Living Presence is within the reach of everyone who turns to Ramana-Jyoti—such was our experience, when we gathered around His holy Presence on *Punarpoosam*, Jayanti day celebration in the Divine Life Society Hall, this month in Jaffna.

There was no T.V. set *but* the gleaming smile of Sri Bhagavan lit up the hearts of even those who had come to watch but who sat down to meditate. There was no Radio set, but His voice vibrated the heart strings of the young and old in the spacious hall. The music in their hearts they bore, long after it was heard no more. There was no *amritha surabi*, but His wholesome act of sharing in that day's Maheswara Puja appeared the hunger of the body-mind and spirit of all of us, and it did in the dining Hall at Sri Ramanasramam in days of yore".

—Smt. Ratna Navaratnam,  
Jaffna, Sri Lanka

**AT VIJNANA RAMANEEYA ASHRAM, PALGHAT**

The 102nd *Jayanti* of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on 10th, 11th and 12th January, 1982 in a fitting manner.

The celebration started with Ganapathy *homam*. There was *akhanda japa* till noon on all the three days, followed by *Annadhana* when about five hundred poor people were fed.

In the public meeting on 10.1.1982, **Brahmasree Vaisravanath Raman Nambodri**, a great Sankrit scholar and a *Bhagavatopasaka*, presided. He spoke lucidly on *Bhakti* and *Para Bhakti*, as expounded in the eleventh canto of *Srimath Bhagavata*.

**Swami Mridanandaji** of Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Trichur, spoke of his own unique experience in the holy Presence of Sri Maharshi. He described Sri Ramana as a '*Sthita*

*Prajna*' and explained that the Direct Path to Self Realisation was the effacement of ego through Self-Enquiry. **Sri M.K. Subramanian** welcomed the gathering and **Sri K.P.D. Nair** gave a vote of thanks.

The second day's function was presided over by **Sri K. Janardanana Thampan**. He gave an exposition of the life and teachings of Sri Bhagavan. **Sri P.A. Pasupathinathan** dealt in detail with the '*Path of Self Enquiry*'. **Sri P.K. Rajagopala Menon** welcomed the gathering and **Sri M.K. Doraswamy** gave a vote of thanks.

On the third day **Sri Sankaranarayanan**, an ardent devotee and member of our '*Ramana Study Circle*', gave an illuminating discourse on '*Upadesa Saram*'. There was a rapturous flute performance by **Sri Narayanan** and a grand Veena recital by **Sri A. Ananthanarayanan** and party of A.I.R. Trichur.



Ramana devotees at Jayanti Celebrations Palghat.



(l to r) Sri Subramanian, Sri Swami Mridananda and Brahmasri Vaisravanath Raman Nambodiri.



#### AT RAMANA MANDIRAM, MADURAI

Bhagavan's *Jayanti* was celebrated in a grand manner at Madurai for 3 days from January 8. **Sri K. Ranga Rao**, B.A. B.L. inaugurated the first day's programme. **Prof. B. Venkataraman** of the Sourashtra College, Madurai, spoke on Bhagavan's Teachings.

The second day's function began with a *bhajan* by the Sri Meenakshi Bhajan Sangam. In the evening **Sri Swami Vimalananda Saraswati**, President of Sivananda Tapovanam, presiding, **Dr. K.K. Krishnamoorthy**, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Madurai, gave a lucid talk on Bhagavan's life history.

On the third day, *Vedaparayanam* was followed by special *pujas* and *archana*. Nearly 500 poor people were given food as Bhagavan's *prasadam*. In the evening, Bhagavan's portrait was taken out in a procession in the four chitrai street with *nadaswaram*. The function came to an end with an eloquent speech by **Sri S.S.M. Sundaram**, Professor, Sourashtra College, Madurai. **Sri N. Somasundaram**, Organiser of the function, thanked all the devotees who helped make the celebrations a great success.

#### AT BHEEMUNIPATNAM

Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanti* was celebrated under the auspices of the Visva Hindu Parishad, Bheemunipatnam on January 10. *Ramana Sahasranama* archana and *Rudrabhishekam* were performed in the morning, and in the evening **Brahmachari Narayana Chaitanya** of Chinmaya Mission and **Sri Ram Bhatla Venkata Somayajulu** of Visakhapatnam spoke on Sri Bhagavan. **Sri C.L. Narasinga Rao**, Principal, Junior College, presided and **Sri P. Ramalinga Sarma** proposed a vote of thanks.

#### "RAMANA"

Following "RAMANA" of Bangalore Centre, in response to our appeal, three more Centres have started Ramana-journals: "Ramana Jyothi", Hyderabad, "Arunachala Ramana", Gudivada, "Ramana in Mauritius", Mauritius. We appeal again to all other Ramana Centres to bring out a family journal of their own. Let us offer many more flowers at His Holy Feet!

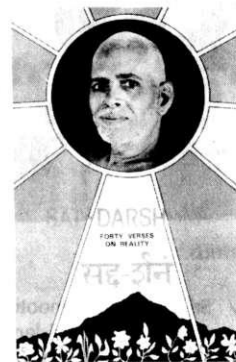
#### TWO ATTRACTIVE BOOKS

(offered at concessional rates)

Children!  
Know intimately  
your "Grandfather  
Ramana"! Order  
today for a copy of  
this first childrens'  
book on Bhagavan!



'Ramana Thatba'  
Price : Rs.3.



'Sat-Darshana'  
Price : Re.1.

Truth Revealed!  
Quintessence of  
Wisdom expounded  
in 'Forty Verses' by  
our Master. A  
treasure to be owned  
and assimilated by  
all drawn to Truth.  
Most lucid English  
translation of *Ulladu  
Narpadu*.

### JAYANTI CELEBRATIONS AT MAURITIUS

It is stated in their newly started journal: "*Ramana in Mauritius*": "Bhagavan Ramana, the invisible traveller who accompanied the *Ramananjali* has conquered the hearts of Mauritius". It is evidenced when we received the happy news from two staunch devotees in Mauritius — **Sri M. Thancanamootoo** and **Smt. Savitree Cuttaree** — each having celebrated the *Ramana Jayanti* in their own grand manner :



**Br. Pranavaji** distributing *Ramana Jayanti* Prasad.



*Ramana-bhaktas* of Mauritius.

*Ramana Maharshi Sabay* : Sri M. Thancanamootoo, President of the Sabay, arranged in the residence of Sri E. Chinappen, O.B.E., the celebrations of Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanti* on the 10th January '82. Nearly hundred devotees participated in this joyous function and partook of His munificent Grace. The devotees melted in *Ramana* while listening to *ramananjali* Music.



**Sri M. Chinappen** doing *aarti* to Sri Bhagavan

*Ramana Study Group*: Smt. Savitree Cuttaree reports: In spite of bad weather, the Celebrations commenced at 8 in the morning, with the reading portions of *Talks* in French; it was followed by a reading and explanation of the '*Jayanti*' '*Verses*' composed by Bhagavan. **Br. Pranavaji** of Chinmaya Mission spoke on Guru *Ramana* and the scriptures. Then *Archana* to Sri Bhagavan's portrait was done to the recitation of *Ramana Ashtothara*. After lunch there was a question and answer session. After tea in the evening, *bhajan* was done, which included *Ramananjali* songs, by *Reduit bhajana* group and others. The children did *kolattam*-dance and the grand function was concluded with *aarti* to Sri Bhagavan's magnificent picture.

**Mrs. Chinappen** offering coconut (**M. Chinappen** and **E. Chinappen**)



#### AT RAMANA BHAKTA MANDALI, HYDERABAD

Sri Bhagavan's 102nd *Jayanti* was celebrated by **Sri Ramana Bhaktha Mandali** from December 25 to 31st. The function commenced each day at 7.30 a.m. and concluded at 8 p.m. On all the seven days Vedic chanting was conducted by Pandits and there was poor-feeding on a very large scale. The *Jayanti* celebrations concluded with a '*Chandi Yagam*' which was witnessed by nearly 2000 devotees. **Sri Varanasi Venkateswara Sarma** was the Chief Priest for the '*Yagam*'. On December 30th, Bhagavan's portrait was taken in a procession through the streets of Hyderabad. "Thanks to the co-operation of devotees, the *Jayanti* celebrations were a great success", reports **Sri M. Narasimhan**

#### SRI VIDYA HOMAM

On Friday, March 19, *Sri Vidya Homam* was performed at the Ashram as usual in commemoration of the commencement of the worship of the *Meru-Chakra*, consecrated by the Touch of Bhagavan Ramana. The function was conducted on a grand scale with meticulous observance of all details by a band of well-versed *vaidiks*. The proceedings commenced at 7 a.m. and concluded with *Poornahuti* at 4 p.m. A large number of devotees participated in it. There was a *bhiksha* in the forenoon and at night *prasad* was distributed. This traditional ceremony is conducted every year by the willing and generous support of many *Ramana-bhaktas*.

#### GIFT OF RAMANA BOOKS



**Dr. Nandoochand**, Chairman of the Commission thanking **Mr. E. Chinappen**, O.B.E., on receiving the books on Sri Ramana. (1 to r) **M. Silarsa**, Asst. City Librarian, **Dr. K. Nandoochand**, Chairman, Commission of City, E. Chinappen, Vice President of **Ramana Maharshi Sabay** and **M. Thancanamootoo**.

Under the dynamic leadership of **Sri M. Thancanamootoo**, the '*Ramananjali*' had a remarkably successful tour in Mauritius, implanting Sri Ramana firmly in that picturesque island. It is again under his able advice, on our return, we had sent two sets of important publications of the Ashram on the life and teachings of Sri Maharshi to Sri Thancanamootoo.



**Mr. E. Chinappen** presenting books to **Mr. R. Gajeelee** Director of the Mauritius Institute, (1 to r) **S. Francois**, Chief Librarian, **R. Gajeelee**, Director, **E. Chinappen**.

We are glad that these sets of books have been duly presented on behalf of Sri Ramanasramam by Sri Thancanamootoo and **Sri E. Chinappen** to the Chairman of the Commission, Municipality of Port Louis and to the Director of the Mauritius Institute.

### "RAMANA IN MAURITIUS"

We are very happy to receive from **Sri C. Andachee** of Mauritius a beautiful folder-journal published in Mauritius, entitled: "RAMANA IN MAURITIUS".

While sending the first copy to be put on the *Samadhi* shrine of Sri Bhagavan, Sri Anadachee also conveyed the following happy developments in '**Ramana Study Group**' in Mauritius: "the Study Group is carrying on its Ramana-activities at the residence of the devout couple, **Mrs. & Mr. Marday Ramsay** of St. Julien. With the blessings of Sri Ramana Maharshi I will be distributing this issue on January 10th - on Sri Bhagavan's *Jayanti*. I want to bring out this journal every month, issued free of charge to all interested. I pray that in 1982 the teachings of Sri Ramana is spread to more places so that more people could lead a happier life".

### OBITUARY

#### Sri Krishna Bikshu

We regret to record the passing away of **Sri Krishna Bikshu** (Voruganti Venkatakrishnaiah) at Hyderabad on 30.12.1981, at the age of 77 years.

His *Ramana Leela* in Telugu is the most comprehensive of the biographies of Sri Bhagavan. It was written in the immediate presence of Sri Bhagavan, who went through every page of it.



Sri Krishna Bikshu

Even at the age of 15 years, he became interested in Vedanta literature, of which he made a deep study. In 1929, he came into contact with Sri Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni and was won over by his great intellectual power and spiritual radiance. That led him on to Sri Kavyakanta's *guru*, Sri Ramana, whom he visited on 17th May, 1929. For a while, his mind wavered between Sri Aurobindo and Sri Bhagavan, but in 1931 it was made up for him and since then he remained a staunch devotee of Sri Bhagavan.

With a degree in Law, he scarcely practised the profession, but dedicated his whole life to spiritual pursuits. A man of sharp intellect and prodigious learning, he authorised several works of which, besides *Ramana Leela*, *Sukti Sudha* (Supplement to Forty Verses), *Ramana Yoga Sutras*, a summary of *Ramana Lahari*, *Tripura Rahasya* - all in Telugu, and *Ramana Gita* (5th edition) in English merit special mention. Many more are his works, both

#### Extracts from 'Ramana in Mauritius'

"My short experience with the teaching of Bhagavan has renovated my ways of living"

— James.

"Without any doubt I can say that the ways of living as prescribed by Bhagavan Ramana has been helpful to me. I feel some important changes have taken place in the core of my heart".

— Marday.

"Never before have I gained such an opportunity to follow a teaching like this. For the last three months I have attended the days of the meeting. Really, I can conclude that certain changes have taken place in myself by the knowledge gained in Bhagavan's study. I have been successful to achieve self-control and self-discipline. I am living a happy life although life is full of problems".

— Mustapha.

published and unpublished; among the latter is his magnum opus, *Anasuya Ramayana*, a complete and faithful translation in Telugu of *Valmiki Ramayana*.

Before his death at 6.05 a.m. Sri Krishna Bhikshu joined his brother Dr. O. Ramachandraiah, in chanting *Arunachala Siva* from 3.40 to 5.20 a.m.

When his mother died at Nellore, the same day that Echammal died at Tiruvannamalai in 1945, Sri Bhagavan observed: "Poor Krishnaiah, he lost both his mothers on the same day!"

And Krishna Bhikshu reached his Master's Feet on the very day and month when Sri Bhagavan was born in 1879!

#### SRI K. RAMAPPA

**Sri K. Ramappa**, hailing from Karnataka State, was from his youth spiritually-minded. His devotion to Sri Bhagavan was unflinching. He paid regular annual visits to Sri Ramanasramam. After retiring from his successful professional career he visited his son-in-law Dr. M. Nagaraju, a famous gastroenterologist at Flint, and his daughter Smt. Renuka in the United States. On his return home he paid a visit to the Ashram in January 1982 along with his *satsang* friends. Just on the day of his return from the Ashram to Bangalore (25th January) he breathed his last, suddenly and returned to his Master's Feet.



Sri K. Ramappa