
THE MOUNTAIN PATH



VOL. 24 No. 2 April 1987

“Just as one would dive to recover something that has fallen into water, even so, one should, with a keen mind, dive into oneself, controlling speech and breath, and find the place whence the swell of rises. Thus should you know.”

— Sri Bhagavan's Forty Verses on Existence, verse 27
(Translation by Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan)

எழும்பு மகந்தை யெழுமிடத்தை நீரில்
விழுந்த பொருள்காண வேண்டி — முழுகுதல்போற்
கூர்ந்தமதி யாற்பேச்சு மூச்சடக்கிக் கொண்டுள்ளே
யாழ்ந்தறிய வேண்டு மறி.

— பகவான் ஸ்ரீ ரமணரின் உள்ளது நாற்பது - 28



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Sri Ramana Maharshi

be with

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The Spiritual Journal

published from Sri Ramanasramam

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MADRAS**

23

The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

—The Marital Garland of Letters, Verse 1

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Thou art the Primal
Being, whereas I count
not in this nor in the
other world. What didst
Thou gain then by my
worthless self, Oh Aruna-
chala!

*The Marital
Garland of Letters
Verse 93*

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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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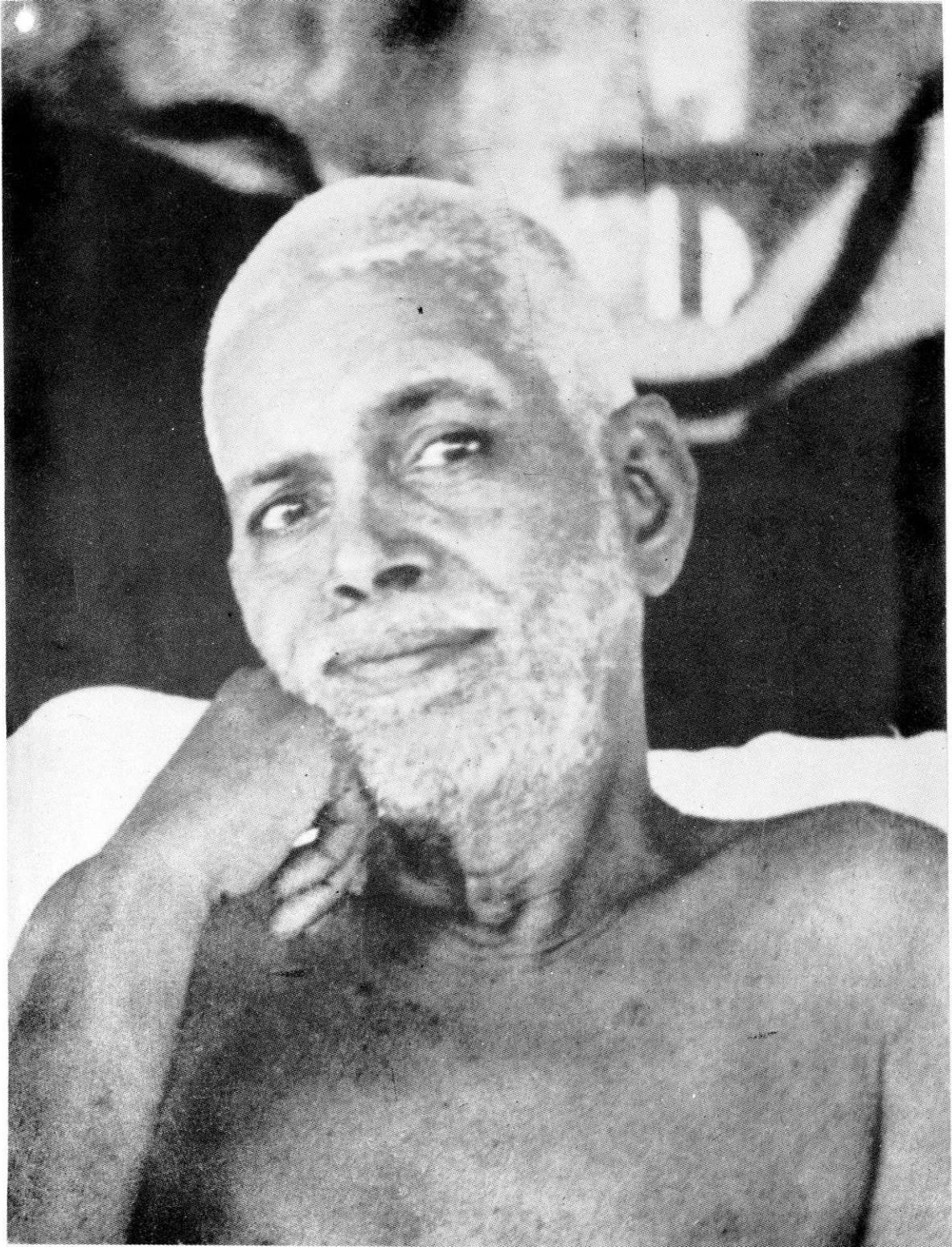
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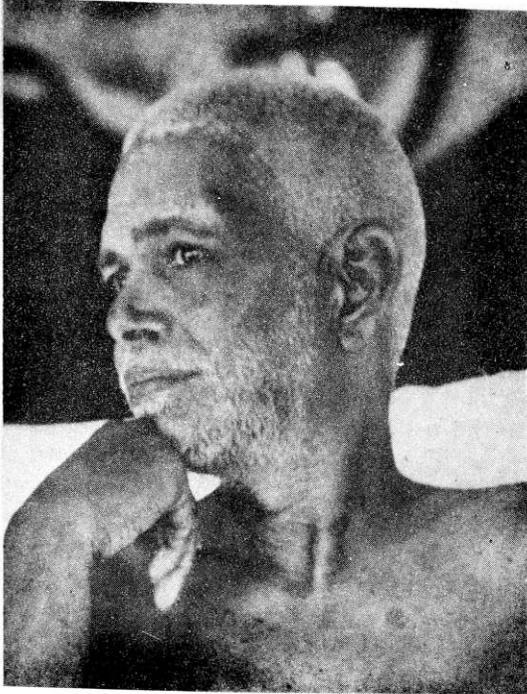
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH
is dedicated to
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi





75

What is happiness? It is a sense of well-being, a feeling of being at home with ourselves. Ceaselessly and vigorously we took for it in persons and things. But we are not able to get permanent happiness from anything. Still we hope against hope that we shall get it and keep on pursuing it.

Sri Bhagavan says that happiness does not depend on our possessions or achievements.

“If a man thinks that his happiness is due to external causes and his possessions, it is reasonable to conclude that his happiness must increase with the increase of possessions and diminish in proportion to their diminution. Therefore if he is devoid of possessions, his happiness should be nil. What is the real experience of man? Does it conform to this view?”

“In deep sleep the man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Every one

“PURSUIT” OF HAPPINESS

Editorial

The Mountain Path

Vol. 24. No. 2. April, 1987

desires to sleep soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent in man and is not due to external causes. One must realise his Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness”.

Happiness doesn't stem from fulfilling our desires. When a man is a bachelor, he enjoys himself. When he gets married, he finds happiness in fulfilling the desires of his wife. He is happy when his wife is happy. When children are born, the couple find happiness in fulfilling the desires of the children. Sometimes they fulfil the desires of the children at considerable expense. What matters to the couple is the happiness of the children and they are happy when they see their children happy. From this we

can see that it is possible to be supremely happy if we can go beyond the family and treat the entire world, as the *Mahabharata* says, as our family (*Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*). In other words, perpetual happiness is possible only when we are not 'me-centred'.

When we are unhappy, we pray. When we pray we submit ourselves to a higher power (for a short period). We don't assert our individuality; we become humble. To be humble is to be egoless. When there is no ego, no sense of individuality, there is peace of mind, happiness. The peace we get from prayer is the result of the mind being merged in the Self, though for a short period. Max Handel says: "Prayer is like the turning on of an electric switch. It doesn't produce the current; it provides a channel on which the electric current may flow". Sri Bhagavan says that surrender is a mighty prayer. In that prayer, individuality is completely extinguished, and there is perpetual joy. What blocks the current of happiness is our ego, our sense of individuality.

Sri Bhagavan says that happiness is our real state. When we are happy, we don't seek unhappiness. When we are healthy, we don't seek ill-health. But when we are ill, we want to be healthy, whole, as 'wholeness', happiness is our real nature. Happiness or bliss comes into being when individuality is completely lost. In that state, there is only unalloyed happiness. The desire for happiness is the result of a sense of incompleteness. When the fragmented mind mer-

ges in the Self, there is only fullness, completeness, and that is the state of Bliss, says Sri Bhagavan.

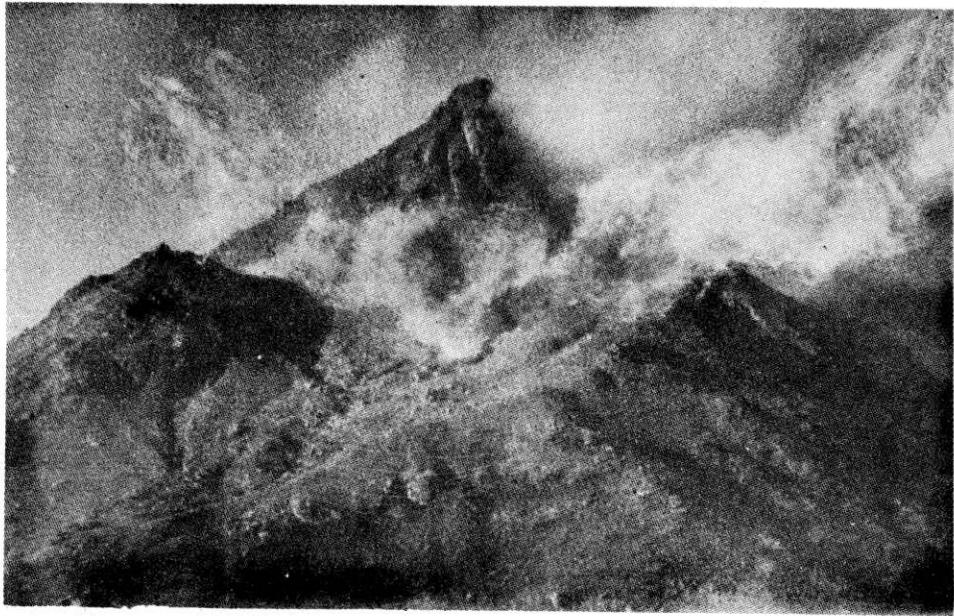
"Bliss is not something to be got. On the other hand you are always Bliss. This desire is born of the sense of incompleteness. To whom is this sense of incompleteness? Enquire. In deep sleep you were blissful. Now you are not so. What has interposed between that Bliss and this non-bliss? It is the ego. Seek its source and find you are Bliss".

"There is nothing new to get. You have, on the other hand, to get rid of your ignorance which makes you think that you are other than bliss. For whom is this ignorance? It is to the ego. Trace the source of the ego. Then the ego is lost and Bliss remains. It is eternal. You are that, here and now... That is the master-key for solving doubts. The doubts arise in the mind. The mind is born of the ego. The ego rises from the Self. Search the source of the ego and the Self is revealed. That alone remains. The universe is only expanded Self. It is not different from the Self."

Happiness or Bliss is realised when our ego disappears. It is not a state where we are aware of something; it is a state of pure Self - awareness. In that state there is no becoming but only being. Pleasures can be sought but not happiness. Happiness comes into being when the seeker merges in the Self, when all seeking ceases.

"*Samadhi* is itself the state of the Self. What do you understand by total loss of body consciousness? You do not imagine it to be falling into a sort of catalepsy or deep sleep. In *Samadhi* the mind is in *jagrat*, but, being free from thoughts, it enjoys the bliss of *sushupti*, in which the mind is withdrawn. In *Samadhi* the mind is so alert that it experiences *Brahman*."

— from GURU RAMANA, p. 79



ASHES OF REPENTANCE

A PHOTO POEM

By V. Dwaraknath Reddy

Space is Thy forehead, Arunachala!

Nature offers its incessant homage
Hugging with ardent love Thy holy feet
And gazing steadfast at the brooding
brow
That silently holds all timeless secrets.

Today, frightened by Thy aloofness,
Nature has sent the mist of her tears
Upwards in vapourous cloud to plead
"Forgive me my trespass and hold me
close".

Lord of compassion, Divine Hill of
Grace,
The meek offering has been accepted
And is seen smeared like sacred ashes
Across Thy forehead, Arunachala.

We gaze upon this auspicious sight
Folding our palms in fervent prayer,
And behold the towering majesty
That cradles us in its soothing shade.

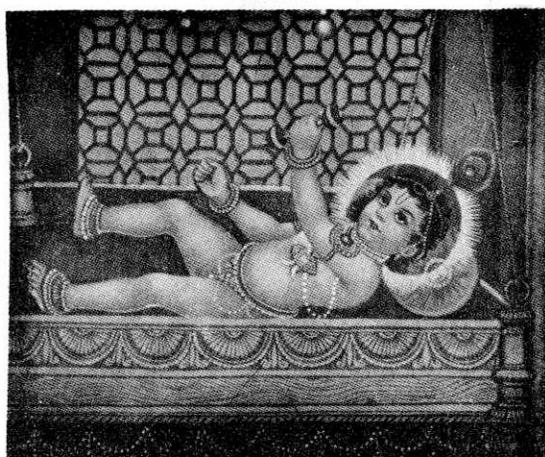
What need is there for words any more?
What need to search for contentment?
While storms rage upon the circum-
ference
Peace reigns within the silent nave

Gita Saara Taalaattu

(THE LULLABY OF GITA ESSENCE) ¹

By Namaraya J.

53. "How does Self-Jnana this dark deception efface?
(of) I'm-body err'r that e'en word-knowledge cannot raze?"
54. "Does deep Dark disappear by shouts mere of 'lamp! lamp!?'
Light up a firm flame if you would the night out-stamp?"
55. "Ajnana, shadow of Atman since times of yore,
When Oh! when would it, through Jnana, pack up and go?"
56. "Darkness though tenanting o'er thousand days a cave,
Vanishes 'pon mere sight of bright light, like a knave!"
57. "Where Action, Yoga, Askesis utterly fail
Can elusive Jnana then Ajnana impale?"
58. "Did Darkness e'er die through armies of sword or fist?
(But) when dawns the noble Sun can darkness dare persist!"
59. "Ignorant of a way out of nescience dark,
How did Karma into this grim voyage embark?"
60. "This world's projected by us quite effortlessly
Like sleight-of-hand, far from truth, a chicanery!"
61. "How can Creation if false e'er appear in Truth?"
"Like silver seen in the mother-of-pearl forsooth!"
62. "Pearl-silver is solely due to true silver seen;
False world's then based on a true world! See what I mean?"
63. "Deluded mind can experience e'en what was not;
Like wing-ed flights in dream though ne'er a cosmonaut!"
64. "Dream-like this world you say? 'pon waking dreams do go,
While this world persists day after day in toto!"
65. "'Real-like,' thus it's thought--only till Jnana dawns
Once awake, set to nought--dream snake sans puissance!"
66. "Say you it's like a dream, on waking seen as nought?
Jnana got, why does this world stand as if well wrought?"
67. "'Burnt clothing', 'Useless for warding off cold and heat'
Thus view the wise this world: form-replete useless treat!"
68. "Though be killed, Ajnana, cause of fruit-karma-fruit—...
Why does this body not vanish that same minute?"



¹ Continued from the last issue.

69. "For many days a tree displays some
green though felled;
Doer dead, body too acts seemingly
impelled."
70. "Some attain Mukti while some are
yet left behind;
Is Atman multiple? This truth pray
help me find."
71. "Brahman and Iswaran and talk of
souls galore
Proceed from delusion. Atman is ONE,
not more!"
72. "If it be true that this Atman is indeed
One,
Why is it split so by bodily parti-
tion?"
73. "Water in many a pot discloses many
a sun;
In Buddhi far scattered, ATMAS are
seen though One."
74. "If Atman, sun-like, be seen by scores
in Buddhi
Who is it, Atman or Buddhi, that
gains Mukti?"
75. "Both gaol and goal are for Buddhi,
unbridled mare;
Not for the Atman. Discriminate thus.
So, there!"
76. "Self being One whence this Jiva
miscellany?"
"Whirls and waves spring from One
ocean; ONE; not many!"
77. "The Jiva reaching Brahman-Self and
merging there
Does this then constitute bliss that's
beyond compare?"
78. "Brahman's One. Two is false. You are
no exception!
Bliss appears when dreadful diff're-
ntiation you shun."

THE SEEKER AND THE SUFI

A Sufi was sitting at a crossroads one morning when a young man came up to him and asked whether he could study with him. "Yes, for one day", said the Sufi.

Throughout the day one traveller after another stopped to ask questions about man and life, about Sufism and Sufis, or to beg for help - or just to pay respects.

But the Sufi wanderer merely sat in an attitude of contemplation, his head on his knee, and he made no answer at all. One by one the people went away.

Towards evening a poor man with a heavy bundle approached the pair and asked the way to the nearest town. The Sufi immediately stood up, took the man's burden on his own shoulders and conducted him part of the way along the right road. Then he returned to the crossroads.

The young disciple asked, "Was that man, miserable peasant though he looked, really a saint in disguise, one of the secret wanderers of high rank?"

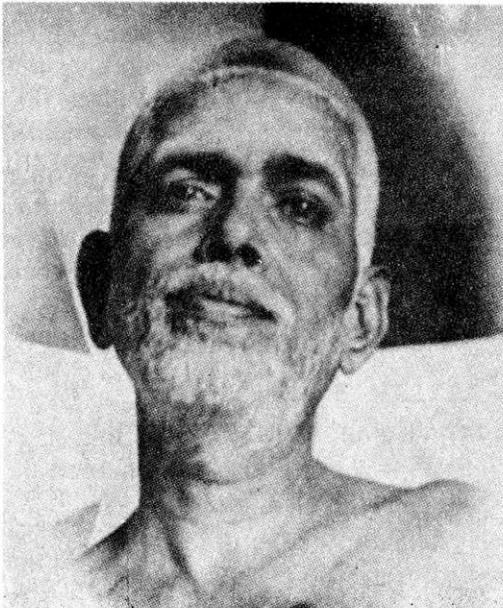
The Sufi sighed and said, "He was the only person whom we have seen today who really sought the object which he claimed to want."

—HERMES, VOL XII, p. 480

The Day, The Night and The Silent-Sun

By V. Ganesan

*"Can there be time, can there be space, except for me
Time and space bind me only if I am body
I am timeless, I am spaceless
I exist always and everywhere"* - Verse 16, 'Forty Verses on Reality'



The beauty of Sri Bhagavan's teaching is that it is not only built on the rock-foundation of rationalism but it is conveyed in such lucid terms and analogies that it is well within the understanding of common people. Every word of His reflects only the truth of one's own experience, even in day-to-day life. "Truth should be available to all, at all times and under all conditions". Any truth, like hunger, thirst, dream, sleep, is common to all and available to all. It is quite logical to assert that the ultimate Truth of Existence should also be common and always available to all, not hemmed in by restrictions and conditions. Truth is present reality and not a mere utopian ideal.

Acceptance on the basis of reason and experience and rejection of concepts not backed by experience is the yardstick given by Bhagavan for passing philosophical propositions. In fact, Bhagavan was not interested in either asserting or denying theories, as philosophers are prone to do. Bhagavan involves the questioner deep in his own questions or doubts rather than give a verbal answer. When the question, "Is there rebirth?" is posed to Him, His answer is: "Who is putting this question? Who wants to know about the existence of rebirth?" Asked "Why is there suffering in the world?" He would reply: "Put this question in your sleep." Bhagavan was not avoiding answering such questions, but was only drawing the attention of the questioner from the mere content of the question to the 'real answer' the questioner himself. When a series of doubts were raised, His crisp but classic reply would be: "Doubt the Doubter. The doubter is the source of all doubts and if that source is sought after and discovered all doubts will cease." "For whom is the doubt? Who puts the question?" is the 'Brahmasthan' of Sri Bhagavan, as Sri Kapali Sastri would put it.

Much human effort is spent on knowing things external to oneself. Treatises have piled up giving elaborate details on creation, evolution, nature, world, sun, moon and stars. Many civilizations and glorious cultures have come and gone. Great human achievements are indisputable. Yet, man

remains eternally a puzzle to himself. Why? While he has succeeded magnificently in his efforts to conquer nature, historically, geographically and astronomically, he does not know what he actually is. Sri Ramana would have us tackle this ultimate question - the question of questions - that is, 'What is the inner nature of man?'

Scriptures declare that the real man is "Sat-Chit-Ananda Swarupa"- He is of the form of Awareness-Knowledge-Bliss. He is one with the ultimate Brahman; and his true essence is Pure Ananda. It is an excellent declaration, but do we understand it?

Bhagavan goes to the root of the problem by focussing attention on the source of all experience, 'the experiencer'.

He says: "Man's real nature is happiness. All men, without exception, are consciously or unconsciously seeking it. They ever want happiness untainted with sorrow, a happiness which will not come to an end. This instinct is a true one. Really his search for happiness is an unconscious search for his true self." (Maharshi and His Message pp 38-39)

"The desire for happiness (*sukha prema*) is a proof of the ever existing happiness of the Self. Otherwise how can desire for it arise in you? If headache was natural to human beings no one would try to get rid of it. But every one who has a headache tries to get rid of it, because he has known a time when he had no headache. He desires only that which is natural to him. So too he desires happiness because happiness is natural to him. Being natural it is not acquired." (Talks, p. 583)

"When there is contact of a desirable object or memory thereof and when there is freedom from undesirable contacts or memory thereof, we say there is happiness. It is the happiness inherent

in the Self. That happiness is not alien. You are diving into the Pure Self on occasions when you consider pleasurable. That diving reveals the self-existent Bliss. On these occasions you are plunging into the Self, though unconsciously. If you do so consciously you call it Realisation. I want you to dive consciously into the Self i. e. into the Heart". (Talks, pp 212-213).

Having stated definitely that happiness is our real nature, Bhagavan who communicates truth in its pristine purity and yet in understandable terms, gives the analogy of sleep and waking states to drive home how Man's real nature is happiness. Sleep and waking states are the experiences of entire humanity - why, even the animal and plant kingdoms enjoy them.

What is sleep? Sleep is a state we undergo daily voluntarily wherein there are no thoughts, no objects, and no world, no differences. It is a natural state of happiness. Every man loves to go to sleep and makes good preparations to achieve it every day, since in sleep he experiences undiluted happiness.

Sleep without dreams - deep sleep - is "said to be the Bliss of Brahman" (Talks 581). "Deep sleep is nothing but the experience of pure Being" (Talks p 580). Such sleep denotes two things: (i) unawareness of objective existence and (ii) the happiness of sound sleep. The unawareness is owing to the absence of relative knowledge of objects and the happiness is due to the absence of seething thoughts.

"In deep sleep man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. Instead of being unhappy he is quite happy. Everyone desires to sleep soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent in Man" (Talks. p. 1).

"Deep sleep is the state of non-duality. Sleep implies forgetfulness of all differences. This alone constitutes happiness. See how carefully people prepare their beds to gain that happiness. Soft cushions, pillows and all the rest are meant to induce sound sleep, that is to say, to end wakefulness. And yet, the soft bed etc. are of no use in the state of sleep itself. The implication is that all efforts are meant only to end ignorance." (*Talks*, p.175). Bhagavan thus drives home clearly the fact that our true state is Ananda, Bliss, such as we enjoy in deep sleep.

For a common man life means only the waking state. His whole activity is in it only. He thinks sleep is the natural result of prolonged wakeful strain. He also considers sleep to be a dull state. In the waking state, he becomes aware of the body and through it indulges in thoughts, objects and achievements. Such indulgence involves him in activity, since the five senses are outward turned. Man is thus propelled into action in waking state. The active principle or the relative awareness in the waking state is a function of one's true being. This connection between the relative awareness of the waking period and the pure awareness of true being makes man attached to the waking state.

The ordinary man thinks he is fully aware of himself in the waking state and totally absent in sleep. There is no need to bring in the dream state, for Bhagavan has equated it squarely with the waking state. He says, "The dream is the combination of *Jagrat* (waking) and *Sushupti* (sleep). It is due to the *Samskaras* (impressions) of the *Jagrat* state. In the dream you do identify yourself only with the one now awake." (*Talks* p. 375). Except that the waking is a gross state and dream a subtle state, there is not much difference between them, He



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affirms. So, for all practical purposes we can include dream state in the waking state itself.

In the waking state there is the thought: "I am so and so" and such identification of 'I' with a body is missing in the sleep state. That is, when asleep there is no 'I', there is mere oblivion. Just before waking there sprouts the 'I'-thought. Even the body comes only after the 'I'-thought has arisen. The vital difference between the two states is the presence of 'I' in the waking and the absence of it in sleep. This 'I' includes all objective knowledge. Thus, in waking, full objective knowledge based on the 'I', the experiencer, is there; in sleep it is absent. But, are we not there at all in our sleep? Are we dead when we are asleep? No. For, on getting up from sound sleep everyone says: "I enjoyed last night's sleep." So the sound sleep was enjoyed by some one! It thus only indicates that even in the absence of the 'I', the master - recorder of the waking state, there is in the sleep state someone to record the happiness of the sleep. This brings to surface another fact that the 'I' of the waking state has only a partial knowledge, as it could not be there in the sleep state at all. The waking 'I' can only be aware of objects, gross and subtle. The experience of objects through the 'I' in the waking state and the experience of happiness in sleep where the 'I' is totally absent, clearly prove that the real experiencer of these states is beyond them both and also prove that it should be the ground and substratum for the appearance and disappearance of these two states. Waking and sleep are vital experiences of every man and they alternate every day. In the waking state, the physical eye is in operation which can see only the objects; the eye of *Jnana* alone can see the Eternal Truth within. In sleep, the preliminary step of not being burdened with objective vision is achieved. True

I want you to know

By Vibhav Tewari

Make me a beggar
I want you to know
Strip me of all belongings
Kick me to and fro
Take away everyone
Into loneliness I go

I want you to know
wherever you may throw
Me and all I know
With you inside my heart
As the even glow
I will gladly take the path
that you care to show
I want you to know.

cognition of the absence of objective vision is a prerequisite to have the inner vision of *Jnana*. In observing keenly the inter-play of waking and sleep, we come nearer the Truth, the awareness aspect. If we are able to cling to the awareness aspect alone of the waking state and the happiness aspect alone of sleep we would grasp the true nature of our Being. This state is called wakeful-sleep, *Jagrat-shushupti* and it is synonymous with our true nature of total Bliss. To put it in Sri Bhagavan's own words:

"In the waking state (*Jagrat*) the gross body perceives gross names and forms; in the dream state (*Swapna*) the mental body perceives the mental; in deep sleep (*Sushupti*) the identification with the body being lost creation in their manifold forms and names; there are no perceptions; similarly in the Transcendental state (*Jagrat-sushupti*) identity with the ultimate Truth places man in harmony with everything; and in it there is nothing apart from his Self" (*Talks*, p.1.)

"Purushothama Ramana"

By V. Ganesan



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"In ordinary sleep there are not only no thoughts, but also no awareness. In waking sleep (*jagrat-sushupti*) there is pure awareness alone. That is why it is called awake-while-sleeping" (*Spiritual Instructions*. Ch. IV, answer 7).

How to get into this wakeful state? Though descriptions about the *jagrat-sushupti* state have been given in all major scriptural texts, the means to achieve it has been given most clearly by Bhagavan. The only difference between the waking and sleep states is the emergence of the 'I' attached to a body. Body-consciousness makes all difference. How does this body-awareness occur?

Bhagavan says in *Forty Verses*, verse 24:

"The body is insentient; it does not say 'I'. The Pure Being does not rise or set. Yet, within the body's limit an 'I' rises between the body and Self, Pure Being. It is called *Chit-jada-granthi* (knot between matter and spirit) or mind."

Bhagavan elaborates the process of emergence of the mind as follows:

"Between sleep and the full waking state, there is a transitional state wherein the 'I' - thought springs from the Heart. This 'I' - thought is a mysterious force" says Bhagavan, "as it does not belong wholly either to the body or to the Self. The state of waking is the combination of the 'I' - thought and the body, the individual ego. Mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. What differentiates waking from sleep is this mysterious force, the mind. We are one with the Self in sleep and wake up as an 'I' with objective knowledge and reach the realm of the mind. Mind thus rules the waking state. The unalloyed happiness of the sleep state is lost in the waking state, because of the emergence of the mind, beginning with the

“Will you take me in a carriage some day to Mati Seal’s garden house? when you throw puffed rice into the lake there, the fish come to the surface and eat it. Ah! I feel so happy to see them sport in the water. That will awaken your spiritual consciousness too. You will feel as if the fish of the human soul were playing in the ocean of Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. In the same manner, I go into an ecstatic mood when I stand in a big meadow. I feel like a fish released from a bowl into a lake.”

— Sri Ramakrishna, in the
GOSPEL, p 238

‘I’ - thought. Elimination of the mind or the separate ego in the waking state would enable man to prolong the happiness of sleep.”

Bhagavan gives light and strength to find our way through these restrictions. The ‘I’ - thought is the clue which will lead us back to the source, for it alone knows the Self, our true Being. Bhagavan says “Like a dog tracing its master through his scent, the ‘I’ - thought will take us back to the Self, the source”. Such self-analysis, the quest into the root of ‘I’ - thought, breaks the barrier between waking and sleep states and enables one to arrive at the wakeful-sleep state, the natural state of our True Being. In this state the dualism of objective knowledge of the waking state and the oblivion or nescience of the sleep state are transcended. Bhagavan summarises this unique state of *jagrat-sushupti*, in a verse, as follows:

“Deep sleep can ever be had while wide awake

By search for Self. In dream and waking states,

Pursue the quest for Self without a break

So long as sleep’s ignorance them permeates.”

— ‘Collected Works’, p. 149.

This *jagrat-sushupti* is a state of full knowledge. In that state activity takes place automatically, in perfect order, since in that state the universe and not the body is ‘I’. The thinking is now done not by the mind-moon, but by the heart-sun.

“The effulgent light of Pure Awareness within, taking hold of a centre, lights up the entire body, as the sun illumines the world. Owing to the diffusion of that light in the body one has experiences in the body. That centre of radiation is the Heart”. (*Sri Ramana Gita* Ch. IX. V. 7 & 8)

That is, the Pure Awareness, the *jagrat-sushupti* state, shines ever as the Light within us, the Heart. Bhagavan pin-points the Heart as the Centre of this illumination. Throughout the three states of waking, dream and sleep, the Heart alone shines. While in sleep it is latent, in the waking state it is “reflected” or ‘restricted’ like moonlight or a film projected on a screen. *tanzas 6 and 7 of the Ashtakam* (Eight Verses) provide one of several explanations of the need and effect of Self-enquiry. He says: “This investigation will lead to the discovery of something within you (Heart) which is behind the mind. Solve that problem, and you will solve all other problems thereby” (*Maharshi & His Message* p.38)

“All the *sadhanas* are for getting rid of the delusion that you are the body, you are the mind. The knowledge that ‘I Am’

is always there. One should only get rid of the idea 'I-am-the-body'. (Letters, p.104)

This pure 'I Am' is the Heart, our true Being, the ground and substratum on which the three states exist, just as in a cinema show the pictures are projected on a white screen. Just as the screen alone is real and the pictures are unreal in the cinema analogy, this Supreme state of Being, call it *Jagrat-sushupti* state or the state of 'I AM,' or Self, it alone is real and the states of sleep and waking, of inaction and action, of ignorance and knowledge, are all only passing shows. In a gold ornament, the gold alone is real and the forms are only appearances. Likewise, the true being, 'I AM' alone is real and the body time, space and the three states of experience all only appear to exist since they do not have a separate existence apart

from the 'I AM', the true Being. If this state of identity with Awareness is held on to firmly man has gained the ultimate goal. The fact that this state of Perfection is real and achievable has been clearly proved in the 54 years of egoless life led by Bhagavan Ramana.

Bhagavan lived in this state of Pure Being, Pure Awareness and Pure Bliss, a Silent Sun. He was ever radiant, ever active but not bound by action. The awareness of the waking state and the blissfulness of the sleep state are both manifestations of the Eternal Being, the ever shining Silent Sun, Bhagavan Ramana.

Our eye, our mind, our Heart are all but rays from Ramana *Bhaskara*, the Silent Sun, the Self, which is the bliss serene of our sleep state and the pure awareness of our wakeful moments!

THE MIND

One method of settling the mind is not to block whatever extraneous thoughts arise, but to concentrate on the nature of the train of thought that has arisen and try to comprehend it. What happens is like the example of a caged pigeon released from a ship in mid-ocean. As the scripture says, 'A bird that has flown from a ship in mid-ocean, after flying here and there, must inevitably land back on the ship from which it left.....'

Although this state of mind lacks any form or structure, and in this way is as bare as space, yet it is precisely on this mind, as on a mirror, that whatever arises to consciousness appears vividly. Although you can behold this nature of the mind most obviously, you can never hold on to or point to any particular thing as 'my mind.....'

At this stage one has merely settled the mind... one should, "like a small fish swimming through clear undisturbed water," explore... who is this meditator?... one will realize that the person who is ordinarily said to exist is only a label in the realm of the senses.

—Courtesy HERMES, VOL XII p. 429

The Uniqueness of Bhagavan Sri Ramana

87

By Dr. K. Subrahmanian¹

The Maharshi wasn't a killjoy. He had a delightful sense of humour. When a teacher of his came to see him at Tiruvannamalai, the Maharshi gave him one of his compositions. The teacher who was very impressed with it asked him a couple of questions about the verses in that work. The Maharshi said to others, "Look! I left Madurai scared of answering questions in the school. He has come all the way to ask questions again!"

The Maharshi was extraordinarily frugal. He would use the margin of newspapers for writing verses. He wouldn't tolerate anyone picking too many flowers or leaves even for puja. If he saw even a grain of rice on the ground, he would pick it and put it where it belonged. Once when his loin-cloth got torn, he went to a nearby bush, took out a thorn made a hole into it and used it as a needle. He took a thread from the torn loin-cloth and sewed it up with the improvised thread and needle.

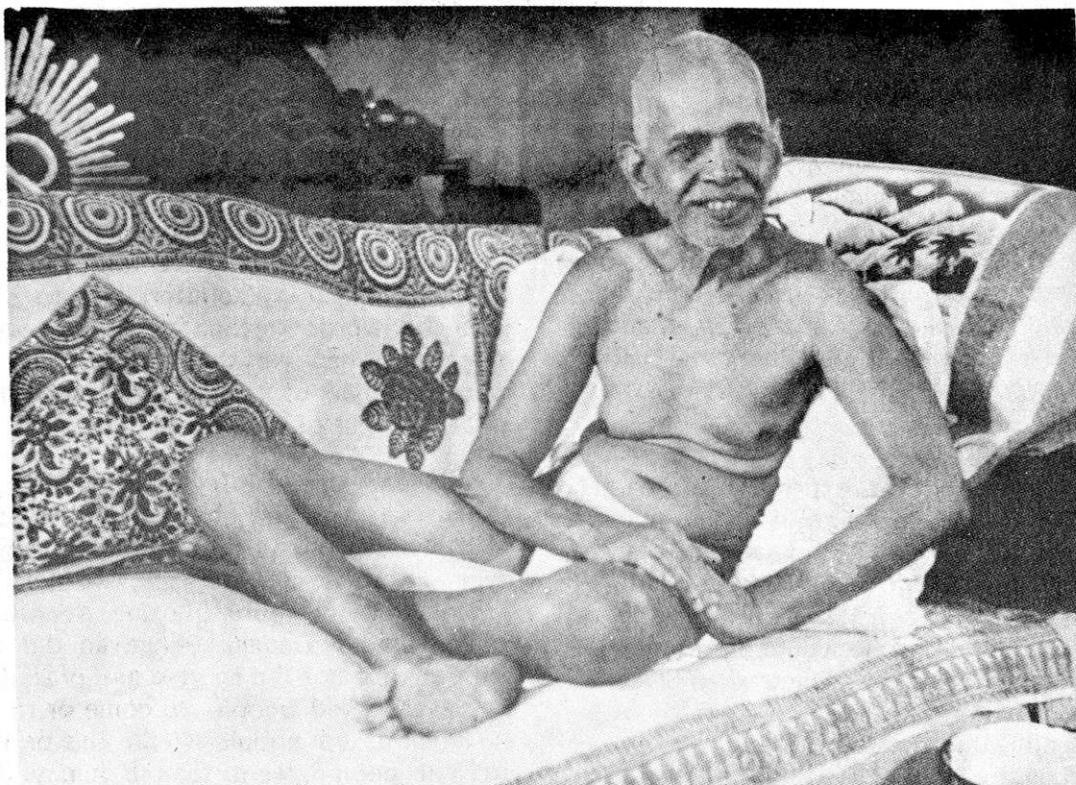
At the beginning of any composition, it is customary to write a *Mangala Sloka*, an invocatory verse. The blessings of God are invoked for the successful completion of the work. *Mangala* means auspicious. Normally only one *Mangala Sloka* is written. The Maharshi wrote two *Mangala Slokas* to *Ulladu Narpadu*. The first begins with the word *Ulladu* which means 'That which is'. The second one begins with the word *Marana* which means 'death'. The first *Sloka* deals with 'that which is' and the second with 'that which is not'. The word death is generally considered *amangala* or 'inauspicious.' The Maharshi perhaps was the first to use *marana* in a *Mangala Sloka* because it was the death experience that

made him realise himself. Death to others is the death of the body. But his death experience resulted in the death of body-consciousness, death of the ego. To him death was auspicious. It did him good. No wonder he chose to write about it in his *Mangala Sloka*. It is also interesting to note that the word 'Ramana' is in the word 'marana.' When we think of *Marana*, we must also think of Ramana. This will drive away the fear of death.

Another extraordinary thing about the Maharshi was that he blessed people neither orally nor by raising his hand. Whenever we go to any ashram, we find the *acharya* or the guru blessing people or giving some *Prasadam*. Bhagavan did not bless anyone nor did he give any *prasadam*. He never asked people to come or to go. He never asked people to do this or that and yet people went to see him as they enjoyed great peace in his presence. Sri Bhagavan saw himself in others and others in himself and, therefore, there was no one to bless and there was no one to be blessed. He has also said that he was not Guru to any one nor was any one his disciple. In a state of pure Advaita there is no other and therefore, the question of Guru and *Sishya* does not arise. He not only said it but also lived it every second of his life. He lived in Tiruvannamalai for 54 years. But he did not give instructions to anyone as to how his body should be disposed or where it should be buried; his detachment was total.

Sri Bhagavan was beyond time and space, but he was most punctual. If the dining hall bell rang, Sri Bhagavan would abruptly

¹ Continued from last issue.



stop if he was narrating anything. He was anxious that nobody should be kept waiting. He was silent much of the time. But he communicated through his potent silence which he said was uninterrupted speech. This communication wasn't restricted only to those who came to the Ashram nor only to human beings. He was Sri Dakshinamurti who dispelled all doubts through his *mouna* or silence. Silence, according to Sri Bhagavn, is not silence of the tongue but silence of the mind.

Duncan Greenless who had met the Maharshi several times writes: "I know no other man whose mere presence has thus enabled me to make the personality drop down into the abyss of nothingness where it belongs. I have found no other human being who so emanates his grace that it can snatch away the ordinary man from

his mind, and plunge him deep in the ecstasy of timeless omnipresent being."

Sri Bhagavan never said that he was either in *Samadhi* or out of it. He never swerved from the Self and was ever in it. He did a variety of things remaining all the time in that state. He was '*avichuta Sthitaprajna.*' *Samadhi* was his natural state.

As a boy and a young man, I had been to the Maharshi several times. Every time I went, I felt an indescribable peace. All cravings and questions vanished in his presence. He asked me neither to come nor go. He was totally free and gave this freedom to all. But every time I left him, I left him most reluctantly. I had seen princes and peasants prostrating before him. He treated them all alike.

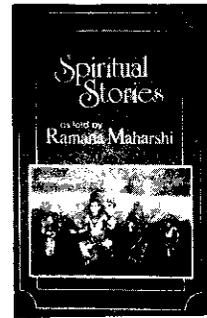
The Maharshi's life and teachings are inseparable. When Sri Bhagavan left Madurai for Tiruvannamalai he took with him just three rupees out of rupees five that had been given by his brother to remit his (brother's) college fee. Sri Bhagavan took just the amount that he thought was the train fare from Madurai to Tindivanam. He never worried about how he would reach Tiruvannamalai from Tindivanam. He had surrendered himself totally to Arunachala and he left everything to him. Anyone of us would have taken the entire amount of five rupees thinking that if conditions were not favourable, we must have some money to return home. Bhagavan did not have even a trace of doubt that Arunachala would not accept him. On arriving in Tiruvannamalai, Sri Bhagavan went straight to the temple and reported his arrival. Later he went to the Ayyankulam tank and threw away the sweets that had been given to him by the wife of Muthukrishna Bhagavata of Kilur. He did not know anyone in Tiruvannamalai. He did not know when, where, or whether he would get his next meal, but he did not worry about it as he had surrendered himself totally to Arunachala and felt that He would do what was necessary. Again, he tore off from his dhoti just the amount of cloth that was necessary for the loin cloth and threw away the rest. He was not interested in an extra *Kaupina*; nor did he think of using the remaining cloth as a towel. He took the absolute minimum.

The seventeen year old boy took a leap and shook off the dust of the world. This is *Vairagya*, this is renunciation, this is total surrender.

He emphasised self-knowledge and suggested self-enquiry as the way towards it. To those who said that self-enquiry was difficult, the Maharshi suggested total surrender to God. Most people

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when they surrender expect that everything will go according to their liking because they have surrendered. The Maharshi said that total surrender implies accepting good and bad with equanimity. In such surrender there is no ego to feel happy or unhappy. In fact in total surrender the ego merges in the Self. There is no will of one's own. The Maharshi was beyond religion and rituals. His teachings are the simplest and the most scientific. Seek the seeker. Find out who you are. You are bliss, but your suffering is due to your identifying yourself with your body. The source of everything is the Self. Merge your mind in the Self through self-enquiry. Then you will be able to function in this world happily. When the ego is lost in the Self, the Self will shine in all its splendour and glory.

Sri Ramana Maharshi did not say anything new, but he lived Advaita. Gandhiji used to ask anyone who was depressed, to go to Sri Ramanasramam and have his spiritual battery charged. To the world-weary the Maharshi is an invigorating tonic. He has pointed the way to the Self which is pure Consciousness. His appeal is to all irrespective of their religion. His method can be practised by all, be he a householder or a *sannyasi*. It is most scientific and direct without ritual of any kind. He has established through his life and his teachings that one becomes alive to the Self when one is dead to his ego. Seekers of Truth go to the Ashram in Tiruvannamalai where his vibrant presence is felt now as powerfully as when he was alive.

In his *Der Weg Zum Selbst (The Way to the Self)*, the famous psychologist, Carl Jung, says of the Maharshi:

"Sri Ramana is a true son of the Indian earth. He is genuine and in addition to that, something quite phenomenal. In India he is the whitest spot in a white space. What we find in the life and teachings of Sri Ramana is the purest of India; with its breath of world-liberated and liberating humanity, it is a chant of milleniums. This melody is built upon a single, great motif, which in a thousand colourful reflexes, rejuvenates itself within the Indian spirit and the latest incarnation of which is Sri Ramana Maharshi... The Life and teachings of Sri Ramana are not only important for the Indian but also for the Westerner. Not only do they form a record of great human interest; but also a warning message to a humanity which threatens to lose itself in the chaos of its unconsciousness and lack of self-control."

Realisation came to Sri Bhagavan unsought. He had no knowledge of the Vedas, the Upanishads, etc. when he got realisation. He had read only the *Periapuranam*, a Tamil work about the lives of the sixty-three saivite saints. The treasure of Self-knowledge came to him when he faced death squarely at the age of sixteen. He faced it alone with great determination and astounding courage. He experienced *Brahman* without knowing the meaning of the word. We all know a great deal about it, but do not know it.

The Maharshi merged with the universal spirit at 8-47 p.m. on April 14, 1950. A meteor lighted up the sky and it was seen in different parts of the country. The Maharshi's presence is powerfully felt even now at his Ashram in Tiruvannamalai. To all who seek him, he is as easily available now as he was before. He has become a centre without circumference.

BODY ATTACHMENT ?

A surgeon may take a mere hour to perform an operation which may take the patient years to describe.

TWO DECADES OF

PREDESTINATION

Editorial

So long as the appearance of an ego remains, so long does the appearance of free will; in fact they are mutually dependent. Therefore the Maharshi said: "Free will exists together with the individuality. As long as the individuality lasts, so long is there free will. All the scriptures are based on this fact and advise directing the free will in the right channel."

Any attempt to limit one's conduct on the pretext of predestination would involve the presumptuous and patently untrue corollary that one knows what is predestined. For instance, suppose you are sitting on the bank of a river when a child falls into the water; to say: "If it is its destiny to drown let it drown" would be a presumptuous supposition that that is its destiny. All that you know up to the moment of speaking is that it is the child's destiny to fall into the water within reach of an adult (yourself) who is capable of rescuing it. Since what is to happen is bound up with your own decisions, it makes no practical difference to you whether these do not yet exist or are simply not yet known to you: in either case you have to make them in ignorance of the outcome.

CONTINUED PRESENCE

By Muruganar

"Having cured me of my separateness, must you,
As if to test me Spirit Supreme, withdraw
Your form from sight? Where have you gone, my God,
Forsaking me? Where have you hidden yourself?"
Deep from within me comes the answer clear:
"Here in the Heart your very Self am I.
Know well this truth, the oneness of the Self."

Destroying thus in every limb
The false, deluding I, He shines
Instead in wondrous splendour now
As "I", as "I", the only Self.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

NOWHERE - NOW HERE

By G. V. Subbaramayya

Sri Bhagavan used to say that the Sanskrit term '*Mahasunya*', which is used as a synonym for 'Brahman' and means literally 'the Great Non-being', can also be resolved into '*Maha-Asunya*', meaning 'the Great Being'. So, in the right perspective, the Great Negative becomes the 'Great Positive'. This is precisely paralleled by the English 'nowhere', which corresponds to *Mahasunya*. It also can be split up into 'NOW-HERE', which means 'the Immediate Presence'. So Brahman is not only the Transcendental Absolute but also the Immediate Presence.

THE HUMAN STATUS OF THE MAHARSHI

By Dr. T. N. Krishnaswamy

Normal human awareness is mental and when the mind is still the state is one of darkness like deep sleep except insofar as pure supramental awareness awakens. In the state of *sahaja samadhi*, in which the Maharshi permanently was, this higher awareness is experienced constantly without preventing simultaneous mental awareness. It can continue, he has told us, without the aid of the body, for instance in sleep or after death. It is said to be located in and function from the heart at the right side, and the seeker can indeed experience it there, but it is also independent of any body support. Not only did the Maharshi guide us towards the actual experience of this higher awareness, but by living among us and by the grace and power he emitted, he proved to us the possibility of abiding permanently in this state.

Why Poverty Amidst Such Wealth?

By Selvaraj Yesudian

IF little Switzerland, where I have lived for the past thirty-six years, has wonderfully solved her social problems, is a country where the sick, infirm, and the mentally handicapped are cared for, where human dignity is not crushed by almsgiving but awakened and supported by the opportunity for work, then why cannot our India also strive with united efforts, with similar ideas, to work for each other's welfare, to do away with the acute problem of poverty by educating the younger generation? When the rich turn their back and pretend not to notice the problem of poverty, they are only covering their own festering wounds with roses. But the stench will soon fill the air, and the epidemic of communism will, remove them by force and level them to the ground.

Switzerland is one of the youngest nations but has the oldest democracy in the world, where the people are the parliament and legislative body in one, and the government the executive. The people have a right to decide for themselves, make new decisions, new laws and new orders. They choose their own members of parliament and every citizen has the right to vote. No system is perfect on earth and the Swiss are perfectly aware of it. Their standard of living is very high, but they are prepared to pay taxes for their clean cities, towns and villages, for their unique administration and for a thousand facilities they enjoy. The tax payers have an absolute right to know what their money is spent on. The budget of the nation is balanced as much as it is humanly possible.

India is the oldest nation on earth with the youngest democracy in the world. Things take time in a timeless land like India. The government can achieve its ends only when the rich and the knowing ones come forward and extend a helping hand in the administration and execution of the great tasks needed for uplifting the nation. Our India should send some of its intelligent young men to Switzerland, in particular, to study their pattern of democracy which works so beautifully, which has made the country rich and prosperous, and the most envied amongst all the nations of the earth.

It will take a long time for us in India to achieve such a dream, but there is nothing impossible under the sun. The first seed to sow is education. Rural people are reluctant to educate their children for fear of losing their help in agricultural work. So much could be done in this direction if the richer educated classes extended their financial and moral help. The rest will follow. The initiative must definitely come from the knowing ones; they must lend a hand in removing the unseen barriers of ignorance, the father of poverty and misery.

Let the vision of a better and greater India ever be before our eyes and let us work with enthusiasm as though the whole work depended on us. Great things are to be achieved, my friends, but only through the ungrudging help of the strong, the selfless, the sacrificing ones who have the welfare of their motherland at heart.

Humanity is entering a new era, a new epoch in history, where the small barriers of nationalism and religion will vanish and give way to the growing family of man. For this purpose there arose pioneer workers, shining stars of unusual magnitude on the Indian horizon, to cast a divine light on our motherland. There appeared a Dayananda Saraswathi, the dynasty of Tagores, a Ramakrishna, his twenty-three divine emissaries guided by his strong hand, the warrior monk Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi and Bhagavan Ramana. They all poured their life's blood into the ancient body of India to revive it. Let every child of India prove himself worthy and join this heavenly host, and on the altar of humanity make a sacrifice of himself. "For the good of one's family, one sacrifices oneself. For the good of the country one sacrifices one's family. For the good of the world, one sacrifices the country", goes an old Indian saying.

What makes a country great? What made England great? What made her the most powerful nation on earth, a wonder which was wrought during three short centuries? Not their weapons, not their guns, but, the faith the Englishman had in himself! The English believed in themselves, they had SELF-RESPECT, they were warriors in the true sense, a race of *Kshatriyas*. That is why the whole world respected them. England roused India from her age-long slumber and forced her to stand up and fight. Mahatma Gandhi took up the challenge and through his *satyagraha* proved the strength of the mark and the power of the peace-makers.

The cause of all the miseries in the world is when a man stops believing in himself or when a nation stops believing in itself. Then comes the inevitable fall and downfall, the death of a nation. Faith,

In Sanity

By VIBHAV TEWARI

I am too young to feel this way
But deep down its true
That all my love for this life
Has left me and its through
Behind every happy smile
I see a ghost of sorrow
Everywhere I see darkness
With dread I herald tomorrow.

Hope and love are crushed in me
Trampled and distorted
Even the Fun of being alive
in me has departed
I want no money, fame or more
For all these I am too dead
On your grand truth and love
My mind needs to be fed
And if my timely plaint to you
has all been in vain
you will be responsible
if then I go insane

faith and faith is the only answer, my countrymen. Have faith in yourselves. In order to rule, one has to obey. To obey means to rule. We Indians do not obey but fight when we get together because we are jealous of each other; jealousy is the bane of our race. It is an evil to be uprooted. It is the weak man's weapon. The answer to our national weakness is strength.

Once I saw a strong male sparrow hopping around a small female of the same species with wide open beak begging for food. It was rewarded by severe pecks on the head, which humiliation it bore patiently. This begging and sharp pecking in return continued for full fifteen minutes. All the while I thought the male bird was courting the female and

was unjustly rewarded with such a shameful treatment. When the male bird could no longer bear this chastisement, it turned against its female opponent with fury, and retaliated with its claws, wings and beak. The battle came to a sudden end when the apparent victor spread out his wings and perched high up on a neighbouring tree. The female bird in its turn flew up to a branch where hundreds of its kind were gathered to witness the result of an unusual combat. It suddenly dawned on me that the male bird was none other than the first-born son, who refused to leave his warm nest, full of the richest memories of childhood, memories of being fed with fat worms and sweet berries under mother's wings. But this taxing of mother's tolerance had gone too far when the plump young son had to be aggressively thrown out and denied further family privileges. The sudden chirping of that host of sparrows made good sense, for they were family members and friends come to congratulate "sonny boy" and wish him 'bon voyage' for his great journey into life.

India's awareness of her own spiritual greatness is also due to England, who drew attention to India's heritage, which soon became the spiritual heritage of all the nations of the world. A Shakespeare, a Goethe, a Schiller, a Bach, a Beethoven and a Mozart belong to the world. So does the Vedanta philosophy of India condensed in the classical lectures of Vivekananda, India's first ambassador of truth, two thousand five hundred years after the advent of Lord Buddha. They are his inspiring teachings on Karma, Bhakti, Raja and Jnana Yoga which transcend all barriers and show that psychology, philosophy and religion form an inseparable whole.

The mutual co-operation of the east and west, in learning and wisdom can

Thunder Showers

By "MANI"

Thunder! Thunder! Clap your hand
 You are over Sacred land
 Thunder! Thunder! Play your band
 You are over Ramana's land
 Thunder! Thunder! Come thee near
 Ramana's Children Know no fear
 Thunder oh! of great Elan
 We are of the Mountain Clan
 Thunder! Thunder! Understand
 That We live, by Ramana's Plan
 Thunder! Thunder! See below
 See our Ashram's divine glow
 See its Light 'yond worldly fears
 And shed in shame your rain-like Tears.

only bring the two worlds to meet on a platform of equality. In exchange for the technical knowledge India gets from the west, the occident is prepared to explore the inner world of reality aided by more than five thousand years of experience. The science of yoga seems to be the answer to many a psychological and philosophical problem Christianity could not solve. It gives the westerner's power of reason its full support, as well as proof for all its bold assertions, statements and claims.

India has much to learn from the west. Let her sons and daughters cross the seven seas and with open hands receive what the world gives from the great treasure house of knowledge.

Let India's chest of spiritual treasure be flung open for everyone to take freely. What our ancestors had conquered was a kingdom with riches far greater than and fundamental to any material wealth. It was for posterity they gave, for a timeless future, for the children of the great family of man.

How I Came to the Maharshi

By Dr. Lt. Col. P. V. Karamchandani



Normally, as soon as I place my head on the pillow, I fall asleep. One night, in February 1949, at Vellore, for no conscious reason, I could not sleep and kept tossing in bed. That was something very unusual.

At 1 a.m. a telephone call came from Tiruvannamalai, a place 55 miles away, asking me to reach there by 8 a.m. as Bhagavan Ramana was very ill. Having received the call, I fell sound asleep.

I was District Medical Officer of North Arcot then and Tiruvannamalai was within my jurisdiction. I reached Tiruvannamalai without any emotion. My only thought was that I was on a professional mission of attending on a patient. The sainthood

of Bhagavan Ramana had no significance for me.

I examined Bhagavan Ramana. He had cancer of the main nerve, high up in the arm. I gave my prescription and returned to Vellore the same day.

I had conducted my examination of Bhagavan Ramana in a strictly professional manner. I carried no spiritual feelings for him. Nor did he speak a word with me. But he had directed a momentary gaze of grace at me which kept stirring me deeply. Involuntarily I felt a new vista of spiritual consciousness open out before me.

That wondrous gaze of Bhagavan seemed to envelop me with an aura of bliss. The spiritual pull from him felt so irresistible that after a few days I myself arranged a visit to Tiruvannamalai just for the sake of having his 'darshan'. I took my wife with me.

We visited Bhagavan with a sense of curiosity and an indefinable sense of expectation. We made our obeisance and sat by his feet. We did not speak a word; nor did he speak. No speech seemed necessary. So surcharged with spirituality was he, that his spirituality wafted out to us, completely enveloping us. Serenity seeped into us. Our minds attained a state of blissful, ecstatic meditation.

The tumour that Bhagavan was bearing must have given him the most excruciating, nerve-wracking pain. Such writhing pain would make the toughest man wince and moan. But Bhagavan's face was serene, smiling and radiant.

All of a sudden a disciple accidentally touched only the fringe of the thin bandage that was covering Bhagavan's tumour. Bhagavan gave an involuntary start. The disciple felt bewildered and mumbled, "Bhagavan, did I hurt you? It was only the fringe of the bandage that my hand touched." The Bhagavan smiled his benign smile and softly said, "You do not know the enormous weight as of a mountain that this fringe bears!"

That chance exclamation of Bhagavan indicated the severity of his pain. But his godly face did not bear the slightest sign of his agony. It reflected only joy and peace. He seemed to have switched off his mind from the body to the divine.

The next occasion when I was summoned to Bhagavan's presence was when he had developed anuria. I now went to his Ashram not with the all-important feeling of a District Medical Officer going to visit his patient. I went in the spirit of a humble devotee going to serve a saint of colossal spiritual magnitude. My ministrations as a doctor were to be coupled with the devotion of a disciple.

When I reached the Ashram, I was told that for the past 24 hours Bhagavan had not taken any food, not even a drop of water; that the disciples' implorations in this behalf had failed; and that, in consequence, the entire community was feeling most anxious. I was entreated to persuade Bhagavan to eat something.

On examining Bhagavan I found that it was imperative that he should take some fluid. But what if he refused my request too? Ordering him in my capacity as a doctor seemed to be out of question. I felt like asking him as a boon to accept my prayer. I prayed inwardly and held a glass of buttermilk before him. He gazed at me for a second, took the buttermilk in

shaking hands, and drank it. My joy knew no bounds. There were relief and jubilation all around. I was thanked profusely. But I felt infinitely grateful for Bhagavan's overwhelming grace. He had heard my silent prayer and granted my boon.

Wonderful was the spiritual exhilaration I experienced in Bhagavan's holy presence.

The next time I was called to him was at midnight. When I entered his room, four disciples were there. Bhagavan was saying something to them in Tamil. They told me that he was asking them to leave the room, but that they wanted to stay as, according to them, he was in a delirium. I persuaded them to go. Three of them went away. The fourth one stayed on. Bhagavan turned to him and whispered, "You are not going away because you feel that you love me more than the others!" The disciple now knew that Bhagavan was not delirious. He bowed and went.

I was left alone with Bhagavan. As usual, he did not speak with me. I was also silent. But the vibrations that emanated from him were celestial. His body must have been in terrific, mortal pain. But his heavenly spirituality was unaffected by it. A rapturous thrill electrified my entire being.

I administered to his body; but I was hardly conscious that I was a District Medical Officer. I was conscious only of an intense desire to worship this illumined soul. I had learnt that Bhagavan did not allow devotees to touch his feet. But I felt a deep urge within me not only to touch his blessed feet but to press them lovingly. I took courage in both my hands and pressed them. The wonder of wonders! Bhagavan let me do so! His grace was abounding. I considered myself in the seventh heaven. I glorify those few minutes of my life.

The next time I was summoned to him was about three hours after midnight. Pain must have been torturing his body. Still, he was sound asleep. Holy silence filled the room. It was the ambrosial hour of the dawn. I did not wish to disturb him. I sat quietly by his feet. Suddenly he opened his eyes. His gracious gaze fell on me. He softly muttered, "D. M. O.!" The peculiar tone in which he mentioned me indicated that I had been in his sacred thoughts and that he was expecting me. I felt myself blessed. I silently worshiped him. My whole being seemed to vibrate with ecstasy.

At that time I had been feeling restless about promotion to the rank of Major-General (Surgeon General), which was legitimately due to me as the senior-most I. M. S. Officer in the Province of Madras. Howsoever I tried to banish the idea of that coveted promotion from my mind, it loomed large before my mind's eye and marred my equanimity.

Then I said to myself, "Why am I fretting unnecessarily? The next time I visit Bhagavan, I shall request him to grant me this promotion!"

When I visited the Ashram again, I went before Bhagavan with my mind resolutely set on requesting him for that boon. But a marvel happened. As soon as I saw Bhagavan, my mind melted, the resolution evaporated, and I felt filled with strange contentment. A request did formulate

itself within me, but it was an entirely different request. I inwardly prayed, "Bhagavan free me from my craving for this promotion. I don't want anything mundane. Instead, grant me my soul's evolution." My prayer seemed to be instantly granted. Effulgent joy flooded the very depths of my being. I reverently bowed before Bhagavan as he gazed at me benevolently.

My last visit to Bhagavan was on the day he attained Nirvana. I have described it in my *Saintly Galaxy*; how, on visiting him, I found that his body would not last beyond that day; how I silently prayed that he might retain his body till I brought my wife from Vellore as she had always been anxious to witness a great saint's last moments of life; how she brought orange juice for him; how he would not accept any drink at all; how, once again inwardly, I implored him to drink the orange juice to save my wife from deep disappointment; how he accepted my unspoken prayer and asked for orange juice, to the transcendental delight of my wife and myself; and how, shortly afterwards, in utter tranquillity, he passed away.

That was a scene of great sombre beauty.

During my two months' contact with Bhagavan, I did not speak a single word with him. But what wonderful grace he poured into me through his benign, benevolent gaze!

A peerless spiritual experience indeed!

WISDOM'S FEAT

Q. Does Maharaj consider himself as following in the footsteps of his Guru ?

Nisargadatta Maharaj: He has no footsteps. He has no feet.

— from *Seeds of Consciousness* Sep. 20, 1979

MOMENTS REMEMBERED
by **MANAGING EDITOR**

Thrilling Ramana

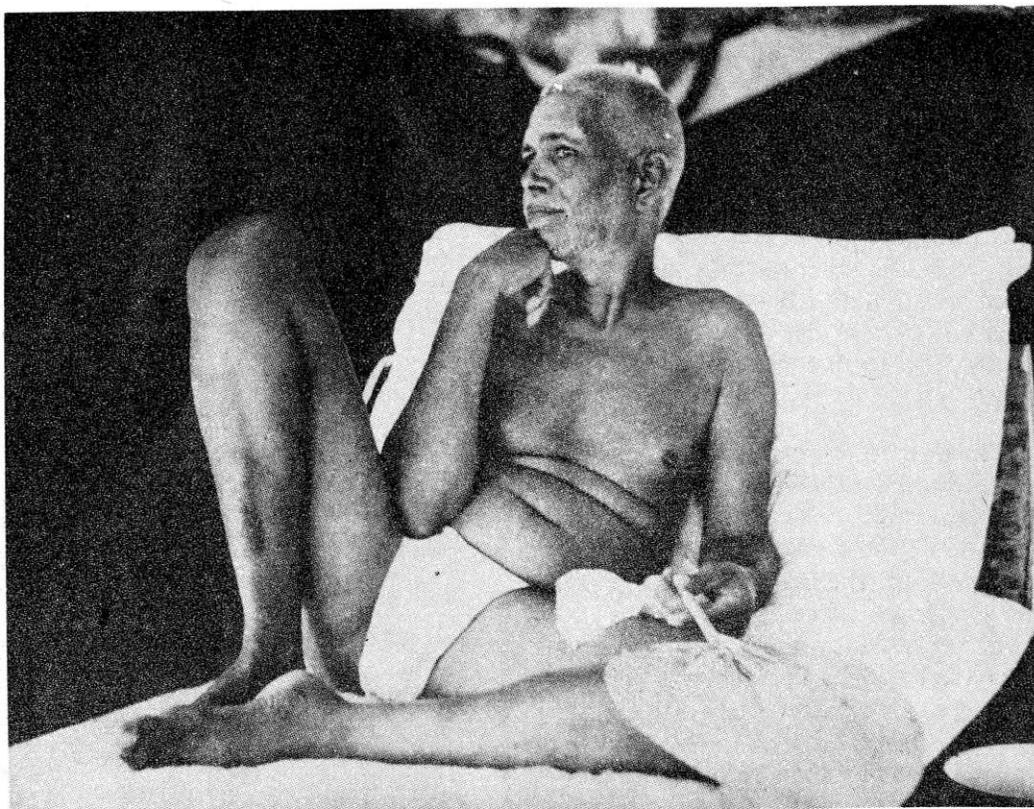
I am happy to record yet another instalment of anecdotes about our Master.

— V. G.

Akhilaandamma, well-known as Thesuramma, was born in Thesur, near Wandavasi, in 1871. She was one among three brothers and six sisters. Widowed two years after marriage, when barely 7, she grew under her mother's care spending time stringing flowers for the Lord of the local temple and serving food to pilgrims.

In 1903, she came to Tiruvannamalai on a visit. Ramana was then residing in Banyan Tree Cave (Sadguruswami cave). Hearing about an innocent youngster, called *Brahmana Swami*, living without food, she had gone up there to see Him, taking with her some sugar-candy as offering. Though His body clad in a cod-piece had rarely had a bath, a golden effulgence shone from the emaciated frame. His penetrating gaze of grace held her captive. She returned to Thesur deeply moved. When she saw Bhagavan again, He had moved on to Virupaksha. Though a great love towards Him filled her heart, an indescribable reverence and trepidation overcame her in that presence that time. She reports in her reminiscences¹: "The ancient customs call for silence, reverence and humility when approaching the sage. In Maharshi's *sannidhi*, I was thrilled to see these do's and dont's fulfilled *automatically* without any human enforcement!"

She became a frequent visitor collecting the wherewithal for *bhiksha* from Thesur and then coming to Arunachala and staying here on each visit for several weeks. She had the unique privilege of offering daily *bhiksha* to Bhagavan Ramana, Seshadri Swami and later to Vitoba Swami of Polur. It was through her that Masthan Swami, also of Thesur, was introduced to Bhagavan. A simple and highly evolved soul, Masthan Swami, received the yarn spun by the Ramana-devotees (see my earlier account on Ramanatha Brahmachari) and wove it in his looms into cloth for Sri Bhagavan. Masthan Swami was one of those present in the thatched shed, along with Bhagavan, when thieves struck one night in the early 1920s. Even before that Masthan Swami had the unique privilege of receiving His Grace in fullness at Virupaksha Cave. Sri Kunju Swami related Masthan Swami's words as follows: "When I came to Bhagavan He was seated like a rock outside Virupaksha Cave, without altering His look, which was filled with Grace, compassion and steady Wisdom. So I also stood by His side. After giving me a look, He opened the gate of my heart and I was also established in His state. I stood like that for eight hours, absolutely without fatigue, but filled with total absorption and peace. Bhagavan in those days used to open our



heart with a simple gracious look and it transformed us. There was no need for any questions since He made us, by His look, like Himself!"

Thesuramma with the help of Masthan Swami established the Ramananda Mataalayam at Thesur. This was done with the sole view of serving the needs of food and rest of the growing numbers of Ramana-pilgrims from afar. When Sri Bhagavan was shown the plan of the proposed building, He had said "Well, well! It appears the Math would turn out a grand thing!"

After the *kumbabhishekam* (consecration) when Thesuramma came here, Sri Bhagavan pointedly asked her three times during her stay, "Is the consecration over?" He had already contracted the cancerous growth then. Thesuramma who had just been informed of this, approached Bhagavan and enquired haltingly, "Bhagavan! Pray, What

is in your hand...?" Bhagavan interrupted: "Who's been telling you all this? Oh these people?" Then stroking His left hand, "Nothing, nothing". He thus put a stop to any further talk on that!

Later when she saw Bhagavan in the terminal stage, she broke down completely. After she moved away from that room Sri Bhagavan sent word to her, through an attendant, by way of consolation: "Why grieve at all for the sake of this gross body?" She was greatly strengthened by this grace and assurance thus given of His continued Presence.

Thesuramma herself merged in Bhagavan at the ripe age of 91 in 1961 at Thesur. The samadhis of Masthan Swami and Thesuramma, two very important Ramana-bhaktas, continue to attract many pilgrims to Thesur.

* * * *

Sri Balarama Reddiar, was in a mood to talk on Sri Bhagavan's compassion, particularly, in His last days of ill-health. I collected the following two incidents from him on that day.

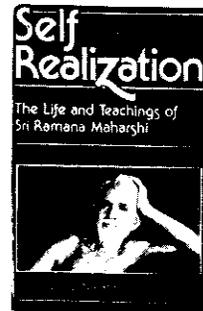
"Sri Bhagavan's compassion for devotees was always striking. It was more explicit at the end of his earthly life. Or else, can one imagine Bhagavan with that excruciating pain in His arm insisting on giving *darshan* to devotees even on the last day?

"Dr. Lt. Col. P. V. Karmachandani, the District Medical Officer, had come. Seeing Bhagavan's critical condition, on April 14, 1950, he went back to fetch his wife from Vellore. The Doctor related: 'I had a great desire to offer orange juice to Bhagavan. As the fruit was not available here we purchased a few at Vellore which my wife with great devotion made into juice. This we carried with us back to the Ashram. Sri Bhagavan was by then refusing to take any liquid, as movement to bathroom was so troublesome to Him. I made bold to offer the orange juice to Bhagavan. Twice He declined the offer but asked for water. I was feeling sorry for my wife's unfulfilled longing. So, this time with all earnestness of my soul I conveyed a mute prayer to Maharshi to spare my wife from a heart-breaking disappointment. Bhagavan at once said: "Give me orange juice" and took it!" Sri Reddy added "It was nothing short of total compassion on Bhagavan's part to have asked for it and drunk it, just to fulfil the desire of a devotee."

"Another moving incident took place when my sister with her husband and child had come to have *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan. In those last days, entry into Bhagavan's room was severely restricted. I sought special permission and Sri Niranjananda Swami was kind enough to give it. I entered the now Nirvana Hall with

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my sister and her child (not even her husband was permitted). My sister put her baby on the floor so that she could prostrate. The child started crying. Bhagavan, who was in such agony in those days, turned His face to the child and uttered repeatedly the comforting sound which a mother makes to pacify her child! It moved me to tears to see His love and compassion even in that condition of His body in distress!"

* * * *

Sri Annamalai Swami recalled the glorious days of the late thirties, when construction activity was at a peak at the Ashram. As the supervisor he was a hard task master and took special pains to ensure that the quality and quantity of incoming material (like bricks, lime etc.) were as stipulated. He recalled: "I would be standing in the blazing sun near where the lime was being emptied from the carts using huge cans. Two labourers would come carrying a full can and swivel it upside down to let the contents fall below. I would stand close to the heat and fume from the pile and ensure that the last bit had fallen off every upturned can.

"Major Chadwick had given me a pair of imported dark-glasses and there I would stand under the shade of an umbrella held in my hand, glasses on, a turban around the head and chappals on my feet! Bhagavan would occasionally come and stand by my side, discussing some technical point. The first time this happened, I naturally attempted to remove the chappals and the various other things I had put on! Would it not be sacrilege to wear chappals and turban, when the Guru came nearby? Bhagavan uttered a gentle threat: "I shall come near only if you desist from all this (i. e. removal) and remain as you are!" ("இதெல்லாம்

PRESENCE

By Faroukh Merat

I looked for him on the Hill
and Ramana was there
I looked for him by broad day light
and Ramana was there
I looked for him in the dead of night
and Ramana was there
I looked for him throughout the land
and Ramana was there
I looked for him in the air
and Ramana was there
I looked for him in all of life
and Ramana was there

O, Ramana, ocean of grace, you
who have made
The mute sing and the blind see,
blind me
To the world and turn my gaze
inwards
So that I can mutely sing :

"I have seen the Heart
I have seen the Heart,
I have seen the Heart
and RAMANA IS HERE."

செய்யாம, இருக்கறபடியே இருந்தாத்தாங் கிட்ட வருவேங்") What compassion and what direct upadesa! Annamalai Swami recalled that tongues did wag at his 'rudeness'!"

He had often felt sad at not being able to engage himself in scriptural study or be with others in Bhagavan's Hall, as his duties were those of a supervisor. He has nothing but wonder and gratitude for the special grace of Sri Bhagavan who imparted *Jnana* to him under the cloak of discussing construction details!

* * * *

I took my friend to Sri Balarama Reddiar since she wanted to have clarification on a passage she had read in Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya's book: *Ramana Reminiscences*. Sri Reddiar had the passage read out to him. It is recorded, on p. 214:

"I arrived on the 4th April, 1950. In view of Sri Bhagavan's weak condition, *darshan* was restricted to the queues in the morning and the evening, and except the personal and medical attendants all others were strictly forbidden to see Sri Bhagavan. So, that night I started back with a heavy heart. As I neared the wicket gate of Sri Bhagavan's room, Sri Jayadevlal, who was guarding it, whispered to me: 'Do you want to see Sri Bhagavan?' I replied: 'Yes, but there is no permission'. He said: 'Never mind, get in', and pushed me in. Sri Bhagavan lay alone facing the entrance as though He was expecting to see someone. As soon as I got up from prostrating at the door-step Sri Bhagavan said, 'Come in'. As I went in and stood before Him, Sri Bhagavan asked me: 'What do you want?'

I said with streaming eyes: 'I want *Abhayam*' (freedom from fear').

Sri Bhagavan replied with overflowing Grace: '*Saree Icchanu*, ('Yes, I have given it').

Sri Bhagavan added: 'Don't fear. As it came, so it will go'.

"At once I felt as though a heavy load were lifted from my heart and as I touched His Lotus Feet with my hands and head a thrill of ecstasy passed through my frame, and I was plunged in an ocean of peace and Bliss. That vision of Sri Bhagavan and His gracious words granting me *Abhayam* have taken permanent abode in my being and are guarding me from all life's ills."

A POEM

The Great Way is not difficult
For those who have no preferences.
When love and hate are both absent
Everything becomes clear and undis-
guised.
Make the smallest distinction, how-
ever.
And heaven and earth are set infinitely
apart.
If you wish to see the truth
Then hold no opinions for or against
anything
To set up what you like against what
you dislike
is the disease of the mind.
When the deep meaning of things is
not understood
The mind's essential peace is distur-
bed to no avail.
The way is perfect like vast space;
It lacks nothing and nothing is in
excess.

— Seng-ts'an
(Chinese-1300 years ago)

My friend wondered whether Bhagavan would have reacted as sharply as it is stated in the same book, on p. 217:

"Bhagavan asked in the evening if there was the queue in morning. *Sarvadhikari* replied that it was suspended for some time. Bhagavan said that He would suspend taking even a drop of water till all that came had their *darshan*. So there was the queue last evening."

Sri Reddiar went into a mood of ecstasy and started pouring out nearly for an hour, extolling the greatness of Sri Bhagavan. It was a thrilling session, indeed! He said:

“Though His love was impersonal and universal like God’s, when occasion demanded it could be deeply personal like one’s mother’s. You can’t doubt whether He would have done something special to a devotee who was in need of it at that time. There were no rules that bound Him to a particular course of action.

*‘Nistraigunye Pathi Viharatam
Ko Vidhih Ko nishedhah’*

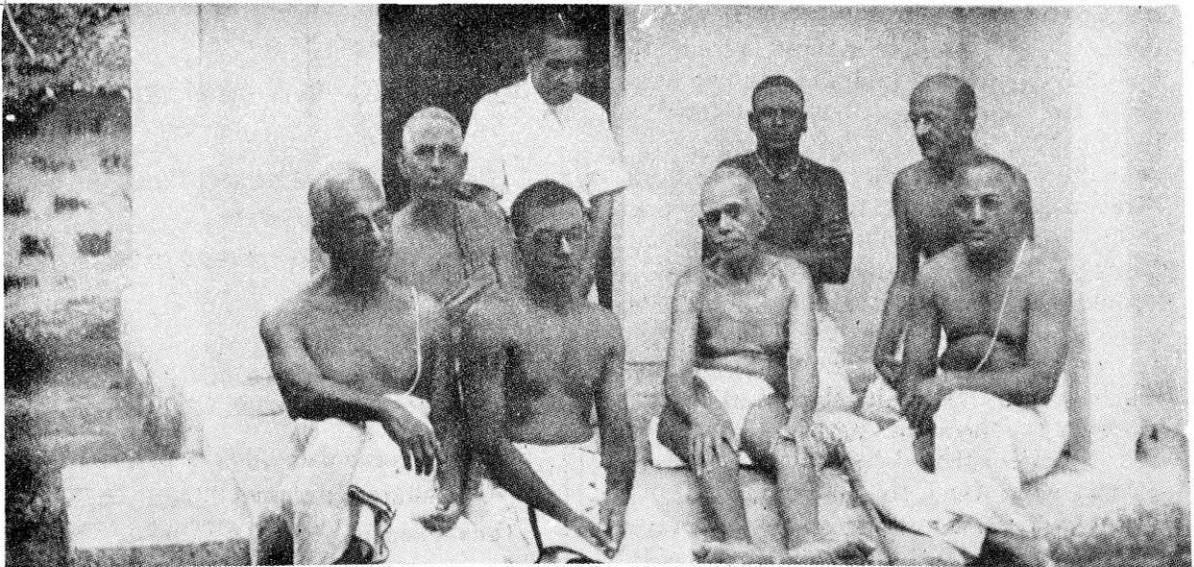
“Says the Upanishad : ‘Do’s and don’ts do not apply to those who move in a path beyond the sway of three gunas’.

“Sri Subbaramayya was a somewhat emotional person and for him nothing existed other than Bhagavan, who fully knew his deep and transparent love. It is quite possible that Bhagavan allowed him to place his head on His Feet and hold them, since, obviously, He knew it was the last meeting. Bhagavan’s ways were not always predictable. His manner of dealing with devotees differed from devotee to devotee, depending on the circumstances obtaining at a given moment.

“I shall tell you a few such incidents.

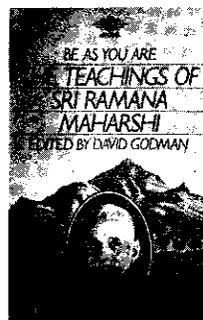
“Sri Jagadeesa Sastri was the Sanskrit poet-laureate of Sri Bhagavan’s Court! He was readily available to Sri Bhagavan in the Hall for references made in Sanskrit texts and for all matters connected with Sanskrit. Bhagavan addressed him intimately as ‘Jagadeesa’! He and his wife wanted to settle permanently in the vicinity of the Ashram. Fortunately, Mr. David McIver who had bought a big plot in front of the Ashram, permitted Sastri to put up a hut in his land. A hut was raised and he was living there.

“After some time, McIver was badly in need of money and he could raise it only by selling the plot in which Sastri had put up his hut. McIver requested Sastri to move to another place since he needed the land. He offered to return the money spent on the construction and even a little more. But Sastri got upset and was not willing to vacate it. He even used some harsh language. Some of us persuaded Sastri to hand over the place to McIver and accept the compensation. He was disconsolate but somehow we suc-



ceeded in making him agree to the arrangement. With a depressed mind Sastri decided to leave Tiruvannamalai, went to Bhagavan and placed the money in the hands of Bhagavan, who held it for a minute and handed it back to Sastri. Sastri sat down near the sofa of Bhagavan for a while and got up with his depression entirely gone. The magic touch of Bhagavan had done its work! It was a surprise to me that Bhagavan who was never known to have touched money should have gone out of His way to do this for the sake of His devotee. Yes! He could disregard any rule which stood in the way of His boundless compassion. People would not believe Bhagavan ever did such a thing, but I was an eye-witness to that on that day!"

"Another incident connected with my own self occurred in 1937. One early afternoon by 2.30, I was alone with Bhagavan in the Hall. Bhagavan was explaining to me a passage in a text and He asked me to bring the book from the almirah placed at the western end of the Hall. I looked for the book and could not find it. I returned to the place where I had been sitting close to the sofa. In a trice, Bhagavan got up and walked across the Hall to where the almirah was. It was a sight for the gods!— the tall figure, almost naked, walking majestically and once near the almirah, quickly locating the book. I was expecting that He would go back to the sofa and call me to show the passage. No. He did no such thing. Before I could realise what was happening, He came straight to where I was seated and sat on the floor by my side, almost touching me! He held the book before my eyes to show the passage. When he was satisfied that I had read it, He got up and went back to the sofa. Was it necessary for Bhagavan to do this? His ways are mysterious! What He did that day by this act of what the Sri Vaishnavas call



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'*sausilya*' (which has no equivalent in English—it means 'God descending to the level of man') affected me tremendously. Its impact is as fresh today as it was 50 years ago. It was not a human being who sat by me but an unearthly mass of vibrations, encased in a thin human vesture and almost bursting out of it!"

He added: "This is the significance of living with the Guru— the *gurukulavasa* of Indian tradition. The Guru seizes every opportunity to inject his liberating grace into the disciple."

"Sri S. Doraiswami Iyer, a top-ranking advocate and a staunch devotee of many years standing, narrated to me how Bhagavan took him to the top of the hill from Skandashram. He said he had not revealed it to any one before. Those were the Skandashram days. One day, when he was alone with Bhagavan, Doraiswami Iyer asked Him if one could go to the peak straight from Skandashram. Without uttering a word, Bhagavan stood up, took

hold of Doraiswami's hand, and led the way to the top, within half-an-hour. What an extraordinary privilege to be so led by one considered as the moving form of Arunachala! That experience was vivid in the mind of Doraiswami Iyer even after 70 years and who knows what permanent spiritual thrill Bhagavan created in him by this apparently small but truly significant act?"

After some silence, Sri Reddiar, concluded his narration thus:

"Here we don't have to make an effort to remember Bhagavan; it is as if He is remembering us by being constantly present before the mind's eye. He is instilling every moment into us the hope and faith that He will have to hold our hands and drag us to the peak as He did to Doraiswami Iyer. All we have to do is to follow His teachings and allow Him to take hold of our hands and lead us to the top. He is ready and anxious to do that"

"Experience such as 'I went; I came; I was; I did' come naturally to everyone. From these experiences, does it not appear that the consciousness 'I' is the subject of those various acts? Enquiring into the true nature of that consciousness, and remaining as oneself is the way to understand, through enquiry, one's true nature."

— Sri Maharshi in *Self — Enquiry*

A Talk with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

Collected BY JEAN DUNN

(on Jan. 11, 1981)

Questioner: The spiritual experiences which I have, are they something which shouldn't be there? What is it?

Maharaj: It is all entertainment. You are present here, is your body not the result of the parent's entainment? So long as you know that experiences are only appearances in Consciousness, it is all right.

Understanding is not a matter of time. If you really apperceive the truth, it is simple and quickly grasped. The conscious presence depends on the body, is nothing but the result of the sperm, so where is this 'you'? I want you to see exactly what the position is.

Whatever activities are happening are of the unmanifested which has manifested, not of an individual.

In the body where are you? This body-mind is like an instrument that says 'I am', though really said by the announcer. For the announcement you must have an instrument. Presently you think you are the body-mind, and whatever concepts you have collected are flowing out. When you start this spirituality you reject the body-mind, I am not that, then you come to the 'I am' only, without words, then you are everything, you are not confined to the body. Then you have to understand that this consciousness is due to the body, because of the instrument of the body that feeling of consciousness is there, and I, the Absolute, am not that. Having stabilized in the total consciousness the next step is to be in a position to observe the consciousness, and the play happening in the consciousness, just to understand.

Attachment to the body and the consciousness is very strong, to get rid of that is very difficult.

The birth principle, the chemical around which the body formation takes place, has no form or design, actually it didn't exist also. That non-existing thing suddenly started existing. What is the validity that it exists? It is an apparition only, it can't be truth. That's why I dare talk like this. This is a big hoax, a big fraud, created out of nothingness. Can you create something out of nothing? Whatever I have talked is securely planted in that birth principle of yours, you cannot pull it out. In due course it will proliferate into knowledge.

I don't want life, even for a moment, but in that life for a moment there are so many lives. I am not afraid of death. With death the imperfection is removed. Consciousness, the stigma of imperfection is gone, what remains is total perfection.

There is no guarantee that I will meet you tomorrow, but the reality is that there is no separation at all between you and me, we are one, do not imagine any separation.

Heart's Prayer

By Sunyata

We wander on,
Our clothes worn out and patched.
Our warmth is in the thought of God-
incanting at the heart His prayer
we think upon our teachers and tears
come.

Time finds us
wrinkled, thin, bending upon staffs.

We hold in our possession
only the vision of a flittering
butterfly,
fog at early morning,
the river that we cross.

We have nothing.

Only the mind to negotiate the
vast open space that passes
beneath us.

We wander on
over the old wooden bridge,
left by someone else's kindness,
and all around is mountain.

Vast rocks, stone walls rising
into the clouds.

There are few trees, mostly the rock
is bare,
just with a narrow footpath cut in
around the scarps
leading down into the river.

Thunder rumbles overhead,
the light becomes less certain
and we find a cave to rest.

There is time to see if there is
anything inside
besides ourselves, and satisfied we
sweep it,
gather wood and nettles, make a
fire and a nettle stew.

Time--to eat, to rest, to pray,
to prostrate to our Lord.

We chant a bit,
are warmed by the fire
and our heart's prayer
that sends bliss upon bliss
through our old bones.

We sleep in the light of His Grace.

If another saw this cave
they would find it suffused with a
golden glow
and the smell of myrrh.

What can be found inside but some
old weary travellers,
wizened by years wandering ?

Only they, but they carry with them
the purest essence
pouring out from their heart's prayer.

Maharshi, the Poet-II

By Ra. Ganapati

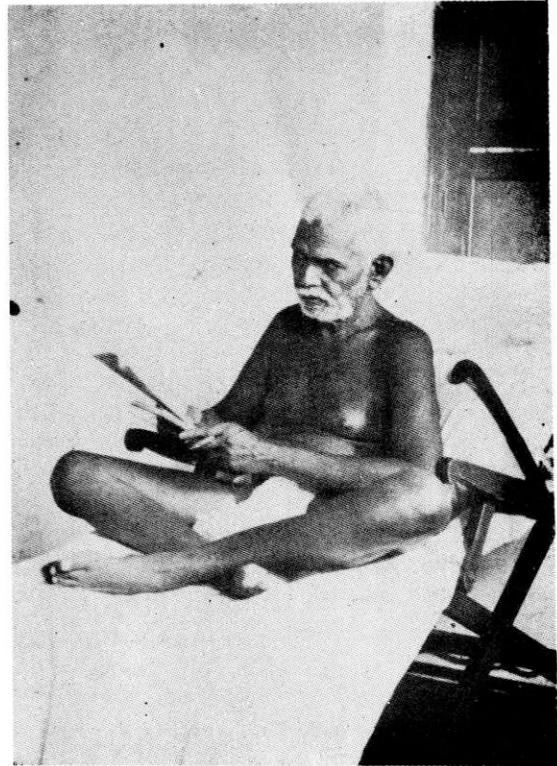
It was Ganesa Chaturthi in the year 1912. Sri Ramana was living in the Virupaksha Cave on the eastern slope of Arunachala. Though Ganesa was worshipped in clay images with fervour and festivity throughout the land on that day of His Advent, our Resident of the Virupaksha felt no need for the external worship of an externalised God-form. But it seems Ganesa felt the need! So a potter-devotee went up the slope with a clay image of Ganapathi and presented it to Ramana. Ramana, who was all acceptance, accepted the image.

There is unwritten poetry in this to silently herald a creative poet. Pottery has been our age-long symbol for creative activity and Brahma, the Creator-God, is spoken of as the Potter. Clay stands for the pliable and plastic material that lends itself to any form of creation, i.e., it has no ego-identification with set-forms!

Ganesa had come uninvited to Sri Ramana. But Ramana had no thought about worshipping Him. Anyhow He was given a place of honour. He was put in a niche in the cave.

Ganesa would not leave it at that. If He could not have the formal puja with flowers and fruits he would have the greater puja with the unfading flowers of words and thoughts.

On that heyday of the potters, a different kind of potter's wheel was to be inaugurated here to produce, not empty and fragile pots, but *mrt-kumbhs*, pots



full of nectar lasting for eternity. (*Amrt* actually means eternity). The *Muhurt* (Ordained Moment) had come to bring out of the wordless, thought-less *Mauni* a poet of living words and lofty thoughts.

Isvara Swami, a sadhu-scholar, with ability to compose poems impromptu was with Bhagavan that day, evidently by preordination as the prompting instrument. "Whatever" prompted him, he invited Sri Ramana to a poetic joust. He suggested that since the Divine Guest had graced the cave of His own accord, he and Ramana must each honour Him with a poetic composition. On his part he sang a new stanza then and there.

When *Isvara Samkalpa* (Lord's will) had come through the mouth of *Isvara Swami* how could the *samkalpa-rahita* volitionless *Ramana* resist?

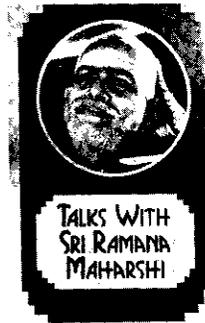
Thus, the one who for the most part remained silent, turned poet, with his first offering of poesy fittingly going to the first deity in our pantheon.

It was a four-lined Tamil stanza of the *venba* variety - a rather difficult form in prosodic structure. But it came to our silent *Bhagavan* with spontaneous ease.

A miracle? Yet the Supreme Power worked out the miracle in an inconspicuous way. *Ramana*, the Self, which is beyond miracle, appeared in the relative plane as wholly human, normal, ordinary. Though a supreme channel of Divine Power (as Grace), the miraculous was to be minimal in his case, so as not to distract our view from both the serenity of His Self-hood and the simplicity of his humanness. The Supreme Power brought this to bear even while making the *mauni* a *kavi*. Suddenness is the mark of the miraculous. *Ramana* too would appear to have become poet asudden, but the fact was that it was not a sudden development (or whatever word you would have for a *jnani* knows no 'development'). The fact was that he was groomed for poetic scholarship over the years by the Supreme Power, unnoticed but unmistakably.

A lad of sixteen he attained *Atma sakshatkara* (Self-realisation) without even knowing that phrase—such an 'illiterate' he was as far as Vedantic lore goes. But, be it remembered, that academically he was not an illiterate. He had received schooling upto the Higher Secondary stage. He had read and understood such devotional works in Tamil as the *Periya Puranam*, and songs from the *Devaram*. But since the day he set

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foot on Tiruvannamalai in this seventeenth Year (1896), his absorption in the *Nish-pran*cha (World-unseen) mode of Self-enjoyment was so profound that for the following many months he remained a *mauni*, i.e., one who had no give-and-take transactions with the world of duality (which includes Vedantic lore). But roughly from the beginning of the present century, his *maunam* was partially broken (of course, only externally) and the Supreme Power imperceptibly contrived his give-and-take engagement in Vedantic poetry: he was made to read (take) Vedantic poetry and also to teach (give) it. It was brought about thus, by the deft Invisible Hand.

In the last lap of the last century a near-illiterate sadhu was brought into the picture to serve as the dedicated attendant of the *Mauni* for the succeeding 21 years. Palani swami was a Malayali by birth, a Tamil by domicile. With his poor knowledge of both the languages he used to read aloud spiritual works in them, many of them in poetry, for his own edification. The Supreme Power found a channel for the world's edification through just this! Palaniswami committed many mistakes in his reading and it was evident he could not understand the sense. The *Mauni* was moved by compassion towards his self-appointed servitor. He would help Palaniswami properly in his studies. Towards this end, he himself began reading those books so that he could impart their contents to Palaniswami. The Realised One reading about the "technique" of Realisation! The Ocean reading about H₂O! With the intuition of the Wise and Pure, Sri Ramana could discover the import of the books at first glance. Whatever he read got imprinted in his mind-beyond-mind. Incidentally he could also grasp the rules governing the prosody of Tamil and Malayalam poetry. He became, thus, conversant in both the subject and structure of spiritual poetry.

The MONK

By "MANI"

Up upon the Mountain Path
Sat a monk in loin cloth who
Ne'er did speak nor Sermon say
Yet his Darshan made me gay.

Up upon the Mountain Top
Sits he, like a tiny-tot
Ne'er did speak nor Sermon Say
Yet his smile showed me the Way

Down below the Hill so high
Earthly passions flare and fly
O! Ye cannot touch me now
For that One has shown me how!

But the Supreme Power which 'waits for centuries to perfect a small wild flower' waited for twelve long years to reach the moment, when the poetry latent in Ramana could come out patent. And it was on that Ganesa Chaturthi of 1912 that he composed his *venba* in Tamil.

In the succeeding years he was to become a master creator of more and more *venbas*. Though he was proficient in many other metres also, in which he has composed flawless poems, the *venba* seemed to be his forte, as it was to the celebrated poet of yore, Pugazhendi. More than that, he was to introduce the *venba* metre in the Telugu language also. He was also to silently inspire Ganapati Muni and another scholar Lakshmana Sarma to try their hand *unsuccessfully* at the adoption of the metre in Sanskrit—*unsuccessfully*, to show perhaps how difficult a metre it is. Ganapati Muni translated the name *venba* (*ven-pa*) into "sukla chandas", the "white metre."

"White metre" has deep significance. In our tradition white stands for peace,

i. e. silence; poetry is represented by the red colour. When a prism is interposed in white radiance and the colourless white is thereby resolved into the seven colours, the first to come out is red, which is nearest to white. Only after its emergence, the other six colours follow. In this way red represents Maya, the primal manifestation of the colourless radiance of Brahman, followed by the myriad creation. However great a poet Ramana be, and however great his poetry be, he basically symbolises the white of silence and his poetry too finds its consummation in silence. Naturally, therefore, he excelled in the "white metre". The Supreme Power had his white radiance refracted in the prism of *loka kalyana* (weal of the world) to shed the various colours of poetic rasas (loosely, 'sentiment') red being predominant.

Here red signifies the *rasa* of love. 'Aruna-Achala' is itself the 'Red Hill', Red being Sakti, i.e. Love, the dynamic force that activates the universe, the Hill being Siva, i.e. peace, the static base of Love. In Ramana's *Akshara-mana-malai* the red of Love touches its peak in its matrimonial merger in the white of Peace. More of it later.

Now to return to the first song on Ganapati:

*Him who begot you as child you made
Into a beggar; as a child yourself
You then lived everywhere just to support
Your own huge belly; I too am a child.
Oh Child God in that niche! Encountering
one*

*Born after you, is your heart made of
stone?*

*I pray you look at me!*¹

The Silent One having made his debut in the world of words, the Enlightened

One enjoys the lighter side of devotional duality and offers a *ninda stuti* (ironic praise) to Ganesa in serio-comic vein. Ramana's poetic worship of the Poets' Poet *Kaviinaam Kavi*, as the Vedic mantra extols Him) is not the plaintive prayer of a humble servitor, but the free and familiar banter of a companion. He rails at Ganapati as being the cause of His father Siva's mendicancy. He accuses Him of selfishly pampering His own pot-belly, ignoring Ramana. The poet asserts that he has every right to taunt the big Elephant God, because he is none other than His younger brother: *one born after you*. It is momentous declaration casually made! It confirms the belief that Sri Ramana was the Avatar of Kartikeya. "If you, Ganesa, are the first child of Siva Sakti, I too am a child of theirs, the younger one at that. How is it you deny your graceful glance to me? Look at me."

The *Mauni* steeped in non-duality did not attach any significance to Avatarhood. Right from the Greater God to a blade of grass all are phantoms of illusion to him. But once the *Mauni* became *Kavi*, enjoyed the variegated beauties in the dual illusion, and found in that beauty itself a pathway of poetry to return to the world of the Non-dual. The truth of his being the incarnation of Kumara Swami came out of his mouth in natural ease, casually: *one born after you; I too am a child*. When Silence donned words, the Formless donned Avataric Form.

The casualness of the declaration goes well with the sweet, simple spirit that informs the poem, as of a child addressing another child: "Oh child God in that niche!", "I too am child". Ramana, ever

¹ Unless stated otherwise, the translations are as given in *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi* edited by Arthur Osborne.

the child, is in addition just born as poet and so is the child-poet!

Sankaracharya said that having fed on the Wisdom-milk of the Mother Divine, Ganesa and Kumara remain (lust unknown) children for ever. ² Jnani Gods though they are, they are not forbidding, but invite us to intimacy in chummy childliness. Ramana's first poem extends that invitation.

Here the red of Love takes the shades of *sakhya bhaava* 'the mood of the friend, which includes the intimacy of a brother, and *apatya bhaava* (the mood of a son). *Sakhya* towards Ganesa and *apatya* towards Siva.

Apatya was the 'k' mood of Ramana insofar as he seemingly related himself to the relative sphere of duality. Like

² Saundarya Lahari-73.

Christ, the Son of God, constantly speaking of the Father in Heaven, Ramana always felt his sonship to Arunachala Siva. He left home at seventeen, "in search of my father" ("என் தகப்பனரைத் தேடிக்காண்டு"). This, again, linked him to the previous Kartik Avatar, Jnanasambandha, who typified the *satputra maarga* (the Way of the Noble Son) among devotional paths.

But Ramana was soon to burst forth in poetry in the most splendid shade of Red, that is, in the *Madhura Bhaava*, the Sweet Mood of the Bride. He who accuses the pliant clay Ganesa as stone-hearted is going to mould, as easily as from clay, the form of the Lord of Love out of the stony Hill of Arunachala in the *Akshara-mana-maalai* ("The Marital Garland of Letters").

- (To be continued)

DEATH

By Arthur Osborne

"He hath revenge on Death, for he died well,"¹
A poet wrote in life's far distant spring,
Stumbling on truth. Death's fabled heaven and hell
And drearier prospect yet the new times bring
Of a blank nothingness hedge like a ring
The seeming self whose lifelong passing bell
Tolls in his ears, although the mind may cling
To fragile hopes the gathering years dispel.

But "Die before you die", the Prophet said:
Give up the seeming self that from the world
Falls into death; remains that Self instead
Wherein earth, heaven and hell like dreams are furled.

The world in you, not you in it, has died,
For That you are and no thing else beside.

¹ Quoted from a poem by Denzil Batchelor.

LEAVES FROM DEVOTEES'
DIARIES

Sri Bhagavan's Frugality

Nothing brought to the Ashram could be wasted. Not even when it was obviously useless. Here Sri Bhagavan was adamant. He was frugal in the use of everything. With Him frugality was an art.

He would allow nothing to go to waste. Even a grain of rice or a mustard seed lying on the ground would be picked up, dusted carefully, taken to the kitchen and put in its proper tin. I asked him why he gave himself so much trouble for a grain of rice. He said: "Yes, this is my way. Everything is in my care and I let nothing go to waste. In these matters I am quite strict. Were I married, no woman could get on with me. She would run away." On some other day he said: "This is the property of my Father Arunachala. I have to preserve it and pass it on to His children." He would use for food, things we would not even dream of as edible; wild plants, bitter roots and pungent leaves were turned under his guidance into delicious dishes. Even the water in which bitter ground was boiling could not be thrown away. With salt added it would be taken to the cows. What the cows thought about it, they did not tell us!

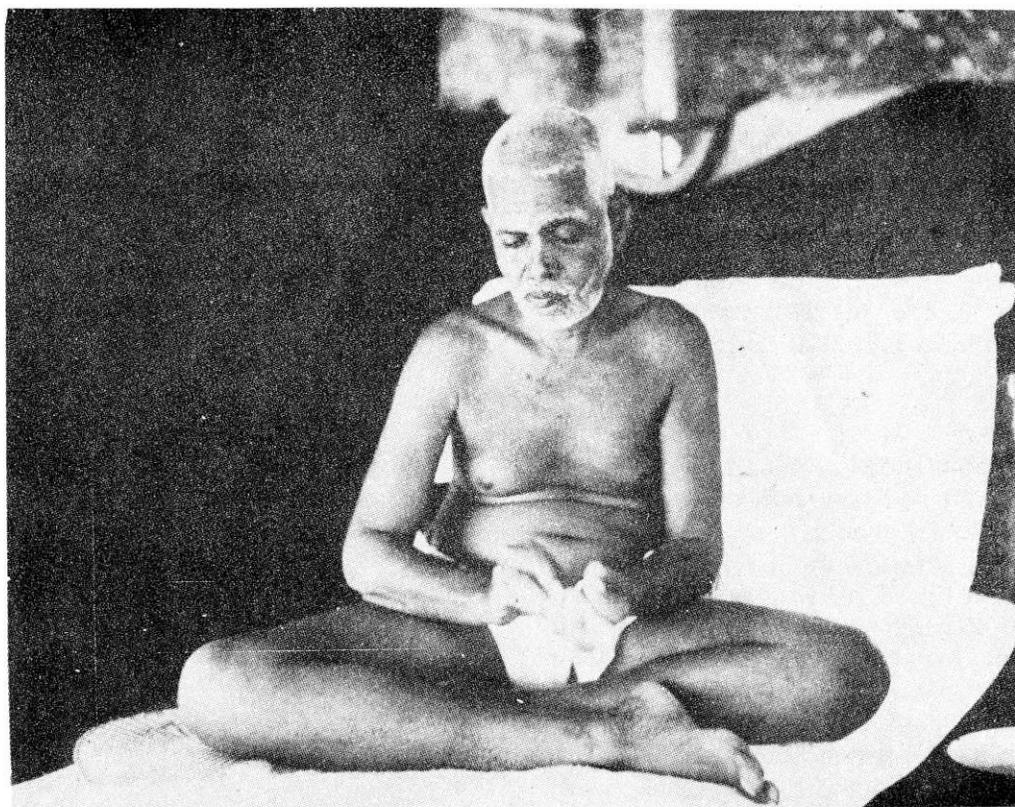
One evening some village woman was passing with a bundle of wild and bitter herbs for her goats. She left it near the well and entered the Hall to offer her devotion. Bhagavan saw it and said: "Who has left it here? Better take it to the kitchen and make it into a paste with some coconut." Our hearts stopped beating. The horror of the paste was stronger than devotion. We called the

woman and begged her to disappear with her dangerous bundle!

-from *RAMANA SMRTI*, by Varanasi Subbalakshmiamma: 'My Life, My Light'

Recently while coming from Bangalore, Aurobindo Bose brought some costly pencils and gave them to Bhagavan. After he left, Bhagavan examined the pencils closely, wrote with them, appreciated their good quality, and handed them to Krishnaswamy, saying: "Please keep these carefully. Our own pencil must be some where. Please see where it is and let me have it." Krishnaswamy carefully put away those pencils, opened a wooden box which was on the table nearby, and after searching for a while, found a pencil and gave it to Bhagavan.

Turning it this way and that, and examining it, Bhagavan said, "Why this one? This is from Devaraja Mudaliar. Our own pencil must be there. Give it to me and keep this one also safely somewhere". Krishnaswamy searched everywhere but could not find it. "See if it is in the hall", said Bhagavan. Someone went there and came back saying it was not there. "Oh! What a great pity! That is our own pencil, you see. Search properly and find it", said Bhagavan. Devaraja Mudaliar, who was there, said, "Why worry, Bhagavan? Are



not all these pencils your own?" Bhagavan said with a smile, "That is not it. You gave this one. Bose brought the other ones! If we are not sufficiently careful, somebody may take them away. You know, Swami is the common property of all people. If your pencil were lost you might feel aggrieved, for you brought it, spending a good amount of money, and gave it to me. If it is our own pencil it does not matter where it is kept. It costs half-an-anna¹ and even that was not purchased. Some one brought it, and gave it saying it had been found somewhere. So, it is our own. As regards the others, we are answerable to the donors. No one will question us about this one and that is why I am asking for it. The others are for the use of important people. Why do we want such pencils? Have we

¹ about 3 paise

to pass any examination or have we to work in an office? For our writing work, that pencil is enough". So saying, he had a search made for it and ultimately got it.

A devotee brought a nice walking stick with a silver handle, and presented it to Bhagavan. Turning it this side and that, and examining it, Bhagavan remarked to the devotee, "Good. It is very nice. Please use it carefully". "But it is not for my use," he said. "I have brought it thinking that Bhagavan would use it." "What an idea!" exclaimed Bhagavan. "A nice walking stick with a silver handle should be used only by officials like you. Why for me? Look, I have my own walking stick. That is enough," concluded Bhagavan.

"When that one is worn out, you could use this one, couldn't you?" asked another

devotee. "Why these costly things for me? If a bit of wood were chiselled, a walking stick could be made out of it in an instant. While I was on the hill, I used to chisel a lot of wood into walking sticks, smooth them and preserve them. Not even a paisa was spent on that account. Several people took away those walking sticks. They were our own. Why all this ostentation for us? Those cheap walking sticks will do for us". So saying, Bhagavan gave the stick back to the devotee.

As a rule, Bhagavan does not use costly things. He likes things which do not cost even a paisa!

-from *LETTERS*, pp. 246, 248,

During the early days of my stay here, i. e. in 1941-42, someone brought the electric fan and requested that it be used by Bhagavan. "Why this fan? The ordinary fan is there. We have hands. I will fan myself with it whenever necessary. Why do I require all these things?" said Bhagavan. "Is it not some trouble? If the electric fan is used there is no trouble whatsoever," said that devotee. "What is the trouble? If the ordinary fan is used we get just as much breeze as we want. The electric fan blows too much breeze and with a whizzing noise. Moreover, some electric current is consumed. For that, there will be a bill. Why should we make the office bear that expense on our account?" said Bhagavan. "We have got it here, Swami, with the permission of the office," said the devotee. "Oh, is that so? Then let them have the fan for themselves. They are people who work and it is necessary for them. Why should I need it?" said Bhagavan.

I wrote to you in my letters of yesterday and the day before about the disinclination of Bhagavan to use satin-covered mattresses, pillows, fans and the like. You know, in September 1946 the Golden Jubilee

To Ramana Maharshi

By M. R. Tewari

Through the unseeing glass
The absent-minded gaze burnt
Falsehood with truth;
And what remained
Was nothing that can be known
Named, classified, rendered in word,
Fixed by thought, grasped.
Unabsorbed by feeling,
It flowed like water over the mossy
rock.
Unsingeing flames played lambent
Like sheen on dry water.
Imagination, imagining its plights,
With beauty and truth gone,
Receded into nowhere, its haunt,
And sulked losing its function.
Only illusion remained
And you, like a curtain,
Drew it aside.

of Bhagavan's advent at Arunachala was celebrated. About a month before those celebrations the Maharani of Baroda sent by parcel post a velvet shawl embroidered with silk and gold thread. The office people sent it to Bhagavan through Rajagopala Iyer, one of the office attendants. He showed it to Bhagavan and wanted to spread it on the sofa, but Bhagavan would not permit him to do so. When the devotee tried to place it under Bhagavan's feet, Bhagavan withdrew his feet and sat with folded legs. Thereupon the devotee placed it over the pillow on which Bhagavan reclined. Immediately, thereafter, Bhagavan stopped leaning on it, moved to the middle of the sofa and sat in *padamasana* pose without uttering a single word.

The devotee felt it was no use trying any further and so he folded the shawl and took it back to the office. After he left

Bhagavan sat as usual and said: "These are meant for those who wear shirts, coats, turbans and appear in style, but why do I require all these? If I have to sit on them, I feel like sitting on prickly pears. According to the old saying, I have a bear body and a bald head: of what use are these to me? This towel itself is my silk shawl and my lace upper cloth." "In some places such things are being used. That is why perhaps they have sent it," said a devotee. "It may be so. But what status have I to use them? I am a poor man. For my status even what I now have is too much. This sofa, these mattresses, these pillows—why all these? You people do not agree, but how happy would it be if I could spread out this towel and sit on the floor!" said Bhagavan. "You say even that towel should be no bigger than the present one!" said Mudaliar. "Why a bigger one? It is half-a-yard broad and three-quarters of a yard long. It is sufficient for drying the body after bath, for spreading over the head if you walk in the sun, for tying round the neck if it is cold and for spreading on the floor to sit on. What more could we do with a bigger one?" said Bhagavan.

from *LETTERS*, pp. 433-435.

Upon the Hill, when we did not have sufficient rice, we used to go and collect different kinds of greens. When we were cleaning them, Sri Bhagavan would talk about the characteristics of each one of them, how one produced heat in the body, another cold, etc. After cleaning them, we used to put them all in a big vessel and cook them in the way suggested by Sri Bhagavan. He used to ask us to eat the greens as the main dish and rice as the side dish! It used to taste like nectar!

We used to make tooth powder in the Ashram and put it in tiny paper packets,

each containing a day's supply. If Sri Bhagavan found even a little more than what was needed for a day's use, he would leave it in the packet and fold it and give it back to us. He expected us to give it to him the next day. If we forgot, he would gently chide us for our carelessness and extravagance.

Both at Skandashram and for a few years at the Ashram, Sri Bhagavan used *panchakal pam* for his bath. Later we used to take oil out of *copra* and Sri Bhagavan used to take a little of it in his palm and rub it on his head. From the hot water provided for him, he would take a little and rub his head with it and apply that oily water to his body. He would do it so well and so carefully that his entire body used to be covered with oil. He was frugal in the use of everything. With him frugality was an art.

Once Sri Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, affectionately called *navana* by all, was staying in Palakothu. One day Sri Bhagavan went to see Nayana after lunch. Nayana had cut some sheets of paper for making notebook and had thrown on the floor a lot of unwanted bits of paper. When Sri Bhagavan saw them, he said they could all be made into a small note book. Viswanatha Swami said he would make a note book out of the bits and did so and wrote some verses on them. He did not want Sri Bhagavan to take the trouble of making a notebook. Sri Bhagavan was very happy when he saw the notebook and said, "You have done it the way I thought of doing." Sri Kavyakantha was amazed at the skill of Sri Bhagavan in using everything without any wastage. The Lord of all, possessing nothing himself, taught us the importance of frugality!

from Sri Kunju Swami's *REMINISCENCES* (unpublished)

The most difficult secret for a man to keep is the opinion he has of himself. — ANON

GLIMPSES—BUDDHIST THOUGHT AND CONTEMPLATION

By G. Narayan

Dukkha is the common lot of man. There is old age, disease and death. Pleasant conditions and happy feelings are not permanent, they soon change giving place to unhappy feelings. Sectarian religions and ideologies have divided man and so there is ever increasing violence and war. When you look into the psychological structure of man he is conditioned and limited. There is a sense of anguish and loneliness, a feeling of inadequacy. This is dukkha.

The Buddhist way of life starts with Right view (Samma ditthi). Ignorance (avidya) comes in the way of right perspective and understanding. To attach permanence to something that is impermanent is to invite sorrow. Illusion and hatred thrive in the field of ignorance. The word *samma* indicates a sense of equilibrium and harmony, not being tossed about by conflicting ideas and desires. In the wake of right view are right livelihood, right speech and right action. These constitute *shila* which is the basis of ethical conduct. Without establishing this order in himself man has no sense of peace, no vitality of freedom that can give birth to a new culture.

Freedom and order go together. This order is not of a mechanical nature. It includes moral sense, aesthetic sensivity and ethical conduct. *Shila* is conducive



to mental health and goodness. We now enter the field of energy and mindfulness (*Sammasati*). There is a clear perception of 'what is', in a state of energy, without any projection of thought or interpretation. 'what is' unfolds itself and tells its own story. This state of mind is free of comparison, justification or condemnation. It has no sense of static identity.

Mindfulness or awareness gives a posture to both the body and the mind, subtle and pliable, and is imbued with a sense of insight. In this state of learning there is an inherent discipline, not imposed from

without or within. It cannot be translated as practice, the Sanskrit words *dhyana* and *upasana* may be nearer as synonyms. This awareness is essentially without choice and is not caught in the corridor of opposites. There is total attention (*Samma Samadhi*) without division as the observer and the observed. By its very nature the quality of this attention is extensive and not bound by the relativity of time and space. *Nibbana* is Freedom (*Mukti*) and is realised by the Wise within themselves. It is beyond logic and reasoning.

It is interesting to look into the *dhyanas* (*Jnanas*) as enumerated in Buddhist philosophy. The first *dhyana* is composed of reasoning, reflection, joy and happiness. One is free from unwholesome thoughts and desires—and there is a sense of detachment. Both reasoning and reflection, however necessary, are mental babble according to the Buddhist sage Asanga. By the elimination of reasoning and reflection one attains to the second *dhyana* which consists of inner serenity, joy, happiness and *ekaggata* (one-pointedness of mind).

In the third *dhyana* there is detachment from joy (*piti*). The sage enjoys happiness in the body and dwells in equanimity (*upeka*) and mindfulness. There is awareness and *ekaggata*. In the fourth *dhyana* there is disappearance of happiness, there is neither joy nor sorrow. The sage lives in the purity of equanimity—mindfulness, the highest point of peace immovable like a mountain. This mindfulness is opened and cleansed by equanimity.

The enlightened sage is the embodiment of *Prajna* and *Karuna*, of wisdom and compassion. *Prajna* and *Karuna* are inseparable. Compassion is the highest form of intelligence, without any trace of illusion. The Buddha showed a way out of *dukkha*. He wanted those who came to him, laymen

The Mountain Path

As announced, our January '87 issue was printed for the first time in a new press, 'Sri Ramana Offset', at Tiruvannamalai itself. Our readers would have noticed some shortcomings in it. Some inescapable first-attempt errors and delay—due to a relatively inexperienced crew in a new press—could not be avoided. We are confident of surmounting such minor lapses in future issues, and bring them out in time.

The readers would also have noticed a difference in the quality of paper. Cousequent to ever-rising costs, we have dispensed with the costlier Map Litho paper and resorted to good quality Mechanical Glazed newsprint, which is being used in journals of comparable standard.

We solicit our readers' understanding and continued encouragement. Suggestions are, of course, welcome!

Managing Editor,
The Mountain Path

1st April, 1987.

and monks, to test it in their daily lives. There was no need for belief, ritual, or sacrifice. Observation and dialogue are very important. This gave birth to the science of psychology (study of the mind), nearly 2500 years ago, and Buddhist scholars were the earliest psychologists. Superstition gave way to inquiry, enriching Indian culture and philosophy.

As it is presented today there are two forms of Buddhist meditation. *Samatha* is the practice of calmness leading to devotion. This is staying with the image and the mind feels secure. Buddha spoke of a new form of meditation known as

Vipassana or Insight meditation. It does not reject calm meditation, but goes further to develop insight. The way of insight is to be constantly aware of ourselves and our relationships. One is aware of all the emotions and thoughts as they arise. In this observation each thought flowers and withers away. The mind slows down; there is neither fear nor suppression. This is the beginning of clarity, and there is energy for further investigation into the deeper layers of human Consciousness. Insight has no anchor in the past images of thought and experience. Then life is an eternal voyage of the present in a state of wakefulness, and there is learning without accumulation.

THE TWO VILLAGES

Once the Sikh Teacher, GuruaNnak, was travelling accompanied by a disciple by the name of Mardana. They came across a village where the people were very inhospitable. The two holy men were given neither food nor shelter. On leaving the village Guru Nanak said, "May this village always be here."

Soon after, they came to another village. The villagers here were extremely kind and courteous to their guests. They were looked after properly, fed, made comfortable. On leaving the village Guru Nanak said, "May this village disappear and its people scatter all over the earth!"

Mardana was astonished.

"Sire," he said to Guru Nanak, "when you left the bad village, you wished it well. Now when you leave this good village, where the people have tried so hard to make us at home, you wish that it disappear! Isn't that very strange?"

"Not at all, not at all", replied Guru Nanak with a smile. "When I left the good village, I wanted its inhabitants to be spread out all over the world, to shed sweetness and light. And when I forsook the bad one, I expressed the wish that its meanness of spirit might forever be confined to a small place."

Mardana's eyes opened wide in admiration for the wisdom of his revered Teacher.

— Courtesy HERMES 1984

DETACHMENT FROM PAIN

K. Pandya

Dr. Sunil K. ~~Pandya~~ a neurosurgeon working at the Seth G. S. Medical College and K. E. M. Hospital in Bombay, wrote to us on May 23, 1985, "I am attempting a study of the Hindu philosophy on pain. During the course of my search for information I was directed to the experiences of Sri Ramana Maharshi. I am informed that he demonstrated, with supreme effortlessness, the indifference of the spirit to the suffering of the body thus illustrating the principle he often taught that 'I am not the body.'" He went on to say that he wanted details of the operations performed on the left arm of Sri Bhagavan and how He reacted then as he needed that information for incorporation in an essay on pain to be presented to an international gathering of neuro-surgeons.

We report with regret the passing away of Dr. G. Raghavachari, the surgeon who led the team that performed the operations on Bhagavan. Dr. Raghavachari, was alive then and we called on the aged Doctor at his home in Madras, requesting his reminiscences.

We are grateful to him for his detailed letter dated June 24, 1985, received subsequently which we reproduce hereunder:

* * * *

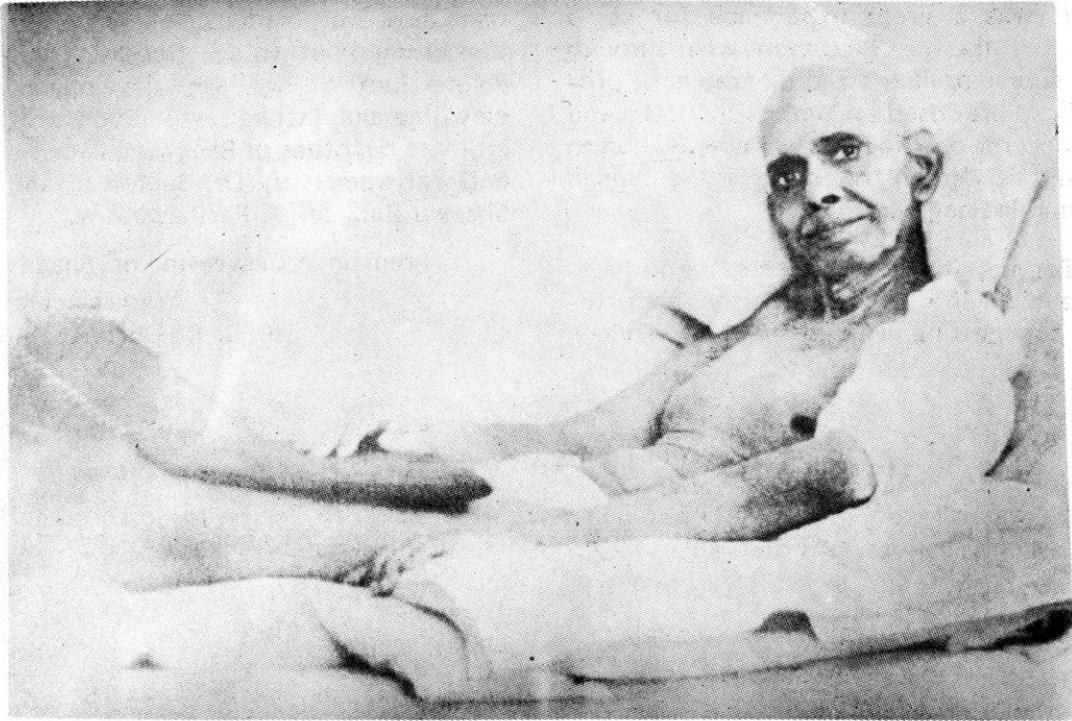
"Cherished memories of the days spent in the service of Bhagavan were revived. For me it was a blessed day, when my professional service was summoned for the treatment of Bhagavan, for His ailment. In



A rare photo: Sri Bhagavan giving darshan, seated in the verandah of the now Nivana Room.

the protracted treatment, we had the unreserved help of the Government of Madras and the authorities of the Stanley Medical College for use of the elaborate equipment and their transport. I had the expert assistance of Dr. M.V. Kamath and Dr. S. Krishnamurthi, Anaesthetist, Dr. V. Rajagopal and Blood Bank Officer Dr. Raghavan - In the Ashram, we had the help of Dr. Subramanyam and Dr. Shankar Rao and the overall moral support of Sri S. Doraiswamy Iyer.

"Records of the case, progress and treatment were maintained by Dr. Shankar Rao.



The last photo of Sri Bhagavan; taken seven days before His *Brahma Nirvana*.

If at all, they are available, they must be in the files of the Ashram.

“The operative procedures and their sequence are truly chronicled in the Diary part of *Guru Ramana* by S. S. Cohen—There is nothing much more to add, except for some personal observations.

“Very often the surgery that was allowed to be done by Bhagavan and his devotees was one with reservations and not the surgery demanded by the disease on its merits. For instance, in the excision of the recurrent lump in the back of the elbow, it was laid down that the ulnar nerve must be preserved at any cost. It is brought out in the diary, how amputation which was the indicated line of treatment was not accepted and the alternative of doubtful result viz. of extensive excision was undertaken. At one stage, Allopathic surgery was one of the many lines of treatment that was

allowed to be practised on him, some times concurrently, very often to oblige concerned devotees.

“At one stage, a biopsy was planned and a sizable amount of tissue had to be cut out. This was done without an anaesthesia. The way Bhagavan bore the pain without wincing and with a smile on his face was revealing. There is a prevailing idea among the public that operations were done on Bhagavan without anaesthesia. This is a wrong idea. Local anaesthesia and Brachial Block anaesthesia (nerves to the limb were blocked by injecting drugs around them) were used. This information may be passed on to Sri Sunil K. Pandya for a clarification on this issue. On the whole one does not feel happy about the course and ultimate result of surgery but one is satisfied that what was allowed to be done, was done well.

"It was a great experience for us to observe the way Bhagavan went through the course of illness and the traumatic procedures practised on him, with a calm and unconcerned attitude. It was a revelation to us and it demonstrated to us the human Avatar in Bhagavan.

"For me, it was the greatest good fortune of my life, to have had the opportunity for getting his blessings for services

done, however inadequate and ineffective they turned out to be. Besides I had the unique luck of my life, developing the elevating and lasting association with the intimate devotees of Bhagavan namely, Sri S. Doraiswami Iyer, Dr. Subramanyam, Dr. Shankar Rao, Sri S. Parthasarathy.

I remain in the service of Bhagavan

Yours sincerely

Sd. C. RAGHAVACHARI.

FREE FROM PASSIONS

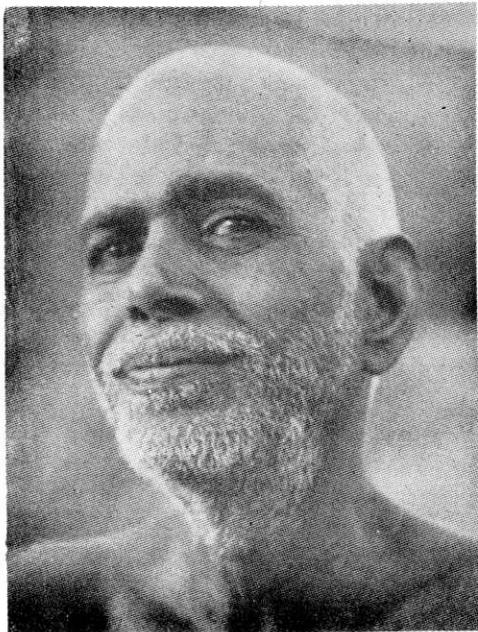
A young man posed a question; "Sir, how one can be freed from lust? Passions and unhealthy emotions disturb the mind sometimes and make me restless in spite of myself."

The Paramahansa replied:

"Ah, lust does not vanish till God is realised. So long as the body lasts, a little of it continues even after the realisation; but then it cannot raise its head. Do you think I myself am altogether free from it? At one time, I thought I had conquered lust. When I was sitting under the Panchvati such an onrush of lust came that it seemed to be beyond my power of control. I then wept rubbing my face against the dust on the ground and said to the Mother, 'I shall never harbour the idea that I have conquered lust.' It was only then that it vanished. Do you know, you people are now passing through a high tide of youth. This is why you cannot stop it. When a high tide comes does it heed an embankment? It then swells up, breaks the embankment and rushes forward. Then water stands as high as a bamboo over the paddy fields. But it is said that a mental sin is no sin in the Kali Yuga. Again, even if an undesirable feeling happens to arise once or twice in the mind why should you feel worried because of it? It is natural to the body, it comes and goes sometimes. Pay no more heed to it than to the bodily functions, the calls of nature. Do people feel worried because of such functions? Similarly consider these feelings to be very trifling, unworthy of any attention and do not think of them any more. Moreover, pray to Him heartily, repeat continually the name of Hari and meditate on Him. Do not take notice whether they come or go. They will slowly come under control."

INTRODUCING...

Sri V. Mallikarjunan



Sri Mallikarjunan is the younger brother of Raja Iyer (see p. 67 *The Mountain Path* Jan. '83). Born in Tiruvannamalai in 1906 he had his first darshan of Bhagavan when 7 years old, at the Virupaksha Cave. Educated throughout in this town Sri Malli married in 1929. He served in the Railways at various places in the Madras State but had the longest stay at Villupuram being posted there thrice. This is a very important Railway junction. This enabled him to be of very great service to the Ashram in timely follow-up on parcels and mail concerning the Ashram. He says, "I was in the good books of Chinna Swami! He was very kind towards me." He retired in 1960

and then-on visited the Ashram from his house nearby, to help Sri Raja Iyer at the post-office. One day the President suggested that he could work in the Book-stall in case he did not seek employment elsewhere. He accepted gladly! A year later came the Chinese aggression and Malli's services were again required for the Railways where he continued for the next three years. That over, he was back in the Book-stall and slowly began extending help in Ashram accounts, *The Mountain Path* office, and also attending to correspondence.

Sri Malli recalls the many occasions when Bhagavan enquired about his welfare. Once when he was transferred to Trichy he was quite upset as he feared much trouble as a Railway official, dealing with the overbearing business and government customers. He made his trepidation known to his brother Raja Iyer when he visited the Ashram. As Bhagavan happened to pass by Raja Iyer's room on the way to the Goshala just then,



Sri V. Mallikarjunan

the latter urged him, "Go, go! Prostrate to Him seeking His blessings. Everything will then turn out all right". Malli did likewise. Sri Bhagavan stood there looking at him and nodded. Sri Malli says that it was this *Abhaya* of Bhagavan which enabled him to overcome all the troubles, which confronted him.

As he had been in that service for so long all matters relating to Railway dealings were entrusted to him. He recollects a very strange incident in 1961 concerning two huge marble pieces measuring 8 feet each and weighing 4 tons despatched by train from Ahmedabad by a devotee as donation to the Ashram. These did not arrive at all! The Railway in fact agreed to pay the value of the marbles, but the Ashram would rather have the stones! After a herculean follow-up by Mallikarjunan, in the face of discouragement from many quarters the stones were at last tracked and reached the Ashram by the end of

1964 after three years! Shortly there after the stones were dressed and made to form the Lotus-Flower that adorns the the pedestal of Sri Ramaneswara Maha-lingam over the *samadhi* of Bhagavan. A *Leela* indeed!

The above incident illustrates the dogged persistence that Sri Malli displays in whatever he does by way of service to Bhagavan, which he has been quietly performing for over two decades now. He still commutes from his home near the Ayyankulam tank where Bhagavan had thrown away the robe and the sacred-thread in 1896. The Mallikarjunans have three sons, all well off.

He says "I am now past eighty-one. Bhagavan has given me strength and kept me fit to work for Him; I am not used to idling."

We wish this unobtrusive *Karma-Yogi-Bhakta* and his family many years of health and happiness in Bhagavan's service.

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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.

Date : 31-3-87.

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



SELECTED THOUGHTS OF INDIRA GANDHI:
By S. K. Dhawan. Pub: Mittal Publications,
3-2/19-B, Lawrence Road, Delhi 110035.
Price : Rs. 200/-

It was Emerson who enjoined his readers to write in their hearts that "every day is the best day of the year" - A counsel which might sound trite, musty and sententious ; but the one person who seems to have put in practice and lived dangerously every day of her life was the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, one of the most powerful leaders of the twentieth century. Having cast the longest shadow on India's post-Independence years she was, in "The Economist's" phrase, the undisputed Empress of India, cutting her stately figure in the political firmament for two decades. She was the ubiquitous super woman to her admirers who installed her in the Hall of Fame along with the Queens, Catherine, Elizabeth and Victoria. But quite unlike them, her end was tragic, and she was even prophetic about it, for just the previous day she seemed to be writing her own epitaph in a speech in Bhuvaneshwar by remarking " Attempts are being made to eliminate me, but I will preserve the unity and integrity of the country till the last drop of my blood. Every drop of my blood, I am sure, will contribute to the growth of the nation."

There is not a single subject of any importance on which she had not expressed forcibly and in a forthright manner her views with clarity and precision. Who would not then like to read some of these thoughts and the public is indebted to S.K.Dhawan (not kin to R.K.Dhawan, her secretary) the author of several bibliographies, chronologies and compilations, of which the book under review is one such. This is a cornucopia flowing with her inspiring ideas and elevating thoughts, culled from her numerous speeches, writings, interviews, books and broadcasts and all of them

arranged subject-wise and alphabetically. If one wants to know how an extraordinary woman, and a statesman at that, had worked for the betterment of her nation, one cannot do better than read this book which reveals a mind enriched by the life-long study of men and matters. The reviewer is embarrassed by its riches as he is moved to tell, in just the few lines that a review permits, about every thing she had said. This book of nearly 400 closely printed pages may turn out to be tiresome reading, if perused continuously; but we can just dip in it anywhere and it is worth the effort. The knowledge provided is impressive both in content and variety.

BOUQUET OF THOUGHTS : By Tribhuvan Prasad, Tewary **SEEKER'S QUEST :** By the same author. Both published by the Directorate of Information, Publicity and Tourism, Government of Pondicherry. Price not indicated.

These two books are the first and second vols of some of the speeches and messages of the Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry, who had been earlier associated with the management of social and economic planning. The one thread that runs through all the chapters is that of patriotism and commitment to Indian culture and its abiding values. Although hailing from the north, the Governor had taken keen interest in Tamil culture too, as he probes the depth and profundity of the wisdom and wealth of South India. This is evident particularly in the several addresses he had made in the functions connected with such personalities as Anandarangam Pillai, Kam'ban, Thyagaraja, Shyama Sastri and Subramanya Bharati. It is hoped that these two publications will not be treated like just publicity material because of their source, but read with care being valuable hints from an earnest "pilgrim savouring the mystique of India's imperishable heritage", to quote the words of K. C. Pant in his foreword.

— ARGUS

GOD HAS GIVEN US EVERY GOOD THING : by Roy Eugene Davis. Pub. CSA Press, Publishers Lakemont, Georgia 30552 (U.S.A.) Price: \$ 7.95

In this spiritual autobiography, Roy Eugene Davis has written of his experiences and yearning at an early age to know the truth about life, about God, the soul and the universe. This quest for understanding had led him to a Guru, Paramahansa Yogananda, in 1950 at Los Angeles, California. Finally it resulted in a ministry which

has been able to touch the lives of several thousands of men, women and children around the globe, teaching that God is the higher true self of every person. The reader is introduced to many God-directed people, among them Neville Goddard, Ernest Holmes, Walter Lanyon, Father Devine, Dr. Masaharu Taniguchi, Sri Swami Ram and Sri Satya Sai Saba. He has found that God as the true Guru, moves into the human condition and dissolves it so that only His will is evident. Again the author had been exposed to several books on Yoga even in the early stages of his life, and recalls Brunton's "A Search in secret India" with its inspired accounts of Sri Ramana Maharshi as being "helpful and fascinating." The author goes on to say that Paramahansa Yogananda's amazing book, 'Autobiography of a Yogi' "held me entranced and became my second Bible." Incidentally a rare photo of Yogananda's Guru's Paramaguru, Sri Babaji is included in this book.

The author became the Director of the Centre for Spiritual Awareness, a new-era movement with world headquarters and a retreat centre to which people come from all over the world in north-east Georgia. He is the author of a score of books many of which are published in five languages. He is also editor - publisher of 'TRUTH' Journal, a magazine with an international circulation.

Davis tells of his years of travelling to speak in many countries of the world and says: "I did my best to be open to God's goodness, and to help make this world a more congenial place for my brothers and sisters and for future generations". However, when he came to India, he came only as a pilgrim and wanted to see and experience "the land known as the mother of religions." His pilgrimage to India was useful in many ways. Many new friends were established and better understanding of people and their aspirations and needs was acquired.

This is an autobiography of a *Sadhak* with a message of hope and faith for everyone in today's awakening world. For such a *sadhak*, outward struggles, troubles, calamities are only a means of surmounting ego and *rajasic* desire and attaining to complete surrender. So long as one insists on success, one does the work partly at least for the ego. Difficulties and outward failures come to warn one that it is so and of the need for complete equanimity. It is not the success in the immediate work that is all im-

portant; it is the capacity to receive and transmit a greater vision and inner Force that has to develop; and this has to be done quite coolly and patiently without being elated or disturbed by immediate victory or failure. Further it is also seen that the very best happens to those who have put their entire trust in the Divine alone. It is only by remaining perfectly peaceful and calm, with unshakable confidence and faith in the Divine Grace that you will allow circumstances to be as good as they can be. Absolute faith and trust in Grace is, in the last analysis, the supreme wisdom.

A book to be read and a life to be emulated.

— Dr. D. SRIRAMA RAO

TRIUMPH OF THE SPARROW : By Shinkichi Takahashi Tr. by Lucien Stryk & Takashi Ikemoto Pub: University of Illinois Press, USA. 1985. pp. 174 Price : Not Stated.

"The poet deals with absolute truth, offering witness to it directly, experientially—the philosopher with relative truth, using strategies of all kinds to assure understanding."

—From the interview with Shinkichi Takahashi.

Each of Takahashi's poems is a koan, created with the intention of pushing the reader into that intuitive leap in which understanding of what is real dawns. Consequently they are not easy to read and in the process of pointing to the flexibility of the relative world may seem bizarre or impossible. "I hold a newspaper reading. Suddenly my hands become cow ears, then turn into Pusan, the South Korean port." (Fish p. 91)

However non-logical, the images do not occur by some random accident. With some insight into Mahayana Buddha Dharma, particularly of the view of the Emptiness (*sunyata*) and the difference between absolute and relative truth, what they point to becomes clear.

"Nothing exists, yet fascinating. The ants scurry in moonlight. It is the eye deceives: The ants—they are but moonlight. The idea of being's impossible: There's neither moon nor ants." (Ants p. 94)

Nothing exists, neither moon nor ants because, in Buddhist theory, there is no such thing as soul or *atman* to be found absolutely or inherently

existing from its own side. Seen from the mountain top of enlightenment, existence is no more substantial than moonlight.

The poet's intention is not to explain these things in concepts which, he says, is the work of philosophers, but to transmit insight. He says in the interview; "Why do we honour Hui-Neng and Rinzai? Because they transmit rare gifts of enlightenment. As a poet I too have that responsibility."

Readers unfamiliar with Buddhist philosophy will at least appreciate his imaginative elasticity and his oneness with what he describes. His images are of nature, like the wind and trees and birds amongst whom he displays an uncommon empathy with the ordinary sparrow. Aspects of modern life also enter, such as newspapers and railways; and Takahashi's own early involvement with Dadaism in the 1920's might help to explain what others describe as a surrealist flavour.

Quite often he alludes to the unity of microcosm and macrocosm: "The three thousand worlds are in that plum blossom./The smell is God." (Gods p. 135)

"Triumph of the Sparrow" is a nicely produced compilation of Takahashi's work, excellently translated by Lucien Stryk and Takashi Ikemoto.

The introduction and the interview at the back between the poet and the translator help ease the reader into this uncommon world where the absolute, and not the relative, remains the norm.

— SUNYATA

MORE ON TANTRAS By M.P. Pandit. Pub: Sterling Publishers (P) Ltd., L-10, Green Park Extn. New Delhi-110 016. Pp. 141 Price: Rs. 100/- (1985).

Mr. M.P. Pandit is well-known as he has authored, translated and compiled nearly a hundred books on various subjects viz. Yoga, Philosophy, Psychology, Occultism, Culture and Polity. His interpretation of the Vedas, Upanishads and the Tantras forms a bridge between ancient and modern thought. He is a regular reviewer of books for THE MOUNTAIN PATH as also other prominent journals. He speaks over the Radio and the TV on topical subjects in India and abroad. He firmly believes in the advent of a New Age

governed by a New Consciousness, and devotes all his time and energy and his vast erudition to this pursuit.

In this new book Mr. Pandit tells the reader convincingly that there is no necessity at all for 'a new religion for the new man.' The wisdom of the Spiritual Tradition has an answer for every question, every problem, which is not only reasonable but also adequate. Mr. Pandit, whose Yoga training began at the age of 21 in the Aurobindo Ashram, explains the Tantra wisdom so clearly as to make it simple for a child to understand. The reader may not find much 'new stuff' in the book, but useful light is thrown on warped interpretations and certain dark corners of this esoteric science.

In a broad perspective, Mr. Pandit shows that the Tantras synthesise God and man and society, knowledge and practice. The Tantras hold that this world and this universe are the outpourings of a Divine Reality which exists not only in the Universe but also in the human body. To recover this true consciousness is the sublime aim of Tantra.

Section I of the book contains the author's addresses on Tantras in India and abroad. In Section II, these are enlarged by his studies of the subject in the form of reviews of books and articles by eminent exponents of Tantra. Section III consists of excerpts from Sri Aurobindo's Integral yoga and Tantras compiled by Mr. Pandit from Sri Aurobindo's writings.

— LUCY CORNELSEN

FOR MY CHILDREN: Spiritual Teachings of Mata Amritanandamayi. Pub: Mata Amritananda Mayi Mission, (Vallickavu), Kuzhithura P.O. Via. Athinad, Quilon Dt. Kerala 690 542. Pp. 140. Price: Rs. 5/-

This little, pocket-size book gives a glimpse into the saintliness of Mata Amritanandamayi, popularly known as 'Ammachi'. "From birth itself I had an intense liking for the holy Name of God. I would repeat the Lord's Name incessantly with every breath" — this gift of the Mataji is the key to her teachings.

Ammachi's lucid statement on various practical aspects of a seeker's life is helpful.

"A spiritual person should be like the wind. Wind blows over the fragrant flower as well as

foul-smelling excreta without bias. Like this, a *sadhak* should have neither attachment to people who show him affection nor malice towards those who abuse him. To him, everybody is equal. He should see God in everything." (p. 78 No. 211)

Serious spiritual questions, in their own right, require direct, deep and enlightening answers. In the questions and answers section we see more of the compassion-aspect of the Mataji.

— "SEIN"

SHARING THE QUEST: By Muz Murray.

Pub: Element Books Ltd. Longmead,
Shaftesbury, Dorset. U. K. Pp. 259 Price £ 7.95

An unusually fascinating book on matters spiritual. The writer has been in quest of the Self for decades and has certainly arrived. After all tribulations and detours, he had a crucial experience at Cyprus which hoisted him into a different dimension. Let him speak: "One evening I was sitting gazing vacantly at the sea in the afterglow of sunset, having just finished a meal in a little Greek eatery, feeling very tranquil and relaxed, when I began to feel a strange pressure in my brain. It was as if some deliciously loving hand had slipped numbingly under my skull and was pressing another brain on top of mine. I felt a thrilling liquidity of being and an indescribable sensation, as if the whole universe was being poured into me, or perhaps rather as if the whole universe was welling up out of me from some deep centre. My 'soul' thrilled and swelled and my consciousness passed out across the ocean and the land in all directions, through the sky and out into space. Within moments I was among the stars and planets and strange entities of space. Somehow I was aware of great beings, millions of miles high, moving in space, through which the stars could be seen. Wave after wave of revelation swept through my whole being, too fast for my normal conscious mind to record other than the joy and wonder of it. Every single cell of my body seemed to record and intuit the experience, retaining it like the negative film emulsion in a camera. I was aware that every cell had its own limited form of consciousness, although collectively they were all still subject to a single controlling consciousness which was mine."

No wonder after the stabilisation of this and similar experiences, Murray is naturally able to look behind the surfaces and that with a rare

touch of humour. He records how at one stage of his *sadhana* of austerities which apparently brought him nowhere near the goal, he came across the tantalising counsel: *Don't push the river, it flows by itself*. It was great. He stopped all effort and abandoned himself to whatever happened. But soon he found himself where he was; the river was flowing all right but he simply could not stay afloat. He quotes Bhagavan Maharshi on the point:

"Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain that state and abide in it, that is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort."

The point is effort is indispensable to come to a point where no effort is required any more. The writer has been deeply influenced by the Personality and teaching of the Maharshi whom he cites time and again. Each page of the book has something of value. To quote:

Through scientific research it has been determined that the visual effect of this colour (ochre or saffron) induces a contemplative consciousness.

He dwells upon many important themes, e. g. Sound, Psychotherapy, Inner Eye, Meditation and Contemplation, Revolution vs. Revelation. His observations - well documented - on the subject of the unknown years of Jesus Christ, crucifixion, Reincarnation in Christianity, the echoes of the Veda in the Bible, the continuing thread between Buddhism and Christianity, are striking. All told, this writing provides solutions to many a problem that perplexes seekers on the Path.

— M. P. Pandit

MAJOR RELIGIONS OF INDIA: By Susunaga Weeraperuma. Pub: M/s. Chetana Pvt. Ltd., 34 Rampart Row, Bombay 400023. Pp. 120 Price: Rs. 50/-

Despite the apologia of the publisher and editor, this lampoon of the basic principles of Religions in India leaves the reader unhappy. That the author is a follower of J. Krishnamurti does not extenuate, though perhaps it may explain. The major part of this book purporting to give 'new insights into Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism, questions, in a facetious way, the very foundations of spiritual life and religious faith. How can there be any meeting ground between the finite and the infinite? How is it at

all possible to gain knowledge of what is Unknowable? Are not the Gods of the Hindu religion figments of human imagination? Does not worship and praise of the Almighty presuppose that He is vain and susceptible to flattery? What else are the mystic experiences of the bhakta if not subjective fantasies? If man is his own saviour, how come that Buddha is being worshipped as a veritable God? Faith in the soul as an indestructible, divine element in the human being - in the words of Guru Nanak - is an anathema to the author. If I am already divine, where is the need to seek Him elsewhere?

One can understand an eighteenth century rationalist raising such questions. But these posers on the threshold of the 21st century when the intellect has burst its bounds and a larger consciousness is gaining ground, are, to say the least, childish.

This book is a disservice to Truth in its integrity.

— M. P. Pandit

THE BLISSFUL LIFE-TEACHINGS OF SRI NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ—compiled by Robert Powell.
Pub: ACORN PRESS, Durham,
North Carolina, USA.

Maharashtra has had a long tradition of great religious mystics drawn from all walks of life. Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj (1897—1981) is one of the recent mystics in this tradition. His published teachings and talks were all in Marathi. The book under review is a compilation with brief comments of sayings drawn from the English translation of the Maharaj's talks published in 1983 by Maurice Frydman, a Polish engineer long resident in India who was a disciple of the Maharaj. Powell is a scientist and is wellknown as an expositor of Zen and the author of the popular book "Zen and Reality".

The Maharaj's teaching is the core of the Advaita of the Upanishads and of Ramana Maharshi; the parallels with J. Krishnamurti and with Zen are also very close.

The Maharaj seems to have come into prominence from 1934 when he attained Illumination by PRATYAKSHANUBHAVA; he had earlier received initiation from his guru in 1931. Even after his illumination, he continued to live the life of an ordinary householder, running a small shop at Khetwadi in Bombay.

The Maharaj's approach to Vedanta is highly practical. He brushes aside all idle speculations about god, the human soul, etc., and concentrates on the essence of Vedanta as embodied in the Mahavakya "TAT TVAM ASI". His favourite mantra is "All this is Self and I am That". He recommends Atma-Vichara or "Who am I", and also specifies yogic sadhana as a necessary preparation for the spiritual life. He rightly stresses, in a manner that recalls Gautama Buddha, that the individual ego is wholly false and illusory and is merely a stream of perceptions, memories and ideations. He makes a distinction between Awareness and consciousness and, as with J. Krishnamurti, stresses the need for maintaining an ever-alert and choiceless Awareness. He gives detailed directions on how this Sakshi-Bhava is to be developed and useful tips on how to maintain the constant feeling of "I AM" instead of "I am this" and "I am that".

But the ultimate realisation of the Self, according to the Maharaj, is a sudden illumination similar to SATORI in Zen; it is beyond the causal process and can neither be compelled nor prevented.

— A. V. Venkateswaran

There is no safety in faddishness or the compulsive intellectualism that hungers for truth but eats the menu instead of the dinner.

— Radical Buddhism
by Leonard Price

How a man plays the game shows something of his character; how he loses shows all of it.

— Anon

Letters to the Editor

THE SELF

In *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, we are told to find the "SELF" within and be with it.

Now my problem is, how to begin?

I found the book interesting and knowledge-giving. I heartily respect and love Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Kindly guide me how to proceed.

— H.M. BUCH,
Bombay.

Your postcard of the 11th instant is, difficult to answer. You want spiritual guidance to find the 'Self'. Sri Ramana Maharshi's "Talks" are just the guidance, the way and the Goal! The 'Self' is the innermost Truth of human being and Life. The thing most needed to find it is patience, patience, PATIENCE! The answer to your questions you will find in the 'Talks'. Sri Ramana Maharshi Himself is your Guru - Your Inner Guide. If your wish to discover the Self is serious and sincere, you are sure to reach the Goal. It takes time!

Begin to reserve daily- regularly half-an-hour for meditation, to sit still and watch, how your thoughts arise and again disappear. Do not cling to them; only observe them, for a few minutes. Then read attentively some pages of 'Talks'.

During the rest of the day do your duty as best you can, but without liking or disliking. Bhagavan will bless your sincere efforts. — Editor

* * * *

THE AWARENESS

I would like to invite your kind attention to page 50, Question 9, of the book *Words of Grace* in which it is said: "Between the two

nipples, below the chest and above the abdomen, there are *six things of different colours*" (Italics mine). One of them is the heart. What are the others?

Another poser I am confronted with is "how a yogi in *sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi*, in which state there is no external awareness, can indulge in activity, since external awareness is the essential pre-requisite for actions."

— M.N. VENKATESWARAN,
Bombay.

It cannot be authoritatively stated what exactly the five organs referred to are. The point however is that within the boundaries mentioned lie six organs and that five of these are discernible to the senses. The sixth however is quite different. The location of this spiritual Heart, two digits to the right within the body, is not the absolute Truth, as the body (physical, subtle and causal) itself arises from It and ever depends on It.

Awareness has no divisions. The labels, external and internal, apply only to the embodied ego and only as long as it exists. It is an assumption of the ego that ego is necessary for external activity. In fact ego can only interfere in the natural flow of activity. The activity, *dhyana* and bodily repose of the *sahaja jnani* are like the activity of the bullock cart (whose master sleeps within), when the cart is moving, stationary with the bulls yoked; and stationary with the bulls unyoked. The trained bullocks are the pure *buddhi*. The sleeping master, the Self. The ego, had it been present, would have been a drunken driver causing havoc. — Editor

* * * *

THE MOTHER

From the various accounts that I have read of the *Samadhi* of Bhagavan's Mother, and the construction of a temple thereon, I gather that a Shiva Lingam was initially installed on the Mother's *Samadhi* and that subsequently, a "Shri Chakra" was also installed, which was blessed personally by Bhagavan by placing both His hands on the "Shri Chakra".

May I request you to give me information on:

Whether it is the accepted practice to install a Shiva Lingam on the Samadhi of a lady saint?

— Lt. Gen. HANUT SINGH, M. V. C.
General Officer Commanding.

In *Sri Ramana Gita* Sri Bhagavan is asked by Ganapati Muni's wife (13.6) "If a woman liberated while alive, sheds her body; what would be the right thing to do, cremation or burial?"

Sri Bhagavan replies (13.9) "In liberation and Self-knowledge there is no difference between men and women. The body of a woman liberated while alive is not to be cremated as it is a temple of God"

Sastraic injunctions are laid down by the *rishis* from time to time. In the reply above Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi has clarified that the question of male or female is irrelevant in liberation and that the mortal remains of the *Jnani* acquire the sanctity of a temple. It would therefore be quite proper to install Siva-linga in such a case, in order to formalize the rites of worship. — Editor

* * * *

THE BROTHERHOOD

"Brotherhood based on equality is the supreme goal to be attained by human society"—*Sri Ramana Gita*.

Please write to me in simple English the moral of the above message of our beloved Master Sri Ramana. I am anxiously awaiting. Kindly send me a guide booklet of Ashram.

— KISHORILAL AGRAVAL,
Harda.

All wars, strife, enmity, greed and discontent are based on egoistic perception of differences between man and man (between *jivas*). In truth however, there is but one Self of pure Being-Awareness-Bliss. The differences seen on the surface are all really the *Self only*, much like the various waves on the surface are really only water. The goal of human society is therefore to live this grand truth every moment in a spirit of brotherhood, humility, love and equality—the equality of the Self in all. — Editor.

* * * *

LAURELS-I

I thank you for sending me duplicate copies of July '86 and October '86 issues of *The*

KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE

By S. M. KAUL

I asked Him, "What is Knowledge?"
"How is ignorance discerned?"
Said He, "From which peace flows
And Ignorance shadows behind."

Mountain Path. Due to several changes of address during the last year the copies you must have sent to Rishi Valley address somehow got lost. I have now received the January '87 issue also.

I would really have, missed two excellent issues, if you had not sent me fresh copies of July and October 86, issues. Especially, the article 'From Evolution and other Dreams, to Ramana' brings scientific thinking on human neurophysiology and Ramana's philosophy so close. It is a wonderful article.

Equally excellent is the 'Birth of an Upanishad' by Masti Venkateswara Iyengar. I think it is a jewel piece of philosophical story.

— Dr. K. N. A. SUBRAMANIAN,
Rishi Valley.

* * * *

LAURELS - II

In the October 1986 edition of *The Mountain Path* you reprinted an article of mine (Self-Observation.) which I had originally written for the *British Quarterly, Self-Knowledge*.

Encouraged by your interest, I offer you here something of a quite different nature, wondering whether you might like it for your *Mountain Path*. I actually wrote it many years ago, but since it is of a rather personal nature, I have up to now hesitated to offer it or publication.

I have been a member to *Shanti Sadan* for forty years, and it has been my privilege to be in daily contact with its founder, the late Hari Prasad Shastri, over the last ten years of his life.

Some twenty years ago I became acquainted with *The Mountain Path* and have been its reader and admirer ever since, and if you should find this little contribution suitable and have room for it, I would be very pleased.

— JOHANNA BOWES
London.

Yes. We have accepted your article with grateful thanks. — *Editor*

* * * *

LAURELS-III

I have just read J. Jayaraman's recent article 'The Mobius Trip' in the January '87 issue and

I write to express my sincere appreciation of it. I had also read his review of J. Krishnamurti's book, earlier.

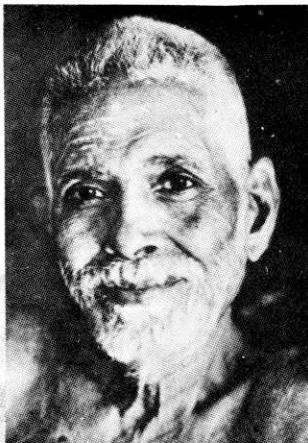
His articles are obviously written not so much from scholarship, but from several years of sensitive contemplation. Also the ease with which he reflects upon the teaching of Bhagavan Ramana amplifies his intuitive understanding of them.

— Dr. SUJATHA VIJAYARAGAVAN,
Pondicherry.

“Not to desire anything extraneous to oneself constitutes *vairagya* (dispassion) or *nirasa* (desirelessness). Not to give up one's hold on the Self constitutes *jnana* (knowledge).”

“ Firm and disciplined inherence in the *Atman* without giving the least scope for the rise of any thought other than the deep contemplative thought of the Self, constitutes self-surrender to the Supreme Lord”.

— Sri Bhagavan

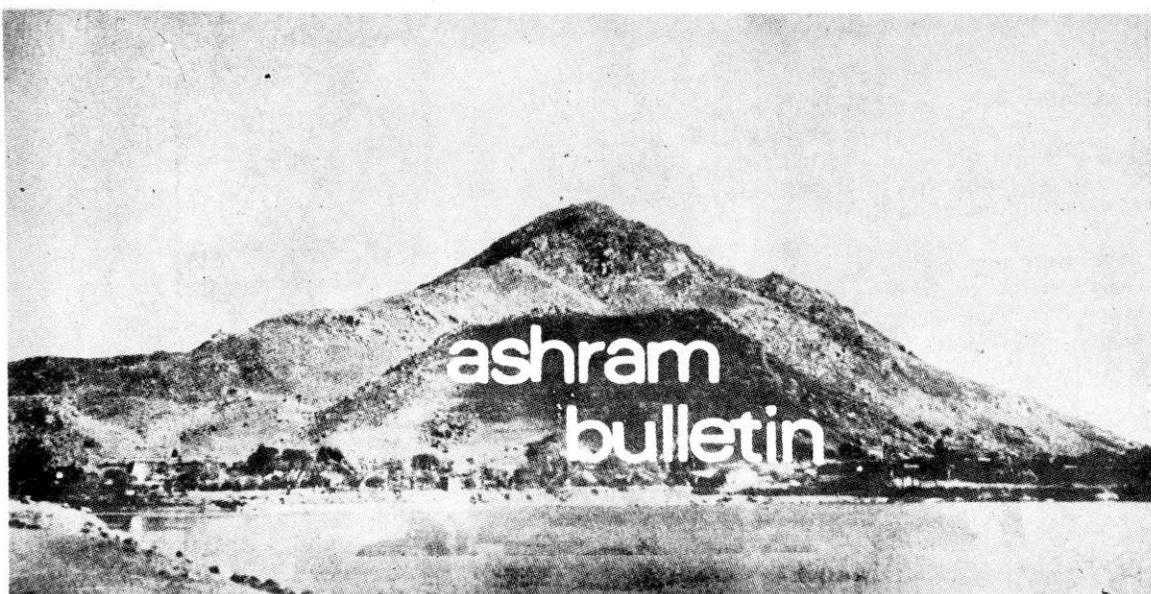


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Sri Arunachala - Having turned Himself from a column of Fire into the Holy Hill - was worshipped by Vishnu, Brahma and other Gods - that sacred day is *Siva Rathri*.

Maha Sivaratri Celebrations at The Ashram

On February 26, Maha Sivarathri was observed at the Ashram. Residents were joined by devotees living outside as well as by visitors in greater numbers than usual. Groups of devotees witnessed the four pujas through the night at Sri Bhagavans shrine of Grace and also went round the Hill.

The vibrant atmosphere testified once again to the great significance of this occasion thus described by Lord Siva Himself:

“By doing puja to Me on this holiest day one gets the result of (doing) puja for a whole year.

This sacred hour enhances the Grace of My manifestation.

—ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

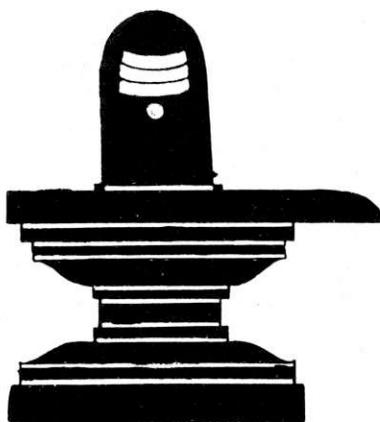
There is an account found in the *Siva Purana* that there was a fight between Brahma, the Creator, and Vishnu, the Protector, as to which of them was greater and as a result everything went wrong in the Universe. At that juncture, Lord Siva appeared there as an endless column of extraordinary Light and a voice was heard

saying: “Whichever of you two is able to find either the top or bottom of this column of light is the greater one”. And so Brahma took the form of a swan and soared up to find the top and Vishnu went down searching for the bottom, taking the form of a boar.

After a long long time, both of them had to return without success and they realised that there was the great God Siva of whom they were only instruments existing and functioning only by His Grace.

At their request Lord Siva took the benevolent form of Arunachala so that every one could have *darshan* of Him, go round Him, think of Him and worship Him and be blessed. The first day on which Vishnu and other *devas* praised and worshipped Lord Siva (manifested from the column of Light) was in the month of *Masi* (Magha February-Match) and that is *Siva Rathri*.

Sri Bhagavan always extolled the glory of Arunachala Siva. He used to quote *Siva Purana* where Arunachala is said to be Siva Himself.



The *Linga* (Siva Linga)

"This is the original Linga formation. Owing to this only, the system of worshipping Siva as 'Linga' has come into vogue."

Siva Rathri really means absolute Pure Awareness of Lord Siva in which all else gets dissolved. In the presence of Sri Bhagavan devotees have experienced this stillness of Pure Awareness, dissolution total.

There were four elaborate *Pujas* to the sacred *samadhi* shrine of Sri Bhagavan, covering the whole of this holy night. Devotees went round the Holy Hill, singing 'Arunachala Siva' 'Arunachala Siva'.

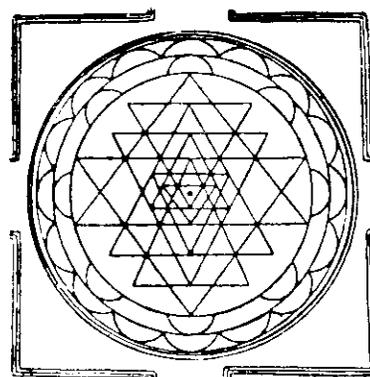
Sri Vidya Homam

SRI VIDYA HAVAN

This annual function came off on 20th March 1987.

The devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi know that at the time of the Kumbhabishekam of Sri Mathrubhuteswara shrine, Bhagavan consecrated by His touch the *Meru Chakra* that was made specially for the shrine. A *Meru* in granite is a rare production and rarely comes off all right, and in this case it is undoubtedly due to the Grace of Sri Bhagavan working through the architect Sri Vaidyanatha Stapathi's skillful fingers. When the *Meru* was fitted in its niche a few of those present saw Bhagavan sitting in the inner shrine and guiding Sri Vaidyanatha Stapathi in his work. At the conclusion of it all Bhagavan placed His hands on the *Meru*, as well as the Mathrubhuteswara Lingam.

Initiating the *Sri Vidya Havan*; our Managing Editor performed the rites. V. Subramanian is to his left.



Sri Chakra Yantra, (design)

After the *Brahmanirvana* of Bhagavan, when the devotees were feeling that some tangible activity was needed to perpetuate the spiritual atmosphere of the Ashram, it came intuitively to Sadhu Arunachala (Major Chadwick) that neglect of the *Meru* at the shrine of the Mother was a great indiscretion, if not a crime against divinity. So he took it upon himself to organise the worship of the *Meru* and the management readily agreed. And so the *Puja* started in earnest.

The regular *saparya paddathi* was followed for the *Sri Chakra Puja*, with its *argala stotras*, *Chathushshashti upacharas* and *sahasranama* (1,000 Names) and *thrisathi* (300 Names). Our *thrisathi* is unique in that every 20 names of the Mother is preceded by one of the 15 mantras of the *Sri Suktha*. The *thrisathi* by itself is *sarvartha purthi* as said by Acharya Sankara in his commentary

on the same. The addition of the *Sri Suktha* mantras adds greater efficacy to the *thrisathi* archana. In the usual course comes the *ashtothra* also (108 names of the Mother). Then comes the solemn offering of *sthothras*.



Sri Chakra invoked into a *Kalasa*; it is being worshipped (*Navaavarana Puja*)

These *pujas*, lasting about 3 1/2 hours, go on right through the year on Fridays, full Moon days and the first day of the Tamil months, i. e. the day the sun moves into a new sign of the Zodiac. (one can participate in any one of these *pujas*; by sending one's name, *nakshatra* and *gotra* along with twenty rupees.).

When the first year of the *puja* was completed it was felt that the anniversary of the commencement of the *puja* should be celebrated; others were consulted as to how best this could be done. It was unanimously agreed that the best would be a *havan* (Homa). The *havan* is an elaborate day-long ceremony lasting from early morning till late in the evening with several oblations. When the offerings in the *havan* have cooled down, after several days, the sacred ashes are taken out and distributed as *prasad* to devotees.

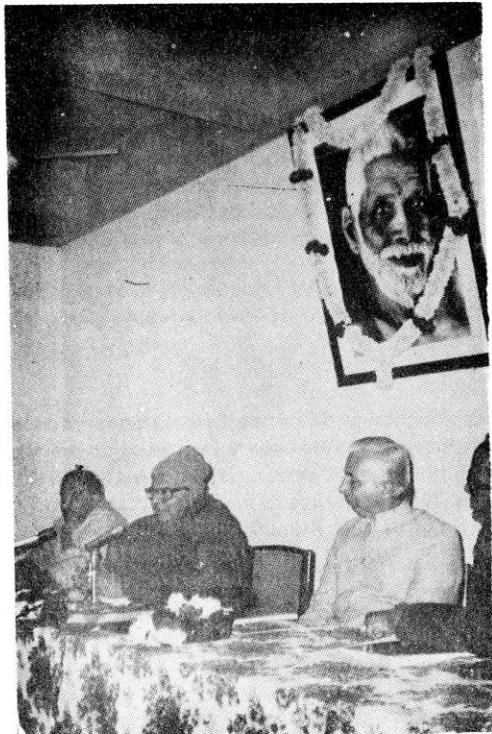
RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI.

The 107th *Jayanti* of Bhagavan was celebrated in a grand manner on December 18. Besides the customary programmes at the Kendra and at the Uttara Swami Malai Temple, there was

a well-attended public meeting in the evening at the Kendra which was presided over by Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranganath Misra, of the Supreme Court. Swami Gokulananda, Head of the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi and Swami Prabuddhananda of Arsha Vidya Mandir spoke on Bhagavan and his philosophy.

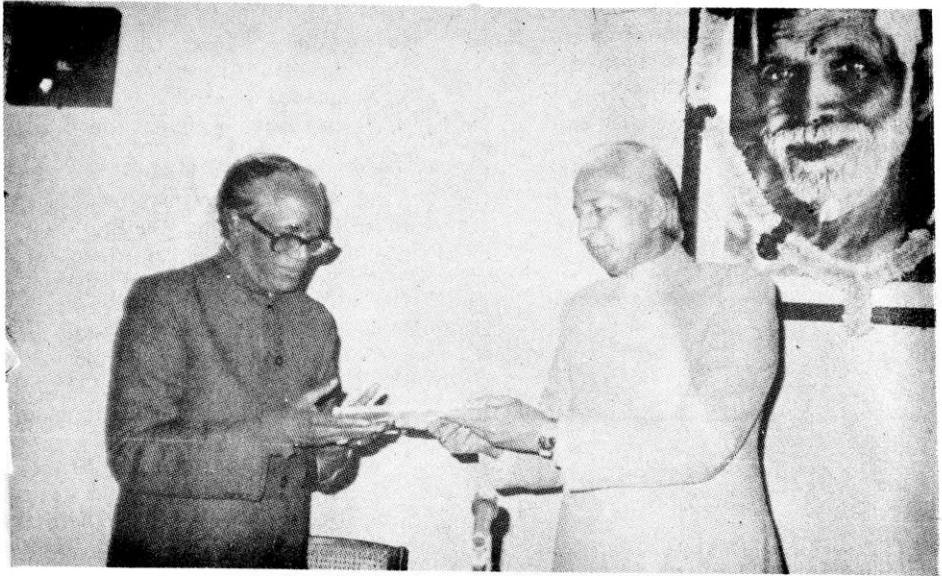
An attractive souvenir, *RAMANA KRIPA*, planned for the *Jayanti*, was released by Justice Misra by presenting the first copy to Dr. V. Gauri Shankar, Vice President of the Kendra. The Souvenir carries an inspiring message from Sri R. Venkataraman, Vice-President of India and articles by persons of spiritual and literary eminence. Through the kind courtesy of Mr. V. Ganesan, Managing Editor, a few choice pieces from *The Mountain Path* have been reproduced.

A fine portrait of Bhagavan done by Miss Sadhana Moolchandani was also unveiled on the occasion. The Films Division documentary on Ramana Maharshi and a few film shorts on Bhagavan were then screened to the great delight of the large audience who had gathered despite the chill weather. The function came to a close with a vote of thanks by Mr. K. C. Subbaiah and distribution of *prasad*.



Swami Gokulananda of Ramakrishna Mission speaking at the Delhi Kendra.

Hon'ble Mr. Justice Ranganath Misra presenting a copy of RAMANA KRIPA to Dr. V. Gauri Shankar



Lady Doctor Lobsang Dolma Khangkar of the Institute of Traditional Tibetan Medicine, Dhar-masala, who has been doing great humanitarian service in the Himalayas healing the psychological and physical ailments of many, gave a thought provoking talk on BUDDHISM AND MEDICINE on January 25. An appreciative audience listened to her illuminating talk with rapt attention. There was a lively question and answer session at the end of her talk.

* * * *

On February 15, the Ladies' Wing of the Kendra held a music session on *Soundarya Lahari*.

On February 15, Sri Ashok Narayan, a high official of the Govt. of India, gave a talk on the *Bhagavat Gita*.

* * * *

Swami Ritajananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, who had spent several years in France at the Centre Vedantique, Gretz, visited the Kendra on January 26. He expressed his appreciation of the work done by the Kendra.

* * * *

The Annual General Body meeting of the Kendra was held on February 1, when the biennial election of office bearers was conducted. Hon'ble Shri. R. Venkataraman, Vice-President of India, was unanimously re-elected as the President of the Kendra for another two-year term, 1987 and 1988.

KOLHAPUR, MAHARASHTRA

On 18th Dec. 1986 'Bhagavan Ramana Satsanga Mandal' celebrated Bhagavan's Jayanti in Kolhapur. In the morning there was *Puja, Abhishekam, Arathi*, listening to 'Ramana music', reading of Sri Ramana's life etc.,

In the evening from 5-30 to 7-30 there was meditation, Vedic Prayer and a Symposium on "The Supreme Secret of Life as given by Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi". Prof. Mrs. Snehal Vaidya, Prin. Toro, Dr. Prakasha Kulkarni, Sri Sudhir Kulkarni, Sri Sanjeeva Kulkarni, Sri G. V. Kulkarni participated. Pandit Jere Shastri, the President, made concluding remarks.

After *Arathi* and *Prasad*, the function came to a close. The whole day was sanctified by the Divine Presence of Ramana Sadguru.

TADPATRI, ANDHRA PRADESH

The 107th birthday of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on 17th and 18th Dec. '86 at Tadpatri.

On 17th morning *Sri Ganesa Homam* was performed by Sri G. Ramachandra Sastry for the welfare of the world. In the evening Sri R. Sreeramulu of Anantapur spoke on the life Sri Ramana Maharshi. Bharata Natyam was performed by the students of Smt. Sandhya Murty of Anantapur.

Ramana Monuments

“SRI RAMANA MANDIRAM”, MADURAI

The Reconstruction of Sri RAMANA MANDIRAM, MADURAI, century-old structure, has been long overdue. It has now been taken up, in right earnest.

Preliminary proposals had been put up with a skeleton plan and an estimate by the local Ramana bhaktas, enlisting the kind services of Sri T. M. Jambulingam, Architect/Engineer of Madurai. A couple of alternatives had also been suggested by Sri K. Padmanabhan, our Ashram Engineer, who now resides in Bangalore.

It was found necessary to have a spot inspection.

Accordingly, Sri T. N. Venkataraman, President Board of Trustees, Sri Ramanasramam, accompanied by Sri V. Subramanian, Sri K. Padmanabhan and Sri Anjaneyalu, Ashram Contractor, visited Madurai and inspected the structure along with the local office-bearers and devotees of Ramana Kendram and Sri Jambulingam, on March 1, 1987.

Among various decisions taken the following may be mentioned :

- i) Dismantling of the entire structure.
- ii) Retention of the orientation and disposition of the two sacred rooms — one in the ground floor, where now *Puja* is being held; and one in the first floor, where Sri Bhagavan had the Final Experience.
- iii) Provision of a hall and a care-taker's unit, along with bathing and W. C. cubicles.
- iv) On the first floor, on the rear, two halls and a room with an open terrace of modest area, are envisaged. Provision for Bath, W. C. & C, as on the ground floor.
- v) An ornate dome, of Dravidian style, over the sacred room, to signify the structure as a *Mandir*, is also envisaged.

The actual area of construction would be about 2,300 Sq. Ft., and the total cost of the project has been roughly estimated at Rs. Four lakhs. To complete the work it would take not less than ten months.

We are happy that so far we have received Rs. 3,08,000/- as donations from devotees.

A COMMITTEE

“Committee for the Reconstruction of Sri Ramana Mandiram, Madurai and for the improvements and modifications to Sri Sundara Mandiram, Tiruchuzhi” is constituted with the following office - bearers:-

Sri C.V.S. Mani — Chairman
Sri T.M. Jambulingam — Vice Chairman
Sri S. Ramachandran — Vice Chairman

Sri M. Jagannathan,
Sri N. Somasundaram
Sri K. Rangaswamy
Sri N. Ramanan } Members.

“SRI SUNDARA MANDIRAM”, TIRUCHUZH

Measurements were taken and a line diagram prepared. It was found that the front verandah, the room on the East where Sri Bhagavan was born and the front room as counterpart on the West were in good condition, having had necessary repairs and improvements some years back.

Apart from keeping these intact, it was decided to take up for the present the adjoining strip of about 12 Feet, immediately behind these rooms and to the entire width of the building for being reconstructed on a pucca basis. Some of the outer walls were found to be weather beaten and beset with dampness. The removal of the existing plaster and redoing with Cement plaster have been found necessary. These have been proposed to be done along with some leak-proofing work on the terrace in the front portion.

On the rear, it has been proposed to dismantle an area of the existing structure, now in bad shape and put up a fairly full-fledged unit for the care-taker, with all amenities; the existing staircase has also been proposed to be redone. The tiled shed opposite the well will be removed and in its place bath and w. c. will be put up.

The total expenditure for all these and works incidentals has been limited to Rs. one lakh.

We are happy to announce that so far we have received Rs. 72,000/- as donation from devotees.

*Sri Ramana Jayanthi
Celebrations at Kumta.*



On 18th morning, *Sri Ramana Gita* of Sri Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni was recited. Sri V. V. Brahmam gave a talk on the Teachings of Bhagavan. The poor were fed.

Bhajans were performed by Bhajan parties of Yadiki, Vemula Palli, Vanganur, Talla Proddatur, Palem and Brahmanapalli for 2 days. Drama and dance was performed by the students of Arts College, Tadpatri.

PALAKOL, ANDHRA PRADESH

The 107th Birth Anniversary of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated on Dec. 18 at Srungavruksham Village, West Godavari dt. by Sri Ramana Sat-sanga Association, Srungavruksham. Sri Bhupathiraju Venkata Lakshmi Narasimharaju of Jinnur gave a detailed discourse on the life of Bhagavan Ramana. About two thousand devotees from all parts of coastal Andhra attended the function. Ex-Minister Sri V. P. M and Ex-Deputy Speaker of A.P. State Assembly Sri Pasala Suryachandra Rao participated in the function. Sri K. Ramaraju welcomed the Chief Guest and the participants; Dr. V. Brahmaji proposed a vote of thanks.

SRI RAMANA GNANA KENDRA, MYSORE

Sri R. S. Govindappa Setty reports:

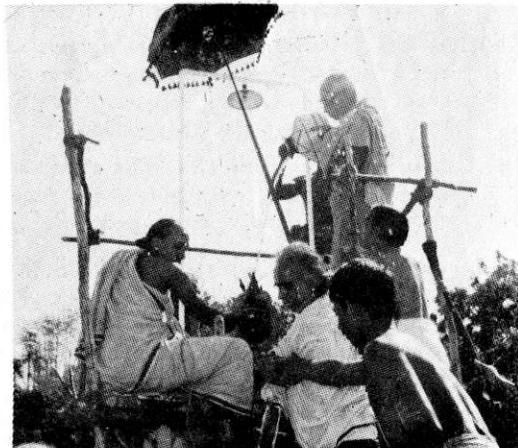
"I am happy to inform you that inspite of financial shortcomings, the building is making progress and has come to the finishing stage. Regarding the proposal of installation of the life-like statue of Bhagavan inside the building, I am

glad to inform you that the required Krishna Shila stone material, weighing about 7 to 8 tons, was brought with great difficulty from a nearby stone-quarry from Mysore and chiselling operation is in progress.

However the work when completed is estimated to cost Rs. 75,000/-. Any devotee willing to subscribe in part or full may kindly contact me at:

Sri R. S. Govindappa Setty, Hon. Secretary, Sri Ramana Gnana Kendra, No. 1148, Vrajanivas, Railway Station Road, Chamarajapuram, Mysore-570 004.

Kumbhabhishekam to the Shrine of Sri Janaki Matha: Sri Swami Gurudasanandaji pouring the sacred water over the *kalasa* on the *Gopura*.



The subscription for this item covers Income Tax exemption.

Dr. B. Sureshwara, an ardent devotee of Bhagavan, in his recent visit to India, was kind enough to make a voluntary trip to our Kendra and after his return to the States, has been taking great interest in the progress of our Kendra.

He has already sent a list of persons in States whom we should contact, explaining our present needs, including the aims & objectives of our Kendra.

It is only through the Grace of Bhagavan that this Kendra is blossoming from a tiny seed into a large tree with so many branches."

Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi at New York



Arunachala Ashrama, New York: 107th Jayanthi celebrations.

SRI BHAGAVAN'S JAYANTHI at NEW YORK

Evelyn Kaselow Saphier from Arunachala Ashrama, NEW YORK, reports:

This year we celebrated the *Jayanthi* on New Year's Day, 1987.

At three p. m., we began with the thought of Mother—She in whom Sri Bhagavan took refuge as a child in the village Temple of Bhuminatheswar, in Tiruchuli. The altar was adorned with a spray of rainbow-hued gladiolas provided by Miss Olivia Cutler. As the Sanskrit chants of *Sri Chakra Puja* rolled along the Ashrama filled with devotees.

Close to six o'clock, each and everyone present was served a feast provided largely through the combined efforts of lady devotees, especially Mrs. Bhanumathi Parekh and Mrs. Bindu Bhatt.

At seven, our celebration resumed. This latter part of the ceremony consisted of the spontaneous devotional offerings of several devotees.

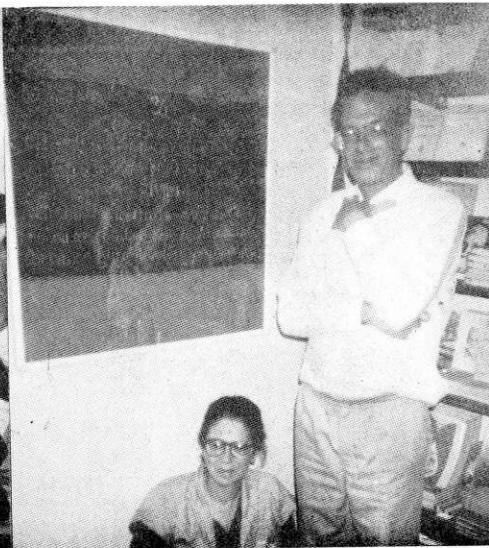
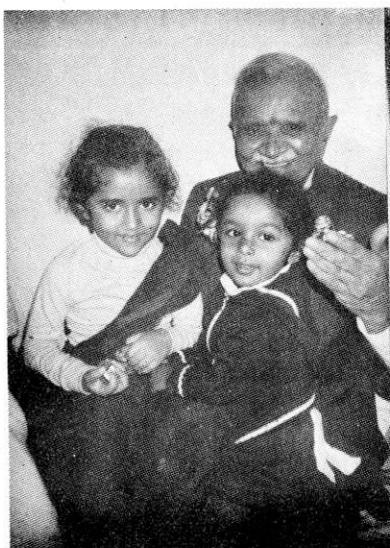
Tyagan Wylie, reading "squirrels" from *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*.

Dennis Hartel, acting as master of ceremonies, began by reading the story of Sri Bhagavan's birth from Arthur Osborne's *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*. Mr. Babubhai Parekh both sang and spoke on Sri Bhagavan's teachings. Miss Bhavana Parekh led the congregation in *bhajan*s and the recitation of *Upadesa Sara*. Mr. Roy Colonna led the spirited

(1 to r) Mr. Roy Colonna, Sri Dennis Hartel and Sri Babubhai Parekh.



Sri Maganlal Bhatt, with babies-Henaz Bhatt and Saraswathi Singh.



Mrs. & Mr. Arthur Fenton

"Song of the Poppadum".

chanting of "Arunachala Siva". Tyagan Wylie a younger devotee of high school age, chose to read Suri Nagamma's letter, "Squirrels", since he felt it so convincingly demonstrated Sri Bhagavan's immense love and compassion. Sri Arunachala Bhakta Bhagawata spoke on the utter simplicity and accessibility of Sri Bhagavan's teaching of *Self-Enquiry* for all. Evelyn and Paul Saphier made mention of Sri Bhagavan's way of imparting instruction through seemingly commonplace events, and read out the

We offer our thanks and gratitude to Sri Bhagavan, to Him who came in the heart of winter, when days are short and nights long, to shed light and life on His devotees. Indeed, He is the light of knowledge which illumines our ignorance..... He, the light of hope which dispells fear, darkness and despair. To Him, the light of our lives, may we offer our unceasing remembrance!"

Smt. NAVARATNAM

Smt. T. Navaratnam of Sri Lanka was absorbed at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan on February 11, 1987. She was conscious to the last. The last word uttered by her was 'Bhagavan'; with that holy name on her lips she breathed her last, peacefully. Smt. Navaratnam's life was one of service to others; her motto was 'service is worship'.

Her devotion to Sri Bhagavan was deep and latent. Once while meditating at the Old Hall in 1980 in front of Sri Bhagavan's portrait she reported to her husband that a flash of light emanated from Bhagavan's forehead and enveloped her. From thence she had experienced effortless absorption 'within'.

A noble devotee, indeed !

SRI M. R. KULKARNI

Sri Mukund Raghavendra Kulkarni, aged, 64 an ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan, passed away on March 3. From 1964 he was having constant contact with the Ashram which he visited quite often. He was regular in supplying medicines to Sri Ramansramam Free Dispensary, manufactured by Ajit Laboratories, which he owned.

May he ever abide in peace at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan!

SRI S. RAMAMURTHI

Ramana Kendra, Delhi reports, with profound sorrow, the passing away on Dec. 30, 1986 of Sri. S. Ramamurthi, a staunch devotee of Bhagavan and an active member of the Managing Body representing educational institutions.