

# The Mountain Path

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**ARADHANA ISSUE, 1990**

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# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1

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— Editor.

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## The Mountain Path

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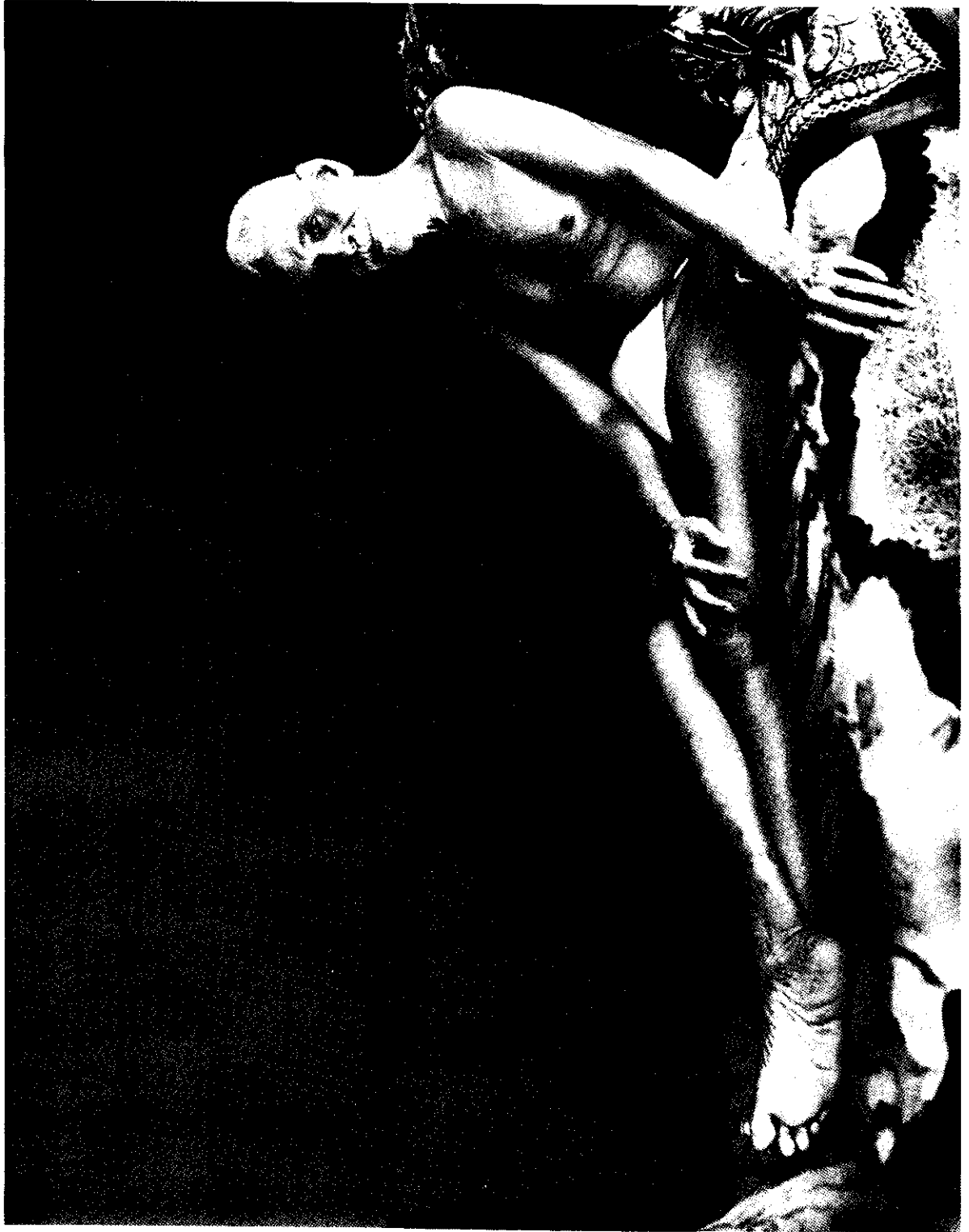
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



ARADHANA ISSUE

MAY-JUNE 1990

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EDITORIAL

## TRUE KNOWLEDGE

THE MAGIC quest 'Know Thyself', popularly attributed to Socrates, has gripped the attention of the greatest seers, sages and thinkers of all ages. It is the essential experience welling up from the hearts of yearning souls belonging to every country of the world. In giving expression to it, the terminologies, the words and the languages may differ but the essence, in its content, is the same.

The command of Vedanta is '*Aatmaanaam Viddhi*' – 'Know the Self'. In fact, this experiential dictum is at the back of all eastern religions, though it is true that the basis of this dictum is too fundamental to be classified under any philosophy, or thinker, or age. That is, 'knowing the knower' is the aim of all spiritual strivings, in all ages and of all religions. Not to know the knower and yet to know all else is termed 'total ignorance' – '*moola avidya*'. Hence, very great importance is given to knowing oneself. 'Know Thyself' is the same as 'Know who you are' or asking 'Who am I?' or seeking 'Whence am

I?'. This ancient quest is the ground and fundamental teaching of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

"Simple Being is the Self" said the Maharshi. This being is consciousness. The very living-principle of each one of us is this consciousness. Any form of awareness is imbedded only in this vast expanse of Consciousness. The triple principle dominating man's activities is called *triputi*, comprising the knower, the object known and the act of knowing, occurs only in Consciousness. Experiences are classified into *avastha thraya* – the waking, the dreaming and the deep sleep states – which also take place only in Consciousness. Likewise, the pairs of opposites, called *dwandva*, like right and wrong, good and bad, day and night, or concepts like being and non-being, get exposed only in the backdrop of Consciousness.

Thus, Consciousness is the ground or screen on which the play of the *triputi*,

*avastha thraya* and *dwandva* is enacted endlessly. While one is aware constantly and gets involved deeply in this drama, the basis or stratum on which the play takes place is totally forgotten.

'By whom?'

To turn one's attention from the details or activities to the source of activity is called 'introspection'. This turning inward is the beginning of spiritual effort, called *sadhana*. Taking a right-about turn from the *triputi, avastha thraya* and *dwandva* to the *Chit* (Total Consciousness) is the positive key to open the gates to 'Know Oneself'. Becoming conscious of or aware of something else brings in the *triputi, avastha thraya* and *dwandva*. But Pure Consciousness is Pure Awareness *per se*. It is the basis for all motion, while remaining motionless, unaffected by any such movements.

Perhaps an analogy will help us understand Consciousness as our basis.

Electricity flows through a wire. It is invisible and intangible. When an electric bulb is connected to that wire, the lamp gets lit up. The colour of the glass of the bulb determines the colour of the light. When flowing through a fan, the current makes the fan rotate. Connected to a pump, it lifts water. The current flowing in all these cases is one and the same. But its effects are different. Similarly, when the pure light of Consciousness passes through different physical, emotional, mental and ego vestures, it looks as though it is limiting itself by taking the colour and texture of that particular vesture. Since the bulb, fan and pump are visible to the eye (and not the electricity), their utility aspects engage one's attention, the root or the cause -- the electricity being ignored. Likewise, man's activities ensnare him and make him forget his very nature as Consciousness.

When Consciousness is confined to an individual or the body -- it gets clouded by this manifestation. This descent results in the ego, the non-self mistaking itself for the Self.

Conversely, ego functioning through the physical, emotional and mental fields has the power to cloud or veil pure Consciousness. Ego has no existence apart from the Self, like the gold-ornaments having no existence apart from the gold. But, the Self exists always. Ego is only a shadow of the Self. It catches hold of a body and through it projects itself as the Self. Thus ego thrives in the *triputi, avastha thraya* and *dwandva* as a conscious perceiver and enjoyer of the world. It hops from one form to another, since no form is permanent. Such impermanent movement is called the cycle of births and deaths. This limitation is technically termed as *samasara*. Freedom from such bondage is called *Moksha*, release back into total Consciousness.

Absolute Release into Pure Consciousness is the ultimate goal of human life -- the release from the ego!

How to effect it?

Through introspection, deep enquiry, *Atma Vichara*, Self-Enquiry, release from the bonds of ego is gained. This is the process of 'Who am I - enquiry', the technique to 'Know Oneself'. The bondage is the ego. The bondage is *for* the ego. Consciousness, conditioning or identifying itself into a body is this ego. The ego exists, say the scriptures, due to non-enquiry -- *avichara*. This *avichara* is sustained and strengthened by *avidya* -- ignorance. Consciousness is pure attention alone. When attention is held unmoved, there is no place for ego or non-attention. To hold the attention on itself, to dissolve or transform non-attention into Total Attention, Total Consciousness, the quest 'Who am I?' is the vital process. To turn one's attention on oneself is the essence of true knowledge. Such self-attention is the key to open the mystery-gates to the immeasurable treasure: 'knowing the knower'! The knower known, there is none else, nothing else to be known. To remain as Pure Consciousness is the secret and meaning of 'Know Thyself'.

Bhagavan Ramana put it all in a *sutra* -- aphorism. He summarised the whole process

into four pregnant words: *deham*, *naham*, *koham*, *soham*.

**DEHAM** – Body, symbolising all objective and subjective perceptions;

**NAHAM** – I am not. Then,

**KOHAM** – Who am I?

**SOHAM** – I am Consciousness.

Rid of all vestures, vehicles, masks, conveyances and camouflages, Pure Consciousness alone will shine if the enquiry 'Who am I?' is

relentlessly pursued within. Such *Atma Vichara* releases one from the bondage. Release from bondage and dawning of Wisdom are simultaneous, like the coming of light and ending of darkness are spontaneous.

In this grand journey within, the Guru's grace is absolutely essential. For one who is ready to plunge within, Guru's grace is totally assured. This grace is felt by one dedicating himself to the pursuit of Self-Enquiry, through a deepening peace welling up in him, independent of life's circumstances.

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## THE DUALITY CALLED "GURU"<sup>1</sup>

By JAGADGURU SANKARACHARYA  
OF KANCHI

**T**O a person inclined to the way of Advaita, reference to an unseen principle like *Ishvara* (God) may seem a rather unnecessary duality. In practical terms, however, even he (the *advaitin*) finds the *Upadesa* and Grace of a person of experience necessary. In other words, he does not find conflict in having to see before him, in human form, a Guru who extends this favour. It is seen as a duality that only aids Advaita.

An example will clarify. Those who come to Ramana Rishi, chiefly those from the West, wish very much to follow the philosophy of Advaita. Bringing in *Ishvara* may not go hand-in-hand with their Self-enquiry. Yet even they refer to him respectfully as Guru, and Master and say that they gained experience owing to his Grace. For all that, he never

calls himself a Guru, nor does he refer to those who come to him as his disciples! More astonishingly, even those who go to (J.) Krishnamurti who opines, "There is no need at all for a Guru. Nothing ought to be handed down definitively or circumscribed", look upon him with respect as a sort of Guru, and say that they obtain clarity through his energy.

Therefore, without overly stressing a sense of duality by reference to the Lord's Grace, even the Advaitins have emphasised it by calling it the Grace of the Guru. Our revered *Acharya* (Sankara) has brought out this point clearly and forcefully, with great devotion and gratitude, in *Guru Ashtaka* and numerous other works.

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<sup>1</sup>from the *Voice of Divinity* (Tamil) part IV, p.731

# ARUNACHALA RAMANA

By ARTHUR OSBORNE<sup>1</sup>

THERE is an old saying that the sacred hill of Arunachala is wish-fulfilling. I heard of it first in a remarkable way. I was then a newcomer and was making my first circuit of the hill. A more veteran devotee of Sri Bhagavan was walking beside me and said: "You must be careful not to wish for anything while on the hill or walking round it, because Arunachala is wish-fulfilling".

Anywhere else the saying would have sounded absurd. One would have laughed and said "But surely that is just the reason why I should wish for something!" But one whose heart had opened to the spirit of Sri Bhagavan's teaching understood. There are modes and levels of spiritual aspiration on which petitions and wishes are justified so long as the petitioner sincerely believes them to be for the good — even petitions for a change of fortune making for his mundane happiness or welfare and, far more, petitions of an unselfish nature. But Bhagavan sought, like Buddha, to free us not so much from our misfortunes as from the wishes and desires, the fears and attachments, which make misfortunes possible. Therefore, to come to him or to Arunachala with a wish was to deny his teaching. It was the path of pure Advaita that he taught, the highest, the most serene. There was no compromise, no half measure. The illusory ego-self had to be denied, so how could one ask for boons for it? True, those who responded to the teaching were still enmeshed in hopes and fears, still very far

from having dissolved the illusion, but the least they could do was to recognize that the hopes and fears were illusions and strive to put them aside, not ask the help of Bhagavan in indulging them.

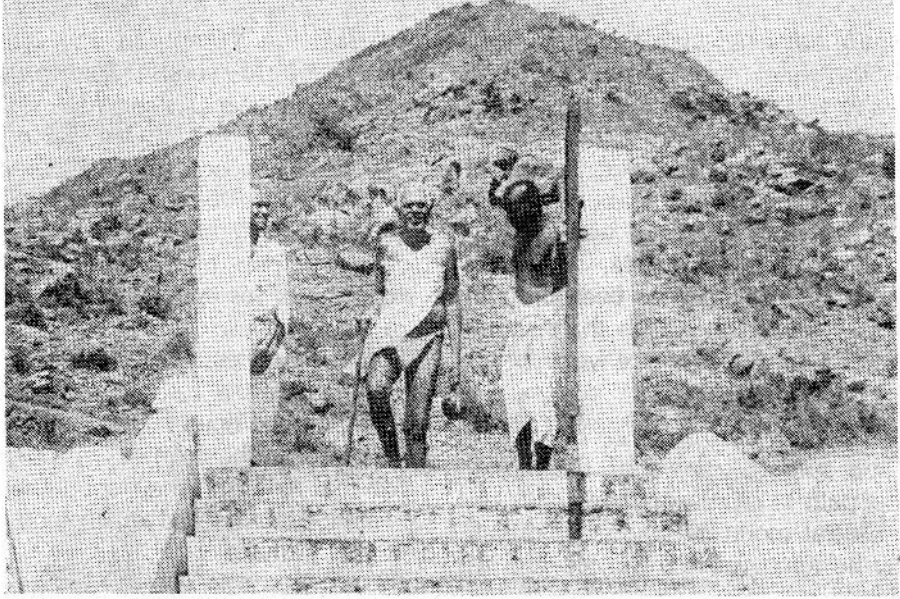
Described in words, this sounds a hard path and makes Bhagavan appear a hard Master, but he was all love. It was his Grace that made misfortunes dwindle and took the sting from fear. It was he who bore the burden. It was the magnitude of his love and the serenity permeating the heart in his presence that made desires and afflictions dwindle until to pray for things seemed an unworthy act. The depth of compassion in his eyes at any misfortune would heal the heart of the sufferer. And yet, behind it, was the silent urging to give up attachments, to turn from the ever-frustrated ego to the ever-blissful Self; it was compassion for suffering but even more for the ignorance that made suffering possible.

It might be suggested that this path of pure understanding was only for the philosophers and intellectuals; surely the simple folk, rich and poor, who came to Bhagavan came with prayers and petitions and with wishes to be fulfilled? In any case they felt the silent flood of Grace, peace permeated their hearts, and their attachment to whatever had caused bitterness or anxiety was transmuted into love for Bhagavan. A simple-minded lady said: "I

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<sup>1</sup>from *Ramana Arunachala*, pp.46-51.





don't understand the philosophy but when he looks at me I feel just like a child in its mother's arms". A businessman, speaking of miracles, said proudly: "My Bhagavan doesn't give a hoot for such things". It was only a little more outward. Those who were not at first drawn to seek the Self in the heart were drawn by love to the Self manifested as Sri Ramana. And he said: "Submission to God, Guru and Self is the same and is all that is needed." They felt that he did not wish them to ask for things, and his love was so much more precious than any boon they could have asked for that it dissolved the petition and left them poor and open-hearted before him.

The old saying that it is sufficient to be born at Tiruvarur or die at Banaras or even think of Arunachala refers to the *mouna-diksha*, the silent transmission of Grace for which physical presence is not needed. But to "think of Arunachala" means to turn to the Destroyer of desires and to renounce all petitions.

What then is this wish-fulfilling Arunachala, and why did Bhagavan take up his mortal abode there and compose hymns to it? From the most ancient time Arunachala has been known as Siva Manifested. It is the centre of

the most pure and quintessential doctrine, the doctrine of Advaita, and of the spiritual path that goes with it, the most direct path of all, that of self-enquiry.

Arunachala-Siva is the Destroyer of otherness in the fire of Union. "Unite with me to destroy (the duality of) you and me and bless me with the state of ever-vibrant joy". Bhagavan sang in the great hymn *Arunachala-Aksharamanamalai* (Garland of Letters).

It is at Arunachala that Siva in ancient times taught as Dakshinamurthi, that is as a youth surrounded by elderly disciples whom he taught in silence. For the direct influence on the heart is the natural counterpart of pure advaitic doctrine. Just as the doctrine requires no theoretical adumbrations, so the path based upon it requires no elaboration of technique.

There is a legend that throughout the ages Dakshinamurthi has been sitting beneath a huge banyan tree on the north slope of Arunachala, in a spot inaccessible to climbers and that his silent *upadesa* would bring realization to any who approached him. The direct path

of Self-enquiry has been inaccessible to mankind and therefore Arunachala has been neglected and considered of less importance than centres of less direct theory and more practicable paths. Now, however, the direct path has been opened to us again by Siva in the form of Sri Ramana; what was inaccessible has been made accessible, what was hidden high on the hillside has been brought down to the foot of the hill, to the Ashram first and now to the shrine where worshippers sit in silent meditation.

This is why Bhagavan declared that Arunachala is the spiritual centre of the world, because the path it represents has again become the central mode of man's aspiration. This is why he approved the project that his Ashram should still remain a spiritual centre when he left the body, because the path still remains open.

However, to suggest that Bhagavan chose Arunachala for his abode because it is the traditional centre of the direct path he was to teach would be supposing altogether too much deliberation. It was not a rational but a spiritual choice and it would be more correct to say that Arunachala chose Sri Ramana. Even in childhood the name fascinated him. When, as a schoolboy, he met a traveller from Tiruvannamalai and learnt that this was Arunachala, it came to him as a shock and a premonition of joy that the sacred hill could actually be visited on earth. When he left home as a *sadhu* after his Self-realization, while still a youth of 17, it was in search of his Father Arunachala. It was while standing before the inner shrine of Arunachala on his arrival at the great temple of Tiruvannamalai that the Peace in which he was now living became pronounced. For more than fifty years that still remained of his life on earth he never again left Tiruvannamalai, the town or the hill.

While he was still a youth in a cave on the hill some devotees asked him for a devotional hymn to help them in their *sadhana*. He walked round the hill with them and as he

walked he composed the supreme hymn *Arunachala-Aksharamanamalai*, tears streaming from his eyes as he sang it. That last evening, as he lay dying, a group of devotees sat outside the little room singing *Arunachala-Aksharamanamalai*. He heard it just before breath left the body and two tears of bliss trickled down from the outer corners of his eyes. At the moment of death a large star was seen to trail slowly across the sky to the peak of Arunachala as his spirit returned to the Father. That night, while the body he had now relinquished was exposed to the view of the devotees in the great new hall of the Ashram, they spontaneously sang a Tamil verse he had made long ago, 'Arunachala Ramana.'

The spiritual power of Arunachala has become active again as it was long ago. Dakshinamurthi has moved down to the foot of the hill. He said, "I am not going away; I am here." He is here at Tiruvannamalai as before and at the same time he is spaceless Arunachala-Ramana, here in the heart of every devotee who turns to him, guiding them as before.

Bodily presence at Arunachala, at the shrine at the foot of the hill, is not necessary. The silent initiation, as before, can strike where it will. But for those who wear a body, bodily presence remains a great aid.

If it were not so, Siva would not have needed to manifest as Arunachala or as Sri Ramana. The grace of Bhagavan radiates from Arunachala and from his shrine there no less than it did from his bodily form. People are drawn there as they were to his bodily Presence and, just the same, they feel their doubts and questions melting away and their wishes dissolved in love. Often enough the Grace poured out upon them affects their circumstances in life also and the inner harmony is reflected outwardly, but to go there for that purpose is to reject the greater good for the lesser. It is in that sense that Arunachala is wish-fulfilling and that it is better not to ask.

# THE UNIQUENESS OF SRI ARUNACHALESWARA TEMPLE

By T.R. KANAKAMMAL

THE TEMPLE of Gracious Sri Arunachaleswara is a work of marvel. Majestically standing over an area of about 25 acres, it is one of the biggest and most celebrated temples of Tamil Nadu. The poet's description of "cloud-capped towers" comes to one's mind when viewing the four main towers of this Temple. Even its four walls stand high like the ramparts of a fort. Their length and breadth are not less immense — they are an impressive 1500 feet east to west and 700 feet south to north, respectively.

The *Rajagopuram* — literally the royal tower — which rises over the main eastern gate of this Temple measures a magnificent 217 feet, which is taller than even the majestic *vimana* [tower] of the Brhadeeswara Temple of Thanjavur, built during the reign of the Chola King, Raja Raja Chola. Sri Arunachaleswara Temple's *Rajagopuram* is 217 feet high, 139 feet long and 98 feet broad and has 11 stages.

Looming over our heads like a colossus, just like Arunachala, the Hill of the Holy Beacon, which forms an eye-filling background to it, the *Rajagopuram* is a stunning sight giving the impression of being an entrance to the Hill itself.

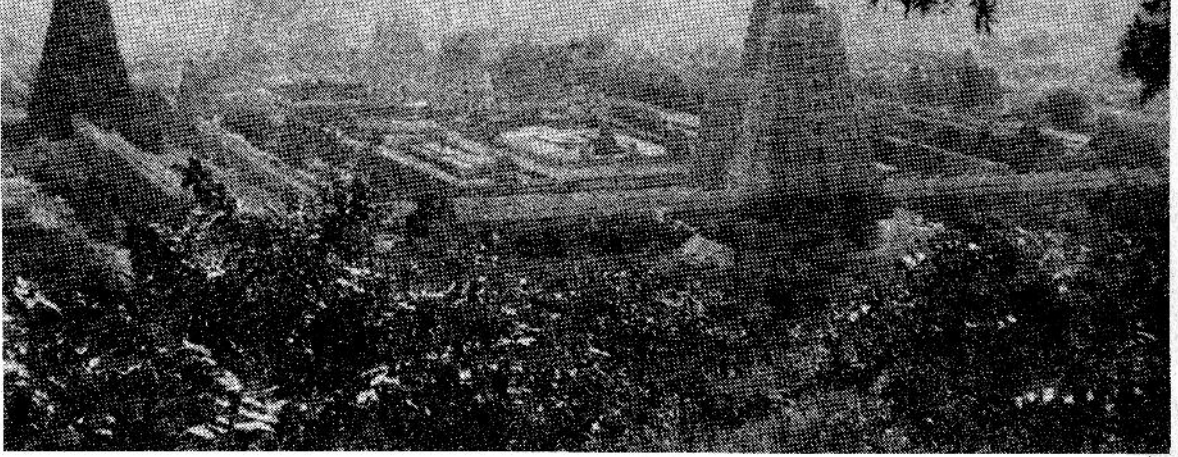
The Temple has five *praakaaras* [circuit corridors] and nine towers. Behind each tower lurks a fascinating story.

The *utsavamurtis* — main idols which are taken round the town in procession during days of festivals — are made of an alloy of five metals and are cast in a big mould. The idols

look life-like and each has its own special feature. There is no doubt that the artists and artisans of those times who made these idols were perfectionists and inspired artists.

The *vahanas* [mounts of the deities] stun people by their beauty and majesty. They are said to be the finest *vahanas* in South India. Particularly, the grand silver bull-mount which comes out carrying Arunachaleswara and His consort in procession, on the streets of the town on the fifth day of the Kartigai Deepam festival is simply peerless in its beauty and majesty. None can fail to marvel at its eyes which brim with justifiable pride. Indeed, it is a mount worthy of the Divine Riders.

There are five sacred centres in South India which represent the five elements, viz., earth, water, fire, air and space. These centres are called *Panchabhoota Kshetras* [the holy centres of five elements]. These are, respectively, Tiruvarur, Tiruvanaikkaval, Tiruvannamalai, Kalahasti and Chidambaram. A symbol of the fact of Tiruvannamalai being the *Agni Kshetra* [Fire Centre] is the annual practice of fire-walking in the temple. It takes place on the day of *Adi* [July-August] *Pooram* asterism in front of the shrine of the Goddess. Of all the temples of Tamil Nadu where the worship is done in accordance with the *Agamas* [Scriptures], this is the only one where fire-walking is done within the precincts of the temple. Besides, here is also the practice of *Madana Dahana* [burning of Cupid, the God of Love, by Siva] in the third *praakaara* of the temple during the Spring festival in the month of *Chitral* [April-May]. This is at variance with



other Siva temples which confine *Madana Dahana* to a crossroad where three roads meet. These two features are unique to Sri Arunachaleswara temple.

Every temple has a local tree. Here it is *Makizha* tree [*Mimusap elangi*].

The tower which goes by the name of King Vallala is very renowned. It was from the top of this tower that Arunagirinatha, who later became an inspired Tamil poet-saint who wrote marvellous songs on Lord Muruga, threw himself down with a view to ending his life. At that moment, however, Lord Muruga saved the falling devotee by holding him in His hand. The Lord then urged him to sing a song of which He Himself composed the first few words "*Muthalitharupatti*" [O Lord of the *moksha* – conferring Devasena whose face is adorned with pearly-white rows of teeth]. Arunagirinatha, taking off from those words from the Divine lips, went on to compose one of his first and most adored songs. Lord Muruga at the entrance of the tower has come to be hailed as "The Muruga of the Tower". Detailed facts about King Vallala are given elsewhere in this issue.

The metallic icons of this temple look bright red because the copper content in their *panchaloha* [five metals] is higher than usual. It is but appropriate that the icons of this Saivaite temple look reddish, symbolizing the flame-red colour of Lord Siva and the fact that Tiruvannamalai is an *Agni Kshetra*.

The Siva Linga which is the presiding deity of this temple is a *Swayambhu Linga*, i.e. a naturally occurring Linga.

This is one of the temples of South India which house the *samadhi* of each one of the famed eighteen *Siddhars* [mystics]. In this temple is situated the *samadhi* of the *Siddhar* *Idaikkaadar*. *Arunachala Puranam* says that Lord Siva Himself is seated on the Hill on its northern side in the guise of a *Siddhar* named *Arunagiri Yogi*.

It may be mentioned here that those temples of South India which enshrine the *samadhis* of these *siddhars* have flourished greatly. To name a few, the *Bhadeeswarar* Temple in Thanjavur, the *Muruga* Temple in Palani and the *Venkatachalapati* Temple in Tirupati, which are among the most flourishing temples of the South, house the *samadhis* of *siddhars* *Paampaatti* [literally, Snake Charmer], *Bhogar* and *Konkanar*, respectively. These *siddhars* and temples thus enhance each other's distinction.

The interesting story behind one of the pillars, called "*Kambatthu Ilaiyanaar*" [Muruga of the Pillar], of the 16-Pillared Hall on the outermost *praakaara* of Sri Arunachaleswara Temple, is told elsewhere in this issue.

The *samadhis* of two great saints are housed in this temple. The underground shrine known as *Paataala Lingam* is the sa-

*madhi* of a *jnani*. The western end of the "Thousand-Pillared Hall" stands over this *samadhi*. The other *samadhi* is that of "Arunagiri Yogi". It looks like a *mantapa* and is situated behind the *vimana* of Sri Arunachaleswara in the third *praakaara* of the temple.

The tower adjacent to the Vallala Tower is called *Killi Gopuram* [Parrot Tower]. There is a parrot's form sculpted on the first stage of this tower. Of course not without a reason. The fascinating though incredible story is narrated elsewhere in this issue. The Parrot Tower is a very interesting landmark at the Temple.

Another unique feature of Sri Arunachaleswara Temple is that, as the Arunachala Hill is Siva's form itself, the bedchamber icon in the hall in front of Arunachaleswara's shrine, has been given the appearance of a Sivalinga placed at the top of a three-layer hill. In no other Siva temple does one find such a Meru-like Siva icon. Besides, the marvellous architects of this Temple have made the *Ardhanaareeswara* [Siva-Parvati] idol so perfect in every way that it is often claimed that there is no other idol of the kind which can hold a candle to it in beauty.

It was in Tiruvannamalai that the earliest *Lingodbhava* [manifestation of Sivalinga] occurred. Siva appearing in the form of an immense column of fire, of which neither Brahma nor Vishnu could find the top or bottom, is the primordial Linga manifestation.

In all Siva temples constructed in accordance with the norms laid down in the *Agamas*, the *Lingodbhava* idol will be kept in the *sanctum sanctorum*, and in such temples there will be a sure special place for Arunachaleswara also. Similarly, Tirujnanasambandha, the great child *jnani*-poet, who sang many *Pathikams* [Decads], reserved the ninth song for Annamalai [Arunachaleswara]. Besides, he also composed *Pathikams* wholly in honour of Annamalai.

These facts have been mentioned only to point out that Sri Arunachaleswara, who has a great temple for Himself and special *Pathikams* sung on Him by saints, has also a special place of honour in every Siva temple, whether "made of stones, or of words"<sup>1</sup>. Saiva Ellappa Navalar, the author of *Arunachala Puranam* says that the devotees' full-throated shout "Annamalaiyaku Arohara" (Hail Arunachala) heard in this sacred place can drown the roars of all seas and oceans.

Annamalai is the food-giver, the *anna-daataa*. That is why *sadhus* everywhere in Tamil Nadu – not only in Tiruvannamalai – who beg for food, carrying an *anna-kaavadi* [decorated pole with an arch over it] on their shoulders, stand in front of each house and shout "Annamalaiyaku Arohara". Hence the saying "Annamalai is the haven of mendicants."

Similarly, Lord Nataraja, the King of Dancers of Chidambaram, is also specially honoured everywhere in Tamil Nadu. Wherever *Devaram* – hymns composed by the great Saivite Saint-singers – is sung by whoever it may be, one should begin and end by saying "*Tiruchitrambalam*", a word which refers to the sacred space in the Chidambaram Temple where Lord Nataraja dances.

Tiruvannamalai has been honoured by all the four famous saint-singers of Tamil Nadu – Appar, Sundarar, Manickavachagar and Jnanasambandhar – by their songs.

The Kartigai Deepam festival, called *Brahmotsava*, the main festival of this Temple, is spread over ten days. On the tenth day of the festival, at 6 p.m., the sacred lamp called "*Kartigai Deepam*" is lit atop Arunachala Hill. The flame is visible far and wide over a radius of about 30 miles. The practice of lighting the *Deepam* on the summit of Arunachala is a hoary one. The ancient Tamil Sangam literature contains a proverb which says "like a lamp lit on the hill-top"

<sup>1</sup> "கற்கோயிலில், சொற்கோயிலில்"

## THE GLORY OF SRI ARUNACHALA

### SRI ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

(Extracted from the *Skanda Purana* by Sri Bhagavan)

Nandi Said:

1. "Arunachala is the place [that which deserves to be called the holy place]! Of all places it is the greatest! Know that it is the heart [centre] of the earth. It is Siva Himself. It is a secret place representing the Heart. Lord Siva always abides there as a glorious hill called Arunachala!"

2. "Know that the day on which [Siva] assumed for the first time the form of a great and wonderful *lingam* under the name of Arunachala is [Ardhra Darshan]. And the day on which the *devas* led by Vishnu praised and worshipped Siva, who appeared in their midst of that splendour [or appeared as that splendour], is *Sivaratri* [the great night dedicated to the worship of Siva]..."

Siva said:

3. "Though in fact fiery, my lack-lustre appearance as a hill on this spot is an act of grace for the maintenance of the world. I also abide here as the *Siddha*. Within me there are many glorious caves filled with all kinds of enjoyments. Know this."

4. "Action naturally binds the entire world. One's refuge [from such bondage] is this glorious Arunachala, by seeing which one becomes Itself."

5. "What cannot be acquired without great pains - the import of Vedanta [viz. Self-realization] - can be attained by anyone who looks at [this hill] from where it is visible or even mentally thinks of it from afar."

6. "I, the Lord, ordain that those who reside within a radius of three *yojanas* (30 miles) of this place [Arunachala] shall attain union [with the Supreme] which removes bondage even in the absence of initiation, etc."

The *Purana* says that on the full-moon night in the month of *Karthigai* [Nov.-Dec.] Lord Siva, moved by Parvati's relentless pursuit of Her goal of uniting with Him and Her intense penance at Tiruvannamalai, appeared before Her in His luminous form and blessed Her by absorbing Her in Him as His left half. To commemorate that event on that *Kartigai* full moon night, devotees light the flame, symbolizing Siva's luminous form, on Arunachala's peak and worship it.

The *Kartigai* festival is celebrated in a grand manner. During all the ten days, the celebration is literally glittering, thanks to the huge shining mounts made of silver. The

*Panchamurtis* of the temple [five deities] going round the town riding their silver mounts is a sight for the gods!

As already mentioned, the immense silver bull mount on which Arunachaleswara and His Consort Apeethakuchambal [Unnamulai] go in procession on the fifth day of the festival is renowned for its majesty. Very impressive is the manner in which Arunachaleswara and His Consort are lifted up and fastened on the huge silver bull. It is grand all the way: the divine riders, the mount, the way they are placed on the mount, the flower-umbrella above the gods, and their procession through the festive town!

When on the tenth day of the festival, the huge lamp is lit on Arunachala's summit, camphor is burnt and lamps are waved at the same time separately before the *Panchamurtis* enshrined in the hall adjacent to the flagstaff of the Temple. At that moment, the *Ardhanareeswara* idol emerges in great haste from inside to the accompaniment of flames and drums. After giving *darshan* to the *Panchamurtis* presiding over the Hall and after witnessing the holy beacon on the hill, *Ardhanareeswara* returns to His Shrine as hurriedly as He came out. If on that evening the sky is overcast and the flame invisible, He waits till the flame leaps to His view. He is impatient as He waits, and keeps moving forward and backward all the time!

It is believed that Parvati, who attained physical union with Her Lord Siva as His left half thus making Him *Ardhanareeswara*, thus blesses the *Panchamurtis* with the *darshan* of Her wonderful union with the Supreme Lord.

The *Deepam* festival at Tiruvannamalai is one of the most celebrated festivals of South India. It is worth witnessing in person at least once in one's lifetime.

Next in importance and popularity to the *Kartigai Deepam* is the Festival of *Tiruwoodal* [Holy Estrangement] which commemorates an event in the lives of Arunachaleswara and His Consort. The *Tiruwoodal* Street in Tiruvannamalai is named after that event. The Tamil word "oodal" means "estrangement, separation". This Festival of Holy Estrangement falls on the second day of the month of *Thai* [Jan-Feb].

The interesting tradition behind this festival is as follows: Bhringi [from '*bhringa*', a Sanskrit word for 'bee'] was a sage and a great devotee of Lord Siva. Fine. But to him, it was Siva and none else, not even his consort Parvati. Every time Bhringi would worshipfully go round Siva, he would exclude Parvati from his circuit. How cheeky! Parvati felt slighted by Bhringi's repeated insolence. After Her physical fusion with Siva, She thought, "What will this man do now? Let him try excluding Me when he goes round My Lord!" However, the fierce Siva-devotee was smarter than She thought. He turned himself into a bee (hence his name) and, piercing through the body of Siva-Parvati in the middle, he whizzed around the Siva-half blithely ignoring the Parvati-half. Parvati, thus outwitted and discomfited, was beside Herself with anger. As She is Shakti [Energy], She punished him by withdrawing all his energy, reducing him to a skeleton. He could barely stand.

Moved to pity, Siva gave His great devotee a third leg to stand on. Parvati took this in Her stride. But when Siva proceeded to grant Liberation to Bhringi, the greatest act of Grace, She objected.

Lord Siva loved Parvati but He could not let His devotee down. Parvati sulked and stayed away from Her Lord. Thus began *Tiruwoodal*, Holy Estrangement. Siva, however, went ahead and gave *Mukti* to Bhringi. Not that He loved the One less and the other more, but Siva would do anything for His devotees, would even sacrifice His own interests.

The Estrangement was temporary but Lord Siva's Grace is everlasting.

**"Good luck accumulated to the Red Mount, Arunachala, for its having sheltered numerous sages in the past, has now grown incomparable because Lord Sri Ramana Maharshi has chosen this hill among many other holy places, for his abode".**

**— Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni in  
Forty Verses in Praise of Sri Ramana, v.39**

12

# MAHAN SESHADRI SWAMI

By A.R.N.



Mahan Seshadri Swami

**I**T WAS Friday the 4th of January 1929. Ramana stood watching the elaborate rituals connected with interring of the sacred body of 'Mahan Seshadri' who had attained *Mahasamadhi* on that day. Practically the whole of Tiruvannamalai was there in mourning. Was he not one of its two eyes? The other of course was Ramana. For nearly forty years since Seshadri arrived in Tiruvannamalai in 1890, its citizens were witnesses to his *siddhis*, powers, his child-like nature, and above all his extraordinary spiritual stature. Yet few could claim to know much about him for his God-intoxication made him a puzzle. Narasimha Swami, who was to write Ramana's biography later, initially wanted to do Seshadri's biography. He made every attempt to observe and study the saint. But he would literally shy away and give him no opportunity to get close to him. Yet, can such *Mahans* really succeed in hiding their greatness, however much they might try?

Seshadri was born on Saturday the 22nd of January 1870. His parents Varadaraja and Marakadam were a pious Brahmin couple of Vazhur in the North Arcot District of Tamil Nadu. He was a precocious child who inherited a flair for music from his mother. (In later years he would sing in the most melodious voice when the mood was on). When he was four years old he and his mother went for a festival in the Varadaraja temple at Kancheepuram. Attracted by the boy's sweetness a vendor gifted to him a small image of Lord Krishna. That person was able to sell his entire stock that day. Later he could not resist

kissing the baby hands of Seshadri, saying again and again 'My golden hands, my golden hands'. This reputation has stuck and for good reason. In his years in Tiruvannamalai shopkeepers would be eager that he should enter their shops for they would be assured of a roaring trade. We are reminded of the similar reputation of Ramana who was eagerly sought after by his schoolmates, for his presence in their team would ensure success. Is not one of Siva's attributes the same ('*Hiranyabahu*')?

He seemed to be growing up like any other normal child except that he was extremely gifted. The death of his father when he was barely ten years old and later that of his mother somehow changed completely the even tenor of his life. He would be reciting times without number *Mukapanchasati* in presence of goddess Kamakshi or the *Kamokarshid mantra* from *Narayanopani-shad*. The flood tide of *Bhakti* simply devoured him. All time became *sadhana* time. To somehow have the vision of the Divine Mother and cut the bonds of *karma* was his single-minded goal. Since his guardians at home, his uncle and aunt, could not understand this passion, this desire for solitude, he would quietly go to the cremation ground. Fearless and steadfast of purpose he was looking for an excuse to leave home. He got this excuse when his guardians locked him up. He managed to slip away. Who can bind the unbound?

The lure of Arunachala was strong. A couple of years earlier he had himself drawn a



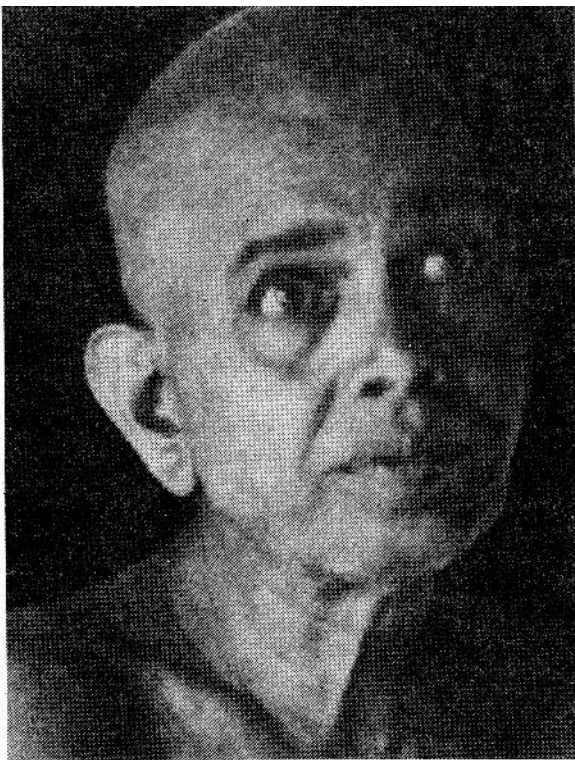
picture of Arunachala and given it the pride of place in his *pooja* room. Often he would be heard shouting 'Arunachala; Shonadrinatha'. Is not Arunachala waiting and beckoning the spiritual heroes? He reached Tiruvannamalai in 1890. For the remaining forty years of his life it was the home of this 'homeless' one. In this too one finds a parallel with Ramana who remained rooted at Arunachala for fifty-four years, from his arrival in 1896 till his *Mahasa-madhi* in 1950. Seshadri had arrived earlier, for in the divine drama he was cast in the role of a protective elder brother of Ramana, who was in fact called 'Chinna Seshadri' by some in the early years.

It was Seshadri who saved Ramana's body for humanity. Trying to escape the trouble from young urchins, Ramana had hidden himself in the underground temple of Siva (*Patalalingam*). Such was his state that he was oblivious to the ravages to his body by vermin and insects. It was Seshadri Swami who directed one Venkatachala Mudaliar to the underground shrine requesting him to bring Ramana out with the help of others.

One finds Seshadri identifying himself completely with Ramana. When one of the devotees came to him for counsel he remarked: "There is no difference between 'there' and 'here' (between 'him' and 'me')." It was he who encouraged Natanananda to go to Ramana fearlessly and with faith. Or he would say 'the very sight of Ramana is auspicious'. Being an adept in *mantras* he would initiate people into them but not Ramana's devotees. For they were the flock of his younger brother and should only follow his guidance. Seshadri would often visit Ramana and occasionally enter into friendly arguments. Once he took up the dualistic position and said: 'You worship Arunachala and he will grant liberation'. Ramana remarked: 'Who is the person who worships and who is the worshipped?'. Seshadri laughed and bowed repeatedly to the peak. The bond between them was deep. It was the union of spiritual hearts.

Seshadri would not accept money. Totally dependent as he was on what God chose to provide, what need did he have for worldly things? One is reminded of a statement of Ramana when he was being examined on commission. A lawyer asked him why he should have any compunction in accepting monetary offerings when he did not refuse offerings of food and eatables, Ramana replied 'You cannot eat money'!

It is said that the truly great ones defy any attempt at classification. This was more so in the case of Seshadri. For he discarded all rules and would roam about the streets of Tiruvannamalai, half-shaven, with dirty clothes, eating stale food, and even sharing food with dogs. He was a law unto himself. But all this could not prevent one's perception of the brilliance of his eyes, the hand-someness of his face and above all his utter God-mindedness. People flocked to him as a *Siddha Purusha*, as a powerful one who could grant their boons. But his title to greatness does not rest on this. His was a truly inward life and he was Self-Realised. About this there can be no doubt though he did his best to cover up his true state by putting on a 'cloak of madness'. But truth would come out though only rarely. Sometimes he would talk at length about the meaning of the '*Maha Vakyas*', 'I am Brahman', *Tat Tvam Asi*, with wondrous richness of detail and fullness of 'illustration'. He told Natanananda: 'After one rejects all objects one after another as transient and unreal that which remains is the Self'. When taunted once by a relative for his forgetfulness Seshadri told him: 'Mine is the forgetfulness of the illusions of the world and not the Real, Brahman'. When a devotee was despondent he encouraged him by saying: 'The Self is not discovered in the mountain caves or near holy rivers but is there all along with you as your own consciousness'. But one fact remains irrefutable. He was what he told J.V. Iyer. Truly he was the third *Linga* of Tiruvannamalai -- the other two being Arunachala and Ramana.



# BHAGAVAN'S DEPOSITION ON ARUNACHALA

By DAVID GODMAN

**U**NTIL the 1930s the eastern slope of the mountain of Arunachala was administered by the Arunachaleswarar Temple in Tiruvannamalai. Prior to 1934, its right to do so had been accepted by everyone on and around the hill. From time immemorial the temple authorities had maintained the tanks and temples on the mountain, put out any fires which broke out, and arranged for all the forest produce to be sold in an orderly manner. The unquestioned authority that the temple authorities had wielded over this area had arisen because of the local tradition that the hill was Siva Himself manifesting in the form of a *linga*. Since the belief was widespread and largely unchallenged, the local people felt that it was natural and correct that the main temple in Tiruvannamalai should administer all affairs pertaining to the hill.

This traditional arrangement was challenged by the Government of India in 1934. In May that year the Government issued a notification in the district gazette which stated that the whole of Arunachala was a reserve forest and was thus the property of the Government of India. The Temple authorities challenged the Government's order in court,

maintaining that the Temple was the legitimate owner of 1,750 acres on the eastern side of the hill. This area included all the tanks and temples on the slope of the mountain which begins at the back of the Arunachaleswarar Temple.

One of the Temple trustees approached Bhagavan and requested him to give evidence to the court which would support the Arunachaleswarar Temple's claim to the land. Bhagavan agreed and in 1938 lawyers for the plaintiff and the defendant came to the Ashram to hear his evidence and to cross-examine him on it. Bhagavan's initial evidence took the form of a written deposition. A small part of this deposition was recorded in *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Talk no. 492. The full text is given below.

\* \* \*

*"I came to Tiruvannamalai in the year 1896 and lived on the hill from 1899 to 1922. In that year this Ashram was started, and since then I have been living here [at Sri Ramanasramam]. From the time I first lived on the hill, all the hill*

areas have been in the possession of the Devasthanam [the Arunachaleswarar Temple authorities]. The ashram on the hill where I used to live was started in 1902. The building which is there now was completed in the year 1916. This particular ashram was built with the permission and kindness of the Devasthanam. [The permission was oral, for no written Government order or permission was ever received]. From the year 1899 until a date a few years after I left Skandashram the front side [the eastern slope] of the hill was never in the possession of the Government."

Having given his views on the ownership of the hill, Bhagavan then cited a few examples of how well the Temple authorities had administered the hill during the period when he had been living on it.

"[Many years ago] a man called Saraswathy Swami lived on the hill. That Swami advertised that he intended to perform a ceremonial worship of an image of Lord Subramania [on the hill]. The Devasthanam objected and stopped it. In an official notice they said that the hill itself is linga swarupa [God in the form of a linga] and that to perform worship of another deity on it, and to celebrate a festival there, was against the tradition of the sastras. On another occasion, when my mother attained [samadhi], they raised a precautionary objection that her samadhi should not be on the hill. They feared that we might build her samadhi on the hill itself. On this occasion also their objection was that the hill was Iswara swarupa [the form of God].

"In those days the Devasthanam authorities gave out orders that the woodcutters should not cut the trees on the hill. Every year during the time I was on the hill, the Devasthanam gave licences to various people to cut the grass and to collect the other forest products. Whenever there was a fire on the hill, it was put

out at the expense of the Devasthanam. On one occasion when we happened to cut some of the cacti which were causing an inconvenience to the ashram, and then burned them, the Devasthanam objected, saying that we should not have a fire in that place. All these incidents took place on the eastern slope. This eastern slope has fixed boundaries."

Bhagavan then went on to describe why the hill was sacred and why, in his opinion, the temple authorities should be allowed to administer it.

"There is an aitikya [tradition] that this hill is linga swarupa, that is to say, that this hill itself is God. This aitikya is not to be found anywhere else. That is the cause of the glory of this place. The tradition of this place is that this hill is the form of God and that in its real nature it is full of light. Every year the Deepam festival celebrates the real nature of the mountain as light itself. Authority for this is found in the Vedas, the Puranas and in the stotras [poems] of devotees. Because this tradition maintains that this hill is Siva swarupa, the practice of giripradakshina, walking clockwise around the mountain as an act of reverence or worship, has arisen. I also have faith in giripradakshina and have had experience of it.

"There is no sastra to separate the hill from the temple. The inseparability of the hill and the temple can be observed during Kartikai Deepam when the festival [of kindling the light] is conducted simultaneously in the temple and on the summit of the hill. Further proof of the tradition that the hill is the form of God can be found in the bi-annual festivals in which the image of Arunachaleswarar in the temple performs pradakshina of the hill."

In the account in Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi Bhagavan is reported to have also

said: "Siva always remains in three forms: 1) as *parabrahman*; 2) as *linga* (here as the hill); and 3) as *siddha*". The third category refers to Siva in the form of Arunagiri Yogi who Bhagavan said resided on the north slope of the hill. Although this quotation summarises views which Bhagavan had expressed on other occasions, there is no record of this remark in the court transcript.

Bhagavan continued:

*"In accordance with the tradition that the hill is Iswara swarupa, the Devasathanam performs abhishekam to the top of the hill in the same way that it would do to a linga. For the last ten to twelve years the cauldron which contains the Deepam light on the top of the hill is carried to the summit every year during the festival. Prior to this, for many, many years, the cauldron was left there throughout the year.*

*"I am a devotee of Arunachaleswarar. I have composed a poem in Tamil which says that the Arunchala hill is Iswara swarupa."*

The Government's lawyer objected to Bhagavan introducing this poem as evidence, but the objection was overruled. It seems that no one recorded the original Tamil verse. It now only exists in the following English translation:

*"Lord Arunachala appeared out of the hill and at the request of Brahma and Vishnu merged back into the hill. Simultaneously he manifested as the linga at the bottom of the hill. The hill continues to represent the Lord."*

A similar idea, which may be derived from this verse, can be found in the account in *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*: "Siva originally appeared as a column of light. On being prayed to, the light disappeared into the hill and manifested as *linga*. Both are Siva." After Bhagavan had submitted his verse, the case was adjourned for five days.

On its resumption, Bhagavan added a few extra comments on the traditions and mythology of the hill.

*"Even after this [the time when Siva appeared to Brahma and Vishnu in the form of Light] Ishan [Ishwara] appeared to Deul in the form of Light before disappearing graciously into the form of the hill.*

*"There are many ancient tirthams [sacred tanks] which exist on the hill. Among them the Mulaipal tirtham and the Pada tirtham are important. There is a tradition that these tirthams were created by Siva and Parvati for the sake of Guhal Namasiivayar."*

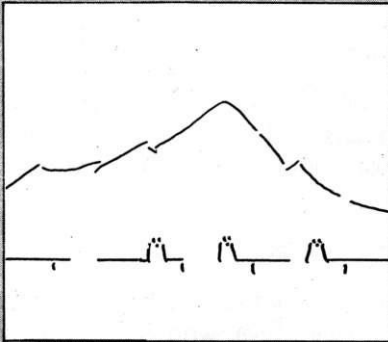
The Government's lawyer then began his cross-examination of Bhagavan, questioning him in detail on some of the statements he had made. Only Bhagavan's answers are recorded in the court transcript. I have separated the text into paragraphs in such a way that I hope each paragraph constitutes a separate answer. I leave the reader to infer what the questions might have been.

*"I lived in Virupaksha Cave for sixteen years. I lived in Skandashram for six years. I have stayed at this place [Sri Ramanasramam] since 1922."*

*"I constructed a building at Virupaksha Cave. No written permission was obtained from anyone for the construction of the building."*

*"Skandashram was started in 1902. The building was completed in the year 1916. Even after that date, some construction work was carried on."*

*"At first it [Skandashram] began as a tirtham. Later it developed into a place of residence. Before Skandashram came into existence, moisture was found in another location nearby. Its source was in a rock that was twenty yards away. This tirtham is now located between*



**SHHH** .....

Drawing of the Mountain and  
the poem in French

By HENRI HARTUNG

Pure?

Pure "my" plans

"my" kindness

"my" purity?

Sitting in front of the Mountain  
don't, please, don't say a word!

Skandashram and Virupaksha Cave. It was only later that the Skandashram tirtham came into being."

"Because it [Skandashram] was built by a person called Kandan who lived in the ashram, by his own hands, it became known as Skandashram. That tirtham [I just spoke about] is attached to that ashram."

"No order was received from anyone for building this ashram [Skandashram]. Because I was staying there, no one objected. On the contrary, they approved of it."

"During the time I lived on the hill, no written order was ever obtained from anyone to make living facilities. Nor was any order obtained when repairs were carried out in some of these places."

"They were not done on my authority; others did them as their own work. I did not tell them to build, nor did I prevent them. In this manner Skandashram, Virupaksha Cave and Sri Ramanasramam came into being. The other ashrams on the hill also came into existence in this way. No written orders were received for their construction."

"I knew about the notice issued to Saraswathy Swami by the Devasthanam, but I do not remember the year in which it happened. I heard that the notice had been given."

"During the period I was on the hill, a vel [spear] and a statue were in the temple [of Subramania]. They [the Devasthanam] did not object to the statue being kept in that place, their objection was to popularising it through public celebrations."

"There are places to stay both at Virupaksha Cave and Guhai Namasiwayar Temple. It is not known whether they contain the samadhis [of the two saints who founded them]. In Guhai Namasiwayar there is a linga. In Virupaksha Cave there is an altar. In Guhai Namasiwayar puja and abhisheka are done to the linga. At the altar in Virupaksha Cave, only puja is done. It is the popular belief that both of these places are samadhis."

"The time when Virupaksha Devar and Guhai Namasiwayar attained samadhi may be about 300 or 400 years ago. I do not know when the buildings were first started in those places."

"It is stated in the Upanishads and in the Skanda, Linga and Siva Puranas that this hill is Iswara Swarupa."

"I cannot say without referring to the books in which Upanishad and in which place it is stated so."

"There was a Jadai Swami [a swami with long matted locks] who used to live

on the hill. He died there. His body was brought down to the foot of the hill and interred. The same thing happened to Palaniswami. A samadhi cannot be made on the hill for anyone who dies there. They can only be buried after bringing them to the foot of the hill. Once a person died near Seven Springs [two thirds of the way up the mountain]. His samadhi was also made at the foot of the hill."

"Jadai Swami attained samadhi about four or five years ago. The others attained samadhi after 1901 and before 1920."

"I had no thought of having my mother's samadhi on the hill. I did not tell anyone that the samadhi should be made on the hill."

I have omitted several of Bhagavan's answers. Some of them merely repeat what he said earlier while others pertain not to Arunachala but to rather mundane matters of ashram administration. In one of his answers Bhagavan stated that verses in the *Skanda* and *Siva Puranas* supported his assertion that Arunachala was a manifestation of God in the form of a mountain. After the hearing was over, Bhagavan selected some verses from these two works and passed them on to the court to supplement and support his evidence. Bhagavan entitled this collection of verses *Sri Arunachala Linga Pramanya Vakyan*, which means, 'Sentences giving authoritative proof that Sri Arunachala is a *linga*'. The verses he selected are given below.

**From the *Skanda Mahapurana*,  
*Maheswara Kanda*, Part Three, *Arunachala Mahatmyam*, First Half:**

#### CHAPTER ONE

Sanaka said [to Brahma]:

9. O Treasure of Grace! O Foremost of Devas! On earth there are Siva *lingas* which

are divine, which are installed by human beings and *siddhas*, and which are composed of the [five] elements.

10. Tell me, which *linga* in the land mass that contains India is immaculate, divine, of undefilable glory, self-originated and effulgent?

Brahma replied:

22. Hear how in ancient days the wonderful and effulgent Siva, who is full of motiveless grace, manifested with the name of Arunadri [one of the names of Arunachala].

23. Narayana and I were born from him who transcends the universe.

24. Once we two, who were self-born, began to argue with each other.

25&31. Seeing the dreadful enthusiasm with which we were fighting with each other, *Ishwara*, who is the embodiment of grace... rose as a column of fire between us.

#### CHAPTER TWO

Brahma and Vishnu prayed [to Lord Siva]:

31. Withdrawing your effulgence, abide as a motionless *linga* named Arunachala in order to bestow grace upon the world.

Brahma said:

50. He [Lord Siva] assumed the nature of motionless *linga* in the form of Arunachala.

51. This indeed is the effulgent *linga*, the sole cause of the universe, which is visible on earth and which is renowned as Arunadri.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

*Ishwara* said:

37. I truly abide here on earth in the form of an effulgence named Arunachala [in order to bestow] the attainment [of liberation].

38. Since it [this hill] removes the cruel accumulation of sins from all the worlds, and

since bondage becomes non-existent when one sees it, it is [named] Arunachala.

40. In ancient days, when a fight arose between Brahma and Vishnu, who were both born from a part of me, I manifested myself in the form of an effulgence in order to remove their delusion.

43. At their further request I, who was in the form of an effulgence, became the motionless *linga* named Arunachala.

### CHAPTER FIVE

Devi said to Gautama:

24. Siva told me: "I abide [on earth] with the name Arunachala", and said that I should hear the glory of Arunachala from your lips.

Gautama said:

42&43. In ancient days Brahma and Vishnu, who had come into existence from a part of the effulgence of Siva, but who had become egotistical, fought with a desire to conquer each other.

43&44. In order to subdue the pride of these two, who were fighting in this manner, Sadasiva, who is worthy to be meditated on by yogis, assumed the form of a column of fire without beginning, middle or end, and stood between them, illuminating the ten directions.

47. At their further request, *Devesa* [Siva, the Lord of the *devas*] assumed the form of a motionless *linga* [now] renowned as Arunadri. Tranquil he shines.

### CHAPTER SIX

*Ishwara* said:

21. I abide on earth as the form of Arunachala.

22. That effulgent form alone is called Arunachala.

23. This fiery effulgent form, unmanifest and of the nature of limitless glory, cooled down in order to protect the world.

### CHAPTER SEVEN

The *devas* said:

9. O Bhagavan! O Arunadrisa [Arunachala]! You who do good to the whole world! Although you are of the form of fire, you shine in the world, having become tranquil.

Gautama said:

5. Having been prayed to by the *devas*, Sriman Arunadrisa gradually cooled down and became perfectly tranquil as Arunachala in order to protect the world.

### CHAPTER EIGHT

20. You [Lord Siva] are seen on earth as the famous *Sonadri* [another name of Arunachala].

17. Nowhere else on earth have I seen even one *linga* in the form of a hill.

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Brahma said:

42. This is Sadasiva himself in the form of Arunachala, which is seen even as the supreme effulgence, the cause of creation, sustenance and dissolution.

44. This effulgent *linga* is worshipped by all the *devas*. Because of this the earth is considered to possess more *dharma* [than any other world].

**From the Second Half of the *Skanda Mahapurana*:**

### CHAPTER FOUR

Nandikeswara said:

12. There God, Sambhu, the one who does what is good for the world, has himself assumed the form of a hill and abides with the name Arunachala.

14. This hill, which is Parameswara Himself, is considered by *maharshis* to be superior to Sumeru, Kailasa and Mandara.

58. Neither Meru nor Kailasa nor Mandara are equal to Arunadri; they are abodes [of Lord Siva] filled with huge rocks, whereas this [Arunachala] is *Girisa* [The Lord of the Hill, one of the names of Siva] himself.

### CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Siva said:

27. For the welfare [of the world], may My effulgent form, which is motionless and eternal, abide here forever with the name Arunadri.

### CHAPTER TWENTY

Gautama said:

21. This Arunadri is the hill of fire itself in a concealed form.

**From the *Siva Mahapurana*,  
*Vidyeshwara Samhita*:**

### CHAPTER NINE

Ishwara said:

21. Since this *linga* rose up as a hill of fire, it shall be renowned as Arunachala.

41&42. Since this formless column, which reveals My nature as *Brahman*, possesses the characteristics of a *linga*, it shall be My *linga*.

\* \* \*

Since the *Skanda Mahapurana* and the *Siva Mahapurana* are two of the eighteen principal *Puranas*, these verses should have been enough to convince the court that Bhagavan's assertions about the sanctity of Arunachala were backed up by an authoritative scriptural source. Unfortunately, the issue at stake was not the sanctity of the mountain, but the ownership of it.

Property disputes in India tend to be protracted affairs, and this one was no exception. The final judgement was handed down in July

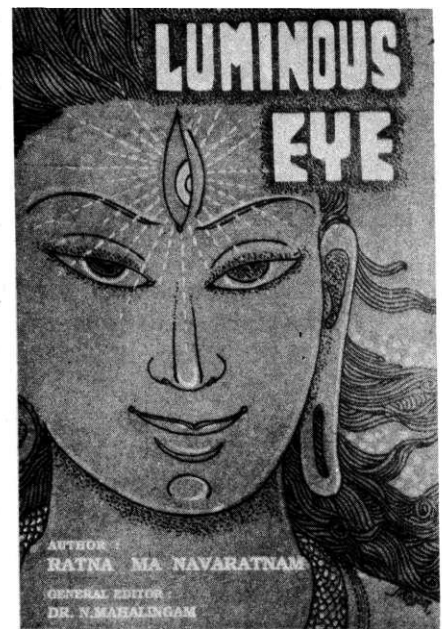
1940, more than six years after the original notification. The two parties seemed to have reached a settlement out of court, the terms of which were incorporated in the court's decision. The *Devasthanam* reluctantly accepted that the Government was the sole owner of the hill. In return the Government granted the *Devasthanam* the right to maintain and repair all the religious properties on Arunachala and to enjoy all the income from the sale of the grass which grew there. The *Devasthanam* was also given the right to collect dead wood from the hill and to graze its cattle there. The Government reserved for itself the right to authorise the construction of any new buildings on the hill.

In the fifty years that have passed since this judgement took effect, Tiruvannamalai has grown enormously. The town now has a population of about 1,00,000, all living at the foot of the hill, with many more living in outlying villages. As the population increased, nearly all the local forests were felled to meet the ever-increasing demand for timber and firewood. Arunachala was not spared. Nearly all the old trees on the hill were cut long ago, and sporadic reforestation projects in the last few years have failed to repair more than a fraction of the damage. The temple, although constrained by a lack of finances, has attempted to fulfil its obligations to the properties on the hill which it has been appointed to maintain. The other party, the Government, has until recent years, been quite successful in preventing new settlements from springing up on the hill and spoiling its sanctity. Unfortunately, neither party has been able to prevent or slow down the progressive environmental degradation of Arunachala's slopes, nor have they been able to stop the annual fires, started by the local grass-cutters, which consume most of the mountain, destroying large tracts of vegetation and wildlife. The forests of Bhagavan's youth have long since gone. With the local population still rapidly expanding, it will need a minor miracle to bring them back!



# THE THIRD EYE <sup>1</sup>

By RATNA MA NAVARATNAM



Behold the Eye of Siva! The Triple Eye whose radiant energy transforms ordinary processes like

Reason into *intuition*;

Memory into *recollection*;

Work into *worship*;

Leisure into *peace*;

Coexistence into *communion*;

Teaching into *initiation*

Detachment into *liberation*;

Love into *illumination*;

Life into *existence*;

Knowledge into *wisdom*;

Alienation into *integration*;

Subjectivity into *interiority*;

Sentiment into *inspiration*;

Joy into *Ananda (Bliss)*;

Delusion into *certainty*;

Word into *experience*.

The Eye of Siva has awakened man from the stupor of ignorance. We have recognised our ignorance. We know that we know nothing. The symbolic Eye stands for the highest form of Consciousness, the essential integrating centre of infinite power. Look intently. The vertical, half closed eyelids point the path inwards. How do we set about to cross the threshold and proceed towards that which lies beyond thought? Wherein lies the Will that engages one's energy with intense, burning interest to contact the spark of the energy centre within? There is a transformation of values. It is to be in living contact with the built-up sublime experiences of the sages and saints; the intimate impact effected by reading the scriptures, and their vibrant expressions in the realms of art, music, poetry and sculpture help one to attain a higher attunement, where all discords and impurities fade out. The soul of man cries out; "Mukkanna (The Three-Eyed)! Illumined by Thine Eye of Grace alone, can I see aught!"

"Who will see if Thou dost not grant the light rays?"

"Oh luminous Eye, Thou wilt and we SEE".

"If Thou openest Thine Eye, who will not see?"

"Oh Seeing Eye, withhold not Thy Sight".

-- Tirumurai I - VII

<sup>1</sup>Reproduced from her latest book: *Luminous Eye*, pp.28, 29 published by International Society for the Investigation of Ancient Civilisations, 102, Mount Road, Madras - 600 032, S. India.

# HYMN TO APITAKUCHAMBA

*Apitakuchamba, the Divine Mother unsuckled, has a special Presence in the Kshetra of Arunachala. Here is a free rendering of Vasishtha Ganapati Muni's eulogy of the Deity in his magnum opus, UMASAHASRAM (Canto 26).*

1. May the moon-smile of the face of the Spouse of Mahesha, ever enlightening the lotus-minds of the wise adepts of old, protect all the peoples.

2. May she, *Aparna*<sup>1</sup>, destroy the distress of the world, she whose long eyes extend to her ears, whose fame for generosity excels that of the downpouring cloud and the celebrated *Karna*<sup>2</sup>, beloved of the Lord of Arunachala.

3. I have beheld in Arunachala the mystery of the moon-face scattering all sorrow, the happy cynosure of the sight of Shiva, Lord of the steeds of Veda, sought after even by the host of Vedanta.

4. O Mind, when the myrobalan is in the palm of the hand, doubt not the fulfilment of all wishes. The Daughter of the King of mountains is in sight, now I am the monarch within.

5. Now in Arunachala is attained She who enters the sculpted forms, who shines as the saviour of even the ignorant. O, indeed, She has always been my mother!

6. Maybe there are plentiful auspicious homes today in the land of Bharata. But my Mother sports here in Arunachala with her Face exceeding the glory of the moon.

7. Mother of Ganapati, she undoes the web of sins of those who take refuge in her, she whose glory is untrammelled like the waves of the ocean, whose eyes scoff at the beauty of the lotus.

8. May your bonds be sundered by her with long, thick, dark, ringed plaits of hair, with moon-topped head, with fame like the

fragrance of *Kasha*<sup>3</sup> flowers, Beloved of Rudra, foe of Kama.

9. She is our refuge whose feet are worshipped by Brahma, she whose very name wipes out sin, who is the fulfiller of the wishes of the devotees, nectar of the eyes of Shankara.

10. She is our refuge whose eyes are ever-moving, fulfiller of the wishes of the devotees, whose brows form the bow of Manmatha, praised by the host of the Gods led by Brahma, Darling of the five-faced Parameshwara.

11. O Mother who dwellest at the foot of Arunachala, thy foot with the jingle of its bracelet drove off the host of desires and all and forcibly captured my mind.

12. Listen, O foolish mind, give up attachment to wealth and the like; cultivate devotion for the feet of the Beloved of the Lord of Arunachala. You will attain liberation.

13. O Mother, the fevered mind of man seeks thy feet when his entire body is decrepit, his intelligence decayed in delusion.

14. Adepts in the Tantra speak of the mountain Arunachala as the Sri Chakra; half of it as the body of Shiva and half as thine, O Daughter of the King of mountains!

[Four are the Shiva Chakras and five Shakti Chakras]

<sup>1</sup> *Aparna* - Mother Uma is called *Aparna* as she did severe penance without taking even tender leaves (*parna* = leaf).

<sup>2</sup> *Karna* - A play upon the Sanskrit word which means both ear and Karna, son of Kunti, famous for his generosity.

<sup>3</sup> *Kasha* - white flower from a kind of grass.

15. Daughter of the King of mountains, granted, Arunachala is the symbol-focus of Fire; even there is thy portion. How indeed can there be Fire without conjunction of the Qualityless Shiva with thee, O Goddess!

16. Thy installed Image is worthy of obeisance, delightful to worship. This thy form of half of Arunachala, without blemish, is beautiful to laud.

17. O half-form of Arunachala, always thou bearest on thy lap Guha in the form of Ramana. O Mother, why dost thou push away Ganapati coming again and again?

18. O blessed half of the Lord of Arunachala, dost thou not reign here to give plenty of milk to Ramana on thy lap, Guha in human guise, thou of unsuckled breasts?

19. Mother unsuckled! Thou art asleep in full trance; hence thou knowest not that son Ramana on thy lap has drunk milk aplenty.

20. O Sovereign, drinking abundantly thy milk, the quintessence of Knowledge, Ramana the king of sages, embodying Knowledge, became the All. With that Knowledge-

Self he nourishes the body.

21. O Parvati, may be darling Guha has got from thy unsuckled breast abundant milk inherent with Knowledge. O Sovereign, won't you bear a little for me?

22. Daughter of the Mountain, should you consider the rictus-flowing son [Ganapati] as grown-up, then do not give him milk, but give him fruitful food yielding strength.

23. Mother of the Universe! If I must earn my food, so be it. Send me thy most auspicious benedictions by which I may conquer the world.

24. May the Spouse of the Lord of Arunachala, with full-moon-like face, delicate of body, be our refuge, she whose glory of look shines in every lightning, whose mystery lies subtle in all that is visible.

25. O Mother unsuckled, Spouse of the Lord of Arunachala, glorious with radiance, Ganapati offers to thee this elegant garland of *dodhaka*<sup>4</sup> flowers.

<sup>4</sup>*Dodhaka* - A form of metre.

## FAR AND NEAR

By K. NATESAN

The *Isa Upanishad* appears to be a very ancient one. This is the first Upanishad among the twelve major Upanishads which bears the commentaries of all the Acharyas and other great saints. *Nayana* (Ganapati Muni) also wrote a short commentary on this important Upanishad in the light of Maharshi's teaching.

This Upanishad contains eighteen *mantras* in the form of verses. The fifth verse speaks about the nature of the Self. The verse translated reads thus:

"It moves and moves not. It is *far* and likewise *near*.

It is inside all this and it is outside all this."

Acharya Shankara's commentary is:

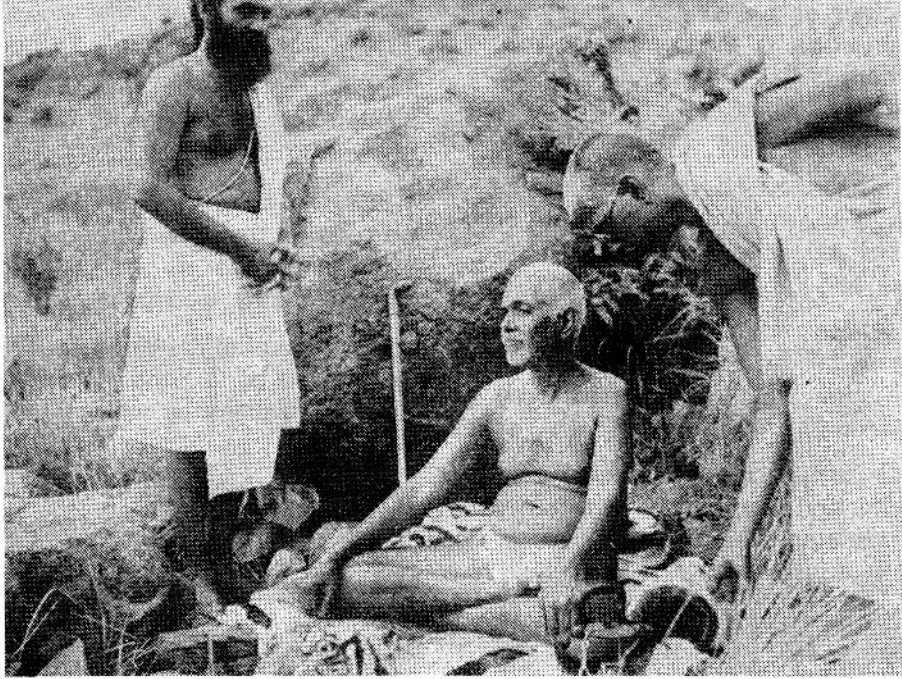
तद्दूरे = *Far* = For the ignorant who cannot realise the Self even in millions of years, It is *far*.

तदन्तिके = *Near* = For the wise who realises It to be his inmost Self, It is very near.

*Nayana* explains this as follows:

तद्दूरे = *Far* = It is far away, as It shines in the heart of the Sun.

तदन्तिके = *Near* = It is quite near, as It dwells in the heart of every being.



To Sri Bhagavan's right stands Sri Daivarata (Gajananam) and  
to His left Sri Niranjanananda Swami

## DIALOGUES AT ARUNACHALA

By PROF. N.R. KRISHNAMOORTHY AIYAR

*Professor N.R. Krishnamoorthy Aiyar's reminiscences have recently been brought out in a book-form by the Ashram, entitled: ARUNODAYA: A refuge at the Feet of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. The following is a portion of a chapter therein.*

**D**URING the summer vacation at the end of the first year of my service in the College, I visited my sister who was married to Kuppuswami Iyer in Tiruvannamalai. During that visit I had *darshan* of both Kavyakantha Ganapati Sastri and Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

The Kavyakantha was then living in the Mango Tree Cave on the Hill Arunachala, already sanctified as a residence of the Maharshi. One afternoon I went to see Ganapati Muni along with my friend T.K.Sundaresa Iyer and my brother-in-law Kuppuswami Iyer.

T.K.S. had told me how, with himself as secretary, Ganapati Muni had organised a 'Mahendra Sangha' with about ten thousand members all over India to perform *mantras*, *japas*, *homas* and diverse spiritual practices for the emancipation of India from the foreign yoke. Ganapati Muni was then affectionately addressed as *Nayana* (Father) by all his followers. I approached Nayana in a most respectful attitude.

He was seated in front of the Mango Tree Cave. I saw him a majestic figure like a Grecian statue. His face was wreathed in a smile

most enchanting like that of a dear mother. We prostrated before Nayana and I was duly introduced to him. I started speaking with him and he listened with a look of great intellectual avidity to the latest ideas of space, time and matter, just making a few interjections once in a while. I finished saying that everything resolves to a space-time continuum in which there is a continuous transformation of tiny particles into energy and *vice versa*, according to certain specific laws. Nayana asked me how without an intelligent agency acting at every point of the cosmos and the whole of the cosmos, the cosmos could endure as such without ending in a chaos -- a peacock's egg would produce a crow, and a mango tree would produce a coconut and so on. So I had to admit the universe to be a continuum of consciousness in which space-time and all objects from the stars to the electrons were governed to function according to certain specific laws. Solidity of all objects is only an illusion since the volume of the particles constituting a body is negligibly small compared to the volume of the whole body even as the stars taken together will form a very negligible part of the volume of the whole universe of infinite space. The conclusion will be that the picture of shadowy forms is held on an infinite screen of pure consciousness. At this stage of discussion Ganapati exclaimed: '*Chitram Chitram*': (*Chitram* picture; also strange, beautiful). The words, like mystic *mantras*, had a magical effect on me! That very instant for a brief eternity my body disappeared and *I was that screen of consciousness holding the world picture!*

We prostrated at the feet of the great master of *Mantra Shastra* and took leave of him. His word was a *mantra*, and his very breath a benediction unto the whole world!

Next day I visited Sri Ramanasramam, just then located in its present premises of Mother Alagammal's *samadhi*. After prostrations before Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, I asked him about a person's state after death: "இப்போ இப்படி இருக்கிறீர். உமது அடுத்த ஸ்திதி என்ன?" ("You are now thus. Pray, what will be your subsequent state?") Maharshi put the counter-question: "What do you mean by *state*?" "ஸ்திதிதின்னியே ஸ்திதி ன்னா என்ன?" I began to think. "I certainly did not enquire about the body which would be burnt or buried. Then what was the thing about which I asked? It must be the thinking apparatus called mind. If I said, 'I asked about mind', he would ask me to define mind." So, before answering, I deeply enquired about the mind; just then I saw that my eyes were gripped by the piercing look from the eyes of the Maharshi. When I enquired about the state of mind, my mind was paralysed and I lost the power of producing any thought. The truth dawned on me that *the mind is only a bundle of thoughts*. Thoughts come and go, and there is no such thing as mind. At that time I did not pursue the investigation any further. I prostrated before Bhagavan and took leave of him with the simple impression of pure Being which was a simple lonely existence aware of Itself, which I did not then investigate or dwell upon. I did not pursue the question (of the state after death) with Sri Bhagavan!

**"When the sun rises, it is by means of the sun that the sun is seen. Similarly I AM to be known through MYSELF."**

**-- Saint Jnaneshwar**

\*\*\*\*\*

**"Becoming is effort, being is the cessation of effort. Whenever there is effort it is self-conscious and hence it is imperfect. Being is pure awareness, effortless consciousness."**

**-- J. Krishnamurti**

# ARUNAGIRINATHA

By SWAMI ANVANANDA \*

**P**RIOR to the advent of Ramana Maharshi, Tiruvannamalai's most famous saint was probably Arunagirinatha, a Murugan *bhakta* who lived at the foot of Arunachala in the fourteenth century. Reliable information about his life is hard to come by for the earliest account of his life was not published until the nineteenth century, about 500 years after he died. This version, which has several variations, contains the following principal elements.

Arunagirinatha was born in Tiruvannamalai and spent the greater part of his life there. He was reputed to be the son of a courtesan called Muttammai. As he grew up he found the company of courtesans so attractive, he spent most of his time in their houses. When his mother died, all the properties he inherited from her were squandered to pay for his lust.

Arunagirinatha had a sister called Adi who was very fond of him. Taking advantage of her affection, Arunagirinatha persuaded her to part with her jewels and all her other possessions so that he could continue to indulge his appetite for the local courtesans. He continued with this way of life for many years. As he became older, his body became diseased and the better class of courtesan began to jeer at him and avoid his company.

The major turning point in his life occurred when he had spent all his sister's money. Not knowing that she was destitute, he approached her again in the hope of getting another hand-out. His sister, who had nothing left except the clothes she was wearing, told him that her funds were exhausted. Since

she still loved her brother, and since she still wanted to be of assistance to him, she offered him her own body, saying, "If your lust is so insatiable, you can use my body for your sexual satisfaction".

These words deeply affected and shamed Arunagirinatha. He mentally reviewed the wasted years of his life and came to the conclusion that he had been committing crimes against God. As his sense of shame deepened, he decided to commit suicide by jumping off one of the *gopurams* in the Arunachaleswarar Temple. He climbed the tower, but before he was able to jump Lord Murugan manifested before him and held him back. In some versions of the story, Arunagirinatha actually jumped and Murugan had to catch him before he died on the paving stones below.

Murugan embraced him and then with his *vel* (the spear which he always carries) he wrote a *mantra* on Arunagirinatha's tongue, gave him a *japamala* and commanded him to sing songs in praise of Murugan. Arunagirinatha was initially hesitant, claiming that he had no knowledge of Tamil prosody, but when Murugan encouraged him by giving him the first line of a song, Arunagirinatha found that he could effortlessly compose and sing the remainder. Murugan disappeared, leaving Arunagirinatha a totally transformed man. His diseases vanished and he became an ecstatic *bhakta* whose devotion manifested as a stream of new songs, all in praise of Murugan, his deliverer. He toured the town of Tiruvannamalai, composing and singing songs as he went. Later on, he travelled throughout India, still singing his songs, and visited many of the country's famous pilgrimage centres. Traditional accounts say that he

\*This article has been condensed from the author's book, *Saint Arunagirinatha*

composed more than 16,000 songs in praise of Murugan. Most of them have been lost, but more than 1,300 of them which survived have been collected together in a work called *Tiruppugazh* [The Glory of God], which has now become one of the classics of devotional literature.

So much for the traditional account. If one turns from this to the historical evidence and the biographical and cultural references in Arunagirinatha's poetry, one is likely to conclude that this account, though it contains a large germ of truth, has been greatly embellished and sensationalised.

From one reference in the *Tiruppugazh* it is clear that Arunagirinatha came from a Hindu family whose ancestral deity was Murugan:

*O Skanda [Murugan] ! The glorious God of the hills! Pray bestow your blessings, accepting the ardent worship of this humble son to you, my ancestral deity.<sup>1</sup>*

Though there is little doubt that the verses of the *Tiruppugazh* were brought into existence by divine inspiration, a study of their contents reveals that Arunagirinatha was a highly educated man. His songs exhibit a familiarity with the *Tevarams*, the *Tirukkural* and numerous other Tamil scriptural and philosophical works. His compositions are also sprinkled with Sanskrit words and expressions which indicate that he had studied the *Itihasas*, the *Puranas*, the *Gita*, the *Upanishads*, the *Agamas* and the *Mantra and Tantra Sastras*. Some commentators feel that the vast erudition he shows in his compositions indicates that he must have come from a family of brahmin pandits. It is not therefore likely that he was the son of a courtesan for with such a background he would not have received a scholarly education.

It was the lot of many learned men in Arunagirinatha's day to earn their living by composing poems in praise of rich men.

Arunagirinatha himself admits that he took up this profession in order to be able to afford the fees of the local prostitutes:

*To me who seeks the company of prostitutes all the time, spending on them whatever little money I earn by bestowing lavish praises on men who lack wisdom, who never pray to your holy feet, who are dunces, who indulge in devilish activities and who have no sense of gratitude; pray, Murugan, grant me moksha [from all this].<sup>2</sup>*

One can deduce from this that he was already a reasonably competent poet before his encounter with Murugan and that Murugan merely enhanced his talent, enabling him to compose extempore verses which were both devotional and literary masterpieces.

Some references in the *Tiruppugazh* show that he was a married man and that his immoral behaviour outraged his family and made him the laughing stock of everyone in town:

*[I was] ridiculed and jeered at by my wife, by the people of the town, by the women of the place, by my father and my relatives. I was treated as a despicable person by the very people whom I have loved. With every one scolding me or indulging in loose talk about me, my mind became confused and full of gloom. I thought within myself, 'Is it for this that I strove to obtain this human body which is a treasure indeed...'<sup>3</sup>*

This account of his family seems to contradict the traditional story which casts him as an orphan who frittered away his inheritance on sensory indulgences.

Arunagirinatha was clearly aware that his immoral behaviour was sinful in the sight of God. In one of his verses he lamented: "Will

<sup>1</sup> *Tiruppugazh*, "கரதல முங்குறி...."

<sup>2</sup> *Tiruppugazh*, "அறிவில்லாப் பித்தர்...."

<sup>3</sup> *Tiruppugazh*, "மனையாவள் நகைக்க...."

I ever get to know how to attain your holy feet before becoming too old? I am wasting my youth by indulging in sinful and sexual pleasures."<sup>4</sup>

His life took a change for the better when he came into contact with an unknown *mahatma* who advised him to meditate on Lord Murugan. Arunagirinatha at first ignored the advice, but after some time he began to meditate in the manner prescribed by the *mahatma*. For several hours each day he sat in front of an image of Murugan, but his mind, weakened by years of dissipation, was unable to concentrate for any length of time. In despair Arunagirinatha decided to end his life. It was at this opportune moment that Lord Murugan appeared on a dancing peacock, halted him in the act and took possession of him. There is no support in any of Arunagirinatha's verses for the well-known story that his suicide attempt was precipitated by his sister's offer of her body, nor is it indicated anywhere that his chosen method of suicide was to jump off one of the *gopurams*. However, the attempted suicide and the divine intervention that prevented it are clearly documented:

*When I was about to shed life from my body, out of compassion for me and to elevate me to a better and praiseworthy status, you came upon the scene, dancing, accompanied by your celestial devotees and showered grace on me.*<sup>5</sup>

In some of his other verses Arunagirinatha attempted to convey the joy that his first *darshan* brought to him and the transforming effect that it had on his mind:

*The Kadamba garland that he wore suffused me with its cloying fragrance. My breath was held. His moon-like countenance and tender smile caused such joy and ecstasy that my mind was lost. The moment he looked at me a cool liquid light poured out from his long lotus eyes. It filled my heart, tasting like nectar, and I was lost to him forever.*

## ODE TO ARUNACHALA

By David Corrydon

Dear Bless'd Arunachala,  
Blessed Soul in form,  
Reaching up through foreign soil  
To touch the blue of heaven's  
space.

A star rests overhead.  
Within your heart beats truth.  
Upon your slope treads peace.  
Your circling path brings knowing,  
Your summit is the goal.  
And standing there in form,  
Challenging all who seek  
To ever BE as thou,  
Serene,  
Content,  
And lost in all that is  
And ever will be.

Overwhelmed by the experience, Arunagirinatha surrendered wholeheartedly to Lord Murugan and resolved to keep an awareness of the Lord's name continuously in his mind:

*O mind of mine, it's good you decided to surrender. See him on his peacock vahana. He has now taken charge of you. Doubt not, there is no greater state. Dwell on his holy name always....*<sup>6</sup>

After his dramatic conversion Arunagirinatha made extensive tours of India, singing Murugan's praises and repeating his name. On many occasions during his travels his devotion was rewarded when Murugan appeared to him in the form of a vision. It is

<sup>4</sup> Tiruppugazh, "சுரதல முங்குறி...."

<sup>5</sup> Tiruppugazh, "அரிவையர் நெஞ்சுரு..."  
"சோதி முடித்து..."

<sup>6</sup> Tiruppugazh, "அந்தோ மனமே..."



worth examining some of these verses that he sang, for they give a revealing insight into his spiritual state, his beliefs and the practices he enjoined on others.

Before I quote from these verses I should mention that there is a long tradition in Tamil spiritual poetry of authors who demean themselves or who speak from standpoints which are not their own. Ramana Maharshi, for example, prayed for union with Siva in *Aksharamanamalai* even though he had attained oneness with Siva many years before. Arunagirinatha probably indulged in this habit as well, so one need not take literally his many accounts of his own unworthiness. Since there is ample evidence in his poetry to show that he attained the highest *advaitic* Self-realisation, one can regard verses in which he apparently speaks of his faults or of his spiritual longings as being written from the standpoint of a devotee.

We can begin with a description of his own exalted state. In the following verse he recalls how he transcended his dualistic relationship with God and established himself in the supreme state of Self. As Ramana Maharshi would do centuries later, he utilised the term 'mauna' or 'silence' to convey the essence of this indescribable state:

*It [mauna] has no length and breadth and its extent cannot be comprehended by anyone. [It is] where everything becomes clear. No longer engaged in outward puja, I experienced profound wisdom and spread flowers of joyous love. Can I [now] worship that form of Siva which is beyond the Vedas, beyond thought and speech, beyond conscious self-effort and beyond, beyond all subtle desires?*<sup>7</sup>

Arunagirinatha never stated explicitly how long it took him to attain this realisation, he merely said that it came about sometime after his first encounter with Lord Murugan:

*The appointed day of Yama's coming having passed by, the desire to be always*

*sporting with women having left me..., having cut asunder the troubles caused by the five senses, I began to sing the glory of your lotus feet. I meditated upon you, O Lord of Tiruchendur [Murugan], and having come to know you, wisdom dawned upon me. O Kanda, I have known you, known you well. Going on the path of inner experience, I attained the true knowledge, destroying the I-am-the-doer sense at its root. (Afterwards), the ever-functioning mind was dead. Speech ceased to be....<sup>8</sup>*

Although Arunagirinatha seems to have realised the Self fairly quickly, probably because of his latent spiritual maturity, he recognised that most devotees could only progress slowly, step by step. Like many other teachers before and after him, he told such people that they should first learn to quieten their minds:

*Before I go down the steps of the Bhakti ghat to bathe in the sea of ananda, the restless waves of the mind, free of all silt, must first subside.<sup>9</sup>*

To effect this subsidence Arunagirinatha recommended that devotees should live a life of purity and follow traditional practices:

*By engaging in charity, by observance of festivals, by external worship of God, by the study of scriptures, by the control of the senses, by purity of thought and action, by observance of dharma, by adopting an attitude of compassion, and lastly, by rendering personal service to the Guru, one soon attains purity of mind.<sup>10</sup>*

When these practices mature, the grace of the Lord manifests in full measure and takes one to the goal:

<sup>7</sup> Tiruppugazh, "அகல நீளம் யாதாலும்..."

<sup>8</sup> Tiruppugazh, "அந்தகன் வருந்தினம்..."

<sup>9</sup> Kandar-Alankaram, "பத்தித் துறையிழிந் தானந்த..."

<sup>10</sup> Tiruppugazh, "நாதபிந்துக லாதி நமோ தம்..."

Kandar-Alankaram, "வையிற் கதிர்வடி  
வேலோனை..."

Control your mind, give up anger, always perform charity, remain in the sattvic state of repose, free from rajas and tamas. Jnana Vel [the spear of jnana wielded by Murugan] of its own accord, without seeking or effort, will [then] bestow its grace on you.<sup>11</sup>

Having been transformed by the grace of the Lord from a life of debauchery to a state of Self-knowledge, Arunagirinatha could speak with authority on the redeeming power of grace, the necessity of surrender, and the effectiveness of meditating on the name and form of the Lord. As a result of his own experiences Arunagirinatha clearly felt that the path of devotion and surrender was the easiest and most direct route to God. He therefore discouraged his listeners from engaging in other practices, deeming them to be either counter-productive or futile. For example, in several of his verses, written from the standpoint of a devotee, he makes very blunt and outspoken remarks about the uselessness of traditional yogic practices. In other places he is equally negative about pandits and philosophers who get bogged down in intellectual disputes about religion.

*The practice of yoga to make the body steady by controlling the breath, ... the awakening of the external fire [kundalini] in the solar plexus and the resulting pre-occupation with such practices which cause mental anxiety should be given up. I should strive to control the five senses of the body by rooting out their mischief completely. I should give up the sense of doership. I desire to attain the mauna state where there is no feeling of insufficiency, the brahmic state of non-differentiation and the house of moksha by surrendering at the lotus feet of God Kumara [Murugan].<sup>12</sup>*

*I have had enough of the company of those persons belonging to one or the other of the six religious faiths, shouting, doubting, disputing, asserting and debating with each other about the superiority*

*of the tenets of their respective faiths. Also [I have had] enough of those who have only taught themselves for the purpose of engaging in such controversies or for the sole purpose of performing ritualistic worship. Enough also of those who spend their times in mantras and calculations concerning yantras and chakras, their layouts with angles and junctions as found in Siva Tantras and Agamas. O Lord Muruga! Grant me moksha without my having to meander by fruitless and circuitous routes.<sup>13</sup>*

*O yogis, by concentrating your two eyes on the tip of your nose and by controlling your breath from the muladhara to the head so that not even a single breath goes out of your body, you are trying to get moksha. You have forgotten to follow the easier and simpler way. If you concentrate your mind on Vallinayaka's feet, it is easy to get moksha.<sup>14</sup>*

*I do not want to be a foolish yogi by practising the control of respiration and consuming large quantities of herbs and roots, hoping to preserve and protect this mortal body as long as one wishes. Bless me, O Muruga, to avoid the ordeals of such disciplines which produce a certain rigidity by mala maya [the contaminating power of maya] and instead lead me to daily life disciplined by jnana and possessed of religious piety. Bless me further, O Lord, to become a great yogi established in the reality of Siva, a state without differentiation of the Self from the objects around.<sup>15</sup>*

After his extensive pilgrimages, encompassing at least 200 towns, Arunagirinatha finally returned, and settled down in Tiruvan-

<sup>11</sup> Tiruppugazh, "அமுதுதி விடமுமிழு...."

<sup>12</sup> Tiruppugazh, "கறைபடுமு டம்பி ராதென...."

<sup>13</sup> Tiruppugazh, "சங்கைக்கத் தோடு...."

<sup>14</sup> Kandar-Alankaram, "காட்டிற் குறத்தி பிரான்...."

<sup>15</sup> Tiruppugazh. "அனித்த யான வுனாளு...."

namalai and spent the remainder of his life there. The traditional story of his life includes several incidents which took place during this period either in the Arunachaleswarar Temple or nearby. In the first of these stories Pravuda Devaraya, the local king, invited him to appear in court because he had heard of Arunagirinatha's high reputation as both a poet and a saint. Arunagirinatha, who had no interest in the affairs of the world, ignored the invitation. Pravuda Devaraya, who had a high regard for scholars and *sadhus*, then came in person and requested that Arunagirinatha come for a visit to the royal palace. Arunagirinatha, noticing that the king was a devout man, accepted the invitation, went to the palace for a visit and had several honours bestowed on him by the king.

In the court of this king there was a famous scholar called Sambandandan who had a tendency to boast both about his spiritual attainments and his religious knowledge. He had managed to establish himself as a favourite of the king, so when he heard about the reception accorded to Arunagirinatha he felt that his position in court might be threatened. His jealousy motivated him to hatch a plot against Arunagirinatha which he hoped would belittle his new rival in the eyes of the king. Sambandandan had done great *tapas* earlier in his life, so much so that he had obtained a boon from Kali, his *ishta devata*, that for a period of twelve years she would appear before him whenever he summoned her. Knowing that he could call on Kali to appear at any time, Sambandandan proposed to the king that he and Arunagirinatha should have a competition in which each would try to make his chosen deity manifest in a form that would be visible to everyone. Sambandandan not only persuaded the king to agree to the competition, he also persuaded him to add a stipulation that the loser of the competition should leave the kingdom and never return. Although the king agreed to the rules of the competition, it seems that he did not pass on the full details to Arunagirinatha. He merely

## I THINK THIS IS ...

By Noona Osborne

Arunachala Siva,  
I thank you, I do,  
Thank you sweet holiness  
Love is -- but you.

Song of the wild,  
Love be that grace,  
A circle of that  
Sweet Guru's embrace.  
Dawn in the wilderness,  
Pray that to be  
Touch of an angel  
Forever in me.  
I bathed on the mountain  
And walked in the stream,  
Forever was dawn  
When I walked so free,  
Touch of an angel  
Forever in me,  
Touch of an angel  
Forever to be.

Circle of love,  
Circle of grace,  
Circle of that sweet  
Mountain's embrace,  
Dawn in God's holiness,  
-- pray you -- you are  
Ramana Siva  
Arunachala.

told him that he had organised a competition in which the two devotees would try to summon their favourite deities. Arunagirinatha agreed to take part, saying that if Lord Murugan could be persuaded to appear, he would give the king *darshan* and bless him.

The competition was held in public in the Arunachaleswarar Temple. Sambandandan,

full of confidence, undertook to manifest his God first. To the accompaniment of great pomp and ceremony he called on Kali to appear, but for some reason she refused to manifest herself. In some versions of the story it is said that the twelve-year period of the boon had expired the previous day so she was no longer under any obligation to appear. Since Sambandandan was still able to communicate with her, even though he could not make her appear, he got a promise from her that she would hold Murugan tightly in her arms so that he would be unable to manifest when Arunagirinatha called on him.

Arunagirinatha began his attempt by singing a song. After praising Murugan at length in verse form, he summoned him to appear:

... O Lord Murugan who resides in the heart of Pravuda Devaraya in such a way as to make it dance with joy! O Lord of Lords! Come dancing, O Lord, come dancing in such a way that when you dance, everything dances...<sup>16</sup>

In some versions of the story Murugan manifests immediately, but in other accounts he fails to appear because he is being held tightly by his mother, Kali. In the version in which Murugan is restrained, Arunagirinatha devised a strategy to counter Kali's influence. He first sang another song which was so entrancing that Kali unconsciously began to loosen her grip on her son. When Arunagirinatha sensed that this was happening, he sang a different song which summoned Murugan's *vahana*, his peacock, to appear and dance before Murugan and Kali. The peacock promptly appeared and danced in such an enticing way that Kali momentarily forgot to hold on tightly to Murugan. At this crucial moment Murugan leapt out of her arms, mounted his peacock and entered the physical world through one of the pillars in a *mantapam* in the Arunachaleswarar Temple. A temple has since been built around the column to commemorate this great event. The manifestation of Lord Murugan was so

dazzling that the light he emanated caused Pravuda Devaraya, the king, to lose his eyesight.

This traditional story is so full of improbable events that it would be tempting to dismiss the whole episode as a quaint myth. However, the central event of the story, the manifestation of Lord Murugan in public in response to Arunagirinatha's plea, finds some corroboration in two verses from the *Tiruppugazh*:

*In the midst of the assembly of your devotees who deserved your compassion... you came once in Tiruvannamalia.... O Victor on the peacock! You came to my help in Tiruvannamalai in a way that people of the world can perceive and praise your great compassion.*<sup>17</sup>

There is no mention of a competition in any of the verses, nor are the activities of Sambandandan and Kali alluded to, but there seems to be enough textual evidence to suggest that, prompted by Arunagirinatha, Murugan appeared, mounted on a peacock, before a large assembly of people, including the king, who had gathered there with the express purpose of determining whether or not Arunagirinatha could make his chosen deity appear.

The biographies of Arunagirinatha contain another story in which the central event is a competition. A contemporary of Arunagirinatha, an erudite scholar and staunch Vaishnavite called Villiputhurar, was responsible for translating the *Mahabharata* into Tamil verse. This man was so confident that he was a better scholar than anyone else that he toured around the country, challenging all the pandits he met to engage in scholarly competition with him. It is doubtful whether many people accepted his challenge because Villiputhurar made it a condition of the competi-

<sup>16</sup> *Tiruppugazh*, "அதல சேட னாராட அகில மேரு மீதாட..."

<sup>17</sup> *Tiruppugazh*, "குடா குருபா குணதா நிசிகா"

tion that the loser should have his ears cut off. Hearing of Arunagirinatha's fame as an extempore poet, he came to Tiruvannalamai and challenged him to a poetry competition. Under the rules of this competition, Arunagirinatha had to compose extempore verses which Villiputhurar undertook to explain. If Arunagirinatha could compose a verse which Villiputhurar could not ascertain the meaning of, the latter would concede defeat and agree to have his ears cut off. Arunagirinatha in return agreed that he would have his own ears cut off if he failed to produce a verse which baffled Villiputhurar.

The competition began with Arunagirinatha composing the verses of a poem which later became known as *Kandar Antadi*. Villiputhurar easily deciphered the meaning of the first fifty-three verses, but could make no sense of verse fifty-four. It was a cunningly designed verse, a masterpiece of alliterative prosody in which the meaning was deeply buried inside a succession of apparently meaningless syllables, all of which began with the sound of 't'. When Arunagirinatha explained the meaning of the verse, Villiputhurar admitted that he had been defeated. Arunagirinatha, who lacked the vindictive streak that characterised Villiputhurar, allowed the latter to keep his ears.

There is one other well-known story about Arunagirinatha which is so incredible that almost nobody nowadays takes it seriously. After Sambandandan, the man who had failed to make Kali appear, had lost his competition with Arunagirinatha, he tried to get revenge by hatching another plot. He went to the king, who had been blinded by the *darshan* of Murugan, and told him: "If Your Highness can persuade Arunagirinatha to bring a *parijata* flower from *svargaloka* [one of the heavenly worlds], a few drops squeezed from the flower onto your eyes will restore your eyesight." The king, eager to regain his vision, commissioned Arunagirinatha to do the job. In order to reach the heavenly world, Arunagirinatha entered the body of a parrot

which had recently died and reanimated it. He left his own body in one of the niches of a *gopuram* in the Arunachaleswara Temple and flew off to collect the flower. After the parrot had departed on its mission, Sambandandan, who had been watching Arunagirinatha's movements, showed the lifeless body of the poet to Pravuda Devaraya, announced that it was dead, and asked for permission to cremate it. The king agreed and the body was quickly burned. Some time later Arunagirinatha returned with the flower only to discover that he no longer had a human body to return to. He went to the king, restored his eyesight with the *parijata* flower juice and explained what had happened. Realising that he had been tricked, the king was struck with grief because he knew that it would now be impossible for Arunagirinatha to resume a human form again. Arunagirinatha, on the other hand, was untroubled by this bizarre turn of events. He happily spent the remainder of his life in the parrot's body and even continued to compose poetry in praise of Lord Murugan. It is said that he composed and sang his famous work *Kandar Anubhuti* and several other poems while he was still occupying the parrot's body. If this story were true, there ought to be some reference to his startling physical transformation in his later works. The lack of any such reference has convinced most people that the whole story is an imaginative embroidery on the original, more documented, incident of Muguran manifesting out of a pillar in the Arunachaleswarar Temple.

If his life did not end in this improbable way, what finally did happen to him? Sambandandan, Villiputhurar, Pravuda Devaraya and Arunagirinatha were all people who left imprints on the historical record. If one compares their dates and collates all the facts that are known about them, it is possible to come to conclusion that Arunagirinatha lived about seventy-five years from around 1330 A.D. to 1405 A.D. There is no evidence in his poetry that he lived to such an age, but in the

following verse, which summarises the main events of his life, he is clearly looking back on a very long and distinguished career:

... By your precious gift to me of singing the songs so beautifully named as Tiruppugazh, I have been blessed with the

eternal vision that knows no decay or diminution. [I have] also gained insight into the truth enunciated in great writings, Sunk as I was in ignorance, this heinous sinner, by the merit of singing Tiruppugazh, has crossed the ocean of

## ARUNAGIRINATHA'S

(Tamil translations and verse)

The genius of the Tamil language is such that it can juxtapose a long series of root-words and substantives to produce the equivalent of what in an Indo-European language might be a complex, compound sentence, with several sub-clauses. This it can do without resort either to case and verb endings, or prepositions and suffixes.

Although such elements are available if required, they occur sparingly in classical Tamil usage, with the result that richness and allusiveness of meaning are combined with great economy of expression. A second result is, of course, that it is often very difficult to deduce the grammatical relations between the component elements of such an utterance, especially since a single Tamil word may have as many as 10 or 15 secondary meanings.

There is no separation of words in written Tamil, and this, combined with the elision of a final "u" before a following vowel, and the various transformations of consonants appearing in both final and initial positions, often causes extreme difficulty in dividing any given utterance into its discrete component elements.

However, under normal circumstances, Tamil *pulavar* of the standing of Villiputharar might be expected to reel off the meaning of any verse Arunagirinathar might care to set him, however complex. In any normal verse, however complex, Villiputharar would be able to recognize individual words by the very diversity of their consonants, would resolve the *sandhi* of final and initial letters, deduce the grammatical relations, give the meaning, and thus defeat Arunagirinathar.

Our poet, therefore, resorted to the expedient of comprising a whole four-line verse using only one consonant (Tamil has twenty-two native consonants). This he was able to do by utilising the vast fund of synonyms available to him, and by combining them without affixal or suffixal connections.

The result is a seamless, apparently meaningless stream of "t" sounds with a following vowel. Villiputharar could not hope to resolve this sequence into a series of discrete words, or if he did, he could have no way of knowing whether his version was the correct one or not

desire and reached a place indescribable by speech. It has earned me great name and good fame, has made me traverse the seven worlds, and now mere wishes of mine, once uttered, carry the weight of a king's command. Leaving these aside,

how can I forget You for the very precious gift which has taken me beyond the ocean of sorrow, beyond the three gunas, beyond all vasanas and freed me from rebirth forever...<sup>18</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Tiruppugazh, "ஆனாத ஞான பததி..."

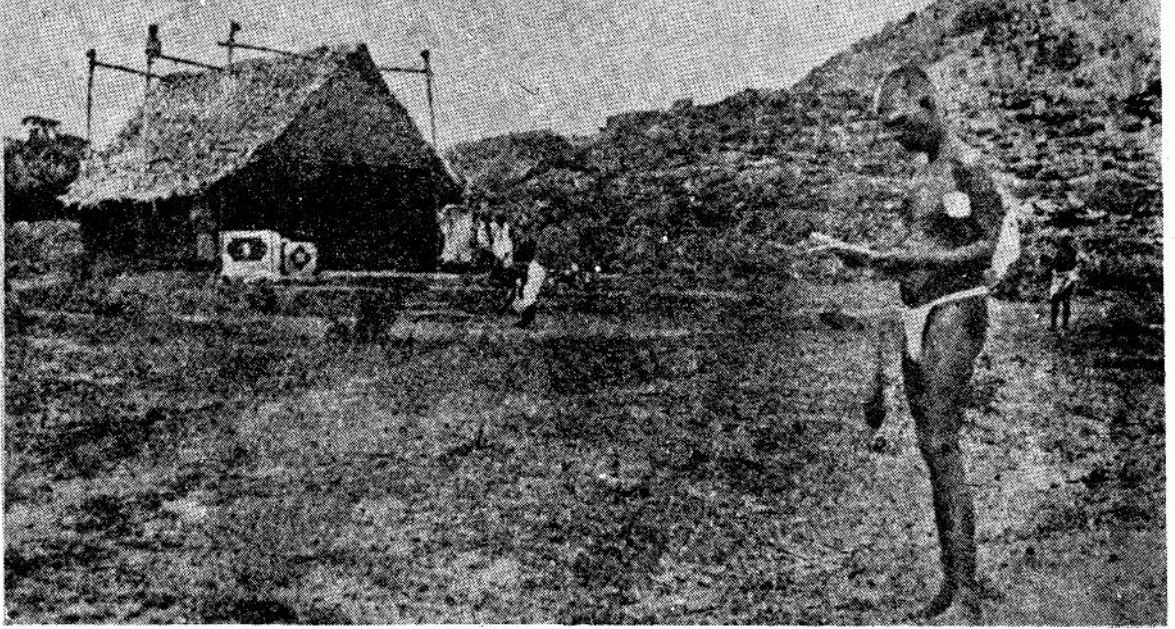
## WINNING VERSE

commentary by ROBERT BUTLER)

<i>ti-da-ta-ta-ti-ta</i> Dancing to the rhythm "ti-da-ta-ta-ti-ta"		<i>tithi</i> Protecting	<i>taathai</i> Father [Siva],	
<i>taatha</i> Brahman,	<i>tutti</i> hooded	<i>tatti</i> snake	<i>tao/</i> dwelling/	
<i>titha</i> enduring	<i>tatt(u)</i> roar	<i>atti</i> sea/	<i>tuthi</i> "the curd [is]	<i>tittittathe</i> sweet" [saying]
<i>tu</i> eat[er-Krishna]	<i>tutititt(u)</i> praised	<i>ithattu(u)</i> blissful	<i>aadi</i> First [one]	
<i>tattatt(u)</i> tusk-bearing	<i>atti</i> elephant-[reared]	<i>tattai</i> parrot[-like One]	<i>taatha</i> Servant!	
<i>tithe</i> evil	<i>tuthai</i> abounding	<i>dhaat(u)</i> bodily constituents/death	<i>athatt(u)</i>	<i>uthi</i> birth
<i>tatt(u)</i> misfortune	<i>att(u)</i> bringing	<i>atti</i> bones [enclosing]	<i>titti</i> sack[-like body]	
<i>tii</i> fire	<i>tii</i> consume	<i>titti</i> [on that] day,	<i>tuthi</i> praising	<i>tii</i> [my] understanding
<i>tottathu</i> Joined [me to you]				

Bliss-bestowing Supreme one, praised by the Father, Siva,  
Who protects us as he dances to the rhythm: "ta-da-ta-ta-ti-ta",  
By Brahma,  
And by Vishnu, who ate the curd, relishing its sweetness,  
And who reclines upon the serpent Adishesha  
In the eternal roaring ocean!  
Servant of the parrot-like Devayaanai, who was reared  
By the long-tusked elephant Ayiraavatham!  
On that day, when fire consumes this body,  
Which brings in its wake birth, death, and misfortune,  
And which encloses like a sack  
The bones and the other evil-filled bodily constituents,  
My understanding, praising you, must seek your protection.

-- Kandar Antadi, v.54.



Sri Bhagavan in front of the Mother's Shrine in 1922

## MOTHER AZHAGAMMAL

By A.R. NATARAJAN

**T**HE scene is the hillock, Pavazhakunru. Ramana had left his uncle Subba Iyer's house at Madurai twenty eight months earlier, after his 'Death Experience' in July 1896. Azhagammal had come in the sure faith that her motherly love would be sufficient to persuade Ramana to return. She had no idea of the supreme state of her son. Ramana's physical condition, the matted hair, long nails and a dirty body covered by a cod-piece confirmed her resolve that she should somehow 'save' him. Ramana was fully aware of his filial duty. Besides, Ramana always gives in return a thousand-fold more than what he receives. What indeed could be the true gift of a *Jnani* to his mother? To give her his own state, of course. Ramana could, however, readily see that she was not yet ripe for it and he was not the one to thrust spiritual benediction when one was not in a condition to receive it. This

is not to say that the mother was not evolved. Her womb had nurtured the unique Ramana. Such a blessing was impossible but for ardent *tapas* which she must have performed over several lives. She had a generous heart and was all too ready to share, along with her husband Sundaram Iyer, her wealth with the poor and needy. She also had grounding in Vedantic ideas. But for all that, she was not ready for the final spiritual assault. Her motherly pride and love were dominant. Hence, Ramana let her go back, let her obey the Karmic law. But at the same time he made her his first disciple by giving her a written message pregnant with meaning. The message was that the ordainer is everywhere administering a just law. Wisdom would demand acceptance of the law as it unfolds. The seed had been sown. It was bound to work.

They met only years later for a day in



Virupaksha cave up on the Hill, Arunachala. Azhagammal asked for a boon, a child for her youngest son Nagasundaram. This suggests clearly that she had come to recognize the stature of her son. It may be because she had a vision of him as Siva bedecked with snakes or it might have been because of the universal reverence in which he was held. But this marks a special stage, for, reverence for the guru is a pre-requisite. This made it possible for her to surrender to Ramana later, when she came to stay permanently with him.

A year later mother came again, on her way to a pilgrimage to Tirupathi. Her faith in Ramana's powers had grown for she had asked for a boon and it had been fulfilled. During her stay she became seriously ill with typhoid. The son then became the mother. Ramana attended on her with utmost care. Her life had to be saved for she was not yet ripe enough to receive the gift of liberation. So the phenomenon, the only instance of a prayer by Ramana. The prayer was ostensibly to extend her life-span. At the same time, there was the undercurrent that this fresh lease of life which was being sought was only in order that she may be consumed by Arunachala, 'the blazing fire of knowledge', as he himself had been consumed.

The final chapter in their relationship began in 1916 when mother decided to place herself fully in the hands of her ascetic son. She came to Virupaksha cave and refused to budge. She just had to be in his physical proximity. Ramana too knew that the time had come for him to take over. Hence his consent for her staying with him over-ruling the ignorant protests of the inmates. In 1896, she had come to claim him as her son. Whereas now, she had come to surrender herself to him as her guru and entrust herself physically and spiritually to his custody. From then on, it was no longer a relationship of mother and son. It was that of a Sadguru and his disciple. The love showered by Ramana on all women made it clear to her that in his state, all women were his mothers and that there

### THE SEER

Without going out of my door  
Without going out of my door  
I can know all things on earth.  
Without looking out of my window  
I can know the ways of heaven.

For the farther one travels  
The less one knows.

The sage, therefore,  
Arrives without travelling,  
Sees all without looking  
Does all without doing.

-- from *The Tao Te Ching* - XLVII

could be no special exception to this. Her orthodoxy got eroded, thanks to the daily lessons of Ramana's compassion which knew no distinctions. Azhagammal gradually evolved from being Ramana's mother into being the mother of the Ramana family to begin with. Later she blossomed as the universal mother. The master's devotees and the visitors were her children to be fed and cared for. Every needy person was her ward. When requested by her daughter Alamelu to come to her home for a house-warming function, she firmly said that her place was at Ramana's feet and that she did not care if Ramana threw her dead body into the bushes. She also told Ramana that she wanted to die in his arms. From these remarks it is clear that her faith in him was unqualified and complete. She was ready and could therefore profit fully from Ramana's spiritual ministrations.

On the historic day, May 19, 1922, when she lay dying, facing death, Ramana took over the solemn assignment of liberating her from the travail of births. With his left hand placed on her head and the right hand on her heart, he sat for full twelve hours when mother was battling with her tendencies. Literally there was a fast forward of the experiences of her future life which she would have had to go through. The whole gamut was condensed

### FOR THE MOTHER'S RECOVERY

In 1914 Bhagavan's mother paid a brief visit to Him at Virupaksha Cave. While there she had a severe attack of fever, which some thought to be typhoid. Her life was despaired of and Bhagavan composed the following verses for her recovery. Needless to say, she recovered. Two years later she came and took up her abode there permanently, on the hill.

\*\*\*

Oh Lord, Hill of my refuge, who curest the ills of recurrent births, it is for Thee to cure my mother's fever.

Oh God who slayest death! Reveal Thy feet in the Heart Lotus of her who bore me to take refuge at Thy Lotus-Feet, and shield her from death. What is death if scrutinized?

Arunachala, Thou blazing fire of Knowledge! Enfold my mother in Thy Light and make her one with Thee. What need then for cremation?<sup>1</sup>

Arunachala, Dispeller of Illusion! Why dost Thou delay to dispel my mother's delirium?<sup>2</sup> Is there any but Thee to watch as a Mother over one who has sought refuge in Thee and to rescue from the tyranny of Karma?

<sup>1</sup>In India the body of the sage is buried after death, whereas others are cremated. Having passed through the fire during life he does not need to do so again after death. The Mother attained Liberation before death and was buried, as this verse foresees.

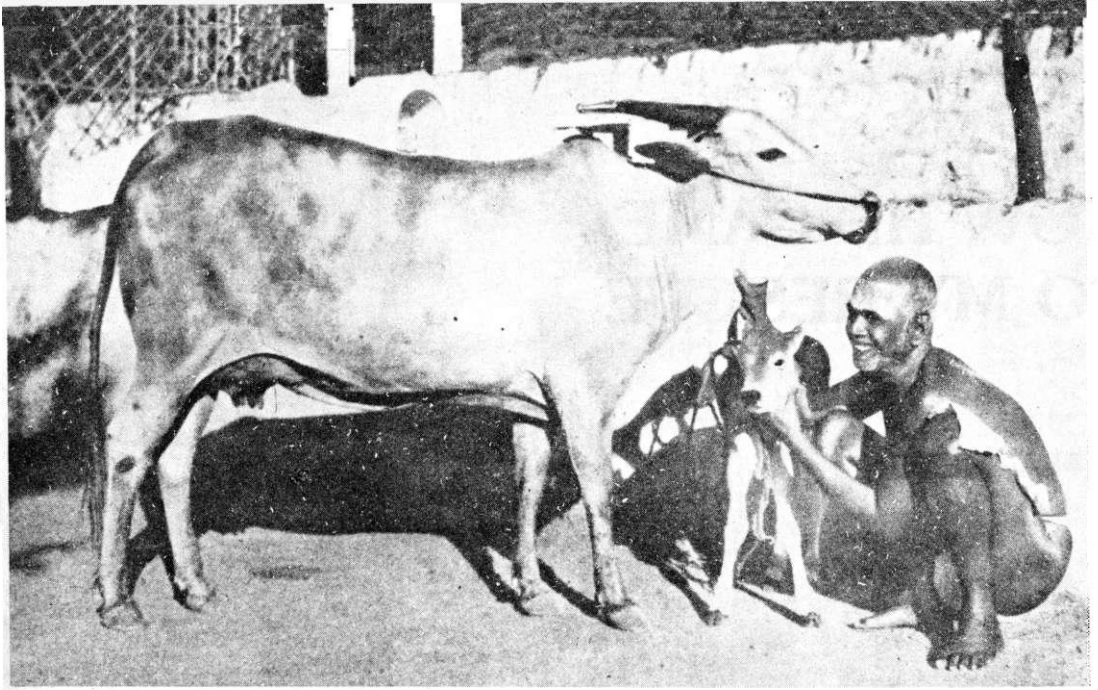
<sup>2</sup>By delirium is meant not merely the physical fever but the "I-am-the-body" illusion.

into a few hours. She fought bravely working out her karma. Ramana had in him the power to destroy the balance of karma. But he let mother battle it out for effort is necessary and inescapable till the last breath till one learns to hand over the baton to the Sadguru. This would serve as an example for all seekers who cannot afford to take it easy till effort is no longer possible. Thanks to the omnipotent power and grace of Ramana her life-force was absorbed in the Heart. She became a *jivanmukta*. Ramana had repaid his debt, and in what a way! He had rendered a service to the mother which is unparalleled in spiritual history!

When Ramana moved over from Skandashram to Sri Ramanasramam in December,

1922, he explained that the same force which had brought him to Arunachala was responsible for his moving over there. The construction of the Mathrubuteswara temple over mother's *samadhi*, which was possible only because of the tireless efforts of Sri Niranjanananda Swami, had the backing of Ramana's grace.

Now we have two shrines, the Mother's shrine and the *Ramaneswara Mahalingam*. For all appearances they are visibly two temples. But are they really one or two? Ramana's power had intermingled with that of the mother at the time of her liberation. The two had merged. If only we can lose ourselves to this force, where can there be any question of deaths or births?



*Sri Bhagavan with Cow Lakshmi and her calf*

## A COW'S MUKTI

By A. DEVARAJA MUDALIAR

**O**n June 17th 1948, Cow Lakshmi fell ill and on the morning of the 18th, it seemed that her end was near. At about 10 o'clock in the morning, Sri Bhagavan went to her. He caressed her and said, "Amma, do you want me to be near you now?" He looked into her eyes and placed his hand on her head as though giving *diksha*. He put his hand over her heart also and then caressed her, placing his cheek against her face. When he had convinced himself that her heart was pure, free from all *vasanas* entailing rebirth and centred solely on Bhagavan, he took leave of her and returned to the hall.

Shortly before the end, she licked up a little sweet rice that was placed before her. Her eyes were calm and peaceful. She was conscious up to the end and left her body at 11.30 a.m., quite peacefully.

Those who were in close contact with Sri Bhagavan and who observed carefully his treatment of Lakshmi before her death and noted what he said about her have no doubt at all that he gave *Moksha*, Deliverance, to

her as he did to his mother. She was buried with proper funeral rites and with great ceremony in the Ashram compound near the graves of a deer, a crow and a dog, already buried there on Sri Bhagavan's instructions.

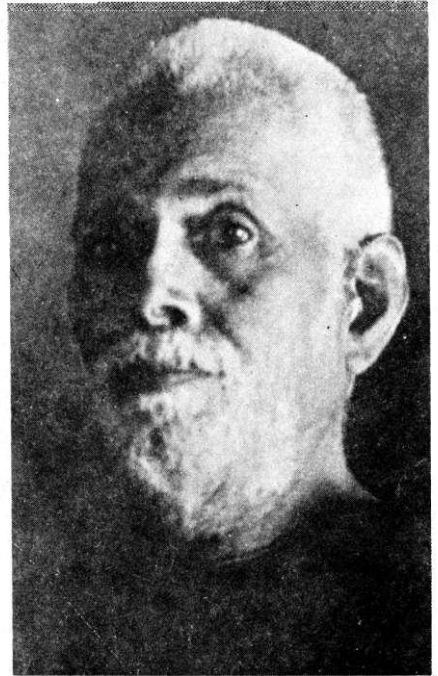
A tombstone was built over her grave, surmounted by a likeness of her. On the tomb was engraved an epitaph by Sri Bhagavan which makes it quite clear that she attained Liberation.

"On Friday, the 5th of *Ani*, in the bright Fortnight, in *Sukla Paksham* on *Dvadasi* in *Visaka Nakshatra* in *Sarvadhari* year, that is on 18-6-48, the Cow Lakshmi attained *Mukti*."

On my next visit to the Ashram after the tomb was finished, I read the stanza and asked Bhagavan whether the use of the word *vimukti* in it was just conventional, as when we say that some one has attained *samadhi*, meaning that he has died, or whether it really meant *Nirvana*, and he replied that it meant *Nirvana*.

# HOW HE CAME TO MY RESCUE

By M.A. MENON



“I AM not going away. Where could I go?  
I am here.”

So spoke Bhagavan Ramana to His devotees while He lived in His body.

How true is the above assurance given by Maharshi! For did He not come to my rescue! I wish to share my joyous experience with the readers of *The Mountain Path*.

I am not a religious man as ordinarily understood, as I do not perform any *puja*, *japa*, or go to temples. I live a simple and quiet life, with the least possible interference in anyone's life.

I have some of Sri Bhagavan's books and when afflictions assail me or when I am tormented with worries -- which are too many in life -- I turn to these Holy Books for solace.

My wife and myself along with our dear daughter were living a happy and contented life. My daughter was a tender girl of exquisite charm and grace, kind-hearted and compassionate, took Nursery Teachers' Training, for she was fond of small kids and enjoyed their company. As a teacher, she soon became the darling of many Tiny Tots.

Disaster struck us most unexpectedly. My daughter, married on 1.11.1987, passed

away on 15.4.1988, when she was only 24 years of age. We were stunned and heart-broken.

As usual, I turned to Maharshi for solace. When one day I took the book *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* I chanced to open it on page 172 (Talk No.203), which says:

“- Mourning is not the index of true love. It betrays love of the object, of its shape only. That is not love.”

Maharshi was consoling one Mr. Varma, Financial Secretary, P & T, Govt. Of India, who was grief-stricken on account of the death of his dear wife.

“Was the wife with you when you went out to the Office or in your deep sleep? She was away from you. You were satisfied because of your thought that she was somewhere whereas now you think that she is not. The difference lies in the different thoughts. That is the cause of pain. The pain is because of the thought of the wife's non-being. All this is the mischief of the mind.....”

As I finished reading, it occurred to me that I should write to Sri Ramanasramam. And I did write and asked if we could come and stay

**TO KNOW OR  
NOT TO KNOW...**

By Muniya Soumen Mukherjee<sup>1</sup>

**Arunachala!**

**I love you. That's why I come to you  
again and again from far.**

**Yet I don't know you.**

**The more I love you  
the less I know you.**

**I love you because I love Ramana  
and Ramana loves you.**

**The more I love you and Ramana  
the less I know you and Him.**

**It is just as well  
'cause I can never know you  
and Ramana.**

**Why bother to know the  
Unknowable?**

**Knowing is not love  
But love goes far far beyond  
knowing.**

**I love you, that is, I love Ramana,  
for both are One.**

**The more and more I love you  
By Your Grace, the less and less  
will I know.**

**Till, by your Grace, my love will  
free me from knowing.**

**No, it is Your Love which will  
free me from myself.**

**Arunachala Ramana I love You.  
Free me from "I" and the I's You  
and I's love**

**So that Love alone remains.**

<sup>1</sup> A 7-year old girl

in the Ashram for a few days. Pat came the reply by return of post inviting us to the Ashram and confirming that accommodation had been arranged. From then on, a sort of peace reigned in my heart. Was it not Sri Bhagavan who made me write that letter?

We went to the Ashram. The warm welcome and hospitality shown to us by all concerned brought the sunshine of a new day. We spent time in the Ashram mostly in Sri Bhagavan's Holy Shrine, Mother's *Samadhi*, the Old Hall, the *Nirvana* room and Cow Lakshmi's *Samadhi*. The spiritual vibration of Maharshi is all over the place.

We climbed up to Skandashram and then down to Virupaksha Cave, the two places where Maharshi spent many years in the early part of His life in Arunachala Hill. We also did *giripradakshina* of the Holy Hill. Here again Maharshi showered His Grace on us. My wife is a diabetic and is weak in her knee. Ordinarily, she was reluctant to walk even one or two furlongs daily. How then could she undertake to walk the 13 kilometres around the Holy Hill? She made up her mind to go with us, and what a miracle! She did walk the whole distance and back staggering into the Ashram late in the night, dead tired. It was Sri Bhagavan's Grace alone that made her accomplish this feat.

It was a wonderful sight to see such a large number of poor people being fed every day in the Ashram. Food is served generously daily to sadhus, resident-devotees and a large number of visitors in the Ashram dining hall.

It was with reluctance that we left the Holy Place. The days we spent there were quite calm and peaceful and we felt that we had not lost our child at all, unlike at other times before the visit. I am now able to talk about my daughter invariably without grief, and also think of her in accordance with Maharshi's utterance:

*"The prarabdha which the child had to work out in this life was over and so it passed away. So we may call it the child's Karma...."*

– Day by Day with Bhagavan,  
dt. 18.4.1945

How to explain this change? Did not Maharshi come to my rescue?

# SIGNIFICANCE OF ARUNACHALA

"This is Arunachala Siva, who, being the ocean of grace, bestows liberation (merely) when thought of."

— Benedictory verse by Sri Bhagavan  
in Tamil *Collected Works*

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

"Arunachala Ramana is the Supreme Self, who blissfully exists as Consciousness in the Cave of the Heart Lotus of all the many different souls beginning with Hari. When the mind melts with love and reaches the Cave of the Heart in which the benign Supreme dwells, the Eye of Consciousness will open and you will know the Truth, for it will become manifest."

— Sri Bhagavan — a stray verse from the  
*Tamil Collected Works*.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Maharshi observed: *Pradakshina* [the Hindu rite of going around the object of workship] is: "All is within me." The true significance of the act of going round Arunachala is said to be as effective as circuit round the world. That means that the whole world is condensed into this Hill. The circuit round the Temple of Arunachala is equally good; and self-circuit [i.e., turning round and round] is as good as the last. So all are contained in the Self. Says the *Ribhu Gita*: "I remain fixed,

whereas innumerable universes, becoming concepts within my mind, rotate within me. This meditation is the highest *pradakshina*."

— Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi,  
No. 212

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ramakrishna Swami, a long-resident devotee, asked Maharshi the meaning of *twayiarunachala sarvam*, a stanza in *Five Hymns to Arunachala*.

Maharshi explained it in detail, saying that the universe is like a painting on a screen — the screen being the Red Hill, Arunachala. That which rises and sinks is made up of what it rises from. The finality of the universe is the God Arunachala. Meditating on Him or on the seer, the Self, there is a mental vibration "I" to which all are reduced. Tracing the source of "I", the primal "I - I" alone remains over, and it is inexpressible. The seat of Realisation is within, and the seeker cannot find it as an object outside him. That seat is bliss and is the core of all beings. Hence, it is called the Heart. The only useful purpose of the present birth is to turn within and realise it. There is nothing else to do.

— Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi,  
No. 219

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

[A devotee] said: "Chidambaram is even greater than Arunachala because among the *Panchabhuta-lingams* [the *lingams* representing the five elements] Chidambaram is the space-*lingam*, while Arunachala is only the fire-*lingam*. Since the four elements, earth, water, air and fire, finally have to merge in space, space is the principal element."

Hearing this, Sri Bhagavan smiled and said, "All the five elements come into existence only when Sakti seemingly forsakes Her identity with Lord Siva, the Supreme Self [*Paramatman*]. Since the five elements are thus only the creations of Sakti, She is supe-

rior to all of them. Therefore, more important than the place where the elements merge is the place where Sakti Herself merges. Because Sakti is dancing in Chidambaram, Lord Siva has to dance before Her and thereby make Her become motionless. But in Arunachala, Lord Siva remains ever motionless [achala], and hence Sakti automatically and effortlessly merges in Him through great love. Therefore, Arunachala shines as the foremost and most powerful *kshetra* because here Sakti, who has seemingly created all this manifold appearance, Herself merges into the Lord. So, for those mature aspirants who seek to put an end to the false appearance of duality, the most powerful help is to be found only in Arunachala-*kshetra*."

-- *The Mountain Path*, 1982, p. 79

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Someone remarked: It is said that they get *mukti* unasked who live or die within a radius of 30 miles around Arunachala. It is also admitted that only by *jnana* is liberation obtained. The *purana* also remarks that *vedanta vijnana* is difficult to get. So *mukti* is difficult. But life or death round about the Hill bestows *mukti* so easily. How can it be?

**M:** Siva says: "By My Command". Those who live here need no initiation, *diksha*, etc., but get *mukti*. Such is the command of Siva.

**D:** How does mere life or death here confer *mukti*? It is difficult to understand.

**M:** *Darsanad Abhrasadasī janānat Kamalalaye, Kasyantu maranan muktih smaranad Arunachalam.*

"To see Chidambaram, to be born in Tiruvarur, to die in Benares, or merely to think of Arunachala, is to be assured of Liberation." *Jananat Kamalalaye* means "by being born in *kamalalaya*". What is it? It is the Heart.

Similarly, *Abhrasadasī* -- Seat of Consciousness. Again, *Kashi* is the Light of Realisation. Remembering Arunachala completes the

verse. It must also be understood in the same sense.

-- *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*,  
No.473

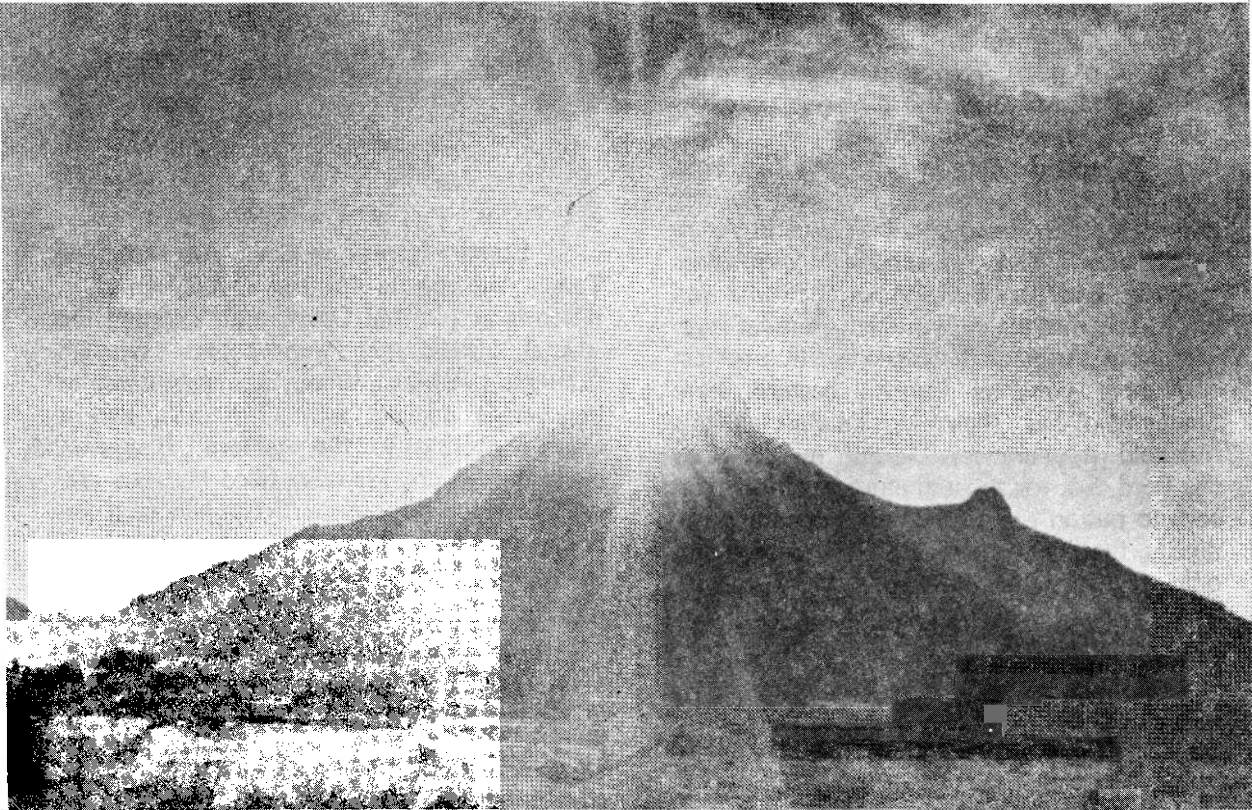
★ ★ ★ ★ ★

... Bhagavan was reading out from the Tamil *Arunachala Puranam* the verses in which it is said that Gauri, after crossing the several streets of Arunachalam, reached Gautama's Ashram. When Bhagavan came to the verses dealing with Gautama's joy at Gauri's coming to his Ashram, Bhagavan could not go on, for tears filled his eyes and emotion choked his voice. So he laid aside the book and Mr. Desai continued his reading of the manuscript....

In the course of Mr. Desai's reading . . . , he read about the Holy Hill having eight faces. To a question of mine whether as a matter of fact this Hill has eight faces, Bhagavan replied, "The *purana* says that the *Ashta Vasus*, having flattered themselves in Brahma's presence, lost all their worth, and to regain it they came and did penance here all around Arunachala. They were given *darshan* at one and the same time by Siva assuming eight faces in this Hill. All those eight *Vasus* are still in the shape of eight spurs round this Hill. What is meant by saying all those *Vasus* are still here as hills and doing penance round this holy Hill, it is difficult to understand. Does it only mean they are living on these hills and doing penance, or are they themselves these hills?" He added, "It is difficult now for us to locate where the *Ashta Dikpalakas* actually stood sentry, whether at the spots where the *Ashta Dik Lingams* are now found or whether the *lingams* are those which were installed and worshipped by them. We cannot be sure where exactly Gauri did penance and where Gautama had his *Ashram*. But it would be safe to assume that Gauri did her penance in the region covered by Pavalakunru, Durga Temple, and Pachiamman Koil, and that Gautama's *Ashrama* must have also been near this region."

-- *Day by Day*, dt. 12.12.1945 (afternoon)

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## ARUNACHALA PURANAM -- VIGNETTES<sup>1</sup>

By J. JAYARAMAN

### *On the Blind-Folding of The Lord:*

**T**HE NEWLYWEDS would have tiffs, then make up; garland each other; listen to their praises sung by the *rishis*; play on the *Veena*; dally in spirited sport or pass time in games of gamble, winning and losing then to one another. On one such occasion Parvati asked her Lord, "Won't you tell me what the moon and sun are?" He replied; "Dear lass of lush lips! The two lights are but my eyes!" Thinking that he was teasing her, the mother of Kartikeya went behind him and, without any warning, closed his eyes. The momentary closure meant aeons of darkness for the gods. All of embodied life behaved as if born blind. Order and organisation broke down in the

<sup>1</sup> Continued from our last issue



absence of the Eye-energy. In what was a trice for him, the Lord opened the Third Eye on his uncovered fore-head. The Destroyer had turned Life-giver! As Gauri drew her hands back, the three Eyes shone like the three Vedic fires (*Dakshina*, *Gaarhapatyā* and *Aahavaneeya*) powering the 'unplanned' power-cut. When Parvati begged for forgiveness, Siva replied, "You are ever taintless and beyond Karma. However, if you desire to set an example of purification, go to Kanchi which is greater than Kasi, Avanti, Dwaraka and Mathura." Narrations of the holy Mother's *tapas* at various places are scattered throughout the *puranas*. Was the Lord now advising her of the superiority of Kanchi over those places of her earlier visits?

What follows is well known. From Kashi Parvati reaches Kanchi; makes a sand-Linga by the Kampa river and worships it day and night. The Lord wills a flood in order to test her devotion. She embraces the Linga in protection unmindful of her own fate in the spate. Pleased, the Lord appears before her, "with his shoulders bearing the marks of the Pandya king's cane<sup>2</sup>, his feet the marks of crowns of countless gods, his chest, embraced recently, bearing the mark and sandal-scent of Parvati's breasts and bangles!" She requests for the ultimate boon of *Idappaaham*, of being his left half. The ultimate asking; the *Adviteeya*. The Ultimate, giving, said, "purified in Kanchi, proceed now southward to holy Tiruvannamalai. Resident as the primal Linga contracted to a hill, there I shall grant this boon!" Parvati, wise after the event, said, "Following your advice I came to Kanchi 'superior to Kashi'. And now you mention Arunachala! Please let me know right away if more places exist!" The Lord gave her his word that the *Tejolinga* (Arunachala) is the terminus.

*En route* to Arunachala from Kanchi, Parvati encamped for the night at Seyar, the son's river. It was here that Lord Subrahmanya got a hut made of plantain trees for her rest and the following morning enabled with a thundering arrow, a river of pure water to flow by for her ablutions.

Passing then through paddy fields Parvati reached Tiruvannamalai. After obeisance to the Lord at the Temple to the east, she began to look for a spot to pursue *tapas*. At the nearby Pavazha Kunru, Coral hillock, a spur of Arunachala hill, she met the sage Gautama<sup>3</sup> who told her, "This holy place is ideally wooded for a radius of two *yojanas* (18 miles) and teems with life and life-giving streams. The distraction of crowds of gods and *siddhas* that frequent this Hill for worship has made me take shelter in the thick but secluded forest of this spur. Therefore do you too choose a spot nearby!" The *Purana* indicates clearly that Gautama's Ashrama was at Pavazha Kunru to the east and that Parvati did *tapas* near his Ashrama. (This is also consistent with later events: she kills the demon and cleanses herself at the Khadga Tirtha which lies near the spur; she then begins, the *pradakshina* of the Hill from the east, and completes it there).

### **On the Episode of obtaining *Idappaaham*, Merger:**

Indeed the *Aranyakas*, forests, are the fountain springs germinating and sustaining all that is best in Vedic wisdom and life. The light of the Upanishad was communicated under the shade of the silent tree. Parvati began her *tapas* in the forest of

<sup>2</sup> See *Tiruvilaiyaadal Puraanam*

<sup>3</sup> Refer the stirring verses of praise sung by Gautama and gathered *Rishis*; translated in our July 87 issue p. 209

Tiruvannamalai, then home to Nature's wild splendour. Could such magnificence escape the malefic marauder? The troops of the demon king Mahishaasura came from afar to capture the wild elephants, and to hunt for flesh and fancy the wild boar, bison, leopard and doe which roamed free in the forest, alert and aware. Mahisha's lusty letter to Parvati led to her warning him, "This is the residence of those committed to the ideal of *Dharma*. Those who misuse their advantage to evil ends here, will lose their ease and die diseased, all their strength and authority wiped out. Do not incite the fiery hill, Lord Arunachala, to anger, lest you should be destroyed. Beware!"

(The events that followed are well known and we shall confine ourselves to certain interesting aspects alone). In the battle that ensued Mahisha, the buffalo-headed demon proved redoubtable to Durga, the militant emanation from Parvati. When decapitated, the 'buffalo' took the form of a mad elephant. Beheaded, he went on successively taking the forms of a horse, of darkness and even appeared before her as Brahma and Vishnu. Then Durga prayed to Uma in her heart. The Supreme directed her to continue till the Asura assumed his original buffalo form. She was then to cut off his head and hold it under her foot. Mahisha met his end thus. (Sri Ramana too prays in his *Arunachala Padikam*, verse 7, "Resident as I am in the non-dual Heart, who is it that comes out? Manifest thyself, O Arunachala; place thy broad feet on his head, and subdue him!" Again, in *Forty Verses* he declares Mahisha's secret, "It arises dependent and feeding on form; it abandons one form for another; when enquired into its original form, it is no more! Such is the formless ego-demon.")

After slaying Mahisha, Parvati went in *pradakshina* of the holy Hill. Half-way, near the west, the Lord gave *darshan* on his bull-mount. Her going round the hill was like Parvati's earlier circumambulation of the sacred Agni on the day of her marriage! As she neared the east completing her *pradakshina*, the Lord absorbed her as his left-half.

### **On the Pradakshina of the Holy Hill:**

(*Prada* = giver of boons; *Kshi* = destroyer of Karma; *Na* = giver of Jnana. Also, *Pra-Dakshina* = going around with centre kept to the right). The holy Arunachala is the primal, *Adi linga*. The path around its base is the sacred *Yoni*. *Pradakshina* of the Hill is therefore *pradakshina* of the source of all *lingas*! So one goes round keeping to the left-edge of the path. A mere step taken, confers the benefit of a *Yaaga*, sacrifice; two steps, the fruit of *Raajasuya Yaaga*; and three that of *Asvamedha Yaga*. Going round the hill one gains in health and vigour. The hill abounds in rare herbs sought by traditional herbalists. The breeze carries the salubrious wafts from these *siddha* herbs to the one doing the holy round. The dust from the feet of such a person, carried and deposited in towns far away effects immeasurable purification.

The fruit of a Sunday *pradakshina* is Siva's abode; that of Monday is merger in Siva-form; that of Tuesday is termination of debt and cyclic death; that of Wednesday is divinity through skill in philosophy and art; that of Thursday is lordship over gods and god-men; that of Friday is lordship of the Lotus Lady. A Saturday *pradakshina* confers the astronomical benefits of a nine-planet conjunction in the Eleventh House.

The above effects are magnified if done on *Sivaraatri*, New-year day, or during the three months, mid-October to mid-January. The fruits increase by a factor of one crore if done on the two solstices; or on the day the moon is in the *Magha* asterism during February-March; or during the pre-dawn hour; or during solar eclipse or *Vidhipaada Yoga*.

As to the ritual of the spiritual round, one abjures all thought of the opposite sex on the day of *pradakshina*. After bathing one wears clean white clothes, applies the holy ash and proceeds, giving alms but without accepting any. One does not wear shirt or shawl or carry an umbrella. Free from fear, anger, irritation or sorrow one walks on bare feet, without using vehicles. Without swinging one's arms about, with a silent soft tread, one saunters like a queen in her 'tenth-month'. One bows, first to the holy Hill from each of the eight cardinal directions, and then to the Lord of that direction enshrined in the *linga* there. One bows mentally to the incorporeal gods and *siddhas* going the rounds and keeps to the side. One could keep silence of speech and mind; or one could allow thoughts to flow on to the Hill of Fire; or one could sing and listen to songs of devotional praise.

In the company of those of lofty character, one could halt here and there and enjoy a feast of fruit and milk. Otherwise, simple food free of flesh may be taken.

In conclusion, the *Arunachala Puranam* declares, "the residents of Tiruvannamalai must scrupulously follow the above rules. Pilgrims from far-away places are allowed to do the holy round according to their capacity."

(Concluded)

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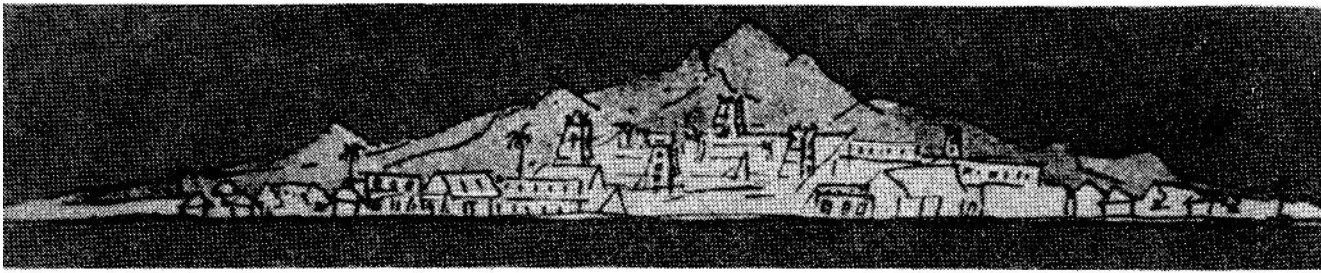
## WHO AM I BEING - KNOWING

By Prof. K. SUBRAMANYAM (1903-1968)

The Wave had heard it said that it was water and that only as water it could know itself. "I must know myself as water", said the wave, "I must strive and know myself as water."

It strained itself and grew into a bigger, even bigger wave; it churned itself into froth; it dashed against rocks and flew far, far as spray. And yet for all this effort it knew not itself as water, but only as violence. Tired at last and feeling faint and feeble, it fell back and heaved only with the heaving of the deep sea. And then it was water. being calm and still, it knew itself as water. In agitation it had not known peace. In peace it comprehended agitation.

What had been had had to be; what was yet to be, let it be what it would be. Having known itself once as water, it was henceforth and for ever indefeasibly only water, though it may be raised up again as a wave.



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*Arunachala: Drawn by Sri Bhagavan in the note-book of Sri Kunju Swami*

# PILGRIMAGE TO ARUNACHALA

By V.G.

**The Holy Triangle of Kashi, Kanchi and Arunachala, the sacred pilgrimage of Mother Parvati, is completed by Her *yatra* to the Hill of the Holy Beacon. Let us therefore meditate on Arunachala: "While Tiru Arur confers *mukti* on one who is born there, Kashi on one who dies there, and Chidambaram on one who worships there, Tiru Annamalai brings Illumination to one who merely thinks of It!"**

- Editor

**W**ITHOUT 'Movement' there is no pilgrimage. Even a movement from one standpoint to another is a pilgrimage. It is said: "The duration taken for the self to reach the Self is TIME; and the distance covered by the self to reach the Self is SPACE." And we can also say: "The effort put forth by the self to reach the Self is CAUSATION". These movements by the self to *be* the Self make up the "Pilgrimage to Arunachala". One residing in Arunachala or elsewhere, remembering that one is no more conditioned by time or space, is the beginning of this pilgrimage. From the pleasures of the external to the bliss supreme within is this sacred *yatra*. The sages affirm that when one realises that there had never been any *dvandva* -- the dyads of outer and inner -- then this pilgrimage is completed. The *yatra*, the pilgrim and Arunachala-*kshetra*, Infinite Column of Fire, all these in one is Arunachala Siva!

All this is mirrored in the earthly life of Sri Ramana Maharshi. The child Venkataraman felt this resonance 'Arunachala' going on in him, though he did not know what it was or what it meant. The *nama* summons the lad to go to the *rupa*, the Mountain. Then, transcending

both name and form, he is established (even physically) in the One that consumes the all, and thus remains pure Being-Awareness-Bliss.

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From miles away, from whichever direction one travels towards Arunachala, whether by car or train, the first glimpse of the Hill brings about a silent change, a sense of increasing joy! Bhagavan as a boy only once travelled (by train) towards the Hill. When Dr. T.N. Krishnaswamy, the photographer royal, was wondering from which angle he should take the best picture of Arunachala, Bhagavan, of His own accord, said: "A few miles before reaching the railway station, there is a small river-bridge. If you take the photograph from there, the Hill top and the big Temple tower would form one vertical line." The Heart held the whole Hill, the Eye saw clearly the features of the Form.

The near view of the Hill is glorious, indeed! See how Paul Brunton describes It: "The Hill now towers over our heads. It is not without its rugged grandeur, this lonely peak patterned with red, brown and grey boulders, thrusting Its flat head thousands of feet into the pearly sky... I find a queer feeling of awe arising in me as I gaze up wonderingly at the steep incline of Arunachala."

Another admirer, Anne Marshall, in her book *Hunting the Guru in India*, rhapsodizes: "The sun was clearing the horizon. The *gopurams* of the Temple were silhouetted against the perfect cone of Arunachala Hill. It rose three thousand feet out of flat terrain, and being so close it completely dominated the scene. The summit was at that moment hidden in a cloud which deepened to a crimson coronet as it caught the first rays of sunlight. I had seen the Taj Mahal by moonlight, and the vast expanse of the snow-clad Himalayas stretching for a hundred miles, but in all India I never saw anything to equal this first glimpse of the holy Hill, rose-crowned by the glory of the morning light. It so dominated my mental horizon that I feel unequal to the task of impartial judgement."

It is stated that 'Arunachala' is the one *kshetra* where the Hill, the Temple deity and the town all bear the same name. In Tamil it is called *Annaamalai*. And from the *Puranas* downwards to the recent *Mahatmas* like Easanya Desika, Guhanamassivaya, Virupakshadeva, Seshadri Swami, Ramana Maharshi and Yogi Ramsuratkumar, It has been regarded as Siva Himself. It is repeatedly stressed in ancient texts that while Mount Kailas is only the abode of Siva, Arunachala is Siva Himself! So it was very aptly called *Annalmalai*, *Annal*, like *Atthan*, being one of the Tamil names of Siva. In due course of time, *Annalmalai* came to be called *Annaamalai*. The name *Annaamalai* suits Arunachala very well, too, because it means "the mount which is beyond all reach" – not even Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma could reach either Its top or bottom, according to the *sthala purana*.

The Hill is the solid, frozen form of the column of Fire, the manifestation of Siva as transcendent Being, beyond 'I' and 'mine'.

Poet Muruganar says, "The sudden rise of the blazing column of An-namalai in front of Brahma and Vishnu symbolizes the *sphurana* of the Heart Centre as the real Self of the intellect and the ego."

Saint Arunagirinatha extols Arunachala as the "essence of *Jnana* which consumes all knowledge". The sage Jnanasambandhar saw the Hill as "a mass of *Jnana* [Illumination]", with the power to destroy at once and once and for all the *vasanas* of those who view It. For Bhagavan Ramana, Arunachala "is the holiest of all holy places", "God Himself". He sings: "To look for God while ignoring Thee, O Arunachala, who art Being and Awareness is like going lamp in hand to look for darkness." (*Ashtakam*, v.4). Supplementing the Child Saint's statement, Bhagavan Ramana explains how this "mass of *Jnana*" operates: "This Hill, the Lodestone of lives, arrests the movements of anyone who so much as thinks of It, draws him face to face with It, and fixes him motionless like Itself [the Self], to feed upon his soul [*buddhi*, *ahamkara*] thus ripened." (*Pathikam*, v.10). Again, Arunachala "frees the mind from attachments, from the misery of darkness and makes it abide in the Bliss of Self." (*Navamanimalai*, v.3). He also gives the formula to receive Arunachala's Grace: "He who turns inward with untroubled mind to search where the 'I' arises, realizes the Self... Thee, O Arunachala!" (*Pancharatnam*, v.3)

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To conclude this story of Kashi, Kanchi and Arunachala, let us now think of Mother Annapoorni, Mother Kamakshi, who left Kanchi at the 'bidding' of Her Lord.

Mother Kamakshi, now in Arunachala, is named Mother Uma. She has arrived Home, the "Heart of Siva". She goes round the Hill, does *gripradakshina*, with hands clasped and mind absorbed in devotion. In olden days, people coming to Arunachala, even residents, would first go round the Hill and then only enter their residences.

The tradition is that Shakti sports and Siva witnesses in Madurai, but "At Chidambaram, Siva, though motionless by nature, dances before His *Shakti* who stands still. But in Arunachala, He stands still and She withdraws into this Unmoving Self!" (*Navamanimalai*, v.1)

Mother Uma does intense *tapas*, under the protective care of Sage Gautama. Daily She goes round the Hill. As a fulfilment of Her arduous *tapas* and while doing *gripradakshina*, She is absorbed into Lord Siva. Hence, *Ardhanareeswara* -- Mother-Father, in one Form.

Mother-Father's Son, Bhagavan Ramana, arrives in Arunachala, goes straight to the *sanctum sanctorum*, embraces the *Siva Linga* and reports: "Father! At Thy bidding I have come. Henceforth Thy Will be my pleasure." (*Pathikam*, v.2). The lad stays in various places inside the Arunachaleswara Temple, like Pathala Linga, Iluppai tree, Vahana Mantapam, the flower-gardens and goes to Gurusurtham; stays on the

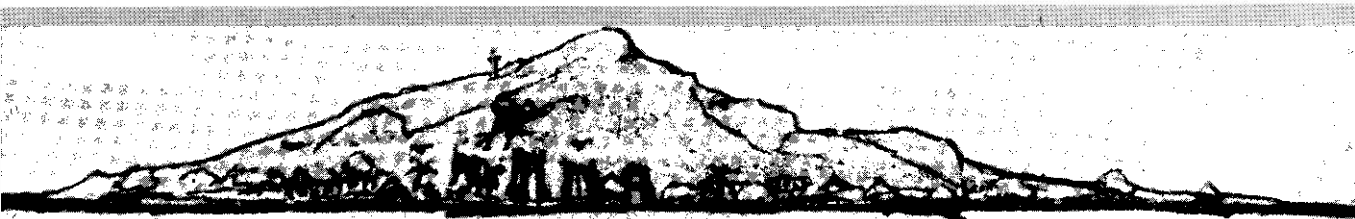
hillock, Pavalakunru; lives in the very bosom of Father Arunachala, in His various caves, Banyan Tree cave, Mango-Tree Cave, Guhainamassivaya Shrine, Virupaksha Cave, Skandashram, and finally by Mother's *samadhi*. There grows an Ashram. Ramana mostly remains in silence rooted in the Self but, when He speaks, He speaks of *Atma-Vichara*. Through this process of Self-enquiry, *manas* (a mass of thoughts), *buddhi* and *ahamkara* are merged in the Source, the ever-throbbing Self.

The pilgrim thus has these two examples to follow -- Mother Uma for *tapas* and *giripradakshina*, and Bhagavan Ramana for *Atma Vichara*.

"The waters rise up from the sea as clouds, then fall as rain and run back to the sea in streams; nothing can keep them from returning to their source. Likewise, the soul rising up from Thee cannot be kept from joining Thee again, although it turns in many eddies on its way. A bird which rises from the earth and soars into the sky can find no place of rest in mid-air, but must return again to earth. So, indeed, must all retrace their path, and when the soul finds the way back to its Source, it will be merged in Thee, O Arunachala, Thou Ocean of Bliss!" (*Ash-takam*, v.8).

All this is no wishful thinking. The writer, himself a pilgrim, has witnessed such 'endings' of the *yatra* in Muruganar, Arthur Osborne, Major Chadwick, S.S. Cohen, Viswanatha Swami, Kamakshi, Sastrigal Mama and latest, Lucy Ma!

So we conclude the pilgrimage at Arunachala. Bhagavan Ramana said: "Everybody has to come to Arunachala one day." But He was quick to add "Arunachala is one's own Self". Arunachala is the outer manifestation of the inner Self. The spiritual journey ends in Self-discovery.

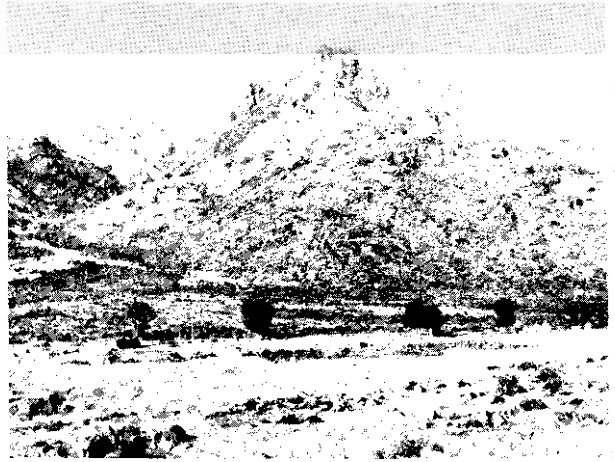


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## ASHTA LINGAS and TWO IMPORTANT ARUNACHALA-



AGNI LINGA - 1



YAMA LINGA (South) - 2

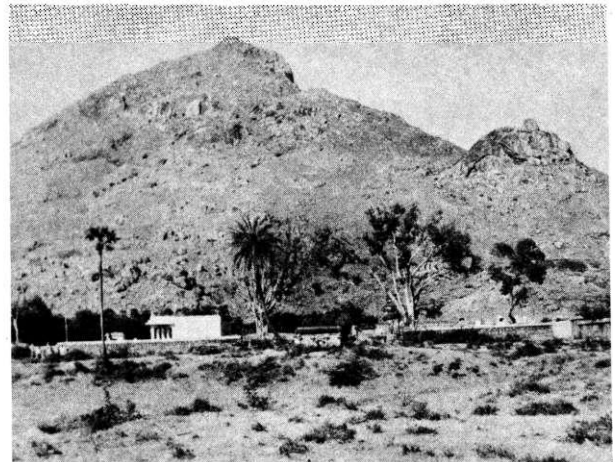


ARUNACHALA-PEAK in between two hillocks

INDIRA LINGA - 8



EASANYA LINGA (North East) - 7

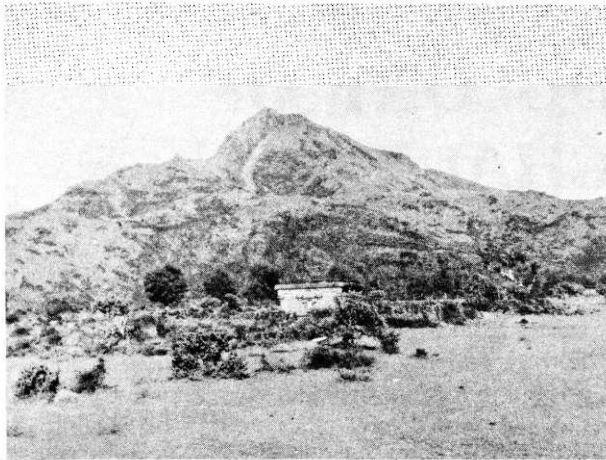


### THE VALUE OF "MEDITATION IN MOVEMENT"

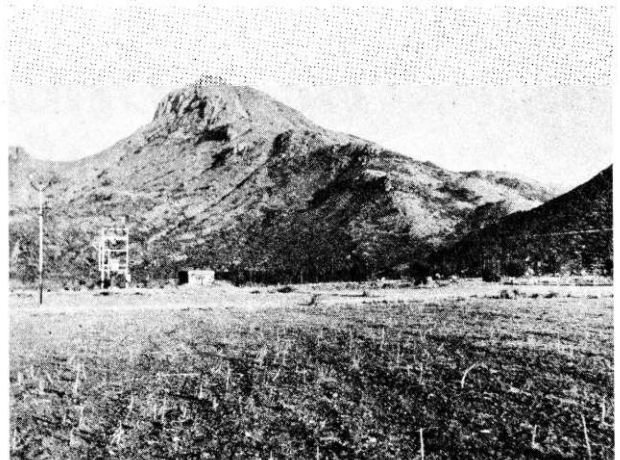
Sri Bhagavan said: "There is nothing better than *giripradakshina*. That alone is enough. If you do *japa* or meditation sitting in one place, the mind may wander. But during *giripradakshina* the limbs move but the mind will be still. Doing *japa* or meditation while walking without any other thought is called *samadhi* in movement. ...*Giripradakshina* is particularly important. As there are several medicinal herbs on the Hill, its breeze will be good for the health. There are several *siddhas*



## -DARSHAN ON GIRIPRADEKSHINA ROUTE



NIRUTI LINGA (South West) - 3



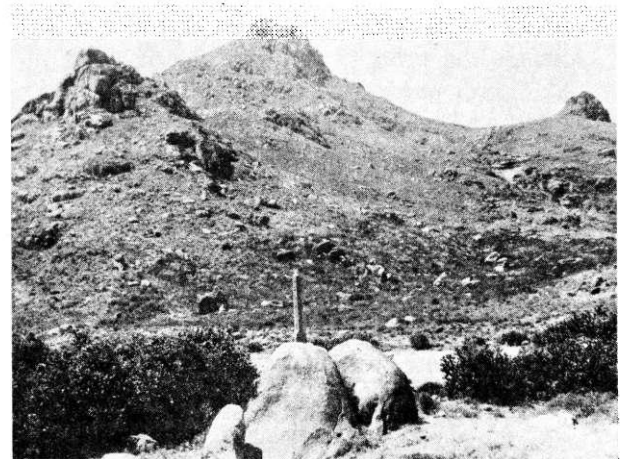
VARUNA LINGA (West) - 4

### **GIRIPRADEKSHINA :**

By Kunju Swami

and sages on the Hill, even though we cannot see them. They also go around the Hill, unseen by us. When we go around the Hill, we should go on the left-hand side of the road; otherwise we will be obstructing their movement. We shall also have the benefit of making *pradakshina* of them, and will thus get their blessing also."

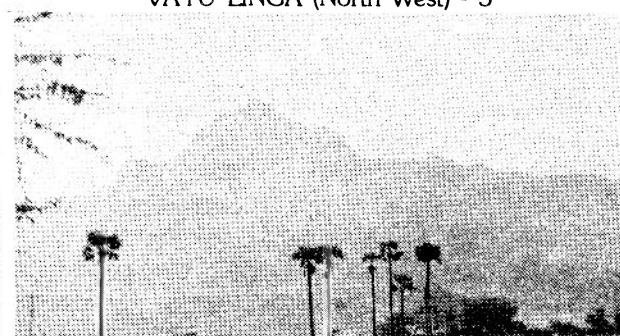
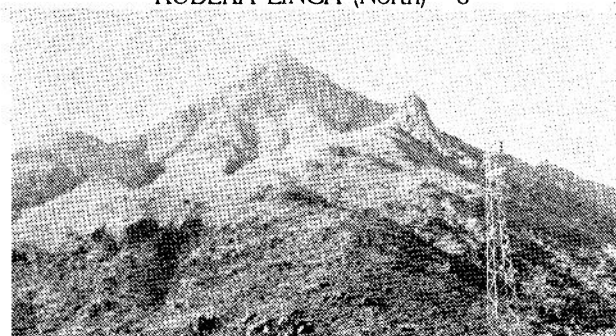
-- from his *Enadu Ninaivugal*  
(Reminiscences)



TRIMURTI - Three Faces of Arunachala

KUBERA LINGA (North) - 6

VAYU LINGA (North West) - 5



# THE HIDDEN GLORY OF ARUNACHALA

.... One of the devotees addressed Bhagavan: "You told us once that you had seen on this Hill temples, gardens and such like. Was that all during the period you were on the Hill?"

*Bhagavan:* "Yes. That was perhaps when I was in the Virupaksha Cave. I closed my eyes. I felt I was walking on the Hill itself towards the north-east. I saw at one place a nice flower garden, a big temple, a fine compound wall and a big Nandi [a bull, sacred to Siva, carved in stone]. There was a strange light. It was extremely pleasant. As I was looking at all these, it was time for *Puja* [worship]. The bell was rung and immediately after that I opened my eyes."

*Devotee:* "Bhagavan told us some time back that there was a big cave also."

*Bhagavan:* "Yes, yes. That also happened when I was living on the Hill. I was wandering about aimlessly, when I found at one place a big cave. When I entered the cave, I saw a number of waterfalls, beautiful gardens, tanks within those gardens, well-laid paths, fine lighting; everything there was most pleasing. As I went farther and farther I saw a *Siddha Purusha* [Realised Sage] seated like Dakshinamurti under a tree on the banks of a tank. Around him, a number of *Munis* [sages] were seated. They were asking something, and he was replying to them. That place appeared to me very familiar. That is all. I opened my eyes. Subsequently, after some time, when I saw *Arunachala Purana* in Sanskrit, I found ... slokas [which describe] that cave and that *Siddha Purusha*, and so I was surprised that what had appeared to me in a trance was to be

found in that book. So I wrote their translation in Tamil... Its meaning is, 'Though you are in the form of fire, you have kept away the fire and have taken the shape of a hill, mainly to shower your blessings on people. You are always living here in the form of a *Siddha*. The cave that appeared to me is in you with all the luxuries of the world.'

"Recently [i.e., c.1949], when the temple in Adi Annamalai was renovated, it was reported that in the *sanctum sanctorum* of the temple a large tunnel was found, and when people tried to find out its extent they saw that it was extending to the very centre of the hill. As they could not go in very far, they came back. I therefore thought that that which had occurred to me and that which is in the *Purana* appear to be true, and that the tunnel was the way to the place I had seen. It is reported that *Siddha Purushas* come from the cave inside to the temple through that tunnel night after night and go back after worshipping *Ishwara*. Why so far? Recently, something like that was seen even here. I was going on to the hill as usual when, as I was getting near the steps over there, a big city appeared before me. There were huge buildings of several varieties; well-laid thoroughfares; good lighting; and it appeared to be a great city. At one place, a meeting was being held; Chadwick was with me. He was even saying, 'Bhagavan, all this is so self-evident. Who will believe if we say this is all a dream!' Everything appeared as if it was actually happening..."

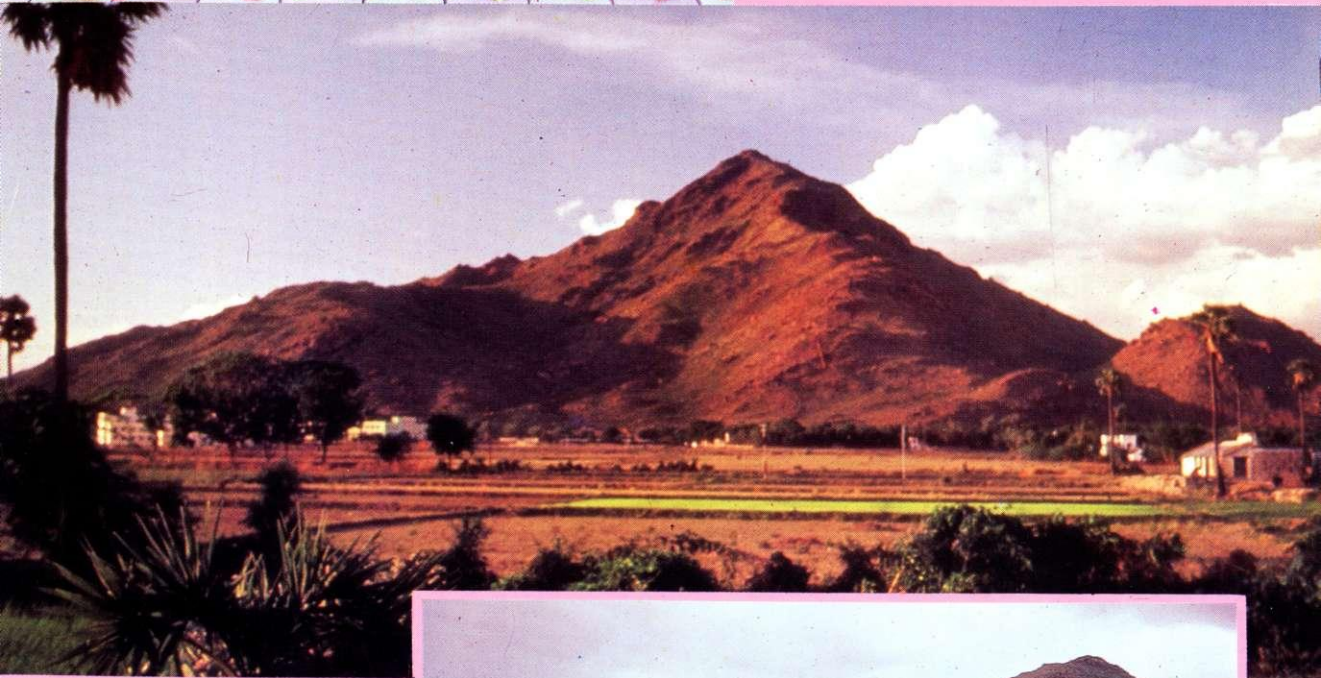
(From Vol. II, Letter No.67, of *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, by Suri Nagamma)



# Arunachala

Mukti-kshetra

Father Arunachaleswarar (Lingam) and  
Mother Apeethakuchambal



ARUNACHALA — “the  
Holy Hill who beckons  
those rich in  
*in Jnana-tapas*”.

The Temple of Sri  
Arunachaleswarar — “the  
biggest and most  
celebrated”





The mystic northern side of the Holy Hill: "Oh Lord! You are the remedy for the endless chain of births"

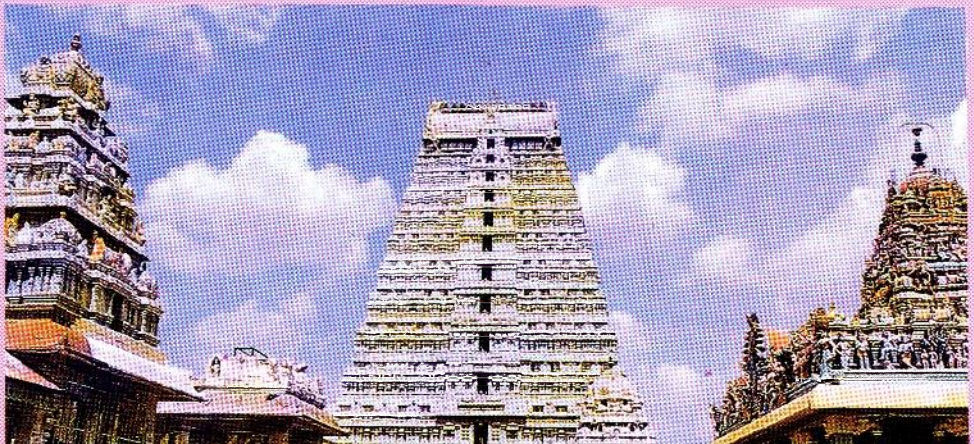


*Panchamukha-darshan* (Five-Faces) — an important landmark on *Arunachala giripradakshina* route.

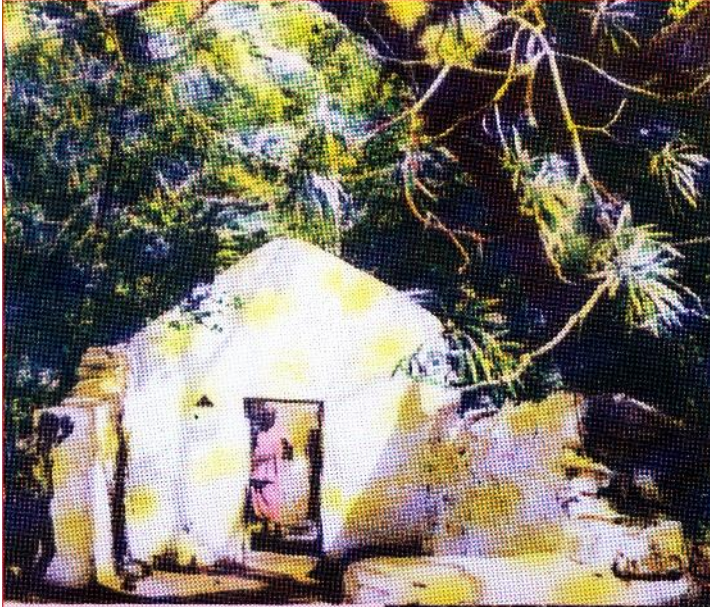


Easthetically decorated *uthsavamurtis* of Lord Arunachaleswarar and His Consort Appethakuchambal — while going on procession round the Holy Hill.

The *Rajagopuram* in all it's royal majesty — viewed from inside the temple.



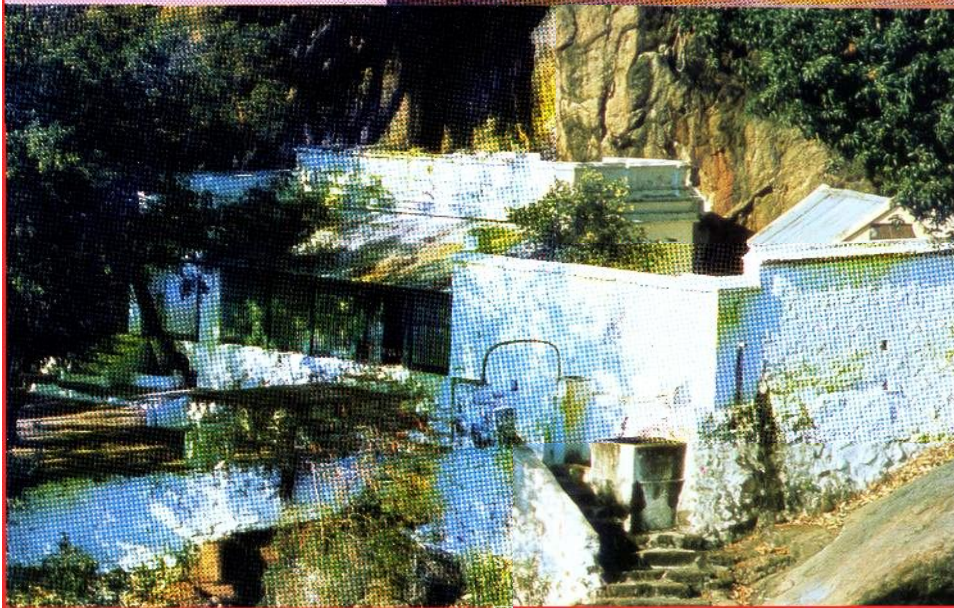
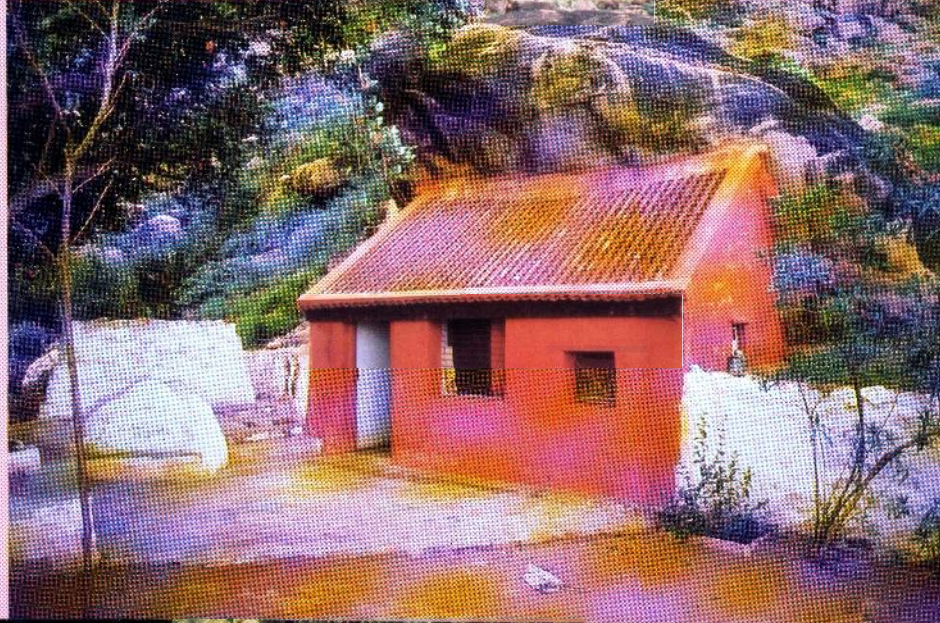
Mulaippal Thirtham — “for centuries the only source of water for *sadhus* living up on the Hill”



Mango Tree Cave:  
Sri Bhagavan's  
summer residence.

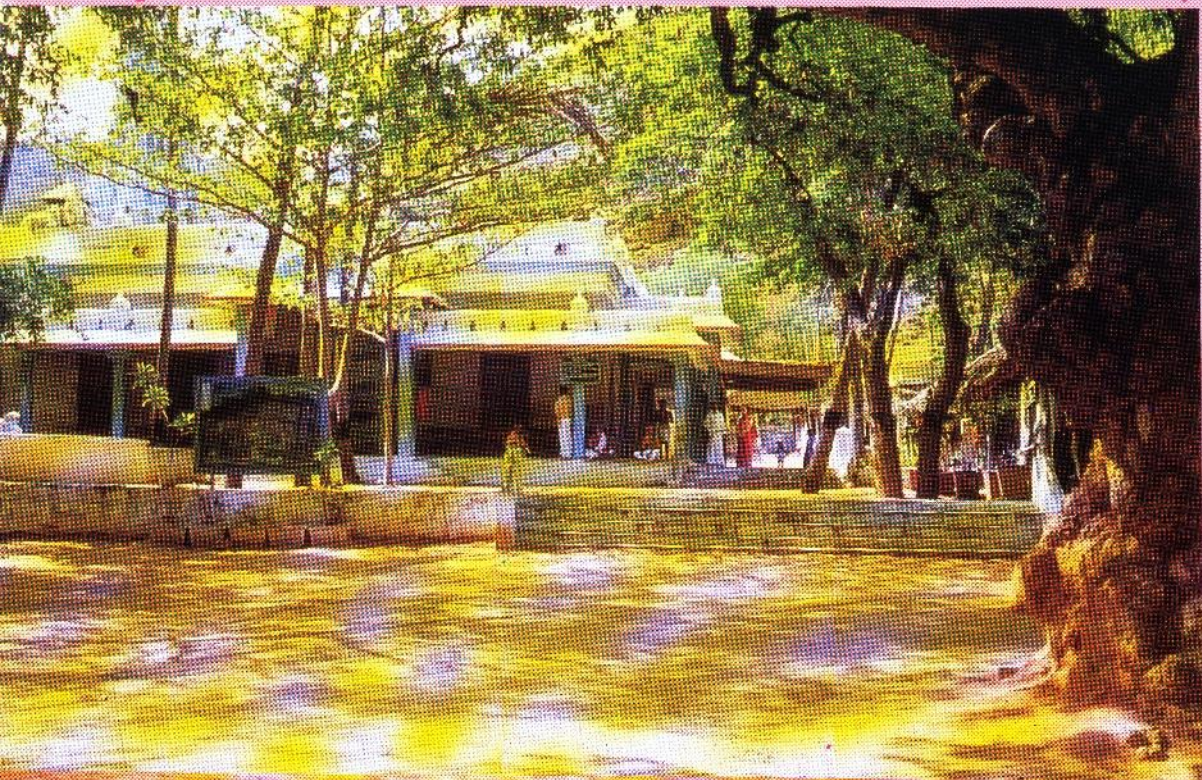


Virupaksha Cave  
— the Maharshi's  
abode for 17  
years, where  
blossoming of his  
*jnana granthas* and  
*bhakti granthas*  
began.



Skandashram —  
“a peace-suffused  
atmosphere”

SriRamanasramam — "Maharshi's Continued Presence is vibrantly felt, even today"



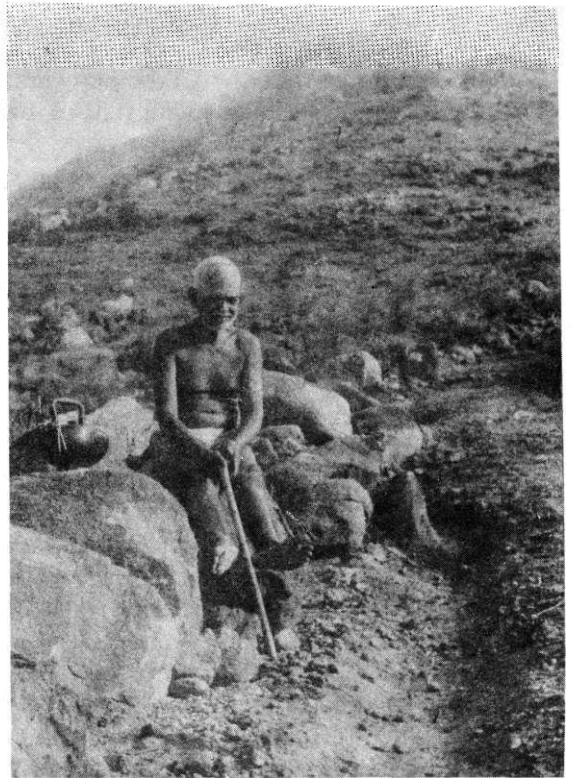
Colour Transparencies: Matthew Greenblatt

The Glorious sun-set, viewed from up on the Hills, (behind the Ashram).



# HALLOWED BY BHAGAVAN'S PRESENCE

By DR. SARADA NATARAJAN



**A**N EFFULGENT lad of sixteen with shaven head, clad only in a loin cloth, stood in the *mantapam* before the eastern gate of Arunachaleswara temple. The open *mantapam* was scant protection from the cold winds and lashing rain. So the lad sought shelter in the verandah of a neighbouring house but, when people came out a little later, moved into the temple's thousand-pillared hall. The temple doors were open for him in the middle of the night as they had been that afternoon. The doors had all been open, yet not a soul was around, when, on the 1st of September 1896, Bhagavan Ramana came to Arunachala and reported, "Father, I have come". With his tears of ecstasy bathing the Lord, Ramana embraced Arunachaleswara. The fever that had been burning in his body ever since the death-experience left him at that moment. The drought-fever that had been burning the land was cooled by the rains that came that night and poured for days after. Thus was the land hallowed by the very footfall of Bhagavan!

Every inch of ground in Arunachala then became witness to the living of the Supreme Truth. Be it the mute pillars of the thousand-pillared hall that looked at the young sage's absorption in the bliss of the Self; or the stones and pot-sherds thrown by mischievous urchins that landed on the steps of the unattended cellar-shrine and from there bore mute witness to ants and vermin feeding on his tender body as he was lost to the world, lost in the Self, abiding as the Self. As unmoving he seemed as the carvings in the Subrahmanya shrine to which he was later bodily carried from the Patala-lingam. And even when he moved, it was much like themselves, not of his own accord but being moved by some other force. Such might have been the thoughts of the chariot wheels, could they think, as he lay beside them in the vehicle room

(*Vahana Mantapam*) of the Gods. Sometimes when he opened his eyes it was day, sometimes night. Once he found himself beside one chariot, another time beneath some other car at a farther corner of the room. That is all he knew of the passing of time and of his own movements.

Such was his divine effulgence that the sun, growing jealous, might well have asked the Illupai Tree to dullen his greater lustre by its shade. And the flower-garden blooms must have got their colours blushing in shame at their puny perfumes in the presence of his mighty spiritual fragrance. That fragrance drew throngs to his presence like droves of nectar-seeking bees. These crowds attracted the head of Gurumurtham Mutt who felt that Bhagavan's presence at the Mutt would make it famous. At his request, conveyed through Uddandi Nayanar, Bhagavan moved to Gurumurtham. The inner wall of this little temple on the outskirts of Tiruvannamalai proudly bears to this day a mark on the spot where Bhagavan leaned on it day in and day out in wall-like stillness. Yet, how vibrant was this silence! A silence that could still the leaves in the neighbouring mango orchard into which he moved a year later. Yes, the very leaves must have watched awe-struck, unrustling quiet as the young sage sat unmoved even when some intruding thieves out of sheer frustration were about to blind him with poisonous cactus-milk. Lord Arunachaleswara entered their minds, changed their intentions and saved those lustrous eyes. These very trees must have wafted a gentle breezy sigh of relief. Then they watched as Bhagavan graciously learnt Malayalam in order to help Palaniswami, his ardent and loving attendant, with his daily reading of *Adhyatma Ramayanam*. Through the *Adhyatma Ramayanam* Bhagavan learnt that the scriptures described only what he had already experienced and known intimately as the Truth. This was his first reading of a Vedantic text. His first written spiritual instruction came a little later, to Mother Azhagammal.

The very rocks of Pavazhakunru must have been worn out by mother's repeated climbs. But she could not wear out her son's firm resolve. Unmoved he remained, like the very hill. She lamented his uncared-for state. 'Who is there to look after you, what food do you eat? Come home, my son,' cried her mother's heart. No answer came. Perhaps she would have done better to ask the portals of the Eesanya Mutt. They sometimes saw her son stand before them and wait for the *naivedya* which would be his day's meal. Perhaps she would have done better to ask the streets of Tiruvannamalai which thrilled at his foot-steps, the houses echoing his clap as someone came out to give food. Maybe it was just stale gruel which he ate from his cupped hands in kingly manner, wiped his hands on his head and walked majestically away. But Azhagammal addressed her questions to her son, and got only silence as an answer. Finally, at some devotees' request a written note was given to Azhagammal. It reiterated the inevitability of the ordained course of events. Mother returned alone.

Bhagavan alone was allowed to remain in Tiruvannamalai when plague struck the town. The town was evacuated and, with the few policemen who remained, Bhagavan moved to the Pachchiamman temple. Of course, there were those huge statues lining the entrance to the temple. Their stern expressions must have relaxed awhile and their mouths watered at the aroma of Bhagavan's delicious cooking. For, Bhagavan would cook the various vegetables that the policemen brought in daily. And whatever Bhagavan did was perfect. Be it slicing vegetables or plastering walls, stitching notebooks or polishing a bough into a walking stick, swimming across a tank with a child



on his back, playing marbles with little boys or narrating stories. The statues at Pachchiamman shrine must certainly have longed to move closer to listen to the various anecdotes with which Bhagavan regaled the fortunate policemen.

Lest they should actually do so, Bhagavan himself moved onto the hill. In the summer his abode was the Mango-Tree Cave with the adjoining Mulaipal-Thirtham, the only source of water in those scorching months. The cool waters waited daily for his cooler touch as he filled them in a vessel. And he, in turn, waited for the poor grass-cutter women who were not allowed near the tank. They would arrive and call to him after their gruelling day in the hot sun. He would pour water on their burning backs and to wash their sweat-lined faces, then give them enough to drink before they rested in the shade and went their way.

The scant shade of a few shrubs and a couple of trees near Virupaksha Cave has held in its embrace little children who would climb the hill and sit for hours in silence before Bhagavan Ramana. Often there were monkeys too drawn into this net of peace. A peace so great that it could erase with a single glance the inconsolable grief of an Echammal, the anguish at the bereavement of husband and children in quick succession. Virupaksha Cave was witness to that marvellous silence, but it also drank in the glorious words of the Maharshi. Here are the sands that bore his immortal writing, the explanation of self-enquiry to Gambhiram Seshayya and Sivaprakasam Pillai. Here also echoed the first recorded spoken instruction in the momentous meeting between the Muni and the Maharshi. Bhagavan's explanation to Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni about the nature of *tapas*, was given here. "Find out wherefrom the 'I' arises and merge at its source, that is *tapas*. Find the source of the *mantra* and merge there, that is *tapas*", said Bhagavan. The look and the instruction awakened the Muni to the Truth. The walls of the Virupaksha Cave that hum in silence with the vibration of 'Om' were the first to vibrate with the name of 'Ramana'. Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi - so did Kavyakantha name the young sage hitherto known as *Brahmana Swami*.

It was also these walls that heard the first chantings of the *Arunachala Aksharamanamalai* which Bhagavan composed at the request of devotees. From Virupaksha they would start chanting as they embarked on their rounds for begging food. And when they returned, the food was equally shared by all present. Even if a leopard was included in the company? No, not then. Then the iron gate must have laughed with Bhagavan. For, the devotees, locking themselves in securely, shouted brave warnings at the leopard, while Bhagavan, outside, merely looked at it quietly and it walked away.

The Virupaksha days - full of silence, the peace of the Self, full of love and compassion, laughter and sharing. In Virupaksha the mysterious Satyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer came, sang gloriously on *Ramana Sadguru*, and left, and could not be traced ever again. Virupaksha saw the first foreigner's surrender to Bhagavan and knowledge of Bhagavan dawned in the West through Humphreys' report. In Virupaksha also sprouted the plant of the extraordinary relationship between Bhagavan and mother. The seed had been sown in the first instruction at Pavazhakunru. Now the plant was tended carefully by Bhagavan as mother came to stay permanently with him. Sometimes through sternness, at others with humour and love, Bhagavan

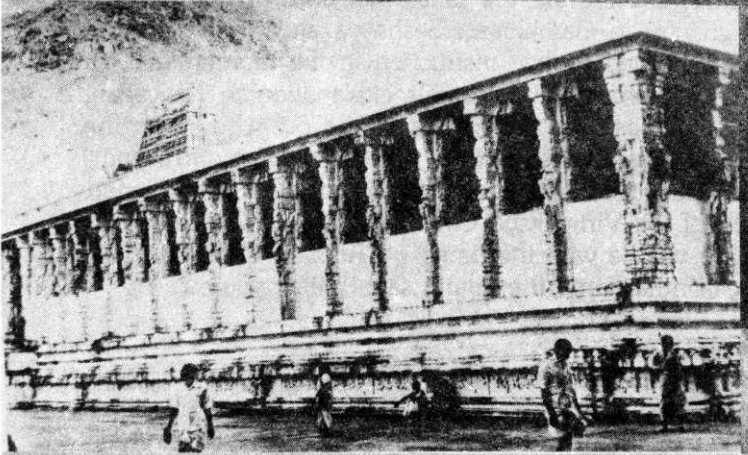
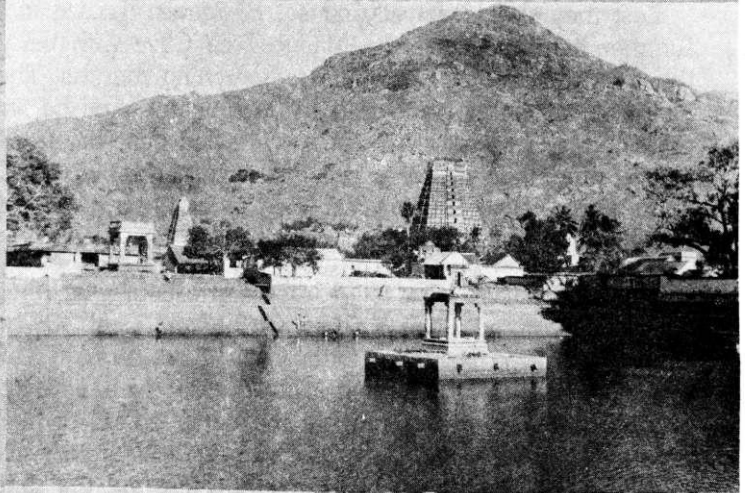
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# PLACES OF SACREDNESS



Bhagavan  
at the age of 21 years

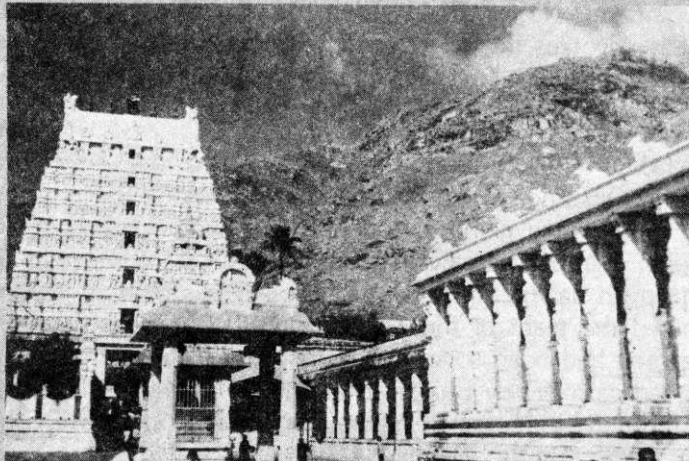
Ayyankulam



1000-pillared Mantapam



Pathalalingam

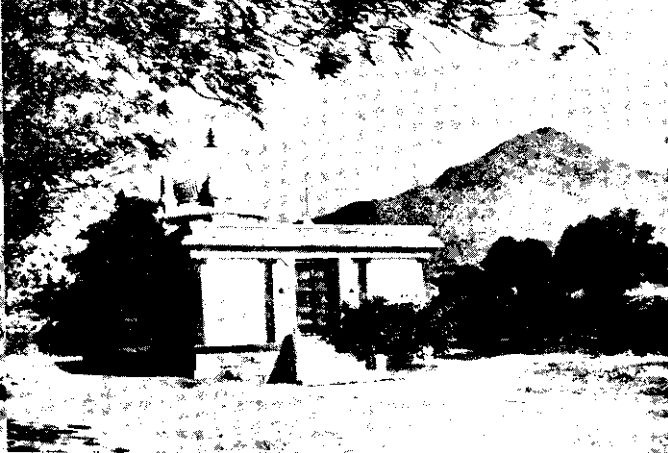
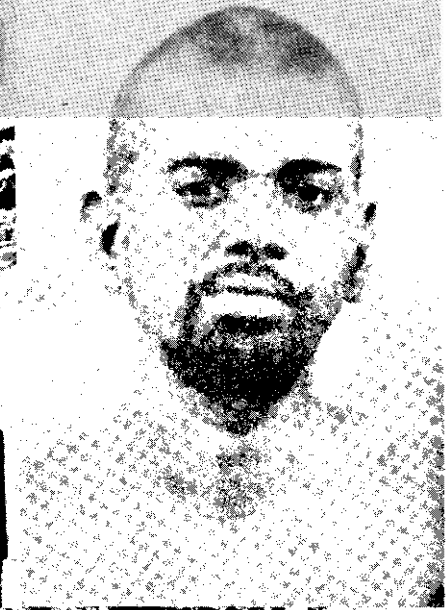
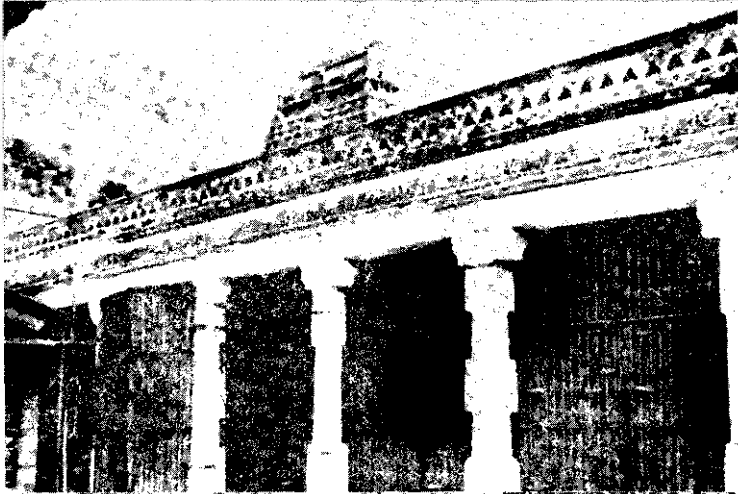


Subramanya  
Shrine

# HALLOWED BY SRI BHAGAVAN

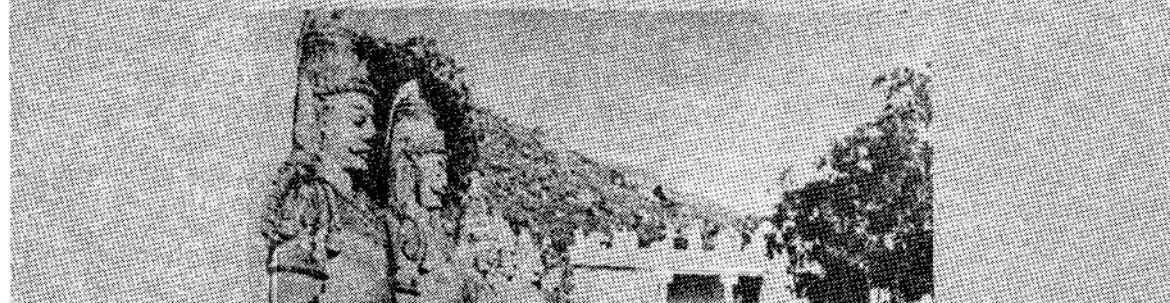
Vahana  
Mantapam

Bhagavan  
at the age of 30 years



Illuppai Tree

Gurumurtham

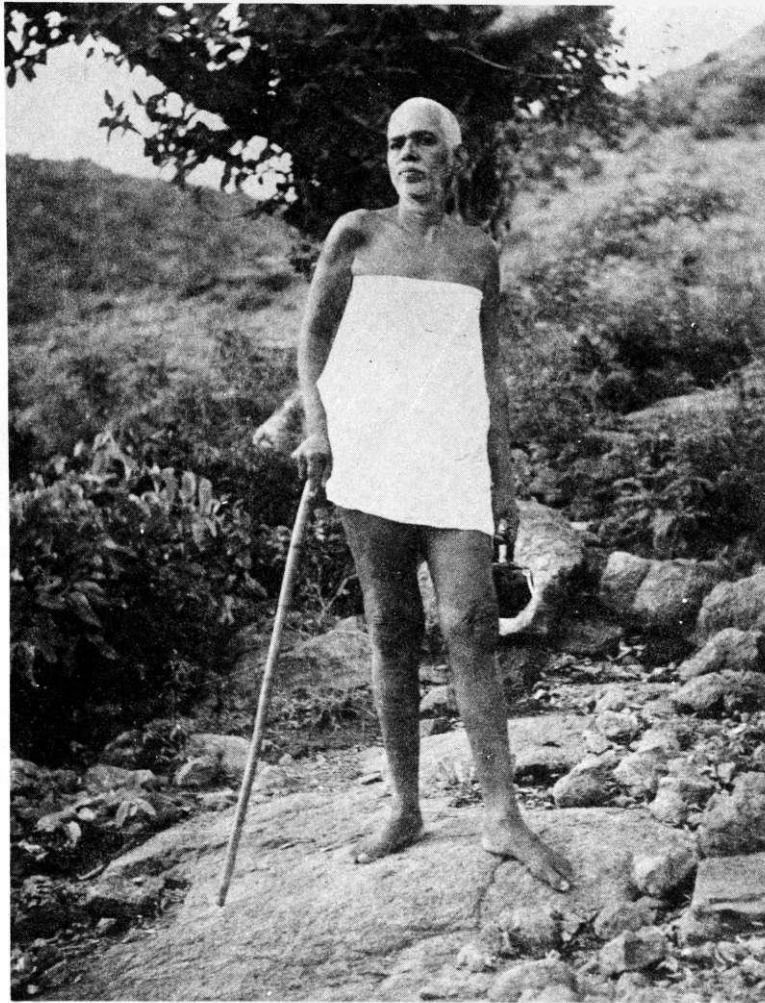


ripened her spiritually. And she responded fully, surrendering to Bhagavan and readying herself for the culmination of Skandashram.

Skandashram is the little oasis of trees on Arunachala adjoining a tiny, perennial spring of sweet water. This haven was carved out of rock and prickly pear – a single-handed effort, an offering to Bhagavan by Kandaswami after whom the Ashram gets its name. Here Bhagavan moved in, with mother and other devotees, in the face of acute water scarcity at Virupaksha. Mother started a regular kitchen, despite Bhagavan's protests, and the Ramana family grew. Among the inmates was *Nondi*, the lame monkey whom Bhagavan had nursed back to health and who later became king of his tribe. The little window in the grill tells us of him. Whatever time he came in, through this window Nondi would collect his share of the day's food. Curving up from the ground beside this window grill is a single coconut tree. It stands sentinel to the sacred room where Mother Azhagammal attained liberation. On the 19th of May, 1922, Bhagavan knew that Mother's end was near. He stayed with her through the day, and for the last hour sat with her head on his lap, his left hand on her head and his right hand on her spiritual heart. The devotees chanted *Arunachala Siva* and *Ram Naam*. At eight in the night mother attained *maha-samadhi*. Describing Mother's absorption, Bhagavan said "After mother breathed her last, her body glowed with a divine resplendence. By 5 a.m. the next morning we brought her remains to Palakothu (at the southern foot of the hill), but even by that time people of the town had gathered there in a vast crowd".

Mother's *samadhi*, the Matrubhuteswara shrine, became the centre around which "Sri Ramanasramam" grew. In December that year Bhagavan came to stay here. Every stone in the walls, every tile on the floors, every grain of sand here is filled with His presence and could recount numerous wonderful incidents of Bhagavan's love and grandeur. But the doors and windows have drunk of Bhagavan's silence that once even kept the devotees unaware of the passing of a whole night one *Sivaratri*. So these silent participants continue to radiate the silence. If the two sparrows that perched daily on the door to hear the *Vedas* recited were to return now, they could hear the same harmony stemming from the shrine of *Ramaneswara Mahalingam*, Bhagavan's *samadhi*, adjoining Mother's shrine. 'Next door', the tiles of the 'Old Hall' are hallowed by the touch of numerous devotees, from the squirrels that lined-up in patient rows while Bhagavan accurately threw nuts to each one, to Muruganar who would sit with his gaze unswervingly rivetted on Bhagavan, often with tears of ecstasy pouring down his cheeks. The *goshala* reminds one of the tender relationship between Bhagavan and Cow Lakshmi, her surrender and liberation. The kitchen holds numerous events of touching care and concern. The *Nirvana-Room* is a reminder of the many months when Bhagavan bore the terrible sarcoma cheerfully, emphatically bring home to devotees that he was not the body, that he was in no way limited by it. It still echoes his words, 'Where can I go? *I am here*'.

Every atom in Sri Ramanasramam, in Arunachala, is a silent, yet moving reminder of eternity's advent amidst us in human garb, bringing home to each one of us the truth of His presence within, as the ever-effulgent, all-pervading Self!



## FOUR PHASES\*

By KUNJU SWAMI

**T**HE state of *Jivanmuktas* (those liberated while yet alive) is said to be four-fold: *Brahmaid*, *Brahmaidvara*, *Brahmaidvarya* and *Brahmaidvarishta*. The Tamil Vedantic classic, *Kaivalya Navaneetam*, says this of *Brahmavits*: "... They are totally unattached to anything. Due to their *prarabdha* [that part of one's *karma* which has to be worked out in the present life], they may perform penance or engage in trade, they may rule over a kingdom or they may beg for food. Whatever may happen to them, noth-

ing would surprise them, they do not judge, they only remain a witness to everything. They are never affected by anything."<sup>1</sup>

The *Kaivalya* defines the other three categories of *Jivanmuktas* as follows: "... He who, in order to meet the needs of the body, eats by himself is *varan* [*Brahmaidvara*]; he who knows his physical needs through others is *varyan* [*Brahmaidvarya*]; when neither the *Jivanmukta* himself nor others know his physical needs, he is in the *Brahmaidvarishta* state."<sup>2</sup>

\*Translated from the manuscript of a Tamil book to be published under the title *Sri Ramana Bhakta Vijayam*

Sri Kunju Swami in  
front of  
Guhainamassivaya  
Temple



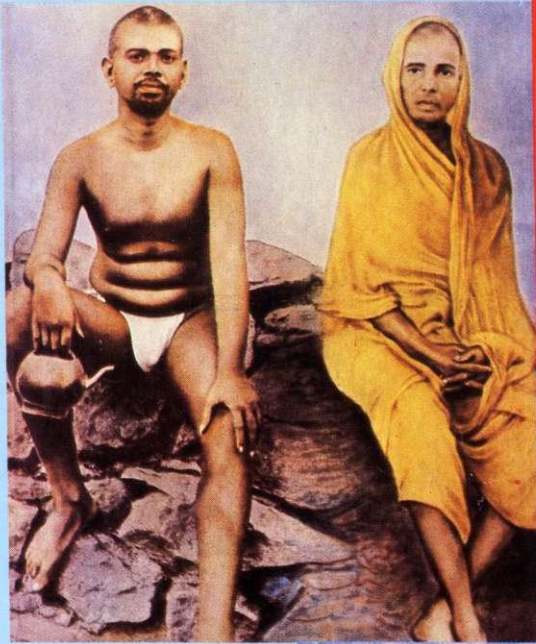
It is said that one begins by being a *Brahma-vid*, then passing through the states of a *Brahma-vidvara* and *Brahma-vidvarya*, ends up being a *Brahma-vidvarishta*. However, in whichever of these four states one may be, one is a *Jivanmukta*.

Bhagavan Ramana has been in all these four states. However, he did not begin with the state of a *Brahma-vid* and then by stages become at last a *Brahma-vidvarishta*. It was the other way. Out of his boundless compassion for His devotees and other people Sri Bhagavan who, as a young *Jivanmukta*, was in the final state of *Brahma-vidvarishta* came down from *varishta* state to that of *vara*, then after a while remained in the *Brahma-vidvarya* state. Again after a while, He came down to the *Brahma-vid* state and luckily for all of us stayed in that state ever since. *Kaivalya's* definitions fit Sri Bhagavan perfectly.

Like the ocean coming to the river, He came to us and was ever in the rare *Sahaja* (natural) state so that we might see Him, listen to Him, enjoy His company, bask in the sunshine of His Presence and experience the Truth in His Being and realise the goal of our birth. As Sri Muruganar, the great devotee and poet, sang in his *Ramana Tiruvembavai*, "without remaining beyond the Beyond, you were easily available to us, coming nearer than the nearest to us, being clear to us like the gooseberry on the palm."

Sri Bhagavan was in the *Brahma-vidvarishta* state when He was at the Patalalinga Shrine under the Thousand Pillared Mantapam in the Sri Arunachaleswara Temple and then under the Iluppai tree (*Madhuca Indica*) within the Temple compound, and later at Gurumurtham at the outskirts of Tiruvannamalai and in the mango-grove close to Gurumurtham. During the days when He stayed at the Thousand Pillared Mantapam, He subsisted often mostly on the *abhisheka* (ceremonial bath) milk coming from the Apeetakuchambal Shrine, fed into His mouth by the priests. He was so immersed in the Self that He was not even aware of the smell of the various powders mixed in that milk. He continued in that *Brahma-vidvarishta* state of total immersion in the Self when He was in the *Vahana Mantapam* (hall where the deities mounts are kept), plantain-grove, flower-gardens and other places in the Temple. When He was under the Iluppai tree, devotees used to place some food in His mouth. This state continued during His stay at Gurumurtham and in the mango-grove.

During that phase, devotees began to stick food into His mouth whenever they pleased. Palaniswami, Bhagavan's earliest attendant, fearing that that would disturb Sri Bhagavan, would stand near Him, receive all the food items brought by devotees, and mix them up in a vessel and feed Bhagavan just three

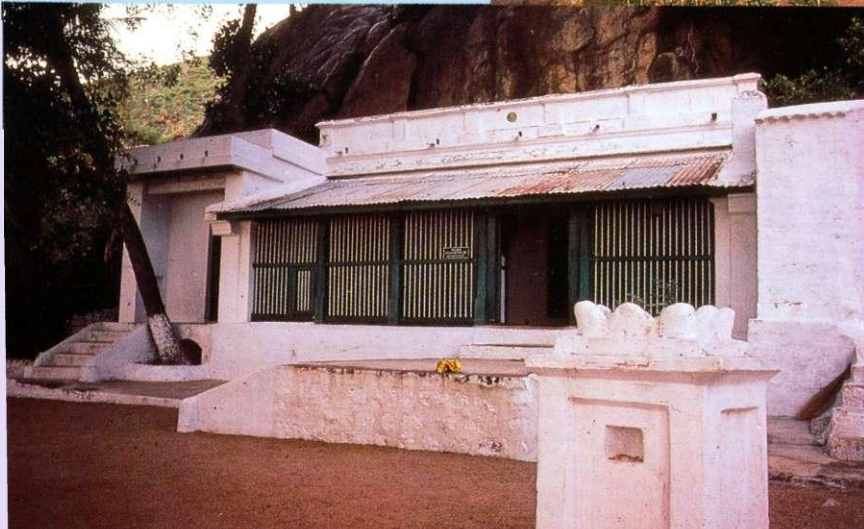


# Maharshi

**Sanctifies the Sacred**

The Sacred Son  
and the Holy Mother.

Pavalakunru (back view):  
“...The best course, therefore,  
is to remain silent” — a portion  
of His written *upadesa* to His  
Mother.

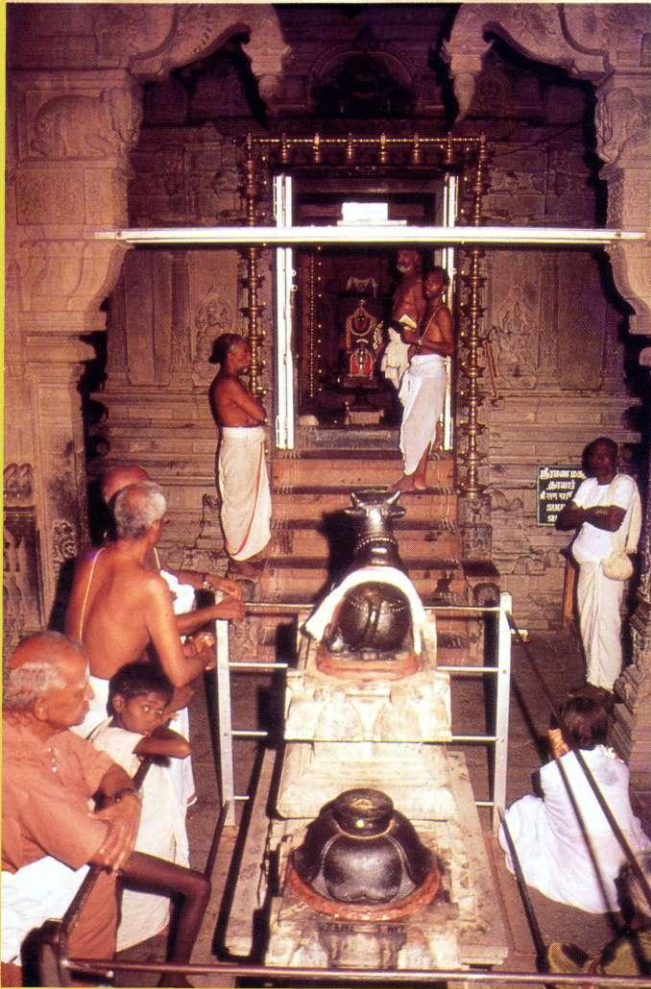


Skandashram (close view) —  
“Where equal sharing was  
meticulously practised, not  
excluding *Nondi*, the monkey!”



Sri Bhagavan's Royal Court — the  
OLD HALL.

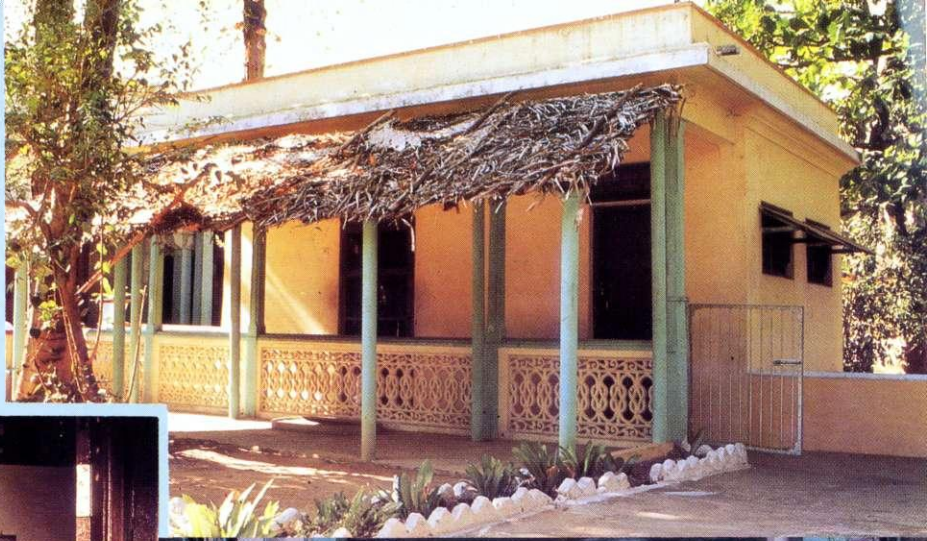
(Inside the Old Hall): Pilgrims  
and devotees meditate and  
"find that they are in the very  
presence of the beloved Guru  
Ramana"



Priests chanting at the Mother's  
Shrine — the *Sri Chakra Meru* therein  
has been sanctified by the 'touch' by  
Sri Bhagavan.



Nirvana Room:  
"Where could I go?  
I AM here" — this potent  
message was given from this  
holy place.



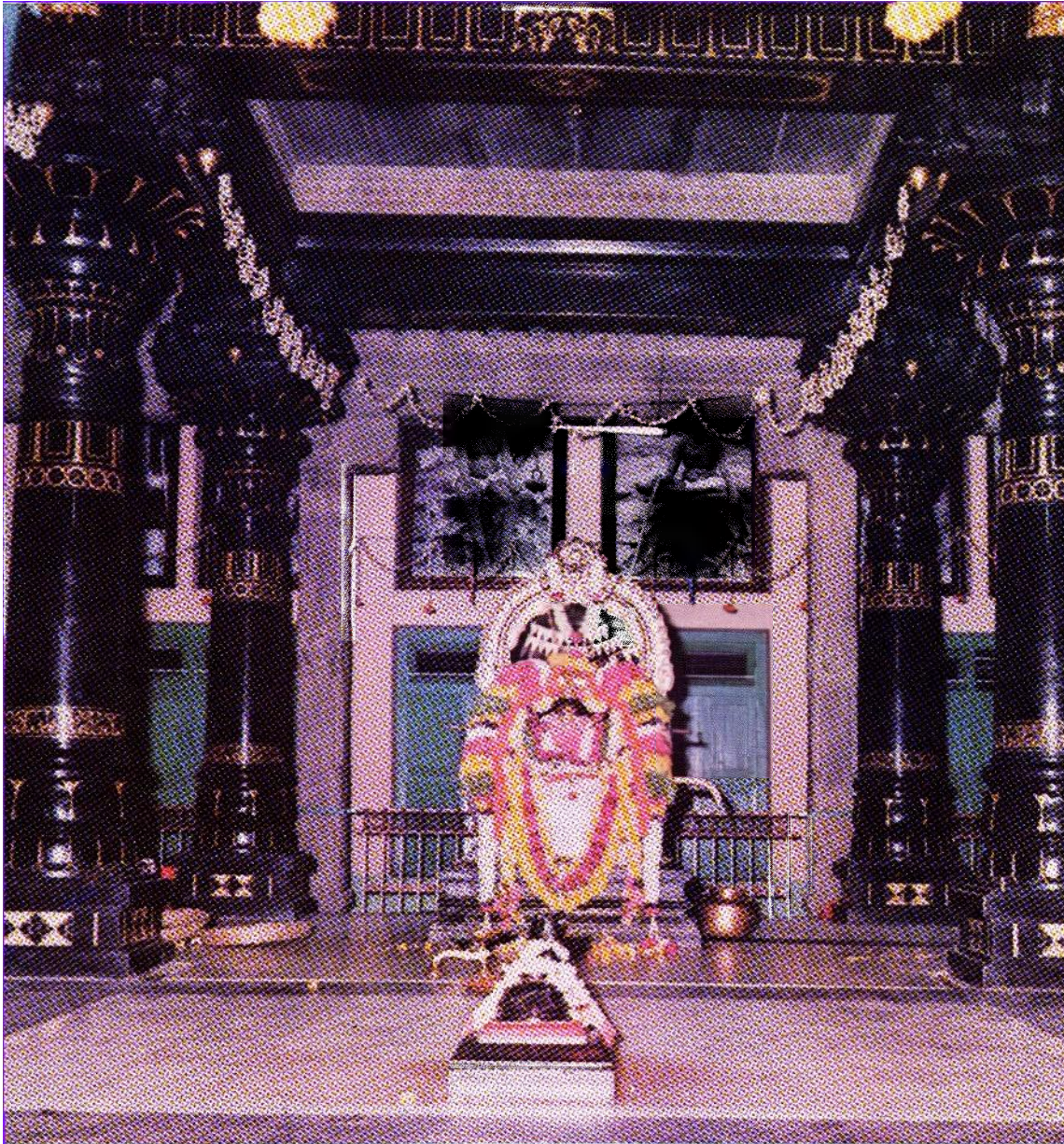
Inside the Room:  
"He is here in the eternal  
*here and now*; He is here  
in each one's heart!"



Cow Lakshmi's Samadhi

Ashram View from the Hill: "The  
peace that abides here encompasses  
and permeates"





*Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam — Sri Bhagavan's Sacred Samadhi beautifully decorated: "The very air is redolent of His Presence".*

mouthfuls of it once in a day. It did not occur to him that Bhagavan could eat more, nor was Bhagavan in a state where He could ask for more. The remaining food would be distributed among the devotees present. Sometimes, even when the third mouthful of food was being fed to Him, Bhagavan would go into *samadhi*. The food would still be there at feeding time next day. The old food would be taken out and fresh food put into His mouth.

Sri Bhagavan came down to the *Brahma-vidvara* state during His days at Pavalakunru, at the Arunagiri Mantapam near the Ayyankulam tank, and in the circuit corridor of the Durga Temple. It was during that phase that He went out begging for food when He felt like eating; and when He felt like having a bath he went to the little fountain nearby.

When Sri Bhagavan moved up the Hill and lived in the Guhainamassivaya temple and Mango Tree cave, Bhagavan was in the *Brahma-vidvarya* state. During those days, if people bathed Him, He would let them do it but He did not bathe on his own. If they offered food, He would eat it but never sought food. As *Kaivalya Navaneetam* puts it, "A *Jivanmukta* who has to be made aware of his physical needs by others is a *Brahma-vidvarya*."

To our great good fortune, Sri Bhagavan moved down to the *Brahma-vid* state and stayed in it ever since His Virupaksha days. It was when He stayed in Virupaksha cave and at Skandhashram that He translated into Tamil Adi Sankara's *Dakshinamurti Stotra*, *Vivekachudamani*, *Gurustuti* and *Hastamalagam*, and also the Agama works *Devikalotara* and *Atmasakshatkara*, and also wrote in

Tamil *Appala Pattu* and *Arunachala Aksharamanamalai*, the latter of which was composed when he went round Arunachala. After He settled down at the foot of Arunachala, and Mother Azhagamal's *Samadhi-Shrine* was built, He wrote *Upadesa Undiyar* in Tamil and then wrote its Sanskrit, Telugu and Malayalam versions. He composed *Ulladu Narpadu* (Forty Verses on Reality) in Tamil and then wrote its Malayalam version. He also translated Adi Sankara's *Atmabodha* into Tamil.

Sri Bhagavan's gracious answers to the great variety of questions put to Him by devotees and visitors, published in the book *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, belong to the period when He was in the *Brahma-vid* state. All the incidents which have been narrated in the books *Day by Day with Bhagavan* and *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* also belong to this period.

Sri Bhagavan, who thus remained in all the four states of a *Jivanmukta* and hallowed different places in Tiruvannamalai, now abides as the Sun within the Heart.

<sup>1</sup>பேதகன் மத்தால் வந்த பிராரத்த நாநா வாகு  
மாதலால் விவகா ரங்க ளவரவர்க் காவ வாகும்  
மாதவஞ் செயினுஞ் செய்வார் வாணிபஞ் செயினுஞ்  
செய்வார்  
பூதலம் புரப்பா ரையம் புகுந்துண்பார் சீவன் முத்தர்.

<sup>2</sup>.... தேக சஞ்சார நிமித்தந் தானா  
யுன்னுவோன் வரன்வேற் றோரா லுணர்பவன்  
வரியா னாகு  
மன்னியர் தம்மாற் றன்னாலறியாதோன்  
வரிட்ட னாமே.

### THIS HARMONY

When critics disagree, the artist is in accord with himself.

-- Oscar Wilde

# KING VALLALAN OF TIRUVANNAMALAI

By MARYE TONNAIRE

**K**ING VIRA Vallalan III was an illustrious Tamil king who ruled over the Hoysala empire from 1292 AD to 1342 AD. His empire at its peak covered a large portion of South India. It had three capital cities, one of which was Tiruvannamalai, although it was then known as Arunasamudra, or Arunai for short.

The king was an ardent Saivite and during his stays in Tiruvannamalai he made many improvements to the Arunachaleswarar Temple. Tiruvannamalai was near the geographical centre of his empire and this encouraged him to make protracted stays there, particularly after the destruction of Dwarasamudra. It seems that during the last fifteen years of his reign he was constantly in residence at Tiruvannamalai.

King Vallalan's devotion and piety are celebrated in chapter seven of the *Arunachala Puranam*, a Tamil work which was written in the sixteenth century by Ellapa Nayinar. This work is primarily a poetical rendering of the Sanskrit *Arunachala Mahatmyam* which was written several centuries before, but the following verses, dealing with King Vallalan's quest for a son, are only to be found in the Tamil version.

\*\*\*

452. ....Now we will tell you the story of King Vallalan to whom God Himself manifested as a child and then bestowed His grace by giving him a boon.

453. In a famous place called Arunai [Tiruvannamalai] there are mansions with jewel-bedecked pinnacles and gardens dense with fruit-giving trees which reach up to the

starry firmament. In this place dwell beautiful *devadasis* equal only to Arundhati [Vasishta's wife] in chastity.

454. Vallalan the king of this renowned city, has a virtuous character, speaks only the truth, and with great devotion takes care of all beings as if they were no different from him. He belongs to the Agni lineage whose fame cannot be described. This king came [to this world] to worship daily the feet of Parameswara, to do service to him and to praise him.

455. He has no desire for the possessions of others. Excepting his own wives, he considers all other women as his sisters and treats them accordingly. In accordance with the law, he is given one sixth of his subjects' earnings as taxes. He serves with great delight as a partron of the temple of the Lord who held the poison in his throat.

456. In this place tigers and cows dwell together, drinking from the same tank. The brahmin preceptors recite the *Vedas*, and all the people listen. To obtain grace from the ancient Lord, people decorate the city, making it a marvel to behold. Maidens sprinkle water in the street and make magnificent *kolams* [symmetrical patterns made out of rice flour].

457. There are three rainfalls a month and the abundantly rich harvests never fail. Those who ask for food are immediately invited and offered food with the six different flavours. The people, by serving the *tapasvins* [those performing *tapas*] and giving whatever is asked of them, receive their blessings. In the temple of Siva, the Just One, they light ghee lamps and do *puja* regularly.

458. Thus, the great city existed in all its splendour according to God's design. But even though the king had all possible wealth, he had a troubled mind because he had no son to speak his name.

459. He asked the ministers: "Is there anything wrong with the *pujas* I perform to Siva? Have there been any errors in my [administration of] justice in this country? Among the flowers plucked for *puja*, are there any defective ones? O ministers, tell me what is to be done."

460. The ministers said: "O king, if one gives charity with steadfast faith and devotion to each and every poor person who approaches us, then by the grace of the Lord with three eyes, who protects and rules us, a son will be born."

461. The king replied: "In order that my good name should flourish [in the form of subsequent generations], hoist a beautiful banner on high and spread the following news by striking a *murasu* drum; 'Whosoever enters this splendid city where the handsome Lord Arunai lives, whatsoever they ask, I shall give to them.'"

462. Then the ministers said: "O our king, whose good name flourishes throughout the world, listen! Are we capable of giving away what the devotees who worship the feet of the Lord, praised by the *sastras*, and elders and hymn-singing bards take it into their heads to ask?"

463. The king said: "Will anyone ask for something that is not [available] in the world? Even if anyone did, no one could give such a thing. So, quickly do what I have ordered." The ministers then hoisted the flag on high and struck the *murasu*.

464. On hearing that the king of Arunai, where the Lord dwells, had hoisted a flag, people from all over the world drew near in great numbers to receive gifts which alleviated their poverty. [There were] old people, people carrying the *kavadi* [a pole with a weight on

each end], *tapasvins*, brahmins chanting the *Vedas*, wandering minstrels, singers and beggars.

465. To those who came and who wanted to perform a marriage ceremony, the king gave 1,000 gold [coins]. In addition, he made those who said that they were unable to redeem their pledges of houses, lands and jewels happy by giving them 2,000 gold [coins]. Afterwards he gave 300 gold [coins] to old brahmins who wanted to perform the *upanayanam* [sacred thread] ceremony.

466. [Someone asked:] "The jewelled *mantapam* and the compound wall in the temple are deteriorating. O Lord, give us funds to repair them." The king gave 2,000 gold [coins] with great devotion and said, "renovate them properly". In addition 50,000 gold [coins] were given to endow maths throughout the land.

467. [The sage] Narada, hearing that King Vallalan, as he had proclaimed, was graciously bestowing gifts daily to blind people, to Siva devotees, to the lame, to wandering minstrels, to those afflicted by the disease of poverty and [many] others, approached that king.

468. When he heard about the arrival of the *muni*, the great *tapasvin*, the king with great love descended quickly from his throne and, surrounded by all his ministers, approached the holy man singing His praises, received him and offered him a seat free from all impurities. Once the *muni* was seated, the king began to speak.

469. "O great *muni*, you who were born from the *tapas* of Brahma and who sing with the *vina* in your beautiful hands, graciously enlighten me about the purpose of your visit to this lowly cur." Then the ascetic replied:

470. "O king belonging to the lineage of Agni, which is one of the three ancestral lines [Surya, Chandra and Agni] praised by the world-renowned *tapasvins* and the praise-worthy ascetics who have conquered the five

senses, I have heard of your flawless munificence and have come to learn about [it]. Tell me what is on your mind."

471. "O *muni*, O great *tapasvin* whom the *rishis* learned in *Vedas* and *sastras* praise, please listen! I have no son to speak my name [at the time of my death] or to rule my great kingdom [after me]. Therefore I have hoisted a flag so that I can lovingly give whatever in this world is humbly solicited by devotees of the Lord who shares half his body with the one whose hair is decorated by dewy flowers. But I know not the will of God."

472. Then Narada replied: "The worthy *Dharma Sastras* proclaim that those who perform great charitable acts on this earth will obtain children. Furthermore, qualified people have also said so. So, by the grace of the Guru who protects everyone and who delights in wearing the crescent moon and the surging Ganga in his matted locks, a son will be born. Now, O king, grant me leave."

473. Full of love, the *muni* went to see Lord Siva's abode in Kailash to tell him of the King's justice. As the *Siva ghanas* [attendants or followers] were standing there, singing His praises, Narada prostrated himself to the dazzling form of Nandikeswara, who was standing in the foreground. Then, beholding the beautiful scene of Siva with the crescent moon in His hair, surrounded by *rishis*, he praised the Lord and said:

474. "O Lord of Lords, dwelling in luminous Kailash, praised be Your holy feet! Desiring a son to speak his name, a king called Vallalan, in the flourishing, flawless city of Arunai, has hoisted a flag to proclaim that if anyone in the world asks for whatever he wants, he [the king] will gladly give it. Listen now to the glory of this king."

475. "He enables justice to flourish and is the guardian of truth. He never swerves from righteousness. This great king was born into the world as the embodiment of the *dharma* which weeds out sin. He regards all beings on

the earth as his own and treats them accordingly. He is Your devoted slave. Every day he prays in the following way: 'O First Cause, Your lotus feet are my refuge.' "

476. Listening to the discourse of the *muni* who had come before Him, Lord Siva thought, "I will ascertain for myself what this Vallalan is like". Then the Peerless One said to the *devas*, *rishis* and *munis*. "All of you go to your respective ashrams".

477. Immediately the Lord of Kailash summoned the king of Alakapuri [Alakesan, the god of wealth]. That king, who came with such a huge pile of gold that he was honoured by everyone, prostrated himself at the gracious feet of the Lord, whose body wears the *rudraksha* and the cobra as His ornaments, and praised Him. Then the Red-Hued One graciously spoke a few words:

478. "O King who rules Alakapuri:, listen. I have decided to test the steadfastness of the king who dwells in Arunai. Therefore become My worthy disciple and accompany Me joyfully with lots of wealth." Thus said the Lord of Kailash.

479. Then Paramasiva, who shines with the indescribable lady as one of his halves, took the form of a *sangama* [Siva *bhakta*] which could now be worshipped by everyone. As Brahma and Vishnu looked on, they felt a joy they had never experienced before. All the *devas* showered forth a rain of flowers while the *Vedas* praised [Him].

480. All the beautiful *Siva ghanas* dwelling in Kailash, the abode of the Lord, became *andis* [mendicants] by the grace of our most excellent Lord Siva. Coming in a large group, they reached the beautiful city where Vallalan dwells and were praised by those who knew the ways of the king.

481. The mendicants proclaimed: "Are there no highly-virtuous mothers who regard their husbands as gods? Are there no young men excelling in beauty? Is there no one to give food to the hungry? Are there no just

monarchs? Are there no good-hearted ladies who will lovingly invite us and attentively serve us food?"

482. "Even if gold is given, we don't want [it]. If you give us beautiful ornaments, we don't want [them]. We desire neither shining rubies nor long pearl necklaces. If you grant us sovereignty over kingdoms, our minds are not in that. However, should you offer us food and protection, we shall eat with great delight."

483. The Lord, who had given up the deer he was holding in his beautiful hand to take on the appearance of a *sangama*, headed for the street in that excellent city wherein dwelled the *devadasis* [temple dancers, or more often, temple prostitutes], whose lips were like red fruit. His lily-like mouth blossomed and he cried out like a beggar suffering terrible hunger.

484. "O ladies," he said. "You who have eyes like a fish, whose speech is like a parrot and whose faces are like the moon; you who wear garlands of light flowers in your hair and who have breasts like young coconuts rubbed with sandalwood fragrance! How much gold is needed to stay with you until dawn so that the suffering caused by Kama [the god of love or lust] with his five arrows is removed?"

485. The *devadasis* replied: "O Lord whose beauty defies description! You who resemble Paramasiva wearing the cobra with lifted head, listen! We neither lie nor cheat. You must give 1,000 gold [coins] for one lady to make love all night. If you give this we will join our bodies in intercourse with yours and remove the suffering caused by Kama."

486. Siva immediately handed out the gold that the *devadasis* had demanded. Matching up one mendicant with each lady, he signalled them with his eyes that they must stay together all night. Thus in the city of Arunai, which grants many boons, Siva made the *devadasi* streets light up with the great assembly of *sangamas* embracing all the *devadasis*.

## A RECLUSE

By Dr. M.C. Mehrotra

A wandering recluse  
Is what I'm now,  
Time's encircling noose  
Escapes me somehow!

Clouds of gloom darken my brow,  
The breeze of Thy Grace  
escapes me somehow!  
Betwixt life and death  
Yama's noose 'n' thy breath,  
I'm caught in a dilemma –  
For once, show me Thy charisma.

487. Siva made sure that no *devadasi* was left unengaged and had everyone embrace according to the path of the lustful Kama. Then he set off for the king's palace with his disciple [Alakesan, the god of wealth], who had experimented with [and followed] the path that leads to goodness. Seeing them come towards the palace, the king, who was an expert archer and the ruler of the land, approached the two *sangamas* deferentially, praised them, invited them inside and seated them there. [Then] the king began to speak:

488. "Lord, your golden feet have deigned [to come] here. Is it [because of] the *tapas* I have performed? What is the good deed I am performing in the world? If, due to my past merit, I am able to give whatever you ask, I will be honoured and I will also receive your gracious glance."

489. Siva said: "O king, listen. May your kindness and your just path flourish for ever! I have come to you for a purpose which I will now tell. If you give me a woman to remove

the misery caused today by the five arrows sent by the formless Kama, your fame will shine over all the seven seas."

490. The King replied: "I shall do more! For you, Lord, a beautiful marriage will be arranged." Hearing this, the venerable one replied: "O king, listen. Marriage is a great bother. Only the *devadasis* have the skill and knowledge, which is a great treasure, to alleviate the suffering caused by the disease of lust."

491. "O *sangama* who teaches wisdom even to those who have made their minds steady, I shall act according to your wish." Then the king called his guards and said, "Go immediately and fetch a beautiful *devadasi*." The guards set off faster than the wind.

492. They reached the street where the *devadasis* lived and entered every house. Each time they looked inside the crowded houses they saw a *devadasi* dancing and singing affectionately with a Siva devotee wearing *Kondrai* flowers. "Today it won't be possible to find an available *devadasi*", they thought, and returned to the palace to tell the king.

493. The king listened to what his guards told him and became angry. Looking at his ministers he said: "Is it the doing of the Lord that my words should fail? Is there any defect in our *pujas*? Is it proper to tell that *sangama* who spoke so clearly, that we can't get him a lady because there are none available?"

494. The ministers said: "O prosperous one! Stop worrying. We, your humble servants, will bring back a beautiful *devadasi*. Give up your anxiety." Arriving at the street of the *devadasis*, they saw the amorous play inside the houses and they addressed the *devadasis* who had perfumed their rounded breasts:

495: "On this street where there are crowds of lotus-eyed ladies living closely together, if there is one lady who can satiate the lust of the wise man who has approached our king, she will have bracelets, ornaments made

## THE MOUNTAIN PATH

By Swami Swayambodhananda

Winding its way thro' a great  
wilderness,  
Thro' forests, valleys and  
barren rocks,  
Solitary, save for the  
whistling wind,  
Towards the peak goes the  
mountain path.

Rising above the diversity of  
the world,  
Passing thro' emotions, thoughts  
and desires,  
Silent but vibrant with the Word,  
Towards the centre goes the  
Inner Path.

of rubies and tinkling anklets; she will always eat food with the six flavours along with ghee, curds and milk."

496. After hearing what the ministers had said, the ladies humbly replied, "We have already been paid by these devotees to stay with them all night. After this night is over, we will do what you say." The ministers were much disturbed and reported what the *devadasis* had said to the king.

497. The king said: "Why is this insignificant thing becoming so difficult for us?" He grew sad and his mind was filled with anxious thoughts. "Is this the working of the Lord's grace? I will fulfil my promise to the *sangama* who has appeared before us as if he were Siva Himself." So saying, the king took his bow and quickly went to the street of the *devadasis*.

498. He spoke to them in the following manner: "A flag has been hoisted on high so that those who come here will know that



whatever they ask will be given. I will give this kingdom to the *devadasi* who will help me avoid breaking my word to the beautiful *sangama* who has come today."

499. "I will also give her elephants, horses and as much gold as she wants. She will have a palanquin inlaid with pearls. If she satisfies the desire of the venerable one, I shall give her the great sceptre of authority to govern this ancient land. I shall serve her and she shall become my own mother."

500. "All the *rishis* who are knowledgeable in the *Vedas* say that among all worldly pleasures, this is the highest. Therefore come, ladies. If you can remove the desire of the *sangama* who has come to our land, and in return you ask for my life, I shall give it."

501. The ladies humbly replied; "Abiding by your laws, O Lord, we have already accepted the gold to have pleasure with these pure devotees. What else can we do?" The king of this land became ashamed and went back to his famous palace.

502. When he got home two of his wives, Nallamadevi and the young generous Sallamadevi perceived the change in his moon-like face. Prostrating at his feet they said, "O Lord, who can rule [the whole of] this ancient world! What is the reason for your sadness? Please tell us." Then Vallalan, who walks the path of purity, replied to them:

503. "Today a venerable man approached this prosperous king desiring pleasure with a woman having deer-like eyes. Acceding to his request, I tried to get a *devadasi* but none is available in our city. Because of this I am distressed." After listening to the king, the younger wife began to speak:

504. "O king who has made a promise to the devotee suffering from lust, we don't know what is on your mind. If you think that I, the younger wife, should offer myself to him, then I shall do so." The king, who was blessed by Lakshmi, rejoiced in his mind. He

## ARUNACHALA

(A Franco-German Response)

By ARNAUD DESJARDINS <sup>1</sup>

It was such a striking experience to me that it has ever remained green in my memory. A few days after I first arrived in India, I was taking a walk in the very picturesque Gangetic Valley at Rishikesh, on the riverbank on the opposite side of the Sivananda Ashram. Brahmachari Wilhelm, "the German monk", was talking to me about some of the famous sages whom he had seen during his many years of wanderings in India.

I put to him the question, which a newcomer, often in search of quick success, is apt to put: "Of all your encounters, which one has impressed you the most?"

The reply was quite different from what I expected:

- "The mountain", he said simply. As I no doubt looked surprised, with an emotion which I understood only two years later, he added a word: "ARUNACHALA."

<sup>1</sup>from his book "ASHRAMS - Les Yogis et les Sages"

looked at his wife and said: "O noble lady, you will go with the devotee into a room and remove the suffering inflicted on him by the formless Kama." Then the good king informed the venerable man.

505. Sallamadevi immediately bathed in perfumed water, dressed up beautifully and went inside the room. There she skillfully played the *vina* and sang melodiously. But when she came close to the Supreme One and looked at him, she saw that the one who wore the *rudraksha* beads was deep in meditation.

506. Then, thinking that she would make the venerable one happy, she took perfumed water and sprinkled it over his dazzling form, speaking to him in a pleasant manner. When he didn't even open his eyes to look at her, she hesitated a moment and then began to speak.

507. "O Lord, alas, is it proper that the king's promise should be uttered in vain?" Then the beautiful lady placidly bent over and embraced him. At that very moment Paramasiva turned into a baby and, to make her happy, began to cry.

508. When Siva became a child and was crying loudly, the king, thinking that this was the Lord's doing, came quickly, took the child in his arms, embraced it and lovingly kissed it on the forehead. But just as the king was so immersed in bliss, that Immaculate One disappeared.

509. "O Lord, will we ignorant ones know the working of your divine will? O embodiment of truth! You who have three eyes! You who are the *Vedas* and the Lord of the *Vedas*! O pure one! Is it to test us that you have appeared in the form of a child and then disappeared? What is our destiny now, O great one?" The king, along with the queen, lamented in this way.

510. Then the king's heart weakened. As he was crying out loudly, *Ishwara*, who is praised by the excellent *tapasvins*, appeared mounted on the bull with Parvati, all sur-

rounded by Siva *ghanas*. Brahma and Vishnu followed them. In this way the Lord gave His *darshan* to the prosperous king dwelling in Arunai. The king prostrated and prayed with fervour:

511. "O origin of everything, I surrender! O luminous one who can protect devotees on earth, I surrender! O Lord wearing the crescent moon and the Ganga in your pure, lustrous red matted hair, I surrender! O Immaculate one, bless me with a son to carry my sceptre and rule with justice."

512. "O handsome king, listen! I myself became your son. Hence, at the time of your death, I will perform the *Vedic* ritual for you." So saying, the One bearing the crescent moon blessed the king and returned to Kailash. Thereafter, King Vallalan firmly ruled the land with great virtue.

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Apart from this text, there is no other historical evidence to support the main contention of the story: that King Vallalan, in his efforts to conceive a son by being generous to all Siva devotees, obtained *darshan* of Lord Siva along with a promise that the Lord would personally conduct his funeral rites. However, there is incontestable proof that he was a major patron of the Arunachaleswarar Temple [see verse 466] since the additions he made are still very much in evidence. One of the inner *gopurams* bears his name and was constructed at his behest.

According to a traditional story which is well-known in Tiruvannamalai, King Vallalan, after building this *gopuram*, felt great pride in his achievement. Lord Arunachaleswarar, noticing that the feeling 'I have built this great *gopuram*', was strongly rooted inside him, decided to teach him a lesson. There is a ten-day festival in which Arunachaleswarar is paraded each day through the streets of Tiruvannamalai. In the first festival after the *gopuram* had been built, Arunachaleswarar initially refused to leave the temple via the

passage in the centre of the new *gopuram*. For the first nine days of the festival He always left the temple via a different route. On the tenth and last day the king realised his mistake and became more humble. He broke down and cried before the Lord, begging him to use the new *gopuram* for just one day. Lord Arunachaleswarar saw that the king's pride had abated and granted his request. This particular festival is still celebrated in Tiruvannamalai. To commemorate King Vallalan's attack of pride and his subsequent humility, Arunachaleswarar is only taken through the king's *gopuram* on the tenth and final day. On the other days other routes are used.

The results of King Vallalan's patronage can also be seen in other parts of the temple. There are several statues of him there, one showing him with a full beard, another showing him with one of his queens and a third as an old man. In the sixteen-pillared *mantapam* outside the temple there is another statue of one of his queens in which she is standing on a projecting platform, supported by lions' heads, with her hands folded in supplication towards an image of Siva and Parvati seated on a Nandi. He was also responsible for the Nandi which was installed to the east of the *Kiligopuram*. This particular Nandi is covered with a small *mantapam*. On the right hand pillar there is a carving of King Vallalan and on the left-hand pillar there is a carving of the *ganda berunda*, the imperial emblem of the Hoysalas.

In the concluding verse of the chapter, Siva undertakes to perform King Vallalan's funeral

rites for him, a task which is normally performed by the son of the deceased. This promise is still remembered in Tiruvannamalai and each year King Vallalan's funeral is re-enacted to commemorate the event. In the month of *Masi* the temple priests read out the news of King Vallalan's death to Arunachaleswarar. Then the image is carried in procession to the village of Pallikonda Pattu, about three kilometres from Tiruvannamalai, for the performance of the king's annual *sraddha* rites. The connection between Pallikonda Pattu and the life and death of King Vallalan is no longer known. It is unlikely that he lived there since his palace is thought to have been located about a mile to the east of the main temple. Until about a hundred years ago the last remains of what was reputed to be his palace could still be seen there, but around the turn of the century the land was levelled and cultivated and the railway line from Villupuram to Tirupathi now runs across the site.

Whether through divine intervention or mere accident, King Vallalan eventually fathered two sons, Virupaksha and Thipparasa, and a daughter whom he married to one of his ministers. Virupaksha succeeded to the throne after his father's death but he was unable to retain control of his inheritance. One of Vallalan's generals, Harihara, was sufficiently powerful to operate independently of the new king. With the aid of his two brothers, Kampa and Bukka, he defeated all the neighbouring kingdoms, founded the Vijayanagar empire, which included the Hoysala territories, and, under the title of Harihara I, became its first king.

### THE UNCERTAINTY PRINCIPLE?

When a friend noticed a horseshoe on his door-frame and asked Niels Bohr (a founder of Quantum Mechanics) whether he believed in it, he answered, "Of course not, but people say it helps even if you don't believe in it."

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# INQUIRY INTO THE 'I'

## A Garland of Sonnets

By O M (OLEG MOGILEVER, LENINGRAD, U.S.S.R.)

(Translated from the Russian by Nadhia Sutara)

### I

In the Cave of the Heart dwells the True I,  
The Source of glory, abiding eternally –  
Immortal, limitless Dawn,  
The call of the Eternal, the joy of humanity.

Here are destroyed the illusions of existence  
In the baring of the Ultimate Truth --  
All that is false is consumed in It.  
Marvellous is the shift from "I" to I.

When the star of personality arises,  
With "me" and "mine" repeating incessantly,  
Then the Source of Being can be traced.

Nature, Knowledge, Bliss:  
Onto the Path, Adept!  
Pursue the Self, knowing that Its legacy  
Radiates alone with a subtle Light.

### II

Radiating alone with a subtle Light  
Is HE - the Atman - concealed by the trinity of bodies ...  
Fearless, dispassionate, beyond reproach.  
Permanent is the victory of the one who attains Him.

-- "That great Healing, is it far off?" --  
-- "Avert thy gaze from outer affairs,  
Turn thy longing eye within --  
That healing frontier eternally awaits thee:

"Where the Goal is inestimable, and Totality the only Substance;  
In the flaming Cave ends the Way,  
Where complete is the deliverance from bondage.

"When the Light alone absorbs all diversity,  
And all dualities resolve,  
That single Essence shines forth without defect."

## III

Its Essence shining forth without defect,  
It welcomes home the seeker –  
The unbroken thread from age to age,  
Bestowed through the Wisdom Eternal.

O, Reality! Source and Substance of the Stream of Life Divine!  
O, imperishable seed of perishable life!  
O, THOU, the ruling depths within,  
Everything is only THEE, everywhere THEE Alone!

O, grant Thou the strength to renounce the glitter of the world,  
To cast aside the ever-arising *vasanas*,  
To free from the body the feeling of Thee – the I!

To THEE I hasten, to my Self – to the refuge of the Heart –  
To discern my Self in THEE, eternally subsistent:  
Blissful Consciousness of Being.

## IV

Blissful Consciousness of Being,  
Sat-Chit-Ananda - Triune Oneness,  
Gift of Wisdom in the death of self,  
The draught that grants resurrection.

O, Being of the Eternal Flame  
That burns with the stillness of the Primal Cause,  
That pulsates with the breath of "I" –  
Thou art Thyself ... Where art Thou, my birthright, my heritage?!

Arming myself with the Guru's Covenant –  
Holy Ramana, like unto the Light of the World –  
I set off on the Quest, my begging bowl full to the brim with Him.

This immemorial calling is unattainable  
So long as the One is not realised:  
Brahman is the sole Reality - THAT is the Truth Itself.

(To be continued)

**"We were always happy in the presence of Sri Bhagavan. We did everything in a sportive spirit. Fasting, doing *tapas*, looking on one's body as if it were dead, going round the Hill two or three times a day, and sleeping on the bare floor, were some of our sports."**

**– from Sri Kunju Swami's *Enadu Ninaivugal (Reminiscences)***

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## FROM ASHRAM ARCHIVES - 3

In this issue, we publish the reminiscences of "a disciple" in his own words, as recorded on 23-1-1930 by **Sri B.V. Narasimha Swami**. The devotee's name could not be traced.

- Editor

**A**T the outset, I frankly confess my incapability and littleness to come forward to give my observation about such a great soul as Sri Ramana Maharishigal of Arunachala. To understand the greatness of any saint is not an easy task as some erroneously imagine. Greatness as the majority of people think does not consist in any novelty or complete abstinence from the routine work of one's daily life such as eating, drinking and sleeping. Nor is miracle-performance at all counted as an indispensable quality of greatness.

As a result of my 4 years close movements with the Maharishi, I found the virtue of a genuine *equality* to be most predominant in him. His equality extends impartially towards humanity as well as to animals and to birds. He is ready to clear the doubts of all sincere seekers of religion on all practical points in the fields of philosophy regardless of the fact that he is young or old. There is no such difference in his vision. As an illustration we can note the attitude and kindness he shows alike to both animals and to ourselves. I have seen animals like cows, dogs, etc., coming and taking food at his hands. It is really an enviable position. As far as my observation and experience go, I have not seen him showing any special love towards anybody whether he is a frequent visitor or a sincere worker or a casual one. In his vision all are equal, the sinner and the

pure man. Yes, how can he see any difference! He sees not the body as the self but sees the real Self i.e., omnipresent and omnipotent *Paramatma* and its oneness in all.

Another quality which I have often noted in him is leniency towards humanity as a whole. Indeed we are fortunate enough in having such a great soul so easily accessible. He is so lenient as to oblige everybody by taking something of the countless offerings that are brought by the numerous visitors from all parts of India even at the cost of his health. His perfect non-intervention in any *controversial* questions, his *promptness*, his *kindness* are some other qualities I have observed in him.

Maharishi has attained the highest state in meditation called *Sahaja Samadhi*. ( சஹஜ சமாதி ). *Sahaja Samadhi*, in the words of the dualist (devotee) is a state in which the *Jiva* ( பசு ) has totally resigned itself in submission to the will of *Siva* ( பதி ). In the words of the monist (*Advaita*) it means the state in which the lower self ( அஹம்சாரம் ) is completely annihilated and the higher Self ( பரமாத்மா ) has taken its place instead. I had the good fortune and opportunity of watching him many times when he is sitting with his eyes fixed like a *statue for 2 or 3 hours together*. How inspiring the scene is. Then we are certainly given an

uplift from our ignorance i.e. ( தேகாத்ம புத்தி ). Only persons who have enjoyed this calm and holy atmosphere can know its immense value. Though he uses the ordinary language like 'I am doing this or that' etc., here the meaning of 'I' is a quite different one. The 'I' is very elastic. To the saints 'I' means not only this body but also the omnipresent Self in which all these material things and *jivas* have their existence. Whereas to us 'I' denotes the body alone, in their case the 'I' is expanded, but in us it is very much limited. As we are ever conscious of our body either material or *sukshma* in our waking, dreaming, or sleeping state, so also *Maharishi* is ever conscious of his *superconscious* state ( துரிய நிலை ) whether he be in *jagrat*, *swapna* or *sushupthi* state or engaged in some other activities. His state, in short, is the state in which the self has attained its oneness with the universal Self ( பரமாத்ம ). There is no such thing as an individual ego in him. Hence it is rightly said in the scriptures that great men are equivalent to God in their nature. Verily *Maharishi* who is always in *Sahaja* state is God. How fortunate we must be in having our God in flesh and bones in our midst.

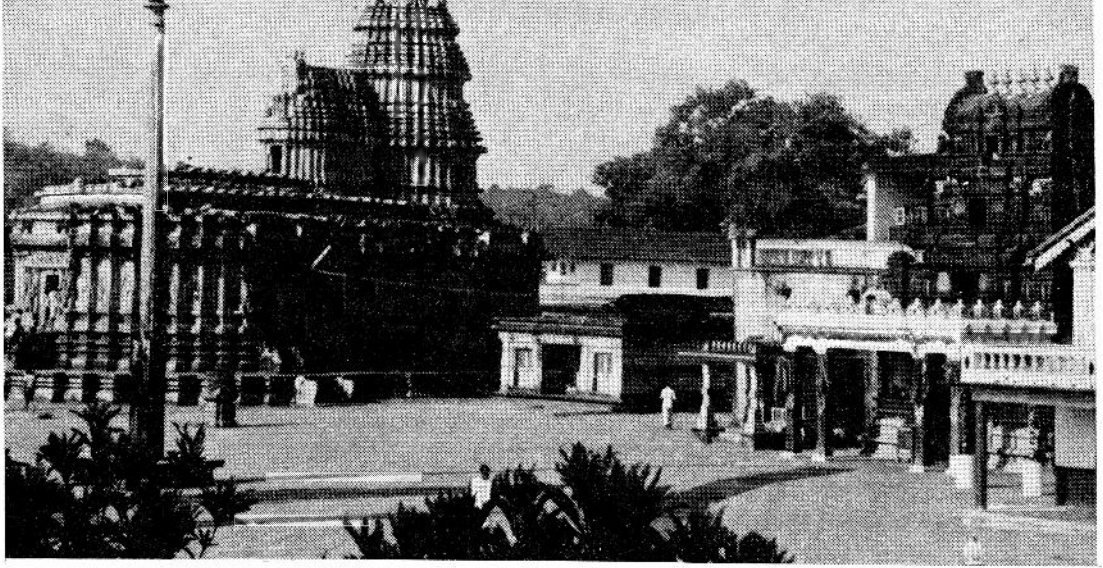
The peculiarities of his teachings as I found are two. The one is his teachings on the connection between Heart and Mind in the 5th chapter of the *Ramana Gita*. The other is the method he prescribes for "*Jnana Vichara*". This is quite a new and an improved method in the field of philosophy. This method if properly understood gives an easy clue to all arguments discussed in the scriptures, especially in *Advaita* philosophy and it is easily practicable in our routine daily life. Those who want to know more of his teachings, let them please refer to the *Ramana Gita*, *Ullathu Narpathu* and *Upadesa Saram*.

The physical personality of *Maharishi* is itself very sweet to look at, gracious and a source of inspiration to all religious minded

and pure people. Especially when he stands with his *kamandalu* in his left hand and staff in his right, he looks exactly like *Dhandapani* (God Subramania). I remember to have heard from people who frequent his Ashram express the same opinion. The most striking feature of this physical structure which even the casual visitor ought to observe, is his *ever-shining* eyes. They can be compared to powerful electric lights that shed always a shower of cool and gracious looks upon everybody who comes before him!

The Halo of *Maharishi* is very effective and its influence on all of us who go in his presence is great. Whenever I sit in his presence, I enjoy a perfect calmness of mind and body. Many good and elevated thoughts spontaneously spring in me. I enjoy a certain amount of pleasure in his presence which cannot be in the least compared with the pleasures derived from any material objects. Each time I come here, I experience the same state and hence I have reason to think that I had a lift from my ignorance. In his presence I forget all my worries, anxieties and home thoughts. Meditation in his presence is easier to me. But when I sit on *asana* at home I have to struggle hard with this wavering mind. It is as if it were my little self fears and tries to disappear at the very sight of the *Maharishi*.

I am unable to explain why I am so much attached to *Maharishi*. To me it seems he is all in all. This whole world with its temptations and paraphernalia is a zero to me before the *Maharishi*. One smile of his is worth the whole world. Though he is silent, yet he teaches volumes through his look, casual talk and by his example. For a முமுக்ஷு (mumukshu) one glance of his is enough to cross the ocean of *samsara*. If any one is desirous of getting the *darshan* of his *Ishtadeva* in flesh and blood, let him come to Arunachala. There is the Allah, the Christ, the Vishnu, the Subramania -- all combined in one person. *That is our Maharishi!*



*Sri Sarada Temple at Sringeri Mutt*

## UNFORGETTABLE MEETING

By V.G.

**T**HE SRINGERI Sarada Peetham was founded by Adi Shankara with Sri Sureshvaracharya as the first Pontiff. A lineage of illustrious sages has adorned this sacred seat, spiritually guiding humanity through the centuries. The 35th Pontiff of Sringeri Mutt, *His Holiness Sri Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Swamigal* attained *Mahasamadhi* some months ago.

When I had the opportunity to meet him, in the company of Sri A.R. Natarajan and family I found his simplicity exemplary and his graciousness limitless. I feel that the best way I could pay homage to this illustrious *Acharya*, the ever-gracious *Mahasannidhanam*, is to recount what happened while we were with His Holiness.

The *Mahasannidhanam*, as His Holiness is referred to reverentially, had a severe heart attack and hence was under the constant and immediate care of doctors. He was advised to avoid the strain involved in talking, walking



*His Holiness Abhinava Vidya Tirtha Swami*



and similar other exertions. When we were taken to the quiet place where the *Mahasannidhanam* was seated, there was a very old couple with him. The old man was sickly and bent even in the sitting posture. His wife was narrating to His Holiness how her husband was suffering from this and that illness, how it was difficult for her to look after him and that *Mahasannidhanam* should bless them both and save them from hardship. *Mahasannidhanam*'s response was magnificent: "Oh! He has these problems! It is really painful and difficult to undergo such suffering. Take this *mantra akshada* [sanctified rice soaked in turmeric-juice]. Don't worry; everything will be all right!" The old lady took the *prasad* and sat at a distance. Again, she came up to him and repeated the same words of woe. His Holiness also responded with the same intensity, repeating the above words and also giving the *mantra akshada*. This happened nearly five times, continuously, without interval. For an onlooker like me it was irritating. But there was not a trace of irritation, monotony, boredom or diminution of concern on the face of His Holiness. It was amazing to witness his capacity to be tolerant and yet gracious! I remembered the saying that *Mahatmas* are like mirrors and reflect the same intensity of approach that is shown towards them! A demonstration of purity, tolerance, grace, compassion and intense spiritual relationship, indeed!

Next, the *Mahasannidhanam* referred to the shrine of the Papanasana Linga in a cave on a hillock near Mysore and narrated the following:

"Some thirty years back we were going on a *yatra*. When we were close to that hill I felt like going there and so we deviated and walked a few miles to reach the hill. Climbing up a particular place in the cave, the passage is so narrow you will have to bend and crawl to go in. Once you are through you reach a vast space where a *Linga* is placed. Behind the *Linga* there is a raised ground from where water sprung up and fell on the *Linga* like a

## SMALL IS GREAT

By Professor K. Swaminathan

Once long ago the fingers five  
Egocentric began to strive  
For primacy of place.  
They could not run a race,  
For only feet and noses run.  
Poor things they could not even walk.  
But to-day by God's good grace  
They gained the gift of speech.  
With words they carried on  
their quarrel

Which has for all of us a moral.

The middle giant told the thumb,  
"You are stumpy, you are short.  
Shut up. Be quiet and keep mum,  
Lazy, clumsy, lump, be dumb".

The dwarf shot out the quick retort,  
"Opposing me, you fellows work,  
You would, but for me, shirk all work".

The forefinger proclaimed aloud,  
"I point to people and feel proud.  
To me alone is it allowed  
To humble others at my will."

The ring-finger spoke louder still.  
"Fie, fie on such debasing skill,  
By honouring me they honour you  
To me all royal honour is due  
Me only they adorn with gold."

The little finger meekly mumbled,  
"In Your grand presence  
I am humbled.

How can I contend with you  
In action, bulk or tallness!  
You are my superiors it is true.  
How can I deny my smallness?

But then when people worship God  
You stay behind me, over-awed  
Daring to look at His Majesty  
I am only eye and no hand  
In silent prayer, praise, bliss I stand."

small waterfall, forming a natural *abhisheka*. I had heard about it long back and hence wanted to do my *sandhya puja* there. But when we reached the interior of the cave we found that water was not flowing, though the moisture of water was visible on the surface of the earth. How to do the worship? For a moment there was hesitation. Then, spontaneously, I started chanting *Purusha Sooktam*. By the time the chanting was concluded, water gushed forth from the raised ground and poured over the *Lingam* to our great delight, I had never before heard or read anywhere that *Purusha Sooktam* had such tremendous power!

"Next time, some years ago, we were passing that side. Coming to know about the above details from me, people numbering 30 or 40, following me, wanted to go into the *guha*. We all went. Again, it was dry! Now I kept quiet; but the *bhaktas* in one voice, as it were, chanted *Purusha Sooktam* with great fervour. Lo! Again the miracle happened! Water simply poured forth and fell as a small falls on the Holy *Shiva Linga*. We all performed *puja* and returned. For the second time, the uniqueness of *Purusha Sooktam* was demonstrated on that day too. The Lord's Grace!"

The words of His Holiness narrating the whole episode in his lilting Tamil is still lingering in my ears. The facial expression of the *Mahasannidhanam* was that of an innocent child, filled with wonder and awe! How simple and gracious His Holiness looked!

Crowning the above two anecdotes occurred the most remarkable incident. A middle-aged man, perhaps some junior official touring that area for inspection, suddenly burst in and stood in front of His Holiness. He reported that he was going to perform the sacred-thread ceremony of his son on a particular day. He did not even, if I remember aright, have the courtesy to reverentially seek the blessings of the *Mahasannidhanam*; he gave the information in a casual way. His

## EFFULGENCE<sup>1</sup>

Arunachala, divine effulgence!  
You, the eternal throb within the  
deathless Heart,  
Stand moveless before the world's  
eyes.

You stand there mute, mysterious  
sphinx-like  
You who for ever whisper the  
secret of secrets  
As "I-I" in the cave of the Lotus-heart.

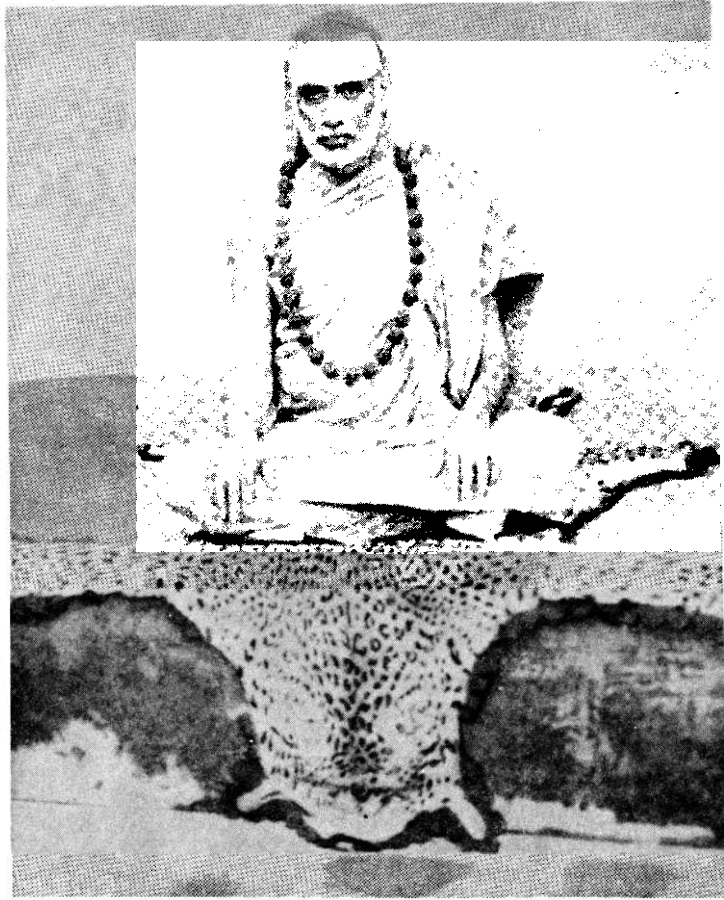
Ramana felt that throb,  
heard that whisper  
And knew that You are not sand  
and stone  
But are Life, the Lord Himself.

Arunachala! You are the Luminiscence  
That illumines the universe,  
The crimson Incandescence  
which burns up the illusion of  
*samsara*,  
The flaming Infinite which awed even  
Brahma and Vishnu.

You are the Creator, Sustainer and  
Destroyer  
Of the Universe, of life, the world  
and *maya*  
I meditate on You who alone  
Can root out my "I" and  
reveal your "I-I".

<sup>1</sup>Based on the Telugu poem: *Jyoti*  
by DR. O. RAMACHANDRAIAH

Holiness was happy to hear that. With a gracious smile he gave him *mantra akshada* and blessed him and the *vatu*. I was, again, amazed to see the Swami's magnanimity, which looked million times magnified in front of the pettiness and callousness arrogantly demonstrated by the '*bhakta*'!



*His Holiness Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami*

It was not all!

This man did not leave; and kept standing in front of His Holiness. Suddenly, again, in a casual tone, he asked the *Mahasannidhanam* who his *Guru* was. Such a question is not permitted in the *Shastras* to be put to a *sannyasin*, not to speak of the head of such an eminent spiritual Centre! I felt how impertinent that question was and feared that it might annoy His Holiness. But I was surprised by the reaction of His Holiness! *Mahasannidhanam* as I previously said, was under strict medical advice not to get up, thereby straining himself. No sooner did the word 'Guru' strike his ears, his face became serious, mellow, full of devotional fervour; and like a rubber ball he jumped from the seat and approached the wall where huge oil paintings of the previous *Acharyas* were hung. He reverentially went in front of the painting of

His Holiness Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami and raised both his hands above his head in salutation. In a voice choked with *guru-bhakti*, he said: "This is my *Acharya*, Sri Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Swami". He then moved and stood in front of the next picture; and again in a mood and tone full of devotional ecstasy, said: "This is my *Paramacharya*, Sri Sri Nrisimha Bharati Swami." After standing a few minutes like that he came back, face glowing with spiritual ecstasy, as if he had met them in flesh and blood!

That day, I realised what was meant by *guru-bhakti*! Intensity of *bhakti*, total dedication and steadfast surrender are the marks of *guru-bhakti*. Henceforth, I will never be casual in referring to my *Guru*; my whole being will be involved! Great *Mahatmas* teach through practice, not by precept alone! And how marvellously they teach!

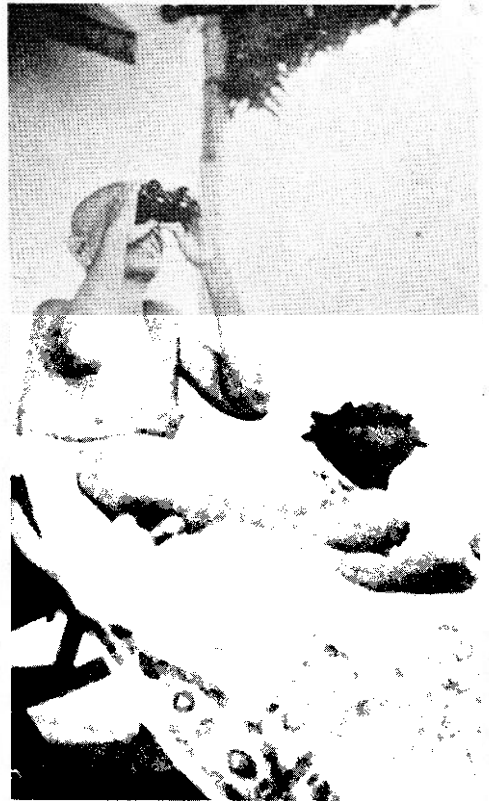
# ARUNACHALA: EGOLOGY AND ECOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

By ANNAMALAI REFORESTATION SOCIETY

“WATER which rises up from the sea, rains on earth and finds its way back to the sea, defying all obstacles. So too the embodied ego arising in you and bound by action, is destined to reach you, O Arunachala, thou hill on earth, Ocean of bliss”.<sup>2</sup>

Neither the Self nor one's body is in need of Liberation. In between rises the ego freely aware at one level and tied to the body at another. The body is innocent and efficient. Within limits, it adapts to a varying environment; it grows and when hurt, heals itself. The ego, when conscious of its Source, remains subdued. The ego, when not so, destroys the body and the environment without usefully destroying itself. *Vichara* then is *ego*-logy; the ego in quest of its source. Ecology is the natural consequence of this. It is the art of living happily and in harmony with all life on earth.

Lord Arunachala, the Hill, declares this same truth, “He who thinks of me, gazes at me or resides in my precincts is granted Liberation without *Diksha* or drudgery. Though fiery in form, I stand as a hill of contracted energy, so that mortal life may be sustained. Many are the enjoyments secreted in me and which flow out for the joy of all”.<sup>3</sup> Even on a physical level, the hill, any hill, symbolises height or potential energy, and is the basis for retention and efficient distribution of life-giving water to the levels below. The sage, the *Egologist*, is the perfect *Ecologist*. He has minimal needs, infinite patience; he conserves the environment and promotes the



welfare of all. One need not wait for 'sagehood' to understand and thus respect Ecology. The demands of hunger and thirst of the body are uncomplicated. It is the ego which dictates its own peculiar 'tastes', of food and drink, often to the detriment of the body's dynamic balance. Tied as we are to the body's

<sup>1</sup> -logy: study of; science of,

<sup>2</sup> Sri Ramana's *Arunachala Ashtakam* (v. 8)

<sup>3</sup> *Arunachala Maahaatmyam*

simple needs, we are in deep and continuing debt to Mother Earth who meets our needs.

Earth is Gaia, a living self-regulating being, swimming in the cosmic environment. The Universe is now being seen as a self-organising principle. Who sees this? Man! Using his self-aware intelligence. Alas! He views his self-aware intelligence as a useful but chance product of material evolution. To him, the universe is self-organizing but not 'self-aware' as he is. Can a son annul the parents' marriage because he could not be there to register it! Even if our self-awareness were a product of evolution, it is the subservient 'neuron' of Self-aware Cosmic Being!

On the screen of Awareness the Seer and the Seen arise. From the Seen, the Seer-ego constructs models of evolution of the Seen. The universe of Seen is as real as the Seer-ego that declares residence in it. For the ego-hero of this 'movie', paradigms of biological and cosmic evolutions are factual, real and themselves evolving. The ego's discovery of the living cell, the embodied gene, has enabled the view that all of life is but a commune. Worm, bacterium, bird or beast, we are all but vast communities of cells 'swimming' in Earth-environment, multiplying and competing for Earth's nutrients. Earth too is a giant 'cell' swimming in the ocean of the Sun's energy. Green forest cover is the sole means by which Mother Earth traps this energy, this *Prana*, and distributes it to all life. Soil is Earth's epidermis. Deprived of a minimum skin-cover, Mother Earth, like a man severely burnt, can heal no more. Her forest clothing prevents soil-loss.

"The forest is a society of living things, the greatest of which is the tree. Its value depends upon its permanence, its capacity to renew itself, to store water, provide Nature's most valuable ground cover, and build up to a great height, stores of one of the most adaptable of raw materials: wood. As long as a soil is covered with forest, its humus is maintained. In the forest the processes of decay and growth always balance one another. The

## A DOSE TO A DOZING SOUL

By Swami Nirvedananda

Why do you weep, my friend:  
The Goal is not in sight?  
The sun is bound the northward round,  
So muster courage and march onward!

What ails thee, O friend;  
'Dark night of the soul'?  
Then search no more in corners dark  
But enter thou the open glades.

Atman's doubtless all.  
'Inside'; 'Outside' Two?  
This truth shines as One, not three,  
If you as simple Being be!

forest manures itself and with the help of earthworms and other animals distributes this manure through the upper layers of the soil. Everything is done by nature quietly and efficiently. No artificial fertilizers, no selective weed-killers, no pesticides and no machinery are needed in the household of the natural forest. In that vast evergreen forest Nature works in perfect rhythm... A teeming life goes on in the forest without any of the problems that confront mankind in similar circumstances. There are no dust-bins to empty, no water-borne sewage, no town-clerks or city-councillors or armies of officials, with more and more rates to pay, no ever growing burden of debt. The forest solves its own sanitary problems by direct action while man evades them. In its economy it perfectly combines Capitalism, Communism and Social Credit and instead of building up debt it stores up real wealth -- the wealth of the woods."<sup>4</sup>

The forest is a vital factor in the formation of rain. A forested hill is Nature's sponge that soaks in all the rain water. The green canopy

<sup>4</sup> *My Life, My Trees* (p.55) - see *Book Reviews*.

breaks the fall of the rain drops; the ground cover absorbs much water; the soil well aerated by the searching roots and worms, absorbs the excess water. This water is pumped up the living roots to the leaves, thus enabling the soil to retain even more water. The excess begins to flow down-hill, but the standing trees break the speed and minimize erosion of soil and nutrient. The hill is the source of rivers and springs that sustain life in the plains below. The greater the wooded cover, the greater is the 'sponge-effect' and the more perennial are the streams, springs, tanks and wells.

The *Arunachala Ashtaka* [attributed to Adi Sankara] declares the Arunachala Hill to be of the form of *Sri Chakra*, thus linking its spiritual and earthly significance. The *Arunachala Puranam* devotes a whole chapter to describing the tanks and springs surrounding the Hill. The major *Tirthas* were in the eight cardinal directions, with minor ones in between. Charged by underground springs, these *Tirthas* were also the catchment area for the many streams from the water-sheds of the broad-based hill. Sri, Seyar, Punya and Sona were rivers flowing respectively to the North, North-west, West and South of the Hill. The presence of forest cover ensured the stability of these water-systems. The *Purana* also speaks of the residents of Arunachala taking pride and initiative in maintaining the

wealth given *gratis* by the thickly forested Hill. The Hill was not home to the recluse alone. Even, "boar, bear, parrot, deer and elephants converge in hordes upon this Hill of streams"<sup>5</sup>.

Resplendent even today as the spiritual Hill attracting aspirants from far and wide, the barren physical hill faithfully mirrors modern man's neglect of Nature's fundamental role. Indiscriminate felling and burning of the hill has led to serious erosion. The bared rocks bear testimony to trends afar: man's lop-sided pursuits and extravagance often disrupting the integral web of Nature on which he is actually dependent.

All is not lost. Every clod of earth is 'alive' and precious. When protected, bare rock and soil spring to green life. If Arunachala represents the convergence of all spiritual disciplines, He is also the radiator of earthly prosperity. Let us clothe Him in green splendour and thus usher in the greening of the planet too! The small society<sup>6</sup> of devotees of Arunachala Ramana which has come forward for this, needs all the encouragement of enlightened men.

<sup>5</sup> Jnana Sambandhar's *Annaamalai Thevaaram* (Jnaanat Tiralaai; Uruvil thigazhum)

<sup>6</sup> Annamalai Reforestation Society, III Street, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603.

"I was the guest of my friend. One day I happened to use one of the silly adjectives such as 'heavenly' or 'incredible'. My hostess interrupted me suddenly, and said: "You should not use words that you cannot possibly mean. I am sure you know that words have a deeper meaning in themselves than the one which we thoughtlessly give them."

Later I discovered that her own, at times extremely successful, way of getting at the roots of things consisted in always trying to avoid the use of the words in their wrong sense. She never used them irreverently, but was always anxious to remember that a word is both a symbol and a centre of spiritual power in itself. I began to watch myself and to be careful in the use of adjectives -- the 'most incredible' and 'heavenly' were eliminated from my vocabulary!"

— Rom Landau in his book: *God is My Adventure*

# APEETAKUCHAMBA STAVA OF APPAYA DIKSHITA

Translated By DR. G. MISHRA

**A**PPAYA Dikshita was a distinguished poet, philosopher and saint who spent most of his life in Vellore, a town eighty kilometres north of Tiruvannamalai. He was probably born in the first half of the sixteenth century in a village near Arni, a small town to the north of Tiruvannamalai. His parents, who did *tapas* for six years to get a son, named him Vinayaka Subrahmanya Sarma since they believed that Siva had given them a son as a reward for their *tapas*. At home he was called 'Appa' or 'Appaya' and posterity now knows him by this affectionate nickname.

Appaya was a child prodigy who mastered all the philosophical knowledge of his age in a few short years of study. He was so talented that he was appointed as a court poet in Vellore while he was still in his teens. His patron, a king called Chinna Bomma, was so pleased with his scholarly and poetic production that on one occasion he bathed him in gold. Many other South Indian kings who were aware of his scholarly and saintly reputation tried to woo him away from the court at Vellore, but he refused all offers and remained loyal to his first patron.

Appaya Dikshita is primarily remembered as an exponent of *Sivadvaitya*, a philosophical fusion of Saivism and *Advaita*, but he was also a prolific writer on other subjects such as *Advaita*, *Mimamsa*, rhetoric and grammar. Over a hundred written works have been attributed to him.

He lived in an age characterised by intense hostility between rival Saivite and Vaishnavite sects. Appaya was a Saivite himself, expounding Saivism in a vigorous way, but he had a broad-minded and eclectic approach to religion and philosophy and eschewed the rancorous, ill-mannered evangelism that characterised many of his contemporaries. Many miraculous incidents are attributed to him, many of them featuring Tatacharya, a hostile Vaishnavite philosopher who spent many years attempting to undermine and discredit Appaya and his works. Appaya, if one believes the traditional legendary accounts, needed a succession of miraculous interventions to keep his life and reputation intact.

Appaya died at the age of seventy-three, apparently in similar circumstances to Manikavachagar. He simply vanished into thin air while standing before the image of Nataraja in the main temple at Chidambaram.

Appaya made a few tours of his local area to propound Saivite teachings, but he never ventured far from home. On one of these tours he came to Tiruvannamalai, but he was unable to continue because he contracted a high fever there. In order to relieve himself of his ailment, he wrote a poem to Apeetakuchamba in Sanskrit, asking for her assistance. Apeetakuchamba is the Sanskrit name of Unnamulai, the name by which Parvati, the consort of Siva, is known in Tiruvannamalai. According to the local tradition, Parvati did *tapas* at Arunachala, attained union with

Arunachala-Siva, and thereafter assumed half of his physical form. Iconographical representations of the union show the right half of Siva's body joined to the left half of Parvati's. In their fused androgynous form, Parvati is

regarded as the *Shakti* aspect of Arunachala-Siva. It was thus fitting and proper that Appaya Dikshita should pray to her and ask for relief.

### Apeetakuchamba Stava

O Mother Apeetakucha, I dwell upon your form which is the outflow from the ocean of bliss towards your Lord, he who bears the nectar-ray moon upon his head. To the eyes of the devotees, that form is the nectar-twined wick and the nectar-sprinkled cluster of flowers on the bower of the creepers that spring from bliss. (1)

Your foot, which always rains showers of nectar, has the attractive delicate hue of the full-blown red lily. I am pained by this ailment, this faint-causing fever. O Mother Apeetakucha, place your foot at least once for a moment, upon my head. (2)

You who are honoured by Arunachala! Your glances, cool as the light of a crore of moons, are laden with the springs of your causeless grace. They sprinkle the powder of camphor upon all the points of the compass. O Mother, please bathe me in those glances. (3)

O Mother, I have pain caused by a high fever. Let me see you before me just for a moment. I shall then dip down into the nectar-flow from the light of your feet and immediately be relieved of this bodily pain. (4)

Brahma has ordained that I should have deep fainting fits on account of an accumulation of different fevers. O Apeetakucha, by playfully waving the

golden lotus fan in your hand, waft towards me a fragrant odour and thereby give me a momentary consolation. (5)

Your Lord, Arunachala, has poison in his throat; in his hair there are poison-spitting serpents; on either side of him there are terrifying divine beings. Were it not for your presence near him, O Mother, who could approach or serve him? (6)

In the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe, your presence is his *shakti*. It is the *siddhi* which always resides in his hand. You are his divine consort in all his enjoyments. O Apeetakuchamba, I do not know what he would be without you. (7)

You are the witness of the terrible dance of dissolution, remaining even after the demise of Brahma, Vishnu and other animate and inanimate objects. You are the one who liberates from the meshes of *samsara*. I bow to you, O Apeetakucha, who are the consciousness (*samvit*) born out of the experience of *Brahman*. (8)

Because of the gracious glances of the Mother, all ailments will be far away from whosoever recites continuously and with great fervour this praise of Apeetakuchamba. (9)



# THANK YOU FOR EVERYTHING, LUCY MA!

By V. GANESAN



Lucy Ma

ON DECEMBER 31, 1989, Lucy Cornelissen -- "Lucy Ma" to us, the Ashramites -- "went gently into the night". She did not "rage against the ending of the light". Why should she? It was the end of the shadow, not the light. Her *Sadguru* Ramana had shown her that the Self, one's own true Being, is eternal Light. So she went gently. After ninety beautiful years on earth, her last day here was also the last day of the year.

Lucy Ma came from a land which has produced great Indologists, like Max Mueller and Heinrich Zimmer. In earlier times, Arthur Schopenhauer, who saw the world as a Will and an Idea, lost his heart to Indian metaphysics. "If I were to be reborn," said he, "I would like it to be in India." Goethe, Germany's Shakespeare, was enraptured by Kalidasa's famous play and sang in praise of its heroine Sakuntala. One may see in Lucy Ma's return to the Source the restoration of her Fatherland's unity.

This love of India was in Lucy's blood too. Her mother was an Indologist of impressive erudition. Young Lucy often saw "Mutti" poring over huge tomes. One day the girl was struck by the jacket of a book on her mother's table and opened it at random. This book fascinated her before she read a single word

of it. A page in it had a strange picture which transformed her all at once. She lost all sense of her body and surroundings. All that remained was an awareness of immense joy. After a while her mother came in, shook the girl and brought her back to herself. The girl pointed to the picture and asked. "Mutti, what is that?" The mother said: "My dear child! This is Siva, the great god of India. There are three main gods for them: Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. Brahma creates, Vishnu preserves, while Siva destroys to make way for re-creation. See, how fierce Siva looks as He dances on the cremation ground! But to His devotees He is sweet and gentle like a mother". Precocious young Lucy was thrilled! From that moment she became a devotee of Siva at heart. It was years later that she realised that the trance-like state induced in her by that picture was very deep meditation, which comes but rarely to people, what we call 'samadhi'.

Siva became for her a living god. During many of her wakeful moments she saw the fierce-looking figure dancing before her mind's eye. Far from resisting that experience, she revelled in it. It took her to a wonderland, more real than Alice's!

Lucy was a beautiful girl. Left to herself, she would have remained single, wedded only

to Siva. But "the stars that govern our conditions" decided otherwise and lovely Lucy married and became Frau Lucy Cornelssen.

Lucy took to writing, or rather was called to that vocation. Those were days when serious writers could just manage to keep the wolf from the door. "I was always poor!" said Lucy Ma once. But that was *sadhana* in a rich sense. Did she not in later years become a very articulate, highly polished writer, producing such well-received books as *Hunting the I* and very perceptive German translations of Sri Bhagavan's works?

The Second World War broke out in 1939, which did not spare a single household. "Wars always devour the best", says a German proverb. The best in physical strength and valour, in patriotism and heroism. The best-minded Germans, like the great novelist Thomas Mann, left the Fatherland reluctantly and in disgust. Bertolt Brecht, the dramatist and passionate pacifist, dared the warmongers who burned his inflammable books, to burn him, and moved from one country to another to escape the evil of war. Einstein, the greatest German since Goethe, had left the country earlier, an exit which was later to prove disastrous to those who made him quit. Many stayed and suffered; Lucy was one of them. As she had already found a measure of inward poise, the war did not touch her inmost being. She quietly retired to a life of solitude in a little hut in the midst of a dense forest.

Siva had come to Lucy in her childhood. Now Arunachala Siva Ramana came, for she was ready to receive and spread His teaching.

One night Lucy had lost the way to her hut and was groping around in the dark. Weary and dispirited, Lucy was about to collapse, when she saw a dot of light at some distance. When she reached the spot, she saw that it was another hut. The door was open. Lucy was not the kind of person to walk into a house unannounced. But on that night, she neither knocked nor called out. She just walked in. On a table near the candle, whose

**Many the Paths that lead  
To the Mountain Peak  
One the Moon that shines  
Alike on all who seek.**

-- Anonymous Japanese verse.

little flame had guided her to that hut, there stood the photograph of the head and shoulders of a man whose eyes shone with a rare lustre. Lucy saw the photo and stood still, a monument of Bliss. It was no Medusa who petrified her but a Maharshi who 'vivified' her. A German philosopher said "To philosophise is to vivify". She had made no effort, yet the sage had made her alive, as no mere philosopher could. It was the sage who looked upon Arunachala Hill not as sand and stone but as more alive than flesh and blood. Lucy found it strange that she now felt fully alive as never before and yet her body was nowhere.

The owner of the hut walked in after a while. She was surprised to see a youthful lady standing entranced and statue-like, a look of rapture on her radiant face. She shook Lucy and brought her out of the trance.

Lucy learnt that the person was the lady's spiritual Master, that He lived at the foot of Arunachala, the Hill of the Holy Beacon, in South India, and was called Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Not much later a copy of Heinrich Zimmer's book "*Der Weg zum Selbst*" (The Way to the Self) in which the great Indologist had written a glowing account of the Sage's life and teachings and had made first-class translations of some of His works, "somehow found its way into my deep forest solitude." That photograph and that book totally transformed Lucy's life. The Devotee of Siva had found her *Sadguru!*

Lucy Ma wrote in *The Mountain Path* in 1979: "I should say that it was my spiritual earnestness which brought about my acquaintance with Sri Ramana Maharshi through that

she was ready to leave, news came of His *Ma-hasamadhi*. She was just not destined to see her *Sadguru* in the body. True, He often said that He was not the body, but she was sad.

## SMILE OF PEACE A TRIBUTE TO LUCY MA

By Joan Greenblatt

There is a calmness in the air. It is four in the afternoon and villagers walk slowly down the Chengam road on their way home. We are on our way to visit a rare being known simply as 'Lucy Ma'. We enter her compound and look up at the peak of Arunachala. The peak steals its way into Lucy Ma's cottage through her front window. It reminds us how they have merged into one. Through this tiny window we see the brilliant orange robes and upright figure of our dear friend. She is waiting for us with dignity and presence. She greets us at the door, rewarding us with one of her remarkably vibrant smiles. It is a smile of peace, emanating from years of lone *tapas* and purity of purpose. In itself it is enough to lift the heart. We talk quietly. I sit on the bed next to her and Matthew, my husband, sits in front of her on the only chair available. The cottage is bare except for a few pictures, some simple necessities and a number of books. Her austere and simple life is a reflection of her inner mindfulness. We talk of many things -- she tells us ancient spiritual stories from her vast storehouse of parables, or interprets Bhagavan's teachings in a new and thoroughly original manner. At other times she relates tales of her



Lucy Cornelissen

early days, during the war, when she lived in her beloved cottage in the woods. Whatever the topic, it always comes from her own experience, clothed in humility and purpose. She never minces words and always appreciates when we speak directly and honestly, whatever it may be. And when we need it she scolds us with motherly charm. We always feel that Arunachala-

Shiva has merged itself in her being for she radiates the same majesty, rocklike determination and tender grace as the Holy Hill.

It will soon be five years that we crossed the threshold of that modest cottage. At times it feels like ages, while at other times it seems like only yesterday. When someone of 'Lucy Ma's' greatness lives in the world they bring with it a wonderful atmosphere which long outlives the physical body. Although we know the flowing orange robes and magical smile of 'Lucy Ma' will greet us no more when we return to Arunachala, she continues to live in our heart and in the hearts of all whom she has touched. Her presence merged with the hill itself, and her *tapas* at Arunachala remains on, living and pulsating, for all aspirants of 'Truth and Wisdom' to draw from.

book. I was able to perceive that Ramana was an authentic representative of the lofty Upanishadic Wisdom in our own days."

Lucy started saving money to go to South India to be at the feet of her Master. Just when

However, she soon braced herself and her grief was transmuted into energy for action. She resolved to bring out accurate translations in German of Bhagavan Ramana's works, and towards this end she made up her

mind to acquire adequate proficiency in Tamil. By the time she left for India in 1956, she had a good passive knowledge of Tamil and had put together a manuscript of her German translation of His works. She said that she completed the draft translation "in a matter of weeks". But then deeply meditative preparation had lasted years.

Lucy Ma came to Sri Ramanasramam because it was there that her Master had lived and sanctified every inch of the Holy Hill and the Ashram by His footsteps. She would place her manuscripts at His feet and also seek confirmation from His disciples that her translation was flawless and worthy of the original.

At the Ashram she got an excellent guide. T.K. Sundaresa Iyer -- popularly called TKS -- was well-read in English, Tamil and Sanskrit and had a deep understanding of Sri Bhagavan's teachings. Affectionately called "Sundaresa" by Bhagavan, he was held in esteem by everyone in the Ashram. Lucy found in TKS a match for her Teutonic diligence and thoroughness.

When her translations were printed -- in three volumes -- Lucy Ma in characteristic humility, had hidden herself behind the *nom-de-plume* "Satyamayi". Lucy Ma and TKS allowed me the privilege of assisting them in this project.

Lucy Ma, lover of peace and loneliness, spent more than seven months in sylvan surroundings at "Nirudhi Lingam" shrine on the hill-round route. It was here that Nayana (Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni) had done *tapasya* before he met the young Swami whom he recognised and named as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. Now around this sacred spot has sprung up a colony of very earnest *sadhakas*, deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan, most of them from West Germany.

Lucy Ma kept shuttling between Germany and Tiruvannamalai. In response to my humble request and Ashram's invitation, she finally came to Arunachala forever in the

70's. Her daughter, Heike Becker-Foss, kept coming from Germany to spend some time with her mother, but Lucy Ma stayed put in Arunachala. Heike, daughter of her mother, tall and regal, bright and sensitive, wrote of the Ashram: "It is another world than we are used to live in; strange and yet, as if it were, the real world of the Soul, seemingly lost since centuries, yet never forgotten!"

Lucy Ma lived, till her last day, in a little apartment offered by me in front of the Ashram. Once during my long absence from the town, she had arranged for her permanent stay in an Old Women's Home in Germany. When I returned, she divulged her plan to me. With tears in my eyes I pleaded with her not to leave dozens of her spiritual children, and me, her son, who needed her guidance most. She pleaded she was becoming too weak and a burden on the Ashram. I reasoned with her. Where was the question of burden? Lucy Ma magnanimously relented and said she would stay on if only for my sake. I was overwhelmed. When comes such another mother?

Lucy Ma observed silence on Mondays. The board "MOUNAM -- MONDAY" hung at her door on every Monday. But she would graciously consent to receive and talk to any serious seeker who could not wait till Tuesday. Actually it was an atmosphere of silence that prevailed in Lucy Ma's apartment on all days. Her soft-spoken words had the quality of silence. She spoke little, but with great effect.

And wrote likewise. Her book *Hunting the I* is one of the best and most original books on Sri Bhagavan on our shelves. It has fascinated many seekers with an intellectual bent of mind. Using her knowledge of philosophy, sociology, biology, archaeology, psychology, and other disciplines, she has interpreted Sri Bhagavan's teachings in a novel and convincing way, anticipating all questions and copiously quoting Sri Bhagavan's own words. Hunted in the forests of Germany by the

Master-Hunter Ramana, Lucy Ma uses all her fine intelligence to teach us how to track and chase away the trickiest of impostors! The little book of 100 pages is a masterpiece of rigorous analysis and clarity of thought. Lucy Ma showed her gracious affection when she dedicated the original German version of *Hunting the I* to me.

Her clarity impressed visitors. Only those were sent to her who would benefit by talking to her – mainly those who wanted to see her and those who knew only German or French. After a brief session of conversation with her, many came away clearer in mind.

Like me, Helga, the brave Bulgarian-born German lady, regularly visited Lucy Ma. She is now sorting out Lucy Ma's few unpublished writings and translating them into English.

It so turned out that neither Helga nor I was

at Lucy Ma's bedside when she passed away. We were both out of the town. Before I left, when I went to her to take leave, she was intensely emotional and said: "Thank you for everything, my son! You are taking leave of me and I am taking leave of everybody soon. I bless you!" I drenched her feet with my tears and walked away.

A day after I left, she was absorbed in Arunachala. Her body was interred inside the Ashram premises; her *samadhi* is built near those of Major Chadwick, S.S. Cohen and H.C. Khanna.

She went gently, happily. It was into the great Light that she went. Goethe, in his last moments, muttered: "Light, more light". To Lucy Ma that great Light was never in doubt, ever since she realised the truth of Sri Bhagavan's teaching, "the Self is Light"

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## BEING NEAR

By M.V. KRISHNAN

**S**EVERAL devotees of Sri Bhagavan attempted to know from Him as to what his previous birth was, and whose incarnation He was. Sri Bhagavan never gave any answer to satisfy the curiosity of devotees. On two occasions, however, He revealed that He is none other than the Universal Self.

In 1949 Sri Bhagavan was suffering from cancer. The Ashram tried several remedies. One of them was to perform recitation of Vedic hymns in the *Veda Pathasala* and to give Him holy water sanctified by various rituals, when He walked past the *Pathasala* at about 10 a.m. My father, Sri Munagala Venkataramiah (compiler of *TALKS*) was

given the charge for this. Venkataramiah would be waiting near the entrance of the *Pathasala* for Sri Bhagavan's arrival during His rounds and the *pundit* from the *Pathasala* would give the holy water to Him. The routine was carried out regularly. One day Bhagavan smiled and quoted:

स यश्चायं पुरुषे यश्चावादित्ये स एकः

"Whoever is in this person here and whoever is in the Sun, He is ONE".

(*Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2-8-5).

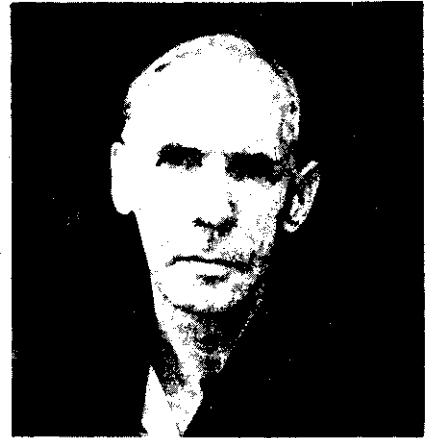
He looked at the Sun, imbibed the water and went on His way!

## ARTHUR OSBORNE'S ANSWERS

(Selected Questions and Answers from  
*The Mountain Path* –  
1965-1966 volumes)

**T**hank you very much for your kind and generous review of 'The Way of the White Clouds'. But it saddens me to see that you think me capable of 'sniping' at Hinduism. You may not agree with my opinion or my terminology, but the word 'sniping' implies a surreptitious attack and an intention to hurt. Nothing was further from my mind. I have always shown respect and appreciation for Hinduism; in fact, in my writings, I have often gone out of my way to show how much Buddhism owes to ancient Vedic and Upanishadic tradition and how much Buddhism and Hinduism have in common. I have always insisted that even where the two systems differ, we have to acknowledge the validity of different ways and even of different aims. As I said in a previous letter to you: "I believe that every religion is a unique contribution to the spiritual life of humanity and that the more we respect this uniqueness by honestly accepting the necessary differences in form and outlook, the more we shall be able to discover the underlying harmony. Harmony, after all, is not based on sameness, but on co-operation of different forms of expression". I have used the term 'regression' in a strictly psychological sense – not as criticism but merely as an example of two different psychological methods or attitudes. The term was not invented by me but was used in the context of a quotation by the well-known psychologist Erich Fromm, and applies as much to certain Buddhist schools (as you rightly point out) as to certain Hindu schools of thought. My remark, therefore, is not caused by any prejudice against Hinduism (in fact I am far more critical about certain schools of Buddhism), but serves to clarify my own personal attitude or choice regarding two possible methods or ways of Liberation. I have not said that both these ways may not be found in Hinduism. Also in fact, I think that Sri Aurobindo comes very near to my own conception but I merely refer to the conception of the 'average' Hindu mystic, and I might have said the average follower of Hinayana Buddhism, if I had not made my position in this respect already perfectly clear in other parts of the book.

I may add that my love and respect for Sri Ramana Maharshi (which I have often expressed in my various publications and lectures and which I have tried to instill into my Buddhist readers and audiences) is much too great to identify him with any particular school of thought or to



measure him by the stands of 'average' Hindu mystics. His living presence was (and still is) a unique phenomenon and an inspiration to all religious-minded people in the world, however different their ways and methods of realization may be.

—Lama Anakarika Govinda, Almora.

*I am glad to hear that the impression I formed of Lama Govinda's opinion of Hindu mystics was incorrect and happy to publish this rectification.*

— Arthur Osborne

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The review of 'Theurgy, the Art of Effective Worship' by Mouni Sadhu in *The Mountain Path* of July 1965 (pp.197-8) mentions a quotation attributed by the author to Bhagavan, i.e. "Realization is nothing but seeing God literally." This remark does in fact appear on p.20 of 'Glimpses of the Life and Teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi' by F. Humphreys. Presumably, in view of Bhagavan's usual remarks on Realization, this particular comment was originated by Frank Humphreys. I wonder if you would be kind enough to comment on this, please, as the book as a whole seems to indicate that Frank Humphreys was deeply influenced by Bhagavan.

— P.T. Murray, Scarborough.

*Frank Humphreys spoke with Bhagavan a few times and was deeply influenced by him, though not deeply enough to settle at Tiruvannamalai or continue to follow Bhagavan and pay visits to Tiruvannamalai when occasion offered, as a number of other Western devotees did. It is quite clear from the sentence quoted that he had not fully understood Bhagavan's teaching. Bhagavan's instruction, in accordance with the orthodox Hindu tradition of Advaita, was to transcend the 'three' of seer-sight-seen and attain to Oneness. He never represented Realization as 'seeing God'. His attitude when people asked him to enable them to see God was that reported by H.W.L. Poonja on p.156 of the July 1965 issue of The Mountain Path. "I can enable*

you rather to be God than to see God." He never departed from the truth of Advaita or directed attention to a God who could be seen. In v.8 of the 'Forty Verses' Bhagavan definitely states: "That alone is true realization wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with it." A writer like Mouni Sadhu who claims to expound Bhagavan's teaching should understand this.

— Arthur Osborne.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Ramana Maharshi's books are certainly wonderful. They agree in entirety with the Ch'an and Zen Masters, who speak or point at the pure and clean Self-nature.

Sri Ramana said again and again that the body is the main obstruction to the realisation of the Self, that man identifies his real self with the mind and body and that that is the main thing to go beyond. In other words the real Self is not the physical mind-body as everyone supposes. The Buddha would say that body and mind just don't exist in the Self-nature.

My question is why do you have so many pictures of Sri Ramana in all of his books and even on your letterhead? It would seem to me that this would be very misleading to devotees.

It looks like you are trying to eternalize the physical body rather than the pure spirit or as Sri Ramana would say Pure Consciousness.

Please don't for a minute think that I am being critical or disrespectful. It is that it seems so incongruous to see a physical body photographed so often when Sri Ramana's chief message was "you are not the body".

Sri Ramana said: "A sage knows his bodiless existence just as an ordinary man knows his bodily existence".

— J.G., Alabama.

*It is true that you are not the body; but so long as you feel that you are, you also feel that there are other bodies and you are influenced by them in various ways and to a varying extent. The most powerful of all these influences is that of the Guru. It may happen that, just as an ordinary person's way of living and thinking shows in his face, so the grace and wisdom and power and beauty of a Guru do. This was so with Bhagavan. Many people were moved to the heart by just seeing him. Some people have been so powerfully moved by seeing a picture of him as to lose consciousness. One German devotee was awe-struck and taken immediately inward, when she saw a photo of Sri Bhagavan in a hut in the middle of a forest in Germany, after the second world war. She did not then know that it was Bhagavan. One Englishman who came here told us that he was the owner of an antique shop. One day a lady came in as a customer and as she opened her bag a picture of Bhagavan fell out. He fetched a chair and*

*made her sit down and tell him about it, and from that day, his intuition told him that Bhagavan was his Guru.*

*Certainly Bhagavan said that the outer Guru serves only to awaken the inner Guru in the heart and ceases to be necessary when that has been done; but it may take some time to do that, and until it has been done the impact of grace from the outer Guru can be terrifically powerful. As long as, for instance, a man's wife or child or parents are real to him, the outer Guru is even more so. And as long as an evil contact can harm him, so long can a blessed contact help him.*

*The question is not whether a Sage knows his bodiless existence, but whether you do. Until you do, other bodies influence you, and the more blessed that influence is the better it will be for you.*

— Arthur Osborne

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Please accept my congratulations on the fine job that you and Sri Ganesan have made of *The Mountain Path*. It is an excellent production. Long may it prosper as a worthy vehicle of the Grace of beloved Bhagavan.

As one for whom four months' practice of Bhagavan's 'Who am I?' at Sri Ramanashram brought greater understanding and contentment than did four-year cogitation on *Anatta* in Buddhist monasteries, I found the 'Ashram Bulletin' particularly inspiring. Very moving was your description of Bhagavan's last hours in the body.

I have often wondered just how Bhagavan's teenage experience of bodily death was instrumental in his realization of Enlightenment. Recently I came across the following words on page 20 of Sri Krishna Prem's *Yoga of the Kathopanishad*: "The mystic death which played an essential part in all the ancient rites of initiation is in fact the gate through which must pass all who seek the light of wisdom. Psychologists will explain it in terms of introversion and ethical writers in those of self-abnegation and what they write will all be quite true. It is these things but it is also much more for here, as always, the ancient symbols have a wealth of content to which it is impossible to do full justice with our modern conceptual thought. The Mystic Death is a real death and, like all that is real, it has its dangers... It has also been said that 'He who would cross the threshold of any world must leave fear behind him.'"

Does this not relate directly to the answer that He, as a fearless schoolboy, gave to the personal query 'Who am I?'

— F. Allen, London.

*In most cases, of course, the initiatic death is a symbol of the real spiritual death and rebirth; in Bhagavan's case it was the real thing.*

— Arthur Osborne

## BOOK REVIEWS

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**RAMAKRISHNA AND VIVEKANANDA: NEW PERSPECTIVES;** By Arvind Sharma; Sterling Publishers, New Delhi 110 016. pp: 132+10 Rs.125

The two great saints whose achievements are sought to be assessed in this book, critically rather than merely reverently, were most important figures in the latter-day history of the ancient religion of India, miscalled Hinduism. At a time when the salaried missionaries from the West were looking forward eagerly to replace the ancient religion of India with their particular version of the gospel of Christ, the emergence of the Paramahansa and his authentic spokesman and chief disciple Swami Vivekananda marked a dramatic reversal of the trends towards a total surrender to the West. The inherent and insuppressible vitality of the religion of India asserted itself with a vigour. Arvind Sharma raises a large number of problems relating to both the great figures of renescent Sanathana Dharma. Among these issues are: 1) Is mystical experience unitive or diverse? 2) Did Ramakrishna believe in Reincarnation? 3) Was Ramakrishna an Advaitin or a Visishtadvaitin? 4) Was Ramakrishna a hypnotist? 5) Which experience of Vivekananda was really Advaitic? Arvind Sharma, as the Notes to each of these essays verify, has brought much learning and some critical thinking to bear on these and a few other topics and some of the points he makes are indeed interesting. But does it help a person to grow spiritually or to understand the enigmatic meaning of life? Will one understand the apparent spiritual versatility of Sri Ramakrishna better by relating his sadhanas to this or that scriptural text? One wonders. Ramakrishna turned millions of minds towards an intensive exploration of the Truth, of God as the eternal, fundamental Reality behind and beyond the Appearances which look so large to our eyes. Swami Vivekananda articulated Sri Ramakrishna's message with a vigour which made nonsense of missionary propaganda about the religion of ancient India as a contemptible mixture of animism, superstition, naturalism and worse. Let us ponder on these men's messages.

*Prof S. Ramaswamy*

**IQBAL AND RADHAKRISHNAN:** By Nazeer Siddiqui; Pub: Sterling Publishers, New Delhi - 110 016. pp: 122; Rs. 125

It is a matter for real thankfulness that Siddiqui has chosen to study, albeit not in depth as he would have liked,

two of the greatest figures in the modern history of India. Siddiqui is a Pakistani and his approach to both these figures is a vigorous vindication of Gandhiji's view that Pakistan was an untruth. The political division of an India that had proved generously hospitable to various peoples from outside and had indeed withstood their maladroitness manipulations of various historical factors, has indeed hardened over the last few decades, but has not altogether destroyed the bases of intellectual interaction and fellowship. Iqbal had a brief 'interregnum' in politics as president of the Aligarh session of the then All India Muslim League where he prophesied that the destiny of the Muslims lay in the emergence of a North Western Muslim state. Here the poet who had sung of Hindustan Hamara, turned politician and the contamination that politics brings on is very evident indeed. But Siddiqui draws on the poetry and on the, alas! inconsiderable philosophic output of Iqbal. Iqbal's Madras lectures at the YMIA on the Reconstruction of Religious thoughts in Islam, which I attended as a young man, showed that Iqbal was no theologian and that Islam rested more on faith than on a well articulated philosophic view of the universe. It was sad to find that modern education, in the sophisticated West, had failed to provoke firsthand thinking on fundamental issues of man's relationship to the universe.

It is vastly different with Radhakrishnan, and Siddiqui is vividly aware of the depth, the sophistication and intimidatingly wide range of Radhakrishnan's thought. One's cultural heritage, as Radhakrishnan's achievement shows is not damaged or weakened by critical exploration of them in the light of human intellectual evolution. Siddiqui's appraisal of both Iqbal and Radhakrishnan is reasonably objective and it is something to be thankful for that young intellectuals of Pakistan can rise above the militant parochialism of politicians.

*-- Prof S. Ramaswamy*

**CANOEING... THROUGH LIFE :** By Nick Inman pp 40, 75p.

**THE CHRONICLES OF THE WHITE HORSE :** By Peter Please. pp 153, £2.95

**THE TOWER AT THE EDGE OF THE WORLD :** By William Heinesen. pp 183, £2.50. All from Findhorn Foundation, The Park, Forres, IV 36 OTZ, Scotland.

In the Bible (a very old and holy book) it says that to enter the kingdom of heaven we must become like chil-



dren. Do books for children, and grownups who haven't grown up, hold open secrets?

Like the nursery rhyme:

"Row, row, row your boat  
gently down the stream;  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily  
life is but a dream."

*Canoeing... Through Life* is a picture story about a funny man in a small boat making his way down the river, even though he doesn't quite know how to do it. He has a hard time sometimes. But he learns. And somewhere along the line he wakes up to realise -- "It's fun!" Nick, for one, enjoys himself. It shows in his drawings and handwriting.

In *The Chronicles of the White Horse*, Ben the Mole, Private Detective, is the great-great-great-great-grandson of Wormhole the First, founder of the business. He plies his craft among the little creatures who live around the giant white horse carved long long ago on a hillside in Berkshire, England. A solitary farmboy vanishes into this mysterious world and learns of many things. Ben teaches him to "sit stone" (so nobody can see you) and "not think" (you know exactly what the other person is thinking), skills needed to solve problems and stay alive. The pair join up with Pickles the badger, White Rook, and the three timid rats on a brave adventure into the heart of darkness. Perhaps there is at the end a passage, between two worlds and, into more than what they bargained for.

William Heinesen calls *The Tower at the Edge of the World* "a poetic mosaic novel about my earliest youth". It's translated from the Danish and is included in the European series of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works. This is a book one read slowly. A boy comes of age in a Scandinavian island fishing village beneath the northern lights. Poetry overwhelms the prose. Events, characters, landscapes and perceptions whirl timelessly like a radiant galaxy deep within the farthest reaches of memory. The clarity of hindsight is tinged with the flavour of longing. "However, if you listen very carefully you can hear a slow but intense ringing as if from a great many tiny faraway little bells. It is the sound of stillness. It is the sound beyond all sounds..."

-- Dev Gogoi

**SUMMONS TO A HIGH CRUSADE:** by George Trevelyan, pp 109, £3.50.

**MY LIFE, MY TREES:** by Richard St. Barbe Baker, pp 167, £4.50. Both published by The Findhorn Press, The Park, Forres IV 36 OTZ, Scotland.

These two books from The Findhorn Press might have been appropriately called 'The Raising of Paradise Lost', for both empower the reader to strive towards a new consciousness, a different attitude towards the planet. The form and perspective though, are quite different. Broadly speaking, George Trevelyan, a long-time trustee of the

Findhorn Foundation, is a philosopher and orator, while Richard St. Barbe Baker, founder of 'Men of the Trees', was a man of action who was instrumental in the planting of trillions of trees!

*Summons to a High Crusade* offers a series of addresses given during the seventies and eighties to various New Age audiences at Findhorn on the theme of recognizing that we all have a role to play in the regeneration of this planet. Findhorn, a community situated on the windswept coast of northern Scotland, has established extraordinary gardens and rich soils from a sandy barren wasteland, using organic gardening techniques and, more importantly, a belief that we are intrinsically connected with the life of the planet. This philosophy is expounded as the 'Gaia hypothesis', which considers Earth as a specific organism, constantly seeking balance and harmony. If we choose to accept this theory instead of separating ourselves from Nature, the resources available to us for regenerating the ravaged Earth are limited primarily by our imagination, or lack of it. The extraordinary Findhorn gardens were established with constant communication with nature spirits, 'devas'. The author's lectures explore different aspects of his belief in holistic thinking, in humanity's fundamental role in the transition of the planet to a new vitality and health from its present degeneration. The book concentrates on a biblical bias and anglo-centricity which at times detracts from its universal relevance, but the underlying vision and love for Life are inspirational.

If George Trevelyan's approach to the world's problems is philosophical, at times verging on intellectualism, Richard St. Barbe Baker was a man who believed that one of the planet's greatest needs was for trees, and lived his long life planting them, saving them, and encouraging all who came his way to do the same. *My Life, My Trees* is his autobiography, written at the age of 80, twelve years before his death. The book faithfully follows the course of his life, from his first nursery and adoption of vegetarianism at the age of four, through his awakening to the devastation against Nature while working as a young man in Canada, his years in Africa where he instigated the Men of the Trees movement and the battle to resist the encroachment of the deserts, and finally his international recognition as a forester and conservationist, including his role in the campaign to save the giant Redwoods of California.

If at times this reviewer felt that the old man was performing a requisite duty for posterity in writing the book, the anecdotes from his life's experience help maintain intimacy and interest. The tale of one man's passion for his work and belief in his ability to effect necessary change to man's attitude to the planet, are inspiring enough reasons for reading *My Life*.

The two authors are English 'to the bootstraps', born into the privilege of aristocracy, yet both chose to step beyond their peer group and pursue lives bent on creating a New Order. Both men are pioneers in their fields, and an inspiration to today's world, that we must recognize the

choice we all have in helping to create a better environment, both ecologically and philosophically.

— John Button

**J. KRISHNAMURTI AS I KNEW HIM:** By Susunaga Weeraperuma. Pub: Chetana Ltd., 34 Rampart Row, Bombay - 400 023, pp 170, price not stated.

To some, J. Krishnamurti is an adorable guide and philosopher. To many others he is an enigma: a teacher of consequence with a wide following but a violent critic of the institution of the Guru, a man of admitted personal charm but brusque in his dealings in public, connoisseur of rare values but harsh to spiritual traditions of Mantra and Bhakti. To these baffled sections of the public, Weeraperuma's book will come as an eye-opener. Associated with J.K. closely for over three decades and having had the rare fortune of moving with the great man on intimate terms, he is able to throw a number of sidelights on the personality of the Master and bring into focus many an insight into the workings of his 'thoughtless' mind.

Is J.K. a fully enlightened being, asks Weeraperuma of his mentor, Adikaram. His considered answer: "It is given in the Buddhist scriptures that an Arhat does not dream. An Arhat has no residuary thought that needs to rise up in the form of a dream... I asked Krishnaji whether he has dreams. He answered that he never dreams." (pp-89) Speaking of his compassion, Adikaram observes: "K. is the gentlest of creatures with a heart that is overflowing with compassion. He is the personification of Metta (loving kindness)."

The volume abounds in educative recollections. They underline the fact that with J.K. "many personalities [were] in one frame."

J.K., it is well known, was against any kind of organisation in spiritual and allied matters. Consequently, Weeraperuma was baffled when he heard that a Krishnamurti Foundation was being started. Alarmed, he wrote to J.K.: "What is the guarantee that the Foundation's administrators will not overstep their bounds someday and behave with priestly power and arrogance? That will happen in all probability. All the great religious teachers were betrayed by those who claimed to be the guardians of their doctrines... If you are planning to recruit angels to run it, then let us have some more Krishnamurti Foundations. But if celestial personnel cannot be found, will it not be better to dissolve the K. Foundation?" J.K.'s response: "It is quite a sensible letter."

The author's fears were not unfounded. An anthology of J.K.'s writings, prepared by him with the express approval of J.K. who even gave the title — *Sayings of Krishnamurti* — was denied authorisation by the Foundation. So also when Sri Sudhakar Dikshit sought permission to publish a companion volume to the already circulated first volume of quotations (by the author), it was denied, for "to give approval for one now would encourage a proliferation of them in the future." (pp 102)

There is much else in this remarkably frank book which

should be read by everyone interested in the higher values of life and particularly by those who have set judgements of their own on the work and mission of the heroic Vibhuti known as J.Krishnamurti.

— M.P. Pandit

**CRISIS IN CONSCIOUSNESS:** by Robert Powell. Pub: Sun Publishing Co, P.O. Box No. 5588, Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA; pp 199, \$ 12.

This book follows the author's previous book of Zen and Reality. Reality can only be discovered through self-knowing. This book can be regarded as an extended commentary of the teachings of J. Krishnamurti and the author acknowledges his indebtedness.

The correspondence, the first chapter of the book, between the author and Mr. Smith is of considerable interest. The problem of right livelihood and boredom is discussed. When resistance against the work in hand is eliminated, you will do your work as well as you are capable of, effortlessly, and without looking for a reward for your increased efficiency. It is enough to 'wake up' and carry on with one's normal work. To live in non-duality is incompatible with the following of a set path with a goal and an ideal.

This is not an easy book to read though the style and language is simple. Readers who have found release through listening or reading J.Krishnamurti will enjoy going through the book. There is so much packed into this book that one should read it and ponder without effort.

— G. Narayan

**YOGA OF SELF-OBSERVATION:** by Johanna Bowes; Ananda Books, P.O. Box 1919, London W 113 JA; pp 155.

The book is well brought out. The free-flowing style, as also the quality of paper and printing make it a pleasure to go through it. In content, Bowes covers a wide range of areas related to Self-realisation. She outlines neatly, with vivid examples, some 'psychological and meditative approaches to self-knowledge' - especially the techniques of self-observation and discrimination. She also throws light on many of the doubts that spring up both initially and on the path, and exposes certain dangers that lurk on the spiritual journey. Bowes displays an in-depth knowledge of Vedanta, being a student of yoga for forty years under the late Prof. Hari Prasad Shastri. Further, Bowes places the Vedantic approach in relation to Western psychology and science. She points out the overlapping areas as also the limitations of the latter methods in transcending the physical and mental realms. The role of visions and dreams, and of desires, emotions and fears, are dealt with in some detail.

While the Vedantic approach underlines all the essays a certain amount of clarity is lost due to overlapping of

issues. As it is, step-downs are rare, just one or two in the whole book, and at other places the positive aspect of Self-experience has been amply stressed. Certainly worthwhile reading for anyone who is even remotely interested in knowing the Truth about oneself.

- Dr. Sarada Natarajan

#### WHAT DO YOU CARE WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK:

by Richard P. Feynman; Pub.: Unwin Hyman Ltd; Distr: Affiliated East - West Press, Madras - 600 010; pp 248, \$11.95.

For those of us who went through courses in physics at the university level Feynman's "Lectures on Physics" was like a breath of fresh air. The "Lectures" was easily a great persuader for many of us to take physics more seriously, precisely because Feynman did not. He was a great debunker and a believer in simplifying complex problems by looking only at the essence rather than the overlying complexities. In fact his best achievement in physics -- the Feynman diagrams -- is an extremely elegant and simple method of understanding subatomic particle interaction.

This and the preceding book "Surely you're Joking Mr Feynman" [reviewed in the MP April 88] are about Feynman the man and not Feynman the physicist. Very interesting anecdotes evidence the qualities which made him a good scientist.

His unbounded curiosity and impressive patience when faced with a problem however trivial, his absolute dislike of cant and hypocrisy (read the section on his inquiry into the "Challenger" disaster in this book), and an ability to accept nothing as a given truth made him both a great learner and a great teacher.

The following is quoted from his address (1955) to the American National Academy of Sciences: "...the imagination of nature is far, far greater than the imagination of man. For instance, how much more remarkable it is for us all to be stuck -- half of us upside down -- by a mysterious attraction to a spinning ball that has been swinging in space for billions of years than to be carried on the back of an elephant supported on a tortoise swimming in a bottomless sea."

"I have thought about these things so many times alone... I stand at the sea shore, alone, and start to think..."

Out of the cradle  
onto dry land  
here it is  
standing:  
atoms with consciousness;  
matter with curiosity.  
Stands at the sea,  
wonders at wondering: I  
a universe of atoms  
an atom in the universe."

- N.J. Krishnan

**SATI - HISTORICAL AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL ESSAYS** : by Dr. Arvind Sharma and others; Pub : Motilal Banarasidas, New Delhi - 110 016. pp: 129; Rs.45, cb Rs.75

The phenomenon of Sati, due to its dramatic, tragic and macabre element has always commanded attention, more so after the much publicized Roop Kanwar episode in 1986. Christened by the British as 'Suttee' in 1787, this gruesome practice of concremation of the surviving widow with the body of the dead consort was banned by them, though historically speaking the Peshwas had sought to put it down much earlier. Reaction to Sati ranged from naked admiration to outright condemnation. Sati was blatantly used by the British as a moral justification for Indians to submit to British Raj. British writers sensationalised the abhorrent practice while British historians monopolised the credit for the abolition of Sati. However, to quote Edward Thompson, 'Suttee has gone, but its background remains'.

A persistent tradition of indigenous dissent has always existed in India. 'The custom is a foolish mistake of stupendous magnitude committed under the reckless impulse of despair and infatuation' - says poet Bana. Dubbed savage as also humane, Sati has also been eulogised as heroic by Greek, Muslim and even British admirers.

Dr. Arvind Sharma (nine essays), of the University of Sydney, with Dr. Ajit Ray of Australian National University Library, Canberra (two essays) and Dr. Alaka Hejib and Dr. Katherine Young of the McGill University have dealt in simple but reasearch-oriented style with the role played by Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the scriptural sanctions interpreted for and against the practice, the native responses -- for and against -- widowhood and yoga, all graphically analysed from the Indo-Western, Indo-British points of view, as also the orthodox and progressive view points.

The book neither condemns nor supports the practice of Sati unequivocally. Fresh material and new perspectives have been generated avowedly besides expansion of pious hopes. The fact, however, remains: Sati is illegal and totally banned. A singularly oppressive practice, heinously sought to be perpetuated against only one of the two sexes on grounds of religious sanction, Sati should forever remain condemned and banned.

- R. Rangachari

**BRAHMASPARSINI BHAGAVAD GEETA** : by Vedantam Lakshmana Sadguru; Tr. from Telugu into English by S.Subramanyam; Pub.: Brahmosparsini Vedi Sangham, copies from 21/156, Murugesam compound, Cuddapah 516 001; pp: 656+40; Price: Rs.50/-

Vedantam Lakshmana Sadguru has written commentaries on the Bhagavad-gita, the Brahma-sutra and some of the Upanisads. The author's interpretation of Vedanta has its own characteristics and deviates from traditional interpretations. The author holds the view that the Bhagavad-gita stands for inward-turned consciousness

(antarmukha vrtti) and helps the sadhaka to immerse himself in the Self of Brahman. Hence the Bhagavad-gita is described by him as Brahmasparsini. A follower of the Gita should practise the thought that the Jivatman is identical with the Paramatman. The author describes this attitude as *so'ham bhava*.

The context in which the Bhagavad-gita was enunciated, namely the impending war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas at Kurukshetra, is given a psychological and subjective interpretation by the author. Following this line the author has his special interpretations for the various concepts occurring in the Bhagavad-gita. These may look unconventional, but in an appendix entitled "Geeta Mathanam" the author justifies these interpretations in the form of questions and answers. There are three other, shorter, appendices in which also the reader can discern Lakshmana Sadguru's philosophy.

- Prof. T.P. Ramachandran

**THE METHOD OF THE VEDANTA: A Critical Account of the Advaita Tradition** by Sri Swami Satchidanandendra Sarasvati, translated from the Sanskrit by A.J. Alston, Pub.: Kegan Paul International, London and New York, pp 975, £65.

We learn that Swami Satchidanandendra has written many works both in Sanskrit and in English, in all of which he has sought to present the philosophy of Advaita as taught by Sri Sankara. *The Vedanta Prakriya Pratyabhijna* was originally written in Sanskrit and published in 1964 by Adhyatma Prakasa Karyalaya, Holenarsipur. The present publication is a free English translation of the work. The translation speaks for the care and devotion which Alston has brought to bear on his undertaking. Judging from the Translation, it seems that the style of the original must be somewhat verbose. But there is no doubt that the work will be of interest to scholars in India and abroad.

The focus of the book is the method of "false attribution followed by later retraction" (*Adhyaaropa* and *Apa-vaada*) adopted by Advaita preceptors from olden times to communicate their teaching. The central teaching of Advaita is that Brahman is the sole reality, the physical world is illusory and the so-called individual soul is identical with Brahman. Such a doctrine is so much at variance with common experience that it will not go home if presented outright. To prepare the student to receive the teaching, the teacher provisionally accepts all common notions of duality, which are in ignorance superimposed on the reality. When later on the student sees the logical difficulties of these notions, the time is ripe for the actual teaching of Advaita, which replaces the earlier. As a means of explaining this method, the author covers a vast ground of the content of Advaita also.

After showing that the method is as old as the Upanisads, the book explains how Sri Sankara employs this method. Then follow chapters on pre-Sankara thinkers, on Mandana, on Suresvara and the author of the

*Panchapaadika*, on Bhaskara, who opposed Advaita, and then on post-Sankara works and followers -- the *Bhaamati*, the *Ishta-siddhi*, the *Vivarana*, the *Nyaaya Makaranda*, Sriharsa, Citsukha, and Sarvajnaatman.

The chief contention of the book is this. Although the method of Advaita is indicated in the early texts, it was not noticed till the time of Gaudapada and Sankara. And even after these teachers had clearly set forth the method, it was not only opposed by thinkers belonging to other schools but [and this is debatable], obscured by Advaita teachers who came after Sankara.

A very useful bibliography concludes this work.

- Prof. T.P. Ramachandran

**THE WISDOM OF NYAAYA:** by K.P. Bahadur, pp 246, price Rs.150.

**THE WISDOM OF SAANKHYA:** by the same author, pp 222, price Rs. 125. Both published by Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi - 110 016.

The two books under review belong to a series of six volumes confined to the six systems of the Vedic tradition, though its title "Wisdom of India Series" suggests a larger scheme including the non-Vedic systems. Besides a common general introduction, there is a separate introduction to the system dealt with.

The contents of the present volumes, on Nyaya and Sankhya, are devoted to the sutras of Gotama (Gautama) and Kapila respectively. The text of each sutra is given in Roman type, and this is followed by an English translation and explanation by the author. The volumes would be useful as sources for students of these systems. The transliteration of the sutras as well as of the Sanskrit terms occurring in the explanation does not follow the recognised format using diacritical marks. To convey the exact sounds, the Sanskrit passages and terms could either have been printed in Devanagari type or transliterated with proper diacritical marks.

The author's translation and explanation of the sutras are quite readable. In the absence of a specific mention, one has to presume that the explanation of the sutras is a free one, based on the classical commentaries. The price of the books is on the high side, though the get-up is good.

- Prof. T.P. Ramachandran

**MY MASTER IS MY SELF:** by Andrew Cohen. Pub: Moksha Foundation, USA. ISBN 0-9622678-0-5. No Price.

The author, a young American, when aged 31, came into contact with Sri Hari Lal Poonjaji, for a few weeks in 1986. This meeting apparently catapulted Cohen into the realm of the Self. The agonising search had ended for Andrew. The book is a personal recording of the events and experiences of the author, the 'chosen successor', in living Union with his guru Poonjaji. Being really intimate communion of two kindred souls, the diary notes and

letters wind through a maze of mutual admiration and near-maudlin messiah-hood. The author, the budding Guru, writes: "This morning Poonjaji said to me as he had yesterday that I had the same look in my eyes as Ramana did. He said that he'd seen these eyes only three times in his life: in Ramana's, his own, and mine." (p.50).

A curious book. A bushel of back-slapping in a grain of wisdom.

-- K.R. Mohan

**THE CONTEMPORARY I CHING:** Tr. Martin Palmer, Kwok Man Ho and Joanne O'Brien. Pub.: Rider & Co., London WC2N 4NW. pp.200. £6.95

One of the oldest books in the world, the Chinese *Book of Changes* has proved more than an ancient system of divination, tried and trusted down the millennia. The terse yet meaning-laden ideograms of the original defy definitive translation, and thus each new attempt is welcome for revealing fresh insights into a perennial wellspring of temporal guidance and spiritual nourishment.

*The Contemporary I Ching* is a reissue of *The Fortune-Teller's I Ching* first published three years ago. Both titles aptly sum up the emphasis of the translators. Departing from earlier approaches as needlessly esoteric or plainly illiterate, they have turned to the *I Ching* as popularly understood by the Chinese of today, consulting modern commentaries and practising diviners in many parts of the Chinese diaspora.

Another distinctive feature of this edition is its advocacy of the eight-coin method of divination, which yields only one hexagram with just one line of change. This is faster and far simpler than the traditional three-coin or yarrow-stalk methods which open the full range of possibilities through moving lines and changing hexagrams, and are reported to have fallen into disuse among the Chinese themselves.

Short introductory chapters succinctly explain the history, evolution and philosophy of the *I Ching*. This edition is worth a look by all *I Ching* readers. It may well be the preferred version for some inquirers.

-- Dev Gogoi

**LETTERS OF WISDOM:** by B. Sanjiva Rao. Dipti Publications, Pondicherry 605 002. pp 254, Rs.30.

Whether evolution of the human race over aeons of time is a fact or myth, no one can be sure. But there is no doubt of evolution of the human mind from birth to death, particularly in those who have given a sense of positive direction to their lives with corrective manoeuvres in mid-course when the goals set or the means employed have been found wanting.

In his letters, B. Sanjiva Rao (1883-1965) (one of the four famous Benegal brothers) a sensitive and perceptive

writer, traverses a wide ground in his quest for truth. His initial preoccupation with the Theosophical movement in Dr. Annie Besant's time when it got 'grounded' in mediums and visions; the New Messiah J. Krishnamurti's disbandment of the order, the belated realisation that "truth" cannot be organised like a commodity but has to be apperceived as a unitary and individual experience; his interaction with Sri Aurobindo, his Yoga and Tantra which, it is said, he used to drive out the British -- all these and innumerable facets of the changing matrix of experience find their place in the letters, making it interesting reading. In the end, Rao confesses to the blunder of trying to discover truth through 'regimentation' and finds that LOVE is TRUTH and is eternal.

In his brief mention of Kamana Maharshi, he refers to a group of workers from a camp under Mahatma Gandhi who visited Bhagavan, and to whose persistent inquiry why he was not 'doing anything', Bhagavan smiled and replied, "I must be doing something, as otherwise you busy social workers would not have come all the way from Ahmedabad to see me". There was no answer to this but the group found, during their three-day visit, they enjoyed a peace they had not felt during their 17 years of life under Gandhiji.

How one wishes the learned writer had discovered Ramana in his youth to fulfil his quest almost instantly, but then truth realised after an entire life's labour, search and trial and error would be more precious and treasured, won't it? These letters, of an intellectual, an ardent seeker, studded with gems of wisdom, should provide valuable material and instruction to those on the Quest.

-- K. Sivaraj

**THE SILENT PATH:** A comprehensive introduction to the study of Meditation, by Michal J. Eastcott, Pub: Century Hutchinson, London WC2N4NW, pp.166, £4.95.

Over 100 years ago, the Tibetan Mahatma Djwhal Khul dictated *The Secret Doctrine* to H.P. Blavatsky with the object of laying the foundation for the "New Age." Many years after the publication of *The Secret Doctrine*, Djwhal Khul wrote a number of books 'through' Alice A. Bailey. In them, he formulated the esoteric Buddhism of the Mahayana school into a form specifically geared to turn the Western mind, steeped in materialism, 'towards spiritual channels. The League of Nations, which ultimately became the United Nations, was one of his projects, and Dag Hammarskjold, the first Secretary General of the UN, was a disciple and member of the esoteric school founded by the Tibetan Mahatma and Alice Bailey. It was Hammarskjold, too, who designed the meditation room for the UN headquarters in New York.

In *The Silent Path*, a more or less Westernised and non-sectarian formulation of Raja yoga and Tibetan tantra philosophy, basic techniques and exercises are offered to introduce the beginner to fundamental meditation prac-

tices, including attitudes to cultivate and dangers to avoid. Charts and diagrams assist the reader to visualise the ideas so lucidly presented, and references and quotes from a variety of sources from Plato to St. Dionysius to Rabin-dranath Tagore and Paul Brunton help the student to assimilate the truly catholic approach so characteristic of the Tibetan Master and -- as we are now seeing -- of the New Age.

This book is not only for beginners, but also for established practitioners treading the long and arduous road to perfection.

- Nadhia Sutara

**THE MARATHON MONKS OF MOUNT HIEI:** by John Stevens. Pub: Century Hutchinson, London WC2N 4NW, pp.158, £7.95.

Near Kyoto in Japan is Mount Hiei which houses three temple complexes of Tendai Buddhism. Tendai, established by Saicho in Japan in the 9th century AD, was instituted by the Chinese monk Chih-i in the 6th century, and is an amalgamation of Buddhist practices of the Hinayana, Mahayana and Tantra schools. In Tendai, stress is placed upon the balance between meditation and wisdom.

Mount Hiei played a leading role in the expansion and depth of Buddhism in Japan. Many of its leading figures were at one time or another associated with Mount Hiei: Ryonin, founder of the Yuzu Nembutsu sect; Honen, founder of the Pure Land school, as well as Shinran, his principal disciple; Eisai, founder of Rinzaï Zen; and Dogen, the Soto Zen Patriarch.

The history of the Hiei marathon (Kaihogyo) began with So-o whose teacher was Ennin, a direct disciple of Saicho the founder. So-o had a dream which indicated that all the peaks of the Mount Hiei range were sacred and that he was to make pilgrimages to their various holy places and thus realise the True Dharma.

The practice today consists of 1,000 days spanned over seven years whereby the monk runs a total of 38,632 km, equivalent to circling the globe on foot. In the first three years (100 days per year) and the next two years (200 days per year) a monk runs 40 km daily. In the sixth year, 60 km per day (100 days) and in the seventh 84 km (which is twice the length of an Olympic marathon) every day (100 days), easing down to 40 km for the final 100 days! There are also special occasions when a monk does a special 54 km run through the city of Kyoto. All this they do aside from their normal duties as monks in a temple! There is also a nine-day confinement without water, food, sleep or rest.

The book has a lively tone to it without gushing at the extraordinary achievements of these monks. There is a fine selection of photographs, especially of two senior monks who radiate a powerful peace, whether they are in motion or at rest. A fascinating book.

- A.M.

**BID FOR SUPER MANKIND:** By B. Rajabhushana Rao. Pub.: Author, 6-3-1113/3, B.S. Makta, Begumpet, Hyderabad - 500 016. pp.126, Rs.25/-

The author, a one-time associate Editor of *Triveni*, is a distinguished patriot and a scholar proficient in modern philosophy, science and ancient learning. The author opines that with the arrival of man on the evolutionary scene, a leap-frogging has occurred in the mental and emotional expanse manifest in Nature. While a life of austerity, self-denial and sublimated impulses may help fashion a Super-man here and there, the author sets his sights on ways to usher in a super mankind. This is not only a *manly* ideal given man's evolutionary position, it is also perhaps the only choice given to mankind, capable of exercising conscious decision, if it is not to perish abandoned as an over-specialized, disposable stump of the evolutionary tree. The author strives to provide the requisite motive force for a world movement, and suggests the possible directions such organised effort may take.

- J. Jayaraman

**AN INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM:** Compiled and edited by Diana St. Ruth, Pub: Buddhist Publishing Group, Leicester LE2 4TZ, pp.92, £3.95.

Within just 95 pages, this slim booklet captures the essence of Buddhism in pellucid prose.

Having broken from his princely home at the age of 29, the Buddha went through the Hindu ascetic's practice of rites and rituals, self-flagellation and self-immolation for six long years, only to awaken at the end of that period to the utter futility of it all in the investigation of the unresolved question of age, disease and death. Discarding all convention, he sat under the Bodhi Tree determined not to move from his seat until he received Enlightenment. By sheer self-effort, he was able to realise in a single flash that the self of man is put together by *Desire* which is the root cause of Sorrow, Karma and Reincarnation. The actual Realisation of this Truth in his own Being is the Enlightenment opening the Eightfold Path to the Life Immutable.

Towards the end of the book, the evolution of Buddhism in various countries is given in chronological order, pointing out with logical precision that the different schools of Buddhism differ only in name. They are the various musical notes of a single song.

The epilogue is a short beautiful piece: "What is the future of Buddhism? No one can say. However, as long as there are people suffering, it will have a place". A useful glossary rounds off this charming compilation which could well be a veritable vade-mecum.

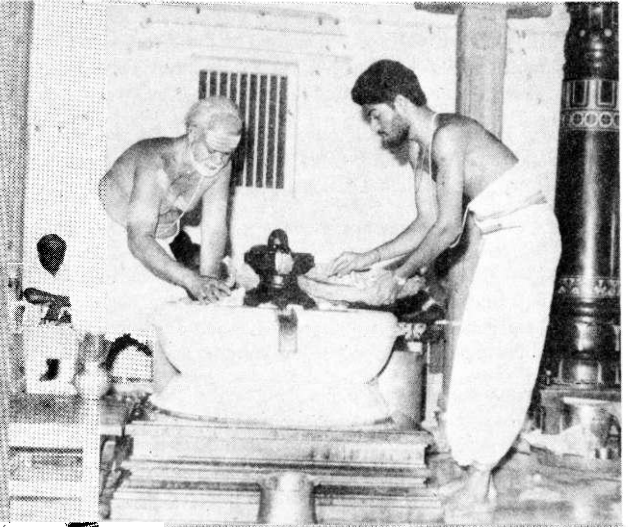
- S. Jayaraman

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# ASHRAM BULLETIN

## HAPPENINGS AT THE ASHRAM

110th *Jayanti* of Sri Bhagavan (11.1.90):  
Fruits-*abhisheka* to Sri Ramaneswara  
Mahalingam



Sri Vidya Havan (16.3.90)

Maha Puja (18.5.90):  
Sri Bhagavan's Mother's Shrine



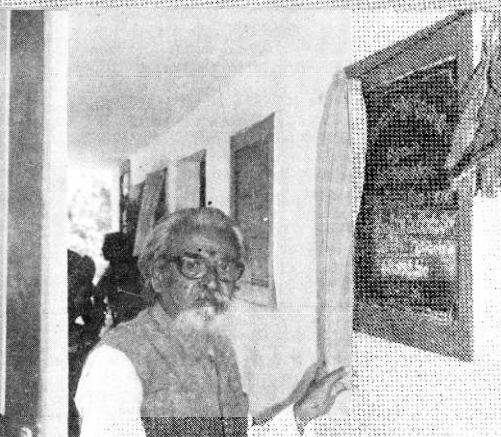
Sri Bhagavan's 40th *Brahmanirvana* (23.4.90):  
A section of the feeding of the poor on that holy day



**President of Sri Ramanasramam, Sri T.N. Venkataraman's Participations**



*Bangalore Ramana Seminar: Flower-offering and releasing a Ramana-cassette by giving it to Sri S. Sadakshari*



*At Tadpatri: Declaring open the Meditation Hall at the Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram*



*Tree-planting at Tiruvannamalai Railway Hospital compound*



*Releasing the Souvenir at Ramana Kendra, Madurai: (l to r) Sri K.Rangaswamy, Prof. T.N.Pranatharthiharan, Sri Ramachandran, Sri M. A. Nagaswamy, presenting the first copy*



# SRI RAMANA FOUNDATION IN LONDON

By Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan

I have heard some devotees say that Bhagavan is *all silence* and hence it is sufficient to stay at home *practising silence* some time during the day. While some benefit will accrue in such practice, greater and positively guided advancement to self-realisation is certain to come from *Sat Sangh* (association with those dedicated to Self-realisation). "If association with Sages (which is the best form of *Sat Sangh*) is obtained to what purpose are the various methods of self-discipline? Tell me, of what use is a fan when the cool, gentle, southern breeze is blowing?"

For instance, take the case of Sundaresa Aiyer who became a devotee at the age of twelve. When he got to be about nineteen he grew dissatisfied with himself, feeling that more conscious and intense effort was necessary (don't we all feel so at some stage or other). He was a householder, living in town, but had been visiting Sri Bhagavan almost daily up on the Hill; now, however, he decided, as an act of stern discipline, not to go again until he had developed such detachment and earnestness of purpose as to make him worthy of the association. For a hundred days he stayed away, and then the thought came to him, "How am I better for not seeing Bhagavan?". And he went. Sri Bhagavan met him at the entrance to Skandashram and greeted him with the question, "How are you better for not visiting me?". He then spoke to him of the importance and potency of *satsang* even though the disciple did not perceive the effect it was having on him or see any improvement in himself. He compared it to a mother feeding her child during its sleep at night, so that next day the child thinks it took no food, although she knows it did and in fact the food sustains it.

So the number one aim of **Sri Ramana Foundation in London** is to promote *sat-sang* among the devotees in Britain and Europe, and to help them, co-operate with them to follow the Ramana Way, the pathless path towards Self-realisation.

When I was sitting at the feet of Sri Bhagavan in August 1949, a lecturer in physics asked him: "Bhagavan has explained spiritual problems with the aid of mythological stories; in this scientific age, couldn't your teachings be explained by appropriate use of modern scientific formulations?". Sir Bhagavan after about two minutes of silence said: "Yes, why not, up to a point!" Then turning his glance fully upon me, continued, "It can be done, couldn't it be so?" (in Malayalam). A thrill passed through my brain to my heart.

I have written a few articles in *The Mountain*

*Path* explaining scientifically Sri Bhagavan's teachings and I propose to write some more.

That takes up the second aim of **Sri Ramana Foundation in London** -- explaining scientifically his teachings.

The third aim is to propagate Sri Bhagavan's teachings all over Europe, through a heart-to-heart communication, aided by mechanical data already provided for by our Master.

These are the three aims to begin with.

Self-enquiry and the path of devotion can be practised by Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Parsis, and others, without prejudice to practise his/her religion. The teachings of Bhagavan is the essence of all religions; Bhagavan's devotees are bound to Self-realisation without getting involved in difficult outer disciplines.

I would like to invite all devotees in Britain and Europe to participate in the formation and sustenance of **Sri Ramana Foundation in London**.

## Steering Committee

To create a central organisation to look after the needs of **Sri Ramana Foundation in London**, a steering committee had been formed comprising **Annie Elkins, Alan Jacobs** and **Squadron Leader N. Vasudevan**.

## Membership of the Foundation

Membership is free; anyone interested in the teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi and wishing to take up the path of enquiry can register as a member. However, those who wish to become Life Members are requested to make a donation of £50 or more.

## Help and Donations

We need a central building in London or its outskirts and an offer of free-hold or lease will be highly appreciated.

Donations/Contributions are welcome even if they are small (by postal orders or by cheques crossed and for **SRI RAMANA FOUNDATION**). Please send them to the following address:

**ANNIE ELKINS**  
C/O BUNTIE WILLS FOUNDATION  
STUDIO E, 49 THE AVENUE  
LONDON NW6 7NR.

All communications are also to be addressed as above.



Sri Ramana Jayanti at Vijnana Ramaneeya Ashram, Palghat: Sri Swami Mridanandaji, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashram, Trichur, speaks.  
Next to him is **Brahmasree Vaisravanath Raman Namboodiri**

## TAMIL PARAYANA

Sri Bhagavan was seen indrawn and resplendent while listening to the chanting of *Veda Parayana*; equally so at the Tamil *Parayana* time, too. Devotees will be happy to know that for the first time, in many decades, that all the poetical works of Sri Bhagavan, in Tamil, are now being chanted in front of His sacred Samadhi Shrine, every evening, for six days in a week. Smt. **Anuradha**, whose relentless efforts made this into a reality (who is in charge of the Tamil *Parayana*) is keen to have this sacred chanting done on all seven days. The schedule is as follows (from 6.45 to 7.30 p.m.):

Monday	: Arunachala Stuti Panchakam
Tuesday	: Upadesa Undiyar, Ulladu Narpadu and Ulladu Narpadu Anubandham.
Wednesday	: Ekanma Panchakam, Appala Pattu, Atma Vidya Keertanam and Devikalottaram.
Thursday	: Atmasakshatkaram and Bhagavadgita Saram.
Friday	: Dakshinamurti Stotra Anmabodham Guru Stuti Atthamalakam.
Saturday	: Ramana Stuti Panchakam.

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## PUNE RAMANA SATSANGH

Sri K. **Nageswaran** reports: The Pune Satsang of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi is functioning well, meeting regularly every first Sunday of the month. We observed the Aradhana Day on 23rd April '90 at the residence of Mr. **K.V. Parthasarathy**, a long-time devotee of Bhagavan. We had a big audience and lunch was served after *Puja*, *Ramana Ashtottara*, *Veda Parayana*, *Ramananjali* and talks by a few devotees.

## VIJNANA RAMANEeya ASHRAM, PALGHAT

The 110th Jayanti of Bhagavan was celebrated at Vijnana Ramaneeya Ashram, Palghat with a variety of programmes, for three days from 10th to 12th of January 1990.

The celebration commenced with *Ganapathy Homam* at the early hours of the morning followed by Sri Ramana Pooja, *Akhanda Japa*, and poor-feeding. In the evening of the first day after Bhajan and Kirtans there was *Satsang* which was presided by Prof. **T.R. Subramaniam**, Retd. Principal. **H.H. Swami Nityananda Saraswathi**, President, Sivananda Ashram, Olavakode spoke on Bhagavan's teachings.

The second day's *Satsang* president was **Brahma Sree Vaisravanath Raman Namboodiri**. **H.H. Mridananda Swamiji**, President, Sree Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur spoke on Bhagavan. On the third day Sri **T. Ramavariar** presided and Sri **Rangaswamy** spoke on Bhagavan.

Sri **K. Doraiswamy** welcomed the gathering and Sri **K.M. Unni** proposed the vote of thanks.

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The 40th *Maha Nirvana* day of Bhagavan was celebrated on 23rd April 1990.

The celebration started with Sri Ramana Pooja at the early hours of the morning followed by *Lalitha Sahasra Namarchana* and *Akilanda Nama Japa*. At noon there was poor-feeding. In the evening after *bhajan* and *Ramana Kirtans*, there was a *Satsang* in which Prof. **P.K. Madhavan** of Govt. Victoria College, Palghat presided and Dr. **P. Achuthan** spoke on Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram*.

Prof. **A. Swaminathan** welcomed the gathering and Sri **S. Sankaranarayanan** proposed the vote of thanks. The function came to close with *arathi* and distribution of *prasadam*.



Ramana Kendra, Delhi:  
Sri T.N. Chaturvedi offering  
flowers on 11.1.90 at the  
Ramana Shrine

### RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Sri C.G. Balasubramanyan, Treasurer, Ramana Kendra, Delhi, reports:

The 110th *Ramana Jayanti* was celebrated at Ramana Kendra, Delhi with all grandeur and solemnity on 11th January 1990. On that day, there were the traditional *pooja* and *Veda Parayana*, in the morning and evening.

At the public meeting held in the evening, Shri. T.N. Chaturvedi, Comptroller and Auditor General of India, presided. A special Souvenir, **RAMANA PRASAD**, was released on the auspicious occasion. The key-note address, 'The Message of Ramana' by Justice Ranganatha Misra and a talk on Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni by Shri S.R. Sarma were illuminating. The function came to a close with a delectable Karnatic music concert by Dr. (Miss) Radha Venkat-achalam and Party.

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### RAMANA KENDRA, MADURAI

Sri Bhagavan's 110th *Jayanti* was celebrated for five days starting from January 6, 1990. A souvenir was released on the occasion by Sri M.A. Ramaswamy. The first copy was presented to Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam. Sri N.S. Krishnan and Prof. T.N. Pranatharthiharan spoke on the importance of Sri Bhagavan's advent. The film on Sri Bhagavan was shown.

On 8th with Smt. Meenakshi and party's musical offering the function began and Prof. Pranatharthiharan spoke. On the 9th, President of the Kendra, Sri S. Ramachandran presiding, the function commenced with

Ramana Kendra, Madurai:  
At the Ramana Jayanti Celebrations,  
Sri N.S. Krishnan speaks

Ramana Music. On the 10th Smt. Lakshmi Ramachandran, Smt. Nagalakshmi Parthasarthy, Smt. Jaya Rajamani gave a musical rendering of Sri Bhagavan's life which was well appreciated. Smt. Kala Rangaswamy's talk

on Sri Bhagavan was filled with devotion to the Master. Prof. Pranatharthiharan gave a report on the activities of the Kendra, details about the Kendra's literary organ *Ramana Oli*, a Tamil monthly and requested the *bhaktas* to support these activities by taking part in them actively. Sri K. Rangaswamy, Secretary, proposed a vote of thanks.

On the 11th the function was held at Sri Ramana Mandiram itself. Elaborate chanting and pujas throughout the day were held. Feeding a large number of the poor and taking Sri Bhagavan's portrait in procession on the main streets of Madurai, were the highlights of that day's programme. Throughout the five days, the Presence of Sri Bhagavan was felt.

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### MEDITATION HALL INAUGURATED AT TADPATRI

To mark the occasion of the 110th birthday of Sri Ramana Maharshi, a Ramana Meditation Hall was declared open by Sri T.N. Venkataraman, President, Sri Ramanasramam, on 1st January, '90 at the Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram, Tadpatri. The donor of the Meditation Hall is Smt. Itikala Subbamma of R.S. Kondapuram.





On the occasion of Sri Maharshi's 110th Jayanti, on 11.1.90, **Sri B.V.L.N. Raju** of Jinnur unveiled the statue of Bhagavan Ramana, at Srungavruksham village, West Godhavari District in Andhra Pradesh

Sri Ganesa Homam and Sri Rudra Homam were performed in the morning. Nearly 5,000 poor people were fed at noon.

In the evening, Sri **T.N. Venkataraman** presiding, Dr. **Sarada Natarajan**, Editor, *The Ramana Way*, Bangalore, spoke on Sri Bhagavan's kindness. She narrated how His grace is available even today, not only to human beings but also to animals and plants.

Sri **V.V. Brahman**, Founder, Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram, Tadpatri, in his report stated that the local Ashram has acquired two acres of land.

The *Ramananjali* Bangalore gave a Ramana Music performance.

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### ARUNACHALA RAMANA SATSANGAM, VIJAYAWADA

Sri **K.G. Prasada Rao**, Arunachala Ramana Satsangam, Vijayawada, reports that the 110th Ramana Jayanti was celebrated at their centre in the morning with Sri Ramana Pooja, and poor feeding, and in the evening at Sri Ramakrishna Samiti, Gandhinagar, Vijayawada.

Sri Ramana Jyoti was lit by Sri Dr. **T.V.A. Subrahmanya Sarma**. Ramana sankeertana by Smt. **Ravuri Rajeswari**, **Karamsetty Guruprasad Rao** etc. Dr. **Mopidevi Krishnaswamy**, Manava Dharma Samsta, presided over the function. Sri **K. Ramachandra Rao**, Editor, *Andhra Patrika* Daily, spoke on the life of Bhagavan Ramana. After arathi, prasadam was distributed.



Sri Ramana Jayanti at Vijayawada (11.1.90):  
**Sri K. Ramachandra Rao**, Editor, *Andhra Patrika*, (daily) speaks, Sri **Mopidevi Krishnaswamy** presiding



Sri Ramana Kendram, Jinnur: Nearly 400 devotees went round the mound of Arunachala on 11.12.89 (Jyoti Darshan festival), led by Smt. & Sri **A. Surya Ramachandra Rao**

## OBITUARY

### Sri Swami Satyananda

Sri Swami Satyananda, Old Ashramite, was absorbed in Arunachala on the evening of Monday, 27th November, 1989. End came rather suddenly, though very peacefully, to the septuagenarian Swami who was one of the attendants of Sri Bhagavan during the last few years of His physical existence. He was with Sri Bhagavan at the time of His *Mahanirvana*.



Sri Swami Satyananda, who observed *mouna* for about 13 years from the day of Sri Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana*, took care of the *Nirvana Room* for several years. In those days, he was fondly called "Pori" (puffed corn) Swami because he regularly fed corn to the peacocks in the Ashram. The Swami was liked by one and all for his sweet disposition, and his friendly, winning smile which never left him.

Sri Swami Satyananda now rests at the Lotus Feet of His Master, Bhagavan Ramana.

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### Sri Robin Lagemann

Sri Robin Lagemann, born in 1930 into an affluent family of New York, became disillusioned with his life and began an intense search for a deeper meaning and purpose to it. At that point he did a complete right about turn in his professional ambitions and lifestyle. To the dismay of his family and friends he embraced all forms of simplicity and many forms of austerity.



In the mid-1970's he came across the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi and in this found the ideal of his spiritual quest. Because of his devotion to Bhagavan he had freely rendered assistance to Sri Ramanasramam in India and Arunachala Ashrama in North America whenever he became aware of any need.

Robin's home overlooks the Atlantic Ocean, South of Boston. Throughout his life as being a marine surveyor he always had a strong attraction for the sea and felt happy near it. Ultimately, on February 24th, the sea was the instrument used to shuffle off his mortal frame and unite his soul to his Guru, Bhagavan Ramana.

He is survived by his Indian wife, Durga, and

## TRANSFORMATION

By Vishnu Pathak

Bhagavan's radiant glance  
 Moved round and lit up  
 Faces in the Hall.  
 For an instant it engaged my eyes  
 And caused a sea-change  
 in my being.  
 Even today that glance  
 Abides a tide of bliss in me.  
 Anger, pride, illusion, greed,  
 Dark demons have fled  
 From their former home, my heart.  
 Which now is filled by bliss,  
 The radiance of that glance

eleven-year-old son, Ramana. We offer our sincere condolences to his family and pray to Bhagavan for their peace and happiness.

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### Sri G.V. Rajeswara Rao

Sri G.V. Rajeswara Rao, a sincere devotee of Sri Bhagavan, passed away in Hyderabad on 31st March, 1990. Marked by simplicity, integrity and concern for Sri Bhagavan's devotees, Sri Rajeswara Rao was a pillar of strength to Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad. It was he who brought out the journal, *Sri Ramana Jyothi*, month after month without fail for about eight years. He thought of it by day and dreamed of it by night. In his demise, Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad has sustained an irreparable loss. May Sri Bhagavan grant members of the bereaved family the strength to bear the loss.

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### Smt. Mangalammal

We deeply regret to record the death of Smt. Mangalammal, mother of Sri A.R. Natarajan. She was absorbed at the holy feet of Bhagavan on the 24th of March (see Ashram Bulletin April '73, p. 113 about her). Large hearted and generous to a fault she was full of old-world charm. During the last few months of her life when she was ailing, she was in constant thought of Ramana. Her main diet was Ramana Music, hours and hours of it. In particular she would repeatedly ask for 'Aksharamanamalai' to be played. Or she would delight in hearing readings from books on the Master. There was a perceptible dropping off of attachments and when the end came she was ripe and ready.



**FINGERS AND MOONS:** A collection of Zen Stories and Incidents: by Trevor Leggett. Pub.: Buddhist Publishing Group, Leicester, LE24TZ, pp.105, £5.50.

Trevor Leggett, a well known teacher of Judo and its Zen background, was introduced to "Zen in its original Indian form" by the late Dr. Hari Prasad Shastri.

The book is a transcript of talks given between the years 1982 and 1985 under the titles: 1) Sparks From the Heart Flint; 2) Fingers and Moons; 3) The Stone Sermon, and 4) Tips and Icebergs; each replete with stories, similes and real-life incidents through which Leggett illustrates so many subtle aspects of practice and progress.

"When we're following a pointing finger, the pointing finger can become very very clear, but the goal very very vague. When the time comes, we have to take a leap beyond the very clear finger to the goal. And then the means we were using become almost transparent - the moon becomes clear"

"In Judo... after eight years' intense practice, you develop something (some technique or style) very strong and that's the bull's horns - that's what you fight with. Now you're asked to cut them off. And that means one becomes a beginner again. [The teachers say], 'When you've become a great big frog in your own pond and you're puffing yourself up, go into the neighbouring pond and become a tiny little tadpole'."

"They make special rooms in which the verticals (the doors and so on) are slightly on the slant. A trained judo man's balance is internal, and such a room doesn't affect him at all. But most people align themselves from something outside. No harm perhaps physically, but spiritually if we do that we are always liable to collapse when the outside environment is twisted or abnormal. So the ultimate purpose of the teacher is not to provide us with true outer verticals of morality and so on to align ourselves with, but to develop the inner sense of balance in ourselves".

One comes back again and again to each of the four sections to find each time something refreshingly new popping into one's consciousness. Tellingly told by one of the masterminds among the practitioners of Zen.

- S. Jayaraman

## BOOKS RECEIVED

**ANUVADA NOOL MALAI:** collected verse-translations (done from Sanskrit to Tamil) by Sri Ramana Maharshi. With word for word meaning and commentary in Tamil by T.R. Kanakammal. pp. 465, Rs.50.

**SCENES FROM SOUTH INDIAN LIFE:** "Argus". Pub: Affli. EWP, Madras - 600 010, pp.82, Rs.20

**VEDIC TANTRISM:** A study of Rg Vidhana of Saunaka (text & transl.): M.S. Bhat, Pub: MLBD, N.Delhi - 110 007. pp.437, Rs,175.

**SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE IN INDIA:** Dr. Sujatha Vijayaraghavan, Univ. of Pondicherry. pp.88. No Price.

**THE STRANGER: A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORIES:** S. Weeraperuma. Pub: Writer's Workshop, Calcutta - 700 045, pp.86, Rs.80/Rs.60.

**ART OF POSITIVE THINKING:** Sw. Jyotirmayananda. Pub.: Yoga Res. Fdn., Florida 33143. pp.145, \$3.50

**PICTORIAL STORIES FOR CHILDREN** (vols. 1, 2, & 3). pp.33, Rs.4 each. **RAMAYANA FOR CHILDREN:** Sw. Raghaveshananda. pp.44, Rs.12. **THE STORY OF SRI SANKARA FOR CHILDREN:** Sw. Raghaveshananda. pp.20, Rs.6. All published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras - 600 004.

**A PANORAMA OF PERENNIAL PHILOSOPHY:** Sw. Brahmanandendra Saraswathy, 19, 39-A cross, IV-T Block, Bangalore, pp.117, Rs.15.

**THE MAHARSHI'S WAY:** (tr. & comm. on *Upadesa Sara*): D.M. Sastri. Pub: Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai 606 603. pp 51+18.

**MOMENTS REMEMBERED:** Reminiscences of Bhagavan Ramana: V. Ganesan. Pub: Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai 606 603. pp.134 (with Glossary, Index and many photographs). Rs.20/-

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