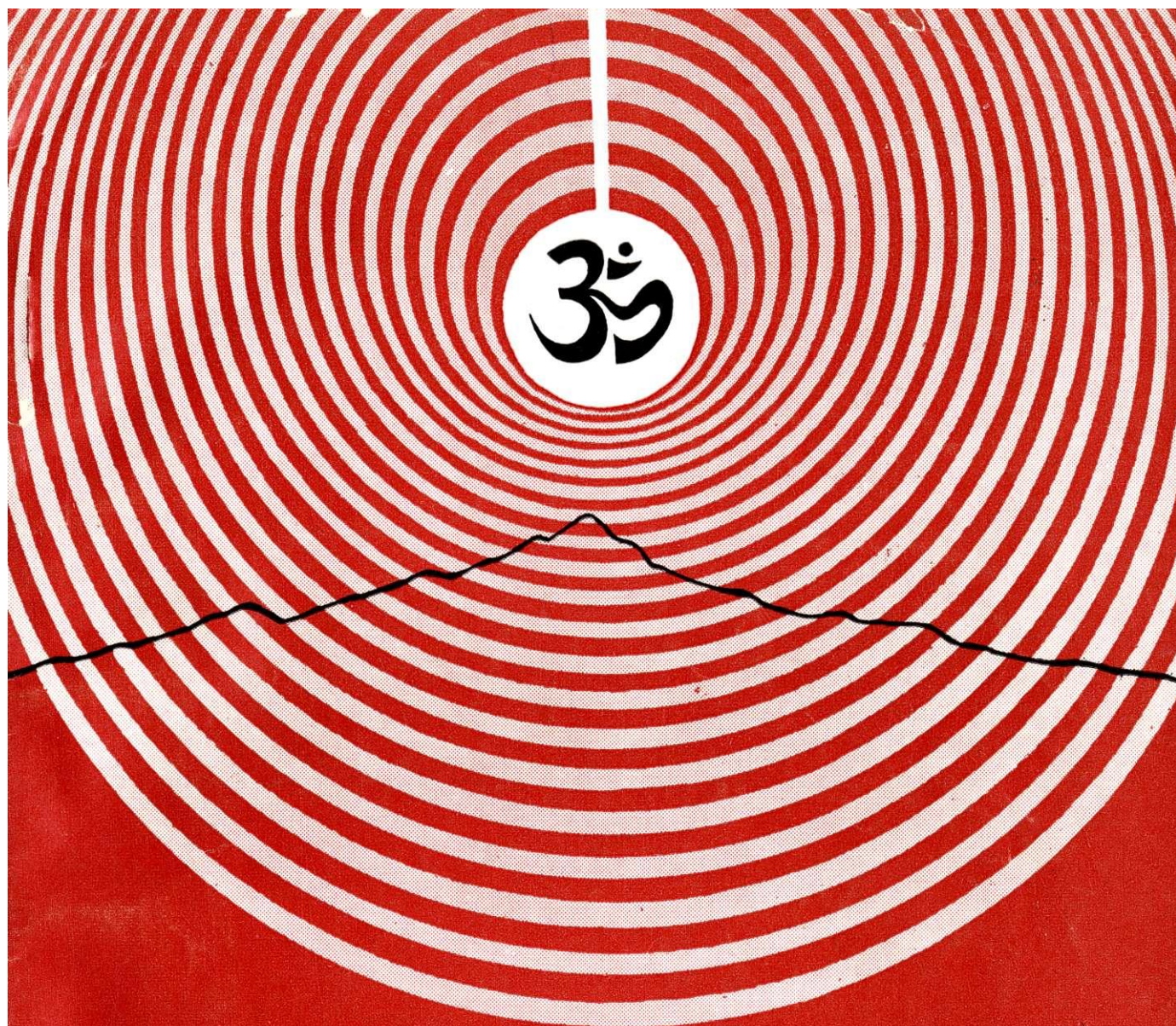




*Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those
who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!*

The Mountain Path

VOL. 19, No. 1

JANUARY 1982

Thou didst benumb (my faculties) with stupefying powder, then rob me of my understanding and reveal the Knowledge of Thy Self, Oh Arunachala!

—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 73.

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Annual Subscription:

INDIA		Rs. 15
FOREIGN	£ 4.00	\$ 8.00

Life Subscription:

Rs. 150	£ 35.00	\$ 70
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Single Copy:

Rs. 4.00	£ 1.20	\$ 2.50
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All letters and remittances to be sent to:

The Managing Editor,
"The Mountain Path",
Sri Ramanasramam, P.O.,
Tiruvannamalai-606 603, S. India.



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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—The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

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

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



EDITORIAL

“Self-Enquiry” and “Who am I”: a history and an evaluation

DURING his early days at Virupaksha, Bhagavan was still maintaining silence most of the time, and if any devotees wished to question him, he would give them brief answers in writing. Two devotees, Sivaprakasam Pillai and Gambhiram Seshayya, received answers to their questions in this way. Both recorded their answers, and the teachings contained in them were published many years later under the titles “Who am I?” and “Self-Enquiry”. Originally both works were published in a question and answer format, and it was not until the late 1920s that Bhagavan himself rewrote “Who am I?” in the form of a connected essay. “Self-Enquiry” was never put into prose by Bhagavan himself, but in the late 1930s, Sadhu Natanananda put it into an essay form comprising twelve small chapters, and it is this version that has appeared in most of the editions of Bhagavan’s Collected Works.¹ Both of these works show how Bhagavan’s teachings remained the same throughout his teaching career, and a careful study of their origin and evolution throws a revealing light on Bhagavan’s attitude to authorship and to the written word in general.

The answers given in “Self-Enquiry” represent Bhagavan’s earliest written teachings. In 1900, Gambhiram Seshayya, a municipal overseer from Tiruvannamali, approached Bhagavan with the intention of getting him to elucidate several passages in Swami Vivekananda’s book “Raja

Yoga”. Gambhiram Seshayya was following the path of Raja Yoga, and he had little interest in Bhagavan’s teachings on self-enquiry. Bhagavan, realising that Gambhiram was not ready to give up his chosen path of yoga, explained Vivekananda’s points in great detail, and only occasionally introduced a little of his own teachings. Gambhiram’s original request was that Bhagavan give him the gist of Vivekananda’s book, together with his explanations and comments. Bhagavan happily complied, so that a portion of the work we now know as “Self-Enquiry” consists of little more than a paraphrase of Vivekananda’s ideas on yoga. Because the circumstances surrounding the interviews are not known, it is now extremely difficult to determine exactly which are Bhagavan’s own ideas and which are his comments on Vivekananda’s teachings. However, it is probably safe to assume that the sections which outline the practices of yoga and pranayama are not Bhagavan’s teachings, since they differ from what he said in later years.

¹The original Tamil question and answer version has been out of print since the 1930s although the Ashram now has plans to reprint it. All the Tamil editions of Collected Works since 1940 have included the essay version. In the English editions, those printed in India contain the question and answer version while those published and distributed abroad by Rider contain the essay form.

The problem of disentangling Bhagavan's own teachings from the work is further complicated because Gambhiram also brought several other texts for elucidation. Bhagavan quoted liberally from these texts in his written answers, and in giving his interpretations, he often would make major concessions to Gambhiram's requirements, and on occasions, he merely rephrased the original passages in a language which Gambhiram could understand. The sources of most of these scriptural quotations are not given (although some of them have been noted in T.M.P. Mahadevan's translation), and so readers could be forgiven for assuming that all the ideas contained in them come from Bhagavan himself. A few examples will suffice: section 28 in the question and answer version which deals with the mantra "AUM" is a paraphrase and an amplification of mantras eight to twelve of the Mandukyopanishad; the picture which Bhagavan himself drew, and which has appeared in all the editions of the work, was drawn in Gambhiram's notebook to illustrate a text from the Tamil version of Vedanta Chudamani; the reference to the body being the temple of God which appears in section 29 is a direct quotation of stanza ten of the Skandopanishad. In addition to these examples, many other references can be found, among them quotations from the Bhagavad Gita, the Rama Gita, the Ribhu Gita, Brahma-Gita, Vivekachudamani and Yoga Vasishtha.

The only record we have left of the circumstances under which each question was asked come from some notes made by B.V. Narasimha Swami in 1930. Gambhiram's original notebook was still in existence at that time, and B.V. Narasimha Swami copied several portions from it to assist him in preparing material for his biography on Bhagavan. For those readers who are interested in doing a little detective work, we shall be printing Narasimha Swami's notes as an article in the next issue of The Mountain Path so that those who wish to study "Self-Enquiry" in future may have a better idea of which portions contain Bhagavan's own teachings and which are merely commentaries or translations of earlier religious texts. It seems

that not all the material from the notebook was published. In Narasimha Swami's notes, for example, it is mentioned that Gambhiram's notebook contained a five-page rendering by Bhagavan in Tamil prose of the verses from the Ribhu Gita which deal with *Nirguna Puja*, or the worship of the attributeless. In "Self-Enquiry" this translation is completely omitted, and its contents are reduced to a brief question and answer which appears as section thirty-three.

Bhagavan wrote most of his answers on small slips of paper and Gambhiram took them away and copied them down in a notebook; all the questions and answers were written down in this way between 1900 and 1902. The bundles of slips and the notebook lay in Gambhiram's house until the late 1920s. After his death, Krishnayya, Gambhiram's brother, collected them all together, brought them to Sri Ramanasramam and passed them on to Sadhu Natanananda. Natanananda edited the notes and published forty of the questions and answers in a small booklet entitled "Vichara Sangraha Prasnotthara". It is possible to infer from comments in B.V. Narasimha Swami's notes that some of the questions were not listed in Gambhiram's notebook, and so Natanananda may have had to infer from the answers what some of the original questions were. In the first edition of the book, which was first published in 1930, several of Natanananda's own questions were included, along with the answers which were given to him verbally, but in all the later editions these were omitted. Sometime in the late 1930s Natanananda edited the questions again and turned the whole work into an essay. This essay form was included in the third edition of the Tamil Collected Works in 1940 in preference to the question and answer version which had been printed in the second edition in 1934. Although the essay version took many liberties with the text, and many of the original details were omitted, Natanananda frequently consulted Bhagavan to ensure that the finished version met with his approval. However, because of the many alterations which Natanananda made,

the essay version cannot really be regarded as an original work since Bhagavan himself did not rewrite it.

It should be clear from what has been said so far that although there can be no doubt that Bhagavan wrote the answers which are contained in the question and answer version of "Self-Enquiry" one must have considerable reservations about using the material contained in this work as an example of Bhagavan's teachings. Considering the background of the work it is useful to draw a distinction between the works Bhagavan wrote and his authentic teachings, since the two categories do not always overlap. Using this classification, it would appear that the question and answer form of the work contains a reasonably accurate account of what Bhagavan wrote at the turn of the century, and must therefore be counted as an authentic original work, whereas the essay form cannot be so regarded since Bhagavan played no creative part in its production and since it differs in so many respects from the original text. With regard to the content, since large portions of the work deal with spiritual paths which are alien to Bhagavan's mode of teaching, as a whole, it cannot be taken as a source of his authentic teachings. One should not disregard all the material; there are many sections which give an excellent presentation of Bhagavan's teachings, but there is enough extraneous material to disqualify the work from being a reliable source of his authentic teachings.

The problem of authenticity will be returned to later, but first it will be helpful to give the background to Bhagavan's other early work "Who am I?"

"Who am I?" came into existence through circumstances similar to those which produced "Self-Enquiry". In 1901 or 1902, a devotee by the name of Sivaprakasam Pillai came to Bhagavan seeking replies to spiritual questions which were troubling him. Bhagavan, who was remaining silent at the time, gave short cryptic answers either by tracing his finger in the sand to form letters, or by writing brief notes with a

piece of chalk on a slate. The first question asked by Sivaprakasam Pillai was "Nan Yar?" (Who am I?) to which Bhagavan replied "Arive nan" which means "Awareness alone is I",² the Tamil word *arivu* being approximately equivalent to the Sanskrit word *jnana*. Sivaprakasam Pillai then asked: "What is the nature of (this) Awareness?" to which Bhagavan replied "Arivin swarupam sat-chit-ananda", (the nature of Awareness is existence-consciousness-bliss). The questions continued in this manner until thirteen had been asked. Bhagavan, restricted by the limitations of his writing medium, was only able to give short cryptic answers to each question. Sivaprakasam Pillai was unable to make a permanent record of any of Bhagavan's answers at the time except the last one which he copied down in a more permanent form at the conclusion of the interview. However, shortly afterwards, he wrote down the whole conversation from memory and so both the questions and the answers were preserved. Many years later Sivaprakasam Pillai decided to publish the conversation and a manuscript copy was taken to Bhagavan by Manikkam Pillai, a disciple of Sivaprakasam Pillai. Bhagavan immediately noticed that in the manuscript, his own cryptic answers had been expanded to a paragraph or more. He turned to Manikkam Pillai and said: "I did not give this portion, how did it find a place here?" Manikkam Pillai replied: "When Sivaprakasam Pillai was copying Bhagavan's answers in his notebook, he added this portion thinking that it would help him to understand that first answer more clearly." (Bhagavan's answers had been retained in this new version, but Sivaprakasam Pillai had added his own comments underneath). Bhagavan seemed to have no objection to this expanded version and so it was published with its expanded answers as an original work of Bhagavan in 1923.

Sivaprakasam Pillai continued to revise the work, and at a later date a twenty-eight question

²"Arive nan" may also mean "Awareness alone am I" but, as an answer to the question "Nan yar?" it is the less likely of the two interpretations.

version was published. This version was published in many editions of the Collected Works, and in this Version, Bhagavan's two answers listed above appear as the answers to questions two and three. The answer to question one ("Who am I?") was interpolated later by Sivaprakasam Pillai. A fourteen question version was also published in Sri Ramana Vijayam, a Tamil biography written by Shudhananda Bharati, and a translation of this version was printed in the first major English biography *Self Realisation*. However, it is not known how this fourteen question version came into existence.

Sivaprakasam Pillai continued to devote an enormous amount of his time to rewriting this work and the archives of Sri Ramanasramam contain a large number of Sivaprakasam Pillai's notebooks, most of which have been filled with different versions of "Who am I?" However, none of these other manuscripts was ever published.

Sometime between 1923 and 1928 Bhagavan himself decided to rewrite "Who am I?" in the form of an essay. This essay version was largely based on the twenty-eight question version prepared by Sivaprakasam Pillai, and most of Pillai's additions were incorporated in Bhagavan's version. A new opening paragraph was added, the answers to questions four and five were omitted, as were parts of questions six and twenty. In other cases such as question twenty-seven, he modified and expanded the answer. Despite these alterations, most of the sentences were not changed at all; Bhagavan simply rearranged the ideas and connected them in a more logical and coherent order. Although the work bore a striking resemblance to Sivaprakasam Pillai's twenty-eight question version, because of the changes which he made to the structure and the content, it can be regarded as an original work of Bhagavan. Since Bhagavan himself wrote this version, it immediately superseded all the other versions which were based on a question and answer format. Bhagavan never made any attempt to rewrite or edit the versions which

existed in a question and answer form, and since he was not responsible for their original composition (except for a few brief words in some of the answers) none of these versions can really be regarded as Bhagavan's original works.

With regard to the content there can be little doubt that "Who am I?" contains the essence of Bhagavan's teachings. The original instructions were given to a devotee who was sympathetic to Bhagavan's basic teachings, and so no material from other spiritual disciplines was included. Bhagavan himself often recommended newcomers to the Ashram to read "Who am I?" and in one of his rare incursions into the business affairs of the Ashram, he insisted that it be on sale in the book-store at the cheapest possible price so that its contents could be available to everyone. If further proof is needed, one only has to turn to "Talks" (Number 602) where Dr Emiele Gathier, a Jesuit professor was questioning Bhagavan. The professor asked: "Can you kindly give me a summary of your teachings?" Bhagavan replied: "They are found in the booklets, particularly in "Who am I?"

If we apply the same criteria to "Who am I?" as were applied to "Self-Enquiry" we can see that the essay form of "Who am I?" is an authentic original work of Bhagavan whereas the various question and answer versions, even though they may be similar in content, are not. So far as the contents of "Who am I?" are concerned, one can have no hesitation in saying that they represent the authentic teachings of Bhagavan in their purest and most concentrated form.

If we return now to the question of the authenticity of "Self-Enquiry", it is possible to maintain that since Bhagavan personally read and corrected all the Ashram publications that appeared during his lifetime, the fact that he allowed "Self-Enquiry" to be published in his Collected Works is sufficient proof for it to be regarded as an original work containing his approved teachings. Unfortunately, the question of Bhagavan's "approval" is not so clear-cut.

Although he took enormous care to ensure that there were no printing, spelling or grammatical errors in his books, his concern did not appear to extend to their contents. Two stories from his early days at Sri Ramanasramam will illustrate this point very well.

Soon after Kunju Swami arrived at the Ashram, a Malayalam visitor came to see Bhagavan, and after staying a few days in the Ashram, presented him with a manuscript which he said contained a biography of Bhagavan. The manuscript was in Malayalam, and since Bhagavan was familiar with the language, he accepted the manuscript and began to peruse it. He read it from beginning to end, occasionally stopping to make grammatical or spelling corrections to the text. When he had finally finished reading it he returned it to the author with a smile. This incident generated considerable excitement among the devotees since no biography of Bhagavan had ever appeared before. Unfortunately though, no one in the Ashram apart from Bhagavan could read Malayalam except Kunju Swami, and he was temporarily absent. When he finally returned he was immediately given the manuscript and was asked to translate its contents for the benefit of the assembled devotees. Kunju Swami began to read the account but was horrified at what he read; the biography was mostly fiction. Among other things, it stated that Bhagavan was married and it gave a long list of all the *siddhis* he had attained and all the spectacular miracles he had performed. None of them were true. Kunju Swami rushed off to see Bhagavan and asked him: "Is all this true?" Bhagavan looked at him quietly for a while and then said: "Is all this true?" (pointing at the world) "Is this alone false?" (pointing at the manuscript).³ The manuscript was never published since the author was unable to find a publisher who would take his work.

Perhaps the most pertinent information concerning Bhagavan's attitude to his own works comes from the conversations he had on Ramana Gita. When it was first published, only the Five Hymns to Arunachala, the

Appalam Song, the translation of Vivekachudamani and a few stray verses had been published. Because of this, devotees were unable to get a clear idea of Bhagavan's teachings except by personal contact with him. Ramana Gita was therefore the first work which purported to be an extended treatise on Bhagavan's teachings. When it came out, all the Sanskrit-knowing devotees started to praise the book saying that it contained the whole essence of Bhagavan's teachings. Sadhu Natanananda who knew no Sanskrit felt a little left out and so he went to Bhagavan and said:⁴ "Bhagavan, everyone is praising this book so highly, but I do not know this language. Please tell me all that is said in it." Bhagavan replied: "Oh it is nothing. Some years ago some devotees asked me some questions about various matters, but their only aim was to get my approval for some of their beliefs. Because the questions were asked in that spirit, the answers were also according to it. One of their beliefs for which they wanted my approval was that a *jnani* with *siddhis* (supernatural powers) was greater than a *jnani* without *siddhis*. They tried to get me to agree to this, but after questioning me for more than a month, they finally understood that I could not be shaken."⁵ However, rather than let the episode pass away, Ganapati Muni wrote this book in which he recorded some of the discussions which took place at that time. That is all." A similar conversation took place in 1935 and is recorded in "Talks" (Number 57). In answer to a query about two stanzas in Ramana Gita, one of which glorified

³A similar quotation can be found in "Talks" (Number 286) when Bhagavan remarked; "What is the meaning of this talk of truth and falsehood in the world which is itself false."

⁴Both the question and Bhagavan's answer are taken from a transcript of a taperecorded conversation which Natanananda had with devotees in 1978.

⁵A similar comment on this subject was elicited by Lakshman Sharma, the author of "Maha Yoga". In the Call Divine Vol.2 P.572 he reports a conversation he had with Bhagavan on the subject of the interviews he gave which resulted in Ramana Gita, and he reports that Bhagavan said: "They tried very hard to shake me, but I stood firm."

siddhis,⁶ Bhagavan explained: "The (Ramana) Gita questions were asked in a certain spirit. The answers were according to it. People look to the body only and they want *siddhis* also. . . . People anxious for *siddhis* are not content with their idea of *jnana* and so want *siddhis* associated with it. They are likely to neglect the supreme happiness of *jnana* and aspire for *siddhis*."

None of the reservations which Bhagavan obviously felt about some of the contents of this particular work prevented him from taking an active interest in the publication of the book. The Sri Ramanasramam archives contain a proof copy of the first English translation of Ramana Gita which was prepared for the press by Bhagavan himself, and within a year of the second conversation quoted above, Bhagavan took the trouble to translate the whole of the work into Malayalam for the benefit of devotees who could not read it in any of the other languages. In translating the work, Bhagavan made no attempt to change any of the sections he disagreed with.

Paradoxically, Bhagavan could be a stern taskmaster when it came to translations of his works. Lakshman Sharma reported that when he attempted to translate *Ulladu Narpadu* into Sanskrit he had to make at least four or five attempts before the final rendering of each verse met with Bhagavan's approval and Major Chadwick reported a similar experience when he attempted to translate Bhagavan's poems into English.

There seems to be no logical explanation for these apparently contradictory attitudes; one must simply accept them as a fact of life without attempting to explain them. Since it seems that Bhagavan's approval for a work cannot be gauged from the amount of care and attention he paid to reading manuscripts and correcting proofs, or from his apparent willingness to have books published in his name, one must look elsewhere to find his evaluation. With regard to "Who am I?" there can be no doubt as to what his opinion was.

**He who clings to the Void
And neglects compassion,
Does not reach the highest stage.
But he who practices only compassion
Does not gain release from toils of existence.
He however who is strong in practice of both
Remains neither in Samsara nor in Nirvana**

-Saraha (Buddhist Tantric Text)

He recommended it as a basic text for visitors to the Ashram, it conforms perfectly with his verbal teachings which are recorded in numerous Ashram publications and he is on record as saying that it contains the essence of his teachings. None of these indications holds true for "Self-Enquiry". Although Bhagavan raised no objection to its inclusion in his Collected Works, it is clear that many of the statements contained in it, particularly those in the sections dealing with yoga, flatly contradict his other written works and his verbal teachings. Since there is no longer any way to determine exactly which portions of "Self-Enquiry" are Bhagavan's specific teachings, which are translations or paraphrases of scriptural texts and which are answers specially formulated to meet the needs of a particular devotee, it would be wise to exercise extreme caution in utilising any portion of the text as an authoratative source of Bhagavan's teachings. □

⁶Chapter 18, Final stanza: "The glory of the *siddhis* is past imagination, they are equal to Siva, yea Siva himself, in being able to grant boons."

EKATMA VIVEKAM

On page 217 of our last issue, while introducing the kalivenba form of Ulladu Narpadu, we explained how Sri Bhagavan converted most of His works in venba metre into kalivenba metre by adding some 'link words' at the end of each verse. In continuation, we now give a literal English translation by Sri Sadhu Om of Ekatma Vivekam, the kalivenba form of Ekatma Panchakam (The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self). In this translation the link words are once again indicated in bold type, and an introduction and some brief notes by Sri Sadhu Om are also added.

INTRODUCTION

ONE day in February 1947 there was some discussion in Sri Bhagavan's hall about the Tamil metre *venba*, during the course of which Sri Bhagavan remarked that though Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni, the great Sanskrit poet and scholar who was renowned for his *asukavitvam* (ability to compose extempore verses on any given subject), had tried to compose some verses in *venba* metre, he had found that he was unable to compose even a single verse in that metre either in Sanskrit or in his mother tongue, Telugu. Hearing this, Suri Nagamma (the recorder of *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*) requested Sri Bhagavan to compose some Telugu verses in *venba* metre, but at first He declined saying, "Am I a pundit well versed in Telugu? If I write anything in Telugu, your people will say that there are mistakes which must be corrected". Though Suri Nagamma continued to entreat Him, He did not compose any verses that day, but on the next day He graciously composed three Telugu verses in *venba* metre and at the same time translated them into Tamil. Seeing this, Suri Nagamma again entreated Him to compose some more verses on the same lines, and though at first He again declined, after some days He composed two more verses in the same metre both in Telugu and Tamil¹. These five verses are a lucid exposition of the nature of Self, the one reality, and hence were named *Ekatma Panchakam* (The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self)². As it turned out, this was to be the last original work which Sri Bhagavan ever composed.

Subsequently some Malayali devotees requested Sri Bhagavan to translate *Ekatma Panchakam* into Malayalam, which He graciously did, again in the same *venba* metre. Sri Muruganar then composed a concluding verse in Tamil, which Sri Bhagavan translated into both Telugu and Malayalam. Finally Sri Bhagavan converted all three versions from *venba* metre into *kalivenba* metre. Since the five verses were thus linked into a single verse, the *kalivenba* form of *Ekatma Panchakam* was renamed *Ekatma Vivekam* (The Knowledge of the Oneness of Self).

The following is an English rendering of the Tamil version of *Ekatma Vivekam*.

* * *

Payiram—Prefatory Verse
(composed by Sri Muruganar)

Here, the Lord, Sri Ramana Guru, who first graciously gave *Ekatma Panchakam* (The Five Verses on the Oneness of Self), has Himself again lovingly composed it as a fine *Kalivenba*

¹For a fuller account of the origin of *Ekatma Panchakam*, refer to *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, vol. I, letters 95 and 96, and *My Life at Sri Ramanasramam* by Suri Nagamma, pp. 42 to 45.

²The compound word *Ekatma* means 'the one Self', 'the oneness of Self' or 'Self, the One', and hence it denotes not only that Self is only one (and not many), but also that Self is the only one, that is, the only one existing reality. It is particularly in this latter sense that the expression 'the oneness of Self' should be understood, for the import of this work is that, as verse 5 clearly states, Self is the only ever-existing and self-shining reality.

called *Ekatma Vivekam* (*The Knowledge of the Oneness of Self*)* as an aid to true devotees in reciting.

* An alternative version of this same verse gives the title as *Ekatma Unmai* (*The Truth of the Oneness of Self*).

Nul—Text

1. *Forgetting Self, mistaking a body as Self, taking innumerable births and finally knowing Self and being Self, is (just like) waking up from a dream of wandering about the world. Know thus.*

Note: The ever-awakened state of Self is here compared to the waking state of a person. On going to sleep, a person forgets the waking state; this is similar to one forgetting one's true Self-consciousness. In sleep a person dreams, and in that dream he mistakes the dream body to be himself; similarly, in the state of Self-forgetfulness we mistake a body to be ourself. These two fundamental errors—forgetting Self and mistaking a body as Self—occur simultaneously.

Our undergoing innumerable births and deaths is similar to a person wandering about the world in a dream. Though in a dream a person may find himself to be wandering all over the world, does not his waking body in fact remain stationary on the bed? Similarly, despite our undergoing innumerable births and deaths, our true Self is in fact ever motionless, unchanged and unaffected.

On waking up from a dream, a person finds that all that he did and experienced in that dream is unreal, and hence he is no way affected by any gain or loss that he may have experienced at that time. Similarly, on knowing Self one finds that all the *karmas* that one has done and all their fruits that one has accumulated and experienced throughout innumerable births are unreal, and hence one is in no way affected by them. In one's experience of Self, one realizes that truly nothing has ever happened to one. This experience is the ultimate truth and is known as *ajata*—the knowledge

that nothing ever comes into existence or happens, and that Self, the sole reality, alone ever exists as it is.

2. *Declare that he who asks himself 'Who am I?' and 'What is the place where I am (coming from)?', though he **always** exists as Self, is equal to a drunkard who asks 'Who am I?' and 'In which place am I?'.*

Note: It is well known that from about the year 1900, when He first started to give verbal instructions, till the year 1950, when He left His mortal body, Bhagavan Sri Ramana's principal teaching was the path of Self-enquiry. As clues to aid the practice of Self-enquiry, He gave two questions, namely 'Who am I?' and 'Whence (or from where) am I?'. However, many people failed to understand the purpose of these two questions and, instead of using them as an aid to turn their attention towards the first person feeling 'I', merely wasted their time and energy either in repeating these questions mechanically as if they were *mantras* or in using them as objects of meditation. In this verse, therefore, Sri Bhagavan declares that those who merely repeat or meditate upon these questions in this manner are no better than a drunkard who blindly asks such questions.

"Always keeping the mind fixed in Self, alone is called 'Self-enquiry' (*atma-vichara*)", says Sri Bhagavan in *Who am I?*. It is only as a contrivance to help one thus fix the mind or attention in Self (in the feeling 'I') that Sri Bhagavan gave such questions as 'Who am I?' and 'Whence am I?'. Whenever thoughts rise during the time of Self-enquiry, it is an indication that Self-attention has been lost. Therefore, to enable one to set aside thought-attention and to regain Self-attention in an easy and quick manner, Sri Bhagavan recommended in *Who am I?*, "At the very moment that each thought rises, if one vigilantly enquires 'To whom did this thought rise?', it will be known 'To me'. If one then enquires 'Who am I?', the mind will turn back (from the thought) to its source (Self); (then, since no one is there to attend to it) the thought which had risen will also subside". Thus, the purpose of such

questions as 'Who am I?' is only to turn the attention away from thoughts and towards Self. Once the attention is fixed on Self, these questions are no longer necessary.

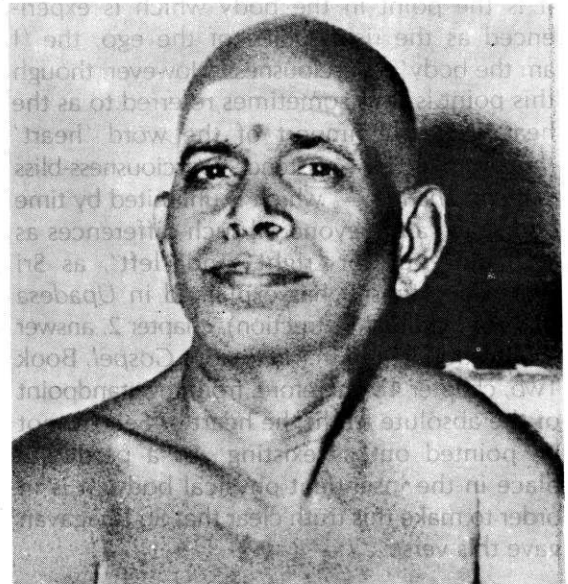
However, instead of diving within by thus fixing the attention more and more firmly on Self, many merely float on the surface of the thought-waves by continuously keeping their mind on these questions ('Who am I?', 'Whence am I? etc.'). It is in order to correct the wrong understanding which such people have about the practice of Self-enquiry that Sri Bhagavan gave this verse. Refer also to *The Path of Sri Ramana—Part One*, second edition, Pp. 123 to 124.

Moreover, in the final state of Self-experience one realizes the truth that one always exists as Self, and hence Self-attention is found to be natural, spontaneous and effortless. Therefore, in that state questions such as 'Who am I?' and 'Whence am I?', which are only clues given to those who seek to regain Self-attention with effort, are found to have no meaning whatsoever.

3. When in fact the body is within Self — existence-consciousness-bliss (sat-chit-ananda)—, he who thinks that Self is within that insentient body is like one who thinks that the cloth (of the screen), which is the substratum of the (cinema) picture, exists within that picture.

Note: When a fool watches a cinema show he is able to see the cloth screen between the various pictures on that screen, and hence he is deluded into believing that the screen is one among the pictures. Similarly, when a man sees this world-picture, which consists of so many souls, bodies and inanimate objects, he feels himself to be a body—one of the pictures that he sees—, and hence he is deluded into believing that Self is a limited object that exists within that body.

However, just as the cloth screen is truly the substratum or support upon which all the cinema pictures come and go, so Self is truly the substratum or support within which this whole world picture—including the body—



appears and disappears. Therefore, he who thinks that Self is within the insentient body is no better than a fool who thinks that the cloth screen is within the cinema picture. Moreover, just as the screen is permanent while the pictures are a transitory appearance, so Self is permanent and hence real, while the body and world are a transitory and hence unreal appearance. How can that which is real be contained within that which is unreal? Therefore, it is wrong to imagine that Self is something which is contained within the body.

Though such is the truth, there were some among the devotees of Sri Bhagavan who, being unable to doubt the reality of their false experience 'I am the body' often used to ask Him which point in the body is the seat of Self. Knowing that the understanding of such devotees was limited by their wrong outlook, 'I am the body', and they were therefore incapable of grasping even intellectually the truth that Self is beyond the limitations of time and space, Sri Bhagavan sometimes, out of compassion, had to dilute the truth by replying that the heart or seat of Self is two digits to the right from the centre of the chest. The reason why Sri Bhagavan used to specify this particular point is that

it is the point in the body which is experienced as the rising-place of the ego, the 'I am the body'-consciousness. However, though this point is thus sometimes referred to as the heart, the true import of the word 'heart' (*hridayam*) is Self—existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*)—, which is unlimited by time and space and beyond all such differences as 'in' and 'out' or 'right' and 'left', as Sri Bhagavan Himself has explained in *Upadesa Manjari* (Spiritual Instruction), chapter 2, answer to question 9, and in *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book Two, chapter 43. Therefore, from the standpoint of the absolute truth, the heart or Self cannot be pointed out as existing at a particular place in the insentient physical body. It is in order to make this truth clear that Sri Bhagavan gave this verse.

Nevertheless, even after Sri Bhagavan had given this verse, there were some devotees who, having failed to reflect deeply over its meaning, continued to practise concentrating their attention on the right side of the chest, believing that they were thereby meditating on Self or practising Self-enquiry. However, concentration upon any point in the insentient and alien body is nothing but an objective attention—an attention to something other than 'I'—, and hence it can never be Self-enquiry, which is a subjective attention—an attention to the first person, the feeling 'I'. That is why whenever devotees asked Sri Bhagavan whether they should meditate on the right side of the chest in order to meditate on Self or the heart, He used to reply that meditation should not be on the right or the left, that the heart is not a place in the physical body, that it is neither within nor without, neither on the right nor on the left, and that meditation should therefore be only on Self, the feeling 'I am' which is under the direct experience of everyone (see for example *Talks*, No. 273, p. 229).

In this context it is also worth bearing in mind verse 22 of *Ulladu Narpadu-Anubandham* (The Supplement to the Forty Verses), in which Sri Bhagavan says, "... It (the heart whose

form is the one consciousness) exists both within and without, (yet) it exists neither within nor without", for the distinction 'within' and 'without' exists only with reference to the body, which is itself unreal. This point can be made clear by the following simile. Let us suppose that a pot made of ice is immersed deep in the water of a lake. Now where is the water? Is it not wrong to say that the water is only inside the pot? Is it not both inside and outside? In actual fact, the pot itself is truly nothing but water. Therefore, when water alone exists, where is the room for the notions 'inside' and 'outside'? Likewise, when Self alone exists, there is truly no room for the notions that it exists either inside or outside the body, for the body itself does not exist apart from Self. This truth—the truth of the oneness of Self—is made more clear in the following verse.

4. *Can an ornament exist as other than gold, which is the substance (vastu)? Without Self (the sole existing reality), where is the body? He Who thinks the body to be himself is an ajnani. He who takes (himself) to be Self is a Jnani, who knows Self. Know thus.*

Note: Brahman has five aspects—existence, consciousness, bliss, name and form (*sat-chit-ananda-nama-rupa*)—, the former three being its real aspects (*satya amsas*) and the latter two being its unreal aspects (*mithya amsas*). The three real aspects are likened to gold, which is the *vastu* (the substance or reality), while the two unreal aspects are likened to ornaments, which are but names and form temporarily assumed by gold. Whereas gold is permanent and unchanging, its names and forms, the ornaments, are transient and subject to change.

Self is existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*), while the body is a mere name and form. Just as an ornament cannot be other than gold, its substance, so the body cannot be other than Self, the sole existing reality

³For further explanation, refer also to *The Path of Sri Ramana—Part One*, 2nd edition, Pp. 108 to 110, 119 and 156.

(*vastu*). However, though the gold assumes a name and form and appears as an ornament, it would be wrong to take the gold to be that name and form. Likewise, though Self might appear to assume so many names and forms—this whole universe—, it would be wrong to take Self to be one of those names and forms—the body. He who thus takes himself to be the body is an *ajnani*, one who lacks true knowledge.

As explained by Sri Bhagavan in verse 17 of *Ulladu Narpadu*, the difference between an *ajani* and a *jnani* is that in the experience of an *ajnani* 'I' is limited to the measure of the body (that is, to the name and form of the body), whereas in the experience of the *jnani* 'I' shines as the limitless Self, other than which the body cannot exist. That is, the *ajnani* feels 'the body alone is I' (like a fool who thinks 'the ornament alone is gold'), whereas the *jnani* feels 'the body is also I' (like a wise person who understands 'the ornament is also gold').

5. *The only thing (vastu) that exists eternally by its own light is that one Self. When in those (ancient) days the Adi-Guru (the primal Guru, Sri Dakshinamurti) revealed that vastu through speechless speech, say, who can reveal it through speech?*

Note: Eternal, unchanging, self-existing and self-shining—such is the definition of reality given by Sri Bhagavan. "What is the standard of reality? That alone is real which exists by itself, which reveals itself by itself and which is eternal and unchanging", says Sri Bhagavan in *Maharshi's Gospel*, Book Two, chapter 3 (8th edition, p. 63). According to this definition, Self is the sole reality, for it alone exists and shines eternally, by its own light, without change and without dependence upon any other thing. All else—the mind, body, world and so on—are unreal, for they are transitory and subject to change, and they exist and shine not by their own light but only by depending upon the light of the one Self.

When in ancient days even Sri Dakshinamurti

—the *Adi Guru*, Guru of all Gurus—was able to reveal the truth of that one Self only through Silence, the speechless speech, who else can reveal it through speech?

In this connection, Sri Bhagavan once told the following story to Sri Muruganar. When the four aged *Sanakadi Rishis* first saw the sixteen-year-old Sri Dakshinamurti sitting under the banyan tree, they were at once attracted by Him, understanding Him to be the real *Sadguru*. They approached Him, did three *pradakshinas* around Him, prostrated before Him, sat at His Feet and began to ask very shrewd and pertinent questions about the nature of reality and the means of attaining it. Because of the great compassion and fatherly love (*vatsalya*) which He felt for His aged disciples, the young Sri Dakshinamurti was overjoyed to see their earnestness, wisdom and maturity, and hence He gave apt replies to each of their questions. But as He answered each consecutive question, further doubts rose in their minds and they asked further apt questions. Thus they continued to question Sri Dakshinamurti for one whole year, and He continued to clear their doubts through His compassionate answers. Finally, however, Sri Dakshinamurti understood that if He gave more answers to their questions more doubts would rise in their minds and hence there would never be an end to their ignorance (*ajnana*). Therefore, suppressing even the feeling of compassion and fatherly love which was welling up within Him, He merged Himself into the supreme Silence. Because of their great maturity (which had been ripened to perfection through their year-long association with the *Sadguru*), as soon as Sri Dakshinamurti thus merged Himself, they too were automatically merged within into Silence, the state of Self.

Wonder-struck on hearing Sri Bhagavan narrating the story in this manner, Sri Muruganar remarked that in no book is it mentioned that Sri Dakshinamurti ever spoke anything. "But this is what actually happened", replied Sri Bhagavan. From the authoritative way in which Sri Bhagavan thus replied and from the clear

and descriptive way in which He had told the story, Sri Muruganar understood that Sri Bhagavan was none but Sri Dakshinamurti Himself.

Why is it that even Sri Dakshinamurti was unable to reveal the truth of the oneness of Self through speech? Because, from the one Self, the supreme Silence, rises the ego on account of weakness or slackness in Self-attention, from the ego then rise thoughts on account of further weakness in Self-attention, and from thoughts finally rises speech on account of still further weakness. Therefore, how can speech, which is the great-grandson of Silence and which is born only through weakness, be capable of describing or revealing the nature of Self, its original source?

Moreover, since Self alone truly exists and since there is nothing that exists as other than Self, who is there to reveal Self and to whom is it to be revealed? Speech is possible only in a state of duality and otherness, and since duality and otherness do not exist in the state of Self, it is beyond the range of speech.

Therefore, Self can be realized only in the state of Silence, in which it is clearly known that nothing else—neither speech, thoughts nor the ego—has ever truly existed. This knowledge is *ajata*, the absolute truth, the truth of the oneness of Self.

Concluding Verse (composed by Sri Muruganar)

Thus, in these days *Guru Ramana, who shines as the form of the one Self-knowledge (ekatma-jnana-swarupa), has made clear in this verse* sung by Him what the truth of that oneness of Self is, destroying (thereby) the 'I am the body'-feeling (dehatma-bhava) of His devotees.*

*When Sri Muruganar composed this verse as a conclusion to *Ekatma Panchakam* he used the words *ip panchakattu* (in these five verses). However, when Sri Bhagavan composed *Ekatma Vivekam*, He linked this verse to the other five and He changed the words *ip panchakattu* into *ip pavitran* (in this verse), since He had converted the five verses in *venba* metre into one verse in *kalivenba* metre. □

Therefore I pray to 'God' that he may quit me of 'God', for His unconditioned being is above 'God' and all distinctions. It was here (in unconditioned being) that I was myself, wanted myself, and knew myself to be this person (here before you), and therefore, I am my own first cause, both of my eternal being and of my temporal being. To this end I was born, and by virtue of my birth being eternal, I shall never die. It is of the nature of this eternal birth that I have been eternally, that I am now, and shall be forever. What I am as a temporal creature is to die and to come to nothingness, for it came with time, and so with time it will pass away. In my eternal birth, however, everything was begotten. I was my own first cause as well as the first cause of everything else. If I had willed it, neither I nor the world would have come to be. If I had not been, there would have been no 'God'.

Some people want to see God with their eyes as they see a cow, and to love Him as they love their cow, for the milk, cheese and profit it gives them. This is how it is with the people who love God for the sake of outward wealth or inward comfort. . . . Indeed I tell you the truth, any object you have in your mind, however good, will be a barrier between you and the inmost Truth.

-Eckhart (Christian Mystic)

SAT-DARSANAM

S. SANKARANARAYANAN

MAHARSHI'S Tamil poem '*Ulladu Narpadu*' is an epoch-making work. Noted for its profundity of meaning, brevity and precision of expression, the poem has a place of its own in the Tamil philosophical literature. Being in Tamil and that too in a chaste and terse style, it could be appreciated and studied profitably only by a few people. The great Vasishtha Ganapati Muni rendered the whole poem verse by verse in the beautiful *upajati* metre of the Sanskrit language so that it might reach a wider circle of readers and find a permanent place in the spiritual literature of India. Thus *Sat-darsanam* came to be written, a true and faithful rendering of the Tamil text, but appearing almost like an original composition of the Muni.

The Sanskrit version *Sat-darsanam* was composed by Sri Vasishtha Muni when he was staying in Anandashram, Sirsi, along with his disciples. At that time, the Muni was in correspondence with the Maharshi at Tiruvannamalai. As soon as the work was finished by the Muni, it was immediately followed by the writing of a commentary by his illustrious disciple Sri Kapali Sastriar who was at that time staying with the Muni in Anandashram, Sirsi. The composition of *Sat-darsanam* and its commentary figure prominently in the correspondence with the Maharshi and from that we learn the high regard with which the Muni held the work of the Maharshi and how he deemed it a great privilege and experience to have had the opportunity of rendering it into the language of the Gods.

The original Tamil text, as the name *Ulladu Narpadu* indicates, comprises forty verses with two prefatory verses of a benedictory nature.

On the other hand, *Sat-darsanam* comprises forty four verses, renderings of the forty two verses in the original along with two concluding verses composed by the Muni. The first of the concluding verses gives the proper setting to the whole composition. It records that Vasishtha Muni translated into the Sanskrit tongue the immaculate excellent work of the Maharshi composed in the language of the Tamils. The second concluding verse describes the nature of the Muni's words. These words render with ease the essence of the truth principle and bring happiness to those who pine for liberation. These words act also as a bright wall reflecting the glory of the Maharshi's speech. The Sanskrit phrase employed is *amanusa sri ramaniya vani mayukhabhithih*. Through this single pithy phrase, the Muni, the poet par excellence that he is, has explained the greatness of the Maharshi, the greatness of his work, the translation and the relationship between the translator and the original author.

Let us explain: The Maharshi's speech is described as superhuman *amanusa*. As he is *jivanmukta*, he is super-human and therefore his speech is also superhuman. Even if he is considered as a man living amongst men, as he is always poised in the Self, his speech emanates from the Self and therefore, it is superhuman. As the Maharshi is the source of

This article is taken from a new book entitled "Maharshi and Nayana". The book, which will be appearing in a few months time, contains all the works of Ganapati Muni which have a connection with Sri Bhagavan, articles on his other works and his writing style and an extensive account of the relationship that existed between the two teachers. The book is being published by Sri Ramanashram and it should be available early next year.

all knowledge, he is compared to the sun and his speech to the rays of light. Just as rays of light fall on a wall, the speech of the Maharshi pervades fully the words of the Muni. Just as a wall receives and reflects the rays, the Muni's words are receptive to the original text of the Maharshi's speech and at the same time they reflect it truly and faithfully. The rays of the sun are self-luminous, no doubt, but in order to be visible, they have to fall on a wall. Similarly ordinary mortals cannot comprehend the immaculate superhuman speech of the Maharshi, that is *Ulladu narpadu*. They want a bright wall, the words of the Muni's *Sat-darsanam* to receive it and reflect it back to the people, so that the full glory of the text becomes visible. And there is no gainsaying of the fact that with the help of the Sanskrit *Sat-darsanam* one is able to comprehend the Tamil text *Ulladu narpadu* better.

Sat-darsanam has to be studied along with the *Sat darshana bhashya* of Sri Kapali Sastriar. The Muni was very pleased with the commentary of his disciple and said so in his despatches to the Maharshi. The commentary is prefaced with a comprehensive and lucid introduction. Topics of Non-duality, Creation, Bondage, the I-sense, Release, Sadhana and Siddhi and Grace are discussed thoroughly in the introduction. The contents give succinctly the contents of each verse. There is an epilogue to the Introduction which admirably sums up the concepts of the individual Soul as explained in this work. Parallel passages from *Upadesa Saram*, *Ramana Gita* and *Umasahasram* are cited where appropriate. Sri Kapali Sastriar concludes the commentary by paying a magnificent tribute to the Muni and to the work of translation which none else except the Muni could have accomplished. The disciple acclaims in adoration the multifaceted genius of the Master—as a great poet, true to his name *Kavya Kantha* who set the model and style in *stotra* literature by composing thousands and thousands of verses like *Umasahasram* and *Indrashasra*; as a vast and profound ocean of Sastraic knowledge that composed works like *Viswamimamsa*; as a magician who with the mystic collyrium

opened our eyes to the secrets of the Deities and their Mantras, which were long lost and which lingered in memory only by name; as one who spent all his life in the scientific enquiry of the meaning of the Vedas; as one whose speech played about, rich with potency, born out of divine inspiration vouched to him, from his very birth; as the great personality who conducted himself so marvellously and as one who was an ornament to the hosts of disciples of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Let us now go to the subject matter of the work. We can do no better than quote from the *Bhumika*, Introduction to *Sat-darsana bhashya*: "As the title of the work shows, it is a discourse on the perception or realisation of Truth. *Sat-darsana* is a compound word formed of *Sat* and *Darsana*, *Sat* meaning primarily existence and secondarily the real and the true, and *Darsana* meaning perception. It is direct perception of Truth that is here meant by the term. Indeed, this work is based upon the Maharshi's perception of Truth, and from this it derives its title 'Truth-perception'. But '*Darsana*' also means a system of philosophy, such as the *Nyaya* and other *Darsanas* of the post-*sruti* period. Even in this sense the work is a *Darsana*, a philosophy of the Real. For the epigrammatic verses packed with profound thoughts yield a wealth of philosophic concepts furnishing sufficient material for the metaphysical basis of a philosophy that is involved in an intellectual statement of the Maharshi's attitude to life and earthly existence. As there is nothing that is really unreal, a fact that is often stressed by Sri Maharshi this system may be appropriately called a 'True Realism' or 'Ideal Realism'.

"It is needless to say that this *Shastra* is not intended either to refute or to support the current systems, such as the Saivite and Vaishnavite, the Dwaita and the Adwaita. It does not follow the method of metaphysical speculation, such as characterises the *Nyaya* and other systems of the *Sutra* period, nor does it purport, like the two *mimamsas* of Jaimini and Badarayana to harmonise and to remove doubts or misconceptions in scriptural texts or other

authoritative utterances of great souls. Like the sacred words of the Tamil Veda of Saint Nammalvar or of Manikya Vachaka and like the texts of the Upanishads, the words of the Maharshi are an original and independent utterance based upon personal experience, and though they support and elucidate authoritative pronouncements both of the scriptures and of exalted souls, they have really an independent origin and validity, coming as they do directly from himself."

The *Sat-darsana* explains the standpoint of the Maharshi very clearly. He sees no contradiction between the path of knowledge and path of devotion. Knowledge culminates in establishing one's identity with the Formless Absolute, the *Nirguna Brahman* while devotion is directed towards an object of worship with qualities, the *Saguna Brahman*. To the Maharshi the experience of the *Saguna* and *Nirguna Brahman* is not mutually exclusive, but simultaneous. That is why *Sat-darsanam* contains two prefatory verses of a benedictory nature, instead of the customary one—one describing the Pure Absolute Being, *Nirguna* and the other invoking the *Saguna* form of Mahesa who annihilates the very thought of death. In the text, the Maharshi advocates two means, a *nishta*, an advaitic poise in the Self and a complete surrender where one gets devoured by the Self. Also the Maharshi holds that the world is no illusion. For both the ignorant and the wise, the universe exists *ajnasya vijnyasya ca visvam asti*. Only the ignorant one sees the truth of the visible universe alone, while the wise one goes behind to the Formless Truth that is the base and support of the visible universe.

Great philosophical truths are explained here quite simply by means of homely analogies. The Maharshi does not subscribe to the view that in the work-a-day world there is only duality and only when you realise the supreme purpose behind everything there is non-duality. The Maharshi cites the familiar story of ten men crossing a river in spate. When they reached the other bank, they wanted to make sure that all of them had arrived safely. Each one began to count leaving himself out and got the figure nine, till some one else came on the scene and pointed out the mistake. The 'missing' tenth man was never absent, he had always been there. In the same way non-duality is the essential thing, ever present.

Leaving the present, men worry about the past and the future. This is as amusing as proceeding with the count, without counting one, says the Maharshi. The ego has its genesis in form, it is established in a series of forms, it feeds on form and it takes and leaves form as it likes. But when the form of the ego is enquired into, it flees like a ghost and vanishes. Again illustrating the method of tracking down the ego, the Maharshi says that just as a person who has dropped an object into a well, plunges headlong silently into it with bated breath, one should, controlling his speech and breath, plunge into one's self and find the original form of the 'I'.

Passages such as these reveal at once the grandeur of the theme and the simplicity with which it is expounded in the text. Verily *Sat-darsanam* represents the Realisation of the Maharshi truly reflected in the Realisation of the Muni. □

Life from the Centre is a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It is amazing. It is triumphant. It is radiant. It takes no time but it occupies all our time.

-Thomas Kelly (Quaker mystic)

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A WALK IN THE FOREST

DOUGLAS E. HARDING

THIS summer, while walking in the tree-covered mountains of La Drome, in the South of France, I made a curious discovery; curious, and quite useful. Useful, at any rate, for elderly hikers like me.

The unpaved forest roads, with their easy gradients, were very good for walking, provided you were careful not to trip up over loose boulders, bits of projecting rock, and pot-holes. Aware of this danger, I paid close attention to the road surface, delicately picking my way among its obstacles and only occasionally stubbing a toe or twisting an ankle.

My caution worked fairly well, but it had two disadvantages: my walk in the forest became more like a totter in the forest, and I missed the forest. The wayside flowers (at their very best), the trees, and the occasional glimpse through them of valleys below and distant mountains—all these were more or less lost on me. My landscape was a pair of feet, uneasily negotiating miniature mountains and valleys.

I soon got tired of this monotonous scenery underfoot, and decided to try an altogether different way of walking. Taking (I thought) rather a risk, *I looked steadily ahead instead of down*. There, in the middle distance, was the white tree-bordered path, widening and blurring as it approached me, and finally vanishing altogether. No underfoot hazards now, no legs and feet to cope with them, nothing at all as near as that. It was as if the road right here were being rolled smooth enough for safe walking, and in fact rolled up altogether. If there was anybody walking at all (which there wasn't) I was walking on air. No, I didn't fall flat on my nose or sprain an ankle. Quite

the contrary: I became remarkably sure-footed—because no-footed. And I was free to enjoy the forest. The new method worked.

At least it worked so long as I didn't lose myself in that scene. It worked very well indeed so long as I remained centred, aware of myself as the space in which that ever-changing forest scene was on display, aware of the absence here of any walker in the forest, aware of the Nothing here that was making nothing of that difficult road surface. For I soon found that when something out there captivated me and I lost touch with my freedom here I started stumbling about again. It seemed that this central emptiness functioned best when it was clearly alive to itself as empty. It seemed that I had *consciously* to dissolve those approaching hazards and the feet and legs that had been trying so hard to cope with them.

I remembered the sad story of the centipede who got around perfectly happily till some busybody insect asked him how he managed to control all those legs. What expertise, to co-ordinate so effectively all those moving parts! Poor centipede: one anxious glance down at the machinery of locomotion and it halted, never to move again!

There were unfamiliar butterflies at the roadside and swallows overhead. Everywhere such consummate skill in flight: the butterflies dodging this way and that to avoid capture, the swallows (perfect aviators from birth) making human aerobatics look graceless, amateurish, and very dangerous. Certainly no swallow looks back to find wings and tail: one good look, and I guess the little creature would fall like a stone from the sky. *For itself*, no bird is a bird, no animal is an animal, and that is

why it moves so beautifully for us. It is the scene ahead. Have you ever found your cat looking down at its paws while walking, or tripping up over a dropped toy? Observe toddlers starting to walk. They lean forward, intent on what lies ahead, and leave their little legs to stagger along somehow behind. The truth (the inside or first-person story) is that we learn to walk without legs, and only acquire such underpinning later on in life. With what result? Watch young children at the seaside, running about on slippery rocks, hardly ever glancing down yet hardly ever coming to grief; and compare their performance with their parents' unsteady footwork over the same terrain. It's as though they walked on stilts.

How to regain this lost art of the young child, the cat, the swallow—the art of unhesitating and appropriate movement without attending to moving parts? There's no going back to paradise and infancy. I can no longer simply give place to—make room for—those distant trees and hills. That scene is not enough to empty me of myself. Why? Because there persists the *idea* of something here (me) reacting to something there (not-me). The steady assumption of every grown-up, the basis of his life as a man among men (all the more massive for remaining unexamined) is that there lies at the centre of his universe a solid, opaque, coloured, complicated, active *thing*, mostly invisible to its owner but nevertheless perfectly real. This universal human conviction isn't spelled out in so many words: it doesn't need to be, it's too evident, it goes without saying. And it's a lie. Actually, it's *the* lie.

It is a lie that goes on repeating itself and building itself up—this progressive solidification as one gets older—till one fine day it's seen for the nonsense that it is. Though I can no longer, like the swallow, keep myself free of myself by *overlooking my presence*, I can and I do see *my absence*, right here. Though I can no longer *lose myself* in that forest scene, I can and I do *find myself* to be the space it happens in. Though I can no longer afford, like the young child, to *forget my feet* and

what they're treading on, I can and I do *remember* (remember to see) their dissolution. When there is an awareness of nobody here walking in the forest, it turns out to be a good, untiring, easy, thoroughly enjoyable walk. Without such awareness it's hard going. This is experience, not theorising. The Void—its competence to deal with the rough patches (and smooth patches) of life—is right here for testing, all day and every day.

This unspeakably miraculous Void from which all creatures live, this incredible Know-how that is everyone's, this central absence-of-body which animates and regulates all the bodies that proceed from it, is One and the same in all. Intrinsically it is Perfection itself, in man, child, cat, swallow, worm, cell, particle. . . . But how, in that case, do these seeming malfunctionings come about, these stubbed toes and twisted ankles along life's road? It will help if we distinguish clearly the three stages or levels of behaviour that we have been looking at:—

(1) First, the non-human that lives unquestioningly and without obstructions from its central Nothingness, and thereby 'knows' what to do and how to do it and when to do it. True, it is a specialist, confining itself to its specific life-style. It minds its own business. And to what effect! They young Garden Spider's *first* wheel-web is an engineering masterpiece, and he never had a lesson in web-building and what webs are for. The sky where I live is sometimes thick with birds, often of different species, flying this way and that. They have no traffic regulations that I know of, no priorities of right and left, and I have still to witness a near miss, let alone a collision. These aren't exceptional cases. Every creature is in its own way equally brilliant, and equally clueless.

(2) In his own way, of course, man is still more brilliant. He is the great amateur and unspecialist, Nature's generalist. There's hardly an animal skill—on land, sea, and air—that he can't emulate, on the whole clumsily, with many mishaps and abuses and a great deal of misery. He is clumsy because he take on a

body to be clumsy with, and he is frustrated and miserable because that body-idea blocks the No-body that he really is. Man ceases to rely for know-how upon his all-knowing, infinitely resourceful Source and turns to himself—his tiny, handicapped, and ultimately unreal body-mind—for direction. The outcome is hugely impressive, and so disastrous that his survival is threatened.

(3) There is a remedy. It doesn't mean going back to the unconsciousness of the animal and the infant, and it doesn't mean giving up the immense gains of human self-consciousness (whereby one takes an outsider's view of one-self). It means going on to real self-consciousness, which is to say Self-consciousness; coming home again to the spot one occupies and finding it unoccupied; clearly seeing and handing over to What and Who I have always been, right here. It means re-capturing, at the highest level, the natural flair, the sure-footedness, the easy grace and spontaneity which man alone among creatures has managed to

suppress. It comes to this: the only sensible way to walk through the forest of the world is to see there's nobody doing it.

Back home, thumbing through the *Talks* of Sri Ramana Maharshi, I come upon the following advice, which you could call The Intelligent Person's Guide to Forest-Walking:

Find the Subject and objects take care of themselves.

Find your Self and no evil can come to you.

Find the Self and all problems are solved.

When your actions are God's they must be right.

'I am a man' is unnatural. 'I AM' is natural.

Wisdom is natural and ever-present.

The Eternal Being is that state where you have disappeared.

You are not in the world, the world is in you. □

Virtue and vice, happiness and sorrow are all attributes of the mind, not of yourself, O All-Pervading-One. You are neither the doer nor the enjoyer. Indeed you are ever free.

You are the One-Seer-Of-All, and are surely ever-free. Indeed, this alone is your bondage that you see yourself not as the seer, but as something different.

You who have been bitten by the great black serpent of egoism, "I am the doer", please drink this faith, "I am not the doer", like nectar and be happy.

Having burnt down the forest of ignorance with the fire of certitude, "I am the One Pure Consciousness", and discarding all grief—be happy.

My dear son, you have long been bound with the rope of your body-consciousness. Rend it asunder with the sword of knowledge, "I am consciousness," and be happy.

You are unattached, actionless, self-effulgent, without any taints. "You practise meditation", this indeed is your bondage.

-Ashtavakra Gita, Chapter One verses 6, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15

WARIS ALI SHAH

Dr M. Hafiz Syed

IN the first quarter of the 19th century a child was born in a small town in Oudh whose words and example were in later life destined to influence the religious conceptions and ideas of many thousands of people throughout India and the Middle East. The boy was Shah Waris Ali and the place was Dewa, an ancient town to the north of Bara Banki in Uttar Pradesh. His family came from a distinguished line of scholars and his father was a man of considerable learning who had gone abroad to complete his education in Baghdad. However, the parents had little influence on the boy, for by the time he was three they had both died. Apart from a passionate interest in the Holy Quran, which he had memorised by the time he was seven, the young boy showed none of his father's inclinations to study. He took no interest in subjects other than the Quran and he much preferred silent solitude to study. He was a quite exceptional child who was obviously destined for a far from ordinary life. He was never seen playing with other children, he loved disposing of his money to poor people and he was frequently to be found sitting alone absorbed in meditation.

When the people around him discovered that he had no interest in worldly affairs, his brother-in-law, Khadim Ali Shah, a Sufi with a high reputation, took charge of the boy's life and education. At the age of eleven he was initiated into the mysteries of Sufism.

Nothing is known of the period he was training under the Sufis, but he obviously absorbed much and progressed rapidly, for at the age of fourteen, he was allowed to initiate people into his order, and immediately, a large number of disciples gathered around him. At

the age of fifteen, he went on his first pilgrimage to Mecca. Before he left, he gave away all his property, including a valuable library, to his relatives, and he consigned all the documents which related to the lands he had inherited to a nearby pond.

Leaving his home town for this first pilgrimage marked the beginning of a new period of his life. For twelve years he travelled in Arabia, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Persia, Turkey, Russia and Germany. During this period he performed the *Hajj* (the pilgrimage to Mecca) ten times, and on three of these occasions he went from India to Mecca and back barefooted. The young man proved to be a magnet for spiritual seekers everywhere he went, and his biographers report that thousands of people became his disciples during his stays in the Muslim countries of the Middle East. He was a unique phenomenon, and there is no other record of one so young starting life as a homeless Dervish and attracting so much notice in such a short time.

When he finally returned to his home town after twelve years of wandering, he found that his family house was in ruins, and his own people did not recognise him. He walked around his former village, but no one recognised him, and no one came forward to welcome a homeless faqir like him. Unperturbed, he resumed his wandering life again and he spent almost fifty years wandering all over the world. In 1899 he was finally persuaded by some of his disciples to settle down in Dewa, his home town, and he remained there until his death several years later.

Those who met him during his travels were all agreed that his life was rigorously ascetic.

He remained a celibate all his life, and it is reliably reported that between the ages of fifteen and forty he only ate once every seven days. In later years he relaxed this rule and took food every three days. In all his travels he was never known to use a chair, a sofa or a bed. He always rested on the floor at night, but he never seemed to lapse into unconsciousness. Many of his close disciples have testified that they never ever found him fast asleep. Throughout his life he refused to accumulate possessions. Whenever he was given any gifts, he would give them away immediately to needy people, and he never touched money at all.

Despite this way of life he appeared to thrive. He seemed physically quite normal, but disciples noticed that he seemed to have little awareness of the outside world and he seemed to be perpetually in a spiritually indrawn and introverted state. Because of this he was a man of few words, and when he did speak, he would speak in a soft tone and would keep his eyes on the ground in front of him. He was apparently quite a handsome man but it was invariably his eyes that attracted attention. They had a piercing magnetic power that was quite irresistible and most of the disciples who flocked to him were initially attracted to him by the intense spiritual power which emanated from his eyes.

Waris Ali Shah belonged to the Quadira and Chistaya schools of Sufism, both of which emphasise the practise of Divine and Universal Love. Sufis believe that the eternal order of the universe is based on love. Because of this, it is the first principle of their philosophy that the deeper a man's love of God is, the greater is his spiritual knowledge in due proportion to his capacity and depth of love. The practical application of this belief was the quintessence of Shah Waris Ali's teachings. Sufis also believe that the final consummation of the love of God is union with God. In that state, to use the words of Al-Ghazzhali: "Man is effaced from self so that he is neither conscious of his body nor of outer phenomena." Even the thought that the self is effaced should not

occur, even for a moment. Although Waris Ali Shah never made any claims for himself, this was undoubtedly the state which he consciously lived in.

It is a fundamental tenet of Sufism that one should resign completely to the will of God, and because of this, he would always show displeasure when disciples or visitors came to talk to him about their troubles. He would never discuss their problems and he would always enjoin them to resign completely to God's will.

Because of his introverted nature he never gave discourses or sermons, and so little is known of his teachings. His biographers did manage to collect a few of his pithy precepts and a few of them are listed below.

"Love of God is not easily acquired by self effort. It is inborn in a man by virtue of his spiritual evolution."

"There is no method in love."

"Distance does not count in love. If you love me, I am with you even if you are at a distance of thousands of miles."

"My disciples are my children. They should love one another like brothers."

"Do not ask God for anything even if you are starving, for he knows what is good for you. What you call worldliness is nothing short of forgetfulness of God and His existence. A true faqir wants nothing because he has renounced everything. Trust in God fully and completely. If you rely on Him whole-heartedly, you need not worry about your daily wants. Not a moment should pass without constant memory of God. It is no use going to the *Kaaba* (the main shrine at Mecca) for those who cannot see God here and now. The same God is to be found in the mosque, the Church and the Pagoda. God does not live in the empyrean (the highest heaven), he exists everywhere. The seat of God is not to be found in heaven alone. You should search for Him in your own heart."

Waris Ali Shah made no distinction between followers of different religions and he freely

admitted anyone into his order irrespective of their sex or religious background. To emphasise the point he openly declared that in his sight Hindus, Moslims, Jews and Christians were all alike in spiritual essence. Unlike many other Sufi saints he initiated people in public and used different formulae for members of different faiths. He never advised non-muslims to disregard or renounce their faiths; instead he exhorted them to follow their faiths and beliefs with greater zeal and sincerity. The extraordinary spell exercised by him not only on the popular mind but on the rich and the poor, the educated and the illiterate alike, can only be accounted for in the light of the principle that if you have all the world to love you, you must first love all the world. His dislike of formalism was an

echo of Jalalludin Rumi's comment: "Fools exalt the mosque but ignore the true temple in the heart."

Despite the rigours of his life he lived to be 76 and passed away peacefully in 1905 in Dewa, his home town. He was buried there and his tomb is even now treated as a sacred shrine by the large number of devotees and admirers who visit it year after year. It is significant that he is now chiefly remembered as a man who succeeded in making people of differing backgrounds and religions love and understand each other, not by verbally expounding the advantages of social harmony, but by the power generated by his submission to God and the humble selfless life which manifested as a consequence of this submission. □

All is truly the absolute Self. Distinction and non-distinction do not exist. How can I say, "It exists; it does not exist?" I am filled with wonder!

The mind indeed is of the form of space. The mind indeed is omnifaced. The mind is the past. The mind is all. But in reality there is no mind.

You are not born nor do you die. At no time do you have a body. The scripture declares in many different ways the well-known dictum: "All is Brahman".

Union and separation exist neither to you nor to me. There is no you, no me, nor is there this universe. All is truly the Self alone.

For you there is no birth or death, for you there is no mind, for you there is no bondage or liberation, no good or evil. Why do you shed tears my child? Neither you nor I have name and form.

Some seek duality, others non-duality. They do not know the Truth, which is the same at all times and everywhere, which is devoid of both duality and non-duality.

I am not bound, I am not, indeed liberated, and I am not different from Brahman. Neither doer nor enjoyer, I am devoid of the distinctions of the pervaded and the pervader.

There exists neither complete void nor voidlessness, neither truth nor untruth. The avadhuta, having realised the truths of the scriptures, has uttered this spontaneously from his own nature.

-Avadhuta Gita (extracts from chapter one)

Quotations from the Maharshi

The following quotations were noted down by C.V. Subbramania Aiyer of Chittoor when he paid a visit to Skandashram on 19th June 1918. They were passed on to B.V. Narasimha Swami when he was collecting material for his biography "Self Realisation" in 1930. Two of them were published on page 157 of the July 1979 Mountain Path, but the other six have never been published before.

1. There are two kinds of meditation, the first is to be practiced by advanced seekers and is called *Nirgunadhyanam*. This is when one seeks to know the meditator and finds that he is himself the meditator. The second kind is to be practised by the less advanced and is called *Sagunadhyanam*. In this meditation, the meditator, the meditation and the object of meditation are merged in one.

2. When I come to know that I was never born, I shall never die. Death is for one who was born. I was never born. I have no body and I shall never die. I am everywhere; where am I to go and where am I to come?"

3. A man might have performed many karmas in his previous births. A few of them alone will be chosen for this birth and he will have to enjoy their fruits in this birth. It is something like a slide show where the projectionist picks a few slides to be exhibited at a performance, the remaining slides being reserved for another performance. It is possible for a man to destroy his karma by acquiring Knowledge of the Self. The different karmas are the slides, karmas being the result of past experiences, and the mind is the projector. The projector must be destroyed, and there will be no reflection, and no *samsara*.

4. Guru is necessary for a man; he serves as a guide on the road to Realisation. But there

are some who have known the Truth without having a Guru to guide them. Such men must have learnt much in their previous lives. There are some in whose case a word or two will suffice to set them on the road to Realisation while there are others who have to work for years before they can make any progress.

5. *Dhyana* (meditation) is necessary for the Realisation of the Truth. Every man must select what suits him from among the paths laid down for reaching the goal: *yoga*, *bhakti* and *jnana*. *Vichara* is also *yoga*, not merely study of books.

6. To the the question, "Why should a man be under illusion?" the Swami answered, "Enquire who has the illusion and you will find that there is no illusion."

7. The Advaita philosophy alone can successfully stand a severe test, other schools of philosophy try to torture the Vedic texts so as to suit their own theories.

8. Men desire for spiritual powers, but what they get they must lose some day. And further it implies that you are inferior to the power from whom you try to get the spiritual powers. All the actions of the mind tend to keep you in bondage. So give up desire and be independent of everything; for you are the storehouse of power and bliss. Give up and keep your mind at peace. □

The Saiva Siddhanta Church, its beliefs and Practices

Saiva Siddhanta is an ancient South Indian branch of Saivism which has flourished in India for over a thousand years. In recent years, its doctrines and beliefs have been transplanted to the west under the able guidance of Master Subramuniya. From his centre in Hawaii, Master Subramuniya is now spreading the teachings of Saiva Siddhanta all over the United States. The following article, written anonymously by one of his disciples, outlines the main beliefs and practises of Saiva Siddhanta as promulgated by their Saiva Siddhanta Church.

SAIVA Siddhanta recognises four steps in the individual's spiritual unfoldment. These are called *chariya*, *kriya*, *yoga* and *jnana*. *Chariya* is the development of virtue and moral rectitude. All future spiritual unfoldment depends on this foundation, and thus Siddhanta places great emphasis on it. *Kriya* is the spiritual practice of temple worship wherein is developed love and surrender to God as well as communication with *devas* of the inner worlds. *Yoga* is the stage where worship is internalised and mystical union with God achieved. *Jnana* describes the way of life of the accomplished yogi as he both lives in the Eternity of Mystic Realisation, and, as well, serves his Guru, God and *devas* in humble surrender.

The theological basis of the Saiva Siddhanta Church is Saint Tirumular's Vedic/Agamic Saiva Siddhanta. We believe God Siva is one Being, yet we understand Him in three perfections; Absolute Reality, Pure Consciousness and the Primal Soul. As Absolute Reality, He is unmanifest, unchanging and transcendent, the Self-God which is timeless, formless and spaceless. As pure Consciousness, He is the manifest Primal Substance or Pure Love and Light flowing through all form and existing everywhere in time and space simultaneously as Infinite Intelligence and Power. As the Primal Soul, He manifests in three aspects: Brahma, the Creator;

Vishnu, the Preserver; and Rudra, the Destroyer. This Primal Soul is our personal Lord, source of all three worlds and the laws therein, our Divine Father/Mother who protects, nurtures, guards and guides us, veiling His Truth as we evolve and revealing Himself when we are mature enough to receive His Bountiful Grace. We believe God Siva has form and is formless. First, we worship His manifest form as Pure Love and Consciousness. Second, we worship Him as our Personal Lord, the Primal Soul who tenderly loves and cares for His devotees—a Being whose resplendent body may be seen in mystic vision. In our daily lives we love, honour, worship and serve God in these manifest perfections. Ultimately, in perfectly simple yet awesomely austere *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, we realize Him as the formless *Parasivam*.

Our worship of God Siva is directed primarily toward three *murthis* from the ancient tradition: *Siva Lingam*, *Ardhanarisvara* and *Nataraja*. We contemplate God Siva as *Parasivam* when we worship the *Siva Lingam*. Its simple shape speaks silently of His unspeakable Absolute Being. We invoke Him as *Satchidananda*, Pure Love and Consciousness, when we worship *Ardhanarisvara*, *Siva/Sakti*, in whom all apparent opposites are reconciled. We exalt Him as *Mahesvara*, Primal Soul, when we worship *Nataraja*, the Divine Dancer whose

five potent acts of creation, preservation, destruction, veiling grace and revealing grace animate the universe. Thus we worship the three perfections of our God Siva in these three *murthis*, but we cannot limit our God to these forms alone. He is also *Dakshinamurthi*, the Silent Teacher, Guru of Gurus and great Yogi. He is all this and more, our God Siva.

We believe that Ganesha, Muruga, Indra, Agni and all the thirty-three million Gods of Saivism are beings just as we are, created by Siva and destined to enjoy union with Him. The Gods are souls as we are souls, but of a high evolution. We understand the spiritual domain as the abode of God, Gods and devas. God Siva is the Supreme Being, the One without a second, the Lord of Lords. Amongst His creation are the Gods or *Mahadevas* who also live in the Third World. The devas are angels, celestial beings abiding in the Second World and usually subject to rebirth. They help guide evolution from their world between births. There are billions of devas. We worship God Siva and the Gods Muruga and Ganesha, which we also call *Mahadevas*. We do not worship the devas.

We believe that in truth, we are not essentially different from God Siva. The Vedas proclaim, "*Tat tvam asi*". As *Parasivam*, we are That. As *Satchidananda*, pure superconsciousness, He abides within us as us this very moment. As *Maheswara*, He is our Supreme Master and Beloved. God Siva has never been apart from us. He is the Life of our life, the Breath of our breath. Our relationship with God Siva evolves as we evolve and our understanding deepens.

We believe in the individual soul as our immortal and spiritual body of light that animates life and reincarnates again and again until all necessary karmas are created and resolved and its essential unity with God is realized. Our individual soul is the creation of God Siva and the source of all our higher functions, including knowledge, will and love. The soul is neither male nor female. It is that which never dies, even when the four outer sheaths or bodies—physical, pranic, astral and

mental—change form and perish, as they naturally do.

For the sake of understanding the mysteries of the soul, we distinguish between the soul body and its essence. As a soul body, we are individual and unique, different from all others. At the core of the subtle soul body is *Satchidananda* or immanent Love: and at the core of that is *Parasivam* or transcendent Reality. At this depth of our being there exists no separate identity or difference; all are One. Thus, deep within our soul we are identical with God this very moment, for within us are the unmanifest *Parasiva* and the manifest *Satchidananda*. These are not aspects of the evolving soul but the nucleus of the soul which does not change or evolve. They are eternally perfect and one with God Siva.

We believe that the three bonds of *pasam-anava*, which is ignorance; *karma*, which is the consequences of thought and deed and *maya*, which is the principle of matter are given by Lord Siva to help and protect us as we unfold. This veiling is God-Siva's purposeful limiting of awareness which allows us to have individual identity and to evolve. Only this narrowing of our awareness, coupled with a sense of individualized ego, allows us to look upon the world and our part in it from a practical, human point of view.

When the lessons of this life have been learned and karmas reach a point, the soul leaves the physical body which then dies and returns its elements to the earth. The awareness, the will, the memory and the intelligence which we think of as ourselves continue to exist in the soul body. This process is like walking through a door, leaving one room and entering another. Death is a most natural experience, not to be feared. It is a quick transition from one state to another. After this transition, we are in the Second World where we continue to have experiences until we are prepared for yet another physical birth. Because certain seed karmas can only be resolved in the First World, our soul must enter another physical body in order to continue its spiritual evolution. When

our soul has sufficiently evolved and undergone all necessary karmas in this physical universe and God-Realization has been attended, it will not return to the First World. All the worlds rejoice when an old soul is freed from *samsara*, the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

This world, and indeed all of existence, is *maya*, the principle of matter. While God is absolutely real, the world is relatively real. That does not mean that the world is illusory or non-existent, but that it is impermanent and subject in change. It is an error to say that the world is unreal for it is entirely real when experienced in ordinary consciousness, and its existence is required to lead us to God. Therefore, we call it relatively real to distinguish it from the unchanging Reality—God Siva.

The world is the place where our destiny is shaped, our desires fulfilled and our soul matured. In the world we grow from ignorance into wisdom, from darkness into light and from consciousness of death to immortality. The whole world is an ashram in which all are doing *sadhana*.

There is a divine purpose even in the existence of suffering in the world. Suffering cannot be totally avoided. It is a natural part of human life and the impetus for much spiritual growth for the soul. Just as the intense fire of the furnace purifies gold, so does suffering purify the soul and offer us the important realization that true happiness and freedom cannot be found in the world, for worldly joy is inextricably bound to sorrow, freedom to bondage. Having learned this, the matured soul practises spiritual disciplines, turning to God Siva for refuge and liberation from the endless cycles of experience in the realm of duality.

In vast sequences of space and time, the physical universe is created by Lord Siva, exists in Him and is absorbed back into Him, to be created again as He repeats the cosmic cycle. Time and space are non-linear, and the universe was not created out of nothing in one point in time to thereafter exist forever. The universe is born, evolves and dissolves in cycles much as

the seasons come and go through the year. These cycles are inconceivably immense, ending in *Mahapralaya*, when the cosmos undergoes universal dissolution. All three worlds—including time and space—dissolve in God Siva at *Mahapralaya* which is His ultimate grace, when the evolution of all souls is perfect and complete as they lose individuality and return to Him. Then God Siva exists alone in His three perfections until He again issues forth creation to begin another cycle of cosmic manifestation.

We commune with God Siva and the *Mahadevas* through the ritual act of *puja* in which the Deity is spiritually present within the holy image. The image or *murthi* is not merely a symbol of the Deity; it is the form through which His love, power and blessings flood forth into this world. We may liken this mystery to our ability to communicate with others through the telephone. We do not talk to the telephone; rather we use a telephone as a means of communication with another person who is perhaps thousands of miles away. Without the telephone, we could not converse across such distances; and without the sanctified *murti* (temple image) we cannot easily commune with the Deity. His vibration and presence can be felt in the image, and He can use the image as a temporary physical plane body or channel. As we progress in our worship, we begin to adore the image as the Deity's physical body, for we know that He is actually present and conscious in it during *puja*, aware of our thoughts and feelings and sensing even our touch on the metal or stone.

We never outgrow temple worship. It simply becomes more profound and meaningful as we progress spiritually. During the *Chariya marga*,¹ we attend the temple because we have to, because it is expected of us. During the *Kriya marga*,² we attend because we want

¹Chariya Marga—Service and living our everyday life according to traditional religious principles of conduct in order to purify ourselves.

²Kriya Marga—The regular practice of temple worship, both internal and external through which our understanding, love for God Siva and the God deepens.

to; our love of God is the motivation. During the *Yoga marga*, we worship God internally, in the sanctum of the heart; yet even the yogi immersed within the superconscious depths of the mind has not outgrown the temple. It is there—God's home on the earth-plane-when he returns to normal consciousness. The *bhakta* and the *jnani* worship together at God Siva's sanctum, each drawing from the source of spiritual power and insight according to his maturity.

The Saiva Siddhanta Church derives both its teachings and spiritual authority from the prestigious Siva Yogaswami Guru Paramparai, a siddha lineage of the Saiva tradition. We call our church the "Saiva Siddhanta Church"

because we follow, protect and promote the Saiva Siddhanta Agamic theology propounded by Saint Tirumular. Saiva Siddhanta Church can be translated into the Tamil language as "Saiva Siddhanta Tiruchabai". Its meaning includes a place of worship but broadly encompasses the sense of religious organization and of assembly or congregation. Gurudeva, Sivaya Subramuniyaswami has taught as that "Our Saiva Paramparai is most illustrious! Its entire thrust for several hundred years has been to preserve the *Sanatana Dharma* intact and move it forward from generation to generation in the lives of individuals and through the group mind. Now we see it coming into even greater fulfillment in bringing Saivism into the mass mind in the West as well". □

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Neither this nor that I am

Jean Klein

The author of this article spent several years in India where he met a Guru and was initiated into the traditional wisdom of the Vedanta. After several years, he was sent back to Europe by his Guru to teach advaita vedanta. Groups under his direction have now been formed in several countries. The following extracts are taken from his new book "Neither this nor that I am", published by Watkins, Bridge Street, Dulverton, Somerset, England.

Question: What does sadhana mean?

Answer: What truly exists is ultimate reality, the Self. The ego and the world are no more than objects superimposed upon it. "I am", which is the source of all experience, is beyond the experiencer/experienced duality. When we place the accent on the I am, on being aware, and not on thought nor on perception, we gradually become deeply relaxed, both on the neuro-muscular level and on a mental plane.

If we disinterestedly observe all the states we experience, we soon come to realise that each perception, each thought, is reabsorbed into knowledge, 'I know': the only true reality, before any other activity commences. Let yourself sink deeply within this stillness each time it makes itself felt.

The world you perceive is none other than a figment of the imagination founded on memory, fear, anxiety and desire. You have locked yourself away within this world. See this without jumping to conclusions and you will be free. There is no need for you to free yourself from a world which exists only in your imagination.

What you take to be reality is only a concept arising from memory. Memory arises from the mind, the mind from the witness, the witness from the Self. You are the witness, the onlooker standing by the riverside, changeless, beyond the limits of space and time: you cannot perceive what is permanent, because you are it.

Do not nourish the ideas you have built around yourself, nor the image people have of you. Be neither someone nor something, just don't play the game. This will bring about being, constant awareness.

The personality is nothing other than a projection, a habit created by memory and nourished by desire. Ask yourself the question "Who am I?" and lucidly observe that you are not this thinker, doer, sufferer; all these forms appear and disappear indefinitely creating an illusion of continuity. The idea of being a person, an ego, is nothing else but an image. It is a reflection created by the Self, with which it identifies itself.

It is inherent to creativity to identify itself with its creation. The world of objects, just like the ego, is only a figment of your imagination, your creation. The teacher helps you to understand, by his presence and his gift of teaching, that you are neither object nor ego. The objectless 'I', thought without object, is the only real link between the mind and the witness, for the witness carries with it the scent of the Self. "I am this or that" is only part of your imagination, a hallucination. The objectless 'I' points towards its source, its origin, and finally loses itself in stillness beyond time.

Observe the way your mind moves, works, without having any preconceived ideas about it. A moment will come when you discover

yourself to be the witness. Subsequently, when all striving has left you, you will realise that you are the light shining behind the observer. Reality is neither a product of the mind nor the result of a whole train of thoughts, it just is. The only method we can suggest is to observe impartially the way in which your mind reacts in the different circumstances of everyday life. But of course you must realise that you can never find your true Self in a perception. Live as previously, thinking and feeling, but become aware of these functions, thus you will spontaneously free yourself from them.

What you think of as your personality will vanish, leaving only the witness. In the end, he will lose himself in ultimate knowledge.

Above all don't ask me how this comes about.

Question: How can we detach ourselves from objects?

Answer: Being attached to things and repeating things over in one's mind come from fear, a need for security. You become a slave to them. We cannot free ourselves from their grasp by discipline nor by exercises because there is nothing to strive for, nothing to be attained. Freedom from objects comes directly from our true nature when you "know your real self". This realisation is a spontaneous intuition which leaves you in a state of being, of fullness, free from the becoming process.

This mind is an extension of our being, it can only function harmoniously when illuminated by the Self. All forms of control submit us to memory. A controlled mind can never act freely, nor spontaneously. Of course we can say that memory is the best of all tools, but it is a poor guide, for it functions within the framework of the already known. The unknown, what is new, unique, is a closed world to us. Since the independent ego, which we take ourselves to be, is the source of all our anxiety, we cannot rid ourselves of it by effort or discipline. Effort is a driving force resulting from constraint. By clear-sighted aware-

ness of cause and effect, another view will open out for you. Then the problems, together with the emotional involvement they imply, will leave you.

Any form of exercise is bound to be a goal, to a result. It is an obstacle. Be aware of your constant desire to be this or that. There is no goal to be reached since what you are looking for is here and now and always has been. Then the mind, free from all desire to become, will be at peace, and the centre of attention will shift from the object to the ultimate subject, a foretaste of your real Self. Be vigilant, clear-sighted, don't strive to become.

Question: What should we do when there is a striving towards something during meditation?

Answer: You must simply witness it. The only obstacle to this meditation is the striving behind it. Sooner or later you will be attention, attention without object. This would seem to have no meaning when talking of attention, for one is necessarily attentive towards something. But this attention is absolutely empty, it is not focused on an object, it is free from any memory.

Question: My biggest stumbling block is the world of difference that exists between the intuition I encounter while meditating and the fact that everything is forgotten once I undertake my daily activities. In the end I begin to wonder why I meditate at all, for an hour later I have forgotten everything and am once again submerged by objects.

Answer: The problem is this; during meditation you experience and contemplate a vacant state of mind, what you perceive is the absence of activity. You know this absence but do not yet know the knower. Once you are knowingly this knower, you will know "being", whether the mind be active or passive. There will be no difference, no change: from then on, this awareness will be an unwavering certainty.

During meditation you will experience total emptiness which in a way is still an object. Absence of thought inevitably implies eventual presence of thought. Thus what you sense is a state of deep peace free from activity. One

day this void, this blank, will vanish too and you will encounter ultimate stillness.

Up till now you have contemplated a calmed mind, but should a bird sing or someone speak, your inner silence is broken. That is why you ask this question. By its very nature, the mind is occasionally empty; it is nonetheless nothing but an instrument.

Question: I can't see how you can possibly lead an everyday life and "be" at the same time.

Answer: Everyday life appears before someone. You are this someone but you are not what appears day after day. Question yourself deeply: To whom do these things appear? Who judges them, condemns them? Who swings between likes and dislikes, and who is it that is also an integral part of what appears?

You know the person that refuses, accepts or chooses. What you are fundamentally is completely beyond all this. You know moments when you must make a choice and others free from choice.

Within yourself you must distinguish between the person involved in choosing and the observer, who is ever-impartial. You will come to place yourself knowingly in this presence free from choice. Here, what we call everyday life takes root and flourishes. Here, there is no person bound by fear, desire or anxiety, to choose, intervene, or interrupt the natural flow of life.

From what you have said you would think that everyday life was nothing but a burden. Who for? Drop the who, and you will see that there is no burden to bear.

Question: How can I free myself from mental confusion?

Answer: Constantly witness your doings. Vigilance purifies the mind and sooner or later will place you knowingly beyond it.

You encounter ups and downs in your search for the Self because you do not yet see things in their true perspective—as a whole. They will continue just as long as you consider yourself in terms of "I am my body". The

mind will lead you astray until you perceive its true nature.

The basis for re-establishment in true reality is the act of listening, free from the past, to what the teacher has said, and to the reminders that this creates.

The unspoken word, acting as a background to all that takes form, enables this truth to become experience. Be clear-headed, and don't hang on to what you are not. The universe of which you are the source obeys its own laws. Don't look for reasons for what you believe to be. It is a completely useless expense of energy. What you are basically is without cause, beyond improvement. Thinking in terms of a doer responsible for his acts stems from the illusion of the ego and its characteristics.

You must frequently turn to this background, as often as the chance to do so occurs. Your attention is constantly turned either towards objects or to ideas, and you have no sense of being, it is completely unknown to you. Become the spectator, become aware of the natural flow of life, your motives, actions, and what results from them. Observe the walls you have built around yourself. As you become more aware of your body and mind you will come to know yourself. As this image subsides of things, as you believe them to be, you will have a clear-headed insight of what you are, something quite other than a product of the mind. This insight results from elimination. All confirmations come from memory, are outside real experience. You will gradually feel less and less involved in whatever should come up. You will discover yourself to be the perceiver. Once you free yourself from the idea, "I am the body" and the consequences, you will awaken to your natural state of being. Give yourself up entirely to this discovery. True awareness cannot be obtained by projecting known factors in terms of concepts and perceptions. What you are fundamentally cannot be experienced through reason and is only reached once you eliminate what you are not.

A wilful ego hinders you from being. The witness must enter upon the scene, enabling the ego to be recognised for what it is, an object. This witness opens the door to being. The ego cannot "know" itself, it identifies with what it thinks, feels, experiences. The teacher leads the disciple away from what he believes himself to be, in order to enable him to get to know his real Self and awaken to all his perceptions. For the ego, there is nothing but resistance, defense, agitation. It is the witness that shines forth and shows up the ego for what it is, an illusion.

The meditative state leads us to discover what we really are. We become aware of our body and thought patterns, of the reasons that motivate our actions of which we were scarcely conscious. By allowing our thoughts to follow on one from another, to develop fully without our intervening, this meditative state becomes a purification, a letting go, without there being a person that purifies or lets go. It is an uninvolved observation post. A whole world of unsuspected energies releases itself, frees itself. Mental activity ceases to be agitated and follows its natural course, allowing us to discover ourselves as the witness, the onlooker. We completely abandon the "I am this, I am that" reflex. The onlooker transcends the experience and the experiencer. He is pure awareness.

The world exists when we think about it, it is ever renewed. It is only memory that gives the false impression of continuity. The individual does not exist outside the ultimate knower, he is but a shadow, *nothing*, a reflection on the mind's screen. He is a fabrication of both memory and habit. Always agitated he hopes and claims, searching for confirmation and security, striving to accumulate. Basically, he is frightened and does not dare question himself profoundly.

All perceptions, all experiences are connected with time, but the ultimate knower transcends time. It is a lack of clear-sightedness that causes us to identify with temporality. Any perception

Question: Where should the mind abide?

Answer: It should abide in the place of non-abiding.

Question: What is meant by the place of non-abiding?

Answer: It means not abiding anywhere whatsoever.

Question: What is not abiding anywhere whatsoever?

Answer: Not abiding in goodness, evil, being, non-being, inside, outside, or in the middle; nor in void, non-void, abstraction or non-abstraction; that is not abiding anywhere. The dwelling place of the mind should be only this not abiding anywhere whatsoever. Whoever attains to this is said to have a non-abiding mind. The non-abiding mind is indeed the mind of a Buddha.

-Hui Hai (Zen Master)

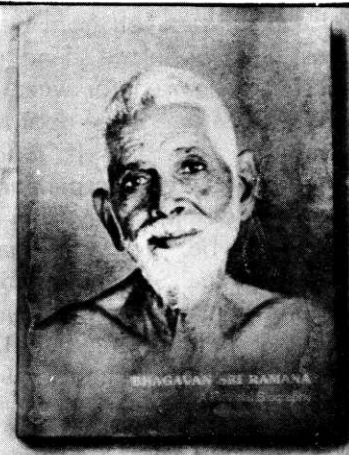
The notion of emptiness (absence of self) engenders compassion, Compassion does away with the distinction between 'self' and 'other', The indistinction of self and other renders the service of others effective.

-Milarepa (Tibetan Yogi)

of what you think, feel or do is only transitory. The feeling of being acts as a support and is permanent. Accept the invitation that the souvenir of this very feeling creates in you, plunge deep within it, until you are carried away by reality. □

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It gives us great joy to announce that the Pictorial Biography of Sri Bhagavan has just been released.

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“OUR NATURAL STATE”

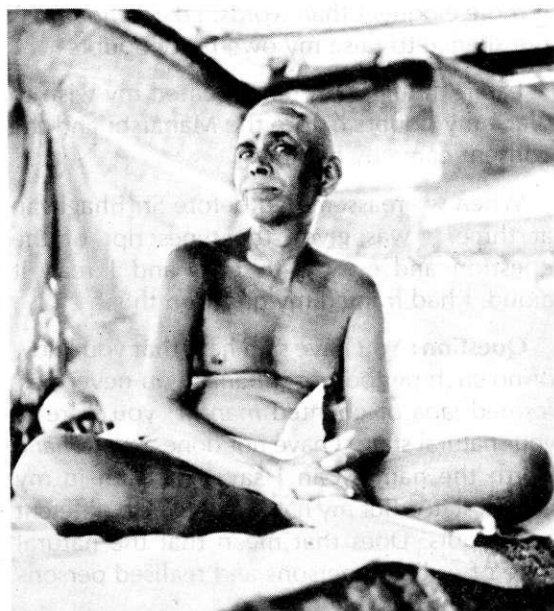
A 'Pilgrim'

I was on my long-cherished pilgrimage to Bhagavan Sri Ramana. On the train I was chewing the cud of a doubt: In the December and January issues of the *Vedanta Kesari*, I had read the answer Maharshi gave to the question put to him by Prof.D.S. Sarma as to whether there was a *sadhana* period in the life of Sri Bhagavan previous to his enlightenment. Sri Dilip Kumar Roy had put the answer in a poetical garb under the caption, "My Yoga" and Prof.Sarma had given his question and Maharshi's answer under the title, 'Sahajasthiti'. I reproduce below the answer of Sri Bhagavan.

'I knew no such period of *sadhana*. I never performed any *pranayama* or *japa*. I know no *mantras*. I had no rules of meditation or contemplation. *Sadhana* implies an object to be gained and the means of gaining it. What is there to be gained which we do not already possess? In meditation, concentration, and contemplation what we have to do is only not to think of anything but to be still. Then we shall be in our natural state'.

This indeed was an intriguing situation for me: I had read in the Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana of the severe *sadhana* he did in the lonely rooms of the big Shrine at Tiruvannamalai and in the caves on the hills. Now here is Bhagavan himself denying it all!! And more than that, how can illumination come without *sadhana*? That was something against the word of the scriptures. However I consoled myself with the thought that at the Ashram, I might have the chance of placing my difficulties before Sri Maharshi himself.

It was one of those beautiful mornings in Tiruvannamalai. After my daily ablutions and other duties I was ready for the *darshan* of



Bhagavan. As I approached the Maharshi's room I could feel the peace that was radiating from his room. I entered the room and then came my first shock; I expected to see something glorious, a face surrounded by a halo, etc. I didn't find any of these. Has he not said, I was reminded, in his answer that Self-Realisation does not mean that something would descend upon us as something glorious? Has he not said: 'People seem to think that by practising some elaborate *sadhana* the Self would one day descend upon them as some-

¹None of the biographies states that Bhagavan did any *sadhana* after coming to Tiruvannamalai. The author seems to have interpreted Bhagavan's period of silence and solitude as a period of *sadhana* although it has been clearly stated both by Bhagavan and the writers who have written about him that no *sadhana* was taking place during this period.

thing very big and with tremendous glory and they would then have what is called *sakshat-karam*.

Yet that winning smile that played on his lips greeting me meant more than Self-Realisation. He beckoned to me to sit down and I sat there for more than two hours not knowing the passage of time. I realised then that silence is more eloquent than words. I dared not break the silence to raise my own petty doubts.

Later, though, I communicated my wish to place my doubts before the Maharshi and the consent came by midday.

When we reassembled before Sri Bhagavan at three, I was given the typescript of the question and answer to read and I read it aloud. I had framed my question thus:

Question: You have said here that you know of no such period of *sadhana*; you never performed *japa* or chanted *mantra*; you were in your natural state. I have not done any *sadhana* worth the name. Can I say that I am in my natural state? But my natural state is so different from yours. Does that mean that the natural state of ordinary persons and realised persons is different.

Answer: What you think to be your natural state is your unnatural state. (And this was my second shock that shook me from the slumber of my pet notions). With your intellect and imagination you have constructed the castles of your pet notions and desires. But do you know who has built up these castles, who is the real owner? The 'I' who really owns them and the 'I' of your conception are quite different. Is it necessary that you put forth some effort to come into the 'I' who owns these, the real 'I' behind all states? Would you have

to walk any distance to walk into the 'I' that is always you. This is what I mean by saying that no *sadhana* is required for Self-Realisation. All that is required is to refrain from doing anything, by remaining still and being simply what one really is. You have only to dehypnotise yourself of your unnatural state.

"Then, you have asked whether there is any difference between the natural state of ordinary persons and realised persons. What have they realised? They can realise only what is real in them. What is real in them is real in you also. So where is the difference?"

"Even then, some may ask," the Maharshi continued, reminding me so vividly of those Upanishadic *Rishis*, "where is the conviction that one's Self is *sakshat* all right, that no *sadhana* is required at all for Self-Realisation. Well, do you want anybody to come and convince you that you are seated before me and talking to me? You know for certain that you are seated here and talking to me. When we read a book, for instance, we read the letters on the page. But can we say that we are reading only the letters? Without the page of the book where are the letters. Again we say that we are seeing the picture projected on a canvas. No doubt we are seeing the picture; but without the canvas where is the picture? You can doubt and question everything; but how can you doubt the 'I' that questions everything. That 'I' is your natural state. Would you have to labour or do *sadhana* to come into this natural state?" □

The author of this article is unknown but the incident must have taken place some time after 1946 when the answer to D.S. Sarma's question was first printed. The quotation was first printed in *Vedanta Kesari* in January 1947 (Vol.33 No.9 P.327) (Editor)

Contemplation is a battleground for men; mortification is a playground for children.

-Sufi proverb

Arunachala Stuti, the Sixth Hymn to Arunachala

When Bhagavan was staying at Skandashram, Ganapati Muni approached him, quoted a Sanskrit verse and asked him if there was any equivalent metre in Malayalam. Bhagavan replied that there was, and to illustrate it he composed the following three verses in Malayalam. Kunju Swami, a native Malayalam speaker memorised the verses and noted them down in his notebook. The verses then passed into temporary oblivion and they were somehow ignored by the various compilers of Bhagavan's collected works. The verses appeared in print for the first time in 1980 in Tamil phonetic script in a small centenary offering compiled by K. Natesan. However, until now, the verses have never appeared either in the original Malayalam or in a Tamil or English translation.

Sri K.K. Nambiar, a native Malayalam speaker, and one of the seniormost living devotees of Bhagavan, has kindly provided us with the following English translation.

1. The Primordial Lord of the Universe, whose form is unbroken consciousness, whose feet are adored by the Vedas, who destroys sins of those who bow to him, The Lord of the mountains! bestow on me a sidelong glance with thy eyes moistened with compassion, lest I should end my life living like an animal.

(Alternate reading of line one: "The Supreme God, Lord of the Universe, whose form is Eternal Awareness")

2. Arunachala, the embodiment of the eightfold form of the universe, in order that the worldly afflictions may cease to torment me (alternatively: may be completely wiped

out), please cast thy look of Grace to help cut asunder the ego-knot without feeling its pangs.

Note: The universe is said to have eight components: the five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth), the sun, the moon and the *jivas* (individual souls)

3. As proclaimed in the essential teachings of all scriptures, by ceaseless contemplation of the Holy Feet of the Supreme Lord Arunachala, I am sure to be freed from my innate pride, attachment, anger, delusion, lust and greed, and attain salvation (liberation). □

Just look once into your mind-depths; nothing else has ever been

-Zen Master Manzan

GLIMPSES FROM THE DIARY

N.N. Rajan.

N.N. Rajan was a regular visitor to the Ashram during the 1940s and during this period he recorded many of the stories told by Bhagavan in his diary. We have already printed a few of his diary extracts in previous issues, and at our request, he has now supplied us with two more.

ONCE there was a talk about photography.

Sri Bhagavan referred to some photographs which someone had brought and then digressed into a short but profound spiritual discourse using photographic analogies.

"When taking a picture, the silver salts over the film are exposed in the camera through an impression caused by outside light. But if the film is exposed to light before you put it in the camera, there can be no impression on it. So it is with our *jiva* (soul). When it is still in darkness, an impression can be made on it by the little light that streaks in. But when the light of knowledge has already flooded no impression of external objects can be obtained. In a similar fashion, the *jiva* gets impressions during ignorance only."

(A similar statement can be found in Arunachala Ashtakam verse five: "when once the light of the sun has fallen on a sensitive plate, will the plate register another picture.")

6th November 1943

After a brief discussion in the Hall between Major Chadwick and Bhagavan on the necessity of taking periodic action to ensure that the body remains healthy there was a ten minute silence. The silence was broken by Dr Srinivasa Rao asking the following question: "It is stated that one should dive into oneself with a keen one-pointed mind controlling speech and breath. Is it necessary to control the breath also?" Bhagavan: "If all one's thoughts are controlled, automatically the breath is also controlled. By intense practise it will become habitual and there will be a flow of continuous current."

"Controlling the breath by yoga is like applying brakes to the train when the engine is working. But by intensely watching the source of the mind and thereby controlling the thoughts continuously, the practice will be more effective and also easier. This is like shutting off the steam power of the engine and thereby stopping the train completely. This is the exact condition."

The two rarest things in our time are a learned man who practises what he knows and a gnostic who speaks from the reality of his state.

-Abu 'l-Husayn al-Nuri

HSIN HSIN MING (VERSES ON THE FAITH MIND)

Sengstan, the third Ch'an Patriarch of China

Sengstan is one of the earliest of the Ch'an (Zen) Patriarchs of China who lived and taught at the end of the sixth century in China. So little is known about him that some scholars have come to the conclusion that he is a legendary rather than a historical figure. The accounts that do exist seem to indicate that he trained for six years under Hui-Ko, the second Patriarch, was granted approval to carry on the teaching lineage, and then spent most of the remainder of his life as a wandering mendicant. The following poem is all that is known of his teaching. Brief though it is, it has become a classic of Zen literature, and like many early Ch'an writings, it owes a considerable debt to Taoist thought. The translation is by Richard Baker, a noted American Zen teacher.

The great way is not difficult
for those who have no preferences.
When love and hate are both absent
everything becomes clear and undisguised.
Make the smallest distinction however,
and heaven and earth are set infinitely apart.
If you wish to see the truth
Then hold no opinions for or against anything.
To set up what you like against what you dislike
is the disease of the mind.
When the deep meaning of things is not understood
the mind's essential peace is disturbed to no avail.

The Way is perfect like vast space
Where nothing is lacking and nothing is in excess.
Indeed, it is due to our choosing to accept or reject
that we do not see the true nature of things.
Live neither in the entanglement of outer things,
nor in inner feelings of emptiness.
Be serene in the oneness of things
and such erroneous views will disappear by themselves.
When you try to stop activity to achieve passivity
your very effort fills you with activity.
As long as you remain in one extreme or another
you will never know the Oneness.
Those who do not live in the single Way

fail in both activity and passivity,
assertion and denial.
To deny the reality of things
is to miss their reality;
To assert the emptiness of things
is to miss their reality.
The more you think and talk about it,
the further astray you wander from the truth.
Stop talking and thinking,
and there will be nothing that you will not be able to know.

To return to the root is to find the meaning,
but to pursue appearances is to miss the source.
At the moment of inner enlightenment
there is a going beyond appearance and emptiness.
The changes that appear to occur in the empty world
we call real only because of our ignorance.
Do not search for the truth;
only cease to cherish opinions.

Do not remain in the dualistic state;
avoid such pursuits carefully.
If there is even a trace
of this and that, of right and wrong,
the Mind-essence will be lost in confusion.
Although all dualities come from the One,
do not be attached even to this One.
When the mind exists undisturbed in the Way,
nothing in the world can offend,
and when a thing can no longer offend,
it ceases to exist in the old way.

When no discriminating thoughts arise,
the old mind ceases to exist.
When thought objects vanish,
the thinking subject vanishes,
as when the mind vanishes, objects vanish.
Things are objects because of the subject;
the mind is such because of things.
Understand the relativity of these two
and the basic reality: the unity of emptiness.
In this Emptiness the two are indistinguishable
and each contains in itself the whole world.
If you do not discriminate between coarse and fine
you will not be tempted to prejudice and opinion.

To live in the Great Way
is neither easy nor difficult,
but those with limited views
are fearful and irresolute;

the faster they hurry, the slower they go,
and clinging (attachment) cannot be limited;
even to be attached to the idea of enlightenment
is to go astray.
Just let things be in their own way
and there will be neither coming nor going.

Obey the nature of things (your own nature)
and you will walk freely and undisturbed.
When thought is in bondage the truth is hidden,
for everything is murky and unclear,
and the burdensome practice of judging
brings annoyance and weariness.
What benefit can be derived
from distinctions and separations?

If you wish to move in the One Way,
do not dislike even the world of senses and ideas.
Indeed, to accept them fully
is identical with true enlightenment.
The wise man strives to no goals
but the foolish man fetters himself.
There is one Dharma, not many;
distinctions arise
from the clinging needs of the ignorant.
To seek Mind with the discriminating mind
is the greatest of all mistakes.
Rest and unrest derive from illusion;
with enlightenment there is no liking and disliking.
All dualities come from ignorant inference.
They are like dreams or flowers in air;
foolish to try to grasp them.
Gain and loss, right and wrong
such thoughts must finally be abolished at once.

If the eye never sleeps,
all dreams will naturally cease.
If the mind makes no discriminations,
the ten thousand things
are as they are, of single essence.
to understand the mystery of this One essence
is to be released from all entanglements.
When all things are seen equally
the timeless Self essence is reached.
No comparisons or analogies are possible
in this causeless, relationless state.

Consider movement stationary
and the stationary in motion,
both movement and rest disappear.

When such dualities cease to exist
 Oneness itself cannot exist.
 To this ultimate finality
 no law or description applies.
 For the unified mind in accord with the Way
 all self-centered striving ceases.
 Doubts and irresolutions vanish
 and life in true faith is possible.
 With a single stroke we are freed from bondage;
 nothing clings to us and we hold to nothing.
 All is empty, clear, self-illuminating,
 with no exertion of the mind's power.
 Here thought, feeling, knowledge, and imagination
 are of no value.
 In this world of Suchness
 there is neither self nor other than self.

To come directly into harmony with this reality,
 just simply say when doubt arises, "not two".
 In this "not two" nothing is separate,
 nothing is excluded.
 No matter when or where,
 enlightenment means entering this truth.
 And this truth is beyond extension or
 diminution in time or space;
 in it a single thought is ten thousand years.

Emptiness here, emptiness there,
 but the infinite universe stands
 always before your eyes.
 Infinitely large and infinitely small;
 no difference, for definitions have vanished
 and no boundaries are seen.
 So too with Being and non-Being.
 Don't waste time in doubts and arguments
 that have nothing to do with this.

One thing, all things;
 move among them and intermingle,
 without distinction.
 To live in this realisation
 is to be without anxiety about non-perfection.
 To live in this faith is the road to non-duality,
 because the non-dual is one with the trusting mind.

Words

The Way is beyond language,
 for in it there is

no yesterday
 no tomorrow
 no today

Garland of Guru's Sayings

PART III EXPERIENCE OF REALITY

951

The mighty masters who have gained
The plenitude of Self-experience
Know nothing other than the Self.
How can the split, deluded mind
Measure the bliss supreme transcending
Phenomenal duality?

THE NON-EXISTENCE OF SUFFERING

952

The Heart, the Being true that shines
In every creature, is an ocean
Of pure bliss. Therefore suffering
Is like the blueness of the sky
A mere illusion in our mind
Lacking all reality.

(Ananda alone is Eternal Being, the sole Reality. Suffering is a false creation of the ego-mind).

953

Our Real Being, the Sun that never
Can see the darkness of illusion,
Shines as pure bliss. The ego false,
Deluded, thinks it suffers. But
Suffering cannot approach or touch
One's real Self.

954

Blissful, auspicious is the Self,
Our real Being. One who knows this
Sees no trace of pain or suffering
In life. Misery is what one brings
Upon oneself by foolishly thinking
That the body, not the Self,
Is one's true self.

955

Not seeing oneself as the One Self
One always suffers fear and anguish.
Destroy the "I am-the-body" thought

By Sri Muruganar

Translated from Tamil by
Professor K. Swaminathan

And in Self-knowledge firmly fixed
Abide in real non-dual being.

956

The goal, the Truth is Self-awareness.
Reaching it is annihilation
Of the painful illusion of birth.¹

(1. The line may also mean:
"Of the folly which gives birth to pain")

ON THE PERVASIVENESS OF DEEP SLEEP

957

Do not lose hope and feel dejected
Because deep sleep has not pervaded
The dream-state. When in waking one
Attains deep sleep's nondual bliss
It spreads into the dream-state too.

(No special effort is needed to remove body-consciousness in the dream-state. When through self-enquiry it disappears in waking, it will automatically disappear in the dream-state also.)

958

Till one attains non-dual bliss
One must while waking persevere
In self-enquiry, and till this bliss
Spreads to the dream-state and pervades it,
Persist in this enquiry.

(19)

**Unbroken self-enquiry leads
To "deep sleep" in the waking state.
Till this nondual bliss pervades
Alike the waking and dream states
Persist in such enquiry. —BHAGAVAN)**

OF WAKING SLEEP

959

Poor folk who in the world's snare caught

And pierced by pain's sharp arrows suffer
Anguish, and yearning go in search
Of moksha, sleep with full awareness
In true imperishable bliss.

960

Those who, unlured by the false senses,
Abide in the heart-lotus, they
In waking sleep enjoy the bliss
Of true Awareness which is *moksha*.
Others but slumber lost for ever
In the illusive world's dense darkness.

OF NONDUAL AWARENESS

961

When through 'Namashivaya' the ego
Burns and dies, the steady flame
Of bhakti shines as the triumphant,
True, clear light of Self-experience
Which is named "Shiva am I".

962

When earnest self-enquiry grinds
The mind against the heart-stone till
The bright sparks shine, the light is true
Awareness, and its other name
Is *Anal-Haq* or "That am I".

(The *mahavakya* of Islam is *Anal-Haq*, as that of the Bible is "I am That I am". Compare verse 341 and verse 663 of "The Garland". All religions spring from and end in Self-experience.)

963

Firemness in nondual jnana,
This alone is courage true.
Even victory over every foe
In this false empirical world
Is traceable to fear.

(Duality is the source of fear and hence of conflict.)

964

Knowledge absolute is free
From all the differences created
By the false, deluding ego.
The gracious stillness, the awareness
All-transcendent, is the state
Supreme experienced by the great.

OF GRACE

965

If towards the Lord you take
A single step, then with much more
Than a mother's love He takes
Nine steps towards you to accept you.
Such is the Guru's Grace.

966

That which IS for ever shines
In Grace as I, the Self, the Heart.
Can That be blamed for lacking Grace?
The fault is theirs who do not turn
Within and seek the Self in love.

(The Tamil word *ullam* means both "We are" and "Heart".)

967

Mind inward turned and the ego dead.
There shines the Self, the Being—
Awareness
And though transcending form and feature,
Appears as Guru. Thus does God,
The Self, bestow His Grace as Guru.

(God, Self, Guru and Grace are different forms of one same Reality.)

968

The ego-knot, twixt spirit and matter
Causing delusion and confusion
Having been destroyed beyond revival,
The heart of one who has experienced
Such grace now shines as pure, true Being.

969

We are surrounded on all sides
By the nectareous flood of Grace.
And yet we suffer from delusion
Like some fool standing in the midst
Of mighty Ganga afire with thirst
And not knowing how to quench it.

970

Why should God's glance of Grace which
falls
On all alike seem to avoid
Some "sinners"? The universal Eye
Avoids no creature. We are blind
For we look outward, not within.

HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

Souris

WHO is this ugly man with the big stomach! He hasn't got the decency to wear proper clothes, poses for pictures, and shamelessly gets them published in the newspapers." This was my first reaction when at the age of fourteen I first saw Bhagavan's picture in the *Sunday Times*.

I was studying the picture because my father had just gone to pay his first visit to Sri Ramana-sramam. When he returned, I was in bed with a headache, but the rest of the family crowded around him to listen to his account. However, when the word "Arunachala" floated in through my doorway, I felt such an unaccountable thrill of joy in my heart that I got up and joined the rest of the party. By the time I joined him, my father was trying to explain Bhagavan's teachings on self-enquiry, and although the rest of my family seemed to find it very confusing, I took it in quite easily. Bhagavan's teachings seemed to articulate a feeling I had intuitively had all my life, and though I had always been a seeker after Truth, it was only after hearing Bhagavan's teachings that I became aware that there was a viable method by which Truth could be discovered.

Three days later we children found father

sitting upstairs with his eyes closed, and we asked him what he was doing. He replied that he was practising the method of self-enquiry advocated by Bhagavan and I immediately felt a desire to join him. I went through the booklet "Who am I?" and began practising self-enquiry immediately. My brother Vasanth joined us soon afterwards, but he soon lost interest and gave it up.

After the first four or five days of meditation Bhagavan's form appeared before me. Although I had never seen him in person, my mind could not get rid of the feeling that it was conjuring up an image of a person I already knew. I tried to shake off the image, but the image of Bhagavan persistently drew my mind away from self-enquiry and kept it on himself. Eventually I gave up trying, and as my mind became more and more transfixed by the image I found my surging thoughts subsiding and I was submerged in a strange peace. I was apprehensive that I was being weaned from the path of self-enquiry by concentration on Bhagavan's form, but later on I understood that Bhagavan's appearance was not an illusion but a manifestation of Grace, and that without this Grace, even the severest *sadhana* would be of no avail.

During this period I was introduced to Paul Brunton's book "A Search in Secret India", and after reading it I developed a strong desire to see Bhagavan in person. My desire was fulfilled a year later when all my family made a pilgrimage to Arunachala. The moment I saw Arunachala my heart was suddenly filled with an intense feeling of happiness and a strange sense of excitement. When we finally reached the Ashram and entered the Hall, Bhagavan smiled as if to say that I was well-known to



Souris

him and that he had been expecting me for a long time. Bhagavan was just how I had imagined him to be, and the minute I sat before him I slipped into deep meditation like a fish jumping into water. For two days, I felt as if I was in heaven but on the third day I developed a severe headache and my heaven suddenly turned into a hell. I felt as if my head was splitting in two and my only wish was to find a quiet corner to lie down. However, there was no privacy anywhere in the Ashram and I suffered intensely. At the height of the pain I was publicly scolded by one of Bhagavan's attendants for being disrespectful to Bhagavan. My only crime was that I had stretched out my legs towards Bhagavan because my knees were aching from sitting cross-legged for a long time. My mind suddenly rebelled against the whole situation. Bhagavan's seeming indifference to my presence, my physical pain and the indifference he showed to my public humiliation caused me to change radically my opinion of him. My only desire now was to leave the Ashram. I communicated these feelings to my father and rather surprisingly he was happy to leave. It seemed that he too had been having doubts about Bhagavan, but he had not broached the subject with me previously because he could see that I had been in an almost ecstatic state. We both decided that it had been the height of folly to take Bhagavan seriously, and we decided to give up our *sadhana* and leave the place immediately.

After the next meal we went to take leave of Bhagavan. When I bowed silently, Bhagavan looked into my eyes and smiled a loving smile. That smile lighted up my love and faith again, and although we still went ahead with our plans to leave, from the moment I got into the train, I was seized with an eagerness to see Bhagavan again. That was the first and last time that my mind rebelled against him. During the years that followed, he subjected me to many severe tests and trials, but I never again lost faith in the clarity of his guidance.

I carried on my *sadhana* at home but it was a year before I was able to visit Bhagavan



again. On my second visit, although I experienced particularly deep meditations again, I still had problems with the Ashram customs. I was scolded again by an attendant for attempting to receive *prasad* with my left hand, even though I am naturally left-handed, and my mind continually rebelled against the seemingly meaningless *pujas* and ceremonies which surrounded Bhagavan. I had been brought up among complete atheists and I found this sudden immersion into ritual and orthodoxy irritating and meaningless. Finally, though, I realised that Bhagavan was subjecting me to this treatment in order to subdue my ego. From the moment that I started to interpret the happenings in the Ashram in this light, I was unable to take offence anymore. I found myself feeling affectionate towards the inmates of the Ashram and their customs, and they in turn responded by feeling and showing affection to me.

My love for Bhagavan was growing stronger

every day, and my second visit was marked by a strong desire to find a way of settling down permanently near Bhagavan. Although I could see no means by which this could be accomplished, I consoled myself that Bhagavan would somehow make it convenient for me to stay near him.

Unfortunately this was not to happen for many years. I made two more brief visits to the Ashram later that year and in between the visits I felt that my *sadhana* was growing stronger all the time. Suddenly, though, the visits stopped and I was not able to visit Bhagavan again for ten years. After my last brief visit to the Ashram, living in my house again was like living in a jail. Every vacation father and I would try and go to see Bhagavan, but somehow circumstances always conspired to prevent us. I realised that Bhagavan did not wish me to go and see him, and I viewed the long separation as a prolonged lesson in surrender. As the years went by, I began to realise that Bhagavan was always with me and within me, and as a result, the urge to see him physically diminished. Whenever I had a longing to see him again, Bhagavan would appear in my dreams and console me by saying: "Why do you feel sad? I am always with you wherever you are." My health declined during the years of separation, but because I constantly felt that Bhagavan was with me, neither the physical pains nor the anguish of separation affected me unduly.

At the end of the ten years, my mother's sister, who was both our guardian and our support, died. Although her death brought many problems, it brought me much nearer to Bhagavan. It severed the only bond we had with the outside world and so it gave us an opportunity to move to Tiruvannamalai and stay permanently near Bhagavan. The year was 1950 and by the time we arrived at Arunachala Bhagavan had already had three operations on his arm and few people thought that he would live much longer. Because of this, when we arrived at the Ashram with three big

cartloads of luggage, the people in Ramana Nagar laughed at us; but for us, whether Bhagavan could be seen there or not, Arunachala was our life's last destination.

After settling near the Ashram I found that my meditation was taking a new turn. My heart was no longer responding with love at the sight of Bhagavan's form; instead it was dwelling more on the real Bhagavan beyond the bodily presence. I realised later that Bhagavan was giving me an insight into his real Self in order to wean me from the attachment I felt towards his physical form. This new perspective enabled me to view the passing away of Bhagavan with almost total equanimity. On the day he died, I was away on a visit, but I remember that I did not feel miserable at all on hearing the news. I felt astonished at my own apparent callousness, but underneath I knew that it was his grace.

I received a letter from my father saying that the spiritual power radiating from Bhagavan's *samadhi* was very strong, and that he himself felt Bhagavan's presence more strongly than ever before. When I finally returned to the Ashram I had to conclude that my father was right. I felt him there at once. The Ashram seemed to be like a ghost town, and I wondered why people had made such haste to depart simply for the reason that they could no longer feast their eyes on his form. The moment I shut my eyes before the *samadhi*, Bhagavan's smiling form would stand before me and I could feel his presence as vividly as before.

In the years that have passed since that day, the presence of Bhagavan has retained its force and potency, and I feel his guidance within me as a continuous presence. The silent music of Bhagavan is a devouring harmony, and I feel that very soon it is going to be a universe-filling symphony. Where can be the end for the *Mahaleela* that Bhagavan is weaving while he stands amidst us here for all eternity? □

MUDALIAR PATTI

Compiled From Ashram publications and devotees' reminiscences

MUDALIAR Patti was one of the earliest devotees of Bhagavan, and she is affectionately remembered among devotees for the many years of service which she gave to Bhagavan. She considered it her duty to bring food daily to Bhagavan, and despite her own relative poverty and lack of resources she considered that feeding Bhagavan was a holy obligation and no one could persuade her to give it up.

Her family came from Karaikal near Pondicherry and they were all deeply devoted to Siva and His devotees. They manifested their devotion by utilising a large portion of their income to feed devotees of Siva and itinerant *sadhus*. They were particularly fond of one *sadhu*, and when his death was approaching, they felt that his passing away would be a great blow to them. Shortly before his death, they approached him and asked: "Revered sir, where can we find another like you after your passing away?" The *sadhu* told them not to worry and he consoled them by saying that they would soon be fortunate to serve a great *jnani*. When they asked for further details, the *sadhu* advised them to go to Tiruvannamalai and serve a Swami called *Brahmana Swami*, which was the name by which Bhagavan was known during the first years of his stay at Arunachala. A few days later the *sadhu* passed away.

Two months later in 1909, Mudaliar Patti came to Tiruvannamalai with her son Subbaya Mudaliar and her daughter-in-law Kamakshi and they settled down together in Tiruvannamalai. The whole family was filled with joy



Mudaliar Patti

when they finally had the *darshan* of *Brahmana Swami* and they had no hesitation in deciding to serve him food.

Every day Mudaliar Patti and her daughter-in-law took food to Bhagavan, first at Virupaksha Cave, and then later at Skandashram. In addition to their commitment to Bhagavan, they were also feeding a number of *sadhus* in their own house. Mudaliar Patti wished to extend her service by worshipping Bhagavan with flowers also, but when she found that Bhagavan disapproved of this practice, she installed a picture of Bhagavan in her own house and garlanded him there instead.

After few years the revenue which Mudaliar Patti received from her lands in Karaikal dimini-

shed and she soon found herself unable to live on it. However, her lack of income from this source in no way diminished her commitment to feed Bhagavan. She procured *gingili* seed (sesame seed) from the local market and laboured by hand to extract the oil from it. She supplemented the money she earned from selling the oil by preparing and selling *poppadam* and all the profits she earned from these enterprises were channelled into feeding Bhagavan. She occasionally had to work day and night to ensure that the supply of food to the Ashram was maintained, but no matter how little she earned, she always managed to bring an offering to the Ashram. On special occasions she would redouble her efforts, and on these days she would prepare special sweets, *vadai* and *poppadam* and when she brought them to the Ashram she would personally serve them to Bhagavan and his devotees.

Around 1938, Mudaliar Patti's daughter-in-law passed away and her son lost interest in worldly life and joined a Mutt as a *sadhu*. Although she was now alone she bore the difficulties of life with equanimity. Because she had no money and no one to help her with the domestic work in her house, the Ashram Manager and several devotees approached her and offered her a place in the Ashram. They even offered to send food to her house if she did not wish to reside in the Ashram. Mudaliar Patti was not interested in the offer and she replied: "Whatever the difficulties, I shall not give up this holy task. If I do not have money, I shall go to ten houses, feeling my way with my stick, beg food, offer it to Bhagavan, and only then will I eat. I cannot keep quiet." She finally accepted an offer by one of the devotees to live in a vacant house which he owned, and several devotees, impressed by her devotion, gave her small donations so that she was able to continue her daily offerings.

Bhagavan himself would always wait for her food to arrive, and he could never be persuaded to eat before her offering had arrived. If Bhagavan went round the hill, or even to the

top of it, Mudaliar Patti would follow to ensure that her offering was accepted. Bhagavan had his regular stopping places around the hill, and Mudaliar Patti soon learned them; frequently Bhagavan would find her waiting for him with a basket full of food in some remote place on the far side of the hill. Once, when she was approaching old age, she climbed the mountain alone with two large carriers and a basket full of food because she had heard that Bhagavan was climbing the mountain with several devotees. She eventually tracked him down at Seven Springs which was at least two thirds of the way to the summit. It seemed that nothing would persuade her to stop her daily offering, and even when the whole town was evacuated because of a plague epidemic, Mudaliar Patti took shelter on the hill and still managed to find food to take to Bhagavan.

In the last years of her life Mudaliar Patti's eyesight became very poor, and on one of her visits to the dining hall to feed Bhagavan she accidentally stepped on a leaf plate. The ashram Manager took her aside and said: "Patti, what is the use of taking all the trouble to come when you cannot even see Bhagavan?" Mudaliar Patti immediately replied: "What does it matter whether I see Bhagavan or not? Is it not enough that Bhagavan's gracious look falls on me?" Bhagavan smiled at this reply and said to the manager: "What answer could you give her now?"

Because of her long familiarity, she often took great liberties with Bhagavan. On one occasion when she was serving him she put a handful of rice and curry on his plate and Bhagavan reprimanded her by saying: "If you serve so much, how can I eat it?" Everyone knew how touchy Bhagavan was about receiving large servings, and had the remark been made to one of the regular servers, the portion would have been hastily removed. However, Mudaliar Patti was unperturbed and she insisted that Bhagavan eat it all. "There are several other things to eat," replied Bhagavan, "How can my stomach contain them all?" Mudaliar Patti just smiled at him and said: "It is all a matter

of the mind, Swami," and after saying this she served Bhagavan the full portion and left. Bhagavan laughed at the incident and commented to the people who were near him: "Do you see? She is paying me back with my own teachings."

Finally her health gave way, and for the last two or three years of her life, she had to be content to send the food through somebody else, and as a consequence she had to give up her hard earned privilege of personally serving Bhagavan his food. During this period, someone told her that Bhagavan's body had become very emaciated, and she thought that this was all due to the fact that she was no longer able to serve him personally. She immediately came to the Ashram and voiced her fears to Bhagavan. Bhagavan laughed at her fears and told her that they were groundless. Taking advantage of her lack of sight, he stood near her when he was leaving the hall and said with a laugh: "Granny, have I become reduced? See how well I am. It is a pity that your sight is

so poor that you are not able to see for yourself."

By the time she finally died in September, 1949 she was completely blind, but neither old age, blindness nor lack of money prevented her serving Bhagavan till the end. She breathed her last only after hearing that her last daily offering had been served to Bhagavan in the Ashram. It had been over forty years since she had served her first meal to Bhagavan, and in all that period not a day had passed without Bhagavan eating her food offering. When Bhagavan heard about her death, he enquired about the place of her burial, and when he was told that it was planned to bury her in the Hindu general burial ground, he intervened and insisted that she be buried in the compound where she had died. So, in obedience to Bhagavan's will, her body was made to sit cross-legged, garlanded with flowers, sprinkled with sacred ash and camphor (the standard procedure for burying a *sannyasi*), and she was finally laid to rest in the compound where she had spent the last years of her life. □

STORIES FROM BHAGAVAN

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Gaudapada and Non-origination

T.M.P. MAHADEVAN

*Gaudapada was the Guru of Sankara Bhagavatpada's Guru, Govinda, and he is the earliest known exponent of advaita vedanta whose works have come down to us. His major work, the commentary on the **Mandukya Upanishad**, has become a classic of Indian philosophy. Sankara himself wrote a commentary on it, a great compliment since his only other commentaries were on the **Brahma Sutras**, the **Bhagavad Gita** and some of the major upanishads.*

Professor T.M.P. Mahadevan is a long-standing devotee of Sri Ramana Maharshi who has written extensively on Sri Ramana and Gaudapada. In this article, the concluding portion of which will be published in our next issue, he has given us both a summary and a commentary on the main ideas of this work. For those not familiar with the text we have incorporated some of the key verses as footnotes. The translations were done by Prof. Mahadevan himself at our request.

ONE of the stray verses translated into Tamil by Ramana Maharshi is from the *Mandukya Karika* of Acarya Gaudapada. In one of his conversations, Sri Ramana refers to the same verse, gives the source and explains its meaning thus:

"There is no dissolution or creation, no one in bondage, nor anyone pursuing spiritual practices. There is no one desiring liberation, nor anyone liberated. This is the Absolute Truth." He then went on to say: "This *sloka* appears in the second chapter, (the chapter on *Vaitathya* or illusoriness) of Gaudapada's *Karika*, a commentary on the *Mandukya-upanishad*. It means that there is no dissolution and no creation. There is no bondage, no one doing spiritual practice, no one seeking spiritual liberation, and no one who is liberated. One who is established in the Self sees this by his knowledge of the Self." (October 1980 *The Mountain Path*)

This view (this is called a view only in our language) is known as *ajati-vada* also sometimes called *ajata-vada*. It means that the ultimate

truth is that nothing whatever is born. Non-birth implies that the concept of causality is an illusion. But for whom is it an illusion? It is for the sage who has realised the truth of non-duality. From our standpoint—the standpoint of relative existence—the world and its changes, the soul and its states cannot be dismissed outright. But if one undertakes proper enquiry, one would at least realize theoretically that the world, though it appears, cannot be real.

In his "Talks" Ramana says that there are three methods of approach in advaita. (1) *srsti-drsti-vada*, i.e. what is perceived existed and was created prior to the person who perceives it. (2) *Drsti-srsti-vada* i.e. simultaneous creation. The seer and the seen arising together. (3) *Ajati-vada* according to which there is no loss, no creation, no one bound, no *sadhaka*, no one desiring liberation and no one liberated; this is the Supreme Truth.

In order to appreciate this teaching of Sri Ramana, it will be worth while to understand the quintessence of Gaudapada's exposition of

advaita. We will find there, how, step by step, the great teacher guides us to the Supreme Truth

The central theme of Gaudapada's philosophy is that nothing is ever born (*ajati*). This however does not mean that "nothing" is the ultimate truth as in *Sunya-vada*. When he speaks of nothing in this context, he means that there is nothing other than the Supreme Self. That Self is the only Reality. "No *jiva* is born; there is no cause for such birth; this is the supreme truth, nothing whatever is born".¹ From the standpoint of *advaita*, there is nothing finite or non-eternal. The Absolute alone is; everything else is illusory appearance and non-real. Those who take the pluralistic universe to be real are deluded. It is because of *maya* that there seem to be distinctions such as knower and object known, mind and matter. One cannot explain how they arise. However, an enquiry will reveal that they are void of reality. Seeing them is like seeing the footprints of birds in the sky.² The Self is unborn; there is nothing else to be born. So duality is mere illusion; non-duality is the ultimate truth.

In several ways, and through many an argument Gaudapada expounds his philosophy of non-origination or non-birth. He first establishes the reality of the non-dual Self through an investigation into the purport of the *Mandukya-upanishad*. The *Upanishad* is extremely brief, yet it contains the essential teachings of Vedanta. The *Muktikopanishad* says that for those who seek liberation the *Mandukya* alone is enough. The *Mandukya-upanishad* begins with this equation: "Om=all. Brahman=Self," and then it describes the three states of the Self, waking, dream and sleep, as well as the fourth (*Turiya*), which is not a state like the others, but is the transcendent nature of the Self—the non-dual peace, the Self per se. Gaudapada makes this statement of the *Upanishad* the basis of his metaphysical quest and seeks to show, through reasoning, that non-origination is the final truth. The Self in the three states of waking, dream and sleep, is *visva*, *taijasa* and *prajna*. *Visva* is conscious of the world outside, enjoys that

which is gross, and is satisfied therewith. *Taijasa* is conscious of what is within, enjoys what is subtle and finds satisfaction there. *Prajna* is a consciousness-mass without the distinctions of seer and seen; bliss in its enjoyment and satisfaction.³ It should be noted that *Visva*, *Taijasa* and *Prajna* are not distinct selves. It is one and the same Self that appears as three. Gaudapada assigns localities to them in order to show that all three aspects are present in waking. The right eye is the seat of *Visva*; *Taijasa* has its location in the mind and *prajna* is located in the ether of the heart. Also, the three should be thought of as the three cosmic forms of the Self; *Virat*, *hiranyagarbha* and *avyakta* or *Isvara*. So as to indicate this identity the *Mandukya-upanishad* describes the *prajna*-self as the lord of all, the knower of all, the controller of all, the source of all, the origin and end of all beings. The recognition of *visva*, *taijasa* and *prajna* in the waking state, and the identification of the three individual forms of the Self with the three cosmic forms, are for the purpose of realising non-duality.

Turiya is the non-dual reality.⁴ It has no name really by which it is to be distinguished,

¹(4.71) No *jiva* is ever born; for that there does not exist a cause. This is the supreme truth, where nothing whatever is born.

²(4.28) Therefore the mind is not originated nor is originated what is seen by the mind. Those who see the origination thereof verily see the foot-print (of birds) in the sky.

³(1.3) *Visva* indeed is ever the experiencer of the gross; *taijasa* is the experience of the subtle; and *prajna* is the experiencer of the blissful. Know that the experience is three-fold.

⁴(1.5) He who knows these two—what is experienced in the three states and that one who is proclaimed to be the experiencer—he, however, is not affected, although experiencing.

(1.11) *Visva* and *taijasa* these two are taken to be bound by the effect (apprehension otherwise i.e. *viksepa*) and the cause (non-apprehension of the truth i.e. *avarana*); *prajna*, however, is bound by the cause. Those two (i.e. the effect and the cause) are not there in the Fourth (i.e. *Turiya*).

⁴(1.10) When all miseries (consisting of *prajna*, *taijasa* and *visva*) are removed the Lord is known to be the supreme changeless non-dual luminous reality of all entities, the Fourth (*turiya*) which is all-pervading.

and for this reason it called the 'fourth' (*turiya*). It is the Self, changeless, self-luminous, and one without a second. The various states which come and pass with their worlds and enjoyments are not real, they are really products of *maya*. *Maya* functions in two ways: it veils the one and projects the many. This results in non-apprehension of the Real (*tattva-pratibodha*). In the state of sleep there is not misapprehension, there is non-apprehension alone. The Self in its real state is unknown, but even the non-self is unknown. In the *Turiya*, there is not even a trace of ignorance. It is omniscient sight unfailing light. Sleep, in which the true is hidden, and dream, in which the untrue is projected, have metaphysical implication for us when we consider the aforementioned issue. Real awakening comes with the realisation of the *Turiya* in which there is no veiling or projecting. In the so-called 'fourth state' it is shown that the two are unreal. When the *jiva* wakes from the beginningless sleep of illusion it knows its true nature as that in which there is neither sleep nor dream nor duality, it understands itself as unborn and beyond death.

This enquiry into the three states of experience leads to the knowledge that the pluralistic world is illusory and that the Self alone is real. Gaudapada seeks to establish that the world, which we take to be real is illusory in the chapter on illusoriness by using the analogy of the dream world. When we judge by the standards of waking, we see that the world of dreams is unreal. We may dream of chariots and elephants for instance, but on waking, we realise that all of them have been illusory because they appeared within the small space of our body.⁵ No one else experienced them. The dream contents do not form part of the external world which we take to be real in waking. So they are illusory. Also they do not conform to the laws of space and time which govern the waking world. In a moment of waking time, one may have travelled far and wide in a dream. In dream there is no real going to a place, even if we are convinced thereof at that time, for on waking, we find that we are not at that place.⁶ The same holds good for the objects experien-

ced in dream. They too are not real, for when the dream spell is broken, one does not see them. This is because the chariot and the elephant seen in the dream are non-existent, they are illusory.

In many respects the world of waking resembles the world of dream.⁷ Just as the dream objects are perceived, so also are the ones of the waking state, but they too are evanescent. How can what is non-existent in the beginning and at the end be existent in the present? That only is real which is not conditioned by time. That which is conditioned by time cannot be real. The dream objects experienced in dream are experienced therein only, neither before nor after, so also the objects of waking are experienced in the state of waking alone. We cannot say that there should be made a difference between the two states on the ground that the objects experienced in waking are practically efficient, whereas those seen in dream are not. For even these are so only to the waking state and not in the dream state. Just as it is true that dream water cannot quench actual thirst, so also the so-called actual water cannot quench dream thirst either. One may argue that the things experienced in dreams are abnormal unlike those in the waking state. But in the dream world we find nothing unusual in watching the

⁵(2.1) The wise declare that in dream all objects are illusory, for the reason that they have their place within (the body) and because of their confined space (in the *nadis* inside the body.)

(2.2) And because of the shortness of time (the dreamer) does not go to the place (to which he imagines he goes) and see (the dream-objects). And when he wakes up all (that which he saw in dream) is not present in that place (where he is while awake).

⁶(4.34) It is not possible for a dreamer to go out in order to experience the (dream) objects on account of the discrepancy of the time involved in such a journey. Again, on being awake, the dreamer does not find himself in the place (where he dreamed himself to be).

⁷(2.5) The discriminating ones say that the different objects in the states of dream and waking are one, because of similarity (of objects) perceived, and for the reason already well known.

(2.6) That which is non-existent at the beginning and at the end is so even at present. The objects are similar to the illusion (we see). They are referred to as if non-illusory (by the ignorant ones).

dismemberment of our own head. We are told that the denizens of heaven have their own peculiarities which to us are all abnormal, but in themselves they may be quite normal. Similarly, from the side of waking, the dream contents may be abnormal, yet here too, in themselves, there is nothing strange. A closer scrutiny of the two states will show that there is an essential similarity between them. When we wake up from a dream we realise the unreality of the things which we experienced as *if* outside. The same in waking; we have our fancies which we know to be unreal, and we experience facts which we take to be real. But when the delusion of plurality is dispelled, the so-called facts of the external world will turn out to be mere illusory appearance.⁸ This is why the wise characterize waking as a dream. In the same way as the dream content arises and perishes, the contents of the waking world also come into being and pass away. Both the dream contents and the external world are posited by the Self. The things created in the mind within, and those in the world without—both these are the illusory imaginations of the *Atman*.⁹ There is, however, a difference between the waking experience and that of dream. While the dream contents are experienced in the mind of the dreamer, the objects of the external world are perceived by other subjects as well. Not only that: they are cognised through the sense organs. But even so, illusoriness is common to both dream and waking.¹⁰ In both, it is the mind, impelled by *maya* that creates the appearance of plurality. As identical with the Self, the mind is non-dual; but owing to nescience, duality is figured and there is the consequent cycle of birth and death.

Even in the state of waking there are illustrations for illusoriness. In the dark a rope which is not clearly seen is imagined to be a streak of water or a snake. So also the Self is imagined to be the world owing to nescience.¹¹ When the snake is known as such, the posited snake vanishes, so also, when the Self is known as what it really is, i.e. the non-dual reality, the pluralistic world disappears. It is just like the Palace city of Fairy Morgana (*gandharva-nagara*),

our universe may be seen but it is not real. Because they are perceived, the things of the world are thought to exist, also because they answer to certain practical needs. But these two reasons cannot render them real on that account. Even objects like elephants conjured up by the magician are observed and practically efficient, but they are certainly not real.¹² Gaudapada gives another illustration in the fourth chapter. It is the one of the fire-brand. When the fire-brand is moved, it appears straight or crooked depending on how it is waved, yet when the movement is stopped, the appearances vanish.¹³ They do not really emerge from the moving fire-brand, nor do they merge into it when it comes to rest. These patterns seen when the fire-brand is moving are illusory and without any substance whatsoever. In the same way we can understand that consciousness appears in many forms because of *maya*. But these too do not come out of it, in reality, nor do they return to it. So there is no dissolution, no origination; no one in bondage, no one who desires release, no one who is released. This is the Supreme Truth expounded in Gaudapada's chapter on the fire-brand. □

⁸(2.9) In dream what exists as within is unreal being imagined by the mind, and what is understood by the mind as being outside—both these are seen to be illusory.

(2.10) In the state of waking also what is imagined by the mind within is but unreal. And what is understood by the mind as being outside appears to be real—it is reasonable to regard both these as illusory.

⁹(2.12) The shining *atman* through its own *maya* imagines by itself and in itself (all the objects seen within as well as without). It alone cognises the different objects (so imagined) this is the conclusion of Vedanta.

¹⁰(2.15) Those objects which are within are unmanifest and those which are outside are manifest—all of them are but imagined. The difference, however, is in regard to the sense-organs (by which the latter are seen).

¹¹(2.17) As the rope whose nature has not been determined is imagined in darkness as a snake, a streak of water etc., so the Self is imagined in a variety of ways.

(2.18) Even as when the nature of the rope is determinately known as the rope alone the imagination is removed, so also is there the determinate knowledge of the Self.

¹²Referred to Chapter 4 verse 44

¹³(4.48) The fire-brand, when not moved, is without appearance and origination, even so cognition, when not moved, is without appearance and origination.

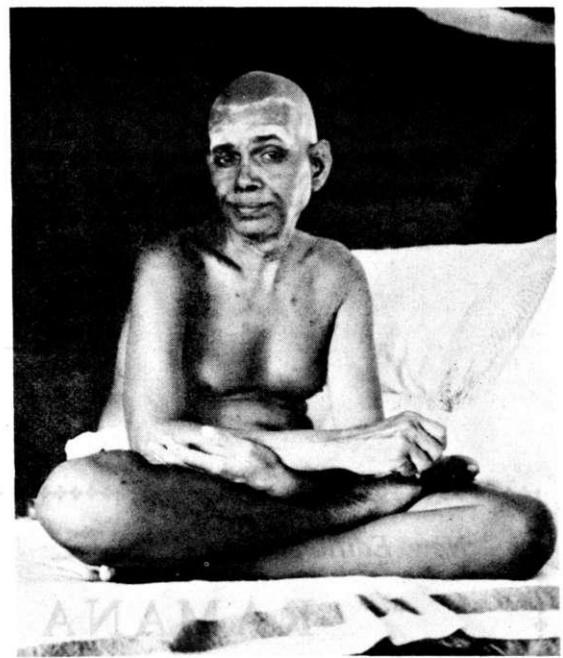
Introducing....

Sri Palaniswamy Chettiar

SRI Palaniswamy, a native of Sular Village near Coimbatore, has been resident at Sri Ramanasramam for many years. He first came to visit Bhagavan in 1948, and although he only intended to make a casual visit of a few days he has been residing here more or less continuously ever since.

When he arrived, the Ashram was bustling with activity in preparation for the *Kumbabhishekam* of the Mother's temple. Despite the intense activity in the Ashram, Chettiar made an immediate impression on Sri Niranjanananda Swami, the *Sarvadhikari* of the Ashram, who asked him to stay and serve Bhagavan by attending to various odd jobs in the Ashram. In his short stay Chettiar had been greatly impressed by Bhagavan and so he considered it a great privilege to be allowed to stay on and offer service in this way.

When the preparations for the *Kumbabhishekam* were nearly completed, he was put in charge of a temporary godown which had been fenced off in the Pali Mantapam, about a hundred yards from the temple. When the



ceremonies had been completed, he was appointed caretaker of Skandashram, a position which he held for several months. Finally, he moved back into the Ashram and offered his service in the stores and the kitchen.

This job involved rising at 3 a.m. every morning to assist Sama Thatta in cutting the vegetables. His only contact with Bhagavan during this period occurred during a lunch in the Ashram when Bhagavan was heard to remark that the vegetables had been cut unevenly. Chettiar who had been responsible for the vegetables that day immediately came in to apologise, and although Bhagavan said nothing



Sri Palanisamy Chettiar

about it, it made a deep impression. He now realises that this one small incident taught him more about the correct attitude to work than a dozen lectures could have done.

When Bhagavan attained *Mahanirvana*, Chettiar helped in the construction of the *samadhi* pit, officiated in the last rites, and was one of the people who helped to carry Bhagavan to his final resting place. In later years the experience he gained from this episode was put to good use when he was asked to help with the final rites and the construction of *samadhis* for a number of devotees; the *samadhis* of Muruganar, Visvanatha Swami, S.S. Cohen, Sadhu Natanananda and more

recently Natesa Iyer have benefitted from his expertise.

Nowadays Chettiar's main occupation is making garlands for the Ashram shrines. He rises early every morning, collects flowers in the Ashram garden and then makes the garlands which later in the day adorn Bhagavan's Shrine and that of the Mother.

Chettiar continues to live a quiet and contented life in the Ashram, and few visitors are aware of his service to Bhagavan. His preference for remaining in the background and the years of work he has voluntarily given to the Ashram make him a model example of humility, devotion and service. □

New Edition

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By K. SWAMINATHAN

We are happy to announce the latest biography of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi by Prof. K. Swaminathan, Editor of *The Mountain Path*. As Professor of English in a College in Madras for years, he had the unique opportunity of visiting the Ashram for short or long periods and of coming into close contact with the Maharshi. This new biography lays special emphasis on the inner core of Bhagavan's Teachings and *Sadhana*. The Book is a publication of National Book Trust, India, New Delhi. Crown Octavo. 150 pp.

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BOOK REVIEWS

PRABODHA SUDHA: By Swami Poornananda Tirtha. Pub. Jnana Asram, Parlikad, Wadakancheri, Trichur Dt., Kerala. Pp. 261. Price Rs. 20-00

This is a compilation of the talks given by the author to a Bombay audience on the subject of Practical Vedanta and its applicability to modern life. For this purpose, the author had taken for detailed exposition two authentic texts, one a selection from a famous ancient Yoga classic and the other a contemporary modern piece of revealed scripture.

The first part of the book deals with the seventy six verses in Sanskrit on "Sapta Bhūmikas", seven stages in spiritual attainment, a selection from that ancient treasure house of Yoga and philosophy, the famous Yoga Vasishtha. The author enumerates the seven stages as "Subheccha, desire for enlightenment, Vichara hearing and reflection, Tanumanasa tenuous mind, Satvapathi self-realisation, Asamasakti nonattachment, Padartha'bhavana absolute nonperception of objects and Turyaga, the transcendental state". The Sadhana is started with the conviction that permanent peace can only be had by cultivating dispassion, and it proceeds until the last frontier of the realm of *jnana*, the state of *Videha Mukti*, the state of sublime quiescence, is reached (page 88).

The second part deals with *Sat Darsana* of the great Vasishtha Ganapati Muni, a rendering in Sanskrit of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's epoch-making work in Tamil, *Ulladu Narpadu*. To quote the author:

"In my opinion, *Sat Darsana* and *Upadesa Saram* are probably the highest among the short works on Vedanta. I have gone through quite a number of books in Sanskrit on Vedanta but none explains, as these two do, the state of self-realisation and the path leading to it in such clear, concise and convincing language which is at the same time simple and pleasing. They rank in my view as high as the Upanishads or even higher because of their directness of approach" (page 105).

The talks are appealing, didactic in nature, couched in simple and popular language, and backed up by the earnestness and sincerity of the speaker. But as they seem to be just transcripts without proper editing, they are loosely structured and lack consistency and precision. For instance, *nishtha* is a key word in the text of *Sat Darsana* and occurs in eight verses. It means 'settled state', 'poise'. Instead it is translated differently in different places, viz. 'being seated', (page 112) process, technique, science or method (page 138) contemplation (page 156) remaining (page 196) self-realisation (page 211). *Hrt* another

keyword meaning 'heart' is translated as pure consciousness. *Dhi*, meaning thought, is translated as *antah-karna*. In verse 36, the word *mukha* which means 'chief' is taken along with *pravada* and translated as lip-talk!

All these naturally have given rise to interpretations which, though interesting as popular Vedanta, are quite different from what is intended in the text.

The beautiful import of verse 44 is entirely missed as the phrase *munivak* is misunderstood to mean "the words of the Maharshi" instead of its proper meaning 'the words of the Muni' (Vasishtha Ganapati Muni).

S. SANKARANARAYANAN.

RISHIS IN INDIAN ART AND LITERATURE: By C. Sivaramamurti. Pub. Kanak Publications, 16/F-3 Ansari Road, Darvaganj, New Delhi: 110 002 Pp. 258 + 96 pages Photos. Price: Rs.250/- US\$50

"The spiritual man who can guide human life towards its perfection is typified in the ancient Indian idea of the Rishi, one who has lived fully the life of man and found the word of the supra-intellectual, supra-mental, spiritual truth. He has risen above these lower limitations and can view all things from above, but also he is in sympathy with their effort and can view them from within; he has the complete inner knowledge and the higher surpassing knowledge. Therefore, he can guide the world humanly as God guides it divinely, because like the Divine he is in the life of the world and yet above it".

These words of Sri Aurobindo neatly sum up the role of the Rishi in human life. As the author of this brilliant and fascinating study amplifies, the Rishis are "the embodiment of not only learning but the highest of self-control, sacrifice, supreme understanding, childlike innocence, universal love, a feeling of utmost goodwill for the entire world, animals and birds, trees and creepers, lakes, streams and rivers, hills and dales, rocks and hillocks included. The highest seers could see beyond the ordinary ken of mortals, but yet, were the very embodiment of simplicity, the highest acme of contentment, viewing alike everything on earth, nothing so high as to overawe them, neither so low as to be despised".

The author is an acknowledged authority on Art and is a connoisseur and critic, a *sahridaya*. At his hands, the already fascinating theme becomes more fascinating, with the aid of plates and pictures on the archaeological achievements of India and with the help of appropriate and

delightful quotations from the masterpieces of Sanskrit literature.

Everything in India, worth the name, has come from its Rishis. Not only the higher echelons of society, but everyone in India would like to trace his lineage to a Rishi. The concept of Pravara and Gotra is a part of Indian thought. The scripture held most sacred in India, the Vedas, are the Revelations of the Rishis in whom the very Gods vie with each other to take birth. Brahma, as the origin of all the Vedas is a Rishi, Vishnu is the sage Narayana come to uplift humanity. Siva is the master of masters, Mauna guru, Dakshinamurti, the repository of all knowledge. The celestials are first Rishis and then Gods. The Valakhilyas and Vaikhanasas, Narada and Tumburu, the Sapta Rishis, Vyasa, Valmiki, Vasishtha, Vamadeva, Durvasa, Kausika, Prasurama, Gautama and a host of them—without these, what is India, what is Indian Culture?

Satyam Truth is the life-breath of the Rishi. It is synonymous with God. As the words of the Rishi are charged with Truth and nothing but the Truth, whatever he says comes true. If in anger, the Rishi pronounces something, it becomes a curse and it is difficult even for him to revoke it or completely annul its effect. The next thing that the Rishi holds sacred is *tapas*, energising oneself and remaining in the height of one's consciousness all the time. Not caring for the body or physical comforts, the Rishis perform *tapas* for years and years till they achieve their objective. *Svadhyaya* and *Pravacana*, study and teaching is the third thing that the Rishi holds dear. He is the guardian of the wisdom of the race and he propagates by his own example.

As Prof. Swaminathan says in his Foreword, the line of the Rishis is a perennially flowing stream. The span of the book extends upto the eighteenth century only. If it were not so, perhaps Sri Ramana Maharshi and the description of him in inimitable Sanskrit verses by Sri Vasishtha Ganapati Muni would have found a place in the book.

There are 105 art plates and illustrations provided in the book along with an informative Bibliography and Index.

The theme is absorbing, the writing is delightful and the book is beautifully produced.

S. SANKARANARAYANAN.

ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF INDIAN CULTURE: By R.N. Salletore
Pub: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd., A 8/9, Safdarjang
Enclave, New Delhi 110 029. Pp.412 Price: Not mentioned.

The book under review is Volume I of the Encyclopaedia covering the entries from A to D, from 'Abala' to 'Dyuta'. Alphabetically arranged and throwing sufficient light on the important personalities, traditional, mythical and historical, the works, the terms and nomenclature that

constitute Indian civilisation and culture, the work is a real help to the earnest scholar and the interested layman. Based on original source material in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and other languages, both indigenous and foreign, the topics are examined from the standpoint of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, and the details are by and large well documented and authenticated with published material on the subject.

Usually in works of this kind, source materials from the various regional languages, each one of which has a rich tradition and culture behind, are ignored. It is a welcome feature of this book that the author has put to use the source materials in the regional languages, especially Kannada and Tamil. The entries under 'Agastya' 'Ceras', 'Cola' and the like give sufficient and satisfying information. But the same cannot be said about all the entries. Though in the blurb of the book a claim is made that *all available sources* pertaining to the subjects are taken up, one feels that the coverage is not comprehensive.

To quote an example, an entry under Appaya Diksitar runs thus: (page 93)

"APPAYA DIKSITAR Assigned to circa AD 1554-1625. He lived at the court of Sinna (or Cinna) Bomma Nayaka of Velur, a feudatory of the Vijayanagara emperor Venkata I (E.I.IV.271. also E.I.XII.345, f.n.3) Appaya and Tatacarya were contemporaries in AD 1580 M.A.R. for 1944. p.118"

If one had not heard of Appaya Diksitar earlier, one could not make out from this entry, whether the Diksitar was a scholar, poet or philosopher, whether he wrote anything etc. Anyhow, his disciple Bhattoji receives a better coverage (page 218-19).

Describing Amara as a famous lexicographer, reputed author of the Amarakosa, named after himself, the author says. "In that lexicon, Siva himself is called the destroyer of the sacrifice (*Kratudhvamsin*) while Buddha is styled a sage (muni)". It is not clear whether the author is quoting somebody or it is his own statement. It is true that Amarasimha mentions Buddha first and then the Trimurtis, but this does not call for a statement like the above. Siva is famous as the destroyer of Daksha's sacrifice and *kratudhvamsin* is an appellation special to him like the other appellation *nilakantha*. And Buddha is famous as *munindra muni* and *sakya muni*. Amarasimha, as a lexicographer, had to give the words in popular usage to describe persons.

The book also contains nicely printed plates of archaeological interest. Plate No.3 which is described as Ayyanar conforms more to the description of Siva as *Bikshatana murti* in *Daruka vana*. By the way, there is no entry in the book on Ayyanar. Plate No.4 talks of Aparajita trampling on Ganapati. Is it Gajamukha sura? This has to be verified.

In this beautifully printed and nicely produced book, unfortunately printing mistakes have crept in, undetected.

The entry under Dilipa (page 385) reads: "Dilipa once offered his wife to Nandini to save him from the jaws of a lion". This should read: "Dilipa once offered his life to Nandini to save it from the jaws of a lion".

We look forward to the publication of subsequent volumes.

S. SANKARANARAYANAN.

GURUDEV RANADE: *Biography and Mysticism*. By S.N. Deshpande. Pub: Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum 590 011. Pp. 377. Price Rs.24/-

Rightly had Dr. Johnson said that no one could write a man's life who had not known him personally. For it would be very difficult to recreate, particularly a historical character, without his private correspondence: the difference being that of viewing the moon through binoculars and through the Mt. Palomar telescope. Shri Deshpande, the author, is in a special position to undertake this work, as he was brought up in the intimately personal company of his hero, Dr. Ranade, and remained with him till the latter's death in 1957. Not only did he witness and imbibe the spiritual profile of Ranade from close quarters, but the latter entrusted to him the work of publishing some of his valuable books both during and after his lifetime. The biography was originally published in Marathi in 1957 and this English version is the culmination of his six lectures in Belgaum in 1976.

By virtue of his scholarly excellence and spiritual exaltation, Prof. Ranade was loved, and revered as Gurudev. In this book, which reads like a devotee's offering to his guru, one is able to find that the hero's spiritual ambit comprehended not only a rational, critical and comparative philosophy and a practical life of rare patience, love and dedication, but also a perennial irradiation of mystic or spiritual experience. The author quotes profusely from Dr. Ranade's correspondence and writings, and hence the picture that emerges is clear and well-focussed. It was to be remembered that Ranade belongs to our renaissance age of the early twenties, flourishing among such luminaries as Tilak, Gokhale, Gandhi, Aurobindo and others who provided the yeast that has been aerating our minds for more than half a century. However, although the dough has been rising in India's intellectual pantries for decades, one is often left wondering whether any good loaves will ever be produced.

It is in such a period of anxiety and frustration that biographies like this one before us gain added value. The profile of Gurudev Ranade is a rare synchronisation of the three distinctive roles of a philosopher, a mystic and a Sadguru. And the author has taken pains to give us a detailed survey of Dr. Ranade's three major works, namely, the *Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, the *Mysticism of Maharashtra Saints* and the *Bhagavad Gita*, which range

respectively over the three essential fields of philosophy, religious experience and self-realisation i.e. *darsana*, *anubhava* and *sadhana*.

SILVER JUBILEE SOUVENIR (VOL.II) Pub: Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion, Belgaum 590 011. Price Rs.15/-

On the occasion of the silver jubilee celebration of the founding of the Academy of Comparative Philosophy and Religion in Belgaum by Dr. Ranade, this excellent souvenir has been brought out by the two editors, K.D. Sangoram and M.S. Deshpande, members of the Board of Trustees of the Academy. While the first volume was primarily concerned with homages to the late Dr. Ranade and the gurus of his spiritual lineage, the present publication deals with his philosophy of God-realisation. The souvenir contains, in addition to five articles by Dr. Ranade himself, several other contributions by eminent philosophers, learned scholars and dedicated Sadhakas dealing with the favourite subject of Gurudev, rational mysticism.

Ranade's philosophy is based on the bedrock of spiritual experience and not intellectual speculation. He placed God-realisation at the centre, with all his thoughts in every branch of philosophy, be it metaphysics, epistemology or ethics, covering towards the attainment of God. All the twenty articles in this volume stress the fact that Dr. Ranade, being gifted with a contemplative mind of a very high order, firmly believed that it is the life of contemplation alone that will take one towards God.

ARGUS

THE MYSTICAL 'I': By Joel S. Goldsmith. Pub. Mandala Books, 40 Museum Street, London WC1A 1LU Pp.145. Price £ 2.50.

Mr. Goldsmith has attempted to express the meaning of the Christian Gospel in terms of advaita. He maintains that the 'I' of Jesus is the 'I' of pure consciousness, the Self, which is in all man. It is also the 'I am that I am', which was the name of God revealed to Moses. This is for him the truth behind all religion. Religions, as they actually exist, veil this truth, by substituting a personal God or revealer, who is worshipped as God. They thus veil the truth of the eternal 'I', which is equally present in all men and in all religions and which alone is real. To realise this truth, to experience the reality of the 'I' in oneself and in all men is to find the 'Infinite Way', which is the absolute truth.

There is much which is attractive in this doctrine as in all advaitic doctrine, and it certainly gives many profound insights into the deeper meaning of the Gospel and of religion as a whole. But to suggest, as Mr. Goldsmith

does, that this is the final and absolute truth seems to me misleading. There is no doubt that there is one Truth, one Reality, behind all religion and behind all human existence. But this one truth can be conceived and expressed in many different ways. To suggest that Jesus, the Buddha and Moses were all teaching the same truth seems to me misleading, if one ignores the very different way in which each of them conceived this one Truth. The Buddha, for instance, never spoke of the ultimate reality as the 'I' or the Self, nor did he speak of it as God. He preferred to use negative terms like '*nirvana*' for the ultimate state, and his disciples spoke of it as '*sunya*' or the Void. This is very different from the *Atman* of Hinduism or the 'I' of Mr. Goldsmith. Again Moses spoke of God as Yahweh, a unique Person to whom worship and adoration was due. The religion of Israel was built up on this principle, which again is very different from the advaitic doctrine of pure consciousness.

Surely we must recognise that there are many ways in which the one Reality can be conceived and none can be considered absolute. It can be conceived either objectively or subjectively. The *jnani* conceives it as the Self, the pure consciousness, which constitutes the 'I' of every man and seeks to realise this state of pure consciousness as '*saccidananda*'. But the *bhakta* conceives of the one Reality as a Person, to whom he is united in love. He also realises oneness with that one Reality but by a different way and under a different name. In a Sufi text is said, that there are three ways in which the ultimate truth can be expressed. The first is the way of duality, 'I and Thou'. The second is the way of non-duality, 'I am Thou and Thou art I'. The third is the way beyond both which says, 'There is neither I nor Thou, but only He'. Mr. Goldsmith has chosen the way of the *jnani* and has brought many deep insights but the truth can be expressed in other ways, which many will find more convincing.

FATHER BEDE GRIFFITHS

RTA—PSYCHOLOGY BEYOND FREUD: By Nirmal Kumar.
Pub. Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kulapati K.M. Munshi
Marg, Bombay-400 007. Pp. xii + 288. Price Rs. 45/-

In the book under review the author Nirmal Kumar has made a scholarly attempt to utilise the philosophic wisdom of India to derive a theory of psychology which challenges the myths of modern psychology. In doing so it has rendered immeasurable help to modern man, the foundations of whose soul have been ruthlessly shaken by Freud and his legacy. Nirmal Kumar provides a well-argued alternative to the gloomy ideas of Freud and maintains that Freud's work was an over-reaction to a frightened and shell-shocked Europe. The author takes a more optimistic view; in dissecting the depths of the human psyche he concludes that the essence of its being is truth, beauty, goodness and love.

The author has a firm belief that the epics and puranas are useful pointers to understand the course along which the psychological self has developed in the course of the last few thousand years, and he maintains that the evolution of the psyche can be discerned in many of the stories. He is convinced that "the future of mankind is vitally linked with the discovery of the psychological truth as seen by the ancient seers" and he feels that the Freudian view has disillusioned modern man, creating a widespread belief that man differs from animals only because of his sophisticated cunning and his mental powers. The author is in total opposition to Freud's belief "that man is an incurably mean and selfish creature and all nobility and idealism are types of acting". He concludes that the world must find a rational way out of this madhouse if the flame of culture lit thousands of years ago is to be kept burning for posterity. The way out of the madhouse is shown by the Indian spiritual classics which show that knowledge means a fulfilment of all the parts in man and is not produced by a satisfaction of his unbalanced desires.

I am sure this book will undoubtedly have heuristic value for future research in the Psychology of Freud.

PROF. K.S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

RAMANA MAHARSHI CONTACT LETTER

Seekers interested in contacting other seekers on the path or who would like to receive books about Sri Ramana Maharshi may write to the address given below.

For more information :—

Ramana Maharshi Contact Letter
36, Green Ridge,
WESTDENE,
Brighton,
E: Sussex,
England. (Telephone : (0273) 553115)

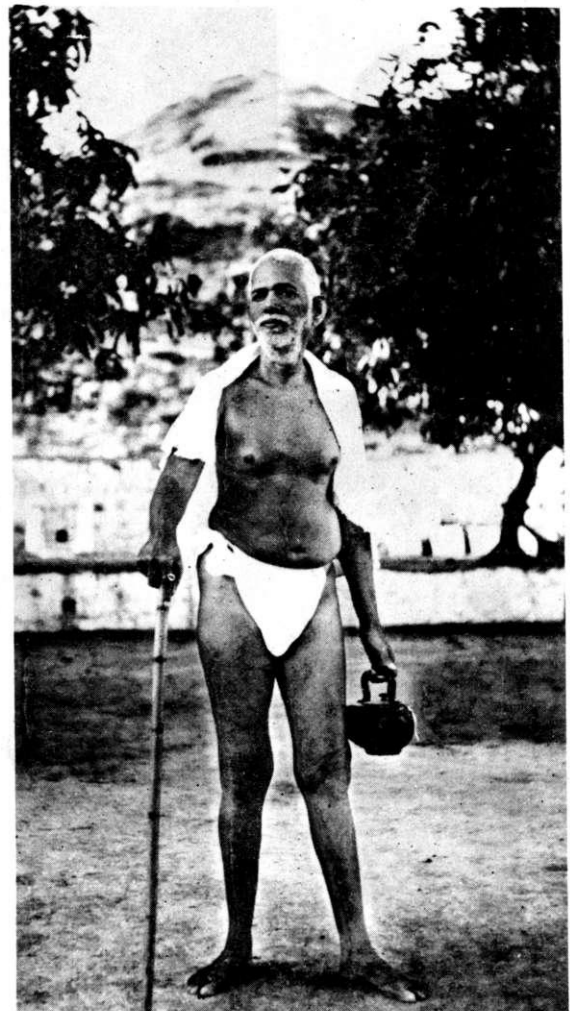


Ashram Bulletin

HAVEN OF PEACE

SRI RAMANASRAMAM TODAY

There is some divinity, some extra dimension, about every spot in Sri Ramanasramam. Bhagavan has walked on every inch of earth here. For devotees, this is the holy of holies, a place very dear to their hearts. Wherever one turns, one is reminded of Bhagavan. As you enter, there is the Mother's shrine, the power which had drawn Bhagavan from Skandashram. The beautiful temple patiently built over ten years by Sri Niranjanananda Swami is in the best traditions of South Indian Architecture. Then, we have the sacred shrine of Ramaneswara Mahalingam over the *Samadhi* of Bhagavan Himself. If we move further, we have the old Hall where Sri Bhagavan had spent most of the years while at Sri Ramanasramam. The *Nirvana Room* takes us to the days when great physical pain could not stop Sri Bhagavan giving *darshan* to the devotees. The *Gosala* takes our mind to the Cow Lakshmi and the love Sri Bhagavan had for all creation. When we enter the dining hall, tender motherly qualities of Bhagavan and His insistence on sharing whatever was available with His children, comes to our minds. The office reminds us how perfect Bhagavan was. The Book Stall is a reminder of the untiring scrupulous care with which Bhagavari would correct manuscripts and Ashram publications. The atmosphere of Sri Ramanasramam is still richly fragrant with His continued Presence.



The feeling of Ramana Presence is strengthened by contact with 'old devotees' who have had the rare good fortune of spending many years in Bhagavan's holy company and His service. **Sri Ramaswamy Pillai**, who had come to Bhagavan even in His Skandashram days, sixty years ago, is here before us, chanting sometimes by himself the Tamil *parayana*. We have **Sri Balarama Reddiar**, who has been coming to Sri Bhagavan from 1934, and has been a regular inmate of Sri Ramanasramam from 1937, ready to relate many incidents which have not been recorded in the *Talks* or *Day by Day* or *Letters*. One sees **Lucia Osborne**, former editor of '*The Mountain Path*', quietly meditating in the Old Hall, and reliving the old days. Then there is **Roda MacIver** in frail health, but full of love and devotion. **Sri Jagadish Swami**, whom Bhagavan had 'caught' while he was young, shy and retiring but always

ready to speak about Bhagavan's compositions and teachings. It seems appropriate that he should occupy the room of that 'pure white light', **Sri Viswanatha Swami**. **Sri K. Natesan** is there greeting one and all with his welcoming smile. One can see his face lighting up with fresh brightness on any mention of Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni or Bhagavan's care in copying or correcting manuscripts. One cannot but notice the regular attendance of **Sampoornammal** at the time of *pujas*. **Lucy Cornelissen** is there to give expert advice in her own gentle way on 'Hunting the I'. **Sri Sadhu Om**, a scholar, poet, composer and teacher expounding or teaching or singing one of his own beautiful songs on Arunachala and Ramana. **Sri Kunju Swami** with his photographic memory, who came to Sri Bhagavan while He was in Skandasramam, is a mine of information, ever ready to help pilgrims on the 'Ramana' path.



"What we call Grace is only His love for us. We cannot but be grateful for all blessings He showers on us."

—Ramaswamy Pillai

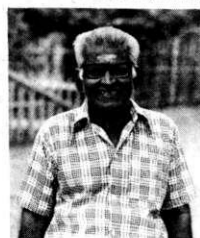


The entrance to 'our Home'.



"Here—each stone, each grass, each place is full of Ramana."

—N. Balarama Reddiar



"To have been born in the age when Maharshi lived is a great blessing. To read, write and recite His works is meditation."

—K. Natesan



Lucy Cornelissen



Sri Bhagavan knows what is best for us. He alone is our sole refuge."

—Jagdish Swami



"He wanted to teach us the lesson that in spirituality the human being comes first and that compassion is the supreme law"

—Sampoornammal



"Our Master's Shrine is vibrant with His compassion and Grace. Let everyone go round it, stay near it, worship it and imbibe His Peace."

—Kunju Swami



'Old Hall, the Shrines and Pali Thirtam'.



'Sense of Space'.

As one sees the 500-year old 'Illupa' tree, coconut groves, spacious gardens and the cool tank—*Pali Tirtham*, one is struck by the sense of space—harmony of man and nature into which all the buildings, including the shrines of Ramaneswara Mahalingam and Matrubhooteswara merge, making an impression and integral whole, which seems to be, like the vast temple complex to the East, a natural offspring of Arunachala Hill, the physical embodiment of Siva Himself.

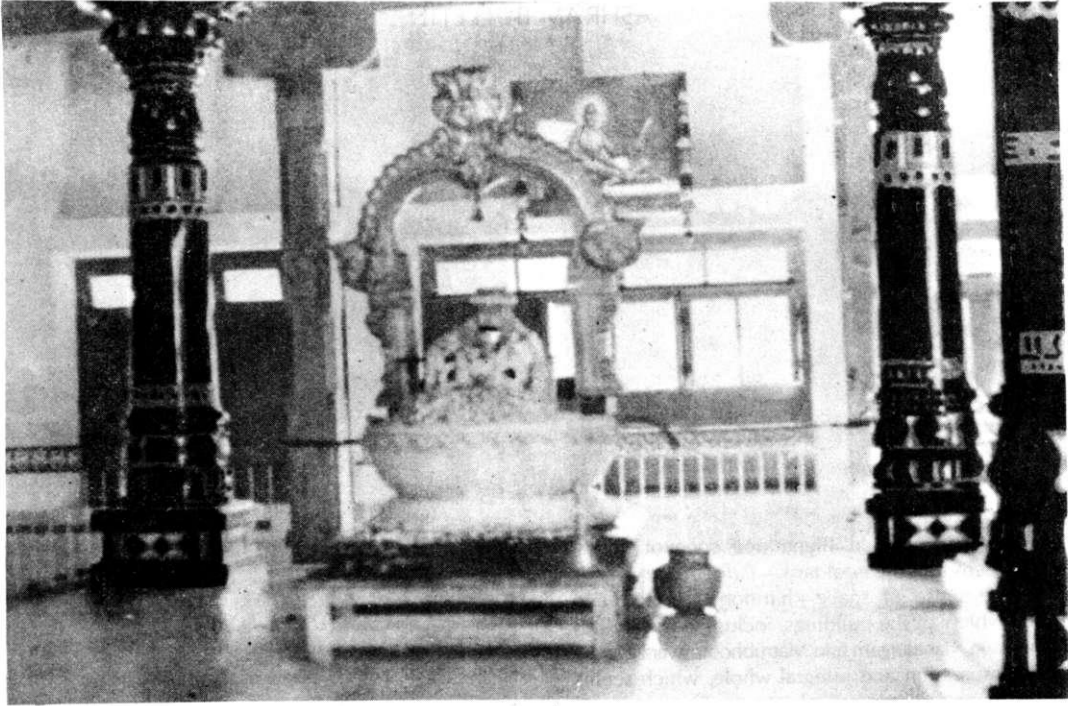
When Bhagavan was in the body, the daily schedule for the devotees was to gather in the hall for meditation in His presence at 4 a.m. in the morning for about an hour-and-a-half till Bhagavan left for His bath. Again at 8.30 a.m. and in the afternoon from 2 p.m. the hall would be packed with devotees and Sri Bhagavan would be answering genuine questions put by earnest seekers. In the evenings at 5 p.m. the *Veda Parayana* would begin and the students of the *Veda Patashala* (Veda School) would chant the *Upanishads* and *Upadesa Saram*.



'Harmony of man and nature'.

'Arunachala casts its protection'



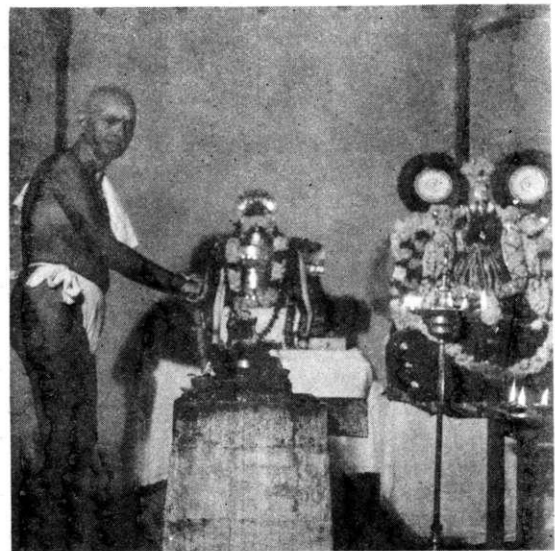


'The focal point for all—Sri Bhagavan's Shrine'.

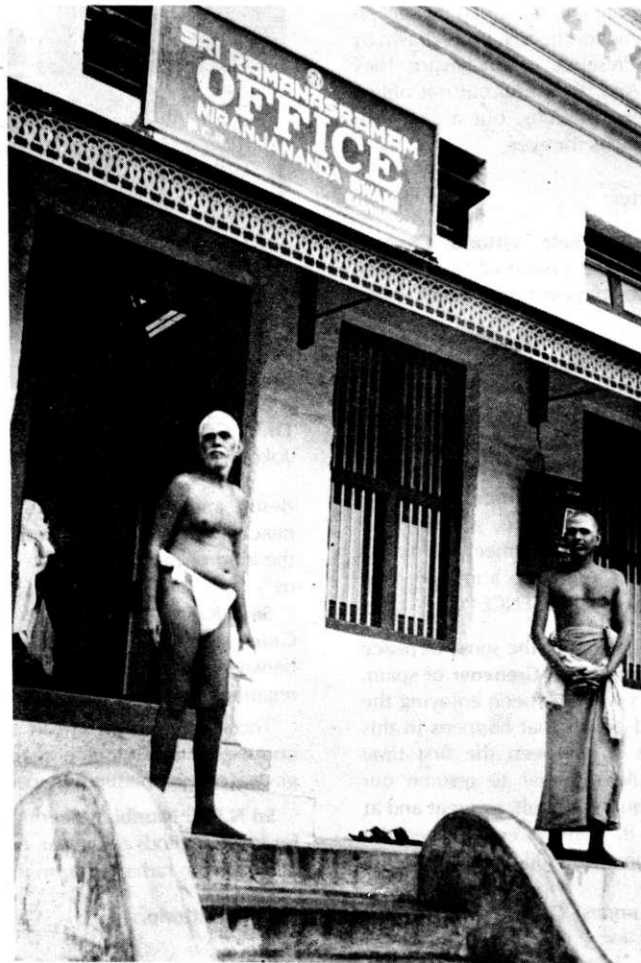
Now, the great white shrine of Bhagavan is the focal point for all. The first *puja* in the morning is at 6.30 when the milk offering is made. Here, every morning and in the evening, Bhagavan's *Upadesa Saram* and the *Upanishads* are chanted by the students of the Vedic School (*Veda Patashala*) run by the Ashram. Ganapathi Muni's *Forty Verses in Praise of Sri Ramana* is also chanted by them. After the chanting, there is a regular *puja* in which at devotees' requests, either 1008 names of the Maharshi or 108 names of the Maharshi, are recited (*Sahasranamam* or *Ashtothram*). The *Puja* in Bhagavan's shrine is followed by the *puja* in Matrubhooteswara temple. The special features of worship in Matrubhooteswara temple is the *Sri Chakra Puja* which takes place on Fridays, the full-moon days and the first day of each month, according to the Hindu Calendar. It is open to anyone to offer a special *puja* on request. One recalls that Bhagavan Himself sanctified practice of doing *Sri Chakra Puja* by placing His own hands on the *Sri Chakra Meru*.

The *Puja* is performed by people who are not only well-versed in the rituals but are totally devoted to Sri Bhagavan. The overall guide is **Sastri Mama**, rich with experience and full of love for everyone. The daily *puja* is performed by either **Apichi** or **Kittu**, assisted by **Chandrasekhar**.

Sri Bhagavan at the Matrubhooteswara Shrine.



Sastri Mama



*A unique picture—Bhagavan in front of the Ashram Office.
Sri Niranjanananda Swami in all humility and devotion.*

The administration of the Ashram has always been in efficient hands from Skandashram days. The first Manager was **Sri Vasudeva Sastry**, who was followed by **Sri Dandapani Swami**. From 1930, the overall charge was with Bhagavan's younger brother **Sri Niranjanananda Swami** the *Sarvadhikari*. The growth of the Ashram was in no small measure due to his tireless work and concern for the devotees. He would never do anything which Bhagavan would not approve, even remotely. On his passing away in 1953, the management has been in the competent hands of his son **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, who is at present the President of the Board of Trustees. The phenomenal growth of the Ashram and the facilities it now provides are attributable to his deep faith in Sri Bhagavan. He knows every old devotee and many of the new devotees very well and this contributes greatly to the atmosphere of friendliness and hospitality of the Ashram.



"I feel I am a humble servant in His service."

— T.N. Venkataraman

As when a flower is in full bloom, bees are naturally drawn to it, even so does Sri Ramanasramam draw seekers from far and near. Some come for the first time, drawn by the mysterious magnetic Presence of Bhagavan. They come in search of Peace. And, they find out not only a Peace that surpasses all expectations, but a spiritual home and haven which is theirs for ever.

From **Fleurier** came this letter:

"**Gaston, Therese, Francois, Michele, Vittorio, Chantal, Jacky**: the seven of us from the *Centre of Fleurier* (see our July '81 p. 179) spent seven days at Sri Ramanasramam.

"The Ashram looked very familiar—it was a 'homecoming'! It was also a great discovery: the might of the Big Hall with Maharshi's Shrine, the intensity of the meditation hall and of the *Nirvana Room*, the kind reception in the dining hall, the Presence of Arunachala, which we experienced when walking round the mountain. Meeting with people—**N. Balarama Reddiar, Lucy Cornelissen, Ganesan**—all considered it a privilege to meet us, although we thought it was our own privilege to meet them. All showed us both great respect and deep attention. And everywhere, within all, Ramana's PRESENCE!"

Different expressions are given, but the sense of peace and homeliness are the same. **Dr. V. Grenzner** of Spain, says: ".... During ten days we have been enjoying the concentration of peace and power that happens in this Holy Place. For two of us it has been the first time coming here and we should say that to resume our experience in a few lines is quite difficult, so great and at the same time so simple is it. Here we experienced the sensation that we are at 'home'. It is like walking in the

The Fleurier devotees in all smiles: **Gaston, Therese, Francois, Michele, Vittorio, Chantal, Jacky.**



Dr.V. Grenzner, with two friends, enjoying a 'Ramana Joke' with our Managing Editor!

desert and reaching at the end, the fresh oasis where peace and rest are. We should also thank everybody, for the kind respect and simple way of doing everything for us".

Sri M.K. Kamat; drawn recently into the net of Bhagavan's Grace spent a month at the Ashram, dividing his time between *sadhana* and *satsangh*—listening to old devotees regaling him with their 'Ramana experience'.

Those who come afresh and those who have been coming, naturally come again and again. Old devotees grasp at every opportunity to spend time at Sri Ramanasramam.

Sri N.B.K. Nambiar, nearing seventy years of age, stays for longer periods each year, quietly imbibing the Presence of Bhagavan radiating from the Ashram.

To sit in the Meditation Hall is Grace and tapas.

— M.K. Kamat



Sri Bhagavan fills the Ashram with His Presence—you are simply devoured!

— N.B.K. Nambiar





"Arunachala is Ramana.
We all belong to Aruna-
chala-Ramana."

—Prof. N.R. Krishnamoorthy Aiyer

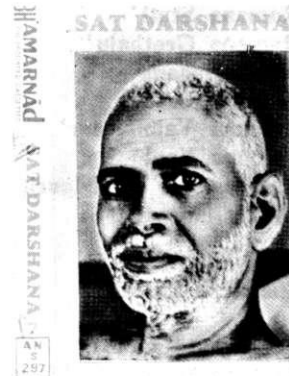
Professor N.R. Krishnamoorthy Aiyer; though 86 years old and physically fragile, is ever alert and vigorous while talking of Bhagavan and the time spent with Him. He insisted on spending a week at the Ashram itself even though his son stays at Tiruvannamalai. He did not wish to put even the short distance to Tiruvannamalai between himself and the Ashram!

KARTHIGAI DEEPAM

Karthigai Deepam festival is one of the biggest in India. Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims throng to Arunachala for this festival, chanting 'Annamalaikku Arohara' (Hail Arunachala), and going round the Holy Hill. On the tenth day, Deepam Day, it is a rare sight to see people occupying the entire length of the eight-mile road during *giripradakshina*. At the Ashram, as usual, a cauldron was lit on Dec. 9 in front of a beautiful portrait of Sri Bhagavan, while old devotees sang 'Arunachala Siva'. The Ashram guest houses were overflowing with hundreds of pilgrims, the maximum devotees coming from Andhra Pradesh. Special mention should be made of **Sri Lakshmana Swami** of Gudur, along with his devotees and **Sri M.R. Nageswara Rao** of Gudivada, who came with a large number of devotees—most of them coming to the Ashram for the first time. **Rajkumari Prabhavathi Raje Rani Padmavati Devi** of Khairagarh, **Smt. Savitri Cuttaree** of Mauritius, **Sandra, Margo** of "Arunachala Ashrama", New York and American Consul General **Mr Christopher L. Sholes** and his family came specially to take part in this holy celebration.

TWO PRECIOUS CASSETTES

Hear
the immortal Words
of RAMANA!
(Sanskrit-English)
Cassette.



This rich musical fare
is now yours
as a Cassette!



Karthigai Deepam at the Ashram: **Narasimha Iyer, Subramania Swami, Ramaswamy Pillai, K. Natesan, Kunju Swami, Smt. & Sri Sudarsanam, Swami Satyananda, Vadivudayar Swami, Venkatasubramania Iyer, Managing Editor, Sivananda Swami, Sri Padmavathi Devi, Rani of Khairagarh, The Wisdom Light!**



*Has Ramana Music entered your home?
Have you bought the following L.Ps and Cassettes?*

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|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. 'Ramana Vaibhavam' | ... (Tamil-Sanskrit) |
| 2. 'Ramana Bhajans' | ... (Hindi-Sanskrit) |
| 3. 'Ramana Geethalu' | ... (Telugu) |
| 4. 'Ramana Vani' | ... (Kannada) |

CASSETTES:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. 'Ramananjali' | ... (Tamil-Sanskrit) |
| 2. 'Ramana Amudam' | ... (Tamil) |
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| 6. 'Ramana Geethalu' | ... (Telugu) |
| 7. 'Sat Darshana' | ... (Sanskrit, with English commentary) |
| 8. 'Ramana Vaibhavam' | ... (Tamil-Sanskrit) |
| 9. 'Ramana Vani' | ... (Kannada) |
| 10. 'Ramananjali' in Mauritius' | ... (Multi-lingual) |
| 11. 'Ulladu Narpadu' | ... (Tamil, with commentary) |

AWAIT RELEASE:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 12. 'Bhagavan Ramana' | ... (A talk by Swami Chinmayananda) |
| 13. 'Bhagavan Ramana' | ... (A talk by Dada J.P. Vaswani) |
| 14. 'Ramana Music' by Maharajapuram Santhanam & Party | ... (Carnatic classical) |
| 15. 'Jai Jai Ramana Maharshi Mahan' | ... (Hindi) |
| 16. 'Ramana Dvani' | ... (Kannada) |
| 17. 'Ramana Geetham' | ... (Tamil) |
| 18. 'Ramana Ganamulu' | ... (Telugu) |
| 19. 'Voice of Ramana' | ... (English) |
| 20. 'Skanda Ramana' | ... (Sanskrit) |

Available at :

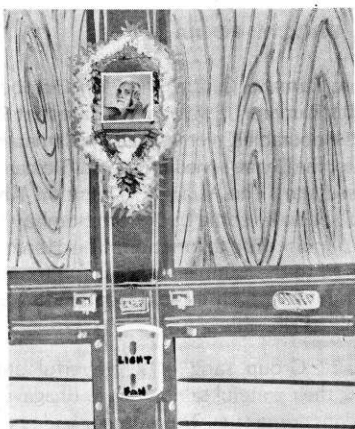
- (a) INDIA BOOK HOUSE, Bombay - 400 039
 (b) SRI RAMANASRAMAM BOOK DEPOT,
 Tiruvannamalai-606 603
 (c) RAMANA MAHARSHI CENTRE FOR LEARNING
 Bangalore - 560 003

*'Chug Chug Chug' went the train from Hyderabad to Bangalore,
'Chug Chug Chug' all the way and every day.*

"RAMANANJALI" IN ANDHRA PRADESH
(Hyderabad and Warangal)
Portraiture by Kumari SARADA

(Editor: RAMANA)

Editor: "RAMANA"

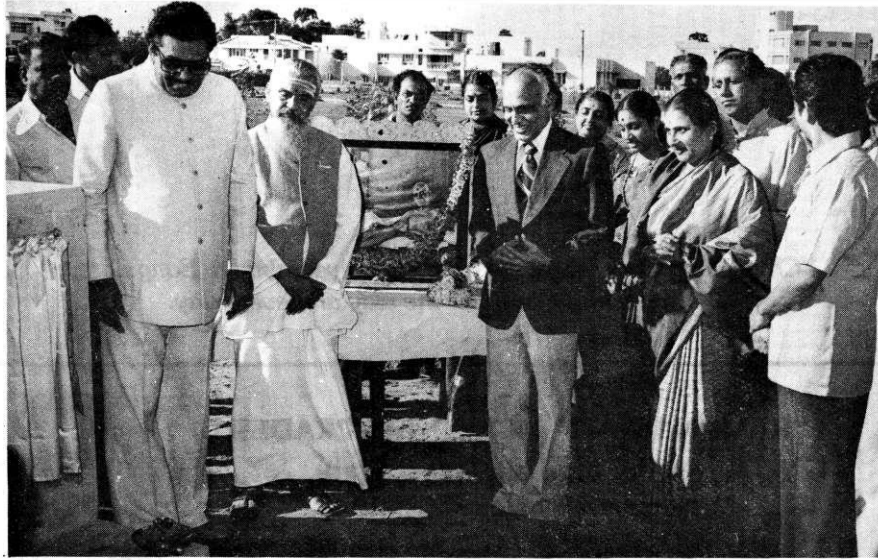


But on the 29th of November, there was something special about the train. One little compartment was all aglow and the train sang 'Chug Chug Chug' Ramana Ramana 'Chug Chug'. So, at least, it seemed to the '**Ramananjali**' group as they returned after singing Bhagavan's glory at Warangal (one concert) and Hyderabad (three concerts), after moving with many Ramana devotees for five happy days. Their compartment seemed aglow with Bhagavan's picture smiling from the midst of a lovely garland. And they sang and repeated their Master's name as they reminisced on their wonderful tour.

"It was really very kind of Swami Ranganathanandaji to specially speak about '**Ramananjali**' in such glowing terms at the end of our performance at the Ramakrishna Ashram."



'Ramananjali' at Vivekananda Auditorium, Ramakrishna Ashrama, Hyderabad recipient of glowing tributes from Swami Ranganathananda.



'Home' of Bhagavan at Bangalore: Bhoomi Puja and Foundation laying ceremony. (1 to r) **Sri R. Gundu Rao**, Chief Minister of Karnataka, **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, Ashram President, **Sri A.R. Natarajan**, President, Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, **Kumari Sarada**, **Smt. Sulochana Natarajan**, **H.K. Narayana** and our Managing Editor.

BHOOMI POOJA

"And saying that the very purpose of building the auditorium and shrine was being fulfilled by having programmes like the '**Ramananjali**' there!"

"With what warmth, what regard he spoke about Bhagavan and how he had spent three days at Sri Ramanasramam in His presence."

"Wasn't it really thrilling; the performance, Swamiji's kind tributes and blessings, the eager response of all those who came?"

So they talked, excitedly and joyously, in that little glowing compartment of the train. And in their joy, they would suddenly sing '*Ramana Ramana Bola Bola*' and the train sang '*Chug Chug Ramana Ramana Chug Chug*'.

"The performance at Thyagaraja Gana Sabha was great, No?"

"Fantastic".

"One of our best performance".

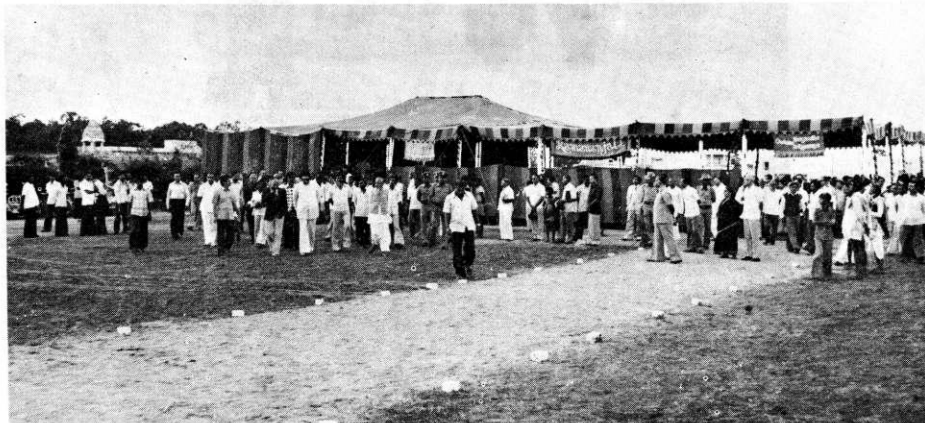
"Someone sang '*Emi Labhamu*' and '*Annamalayani*' with tears in her eyes. What, *Amma*?" teased Ambika, the baby of the team, with affectionate pride.

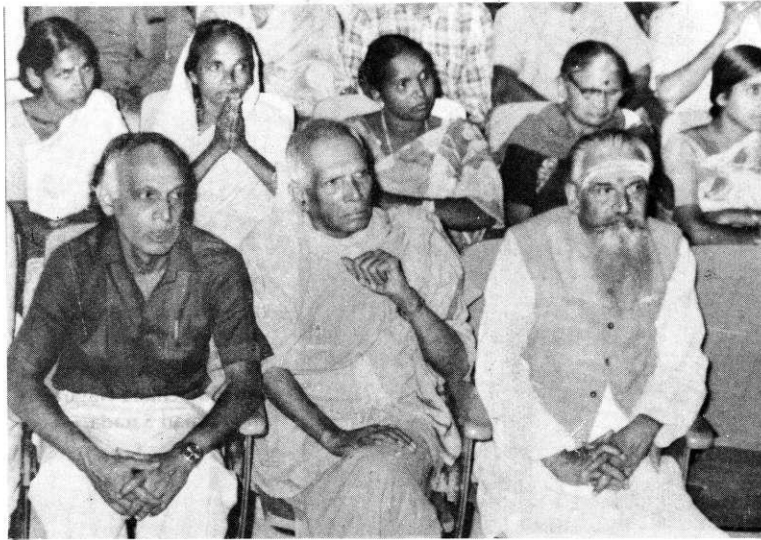
For the Bangalore *Ramana Centre*, the 29th October, 1981 is The date with Ramana. It was on this date that **Sri R. Gundu Rao**, the Honourable Chief Minister of Karnataka laid the foundation for the Centre's Meditation Hall/Research Library, on a 'blessed site'. The Asram President **Sri T.N. Venkataraman**, had specially come back from Bombay to participate in the *Bhoomi Pooja* function. The Hon'ble Chief Minister referred to the 'simple and most profound' teachings of Sri Bhagavan which he said 'required to be propagated as widely as possible'.

The "**Ramanahjali**" Group sang in a prayerful and happy mood offering their grateful salutations to Bhagavan for making their dream come true. The weather had been bad on the previous two days and there was every possibility of rain, but Bhagavan extended His protection, and nature too was fully co-operative. All could enjoy this rare privilege of participation in the sacred function.

The land will be a true '*home*' at Bangalore for the Ramana Family. The Centre proposes to have a garden Ashram-cum-Research Library, in tune with the surrounding landscape.

Site for the 'garden Ashram' for Bhagavan at Bangalore—an auspicious beginning, indeed!





Sri Swami Ranganathananda listening to 'Ramana Music' with interest **Sri A.R. Natarajan** is to his right and **Sri T.N. Venkataraman** to him left.

"I don't know, some songs just seem to take you over completely, they are so thrilling—Bhagavan's words..."

"Rajeswara Rao really enlivened the programme with his enthusiasm. The audience are automatically drawn into the gusto with which he sings. He has set the Telugu 'Upadesa Saram' very well, which was specially introduced in the programme."

"Everyone was in superb form that evening."

"But the happiest part was the manner in which the people responded! proposing three encores!"

"And joining in the 'Ramana Namavali' so vociferously and joyously ..."

"Really one of our best performances"

"You still haven't got us sweets" claimed in Indrakumar, complaining happily.

"Here you are, distribute these sweets which Ramana-devotees have brought for us. Bhagavan is a *kalpataru*, whatever you wish will be granted."

"Tum Hamare Kalpataruuu! Ramanaya Namaha Ramanaya Namaha Ramanaya Namaha burst forth in song."

"At such short notice, the AIR, Hyderabad, came and recorded our programme"

"In full—the entire two and a half hours."

'Ramananjali' members in front of Ramana Bhakta Mandal, Hyderabad



Sri Narasimham: dynamic worker in Ramana-cause.



1. 'You are our *Kalpataru*' (wish-fulfilling tree).

A section of the vast audience lost in raptures in listening to the 'Ramana Music'.



Sri N. Sriramamurthy (President, Tyagaraha Gana Sabha) helping the Minister for Cultural Affairs, Andhra Pradesh, **Sri Pattam Sriramamoorthy** (middle) to hand over te memento to **Sri A.R. Natarajan**. All Praise for 'Ramananjali'!





Portrait of Bhagavan blessing the 'Ramananjali' concert (l to r) H.K. Narayana, Kumari Ambika, Smt. Sulochana Natarajan and Kumari Sarada.

"Wonderful performance, isn't it thrilling?"

"The Kannada Natya Sanga performance was worthwhile just for the manner in which H.K. Narayana sang 'Pal Pal Chintan' put in **Ganesan Anna**.

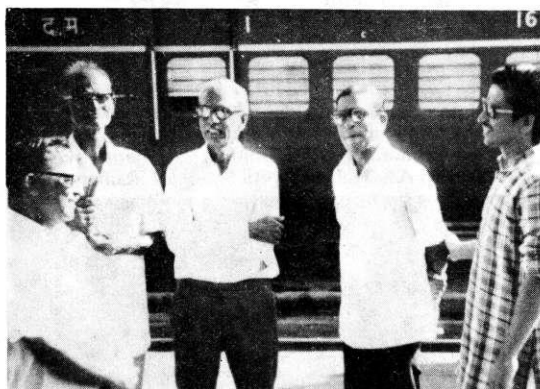
"Tell me which performance wasn't good — from the first at the Vamsee Arts, Warangal, till the last at the Ramakrishna Ashram—the trip has been wonderful!" "On the first day, at Warangal, I thought the hall would be half-empty. But it was overflowing. Even at the Tyagaraja Gana Sabha".

"Really Bhagavan's Grace! Such wonderful response! There was so much demand for the Ramana Music Cassettes also, that we ran out of stock."

"What about the wonderful finale—the meeting of hearts?"

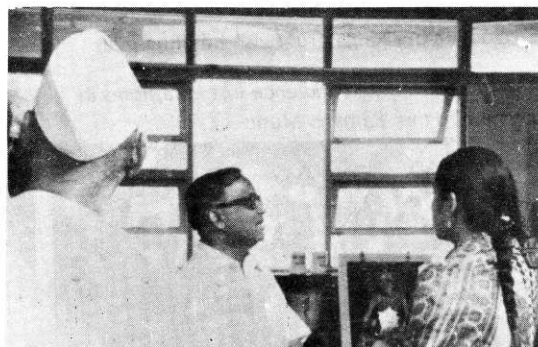
"It was a 'sangamam' of **Sri Ramanasramam**, of our **Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning** and the Hyderabad **Ramana Kendram** and **Ramana Bhakta Mandali**".

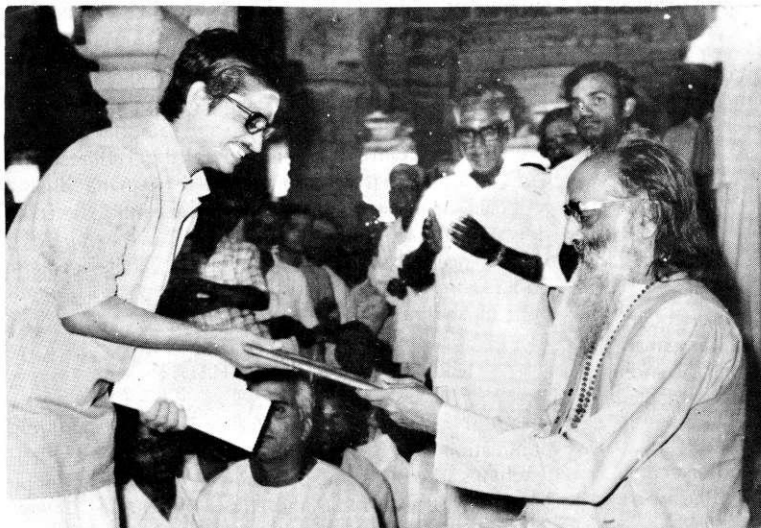
A joyous send-off! Dr. K. Subrahmaniam, Sri G.V. Rajeswara Rao (President), Sri P. Mohan Rao (Secretary) together with our Managing Editor.



What makes me really happy is that in this trip the 'Ramana Family' has not only grown in numbers but has also grown closer. The links between the members of the 'Ramana Family' at Hyderabad and Bangalore have been firmly forged. Spending five days together sharing our Ramana experience, listening to **Sir Shiv Mohan Lal** and **Sri Mahipatram Dave** relate, with tears in their eyes, anecdotes of Bhagavan's glory and compassion, and participating together in the 'Ramananjali' programme and in the meetings of **Ramana Kendram** and **Ramana Bhakta Mandali**, has drawn us closer, with eager joy they continued to sing and talk about these marvellous five days, interrupting one another in their excitement. They talked on, they played the 'Ramana Ramana' game till night and they dropped into sweet slumber to the tune of the train singing, 'Ramana Ramana Chug Chug, Ramana Ramana Chug Chug'. In the darkness the lovely garland of red and white and green swayed with the rocking of the train, as from its midst Bhagavan smiled.

Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad: (l to r) Shiv Mohan Lal received a portrait of Sri Bhagavan, presented to the Kendram, from the Ashram President. Dr. K. Subrahmaniam and Kumari Sarada admiring the Bhagavan's portrait.





Sri Swami Chinmayananda receiving Ashram publication from our Managing Editor.

"SRI RAMANA IS AN EXPERIENCE"

Sri Swami Chinmayananda pays glowing tributes to Bhagavan

"Sri Ramana is not a theme for discussion; he is an experience; he is a state of Consciousness. Sri Ramana is the highest Reality and the cream of all scriptures in the world, the *Bible*, the *Koran* or the *Upanishads*", said **Sri Swami Chinmayananda** while giving a talk on "Bhagavan Ramana" at Tiruvanaikovil on December 20, under the auspices of Chinmaya Mission, Trichy.

He added: "He was there for the ideal society to see how a Master can live in perfect detachment from the equipments—though living in the mortal form but living as the integrity, beauty and purity of the Infinite. Such a mighty Master was Sri Ramana."

Sri Swami Chinmayananda, who was conducting the *Geeta Gnana Yagna* in Trichy, came to Tiruvanaikovil to deliver this special talk. Our *Managing Editor*, **Sri V. Ganesan**, who presided over the meeting, presented sixty Ashram publications on and by Sri Bhagavan and many photos of His, to the Chinmaya Mission, which were formally handed over to Sri Swamiji.

In his presidential address, Sri Ganesan observed: "One becomes aware of the limitations of language when talking about Bhagavan. Being a pure channel for the Divine Power, He defies all traditional classifications such as saint, seer and mystic. He was all this, yet something much more, too."

After elaborating the human aspect of Bhagavan in its perfection, he summed up His teachings thus: "Total attention is focussed, as never before, on the nature of

the ego and the way to ensure its subsidence by the enquiry 'Who am I?' or 'Whence am I?' All thoughts are based on the 'I'—thought which sprout from the Source. The only sure way of dissolving the ego is to question it, for it cannot stand the search-light of enquiry about its identity. This search for it leads one to the Source, whence it arises, and this is nothing else than one's own Self, the Reality."

The Chinmaya Mission in Trichy, which started its activities only in September 1979, has already gained a great reputation, thanks to the dynamic leadership of **Sri Subha Chaitanya** and the patronage of **Sri Deepak C. Shah** (Secretary-General of the Mission).

Sri Subhaji brought the Mission members for the spiritual retreat to the Ashram twice during this period. Classes on '*Upadesa Saram*' and '*Sat Darshana*' have been conducted there by **Sri Swami Dayananda**, **Sri Harinamananda**, **Sri Subha Chaitanya** and other scholarly Brahmacharis of the Mission. The Mission fittingly celebrated the Birth Centenary of Sri Bhagavan by arranging through their 'Yuva Kendra' members an A.I.R. programme on Bhagavan, entitled: "The Call of Arunachala", which was highly appreciated. One of the issues of their monthly, "Chinmayam" was totally dedicated to Sri Bhagavan.

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RAMANA KENDRA, DELHI

Shri K.K.Nambiar, Chairman and **Shri. B. Ananthaswami**, Vice-Chairman of Madras Kendra spoke at the weekly satsangs during their visit to the Kendra in September. At the other meetings, Professor **K. Swaminathan** and **Shri K.C. Subbiah** spoke on *Gita Sara*.

On October 8, Delhi Tiruppugazh Anbargal celebrated the Vijaya Dasami at the Kendra auditorium. The

Tiruppugazh classes on Sunday mornings are held regularly and are well attended.

Swami Bhoomananda Tirtha of Narayanasrama Tapovanam, Trichur gave a series of five inspiring discourses in English on Kathopanishad from October 28.

Sri. K. Senthippan of Madras gave discourses in Tamil on Periya Puranam on October 20, November 15 and 16. On the last day, **Dr. K. Arumugham** of Delhi University also spoke on the greatness of Periya Puranam and the light it throws on the spiritual path.

On December 9, Kartika Deepam festival was celebrated with the usual enthusiasm. The entire Kendra was gaily lit with innumerable candles. Devotees went round the shrine singing *Arunachala Siva* in chorus. Prasadam was distributed at the close of the function.

* * *

Sri Lakshmana Swami is an old devotee who first came to the Ashram in 1949 and stayed until Bhagavan's death the following year. During the past few years, a small Ashram has grown up around him near Gudur in Andhra Pradesh. Lakshmana lives a reclusive life, preferring to remain in solitude for most of the day, and the only occasions when he leaves his Ashram are when he makes his annual or biannual pilgrimages to Arunachala. This year he has been twice, and his second visit coincided with the Deepam festival. During his stay he presided over two meditation sessions each day, a morning one in his room and an evening one on the lower slopes of Arunachala. Both sessions proved to be extremely popular, particularly with the foreign visitors, most of whom attended at least one of the sessions each day.

MAHAMANTRA YAGNA

The Andhrashram in Ramana Nagar near is a gathering place for many Telugu devotees who come to visit Sri Ramanasramam. On the 9th December, the last day of the Deepam festival, the Andhra Pradesh Sri Ramana Bhakta Mandal celebrated a 'Nenu' (the Telugu word for 'I') Mahamantra Yagna there in the presence of a large

number of Telugu devotees. Sri Nageswara Rao has given us the following account.

"Sri Ramana Bhagavan preached the pre-eminence of 'Nenu' (I) as a *mahamantra*. He emphasised the uniqueness of this *mantra* as God's first name and said that it existed even prior to 'Om'. In a ceremony at the Andhrashram, Tiruvannamalai, the Andhra Pradesh Ramana Bhakta Mandal had this *mantra* incorporated on all the assembled devotees' books. Starting with a Sri Ramana *puja*, the *yagna* proceeded with the consecration of all the devotees' books. The occasion was attended by devotees from all parts of Andhra Pradesh."

THE RELEASE OF 'ARUNACHALA RAMANA'

In our last issue we announced the forthcoming publication of a new monthly on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings. The first issue, published in Andhra Pradesh by **Sri M.R. Nageswara Rao** and edited by **Sri M.N. Baboo**, was brought to the Ashram during the Deepam festival and released to the public in a brief ceremony in front of Bhagavan's *samadhi*. A copy of the first issue was placed on Bhagavan's *Samadhi* and then the publisher **Sri Nageswara Rao** presented the first copies to **Sri V. Ganesan** the Managing Editor of *The Mountain Path* and to **Sri David Godman**, one of the editors.

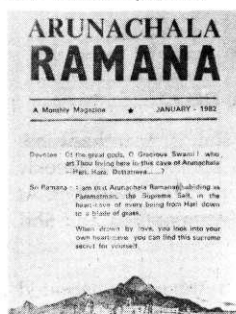
The first issue contains a number of interesting items; there is an interview with **Prof. T.M.P. Mahadevan** on the subject of Bhagavan's teaching, some previously translated reminiscences of **Akilandamma**, a lady who used to feed Bhagavan regularly during His Virupaksha days, several previously unpublished anecdotes about Bhagavan and an old article by **Maurice Frydman** on Bhagavan's teachings.

Readers of *The Mountain Path* who would like to subscribe to this new journal should write to: "the Manager, 'Arunachala Ramana' Gudivada 521 301, Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh."

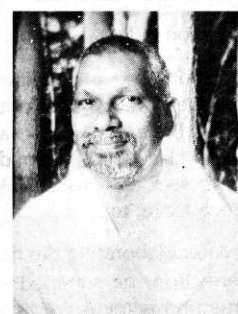
The annual subscription in India is Rs. 15 and abroad £4 or \$8.

Sri M.R. Nageswara Rao presenting copies of 'Arunachala Ramana' to our Managing Editor, **Sri David Godman** is in the middle.

The Cover Page of the new Ramana-journal.



Sri Lakshmana Swami





RAMANA KENDRA, MADRAS: More than forty devotees from Ramana Kendra, Madras, had a 'spiritual retreat' at the Ashram. Old devotees, particularly **Sri Kunju Swami**, thrilled them with their company and by narrating 'Ramana Stories' to them.

SRI RAMANA KENDRAM, HYDERABAD

The Kendram at Hyderabad has started to produce a small monthly brochure containing brief articles on Bhagavan's teachings and previously unpublished reminiscences of old devotees. The brochures entitled Sri Ramana Jyoti, are in the form of a typed cyclostyled manuscript and the last two month's issues have been six and eight

pages respectively. Recent issues have contained articles on Bhagavan's teachings on suffering and surrender along with long biographical reminiscences of two old devotees, **Prof. Shiv Mohan Lal** and **Sri Mahapatra Dave**.

Devotees who would like to receive this brochure should write to *Managing Editor, "Sri Ramana Jyoti", Kathiawar Agencies, Tilak Road, Hyderabad 500 001.* (The annual subscription is Rs. 6/- per year.)

OBITUARY

M. ANANTANARAYANAN

We regret to report the passing away on November 18, 1981 of **Mr. M. Anantanarayanan, I.C.S. (Retd.)**, former Chief Justice of Madras. A keen scholar and accomplished writer equally at home in English and Tamil, Mr. Anantanarayanan was popular among Sri Bhagavan's devotees as an earnest and competent exponent of His teachings. His free English rendering of *Upadesa Saram*, with an elaborate commentary, was published by the Asramam. An ardent admirer of **Sri Muruganar**, he took every opportunity of speaking and writing about his poems. To **Sri Sadhu Om** he was a source of great encouragement in editing "Sri Ramana jnana Bodham" and in bringing out an English version of the Tamil work, "The Path of Sri Ramana".

SMT. RANJINI DWARAKNATH REDDY

We are sorry to record the death of **Smt. Ranjini**, devout wife of **Sri V. Dwaraknath Reddy** of Chittoor, on October 14. An excellent host to many a visiting guest



Smt. Ranjini Dwaraknath Reddy

and a loving mother to two daughters and a son, she will be remembered by all for her simplicity. Her devotion to Sri Bhagavan was not exuberant but deep. Her passing away is a great loss. We pray that **Smt. Ranjini** is absorbed at the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan.

SMT. SARADAMBAL

Smt. Saradambal, wife of the old astrologer-devotee, Sri A.V. Sarma, popularly known as '**Sasiri Mama**', was in



Smt. Saradambal

her own right a great devotee of Sri Bhagavan. She passed away peacefully on Nov, 20, at the ripe old age of 76 years. It is significant to note that her last expression was: "I have absolutely no thoughts or desires. I see within me the holy feet of Sri Bhagavan as He is reclining on the sofa in the old Hall. Sri Bhagavan fills my entire being!" She was well versed in Sri Bhagavan's original Tamil works. She was an example for an ideal womanhood, entirely dedicated to her husband. Visitors to the Ashram will miss this pious lady.



SRI RAJU CHETTIAR

Sri Raju Chettiar was one among the few who, in the thirties, built houses in front of the Ashram, which came to be called as 'Ramana Nagar'. He was a jeweller and his entire family is devoted to Sri Bhagavan. He passed away suddenly on Dec. 11 due to heart failure. We convey our condolences to his family members and friends.

THE RAMANA MAHARSHI ESSAY COMPETITION

The Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning, Bangalore, is sponsoring an Essay Competition and is offering **Rs. 1,000** as a **first prize**, **Rs. 500** as a **second prize**, and up to **five consolation prizes** of **Rs. 200** each.

The rules of the competition are as follows:

1. The submitted essay should consist of a discussion on, or an analysis of, any aspect of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings. We are also prepared to accept entries consisting of a comparative study of the teachings of Sri Ramana and the teachings of any other major spiritual figure or religious tradition. In either case, the judges will be looking for essays which show a deep understanding of Sri Ramana's basic message, or which give new insights into the fundamental tenets of his teachings.
2. All essays must be typed in English and must reach the judges by **31st December, 1981**.
3. Essays must be between 3,000 and 3,500 words in length, and they should be submitted to the following address:

**The Ramana Maharshi Essay Competition,
The Ramana Maharshi Centre For Learning,
40/41, First Floor, II Cross Road,
Lower Palace Orchards,
Bangalore 560 003.**

4. The sources of all quotations used must be given in full either in the text itself or as footnotes. In all cases, the title of the work, the edition and the page number must be given.
5. The results of the competition will be published in the April 1982 issue of *The Mountain Path*, and at least two of the prize-winning essays will be printed in the same issue. The editors of *The Mountain Path* have undertaken to publish all the submitted essays which they deem to be worthy of publication whether they win prizes or not.