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ARADHANA ISSUE 1994



# THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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

— The Marital Garland of Letters, verse 1

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## Cover Story

(Tiruchuzhi: Glory of the  
Eddy)

Anticipating punishment at home for a mischief playfully performed, young Ramana runs into the temple of Bhuminatheswara and takes shelter behind the beautiful, gracious and all-protective Mother Sahayavalli. The priest who comes in to perform *puja* finds hidden the one who later is to found a new pathless path in *Jnana marga*.

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— Editor.

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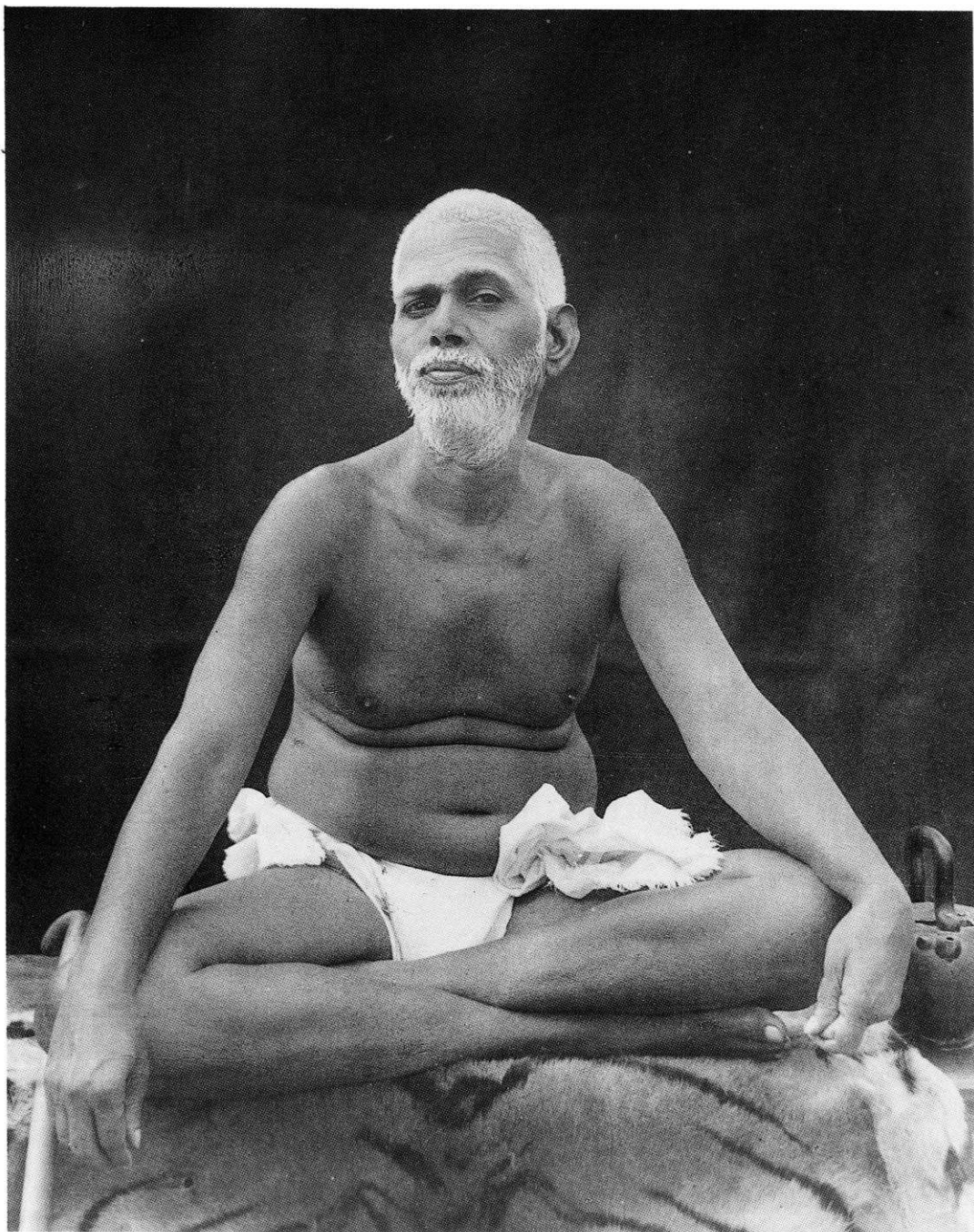
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### THE MOUNTAIN PATH

is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi

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ARADHANA ISSUE

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## EDITORIAL

### *Much to-do about nothing*

**“W**HAT is *karma*?” Nasruddin was asked by a scholar.

“An endless succession of intertwined events,” replied the incomparable Mulla, “each influencing the other.”

“That is hardly a satisfactory answer,” expostulated the scholar. “I believe in cause and effect.”

“Very well,” said Nasruddin, “look at that.” He pointed to a procession passing in the street.

“That man is being taken to be hanged. Is that because someone gave him a silver piece and enabled him to buy the knife with which he committed the murder; or because someone saw him do it; or because nobody stopped him?”<sup>1</sup>

And there lies the rub. The whole fabric of *karma* is easily more complex than the innards of the most sophisticated computer. Whether one traces the design, weave or fibre, tug at any one thread and the entire material shifts. What to do? Or not to do?

Fortunately, one needn't be a wizard of digital technology to tackle the question. This simple human birth, so rare of obtainment, and the

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The above beautiful sketch of Sri Bhagavan was drawn by JANE ADAMS, specially for this issue.

<sup>1</sup> The Nasruddin anecdotes excerpted with apologies from *The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasruddin* by Idries Shah, copyright 1966 by Mulla Nasruddin Enterprises Ltd., Picador, 1973.

aspiration for freedom, an even rarer gift of grace, are qualification enough.

When Arjuna, the mighty warrior and master of the bow, lost heart on the battlefield moments before the start of an epic war, his charioteer Krishna said:

"Not by abstention from work does a man attain freedom from action; nor by mere renunciation does he attain to his perfection. (III : 4).

"For no one can remain even for a moment without doing work; every one is made to act helplessly by the impulses born of nature. (III : 5)

"Do thou thy allotted work, for action is better than inaction; even the maintenance of thy physical life cannot be effected without action. (III : 8)

"But the man whose delight is in the Self alone, who is content with the Self, who is satisfied with the Self, for him there exists no work that needs to be done. (III : 17)

"Similarly, in this world he has no interest whatever to gain by the actions that he has done and none to be gained by the actions that he has not done. He does not depend on all these beings for any interest of his. (III : 18)

"Therefore, without attachment, perform always the work that has to be done, for man attains to the highest by doing work without attachment. (III : 19)

"There is not for me, O Partha [Arjuna], any work in the three worlds which has to be done nor anything to be obtained which has not been obtained; yet I am engaged in work. (III : 22)

"Resigning all thy works to Me, with thy consciousness fixed in the Self, being free from desire and egoism, fight, delivered from thy fever." (III : 30)<sup>2</sup>

Thus, here the secret, which is no secret, is laid bare. God Himself, embodied in the wise

and gentle form of Krishna, does not take up arms in the field of *dharma*; yet, as a non-combatant driver, He instructs Arjuna in the supreme knowledge and this song, *The Bhagavad Gita*, within its compass of 700 explicit and profound verses, remains the user-friendly manual *par excellence*, the do-it-yourself seeker's guide to "Know Thyself".

When the poet Muruganar was writing about a Tamil legend and came to the point in the story where Shiva instructs a group of *rishis*, he turned to Sri Ramana Maharshi — Shiva incarnate — to write it for him. Bhagavan obliged with 30 verses, *Upadesa Saram*, the essence of instruction. Like a lofty mountain peak rising high above the clouds, the first three verses straight away catch the eye, deftly defining an eternal conundrum and pointing to the ultimate goal:

"Action — *karma* — bears fruit in action, for so the Creator ordains. But is it God? It cannot be, for it is not sentient.

"The results of action pass away, and yet leave seeds that cast the agent into an ocean of action. Action, therefore, does not bring Liberation.

"But acts performed without any attachment, in the spirit of service to God, cleanse the mind and point the way to Liberation."<sup>3</sup>

By whichever way we travel, the long or the short, by this religion or that, *sadhana*, *tapas*, or *tyaga*, *karma* is in and of the cosmic order of things. Water, by nature's law, finds its own level; all rivers needs must flow and mingle with the ocean; and it is our *karma*, sinner and *bodhisattva* alike, to be free. And we are also free to complain or rejoice.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bhagavadgita*, tr. S. Radhakrishnan, George Allen & Unwin, 2nd edition, 1967.

Bhagavan once selected 42 verses from the 700 which comprise the complete *Gita*, and arranged them in order for the guidance of devotees. Verses III : 17 and III : 18 are v. 38 & 39 of that selection.

<sup>3</sup> *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, ed. Arthur Osborne, Rider, 1959, page 84.



Nasruddin saw a man sitting disconsolately at the wayside, and asked what ailed him.

"There is nothing of interest in life, brother," said the man. "I have sufficient capital not to have to work, and I am on this trip only in order to seek something more interesting than the life I have at home. So far I haven't found it."

Without another word, Nasruddin seized the traveller's knapsack and made off down the road with it, running like a hare. Since he knew the area, he was able to out-distance him.

The road curved, and Nasruddin cut across several loops, with the result that he was soon back on the road ahead of the man whom he had robbed. He put the bag by the side of the road and waited in concealment for the other to catch up.

Presently the miserable traveller appeared, following the tortuous road, more unhappy than ever because of his loss. As soon as he saw his property lying there, he ran towards it, shouting with joy.

"That's one way of producing happiness," said Nasruddin.

There are, if one is of a technical bent of mind, three kinds of *karma*:

1. *Sanchita karma*: the store of *karmic* debts accumulated from previous births, that will later bear fruit.
2. *Prarabdha karma*: that part of one's *sanchita karma* which has already begun to bear fruit and must be worked out in the present life.
3. *Agami karma*: *karma* freshly accrued in the present birth and which is carried forward into future lives.

Breathing life into this abstract framework, Bhagavan pointed out the essential principle that "so long as the feeling 'I am doing' is there, one must experience the result of one's acts, whether they are good or bad. How is it possible to wipe out one act with another? When the feeling that 'I am doing' is lost, nothing affects a man. Unless

one realises the Self, the feeling 'I am doing' will never vanish. For one who realises the Self, where is the need for *tapas*? Owing to the force of *prarabdha* life goes on, but he does not wish for anything.

"*Prarabdha* is of three categories: *ichha*, *anichha*, and *parechha* [personally desired, without desire, and due to others' desire]," Bhagavan further explained. "For him who has realised his Self, there is no *ichha-prarabdha*. The two others, *anichha* and *parechha* remain. Whatever he does is for others only. If there are things to be done by him for others, he does them but the results do not affect him. Whatever be the actions that such people do, there is no *punya* [merit] and no *papa* [sin] attached to them. They do only what is proper according to the accepted standard of the world — nothing else."<sup>4</sup>

Having assimilated these fundamental accounting axioms, with the keys to maintaining a balanced ledger well in hand, brisk transactions towards a profitable liberation may be confidently undertaken. Firstly, beware *agami karma*; never touch it, even with a pole of any length. Secondly, treat both *sanchita* and *prarabdha karmas* as two forks of the same ophidian tongue, separated only by the jaws of birth and death. And thirdly, most important of all, despite all our puny pride, offer everything to the Divine.

Flights of fancy notwithstanding, the gravity of *karma* often seems inescapable.

In June 1918, C.V. Subbramania Aiyer of Chittor climbed up the Hill to Skandashram. He made notes of his meeting with Ramana Maharshi:

"A man may have performed many *karmas* in his previous births," said Bhagavan. "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 projec-

<sup>4</sup> *Letters From Sri Ramanasramam*, by Suri Nagamma, tr. D.S. Sastri, Vol. 1 & 2, pub. Sri Ramanasramam, 1973, page 65.

tionist 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 [then] there will be no reflection and no *samsara*."<sup>5</sup>

"Who is the projectionist?" asked Paul Brunton on a much later occasion. "What is the mechanism which selects a small portion of the *sanchita karma* and then decides that it shall be experienced as *prarabdha karma*?"

The Maharshi replied, "Individuals have to suffer their *karmas* but *Iswara* manages to make the best of their *karmas* for his purpose. God manipulates the fruits of *karma* but he does not add or take away from it. The subconscious of man is a warehouse of good and bad *karma*. *Iswara* chooses from this warehouse what he sees will best suit the spiritual evolution of each man at the time, whether pleasant or painful. Thus there is nothing arbitrary."<sup>6</sup>

Just so.

Nasruddin's wife ran to his room when she heard a tremendous thump.

"Nothing to worry about," said the Mulla, "it was only my cloak which fell to the ground."

"What, and made a noise like that?"

"Yes," said Nasruddin, "I was inside it at the time."

And here, of course, is the nub of the matter — the much pleased, much reviled body. Is it possible to overcome, even while the body exists, the *prarabdha karma* which is said to last till the end of the body?

"Yes," said the Maharshi. "If the agent upon whom the *karma* depends, namely the ego, which has come into existence between the body and the Self, merges in its source and loses its form, how can the *karma* which depends upon it survive? When there is no 'I' there is no *karma*."<sup>7</sup>

As the serendipitous Nasruddin discovered to his relief:

Seeing a white shape in the garden in the half-light, Nasruddin asked his wife to hand him his bow and arrows. He hit the object, went out to see what it was, and came back almost in a state of collapse.

"That was a narrow shave," he reported. "Just think. If I had been in that shirt of mine hanging there to dry, I would have been killed. It was shot right through the heart."

The shock of epiphanic insights in the midst of everyday life focusses our attention on the fulcrum of the *karmic* mechanism; on the one hand, the heart; on the other, the mind, the senses, the instruments of action, and the whole manifestation of objects and events. Pinpointed by the precise coordinates of *viveka* and *vairagya* — discrimination and dispassion — here lies the freedom to surrender to one's true and eternal nature.

The outwardly directed mind leads to *karma*, the familiar and thorny fetters of thoughts and problems, the endless cycle of birth and death, where even the conception that there is a release from suffering is an endangered species, often drowned in the ocean of *samsara*. Those who know have told us, not nearly often enough, that reality and peace lie in another direction. Ramana Maharshi signposted the map, whatever our individual doubts and confusions, that we may experience the journey and the goal which, in fact, lie at the root of every human desire. As in *Guru Vachaka Kovai*,<sup>8</sup> the *Garland of Guru's Sayings*:

*Karma and maya both alike  
Spring from, cling to and grow with*

<sup>5</sup> "Quotations from the Maharshi" by C.V. Subbramania Aiyer, *The Mountain Path*, January 1982, page 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Be As You Are*, ed. David Godman, Penguin, 1992, page 211.

<sup>7</sup> *Spiritual Instruction of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi*, by Sri Natanananda, revised translation, 1974, pub. Sri Ramanasramam, page 21.

<sup>8</sup> *The Garland of Guru's Sayings: Guru Vachaka Kovai*, tr. Prof. K. Swaminathan, from the Tamil of Sri Muruganar, pub. Sri Ramanasramam, 1990.



Ego, the first impurity.  
When ego dies, the other two  
Can by no means survive. (v.733)

The essential meaning of *Karma yoga*  
Is true Self-knowledge through the quest  
"Who is this 'I', this doer who starts  
Doing *karma*?" Unless one seeks  
And so destroys the doer-ego,  
The source of action, one cannot reach  
The end of action, perfect peace. (v.703)

He who has found the truth about  
The doer-ego, he alone  
Has once for all worked out entirely  
Every *karma* ever enjoined.  
Than this supremely blissful peace,  
What finer fruit is there to gain  
From daily ritual or hard penance? (v.704)

Except the path of Self-enquiry,  
Probing the mysterious I-sense,  
No other effort, such as *karma*,  
However strenuously pursued,  
Can take one to the fount of Bliss,  
The treasure shining in the Heart  
For ever as the Self. (v.885)

Is there anything more to say? As in the still  
silent presence of the Master, where the unmis-  
takable fullness of action in inaction is directly

experienced, harmonious and complete in itself,  
the slightest congealment of thought disintegrat-  
ing effortlessly in the vast blissfulness of pure  
space, we clearly observe that action simply  
happens. The Guru's grace-full glance, exquisite  
and infinitely subtle, instantly dissolves the dross  
of *karma*, and *sadhana* is as easy as turning to  
the cool south wind in the searing heat of a  
scorching summer. Why would anybody leave  
the shade of the wish-fulfilling tree?

Someone saw Nasruddin searching for some-  
thing on the ground. "What have you lost,  
Mulla?" he asked. "My key," said the Mulla. So  
they both went down on their knees and looked  
for it.

After a time the other man asked, "Where  
exactly did you drop it?"

"In my house."

"Then why are you looking here?"

"There's more light here."

In this way — looking where we will but not  
where we should — we lose ourselves and  
become slaves of a fruitless hunt. Turning within,  
we find the key that unlocks our heart, exactly  
where we left it: at home, in the Heart of our  
Self.







## *Devikalottara Jnanachara Vichara Padalam*

**Rendered into Tamil by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**Translated by T.K. Jayaraman from the Tamil preface  
by Srimathi Kanakammal**

**O**UR ANCIENT scriptures consisting of the Vedas and the Agamas have the one purpose of guiding man to Truth. The Upanishads, which are considered the quintessence of the Vedas, deal with the pure Advaitic Principle, the One Universal Complete Wholeness.

The Agamas, on the other hand, deal with *Saguna Brahman*, the All-pervading Reality which is also conceptualised and idolized for purposes of easy worship and comprehension. They describe in detail how the various idols representing the different aspects of Godhead are to be made, how they should be consecrated in order to be worshipped, the method and form of worship, explaining the rituals to be observed, and so on. They also prescribe the way the temples which house the idols are to be constructed, how the temple towers are to be built, how they should be consecrated [on performing *Kumbhabhisheka* — sacred ablution with holy waters], for different deities. They also furnish architectural details regarding the wells and tanks to be dug and constructed in or adjoining temples. Our temples have been constructed following one or the other of our Agama Sastras pertaining to the particular deity installed in each of them. The method of worship also follows one of these Agamas. Only in a few rare cases, the worship [*pūja*] is based on Vedic tenets. Even here, the temple construction and so on are in accordance with the Agama Sastras.

Some of the Agamas have been elaborated into *upa-agamas* [or sub-agamas]. One such *upa-agama* is this *Devikalottaram*. When

Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi was in the Virupaksha Cave of the Arunachala Hill, a devotee brought some palm-leaf manuscripts of an Agama in Sanskrit in *grantha* script. Bhagavan, while going through them, was surprised to find in them two *upa-agamas*, (1) *Devikalottara Jnanachara Vichara Padalam* and (2) *Sarva Jnanottara Atma Sakshatkara Prakaranam*, instructing pure Advaita, in consonance with His own experience. For, normally Agamas deal with methods of performing worship to deities, the conduct prescribed for devotees, etc. Here both the *upa-agamas* deal with the Infinite Formless Brahman in a very lucid manner.

One of them is in the form of *Upadesa* [instruction] to Devi, and the other to Lord Muruga, by Isvara.

Bhagavan noted down both of them in a small notebook in Devanagari [Sanskrit] script in a beautiful hand. Later on, while staying in Virupaksha Cave, He translated the 85 *slokas* [verses] of *Sri Devikalottara* into Tamil in verse form [as *venbas*], each verse in Tamil corresponding to one in Sanskrit. Some devotees had them published even then.

\* \* \*

There is another version of the genesis of *Devikalottaram* in the Telugu biography *Ramana Leela*, written by Krishna Bhikshu, a translation of which is given hereunder:

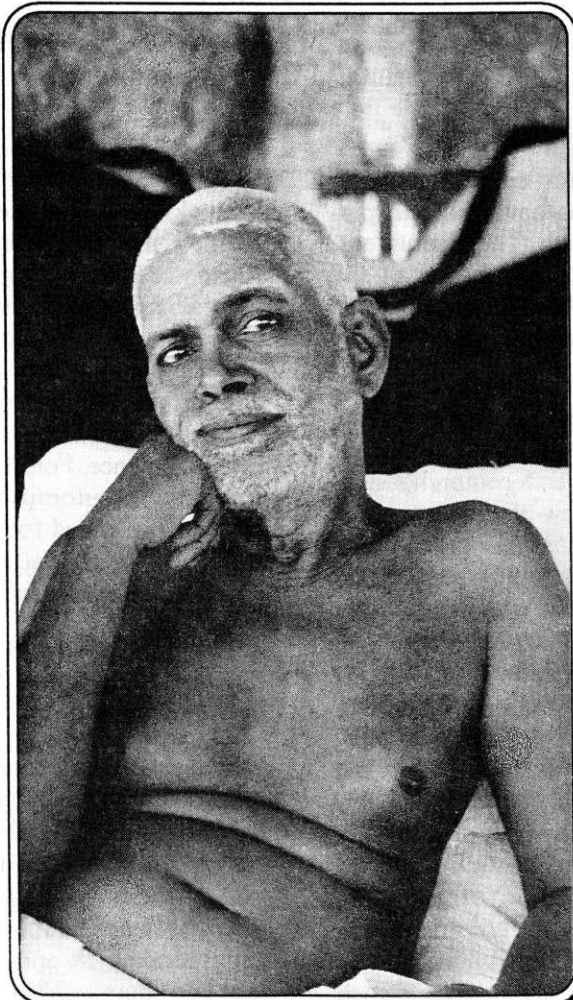
It is interesting to learn how Bhagavan hap-

pened to translate this particular work *Devikalottara* into Tamil. One Thanjavur Kuppuswami Raja was intent on collecting those Agamas which lay stress on Advaita, and entrusted the job to his friend Yagnarama Dikshitar. The latter visited various places and collected some of them. He informed Bhagavan about his work during one of his visits.

Meanwhile, Arunachaleswara Temple purohit Chinnaswami Gurukkal's son, Ramalingam, had earlier brought some palm-leaf manuscripts from a relative of his at Vriddachalam and shown them to Bhagavan. They included this Agama also which was purely Advaitic in character. Bhagavan was reminded of it. He informed Dikshitar, who thereupon collected them, showed them to Bhagavan and started copying some portions. Bhagavan also noted down one padalam [which was *Devikalottara*]. However it was mislaid somewhere.

Much later, when Bhagavan set out to write in Tamil *venba* form some verses, the slokas of *Devikalottara* which He had once noted down came to His mind one by one in sequential order.

He translated them into Tamil as beautiful *venbas*. Bhagavan wrote this work without having the original before Him and depending purely on memory. Thus appeared this lovely translation of *Devikalottara* in Tamil.



After several years, when Bhagavan started staying near Mother Alagammal's *samadhi*, the book, *Ramana Nool Thirattu* [a collection of Sri Ramana's writings], was published. After the *Devikalottara* work was again gone through by Bhagavan, it was included in it.

This work is of special significance, for Bhagavan translated this work on His own without anyone else's persuasion or request, which was very rare. It indicates the greatness attached to this work by Bhagavan Himself. Apart from this, Bhagavan's own introductory remarks to this work give ample testimony to its exemplary merit. He says that it shows the direct path to the highest state of bliss.

This *Jnanachara Vichara Padalam* is the 65th Canto, consisting of 85 verses in the Sri *Devikalottara* containing 2400 verses.

\* \* \*



## DEVIKALOTTARA JNANACHARA VICHARA PADALAM

or

### A STUDY OF THE EXPOSITION OF SUPREME WISDOM AND CONDUCT TO GODDESS ISWARI BY LORD SIVA

Tamil translation rendered by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in verse form,  
translated into English by T.K. Jayaraman.

#### Introduction by Sri Maharshi

This work is one of the *upa-agamas* and explains the supreme wisdom to be attained by mature souls and their mode of life, expounded by the Supreme Lord Siva to Devi Parvati. It is the essence of all *Agama Sastras* on matters of spiritual knowledge. This is verily the boat which can rescue the mortals struggling hard, sinking and rising, in the sorrowful ocean of *samsara* of endless cycles of births and deaths and take them by the direct path to the shore of liberation. Let all earnest seekers after Truth, instead of groping in the dark, bewildered, and losing their way, adopt the help of this straight path and reach the supreme state of bliss and peace.

#### Invocation

*Meditate in the heart upon Lord Ganesa — the silent, non-dual, universal witness — who is the nectar of divine bliss and is full of grace, shining as the bountiful flowering of aspirants following the path of spiritual wisdom revealed in Devikalottara, which was expounded by Lord Isvara into the ears of Goddess Iswari.*

Note : In the original Tamil verse, the word 'kari' means 'elephant', which denotes Lord Ganesa as per tradition, but the word 'kari' also means 'witness', which denotes the Universal Self in line with Advaitic experience.

*Devi :*

1. O Lord of all celestial beings! I yearn to know that path of supreme wisdom and the code of conduct by adopting which one can get liberation, so that all humanity may attain salvation. I request you to enlighten me on them, out of your grace.

*Isvara:*

2. O Queen among women! So that everyone may attain knowledge, I shall clearly explain to you today the highest knowledge and the discipline to be followed by which discerning seekers will attain liberation, which is free from any blemish and is difficult to describe.
3. O Lady with fair countenance! Understand that one who is not able to realise the Truth in his heart by this knowledge of

spiritual wisdom known as *Kala Jnana*, can never attain it even by studying countless crores of *sastras* [scriptures] spread out like the sky.

4. Therefore cast aside all fears [on following this path] and shed all doubts. Giving up attachment or desire for anything, be ardent in seeking the ultimate knowledge with whole-hearted devotion and with a clear mind [without any trace of confusion].
5. Claiming nothing as 'mine', filled with compassion, giving protection to all living beings so that no creature fears you, yearning for liberation, absorbed in yoga [union of *jiva* and *Para*, fusion of individual self with the universal Self], study this work *Devikalottara* and follow wholeheartedly and steadfastly the single path shown therein.

- 6 — 7. If one is to describe the person who can bring under control his mind, which is restless and turbulent like a whirlwind, and maintain it in a tranquil state, he is verily Brahma [the God that does the creation], Siva [the saviour who shows the path to salvation] and Vishnu [the sustainer of the world]; he is Indra, King of the *devas*, and Lord Subrahmanya [chief commander of all the celestial forces]; he is Brihaspati, the *guru* of all *devas*; he is a supreme Yogi, and one who has achieved the result of performing all austerities; he is a great scholar [who has mastered all the Vedas and *Sastras*], and an outstanding man; he is one who has achieved the true spiritual goal.
- 8 — 9. The means by which this mind, which is restless and moves about quicker than the wind, can be brought under control, is indeed the means to obtain liberation; it indeed is what is good for those who seek the permanent Reality; it itself is pure consciousness and the state of firmness; moreover, it alone is the righteous duty to be followed by discerning aspirants; it alone is the pilgrimage to holy waters; it alone is charity; it alone is austerities. Know that there is no doubt about this.
10. When the mind moves even a little, that is *samsara* [worldly bondage]; when the mind abides firmly and motionlessly [in the state of Self], that is *mukti* [liberation]. This is certain. Therefore know that the wise man must hold his mind firm by supreme Self-awareness.
11. The happiness attained in this aloneness is the highest, boundless bliss. Which learned person will not revel in that Supreme Reality, in which there is absolutely no action? Tell me.
12. Being rid of the worldly knowledge, the great hero who has acquired pure wisdom, in which there are no sense-objects, and which is all pervading and without any form, will attain immutable *moksha* without fail, even though he may have no desire to attain liberation.
13. The consciousness [*chaitanya*] associated with the aspect 'am' is called *Sakti*. The universe shines by its light. The entire creation is *Sakti*'s *sankalpa* [thought]. The state [of mind] which is completely devoid of all attachment is the pure [wisdom] to be attained.
14. The void which is the infinite and all-encompassing one whole without a second, which is just the effulgence of pure wisdom, which is completely devoid of visible phenomena and which consists of the aspect 'I', is the seed which fructifies as liberation, bestowing salvation by enabling one to unite with the Supreme.
15. Instead of following this direct path, do not ever contemplate even in the least upon *chakras* [located in six *adharas*, centres in the body], *nadis* [subtle nerves that produce the ten divine sounds such as *Pranava*], the deities associated with the lotus seats [in the *adhara chakras*, beginning with *Vinayaka*], the *mantraksharas* [potent sound syllables for the worship of these deities] and the diverse *mandala murtis* [the God-aspects, starting from those controlling the sun, *Surya Mandala*, the moon, *Chandra Mandala*, and fire, *Agni Mandala*].
- Note: Some aspirants indulge in severe austerities and arduous practices, mastering several techniques and incidentally attaining extraordinary supernatural powers as well. All these are to be shunned as they do not lead one to ultimate peace and joy. On the other hand, the path of *Kala Jnana* described here is a direct path to *Mukti*.
16. Those who seek for the everlasting liberation need not endeavour to practise repetition of countless diverse *mantras* [repeating potent scriptural words or texts to gain various ends], and methods of *yoga*

- such as breath-control [*pranayama*], breath retention [*kumbhaka*] and concentration.
17. There is no room for performing *puja* [worship of deities], *namaskaram* [paying homage like prostration], *japa* [incantation], *dhyana* [contemplation] and so on. Hear from me that the highest truth acclaimed in the Vedas, can be known only through *jnana*; hence, there is absolutely no need to know anything outside of one-self.
  18. For those whose minds are constantly expanding, clinging to external objects, factors will always arise causing increasing bondage. If the outward-wandering mind is turned inwards to stay in its natural state, know that one will not undergo any suffering in the world.
  19. Unite with that one totality which is all-pervasive, which has no inside or outside, which is bereft of all [concept of] directions such as above, below and in between, which assumes all the forms in creation and yet is itself formless, which can be known only by itself, and which is self-luminous.
  20. People perform their actions having their own aims in mind, and they accordingly reap the consequences of their actions by attaining those aims. Therefore do not engage in such actions, which are not free from flaws [leading to bondage]. Turn the attention completely away from external objects and concentrate only upon that [the Self] which cannot be seen.
  21. In our natural state, actions, cause and result of such actions, and all the various other theories propounded [in the scriptures] do not exist. In fact, even the diverse world does not exist. As such even the worldly individual who is attached to [the various attractions of] the world is also non-existent.
  22. This entire universe is nothing but the *niralamba* [the reality which exists without any support]. Further, it shines being illumined by the *niralamba*. The *yogi* [with his mind turned inward] merges with this whole one with it by making every object in this world one with it. Know this.
  23. If any person does not meditate on this great all-pervading void, which is the space of consciousness [*chit-akasa*], he will be a *samsari* [a worldly individual] for ever in bondage to worldly attachments, like the silkworm in its self-made cocoon. Understand this.
  24. All living beings, of whatever genus, undergo great misery over and over again. Hear from me. In order to avert all this suffering and sorrow, meditate on the great void constantly without any break.
  25. Good actions and good conduct have been prescribed only to guide the seeker towards the path of acquiring knowledge. Therefore, giving up even *salamba yoga*\* in which an object [such as a *mantra* or a form of God] is meditated upon in the mind, stay steadfast in your real state [*sahaja swarupa*], where the outside world is not perceived.
- Note: Actions prescribed include worship of Siva in one's mind as well as outside. The various ceremonies prescribed in Agama Sastras for worshipping Siva in *saguna* form in a temple are covered in good conduct.
- \**Salamba yoga* literally means yoga with support [*alamba*], that is any spiritual practice in which the mind clings to some object as a support. See also verses 35, 38, 40, 41.
26. One who can destroy all the *tattvas* [principles] from *patalaloka* [the nethermost world] to *Sakti* [one of the highest *tattvas*], which are all interdependent, by the arrow of *sunyabhava* is a man of great valour. He has attained supreme wisdom which is beyond matter.

*Note:* In *sunyabhava* the individual is only aware of his conscious being while everything else is like a void [*sunya*] — without existence.

27. The mind, hankering after things of the world, is more restless than a monkey. If one controls it from wandering after external things and holds it in the void of non-matter one will attain liberation directly.
28. The full consciousness [*purna chit*] which is not other than the true import of the word 'I', being non-different in all the principles [*tattvas*] and being other than the sense 'I am the body', is the all-pervading reality.
29. This complete wholeness pervades inside and outside all creations like ether, merging with them, and is itself formless. Dear, those who are submerged in this supreme bliss become that supreme bliss themselves. See, how wonderful!
30. The expanding mind will attain peace, becoming still of its own accord, if it is deprived of something to hold on, just as fire gets extinguished gradually if not fed with fuel.
31. You must realise that the four states of infatuation, delusion, swoon [due to shock] and dreaming, as also sleeping and waking, are all to be dispelled.
32. If one meditates that the one consciousness [*chit*] is different from the *prana* [life-force], which has subtly attached itself to this gross body, from the mind, from the intellect and from the ego, one will become established in that consciousness.
33. Due to sleep and due to thoughts the mind always loses its sharpness, its foolishness increases, and it goes to ruin. Awakening this mind with effort, and without allowing it to wander, establish it in the state of Self. Persevere in this effort by fixing the mind again and again in its natural state.
34. When once the mind becomes steady, it should not be disturbed in any way. There is no need to think even in the least of anything else, entertaining any doubts. Fixing the mind firmly in that state [of self-awareness], keep it still.
35. Make the mind, which always clings to some support [attaching itself to sense-objects], devoid of all such supports. Making the mind, which is restless in clinging to external supports, motionless, do not disturb that tranquillity even a little.
36. Meditate on the peerless Self which pervades all the various forms, yet remains without any blemish [being unaffected by them], just as ether, pervading all the creations made up of the five elements, remains unsullied at the time of their dissolution.
37. When one adopts the practice [*sadhana*] by means of which one's mind, which is restless like the wind, is made still perpetually, then the purpose of taking birth as a human being is fulfilled. That is also the mark of a true scholar.
38. Do not practise meditation by fixing the mind on the six *adhara chakras*, the ones that are up or down or in the middle, or anywhere else. Giving up all such meditations, make the mind always devoid of any support [either inside or outside].
39. If the mind falls asleep, awaken it. Then if it starts wandering, make it quiet. If you reach the state where there is neither sleep nor movement of mind, stay still in that, the natural [real] state.
40. The state in which the mind is bereft of any support to cling to, ever faultless and pure, and devoid of worldly attachments, is the nature of liberation attained through knowledge. Keep this firmly in mind.
41. Dispelling all attachments completely, and fixing that mind in the heart firmly, persist in your practice always in order to



strengthen the awareness, which then shines forth with great effulgence and clarity.

42. Know that whoever meditates on that supreme void, and becomes established in it by virtue of constant practice, will definitely attain the great state which is beyond birth and death.
43. Gods and goddesses, merits, demerits and their fruits, which are likewise *anya* [other than oneself], objects of attachment and the knowledge of those objects — all these

will lead one to bondage in mighty *samsara*.

44. All objects of attachments are said to be pairs of opposites [happiness and misery, good and bad, profit and loss, victory and defeat, and so on]. When one rises above those pairs of opposites, one realises the Supreme. Such a *yogi* is a *jivanmukta*, liberated from bondage. On discarding the body, he becomes a *videhamukta*.
45. A wise man should not give up the body out of aversion to it. Know that when

### From the "Notebook" of J. Krishnamurti

"Thought feeding upon itself forms the I and me."

\* \* \*

"Thought has a border, produced by every kind of reaction."

\* \* \*

"Symbols were ashes which fed the mind and the mind was barren and thought was born out of this waste."

\* \* \*

"The burning of the known is the action of the unknown."

\* \* \*

"To be empty, completely empty, is not a fearsome thing; it is absolutely essential for the mind to be unoccupied; to be empty, unenforced, for then only it can move into unknown depths. An occupied mind can never penetrate into its own depth, into its own untrodden spaces."

\* \* \*

"The past and the unknown do not meet at any point; they cannot be brought together by any act whatsoever; there is no bridge to cross over nor a path that leads to it. The two have never met and will never meet. The past has to cease for the unknowable — for that immensity — to be."

once the *prarabdha karma* [result of accumulated actions] which was responsible for the creation of the body ceases, the bodily burden will automatically fall off.

46. The consciousness which shines as 'I' in the Heart-lotus is pure [flawless] and perfectly steady [without a trace of movement]. By destroying the ego, which rises [from that consciousness], that consciousness itself bestows the supreme joy of liberation. Be sure about it.
47. With great devotion meditating constantly that "I am that Siva the form of the one consciousness that is always unsullied by any adjunct," dispel all your attachments.
48. Giving up all notions about country, caste, blemishless community, *asrama* [status as a bachelor, family man, ascetic or one who has renounced the world] and associated matters, hold on to and practise always meditation upon the Self, your own natural state.
49. I alone am. No one belongs to me; nor do I belong to anyone else. I can see no one who can call me his; neither can I see anyone who is mine. I am all alone.
50. Know that the person who experiences the firm conviction "I am the Supreme *Brahman*! I am the Master and Lord of the Universe!" is the real *mukta* [one who has attained Liberation], and that the one following conflicting paths is in bondage.
51. The day one is able to see oneself with his inner eye as not the body, all his desires vanish, and he experiences perfect peace.
52. He who is described in the scriptures as the unborn and Lord, I am He, the Atman [self], who is for ever without form or qualities. There is absolutely no doubt about it.
53. I am pure Awareness, immaculate, perfectly liberated; and for ever present everywhere. I am indeterminable. No one can grasp me or leave me. I am free from sorrow. I am always *brahma-mayam* [of the nature of *Brahman*].
54. I am the Self which is consciousness, absolute completeness, deathless and self-established, and which is other than this insentient body limited between the top of the head and the sole of the foot, and which, beginning with the *antahkaranas* [the inner instruments such as mind and intellect], is bounded by the covering of the skin.
55. Thinking, "I am the Lord of all creations, moving or stationary, I remain as father, mother and father's father for the universe", aspirants for *mukti* contemplate with concentration and ardour only upon Me, who am that great *Turiya* state [the substratum of the waking, dream and sleep states].
56. I am the one who is worshipped through sacrifices and penances by all celestial beings beginning with *Brahma* [the Creator], the heavenly damsels who are themselves sought after, humans, *yakshas*, *gandharvas*, *nagas* and other groups of superhuman beings, and also by many others. Know that everyone worships only Me.
57. By many kinds of rare austerities and charities, everyone worships only Me. Know that this vast creation, moving and stationary, and all objects, are nothing but Me, the Infinite One.
58. I am not the gross body, nor am I the subtle body. I am also not the causal body. I am the kinsman of the universe. I am the One who is of the nature of transcendental knowledge. I am moreover the eternal One, the Lord, the taintless One, the One who is devoid of the state [of waking, dream and sleep], the One who is devoid of the universe.

59. The beginningless consciousness is unborn, whole and, residing for ever in its natural home of the Heart-cave, is without form, world or impurity. It is beyond comparison and completely unattached. It cannot be comprehended by the mind nor can it be seen or felt by the senses.
60. Repeatedly see thus: "I am He, the eternal, omnipresent Reality which is *Brahman*." Meditating thus for a long time, whoever abides imperturbably will become the Supreme *Brahman*, thereby attaining immortality.
61. Having thus explained the nature of knowledge to enable everyone to attain liberation, which is always available, I shall now proceed to describe the conduct to be adopted by seekers. Noble Lady, listen to them calmly.
62. O Queen among women! Know that bathing in holy waters, repeating holy names or words [*mantras*], performing daily *homa* [sacred offering in specially prepared fire], worship, other oblations in lustrous fire, or any other means [*sadhana*] to be followed after great study, are never required for him [the earnest aspirant seeking liberation].
63. *Niyamas* [strict rules of conduct such as what to eat, when to eat, how to eat, what to wear, where to sit and so on], worship of deities in sacred places, *nama-archanas* [worship of deities by reciting sacred names], *pitru-karmas* [oblations etc. carried out for the sake of forefathers to help them reach a high state], pilgrimage to holy places which have come forth on earth, and observance of great vows, are all not for him [the earnest aspirant], if considered deeply.
64. He does not reap the fruit of actions, good or bad. Important dates and special observances zealously followed by the world are not for him. Give up all actions and all kinds of worldly codes of conduct.
65. Renounce completely all religious edicts and disciplines. Since all kinds of action result in bondage, give up all action-plans, mental conflicts, and attachment to one's caste-duties.
66. Even if the aspirant acquires many kinds of supernatural powers and magical powers such as visualising what is buried underneath the earth, and can demonstrate them before the world, he should give up mental attachment to them.
67. All these [powers] are only bondages to the individual soul. Further they drag one to follow a low path. The supreme joy of liberation does not lie in any of them, but only in the Infinite Consciousness.
68. One must engage unfailingly in *yoga* [the practice of Self-abidance] in all conditions, without allowing any special event to affect one adversely. If, due to doubts, delusion arises in the form of attraction to worship in holy places and temples [on account of past practices and *vasanas*], reject it immediately.
69. Listen to me, Lady! Know that only the wise man who never does anything which leads to the destruction of any form of life, such as insects, worms, birds or plants, is a person who is seeking true knowledge.
70. He [the true aspirant] should not pull out tender roots [of fragrant plants, which is often done for worship]; he should not even pluck the leaves; he should not harm any living thing out of anger; he should not heartlessly pluck even flowers.
- 71 — 72. He should worship Lord Siva using only flowers that have fallen naturally. He should not indulge in vile practices such as *marana* [causing destruction through the use of certain *mantras*] *uchadana* [driving one out with the force of *mantras*], *vidveshana* [causing mutual hatred between friends], the well-known *sthambana*

- [freezing one's capabilities], causing fever, putting into action evil spirits, causing agitation, wrongly taking control of others, attracting and infatuating others, and so on. Abandon the worship of stones, wooden objects and similar articles.
73. Having relinquished the great *mudras* which are adopted in order to fix the mind on the *devatas* [deities] residing in holy places and temples, and the associated sacrifices, get rid of the *vasanas* also which may have accumulated on account of such practices in the past, and cling only to the Self, the all-pervading real Consciousness.
  74. Maintain a neutral attitude towards all things; do not get infatuated with anything; maintain equanimity whether in happiness or suffering; be the same to friends and enemies; treat alike a broken piece of mud pot and a piece of gold.
  75. Know that a flawless *yogi* is one who does not ever allow himself to be swayed by desire for the pleasures of the senses, who frees himself at heart from *mamakara* [treating things as 'mine'], who has a steadfast mind, who is free from desires and fear, and who always revels in the Self.
  76. Being unaffected by either praise or slander, treating alike all creatures, he should always unfailingly maintain an equality of vision [*sama drishti*], considering all living beings in the world as himself.
  77. Avoid unnecessary arguments and worldly associations. Do not create misunderstanding among others. Do not join religious bodies well versed in many scriptures [*sastras*]. Give up both words of abuse and words of praise.
  78. Gradually and completely get rid of jealousy, slander, pomp, passion, consequent hatred, desire, anger, fear and sorrow.
  79. If a man is free from all the pairs of opposites and always lives in solitude [established in himself alone], he gains perfect wisdom even while in the present body and shines forth with great effulgence. Know this.
  80. Liberation is attained only by knowledge [*jnana*]. By other powers [*siddhis*] such a fruit is unattainable. However, aspirants become enchanted with blemishful worldly enjoyments and thaumaturgic powers [*siddhis*] and go after them with desire.
  81. Know that the pure flawless person will experience that blemishless Lord [the Supreme *Brahman*] and positively attain Liberation whether he gets attended by the supernatural powers or not.
  82. The body is a form constituted of the five elements [earth, water, fire, air and ether]. The one all-pervading Siva is also nicely seated there. Hence the entire universe, right from the indivisible all-pervading *Sivam* [the highest and most abstract *tattva* or principle] to this world, is the form of Sankara.
  - 83 — 84. My dearest, earnest seekers who see the enlightened one and worship him with all the three instruments [mind, speech and body] in unison, offering him with heart-melting love, sweet-smelling sandal paste, fruits, flowers, incense, good water to bathe, clothes and food, will thus attain liberation. Know that those who worship that *jnani* reap the fruit of his righteous deeds and those who slander him reap the result of his sins.
  85. I have revealed the truth about knowledge and the conduct pertaining thereto, as you have asked. This entire path is indeed *Kalottara Jnana* [the knowledge to be revealed at the final stage of maturity]. Tell me, O Lady, if you want to ask anything more.



## Professor K. Swaminathan



We deeply regret to inform our readers that **Professor K. Swaminathan** who had all along been the friend, philosopher and guide to Sri Ramanasramam, has passed away on May 19th, 1994 at his daughter's residence in Madras.

He had been the Chief Editor of *The Mountain Path* for many years, while functioning as Chief Editor of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* project of the Government of India at New Delhi.

*The Mountain Path* conveys its profound condolences to his wife Smt. Visalakshi and three daughters Mrs. Mahalakshmi Suryanandan, Dr. Santa Ramachandran and Dr. Dharma Chatterji and their family members.

He now rests at the Lotus Feet of his chosen Master, Bhagavan Ramana.



A simple gardener, Emmanuel Sorensen met Rabindranath Tagore on the grounds of Dartington Hall in Devonshire, England. The poet was so impressed that he invited Emmanuel to "come to India to teach Silence."

Emmanuel was introduced to Ramana Maharshi by Paul Brunton. Later, Bhagavan referred to him as a *janam-siddha*. On another occasion, in Bhagavan's silent presence, he clearly heard the words: "We are always aware, Sunya." This had a profound effect on him and he took these five words as recognition, initiation, *mantra*, and name.

Sunyata spent nearly half a century in India, the ineffably wise "Fool on the Hill," before moving to California where he was hit by a car and died in August, 1984. He was 94.

Like the unlikely protagonist of Jerzy Kozinski's *Being There*, Sunyata's life was cradled by the miraculous, nurtured by a transcendent destiny, and finally illumined by the Divine. An avowed non-entity, a roster of his acquaintanceship reads like a spiritual *Who's Who* of his time. He abided in a natural silence, and yet his voice reached across the oceans and the generations, to resonate in the hearts of seekers in a contemporary world. While many of his peers were great scholars, writers, speakers, and doers, all he did was simply BE, and in his being continues to refresh us along the way.

— Editor

# Nothing to Teach, Nothing to Sell

SUNYA BABA

## Part I

**S**UNYATA was born Alfred Julius Emmanuel Sorensen on a small isolated Danish farm in 1890. He had a very quiet and solitary childhood that was congenially related to both nature and to his fellow humans.

It was so simple and unconditioned that the first seven years were remembered as pre-ego consciousness. Ego and mind were no trouble, as there were no impositions, no training, no discipline, and no sin-complex. But there was consciousness and even a certain unconscious awareness of wholeness, unity, and living harmonies.

He was educated only up to the eighth grade and he would often joke that he had escaped "headucation":

"Sunya Baba<sup>1</sup> had undergone no examination or intelligence test until he met Sri Ramana Maharshi whose mere presence was a great test of his inner quality and intuition. The *darshan* of Sri Ramana is one of life's richest experiences and amounts to a liberal education in itself."

Emmanuel, whose name means "indwelling God", accepted whatever happened — even enjoyed or endured it — and had no need or urge to seek the company of others. Usually he was a quiet listener and observer, in empathy with the people he met or visited, interested in the happenings around himself. He especially enjoyed biographies, mystic poetry, and novelists such as Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, D.H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, and the plays of Ibsen, Chekhov, and Shakespeare.

At the age of about 11, while at a party with other children, Emmanuel had an experience of dual consciousness:

"We were romping around. Suddenly, in the

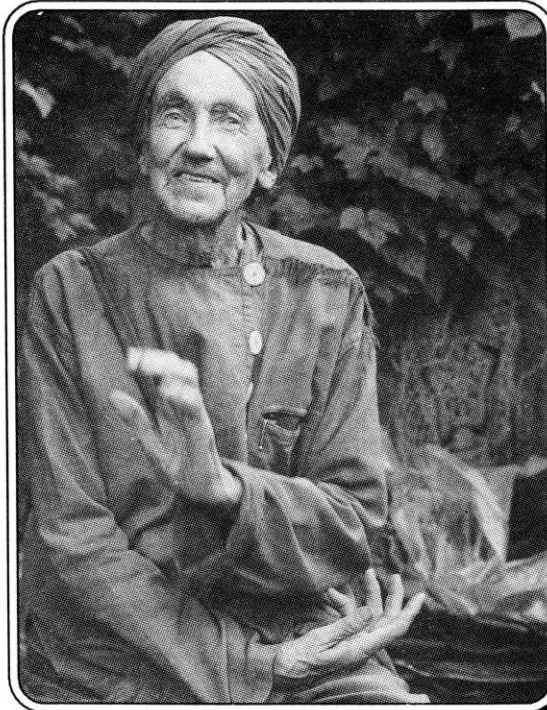
midst of the game, I experienced myself as being also outside it. I continued to play, but was apart from it. What happened was a double consciousness. I saw — subjectively — my body, the other players, and the game progressing, but concurrently I also saw the actors — objectively — as if they were being driven by a force of which they thought themselves masters. I saw them as the egos known by name and form as they thought they were, and also — vibrationally — as they really were. And the thought came to me: 'What are we all doing? We are being used — by what? What is the meaning of it all?'

"Although my 'Soul' was no longer in the game, part of me continued to play and to talk quite ordinarily, though in a queer wistful mood — as if I was on automatic. Soon, one of the boys seemed to notice me psychically. He was a year my junior and I am sure we shared in this see-change. A wordless look and a later question from him made me certain — we were both momentarily 'open' and doubly aware."

When he was 14, the family farm was sold to strangers. He began an apprenticeship in horticulture, which took him to France and Italy, and then in 1911 to England, where he lived for 19 years. Earning his livelihood as a simple gardener — frugally and with poor but sufficient wages — Emmanuel worked five days a week, from six in the morning to six in the evening in such big estates as Forty Hall, Sunbury Court, and Hampton Court, all in glad contentment and joyous ease, happy and harm-free.

Most people would dream of escaping such circumstances and improving their lot, but this was not the case with Emmanuel. There was no

<sup>1</sup> Sunyata usually referred to himself in the third person.



desire for his life to be any different from the way it was. He was simply at ease in all of life's circumstances. There was a complete lack of the usual desires that most of us take as normal. He was like the chameleon able to adapt and fit into situations as varied as the countries he lived in.

In 1929, while he was working in the gardens of Dartington Hall in Devonshire, Rabindranath Tagore, the great Indian poet and Nobel-Prize winner, came to speak at a socialist conference. While strolling in the gardens, he met Emmanuel. The humble gardener played Beethoven's last quartets for Tagore on an old gramophone by the river Dart. By the afternoon's end, Tagore was so impressed with the depth of Emmanuel's silence that he invited him to "come to India to teach silence."

His arrival in India in 1930 — his 40th year — marked a new phase in his life. He remained on the subcontinent for 48 years. In due course, titles like "baba", "saint", and "guru" were thrust upon him, but none seemed true to his being. All he did was simply BE.

"I didn't choose India. India chose me", Sunyata said decades later. "When I went to

Shantiniketan a year later, Tagore had forgotten about this simple fellow.

"There I met Lama Govinda... C.F. Andrews, and many others. Then the heat came — I can't stand the heat, even now — so I went to Darjeeling and spent my first monsoon there. Then I went to Burma for one month. Coming back from Burma, I went to Shantiniketan. There I met two Quakers who gave me letters of introduction to Indian people. I never made any plans. The *Plan* is there and I fit in, with joyous ease and delightful uncertainty!"

Emmanuel had read the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the various *Gitas*, and of the Buddha. He was fairly familiar with Sufi lore, the Greek mysteries, the *Egyptian* and *Tibetan Books of the Dead*, with Theosophy, and other philosophies. So, in India, Sunyata was mainly interested in the simple and mature masters who emanated a natural spirituality — the real and integrally awakened ones.

Emmanuel heard of Ramana Maharshi in Kashmir and Tibet, and then later through Paul Brunton and Dr. W.Y. Evans-Wentz. In 1936, he made the pilgrimage to Arunachala and the



Maharshi, to whom he was introduced by Paul Brunton. Emmanuel had no problems, no disease, no quest, and so he asked no questions.

Ramana asked him his name and nationality, and inquired about mutual friends and his *sadhana*. During his two-week stay at the Ashram, Emmanuel did not ask a single question. Other than his responses to those few initial questions from Ramana, there was no verbal communication between them.

"I can never forget sitting before him. Never before had I *awared* such integral Self-radiance in any human form, such light of Silence. One was being fed just *awaring* him. At the first sight of him, I felt no excitement or even awe, no solemnity or ecstasy, simply a calm recognition, a glad contentment, and gratitude in his *darshan*."

Emmanuel was therefore quite surprised when he later heard from Paul Brunton that Ramana had referred to him as a *janam-siddha* — "a rare-born mystic." He had no idea of what a "mystic" was or what it meant to be one of the "rare-born." In the hope of finding out what it meant, he began to examine his own childhood, to see why he had been able to so easily lose his identification with ego-consciousness. This exploration is the origin of his written reflections, called *Memory*<sup>2</sup> where he describes his state of being:

"Since Sunya's first *darshan*, Ramana Maharshi has been, to him, a consciousness within and around, a natural spirituality, like the mature harmony and *akasha*-purity of Sri Himalaya. It is an awareness of experiencing to be enjoyed, rather than a vision or ego-memory to be asserted, exhibited or explained. *Darshan* is wisdom in identity-experiencing, and our word symbols are but shadows, a descent into duality, and effort is our bondage.

"Ramana Maharshi is the *advaita* experience, whose chief language is radiant Silence, and mature souls familiar with solitude — in and beyond loneliness and trying — can smile calmly in response."

It was during Emmanuel's third visit to

Ramana Maharshi in 1940 that he acquired the name he was to use for the rest of his life. He was sitting quietly in meditation when he *awared* an effulgence especially radiated and directed upon his form:

"Suddenly, out of the pure *akasha* and the living Silence, there sounded upon Sunya:

" 'We are always aware, Sunya.' "

"It was not an answer to any conscious questioning, yet the words were apposite, strikingly confirming and helpful. Sunya had already in the early twenties used such favourite phrases as 'awareness is all' (after Shakespeare's 'ripeness is all'), but to be suddenly reminded and made aware that we are always aware, was a startling truth. The after-hush of that experience seemed to say, 'Why assert, when we are always and eternally aware? Simply be the awareness in Graceful radiance.'

" 'We are always aware!' "

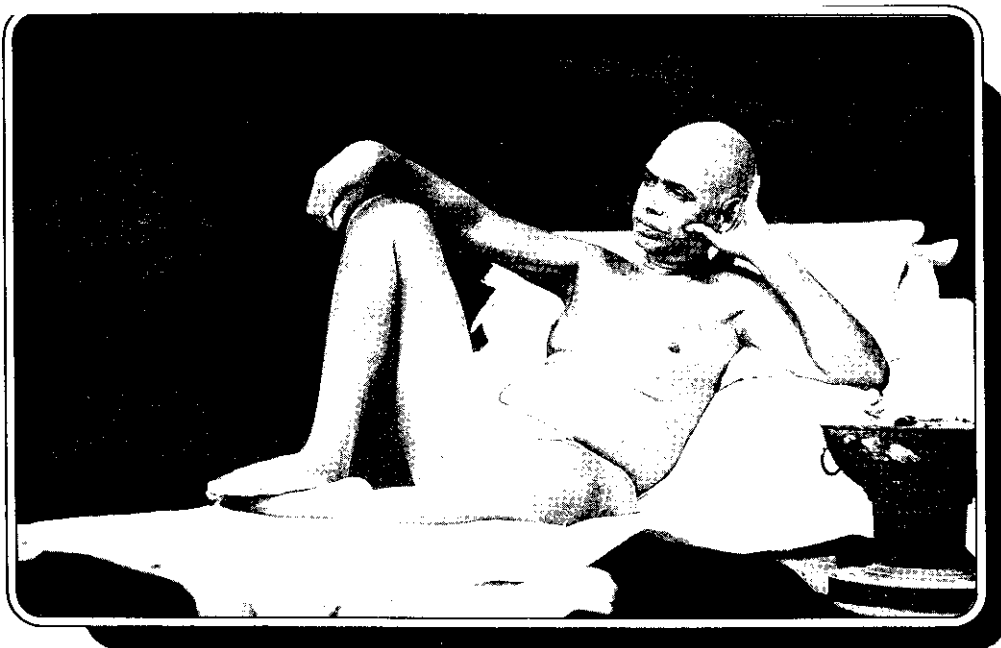
"It resounded in consciousness like a clear chime, a pure note struck in the *akasha*-silence, to linger in the memory as AUM or the I-*mantra*, or as an echo of Sri Arunachala and the inner Dakshinamurti."

Emmanuel also asked himself who was this "we"? Eventually he concluded that "we" meant the indwelling *innerstanding*, the Word, *Logos*.

Another surprise was that Ramana had used the Buddhist term "*sunya*", often translated as "the plenum void." Sunyata took these five totally unsolicited English words as recognition, initiation, *mantra*, and name. Thereafter, he referred both to himself and the hut in which he lived as "Sunyata". He was like a crystal, reflecting many colours yet itself remaining pure, clear, unaffected: no-thing-ness.

"What is, to us, the essential message of Sri Ramana Maharshi? The aim is Self-experiencing or God-awareness. You may call it Truth-

<sup>2</sup> Published in *Sunyata: The Life & Sayings of a Rare-born Mystic*, edited and compiled by Betty Camhi and Elliott Isenberg.



realisation, but you cannot realise (i.e., make real) that which is ever Real, immanent and omnipresent. You, or Christ in you, can awaken integrally, maturely, and abidingly into conscious awareness of Being It. There is nothing to achieve, attain, conquer, or control; nothing to be obtained or possessed; only this mature and abiding awakening into conscious Selfhood.

"The method advocated is to be still — ego-still — to inquire: 'Who am I? What is I? What is the mind-ridden, lustful, and troublesome ego?' Sincerely ask the Silence, the inner Stillness, and you will reach the Source, the Self. You need not control or kill the ego. It will drop away of its own accord. Nothing will be left but the eternal, blissful Self.

"Be still, but do not try to be still. Effort, like ego and reason, that also were helpers, become a hindrance to Self-awareness and to the ineffable experiencing. Simply be still, to reflect purely — Being, Awareness, Grace. Ramana Maharshi always stressed the one essential truth that was necessary for the integral awakening: that there is only one Self, and nothing but the Self.

"We are always nothing but the Self, but associating ourselves with the ignorance of limitation, with an ego, a body, we ignore or forget

the Seer and identify ourselves with the seen. This habit is long-standing. Birth after birth has been imagined, century after century has been fabricated by the mind, which has thus involved itself more and more in ignorance, learned ignorance. From babyhood, we are conditioned to false values and brainwashed into conformity, into desires, ambitions, blinkers, and false identity.

"Many examples are given in Ramana Maharshi's talks and answers to questions, to suit all tastes and mentalities. His presence and our reading of his word-symbols automatically drive us inward to the source. It clarifies our consciousness into conscious, integral Self-awareness and is itself a sufficient *sadhana*. Do not delude yourself. You are already That. There is nothing more to be obtained; only false association and false identity to be shed."

During the years 1936-46, Sunyata was within the bodily radiance of Ramana Maharshi four or five times, for a few weeks at a time. In the following decades, Sunyata continued to live in his Himalayan hut not far from Almora. About this new home, so beautifully situated with vast views of a vaster Silence, he said, "I was contented in Denmark, though I could see that others regarded me as an oddity. In England I felt

freer. In India I felt at home. But in the Himalayas I feel closest to heaven."

During all his years in India, Sunyata was never employed, but found money being thrust upon him. He was once offered Rs.20 a month, but he accepted only five. Then in 1950, the Birla Foundation in New Delhi asked him if he would accept Rs.100 a month. He agreed to accept twenty. "It was more than I needed at the time," he admitted, "but I thought prices might rise." It was later raised to Rs.50, where it remained for more than 20 years. Even after inflation made it hard to live on Rs.50, Sunyata would never consider getting a raise through asking.

The only thing he readily accepted was books — which he always shared. When he read Nisargadatta Maharaj's *I Am That*, he was so impressed by the quality of consciousness in the book that he obtained as many copies as he could in order to give them away.

Living near his modest hut on "Crank's Ridge" were neighbour-friends such as the Tibetan Buddhist scholars Lama Anagarika Govinda and his wife Li Gotami, and Dr. Walter Y. Evans-Wentz. He became personally acquainted with leaders of the Indian independence movement such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Sunyata's circle of friends and acquaintances included Sri Anirvan, Yashoda Ma and her successor Krishna Prem (the British-born

Richard Nixon), Miguel Serrano, Indira Gandhi, and many many others. He also came to know J. Krishnamurti, Anandamayi Ma, Neem Karoli Baba, and other realised beings.

Gradually, Sunyata's life fell into a pattern of sorts, if only a seasonal one; the winter months travelling and visiting "ego-jis" in the plains, and, when the plains began to sizzle with the summer heat, returning to the hut in his beloved Himalayas.

Many of his friends and "ego-jis" have vivid recollections of the endearing Sunyata. In our next issue we shall present a selection of these interchanges with this *janam-siddha*.

[To be continued]

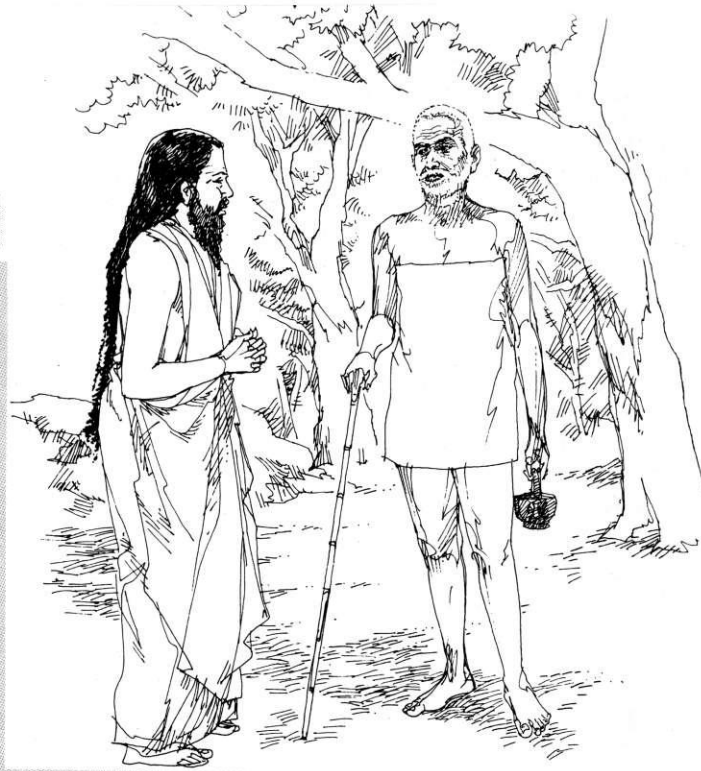
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### Our Real Nature

In the afternoon Bhagavan explained to Dr. Srinivasa Rao the significance of the name 'Rama' "The 'Ra' stands for the Self and 'ma' for the ego. As one goes on repeating 'Rama', 'Rama', the 'ma' disappears, getting merged in the 'Ra' and then 'Ra' alone remains. In that state there is no conscious effort at *dhyana*, but it is there, for *dhyana* is our real nature."

— *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, p. 53



There are many paths but all leading only to the same single Truth. It is said, *vipra bahudha vadanti*, "Truth is one, sages call it by different names". Although the mode of *sadhana* will differ according to the needs of the seeker, the goal aimed at is the same Wholeness.

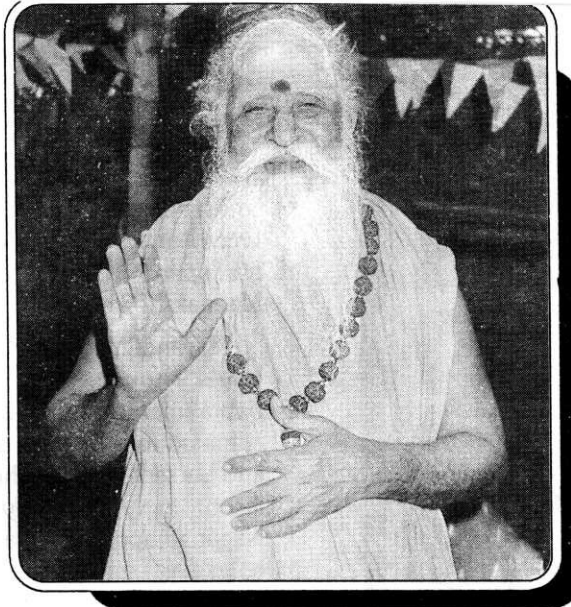
Sri Santananda Swami, a yogi of a very high order, belongs to the lineage of *avadhutas* like Sri Sadasiva Brahmendra. His Ashram at Pudukkottai is called 'Sri Bhuvaneswari Adhishtanam'. He has another Ashram on a hill in Salem, called 'Om Sri Skandashram'. Swami guides many hundreds of aspirants on the path of ritualistic worship, upon which he is perhaps the only living authority. He has conducted a number of very large and efficacious *homas* (ritualistic fire sacrifices of grand magnitude), some of which one only hears mentioned in the Vedas!

Swami had his first *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan at the age of 15; during his *parivrajika* (penetration) days, he stayed in *Palakottu*, the small colony of huts adjacent to Sri Ramanasramam and had innumerable meetings with Sri Bhagavan. Such close association, Sri Swami confirms, gave him the invaluable experience of the Self, in addition to widening his deep understanding of the traditional scriptures. His adoration of Sri Bhagavan is proof enough that Sri Swami is a fully realised *mahatma*.

We feel blessed to publish this article on him.

— Editor





## Sri Santananda Swami

**I**N THE *Bhagavad Gita* (3:10) we read that while creating the human being, God instituted the *yagna* [fire sacrifices to propitiate the gods, by special offerings and chanting of *mantras*, according to Vedic injunctions], saying, "May this grant your desire like Kamadhenu [the celestial 'Wish-fulfilling Cow'] and may you grow with its help." The idea here conveyed is the harmonious co-existence of all the forces in nature, not the plunder by one of another as is now the practice. In 14:16 of the *Gita* we find Lord Krishna declaring: "I am the *yagna*." There is much to be pondered over in these ideas. Ancient as they are, they do prove applicable and efficacious even today. Pudukkottai was an arid zone two decades ago. It has since become fertile. Many people say that this is due to the heavy rains invoked by the *yagnas* performed here for the last twenty years by Sri Santananda Swami, the greatest living exponent of Vedic worship.

A glimpse of the Swamiji is enough to convince one of the beautiful harmony of physical and spiritual powers found in perfection in him. Long red, matted locks; broad forehead adorned with *vibhuti* and *kumkum*; radiant face with

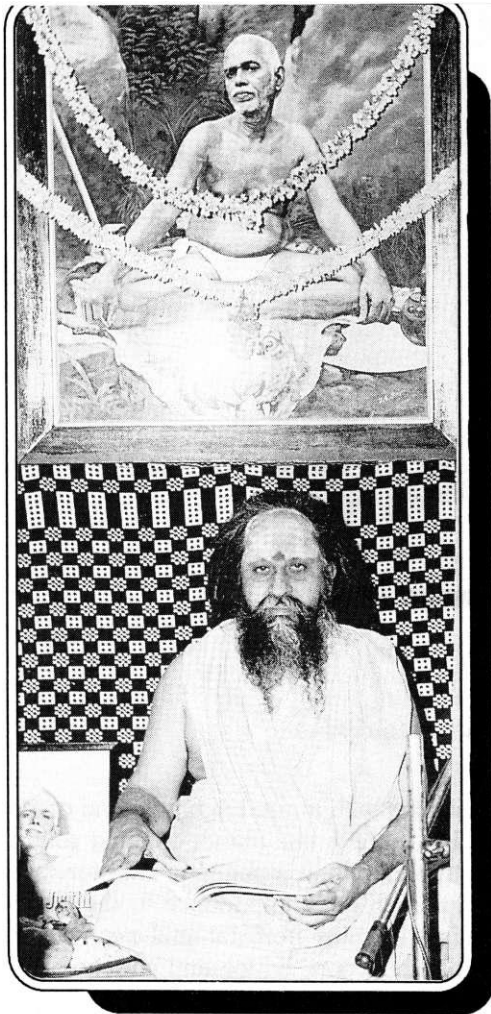
eyes shining with a rare brightness and compassion. His voice is like music, bringing solace to the afflicted. No wonder that our forefathers attached such great importance to the *darshan* of saints! Pilgrims from far and near come to him for instruction, advice and solace.

A scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit, Swamiji is also a great lover of music. Wherever he goes, scholars and musicians gather round him to have their doubts cleared and to be inspired by him. Propagation of Vedic knowledge and encouragement of scholars are the twin aims that are closest to his heart.

Who is this towering figure who has revived the *yagnas* like the *rishis* of old?

In the beginning of the twentieth century, in a small village near Madurai, there lived an orthodox *brahmin* family. The couple were great devotees of Goddess Meenakshi, the presiding deity in Madurai. They had nine children. A famous ascetic of the time, Mayandi Yogi, visited them one day. He predicted that they would have one more child, their tenth. "A son will be born to you. He shall be a votary of the Vedas, a supporter of *yagnas*, repository of knowledge,

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Sri Santananda Swami engrossed in himself with RAMANA JYOTHI SOUVENIR in his hands which he released at the Ashram in 1970.

an ideal disciple, a man of action for the welfare of the world, and a devotee of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, the Mother of the World. "Name him Subrahmanyam. He will be yours only during his formative years; after that he shall belong to the world."

Thus, seventy-five years ago a son was born to the pious couple. They called him Subrahmanyam, as instructed. It was an apt name as Lord Subrahmanya dares to teach even Lord Siva, His Father. He is the God of spiritual knowledge, the presiding deity of yagnas and the supreme commander of the divine army. He appears in the form of iridescent flame and

blesses His devotees with youth, beauty and spiritual knowledge.

The boy displayed phenomenal memory, and immediately retained whatever he was taught. He spent his leisure time in the Goddess Meenakshi Temple.

Mayandi Yogi now made another visit to the boy's house. He was thrilled to see Subrahmanyam. He directed that the boy be admitted to a Sanskrit school to learn the Vedas and be sent to him when his studies were over. Accordingly, the boy was entered into the Naganathapuram Veda Patasala in Karaikudi. In course of time, Subrahmanyam became well versed in the Vedas.

At that time India's freedom struggle was in full swing. Every one had come under Gandhiji's magnetic spell. Subrahmanyam's idealism was also aroused and he plunged into activities for village uplift and the amelioration of the lot of the poor. Like many patriots of the period, he was imprisoned for his efforts.

When he came out of the prison, he was no longer the same. This devotee of the Mother Country had become the devotee of the Mother Goddess!

He went directly to Madurai, where he prayed to Goddess Meenakshi to show him the way. He then approached Mayandi Yogi, who was extremely happy to receive him now that the appropriate time had arrived. He taught the youth the art of meditation and explained the single-syllable *mantra* of Goddess Bhuvaneshwari, the presiding Mother of the Universe. He instructed him to chant it unceasingly so that he would obtain mastery over the senses. He further advised him to remain silent and to subsist on alms and also not to stay long at any one place.

Brahmachari Subrahmanyam began his wanderings. He visited many sacred places, including Arunachala and performed *tapas* there. His *darshan* of Bhagavan gave a new impetus and insight into his *sadhana*.

Once while doing *tapas* in the Nellaippar Temple in Tirunelveli, he had a vision of an

### Swamiji's Adorations to Sri Ramana Maharshi

**Sri Santananda Swami declares that his immortal Self is Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.**

At the age of fifteen, Santananda had the gracious *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan who was shining in his Heart as the eternal *satchidananda*, and to Him alone he surrendered.

Through His divine grace Santananda realised the one Self, which abides as the *Trimurti* (Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra) and all that is.

Santananda realised that the Self is indeed Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Supreme Reality, sporting at Arunachala.

Obeisance to Sri Ramana! the *Mahapurusha* who declared that everyone in this world can realise the Self, the Truth, the essence of the four *Mahavakyas* through the enquiry, "Who am I?"

Obeisance to Sri Ramana! the Supreme Reality, born to enable everyone to realise within their Heart the deathless, self-luminous, gracious, effulgent Self.

Obeisance to Sri Ramana! who is indeed the omnipresent Arunachala Siva Himself.

Obeisance to Sri Ramana! who was like the great *rishis* of old; who only did good and spoke only of people's merits; who kept nothing for Himself, though all the Universe was His; who worked only for the welfare of all; who is the deathless, omnipresent Self!

Santananda declares conclusively that Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi is the gracious gift of God to this world!

*avadhuta* (naked *sadhu*) commanding him to follow. As soon as he got up, the vision disappeared. But he often heard the echo of the command. He was searching for only that particular *avadhuta* so as to become his disciple.

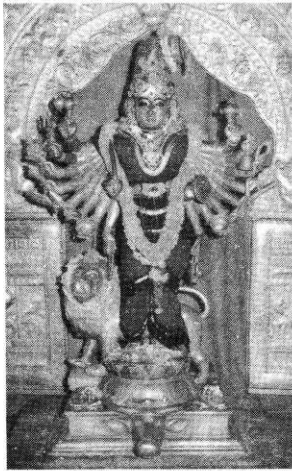
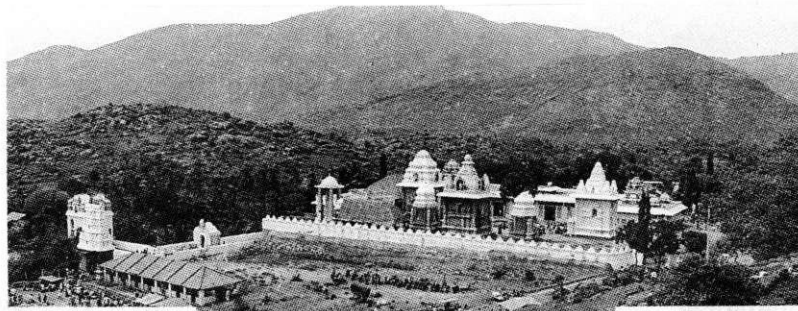
On the Gimar Hill in Gujarat, a favourite haunt of *avadhutas*, Subrahmanyam heard a voice command him to go to Sendamangalam in Salem district where a Guru was waiting for him.

He finally reached Sendamangalam and had the *darshan* of Swami Swayamprakasam. At once he realized that the *avadhuta* he had seen in his vision at Tirunelveli was none other than

this same Swamiji and requested that he be accepted as his disciple. He admitted Subrahmanyam into the *avadhuta* order and gave him a new name — Santananda. Swamiji then explained the mission of Santananda. He told his disciple, "You have learnt the Vedas. You excell in the art of meditation. You have travelled widely and are experienced. I wish to engage you now in a special work. Take charge of the Pudukkottai *Adhishtanam*<sup>1</sup> [literally, repository of Reality; *samadhi*] of Judge Swami,

<sup>1</sup> Sri Bhuvaneswari Adhishtanam, Sri Bhuvaneswari Nagar, Pudukkotai 622 001, South India

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Skandagiri

Durga Devi



Skanda Guru

my Guru. Maintain it and make it into a place of pilgrimage. For one year practise the vow of silence. Subsist on alms. Stay under trees. Don't ask for anything from anyone. Ask only for His Grace. You will succeed." He abided by the commandment of his Guru to the letter. He stayed near the *Adhishtanam* at Pudukkottai day and night. When hungry, he simply ate some neem leaves. In sun and rain he took shelter under a tree.

People were drawn to him. Impressed by the austerity of the young Swami, they not only gave him food but also built a small hut close to the *Adhishtanam*. When the year was over and the vow of silence fulfilled, Swamiji explained to the devotees the reason for his arrival and stay. The owner of the land donated it to the *Adhishtanam*.

Swamiji then procured a huge painting of Goddess Bhuvaneswari and installed a *linga* and an image of Dattatreya on the *Adhishtanam*. *Murtis* (images) of Ganapati and Subrahmanya were next installed on either side of the *Adhishtanam*. The most important step he took was the installation of the image of Goddess Bhuvaneswari, the essence of the *Gayatri man-*

*tra* and the *Parasakti* of the *Kenopanishad*. None can describe the transcendental beauty of this image. Her divine face glows with angelic beauty, Her eyes are full of compassion, while Her smile comforts the afflicted.

After the installation of the image of the Mother Goddess, Swamiji started a programme of performing *yagnas* each year for the benefit and welfare of the world. Hundreds of devotees from far and near come to witness them. Swamiji has unshakable faith in *yagnas*, believing that they will make the world pure, powerful and prosperous. By their means, claim the Vedas, man can cross the ocean of *samsara* and attain deliverance.

Once, Swamiji had an enchanting vision which he used to narrate to devotees; he saw hills all around. A streamlet was flowing below. From the hills one could see villages and green fields. Lord Skanda (Lord Subrahmanya) appeared and told Swamiji that it was there that He would like to reside. One day, in 1956, a devotee presented an image of Lord Dandayudhapani, (one of the names of Lord Subrahmanya) to Swamiji. In 1967, a devotee informed Swamiji that such a spot did exist! It is



(l to r) Smt. Nagalakshmi,  
our Editor, Sri Santananda Swami and  
Sri T.N. Venkataraman

the village of Udayapatti, five miles from Salem. Swamiji could not believe his eyes. Here was the scene of his vision to the minutest detail! This place was miraculously gifted to him by the local government.

The hill near Udayapatti soon acquired the name Skandagiri. The atmosphere is peaceful and is conducive to *tapas* and meditation.<sup>2</sup>

Swamiji constructed a beautiful temple on the hill and dedicated it to Lord Dandayudhapani and Goddess Durga. A big lecture hall and a guest house also were built, together with the shrines dedicated to Lord Ganesa and Hidimba. In the main temple Swamiji has installed images of Veda Vyasa, Adi Sankara, Madhavacharya, Ramanujacharya and the 63 great 'Nayanmars' (Saivite Saints). He plans to add more statues of religious leaders, thus testifying to his synthetic approach to Hinduism.

It is Swamiji's firm conviction that if the Vedas are protected the world will prosper. Therefore he is conducting Yajurveda Patasalas in Pudukkottai and Skandagiri, where students learn the Vedas.

Swamiji spends much of his time in meditation and in chanting the holy *Namas* or *mantras* of Sri Bhuvaneswari and Sri Skandaguru (Lord Subramania as Guru). His meditation has no tinge of selfishness whatsoever. It is not for nothing that his favourite deity is Sri Bhuvaneswari — the presiding Mother of the Universe. He prays for the welfare of all:

For the dear God who loveth us  
He made and loveth all.

<sup>2</sup> Om Sri Skandashramam, Udayapatti PO,  
Salem 636 140, South India.

"Time is endless in Thy hands, my Lord !  
Days and nights pass and ages bloom  
and fade like flowers.  
Thou knowest how to wait,  
Thy centuries follow each other, perfecting a  
small wild flower  
We have no time to lose and having no time  
We must scramble for our chances. We are too  
poor to be late."

- Rabindranath Tagore in *Gitanjali*





Sri Daivarata was extolled by no less a personage than Madan Mohan Malaviya. Vinobha Bhave had such veneration for Daivarata that when anyone raised a doubt about some aspect of the Vedas, he would immediately direct him to Daivarata, saying, "He has mastered all the four Vedas."

When Sri Bhagavan was at Skandashram, Daivarata also stayed with him for some time. Daily he would go down to the town to beg his food. He would then bring it back and offer a portion of it to Sri Bhagavan, uttering "*Indraayasvaaha*" ("Offered to the Lord of Lords!") and only then partake of the rest.

It was also at this time that Bhagavan composed five verses in praise of Arunachala in Sanskrit. He showed them to Daivarata, who noticed a word, *महीयंते* — (*mahiyan-te*), so unusually used that he questioned it. Bhagavan's response was, "I do not know any nuances of Sanskrit grammar. It came like that, and I wrote it down!" When Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni came to know of it, he immediately established that what Bhagavan had written was correct by splitting the word thus: *इयं* - (*iyam*) — "This" (is); *ते* - (*te*) — "your"; *महिमा* - (*mahima*) — "greatness"

Fully satisfied, and praising the five verses, Daivarata wrote a sixth verse:

This *Arunachala Pancha Ratna* ["Five Verses on Arunachala"], expounded in Sanskrit in *arya* metre is the quintessence of all the Upanishads.

— Editor

## AN EARLY DEVOTEE

# Brahmarshi Daivarata

By A.R. Natarajan

**T**HE DATE is the 7th of July 1917. The scene is Sri Skandasramam. Ganapati Muni, Daivarata and six other earnest seekers are seated around Ramana, plying him with questions on every aspect of *sadhana*, spiritual practice. Daivarata asks for a definitive answer to the crucial question as to the paramount duty of a seeker. Ramana gives his memorable answer: "Discovering one's own true nature is the paramount duty. Withdrawing all thoughts from sense-objects through effort one should remain fixed in steady, non-objective enquiry." Those were the joyous days when Ramana would go round Arunachala Hill with the devotees. Daivarata, who was an adept in *bhajans*, would regale all with his expert dancing to music, "jumping from one side of the road to another". He was always full of life and enthusiasm.

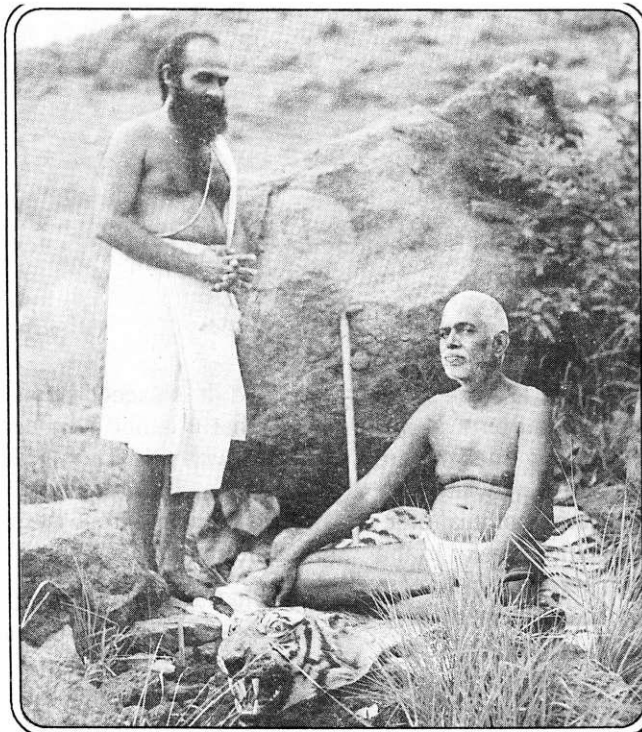
At this time Daivarata also wrote his *Ramana Vibhakti Ashtakam* and dedicated it to the devotees of Ramana in the understandable confidence that these verses would enable the reader to have the mental *darshan* of Ramana, and feel His presence intensely. Daivarata was wholly immersed in Ramana's beauty, enjoying every minute of the radiating peace of Ramana's *sahaja samadhi*. Can we thank him enough for his matchless description of it? "His eyes always glitter with spotless light full of peace and pure love. Like Gods his eyelids do not close. Even though his eyes are so wide open they remain very steady and introverted.... To sit and gaze at his motionless countenance is itself true worship. People become so engrossed in his *darshan* that they do not like to leave his divine presence. His motionless steadfast Self-abidance is his natural state."

What was Maharshi's voice like? Even this Daivarata describes so touchingly. "Sri Maharshi's voice is melodious and soft as that of

a child. It is exceedingly sweet. At times it is so soft that it is not even heard clearly. It must be heard with attention. When we hear his voice, we feel as if we are hearing a divine and subtle voice coming across the firmament. This is the real form of divine speech."

Who was this Daivarata? He was born in 1891 in the sacred pilgrimage centre of Siva, Gokarna, in the North Kanara District of Karnataka state. His father, Vigneswara Bhat, was a Vedic scholar. His mother, Smt. Nagaveni, also came from the reputable Vedic scholar-family of Ganesa Sastry Hosamane. The child was named Ganesh. Vedic spiritual ideals flowed in his veins from his very childhood. He studied the scriptures under his father till the age of fifteen, but the spirit of renunciation was strong in him. Hence he did not want to pursue the priestly profession. At that time a saint from Ujjain, Ramdas, visited Gokarna and initiated young Ganesh into the path of *bhakti*. It was from him that Ganesh learnt the art of dancing to the tune of devotional songs. He left Gokarna with Saint Ramdas and visited all the famous pilgrimage centres, singing and dancing God's name to his heart's content. After the *samadhi* of Ramdasji a couple of years later, Ganesh returned to Gokarna. He then came under the influence of Tombe Maharaj, and under his guidance became an expert in hatha yogic practices.

At this time Ganapati Muni came to Gokarna with his wife, Visalakshamma, to perform *tapas* in a forest grove near the famous Siva temple there. Ganesh was instantly attracted by his magnetic personality and became his favourite disciple. Ganesh served his guru and *gurupatni* during this period of penance with exemplary devotion and love. The Muni renamed Ganesh — then known as Gajanan — Daivarata after the ancient *rishi*, Devarata, to whose lineage he



*Daivarata with Sri Bhagavan*

belonged. Daivarata was with the Muni during his subsequent penance in the Mahendra Mountains of Andhra Pradesh. From there, when the Muni went to Arunachala to have the *darshan* of his Guru, Bhagavan Ramana, Daivarata joined him. At the very first sight of Ramana he was swept away by His spontaneous Self-abidance.

From Arunachala Daivarata went to nearby Padaiveedu with the Muni and joined him in his *tapas*. It was at Padaiveedu that Daivarata composed many enchanting verses in the same metre and of the same excellence as those of the *Rigveda*. The Muni immediately called the corpus *Chandodarsana*. So impressed was he with their quality that he himself wrote a commentary on these verses and paid his disciple glorious tributes, calling him a "*rishi* on a par with the ancient ones".

In later years after India's Independence, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the first President of India, became his devoted disciple. Daivarata was universally respected by such Vedic scholars and leading lights of the day as Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Dr. S. Radhakrishnan.

After the *mahasamadhi* of Ganapati Muni in 1936, Daivarata moved to Nepal, where he spread the gospel of *bhakti* and yoga. He was highly respected by the King of Nepal. Wherever he was he would be in touch with Ramana for his heart was there. Bhagavan too would enquire about him. Once when Ramana was enquiring about him from Mahadeva Sastri, the Muni's son, a parcel of books arrived by post. After talking to Mahadeva, Ramana opened the parcel and found that it had been sent by Gajanan — Daivarata — from Nepal with a moving covering letter.

In February 1946, Daivarata visited Ramanasramam and Ramana made loving references to him. At the request of devotees Daivarata danced to music in the dining hall in the inspiring presence of Ramana. Although he was perhaps fifty at that time, age had not dimmed his vigorous devotional ardour.

Such was the multifaceted Daivarata. As he wrote to Ramana from Nepal, he was "always at Ramana's feet". That he was, undoubtedly, for Ramana had made him his own in those wonderful years at Skandasramam.

## The Dancing Devotee

After *parayana*, Bhagavan was talking to a bearded gentleman past middle age and yet looking sturdy and strong. I went and sat by the side of the visitor. Bhagavan told me, "This is Gajanan, alias Devarata, the answers to whose questions have been recorded in Chapter III of *Ramana Gita*. He was with us at Skandasramam in 1917." I thereupon said "I know. The same who was in Nepal and whose photo and letter arrived immediately after Bhagavan was making enquiries about him once." For the benefit of those who might not know the incident, Bhagavan said, "Some years ago, when Nayana's [Ganapati Muni's] son Mahadevan came here, I was enquiring about this Gajanan. We had not heard from him for about ten years. So I was making enquiries. When we were talking, the post arrived and with it a parcel of books. I perused the letters first and laid aside the parcel. When we were talking about this G., the parcel was by my side. After talking to Mahadevan, I opened the parcel and found G's letter and photo and books, and in the letter he had written that though he was in Nepal, yet he was always at my feet. It looked as if, in answer to my question to Mahadevan as to where G. was, G. was saying Here I am (i.e., in the picture) at your very feet."

At breakfast, Bhagavan enquired where G. was staying and what he was going to take. It was reported G. had gone for his bath. Bhagavan then said, "He would eat anything. If you give him a quantity of tender *margosa* leaves and a *chembu* (jugful) of cow's urine, he would breakfast on them. He has lived on things like that."

About 10.30 a.m., G. was in the hall showing a picture of Pasupati image in Nepal and explaining its esoteric significance.

In the night, again G. was telling Bhagavan about Nepal. He said, among other things, "There are three important shrines in Nepal, all very sacred. The King is a very religious man and it is the custom and tradition there for the King not to do anything or go anywhere without first going and taking permission from the gods in these temples. In that State, cow-killing used to be punished with death sentence. Now the sentence is transportation for life. If a bull is beaten and blood appears the offender will be punished with imprisonment for three months or so. The State has its own coins." Here G. showed some coins to Bhagavan. Mr. Balaram [Reddiar] said, "He does *bhajan* with great spirit and enthusiasm. We should have it one day here." G. said, "Oh, yes. I can do even now. No fear, no shyness. So I can sing away. Can we get some tinkling beads (சுத்தி) for my ankles, and some accompaniment?" Bhagavan also said, "He must have some *sruti* like harmonium, some accompaniment like *mridangam* or *ganjira* and some cymbals (ஜடல்பா). Then the talk drifted to Bhagavan and his party going round the hill in those days. Balaram asked if G. used to do these *bhajans* while resting on the way or during walking. Bhagavan replied, "Oh, he would do his *bhajan* while walking. He would jump from one side of the road to another. He was so full of life and enthusiasm." G. said, "I was much younger then. But I can do it even now." Discussing where and when we would arrange for such a *bhajan* by G. we found out that he would require a big space himself for moving about singing and that it would be better to arrange it in the dining hall.

- from *Day by Day with Bhagavan*,  
dt. 13.2.1946.

### *A Reader's Response*

Dear Ganesan,

First of all, congratulations on one of your landmark issues of *The Mountain Path*, namely, the Jayanthi issue 1993. The reason I call it a landmark issue is because of the new get-up and presentation which makes it particularly attractive.

I especially enjoyed the wonderful sketches peppered throughout the magazine. Amazingly they worked very well in telling the story. The artist, Maniam Selvan, is truly gifted and the cover in particular was divine.

In this issue I was quite fascinated to read your reasoned and well-thought-out editorial, but felt that it did not fully capture the spirit of Bhagavan's teachings. I was so inspired by it that I composed a poem, "*Jnani-Jnana*", which you may enjoy.

Your photo coverage of the Birth Centenary of the Sankaracharya of Kanchi was much appreciated too.

— A. Haji  
U.S.A.

### *Maniam Selven*

**Sri Maniam Selven**, the son of late Sri Maniam, (the foremost artist of his day in South India) is a professional freelance artist. For the last twenty years his work has appeared in all leading Tamil magazines, educational literature and advertisements. As a consummate artist, he is much-sought-after and has drawn illustrations for more than 2000 short stories and 300 serial stories in various magazines. His illustrations depict the figures and events of history, mythology and science, in a varieties of styles and techniques.

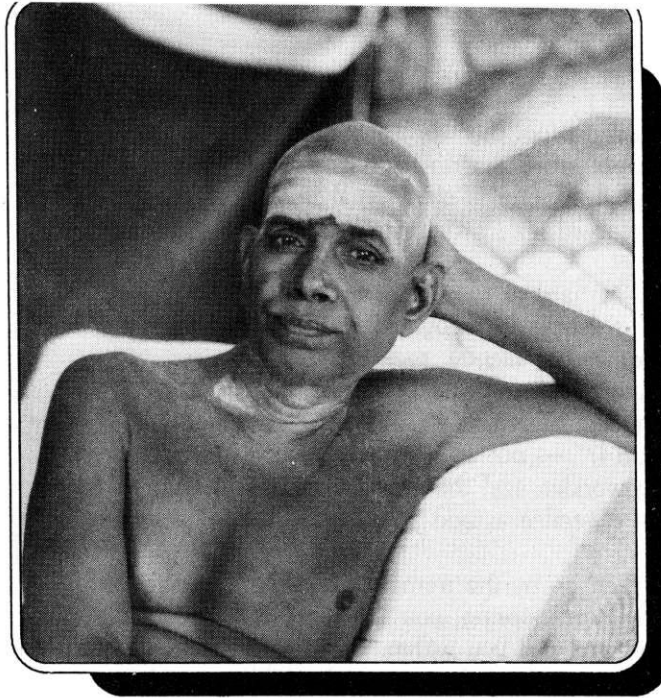
That Maniam Selven is deeply interested in spirituality is evidenced by his close association with and dedication to Sri Ramakrishna Math, Kanchi Sankaracharya Mutt and Sri Ramanasramam. He says, "I get tremendous inspiration when I am in the presence of *mahatmas* and in the *satsangh* of like-minded seekers!"

We join his innumerable fans in wishing him a long, happy and fruitful life!

Maniam Selven







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## *Jnani - Jnana*

*By A. Haji*

The *Jnani* not free of the body suffers every limitation dictated to every body by gravity, genes, and *prarabhda*. But he is nevertheless free for "I" resounds for him as all there is.

Eating, drinking and all the natural functions of the body remain, but appear on the screen of consciousness as distant events having lost their power like a defanged cobra.

Not going out of his way to avoid love, why should he try to avoid hate?

All events and their opposites, equal in his eyes, flit across consciousness equilibrated by "I".

Like a compass always oriented to north, so his entire being, bedrock consciousness, resounds with "'I-'I'", pointing Selfward to the eternal North of pristine power unchallenged.

Ego has been hollowed out, a mere shell, destroyed from within, the germ annihilated. What is left is but the husk and chaff, devoid of the power to dictate: he lets it be.

As a mask to fool the world, he pretends to cry,  
to be happy, to laugh, to have needs like the *ajnani*.  
But it is all a game, a child's make-believe,  
for replete with "I", his consciousness is ever absorbed.

Why try so hard to recognize the *jnani*  
when it is simple to recognize *jnana*? Like a  
kingfisher, hover silently, seek carefully,  
then plunge and grab the prize: the shining Self.  
Watching the breath to still the mind, enquire  
"Who am I?" — not as a verbal question but as  
questing wonder: feel the amazing delusion of the "I"'s  
separate existence as ego and quest for it.

Then, taken up by the tremendous current, washed away  
from any firm mooring, you will see the huge "I-I"  
take over and pull you within. For the source of the ego  
is the "I", eternal, unchanging, unbearably powerful.

Resist not, fear not, it is but your real Self.  
Leave the ego, that cage of desires that keeps  
you submerged. The overwhelming flood of "I"  
will pull you back, but you must trust and let go,  
and let It carry you to the depths  
of your being.

Sinking into the depths is easier if you ask  
"Whence am I?" expressing non-verbal intent  
to trace out the source of this huge "I"-current.  
Then the grip of fear that buoys up the ego must loosen and  
ultimately break. Sinking deep into ourselves  
we shall discern the blue glow emanating from  
the mouth of the Heart-cave and enter within. Then we shall know  
that the journey from head to Heart has been accomplished.  
Here "I" resides alone, free of any trace of separateness.

With prayerful attitude, poised in silence, BE.  
The void within will absorb you,  
so tremendous it dwarfs the universe.  
This void devours the ego, have no doubt.  
It works on you until all that is left is only a  
bare covering allowing you to work in society.  
Then *jnana* will shine forth, unreserved, unfettered,  
burning bright as Light revealed, always  
with you, as you, never apart. In sleep, waking or  
dream, it is there, the ever-present "I".  
"Do it!" commands Ramana, Master of egos  
that wait to die.

## The Various Texts of 'Who am I?' — 2

By Michael James

### Text A

In our Ashram archives there is a bundle containing the manuscripts of Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai, numbered 'TAM-29' and containing a total of 47 items, most of which are in the form of notebooks and some of which are in the form of bunches of rough papers, either loose or stitched together. For ease of reference these 47 items have been numbered as SP-1 to SP-47, but the sequence of these numbers is entirely random and bears no relation to the dates found in some of the items or to the chronological order in which they were written. These manuscripts contain various drafts of the teachings which now form the work *Nan Yar?* ("Who am I?"), besides numerous drafts and copies of Sri Pillai's songs, poems and other writings on Sri Bhagavan and His teachings (some of which have been printed and some of which have never been printed), and also many notes containing Sri Pillai's reflections on Sri Bhagavan's teachings and on various other philosophies, written both in Tamil and in English. Most of the contents of these manuscripts show clearly that the one all-absorbing interest in the life of Sri Pillai was his great longing to understand somehow or other the true answer to the question 'Who am I?'. Some of the contents are written so hastily and roughly, or have become so faded, that they are now almost illegible, whereas some other contents are fair-copies in very neat handwriting, the ink of which is still very clear and unfaded.

Of these 47 items, one of the most interesting and useful is a good-quality notebook with a hard red cover numbered SP-20. The first 54 pages of this notebook (4 unnumbered and 50 numbered pages) are a very neat fair-copy in the handwriting of Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai of the contents of his book *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*. The 3rd and 4th unnumbered pages contain the preface (*mukhavurai*) which was subsequently printed in all the editions of this

book, with just one interesting addition, namely the date (6.1.1920) and place (Idaiyanpalchori) where it was written. This date is a clear indication that the contents of the subsequent 50 pages of this notebook are all writings which were originally drafted sometime prior to 6.1.1920. Numbered pages 1 to 20 contain the poem *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*, 21 to 31 contain the poem *Anugraha Ahaval*, 32 to 41 contain the poem *Sri Ramana Pada Malai*, and 42 to 50 contain an appendix (*anubandham*) consisting of text A of *Nan Yar?*. On page 42, after the word *anubandham* Sri Pillai has added in brackets the significant words '*Maharishigalal tiruttapattapadi*', which mean 'As corrected by Maharshi' and which clearly show that text A as found in these pages is a fair-copy of a draft of *Nan Yar?* which had been seen and corrected by Sri Bhagavan Himself.

Subsequently in 1923 when *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* was first printed, in place of this text A, text B was printed<sup>1</sup>. However text B is actually almost identical to text A except that fourteen extra questions and answers have been added after answer 12 and before the last answer. Text A as such was, however, printed as the *anubandham* to both the 3rd edition (1931) and 4th edition (1946) of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*.<sup>2</sup> When the printed version of text A contained in those two editions is closely com-

<sup>1</sup> In my article on Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai in the January 1988 issue of *The Mountain Path*, I had written mistakenly on p. 41 that text A was the text included in the 1st edition (1923) of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*, because at that time I had never seen a copy of that edition and hence, based upon various references to it that I had read in *Self-Realization* (7th ed., p. 77) and elsewhere, I assumed that the *anubandham* in that edition contained only text A, as was the case with the *anubandham* in the 3rd and 4th editions, which I had seen.

<sup>2</sup> In the only copy which I have seen of the 2nd edition (1929) of this book, this *anubandham* was not included.

pared with the manuscript version of text A contained in SP-20, some slight differences can be noticed, and hence whenever it is necessary to draw a distinction between these two versions I shall refer to the manuscript version as text AM and the printed version as text AP.

The differences between these two texts are seldom of any significance as far as the meaning is concerned, and are generally mere variations in spelling. For example, whereas in text AM we generally find the word 'I' written as 'Yan', throughout the text AP we find it printed as 'Nan', and the introductory sentence of the text, "The enquiry 'Who am I?' alone will give liberation", reads as "*Yana rengira vicharanaiye motchattaik kodukkum*" in text AM and as "*Nanar? ennum vicharanaiye mokshattaik kodukkum*" in text AP. That is, whereas the spelling in text AM (as also in text B) is following a highly literary and more ancient style, the spelling in text AP (as also in most of the other later texts) is following a simpler and more modern style. However, a few of the differences between texts AM and AP are more than mere stylistic variations and, though minor, are of some noteworthy significance, and hence all such differences will be pointed out below in the footnotes of this article.

The following is a literal translation of text AM:

\* \* \*

**The enquiry 'Who am I?' alone will give liberation (*moksha*).**

1. *Who am I?*

1.<sup>3</sup> The gross body, which is composed of the seven *dhatus* [chyle, blood, flesh, fat, bone, marrow and semen], is not 'I'. 2. The five sense-organs (*jnanendriyas*), namely the ears, skin, eyes, tongue and nose, which individually and respectively know the five sense-knowledges (*vishayas*), namely sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, are not 'I'. 3. The five organs of action

(*karmendriyas*), namely the mouth, legs, hands<sup>4</sup>, anus and genitals, which perform the five functions of speaking, walking, giving, excreting and enjoying, are not 'I'. 4. The five vital airs such as *prana*, which perform the five [vital] functions such as respiration, are not 'I'. 5. Even the mind, which thinks, is not 'I'.<sup>5</sup> 6. Even the ignorance [of deep sleep], which is devoid of all sense-knowledges and all actions and which remains with only the *vishaya-vasanas* [the latent tendencies or tastes for sense-knowledges], is not 'I'.

2. *If all these are not 'I', then who am I?*

Having negated and removed<sup>6</sup> as 'not I'<sup>7</sup> all that is mentioned above, the knowledge which solitarily remains, alone is 'I'.

3. *What is the nature of [this] knowledge?*

The nature of [this] knowledge is existence-consciousness-bliss (*sat-chit-ananda*). [It is] the state [literally, place] in which the thought 'I' does not exist even in the least.<sup>8</sup> This itself is called Silence (*mauna*). This Self alone exists. The world, soul and God are imaginary superimpositions (*kalpanas*) and it<sup>9</sup> like silver in the mother-of-pearl. Therefore Self

<sup>3</sup> In text AM the six sentences in answer 1 have been numbered, but these numbers are not found in text AP, text B or any other printed text.

<sup>4</sup> In text AP the word *pani* (hand or arm) has been inadvertently printed before the word *padam* (foot or leg).

<sup>5</sup> In text B this fifth sentence (*Ninaikkindra manamum nan andru*) has been inadvertently omitted in print.

<sup>6</sup> In texts, AM, AP and B the word *neeki* (having removed or dismissed) comes after the words *neti seydu* (having negated), but in all other texts it has been omitted.

<sup>7</sup> In texts AM and B the words *nan alla* (not I) occur only once here, whereas in AP and other texts these words are repeated, *nan alla, nan alla*.

<sup>8</sup> In text AP this second sentence (*Nan ennum ninaivu kinjittum illada idam*) has been inadvertently omitted in print.

(*swarupam*) itself is God. Self itself is 'I'. Self itself is the souls. Self itself is the world. All is verily the supreme Self (*sva-swarupam*).

4. *When will Self-realization (swarupa-darsanam) be attained?*

When what-is-seen (*drisya*) is removed, the realization of Self, which is the seer (*drik*)<sup>10</sup>, will arise.

5. *Will not Self-realization arise even while what-is-seen exists?*

It will not arise. The seer and what-is-seen are like the rope and the snake. When the knowledge of the snake, the imaginary superimposition, has not gone, can the knowledge of the rope, the base (*adhisthanam*), appear?

6. *When will the world, which is what-is-seen, be removed?*

If the mind, which is the cause of all [objective] knowledge and all action, subsides, the world will disappear.

7. *What is the nature of the mind?*

Thought alone is the nature (*swarupam*) of the mind. It is a power (*sakti*). It expands as all objects. When it subsides within itself, that is, in Self, Self will appear. When it comes out, the world will appear. Therefore, when the world appears, Self does not appear.

8. *How will the mind subside?*

The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'Who am I?', having destroyed all other thoughts, will<sup>11</sup> itself be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre; then Self-realization will arise. When the thought 'I' subsides, the breath also subsides. From where the ego originates, there alone<sup>12</sup> the breath originates. Whatever one does, one should do without 'I', the

ego. If one remains thus<sup>13</sup>, even one's wife will appear as though Jagadiswari [the Mother of the universe]. Whoever sacrifices himself to Self, who is God, he alone is the [true] devotee.

9. *Are there no other means by which the mind will subside?*

Other than enquiry (*vichara*), there are no adequate means. If made to subside by other means, the mind will remain as if subsided, but will rise again.

10. *Vishaya-vasanas [inherent tastes for sense-objects] rise without limit like waves in the ocean; when will they all be removed?*

As Self-attention (*swarupa-dhyana*) increases more and more, all the *vasanas* will subside.

<sup>9</sup> The word *adil* (in it), though implied, is not actually given here in texts AM, B, D or E; it was first added by Sri Bhagavan in text F, and was therefore incorporated in the later texts AP and G.

<sup>10</sup> Though Sri Bhagavan here refers to Self as the 'seer' (*drik*), it should not be thought that Self is really a seer of objects, for in truth all objects are seen only by the mind. Self is described in scriptures as the seer (*drik*) because it is only by the light of Self that all things are seen. But as Sri Bhagavan explains in chapter 3 of *Vichara Sangraham*, since the word 'seer' (*drik*) is applicable only in relation to the objects seen (*drisya*), and since the objects seen are not other than Self, Self is in truth not a seer. Therefore the use of the word 'seer' in the present context should be understood to be figurative and not literal. It may also be noted here that when Sri Bhagavan wrote text F, He omitted the words *drik* and *drisya* from this portion, presumably in order to avoid giving rise to a possible misunderstanding.

<sup>11</sup> In text AP the word *mudivil*, meaning 'in the end' or 'finally', is added here. This word does not occur in text E or any of the earlier texts, and it appears to have been first added by Sri Bhagavan while writing text F.

<sup>12</sup> In the earlier texts such as AM, B, D and E the Tamil words used here are *ange tan* (there alone), but while editing text F Sri Bhagavan refined this sentence by writing *angirundu tan* (from there alone). This later refined wording is included in text AP.

<sup>13</sup> In texts AM and B the wording used here is *appadi yirundal* (if one remains thus), whereas in text AP the wording *appadi seyda* (if one does thus) is used.



11. Is it possible to remove all the *vishaya-vasanas*, which come from time immemorial, and to remain as Self alone?

Without giving room even to the doubt-thought 'Is it possible or not?' one should steadfastly cling to Self-attention. If one thus goes on scrutinizing the nature of the mind, the mind will end up as Self<sup>14</sup>.

12. For how long is this enquiry necessary?

As long as there are *vishaya-vasanas* in the mind, so long is the enquiry 'Who am I?' necessary. As long as there are enemies in the fort, they will be continuously coming out. If one were to be continuously cutting them<sup>15</sup> down as and when they come, the fort would fall into one's hands. Likewise, as and when thoughts appear, then and there one should annihilate them by *vilchra-jnana* [knowledge born of enquiry]. Destroying in their<sup>16</sup> very source all thoughts that rise, without leaving even a single one, is desirelessness (*valragya*). Until one attains Self, one should not give up enquiry.

13. All these are the will of God (*iswara-sankalpa*), are they not?

Just as by<sup>17</sup> the mere presence of the sun, which rises without desire (*iccha*), intention (*sankalpa*) or effort (*yatna*), the sun-crystal<sup>18</sup> emits fire, the lotus blossoms<sup>19</sup>, water evaporates and the people of the world<sup>20</sup> commense, perform and stop their respective activities, and just as in front of a magnet the needle moves, so the souls (*jivas*) — who are subject to the three divine functions (*muttozhil*) or five divine functions (*panchakrityas*)<sup>21</sup>, which take place by the mere *sannidhana-vishesha* [the distinguishing quality of the presence] of God, who is one devoid of intention (*sankalpa*) — perform and stop their

activities in accordance with their respective *karmas*<sup>22</sup>. Nevertheless<sup>23</sup>, He

<sup>14</sup> "the mind will end up as Self" (*manam tanaha mudiyum*): that is, the mind will finally turn out to be nothing other than Self. In texts E and F, however, this clause reads as "*tane manamay mudiyum*", which literally means 'Self alone will end up as the mind' and which in the context conveys the sense 'Self alone will finally turn out to be that which is now mistaken to be the mind'.

<sup>15</sup> The word 'them' (*avargalai*), though implied, is not actually given here in texts AM, B, D or E; it was first added by Sri Bhagavan in text F, and was therefore incorporated in the later texts AP and G.

<sup>16</sup> The word 'their' (*avatrini*) is implied here but is actually given in Tamil only in text AP.

<sup>17</sup> The wording here in texts AM, B, D and AP is *sannidhi mattirattal* (by the mere presence), whereas the wording in texts E, F and G is *sannidhi mattirattil* (in the mere presence).

<sup>18</sup> The 'sun-crystal' (*kantakkal*), also known as *surya-kanta*, is a form of crystalline quartz which, like a magnifying lens, can focus the sunlight to produce fire.

<sup>19</sup> The words 'the lotus blossoms' (*tamarai malartalum*), which occur here in texts AM, AP and D, have been inadvertently omitted in texts B, C and E. Since Sri Bhagavan was referring to text E while editing text F, in the early draft of text F in His handwriting which was reproduced in *The Mountain Path*, June 1993, p. 47, these words are missing. However, this omission must later have been noticed by Him, so in text F as printed in all the editions of *Sri Ramana Nutrirattu* these words (spelt as *tamarai yalarvadum* in the first two editions and as *tamarai malarvadum* in all later editions) are included in this sentence.

<sup>20</sup> The word used here in texts AM, B, D and E is *ulaham* or *lokam*, which literally means 'the world' but which in the context is used to mean 'the people of the world'. When writing text F, Sri Bhagavan corrected this word as *ulahor*, which literally means 'the people of the world'. This corrected version has been printed in the later texts AP and G.

<sup>21</sup> According to the different classifications given in scriptures, the divine functions are said to be three, namely creation (*srishti*), sustenance (*sthiti*) and destruction (*samhara*), or five, namely these three plus veiling (*tirodhana*) and Grace (*anugraha*).

<sup>22</sup> That is, in accordance not only with their destiny (*prarabdha karma*) but also with their former tendencies toward action (*purva karma vasanas*).

<sup>23</sup> In most texts including AM and F the word *andri* (nevertheless, however, except, although) comes here after a full stop as the beginning of a new sentence, but in text AP the full stop is omitted and *andri* is linked to the previous sentence making the two sentences into one. This does not, however, make any substantial change to the overall meaning conveyed.

[God] is not one who has intention (*sankalpa*). Not even a single action (*karma*) will affect [literally, approach or adhere to] Him. That<sup>24</sup> is like<sup>25</sup> the actions in the world not affecting the sun. It is also like the good and bad qualities of the other four elements [namely earth, water, air and fire] not affecting the all-pervading space.

\* \* \*

In all the editions of *Sri Ramana Vijayam* (a Tamil biography of Sri Bhagavan written by Suddhananda Bharatiyar) from the first edition (1932) up to the eighth edition (1979) a version

<sup>24</sup> The word *adu* (that), though implied in the verb *polum* (it is like), is not actually given here in texts AM, B or D, but is added in texts E, F, AP and G.

<sup>25</sup> In texts AM, B, D and E this last sentence is split into two, each one of which ends with the word *polum* (it

## The Power of Divine Grace<sup>1</sup>

By Sri Muruganar

1427. If He makes to act, who indeed will not act? If He makes to subside, who indeed will not subside? If He feeds, who indeed will not eat? If He puts to sleep, who indeed will not sleep? If He causes to wither, who indeed will not wither? If He causes to flourish, who indeed will not flourish? If He shows, who indeed will not see? [But] When Venkatavar [Sri Ramana] does not show, who can see?

1428. If He uplifts, who indeed will not come up? If He puts down, who indeed will not go down? If He creates, who indeed will not come into existence? If He destroys, who indeed will not be destroyed? If He changes, who indeed will not be changed? If He deludes, who indeed will not be deluded? If He enlightens, who indeed will not be enlightened? [But] when Venkatavar does not enlighten, who can be enlightened?

1429. If He makes to abide, who indeed will not abide? If He makes to function, who indeed will not function? If He nourishes, whose body will not thrive? If He ordains severe starvation, who indeed will not become emaciated? If He causes grief, who indeed will not grieve? If He causes joy, who indeed will not rejoice? If He reforms, who indeed will not be reformed? [But] when Venkatavar does not reform, who can be reformed?

1430. If He causes to grow, who indeed will not grow? If He causes to perish, who indeed will not perish? If He causes fatigue, who indeed will not be fatigued? If He revives, who indeed will not be revived? If He causes to bow down, who indeed will not bow down? If He causes to praise, who indeed will not praise? If He causes to revel, who indeed will not revel? [But] when He does not graciously cause to revel, who can revel?

*Translator's note:* In this song Sri Muruganar expresses in a beautiful and forceful manner the profound truth that, in accordance with the ancient Tamil proverb, "*Avan arul andri or anum asaiyadu*" (Not even an atom moves except by His Grace), everything in our life, including the ultimate attainment of Self-knowledge, happens only by the power of the divine Grace of Sri Ramana, which is in reality the only power that truly exists. Though in these four verses no explicit reference is made to the attainment of Self-knowledge, the last two questions of each verse do refer implicitly to that attainment, "seeing" Self, "being enlightened" by the light of Self-knowledge, "being reformed" as Self and "revelling" in the bliss of Self. This same truth is also expressed with still more explicit reference to Self-attainment by Sri Sadhu Om Swami in verse 584 of *Sri Ramana Sahasram*:

"If You [O-Sri Ramana] show, I see; if You close my eye [of consciousness], I sleep; if You make me sing [in praise of You] by songs, I sing. If You make to act, who is there who will not act? If by Your Grace You embrace in Self, tell me, who is there who will not be united with You?"

<sup>1</sup> *Tiruvavul Tiram*, a poem from *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai*, translated by Michael James.

of *Nan Yar?* is printed containing fourteen questions and answers. For those who do not know how this version came into being, it appears to be yet another early text of *Nan Yar?*, and since the wording in this version is quite different from that found in all the other texts, it has created a doubt in the minds of some devotees regarding the accuracy of the wordings recorded by Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai of Sri Bhagavan's teachings. However this doubt is in fact ungrounded, because the version in those editions of *Sri Ramana Vijayam* was not actually written by Sri Pillai but is only a Tamil translation by Suddhananda Bharatiyar of the free English rendering made by B.V. Narasimha Swami of text AM<sup>26</sup> which has been printed in all the editions of *Self-Realization*. Having come to know this fact and wishing to avoid the danger of creating confusion in the minds of the readers, while publishing the ninth edition of *Sri Ramana Vijayam* in 1986 the authorities of Sri Ramanasramam decided that, in place of that old version written by Suddhananda Bharatiyar, it would be more suitable to print text G, which is not only a much more authentic version but also a more complete and useful recording of the teachings given by Sri Bhagavan to Sri Sivaprakasam Pillai.

In this context a further doubt arises, namely how is it that in his free English rendering of text AM printed in *Self-Realization* B.V. Narasimha Swami has given fourteen questions and answers in place of the thirteen given in the Tamil original? The answer is that at the very beginning of his translation he has added an extra question, "Swami, Who am I? How is salvation attained?" (1st ed., 1931, p. 75; 7th ed., 1968, p. 81), for which he gives as the answer a free and expanded rendering of the introductory sentences from the Tamil original, "*Yanar engira vicharanaiye motchattai kodukkum*". In fact, though in the later editions of *Self-Realization* this translation is preceded by the sentence, "The fourteen questions and answers elicited in 1902, or soon after, from the Swami are set out below" (7th ed., p. 81), when we refer to two of the copies of the original manuscript

of *Self-Realization* which are preserved in the archives of Sri Ramanasramam (archive No. 1299-q Eng. E-NA), or to the first edition of that book printed in 1931 (archive No. 2003 Eng. E-NA, p. 75), we find that in this sentence the word 'thirteen' was originally given in place of 'fourteen' and that the extra question added by B.V. Narasimha Swami at the beginning was not numbered, unlike the other questions, which were numbered. However, whereas in the first copy of the manuscript the other questions are numbered correctly as 1 to 13 as in text A, in another copy of the manuscript and also in the first edition these thirteen questions have been numbered as 2 to 14.

With reference to the questions and answers which formed text A, one interesting point is recorded by B.V. Narasimha Swami. That is, in the first edition, p. 72, he writes:

"... At that time, the Swami [Sri Bhagavan] was observing silence. Therefore the questions [put to Him by Sivaprakasam Pillai] were sometimes answered by gestures. At times when the answers were not understood, they were written down by the Swami on the floor, or on a slate. These questions and answers were published by Sivaprakasam Pillai in 1923, along with a couple of poems<sup>27</sup> describing the Swami's life and his own special experiences with the Swami. Of the answers to the questions, that relating to the

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is like). However while writing text F Sri Bhagavan omitted the first *polum* and linked the two sentences as one; this revised sentence written by Him was adopted in both the later texts AP and G.

<sup>26</sup> The fact that B.V. Narasimha Swami made his translation from text AM rather than from text AP is apparent from the fact that in the answer to question 3 he has included the meaning of the second sentence, which (as noted above in footnote 8) was inadvertently omitted in text AP.

<sup>27</sup> Actually in the first edition of *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval* published in 1923, these questions and answers (in the form of text B) were published along with three poems of Sivaprakasam Pillai, namely *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*, *Anugraha Ahaval* and *Sri Ramana Pada Malai*.

thirteenth<sup>28</sup> was written down by the Swami on a slate, and copied immediately after on paper by the questioner and retained by him. The other questions and answers were retained by him in memory and written down subsequently..."

However, a slight doubt does arise about the accuracy of the information given in the last two sentences of this passage when we notice the fact that on p. 97 of the fourth edition (1944)<sup>29</sup> of the same book a somewhat different and contradictory piece of information is given, namely "...of the several answers given to him by the Sage, fourteen were written down by the Sage himself on a slate, and copied immediately on paper by the questioner and retained by him. The other questions and answers he wrote, soon after, from his memory...." My own personal feeling is that what was written in the first edition is probably the more accurate of the two versions, but we really have no means now of ascertaining for sure which, if either, of the two versions is actually correct, so as with so many other doubtful details regarding the life of Sri Bhagavan and the genesis of His works we have no choice but to keep an open mind on this

subject. All that we can do with the information at present available to us is simply to place on record the fact that this is a point about which some doubt must exist.

(To be continued)

<sup>28</sup> Here the answer relating to the thirteenth question means that relating to the last question of text A. In more recent editions of *Self-Realization*, however, we find this sentence reworded and printed as, "The answer to the fourteenth question was written down by the Swami on a slate and copied immediately after on paper by the questioner and retained by him" (7th ed., p. 77). But here again the words "the answer to the fourteenth question" mean only the answer to the same last question of text A.

<sup>29</sup> The 4th edition of *Self-Realization* was a version completely rewritten by the author from the earlier editions, and hence not only is its structure different but it also contains certain pieces of information not given in any of the other editions. The 5th edition (1953) was revised from the 3rd edition (1936) with the addition of an epilogue by S.S. Cohen, and therefore it is much closer (both in its structure and in the information it contains) to the first three editions than to the 4th edition. The subsequent editions are little changed from the 5th edition except for the addition of two brief sections entitled 'Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi' and 'The Mountain Path' at the end of the epilogue.

### Errata

Some errors which have occurred in the printing of the translation of lines from *Anugraha Ahaval* on pp. 145-6 of our last issue should be corrected as follows:

| Page | column | Line | For          | Read         |
|------|--------|------|--------------|--------------|
| 145  | 2      | 24   | words        | sword        |
| "    | "      | "    | enemies      | enemy        |
| "    | "      | 28   | wanting      | liking       |
| "    | "      | 48   | he [finally] | [finally]    |
| 146  | 2      | 7    | incamated    | incorporated |



Sri Bhagavan once composed a Tamil verse; a line in it translates as: "The ancient and marvellous Linga of Arunachala came into being in the month of *Margazhi* (*Dhanus*) under the star (*Tiru Adirai*) *Ardra*."

Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya later composed a Telugu verse celebrating the birth of Sri Bhagavan thus:

"On the same sacred day when Arunachala Linga, the Original Linga, came into being, there occurred at Tiruchuzhi as the fruit of the *tapas* of Azhagu and Sundaram, an Incarnation: the Birth of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi."

*Ardra* is the holy day commemorating the manifestation of Lord Siva as Nataraja, the Cosmic Dancer in Chidambaram and as Arunachala, the Mountain of Stillness in Tiruvannamalai. How appropriate it was on this sacred day that Sri Bhagavan chose to manifest Himself on earth. And how inseparable are Siva, *Ardra*, Arunachala, Tiruchuzhi and *Satguru* Sri Bhagavan!

With this thought and many more such thoughts surging within my heart, I undertook a pilgrimage to Tiruchuzhi, earlier this year.

— Editor





"Sundara Mandiram", Tiruchuzhi

Sundaram Iyer

Azhagammal

## Pilgrimage to Tiruchuzhi

By V. Ganesan

**F**or a Ramana-devotee, the holiest of holy places are Tiruchuzhi, where He incarnated, Madurai, where after a sacred Death Experience He emerged in all effulgence as a Self-realized *Jnani* at the age of 16, and Arunachala, where He lived for 54 years and attained *Mahasamadhi*.

However, Tiruchuzhi, by virtue of being the Ramana *Janmabhoomi*, has a special sanctity of its own.

I have gone to that holy town before, but early this year, the 50th anniversary of the installation of the portraits of Sri Bhagavan and His parents at 'Sundara Mandiram', the house in which He was born in 1879, there was a strong inner prompting to go there again and spend a few days in retreat and repose.

This time the word Tiruchuzhi took hold of me powerfully and kept me constantly under its spell. I chanted the word again and again like a *mantra*. A wave of thrill passed through my body. What a mighty, mystical, multi-meaningful word it is! It meant Tiruchuzhi, the holy, ancient town; the holy Circle or Zero; the sacred eddy and Om, the *Pranava*. Isn't one really caught in the etymological eddy of the word?

The town is also called Punnaivanam, Avartapuram, Trisoolapuram, Bhuvaneswaram and Kaleechwaram — all beautiful names.

But to me the word Tiruchuzhi seemed a lot more mystical and magical, far deeper in its evocativeness. I was reminded of a lovely song composed by a Ramana devotee who has since been absorbed at His Feet. Punning on the word 'Chuzhi' and a few similar sounding words like 'chuzhal', 'choozh', the deeply meaningful Tamil song doesn't lend itself to an easy translation.

It says:

You manifested at *Chuzhi* [Tiruchuzhi] and yet never got caught in the 'chuzhi' [eddy].

You left 'Chuzhi' [Tiruchuzhi] and became the Flame [of Arunachala].

Won't your Grace envelope and save those, who, caught in the eddy, twist and twist?

O, the still, grand infinite Circle [Chuzhi]!

You spurned as the whirl of chimaera the pleasures that surround men.

My mind tosses restlessly and craves to be encompassed by you.

You, the Flame that burned away Fate, and vanquished all the eddies that twist and turn men.

Well said. In a world that whirls, and waltzes, twists and tosses, Bhagavan Ramana was ever *achala*, supremely still. In a world where men's minds are fragments, He was the Self's Perfect Whole. The poet Robert Browning wrote, "On earth broken arcs, in Heaven the perfect round". Sri Ramana is the perfect Round, the holy Circle, the Wholeness — the Heaven on earth!

*Chuzhi*, *sunnam* (*sunyam*) means Zero. Historian A.L. Basham says that the unknown Indian who gave the concept of zero to the world is the greatest son of India since the Buddha. Buddhism talks of *sunyata*, the great Nothingness. To Sri Bhagavan it is the Whole, the Perfect, the Infinite. It would seem that to Him it was a countdown to Infinity via Zero — rather the Zero is itself the Infinity. The *sunya* is the *Purna*. Sri Ramana, by dying while alive conquered Death, by reducing Himself to Zero found the Infinite. That *Chuzhi* (Zero) is indeed *Thiru* (holy)!

My mind filled with these thoughts, I set off on a pilgrimage to Tiruchuzhi, the Bethlehem, the Ayodhya of Ramana-*bhaktas*.

Tiruchuzhi is a small town, 38 miles from Madurai in South India. For centuries, the central attraction of this little town has been the huge, ancient temple of Lord Siva, called Bhuminatha (the Lord of Mother Earth). His Consort, Parvati, is here named Sahayamba, the Helping Mother. The Divine Couple have a chamber each, topped by imposing *gopuras* (towers). According to epigraphical evidence found at the temple, the inner portion of the temple is 2500 years old, while its *sanctum sanctorum* is "as ancient as the five elements," leaving us free to sift history from myth.

The *Puranas* tell us that Lord Siva had saved this place from many deluges of which three deserve special mention. On one occasion when the whole land surface was immersed in water, Siva planted His Trident (*Trisoolam*) there. The flooding waters were sucked into the dent made by it. Then an eddy ('Chuzhi')

was formed. Hence the name Tiruchuzhi (Glorious Eddy). During another deluge, He held the place aloft on the top of his Trident (*Trisool*). So, this town is also called *Soolapuri* and *Trisoolapuram*.

As the name of Siva here is *Bhuminatha*, the town is also called *Bhuminatheswara Kshetra*. According to a legend, Mother Earth was once carried away by a powerful demon, *Hiranyaksha*, and hidden under a deluge of water. By destroying the demon, Lord Vishnu rescued Mother Earth. However, as She felt polluted by the touch of the demon, she did an expiatory penance and worshipped Lord Siva in this place. Hence, the name *Bhuminatha* (Lord of Mother Earth).

In Tiruchuzhi deluges are things of hoary antiquity. In modern times, even though it is situated in a rather arid area, water is always adequately available in this town. In Sri Bhagavan's own words, "The village [Tiruchuzhi] has the river on one side and a huge lake on the other side. The bund of the lake is clayey and runs about three miles in all. The lake is, strangely enough, twenty feet over the level of the village. Even when it is overfull, the waters escape in other directions leaving the village unaffected." (*Talks*, No. 652)

There is a sacred tank, *Trisoola Tirtha*, in front of the temple, which was the spot of the eddy created by the Trident of Lord Siva. If you are a sceptic and the Trident story doesn't work with you, what do you say to the following curious phenomenon?

Every year during the ten days preceding the full moon in the Tamil month of *Masi* (*Maghasuddha Pournami*), the water level in the tank rises, and during the succeeding ten days, it gradually subsides. Year after year the young ones of the village throng to the tank and witness this strange sight with wide-eyed wonder! Pilgrims gather to bathe in those waters on that occasion. The silver ornaments of the bathers turn dark. This is not miraculous but something very mundane — these waters are sulphurous!

A very important landmark of this ancient city is the river, called *Gaundinya* river. Sage *Gaundinya* propitiated Lord Siva and obtained from Him the boon of the heavenly river, *Ganga*, to flow into this sacred place. The river is also called *Papahari* (destroyer of sins). A unique feature about it is that it is *Dakshinavahini* (flowing southward, the direction of its origin) at Tiruchuzhi. Ancient lore as well as recorded history state that physically and mentally afflicted people went to Tiruchuzhi to get cured of their illnesses.

Readers of *The Mountain Path* are acquainted with the Miracle of Lourdes. Such phenomena have also been experienced in other places, including several places in India. Jim Swan an environmental psychologist in the U.S.A. and editor of *Shaman's Drum*, has written about transpersonal experiences (such as ecstasies, cures etc.) associated with special places. He says, "If we find that many people, regardless of cultural heritage or prior awareness of the 'power' of the place, go to that place and have a transpersonal experience there, then we can begin to better understand why shamans revere the so-called places of power."

I did of course feel thrilled and transported at Tiruchuzhi, but it may be explained by the fact that I knew that here was born a *Jnani non-pareil*. But when Gautama, the ancient sage, and Parakrama Pandya, a second century Pandyan King, had transpersonal experiences at Tiruchuzhi, they were indeed taken unawares.

Sage Gautama suffered from intense mental disturbance and in quest of relief went on a country-wide pilgrimage. His agony remained unassuaged till he stepped into the region which is now called Tiruchuzhi. The relief was sudden and totally inexplicable. Moved by gratitude Gautama bivouacked there. He set up a hermitage for himself and did penance. Lord Siva the *ashutosha* (quick to please) manifested Himself before His devotee as Nataraja, the Lord of the Cosmic Dance. No devotee could ever ask for a greater boon. Lucky Gautama joined the select band of special devotees, Patanjali and Vyagrapada, who had such *darshan* at Chidambaram earlier.

In the 2nd Century of this era, a Pandyan King named Parakrama Pandya was roaming about his country due to a deep mental unrest caused by severe physical illnesses. When he chanced to step into Tiruchuzhi during his thus far futile wanderings, he was struck by the inrush of a great relief, curing him of all his ailments. He understood that it could only be due to the surcharged spiritual power of this sacred town. He then made Tiruchuzhi his capital and ruled his kingdom from here. He attributed this total cure to the greatness of the presiding deity, Bhuminatheswara, to the Gaundinya river and to the sacred water of Trisoola Tirtha. Even today, this healing power of the place is felt and utilised by earnest seekers.

Tiruchuzhi is one of the *mukti-kshetras*. Here one's fate ('chuzhi') is wiped out. Sri Ramana, the Great Liberator, was thus born in one *mukti-kshetra* and left His body in another.

As we have seen earlier, one of the several names of this town is Trisoolapuram for the reason already explained. There is a Sanskrit work called *Trisoolapura Mahatmyam* (Greatness of Trisoolapuram). Sri Viswanatha Swami, our former Editor and a close relative and great devotee of Sri Bhagavan, translated it into Tamil sometime in 1945-46 at the request of Sri Bhagavan's devotees. Suri Nagamma relates in her *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* how Sri Bhagavan, though He was ill at the time the translation was completed, worked continuously on it, made corrections and made it ready for printing.

This *mokshapuri* (*mukti-kshetra*, city that bestows Liberation) is surrounded by *ashtalingas* (eight Lingas) and *ashtatirthas* (eight sacred tanks). Worship of the Lingas and a dip into the *tirthas* confer release from the cycles of birth and death. The *ashtalingas* are: Kalava linga, Somasekhara linga, Kanva linga, Kameswara linga, Govidarana linga, Niruti linga, Gautama linga and Dinakaresa linga. The *ashtatirthas* are: Kalava tirtha, Tirunayana tirtha, Kanva tirtha, Kameswara tirtha, Amrita tirtha, Brahma tirtha, Jnana tirtha and Koti tirtha. (see map.)

Of the sacred cities of South India, fourteen are mentioned as spiritually vibrant and especially renowned for giving boons in the form of health, knowledge and prosperity. The most important and the greatest of all is Tiruchuzhi, say the Saivite saints. Appar, Sundarar, Jnanasambandar and Manickavachakar have all sung in praise of this place of piety. As in Varanasi, the river and linga in Tiruchuzhi are said to be of the greatest spiritual power. As in Arunachala, the region within a radius of 30 miles around the temple of Bhuminatheswara is so sacred that those living here are assured of Liberation. The *sthala vriksha* (the sacred tree of this place) is *maghizha* (*mimusops elengi*) and the saint (*sthalarishi*) of the place is the same as in Arunachala — Gautama. Arunachala cures the ills of the cycles of birth and death, and at Tiruchuzhi all afflictions are





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**"GLORY OF  
THE EDDY":  
TIRUCHUZH**

★

Sri Bhuminatheswara  
Temple

Gaundinya River

Trisoola Tirtham



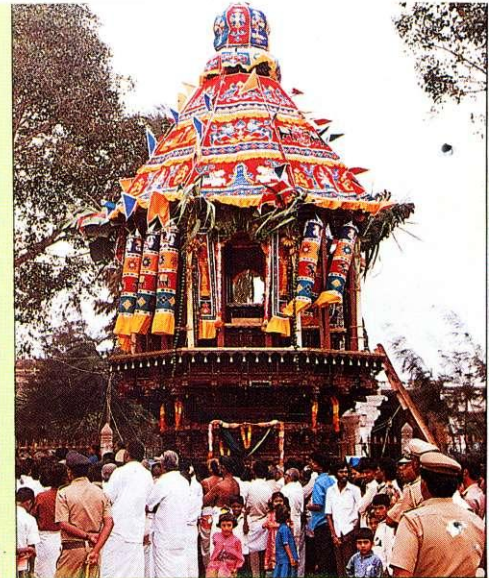
Kaalaiyyar Koil (on the banks of Gaundinya river)







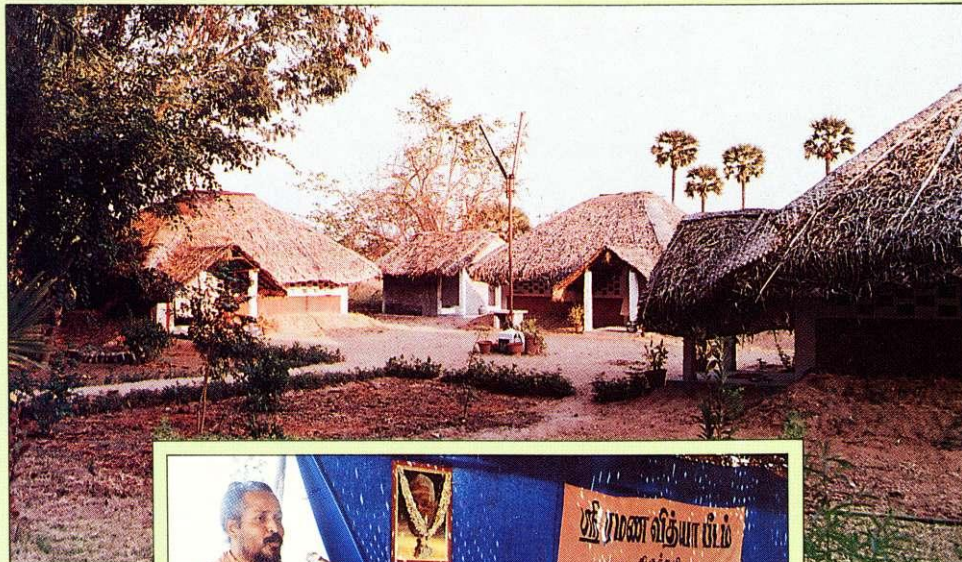
Sri Sundara Mandiram



The new temple-car (which had its inaugural procession, very recently)



Devotees thronged to this sacred city on that day!



"Sri Ramana Vidya Peedam": the simple, but convenient cottages; (inset) its inauguration in 1988 by Swami Sahajananda.



totally cured. Like Arunachala, where ashrams of *rishis* abounded in the past, in Tiruchuzhi too sages like Gautama, Kasyapa, Bhargava, Bharadvaja, Parasara, Kausika, Devala and others had their ashrams.

When Sundarar, the great saint-singer who lived in the 7th century, came to know of the greatness of Tiruchuzhi, which was then known as Punnaivanam or Jyotivanam, he was very eager to have *darshan* of Lord Bhuminatha. The Gaundinya river was in spate. Sundarar waited and prayed, but the floods did not recede. Sundarar was filled with despair. That night the Lord ordered him to follow Him as He rode Nandi, the great Bull. Also, again, he had another dream in which Lord Siva appeared as a brilliant, beautiful, sturdy youth and guided Sundarar. That spot is called "*Kalaiyarkoil*", where there is a shrine for Lord Siva. Tiruchuzhi and Kalaiyarkoil are on opposite sides of the river. Sundarar's songs on Bhuminatheswara and on Kalaiyarkoil are very well known in Tamil Nadu. Kalaiyarkoil is located at Pallimadam, which from very ancient times is considered a sacred spot, ideal for *tapas*. It is here that *rishi* Gaundinya did penance and earned Ganga as a reward. Many a sage performed *tapas* here.

Siva unique, the light supreme that shines  
unceasing in comely Tiruchuzhi, Self that dances  
in unbroken bliss in devotees' hearts, bestow on me  
your grace and shine as Heart within my heart.

— Sri Ramana Maharshi

As depicted in the cover story, young Ramana was very fond of playing along with his friends, His favourite sport being swimming and any ground-play, like football, demanding muscular exertion.

Little Ramana spent long hours swimming in the Trisoola Tirtha, Gaundinya river and at Kalaiyarkoil temple. This now dilapidated ancient temple and the sands in the adjoining river are so surcharged with Sri Ramana's vibrant spiritual energy that one is transported to those golden days of His boyhood. Sri Swami Satyananda, an ardent student of the late Swami Sahajananda, lives in silence at this temple for the past few years. It is to his credit that the car (*ratha*) of the temple was newly made and its inaugural procession took place on January 23, 1994. The old car last run in 1950, the year of Sri Bhagavan's *Mahanirvana* after which it broke down. Sri Swami Satyananda has thus earned the gratitude of all who live in and around Tiruchuzhi.

The Rajas (Kings) of Ramanathapuram have for centuries taken personal care of the Bhuminatheswara Temple, which heads the list of 47 temples under their supervision, as well as Kalaiyarkoil Temple. Swami Vivekananda during his *parivrajaka* (peregrination) days, supported by the then Raja, stayed in December 1892 for three days at the Kalaiyarkoil Temple, as the Gaundinya river was in spate. When the Swami returned to India after his American *digvijaya* (triumphant tour), it was this Raja who received him and afforded him one of the most memorable receptions given to anyone by any royal family of India — he personally drew the chariot in which the Swami was seated! I record here with great joy the invaluable contributions by the Rani (Queen) of Ramanathapuram, Smt. Indiradevi Nachiyar, for the new temple car and in undertaking the stupendous renovation work of Bhuminatheswara Temple which is expected to cost half a million rupees over a period of three to four years to complete (see box.)

As seen earlier, besides being powerfully spiritual, Tiruchuzhi is also a great



Rani Indira Devi

Swami Satyananda

Swami Anantananda

Smt. Indira

Sri Dinakaran

healing centre to this day, a fact tellingly reaffirmed by the recent founding - on the banks of the river Gaundinya very near where young Ramana had played - of "Sri Ramana Maharshi Vidya Peetham" (Sri Ramana Maharshi Learning Centre), which is a centre at once of *vidya* (learning) and *vaidya* (therapy). Its founders, Swami Sahajananda and Sri Dinakaran, have thereby rendered yeoman service to humanity in general and *sadhaks* in particular. Smt. Nirmla and Sri Dinakaran take personal interest in the exemplary maintenance of this spiritual centre. Sri Swami Ananthananda who is in charge of this Ashram, makes the visiting-pilgrims and seekers feel at home with his generous attitude and constant personal care.

At Sri Ramana Maharshi Vidya Peetham<sup>1</sup>, one is helped to recover the natural healthy state of the body through systematic scientific fasts. Once cleansed of the impurities of the body, one is better equipped to pursue the path as taught by Sri Bhagavan.

To me, as to other Ramana-*bhaktas*, the holiest of holy shrines in Tiruchuzhi is the 'Sundara Mandiram' itself. When I prostrated in front of the portraits of Sri Bhagavan and His parents, Sri Bhagavan's beautiful song came to my mind:

In Tiruchuzhi, the holy town of Bhuminatha, I was born to Sundara and his virtuous wife, Sundari [Azhagu]. To rescue me from this barren worldly life, Arunachala Siva, in the form of a Hill, famous throughout the universe, gave me His own State of Bliss, so that His heart might rejoice, so that His own Being as Awareness might shine forth and His own Power might flourish.

By Lord Siva's Grace, Ramana was transfigured into Sivahood. This was done by the Lord for His own greater glory — *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*.

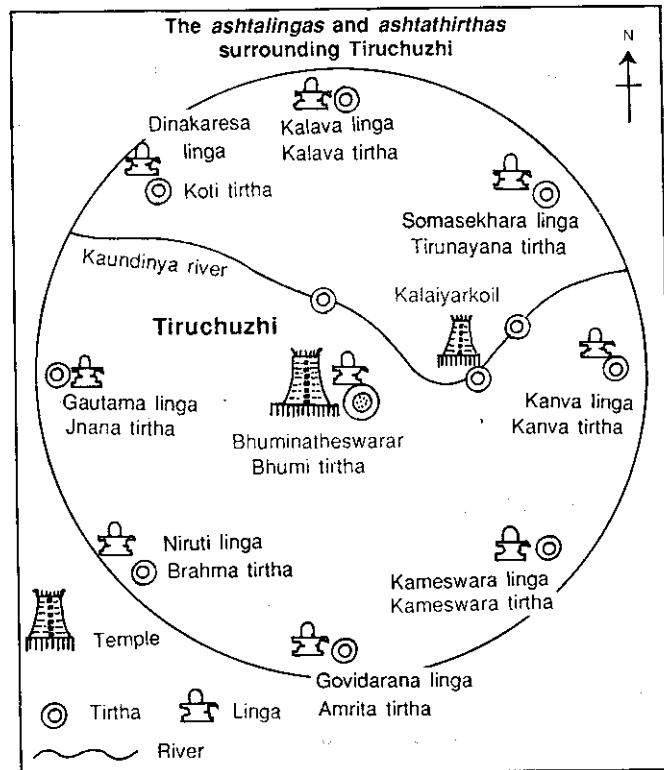
Who can save us from the ocean of *samsara* except one who has crossed over to the other shore? Says Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni:

The Great Blessing of Sahayamba [the Son], who by the inundation of the Grace of Her Purity Supreme became that Itself, let Him [Bhagavan Ramana] be our guide and thus save us from the ocean of *samsara* [bondage of transmigration].

Arunachala, Tiruchuzhi and Sri Ramana share a common quality. The very thought (*smarana*) of each of the three is sure to bestow *Mukti*. This thought should be so whole-hearted that there is no other thought!

Let us ever meditate on Sri Ramana, the Star of *Jnana* which appeared in Tiruchuzhi and vanished into Arunachala and ever and ever shines in our Heart! Let us get caught in the Sacred and Glorious Eddy of His Grace and be liberated from the ocean of *samsara*!

<sup>1</sup> For more information please contact: Sri Swami Ananthananda, 'Sri Ramana Maharshi Vidya Peetham', Pallimadam, Tiruchuzhi - 626 129, South India.



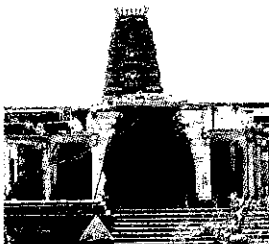
### An Appeal

In Tiruchuzhi, the birthplace of Sri Bhagavan lies Sri Bhuminatheswara Temple. It is an ancient and sacred one, where Bhagavan during His younger days rejoiced playing and worshipping. It is good news that the new "SATHYASANTI SEVA TRUST" has been duly registered, to execute and perform the renovation and *Kumbhabishekam* of Sri Bhuminatheswara Temple together with the renovation of the Kalaiyarkoil Temple. The working committee, which has been entrusted with this noble task, has planned to collect funds, from the rich and the poor alike, by going on a *pada yatra* (travel by walking in a group) and meeting them in person, thereby securing their intimate involvement. The cost is estimated at Rs. 5,00,000 and the work to be executed within 3 or 4 years.

Devotees are requested to send their contributions, by cheque or bank draft, to the following:

*Bhuminatha Temple*

President,  
'Sathyasanti Seva Trust'  
Tiruchuzhi 626 129,  
S. India.



It is gratefully acknowledged that because of the financial support extended by readers of *The Mountain Path* this temple's *ratha* (chariot) was recently newly made and its inaugural procession took place in Tiruchuzhi on Jan. 23, 1994.

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Some time between 1934 and 1940, Sri Yoga Swami, the great sage of Sri Lanka, came to India and met Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. From then on, Yoga Swami always referred to Bhagavan as a *Maha Viran* — a great hero. About Arunachala, which Yoga Swami held most sacred as the silent, unchanging manifestation of the One without a second, and Sri Bhagavan's acknowledged Guru, he sang:

The feet of which Sri Vishnu Himself could not attain the vision,  
The feet of Truth, which stands as One, pervading heaven and earth,  
They are our ever-present help,  
Our refuge and support.

(*Natchintanai*, 232)

This "King of Lankapuri" — as his Guru called him — was a Master in every sense of the word. Always spartan in word and deed, he was noted for his aphoristic, often enigmatic, utterances which nevertheless held a depth of meaning for the discerning seeker. Dextrously fluent in both Tamil and English, he would humourously express deep metaphysical truths in witty puns and *double entendres* in both languages. "Don't proclaim the truth, and don't lie," he would say. The truth can never be expressed in words, and any attempt to do so distorts it. "You cannot realise. I cannot realise. [Because] there is no 'you' and no 'I'." *Tevaram* used to be sung every evening in his presence. About the custom he once quipped, "We sang *Tevaram* to while away at time, but time has not gone. We too are eternal."

— Editor

# "King of Lankapuri"

SRI YOGA SWAMI OF JAFFNA

## PART I

I am here, I am there, I am everywhere!  
And I am the madman who knows it!

— Yoga Swami  
*Natchintanai*, 79<sup>1</sup>

THE story goes that when, in 1897, the great Swami Vivekananda stopped in Jaffna on his triumphant return from the World Parliament of Religions, an inconspicuous man named Yoganathan attended his lecture at the Hindu College. Vivekananda, who had many engagements that day, began his talk with the words, "Time is short but the subject is vast." Yoganathan abruptly got up, left the auditorium, and at once set off in search of a Guru. The words remained with him all his life.

Little is known about the early life of the future sage except that he was born into a pious Saiva family on Wednesday, May 29, 1872 in the village of Mavittapuram. After his mother's death when he was still an infant, he was sent to live with his paternal uncle in Kolumbuturai, about three miles outside Jaffna, where, for the most part, he remained for the rest of his life. He began his formal education in a Tamil school in the neighbourhood, and finished it at St. Patrick's College, reputedly one of the leading educational institutions in Ceylon. He thus acquired advanced proficiency in both Tamil and English. Being a missionary school, study of the Christian Bible was obligatory. This, together with the Tamil scriptures he studied from choice, made a profound impact on Yoganathan, as evidenced by his frequent references in later life to biblical quotations to illustrate vedantic truths.<sup>2</sup>

About 1901, he came firmly under the influence of his Guru, Chellappa Swami, who lived in the precincts of the great Murugan Temple of Nallur, some three miles from Kolumbuturai. From then on, every weekend Yoganathan would vigorously walk the full forty-five miles from

Kilinochi, where he was working, to Nallur to be with his Guru, and again walk back to work the following Monday.

Near the house of the chariot at Lord  
Murugan's shrine...  
I had *darshan* of the Master.  
"Hey! Who are you?" he cried!...

Near the house of the chariot at Lord  
Murugan's shrine...  
I had *darshan* of the Master.  
"Dive deep within and realise" he shouted  
and laughed loud.<sup>3</sup>

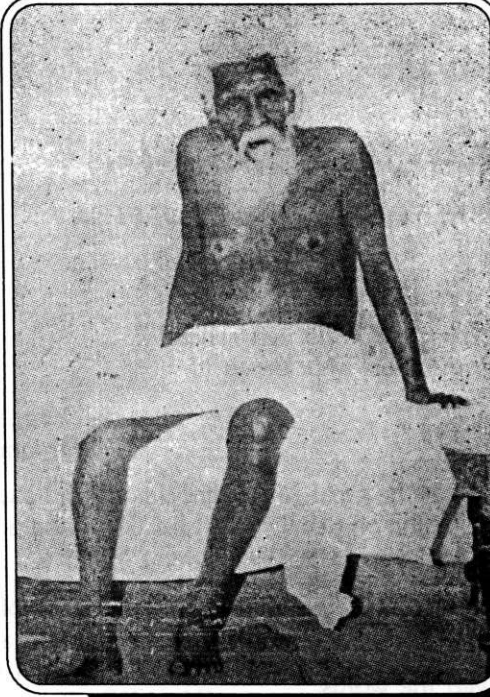
Cheliappa Swami was a *jnani* who cloaked his greatness in *unmatha avastha*<sup>4</sup>, the guise of a madman. Indeed, locally he was known as

<sup>1</sup> *Natchintanai* means "good thought". It was the name Yoga Swami gave to the large number of spontaneous songs he sang that were (or were not, as the case might be) written down by some devotee at the time of their utterance. All references are to the page number on which the song appears in the 1974 English edition of *Natchintanai: Songs and Sayings of Yogaswami* (hereafter referred to as *Natchintanai*), published by the Sivathondan Society, Jaffna. Tamil references will be found in the 1974 edition of நட்சிந்தனை by the same publisher.

<sup>2</sup> No attempt is made here to make an exhaustive study of Yoga Swami's teachings, which parallel those of Sri Bhagavan in a most striking manner. However, a selection of his utterances to certain disciples have been gathered from *Words of Our Master*, published by Jaffna Cooperative Books, 1972, and highlighted here in boxes.

<sup>3</sup> *Natchintanai*, 196.

<sup>4</sup> One of the three classical "guises" of the *jnani*, as described in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*: "balonmathapisachavat" — "like a child, a madman or ghoul".



"Visai [mad] Chellappan". He would throw stones at people and use obscene language and mad talk to drive them from him and keep all at a distance but the most serious.

Attracting people to yourself is another self-deluding activity... Chellappan was great; he never gave in to such delusions. He merely muttered, "Who knows?" and "It was all settled long ago," and went about the outer courtyards of the Nallur Temple and sat in the dirt, saying that all the filth would frighten away the people who came to fall at his feet. I don't think anyone ever got an answer to a question. I merely stood and waited behind him for the occasional gem that fell out of all the mad talk.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to his apparent madness, Chellappan used to repeat, often for months at a time, one or another variation of certain enigmatic sayings of which he was particularly fond.

There were four fundamental sayings, and as they contained the essence of the teachings of both Chellappan and his disciple, they came to be known as the "*Mahavakyas*" "Great Sayings":

1. "ஒரு பொல்லாப்பும் இல்லை."  
"There is not even one wrong (or harmful) thing."
2. "நாம் அறியோம்."  
or  
"நாம் ஒன்றும் அறியோம்"  
"We do not know."  
or  
"We know nothing."
3. "எப்பவோ முடிந்த காரியம்."  
"It was all finished (or accomplished) long, long ago."  
Alternatively; "It was all perfect and complete from the very beginning."
4. "முழுதும் உண்மை."  
"All is truth."  
Alternatively: "The entirety of everything is the Reality."

These apparently enigmatic sayings, when meditated upon, reveal a depth of meaning.

<sup>5</sup> Words of our Master, pp. 65-6.



Their multi-dimensionality directs the mind to the very nature of Reality. About their profundity and the benefits that meditation on them bestows, Yoga Swami sang:

They are the best of all who know themselves;  
 Upon this earth they'll not take birth again.  
 Those who have seen how "three" have become "one" —  
 They are the wise. Know them!  
 He is the Guru, whose attributes and qualities transcend,  
 Who is Knowledge of all knowledge,  
 beyond what is beyond.  
 The God who makes the Hearts of devotees His temple —  
 He is indeed the Lord Supreme.  
 He who is and says "I-I" within the Hearts of all —  
 Perceive Him and be happy!<sup>6</sup>

Clearly, work forty-five miles distant from his Guru could not hold Yognathan for long, and after six years he quit his job to immerse himself completely in his Guru's holy presence.

In speechless Silence he bade me to relish who I am.  
 Distinctions fade. I imbibe his grace, and instantly  
 I gain the clarity of wisdom and become immersed in bliss.<sup>7</sup>

There are striking parallels between the teachings of Yoga Swami and those of his contemporary, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the *Svayambhu* Guru of Tiruvannamalai. Indeed, the phenomenon of similarity also struck Yoga Swami's disciples, who, seeing no difference between the two Gurus, would frequently come to Ramanasramam, often for prolonged periods, for Bhagavan's *darshan* and to seek elucidation on points that the enigmatic Yogi Swami would not elaborate upon. They found Bhagavan Ramana more approachable and, though he

might observe silence, he never, like Yoga Swami, sent anyone away. Yoga Swami observed the outward *gunam* of the *kshatriya*: like a king he ordered people to come or go. Ramana, the *Brahmarishi*, was ever the *sakshi*, the witness: he let people and events come and go and unfold as they would. On a deeper level, of course, both *jnanis* knew that "It was all accomplished long, long ago". Among the regular visitors to Ramanasramam, readers of *Day by Day with Bhagavan* will be familiar with K. (Colombo) Ramachandran (whose son now lives and works in Ramanasramam), K. Navaratnam, and Ma Ratna Navaratnam. Of Bhagavan's attraction for these earnest seekers two examples should suffice. On the one hand we have the cryptic "*Mahavakya*", "We do not know" or "We know nothing". On the other hand, we find Bhagavan saying in *Talks*, pg. 154 "Cease to be the knower; then there is perfection." And in *Day by Day*, pg. 195 "The state we call meditation is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything."

About his remarkable experience with the two Gurus, Sri Gauribala Swami, the first Western disciple of Yoga Swami, narrated the following anecdote. Before the Second World War broke out he had been living in Ceylon as a Buddhist monk. Like other German nationals, he was interned in North India for the duration of the war. On his way back to Ceylon after the war, he stopped at Ramanasramam to have *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan.

Having recently converted to Hinduism, the Swami had a great many questions he wanted Bhagavan to clarify. But as time wore on his mind became far too quiet for questions and they all evaporated. When three months were completed and he was preparing to depart for Lanka, Swami asked Bhagavan one final *upadesa* for his *sadhana*.

<sup>6</sup> *Natchintanai*, 214.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in *Saint Yogaswami and the Testament of Truth*, by Ratna Chelliah Navaratnam, Sri Lanka, 1972 (hereafter referred to as *Testament of Truth*).

"The Truth can be summed up in the words, 'I am that I am,' " said Bhagavan, "and the method is 'Summa Iru.' "

Not yet knowing Tamil, Gauribala asked another devotee what the word meant. Whether not knowing English well enough or Sri Bhagavan's teaching, the devotee answered that they meant, "Be quiet". Puzzled, Gauribala took leave and returned to Lanka. Shortly thereafter he met Yoga Swami and came strongly under his influence. At the time of initiation, Yoga Swami uttered only two words: "Summa Iru." The last words of Sri Bhagavan were the initiatic words of Yoga Swami, and it took Gauribala many years to delve into the full meaning of this identical *upadesa*.

From the time Yoganathan quit work to be with his Guru, his life became one of intense spiritual discipline, severe *tapas* and stern trials. One such *tapas* was a continuous forty-day meditation. At the end of it Yoganathan, presenting himself before Chellappan, received his Guru's benediction. Rude and peremptory, the words shot out: "Go you hither and thither and beg for your food!" With this he sent the disciple away to stand on his own feet and digest what had been transmitted. The year was 1906, and Yoganathan was thirty-four years old.

Thus began Yoganathan's solitary *sadhana*, when he too was absorbed in *unmatha avastha* like his Guru. Naked he would lie in the hot sun for hours and days, with chillie powder smeared all over his body. If he was approached, he would hurl stones or abuse, often both. Thus he kept to himself and followed his Guru's *upadesa*. In 1910 he once again returned to Chellappan and heard the following blessing ring out:

"இந்தா இந்தா இலங்காபுரி தந்தேன் தந்தேன்  
இராசமுடி தந்தேன் தந்தேன்  
பார் உள்ளளவும் கடல் நீர் உள்ளளவும்."

"Look here! Look here! The city of Lanka  
I have given, I have given.  
The king's crown I have given, I have  
given —

### Words of Sri Yoga Swami

"The Truth is one. The rest is illusion. States of realisation are also an illusion. Truth is betrayed by the first attempt at articulation.... You must realise It yourself. It is wrong even to put it that way. How does one express something changeless and beyond the ken of the mind? The whole is the Truth."

\* \* \*

"If you don't know, you are pure. Not knowing is purity. Then you are humble. If you know, you are not pure." (English)

\* \* \*

"There is one thing God cannot do — He cannot separate Himself from the soul."

\* \* \*

"It is now very clear that God is, that He is everywhere, and so am I. Yet this body has to remain within this hut."

\* \* \*

"The one who prays and the one to whom prayers are addressed are one and the same."

\* \* \*

"When you go on a pilgrimage, it directs the mind towards God. But remember — God is within."

\* \* \*

"On the highest level you do not have to control even the mind, because, to control the mind there must be a second. There will come a time when the mind becomes quiet by itself."

\* \* \*

"The *atma* is *summa*. Movement is for the body and mind."

As long as the world exists, as long as the seas exist.<sup>8</sup>

This final blessing, *diksha* and *adhikara* together, appears to have taken place on the second Monday of the Tamil month of Panguni (March-April), and Yoga Swami observed it thereafter as his *diksha* day.

By the Guru's grace my ego was destroyed.

By the Guru's grace my Heart became refreshed.

By the Guru's grace true love burst forth and flourished.

By the Guru's grace the Guru disappeared.<sup>9</sup>

About the middle of that year, Yoga Swami went on a solitary *pada yatra* to Lanka's numerous shrines and holy places, meeting on the way many saints and ascetics from various traditions — Hindu, Buddhist, Sufi and tribal. When he returned to his old haunts after a year or so he was recognised by the people as *Rajarishi*. Revering him as a "King of Yogis", they began to call him Yoga Swami. The name stuck.

In 1915 Yoga Swami heard of Chellappan's impending death and went to Nallur to visit the dying Guru. Chellappan was then being nursed in the hut of a relative. Quietly approaching the gate of the compound, Yoga Swami heard Chellappan shout from within: "வெளியே நின்று பார்!" — "Stand outside and see!" Typically, this was not a rebuff but rather the Guru's final blessing to a beloved disciple. வெளி while colloquially meaning "outside", also means "open space", "void" — *akasha*, *shunya*. To ever abide in the plenum void that is *Brahman* is the ultimate state of realisation; truly a great parting benediction.

The farewell on the external plane pulled him more deeply than ever within the Heart:

"அப்படியே யுள்ளது."

"It is as it is."

"நீயே நானே; நானே நீயே."

"You are I! I am you!"<sup>10</sup>

On the *nakshatram* of Aswini in the month of March, 1915, Chellappa Swami, aged about seventy, attained *mahasamadhi*.

From 1915 onwards, Yoga Swami led the life of a renounced recluse, remaining in *unmatha avastha* like his Guru. He could be seen frequenting the Nallur Chariot where Chellappan had spent most of his life, the Thundi Crematorium, one or another ashram, and the Grand Bazaar, but most often he was to be found sitting under an *iluppai* tree at the School Junction in Kolumbuturai, immersed in *samadhi*. He would sit there for months at a stretch, totally indifferent to — or oblivious of — his surroundings and the inclemencies of weather. The 1921 flood in Jaffna came and went without disturbing his repose. It was only in 1923, when he accepted the invitation to live in a simple coconut-thatched mud hut in the compound of a householder devotee near the tree under which he had been living, that his *unmatha avastha* came to an end and Swami entered the more approachable state in which he remained till his *mahasamadhi*. Though always terse and often enigmatic, ever spontaneous in words and actions, Swami nevertheless led from then on a normal life of regular habits, and devotees found it possible to come to him for guidance. But it was only in 1934, when he gave his permission to a group of his devotees to publish the *Sivathondan* ("Servant of Siva"), a religious journal in Tamil with a small section in English, that his teaching became known to the world at large. Typically, however, as long as he lived Swami forbade his name or photograph to be printed in the magazine.

Between 1934 and 1940 Yoga Swami undertook a number of trips to India, during one of which he went to see Sri Ramana Maharshi.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pg. 121.

<sup>9</sup> *Natchintanai*, 156.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in *Testament of Truth*, pg. 122.

Ever spartan with words, Yoga Swami has nev-

11 மணி நேரம்

[illegible]

৯.

You are not the body. You are not the mind, nor the *buddhi*, nor the will. You are the *atma*. The *atma* is eternal. This is the conclusion which great souls have arrived at from their experience. Let this truth become well impressed on your mind. But there is one thing to which you must give attention. Never swerve from the path of *dharma*. Let it be your practice to regard every life as the holy presence of God. He is both within and without.

- It is a common practice among South Indian *Saivites*, before beginning any letter, to put at the top of the page a sign similar to that shown above, and underneath it the word “*Sivamayam*”. The sign is a symbol of the god Ganesha (the Remover of Obstacles), and “*Sivamayam*” means “pervaded by” or “consisting of Siva,” and thus conveys the idea that everything, including the contents of the letter, is Siva, the One without a second.

### Words of Sri Yoga Swami

"The book is within you. Turn over the leaves and study. One must learn that which comes from within oneself. What is written by others is only what is spat out."

\* \* \*

"You are the only one in the world. Know that and be a man! You are the whole world — everything is in you."

\* \* \*

"If you want to go beyond, you lose everything. There is no work, there is no you, no I, no God — nothing!"

\* \* \*

"Take the 'I' by the 'I.'" (English)

\* \* \*

"Don't admit the second person."

\* \* \*

"When you are cooking, I am cooking with you. When you are walking, I am walking with you. I am with you because there is only One." (English)

\* \* \*

"I salute you on all sides! You understand? Because you are everywhere." (English)

\* \* \*

ertheless condensed into these five aphoristic sentences a glowing tribute to the Sage of Arunachala. In saying, "சுமமா வேந்தோம்" — literally, "Summa we went" — the accent is on the word "summa", as important a word and concept in Yoga Swami's teaching as in Sri Bhagavan's. In its metaphysical sense, the word indicates a state of unruffled inner poise and stillness: "Be still and know that I am [is] God" — a quotation much used by both Yoga Swami and Bhagavan. That stillness is the state of being *summa*. *Brahman* is *summa*, and *summa* *iruttal* — abiding in stillness, the real Silence or *maunam* — is to abide as *Brahman*, our true nature and being. In the entire hour that Yoga Swami spent in the presence of Sri Bhagavan, no words were spoken. They were both *summa*. Their communion was like that of Dakshinamurti — of whom Sri Bhagavan was the living embodiment — communion in Silence. And Yoga Swami, who never overtly praised anyone, came away calling Ramana, a "maha viran", a "great hero".

The rest of Yoga Swami's life is really a description of his influence on his devotees and disciples, and can best be told through their impressions and anecdotes. Like Sri Bhagavan,

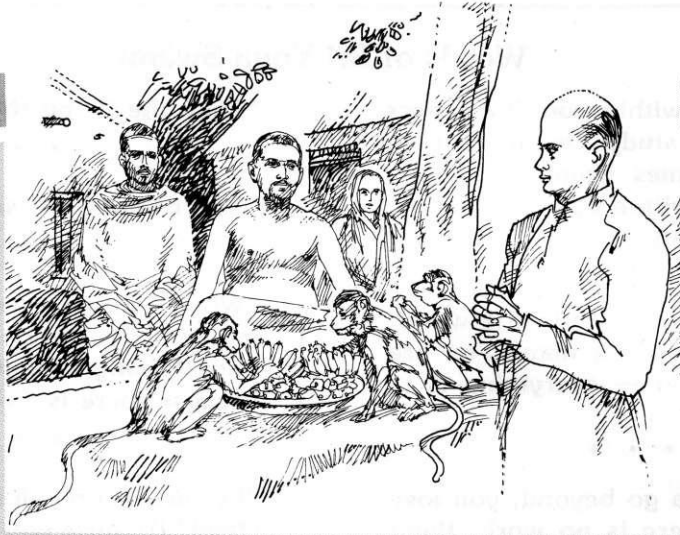
Yoga Swami never accepted the title of Guru, but, as Arthur Osborne has said of Sri Bhagavan, those who were his disciples nevertheless knew so unerringly.

In our next issue, we shall present a number of anecdotes recording Yoga Swami's interactions with visitors and devotees.

— To be continued

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7. Personal interviews.



Shortly before his *mahasamadhi* in 1956, Swami Tapovan Maharaj paid high tributes to Sri Ramana Maharshi, whose *darshan* had provided a lifetime of inspiration, in the following words:

"Silence is Truth. Silence is Bliss. Silence is Peace. And hence Silence is *Atman*. To live this Silence as such is the Goal. It is *Moksha*. It is the end of the endless cycle of births and deaths. Sri Ramana Maharshi was an embodiment of such a Silence. He was the Silence Itself. Therefore he did not *preach* the Silence. Only when one comes back to the 'noisy' from the Silence can one preach the Silence. How can the Silence preach Itself through Silence?

"Nearly thirty-five or forty years ago, I had the good fortune of having the *darshan* of Maharshi at Tiruvannamalai when he was living there in a cave along with his mother and brother. One morning, a young *brahmachari* at that time, I climbed to the cave, saw the Maharshi there and, placing a bunch of bananas at his feet, bowed and sat before him. At the same moment some monkeys jumped on to the scene, scrambled for the fruits and ran away with them.

"Maharshi looked lovingly into my face. That was all. He spoke but Silence, not a word passed between us. A supreme, a dynamic and divine Silence prevailed. An hour passed by, all in Silence. When eventually he rose, I too rose, bowed again and walked down the Hill. The divine Silence sank deeper and deeper into me at each step!"

— Editor



## "Forest of Tapas"

Swami Tapovan Maharaj of Uttarkashi

"If by wandering as a mendicant one can become a *sannyasin*, all beggars should be *sannyasins*. If by studying the scriptures one can become a *sannyasin*, then by counting the King's money, one must become a millionaire."

— Swami Tapovan Maharaj

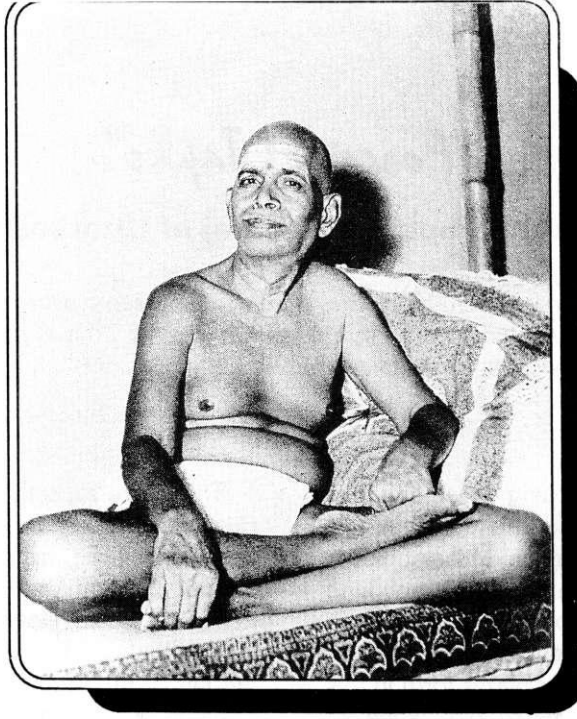
**H**e had not the far-reaching greatness of a Buddha or a Sankara, nor the towering presence and appeal of a Ramana Maharshi or a Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Shunning any kind of name, fame, creature comforts or any other "riches" of this world, ever aloof, Swami Tapovan Maharaj nevertheless blazes forth in this century like the great *Rishis* of old. None so fully embodies the ideal of *sannyasa* and the true purpose of *sadhana* and *tapas* — the realisation and establishment of oneself in the non-dual *Brahman* — as this great yet humble *sannyasin* of the Himalayas. Truly did he come to be his name: a veritable forest of *tapas*. Describing his greatness, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, who had lived near him and knew him well, liked to narrate the following story:

One day, when Devarishi Narada came to visit Dwaraka, he found the Lord absorbed in deep meditation. Narada marvelled at the sight, for it was beyond his comprehension to imagine why or on what Lord Krishna would meditate. For, was not the Lord Himself the Supreme Object of man's meditation? Later on, when questioned on this point by Narada, the Lord replied, "I was meditating upon the lotus feet of saints and holy men."

The future Swami Tapovan was born into an aristocratic and wealthy family in a village near Palghat, Kerala on the auspicious day of the *Sukla Paksha Ekadasi* in the month of *Margaseersha* (November-December) in 1886. This day is called *Gita Jayanti* as it commemorates the birth of the *Bhagavad Gita*. His father, Achutan Nair, and mother, Balamba, named the child Subramania.

The future *tapasvin* showed spiritual tendencies from his very childhood. Indifferent to food and friends alike, his childhood love was to hide himself in temples or out of the way places where he could worship Lord Siva, his *ishta*, undisturbed; or else he would perform *pujas* in the family *puja* room, having set up a beautiful stone as a *Sivalingam*. At such moments he could not be disturbed, so intent was he in his devotions.

According to the family's high standards, the boy studied his native Malayalam only up to his ninth year, when he was enrolled in a better school at some distance from home to study English. By the age of 16, however, Subramania had come to a momentous decision: as he had no ambition whatsoever for worldly ends, this secular education was of no use to him, so he quit. He announced his decision to his crestfallen father. The latter had intended for the boy a university education abroad and then a high government position back in his homeland. When the boy indicated that his desire was only to quit school, not studies, and that he wanted to take up the study of Sanskrit, Achutan agreed to engage the best local scholars to tutor the boy at home. All the while Subramania continued to study Malayalam literature according to his natural inclinations, together with English books on Eastern philosophy. Truly, his hunger for a spiritual education was one-pointed and voracious. Though greatly inspired by the lives of Adi Sankara and Ramanuja of old, and Sri Ramakrishna and Rama Thirtha of more recent years, he was equally anxious to study the teachings of the Buddha, Christ, Mohammed and the Jain gurus with the same unwearied interest.



Not content with a mere ingestion of words and doctrines, he always tried to get at their inner significance through tireless meditation upon the subject at hand.

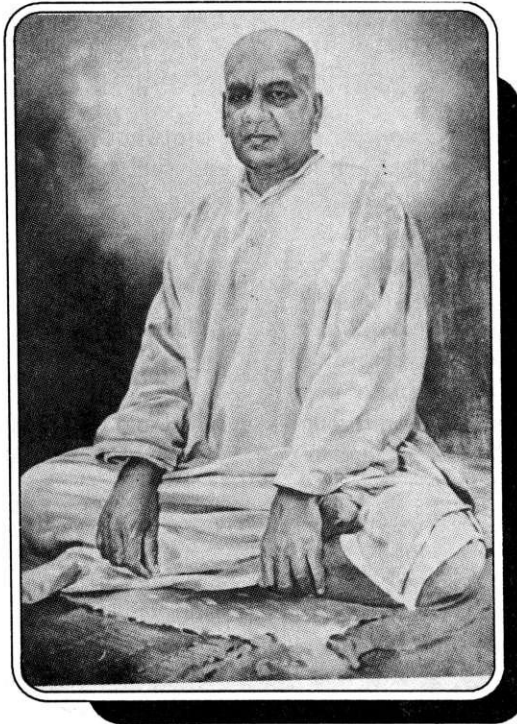
At one time during this period, his mind was assailed by a doubt: "I slept soundly; I was aware of nothing. Is this knowledge of the awakened sleeper a matter of memory or inference?" Although he meditated deeply and long over the question, and sought the help of the learned men around him, it was to take many years and the powerful *darshan* of Sri Ramana Maharshi to erase this question forever.

Together with study, Subramania began a routine of frugal eating combined with regular worship and meditation. Every evening he would retreat into the forest and spend whole nights absorbed in meditation. The beauty of nature became a lifelong passion for him because it never failed to trigger recollectedness of the Divine. In fact, many of his future Sanskrit works were to use the majesty of some holy place as a vehicle for expressing deep Vedantic truths. Indeed, the seeds of all the greatness to follow were already budding forth in the child and young man. Subramania wrote his first Sanskrit

poem when he was 18. Called *Vibhakarom*, it was widely acclaimed and scholars encouraged him to continue his poetic efforts. However, Subramania was already beginning to feel the call of *sannyasa* and redoubled his studies to equip himself for the mastery of Vedanta which, he believed, together with a life of dispassion, renunciation and dedication, could alone lead to liberation, his only goal in life.

When Subramania was 21 years old, his father suddenly died, leaving his eldest son the head of the family. Although Subramania had been on the verge of taking *sannyasa*, after much inner struggle he came to the conclusion that it was wrong to fail to execute his duty to his younger brother and resolved to stay on until Sankara's education was completed and he could properly take over the management of the family's affairs. With this resolve he nevertheless intensified both studies and *sadhana*.

Though himself now the head of a rich family, Subramania managed the estate as a trustee and lived alone in a thatched hut away from his ancestral home. His contemporaries recalled how they would meet the boy living in a lonely hut in an open field, sleeping on the ground, a single



Sri Tapovan Maharaj

*dhoti* his sole possession. They confessed that they took him to be "slightly mad".

Balamba, his mother, had her own plans. She wished to see her son married and settled in life. She would often point out the girl chosen for him and say, "This is the girl for you to marry. When are you going to marry?" Subramania's usual answer was enigmatic: "Yes, I shall marry; and when I marry, you will see whom I marry. You will have no reason to regret."

During this difficult period of his life, Subramania began to write a number of articles for such Malayalam newspapers as *Manorama*. He also began to share his knowledge by giving lectures to the public. In his eagerness to further his spiritual goal he began a number of short and three long pilgrimages throughout South India. It was in this way that his steps eventually lead him to the feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Arriving in Tiruvannamalai, Subramania proceeded first to the great Arunachaleswara Temple and devoutly circumambulated it, singing devotional songs and meditating upon the greatness of Siva, the Lord of Ascetics. The following day at 9 a.m. he began to climb the

Hill eagerly to have his *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan. Reaching Skandashrami, he found the Maharshi seated within, surrounded by his mother, brother and devotees. Noting that Sri Bhagavan wore only a *kaupinam* and an expression of fathomless peace, Subramania thought to himself, "Here is a real *avadhuta*. Though surrounded by relatives and devotees, he is completely alone and at one with the Self. Though people offer him fruits and sweets, he sits unmoved, letting the monkeys take them away. This is surely the Peace and the Silence that are the pinnacle of *advaita*: *Brahmajnana*." Perceiving at last the answer to his early question of "Who sleeps? Who wakes? Who remembers?", Subramania spent the day absorbed in the radiance of the Silent One. The insight, impulse and grace in abundance that poured over him that day never ceased. In years to come, many were the mysterious ways that Sri Bhagavan's grace was to help and guide him, both showing and easing his path.

Late that evening, moved to his very depths, his mind stilled as it had never been before, and convinced that Peace is Truth, and Peace is *Brahman*, Subramania slowly made his way down the Hill. He was never the same again.

Shortly afterward, Subramania began his first North India pilgrimage. Arriving in Rishikesh at the foot of the Himalayas, he began to see his dream come true as he immersed himself in the timeless sanctity of the *kshetram* hallowed by *tapas* from time immemorial. He found there also a small community of South Indian *sadhus* and *sannyasins*, led by a devotee of Bhagavan's named Swami Govindagiri. Their ashram was suitably named "Ramanashram". Subramania was very impressed with the life and routine of the sincere monks of this ashram, and Govindagiri was also much impressed by Subramania, telling him, "If you want to stay here, we shall at once get a hut ready for you in a suitable place and see to all your conveniences. We are at your service." Although the time was not yet ripe for a prolonged stay, this demonstration of Sri Bhagavan's motherly grace and encouragement filled Subramania with joy. It would bear fruit later, when he came to the Himalayas for good.

This finally took place three years later, when Subramania was 33 years old. His brother Sankara had graduated in law, set up practice and married. With his duty fulfilled, Subramania secretly made all the preparations for departure. Finally, on Krishna *Janmashtami* day in 1920, he left his home and family forever. In a short time he arrived at his destination, Rishikesh, where he was warmly greeted and tenderly looked after by Swami Govindagiri in his "Ramanashram".

Swami learned much in his "novitiate" year at Rishikesh, both of the rigorous life of *sannyasa* and the rarity of true *sannyasins*. One experience, however, made a deep impression on him.

One day he came across a *sadhu* clad only in a *kaupinam*, who used to lie on the sand in the scorching summer sun. Baked from above and below, the *sadhu* was obviously in perfect equanimity. Swami saw him many times after that. Usually the *sadhu* would get up abruptly and run away. One day, however, he did not. Swami approached him reverentially, prostrated and greeted him with the customary "Om Namo

Narayanaya". The *sadhu* looked into his face and said nothing. Then with humility, Swami asked him, "Sir, what are you doing here in this hot sun?"

"Brahman," said the *sadhu*.

"Where do you stay?" asked Swami.

"Brahman," said the *sadhu*.

"Would you kindly tell me of the experiences you have gained by this arduous *tapas*?"

"Brahman," said the *sadhu*.

Although Swami wished to spend some time with the *mahatma*, the fierce sun above and the terrible heat of the sand below were too much for him. He quickly prostrated and left. He later learned that the *sadhu* was indeed an *avadhuta* and that his devotees called him "Brahman".

Slowly Swami evolved certain routines. He began to spend the winter in Rishikesh, usually in a hut provided by Swami Govindagiri in his Rishikesh Ramanashram. This great devotee of Bhagavan Ramana proved exceedingly helpful to Swami in every way, nursing him when ill and attending to such physical necessities and comforts as Swami would allow. It is remarkable how Bhagavan's grace followed the arduous *tapasvin* throughout his Himalayan sojourn. Even in later years, when Swami rarely came down to Rishikesh, whenever he did he would seek out Swami Govindagiri for his love and holy association. Summers Swami would spend in Uttarkashi, which he loved deeply, and in innumerable pilgrimages farther afield. He also spent his days in a regular program of bathing in the Ganga regardless of the weather, meditation, *satsang*, teaching Vedanta to those who sought instruction from him, and rigorous *tapas*. Gradually his fame spread throughout India. He became known equally for his erudition, teaching capacity and his sincere, unswerving *vairagya* and *tapasya*. As a result of his natural distaste for fame and love of seclusion, he came to spend more and more time in Uttarkashi, ultimately making that his permanent abode and only coming down to Rishikesh for a short period, usually

at the behest of others. He was recognised by such eminent contemporaries as his own Guru, Sri Jagadguru Santayananda Saraswati, the Sankaracharya of Dwaraka, Swami Visuddhananda and Swami Sivananda, with whom he made several pilgrimages.

It was in this early period that finally Swami was formally initiated into *sannyasa*, largely due to the pressure of his *sannyasin* friends, who urged him to observe the appropriate *samskaras* (rites of initiation) for abiding in *sannyasashrama*. He therefore approached Sri Janardanagiri Swami, who was well versed in both *Karma*— and *Brahma-Vidya*, and completed his formal rites on Maha Sivaratri Day, 1923. His *diksha* guru gave him the name *Tapovanam*, "Forest of Tapas". Truly did the new name become the man, and the man the name.

One incident typical of the fraternity of *sannyasins* at that time occurred when Swami Sivananda came to Swami Tapovanam's hut and said in English, "A Bengali *sadhu* is staying with me. For the last few days he has been very ill. I'm trying to get a little milk to give him. I've gone from ashram to ashram just to obtain few ounces, but no one has any. There seems no way to get it except from some shop. If only I had two annas....," and Sivananda lapsed sadly into silence.

Swami, too, had been depending entirely on *bhiksha*, which was meager and never included milk. Neither did he keep any money. Somehow, however, he managed to collect four annas and gave them to Sivananda, praising his great kindness and love of service. The two held each other in mutual esteem throughout their lives.

The outpourings of Swami's talented pen were inspired ones. In his beautiful *Ganga Stotra*, utilising an eulogy of the sacred Ganga as a vehicle to teach Vedantic truths, Swami writes in exquisite Sanskrit:

Men who have no faith do not consider the good or bad aspect of things. They do not

even think about themselves. From the well dug by their ancestors they drink the brine because the well has been dug by their ancestors. O great and supremely beautiful Ganga, to reach Thee is to attain all divine qualities and Godhood.

The divine qualities are the means and Godhood is the end.... These constitute the *Sanatana Dharma*, nothing else. That *dharma* which remains homogeneous and unchanging in all good persons and in all good affairs, irrespective of time and place, alone is *Sanatana Dharma*; everything else is inessential, unimportant. O Goddess, whose form is the Supreme Self, realisation of Thee is the supreme object of human life.

Swami continued to write accounts of his visits to other holy places in the Himalayas utilising the same technique. These articles were later collected and published in book form under the title *Himagiri Viharam*, and later translated into English as *Wanderings in the Himalayas*. Swami also prepared a Malayalam translation of Sankaracharya's *Bhashyas* (commentaries) on the *Isa*, *Kena* and *Katha Upanishads*.

On *Guru Purnima* day of 1929, while he was staying at Uttarkashi, Swami was seized with the desire to worship his *ishta*, Lord Siva, in a new way. Thus he composed a few stanzas in praise of Him as Sri Kasi Visvanatha and read them aloud each day in the Temple before Lord Visvanatha. This flow of inspiration continued unabated for 41 days and brought Swami great delight and satisfaction. In keeping with his custom, the piece is an objective glorification of several beautiful and sacred *kshetrams* he had lived at in his beloved Himalayas — Uttarkashi, Gangotri, Gomukh, Badrinath, etc. — into which is woven the essence of Vedanta and the 16 *Upanishads*. Describing its uniqueness, Swami Sivananda has written:

This book is a masterpiece in style and thought, a beautiful blending of *bhakti* and *jnana*, like the confluence of the Yamuna and

the Ganga. People of devotional temperament will find it a treasure, while men of *vichara* will imbibe deep and ennobling ideas for philosophical enquiry and reflection.

During a remarkable *Chaturmasya* in Badrinath, Swami had been overwhelmed one morning by the glorious spectacle of not rain but snow, two feet deep and continuing to fall, silently, exquisitely covering all. The vista, a panorama of oneness, threw him into *samadhi* as he stood before his open door, unmindful of the numbing cold. His mind was plunged into the nameless, formless Supreme One, without a second. Ever after, having directly experienced *Brahman*, Swami continued to see It both externally and internally and in all states of consciousness. In Supreme gratitude Swami took up his pen once more and composed a hundred-stanza *stotra* on Badrinath, condensing into his eulogy of the divine majesty of the *kshetram* all the principles of Vedanta and Vedantic *sadhana*. The first stanza reads:

In the valley between the two mountains Nara and Narayana, there shines a celestial mass of light called Badarisha [Lord of Badri], Who is the seed of all this universe.

In this one stanza we see Swami's style in all its simplicity and uniqueness. *Nara* means "man" in Sanskrit; *Narayana*, "Lord of Men", is an epithet of Vishnu. Between God and man lies the seed of *Brahman*. In such beautiful and condensed symbolism did Swami express his realisation of the Truth.

The *stotram* so impressed the pandits of Badrinath that the temple itself offered to undertake its publication with a Hindi commentary.

Swami's masterpiece is considered to be his Sanskrit *Iswara Darshanam*, a garland of the spiritual thoughts of this great *sannyasin* and man of realisation as he waded through the welter of life, written over an autobiographical sketch — as spare and humble as the narrator himself — which stands merely as a framework for the whole to rest upon. It is from this that we can glean what little we know of the life of this great *tapasvin*.

Swami Chinmayananda has added some interesting anecdotes of his own, culled from conversations with his guru, which clearly highlight the character of this noble sage:

When a resident of his village once reached Uttarkashi for his *darshan*, Sri Swamiji had the patience and consideration to listen to stories about his home and surviving relatives. When he wrote to me regarding the conversation, he added, "Beemanchan told me all about the story of a home in Mudupallur, and I listened to it all as in a moving dream."

By 1932, and for next 25 years until his death, Swami's friends and devotees so increased that he rarely came down to Rishikesh at all, preferring the solitude of the higher reaches of Uttarkashi, Gangotri and Gomukh. He never encouraged visitors or disciples to come to him, and he never believed in founding ashrams. According to him, *mahatmas* with ashrams were merely managers of *dharmaśālas* (inns), and he believed that true seekers would be guided to a true teacher by Lord Narayana Himself. In fact, many of the spiritual leaders of India working both here and abroad, and belonging to various Indian missions and fraternities, came in contact at some time or other with Sri Swami Tapovan Maharaj. Every one of them was initiated by him into one or more of the Upanishads and some introductory texts of Vedanta.

Never did he try to keep in touch with his devotees or disciples. He invariably discouraged anybody from writing letters to him and, as a general rule, he replied to but a few. Though he was ever ready to give *satsang*, he never encouraged anyone to be too familiar with him. "He lived a life of his own," writes Chinmayananda, "chaste and pure, far and high. Living thus sequestered, and seeking always solitude and contemplation, his gates were never closed, though he himself never came out of them." Nothing could induce Swami to change his austere ways and distaste for worldly undertakings. To secure abiding *atmajnana* for himself and share his knowledge with "others" was his sole aim. Anything that conflicted with this he jettisoned completely.



"During the Uttarkhand pilgrimage season," writes Swami Chinmayananda, "all varieties and types of seekers came to him, and Swamiji gave his advice to everyone. All received the advice best suited to their temperament and nature. In the beginning his way of teaching was rather confusing for me. A scholar from Benares might come to discuss some portions of the *Rig Veda* and the implications of some Upanishadic text. The discussion would be entirely in Sanskrit, and the very conversation held in aphoristic style, subtle and highly philosophical. At a critical moment might enter a heaving old lady from some village in Rajasthan on her way to Gangotri. To the utter discomfort of the pandits, Swamiji would suddenly enquire of the woman's children at home, of her relations and others, and would convince her that all she had to do was visit Gangotri and return home with all her sins completely washed away. This capacity to sing in all tunes with all notes is the hallmark of a great teacher. It took years for me and others around him to understand this."

Chinmayananda paid two visits to Sri Tapovanam during the latter's final illness in 1956. Despite his and others' vigorous appeal that Swami come down at least to Rishikesh for medical treatment and convalescence, the great *tapasvin* and *jnani* flatly refused.

"Do you think that medical science has discovered any medicine by which this human body can be immortalised? It should die, and since it must die, why not die here? See how peaceful this serene Himalayan atmosphere is? If we are healthy, we can live here in quietude and peace, and even if we must die — as all must die — how peaceful and serene to die in this quietude with nobody to distract us! You can die so beautifully, so silently."

"I must confess," writes Chinmayananda, "that the few days I spent at his feet during those two visits were much more educational to me than the years I had spent in his presence, enjoying, every day, hours and hours of his *satsang*."

When Chinmayananda returned for the sec-

### Tapovan Maharaj Speaks

"The musk deer does not know that it bears the precious musk because it is a brute. But you are a man, endowed with common sense. God is within you. Still you wander here and there in search of Him. Why?"

\* \* \*

"All people in the world are not friends to all other people. Some people who pose as friends prove to be no friends at all in the hour of need. But he who sees the Self in all, and has no desires of his own whatsoever, is the friend of all, at all times, and in all circumstances — in adversity as well as prosperity."

\* \* \*

"If the provoked person resolves not to do to others what he himself dislikes by thought, word or deed, how can love be destroyed or anger engendered?"

\* \* \*

"In the world, the so-called wicked ones are created as a touchstone for the good. Accept their blows as if they were flowers, and rise morally and spiritually purified, higher and still higher."

\* \* \*

"Accept sorrows yourself and rain down happiness on others. That is what ought to be done. That is why Siva swallowed the poison and bears the moon on his head. Similarly, good people everywhere bear good qualities on the head and suppress evil at the throat."

ond of these visits, on December 5-6, he was appalled at Swami's physical condition. Swami had already stopped taking food and was almost unrecognisably emaciated. It was difficult for him to stand without help, and yet he insisted on spending his days — from 6 a.m. till 10 p.m. — in his usual *asana* on the verandah of his hut as was his custom. Swami's last *tapas* had already begun. The vehemence with which he protested the addition of some pillows and a cushion to ease the pain of his body was an education for all around him. It was only out of compassion for his saintly attendant from Ahmedabad that he at last agreed. But the very next day he was even more startling to behold: sitting erect in *padmasana*, dependent upon neither cushion nor man for his support.

"I have already left this body," he said with a smile and sparkle in his eyes, somewhat mischievously. "There is nothing in it to regret."

Chinmayananda, crushed by the sight and the event, looked on gloomily.

"So this is the Vedanta that you have studied from me?" Swami said sternly. "What is strange in death? Death is only one of the experiences which the *atman* illumines. We are not this dying stuff. We are the *Atman*, the Self!"

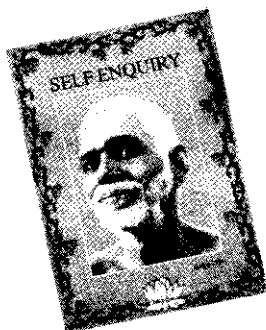
Thus passed the form of a great saint who demonstrated to his last breath the true spirit of renunciation, *tapas* and that laser-like intensity of purpose without which the spiritual quest can never bear fruit. He died as he lived — ever rejecting the ephemeral for the eternal, ever holding his gaze fixed upon the one Reality, the one Divine, nameless, formless, everywhere, ALL.

*"I pray that all my fellow men who possess enough intelligence and some purity of mind will work for the realisation of Brahman, which alone fulfils the purpose of human birth."*

### Self Enquiry

**SELF ENQUIRY:** the quarterly magazine of the Ramana Foundation U.K. (c/o Adams, 53, Broadfield Broadhurst Gardens, London - NW6 3BN (Tel: 071 328 6610) (annual subscription: £ 16/-)

With the fourth number of this new journal by the London-based Ramana Foundation UK, we have a spiritual magazine of such promise that it is a pure delight. The talented cover design by Claudia Weeraperuma immediately attracts the readers to go further, and the skillful line drawings of Sri Bhagavan, Arunachala and Sri Ramanasramam environs by Jane Adams, are alive with the essence of what they portray: her Bhagavan is *alive*, her Arunachala is *alive* — all her sketches place the reader in Sri Ramanasramam, where she spent a memorable month this past winter.



The articles, too, are well-written and professionally laid out. This fourth number is perhaps the best magazine of all the subsidiary Ramana publications, with pieces by Douglas Harding, Dr. Susunaga Weeraperuma, Alan Jacobs, Sqn. Ldr. N. Vasudevan and others. Together with extracts from the writings of Sri Bhagavan, the boxed quotations of saints and sages from

around the world drive home the underlying principle of Ramana's teaching: that Truth is one, only the medium of its expression varies.

I wish the Ramana Foundation UK every possible success in this already fruitful venture and look forward with eager anticipation to the forthcoming issues.

— Beatrice Hoyt,  
Florida, U.S.A.

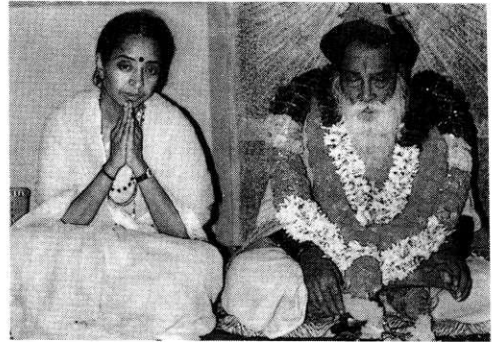
## Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar

*Tattva Darsana*: (A quarterly in English)  
Nov. '93 - Jan '94, Vol. 10, No. 4:  
Yogi Ramsuratkumar 76th Jayanti Issue:  
Pub: Sister Nivedita Academy, 118, Big  
Street, Madras 600 005. Annual subscription  
Rs.30/-.

*Tattva Darsana*, which translates into English as "the vision (or direct perception) of Truth", is an ambiguous title for a journal that over the ten years of its existence has changed its "guiding light" three times. First, in the spirit of the service as taught by Swami Vivekananda, it hailed sister Nivedita, the Irish disciple of the Swami who gave her life in service to Mother India. Shortly thereafter it was Mayi Ma, the Saint of Kanyakumari, for whom the editor addressed his praise and the salutations: "*Vande Mataram!*" Now, with the passing of Mayi Ma, the noble editor, *sadhu* and family man, Sadhu Professor V. Rangarajan, has taken to Yogi Ramsuratkumar, the "Visiri Swami" of Tiruvannamalai. One wonders just when the good *sadhu* will find his *guru*?

It is not that any of the above-mentioned "lights" are not holy, saintly, or, indeed, *gurus*; rather it is the increasing suspicion that the Sadhu Professor Rangarajan is perpetually seeking to hoist up his own prestige by the bootstraps of another in an endless pursuit of being the disciple, the torch-bearer of whoever he conceives to be the *maha-guru* at the time.

The Journal's articles are not without merit, but in his editorial in this issue, he has truly exceeded even his own former record of preposterousness. Abandoning the Vedantic ideals of Swami Vivekananda, the profound presence of his former *guru-ma* Mayi Ma, he has now latched on to Yogi Ramsuratkumar to elevate his own name and fame. It is "my *guru*" this, and "my Master" that, and, worst of all, foreseeing that the saint will not be in the body for long, he has latched on to his ardent devotee, Sri Devaki,



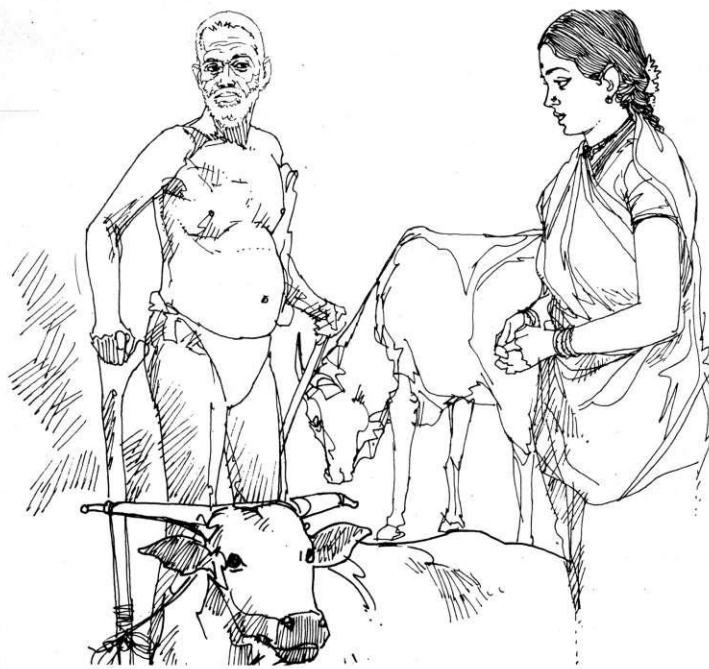
as a sort of life insurance policy. Only Sri Devaki, according to him, can see Yogi as he truly is — that is, God Himself — not even the earnest (but not perfect, like himself) seekers: they cannot see. This is not a question of Sri Devaki's devotion nor of the recorded saying of the Yogi that "Devaki is my eternal slave". It is a question of integrity of purpose and intent, and the gross distortion of events and facts to promote the interests of Sadhu Rangarajan.

The editor asserts that the Yogi introduced Sri Devaki to him as "Ma Devaki" — an invariable sign that a successor has been appointed or, atleast unmistakably indicated. For some it is a sour pill to swallow, for, to them, Yogi Ramsuratkumar is their all in all, and their devotion is directed only to him and to no one else. For them even the thought of human replacement is unthinkable!

However, it is true Sri Devaki, a former physics professor who gave up her career to be with her master, is a fully surrendered devotee of the Yogi. She is looking after his needs very well, indeed. Certainly, devotees of the Yogi should be grateful to Sri Devaki.

We hope that Sri Devaki makes a successful transition from her present one of the devotee-disciple to that of a mother embracing all those who flock to Sri Yogi Ramsuratkumar without distinction and that with haste. A comment from *Reader's Digest* is not without application: "Living with a saint is perhaps more gruelling than being one." (Robert Neville).

— Radha



As extolled by Sri Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh in his book, *Women Saints of India*, "Sri Janaki Mata of Thanjavur fame" ever lived in the *smarana* (remembrance) of Bhagavan Ramana. From her childhood she had extraordinary and powerful spiritual experiences that overwhelmed her and baffled those around her. Though married at an early age, her yearning for spiritual attainment remained unabated. At last she met Sri Maharshi in 1935 and her aspirations were fully rewarded. The Guru's glance washed away every last trace of *ajnana*.

Yet, there was one obstacle which she felt was insurmountable. She yearned for absolute *brahmacharya*. What to do? One day she followed the Maharshi during His usual morning stroll behind the cow shed and expressed her innermost turmoil. Sri Bhagavan looked at her with great compassion and said, "You are in the position of a *grihasta*. What is expected of you as a wife? Fulfil all the obligations demanded of you as a housewife, primarily those concerning your husband. Leave the task of your spiritual fulfilment to me. There is nothing wrong with the *deha* [body]. Only *dehatmabuddhi* [I-am-the-body-idea] has to be given up. You are ever the Self."

Sri Janaki Mata gave birth to several children and led a perfect and harmonious family life which in no way detracted from her spiritual splendour. She was thus all the more able to guide the many seekers who came to her on the path of self-surrender and Self-enquiry.

— Editor

## "Ramana Hridaya"

### Sri Janaki Mata of Thanjavur

When Sri Janaki Mata first came to Sri Bhagavan on April 20, 1935, she was already a mystic and visionary of some renown, though only 29 years old. From earliest childhood, her tendencies had always been godward, her character generous and saintly. In fact, when, at the age of 11, she was encouraged to marry a wealthy but not virtuous relative, she refused and went to live with her maternal uncle in Madras. Two years later, however, when another offer came from a virtuous widower with two daughters barely younger than herself, she readily accepted. About immediately assuming so much responsibility, her simple reply was, "What of that? It doesn't make much of a difference. All the more I like children."

Mata's spiritual life unfolded naturally, though often tempestuously due to the lack of direction of a Guru. She had countless visions of Gods, *devas*, *devis* — Vaishnava and Saiva — but nothing satisfied her thirst for ultimate liberation. Her first *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan left her assured that at last her search for a Satguru was over and *mukti* attainable in this very life. Her first *darshan* triggered a three-hour *samadhi* in His presence and a burning devotion that never waned but rather burned up each and every obstacle in her life. She was reminded of the passage in the *Bhagavad Gita* where Sri Krishna says to Arjuna, "To him who worships Me with loving devotion and whose every enterprise is without desire or motive and is in tune with his *svadharma*, I reveal Myself through the grace of the Guru."

Sri Mata's second *darshan* of Bhagavan occurred on August 16, 1936. Although she had heard of Bhagavan's assertion that He had no disciples, she nevertheless cherished the wish of receiving some form of *upadesa* from Him. When the time came to take leave, Sri Bhagavan asked her whether she knew Malayalam. Sri

Mata answered that she had spoken it only up to her tenth year. Bhagavan then handed her the manuscript copy of *Upadesa Saram* in His own handwriting (as it was on the way to the press) and asked her to follow while He read it out. She had long desired that her husband's spiritual potential should be awakened so that he might not obstruct her spiritual endeavours. Even before she could convey this desire to Bhagavan, He asked her to call her husband to join the reading. Sri Mata was overjoyed and filled with divine bliss.

In October of the same year, Sri Mata and her husband returned to Ramanasramam. Sri Mata was physically and mentally exhausted by the spiritual experiences which made it nearly impossible for her to carry out her household duties. She was concerned about this only insofar as she had heard that without the guidance of a Guru, an aspirant can fall into mental disorder and imbalance, and Sri Bhagavan, who was God to her, was reported to have said that He was not a Guru and had no disciples. Not knowing what to do, she prayed for an opportunity to speak with Him alone and ask Him about it. As if in answer to her thoughts, a perfect opportunity arose immediately. Meeting Bhagavan by the cowshed, Sri Mata prostrated at His feet and poured out her heart, telling Bhagavan of her experiences and beseeching Him to protect her and remove the obstacles in her quest for Liberation. When she expressed her fear of becoming deranged through having no Guru to guide her, Bhagavan replied, "Who told you that you have no Guru? Don't get disheartened. I am here as your Guru; nothing will upset your mind."

Sri Mata returned home and still the tempest of spiritual experiences continued. Here *Guru-bhakti* and faith in Bhagavan gave her the inner poise and stability to endure the transformation





Sri Janaki Mata

that her body was undergoing while her mind was rocked with the impact of visions of gods and *devas*. At last, in January 1938, she had an experience in which Lord Krishna appeared and blessed her with His *visvarupa darshan*. But even this was not enough for Sri Mata. Firmly believing that even this experience was the grace of Sri Bhagavan and that only the Guru can grant ultimate Liberation, she hastened to Ramanasramam. Upon seeing her, Sri Bhagavan spontaneously cited the famous verse from the *Gita*:

Real wisdom dawns on an aspirant after millions of births. Then, realising everything as permeated by Me, he surrenders to Me. Extremely rare is such a lofty soul to be found.

Sri Mata spent three days in Ramanasramam experiencing a super-conscious state in which all the dualities welled up in the mind only to be absorbed in the great Silence. The external world appeared to be a myth and an empty dream — the only reality being the silent, all-pervading Self with she now recognised herself to be. Both desire and volition, *raga* and *dvesha*, were obliterated. The successive waves of latent tendencies, propensities, habits and adjuncts which had been hovering about in the endless chain of births prior to the present one were experienced in rapid succession and exhausted. At last, all

the diverse manifestations of the One sank into the Void and the transcendental Self shone alone. Sri Mata had merged in *Paramatman* as One without a second. Summing up what had occurred, Sri Bhagavan asked her rhetorically, "Where is *Vaikuntam* [the abode of Vishnu]? It is here," meaning that the mind that draws no distinction between itself and the Universal Self is *Vaikuntam*.

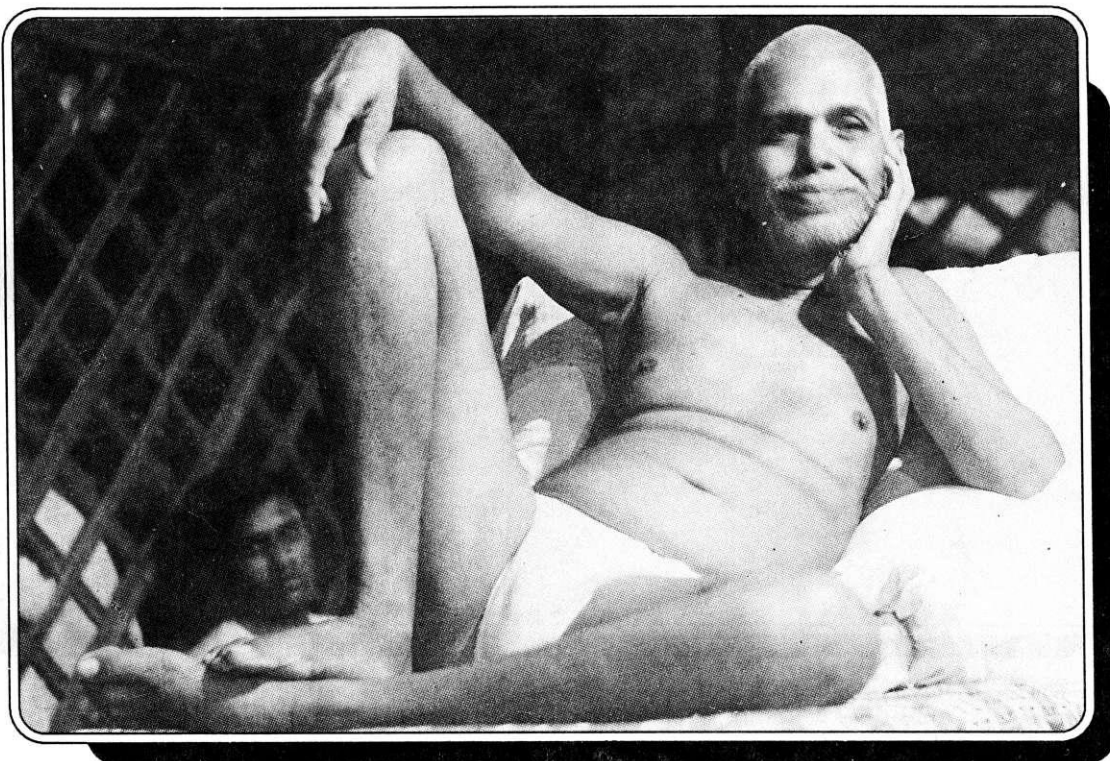
Sri Mata had long cherished the desire to take *sannyas* and live permanently at Ramanasramam, but Bhagavan never gave His consent. Even on this occasion, when Sri Mata could barely look after herself and was hardly aware of the external world, Bhagavan instructed her husband to take her home:

"Doctor, take hold of her hand and go slowly. She will now come with you to Kakinada. For eight more months let her be left to herself. After that she will come to *sahaja stithi*. Her lungs and heart are weak. You doctors say that the heart is on the left side of the chest. But the whole body is the Heart for yogis; *jnanis* have their Hearts both within and without."

Bhagavan then looked at Sri Mata and assured her, "I am always with you."

It took many months for Sri Mata to stabilise in this new state of realisation. She continued to





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have innumerable visions competing with the knowledge that in each and everything that constitutes the universe she saw her own Self.

Sri Mata was recognised as a great saint by such spiritual luminaries as the Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peeta who, in addition to arranging a meeting with this saintly disciple of Ramana Maharshi, showed immense interest in each and every detail about Sri Bhagavan Himself. The Sankaracharya also questioned Sri Mata about her own experiences and realisation.

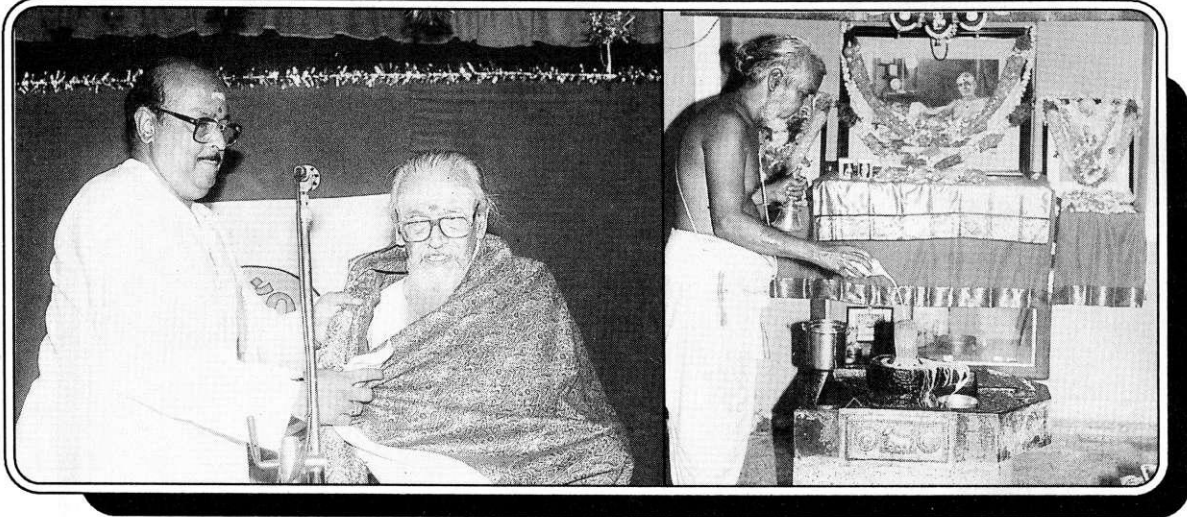
Sri Mata always lived the virtuous life of a householder, always donating a portion of her family's wealth to worthy causes, the poor, and especially giving her own ornaments for temple deities. Mataji built the first bathroom for ladies in Sri Ramanasramam. When the Mother's Temple was being constructed it was considered unfit for a bathroom to be in a front of it. Sri Mata immediately consented to have it torn down. But Sri Bhagavan found another use for it. In his last days he was too ill to sit in the large New Hall and walk to the bathroom he normally used. Sri Mata's "ladies' room" was thus converted into a small living room for Sri

Bhagavan, with a bathroom adjoining it. The room is now revered by all as the Nirvana Room, the room in which Sri Bhagavan attained *Mahasamadhi*. Indeed, the work of saints is inexplicable.

On another occasion, during one of Sri Mata's visits during the time before the Ashram was electrified, the petromax light which illuminated the Old Hall went out for a few minutes. When the light came back, Sri Mata's three-year-old son, Swaminathan, exclaimed: "The light failed and Bhagavan was not visible; light came back and Bhagavan is seen!"

"What you say is precisely correct," Bhagavan said, addressing the child. "When there is *ajnana*, God is not realised. With the dawn of *jnana*, He is seen."

As it was Bhagavan who gave her the light of *jnana*, Sri Mata, as a token and gesture of gratitude, arranged to have the entire Ashram electrified at her expense. By the end of 1938, electric lights illuminated the Ashram premises. For Mata it was a symbol and a sign of Sri Bhagavan's illuminating greatness.



Sri. T.N.Venkataraman, President Sri Ramanasramam, being honoured with a shawl by Dr. Sri G. Swaminathan, President Sri Janaki Nilayam, Thanjavur

Abhishekam to Sri Mathrubhudeswar Shrine

Soon Sri Mata's own devotees began pouring in. She, in turn, would bring them to Ramanasramam to see Sri Bhagavan.

"All these people seek me as their guru," she said to Bhagavan. "But I cannot be indifferent to pleasure and pain, distress and delight like Bhagavan. I can rest content only if those around me are happy and well. I shudder to think of their sufferings and miseries. Moreover, I had never wished to be a guru. I request Bhagavan in all humility to kindly accept these devotees as Bhagavan's disciples."

Bhagavan answered her, "When you are above likes and dislikes, desires and aversions, let things take their own shape. To the extent they believe in you, they will reap. I will protect those who, with full faith, trust in you."

Sri Mata's teachings follow in accordance with her own disposition. Whereas Bhagavan was supreme *jnana* incarnate, Sri Mata was mercy and love and manifest. Born as a woman, it was love and compassion that predominated in her expression of her realisation, enveloping within

its fold the entire universe and all beings within it. She also maintained that *mukti* was not the result of *karma* or any action its fruits. It can neither be bestowed on others nor can it be received from an external agency. For nothing, in fact, is external. The moment the mind gets disentangled from the fetters of desires, worldly pleasures, wants and delusions and seats itself steadfastly in the peace and silence which are its real nature, it gets lost in the Infinite, *Brahman* — and this is *mukti*.

Sri Mata attained *Mahasamadhi* at Thanjavur in 1969, but her devotees and the legacy of her courage, determination and saintliness continue unabated. On one of her visits to Sri Bhagavan, Mata was seized with fear that she would be shattered by the forces that were playing in her mind and body. As the experience reached unendurable proportions, she involuntarily cried out, "*Ramana Hridaya!* Help me!" Immediately she found herself swimming in an ocean of Silence such as she had never known. Truly did this devotee understand that Ramana Bhagavan is the Heart of all.

## God and the Godhead\*

By David Godman

*The previous instalment dealt with Meister Eckhart's and Bhagavan's views as to the omniscience and omnipotence of God. The present instalment continues with their views on God as the creator.*

### God the Creator

**I**n the section on the Godhead I pointed out that Bhagavan, taking the standpoint that the unchanging Self is the only reality, taught that the highest and only true teaching is that creation never happened. This, and this alone, he said, is the true experience of the sage who has realised the Self. Eckhart's view was substantially the same, and the arguments he used to support his thesis will have a familiar ring to anyone familiar with Vedanta philosophy.

"I am that I am." Simple being is the Self.<sup>1</sup> Though these words were spoken by Bhagavan, they convey exactly the theological position adopted by Eckhart and many other theologians. The phrase from Exodus in which God reveals Himself to be 'simple being' underpins all Christian speculation on the nature of God. However, right at the end of the Old Testament there is another crucial verse which needs to be read alongside it: 'I, the Lord, do not change,' says Malachi 3:6. The word for Lord in the original Hebrew is YHWH, the tetragrammaton which is the euphemism the Jews used for 'I am', the original name of God. So, what this verse is really saying is that God as 'I am', as Being, never undergoes any change or modification. These two verses are the twin scriptural pillars which support Eckhart's uncompromising *ajata* stance. Being is the reality, says Eckhart, 'and in Being there is no action'.<sup>2</sup> Being does not create the world or become it, it simply remains as it is.

In *advaita* philosophy reality is defined as 'unchanging, permanent existence'. That is to say, reality is Being, and reality never changes. This is also Eckhart's definition of reality. There is a

corollary to this statement which both Eckhart and the Hindu *advaitins* necessarily subscribe to: whatever does not have Being does not have reality, and whatever changes has no reality. The following two classic Sanskrit verses encapsulate the position. I have added a third quote to demonstrate that Bhagavan's definition of reality is the same:

Existence never belongs to the unreal nor does non-existence belong to the real.<sup>3</sup>

Whatever has no existence before and after does not exist even now.<sup>4</sup>

That alone is real which exists by itself, which reveals itself by itself and which is eternal and unchanging.<sup>5</sup>

Using these criteria *advaitic* philosophers declare that the appearance of the world is not a real appearance because it is impermanent, because it lacks beingness of its own, and because it changes.

The official Church stance on creation is somewhat different to Eckhart's although it is supported by the same scriptural quotes. The medieval Christian philosophers of Europe adopted the position that since God cannot change in any way, He could not manifest the universe out of Himself, since that would necessitate a change in Him. In philosophical terms this can be expressed by saying that He is the efficient cause but not the material cause of the world. Christians solved the problem of 'Where

<sup>1</sup> Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, talk no.433.

<sup>2</sup> *Dum medium silentium...*

<sup>3</sup> *Bhagavad Gita*, 2:16.

<sup>4</sup> *Mandukyopanishad Karika* by Gaudapada, 2:7.

<sup>5</sup> *Maharshi's Gospel*, 1987, p.61.

\* Continued from previous issue

then does the world come from?' to their own satisfaction by declaring that God created it out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). This sets up an interesting problem. 'If the material cause of creation is nothingness rather than being, then creation has no being, and if it has no being, how can it be said to exist?' St. Thomas Aquinas, the most respected of all Christian theologians, conceded that there was a possibility that God's creation might in fact be non-existent when he wrote, 'all that is not God might not exist'. This can be interpreted to mean that God, as Being, alone exists, whereas created things, having no being of their own, do not exist as fundamental realities. And since logically, what does not exist cannot have been created, a potential *ajata* stance can be found at the very heart of the Catholic teachings on the nature of God.

However, this was not the course that Catholic theology ultimately took. It resolved the issue philosophically by saying that creation has a contingent existence, that is to say it depends on God's beingness for its support and apparent existence, without partaking of that beingness in any way. This solution enabled theologians to conclude that the world was real, and that God does *not* pervade it in a pantheistic way. He merely supports it without undergoing any essential change in Himself.

I have outlined these medieval philosophical currents at some length because Eckhart himself was a Catholic who, until the last few years of his life, was a respected priest, theologian, preacher and administrator in good standing with both his Dominican order and the Church. He never denounced the Church's teachings; rather, he took great pains to make it clear that if the Church ruled that he was guilty of promulgating heresies, he would retract them and acknowledge his errors. He therefore took a considerable amount of trouble to develop his more unorthodox theses in ways that would be acceptable to the theologians of his day. The support of his own Dominican order and his brilliant intellect kept the more outspoken of his critics at bay for many years, but towards the end of his life he was formally charged with heresy. He defended

himself vigorously but died without being able to refute, to the Church's satisfaction, many of the charges that had been made against him.

One point that the Church objected to very strongly was Eckhart's contention that the created world did not exist because it had no being of its own:

Creatures are pure nothings. I do not say that they are either important or unimportant, but that they are pure nothings. What has no being has nothing.<sup>6</sup>

Although he continued by saying, 'Creatures have no being of their own, for their being is the presence of God,' a more respectable position for a Catholic of his day to hold, he still offended the Church by asserting repeatedly that 'creatures', by themselves, do not exist.

The term 'creatures' incidentally, in Eckhart's vocabulary does not merely mean 'living beings'. Rather, he uses it to denote anything that has been created. So, when he talks, as he often does, of the world having 'creatureliness', he really means that it has name and form and an apparent real and independent existence.

The above quotation ('Creatures are pure nothings...') is Eckhart's attempt to take Exodus 3:14, Malachi 3:6 and Aquinas' 'all that is not God might not exist' to one possible logical conclusion, but it was a conclusion which was wholly alien to the medieval Church's world-view. Eckhart was unrepentant on this point, and in a written defence of his outspoken views he made a most interesting statement which points to the essence of his teachings on being and creation: 'There is nothing prior to being, because that which confers being creates. To create is to give being out of nothing.'<sup>7</sup>

What Eckhart is saying is that since nothing can be real unless it has being, the only real

<sup>6</sup> *Omne datum optimum...*

<sup>7</sup> *The Defence* VII,5. This section of his defence attempts to support some statements he made in a Latin commentary on the book of Genesis, the part of the Bible that deals with the creation of the world.

creation is that which brings something with real being into existence where it did not exist before. The creation of the world is not a real creation because the various components of the universe arose out of nothing, and do not therefore have their own being.

Only one act of creation can be regarded as valid and real, says Eckhart. When God the Father appeared out of the unmanifest Godhead, He used Its power to bring into being God the Son. He conferred beingness where none existed before and this was therefore a true act of creation. By extension, the world was never truly created because beingness was never conferred on it. So, if one may summarise this complex train of thought, creation, for Eckhart, is a single act by which God the Father, a mode of pure being, brings into a real and everlasting existence God the Son as another unmanifest mode of being.

Teaching or preaching that the world does not exist, and never did exist, is an uphill task when one's listeners and readers see it all around them. Knowing this, both Bhagavan and Eckhart devoted some of their teachings to an explanation of how an unreal, non-existent world appears before us. Bhagavan began *Ulladu Narpadu* with a verse that admits that an explanation of some sort is required for those who, seeing a world around them, cannot accept that it is simply not there:

Because we, who are joined to sight, see the world, accepting a primary principle which has a power to become manifold is unavoidable.<sup>8</sup>

There are two important points to note here:

- 1) The term for 'primary principle', *mudalai*, is a neutral non-committal noun which does not prejudice the issue by saying that it is God or *sakti* or any other agency which causes the appearance of creation. It is simply a statement to the effect that since the world appears in front of us, 'something' must have caused us to see it there.
- 2) Bhagavan taught that realisation of the Self

is not final and complete until the trinity of seer, seeing and seen has been permanently eradicated. By saying 'who are joined to sight', he is indicating that it is only unenlightened people who see the world. The *jnani*, established in the one reality, never sees it and therefore needs no explanation for it. The pronoun 'we' should therefore be taken to be a general term, since it does not include Bhagavan himself.

Bhagavan knew that it was pointless to assert, endlessly, the *ajata* doctrine, because he knew that this alone would not help the vast majority of people to see through the illusion of the world appearance. Instead, he usually taught the *drishti-srishti* point of view which says that the world we see is a projection of the mind, which itself springs into existence simultaneously with the person who sees it. Bhagavan did not teach this as a final truth, he merely noted that this was the most useful attitude for a *sadhak* to adopt:

At the level of the spiritual seeker, you have got to say that the world is an illusion. There is no other way. When a man forgets he is *Brahman*, who is real, permanent and omnipresent, and deludes himself into thinking that he is a body in the universe which is filled with bodies that are transitory, and labours under that delusion, you have got to remind him that the world is unreal and a delusion. Why? Because his vision which has forgotten its own Self is dwelling in the external material universe. It will not turn inwards into introspection unless you impress on him that all this external material universe is unreal. When once he realises his own Self he will come to look upon the whole world as *Brahman*.<sup>9</sup>

How does the unreal appearance of the world arise? Bhagavan said that it is all due to the mysterious workings of the *sakti* of the Self.

What is called 'mind' is a wondrous power (*sakti*) residing in the Self. It causes all

<sup>8</sup> *Ulladu Narpadu*, v.1.

<sup>9</sup> *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, 1:69.

thoughts to arise.... Just as a spider emits the thread out of itself and again withdraws it into itself, likewise the mind projects the world out of itself and again resolves it into itself. When the mind comes out of the Self, the world appears....<sup>10</sup>

There is a wealth of material in the Ramanasramam literature on the subject of the apparent creation of the world because it was a question which devotees often raised in Bhagavan's presence, but there is a much smaller amount in Eckhart's works. This lack of information makes it difficult to say with any degree of certainty how Eckhart thought the phenomenal world arose. He seems to have been so interested, one might say obsessed, with mystical speculation, that he was, on the whole, content to say that the appearance of the world was unreal, and leave it at that. However, there are enough hints and references to make plausible conjectures about his teachings on this point.

Many of the intelligentsia of the middle ages subscribed to a world – view which had been formulated by Plato more than a thousand years before. Plato taught that each concrete thing we see around us is but a pale and inferior reflection of an ideal form of the same object which exists (here I am greatly oversimplifying the matter) in a rather abstract realm which I shall call 'the mind of God' or 'the thought of God'. Since everything manifest has an equivalent in this realm, the whole world is therefore a dim, shadowy and inferior replica of the ideal and perfect world which exists in God and is a complete and perfect expression of his mind or thought.<sup>11</sup>

It is possible to look at this scenario in a reasonably *advaitic* way. The appearance of the world as 'God's thought' occurs in a realm that is beyond space, time and matter. In this ideal realm, objects are not solid, separate things, existing and interacting in time and space; they are indivisible appearances, one might say 'eternal archetypes', in the Absolute. This can, without stretching Plato's logic too far, be compared

to Bhagavan's view that the world, in so far as it exists at all, is merely an indivisible appearance in the one Self.

Eckhart often alluded to this Platonic conception of the world in order to explain why 'creatures', that is, the world of solid, separate things, are unreal. He seemed to accept the Platonic 'ideal world' as being the real world, calling it a world of 'non-natured nature', while at the same time rejecting the phenomenal world we see as a 'pure nothing'.

How did this ideal world come into existence at all? Eckhart here shies away from the Platonic vocabulary and substitutes for it a Christian term that is pregnant with meaning and implications. First a quote from John's Gospel:

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made.<sup>12</sup>

John is saying here that Jesus, existing from the very beginning alongside God, is the 'Word' — *Logos* in the original Greek. *Logos* is not merely a spoken word; it is the mind or intellect of the Supreme Power which brought the universe into existence and which sustains it by its power and authority. The physical laws of nature and the power which brought nature into existence in the first place are one and the same *Logos*. Eckhart, taking this as his starting point, said that when God the Father uttered the divine Word of creation, He brought into existence not merely the Son as a mode of His own being, but an ideal non-physical world. The appearance of this world is an expression and a manifestation of the *Logos*, the mind of God.

<sup>10</sup> *Who am I?* Question and answer version, answer 8.

<sup>11</sup> On at least one occasion Bhagavan taught that the world could be conceived as a 'concept in God' (*Isakalpana*), though this should not be regarded as his standard teaching on the subject. See *Sat Darshana Bhashya*, p.xxxi.

<sup>12</sup> John 1:1-3.



God did not actually do anything when He spoke the Word: 'When God created the heavens, the earth and creatures, he did not act. He had nothing to do. He made no effort.'<sup>13</sup>

This is one point on which Eckhart is in full agreement with Bhagavan. The world arises and unfolds, according to Bhagavan, as an expression of God's inherent power, not as a volitional act of creation by Him. The 'expression of God's inherent power', incidentally, is a good definition of the *Logos*, as interpreted by Eckhart.

Just as in the presence of the magnet, the needle moves, it is by virtue of the mere presence of God that the souls are governed by the three [cosmic functions], or the fivefold divine activity, perform their actions and then rest, in accordance with their respective *karmas*. God has no resolve....<sup>14</sup>

The process of manifestation, the unfolding of the *Logos*, is inexorable. Nothing can touch or affect it because the creative energy that sustains it cannot be manipulated by any of the things that appear in it:

This can be compared to the nations of the world not touching the sun, or to the good and bad qualities of the elements [earth, water, fire and air] not affecting the immanent space.<sup>15</sup>

In making the same point Eckhart uses even more extreme examples:

All the prayers a man may offer and the good works he may do affect the disinterested God as little as if there were neither prayers nor works, nor will God be any more compassionate because of his prayers and works than if they were omitted. Furthermore, I say that when the Son in the Godhead willed to be human, and became so, suffering martyrdom, the immovable disinterest of God was as affected as little as if the Son had never been human at all.<sup>16</sup>

This does not mean that prayers are never answered. I shall explain Eckhart's views on this later.

When God the Father first appeared in the Godhead, He did not exist there alone, waiting for an appropriate moment to generate the Son. The appearance of the Father, the *sakti*, in the Godhead simultaneously brought forth the spontaneous generation of the Son, the *Logos*:

We must not wrongly imagine that God was there to await some future moment in which to create the world. At the very moment that God was and engendered the Son, the co-eternal God who is equal to Him in all things, He also created the world. God speaks the Word once. He speaks in engendering his Son, for the Son is the Word. He speaks also in creating the creatures.<sup>17</sup>

The generation of the Son and the ideal world occurred outside of time and space in the 'now-moment'. The unreal phenomenal world, as it would appear to exist in time and space, was given its predestined script in the same now-moment:

When God first looked out of eternity (if one may say that he ever *first* looked out) he saw everything as it would happen and at the same time he saw when and how he would create each thing. He foresaw the loving prayers and the good deeds each person might do and knew which prayers and which devotions he would heed. He foresaw that tomorrow morning you will cry out to him in earnest prayer and that tomorrow morning he will not heed you because he had already heard your prayer in eternity, before you became a person; and if your prayer is neither honest nor earnest, he will not deny it now, for it is already denied in eternity. In that first eternal vision God looked on each

<sup>13</sup> *Nolite timere eos...*

<sup>14</sup> *Who am I?*, answer 17. The three cosmic functions (*muttozhil*) are creation, sustenance and destruction. The five (*panchakrityas*) are these three plus veiling and grace.

<sup>15</sup> *Who am I?*, paragraph 15, essay version.

<sup>16</sup> *About Disinterest*.

<sup>17</sup> *In. Gen.* II, 1,1. From Ancelet-Hustache.

thing-to-be and therefore he does what he does now without a reason. It was all worked out beforehand.<sup>18</sup>

'God,' says Eckhart, 'did not make heaven and earth as our time-bound speech describes creation; they came into being when he spoke the Word out of eternity.'<sup>19</sup> Everything that happens is preordained because the unchangeable masterplan already exists in the *Logos*. However, from the point of view of 'creatures' who do not know their oneness with God and who consequently cannot see or know the ideal world that appears in the *Logos*, time unfolds in a linear way, free-will exists, and the future appears to be changeable. This limited, ignorant viewpoint was described by Eckhart when he wrote: 'It must be observed that God created heaven and earth and all they contain at the same time, but all things did not appear at the same time.'<sup>20</sup>

Bhagavan too taught that we live in a physical world whose events are preordained and therefore unchangeable, although the notion of an ideal world existing timelessly in the mind of God was very alien to his mode of expression. In what was probably his first written philosophical statement, his reply to his mother in 1898, he began by saying, 'The fates of souls are all ordained by God'. Decades later, in a well-known answer to Devaraja Mudaliar, he clearly outlined his deterministic views:

Q: Are only important events in a man's life, such as his main occupation or profession, predetermined, or are trifling acts in his life, such as taking a cup of water or moving from one place in the room to another, also predetermined?

A: Yes, everything is predetermined.

Q: Then what responsibility, what free-will has man?

A: What for then does the body come into existence? It is designed for doing the various things marked out for execution in this life. The whole programme is chalked

out. 'Not an atom moves except by His will,' expresses the same truth whether you say 'Does not move by His will' or 'Does not move except by *karma*'. As for freedom for man, he is always free not to identify himself with the body and not to be affected by the pleasures or pains consequent on the body's activities.<sup>21</sup>

Though both Eckhart and Bhagavan taught predestination, they differ on one important point: while Eckhart asserts that the destiny of the world was fixed at the moment that God brought into being His Son and the world, Bhagavan taught that *Ishwara*, the personal God, dispenses the destinies of souls on a life-time-by-lifetime basis. Before each new birth begins, *Ishwara* selects an appropriate destiny from out of all the unfulfilled *karmas* that have accumulated from previous lives:

Q: It is said that *prarabdha karma* is only a small fraction of the *karma* accumulated from previous lives. Is this true?

A: 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 the 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.<sup>22</sup>

The question then arises, 'Who is the projectionist?' And the answer, according to Bhagavan, is *Ishwara*, the personal God:

Individuals have to suffer their *karmas* but *Ishwara* manages to make the best of their *karmas* for his purpose. God manipulates the fruits of *karma* but he does not add or take

<sup>18</sup> *About Disinterest.*

<sup>19</sup> *About Disinterest.*

<sup>20</sup> *In. Gen. 1,1. From Ancelet-Hustache.*

<sup>21</sup> *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, 4.1.46.

<sup>22</sup> *The Mountain Path*, 1982, p.23.

away from it. The subconscious of man is a warehouse of good and bad *karmas*. *Ishwara* chooses from this warehouse what he sees will best suit the spiritual evolution at the time of each man, whether pleasant or painful. Thus, there is nothing arbitrary.<sup>23</sup>

In the first verse of *Upadesa Saram* Bhagavan wrote, 'Action bears fruit by the ordinance of God'. The two preceding answers can be seen as a commentary and an elaboration on this important verse. A third answer, which should be read alongside them, makes it even clearer that the power which ordains the destiny of the world is not *Brahman* or the Godhead, since neither perform any actions, but *Ishwara*:

In '*Karthuragnaya prapyathe phalam*' [action bears fruit by the ordinance of God] who is *Karta* [God]?<sup>24</sup> Bhagavan said, '*Karta* is *Ishwara*, He is the one who distributes the fruits of actions to each person according to his *karma*. That means He is *saguna Brahman* [*Brahman* with attributes]. The real *Brahman* is *nirguna* [without attributes] and without motion. It is only *saguna Brahman* that is named as *Ishwara*. He gives the *phala* [fruits] to each person according to his *karma*. That means that *Ishwara* is only an agent.... Without that *sakti* of *Ishwara*, the *karma* will not take place.'<sup>25</sup>

When I described Eckhart's explanation of the appearance of the world, I noted that God the Father appears as an energy within the Godhead and simultaneously brings into being the Son and an ideal world. I equated that Son with both *Ishwara* and the 'I-I' shining within us. Eckhart says that by putting attention on what we imagine is 'outside' us, we fail to recognise our inherent identity with the Son who is within. In this state of ignorance, we do not experience the world as an 'ideal' appearance in God; we instead see 'creatures' outside and apart from us, functioning in time and space. We feel ourselves to be one of these creatures and we therefore experience ourselves in a creaturely way. The cure, says Eckhart, is to take attention off the creatures, the created world, and direct it back

towards the Son who dwells within us. When attention is wholly absorbed in the Son, creation, the manifest world, simply disappears.

Though he expressed himself somewhat differently, this was Bhagavan's view too:

... the world is your thought. Thoughts are your projection. The 'I' is first created and then the world. The world is created by the 'I' which in turn rises up from the Self. The riddle of the creation of the world is solved if you solve the creation of the 'I'. So I say, find yourself.

.... There is no creation in the state of realisation. When one sees the world one does not see oneself. When one sees the Self, the world is not seen. So, see the Self and realise that there has been no creation.<sup>26</sup>

In order to 'see the Self' and by extension to 'uncreate' the world, all we have to do is give up all the ideas we have about ourselves, for it is these ideas which create the individual 'I' and bring the world into an apparent existence. Here is Eckhart explaining how the process works:

As long as the least of creatures absorbs your attention, you will see nothing of God, however little that creature may be.<sup>27</sup> If I am to know true being I must know it where it is being itself, and that is in God, and not where it is divided among creatures.<sup>28</sup> God only asks that you get out of his way, in so far as you are creature, and let him be God in you. The least creaturely idea that ever entered your mind is as big as God. Why? Because it will keep God out of you entirely. The moment

<sup>23</sup> *Conscious Immortality*, p.135. See also footnote 3, p.244, *Be As You Are*.

<sup>24</sup> *Karta* means 'the doer'. In this context it means the personal God since *Ishwara* is the divine agent who organises and supervises all actions.

<sup>25</sup> *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, 1:57.

<sup>26</sup> *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, talk no.455.

<sup>27</sup> *Modicum et iam...*

<sup>28</sup> *Scitote, quia prope...*

you get ideas, God fades out and the Godhead too. It is when the idea is gone that God gets in. God desires that you, the creature, get out of his way.<sup>29</sup>

These self-limiting ideas — that, for example, one is a person or as Eckhart would put it 'a creature' — are known in Hinduism as *upadhis*, or 'limiting adjuncts'. 'Consciousness is the reality,' says Bhagavan. But 'when that consciousness is associated with *upadhis*, you speak of self-consciousness.'<sup>30</sup> This led him to the same conclusion as Eckhart: 'Knowing one's Self, having given up *upadhis*, is itself knowing God, because He shines as one's Self.'<sup>31</sup>

Both Bhagavan and Eckhart agree that when one experiences one's own ultimate reality, *Brahman* or the Godhead, one knows that creation never happened. They further agree that an energy within this reality brings a trinity<sup>32</sup> into existence which causes the illusion of the world to arise in the sight of those who have lost conscious contact with their unmanifest source. There is one more point, which I have not yet discussed, on which they both seem to agree. That is, that creation and the personal God appear simultaneously in the reality, and that when one transcends them by abiding in their source, they both disappear at the same time:

What exists in truth, is the Self alone. The world, the individual soul and God are appearances in it... the three appear at the same time and disappear at the same time.<sup>33</sup>

Eckhart made the same point, in a more amusing way, in one of his sermons:

When I entered in the core...the source of the Godhead, no one asked me where I was going or what I was doing. There was no one there to ask me. But the moment I emerged, the world of creatures began to shout 'God!'<sup>34</sup>

In another sermon, one of his most famous and the one which is generally believed to represent the culmination of his speculative mystical theology, he asserts, in the clearest possible way, that the world and God arise together in the Godhead, and that the God who arises with

creation cannot be regarded as being the same as the ultimate God, the Godhead. To make the sense of the following quotation clearer, God with a capital 'G' denotes the Godhead while God with a lower case 'g' signifies the personal God:

Back in the primal origin from which I came I had no god and merely was myself. I did not will or desire anything, for I was pure being, a knower of myself by divine truth.... But when I...received my created being, then I had a god. For before there were creatures God was not god, but rather He was what He was. When creatures came to be and took on creaturely being, God was no longer God as He is in Himself, but god as he is with creatures.<sup>35</sup>

What causes the three to differentiate themselves from the One? Bhagavan said in *Who am I?* and other places that though God, the world and the soul arise simultaneously, the 'I' was the primary causal agent which brought the other two components into an apparent existence. I shall describe in a subsequent section how the *sakti* of the Self generates an 'I' which in turn produces the illusion of God and the created world, but for the moment I will merely note that Eckhart too felt that this 'I' was the fundamental cause of both God and the world:

I was my own first cause as well as the first cause of everything else. If I had not willed it, neither 'I' nor the world would have come to be. If 'I' had not been, there would have been no God.<sup>36</sup>

[To be continued]

<sup>29</sup> *In hoc apparuit...*

<sup>30</sup> *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, talk no.591.

<sup>31</sup> *Upadesa Undiyar*, v.25.

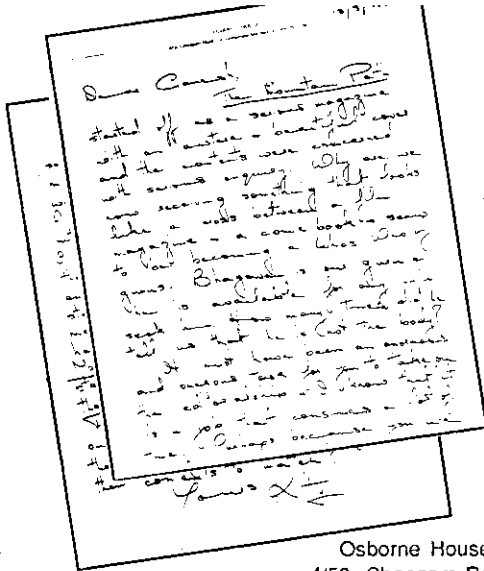
<sup>32</sup> Eckhart's Trinity is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Bhagavan's is God, the soul and the world.

<sup>33</sup> *Who am I?*, question and answer version, answer 16.

<sup>34</sup> *Nolite timere eos...*

<sup>35</sup> *Beati pauperes spiritu...*

<sup>36</sup> *Beati pauperes spiritu...*



Osborne House  
4/50, Chengam Road,  
Tiruvannamalai,  
18-03-1994

Dear Ganesha,

**The Mountain Path** started off as a serious magazine with an austere and beautiful cover and the contents were concerned with serious enquiry. Why are we now receiving something that looks like a cross between a film magazine

and a comic book and seems to be becoming a who's who of gurus. Bhagavan is our guru and he is available for any who seek Him. How many times did he tell us that he is not the body?

It must have been an enormous and onerous task for you to take on the editorship and I know that it consumes a lot of time. Perhaps you are so close you can't see that the magazine seems to have lost its way and with it its clarity. It started from Arunachala to help people who are interested in Bhagavan's teachings and I honestly don't think we can better these aims. Surely there must be enough serious material to maintain the standard without becoming a pop magazine? I am sorry if I sound harsh but I feel very strongly that **The Mountain Path** should maintain a high standard for the lowest common denominator. For a start please can we have our old cover back — the one that Bhagavan approved<sup>1</sup> of — and then contents to match?

Yours  
Kitty

Here is the old cover, from the very first issue of **The Mountain Path**:

Yes, "Bhagavan is our Guru and he is available for any who seek him." You have plucked the words straight from our Heart, and he told us, times beyond counting, that he was not the body.

Your vigorous criticisms are a shot in the arm. We can do no better than affirm our editorial intentions and the spirit informing our endeavours in terms of founder-editor Arthur Osborne's inspired mahavakyas:

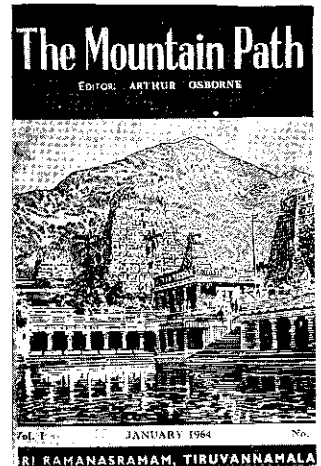
"The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world."

And:

"The Mountain Path is dedicated to

Bhagavan Sri  
Ramana Maharshi."

Specifically, some of the instructions formulated by Arthur Osborne which guide **The Mountain Path** are: articles strictly according to merit; responsibility is to the readers rather than the writers; encouragement to new writers; articles of personal interest, such as "How I came to Maharshi"; stories from the lives of the saints, ancient and modern, Eastern and Western; expositions on the Hindu scriptures, of real spiritual interest, not just academic or doctrinal; articles on other religions; serialisation of various scriptures; but it





should never be allowed to become an academic journal; book reviews and "Ashram Bulletin"; something from Bhagavan quoted in every issue.

The task is neither more enormous nor onerous than cutting vegetables in the kitchen, tending the cows in the goshala, watering the trees and plants, sweeping the grounds, or replying to the letters of devotees who share in this love of Bhagavan.

The magazine is still centred in Arunachala (is there any other?) and from every direction — north, east, west, south — once we have heard the good NEWS we are bound (O, blessed freedom) to return home.

We remain convinced that there is enough serious material out there to maintain a standard. Nevertheless, people immersed in Bhagavan's silent teaching often tend to be silent, a way of being which is respected. So if *The Mountain Path* "looks like a cross between a film magazine and a comic book," it is in deference to the silent majority.

Help!

Please write.

— Editor

<sup>1</sup> Sri Bhagavan attained Mahasamadhi in April 1950; the first issue of *The Mountain Path* was brought out only in January 1964. Isn't it strange you speak on the question of "Bhagvan approved" cover page!

### Congratulations!

I am writing to tell you how much I appreciated the last (*Jayanthi*) issue of *The Mountain Path*. One thing that particularly took my breath away was the exquisite sketches of the Ashram by the remarkably talented Rajjini [Rajny]. I say this because although I took more than one hundred shots of the Ashram and environs during my trip last year, none captured the feeling and rustic sanctity of the place as successfully as these line-drawings of Rajjini [Rajny]. Whenever I look at them I am back in Tiruvannamalai, enjoying the atmosphere of this most sacred place. I do hope that her talented pen will continue enhancing the quality of your already superlative journal.

Yours sincerely,  
Roslyn S. Teicher,  
New York, U.S.A.

\* \* \*

### Rajny Krishnan

RAJNY KRISHNAN, artist and sculptress, studied under and worked with sculptor Kalasagaram Rajagopal. Her devotion to Ramana Maharshi and her love for Arunachala have led her to make a studio in Tiruvannamalai, where she finds inspiration in the very air. Her paintings catch the shifting moods of the Mountain as she perceives them from various angles, and her sketches catch the minutest details of life in this sacred place.

Rajny



## BOOK REVIEWS

In the Charge of J. JAYARAMAN

GANDHI - A memoir: by William Shirer. Pub: Rupa & Co, New Delhi 110 002. pp. 204, Rs. 60.

India's unique non-violent struggle for Freedom led by the unique leader Gandhi, went little noticed in the U.S and in Europe, except as was put across by the *Times of London's* man in Delhi. In the 30's *Chicago Tribune's* William Shirer was the only American journalist sent to cover it. That he found the exclusive British view biased is clear from his reference to the story of the Black Hole of Calcutta, where only a score, of the 146 English thrown in, survived suffocation. Shirer observes "it was a British military prison. How many Indians died there previously is not known. By then the British were writing the History of India".

Before he arrived, in late 1930, Shirer read Gandhiji's *Indian Home Rule*, his *Autobiography* and the numerous writings in *Young India*. He tried to review the Movement of the earlier decade, but found it too puzzling. He preferred to see Gandhi first, to grasp its nature. In Delhi he found Gandhi negotiating with Lord Irwin, the Viceroy, the terms for withdrawal of the Civil Disobedience Movement. In February 22, 1931 Gandhi sent word that he would see Shirer. Then on through to the end of the 2nd Round Table Conference, Shirer won Gandhi's personal friendship and confidence, had the privilege of closely observing his achievements and frailties, his greatness out-topping the latter.

It is so difficult to review Shirer's *Gandhi*. Throughout the book we find both Shirer and Gandhi assessing and reviewing themselves and their thinking and actions.

Gandhiji's Satyagraha was truly that but his non-violence was a 'militant' weapon against which the British had no answer, the apostle of non-violence going savage as he addressed the Luncheon gathering of 500 guests, half of them British. "I believe in non-violence and I insist on practising it. But ... if any sacrifice can win our freedom, we will not hesitate to let the Ganges run red with blood to obtain it". Two truths Gandhiji found true of the British. Jalianwallabagh showed they would stoop, to anything, however heinous, to hold on to their possession of India. The second, Round Table Conference convinced him that freedom can be won from the British not through negotiation but only by his non-violent struggle, which would get not the Indian but the British, to sue for terms.

Much as many may decry, Gandhiji's politics admittedly sprang from his belief in religion. To him in its largest sense, religion meant self-realisation (p.200). "The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine" avowed Gandhiji, "and if I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircle us today like the coil of the snake from which one cannot get out, no matter, how much one tries... (p.202)." "Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means" (p.202).

For purposes of review there is not a page in the memoir, that cannot be dwelt on. The best way to review it is to read it and reread. Shirer sums it up with his own testament, "I count the days with Gandhi the most fruitful of my life. No other experience was as inspiring and as meaningful and as lasting. No other shook me out of the rut of banal existence and opened my ordinary mind and spirit, rooted in the materialist, capitalist West as they were, to some conception of the meaning of life on this perplexing earth. No other so sustained me through the upheavals and vicissitudes that I lived through in the years after I left India". This was what sustained him through the horrendous days of the Nazis in Germany (see his seminal study *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*), the Americans in Vietnam, and the witch hunting McCarthies in the U.S. Shirer died on December 28, 1993 in the U.S.

For us who have participated even in a small way in Gandhiji's Non-cooperation, and the non-violent Satyagraha, and movements not so very non-violent, William Shirer's effort *Gandhi* is richly rewarding recapitulation.

-- Dr. O. Ramachandra Kaundinya

PAPAJI: Interviews: Ed. by David Godman, Pub: Avadhuta Foundation, Distr. by Universal Book Sellers, P. Box 20, Lucknow 226 001, U.P. pp 278 + 28, Rs. 200

The book under review is a compilation, in dialogue form of interviews conducted by nine Western seekers of the Truth. A beautiful mosaic of various approaches made by aspirants, it contains some gems of exposition by Sri Poonjaji, referred to affectionately as *Papaji*.

Poonjaji owes his illumination to the electrifying grace of Sri Ramana Maharshi. As he himself declares: "In the Maharshi's presence, and under his gaze the heart opened and bloomed. It was an extraordinary experience, one that I had never had before. I had not come looking for any kind of experience so it totally surprised me when it happened." The essential teaching of Poonjaji looks very similar to that of J. Krishnamurti and the Buddha. And the essential guidance is that of *vichāra mārga* as directed by the Maharshi. Even though Poonjaji has a considerable following, he rejects his role of a Guru, saying that there are, for him, no 'others'. He agrees that a Sadguru like Ramana has the power of infusing Grace for realisation. Poonjaji does not advocate *sādhana* as such. "Striving is an obstacle ... [as] it is an act of the mind; just be as you are." He emphatically says that any activity, even *sādhana*, is a form of "doing" that uses the mind and ultimately reinforces the sense of *ahankāra*, thus becoming self-defeating. The real *vichāra* or enquiry, is carried on without any "I" or doership whatsoever. If we can stop "doing", the "I" will cease to function and the truth shine as it ever does, without distortion. "All the time you are doing *sādhana*, the Truth is standing before you, smiling

at you." (p. 85). "Do not do anything. Be totally silent." "Then in the inner core you will find an indweller hidden. He is not really hiding. He is hidden from you because you do not want to look at him." (p. 100). "Have a burning craving to know that. Then simply watch it happening. Watch Him revealing Himself like a beautiful unfoldment."

In every interview, Poonjaji forcefully drives home the point, "Get rid of all your conditioning, get rid of all emotions, exterminate the mind, even the 'no-mind'. That is all that you have to do. Realise it *here and now*." Poonjaji eminently succeeds in getting this across. Despite Poonjaji's rejection of classical religion his interviews are amply illustrated with classical similes used in Hindu philosophical tracts.

With such a repeated stress on the universal method of enquiry applicable to all seekers as taught by the Maharshi, it comes as a surprise to read that Poonjaji has declared that he has not given his final teaching to the people because "they are not worthy of them. Nobody is worthy to receive them. Because it has been my experience that everybody has proved arrogant and egoistic." It appears that the editor has either misunderstood Papaji or is quoting him out of context.

One commends David Godman for the beautiful arrangement of the topics included in the book. The very titles bring out the teaching, e.g., "No Building in the Transit Lounge." There are two beautiful summaries of the teachings of Papaji. One is by Shanti Devi, his French disciple. The other is the very last chapter, a videographed interview by Mr. Godman, the compiler of the book, beautifully encompassing the great variety of philosophical approaches and eliciting clear guidelines. In Papaji's answer to one of the questions of his devotee Madhukar, he says, "(Ramana Maharshi) out of his compassion, made himself available to everyone. All doubts are cleared in his silent presence. .... I am his humble servant. The work he started is being carried on. Somewhere, someone, will always be continuing with this work ... The candle he lit will be passed ... It will never go to water." (p. 101). That is the ultimate truth. David Godman's book serves the purpose adequately.

-- Dr. K. Subrahmanian

**THE DOCTRINE OF THE UPANISHADS AND EARLY BUDDHISM:** By Hermann Oldenberg. Translated by Sridhar B. Shrotri. Pub. Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Rd, Jawahar Nagar, N. Delhi 110 007. pp. 226, Rs 225.

German scholarship is well known for its contributions in the field of Indology. Maybe the approach of these savants is not always disinterested, but there is no denying the value of their labours in their efforts to interpret the Indian heritage from ages that are prehistory. Oldenberg is one of the most respected of these scholars for his studies in the Veda. His *Religion of the Veda* which first appeared in 1894 and next as a revised edition in 1916, is still consulted by scholars. The present work which first appeared in 1908 and is now published for the first time in its English translation (by Dr.

Shrotri) is remarkable for the extensive range it covers in the themes of the Upanishads.

In describing the essential features of the Vedic society, the scholar attaches undue importance to magic. He thinks that the magician rose to the high position of the priest. Actually it is the Rishi who by virtue of his spiritual eminence took on the role of the priest in the sacrifice which was a significant call to the Gods to manifest. Taking up the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and the *Chhândogya* of the older Upanishads, he traces the gradual decline of the institution of sacrifice and the arrival of Impersonal Divinity replacing the Vedic deities like Indra, Agni. He discusses the development of the doctrine of metempsychosis and Karma. Considerable space is devoted to the exposition of the concept of 'Re-death' in the higher worlds, termination of sojourn in the greater worlds leading to rebirth on earth.

In the next chapter on later Upanishads viz. *Kāthaka*, *Maitrāyana* and the *Svetāsvatara*, he perceives the Impersonal Reality giving place to the Personal. He traces the beginnings of the *Sāṅkhya* and *Yoga* systems in this period. The shadow of Dualism gathers strength.

The last section attempts to study the beginnings of Buddhism which are in the East whereas the Vedic and Upanishadic thought-empires were mainly confined to the western regions. Buddhism turned away from the larger vision of the Upanishads and the prospect of immortality, to a negative life-view which ruled out the reality of the Absolute and the self. In a remarkable passage on the figure of the Buddha, the author writes: "Greek influence helped to form the image of Buddha to which the weak forces of national old Indian art did not dare to approach. Then this image had cast off the strange Western feature; it was at home in all kingdoms of inner and eastern Asia. The world-conqueror is or rules in infinitely exalted remoteness over the world, beyond all search, desire and action. Now he is lost in meditation. Now the instructive gesture of hands or the raising of the right hand proclaiming peace points out to the blessings he gives to gods and human beings. But no impassioned entreating of minds, no struggle to win them over. But only peaceful emanation of one's own deep quietude over to those seeking quietude." (p. 219)

-- M.P. Pandit

**THE PLACE OF THE HIDDEN MOON: Erotic Mysticism in the Vaishnava Sahajiyā Cult of Bengal:** by Edward C. Dimmock Jr. Pub: Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi 110 007. pp 299, Rs 145.

Classical scholarship, painstaking research and utter devotion to truth have gone into the writing of this book. The book was first published in 1966. The edition under review is the first Indian edition dated September 1991.

Wendy Doniger in her Foreward says, inter alia, "this is the most reliable and indeed altogether the best book I know on the life of the Saint Caitanya, the tradition of the mad Baul

singers, the aesthetic theory of *rasa*, the bhakti tradition of the love of God, the doctrines of Tantrism, the origins of the figure of Radha and the worship of Krishna."

Eroticism is an integral part of spirituality and religious mysticism. Ramana Maharshi converted himself into a love-lorn maiden yearning for her lover in his *Marital Garland of Letters*. Prof. K. Swaminathan, in his biography of the Maharshi, observes, "Many of the verses are charged with erotic symbolism as they utter the Love-lorn maiden's longing for union with the Lord. Hence the title 'Marital Garland'. But the play of imagery, sensuous and striking is far ranging and uninhibited".

This book is a monument to the reconciliation attempted between sacred and profane love, between the spirit and flesh, between doctrine and poetic expression, by the Vaishnava Sahajiyās. The orthodox Vaishnava poetry regards Love, in separation as sacred and, in marital union as profane. The orthodox Doctrine regards vice versa. The Sahajiyā Vaishnavas regard love in separation as true, both in poetry and Doctrine. The court of the Countess of Champagne declared in 1174, "... love cannot exercise its powers on married people. Lovers grant everything, mutually and gratuitously, without being constrained by any motive of necessity. Married people, on the contrary, are compelled as a duty to submit to one another's wishes, ... For this reason it is evident that love cannot exercise its powers on married people" (p.9).

"To the orthodox Vaishnavas, as to the troubadours it is the very longing that is the end; the longing is an act of worship, pleasurable in itself. There is no question of actual union. To the Sahajiyās, man is divine and so has within himself the potential for this experience... As man is microcosm, he contains both male and female elements of (Krishna and Radha). The ultimate experience is to know, interiorly, silently and perpetually, the doubled joy of two in one" (p.15).

The *mādhurya* or *śṛṅgāra bhāva* and the *rasa* to which it leads, are the most important in the poetry and thought of the Sahajiyās. "The Bhāgavata text states the awkward but incontrovertible fact that the Gopis were married to other persons at the time they fell in love with Krishna. A great deal of thought has been given to explaining this ... Although the extramarital activity of the Gopis caused a certain consternation among the orthodox theologians, it was completely accepted by poets orthodox and Sahajiyā, both illustrative of true love... The Gopis were risking home, family, reputation, everything for their love of Krishna".

Vaishnava drama classifies the lover as *svakiya* or *parakiya*. "A *parakiya* woman is she who, belonging to another, is attracted to a man and causes him to be attracted to her but who does not enter into marriage with him. A *svakiya* woman is she who has been taken in marriage, and does not depart from the dharma of her wifely vows". (p.17). *viraha*, the longing involved in separation, is more intense in a *parakiya* relationship. For a *parakiya* "nothing at all is certain; any separation might be the final one". *Parakiya* women can be of two kinds: *parodha* married and *kanyāka*

unmarried. "Of these, *parodha* women have more to lose in giving themselves to a man other than their husbands and thus better illustrate the principle of *Prema*". (p. 17). Rādha and the Gopis were *parodha parakiya* women. To orthodox Vaishnavas their *prema* for Krishna illustrates the proper love the worshipper should have for God. To the Sahajiyās, it is with the *parodha parakiya* woman like Rādha that one can find salvation. This is not poetic, but metaphysical truth.

It is this Erotic Mysticism in the Vaishnava Sahajiyā Cult of Bengal as it centered round the frenzied devotional activity of Krishna Caitanya (born February 1486) that the book explores in depth with a wealth of carefully authenticated data that makes it a unique work of art. It is compulsory reading especially because of its contemporary significance.

-- S. Jayaraman

THE KAPALIKAS AND KALAMUKHAS: Two lost Saivite sects; by David N. Lorenzen. Pub: Motilal Banarsidass, New Delhi - 110 007. pp. 242 + xiv, Rs. 125

The first edition of this valuable book by a very earnest foreigner came out in 1972 and this revised edition taking due account of more recent discoveries has come out at a time when an atmosphere of serious study of religions is emerging in what used to be regarded as a God-intoxicated land but seems now to be just intoxicated. More and more studies of India's intricate complex of cults and movements in the sphere of religion and culture are being published, exploring some of the obscurest corners of our complicated religious history.

The *kapālikas* and *kālamukhas* have long been regarded with some horror as practitioners of rituals too bizarre to be tolerated by a society which is fast giving up ritual as atrociously primitive, and faith in an unseen Power behind the complex workings of the universe as childish superstitions still to be outgrown.

Lorenzen tells us that both tradition and history have been rather misdirected and unperceptive in regarding the symbolism of these two cults with a horrifying sense of their roots in barbaric fanaticism. What most people tend to forget is that the great Siva whom these two groups worship was a *śmaśānauśi* and that Vārānasi, Siva's great abode was known as the great *śmaśāna*. It is interesting to learn that Virasaivism and Kashmiri Saivism are ultimately rooted in these apparently primitive cults. Virasaivism has spread very widely in Karmāṭaka and the *lingadhāris* are a very earnest, resolute religious group.

One of the minor attractions of this book is its critical and impressively impartial account of the relation between the great Ādi Sankara Bhagavatpāda and the Kapālikas. Though the sources of our information are alas! not authoritative -- even Mādhava's Sankara Vijaya is, according to the author, not Mādhava Vidyāranya's but the work of a later writer. This is a book on a phase of the evolution of religion in India which we must not neglect in our pursuit of religious elegance.

-- S. Rāmaswāmy

THE LITTLE BOOK OF LIFE AND DEATH: by D.E. Harding. Pub: Penguin, Arkana, London, EC4 P4 EE. pp. 150, £ 4.99

This 'little' book deals with a great theme, the theme of life and death. Not since Hamlet brooded over the country from which no traveller returns but long, long before him and indeed ever since, the seers of India of the past and of the present have tried hard to emphasize that one's life has had immemorial origins and that trailing clouds of glory do we journey through life, from God who is our Home. The most recent of the great seers of India, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi without brooding long or studying the vast mass of sacred literature, by just lying on the ground and asking himself 'Who Am I?' discovered the major truth about existence that this body is but a bundle of clothes liable to get worn out, and that the Spirit within is one and immortal. Bodies come and go but the Spirit remains.

D.E. Harding has set us thinking again, for ourselves on this great theme and one is grateful to him for giving us further stimulus for brooding over what is now an open secret.

-- Prof. S. Rāmaswāmy

MANAGEMENT WITH DHARMA ALL THE WAY: by S.L.N. Simha. Pub: Institute for Financial Management and Research, 30, Kothari Road, Nungambaklam, Madras 600 034. pp. 336, Rs. 150.

Prof. S.L.N. Simha, a septuagenarian, is an economist, banker, specialist in international finance, UN delegate, company director and author of many articles and books including four on philosophy, religion, epics and ethics. He is Founder Director of the Institute for Financial Management and Research at Madras.

This book is a sincere attempt to infuse the concept of dharma into the minds of those managing business and services, including the government. The author is convinced that dharma must be practised in all activities of life, not only in management.

He says: "... management (with *dharma*) is the art of harmonising forces ..." (p. 298); "... centralisation and decentralisation are two sides of the same coin, they are complimentary rather than conflicting..." (p. 299); "... Management is integrating Man with Nature, and not conquering of nature by him... management is harmonising long and short term views..." (p.300); "... control should be a 'clan' type mixture of both personal and impersonal systems..." (p. 239); "...as in nature so in management, the feature must be unity in diversity..." (p. 321).

The book is full of advices incorporating "should's" and "must's", sounding more like earnest wishes rather than "dharmik" guide lines for practice. It is surprising that no chapter has been devoted for Dharma as such. In the chapter on time management, the author says "... time is money ..." In a book of this sort one would like to be told that "time is consciousness!"

In the opinion of this reviewer, the last chapter written

well, contains all the points the author wants to say on the subject. Therefore, one is forced to feel that much unnecessarily detailed and desultory description of the functions of Management could have been omitted and that with the addition of one chapter each providing a comprehensive concept of "DHARMA", and its practice in management, leaving it to the knowledgeable reader to synthesise the two for himself, the value of this laudable effort would have been greatly enhanced.

-- T. S. Radhakrishnan

PEARLS OF WISDOM: by Sri Krishna Das. Pub: Mayoor Paperbacks, Sector 5, A-95, Noida-201 301. pp. 160 + xix Rs. 75

One may find it difficult, at least on first reactions, to say much about a book -- more a diary which, under the title 'Pearls of Wisdom', gives a mixture of miscellaneous information on subjects such as moral behaviour, palmistry, political policy, diet control, method of preparing medicine etc., and has a section on the author's spiritual correspondences and another section listing the fate of many astrological predictions garnered over a sixty year period applicable to members of the author's family. One however finds it equally difficult to withhold appreciation when the diary also presents very valuable matter, such as a conversation with Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

The author has met with a number of well known personalities such as Mahātmā Gāndhī, Pandit Mothilāl Nehru, Pandit Jawāharlāl Nehru, G.V. Māvankar, Indirā Gāndhī etc. He has also met with sages and holy men -- Bhagavān Sri Ramana, Sankarāchārya of Kānchi, Sri Sathya Sai Baba, Swami Sivānanda, Sri Bhaktivedānta Prabhupāda, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Acharya Amritavagbhava, Vimalā Thakar and others. Although the information is in fragments and no particular subject is treated at length, several useful hints for spiritual practice are given, under the diary entries of different dates, as a sequel to the meetings with the holy men.

In 1935 the author visited Sri Ramana Maharshi in the company of his teacher, Pandit Ram Chander. In reply to the Pandit's question about the Heart and Realisation, Maharshi explained as follows:

"The Heart is not physical, it is spiritual ... There is no one who even for a trice fails to experience the Self. For no one admits that he ever stands apart from the Self. He is the Self. The Self is the Heart. The Self is thus known. But the individual is miserable because he confounds the mind and the body with the Self. This confusion is due to wrong knowledge. Elimination of wrong knowledge alone is needed. Such an elimination results in Realisation. In deep sleep you exist; awake you remain. The same Self is in both states. The difference is only in the awareness and non-awareness of the world. The world rises with the mind and sets with the mind ... The Self is different, giving rise to the mind, sustaining it and resolving it" (later, on control of mind Sri Ramana says)... "It is the nature of the mind to wander. You are not the mind... To inhere in the Self is the thing.



Never mind the mind. If it's source is sought, it will vanish leaving the Self unaffected ... There is no need to control if you realise the Self. The mind vanishes, the Self shines forth. In the realised man the mind may be active or inactive; the Self alone remains for him... "

This conversation has since been included in *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* (Talks 97 & 98)

The author's correspondence with Sri Ramanāśramam as well as Swāmi Sivānanda of Rishikesh containing clarifications on spiritual matters can be put to good use by serious seekers. His correspondence with Paul Brunton carries little interest. One letter from Vimalāji Thakar (dt. 10-1-80) is a gem.

Stringing the pros and the cons and striking a balance we may say that *Pearls of Wisdom* lacks method but not material, to justify its title.

-- Ramāmani.

A JOURNEY WITHIN THE SELF: (A diary of Yogic Experiences): by Deepa Kodikal. Pub: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, K.M. Marg, Bombay 400 007. pp xxii + 310, Rs. 105

This book takes us along on a gripping adventure of a vibrant inner awakening into the spiritual unknown. The *Journey within the Self* is an example of the discriminating use to which Smt. Kodikal, a housewife of protean talents, puts her unique gifts providing a commonsense philosophical rationale for the dramatic para-psychic events about which she narrates in her book. Her spellbinding spiritual journey unfolds a saga, amidst family duties, where the actor, the action and the audience are one, *advaita*, and in this oneness is contained all.

Deepa Kodikal is of the opinion that spirituality does not depend upon the environment, but upon one's attitude towards life. She cuts to the heart of spiritual development by demonstrating that the spiritual path is primarily a matter of perseverance and devotion to love humanity. This book is like meditation in that it is a constant reminder that we are divine. It offers an excellent guide for those who dare to lead the spiritual life.

Deepa Kodikal tackles such issues, of the relation of man to God, of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Sadguru, Meditation, Bhakti, Avatar etc. She presents ideas that help readers find their own answers. The value of the spiritual path is not the goal itself, but the striving for it. This book can help illuminate the path for the seeker.

-- Prof. K.S. Rāmakrishna Rao

ISSUES IN VEDIC MATHEMATICS: Ed. by H.C. Khare. Pub: Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan in association with Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 110 007. pp. 139, Rs. 50

Disappointment is in store if one expects to know from this compilation all about Vedic mathematics. The book is but an edited version of the available papers presented at a

workshop on Vedic Mathematics held at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, in March 1988, sponsored by Rashtriya Veda Vidya Pratishthan, New Delhi, and aided by the Education Department of the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development. And most of the articles deal least with 'Vedic mathematics' as such. The reason is obvious: There seems to be nothing much to commend the subject matter.

Interest on the subject spurted a decade after the publication in 1965 of a book titled *Vedic Mathematics or Sixteen Mathematical Formulae from the Vedas* written by the late Shankaracharya of Puri, Sri Bharati Krishna Tirtha (1884-1960). It carried 16 *sūtras* and sub-*sūtras* claimed to be in the Appendix (*Parisishṭa*) of the Atharva Veda. The non-professionals among mathematicians were made to believe that these *sūtras* lead to extremely fast mental calculation and can be used in the preparation of computer software.

The sixteen essays presented in this book under review talk about the Indian tradition of mathematics, ancient and medieval, but precious little about Vedic mathematics, except to question its tall claims.

Myself not familiar with higher mathematics, I showed this book to Dr. N. Balasubramanian, formerly Director of Cipher Bureau of Defence Ministry and till recently visiting scientist, Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Taramani in Madras. According to him 'the formulae presented by Swami Bharati Krishna Tirtha in his work *Vedic Mathematics* are mathematical but nothing "Vedic" in any sense. They look at numbers from a different angle, e.g., 29 is seen as 30-1. And calculations are made on the pattern of numbers instead of individual digits. How far the formulae enunciated are more advantageous than the existing ones is yet to be established.' He added that it was not difficult to propound novel methods of calculation. In fact he had come across a Tamil booklet by one Vazhundur K.M. Sagul Hameed titled *Minnal Vehattil Kanitham* (Mathematics in Lightning Speed) containing formulae some of which, are similar to Swami Krishna Tirtha's.

Prof. K.S. Shukla who in his paper briefly examines the contents of that part of Swamiji's book which demonstrates the 16 'Vedic' *sūtras*, unequivocally concludes that "the mathematics dealt with in the book is far removed from that of the Vedic period". Instead, it is but "modern elementary mathematics upto the Intermediate standard"... "It is indeed the result of Swamiji's own experience as a teacher of mathematics in his early life" (pp. 31 & 35).

-- La. Su. Rengarajan

MEDITATION IN SANKARA'S VEDANTA: by Jonathan Bader. Pub: Aditya Prakashan, F-14/65, Model Town II, Delhi 110 009. pp. xiii + 130, Rs. 150

This essay is a re-examination of Sankara's work in the light of his interest in Yoga, in which the author has tried to remove some of the misconceptions regarding Sankara's

views on meditation and yoga. The focal point of the study is Sankara's teaching on liberation, particularly with regard to meditation. There are three fundamental approaches to Sankara's work: the traditional, the historical and the philosophical. The author feels that in order to properly investigate Sankara's teaching on liberation, it is necessary to take into account the traditional approach.

Sankara is viewed in these pages as one who sought to re-interpret the message of the Upanishads in terms of what is perhaps their oldest metaphysical doctrine.

For meditation, there must be a meditator, an object of meditation and an act of meditation and thus it entails the notion of multiplicity. Based on the assertion of non-duality Sankara rejects it, but accepts that it will direct the aspirant's attention to the highest truth. So he contends that it is needed till the realization of Self. Also it helps to remove misconceptions of the Self.

Sankara cites the traditional story of the Tenth Man as an analogue of how the sentence *tat tvam asi* can awaken knowledge. In Sankara's words meditation is transformed from a way of action to a way of knowledge.

Similarly Sankara is not diametrically opposed to yoga but admits to using certain yoga concepts. Gaudapāda calls the association of yoga as *Advaita Aspara Yoga*. Sankara accepts the validity of yoga practice as a means to both physical and psychical transformation; the yoga element forms an integral component in his system. But he does not take yoga to be a separate system. According to the author Yoga and Advaita are mutually exclusive. Yoga is effective in destroying karmas. The psychology of yoga is effectively employed in *Upadesa Sāhasri*.

Hence Sankara's position on meditation and yoga may be summarized as follows:

- i) the need for meditation is not denied, but the necessity for meditation on the Self is rejected.
- ii) Yoga is not a means to liberation.
- iii) But it is necessary to regulate the flow of ideas about the Self, when the results of past actions disturb.

The author is very sincere and positive in his approach. The chapters are well-constructed after careful study. Bader succeeds really in his attempt to reveal 'the nature of the Indian Psyche'. A thorough study of the book will certainly help to understand Sankara as well as Ramana Maharshi subtly and suitably enough.

-- Dr. T.N. Pranathārthi Haran.

A *DUET OF ONE* (The Ashtavakra Gita dialogue): Tr. and commentary by Ramesh S. Balsekar. Pub: Advaita press, P.O. Box 3479, CA 90277, USA. pp 221, price not stated.

*Ashtāvakra Samhitā* popularly known as *Ashtāvakra Gīta* is a treatise on Advaita Vedānta, consisting of the dialogue

between Ashtāvakra and his disciple Janaka. In *Vanaparva* of Mahābhārata, the story of *Ashtāvakra* is found, and the same is briefly surveyed in the first Chapter of this book. From the advaitic point of view *Ashtāvakra Gīta*, and *Avadhūta Gīta*, stand high. *Ashtāvakra Gīta*, played an important role in moulding the early life of Swāmi Vivekānanda. With its categorical assertions and unambiguous expressions, it places the Ultimate Truth before us with firm conviction and poetic vehemence.

The translator and commentator of this work, Sri Ramesh S. Balsekar, a retired high bank-official, plunged himself into spiritual life, influenced by the teachings of Sri Nisargadatta Maharāj. Throughout his works one meets with mental agility, logical conclusions, total thinking and complete identity with the unicity that appears as diversity. Balsekar has emerged as the living alter ego of his Guru. A shy banker of a retiring disposition has today become a powerful writer, guide and Guru. When compared to the alas, heavy style found in his other works, the present work is lilting and lucid. The translation of the 298 splendid Sanskrit stanzas is impeccable. The book abounds with gems culled out from the teachings of Ramana Maharshi, Nisargadatta Maharāj and the sayings of Saint Jñāneswar.

Sri Ramana Maharshi, divided spiritual seekers into three categories, the foremost of them being those who only need to hear the truth from a Guru in order to realise the Self. Like gun powder which ignites with a single spark, Janaka, as we see from the commentaries of the various stanzas, plunges from the second chapter, into Eternity. Consciousness of the disciple merges with the indivisible universal Consciousness. The solution to the initial questions put forth by Janaka, "How can knowledge be acquired? How can liberation be attained?" is found in their dissolution. The doubter merged in That. The role of the Guru has been rightly pointed out, at the culminating point, at the fag end of the work, quoting Sri Ramana Maharshi, who said "Guru's words are to be used like a thorn to remove a thorn of concepts embedded in the heart, and thereafter both the thorns are to be thrown away." The book running into two hundred and twenty one pages, well printed, is another fragrant flower that has blossomed in the garden grown in the heart of the author, Sri Balsekar, and deserves to be read by all spiritual seekers.

-- Tādīmalla Jagannādhā Swāmy.

THE CITY OF HEART: by Yunus Emre. Translated into English Verses by Suha Faiz. Pub: Element Books, Longmead, Shaftesbury, Dorset U.K. pp. 121 + xv, £ 8.99

This is another worthy addition to the great wealth of Sufi poetry rendered into English, this time by Suha Faiz, (a Turkish Cypriot who had made his name in Britain for 30 years).

Yunus Emre who died around 1320 was a contemporary of Rumi (died in 1273). Though Yunus wasn't a disciple of Rumi, they were both mystics and like all mystic poets of Sufism, Yunus makes profuse use of metaphors and symbols

such as Wine, Tavern, Friend, Cup, Tree, Bird, Ocean, River, Fire etc. and puts into his poems both the pangs of search and the joys of arrival.

For Yunus religion is not the goal -- the formal ways of prayer and pilgrimages prescribed in the organised religion. The goal is the Truth, so he sings "Not in Mecca is our trust, nor yet in mosque or formal prayer / In Truth, in silent Truth..." (p. 35). He would prefer the Heart to the Kaaba: "Ask then of me to know which is the best -- the Kaaba or the Heart / I give the heart my choice" (p. 35). This heart is the Mystical spiritual Heart, the centre of love, or consciousness, of Being. But in the fire of love when all else is consumed, the traditional differences between the heart and the head fall away; Truth, Self, knowledge and Love, all become one for Yunus. He then cries out, "Throw away the We, the 'other' and Yunus, be one" (p. 17); the end of love, where there is no subject and object. The poet in a rare vision of his unity with all eternity sings he was Adam, he was Noah, he was Jesus ... (p. 63)

Like all lovers Yunus sings of the 'Sweet pain' in love (p. 155), and his dissolution into it. He has welcomed it, chosen this path of pain, and with a rare combination of humility and power of love he feels hurt at what people say about his love for the Beloved, yet challenges them to accept the 'throes of love' to prove the point. "He who would contend, let him come manfully / Into the open field..." (p. 19). Suffering and deliberate suffering needs greater courage than what we are capable of.

In all the 157 poems contained in this volume of 135 pages, one comes across the great intensity and courageous self expression that are the hallmark of the Sufi poets. All the poems end with the poet addressing himself in the last couplet. They are not all written in rhyming couplets, but the reader knows the translator doesn't aim at it, restricting the freedom of expression. The poems are simple, direct and sincere. They embody the many different moods that surface in this story of Love -- the manifoldness of the moods only point out how ultimately the way and the goal are the same.

-- Prof. B.K. Misra

**NATIVE HEALER:** Initiation into an ancient art: by Medicine Grizzly Bear Lake. Pub: Quest books, P.O. Box 270, Wheaton, IL 60189, USA. pp. 199, \$10.95

The path of the Shamanic Healer, is not one specific to American Indians but common to native indigenous peoples throughout the world. This book deals specifically with current day practices of the Native American healer.

Medicine Grizzly Bear reads authentic, in experience and knowledge of his inherent path, and as a biography of a modern day Shaman it is a delightful and easy read. However, for hard facts of this specific path, its practices and initiations one would need to make a deeper investigation than "Native Healer". He goes into very little details in actual fact, apart from a detailed list of spiritual violations, that can create illness.

Medicine Grizzly Bear goes into various descriptions of where western doctors fail because they do not look at things in the same way as native doctors. To say this, is a little simplistic. All modalities have their role limitation and value. The problem arises when one fails to recognize options. To say that all mental disorders arise from sorcery and possession is as limited, as ignoring the possibility that they may. The tendency to criticize one modality in favour of another is unnecessary, and trivializes the value of what he says in some way.

The most delightful aspect of this book, is that it is not a "New Age" writer's version of experience after experience. It is not a self-congratulatory expose, that western writers on "spiritual paths" have a tendency towards. Medicine Grizzly Bear, just is what he is, and the honesty of belief and tradition shines through.

-- Heather Bache

**NO WAY OUT, Further dialogues with U.G.:** edited by J.S.R.L. Narayana Moorthy and Antony Paul Frank Naronha. Pub. Akshaya Publications, Bangalore, India. pp. 209, Rs. 150

**U.G. KRISHNAMURTI, A Life:** by Mahesh Bhatt. Pub. Viking Penguin, India. pp. 189, Rs. 195

Two new books for U.G. fans by U.G. devotees who continue to disregard their "unguru's" advice to give up all hope. For they persist in writing books for themselves in the hope that by doing so they may somehow understand their "unrational guru" better. *No way out, further Dialogues with U.G.* is yet another exercise to make coherent U.G.'s utterances; thus we have the introduction and first chapter trying to explain U.G. in the light of other teachers and teachings, followed by dialogues between U.G. and various individuals such as a journalist, a sex therapist, a physician, and a scientist; all of course, adding further confusion as to what this U.G. is all about, as his answers, as he freely admits, are often contradictory and not meant at all to be conclusive. His comment on questions and answers is telling: "All the questions are born out of the answers. But nobody wants the answers. The end of the question is the end of the answer. The end of the solution is the end of the problem. We are only dealing with solutions and not with the problems." (p. 37)

But as is the case in all U.G. books, there are throughout some provocative and always original insights. "Our desire to know the laws of nature is only to use them for perpetuating something here (in the human being). So thought is, in its birth, in its content, in its expression, and also in its action, to use a very crude political word, fascist in nature. There is no way you can get away from that. It (thought) is a self-perpetuating mechanism." (p. 104)

He has an interesting take on the cause of Alzheimer's disease. "If we continue to give importance to the identity that we have created, which is the product of culture, we are going to end up with Alzheimer's disease. We are putting

memory and the brain to a use for which they are not intended. Computers can do the same job in a much more efficient way. The maintenance of our identity is possible only through the constant use of memory. It is wearing out the human organism, leaving little energy for tackling the problems of the world." (p. 71)

U.G. continues to be consistent in one area -- that there is no hope, no solution, no problem even; hence reading a U.G. book always leaves one a bit depressed. But there is method in the madness, because perhaps surrender of all hope will follow the depression. But this too is a bit tricky. "You see, giving up something in the hope of getting something else in its place is not really giving up. There is nothing to give up there. The very idea of giving up, the very idea of denying certain things to yourself, is in the hope of getting something else." (p. 134). So you see, always, with U.G. there is NO WAY OUT.

As for this new biography, *U.G. KRISHNAMURTI, A Life*, here's U.G.'s comment on it: "A friend of mine, Mr. Mahesh Bhatt, one of the film directors, signed a contract with Penguin Books to write a biography of his friend U.G. Krishnamurti. I told him that there is no story to tell. I am saying whatever has happened to me is acasual. Whatever has happened has happened despite everything I did. All those events before it (U.G.'s 'calamity') were unconnected with it. We would like to link all of them up and create a story or philosophical structure out of them, and say that every event in one's life is not an accident but that some destiny may be shaping the events, shaping one's life. I don't think that is the way we are functioning. This very demand to know either the cause of our own origins or the cause of the origin of the world is an idle demand, the answers for which, however interesting they may be, are of no importance in dealing with the problems of living." (p. 73).

But if you are still interested in possible causes and want more detail about U.G.'s early life than was described in *MYSTIQUE OF ENLIGHTENMENT*, including a lot more about the relationship between U.G. and J. Krishnamurti and the Theosophical Society, then you may want to read this book. An added fillip is the namedropping of well known Bollywood seekers and revelations of their and the author's personal crises, which is probably why the author got the contract to write this book in the first place.

-- Priscilla Gong

**SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S THOUGHTS IN A VEDANTIC PERSPECTIVE:** by Swami Tapasyānanda. Pub: Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras 600 004. pp. 169, Rs. 15

Swāmi Tapasyānanda (1904-1991) of the Rāmākrishna Order has left a considerable legacy to mankind in the form of over thirty books, consisting of biographies, studies and translations. The Swāmi demonstrated from his youth a keen interest in religious and philosophic thought and scholarship.

From 1931 to 1939 he served as the editor of the

*Vedānta Kesari*. This book comprises a collection of essays originally published as editorials in the 1939 issues of the *Vedānta Kesari*.

In five chapters -- 'Man', 'World', 'God', 'Religious Pluralism' and 'Sri Ramakrishna's Spiritual Experiences' the author takes us through all the philosophical understanding, ethical requirements and spiritual practices necessary to attain divinity.

The intricacies of *samādhi*, the subtleties of *Jñāna* and *bhakti*, and the classifications of the aspirants are only a few of the subjects clearly elaborated upon. Furthermore, I have found this book to be a complete guide in itself for those wishing to take up spiritual practice.

Sri Ramakrishna's experiences and teachings are the infallible helm that steers the author through all the complexities of spiritual life. Anyone, whether a new enthusiast, or advanced practitioner, will benefit by reading these insights of Swāmi Tapasyānanda.

-- Dennis Hartel

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## BOOKS RECEIVED

**RAMANA MAHARSHI :** A bibliography. Compiled by K. Subramaniam. Pub: ICPR, 210, DDU Marg, Delhi 110 002. pp. 197, Rs. 125

**UNIQUENESS OF SRI BHAGAVAN:** by Dr. K. Subrahmanian. Pub: Ramana Kendram, 2-2-1145/5, Besant Colony, Hyderabad 500 044. pp. 92, Rs. 20

**SKANDA PURĀNA:** Arunāchala Māhātmya. Tr. by G.V. Tagare. Pub: Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 110 007. pp. 186

**SAYINGS OF NĀNNA GĀRU:** tr. by T. Jagannadha Swamy, Bhimavaram 534 002. pp. 54, Rs. 5

**LIGHT OF ARUNĀCHALESWARAR:** by Iswari Kamalabaskaran. Pub: AEW Press, 1/1, G.P. Road, Madras 600 002. pp. 316, Rs. 150

**CAN GOD IMPROVE MY BALANCE SHEET:** by Dwaraknath Reddy. Pub: as above. pp. 127, Rs. 90

**DEVOTEI TO THE LORD; BELOVED OF THE LORD:** by V.N. Narayanan, Pub: V.K. Narasimhan, W5-A6, Prashanthi Nilayam, 515 134 A.P. pp. 132, Rs. 100



Venkatoo, at 60

## Ashram Bulletin

### VENKATOO

|                               |   |   |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| <i>Nephew of Sri Bhagavan</i> | . | . |
| <i>Ashram's President</i>     | . | . |
| <i>Revered Father</i>         | . | . |
| <i>Karma Yogi</i>             | . | . |
| <i>Devotee of Devotees</i>    | . | . |
| <i>Humble Servant</i>         | . | . |
| <i>Genial Personality</i>     | . | . |
| <i>Remarkable Man</i>         | . | . |

### Satabdhi Celebration Tributes

Today, many know Sri T.N. Venkataraman, as 'Ashram President'. But from the early Forties, he has been endearingly addressed only as VENKATOO !

Our 'Venkatoo' has not only served the Ashram management for 56 years, but has also been the only "lucky" Publisher of our journal for 30 years! A tireless worker, he is yet a demanding, top-class and vibrant executive; an enthusiastic learner in all circumstances, but an equipoised colleague, rising to help on any occasion; a simple person at heart, but righteously ruthless should any injustice be meted out to Sri Ramanasramam !

We are proud and privileged to honour him by publishing a few tributes, joyously contributed by those who love and honour him and extol his many virtues and accomplishments.

— Editor

### My Revered Father

By V. Ganesan

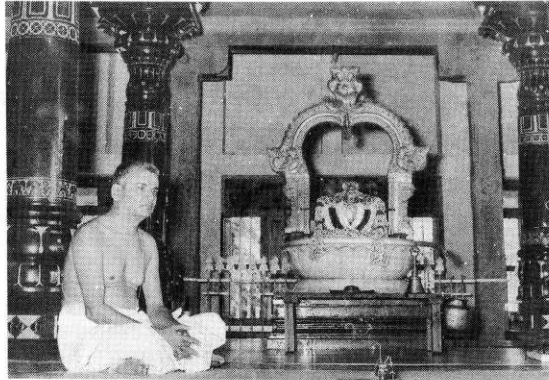
It is a strange coincidence that whenever there was a major incident, both good or bad, taking place at the Ashram, I was present as if dragged to participate in it, even during my school and college days.

One evening (1956) was an unforgettable one: unfortunately, a deeply hurting and tormenting one. As always, I had accompanied my father, Sri T.N. Venkataraman (President of Sri Ramanasramam) to Vellore. They were the days when the Ashram management was flooded with court cases. A vital judgement on the case challenging the validity of Sri Bhagavan's will, that is, the hereditary right of T.N. Venkataraman to lead the Ashram's management, was to be delivered on that day. The judge had just then pronounced that Venkataraman had NO rights and that the entire property, management and power to operate the Ashram would go to the Government. It literally shut all the



Venkatoo, with wife, Smt. Nagalakshmi and son, our Editor - this successful 'trio' relentlessly strived for the betterment of the Ashram.

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The 'nephew' dedicatedly surrendered at the Holy Samadhi Shrine of Bhagavan Ramana.

doors in Venkataraman's face. The elderly lawyer who represented the Ashram wept openly, and holding the shoulders of my father, said, "Venkatoo! Everything is gone. You are nothing from now on. How are you going to dare to return to the Ashram? I am sorry, I can't contain myself seeing you totally ruined....." I was dumbfounded, for I had not yet really understood the impact of the dire situation into which we were all thrown!

Reaching the railway station and waiting for the delayed train, I suddenly realised what had happened — the Ashram would go to the Government like the Hindu temples in Tamil Nadu and that my father was a nobody from then on! The shock was so severe I found myself crying aloud, on that lonely platform, unmindful of other passengers.

My father, a brave man indeed, in all calmness and to soothe me, uttered the following words: "According to the Will of Bhagavan, as His descendent I am entitled and enjoined to do *pūja* to the two *lingams* (images of Siva) — the one over the *samadhi* of the Mother and the other over His own *samadhi*. Let them take away from me all the property, power to manage and right to Presidentship. They cannot deny me this my rightful duty to perform worship. Anyhow, your mother has to cook food for all of us at home. I will bring that cooked rice to these shrines, offer it to them and then take it back home for us to eat. Thus, I will be faithfully fulfilling Sri Bhagavan's injunction to me according to the Will left by Him".

I was amazed to listen to these words of clarity, depth of conviction and determination. Yes, this was the genuine expression in words of the fidelity of a man who had just lost everything! He was noble and his thought was noble! He rightly interpreted for himself the essence in the Will of Sri Bhagavan — it is not to hold on to an official post, power or possession, but to maintain the Ashram "as a centre for the diffusion of spiritual knowledge". For, according to his understanding, doing worship to those *lingams* was the most essential! I was really thrilled for I could feel that Sri Bhagavan was surely guiding him to make such a profound statement.

Some time later, I narrated this story to Sri Muruganar. Listening to it he shed tears of joy and said, "See, our Venkatoo is really our Master's choice! Can anyone else, in such a desperate situation, have had

such clarity of mind? It's purely Sri Bhagavan's Grace that he is being guided, through and through. I am very happy you are standing by your father to assist him in every way. This noble side of Venkatoo should be made known to all Ramana-*bhaktas*. He needs all our support. I am proud of him!"

That noble "Venkatoo", as he has always been affectionately addressed is completing 80 years of a life of dedicated service to his Master and His Ashram on June 10, 1994. All Ramana-devotees should unhesitatingly come forward to applaud his strenuous and continuous Ramana-*seva*! Felicitations to this *karma-yogi* who has managed Ashram affairs so well for so many decades! His example is a fitting tribute to *Karma Yoga* itself!

'Venkatoo-60' was celebrated with great eclat by the devotees of Sri Bhagavan and by his kith and kin in 1974. We are all fortunate indeed to have one more opportunity to express our great joy in celebrating 'Venkatoo-80'.

The following Tributes have been received, and I feel honoured to publish them. I join others in their prayers to Sri Bhagavan that His Blessings be showered on him in abundance! May the Master of masters be ever with him. May Sri Bhagavan lead him unto Himself!

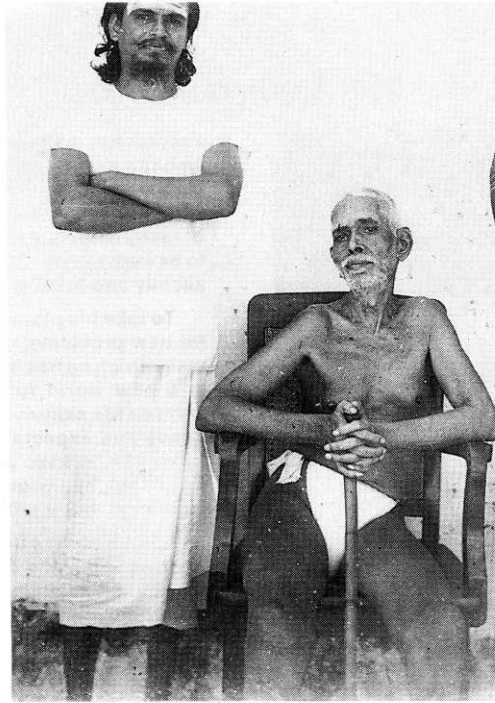
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## Nephew of Bhagavan Ramana

By A.R. Natarajan

Sri T.N. Venkataraman took over the Ashram as Manager-President in 1953, when old devotees had left, unable to bear the void of Sri Maharshi's physical absence, and new ones were yet to come. There were several groups attempting to grab the management; even the State government laid claim for its own takeover. Our Venkatoo met this situation with rare courage, fortitude and unshakeable faith in Ramana. This faith was only natural, for he had moved closely with Sri Ramana, first at Skandasramam as the pet of his grandmother Azhagammal and later as a member of the Ashram management from 1938. Often he would give Ramana an account of the happenings around the Ashram and even complain. Sri Ramana would say, "It is for us to be tolerant towards the management. They are providing us food and shelter". Twelve years with





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Bhagavan! What a rare fortune that has moulded him into a fine human being. Always accessible, greeting all with a pleasant smile, and having a vast knowledge of men and affairs. One has to give him credit for his knack of friendship and his unerring judgement in the excellent way in which he managed events on the *Maha Nirvana Day* and the days following it.

While he was successfully handling the major task of constructing the temple of Sri Bhagavan he had to handle a spate of litigation. In this too he succeeded, facing many a hardship when he, and his revered wife Nagalakshmi, were obliged to spend hours and hours waiting in courts to be called as witnesses. Nothing mattered save defence of the cause: to maintain Sri Ramanasramam the way Bhagavan wanted it. Yet the hardship he bore in those years has not left any scars on him. When it comes to the interests of the Ashram he is ready to excuse his worst enemy. The best interests of the Ashram have always been uppermost in his mind. He would never spend a single penny of the Ashram funds unnecessarily. All the legal giants would readily accept his brief but none would ask for any fees, so touched were they by his simple ways and unostentatious living.

My close contact with T.N.V. began in 1963 in connection with the Trust Scheme, and it has since been a long and cherished association of mutual love and respect. Practically every day he would write about some matter connected with the Ashram, be it Ramanasramam Charities, exemption under 80G, constitution of the Trust Board, correspondence with the government, court matters, notifications for exemption from income-tax, Ramana Kendra, Ramana Maharshi Centre and sometimes even intimate family matters. He was a prompt correspondent. He had learnt this from Ramana, who always set an example of promptness in replying to correspondence. T.N.V.'s letters are life-

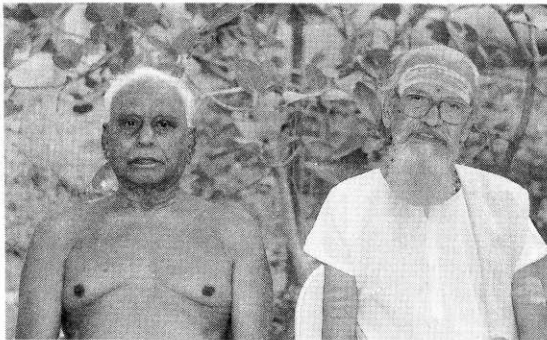
like, full of dramatic impact in describing the events as they are happening. It was and is a great pleasure to receive his letters for he is there in front of you when you read them.

The Centenary Celebrations of Bhagavan in 1979-80 marked a watershed stage in the growth of Sri Ramanasramam. Since then its growth has been phenomenal. The success of these celebrations was in no small measure due to the overwhelming enthusiasm of T.N.V.

The Ramana movement the world over has been receiving T.N.V.'s sustaining support. Every year he has accepted the Ramana Maharshi Centre's request to inaugurate the National Seminar. He kindly donated many mementoes relating to Bhagavan to the Ramana Kendra, Delhi. His recent effort to form the Ramana Vidya Trust, Madras is evidence enough of his unfailing and warm encouragement of Ramana activities.

He is a strong family man too. There is no relative of his whom he has not helped. He is extremely fond of his three sons and four daughters and has great affection for the grandchildren. 'Anna' and 'Anna Thatha' are the most popular words in the family! As for the devotees, he is always welcome in every house, as he invariably yet gently merges and becomes one more member of the family. No special demands, no special airs. Nephew of Bhagavan Ramana, yet so simple!

It is difficult to think that T.N.V. is now eighty years of age. But that is what the chronological clock shows. What a fortunate and what an eventful life it has been! Fortunate, because which other person has had so much opportunity to serve our Bhagavan Sri Ramana, performed four *Kumbhabhishekams* at the Ashram, done forty-two years of untiring and loving service to the Master's 'Home'! He has made it our home too. How can we express our gratitude to him adequately?



With Sri N. Balarama Reddiar

## A Genial Personality

By N. Balarama Reddiar

I have known T.N.V., whose 80th birthday is being celebrated on 10th June, rather intimately for the last 56 years. Not once, as far as I remember, has there been as much as a rift between us during this long period. The credit for this smooth relationship should go more to him than to me. Such is the nobility of his nature.

When in 1956 the late Mrs. Feroza Taleyarkhan, he and myself went on a 6-week tour of North India, I had occasion to observe him at close quarters. Even under stress his patience and forbearance are remarkable. He can handle any situation with ease and understanding. His genial personality has endeared him to one and all. He has a ready smile and a soft and soothing word for those who meet him, friend or foe.

Even though he is not highly educated in the so-called worldly sense, the highly educated are no match for him in tackling difficult situations in life with extraordinary calm and composure. He has fought many battles and won, but he is not proud. Ordinarily he is mild and sweet, almost like a child, but in an uncommon situation which calls for a defiant attitude he is a lion.

That he has had for so long a glorious opportunity to serve Sri Ramanasramam, this abode of the foremost sage of this century, should make him feel fully satisfied with his earthly life of eighty years. With such a man as its head, what family can fail to flourish and feel truly blessed!

My heartfelt felicitations on this happy occasion.

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## President, yet a Humble Servant

By Professor K. Swaminathan

On the auspicious occasion of the *Satabhishekam* of our Ashram President, I deem it a proud privilege to congratulate him and wish him many more years of selfless service to the devotees.

When I first came to the Ashram in September, 1940, the management was in the hands of the 'Roman Emperor' Sri Niranjanananda Swami, and it could be no

easy task to succeed that giant whose word was law and who ran a household and an empire with power derived from the mother-like love and full-moon-like brightness of Sri Bhagavan. Visitors from many countries, speakers of many languages, observers of many customs had all to be kept happy. "Venkatoo" was then a lad and served silently and humbly as the "hand" of *Chinnaswami*.

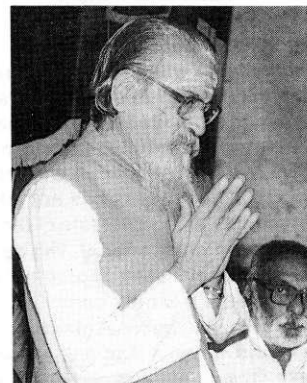
To take his place and do his job and also to encounter new problems, our T.N.V. had a most complicated task, which he has been performing ever since, and this in a new world full of discord. Here it was that he showed his skill and goodness of heart by meeting the needs and expectations of visitors from many countries. The *sattvik* structure of the Ashram, the old *Kalpataru*, has grown big and shelters more pilgrims each year, but it still retains its essential character.

Apart from this hospitality, the educative and inspiring function of the Ashram has also expanded in many ways. *The Mountain Path* has retained the high standard set for it by Arthur Osborne. The Ashram publications are authoritative and authentic expositions of the *Jnani's advaita*. They are incredibly low-priced and yet well got up.

It is the grace of Bhagavan showered on Venkatoo which has brought his three sons to assist him and divide the burden of Ashram tasks.

On behalf of all the old devotees I wish the President many more years of health, happiness and hard work so that he becomes, in Vinoba's words, an *akshaya purusha*.

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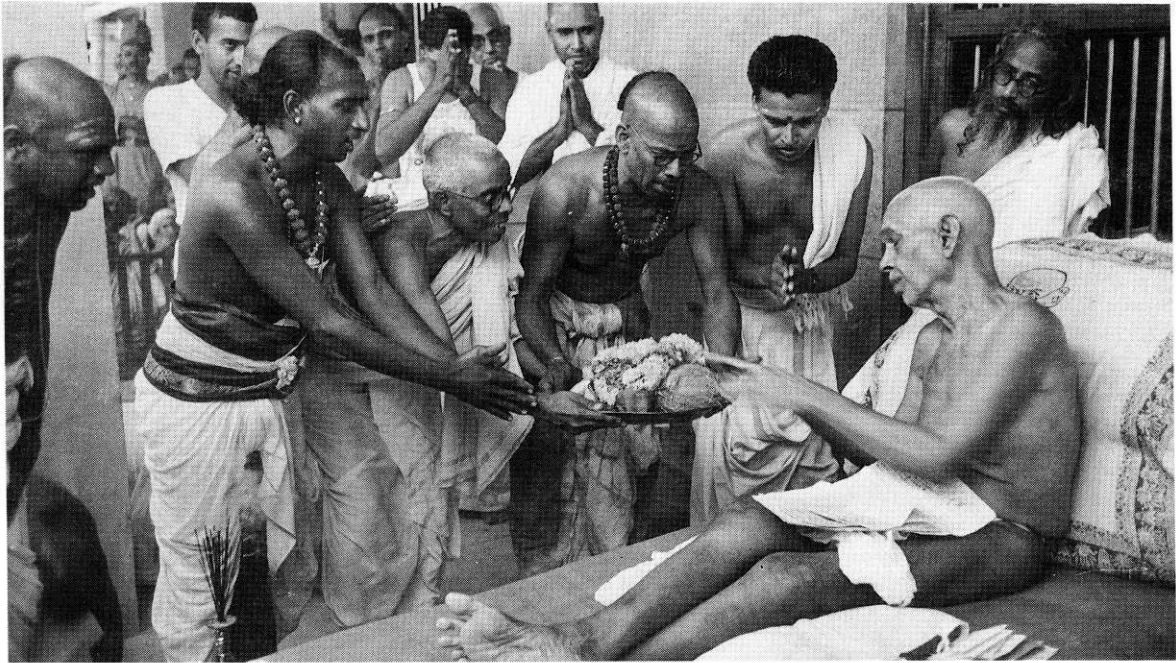


A votary of all Ramana-bhaktas

## A Devotee of Devotees

By Dr. K. Subrahmanian

T.N. Venkataraman is a veritable dynamo on two legs. The expansion of the Ashram during the last forty years has been due to his untiring work. During the lifetime of Sri Bhagavan, there was only a thatched building inside the Ashram and it was there that men stayed during their visits to the Ashram. Women are not allowed to be in the Ashram beyond 6 p.m. and had to make their own arrangements for stay outside the Ashram. The cottages, the new meditation hall, the new book-stall, etc. that have come up since 1950 are all due



Venkatoo (extreme right, bowing to and next to Sri Bhagavan) who representing the Ashram, inaugurated the *Kumbhabhishekam* ceremonies of Sri Mathrubutheswara Shrine on 17.3.1949. Here he is seen taking permission from Sri Bhagavan for the commencement of the function.

to T.N.V.'s total commitment to the Ashram and the devotees. Presidentship has not been a bed of roses for T.N.V. There were over thirty cases against the Ashram but he won them with his indomitable courage and incredible perseverance. Affable, accessible, humble, frugal and extraordinarily simple yet a shrewd and capable administrator, T.N.V. has rendered yeoman service to the Ashram. To him, service to the Ashram is service to Sri Bhagavan. Even now one can see him going up and down the Ashram, morning and evening, circumambulating Sri Bhagavan's *Samadhi*: he moves and has his being here.

We cannot be sufficiently grateful to the unpretentious, dynamic, selfless President, Sri T.N. Venkataraman. Others dream and talk about their dreams. T.N.V. dreams and transforms them into reality. I pray that Sri Bhagavan blesses this great *Karma Yogi*, Sri T.N. Venkataraman, with many, many years of fruitful service to the Ashram and the devotees.

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## A Remarkable Man

By J. Jayaraman

As the chosen instrument of Sri Bhagavan, Sri T.N. Venkataraman has steered the ship of Ashram administration safely, smoothly, through many a financial and legal iceberg. In the year 1938, following Bhagavan's remark "*Venkatoo irukkaane, kutti sarvaadhikaari*" ("Well, Venkatoo is there, the 'Junior administrative head'"), Sri Venkataraman arrived for permanent stay at the Ashram, along with wife Nagalakshmi, sons Sundaram and Ganesan, and his foster parents on 1.2.1938. He had till then been away earning his living working for the Chettinad Bank, and maintaining a growing family. He came to the Ashram on leave and never returned. "I am still on leave," he jests, referring

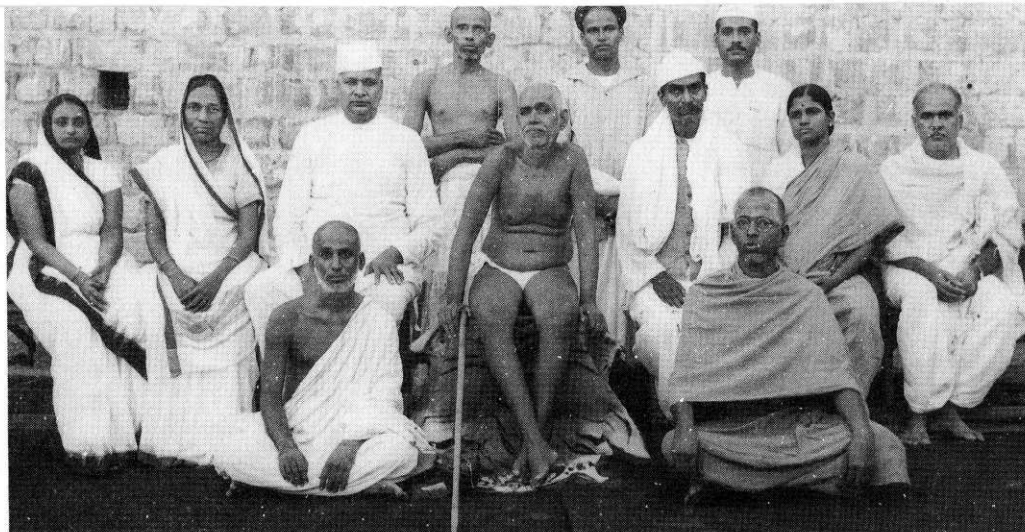
to this occasionally. Though I have been associated with the Ashram only for about 20 years, the past 9 years as a resident, I have witnessed moments when there was not enough money to provide Ashram meals for the following month. This was in itself a vast improvement over the earlier trying times of uncertain daily meals when the President took charge of the Ashram, soon after his father's demise in 1953, with a negative balance of over Rs 10,000/-.

If today the Ashram is a picture of stability and abundance, it is in no small measure due to the one-pointed ministry of this remarkable man. For that is what the President is, to say the least. One truly believes that he could go on for ever. He wears the same majestic look of a lion that impressed me two decades ago. His memory for dates and events of national, Ashram and personal history, and his unsurpassed grasp of the intricacies of accounting, of the nuances of law and of civil engineering ever amaze one and all. Open in manner and rustic in wit, his timely attentions showered on pilgrims and devotees in places high or low, continue to earn their admiration. His magic wand of diplomacy can disarm a critic in a trice, and can recharge a disgruntled, depressed worker or devotee with the invigorating confidence of being needed and loved.

Early on, during Skandashram days, Bhagavan gave him *upadesa* when the child Venkatoo inadvertently tried to eat from the food kept aside for the *Nondi* (lame) monkey and received a slap from the latter. Bhagavan said, "Do not covet what does not belong to you." Today, even though, as the nephew of the Maharshi, he could command and receive homage, he puts on no spiritual airs.

Ashram history bears ample witness to the total protection of Bhagavan that he enjoys. He is without fear and has told me so himself many a time, "I have no fear. I have for a radius of 60 feet around me Bhagavan's total protection!"





A group photo taken, with Sri Bhagavan, in 1938. Standing behind, to the left of Sri Bhagavan is Venkatoo. To Sri Bhagavan's right, Jamnalal Bajaj, to Bhagavan's left Rajendra Prasad. Seated down: to Bhagavan's right, Yogi Ramiah, left Niranjanananda Swami. Extreme right, M.S. Kamath.

## A Karma Yogi

By M. Subba Rao

Sri T.N. Venkataraman, known as 'Venkatoo' to many of us, is, by Sri Bhagavan's Grace, a friend and guide to all who visit Sri Ramanasramam. I have always considered Venkatoo as a relative and friend given me by Sri Bhagavan. He shows the same love and concern to all devotees as he does to his family and is much loved in return.

For the last five decades he has grown with the Ashram imbibing the qualities of simplicity, discipline and punctiliousness from his close association with Sri Bhagavan and his fifteen years' training under his father, Sri Niranjanananda Swami. When the latter attained *samadhi* in 1953, Venkatoo wholeheartedly threw himself into the Ashram's management and became so successful an administrator that this institution has blossomed as an international spiritual centre under his stewardship.

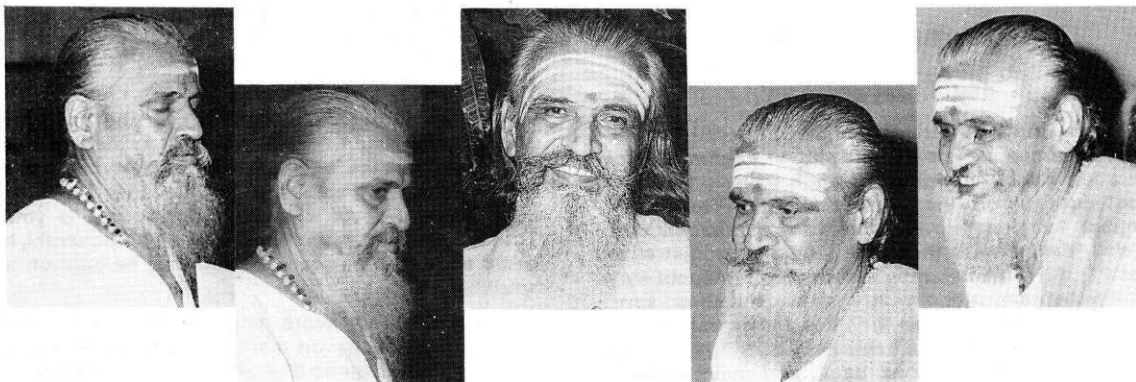
His unflinching faith that Sri Bhagavan is always

with him has given him the strength, courage and determination to successfully fight the many legal battles which beset the Ashram after Sri Bhagavan's *Mahasamadhi* and to safeguard the Ashram as a spiritual centre for the benefit of all. With humility and sincerity he welcomes visitors and extends the utmost hospitality. In the rapport he has established with them, he has never felt the dearth of funds for the development of the Ashram.

The religious rituals of the Ashram, including puja at the shrines of Sri Bhagavan's *samadhi*, the Mathrubhuteswara Temple and also Tamil and Sanskrit *Veda Parayana*, are being conducted regularly with the same serenity and sanctity as they were in the presence of Sri Bhagavan.

The devotees owe a great deal to this *Karma Yogi* for his dedicated service to the Ashram and thus to humanity.

On this occasion of Sri Venkataraman's *Satabhishekam* let us join together in prayer to Sri Bhagavan to bless him with many more years of healthy life and dedicated service to Sri Ramanasramam.



## RAMANA JAYANTHI CELEBRATIONS



Jayanthi Celebrations at the St. Petersburg, Russia Ramana Kendra. Our translator and leader of the group, Sri OM, sits second from left.



Sri Ramana Jayanthi at 'Ramanalayam', Oakville, Ontario, Canada — Dec. 25, '93. Sri Krishna Sastri regularly conducts Ramana Satsangh meetings.



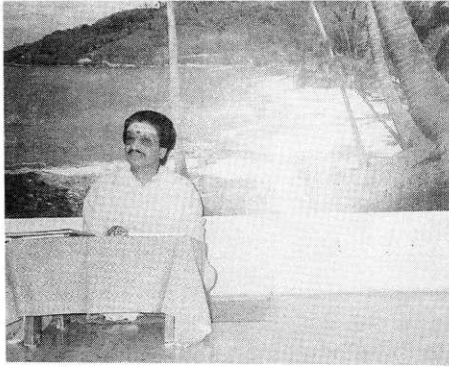
114th Birthday of Sri Bhagavan was celebrated at Bombay at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpathy, on March 22, '94. Sri Ramrao Adik, Finance Minister, Govt. of Maharashtra, who presided, garlands the picture, assisted by Sri P.V. Somasundaram. Chief Guest Mr. Justice H.L. Dudhat addresses the gathering. (l to r) Sri Rohit Mehta, Mrs. Uma Khanna, Dr. K. Subrahmanian, Sri Ramrao Adik, Sri Amrutlal Z. Mehta, Chairman and Sri N.D. Sonde, Vice Chairman of Sri Ramana Jayanthi Celebration Committee, Bombay.



Ramana Kendra, Madras: Ramana music at the Ramana Jayanthi celebrated on January 16, '94, at Asthika Samajam, Madras

Sri Ramana Kshetram, Jinnur: In the Ramana Jayanthi celebrations held on Dec. 30, '93, Sri Nanagaru giving a talk on Sri Bhagavan's unique teachings.





Our Editor gave a talk on the teachings of Bhagavan Ramana at the Rotary Club, Nagamalai, Madurai on Jan. 22, '94.



Ramana Kendra, Madurai: Selvi S. Leela, Station Director, All India Radio, Madurai, inaugurated the Ramana Jayanthi Celebrations at Madurai (l to r) Dr. B. Venkataraman, Selvi S. Leela, Smt. Kala Rangaswamy and S. Guruswamy, President of the Kendra



Sri Ramana Maharshi Satsang Trust, Bangalore: Sri Bhagavan's Jayanthi was celebrated on January 16, '94: (l to r) our Editor, Veda Brahmasri K.G. Subbaraya Sarma and the Trust's Managing Trustee, Sri K. Ramaswami.

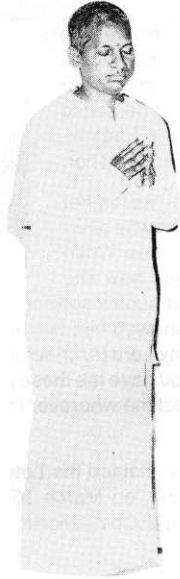


## Eye-Camp at Ashram

Sri V. Dwarakanath Reddy, a long-standing devotee of Sri Bhagavan and a resident of Ramana Nagar has liberally contributed to several projects over the years. He has now committed himself to conduct two eye-camps per year, in June and December, to bring the much needed restoration of sight to the poor and aged rural population who have cataract of the eye. Expert medical support is being given by the Arvind Eye Hospital, Madurai — a famous and dedicated institution of International repute.

For each camp, publicity is carried out by a van that scours the 60 or so villages within a 50 km. radius of our Ashram. Over 1,000 persons are gathered at the Ramanashram premises, where a large team of doctors and para-medics screen them and select 300 cases, ripe for cataract surgery (others are given prescriptions, spectacles and suitable advice). This group is then taken in buses to Madurai where at the Arvind Eye Hospital, they are operated upon, housed, nursed and fed for a week and then brought back to our Ashram. Spectacles are given to them. Everything is free.



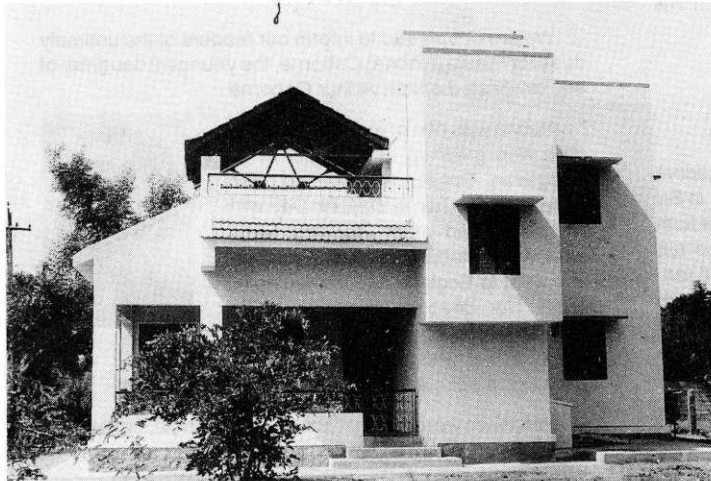


## Dr. Ilaya Raaja

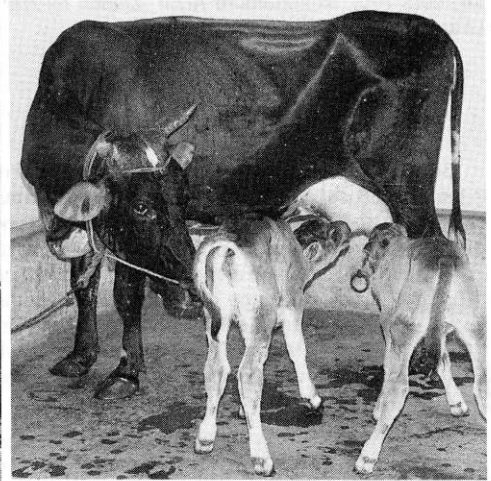
Sri Ilaya Raaja is the most popular Cine-music director in India. Especially in Tamil Nadu, his fame is unparalleled in cine history. His rare achievements as a versatile composer in the various fields of music are phenomenal. Acknowledging this remarkable achievement, Annamalai University, Chidambaram, conferred on him the Degree of *Doctor of Letters (Honoris Causa)* on March 28, 1994.

A decade ago he had a unique spiritual experience within the precincts of the Mother's Temple at Mookambika, and this entirely changed the texture of his life. He was enabled to have direct contact with Sri Bhagavan's teaching of *Atma Vichara* and has come to the Ashram every month since then to pay homage to his *Sat Guru*: Bhagavan Ramana.

Devotees of Sri Bhagavan join the numerous admirers of Sri Ilaya Raaja in conveying our hearty congratulations for this great honour bestowed upon him. May Sri Bhagavan bless him with long life, health and peace!



"Arul Ramana": Prof. Tadashi Yanagida, President, Nippon Ramana Kendra, Japan, has become an *Arunachalavasi* (resident of Arunachala) by entering into his new house on April 24, '94.



An Ashram Cow gave birth to two calves: the first of its kind since the commencement of the Ashram *goshala* (cow-shed) from the '30s

## KUDOS...

The *Jayanthi* issue 1993 was received right on the *Jayanthi* day! Words fail me to express my appreciation of the issue. Your Editorial, and the other pieces from your facile pen, Narayana Guru, Dada Vaswani, Yogi Ramsuratkumar and Swami Chinmayananda, are all real gems!

— C.G. Balasubramanyan

## Obituary

### Prof. N.R. Krishnamurti Aiyar

This life-long devotee of Sri Bhagavan was introduced to our readers in the January 1973 issue of *The Mountain Path*. Coming from a family of Bhagavan's devotees (both his father and grandfather had known Sri Bhagavan from the time of His arrival in Tiruvannamalai), Sri Krishnamurti Aiyar had his first *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan in 1923 when he was a school boy of 16.

A staunch atheist at the time, he was totally transformed by Sri Bhagavan's powerful glance, and he remained a staunch devotee from that time. He and his father were instrumental in the acquisition by Sri Ramanasramam of the houses in which Sri Bhagavan was born and had his famous 'Death Experience'. His entire family — his wife, sons, daughters-in-law, daughters, sons-in-law and grand children — is totally devoted to Sri Bhagavan. Now absorbed in the Lotus feet of the Master, dear Prof. Krishnamurti Aiyar, abides forever at His Lotus Feet.



### Ramani Ammal

Sri Ramani Ammal, who was introduced to our readers in the July '86 issue of *The Mountain Path*, first came to Sri Bhagavan in 1948. So firm was her faith and ardent her *vairagya* that she left home alone and unattended at the tender age of 22. In 1949, together with another lady devotee, she stayed at the Mango Tree Cave on the Hill, where in earlier days Sri Bhagavan, and later Ganapati Muni, had lived.



In 1958 a house was built for her in Ramana Nagar, where she remained until her last illness. Truly was this ardent devotee blessed in abundance by Sri Bhagavan. Ever absorbed in Him, she continues to rest in His Heart.

### Frau Erna Feig

In the '70s, this pious German lady visited Arunachala three times and basked in the Spiritual Presence of her *Satguru*, Bhagavan Ramana.

Two Wars, especially the Second, forced her, the eldest of eleven children, to sacrifice her personal life: she devoted herself totally to her family, working hard and earning what she could. As a result she had no opportunity to marry and

remained single all her life. In time, she lost her eye-sight, and her body contracted all diseases mentionable. In her advanced age, she admitted herself to a home for the elderly as she had neither relatives nor friends to support her.



When in 1991 our Editor visited her at the home in Karlsruhe, she was overjoyed despite all these calamities. When he asked with deep concern how she could continue to live under such insurmountable adversities, this pious blind lady showed him two large photos on the wall and said, "Here is my Lord [Arunachala]! Here is my Beloved [Sri Bhagavan]! You gave me these photos in 1973 and told me They will protect me wherever I was. They still do!"

This remarkable *bhakta* attained the Lotus Feet of her Beloved, Bhagavan Ramana, on March 10, 1994 by the Grace of her Lord, Arunachala! Obeisance to Ma Erna Feig!

### "Noona"

We are deeply sad to inform our readers of the untimely death of Frania (Noona) Osborne, the youngest daughter of our celebrated editor, Arthur Osborne.

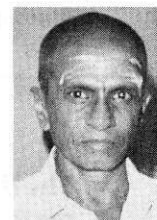
Noona was one of the favoured children who grew up at the Feet of Sri Bhagavan. Our readers will find reference made to her in *Day by Day with Bhagavan* and other Ramana literature. After Maharshi's *mahasamadhi*, she went to England and trained as an artist. Her deep appreciation of Sri Bhagavan's teaching added to the sensitivity of her artist's eye to make her paintings a special contribution to the world of art.



Her ashes were brought back to Arunachala, her eternal Home.

### T.R.K. Murthy

T.R.K. Murthy, the youngest son of the great Vedic scholar of Tiruvannamalai, Sri Ramachandra Ganapatigal, attained the Lotus Feet of Sri Bhagavan on November 10, 1993. Like his elder brothers, Sri Raju Sastri and Sri Sundra Sastri, he was deeply devoted to Sri Bhagavan and served His Ashram tirelessly in every possible way.



### Mrs. Dhanalakshmi Ramachandra Gananathalingam

Mrs. Dhanalakshmi Ramachandra Gananathalingam, the daughter of Bhagavan's beloved devotee Colombo Ramachandra, attained the Lotus Feet of Lord Arunachala on March 29, 1994.

Involved in spiritual activities from her childhood, Dhanalakshmi Ammal had the blessings of Sri Yoga Swami of Jaffna and Bhagavan Ramana from an early age. An adept in devotional music, she inspired one and all with her renderings of songs in praise of Lord Arunachala Siva by Sri Bhagavan and the songs of *shanti* (peace) composed by her father.

\* \* \*

### K.N. Panday



An ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan for whom the Maharshi was an ever-present reality in his consciousness, Sri K.N. Panday has been absorbed into His Lotus Feet on Jan. 6, '94. Through his unswerving faith in Sri Bhagavan, Sri Panday was able to silently bear all the physical handicaps that came in his later life. "Surrender all to Him" was the undercurrent of his life.

\* \* \*

### K. Sambamurti



Sri K. Sambamurti, Founder-Director of the Jupiter Press Private Ltd., Madras attained the feet of the Lord on 21st Feb. 1994. His press has been printing all Ashram Publications since 1949 and *The Mountain Path* since its inception in 1964. He was instrumental in making the press one of the premier institutions in the city, from humble beginnings. Unassuming and humble by disposition, he was a true *karma yogi*.

Addressing Mrs. Noye, a new American visitor from California, who seemed to be suffering from some mental stress, Sri Bhagavan said, "Get rid of the notion 'I am impure'. The Self is ever pure. All this is the work of the mind. If you get at the basis of the mind, all these wrong notions disappear."

— from *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*,  
p. 52-3

\* \* \*

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

— from *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*,  
p. 53

### KUDOS...

I just finished the latest issue of *The Mountain Path* and wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed it. Of course, the articles on my Father Yogi Ramsuratkumar and Papa Ramdas were thrilling but I also loved the other articles, like the one on Dada Vaswani. As I have told you before all such pieces on great saints' lives are food for me. It is amazing and thrilling as well how many realised ones visited Ramana Maharshi and profited from His Being!

— Lee Lozowick, HOHM, Inc., Box 4272,  
Prescott, AZ 86302, U.S.A.



**SRI BHAGAVAN'S  
ARADHANA  
CELEBRATIONS  
AT THE ASHRAM ON  
8.5.'94**

#### FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

|                                               |                  |                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>MATHRUBUTESWARA MAHA PUJA</b>              | <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>2.6.1994</b>   |
| <b>GURU POORNIMA (Vyasa Puja)</b>             | <b>Friday</b>    | <b>22.7.1994</b>  |
| <b>KRISHNA JAYANTHI (Gokulashtami)</b>        | <b>Sunday</b>    | <b>28.8.1994</b>  |
| <b>DAY OF BHAGAVAN'S ADVENT TO ARUNACHALA</b> | <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>1.9.1994</b>   |
| <b>VINAYAKA CHATHURTHI</b>                    | <b>Friday</b>    | <b>9.9.1994</b>   |
| <b>NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL(commences on)</b>      | <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>6.10.1994</b>  |
| <b>SARASWATHI PUJA</b>                        | <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>13.10.1994</b> |
| <b>DEEPAVALI</b>                              | <b>Wednesday</b> | <b>2.11.1994</b>  |
| <b>SKANDA SHASHTI</b>                         | <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>8.11.1994</b>  |
| <b>KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (commences on)</b>      | <b>Monday</b>    | <b>5.12.1994</b>  |
| <b>KARTHIGAI DEEPAM</b>                       | <b>Thursday</b>  | <b>15.12.1994</b> |
| <b>SRI BHAGAVAN'S JAYANTI</b>                 | <b>Tuesday</b>   | <b>20.12.1994</b> |
| <b>PONGAL</b>                                 | <b>Sunday</b>    | <b>15.1.1995</b>  |
| <b>CHINNA SWAMIGAL ARADHANA</b>               | <b>Monday</b>    | <b>16.1.1995</b>  |
| <b>MAHA SIVARATRI</b>                         | <b>Monday</b>    | <b>27.2.1995</b>  |
| <b>SRI VIDYA HAVAN</b>                        | <b>Friday</b>    | <b>17.3.1995</b>  |
| <b>TELUGU NEW YEAR'S DAY</b>                  | <b>Saturday</b>  | <b>1.4.1995</b>   |
| <b>TAMIL NEW YEAR'S DAY</b>                   | <b>Friday</b>    | <b>14.4.1995</b>  |

Statement about ownership and other particulars about THE MOUNTAIN PATH according to Form IV, Rule 8, Circular of the Registrar of Newspapers for India:

1. *Place of Publication* — Madras-15; 2. *Periodicity of its publication* — Quarterly; 3. *Printer's name* — T.V. Venkataraman; *Nationality* — Indian; *Address* — Karthik Printers, 12, Aranganathan Subway Road, Madras 600 015; 4. *Publisher's Name* — T.N. Venkataraman; *Nationality* — Indian; *Address* — Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai 606 603; 5. *Editor's Name* — V. Ganesan; *Nationality* — Indian; *Address* — Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai 606 603; 6. *Name and Address of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than 1% of the total capital* — SRI RAMANASRAMAM, Tiruvannamalai 606 603.

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

Date: 31.3.94

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

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