

Dear Reader

The following are the contents of Sri Ramana Jyothi, Monthly Journal of Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad, from August 2005 to December 2014, as on the system of its editor Prof. Laxmi Narain, <narainprof@yahoo.com> Phone 040- 27173352. These are as sent to the compositor, and not as they finally appeared in print, which was much more systematic. The printed copies of the journal are available in the library of Sri Ramana Kendram, since the journal began publication in September, 1981. E-mail: ramanakendram.hyd@gmail.com website: www.sriramanakendram.org

SRI RAMANA JYOTHI

Aug-Dec 2005

August - 05

UPADESA SAARAM OF RAMANA MAHARSHI – AN APPRECIATION (Verse 24)

Isajeevayoh (): Between *Eswara* and *Jeeva* – the Lord of the Universe and the individual
Veshadhibhida():there is *bheda* or difference from the stand point of *vesha* – the physical equipment, and *dhi* – the mind-intellect equipment, which are the conditioning factors.
Satswabhaavatah(): From the standpoint of their real nature, (they are)
Vastu kevalam(): the Supreme reality alone.

From the standpoint of the gross and the subtle there is a difference between the *Jeeva* and *Eswara*. But from the standpoint of their true nature, they are only One, namely, the Supreme Reality.

The vision of the *Jeeva* is extremely conditioned due to strong identification with the things around them. And because of this fragmentary vision, they see everything as separate and distinct from every other thing else. If one is able to perceive the totality and unity of existence without fragmentation and diversity, he transcends the influence of the conditioning factors and obtain Godhood, as happened in the case of Sri Ramana.

In the Total ocean alone do all the individual waves rise, exist and merge. Each wave has a limited strength and form, but the ocean has all the strength and forms. Water itself is called the wave and the ocean, due to identification with different conditioning. Existence Itself is called the *Jeeva* and *Eswara* because of the differences in gross and subtle.

So long as we think we are the body we shall be bound by attributes. When by the enquiry, WHO AM I? we discover that we are not the body, we also discover that we are, in reality, attributeless like *Brahman*. The triad of the Individual, the World, and God are all the illusions of the outgoing mind. When they are viewed from the standpoint of Ultimate Reality they are seen as one. (Source: Same as in previous months.)

SRI RAMANA’S DIVINITY – A CROSS SECTION OF ACCOLADES

The following encomiums about Sri Ramana Maharshi are from Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad’s forthcoming book Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi – Enchanting and Uplifting Reminiscences of 160 Persons.

It seems doubtful whether any other person in recorded history ever got similar adulations in his lifetime. The contributors have attempted to describe in myriad ways the indescribable Truth,

which Sri Ramana was. A personage like the Maharshi exemplifies Einstein's famous quote: "Generations to be come will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth." No wonder that the Maharshi is envisioned by the contributors as the highest pinnacle of Truth and Wisdom towards which humanity will strive to move for generations to come. (The serial nos. of the contributors to book are after their names.)

1. India's spiritual superman...Had an atmosphere of authentic greatness palpably around him... One enjoys an ineffable tranquility merely by sitting for a while in his neighbourhood – *Dr. Paul Brunton, no. 1*
2. The Maharshi represents spirituality of the finest type –*Prof. Banning Richardson, no.3*
3. He has gone beyond the pair of opposites and looks at events in the light of the Absolute – *Justice K. Sundaram Chettiar, no.4*
4. He is the Truth and the Reality...The Supreme is within such easy reach of so vast a multitude – *Grant Duff, no. 7*
5. He is Hercules among the *yogis*...His *tapasya* has won glory for India – *Sri Aurobindo as quoted by Dilip Kumar Roy, no. 8*
6. He belongs not to time but to Eternity – *B. Sanjiva Rao, no.9*
7. A veritable storehouse of spiritual energy and wisdom...He radiates *shanti*...He belongs to a superlative category of his own – *Justice N. Chandrasekhara Aiyar, no.10*
8. The purest of India...A chant of the millenniums – *Prof. C.G. Jung as quoted by Eleanor Pauline Noye, no. 11*
9. Sri Bhagavan is an ocean of tranquility...He touches you by a fourth-dimensional touch – *K.S. Venkataramani, no. 12*
10. He is the living symbol of that knowledge without which the humanity of today is but a pitiful joke – *Ella Maillart, no. 15*
11. A living incarnation of the Truth, rendering the Truth demonstrable – *Swami Siddheswarananda, no. 16*
12. The whole humanity owes a homage to this great saint – *Prof. B.L.Atreya, no. 21*
13. An exceptionally true representative of Hindu spirituality – *Oliver Lacombe, no. 22*
14. The true benefactor of the whole human race...Stands supreme in the realm of spiritual attainment – *Prof. Syed M. Hafiz, no. 23*
15. A sublime example of what a sage ought to be...Like the rivers and mountains he is the common property of mankind – *A.S. Panchapagesa Ayyar, no. 24*
16. A contemporary witness to the Eternal Truth...An eloquent commentary on Vedanta – *Prof. T.M.P. Mahadevan, no.25*
17. He is at least the greatness incarnate...His mere presence enables one to make the personality drop in the abyss of nothingness...His grace can plunge a person in the ecstasy of timeless omnipresent being...He has raised the whole world a little nearer the truth...His very presence among us is a benediction – *Duncan Greenlees, no. 26*
18. A silent look or an encouraging word from him does more good than all the homiletic literature of the world – *H.Ghosh, no. 27*
19. One cannot know him...remembrance is all – *C.S. Bagi, no.28*
20. Being with him was being elevated...The Divine Power of his presence was something remarkable, entirely outstanding – *Balarama Reddy, no. 34*

21. In him the Ultimate had revealed itself as the immediate. The Supreme had become the innermost. The Undreamt had become the actual – *Maurice Frydman, no.36*
22. He was Supreme Detachment incarnate...A heaven of peace and a beacon light in an otherwise impenetrable darkness – *S.S. Cohen, no. 37*
23. He was Divine Grace in human form...A *jivanmukta*, emancipated while yet in the physical body...For the first time in my life, I began to understand what the grace and blessings of a guru could mean – *Arthur Osborne, no. 40*
24. His face with an expression of serenity and beauty is impossible to describe, or even believe unless you have seen it yourself – *Major A.W. Chadwick, no. 42*
25. He was a perfect Impersonality like unnoticed daylight in an inner chamber – *Prof. K, Swaminathan, no.43*
26. The Supreme Lord has assumed a human body as an act of grace – *M. Sivaprakasam Pillai, no. 45*
27. He was manifestation of God in human form...The Lord has come down to earth to relieve and redeem the suffering of mankind – *Chalam(Gudipati Venkatchalam), no. 49*
28. Being in his presence was being in heaven...If I am to write how Bhagavan impressed me, all the vocabulary I can command in all the three languages I know would not suffice – *Souris, no. 50*
29. He truly represents in himself the University of Spiritual Education – *Swami Madhavatirtha, no.51*
30. Sri Bhagavan was undoubtedly one of those rare *mahatmas* who had the power to banish suffering by his presence, merely through giving *darshan* – *Chhagan Lal V.Yogi, no.55*
31. The unique bliss of peace is directly experienced in his presence – *Viswanatha Swami, no. 59*
32. An immense love poured from him like a mighty ocean – *Krishna Bhiksu, no. 62*
33. He was pure happiness...His smile contained the whole world...His egoless state is unimaginable, beyond verbal description...His grace takes you to a realm way beyond the phenomenal – *Wolter K. Keers, no. 64*
34. Standing before Maharshi one gets peace that surpasseth all human understanding...Being near him one feels the presence of God as a matter of course – no arguments or proofs are necessary – *Mouni Sadhu (M. Sudouski), no. 71*
35. The Maharshi is a God-man who has annihilated his mind and is therefore a perfect stillness and bliss – *Kumar, no.72*
36. The Maharshi has condensed in himself the immortal, the eternal...He is a tremendous spiritual dynamo who enters our heart even without our knowing it – *Swami Ranganathananda, no.73*
37. For the first time I knew the meaning of Eternity and was caught into bliss that surpasseth understanding...Maharshi lives in a sphere beyond the limitations of time and space – *Pascaline Mallet, no. 75*
38. Bhagavan's gaze was spellbinding...He conveyed thoughts silently and so powerfully that the vibrations would sometimes roll in waves almost hurting many of us sitting there – *Ethel Merston, no. 77*

39. In the light of the Maharshi's perfection all imperfections are revealed...When he smiled I felt suddenly as if all the flowers of the world had poured their fragrance into our midst – *M.A. Piggot, no. 79*
40. In the magic of his presence, the questions began to vanish with the quietening of the mind – *Eliot C Clark, no. 85*
41. In him I had discerned the unique sage of the eternal India, it was as if the very soul of India penetrated to the depth of my own soul and held mysterious communion with it – *Swami Abhishiktananda, no. 86*
42. He was the Divine magician – *Ramanadasa Sadananda, no. 87*
43. Under that spell-binding gaze I felt every atom of my body being purified, as if a new body were being created for me – *Papaji (Harivansh Lal Poonja), no. 90*
44. His body was the instrument of God from which God was radiating terrifically – *F.H. Humphreys, no. 92*
45. He was personification of emancipation...the wonder of the world with the perfume of spiritual peace. He was in himself the quest and the find – *Swami Rajeshwarananda, no. 97*
46. A saint of colossal spiritual magnitude. So surcharged with spirituality was he that his spirituality wafted out to us, completely enveloping us – *Dr. Lt. Col. P.V. Karmchandani, no. 98*
47. To write about him is trying to put the infinite into an egg cup...When Bhagavan smiled at me, it seemed I had never before known what a smile was – *Mercedes de Acosta, no. 114*
48. He gave us a tangible demonstration of God's omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence – *T.K. Sundaresa Iyer, no.115*
49. Here was India at its highest and here was the Reality transcending all mundane factors and bringing peace that surpasses all understanding...We were in a world totally different from the one we had left behind – *N.O. Mehta, no.120*
50. Sri Ramana was pure Advaita-experience...His chief language was radiant silence – *Emmanuel Sorensen, no.123*
51. Bhagavan was a *jivanmukta* – he actually demonstrated that state of being above body-consciousness – *Kundalmal A. Mahatani, no. 137*
52. His irresistible and indefinable spiritual power was simply overwhelming...I was totally and blissfully satisfied just being in his presence, where speech seemed redundant – *Santha Rangachari, no. 138*
53. He was Supreme Consciousness – *T.R.A. Narayana, no.139*
54. Our narrow understanding cannot fully comprehend him...His greatness is too vast – too immense to be capture within our mental orbit – *Swami Puragra Parampanthi, no. 141*
55. His *darshan* was a singular experience, which words can hardly describe – *M.V. Krishnan, no. 148*
56. Nothing seemed more enjoyable in this blessed world than to sit in silence in the holy presence of the Maharshi – *N. Ponniah, no. 149*
57. His smile of love and peace, words could not devalue – *Henry Hartung, no. 151*
58. His body seemed a glass case from which a blissful brilliance streamed out...He transmitted spiritual experiences in the manner in which material things are handed over – *Swami Chidbhavananda, no. 152*
59. He was the link to the formless being – *Maha Krishna Swami, no. 154*
60. He seemed to know everything – *Morarji Desai, no. 160*

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI SHOWERS HIS GRACE ON A PARSEE LADY

Roda MacIver (nee Kamdin) hailed from Bombay. She writes:

I first heard about Bhagavan in 1940 from Mrs. Taleyarkhan, a well-known devotee. She gave me some books and photos and told me that Maharshi was a very great man. I could not understand the books but I was strongly moved by the photos. I felt an urge to go and see him, and as time passed, the urge became stronger and stronger. There was no outer reason for this urge; my position in Bombay was good, both financially and socially, but somehow I was not satisfied. I felt restless, eager to break off, and anxious to move on. And I did so in 1942.

The time I arrived at the Ashram, Maharshi had gone up the hill. I was told to wait on the footpath for his return. I was expecting to see a man walking down the hill, but **when Maharshi finally appeared, I couldn't believe that I was watching a glorious sunrise unfold: a distant glimmering of light that, as it approached, became more and more radiant until the blazing sun itself was standing next to me. I was overawed and humbled by this display of utter magnificence.** Standing in the glow of that radiant presence, something shifted inside me, some new awareness manifested that I had never had before. I was caught by him and his love, and in that moment my soul became his.

During the next two years I was visiting the Ashram constantly. One day in 1944 when I went into the hall, Bhagavan was reading some papers. I sat down and looked at him. Suddenly he put away the papers and turned his luminous eyes on me. I could not stand the gaze, so I closed my eyes, tears streaming down my face. When I opened my eyes he was still looking at me. My heart flooded with joy and an inner calmness! Later my friend Munagala Venkataramiah [Compiler of the well-known volume *Talks with Ramana Maharshi*] told me that I was very fortunate to have received initiation from Sri Bhagavan.

Next morning, when I was in the hall somebody asked Bhagavan what was the use of sitting before him. Does he give initiation? Bhagavan replied that initiation can be given in three ways: 'by silence', 'by look', and 'by touch.' When saying, 'by look', he looked at me. Then I had no doubt that I had received initiation from Bhagavan, my most revered Master!

After a month's stay when I returned to Bombay, there was a complete change in my life. Worldly pleasures ceased to attract me and I wanted to be alone as much as possible. I decided to leave Bombay and settle down at Tiruvannamalai, but did not know where to stay. But I knew Bhagavan was guiding me and so I did not worry much. And it so happened that two days before leaving Bombay I met my husband to be. [He was David MacIver who stayed in Tiruvannamalai. Arthur Osborne, a great devotee of Sri Ramana, had left his family with him. The last month's issue carries an article on Osborne.] He told me to go and stay in his house in Tiruvannamalai and so I left happily. Soon after, with Bhagavan's blessings, we got married at Ramanasramam. Bhagavan showed visible interest in the proceedings.

From the beginning, I had a strong desire to touch Bhagavan's feet, but I knew this was not allowed by his attendants. I confided this desire to Mrs. Taleyarkhan, thinking she would keep it a secret. But in the hall, in front of everyone, she told Bhagavan, "Roda has a strong desire to touch your feet." I was so embarrassed. Bhagavan said nothing at the time; but after lunch that day, he stopped near me, said something in Tamil to a nearby devotee, and asked him to translate it for me. The devotee said, "Bhagavan says, why should she want to touch my feet? My feet are always on her head." I was overwhelmed with joy. Everyone around congratulated me on my

good fortune on getting a blessing like this. People who had been with Bhagavan for years and years said they had never heard him make a remark like this to anyone else.

One day I was feeling some mental agony while being seated in front of Sri Bhagavan. He took out an unburnt charcoal from the urn and said, “Do not burn your mind. Keep the mind as fresh and clean as this coal.” From that time onwards I gave up worrying over any problem.

Once, two visitors came to Bhagavan. One of them addressing Bhagavan said, “My friend has taken as his guru a man who is not even a *sadhu*. To show him what a *sadguru* should be, I have brought him here.” Bhagavan replied sternly, “Who are you to say who is the right guru for him? By what power can you make out what a man really is? In fact, the guru is not as important as the disciple himself. If one worships with utmost devotion, even a stone would become the Supreme Lord.”

Once I thought what Bhagavan needed was a pretty silver box for the nuts he kept for his birds and squirrel friends. The little iron tin he had was old and ugly. No sooner had the thought crossed my mind than someone brought a silver box as I had in mind and offered it to Bhagavan. Bhagavan exclaimed, “A silver box! No. Please take it back. What have I to do with silver boxes?” While saying this, he looked at me as if to say, “The same would have happened to you and to your silver box!”

Maurice Frydman, a well-known devotee, once brought a glass of orange juice to Bhagavan, who remarked, “Is that all? It will not be enough”, adding after a pause, “for everyone!” Frydman said that he had brought it only for him as his health was declining. However, Bhagavan would not even touch it. Anything, not shared by all was like poison to him.

Attendant Krishnaswami would beat monkeys who played mischief in the hall or tried to stealthily take away the fruits. Once Bhagavan told him, “It is not the monkeys that are receiving your beatings. It is I. The suffering is mine.” When some devotees complained to Bhagavan about their troubles with the monkeys, he said, “All this land was once a jungle in which the monkeys could roam about freely. It has been their natural habitat for centuries. We are trespassers. Is it fair to complain? Why not put up with a little inconvenience.”

UNDERSTANDING THE REAL: Can a top spinning with speed do so without a firm base, a non-moving ground on which it spins so fast? Could picture be seen in the absence of the white screen? We ignorantly admire the spinning top forgetting the non-moving base; we are lost in the maze of names and shapes that come and go on the screen (the base), blissfully forgetting the *adhara*, the screen, without which the objects seen cannot have any existence. In short, we miss the gold (the Truth, the Self) for the *nama rupa*, non-self. We miss the forest for the trees. – *M.C. Menon*

This world appearance is a confusion even as the blueness of the sky in an optical illusion. It is better not to let the mind dwell on it, but rather ignore it. Neither freedom from sorrow nor realization of one’s real nature is possible as long as the *conviction* does not arise in one that the world-appearance is unreal. The object world is a confusion of the real with the unreal. – *The Yoga Vasishta*

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI BESTOWS *MUKTI* ON A CROW

In the early days of the present Ramanasramam a spring was discovered near the old hall. Devotees had placed a dried tree stump on the ground at its center in order to support themselves when gathering water. Once they found a crow sitting on top of this stump for two days without leaving. On the third day, when Bhagavan returned from his usual walk, Kunju Swami [Bhagavan's personal attendant] told him about the crow. Bhagavan immediately rose from the couch and walked outside. Going close to the crow Bhagavan enquired, "What is the matter?" The crow slowly opened its eyes. Bhagavan asked the attendant to bring his *kamandalu*, and holding the crow in one hand he poured a few drops of water into its beak. Immediately after this, verily in Bhagavan's hands, the crow breathed its last. When some one remarked that the crow must have been a great soul waiting for Bhagavan's touch, he replied, "Yes! It appears so." (Source: *One Hundred & Twenty Five Years of Grace*)

Another version of the incident recorded by T.R.Kanakammal in her book Cherished Memories, is as follows:

One day, Bhagavan was sitting in the verandah with some devotees. Suddenly a wounded crow flew in at great speed and fell at Bhagavan's feet, who picked it up and stroked it gently. When the crow died in his hand, Bhagavan said, "Some *siddha purusha* has left his body today", and gave instruction for entombing the crow. Swami Pranavananda who was on the scene broke into tears and said, "Bhagavan, did you not grant liberation to Jatayu in the last *yuga*? Now you have done the same for a crow." Hearing this, the devotees were moved by Pranavananda's devotion to Bhagavan, who himself looked on silently as though he accepted everything. (The tomb of the crow is at the northern side of the compound near the old hall along with the *samadhis* of the cow Lakshmi, the dog Jakee and the deer Valli.)

[Swami Pranavananda (S.Narasimham before *sannyasa*), uncle of S.Radhakrishnan, former President of India, was a *munshi* in the Police Training College and taught local languages to Europeans. Among others, he wrote *Ramana Maharshi Charitramu*, *Sri Ramana Stutipaatulu* and *Sri Guru-Anugraha Avataramu*. He was the first to translate *Who am I?* into Telugu.]

Note: Both the books referred to above can be had from the Kendram's bookstall.

MANAGE THE ONSLAUGHT OF MATERIALISM – THE RAMANA WAY: The replacement of spiritual values by materialist ones in a fast developing world is a crisis affecting almost every culture. Sheer materialism cannot solve the problems of today. Life in modern times, in spite of its areas of material prosperity and its intellectual and artistic attainments has proved to be not all that conducive to human happiness. As long as the world is dominated by rank materialism and its innumerable spin-offs, the situation will give rise to more complications than we can presently think of.

Materialism is tied to ego. Ego is the root cause of all evils. 'Who am I?' represents the beginning of scientific doubt questioning of the ego's validity. "Seek within and thou shall realise thy blissful nature", declares Sri Ramana. Sri Ramana postulates that the spirit of mankind is identical with the Supreme Spirit. Our suffering are due to the failure to realize our universal identity. We are bliss. But our problem is that we identify our self with the body. The source of

everything is the Self. We can merge our mind in the Self through constant and persistent Self-enquiry and enjoy bliss.

If the world is to be saved from the present crisis, if our spiritual values have to survive the onslaught of material values, if peace and tranquillity are to be sustained for the upliftment of mankind, Sri Ramana's teachings serve as key to unlock the mystery of human life to solve the problems that confront us today. (Source: *One Hundred & Twenty Five Years of Grace.*)

September - 05

UPADESA SAARAM OF RAMANA MAHARSHI – AN APPRECIATION (Verse 25)

Veshahaanatah ():One who gives up the gross and subtle conditionings,
Swaatma darsanam():the vision of one's Self is revealed (and)
Isa darsanam():the vision of the Lord
Swaatma rupatah(): as the Self is obtained.

One who gives up the conditioning factors like the ego, gains Self-realisation. The vision of the Lord as the Self is true God-Realisation.

As the difference between *jeeva* and *Isa* is only in *vesha*, the outer apparel. If the *vesha* is taken away, what remains is the real state, and that is *Isa*. The seeker should ruthlessly and completely eschew all false notions born out of false identification such as, 'I am the body', 'I am the mind', 'I am ignorant', 'I am intelligent' and so on. All these false notions constantly lend credence and strength to the ego.

The injunction that one should eliminate the false notion that one is the body with a form, name etc. is, admittedly, very difficult. Nevertheless, it can surely be accomplished, to some extent or to a great extent, by dint of determined efforts to change the pattern and direction of thought from its old ruts. And such change becomes possible by adhering to a daily programme of *Swadhayaaya*, *Satsanga*, and quiet but intense *Atma vichara* through the great question: Who am I?

One who accomplishes a disengagement with the conditioning factors and thereby transcends ignorance, comes upon the vision of the indwelling Self, which has been called here as *swaatma darsanam*.

It may be noted that one can get the vision of the Lord in a particular form, say Gopala or Rama, in meditation. But such a vision of the form should not be mistaken for the vision of one's true Nature. A form, since it is seen, is inert, finite and perishable. The Lord is Infinite and Imperishable. Therefore, *Isa darsanam* is only to experience the One Infinite Self.

REALITY IS BEYOND UNDERSTANDING: Seeking to understand and comprehend the nature of the Divine through the mind is like trying to understand the intricacies of theory of relativity through Newtonian physics. Einstein explained that the universe is a four-dimensional space-time construct which is finite but unbounded.

Trying to visualize a four-dimensional space-time universe that is finite, but yet unbounded is impossible for those of us who have been brought up on Newtonian physics. We are used to thinking in spatial terms. Therefore, the two attributes of being finite, and being unbounded or boundary less, seem to be mutually irreconcilable. How can something be finite, and yet have nothing around it or surrounding it? If the universe is not infinite, then there must be something else outside the universe. But according to Relativity theory the universe is finite and yet it is boundary less. Like the sensing of this dimension, spirituality is the mystical and direct experiencing of a higher dimensional reality. – *S.H. Venkatramani*

A MIRACLE HAPPENS IN THE PRESENCE OF SRI RAMANA

Day by Day with Bhagavan by *Devaraja Mudaliar* records the following event of December 8, 1945.

“When I went to the *pathshala* to bring some Sanskrit books at Bhagavan’s instance, an incident occurred in the hall. Miss Kamdin (now Mrs. McIver) [Last month’s issue carried an article on her.] was sitting next to a lady who went into a trance and purported to have received a sugar candy from Narayana, that is, God. She thinks that there was no trickery at all in it and the candy came mysteriously into the lady’s hand. I also was given a bit of the candy. The incident as recorded by K.A.Mahatani [A devotee from Karachi (Pakistan), who was a regular visitor to the Ashram till Bhagavan’s *mahanirvana*, and stayed for long periods during his visits.] is as follows:

“On December 8, 1945, at about 3.45 p.m., I saw a Gujarati widow aged about 50 years sitting in the hall with two girls of about eight and ten years in the front row on the side reserved for ladies. I could see that she was in *samadhi*.

“After a few minutes she fell on her back quietly in *samadhi* posture without stretching her legs. People in the hall thought that she was in a hysterical fit, but those two girls said that she was in *samadhi* and that it often happened to her. Then those two girls started singing a Gujarati *bhajan* song in a nice tune. (The song begins ‘*Haji mare gher thaya lils ler*’.)

“Bhagavan was all the time attentively looking at the lady and enjoying the tune, keeping time by beating his knee with his hand. I had never before noticed Bhagavan so interested in any song.

“After a few minutes the lady got up without anybody’s help and sat in *samadhi* in the same posture, and began to mutter something in Gujarati. I asked her whether she saw any vision. She said in Hindustani, “Yes” and added that Sri Narayan gave a message for all in the hall. “Let them close their eyes, be still, without any *pravritti* (i.e. without any thought or action) and I will give *darshan* to one and all.”

“I translated to Bhagavan what she said. For two or three minutes she was bowing her head with hands clasped towards Bhagavan. Then we noticed that she handed over a piece of sugar candy to one of the two girls sitting near her.

“Before that we had seen her open hands quite empty. I asked the girls what was that sugar candy and how it came into her hands. The girl replied, “This is a *prasad* given to the lady by Bhagavan Narayan; and whenever she goes into *samadhi* she gets different things (such as fruits, flowers, garlands, *sandal*, *kumkum* and sweets) on different occasions.

“Then the lady said that she used to get such moods since she was six years old. The girls presented the piece of sugar candy to Bhagavan. He partook a little of it and the rest was distributed among the others who were present in the hall.

“I remarked that this was very miraculous. Bhagavan indicated ‘Yes’, with only a gesture of his hand, but said nothing. After a few minutes, the lady left the hall with the two girls. Before leaving she bowed low to Bhagavan and asked for his blessings and his permission to go back to Bombay.

“I learnt that she had come that morning and left the same evening. She gave her name in the office as Mataji Maniben Samadhiwallah, C/o R.G.Rawat, Purshottam Building, opposite Opera House, Bombay.” (Pp. 54-5)

It would not be out of place to reproduce the following from an article by Mahatani (who recorded the above event in his diary) in Surpassing Love and Grace (page 205), a Ramanasramam publication available at the Kendram’s bookstore.

To me Bhagavan is more than all other gods or prophets so far incarnate on earth, such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Mohamed, Nanak and others. I have only read and heard about them, and cannot have proper conception of them. Even the numerous pictures of them are only imaginary, and naturally, they are all different from one another, therefore it is impossible to have an exact conception of any of them. On the other hand, I have seen Bhagavan and therefore I have a very clear conception of an ideal to meditate upon. In my humble opinion, he was just demonstrating what a *jivanmukta* is. Many have heard and read a great deal about the state of a *jivanmukta*, but he actually demonstrated that state of being above body-consciousness.

WHO IS RAMANA?

Since He has not married, He is a *Brahmachari*. But He has thousands of children and so He is not a *Brahmachari*. Since He has children, He may be styled as a Householder. But he has no house of His own. As such He cannot be called a Householder. Then, is He a *sannyasi*? He caters to the need of the people and feeds them. Such a thing is not done by a *sannyasi*.

Is He a *yathi*? He does not wear *kashaya* and carry a *dandam* the symbols of a *yathi*. So He is not a *yathi*.

Is He a *Maharshi*? He does not possess the long matted hair and flowing beard etc. So can He be called a *Maharshi*?

Who is He? He is everything and also not everything. His presence is everywhere. He rules the world and bestows victory. If one relies on Him, He looks after them as an affectionate father. Surrender to Him completely and be free.

(Source: *Sri Ramana Bhagavan* by K.R.K.Murthy B.E. (Elec.). He was Chief Electrical Engineer in the service of the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The book was published in 1970 by him from 1-8-7/13, Sarvodaya Colony, Chikkadpalli, Hyderabad-20. In his foreword he says that he was attached to Sri Ramana Bhagavan since 1937 and the book is a collection of his articles in the *Call Divine*.)

THE TRUE GURU RESIDES WITHIN US

Adi Sankara's greatest work *Vivekachudamani* opens with a verse in invocation to his Guru, Govinda Bhagavadapada, whom he describes as "bliss incarnate". The Master, when likened to eternal bliss, becomes part of the cosmic consciousness of which *sat-chit- anada* is the essence and the goal of every human being's desire to attain self-enlightenment.

The Guru plays a seminal role in the spiritual unfolding of the *sadhaka*. The Guru is a source of energy and inspiration, though he may or may not exist in physical form. He could even be a body of ideas or a codified anthology of sermons such as the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Ultimately, the Guru has to reside within ourselves, since the source of energy has to be located inside us. In the course of discovering our real Self, we discover our true Guru. The *Sadguru* resides within us, not only as a part of our consciousness but also as a constant guide to our actions in daily life.

The Upanishads say, when the *sisya* is ready, the Guru appears before him. This readiness denotes the utmost spiritual evolution which forms the base within the disciple to receive the Guru's grace. (Source: Malay Mishra in *The Economic Times*)

Regarding the Guru and the Self, Sri Maharshi has said the following:

"Guru is necessary so long as there is *laghu*. [Pun on Guru = heavy; *laghu* = light.] *Laghu* is due to the self-imposed but wrong limitation of the Self. The Guru, otherwise God, guides the devotee, saying that God is in you and He is the Self. This leads to introversion of the mind and finally to realization." (p.80)

"Because of the false identification of the Self with the body the Guru is considered to be with body. But from Guru's outlook, the Guru is only the Self. The Self is one only. He tells that the Self alone is. Is not then the Self your Guru? Where else will grace come from? It is from the Self alone. Manifestation of the Self is a manifestation of the Grace and *vice versa*. All these

doubts arise because of the wrong outlook and consequent expectation of things external to oneself. Nothing is external to the Self.” (p.136)

“*Isvaro gururatmeti*.....God is the same as Guru and Self... ... A person begins with dissatisfaction. Not content with the world he seeks satisfaction of desires by prayers to God; his mind is purified; he longs to know God more than to satisfy his carnal desires. Then God’s grace begins to manifest. God takes the form of a Guru and appears to the devotee; teaches him the Truth; purifies the mind by his teachings and contact; the mind gains strength, is able to turn inwards; with meditation it is purified yet further, and eventually remains still without the least ripple. That stillness is the Self. The Guru is both exterior and interior. From the exterior he gives a push to the mind to turn inward; from the interior he pulls the mind towards the Self and helps the mind to achieve quietness. That is Grace. Hence there is no difference between God, Guru and Self.”(p. 165)

“Guru is the Self. Take Guru to be the Real Self and yourself as the individual self. So long as the duality persists in you the Guru is necessary. Because you identify yourself with the body you think the Guru, too, to be somebody. You are not the body, nor is the Guru. You are the Self and so is the Guru.” (p. 240)

:Does the Guru hold you by the hand and whisper something in your ear? You imagine him to be like yourself. Because you are body you think that he is also a body in order to do something tangible to you. His work lies within. How is Guru gained? God in his Grace takes pity on the loving devotee and manifests Himself as being according to the devotee’s standard. The devotee thinks that he is a man and expects relationship as between the bodies. But the Guru, who is God or Self-incarnate, works within, helps the man to see the error to his ways, guides him in the right path until he realizes the Self within.” (p.368)

(All quotes are from the *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, available at the Kendram’s bookstore.)

PAUL BRUNTON DESCRIBES THE *SAMADHI* STATE

Paul Brunton, a British journalist, who visited India in search of holy men, first met Sri Maharshi in 1930 and got fully captivated by him. In his classic A Search in Secret India, published in 1934 he provides us a glimpse of the moment one experiences the Self. The experience, which is said to be indescribable, has been captured by him in a very vivid manner. It may be noted that all this happened in the presence of Sri Maharshi in the hall. He says:

I enter the hall and slip quietly to the floor and straightway assume my regular meditation posture. In a few seconds I compose myself and bring all wandering thoughts to a strong center. An intense interiorization of consciousness comes with the closing of the eyes.

The Maharshi’s seated form floats in a vivid manner before my mind’s eye. Following Maharshi’s frequently repeated instruction I endeavour to pierce through the mental picture into that which is formless, his real being his inner nature, his soul. To my surprise the effort meets

with almost instantaneous success and the picture disappears, leaving me with nothing more than a strongly felt sense of his intimate presence.

The mental questionings which have marked most of my earlier meditations have lately begun to cease. Now comes the supreme moment. In that concentration of stillness, the mind withdrawn into itself, one's familiar world begins to fade off into shadowy vagueness. Some new and powerful force comes into dynamic action within my inner world and bears me inwards with resistless speed.

The power to think, which has hitherto been a matter for pride, now becomes a thing from which I wanted to escape. Then follows a sudden desire to stand outside the intellect and just *be*. I want to dive into a place deeper than thought.

It is strange enough to be able to stand aside and watch the action of the brain as though it were someone else's, and to see how the thoughts arise and then die. I feel like some Columbus about to land on an uncharted continent.

I remember that the Maharshi has never suggested that I should attempt to force the stoppage of thinking. "Trace the thought to its place of origin", is his reiterated counsel, "watch for the real self to reveal itself, and then your thoughts will die down of their own accord." The waves of thought begin to diminish. The workings of logical rational sense drop towards zero point. I know that at any moment I shall be standing *outside* things, on the very edge of the world's secret.

Finally it happens. Thought is extinguished like a snuffed candle. The intellect withdraws into its real ground, that is, consciousness working unhindered by thoughts. The mind takes its rise in a transcendental source. The brain has passed into a state of complete suspension, yet there is not the slightest loss of consciousness. I remain perfectly calm and fully aware of who I am and what is occurring. Yet my sense of awareness has been drawn out of the narrow confines of the separate personality; it has turned into something sublimely all-embracing. Self still exists, but it is changed radiant self. With it arrives an amazing new sense of absolute freedom, for thought is like a loom-shuttle, which is always going to and fro, and to be freed from its tyrannical motion is to step out of prison into the open air.

I find myself outside the rim of world consciousness. The planet which has so far harboured me, disappears. I am in the midst of an ocean of blazing light. It stretches away into untellable infinite space, incredibly *alive*. I, the new I, rest in the lap of holy bliss. Yesterday's bitter memories and tomorrow's anxious cares have disappeared completely. I have attained a divine liberty and an almost indescribable felicity. I embrace all creation with profound sympathy, for I understand in the deepest possible way that to know all is not merely to pardon all, but to love all. My heart is remolded in rapture.

(Source: *The Maharshi and his Message*, available at the Kendram's bookstore.)

THE METHOD OF SELF-ENQUIRY AS SUGGESTED BY A WESTERNER: The human mind has been so engrossed with the task of supplying its intellect and body with all manner of selfish indulgences that it has never had time to get acquainted with the real You. You have been so interested in and affected by the pleasure and sufferings of your body that you have almost come to believe You are your intellect and body and you have consequently nearly forgotten me, your Divine Self. You cannot awaken to this fact until you get away from the consciousness of this body and intellect, which so long have held you enslaved. You must feel Me within, before you can know I am there.

Let whatever impressions that come to your mind enter at will – with or without effort or interference on your part. Note carefully their import. Then, when somewhat of their vital significance begins to dawn upon your consciousness, speak the words – I am God – slowly, imperatively, to every cell of your body, to every faculty of your mind, with all the conscious power you possess. As these words reverberate through the caverns of your now empty being, you will feel the swell of a wondrous strange breath filling you to the extreme of your mortal members, causing your senses almost to burst with the ecstasy of it.

There will come surge after surge of a mighty, irresistible power rising within you, lifting you almost off the earth; then, you will feel within the Glory, the Holiness, the majesty of My presence. Then the great realisation will come that you have found the Kingdom of God, that you are walking in it, that it is right here on earth, that it is manifesting all around you, that you have been living in it all the time, you just did not know it. (Source: *Joseph Benner author of The Impersonal Life.*)

A SIMPLE METHOD OF SECURING PEACE: The story is told about a woman Zen master named Sono who taught one very simple method of enlightenment. She advised everyone who came to her to adopt an affirmation to be said many times a day, under all conditions. The affirmation [any formal or solemn declaration] was, “Thank you for everything. I have no complaint whatsoever.”

Many people from all walks of life came to Sono for healing. Some were in physical pain; others were emotionally disturbed; others had financial troubles; some were seeking soul liberation. No matter what their distress or what question they asked her, her response was the same: “Thank you for everything. I have no complaints whatsoever.” Some people went away disappointed; others grew angry; others tried to argue with her. Yet some people took her suggestion to heart and began to practice it whole-heartedly. Tradition tells that everyone who practiced Sono’s mantra sincerely found peace and healing. – *Alen Cohen*

In his book *Handle with Prayer* this author says that the highest form of prayer is gratitude. Instead of asking God for anything, start thanking God for all what you have. Life is a big treasure hunt. Eventually we grow weary of seeking treasures outside ourselves, and begin to look within. There we discover that the gold we sought, we already are. **The beauty was overlooked because we were focusing on what was missing.**

SELF-REALISATION IS NOT POSSIBLE WITHOUT SACRIFICE: Mahatma Gandhi says – “Realisation is the final fruit of constant effort. The human lover sacrifices all for his beloved, but his sacrifice is fruitless in as much as it is offered for the sake of momentary pleasure. But, the quest of Truth calls for ever greater concentration than that of the human beloved. There is joy ineffable [too overwhelming to be expressed] in store for the aspirant at the end of the quest. Still very few of us are as earnest as even the human lover. Such being the facts of the case, what is the use of complaining that the quest of Truth is an uphill task?”

Only the grace of the Guru within can help you acquire the wisdom that there is nothing to be renounced except the illusion of “Í, me, myself”. – *Sivanand Saraswati*

Good is restraint in deed; good is restraint in speech; good is restraint in mind; good is restraint in everything. The person restraint at all points, is freed from sorrow. – *The Buddha*

Have neither pride nor vanity in the charities you dispense. Give not something as yours but as something given to you by the Spirit for giving you to others. – *The Chandogya Upanishad*

***Uthistata, jagrata, prapya varan nibodhata* – Arise! Awake! and stop not till the goal is reached.** – *The Kathopanishada*

The Self is established in the luminous city of *Brahmn* which is the heart of all human beings (on the right side of the chest). – *The Mundaka Upanishada*

By speculating on physical facts, Vedic thinkers had arrived at a unitary conception of the universe. Theirs was a cosmological monism through the concepts of *avyakt* - indeterminate nature, *neti*- ontological negation, and *prana* – cosmic energy. The culmination of their discovery was the unification of all experience in the *atman* or *Brahmn*. – *Malay Misra*

TRANSFORMING ANGER: In its unrestrained and impulsive expressions, anger can be most devastating. The ancient Tamil work *Tirukurral* written by Tiruvalluvar observes that anger destroys, like fire, not only the person enveloped in rage but also those who try to intervene and pacify the person. The *Gita* sums up the stages of degradation which follow anger: “From anger springs delusion, from delusion arises confusion, from confusion proceeds destruction of intellect and in consequence of destruction of intellect, the person perishes.” (Ch. II- 63). Just like emotions which are pleasant, creative and positive in themselves, anger, frustrations and indignation are manifestations of an abiding energy within. These too can be transformed into positive expressions. The need is to be equanimous even in those situations which may be provoking by being *proactive* and not being *reactive*. To be proactive is to transform the apparently destructive emotions within to creative and constructive expressions, obtaining support from all over. – *K. Vijayaraghavan*

When one can see eternity in things that pass away and infinity in finite things, then one has pure knowledge. – *The Gita*

You are not born when the body is born, nor do you die when it dies. To think that the space within the jar came into being when it was made and the space perished with the jar is sheer foolishness. – *The Yoga Vasishtha*

More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of. – *Shakespeare*

All the world is a stage, and all the men and women merely players. They have their exit and entrances; And one man in his time plays many parts. – *Shakespeare*

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UPADESA SAARAM OF RAMANA MAHARSHI – AN APPRECIATION (Verses 26 & 27)

Verse – 26

***Aatma samsthitih swaatmadarsanam
Aatma nirdwayaat atmanishthathaa***

Aatma samsthitih (): To be settled in the Self(is)
Swaatma darsanam (): the vision of the Self; (since)
Aatma nirdwayaat (): the Self is non-dual; (this is known as)
Aatma nishthathaa (): firm abidance in the Self.

Since the Self is non-dual, the abidance or settled state in the Self is the vision of the Self. That alone is known as *aatman nishthaa* or firm abidance in the Self.

Without the participation of the mind-intellect and the senses of perception, no knowledge is possible. But so far as knowing the Self is concerned, the experience is direct, intuitive and free from the intervention of the usual instruments of knowing. It is an effortless, natural revelation consequent upon the destruction of ‘ego’ with all its roots of ignorance or *avidya*. This is called *swaatma darsanam*, revelation of the Self, happening in consequence of *aatma samsthitih*, a settled state without any ripple of thought at the conscious, sub-conscious or unconscious levels.

We feel that Self-knowledge is the knowledge of the Self as an object known by our intellect. But we are told that the Self can never become an object of our intellect, that is, it is beyond the intellect. How then are we to know it? By what means is the Self-knowledge is gained? The next verse provides the answer.

Verse – 27

***Jnaana varjitaajnaana heenachit
Jnaanamastikim jnatumantaram***

Chit (): Consciousness
Jnaana (vritti) varjita, ajnaana (vritti)heena(): is devoid of (the thoughts of) knowledge and free from (the notions of) ignorance.
Jnaanam asti kim(): Is there a knowledge
Jnatum(): to know (the Self)
Antaram(): other than (Consciousness)?

Consciousness is devoid of the thoughts of both knowledge and ignorance of objects. Is there then knowledge other than Consciousness to know the Self? (There is none.)

The seeker should understand the utter incapacity and futility of the intellect to probe beyond its limited frontiers of knowledge. One need not bother as to how he would know the Self when the knowing instrument is silenced completely? The nature of the Self is such that Being is at once Knowing. It is the state which one comes upon spontaneously on the extinction of the mind. The verse says that Consciousness (*chit*) is free of the thoughts of knowledge. Similarly, it also says that Consciousness is free of all notions of ignorance. Absolute Knowledge transcends the domain of knowledge which is based on subject-object relationship and instrument-oriented experience.

The Self being the singular light of Supreme Intelligence, how can there be any other source to illumine it? In our daily experience, knowledge presumes the presence of a triads (set of three connecting things) such as the thinker-thinking-thought, knower-knowledge-known, experiencer-experience-experienced, etc. But when we come to Self-knowledge, all triads disappear. And in the light of a rare silence, one comes upon a different order of insight, in a flash. One realizes one's nature to be pure Being-Consciousness beyond all conditioning factors of Time, Space and Causation.

Thus, beyond the pale of knowledge and ignorance lies the Self, which is realized intuitively, independent of any extraneous light to illumine it. (Source: Same as in the earlier month.)

DO BEST WITH FAITH IN GOD: Most of our dissatisfaction stems from expectation of 'what should be'. The 'what is' is what the life presents us from moment to moment. The 'what should be' is the mischievous play of mind. Unwittingly we play into a trap which hampers peace. Expecting others to respond or behave in a manner we are comfortable with is the fundamental problem. The need is to live the life fully, and do the best that one can in a given situation, accepting one's strengths and limitations while not being overly critical or severe on oneself and others. We need to accept ourselves as we are and others as what they are, positively engaging in activity, giving our best attention and care, but not excessively concerning ourselves with outcomes. Albert Einstein said: "Everything is determined by forces over which we have no control. It is determined for the insect as well as for the star, human beings, vegetables or cosmic dust – we dance to a mysterious tune intoned in the distance by an invisible piper." – *Vijay Vancheswar*

ROLE OF A SADGURU: *Sadguru* means the one who has gravitation around whom you suddenly feel as if you are being pulled. He is a tremendous magnet. He has charisma. A great leader may also be a man of charisma. Then what is the difference between him and the

sadguru? The difference is tremendous, namely, when one is pulled towards a *sadguru* one is pulled inwards and not outwards. So, as one comes closer to *sadguru*, one comes closer to oneself.

If you are pulled towards someone and that pull creates slavery, he is not a *sadguru*. If your surrendering gives you freedom only then the man is a *sadguru* or Master. Through the *sadguru* you arrive at your own self. Because you cannot go directly, he helps you. A *sadguru* will never impose himself or his lifestyle on you. He will never give you rigid discipline. He will not enforce anything on you, regiment you. You will become more and more centered, rooted, when you are near him. – *Osho*

EXPLORING CONSCIOUSNESS: Omnipresent consciousness, an elemental essence of the ultimate Being, is no longer a subject of meditation restricted to eastern mystics. It is becoming the inevitable finality of modern science as well, with the emergence of contemporary quantum physics. Modern physiology is also extending our existence beyond physical limitations. British neurologist John Eccles concluded that human consciousness is extra-cerebral and that the non-physical mind enters the physical brain during embryological development.

Wilder Penfield wrote, “To suppose that consciousness of the mind has locality is a failure to understand neurophysiology.” Nobel scientist George Wald echoed that consciousness lies outside the parameter of space and time and it cannot be located, as it has no location. It is all pervading. Consciousness, therefore, is the potential final field behind the apparent universe, mental as well as material. – *M.N. Kundu*

SOME HINTS FOR A SADHAKA: One of the main necessities for *sadhana* is conservation of energy. Restraining speech can conserve the mind’s energy. We should also observe silence and be alone for some part of every day. All negative attitudes like pity, anxiety, despondency and depression are to be avoided for they sap vital energy. The mind also wastes a lot of energy by repeatedly thinking about the past and worrying about the future. As every thought consumes energy, the chattering of the mind should be reduced. Let the inquirer after Truth be alert and sharp and sensitive enough not to waste energy through any kind of conflicts and tensions. If a *sadhaka* brings rhythm into his life, into his sleeping and eating habits and economises using mind’s energy, then when he sits down for his *sadhana* the mind would become silent more easily. Gradually, the effect of silence will start pervading our life and we will thus grow into a new dimension of consciousness, a new dynamics of relationships. – *Venkataramanayya*

CREATING ABUNDANCE: Abundance flows forth from Nature effortlessly. The skies shine forth the abundant sun’s rays, pouring forth Grace to every portion of our little blue pearl in the Universe. Most events occur in our life from our thoughts and are replayed on ‘big screen’ we call life. The seeds of our thoughts and emotions take root and eventually bloom in our life. Gratitude for all we have got is the best path to Abundance because it puts us in the state of reverence. Resonate Good Thoughts and Feelings and you will begin to turn the ship of doom and gloom around into a safe harbour. – *John Aversano*

LESSONS FOR LIVING: Do you need a quick way to relax? Here is a helpful technique you can use. It is as simple and easy as breathing. In fact, it is breathing – the taking of long, slow deep breaths. Shallow breathing is not very efficient because we don't get all the oxygen we need. The body's response is a sigh, which fills the lungs more completely and provides more oxygen. Sighing is helpful, and you can sigh (take a slow, deep breath) on purpose anytime you need to become more relaxed. Allow your breath to focus you in the present moment and permit yourself to appreciate the peacefulness of this single moment. You will always find that the present moment "is" peaceful when your mind is not distracting you away from it by dwelling in a fearful future or lingering on a past of regret. Repeat this meditation sequence several times in a row, and you will become more centered and relaxed. This technique can be used anywhere and anytime that you need to claim a moment of peace for yourself. – *Dan Johnston*

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY: Religion is like a cage; spirituality is like a bird. Religion is restrictive in the sense that the scripture, rites and rituals bind it. It is external. The bird of spirituality has the freedom to establish direct link with the Absolute. Spirituality is all about inner purity. Misuse of religion leads to communal disharmony and violence. Spirituality is soul search; it can only lead to peace and harmony with oneself and with society and nature. Spirituality is free of dogma and can help one rise above religious dogmatism, to be one with the Supreme being. – *Soma Chakravarty*

THE SUN: *Surya* is the supreme of the solar system, the third eye of the mother nature. The Sun is the life force and sustainer of earth and life on it. The *Surya's* presence can change, arrange, reduce, remove imbalances and organise the chemical, biochemical, bioelectrical and biomagnetic powers in living beings. Photons from the Sun can help smoothen and enlighten the body, *prana*, mind and soul to come together in a straight line. Through our most sacred and powerful *Gayatri mantra* we pay our obeisance to the Sun, the only living god. (www.suryayog.org)

INSTINCT AND INTUITION: When you act instinctively, you will feel drained: for instance when you act in anger, you feel guilty. When you act intuitively you feel energised. To awaken your intuitions give your mind a rest. There is a state of mind when you have no thoughts. Consciousness remains. Whenever you find time, be silent mentally. Some part of your being wants to express itself more. Tune into the higher energy of intuition and creativity. – *Sri Nithyananda*

SUFISM: In Arabic, *sufi* comes from *safi*, which means pure. Sufism is the inner mystical dimension of Islam. The essence of Sufi practice is to surrender fully to God in love. For this purpose it is essential to dethrone the mind from its position of king and ruler and make it a slave. The lower self uses every ploy to get the traveller off the road that will ultimately lead to the demise of the self. The irony is that the man is in the grip of his demanding self and is a slave to the material world, but he is not aware of it. Sufis say that only through servanthood to God the man can actually be freed from servanthood to the material world. One cannot be a servant of God and a servant to oneself at the same time. A well-known 16th century Hindi poet – Malik Mohammad Jayasi, was a Sufi. In his classic, long poetic composition *Padamavat*, he says: The

man becomes entitled to *vaikuntham* only through universal love, otherwise he is just a handful of dust...One who adopts the path of love for all, does not come to this earth again.

FOCUS ON ACTION NOT ON RESULTS: Is it not true that one continues to make an effort only as long as there is hope? And if we do not have a hope for the future how do we have a goal? Which person will continue with anything if there is no hope? Then what does it mean that we should forget about the results and do our job? It only means not to bother about the results once the action has started. We need not be like a student sitting to study dreams of the wonderful university life he is going to have, or the millions he is going to make at work. To not have hopes means to forget about the results and focus *entirely* on the current action. Work is of the present, results are of the future. Stay tuned to the present. Don't lose the focus. – *Janki Chopra*

That which speech cannot express but that by which speech is expressed is Brahman. Know that alone as Brahman, not that which people worship here. That which cannot be felt by the mind but that which enables the mind to feel, that is Brahman. – *Kenopanishad*

You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul. – *Swami Vivekananda*

The perfecting of one's self is the fundamental base of all progress and all moral development. - *Confucius*

Meditation is the awakening of Bliss. – *J. Krishnamurti*

The whole world is a tree and all countries are its branches. – *Athrava Veda*

Joy is not in things; it is in us. – *Richard wagner*

First keep the peace within yourself, then you can also bring peace to others. – *Thomas Kempis*

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life: it goes on. – *Robert Frost*

The Guru is the conveyance in which the spiritual influence is brought to you. – *Swami Vivekananda*

The sunlight is one and the same wherever it falls, but only bright surfaces like water, mirrors and polished metals can reflect it fully. So is the divine light. It falls equally and impartially on all hearts, but only the pure and clean hearts of the good and the holy can fully reflect it. – *Sri Ramakrishna*

To utter pleasant words without practising them, is like a fine flower without fragrance. – *The Buddha*

A gentleman is ashamed to let his words outrun his deeds. – *Confucius*

All life exists in the present. To live in the present, the mind must not be divided by the remembrances of yesterday or the bright hope of tomorrow. – *J. Krishnamurthi*

One should perform *karma* with nonchalance[casually calm and relaxed] without expecting the benefits because sooner or later one shall definitely get the fruits. – *Rig Veda*

Forgiveness breaks the chain of causality because he who forgives you – out of love – takes upon himself the consequences of what you have done. Forgiveness, therefore, always entails a sacrifice. – *Dag Hammarskjold*

I never came upon any of my discoveries through the process of rational thinking. – *Albert Einstein*

NAMA JAPA – ITS METHODS AND SIGNIFICANCE: *Japa* or the repetition of God's name, helps to activate a resource center in our system that is otherwise dormant. Most people pass through life entirely ignorant of this spiritual facility, or they underestimate it. Name *japa* is done in three modes: In high tone, in low tone and in mental mode. Low tone *japa* is more powerful than high tone *japa*, and mental *japa* is more powerful than low tone *japa*. One must begin with high tone and gradually move on to low and then to the silent mode. It is important to coordinate thought with chant: If the mind wanders while the lips utter the Name, the exercise is futile. The mind is bound to wander; it must however be repeatedly and gently drawn back to the *japa*. Regular practice of mental *japa* leads to *a-japa japa* or effortless chanting in the subconscious mind. This leads to an exalted state where the individual ego begins to dilute, because the self is logged on to the Cosmic Self. While chanting the Name, many people fix in the mind an *ishta-rupa* (favoured form) of God. It is better to contemplate on the *vishwa-rupa*, the all-inclusive cosmic form. A better way perhaps is to contemplate on the formless, an expanding light, or a brilliant void. – *S.K. Ram*

When we sit still and keep our mind still, we have discovered the key to meditation. In that state of meditation, all prayers are answered. – *Rajendra Singh Ji Maharaj*

That which speech cannot express but that by which speech is expressed is Brahman. Know that alone as Brahman, not that which people worship here. That which cannot be felt by the mind but that which enables the mind to feel, that is Brahman. – *Kenopanishad*

IN PRAISE OF DUST OF GURU'S FEET

The following is from the Balakanda of the greatest Hindi poet Tulsidas's evergreen classic Ramacharitamasa, written 431 years ago. Mahatma Gandhi has said: "I regard Ramanyana of Tulsidas as the greatest book in all devotional literature."Extolling the virtues of the dust of his Guru's feet, the poet says:

I greet the pollen-like dust of the lotus feet of my Guru which is refulgent, fragrant and flavoured with love. It is like the power of the life-giving herb, which reduces the ills and worries of my mundane existence.

The dust of Guru's feet adorns the body of a lucky person as white ashes beautify the body of Lord Siva, and it brings forth blessings and joy. This dust rubs off the dirt from the beautiful mirror in the shape of the devotee's heart, and when this is applied to the forehead as *tilak*, it attracts a host of virtues.

The dust of Guru's feet is a soft, agreeable and soothing ointment. It is the nectar for the eyes and remedies the defect of vision. After having brightened my eyes of discernment from the dust of Guru's feet, I now proceed to relate Sri Rama's story, which secures freedom from the bondage of this earthly world.

(Perhaps the only example where the dust collected from under Sri Ramana's feet and kept as a memento, helped the devotee in a miraculous manner is provided by Papaji, an earnest and ardent devotee of Sri Ramana from the West Punjab, now in Pakistan. Refer write-ups in June and July 2004 issues of this magazine.)

Complete *Ramacharitamansa* with English translation is available from Gita Press Book Shop, Dilshad Plaza, Sultan Bazaar, Hyderabad – 95. Phone: 24758311.

THE KARMIC LAW: There is no animus or favoritism in the functioning of *karma*. Whatever happens in life, even in lifeless-seeming matter, is a response to energy projected. *Karma* is simply, in this sense, the working of Newton's law: for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The *karmic* law functions to a great extent automatically. It is however also guided by a universal intelligence and love, and can be intelligently manipulated or diverted. Hence the concept of divine grace (*kripa*) is common to most religions. *Kripa* can be won by divine devotion and love. – *Swami Kriyananda*

ALLOW OTHERS TO HAVE THE GLORY: The ego is that part of us that wants to be seen, heard, respected, considered special, often at the expense of someone else. It's the part of us that interrupts someone else's story, or impatiently waits his turn to speak so that he can bring the conversation and attention back to himself. Although it is a very difficult habit to break, it's not only enjoyable but also actually peaceful to have the quiet confidence to be able to surrender your need for attention and instead share in the joy of someone else's glory. When you surrender your need to hog the glory, the attention you used to need from other people is replaced by a quiet inner confidence that is derived from letting others have it. – *Richard Carlson*

THE BOOK WRITTEN AT THE BEHEST OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI (Part – I)

Through his first book A Search in Secret India, published in 1934, Dr. Paul Brunton made the world known about the divinity of Sri Ramana, and the enlightenment he got through Sri Raman's grace. In his second book, The Secret Path, published in 1935, he wrote about the vision of Sri Ramana, directing him to write the book. He says:

In the presence of this Sage one feels security and inward peace. The spiritual radiations which emanated from him were all penetrating... This Wise One of the East appeared before me, his grave bearded face as clear, as recognizable as though it were in flesh. I made the humble obeisance of my heart in veneration and greeting. His strange eyes tuned remonstratingly upon me. He said gently: "My son hast thou forgotten compassion? Shalt thou go forth to add to the store of knowledge while others starve for the crumbs of wisdom? Wilt thou commune with the Divine Ones when there are those who look for God but perceive only the impassible barrier of the sky: when there are those who throw their prayers to a void which returns no answer? Forget not thy fellows in distress. May peace be ever with thee. And thereupon, without another word, he passed out of my vision, as silently and as mysteriously as he had appeared.

Brunton has said elsewhere: "Sri Ramana was a spiritual torch carried to the waiting souls in the West. I was only the unimportant 'link-boy', the humble carrier." The book expounds Sri Ramana's philosophy in a language that would make the Western reader understand it. Some portions of the book are abstracted below.

Is it not ironical that the soul of man should seem less open to investigation than the earth on which he abides. Why should he worry how the universe works? He does not have to run it, anyhow. But he does have to run himself. The clever thinker, Zangwill wrote:

The solar system turns without thine aid,

Live, die! The universe is not afraid.

Man, however, hardly appreciates this pointed truth. He knows about the working of an automobile than he knows about the working of his inner self. We can build bridges to span rivers of monstrous width, but are unable to span the simple problem of "Who am I? We are full of curiosity concerning our planet, but we walk indifferently by at very mention of self. The very persons who have been studying all the sciences have yet to study the science of self. We know the value of everything, but we do not know our own wonderful value. The study of self is the most important study to which any thinker can give his mind. Once upon a time, answering many questions put to him, a Sage of Greece has said, "the easiest thing in this world is *to give advice*, and the most difficult of all things is *to know thyself*."

Only in deep silence may we hear the voice of the soul; arguments becloud it and too much speech stops its appearance. The treasure-trove of the real self is within us, but it can be lifted only when the mind is still. The cleverest argument is no substitute for personal realisation. We must experiment if we are to experience. A little practice goes a long way. The German philosopher Kant showed long ago that the reason cannot grasp this Reality. Hence all our "proofs" are mere piling-up of words. Find the god in your own heart and you will understand by

direct intuition what all the great teachers, real mystics, true philosophers and inspired men have been trying to tell you by the tortuous method of using words.

If you want proof of your divinity listen in to your Overself, for that proof is within you. Take a little time out of your leisure to shut out the tumultuous distractions of the world and enter into a short seclusion. Repeat this practice every day, and one the proof will visit your solitude. Like most things that are worthwhile, the results of meditation (which the author also calls *mental quiet*), are not arrived at except with labour and difficulty, but to those who practise they shall surely be reached. (*To be continued...*)

NOVEMBER- 2005

THE BOOK WRITTEN AT THE BEHEST OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI (Part-II)

The first part, which appeared last month, mentions how Sri Ramana prompted Paul Brunton to write the book – The Secret Path.

The hypnotic power of external existence clings to our minds as leech clings to human flesh. The unwilling conscious self will bring dozens of excuses against starting this practice [meditation] or against continuing after it has been started. The initial battle of overcoming the brain's unwillingness to come to rest is perhaps the hardest, but it must be fought. It is a habit of vital importance whose benefit, when practised, cannot be too highly exaggerated; but whose neglect leads to worry and woes.

General Gorden regularly set aside every morning for his spiritual devotions. He got much inspiration, strength and courage from this wise practice.

William T. Stead, famous newspaper editor and fighter for the outcast, once spent three months in prison because he dared to publish the truth. He declared after years that these were the most profitable months of his life. "It was the first time in my life that I had time to sit down and think, to sit down *and find myself*," he said.

Thomas Edison, whose name will always be starred on the world's list of great inventors, developed through repeated habit the ability to relax in the midst of his work and throw himself into a meditative condition which brought him the solution of many of his perplexing problems. He once said that, "The hours which I have spent alone with Mr. Edison have brought me the real big returns of my life; to it I attribute all that I have accomplished."

We give no thought to the inner life. A moment of mental quiet is looked upon as a moment wasted...For many persons the spiritual life has become a mere myth.

The world's mind is too apt to become hypnotized by its material environment. It is a strange and sad thing that while our leading scientists and finest intellect are returning towards a more

spiritual interpretation of the universe and of life, the masses have sunk deeper into the gross materialism.

I propose a simple technique of becoming aware of the highest in ourselves. No method of meditation can be easy in itself, because the practice connotes thought-control, than which few things are harder in this world.

The enquiry into the true self is the simplest system of meditation. It is quicker to grasp and simpler to practise than any complicated yoga system of the East.

When you have awakened in the morning and bathed, the first duty – and usually the most neglected one – confronting you is to “plug in” to your true self. Yet most people make it their first duty to think of their present troubles, the work in hand or the persons they are soon to meet. Their activities and their problems are first in their thoughts, instead of obtaining that wisdom which should inspire all their activities and solve all their problems.

Jesus said, “Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, all these things shall be added unto you.” He gave us not only a general rule, but also a particular one. His use of the words “this day” in the Lord’s Prayer is a significant indication that He advised His followers to pray and meditate in the morning. There exist deep psychological reasons for this counsel. We can set the keynote of the entire day’s activities by the attitude adopted during the first hour after waking from sleep.

If we seek the Kingdom, and are prepared to sacrifice a little time for its sake every morning, our work will not suffer and our problem will not be neglected. But thereby we create a current of spiritual wisdom and strength which will flow beneath the whole of the day’s activities and thoughts. Those who think it folly to attend to our spiritual attitude before we have attended to our worldly concern puts second things first and first things second.

Whether we give five minutes or five hours to this practice of life inspiring, it never fails to produce remarkable rewards in the long run.

Practicing meditation for ten minutes to half an hour once or twice a day should become a habit. Gradually we would get accustomed to it as a part of our normal life. The second fortnight will be slightly easier, the third easier still, until in time you master the art. Even the busy man of affairs can fit it into his programme so that it becomes as natural as having his meal. **Create the habit; stick to it, and without doubt it will begin to make its value felt in conscious progress.**

Spiritual enfoldment is not to be the haphazard thing as it is so often among us, but a steady and serious effort. An ordered and regular daily practice in meditation will naturally lead to advancement in the art. In other words, as you continue the method less and less effort will be needed to produce the same result. **Progress depends upon practice.**

Meditation will produce most result by being regular every day, rather than in fits and starts, because it is something that gradually “soaks in” by repeated daily efforts

The daily practice of mental quiet must be done as regular as eating. **Habit rules our lives. The man who has learnt the secret of creating good habits is able to control that which controls life.** And the best habit man can make is that of meditation.

I would not only emphasize but over-emphasize the astonishing value and urgent necessity of this habit. You will find in course of time that the daily period of mental quiet will become a looked-for joy, instead of a disciplinary duty, as it might seem at first, and you will not allow anything to interfere with it.

About the correct sitting posture, there is no rigid rule. An easy body-posture assists to put the mind at ease. A body in discomfort tends to make the mind uneasy.

Physical stillness is the first gateway to mental stillness. Go to the same quiet spot or room every day, occupy the same chair or sit on the same bed each time. **Sit upright and do not recline on your back.**

Meditation is easier to perform and will bear a better fruit when right conditions are conformed to. Choose a time when you will not be disturbed, when things around you are quiet. If it is also possible, fill your best room with flowers and incense. Put only ennobling and colourful pictures upon its walls. And try to keep that room for your own personal use, so far as that can be done, a place wherein to meditate and pray and to study the things of spirit. Choose a place where you can remain in uninterrupted seclusion, where insects cannot irritate you and where you feel harmonious and at peace. If you cannot get all these conditions, then get as much of them as you can.

I have suggested that the morning be chosen but it is quite possible that the circumstances exist which debar this time. In that case, the next best time is sunset, for then the mind can return more quickly to its interior quiet than it is able to do during the activity of the daytime. There is a mysterious quality in twilight which links it with the great spiritual currents that Nature releases in regular rhythms. If the early evening is out of question, then an alternative time would be just before retiring to rest at night.

He who would attempt to know his Overself must learn to retire into his mind as a tortoise retires into its shell. The attention which has hitherto been dissipated on a succession of external objects must now be concentrated on a single internal focus. [This place could preferably be the right side of the chest, under the nipple, where according to Sri Ramana, the spiritual heart is located.]

The path of meditation is simple to describe, but most difficult to practice. All you have to do is but to abstract your mind from all thoughts. Thought control is hard to attain, its difficulty will astonish you. The brain will rise in mutiny. Like the sea the human mind is ceaselessly active. But the mind can be brought under control by God's/Guru's grace, firm determination and constant and sincere efforts.

.Are you weak in concentration? Then by a little practice everyday you can become stronger. He who practices every day, albeit for only half an hour, shall master his wandering thoughts in time... *To be continued...*

UPADESA SAARAM OF RAMANA MAHARSHI – AN APPRECIATION (Verse 28)

**Kim swaroopamityaatma darshane
Avyayaabhavaapoorna chit sukham.**

Kim swaroopam iti(): What is (my) nature? Thus enquiring

Aatmadarshane(): (one) realizes the Self (which is)

Avyaya(): imperishable,

Abhava(): birthless,

Aapoorna(): all full,

Chit-Sukham(): knowledge and bliss.

“What is my nature?” enquiring thus, one realizes the Self and then comes to experience the fact – “I am the Imperishable, Unborn, All-full, Knowledge and Bliss.”

Until the question, Who am I? is solved through relentless enquiry and the truth of one’s “Being” is realized, there is no redemption for the aspirant.

Egged by ego and ego-centric desires we are fully caught in a restless process of earning, spending, possessing, aggrandizing and indulging whole-heartedly in numerous sense-objects, with a view to getting happiness out of them. But with all our efforts and struggles we end up by having some glory and satisfaction. Gradually, all this becomes routine. And then we start seeking a higher level of happiness, and devote ourselves to acquire it. Thus, we get caught in the ‘activity trap’. If we become a little thoughtful, we are bound to face the important question: Am I going to go all my life cringing before the sense-objects? Will they be able to provide the peace and happiness which is stable? What is the true nature of my being? Kim swaroopam? Am I sorrow or happiness by nature? How do I find out my essential nature?

The essential nature of a thing is that “which” when removed or given up ceases to be “that” thing. For instance, heat and light are two essential properties of the sun. Without these we cannot imagine the existence of sun. Secondly, the nature can never be a burden to one it belongs. For example, poison is not a burden or problem to the snake. Thus, if our habits, and problems caused by them, become a burden, they are not our real nature.

When we analyse ourselves in this light we will come to the conclusion that sorrow and misery, by definition, cannot be our true nature. Then, what is our true nature? This verse tells us four characteristics of our true nature. These are: 1. Avyaya(): The undecaying and indestructible. 2. Abhava(): The unborn or uncreated. 3. Aapoorna(): What is infinite is All-full in itself. 4. Chit-Sukham(): Knowledge and bliss.

It may be noted that the lust, ego, greed, anger, etc. are only our tendencies, and our true nature. These tendencies seize our true nature and we begin to identify ourselves with them.

The constant effort of our Real Self is to find its true nature. Therefore we continue to be unhappy and dissatisfied till we get to our true nature. The verse tells that the goal can be achieved by constant and sincere inquiry through the question of all questions – *Who am I?* (Source: Same as in the earlier month.)

THOUGHT CONTROL: Do not try to control the thought process. Let it go by itself. Just be aware of it or act as a witness to it. Slowly, through constant and patient practice, it will lose its momentum and would gradually decline and fall away. Another method is of controlling the *prana*. If one has sufficient mastery over the *prana*, one would have mastery not only over the thought but also over the body and various organic functions of the body. - *Anonymous*

NISHKAMA KARMA OR KARMA YOGA: In this state all actions are performed as discharge of one's duty with joy and dedication, as rewards in themselves. The *Gita* terms this approach as true sacrifice (*tyaga*) and total renunciation (*sannyasa*) [18,2]. This state has also been termed as *karma sannyasa*. Here, all worldly relationships and possessions could be maintained, while not being tainted or affected by or attached to them, akin to the existence of a lotus leaf in water. Scientific studies have also borne out the fact that power, concentration and effectiveness are concomitant with any work done for its own sake, regardless of status, money or acclaim that may accrue in consequence. – *K. Vijayaraghavan*

Nishkama karma – a short story from the life of Sri Ramana: Sri Ramana's life was a saga of *nishkama karma*. Padma Bhushan awardee Professor K. Swaminathan, Professor of English, Presidency College, Madras, and an ardent devotee of Sri Ramana records the following anecdote: Once Rangachari, a Telugu teacher in a Vellore college, asked Maharshi to explain *nishkama karma* (desireless action). There was no reply. After a time, Maharshi went up the hill followed by a few devotees and Rangachari. There was a thick, strong, thorny branch lying on the way, which Maharshi picked up and began working on. The spikes were cut off, the knots made smooth and the surface polished with a rough leaf. Hours of hard and careful work resulted in a nice stick that Maharshi presented to a passing shepherd boy who appeared dejected because he had lost his stick. Rangachari confessed that he had learnt a new lesson in the art of teaching, for this silent practical demonstration was the Sage's perfect answer to his earnest question.

SHARANAGATI: The Lord comes to the rescue of those who surrender to him with full faith and belief as can be seen in the stories of Gajendra, the elephant king; Prahlad, son of king Hiranyakashipu, and Draupadi, the wife of Pandavas. In the *Gita*, Krishna says: 'Leave everything and surrender to me, I shall absolve you of all sins and lead you to salvation.' Vibheeshana comes to Rama's camp with folded hands seeking protection. Sugriva and his entire army oppose the acceptance of Vibheeshana. Rama tells them, 'Whoever comes to my feet, I will protect him from all fears. This is my *sankalpa*.' Rama adds that he will protect any one seeking protection in him, even if it is Ravana himself.' However, complete surrender can fail in instances where a stronger law prevails, and where a person appealed to lacks compassion and grace. – *D.S. Srinivasan*

NAMA JAPA – ITS METHODS AND SIGNIFICANCE: *Japa*, or the repetition of God's name, helps to activate a resource center in our system that is otherwise dormant. Most people pass through life entirely ignorant of this spiritual facility, or they underestimate it. *Nama japa* is done in three ways: In high tone, in low tone and in mental mode. Low tone *japa* is more

powerful than high tone *japa*, and mental *japa* is more powerful than low tone *japa*. One must begin with high tone and gradually move on to low and then to the silent mode. It is important to coordinate thought with chant: If the mind wanders while the lips utter the Name, the exercise is futile. The mind is bound to wander; it must however be repeatedly and gently drawn back to the *japa*. Regular practice of mental *japa* leads to *a-japa japa* or effortless chanting in the subconscious mind. This leads to an exalted state where the individual ego begins to dilute, because the self is logged on to the Cosmic Self. While chanting the Name, many people fix in the mind an *ishta-rupa* (favoured form) of God. It is better to contemplate on the *vishwa-rupa*, the all-inclusive cosmic form. A better way perhaps is to contemplate on the formless, an expanding light, or a brilliant void. – *S.K. Ram*

THE ISLAND OF SELF: Take refuge in the island of Self – the island of peace in each one of us. We must know how to return to that island when we need to. In his last moments, the Buddha said: “Take refuge in the island of Self...” – *Thich Nhat Hanh*

JOYFUL FEELING: When harmful bacteria invade your body, your antibodies surround the bacteria and render them harmless. Likewise, when you suffuse your body and mind with the feelings of the joy of meditation, your body and spirit will be strengthened. Joyous feelings have a capacity to transform the feelings of sorrow and pain in us. – *Thich Nhat Hanh*

DETACHMENT AND RENUNCIATION: We often imagine that a person who is detached will be indifferent to those around, and dislike everything that reminds him of what he has renounced. This is not true. Detachment frees you from the fetters which bind you to the ordinary plane of awareness. One who is detached may enjoy every pleasure of life, acquire wealth and status, and raise a family that he loves. But on account of his detachment he is not dependent on them. He enjoys everything but as the master and not the slave. On account of his detachment he develops an inner freedom or independence. Detachment should be understood as the ability to remain unaffected in the face of trials and tribulations of life. With detachment comes a greater feeling of love and unity around you. Earlier you had loved only because you were attached to or dependent upon the objects of your love. However, with detachment you experience love which is not bound or restricted by personal likes and dislikes, greed or ambition. The love is devoid of personal motives. [Sri Ramana was a great and true example of this state of mind.] – *Swami Satyasangananda*

REMINISCENCES OF A FRENCH DEVOTEE

Ethel Merston, came to Sri Ramana in 1939. She settled down near Sri Ramanasramam for many years before and after Sri Ramana’s *mahanirvana*. She wrote about her meetings with Sri Ramana in journal *The Call Divine*.

In 1937-8, a small group of seekers in Paris was discussing teachings of J. Krishnamurti and others. All of us had read Brunton’s *A Search in Secret India*. One of us – Pascaline Mallet had visited Sri Ramanasramam and been much impressed. Pascaline had asked me to help her to translate ‘*Who am I?*’ into French, which made a deep impression on me. We were curious to see the great man so eulogized by Brunton.

Bhagavan drew me to Tiruvannamalai in 1939. It took me a few moments after entering his hall to know that **I was in the presence of the greatest teacher I have ever met.** From the first

moment in his presence he made me feel at home, and the peace in that little hall drew me as nothing had before. We had planned to stay for two days. When finally I had to leave, I knew that sometime I should return. The return came two years later and from then on for five consecutive years, I visited the Ashram each summer to sit in Bhagavan's presence. Then in 1944 my work in North India coming to an end, I came to live permanently near him.

Newcomers including me, would begin by asking him questions, but soon found no necessity to voice them; in one way or another, without asking, the questions would be answered and problem solved.

Once I had been mulling over a problem for three days without finding the solution. The fourth day, sitting opposite to Bhagavan, and still harassed by the problem, Bhagavan suddenly turned his eyes upon me. After a moment, he asked one of his attendants to find him a certain book of *puranic* stories; he turned over the pages until, finding the passage he wanted, he handed the book to one of the men who knew English and told him to read the story aloud. That story gave me the answer to my problem.

He taught each seeker as suited his need. He was clairvoyant and could read our thoughts. Of psychic powers, I saw him use none, beyond conveying thoughts silently and so powerfully that the vibrations would sometimes roll in waves down the hall almost hurting one by the force with which they impinged on the body, not only of the recipient, for whom the thought was meant, but on many of us sitting there.

Bhagavan's gaze was spellbinding. Once an elderly *sannyasi* entered the hall. Bhagavan, who was reading, dropped his book immediately and looked straight up at the man who took two strides forward and stood near Bhagavan's feet, returning his gaze. There was such love and joy in Bhagavan's gaze that one could almost hear him say, "So you have come at last, my beloved brother." The two went on gazing at each other, without a word spoken aloud, but I could literally feel them speaking to each other, the flow of the current going back and forth between them. They talked thus voicelessly for some ten or fifteen minutes, then suddenly the *sannyasi* dropped to the floor and passed into *samadhi* for the next two hours. Bhagavan quietly took up his book again and went on, remaining as though nothing had happened, as doubtless indeed for him it had not. But for us it was an unforgettable experience.

Quite apart from solving our problems, or helping us to do so, just to sit in Bhagavan's presence was to realize or get a feeling of what true relaxation and a quiet mind might mean. It did not mean shutting oneself away, isolating oneself, contrariwise, it meant being with all, yet remaining within, being in the world and yet not of it.

During the last years of Bhagavan's life, we learned many lessons from him. But one, which he never ceased to hammer into us was that he was not the body, the body might go, but he would not go. He always was and always would be there with us, as now. I only saw three people cry as we spent the night keeping vigil of the corpse. We just knew that Bhagavan had not gone, so why cry for him, or rather, cry for a non-existent loss? We who knew him in the body are not the only ones to feel his presence. Even after he left the body, people in England who never knew him in the flesh, have told me that after reading about him, they have had the experience of his actual presence near them, even of his touch, ready with his grace to help. (Source: *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi – Enchanting and Uplifting Experiences of 160 persons*, the forthcoming publication of our Kendram.)

Life is a brief candle. It is like a player that frets and struts his hour on the stage and then is heard no more. – *Shakespeare*

Kindness is the sunshine in which the virtue grows. – *R.G.Ingersoll*

Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. – *Stuart Mill*

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything; the just make the most of everything that comes along their way. – *Anonymous*

Most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be. – *Abraham Lincoln*

A happy person is not a person in a certain set of circumstances, but rather a person with a certain set of attitudes. – *Hugh Downs*

A man is happy so long as he chooses to be happy. – *Alexander Solzhenitsyn*

We must become the change we want to see. – *Mahatma Gandhi*

THE NEED FOR RIGHT ATTITUDE: The way we think and feel about things imprisons or liberates us from captivity. Attitude offers an angle through which we look at events, things and relationships. Our attitude determines the nature and amount of our suffering. Attitude is slowly formed in us, as the pearl in an oyster, through the study of scriptures and philosophies, through contact with enlightened persons, through contemplation on the nature of things and through thoughtful analysis. Once formed, it enables us to see incidents in a new, lucid way. The right attitude enables to cultivate dispassion or non-attachment and a natural disinterestedness in the fruit of action. The sand sculptor, for example, has no illusion about the nature of his artistic creation. Artistic efforts of the sand sculptor are not totally wasted. They reward him with the ability to take the futility and wastage of his labour easy. – *Dharnidhar Sahu*

HUMILITY AND PEACE: Humility and inner happiness go hand in hand. The less compelled you are to try to prove yourself to others, the easier it is to feel peaceful inside. The less you care about seeking approval, the more approval you seem to get. People are drawn to those with a quiet inner confidence, people who don't need to make themselves to look good, be "right" all the time, or steal the glory. The way to develop genuine humility is to practice. It is nice because you will get immediate feedback in the way of calm, easy feelings. The next time you have an opportunity to brag, resist the temptation. – *Richard Carlson*

THE GOLDEN BUDDHA: Many years ago in Thailand an ancient statue of the Buddha was being shifted. It was made of clay. During the journey, it started raining heavily. Some of the helpers held umbrellas over the idol; others fashioned a thatched roof over the idol with coconut leaves. Still the idol got wet and the clay was getting washed away gradually. Lo and behold, the disappearing clay revealed a figure of gold. A golden idol had been camouflaged in clay to prevent thieves from stealing it. This is the real life story of the famous golden Buddha in Thailand. Covering ourselves with clay of *ajñana*, we have forgotten the Golden Buddha within us. Catering only to the body, we are neglecting the real inner Self. – www.swamisukhabodhananda.org

DECEMBER 05

UPADESA SAARAM OF RAMANA MAHARSHI – AN APPRECIATION (Verses 29 and 30)

Verse – 29

Bandha-muktyateetam param sukham *Vindateehajeevastu daivika*

Tu (): Some rare

Daivika (): divine or auspicious

Jeeva (): individuals

Vindati (): gain

Param sukham(): supreme happiness

Bandha mukti ateetam() beyond bondage and liberation

Eha(): here.

Here (in this world), some rare individuals with auspicious virtues or qualities attain supreme happiness (of the Self), which is beyond bondage and liberation.

To revel in a state of pure bliss of the Self is the final liberation of a person. But even the idea of liberation is not within the comprehension of majority of people because they think that liberation cannot be had while one is living in this body. To them, liberation means going to heaven, where one comes to enjoy the pleasures not available in this world. It should be noted that the idea of post-death liberation is merely an imagination. Such an idea is due to our tendency to escape from *what is* and project ourselves into the future.

People generally associate their concept of liberation with perennial enjoyment of pleasure, bereft of sorrow. However, the life consistently teaches us that enduring happiness cannot be had from the world of ever-changing environments and objects. Pleasures and sorrows go hand in hand, whereas, happiness in its true sense is the natural state of *being*, independent of the world of objects. Sri Ramana says: We constantly realize the unreal, that is, we regard as the real that which is unreal. This attitude has to be given up for attaining *jnana*

The ignorance about one's true nature leads to false identification with the non-self, that is, the body-mind complex, and creates the bondage of *samsara*. When the ignorance (*ajnana*) is burnt down what remains is the Self Supreme. This state of liberation has to happen in our present embodiment. This no doubt is difficult, but this can be secured at least partially, with sincere and persistent efforts, along with Guru's grace.

Self-enquiry comes very handy here. It is a direct and immediate action involving effective introversion of the mind focusing all its attention and energy in search of its source, which is the Self. The Self is described in this verse as _____ that is, it transcends the concepts of both bondage and liberation. The Self is of the nature of _____ that is, Supreme bliss and happiness. He who comes upon this glorious state of perennial Self-bliss, comes to shine as _____, that is, liberated while living in the present embodiment. The word _____ employed in this verse indicates that such a fortunate individual is rare to come across.

[It is important to note that moving in the direction of Self-search through the method of Self-enquiry, is itself a significant step. Self-realisation is a continuum from 0 to 100. Depending upon our patience and perseverance we may go forward to the extent and intensity of our tapas. Our job is to make a beginning and continue to march forward with all sincerity. Only rare persons like the Maharshi could succeed here cannot be and should not be made an excuse for not making a beginning and moving forward.]

Verse – 30

Ahamapetakam nijavibhaanakam
Mahadidam tapo Ramana vaagiyam

Idam(_____): This (atma vichara or Self-enquiry which is)
Apetakam(_____): the redeemer of
Aham(_____): aham vritti or ego is
Mahat tapas(_____): a great penance or austerity (and is)
Nijavibhaanakam(_____) the revealer of the Self-light.
Iyam(_____): This (is)
Ramana vaagiyam(_____): the utterance of Ramana.

This Self-enquiry, the redeemer of ego, is a great penance or austerity that reveals the Self-light. This is the self-realised Truth uttered by sage Ramana.

Tapas envisages destroying the citadel of spiritual ignorance through awakening of Awareness. In its early stages tapas can take the form of simple practices like undertaking pilgrimage, fasting, worship, sankeertan, selfless-service, etc. – all meant to chasten the inner instrument, that is, antahkarana. Then the tempo of tapas is raised to a higher level involving practice of yoga ,pranayama, swadhyaya, japa and the like. At an advanced stage the tapas becomes an exclusive pursuit of deep meditation and atma-vichara.

The whole intent of tapas is to conquer the mind through right discipline and to keep out the ‘unreality’ with which we are obsessed. Our ego-centric way of life lived in utter vanity and gross selfishness and the constant dabbling in the cesspool of desire, passion and pleasure, must completely cease for the Truth to reveal. Tapas, true to its essential sense and norm, is nothing short of an intelligent and resolute action to completely switch off the unproductive flow of thought-currents in the direction of ‘unreality’, and their careful rechannelisation into the inner realm of Consciousness to explore and discover the indwelling truth – the Pure Self.

Self-enquiry generally begins with and involves a continuous process of negation of everything that is non-self. As a result, one gathers a firm intellectual conviction that one is not the body, vital airs, mind and intellect. Thus constant and sincere practice of Self-enquiry redeems us from the clutches of ego, helping us to be near our real Self.

Sri Ramana says that to be ever in the Self and never to forget that identity under any circumstance is the true tapas. Sri Ramana himself, who was an embodiment of true tapas, demonstrated in his life extraordinary simplicity, purity, power, beauty and peace and joy that radiated to people around him. (Source: Same as in previous month.)

(With this we end brief commentaries on 30 invaluable slokas of Sri Ramana's Upadesa Saaram, which began with October 2003 issue of Sri Ramana Jyothi.)

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI – REMINISCENCES OF AN ARDENT DEVOTEE

The following has been abstracted from the book *Sri Ramana Bhagavan* by K.R.K Murthy, B.E (Elec.), Chief Electrical Engineer, Government of Andhra Pradesh. He writes:

Once in 1937, I read in a newspaper that an eminent personage was going to Tiruvannamalai to have darshan of Sri Ramana Maharshi. I had great respect for that gentleman and was anxious to meet him. So I made up my mind to proceed to Tiruvannamalai as well as Maharshi.

I went straight to the hall and placed the packet of sugar candy, purchased as an offering to Maharshi, on a stool near him and sat down along with a number of people of both sexes. All people were sitting like silent statues and the only offender in the gathering was the clock on the wall. Physical activity in the hall was nil but for the scented sticks, which were briskly throwing up curls of smoke. I waited patiently for sometime but still the same silence continued. It looked very strange and odd, as I had never seen such a silent gathering before. I wanted to know something about Maharshi, but whom to ask?

Several people were coming and prostrating before Maharshi and going or sitting quiet in the hall. This was also an unfamiliar sight, which left a deep impression on my mind. After a while, Maharshi rose up and then everyone in the hall got up and prostrated. When Maharshi left for a walk towards Arunachala hill people began to appear in their true colours and I witnessed the usual work-day-world.

The punyas or merit that I earned previously bore fruit only after Sri Janaki Matha (Wife of Dr. Ganapati Iyer, District Medical Officer, Kurnool, where I was working as Municipal Electrical Engineer), a highly elevated soul and a great devotee of Maharshi, explained in a convincing way that Maharshi was Sarva daiva swaroopam, sarva sakti samanvita, and sarva mangala dayaka. From that time I began to visualize Maharshi as Bhagavan. He was no more a human being occupying a limited space but the all pervading Almighty who could protect his devotees wherever they are. [The write-up on Janki Matha as recorded by her daughter Padma Sitapati, would appear in our next issue, i.e., January, 2006.]

One superficial observer told me that Maharshi sits quiet without doing anything useful to anybody and even without talking or explaining. My very real personal experience has

convinced me that Maharshi was always lending his helpful hand actively and silently in his own characteristic way.

Once, as I was entering the hall I saw Maharshi holding his left hand forefinger with his right hand. There were several people in the hall at that time. Some might not have noticed this and some might have dismissed this as insignificant. But to me it is unforgettable because the pain I was for long experiencing in my left forefinger was permanently cured. Maharshi used to help the devotees so secretly that no one knew anything about it except the recipient, sometimes even the recipient of the help remained in the dark.

I may narrate another incident here. After an accident, I was experiencing much pain in my elbow, which persisted for a long time in spite of medical attention. One day I saw Bhagavan in a dream taking meals at our house. After the meals I handed over a mug of water to him to wash hands. He took the mug and poured some water on my elbow before washing his hands. Next day onwards there was no pain in the elbow. If it had been a mere dream, could it have such an effect on the physical body?

On one occasion, I saw the writing of Bhagavan in Telugu. It was just like print. I had a keen desire to preserve some letters written by Bhagavan, but felt delicate to ask before so many people in the hall. Just then someone in the hall said loudly that I had written in Telugu script some Tamil songs. Bhagavan asked for my notebook and patiently corrected the first stanza of a song. I was overjoyed. Thus Bhagavan satisfied my desire without appearing as though he was showing a special favour to me.

Bhagavan never lectured to any audience. When questions were asked he used to reply in his own characteristic way. Sometimes the questions were answered in monosyllables and sometimes by signs. The golden words full of significance used to ring in the ears and were treasured in the memory. Not only that, the person concerned could not help broadcasting the same at the earliest opportunity.

Once, arrangements were made for feeding the poor in the Ashram. People were rushing into the place set apart for dining. Then someone in authority told loudly that sadhus should keep out. When food was to be served, it was found that Bhagavan was not present. People rushed in all directions and found Bhagavan sitting under a tree. When requested to join the devotees, Bhagavan said, "You never wanted sadhus to remain there. Being a sadhu I left the place." Bhagavan identified himself with the lowest. He used to rectify the wrong not by showing anger but by self-denial or self-punishment.

The Ashram was developing a garden. Some inmates had put forth their best efforts to secure plants and nurse them. One day, some Ashram cows entered the garden and grazed off the inviting plants. The inmates were very unhappy. The event created much stir and reached Bhagavan's ears, who smiled and said, "Why should cows be blamed? Do they know that they were not to graze in certain places? If the garden is properly fenced, the cows will not get in. Bhagavan saw the other side of things, which the normal people fail to see.

Many people used to address Ganapati Muni as nayana, i.e., father. Bhagavan also began to address him the same way. The Muni protested saying that Bhagavan, who was his guru, should not call him like that. Bhagavan's reply was, "Nayana is a term of endearment, which is applied by the father to his own children." This other meaning of the word did not strike any one till Bhagavan himself had explained."

Bhagavan used to occupy a sofa and many people thought it be a luxurious seat. Someone even remarked why should a sannyasi require such a seat, forgetting that Maharshi was accustomed to the roughest and hardest possible seats throughout his life, and only much later the sofa was imposed upon him. One day, Bhagavan was giving instructions to an attendant about binding the books. To show personally how to do the job, he sat down on the floor and remarked that it was very pleasant to sit on the ground. It may be noted that a high seat was necessary for Bhagavan for enabling a large number of devotees to have darshan simultaneously. Though the sofa was for the convenience of the devotees, ordinary people thought it was a nice seat.

[The story of how Sri Ramana was reluctant to have the sofa has been recorded by David Godman. He says: Sometime in 1928-29, one Rangaswami Gounder brought a sofa and requested Bhagavan to occupy it. When Bhagavan refused, he started crying. And for three successive days he was crying in the hall, begging Bhagavan to accept the gift. Finally, on the night of the third day, Bhagavan got off the bench, on which he had been sitting till then, and went to occupy the sofa. Living by the Words of Bhagavan, p.40.]

With a view to recording Bhagavan's voice, some devotees referred to the sound recording machines. Seeing that Bhagavan was favourably disposed towards them, they wanted to pursue the matter further and fix a date for recording the voice. At that moment Bhagavan said, "My real voice is silence. How can you record the same? And he narrated the story of Tattvaraya, whose guru by his dynamic silence, stilled the minds of several people for days together.

[The story as told by Sri Ramana is:Tattvaraya who composed a bharani (A kind of poetic composition in Tamil) in honour of his guru, invited an assembly of learned men to hear him. The pandits raised the objection that a bharani could be sung only in honour of a warrior who had killed a thousand elephants and certainly not in honour of a mere ascetic. Then the poet said, "Let us all go to my guru and settle the matter in his presence." They went to the guru and the poet reported the pandits' objection. The guru sat salient and so did all others. Thus days passed, with no thought occurring to any of them. At the end of the long, silent session the guru made a slight movement of his mind and the assembly declared with one voice: "Vanquishing a thousand elephants is nothing before this man's power to quell the rutting elephants of our egos." And they called upon Tattvaraya to proceed to read his bharani.]

(The book was published by the author from 1-8-7/13, Sarvodaya Colony, Chikkadapalli, Hyderabad-20.)

A man is happy so long as he chooses to be happy. – Alexander Solzhenitsyn

Most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be. – Abraham Lincoln

I cannot teach anybody anything; I can only make them think. – Socrates

To understand completely is to forgive completely. - Anonymous

The Supreme dwells within the lotus of the heart.Those who reach His splendid Feet dwell endearingly within unearthly realms. –Thiruvalluvar

If the mind, which is the cause of all objective knowledge and all actions, subsides, the perception of the world will cease. Just as the knowledge of the rope will not be obtained unless the knowledge of the snake goes, so the realization of the Self will not be obtained unless the perception of the world, which is a superimposition, ceases. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

PARABLE OF A DONKEY: *A farmer's donkey fell in a well. The animal cried sorrowfully for hours as the farmer figured out what to do. Finally, he decided that since the animal was old and unable to perform its job well, it was just not worth taking the trouble to rescue it. He invited his neighbours to help him to cover the well that was dry. The trapped donkey realised what was happening and brayed piteously. Then it calmed down. After dumping a few shovel loads, the farmer looked down the well. He was astonished to find that with each shovel of earth that hit donkey's back, it was doing something amazing: it would shake it off and take a step up. As the people continued to pour the earth, the animal would shake it off and take another step up. Pretty soon the donkey stepped over the edge of the well and came out happily. MORAL – Every one of us is engaged in our own little Kurukshetras. We all fight battles every day. The trick is to get over the problem and take a step forward. We can get out of the deepest well of trouble just by perseverance and calm deliberation. Like the donkey in the narrative, stay calm, shake off the problem and move up. – L.R. Sabharwal*

Note: In his book Thriving on Chaos, the noted management guru Tom Peters says that one should take the problem, however chaotic it may be, as given and learn to thrive on it by dealing with the situation in a proactive manner.

SPIRITUL TITBITS

1. *We have our moods. Learn how to remain in the spiritual mode, as much as possible.*
 2. *Have intense aspiration to see the Light in yourself. It is there in you. It is for you to manifest the inner light.*
 3. *Don't waste energy. Useless doings, useless talks and useless thinking are like weeds. Pull them out.*
 4. *Through constant and sincere practice concentration is deepened, clearing the channels of energy and getting us in touch with the Cosmic Energy.*
 5. *The spiritual practice is like mental skating. The proud fall. Don't think you are too great or too safe.*
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PRAYER: Prayer is, in essence, an act of communication with the Source. It is an expression of gratitude and reverence for securing upliftment and inspiration. In prayer there is always a desire to be aligned with the Source to which we pray. The real purpose of prayer is to attune ourselves to our limitless inner Truth and Happiness. – Eric Bryele

THE URGE TO ACCUMULATE OBSTRUCTS LIBERATION: The nature of the mind is always to accumulate. Mind is a gatherer, always wanting to gather something. With the gathering you may make a living. With this gathering, may be you can enhance the physical quality of life around you; but this gathering – it does not matter how much you gather – is incapable of liberating you, taking you closer to your Ultimate Nature. It does not matter what you accumulate; the constant need to accumulate shows that there is insufficiency. Grace cannot descend on you till you are empty and have got rid of your habit to accumulate, including the habit to acquire knowledge and wisdom. If one brings sufficient awareness, then through constant

sadhana the vessel becomes totally empty. Awareness empties the vessel, *sadhana* cleans it. If you become empty enough for the Grace to descend, then Realisation is not far away. It is here to be experienced. – *Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev*

Enlightenment is our ego's biggest disappointment. – *Swami Yogananda*

As for me, all I know is that I know nothing. - *Socrates*

Our ego *mistakenly* believes that if we point out, openly or in our mind, how someone else is wrong, we must be right and therefore we feel better. – *Richard Carlson*

THINKING MAKES THE DIFFERENCE: We all have things about us that could be used for condemnation or redemption. Everything is a matter of viewing point. We can make or break our lives with the positive or negative thoughts. An anecdote from Paul Brunton's classic *A Search in Secret India* is instructive here: "A large group of visitors and devotees are in the Maharshi's hall when someone arrives with the news that a certain man, whose criminal reputation is a byword in the town, is dead. Immediately, there is some discussion about him, and as is the wont of human nature, various people get engaged in recalling some of his crimes and the more dastardly phases of his character. When the discussion appears to have ended, Maharshi opens his mouth for the first time and quietly observes, 'Yes, but he kept himself very clean, for he bathed two or three times a day!'"

PARASHAKTI: Primordial Shakti is the ultimate dynamic energy of transcendental Brahmn, which is attribute less. But His Parashakti has many attributes. While Brahmn has only to be cognized, Parashakti can be worshipped with name and form. She is Divine Will personified. Shakti creates, preserves and dissolves. She is also possessor and controller of opposite qualities: Destruction and Death, as Mahakali – Goddess of Supreme Strength. As Mahalakshmi, the Supreme Goddess of Love and Delight, she lends grace and charm to everything divine or human. As Mahasaraswati, the Goddess of Divine skill and Knowledge, she is the fire fighter and trouble shooter for the entire universe.

Shakti and Brahmn are conceived as one except that Brahmn is eternal and unchanging while Shakti is eternal but always changing. Shakti's creative force brings out and develops the universe, which after an age draws back into itself to rest into the blissful unchanging state of Brahmn only to emerge again driven by Shakti's infinite energy. The supreme power, Brahmn, manifests itself in Shakti, the feminine principle in Divine form.

According to *Devi Mahatmyam*, a part of *Markandya Purana*, to defeat *asuras*, their formidable enemies, *devas* approached Brahma who took them to Vishnu and Shiva. Through their combined invocation and a fusion of their energies emerged a deity of exceptional radiance. She was Shakti, the repository of infinite energy. Shiva gave her his trident, Vishnu his *chakra*, Kubera his club and Indira his thunder. Armed with weapons, and the lion as her mount she decimated the demons. Since the demons could be defeated only after the gods got united to form a common front and invoke Shakti, the story underscores the value of unity and mutual cooperation. (Source: <http://spirituality.indiatimes.com>)

THE BOOK WRITTEN AT THE BEHEST OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI (Part-III)

The first part, which appeared in October, mentions how Sri Ramana prompted Paul Brunton to write the book – The Secret Path. Some more abstracts from the book are given below:

A TECHNIQUE OF SELF-ANALYSIS: Seated comfortably in a chair or squatted on a rug, breathing quietly and evenly, close your eyes and let your thoughts run over the question **what you really are**. One key to success is to think very slowly. The wheel of the mind is to be slowed down, unabling it to rush around from one thing to another.

First watch your own intellect in its working. Note how thoughts flow one another in endless sequence. Then try to realize that there is someone who thinks. Now ask: Who is this thinker? Who is this “I” that sleeps and wakes up; that thinks and feels; that works and speaks? What is in us that we call the “I”? When a man begins to ask himself what he is, he has taken the first step upon a path which will end only when he has found the answer.

I am happy today. I was miserable yesterday. In all these, the sense of “I am” always remain. To know oneself is to find that point of consciousness from which the observations of the changing moods take place. It is sad to find how man has lost his centrality - his spiritual center of gravity - and this point usually remains unnoticed.

Our thinking is married to the brain, but it is possible to disconnect mind from the body. It is brought about for a specific purpose by means of hypnotism and also through Yoga. Again, in deep dreamless sleep, actions of the physical body and sense organs are at a standstill, yet we emerge again with the “I” notion despite the seeming “near-death” of the body.[The fact that we are not the body, mind, and intellect alone, but something more becomes so clear when a person dies. With every part of the physical body fully intact, we say X or Y “has gone”. What has gone is the higher self that is, *atman*, the Real Self ,which needs to discovered by us.]

Though man is one with the Higher Power, the fact remains that he becomes oblivious of this vital truth. Unless he makes the effort, as in regular meditations, or through frequent self-observation, to detach himself increasingly from his external existence it is unlikely that he will discover his divine consciousness, which is one of the hardest task one can ever undertake.

We must dig with the drill of mind beneath the attraction of the physical world, and try to find the eternal reality which it hides. Then the secret of life , which has baffled the brilliant intellects of illustrious men, will be discovered and become our joyful possession. *To be continued...*

NO FULL STOP OR EVEN A COMMA: Our mind is cluttered and chatters unceasingly. It runs hither and thither, pulled by the accumulated strength of thoughts. There is no full stop or even a comma. We don’t even know where the control switch is located. As a result, the entry or exist of thoughts is not under our control. But we have to remember that the Thinker is the boss and can always resume his authority over any thought; it is our life and no one can alter its course except us. Sri Ramana keeps us reminding that we are sitting on a treasure trove – a full potential of an uncluttered mind. One is hanging on to even purposeless thoughts for want of knowledge of the way to make a bonfire of them. *Atam vichar* – constant and sincere reflection on the question

Who am I ? can show us the way. We alone have to proceed by our own efforts. We have to be our own lamppost, as the Buddha has said. – *A.R.Natarajan*

THE EGO – VILLAIN OF THE PIECE: As far as the spiritual development is concerned, there is one great stumbling block, one villain of the piece, one big hiccup along the way – the ego. It is the ego which gives rise to feeling of awareness which then generates the “I”. This separate individuality is the main barrier to the ultimate reality which an impersonal and universal Being . Enlightenment is the insight that one is not really this separate individual. Enlightened persons consider the whole world as their family; their individuality gets merged with that of the Supreme Being. – *Mukul Sharma*

LIVE LIKE A SHIP IN THE OCEAN: A ship in the ocean moves freely, performing its job of carrying goods and persons from place to place. It faces all oceanic turmoil calmly; ensuring that the water, which makes it move does not enter into it. We will also perform the best by keeping ourselves afloat in the *maya* of *samsara*, not allowing it to engulf and make us sink or jeopardize our performance. – *N. K. Agarwal*