

## **SRI RAMANA JYOTHI**

**JANUARY – DECEMBER 2010**

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### **SRI RANGANATHASWAMY TEMPLE (SRIRANGAM)**

By Y.V. Ramakotaiah\*

Situated in Tiruchirapally (Tamil Nadu) on the banks of river Kaveri, on a sprawling 156 acres, it is the largest temple in India. The temple is enclosed with seven concentric walls with a total length of six miles. Twenty one *gopurams* surround these walls. More than a thousand years old, the temple was constructed by a Chola king. The temple follows the tradition of the Thenkalai sect of Iyengars who put ‘Y’ shaped *naamam* on their foreheads.

The Lord’s Divine Consort is Ranganayaki. The Lord is praised by such names as ‘Nam Perumal’ (Our Lord) and ‘Azhagiya Manavalan’ (the beautiful groom).

The great Ramanuja attained divinity here. His shrine is found in the fourth *parakara* of the temple.

During 1310-1, Malik Kafur invaded the temple and took the Nam Perumal idol with him to Delhi. Some ingenious devotees went to Delhi and regaled the king with their histrionic talents, who felt pleased to allow them to take back the idol with them.

\*Abstracted from his article in *Splendour*, October, 2009.

**SRI KALAHASTI TEMPLE:** Kannapa, a great devotee of Siva, offered his eyes to the Lord at this temple. Adi Sankara who reportedly visited the temple situated in Andhra Pradesh, immortalised Kannapa’s devotion in his lyrical *Sivanandalahari*. Among the several prominent legends associated with this shrine, renowned as

‘Southern Kailasa’, there is one about the curse of the Goddess Parvati herself. The Goddess is said to have been cursed by her consort to discard her heavenly form in exchange for a more humble human body. To get rid of the curse, the Mother Goddess undertook arduous austerities. Pleased with her devotion, Lord Siva again restored her body, which was hundred times more splendid than her previous heavenly form. He also initiated her into various mantra secrets including that of the five-syllables (*Panchakshari*). Consequently, Parvati gained Siva-gyanam and came to be renowned as *Gyana Prasunamba* or *Gyana Prasunamibika Devi*. – *Vithal C Nadkarni*

**SOURCE OF HAPPINESS:** When there is contact with a desirable object or memory thereof, and when there is freedom from undesirable contacts or memory thereof, we find happiness. Such happiness is relative and is better called pleasure or satisfaction. What we need is stable happiness (*shanti*) which does not reside in objects. This is inherent in us. One must realize one’s own Self in order to open the store of unalloyed happiness. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

### **SRI RAMANA’S REPLIES TO QUESTIONS OF A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

**F.G. Pearce, Principal, Scindia School, Gwalior, who had visited Sri Ramana when he was at Skandasram, visited him again after 17 years in 1936.**

Pearce: Bhagavan has stated [in *Sad Vidya Anubandham, sloka 36*]: “The illiterates are certainly better off than the literates whose egos are not destroyed by the quest of the self.” This being so, could Bhagavan advise a school master (who feels this is true) how to carry on education in such a way that the desire for literacy and intellectual knowledge may not obscure the more important search for the Self? Are the two incompatible? If they are not, then from what age, and by what means, can young people best be stimulated towards the search for the Real truth within?

Bhagavan: Pride of learning and desire to secure appreciation from others are condemned, and not learning itself. Learning leading to search for Truth and humility is good.

(While leaving, Pearce requested Bhagavan to make a strong link with him and to continue to help him with His grace in the quest of the Self. The Maharshi gave a gentle smile to him.) – *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, Talk no. 253*

**ASHTA LAKSHMI:** These eight secondary manifestations of the Goddess are: 1. *Adi* Lakshmi (The first manifestation of Lakshmi), 2. *Dhanya* Lakshmi (Granary wealth), 3. *Dhairya* Lakshmi (Wealth of courage), 4. *Gaja* Lakshmi (Elephant, symbol of prosperity), 5. *Santana* Lakshmi (Wealth of continuity, progeny), 6. *Vijaya* Lakshmi (Wealth of victory), 7. *Vidya* Lakshmi (Wealth of knowledge and education), 8. *Dhana* Lakshmi (Monetary wealth).

**When you go on digging for an ounce of gold you have to move tons of dirt. But when you go digging, you don't go looking for the dirt, you go looking for the gold.** – *Andrew Carnegie*

**Even a small accomplishment requires hard work. The smallest of accomplishment is better than the biggest talk.** – *Shiv Khera*

**Prayer does not change God, but it changes one who prays.** – *Soren Kierkegaard*

**Patience with others is love, patience with self is hope, and patience with God is faith.** – *Adel Bestaveros*

**There are no shortcuts to any place worth going.** – *Beverly Sills*

**When you double your wishes, the troubles are trebled.** – *King Solomon*

**NEED TO EXPLORE THE HIGHER SELF:** We have to insulate ourselves from the effects of worldly living. The environment has its strong impact. The external world is in a rat race for greed, glamour, and respectability. It does not bother about real peace, and purity. Naturally, external influence affects an individual. In this rat race even if one wins, one continues to be a rat...Glamour gives us an illusory joy but our soul needs to grow the higher centres in us... 'Why does a fish in an ocean try to jump out?' asked a Zen student. 'The fish is trying to explore a world beyond ocean', answered the Master. Consciousness in each one of us is like a fish that wants to explore the unknown, to evolve and grow. – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

**ADVAITA AND DVAITA:** The concepts of *advaita*, *vishstadvaita*, and *dvaita* are not absolute in their connotation. In fact these are different phases through which the seeker of Truth passes at different periods of yoga practice. And, even at a particular phase of *sadhana* these three may be experienced. They are as valid as a person passing through child-hood, boy-hood, youth, and old age. Even the greatest

*advaitin*, Adi Sankara was also a great experimenter of *dviata bhava*. He went through various phases of intense *bhakti*, for example, his marvellous hymns of *Narsimha stotra* on Sri Hari, *Soudariya lahari* on Goddess of Creative power of universe the Shri Devi, to cite a few. This is possible only when the composer of the hymns foresees the Supreme Lord as away and other than his individual self. But, this does not mean that he did not have the concept of unity of individual and cosmic self. So long one identifies oneself with the mind and acts as being of mental-self (*mano-maya pursha*), the concept of *dvaita* or *vishistadvaita* is there. *Advaita* is one mode of experiences. When one goes beyond the mind i.e. when mind subsides in *para bhakti* the supreme love of devotion, he experiences homogenous, infinite, undivided, immutable, all pervading, all potent, pure existence - consciousness - bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*). Again, when that experience ends, mind comes back and the *abhyasi* feels his individuality, i.e. feeling God is separate to himself, the *dvaita bhava*. One cannot live 24 hours in *advaita bhava* experience. In that case, body will not survive; falls away.\*\* It is experienced intermittently, and not continuously. But a *jnani* has intimate, inseparable, intuitive knowledge that *dvaita* is false by fact just like a scientist is aware intuitively, while enjoying the cool brightness of the moon, that it is not a fact of reality, but virtual in nature. – *Sri Ramachandra Maharaj*

\*\* Sri Ramana Maharshi says that it is possible, and calls it *Sahaja Samdhi*, in which he lived all his life.

### **SRI RAMANA’S UPADESHA TO A KITCHEN WORKER**

**Sankarammal, who served in the Ashram kitchen till the last evening of her life, was fascinated by *advaitic* texts like *Vivekachudamani* even before coming to Sri Ramana.**

Theoretically, I was well equipped for a spiritual life. But only when I had the *darshan* of Bhagavan, I knew I had reached the Goal. The experience of inner peace transcended all the limitations imposed on me by the external and internal vacillations. I had just one doubt whether this state of inner poise unalloyed by thought was the final goal. I gathered courage and one day, when there was no one in the hall except an attendant, I approached Bhagavan, prostrated to Him and said, “Lord! Glory to you who has put on this human form in order to redeem me through your *upadesa*! I do not know how I can repay your Grace for helping to liberate me. Glory! Glory to your holy feet!”

Understanding my plight, Bhagavan confirmed that the state of realization was really that simple and spontaneous by giving me a glorious glance of joyful recognition and

said, “Yes, yes! To stay fixed thus in the Self, is the highest return you can render me.” *Arunachala’s Ramana*, Vol. II, pp. 322-3.

**LIBERATION IS FREEDOM FROM THE FINITE:** What is eternal is the formlessness that is the precursor of form. Form is obsessed with tangibility. The sense organs are instruments to reinforce this belief in form as the true self. The form has total conviction in these deceptive sensory modalities of perception. Sensory modalities can never fathom formlessness. Formlessness transcends the senses. Realisation is when consciousness awakes from its own dream. Till consciousness is in a dream state, illusion persists. The brain is a programme for effecting the dream of consciousness. Myriad forms of creation exist merely as functions of this cognitive programme. Matter or form owes its existence to this programme of deception. This programme also has software that ensures total belief in the illusion that it creates. Any attempt to understand the self is futile in the dream state. Liberation is when the infinite wakes up from the dream of being finite. – *Deepak M Ranade*

### **SWAMI DAMODARANANDA\* REMEMBERS SRI RAMANA**

In 1939, while a student in Mangalore, I came across a pictorial biography of the Maharshi. The book simply stunned me. My immediate reaction was, “A Maharshi living in India now! I must go and offer myself at his feet.” I became restless and was planning to run away to Tiruvannamalai. I was so gripped by this one thought that at all costs I must go to him and be at his feet to be guided on the spiritual path. The force of some past *karmas* must have given my life this sudden turn. Finally, I told the manager of my hostel that I was leaving and booked a ticket to Tiruvannamalai. After covering the long distance, I reached the Ashram, took bath and went straight to the hall of the great saint.

Having offered my *pranams*, I sat down with my back against a wall as I was very tired. As soon as I had done this, the Maharshi gazed directly at me with unblinking, wide eyes. I also looked into his eyes with all humility and wonder. While this was happening I felt ecstatic: Sri Bhagavan was showering his grace upon me. By his mere gaze, it seemed, as if the Maharshi was establishing me once and for all in spiritual life. Perhaps he intuitively saw my spiritual destiny.

I was allowed to stay at the Ashram and was asked to help in the kitchen. After the lunch, one of my duties was to guard the kitchen with a stick and drive away the monkeys. One day at about 4 a.m. I was summoned to the kitchen. To my surprise, I saw Bhagavan sitting near the chutney grinding stone. I began to grind the coconut scrapings and Bhagavan helped me by pushing in the overflowing ingredients. At the same time he was busy putting salt, chillies and other ingredients to make the chutney tasty. When ready, Bhagavan distributed a little among four or five people there and also dropped a bit of it into his mouth. As the devotees were tasting the chutney, Bhagavan asked them how they liked it. He then smiled and quipped in Tamil, “Is the chutney asking for iddlies?” Everyone enjoyed the joke and smiled.

Bhagavan next entered the vegetable-cutting room to assist those at the job. He sat cross-legged and cut vegetables with the utmost attention. I noticed that almost all the vegetable pieces he cut were exactly of the same size.

Once, when I was a little free from my kitchen duties, I went to sit in the hall. Some ladies were talking to Bhagavan. I heard him say, “*Mounam* [holy silence] is not just keeping quiet without talking. Holding to one thought alone is the real *mounam*. On one occasion, a devotee, Mrs Kamakshi, entered the hall, offered her *pranams* and then got up. Bhagavan called her over and showed her a small strip of paper. On it he had written, “*Om namo Bhagavate Sri Ramanaya.*” He told her to chant it always. She reportedly did so throughout her life.

Once a *sevak* from the office came near Bhagavan and began calling out, “Bhagavan, Bhagavan, Bhagavan!” – louder, louder and louder. Bhagavan was unaware of his calls, as he was totally immersed in the Divine Quite of peace and bliss. However, as the *sevak*’s voice became ever louder, Bhagavan returned to everyday consciousness and responded in Tamil, “*Enna, enna*” (What, what)? We used to enjoy such incidents throughout the day. During his various moods, there would never be any expression of fatigue on his face, and I never saw him yawning. He appeared to be unceasingly in the experience of *sat-chit-ananda*.

When my family people came to know about my stay at the Ashram, they complained about me and informed the authorities about the wailings of my mother. I was forced to go back to my house. I was again in hostel for my studies. Ramakrishna Math being near to it, I stated visiting the *swamis* and got attracted to the mission, and felt inspired to join it. While going to the headquarters of the mission at Belur near Calcutta, I visited Bhagavan again in 1946, and was at the Ashram for three days.

On the first day I sat for lunch with other devotees. Bhagavan sat at the head of the line. I think it was Kirai Patti (the Spinach Granny) who came first to serve Bhagavan with a few dishes she had prepared. As she was in her nineties, Bhagavan in a raised voice asked her in Tamil, ‘EnnaKondu-vandirke’ (What have you brought)? She described her dishes. Then she distributed the simple food, little by little, to all of us.

I observed Sri Ramana as he was eating. He took some pieces of chilli out of this curry and pushed them away to a corner of his banana leaf. A few grains of rice happened to get stuck to the chillies. He scrupulously returned these to the rest of the food on his leaf, so that even those few grains were not wasted. When he had finished his lunch, his leaf plate was totally clean, except, of course, for the few chilli pieces.

After lunch, Bhagavan left for the hall where he normally sat on his sofa and gave *darshan*. I followed him. I offered my *pranamas* and asked him to let me know the easiest path. He looked at me and gestured with his hand for me to sit down. In the mean time, many other devotees had arrived and the hall was full. Disappointed that he had not answered my question, I closed my eyes and began doing mental *japa*. After a while I heard him say to a devotee, “This boy wants to know a shortcut!” Then he continued, “A shortcut to where?”

One of my friends who was next to me nudged my leg and indicated that Bhagavan was talking to me. I opened my eyes and saw that he was smiling at me: he had only been waiting for other devotees to arrive so that they too could benefit from his answer to my question! Of course, I told him that I wanted a shortcut to *atma-darshan* – the revelation of the Self. He asked me what method I was presently practising. I replied that in my own humble way I was practising *japa-sadhana*. Hearing this, Bhagavan responded that *japa* was not only simple and direct, but the best method for progress in spiritual life. He quoted from the *Gita* – 10.25: *Yajnanam japayanosmi* (Among the sacrifices, I am the sacrifice of *japa*)

Further elaborating, he said that of all the ways to offer oneself to *paramatman*, the easiest and the best method was the repetition of the mantra of one’s own chosen deity. *Japa* promotes a constant flow of loving prayer from within for inner illumination. This wakes up a subtle thirst that steadily increases, leading to a strong current of continuous divine discontent known as *vyakula*. When this holy attitude develops into deep absorption (*dhyana*), the divinity reveals itself from within. This is *atma-darshan*.

When Bhagavan was explaining *japa sadhana*, an anxious devotee, who was seated a short distance away, loudly interrupted to ask a question about creation and its cause. He said that some scriptures mention that creation was due to the *karma* of Brahma, while other scriptures state that the creation occurred due to the *karma* of *jivas*. He wanted Bhagavan to resolve the difference of opinion. The Maharshi just gave him a kind look, and continued to explain the subject of *japa*. The devotees in the packed hall lapped up his sacred words. Bhagavan explained that the aspirant first repeats the mantra out loud with diligence and devotion. Then, as his or her own loving attitude intensifies, the repetition gradually becomes internalized. As the body, senses and the mind get purified and become free from their selfish nature; the whole being gets attuned to the Divine. The power of the mantra enters every aspect of the individual. The aspirant becomes *mantramaya* (filled with spiritual power of the mantra), in and through all activities. One's life gets transformed into a continuous offering to the Lord, without any attachment to the results of one's actions.

The impatient devotee repeated his question about creation. This time Bhagavan graciously told him that if he would only try to understand the method he has just explained, answers to all his questions would arise within him. As one dives deep within, the mind dissolves into the Self, and all distinctions between *bhakta* (devotee), *Bhagavan* (the Lord) and *Bhagavata* (the sacred text) vanish in divine illumination. – *Mountain Path*, Oct.-Dec. 2009

\* The resident swami at the Ramakrishna Mission, Vedanta Centre of Perth, Australia.

## **SRI RAMANA'S HEALTH: IMPACT OF SEVERE AUSTERITIES**

The Maharshi had realised the self as a school student. He did no *tapas* for securing Self-Realisation, which is most unusual. The transformation of the body-mind combination of the boy Venkataraman, into the Eternal Spirit, Sri Ramana Maharshi, took place in a matter of few minutes. The Maharshi became a full-blown Self-realised *jnani* without having heard of Self-Realisation.

But austerities were a part and parcel of his living. The discipline which he imposed on himself through out his life in regard to denial of basic physical requirements impacted his health very adversely.



Major Chadwick, a well-known devotee of Bhagavan, who had observed him at close quarters, says: “For years he suffered from asthma and a photograph of him taken at Skandashram shows him as little more than a skeleton. Suddenly, after fifteen years, it left him for no apparent reason, he told me. But he was always liable to catch cold and had frequent digestive trouble.

“After that he became a chronic sufferer from rheumatism. His whole body was full of it. As years passed he had more and more difficulty in walking. Various oils were tried and he was massaged morning and evening. In 1947, he was given a medicine which had little effect except to bring a violent attack of hiccups, which lasted for several days in spite of anything the doctors could do. At last it subsided of its own accord.” – *Mountain Path*, April 1967

**BEING AND SEEING:** Once when a visitor had recounted to Bhagavan various visions that he had, Bhagavan after commenting on them unfavourably in Tamil, turned to Dr, Mees, (a famous Dutch devotee), who came to be known as Sadhu Ekarasa, and said tersely in English – Being is true; seeing is not true. – *Mountain Path*, April, 1967

**CONCENTRATION:** Whether it is a worldly activity or spiritual pursuit, concentration is must for success. The mind is restless as a monkey, and strong as an intoxicated elephant. The distracting environment acts on the mind through the senses and keeps pulling it all directions. If one’s mind is trained to concentrate under the control of intellect, great goals can be achieved. If we converge sun’s rays through a convex lens, they get the power to burn. Like-wise when the energies of the mind are controlled and channelised in meditation one can realise God in one’s own self. Both the body and the mind must be under control of the intellect for success in meditation. Moderation in food and sleep, and purity in thought and associations are essential for success in achieving control of the mind. Lastly, one must remember the three P’s for success, namely, Practice, Patience and Perseverance. – *Siluveru Sudharshan*

## THE HUMAN STATUS OF SRI RAMANA

By Dr. T.N. Krishnaswami\*

People sometimes ask whether the Maharshi was a *sannyasin*. He did not wear ochre robes, or conform to the rules of conduct prescribed for a *sannyasin*.

A certain person once made a false claim to possession of the Ashram and its properties, and the court sent a commissioner to record the deposition of the Maharshi in the matter. The following is on record:

“I have not given *sannyas* to any one, nor I have taken *sannyas* from any one. I was living in Skandashram. My mother, who was also living there, passed away in 1922. Her corpse was brought to the foot of the hill and buried here and a *samadhi* was built over it. From that time *puja* was started here. At no time have I taken any title. At no time have I initiated any disciples with *diksha* or in any ritualistic way. I impose no restrictions or discipline on those who gather around me. I do not invite any one to come to this place, nor do I tell any one to leave this place...By birth I am a Brahmin. I was a *Brahmachari*, when I came here. Within an hour of arrival I threw away my sacred thread, clothes, etc.; I shaved my head clean. I had about three rupees which were thrown away. Since then I do not touch money. I accept in my hands things which can be eaten. I do not give *upadesa* or call myself a guru. However, if questions are asked by seekers I answer them. Since 1907, people have called me ‘Ramana Rishi’. I am an ‘*athyashrami*’ (beyond the ashrams and castes) not falling within the category of any of the *ashrams*. This state is recognised in the *sastras*. It is explained in the *Suta Samhita*. The *athyashrami* can own property if necessary. He needs a guru, but the Self is my Guru. The *athyashrami* is not bound to observe any rites. I have no desire to acquire properties, but things come and I accept them. I agree that to own property is worldly, but I do not hate the world.”

Until he was sixteen he was the ordinary schoolboy Venkataraman, rather indifferent to his studies, but was helped by a phenomenal memory. He had never heard of Self-enquiry and it was only his *purva samskara* that led him to it. The intensity of the enquiry in his corpse-like condition somehow resulted in suddenly opening up a new awareness which is described as a continuous flow of ‘I – I’. Many may experience such awareness but the remarkable thing in this case was that it continued henceforth permanently whether the body was in activity, rest or *samadhi*. He has told us that the Supreme Self, although formless and unknowable, manifests itself out of compassion in a human form to guide the seeker...Such incarnations are not bound by any rules and do not fall into any type, caste, *ashram* or category...He himself

said that for a *jivan mukta*, liberated while living, there is nothing to be accomplished, and no duty to be discharged. – *Mountain Path*, April, 1967

\*His reminiscences of Bhagavan are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram, at pp. 256-8.

## FEBRUARY - 2010

**THE CONCEPT OF EMPTINESS:** *Shunyata* (emptiness) is the key concept in Buddhist philosophy. Emptiness is not to be confused with nothingness. It is non-existence but not nothingness. Emptiness means that an object does not have its own existence independently. By way of explanation, we are asked to observe a cup or any other container. Is the cup empty when it does not contain any liquid or solid in it? We say yes, it's empty. But is it really empty? No, it's not. It is full of air. Even when the glass is in a state of vacuum, it is not empty. It still contains space, radiation and may be light...The Buddhist concept of emptiness is often taken as nihilism, which as a concept means that reality is unknown and unknowable, and that nothing exists. Whereas the Buddhist concept of emptiness says that ultimate reality is knowable and that in no case should the concept of emptiness be taken to mean nothingness...The Buddha taught of the emptiness of emptiness. – *Sonam Tsomo*

**THE MANTRA:** It is a spiritual formula of enormous power: the user silently repeating the words as often as possible. Etymology of mantra is '*man*' – the mind, and '*tri*' – to cross. The mantra, repeated regularly for a long time, enables us to cross the sea of mind. An apt image, for the mind very much resembles a sea – ever changing like the waves. In the simple act of repeating the mantra, tension ebbs away and we toughen our will. We gain access to inner source of courage. The mantra can permeate and utterly transform our consciousness. Repeating a mantra sounds so simple that most people cannot believe it works until they try it. The repetition of the mantra is superficially alike, but each repetition takes us ever deeper to consciousness and closer to the goal. – *Ekhnath Easwaran*

**WATCH THE BREATH:** We are unaware of the breathing that goes on constantly. The moment we become conscious of our breath, the pattern of the breath changes and that is its beauty. Doctors say that we take about fifteen breaths a minute. If you observe these fifteen breaths carefully, you would notice that each

one is different from the other. *Hathayoga Pradipika* likens the taming of the breath to the mastering of lions, tigers and elephants, to be carried out gradually and with much courage, perseverance and patience. Many benefits then follow. The energy produced by breath-control keeps you young even in old age. The aspirant lives on in the present, as he watches the movements of his own breaths. Modern research has uncovered spectacular benefits of mindful breathing. – *Vithal C Nadkarni*

**MAHALAKSHMI:** Lakshmi or Mahalakshi is the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Lakshmi in Sanskrit is derived from ‘laksh’, meaning to perceive or observe. This is synonymous with ‘lakshya’ meaning aim or objective. Lakshmi is thus the goddess that helps in achieving one’s objectives, including prosperity. Lakshmi is closely associated with the lotus. Rooted in the mud but blossoming above water, free from the taint of mud, the lotus represents purity and spiritual perfection. Lakshmi’s names derived from the lotus include: Padma, Kamala, Padmapriya, Padmamukhi, Padmakshi, Padmasundari. She is also known as Ramaa and Indiraa. In Vaishnavism, Sri Lakshmi is regarded as the Supreme Goddess and not just Goddess of Wealth. – *Splendour*, October 2009

**EVIL IN THE WORLD – WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?** Ishwara is not responsible for evil except in an indirect way. If the universe consists of active choosing individuals who can be influenced but not controlled, for God is not a dictator, conflict is inevitable. To hold that the world consists of free spirits means that evil is possible and probable. The alternative to a mechanical world is a world of risk and adventure. If all tendencies to error, ugliness and evil are to be excluded there can be no seeking of the truth, the beautiful and the good. If there is to be an active search of the ideals of truth, beauty and goodness, then their opposite of error, ugliness and evil are not merely abstract possibilities but positive tendencies, which we have to resist. – *Dr. S. Radhakrishnan*

**HINTS FOR A SADHAKA:** Those engaged in *sadhana* have to lead a life of service without any desire for attaining any personal gain...One has to establish one-self in the full knowledge and perception that God alone is real, the world is unreal. It should be understood clearly there is only one ultimate, unchanging reality, all else is merely a play of vanishing names and forms. Everything that is perceived by our senses is subject to change, decay and dissolution...One must make all effort to establish oneself in a state of equanimity, knowing the real nature of the world...After attaining this state of calmness only, one may be able to meditate...The *sadhaka* should realize that God is the only one worth living for, all

others are just insignificant...The *sadhaka* should have full and firm faith that the things happen as the Supreme Being wills. One is not here to question but to accept ungrudgingly what comes in the way. God alone has the wisdom to know what is right for us...Perennial practice with Patience, Persistence and Perseverance should be the watch words of a *sadhaka*. In addition, one should sincerely pray for Guru's grace in one's venture. – *Siluveru Sudharshan*

## THE SUFFERING OF A REALISED MAN

By Major Chadwick\*

The first question I asked Bhagavan after I came to Tiruvannamalai [in 1935] was why Christ cried out upon the Cross. If he was a perfect Realized Man then surely he would have been indifferent to suffering, I argued.

Bhagavan explained that although there can be no suffering for one who has attained Liberation, it may happen in some cases that they appear to feel pain. This is only the reaction of the body, for the body has its reactions. It still eats and performs its natural functions. But it seems to the onlooker that it is the Realized Man who is suffering; he himself would no longer say so, since he no longer identifies himself with the body that suffers. It is immaterial to him when and where he leaves the body. Some may appear to suffer when dying; others may die in *samadhi*, while unaware of the outer world; still others may just disappear from sight at the moment of death.

This explanation is especially interesting in view of what happened in the case of Bhagavan during his last days. He certainly appeared to suffer terribly. At night he lay upon his bed groaning and calling out and it was difficult to grasp that he was a Realized Man who did not feel pain in the same way that we do, who saw it as something apart from him, as a dream which he could regard objectively. And yet when he was giving *darshan* to devotees during the daytime he would smile graciously to them and there was no indication of suffering in him.

When he was obviously in agony he was asked if he did not feel pain. "No," he replied, "but there is pain." Pain was there for the body. If one identifies oneself with the body one feels it and believes that one has pain; but for the Realized Man who always sees the body as something apart from himself pain is only a witnessed experience outside his reality. There is pain but somehow it is not his. – *Mountain Path*, Jan.-March, 1967

\*For many reminiscences of the Major, refer *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram, pp. 110-16.

## UNIQUENESS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

By Professor K. Swaminathan\*

The Hindu view is that the state of freedom is natural; Tamil uses the same word (veedu) for home, heaven and freedom. The free man is happy here and now. The saint is normal; it is he who provides the norm for the rest of us. We love him because he is the outward image of our inmost Self; he prefigures the evolutionary possibilities of the race. He is already what all men will become one day. If the Maharshi's personal attendants included *harijans* and his followers included foreigners, if in his ashram a shrine was raised to a woman and a widow, it was all accepted as 'natural'. The distinctions between pariah and pandit, dog and man, vanished in his presence...

Apart from his spoken, acted and written teachings, the simple human friendliness of Bhagavan showed the utter *soulabhya*, the easy accessibility, of the ultimate Truth when it graciously chooses to embody itself in human form. Bhagavan was not merely a yogi or a teacher or a saint: he was a seer, a being comprehending and transcending all these lower categories, and he succeeded in being a friend of everyone – sinner or saint, prince or peasant, old or young, learned or ignorant, man or woman, cow, dog, monkey or peacock. Hundreds of quite ordinary human visitors to the ashram were treated like intimate friends by the Maharshi, who took a most sympathetic interest in all their personal affairs: the train they came on, the food they ate, the marriages and deaths, the appointments and promotions that occurred in their families. No one felt that he was unimportant or unwanted. Women and *harijans* were no less welcome than learned brahmins to this charmed circle. To all he taught humility without humiliating any, as he taught self-surrender without loss of freedom.

If the good teacher is a friend who joins you where you are and leads you up from that point to the mountain top of truth, then the Maharshi is the greatest teacher the world has seen because he refused to stretch us on a Procrustean [enforce conformity without regard to natural variation and individuality] bed of creed or conduct. He did not merely concede as a matter of formal politeness, but convinced every one of his devotees and disciples that there are as many distinct ways of reaching the goal as

there are unique human individuals. His more than mother-like tenderness made no harsh choice between one friend and another among the thousands of his friends; and his steady, calm and unfailing cheerfulness and rock-like certainty sprang from his conviction that the world-process must end in the final release of all beings.

Bhagavan has said: When the ego rises, the mind is separated from its source, the Self, and is restless, like a stone thrown up in the air, or like the waters of a river. When the stone or the river reaches its place of origin, the ground or the ocean, it comes to rest. So too the mind comes to rest and is happy when it returns to and rests in its source. As the stone and the river are sure to return to their starting place, so too the mind will inevitably – at some time – return to its source. Thus, all shall reach the goal. Happiness is your nature. It is not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is seeking it outside when it is inside.

Ramana Maharshi chose to dwell like a tame bird in the cage of the Ashram's regulations. Not only did he sit in the centre of a great household; he read letters and newspapers; he corrected proofs and did a hundred odd jobs with scrupulous care. He stressed by precept as well as by example the primacy of *dharma*, right action. Many devotees who wished to escape from the duties of their station in life he 'ordered back to their posts'.

To a question on the relation of *karma yoga* and *karma sannyasa*, he gave an answer in the manner of a Zen Master. Without uttering a word, he walked up the hill, cut off two sticks from a tree and fashioned them into walking sticks. One he gave to the questioner and the other to a passerby. Then he said, 'The making of the walking sticks is *karma yoga*; the gift of them is *sannyasa*'. – *K.S. Remembered*, a collection of writings of the Professor by his daughter Mahalaksmi Suryanandan. Available at [www.davidgodman.org](http://www.davidgodman.org)

\*Prof. Swaminathan met Mahatma Gandhi in 1915, twenty-five years before he encountered Bhagavan. He was a lifelong Gandhian who, starting in 1960, spent more than a quarter of a century editing hundred volumes that comprise *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. His allegiance to both Gandhi and Bhagavan compelled him to ponder over the apparently competing claims of proactive service to the nation and inner contemplation. He saw no conflict between the two, as Bhagavan's own life demonstrates it. For Bhagavan's reminiscences of the Professor, refer *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 117-22.

**BHAGATI:** It is divine engagement with the Supreme; it draws upon the highest energies of the soul. It calls for incessant yearning from a purified heart, soaked in devotion, which is the supreme state that man can attain. It is *bhakti* that proves the

eternal truth, *Tat Twam Asi* – Thou Art That – that the devotee and God are one. The *Bhagavatam* declares *bhakti* to be the highest gift of God, bestowed on aspirants more rarely than *mukti* itself. No wonder then that the *bhakta* is ready to forego even the pleasures of *Vaikuntha* and the goal of *mukti* itself, for the ineffable delight of loving his Lord. – *Shammi Paranjape*

**THE DIVINE ONENESS:** John Eccles, a renowned physicist, said, “I want you to realise that there is no colour in the natural world and no sound, nothing of this kind; no textures, no patterns, no beauty, no scent.” This means that our senses interpret raw data and create a world of forms, colours and structures. The observer bestows meaning and traits on the cosmos. Since it is the senses that create the universe, the universe as we see it does not exist. Only God exists...All matter is energy according to physics. Nothing is really created or destroyed in the cosmos. One primordial substance pervades the entire universe. This is the Divine. This is the Ultimate Reality of science, logic and philosophy. Since the cosmos is an integral whole, the oneness of God and the oneness of humanity are interrelated. It is on the foundation of this understanding that prophets have built the edifice of humanism. – *Naranjan Singh*

### **SRI RAMANA GIVES *MOUNA DIKSHA***

By R.G. Kulkarni

About twenty years back when I had an urge to have *darshan* of a *mahatma* who was a *jivan-mukta*, I happened to lay my hand on a small book in Gujarati entitled, *Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi-no-Parichaya* by Madhavanada of Baroda. I was much delighted reading it and got convinced that this swami was really a *jivan-mukta*. After correspondence with the Ashram, I was fortunate to arrive there. I sat before the Maharshi in the meditation hall and was eager to receive from him the inner or silent initiation. I wrote out a request for this and placed the same on the table beside his couch. Bhagavan read it and placed it in one of his books. I was eagerly awaiting his response but he just sat silently.

After a few hours my mind began to be oppressed by harmful thoughts and tendencies from the past. This puzzled me a good deal. This state of affairs continued for two days and I was quite worried over it. Had my coming here done more harm than good? Then, on the third day, these thoughts dissolved and an ever increasing peace swept over my mind. This went on three days and finally become so strong that I felt obliged to stand up before Bhagavan with folded hands and testify to



having received the inner *diksha* from him and been brought to a state of peace and contentment through his Grace. Bhagavan looked at me and smiled. I knelt before him and he extended his right hand over my head in blessing.

Since that time, there is a constant awareness dimly, at the back of my mind, and experienced directly in the gaps between *sankalpas*. By the Grace of Bhagavan there is a steady conviction that only Self is, while all else is only the interplay of the *gunas*. – *Mountain Path*, July 1967

## MANGALAGIRI NARASIMHA SWAMI TEMPLE

By Y.V. Ramakotaiah

Mangalagiri, about 8 miles from Vijayawada, is one of the eight great Vaishnavite shrines in India. *Brahma Vaivarta Purana* contains the history of this shrine. One of the eight places where Lord Vishnu manifested himself is Thothadri. This is the present Mangalagiri.

The presiding deity is Panakala Narasimha Swami, who drinks pots of *panaka* (jaggery mixed water) daily, offered by the devotees as *naivedyam*. When the jaggery water is poured into the mouth of the Lord with a conch, a gurgling sound is audible as if the Lord is drinking it. After sometime, the sound becomes shrill and it subsides when the Lord can take no more of the *panaka*. This indicates that the Lord is satisfied. The rest of the *panaka* is given to the devotees as *prasadam*. This is how the name Panakala Narasimha Swami has come. A significant point to be noted is that in spite of hundreds of pots of *panaka* using several tons of jaggery is offered to the Lord, not a single ant or fly is seen anywhere near the shrine.

The temple is situated in the mouth of the elephant-shaped mountain. There is no other idol in the temple except that of Lord Narasimha Swami.

On the eastern gate of the lower temple, there is a ‘Gali Gopuram’ of dizzy heights built over 180 years ago by Vasireddy Venkatadri Nayudu, who ruled from Amravati. This eleven-storey *Gopuram* is a marvelous example of a solid awe-inspiring construction. There is also an ancient *ratha*, with exquisite carvings depicting scenes from the *Mahabharata*, the *Bhagavata* and the *Ramayana*. – Excerpted from *Splendour*, December, 2009

**NEED FOR CONTINUOUS EFFORT:** You should make a greater effort. Forget the past and trust more in God. Our fate is not predestined by Him; nor is karma the sole factor, though our lives are influenced by our past thoughts and past activities. If you are not happy with the way life is turning out, change the pattern. I don't like to hear people sigh and ascribe present failure to past-life errors; to do so is spiritual laziness. Get busy and weed the garden of your life. – *Paramahansa Yogananda*

## HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By S.V.D.

In my college days at Madras, I was already a seeker after Truth. I visited the *sadhus* and swamis in the neighbourhood and talked with them but got no great satisfaction. One of my friends who used to go to Tiruvannamalai frequently suggested that we should go and meet the Maharshi. We went there in December 1922 and climbed up to the Skandasram. I was strongly attracted and decided to stay for a week, taking our midday meal with him. The Maharshi who was almost a *mouni* at that time, rarely speaking to visitors, however, made an exception in our case.

Each day at noon, sufficient amount of cooked food would be brought up the hill by devotees. When all were served, the Maharshi would first give some food to the waiting birds and monkeys and then start eating, which would be a signal for others to start. During the week, I sat long hours at the feet of the Maharshi, trying to imitate his unwinking gaze which radiated peace all around. Since that time I have always remembered the 'Hill of the Holy Beacon' with a thrill. It was not until 1948 that I again spent a day there. To my surprise, it was the very day when the Maharaja of Bhavanagar, who was then Governor of Madras, was visiting the Ashram.

The next time I was 'taken' as it were, to Tiruvannamalai was early 1949. I sat silently before the Maharshi, wondering whether he had any message to transmit to me. And I did indeed receive one. When I rose to go it seemed to me that his message was that I should live and work in the world, as he did in the Ashram. This indeed is a universal message and I have been trying to keep it all this time. – *Mountain Path*, October, 1967

## ATTENDANTS OF THE MAHARSHI

The long line of attendants begins with Palaniswami, who was the first devotee to attach himself to Bhagavan permanently. He was a Malayali and had difficulty in reading Tamil. It was largely for his sake that Bhagavan became learned in Tamil texts in order to explain to him\*. He remained with Bhagavan till his death in 1916. He was succeeded by Aiyaswami, ideal *sadhu* and devotee, who served for four or five years.

Kunju swami and Ramakrishna Swami, who followed him, both came about the same time, while Bhagavan was at Skandasram and continued to serve at the present Ramanasramam. After sometime when Kunju Swami began to live outside the Ashram, he brought Madhava Swami, as Ramakrishna Swami was shifted to assist the *sarvadhikari* in the office. Madhava Swami was a very devoted attendant, but after some years he died at Kumbakonam. After him came a group of attendants – Satyananda, a Malayali, Venkataratnam, a Telugu, and four Tamilians: Krishnaswami, Sivanandaswami, Vaikuntavasara and Annamalaiswami. For some years, a Tamil married man Rajagopalan, used to serve Bhagavan as an attendant, while his family lived outside the Ashram.

According to Kunju Swami: “Bhagavan used to sleep on the sofa in the hall while I and a few other attendants used to sleep on the floor near it. Regularly at half past three in the morning Bhagavan used to get up and go out for his ablutions. As soon as he got up from the sofa one of us would give him the torch, which was kept for his use. But not once it was necessary for him to call us by name or wake us up and ask for the torch. The moment he got up we also used to wake up without any special effort on our part. Bhagavan’s look in our direction produced a sense of brilliant light in us and we used to wake up at once. Bhagavan never ordered his servants about. He preferred to do everything for himself, but the attendants would always anticipate his wishes and do what was necessary.”

Bhagavan used to constantly watch over the *sadhana* of his servants. He, for example told Kunju Swami, “One should practise self-enquiry. When one found it tiring, one should practise *dhyana* or concentration. When this becomes difficult one should practise *japa*. If there is distraction even in that, one should recite *stotras* from the scriptures. In this manner one would be engaged continuously in practising one of the four means.

Satyananda has given the following account of Bhagavan's illness and the *mahanirvana*: "After one operation there was profuse bleeding. I was very much moved and shedding tears told Bhagavan that it was painful to see such suffering. Bhagavan was absolutely unconcerned about his condition and said, "What suffering. All is bliss."...I was blessed to be near Bhagavan during the *mahanirvana*. At 6 p.m. that day, we massaged Bhagavan's legs. At 6.30 Bhagavan wished to sit upright so we helped him into that posture. When the devotees started chanting *Arunachala Akshara Mana Malai* outside the *nirvana* room, there were profuse tears from Bhagavan's eyes, though there was no change of expression on his face. It was such an immense outflow that Dr. T.N. Krishnaswami asked me to wipe the tears away. I did so, but it would not stop. This continued till 8 p.m. I was asked to give a little water and fruit juice to Bhagavan, which I did with the aid of a spoon...The most thrilling moment was the physical demise of Bhagavan. There was no physical movement of any kind, no visible change, not even a flutter. It was as if the human frame in which Bhagavan was, turned into a statute instantly."

Mention should also be made in this connection of Bhagavan's barber, Natesan, who had the task of shaving the Maharshi's head and beard every full moon day. He completed his 25 years of service with his last shave of the Maharshi. – *Mountain Path*, July 1967

\* According to David Godman, from whom a clarification was sought, "In 1890's Palaniswami borrowed Tamil philosophical and religious texts from a *math* but was unable to read the complicated texts. Bhagavan would go through them and then explain the gist to Palaniswami. It was through reading these texts that Bhagavan became aware of many of the religious classics that had been written in Tamil."

**MARCH – 2010**

**UNBELIEVABLE ACTS OF GRACE OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI**

By G. Sri Hari Rao\*

The miraculous cure of the abdominal ailment of Ma Talyarkhan, reported in the December 2009 issue of *Sri Ramana Jyothi*, is yet another re-assuring proof of all encompassing compassion of Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Dr. K.S. [the founder of Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad] used to repeatedly mention that the *jnani* has no *sankalpa*. When a *mahatma* utters something, the meaning runs behind the utterance. Bhagavan Himself mentioned several times that the miracle makers will not be aware that they are performing a miracle. The spontaneous assurance of help that comes out of a *mahatama*'s lips takes the form of concrete blessing and relief to the suffering. We have seen such miracles happen in our own times to the '*children*' of Bhagavan like revered Balarama Reddy garu.

In early eighties, Reddy garu developed speech impediment of a serious nature. He was not able to speak at all. He moved to Bangalore and got himself examined by the doctors of NIMHANS, the country's leading neurological institute. The scans revealed a brain tumour. The doctor attending on him, decided on a surgical procedure to correct the situation and a date was fixed for the operation.

My father, late Rajeswara Rao asked me to go to Bangalore and do what little service I could, to Reddy garu. Like a child, he showed me all the medical records and scans. He desired that I should accompany him to the doctor for final examination before the operation. I could not stay back and had to return to Hyderabad due to official exigencies. A few days later, we heard from him that fresh scans were taken and there being no sign of tumour, operation was not required. There can be no rational or scientific explanation for such a phenomenon – Grace can not be explained!

Reddy garu was an aristocratic ascetic, with deep scholarship which he used to say was for his own benefit and not for public articulation. He was perhaps one of the few devotees who was allowed to remain in the Ashram for the sole purpose of *sadhana*, without having to perform any obligatory services there. When asked to describe his relation with Bhagavan, he said, "I am the child of Sri Bhagavan". It is but natural that Bhagavan took every care of his *child*!

The case of Bhogadula Venkateswara Rao, a senior devotee of Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad, is yet another instance of Bhagavan's Grace. He was a person of utter simplicity and integrity of the highest order. He was in the service of the Vanaparty *Zagir*. People in his position had ample opportunities for making money but his chosen path was strait and rigorous. He eventually left the service and joined Nizam Railways, which later got merged with Indian Railways. Having retired from the service, he was engaged in some avocations, but taking my father's advice he stopped all activities except service to the Kendram. For my father, for Venkateswara Rao,

and for a few other devotees, Dr. K.S. became the centre and circumference of their lives. The incident related here, however, occurred much before he came into the fold of Dr. K.S.

Rao utterly disregarded his personal comfort and family concerns when it came to helping others. He was usually the first to arrive when any body was in trouble. In his physical appearance and mental outlook, he had a striking resemblance to Saint Durgacharan Nag – Nag Mahashaya – the great householder devotee of Ramakrishna Parmahansa. Being a very frail person, the total lack of care for his body had told upon his health. He was suffering from chronic cough and other bronchial problems which became acute in winter months.

I was fresh in my service at ECIL in those days. Venkateswara Rao was my guardian, as my father, who was in the P&T Department, was then posted at Bhubaneswar. I used to visit his house often for meals. Seeing his condition, I took him to a doctor, who after examination and necessary tests concluded that it was a case of chronic tuberculosis, and that a cavity had formed in the lungs, the cure of which was beyond oral medication. Since Rao was in the Railways, the doctor felt that it will be advisable for him to go to Dr. Cherian, a reputed cardio-thoracic surgeon, attached to Railway hospital, Madras, for operation. He went there accompanied by his nephew Ananda Rao. When the operation was initiated, the doctor found that it was not only T.B. but also cancer of the lungs which had spread up to the heart. Biopsy was conducted and the malignancy was confirmed. The doctor advised Ananda Rao that there was no point in going ahead with the operation as the patient at best had 2-3 months to live. He was advised to take Venkateswara Rao to Secunderabad and admit him to Railway hospital, Mettuguda, to pass his last days in as comfortable way as possible under the circumstances.

This was in December 1972 or January 1973. Rao was accordingly brought to Mettuguda hospital. I would go to him every evening and spend a couple of hours with him. He used to take my hand in his hands and shed silent tears. Only his eldest daughter was then married but his other three children – two boys and a girl – were yet to settle in life. I was getting restless thinking that we were not doing the right thing by leaving him without treatment for cancer. I wrote to my father and he wrote to his childhood friend, Samba Murthy of Tenali detailing the state of affairs. Samba Murthy came to Hyderabad and I strongly suggested that Rao needs to be taken to Tata Memorial Cancer Hospital, Bombay, where the best medical facility for his condition was available. I remember very vividly Samba Murthy saying

quietly but very firmly that nothing was necessary, and by Bhagavan's Grace he will be alright.

A word about Samba Murthy will not be out of place here. He was hardly educated but was a great *sadhaka*. When my father and my grandfather went to Sri Ramanasramam in 1948, Murthy went along. Bhagavan was sitting on the stone couch opposite to the Matrubhuteswara shrine. My father pointed out Bhagavan to Murthy through the latticed window. But Murthy could not see Him despite repeated attempts by my father. He saw only a vacant space where Bhagavan was sitting. He saw the *nirakara* form of Bhagavan in the very first *darshan*. He has had several such experiences in his life and was considered a very holy person by all those who knew him closely.

My father concurred with Samba Murthy, and Venkateswara Rao was brought back home. He recovered fully in a couple of months and when he went to Madras for a check-up, the doctors could not believe their eyes, as there was no sign of T.B. or cancer. Incidentally, Rao died in 1997, 25 years after the fatal illness struck him. *Truly, spirituality begins where science ends!*

In a letter written to my father, Balarama Reddy garu observed that Dr.K.S. had become a perfect channel for Bhagavan's Grace. The context was my mother's recovery from a paralytic stroke after Dr. K.S. visited her in the hospital.

Bhagavan's Grace flowed through several such channels, known and unknown. He had the uncanny ability to make every thing appear natural.

\*A former editor of *Sri Ramana Jothi*, a second generation devotee of Bhagavan, retired as executive director of ECIL, Hyderabad, in 2006. His father late Rajeshwara Rao, a founder member of our Kendram, was for many years publisher of this magazine.

## HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By Dinker Rai

I had a religious upbringing. I came under the influence of Swami Madhavatirtha\* [He has written a book about the life and teachings of the Maharshi]. With his blessings I went to see the Maharshi in 1944. I arrived in a powerful mood of anticipation. I had brought the best of flower garland I could find from Madras. I

straightaway wanted to garland him, but he motioned me to put the garlands down on the floor. I felt slighted. However, I forgot all about this later in the day when I came in contact with him and received his blessings. I felt that he was all in all to us – father, mother, everything. He awakened love and devotion in me.

I could fill a book with incidents and remarks about him. I have seen him appear like an enthusiastic youth and at the same time like a bent and aged Rishi. I have seen him caring for squirrels, monkeys, parrots, peacocks and the cow Lakshmi. I saw a great Maharani from my part of India, Smt. Shantadevi of Baroda at the Ashram. As soon as she saw the Maharshi she prostrated herself on the dusty ground before him. I have seen in him what I cannot forget. The total of my visits to him adds up to 200 days, and yet I never had enough.

The last time I visited him was shortly before he left the body. Before leaving, I went to him to say good-bye. His eyes were shining and he nodded very slowly. When I got outside the hall I suddenly burst out sobbing in a way I could not restrain. Even now I do not know why. A crowd of onlookers gathered around. My wife was at first astonished and then she too began weeping. It went on for about fifteen minutes. Someone asked me what was the matter but I could no reply. Afterwards when I received the news of his passing away, I could not believe. I still do not. He is still there. Not only there but everywhere. He can not leave us. He is still in our hearts as before. He is the Heart of our hearts. – *Mountain Path*, July, 1967

\*His reminiscences of Bhagavan are in **Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi**, pp.146-50.

## **AVASTHATRAYA – THE THREE STATES OF BEING**

By K. Sriram

*Avastha*, means ‘state’ and *traya* means ‘three’. Hence, *Avasthatraya* means the three states of being: 1. Waking state (*jagrat*). 2. Dream (*svapna*) and 3. Deep sleep (*sushupti*). The mind functions at two levels. When it expands up to about half its level, dream appears. When the mind expands to its full level, the result is the waking state. All that happens during the dream state appears to be absolutely real, as if it is happening during the waking state. During deep sleep the mind is totally at rest.



Vedanta explains *Avasthatraya* in conjunction with *Sareeratraya* – three bodies, namely, 1. *Sthula sareeram* (gross body) – the physical body, 2. *Sukshma sareeram* (subtle) (mind or ego), 3. *Kaarana sareeram*, which is subtlest of all the three bodies. As this body is root cause for the creation of the other two bodies, it is named as *Kaarana sareeram*.

Vedanta also tells us that the Self is covered by five sheaths (*Panch kosas*). These are: 1. *Annamaya kosa*, 2. *Pranamaya kosa*, 3. *Manomaya kosa*, 4. *Vijnanamaya kosa*, and 5. *Aanandamaya kosa*. *Sthula sareera* is made up of *Annamaya kosa* and *Pranamaya kosa*. Mind or the *Sukshma sareera* forms the *Manomaya kosa*. *Kaarana sareera* functions as Intellect in *Vignanamaya kosa* during the waking state and in *Aanandamaya kosa*, wherein it is detached of the mind during sleep. – Condensed from *Tattvaloka*, November, 2009

**MANTRAS – THEIR SIGNIFICANCE:** Mantras are rhythms of consciousness. They create spiritual vibrations. It is a sound vibration beyond the cognition of the mind. A mantra is like a seed. Every seed has the potential to become a tree. Mantras in seed form are called *bija* mantras. Others are fully expressed like the Gayatri mantra. Mantras work at the level of consciousness. When we chant mantras or listen to them, we get purity of mind and word. This prepares us for meditation. As a result of sound vibrations, different patterns of the mind rearrange themselves to become tranquil. Repetition of mantras creates a psychological or mental response that is deep, beyond the realm of words or expression. It can only be experienced. When the mind is calm and centered, it can turn inward. Only a mind turned inwards can experience the vastness and beauty of Divine Consciousness...Mantras are tools that allow the mind to dissolve and repose in the Self. – *Bhanumathi Narasimhan*

**ESSENCE OF DHARAMA:** Since non-dual *jnana* alone shines as the refuge of all the *dharmas*, the *jnani* who is established in that state automatically becomes the one who has observed all *dharmas* impeccably. There is no greater *dharma* than getting firmly established in the Self. All the actions of that *jnani* who possesses motionless consciousness are actions of God. Living as the Self is the essence of all *dharmas*. All other *dharmas* merge there. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**KUMBHABHISHEKAM OF SRI RAMANA'SSAMADHI SHRINE AT TIRUVANNAMALAI**

Sri Bhagavan's shrine is built at the spot where his mortal frame was kept in April 1950. It took more than 18 years for the present structure to be completed for the final ceremonies in June 1967. The place of Samadhi was his seat where he used to receive people and also take his meals for a number of years before the present dining hall was built in 1937-38. The present enclosed area of the Samadhi was then a dining room, adjoining a small kitchen.

After Bhagavan was buried with all due ceremonies, a simple bamboo structure with a palm-leaf matting roof was erected over the grave. The Vedas continued to be chanted there, morning and evening. It was not until 1962 that it was found possible to start work on the permanent shrine.

Sri Ramaneswara Mahalinga Kumbhabhishekam ceremonies started on June 14, 1967. The *pooja* was done to Ganesha, the Initiator of enterprises, and the to Lord of construction, Vastu Purusha. The worship included the Vastu Homam, i.e., offering of several things through fire to the Vastu Purusha, followed by Rakshokhana Homam performed to dispel all the *asuric* forces which may surround the premises of the Ashram. It is a very peculiar ceremony. A fire-brand is taken all round the Ashram with a flourish of trumpets, and chanting of mantras. It symbolizes the creation of a sort of cordon of fire all round the Ashram, keeping out all evil forces. June 15 was an off-day, being inauspicious (*masa thyajyam*). The 16<sup>th</sup> saw the beginning of the ceremony proper. It started with Ganesha *Pooja* followed by *Go Pooja* (worship of cow), *Gaja Pooja* (worship of elephant), and *Dhana Pooja* (worship of all materials required for the consecration ceremony).

In the evening as a part of the seminar arrangement, Krishna Bhikshu spoke in Telugu on 'The Ramana I Worship', explaining the rationale of Kumbhabhishekam. After the night meal the *purohits* went around in a ceremonial manner for *Mrut-Sangraham*. This is to invoke divine powers of three elements, namely, earth, water and fire. The power of earth through collecting earth in nine parts dedicated to nine *griha-devatas*, in which the seeds of nine *dhanyas* (different grains) are made to sprout. These seedlings are put in water stored in *kumbhas* (pots) which have been worshipped along with mantras, i.e., the creative power of the earth is added to the water stored in the pots. There were five such pots in a row on the pedestals specially erected in picturesque *Yaga Sala*. Water in each of them is sanctified by the power of the mantras. Before each pedestal there is a *Homa Kunda*, where fire is worshipped by offering several articles for the *devas*. After the *Mrut-sangraham* and planting of nine types of seeds, called *Ankurapanam*, the *Ghatashapana* was performed after midnight on 16/17<sup>th</sup> at 1 o'clock.

When the construction of the *Vimana* over the tomb of Bhagavan was begun the power in *Mahalinga* was withdrawn by special mantras and was transferred to and located temporarily in a place called *Balalaya*, in the front hall of the Mathrubutheswara Temple on June 6, 1962. Poojas were performed and Vedas chanted there all these days. The ceremony by which this transference was made is called *Kalanyasam*. During the *Ghatasthpana* ceremony this *linga* in the *Balalaya* was carried over to the *Yaga Sala*, the power therein being invoked into the earth, water and fire, worshipped in the *Yaga Sala*. This is called *Ghatasthapana*. Sacred waters from various rivers like the Ganga and Yamuna, were poured into the *Ghatas* (decorated brass pots). Thereafter the performance of *Pooja* at the *Balalaya* was stopped.

On June 17, at 5.30 p.m. the Ramaneswara *Linga* was taken out with due ritual from the *Yaga Sala* and finally restored to its original place on the tomb of Bhagavan whereon a twin-faced lotus pedestal in white marble had been installed as the support of the sacred *Linga*. Precious stones of nine varieties were put in the socket of the lotus and were covered by a gold plate on which was engraved the sacred *Pranava* (Om). On this Ramaneswara *Mahalinga* was firmly fixed by a special cement prepared in the traditional way. This *linga* will not be removed from here any more and will be worshipped for ever at this place.

The final ceremony took place on June 18, before dawn. The *Sthapathi* or architect, S.K. Achary, began his *Sthapana Homam* before a specially constructed pedestal, on which the *Kalasa* (dome-pinnacle in copper) to be established on the *Vimana* of Sri Ramaneswara *Mantapa*, was worshipped in a ritualistic way.

Kumbhabhishekam literally means pouring the sanctified water on the *Linga* which is said to be the *Sukshma* (subtle) *linga* and on the *Kalasa* established on the *Vimana*, which is said to be the *Sthula* (gross) *linga*; the *Karana* (causal) *linga* being a mere mental conception is worshipped in mind only. These three things are the *pratikas* (icons) into which the Divine power that was manifested through the sacred body of Sri Bhagavan descends to be worshipped by devotees for their spiritual and other benefits.

After the *Sthapana Homam* the *Kalasa* was carried in a big procession to the top of the *Vimana* of Ramaneswara *Maha Mantapa* and finally fixed there. The final acts of consecration, namely, pouring the sacred waters on Sri Ramaneswara *Mahalinga*, on Mathrubutheswara *Linga* and on the *Kalasa*s on the *Vimanas* of the two shrines were

done between 7-30 to 8-30 a.m. With this the ceremony came to an end. –  
Condensed from the *Mountain Path*, July 1967

## SUBTLE HUMOUR OF SRI RAMANA

By Suri Nagamma

One day in 1947, in the afternoon, Bhagavan was explaining something to a devotee who had come from the north. The attendants were standing with Bhagavan's walking stick and *Kamandal* indicating that it was getting late for Bhagavan's evening walk. Massaging his legs, Bhagavan said, "Wait, wait, Rama *bhakta* Hanuman's father [the wind god] is holding on to my legs firmly. He is not an ordinary person. He will not loosen his hold in a hurry. He will do it leisurely. Wait a little." Then Bhagavan rubbed a little oil on his knee caps and got up. Some of those present, who could understand the way Bhagavan punned on his stiff joints which were supposed to be due to *vayu*, laughed at the jocular remarks.

As soon as Bhagavan returned to the hall and sat on the couch, one of the devotees put some incense into the burner nearby. The fumes were a little too intense and as they spread around Bhagavan's face, he felt almost suffocated. "Shall we open the windows?" suggested a devotee. Bhagavan said, Let it be. Leave it alone. In the temples, we burn the incense and fan the fumes towards the deity so that the idol is completely enveloped in the fumes. Your idea in burning the incense here also is to see that the Swami should enjoy the fumes. Just as Bhagavan was saying this, a devotee fanned the embers in the burner with his hand. Suddenly the whole thing burst into a flame. Bhagavan said with a smile, "Yes, now it is alright. The incense has been burnt and the lights have been waved, the process of *puja* is now complete." Then Bhagavan resumed silence. – *Letters and Recollections of Sri Ramansramam*

**INNER LIBRATION:** New life can only be found through awareness, and that the human ego is a barrier to this awareness. It is this false self – a fictitious collection of self-images or pictures about who we think we are – that needs to be jettisoned for inner enlightenment to occur. – *Vernon Howard*

## ***SRI RAMANA PADA MALAI***

By Sivaprakasam Pillai

**In 1902, Pillai queried Bhagavan as to the nature of ‘I’ and in response received the enlightening exposition enshrined in Bhagavan’s *Who Am I?* An abridged version of the instructions (original in Tamil) in the poetic form provides some of the Bhagavan’s simple but meaningful instructions.**

Blessed be the Feet of the Master, the embodiment of Grace.

Blessed be the Feet of Him, who is all Light.

Blessed be the Feet of Him, who removes the fears of those who take refuge in him.

Blessed be the Feet of Him, who sees merits even in faults.

Blessed be the Feet of Him, who lets no danger come to His devotees.

Blessed be the Feet of Him, who returns good for evil.

Blessed be the Feet of the One who gives the knowledge that “I am not the body, which is so dear.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who says, “Throw the burden on the Lord.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who says, “The ego and nothing else is the whole trouble.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who instructs, “Do not think anything and be still.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who says, “All evil that hovers around identification with the body will vanish with Self-enquiry.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who says, “Bliss will surge up and up as one dives deeper and deeper into the ‘I’.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who says, “Do not dissociate yourself from the Lord who is within but appears separate and without.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches, “Quell all thoughts which rise; that is *vairagya*.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who explains, “By mantra *japa* the mind will be quiescent.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One whose teaching is, “The best in the code for *sadhakas* is moderate eating.”

Blessed be the Feet of One who says, “It is best to let one raise himself by himself. Grace helps where there is effort.”

Blessed be the Feet of the One who teaches, “Regard everything as the Will of the Lord.”

**Blessed be, blessed be The Feet of Lord Ramana, Blessed be, blessed be and for ever blessed be!** (*Mountain Path*, Jan. 1972)

**A small trouble is like a pebble. Hold it close to your eye, and it fills the whole world and put everything out of focus. Hold it at a proper viewing distance, and it can be examined and properly classified. Throw it at your feet, and it can be seen in its true setting, just one more tiny bump on the pathway to eternity. – Calia Luce**

**A burning desire is the starting point of all accomplishments. Just as a small fire cannot give much heat, a weak desire cannot produce great results. – Shiv Khera**

**When you double your wishes, the troubles are trebled. – King Solomon**

**Everything that is happening is a result of choices we have made in the past. – Anonymous**

**Whether we surrender ourselves to God in *bhakti*, work without attachment, struggle to calm our mind or analyse our thoughts, elimination of the ego is the prerequisite. – M.N. Chatterjee**

***Atma vichara* on the theme Who am I? is like the grass shown to a turbulent bull, namely, the mind, which helps to tie it securely without strenuous efforts involved in other methods. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

APRIL – 2010

## REMINISCENCES OF SRI RAMANA

By Swami Ramprakash Ramasnehi

I first saw a photo of the Maharshi in the house of M.D. Sagane in July 1948. I immediately felt a thrill of happiness. He attracted me like a magnet. I did not sleep that night. His divine figure shone before my eyes. I was beside myself. On July 21, I obtained a book about him and read his life. Tears came to my eyes and my whole body quivered. On the 27<sup>th</sup> and again on the 30<sup>th</sup> the Maharshi's luminous form appeared briefly before me.

On September 14, I felt ill and lethargic. I put a photo of the Maharshi in front of me and prayed to him steadily from seven in the evening till two o'clock in the morning. Then I saw him standing before me, and immediately I felt almost normal and fell asleep. After that I was constantly praying that he would take me to his feet. I felt physically immersed in the flood of peace-giving rays of divine light emanating from him. Once I felt entranced and merged in his wonderful power for ten or fifteen minutes. It is impossible to describe that state of ecstasy because it is beyond the mind.

Some time later, I was able to spend eleven days at the Maharshi's Ashram. I had never known *samadhi* before but now whenever I entered his presence I fell into *samadhi*. I was overwhelmed and lost consciousness. When I was in a state to do so, I would ask him questions, the gist of which is as follows:

“For the present remain in the *sadhana* stage, not always in *dhayana-samadhi*. Eat and sleep little. Speak little. Keep the mind in the blissful state of *Brahmananda*...In the *siddhawastha* or *sahaja samadhi* state, the mind is *Brahmakar* (absorbed in infinity), and yet all activities are carried on normally. It is like a river merging in the ocean...Continue constantly the practice of Self-enquiry. That will destroy the knot of *ahankara* (ego-sense). You will then dwell permanently in *Brahmananda* (pure happiness)...There is no *maya*. Everything is *Brahman*. There is neither birth nor death, for who is to be born or to die? Who is to be worshipped and who is to perform *dhayana*? All is *Brahman*...Bodily ailments, pains and pleasures are only creations of the mind. Once the ego-sense is destroyed only the Pure Principal remains.” –*Mountain Path*, July, 1967

## AVOID WASTE – SRI RAMANA SETS AN EXAMPLE

By Suri Nagamma\*

In 1943, I was entrusted with the writing work relating to all Telugu matters in the presence of Bhagavan. In those days when paper was scarce due to the world war, I brought papers from my brother's house\*\*, which were typed on one side and could be used for writing on the back. I used those papers to copy in Telugu script the *Ramana Puja Vidhanam* originally written by Jagadeeswara Sastri\* in Nagari script. Bhagavan saw it and asked me where I got the paper from. I told him the fact. "You have done a good thing. Others would merely throw away such papers. I also use paper which is thrown away as useless. When pages are written only one side, the written sides could be pasted together so that the unwritten sides of the page could be used profitably and bound together into a notebook. We did like that a number of times." said Bhagavan.

When a devotee enquired whether Bhagavan had picked up sheets thrown away by Nayana [Ganapati Muni] and had bound them into a book, Bhagavan said, "Yes" and added "When Nayana was leaving Palakottu, he threw away the waste sheets. He was accustomed to write only on about half of a sheet and leave the rest. There are a number of books which are half written like that by him. When that was so with books, would he care for mere sheets? One day, after taking food in the noon, Madhava [his attendant] and myself went out as usual and noticed the heap of papers in the dustbin. We picked out the useful sheets, cut them suitably, stitched them together into a notebook and kept it carefully. Once, when Nayana wanted a notebook to write something, I asked Madhava to give him that bound book. I kept silent, laughing to myself. But Madhava told Nayana that these are the sheets of paper which you had thrown away as useless. Bhagavan saw them and asked me to pick out the useful ones and bind them in a notebook." Nayana was greatly surprised.

– From *Letters and Recollections of Sri Ramanasramam*

\* Many moving and uplifting reminiscences of Suri Nagamma and Jagadeeshwara Sastri are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pp. 88-94 and 278-80, respectively.

\*\* Nagamma's brother was a senior officer in the then Imperial Bank of India, which is now State Bank of India.



## CHIDAMBARAM – THE NATARAJA TEMPLE

It is situated in Cuddalore district in Tamil Nadu. The four armed Nataraja, the divine dancer performing his *Ananda Tandava* (dance of bliss) on *apasmara purusha* (denoting ego or ignorance) is a unique philosophical concept. Chidambaram, known as *Cit Sabha* or *Cit Ambalam* (*ambalam* means *sabha* in Tamil), later came to be pronounced as Chidambaram.

To appreciate the concept of Nataraja, we have to understand the art of dance, which is body language. Like yoga, dance induces trance, ecstasy and the experience of the divine. Siva as Nataraja is the arch yogi.

Nataraja dances with his right foot supported by the crouching figure and his left foot elegantly raised. A cobra encircles his right arm. The fire of yoga is in his left arm. One hand holds the *damaru* (drum). The crescent moon is on his crest. He dances within an arch of flames.

Nataraja's cosmic dance is celebrated as the *Ardra Darsan* festival falling on the day of the star *Ardra* in the month of *Margazhi* (Dec.-Jan.) every year in temples of Siva.

The Nataraja temple attained a lot of importance during the reign of Pallavas (monarchs whose capital was Kanchipuram). In the days of their successors, the Cholas (whose capital was Tanjavur), the temple gained unprecedented importance as Lord Nataraja was the *Kula Deivam* (family deity) of the kings of this dynasty.

A unique feature of this the temple is the presence of a famous shrine for Lord Vishnu, strategically located at right angle so that devotees can worship both Siva and Vishnu standing at the same spot. Lord Vishnu is worshipped here as Govindaraja in a recumbent posture on a serpent bed. It is massive in size. This shrine is also known as Tillai Chitrakootam. Vishnu's consort, Goddess Lakshmi, is worshipped here as Pundarikavalli Thayar. (Condensed from *Tattvaloka*, December 2009 and February 2010)

**SARASWATI:** Goddess Saraswati, whether in her riverine form (*swarupa*) – nourishing an entire civilization on her banks – or in her *shubhra vasana* (white attire), the feminine form inspiring all creative energies, represents the ever glowing stream of consciousness within. As Consciousness, Saraswati is a metaphor for the creative faculty, the trigger for all literature, music and dance, aesthetics and philosophy. She represents the ever-engaged mind, the *dhaara pravah* or one that makes thoughts flow like a river. Her association with the swan stresses the wisdom aspect: the swan is said to have the ability to separate milk from water and drink milk

only. Her four arms, sometimes seen as representing the four Vedas, also represent the four facets of the human cognitive psyche – *manas* or mind, *buddhi* or intellect, *chitta* or consciousness and *aham* or ego, all of which are interwoven in the fabric of Creation. Saraswati is also *sara* or essence of the *swa* or the Self. It is initiation into learning, the long journey into the mind and beyond. Worshipping Saraswati is in fact a call to the higher mind, the beginning of a deep desire to understand the purpose and meaning of life. – *Pranav Khullar*

## THE KNOW-HOW OF YOGIC BREATHING

By Prof. K.S. Joshi\*

Yogic breathing is an art which must be developed with care and caution. It is advisable to practise only deep inhalations and exhalations without holding the breath for some months before an individual makes himself ready to start yogic breathing proper.

One should start the practice of deep breathing in the following manner. Each inhalation should take exactly half the time that is required for each exhalation. This means that if an inhalation should take five seconds, the exhalation would take ten seconds. One respiration is thus completed in fifteen seconds. This is called one round. Four such rounds, which would take one minute, should be made on the first day, and that is all. Five rounds may be made on the second day and six on the third day, and so on, up to ten rounds.

When the dose of ten rounds is reached, one should observe the following points very carefully. (1) Each inhalation and exhalation must be completed exactly within the specified time, e.g., five and ten seconds, respectively. It may happen sometime that the lungs are either filled or emptied a little before the completion of the required time limit, or it may even happen that the required act remains unfinished even before the time limit is over. Both these situations must be strictly excluded by adjusting the time for inhalation and exhalation properly, according to one's capacity. There should be no hurry at all to prolong the breaths beyond the comfortable limits. (2) In each inhalation, the lungs must become full and in each exhalation they must be emptied to the maximum limit. The acts should not remain incomplete. (3) At no stage should there be any feeling of suffocation or any need to inhale or exhale forcefully to hurry up with the process. (4) A feeling of comfort and control should be experienced all along. (5) The movement of air inward as well as

outward must be smooth and uniform. (6) The abdominal muscles should be slightly contracted toward the end of each inhalation, so that the belly is not allowed to be protruded. This causes an increase in the amount of inhaled air as well as in the intra-thoracic pressure. (7) The last round should be performed with equal ease and comfort as the first few rounds.

A deep inhalation is called *Puraka*. *Rechaka* is the term for a corresponding deep exhalation. After achieving equal ease, comfort and completeness over ten successive rounds of *puraka* and *rechaka*, one can safely assume that one has made a good start toward the preparation for yogic breathing . One should then start breathing through alternate nostrils.

For keeping only one nostril open at a time, the other one is required to be closed. This is done with the right hand. The middle finger and the one between it and the thumb are both folded together on the palm. Now the right nostril can be closed by placing the thumb slightly pressing on it and placing the index finger and the one adjacent to it, together on the bridge of the nose. The left nostril can be closed by pressing it with these two fingers while the thumb is kept on the bridge of the nose. Both the nostrils should be closed while restraining or holding the breath.

The first *puraka* should be done through the left nostril. This should be followed by a *rechaka* through the right nostril. The next *puraka* should be done through the right nostril, followed by a *rechaka* through the left nostril. One round will here include two *purkas* and two *rechakas*, through alternate nostrils.

When a dose of ten rounds is achieved and practised over four weeks, one can think of increasing the duration of each round. The ratio of the time taken by *puraka* and *rechaka* would however remain the same, that is, 1:2. If there is no feeling of discomfort, the number of rounds of the longer duration may be increased progressively. One should judge his capacity for deep breathing properly, and should select a suitable duration for each round accordingly. There should be no haste or strain. Patience and practice should be watch words of an individual who wants to draw the benefit of yogic breathing. Preparation for yogic breathing proper is said to be complete when one can comfortably practise ten rounds of breathing through alternate nostrils, taking one minute for each round. Each respiration would here be completed in thirty seconds, (ten second for each inhalation and twenty seconds for each exhalation), making twenty consecutive respiration in ten minutes in all.

After practising this for a couple of months, one could introduce retention of breath (*kumbhaka*) after inhalation. On the first day, *kumbhaka* should be done only in the

last round, allowing ten seconds for it. This means that only two *kumbhakas* of ten seconds each should be practised on the first day. This may be practised for a couple of months and then the duration of each *kumbhaka* may be raised from ten seconds to fifteen seconds.

Bodily fitness is a secondary benefit which accrues from yogic breathing. The main purpose is the coming into being of what is called *kevala-kumbhaka*, which brings with it silence and peace par excellence. For achieving that objective one should practise yogic breathing four times a day – once in the morning and evening, at midnight and at the noon. Such a heavy dose is required to be practised over several months or even years. – Abstracted from *Mountain Path*, July 1967

\*Head, Department of Yogic Studies, Sagar University.

**KARTHIAI DEEPAM\*:** Once Murugnar asked Bhagavan to elucidate the ‘tatva’ (the true significance) of having *darshan* of Karthiai Deepam. Sri Ramana explained, “The mind that has eradicated measuring itself as ‘I am this body’, establishing itself in the Heart and seeing with the inner eye, seeing the advaitic, true inner Deepa, is the truth behind having darshan of the Karthiai Deepam at Annamalai, the spiritual centre of the earth.” – *The Ramana Way*, December, 2009

\*Some details of the Deepam Festival are at pp. 411-2 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

**LET HIDDEN POSSIBILITY GROW:** All of us have come with the same seed. Though every seed has the same possibility, between the seed and the tree, there is a journey to be made. If you want the seed to become a tree, you have to nurture it, protect it; there are weeds which you have to take care of. The same weeds have been bothering us since ages; still we have not figured out how to handle them. Anger, hatred, jealousy, fear, ego, doubt – the same silly weeds have lasted too long because weeds do not need nurturing, they need no protection, no cultivation. They just grow, and continue to grow even after they are continuously weeded out. If you want a sacred seed to sprout and prosper, you have to clear the weeds, cultivate the land, add manure, provide for water and sunlight, and have long patience to wait for the results.*dhguru*

**CONSTRUCTION WORK AT THE ASHRAM:** Annamalai Swami was looking after the construction work when the Ashram was shifted to the foot of the hill. One day when everyone was quietly meditating in the hall, he came to Bhagavan and prostrated. When he got up, Bhagavan began enquiring of him whether the construction of the new room had begun. Noticing the enquiries a devotee said, “Bhagavan why is it that whenever Annamalai Swami comes here you talk to him only of construction work?” Bhagavan replied “What can I do? When he comes here does he come as an individual by name Annamalai? He appears as if the structures themselves have come. With whatever ideas people come to me, the ideas occur to me as if reflected in a mirror. When I speak to him on that subject he is satisfied. He will have no regrets that he could not sit here and meditate. He is concerned only about construction work and he is simply satisfied if I enquire about it.” – *Letters and Recollections of Sri Ramanasramam* by Suri Nagamma

**THE MAGNETIC THIRD EYE:** Modern physiology says that between the two eyebrows is the pineal gland which is the most mysterious part of the body. This gland is said to be the third eye of Siva. It is non-functioning and something has to be done to open it, otherwise it remains closed...Close your eyes and focus both eyes on space in the middle of your eyebrows. Give total attention to it. This is one of the simplest methods of being attentive. You cannot be attentive to any other part of the body so easily. This gland absorbs attention like anything. If you give attention to it, both your eyes become hypnotized with the third eye. They become fixed; they cannot move. The third eye forces attention. It is magnetic. Your attention is brought to it forcibly. It is absorbed. It is said in ancient *tantra* scriptures that for the third eye, attention is food. And once you feel that the gland itself is magnetically pulling your attention, it is not so difficult. For the first time you will see thoughts running before you. You will become the witness. It is just like a film screen: thoughts are running and you are a witness. – *www.osho.com*

### **SRI RAMANASRAMAM’S SARVADHIKARI – A BRIEF NOTE**

Nagasundaram (1885-1953) was Sri Ramana’s younger brother, six years junior to him. His wife died about three years after the birth of his only son Venkataraman, who served as President of the Ashram from 1953 to 1994. He took *sannyasa* in 1918 and became Niranjanananda Swami, also known as Chinnaswami. As a child he was affectionately called Picchai, which means alms.

He joined Bhagavan's *sadhu* group. As Bhagavan insisted that begging was the best way to destroy the ego, all these men went to the town for begging.

In 1922, mother Alagammal became seriously ill. One day she took her younger son's hand and placing it into Bhagavan's hand, said, "Picchai doesn't know good or bad. You have to look after him." She obtained *mahanirvana* soon afterwards by Bhagavan's grace. Her body was taken down from Skandasram and interred near Pali Tirtham. A *lingam* was consecrated over the site and a thatched hut built to cover it. A few months later, in December 1922, Bhagavan and his disciples came to stay at the Mother's *samadhi* and that is how the present Ramanasramam began. Initially, Dandapani Swami (father-in-law of Muruganar) and his son administered the small Ashram. However, relations between Dandapani Swami and ChinnaSwami became too strained and the former left the Ashram.

From 1924 to 1930, the Ashram was looked after by a Sanskrit scholar Vasudeva Sastri and Gopal Rao, who had a *khadi* cloth shop in the town. In October 1931, ChinnaSwami took full charge of the Ashram. Before Shantamma\* and Thenamma started cooking at the Ashram kitchen in 1927-28, it was ChinnaSwami who cooked for Bhagavan.

In 1932, devotees of Kavyakantha Ganapati Muni wanted him to be the manager of the Ashram. He was an ardent devotee of Bhagavan and had brought many of his devotees to Bhagavan. A meeting was arranged to discuss the issue. In the course of the discussion Bhagavan turned to the Muni and said in a gentle manner, "It seems that Picchai has a longing to run the Ashram. Why not let him do it?" From that moment on the Muni and his associates gave up their idea once for all.

On May 1933, a power of attorney was executed empowering ChinnaSwami to manage the Ashram on behalf of Bhagavan, with a rubber stamp with the words 'Sarvadhikari Niranjananda Swami, Sri Ramanasramam' put on it in front of Bhagavan. This was the Ashram's transformation officially as an institution.

Bhagavan silently guided ChinnaSwami to evolve into an exemplary manager. He gave him the right support at the right moment. He would admonish him when necessary, but gave him complete support in the administration of the Ashram. As the Ashram grew, the need for an assistant and successor was felt. ChinnaSwami's

son Venkataraman was called with his wife and sons and was trained as assistant to the *sarvadhikari*.

A few ambitious persons who coveted the position of *sarvadhikari* were creating tensions not conducive to the smooth functioning of the Ashram. The Ashram was even dragged to the law courts. Hence, some influential devotees of Bhagavan thought that it would be in the best interest of the Ashram if Bhagavan could be requested to make a will settling once and for all the question of management of the Ashram. A will was drawn and read out to Bhagavan in March 1938. He made a few corrections, the draft was finalised, and the will was duly registered. (Details of the will and related matters are available in May 2004 issue of Sri Ramana Jyothi)

Chinnaswami hardly talked to Bhagavan directly but he never did anything without his direct or indirect consent. At one time when Bhagavan saw that some devotees were persisting in their critical attitude of Chinnaswami, he told them that he is the *sarvadhikari* here and you should respect his position and follow his instructions.

Bhagavan gave full direct and indirect support to Chinnaswami. Once, a day before the *Jayanti* celebrations, Chinnaswami was greatly worried about feeding the visiting devotees, as there were no vegetables or rice at the Ashram. Late in the night a bullock cart arrived at the Ashram laden with rice, vegetables and other items. The cart driver delivered the items and left. Chinnaswami was woken up, but he was again in a quandary as to who would cut the vegetables. Bhagavan who was aware of this woke up everyone in the Old Hall with his stick, saying, "Picchai is in fix, come on, let us go and cut the vegetables."

Prof. K. Swaminathan used to address Chinnaswami a Roman Emperor in the context of the way he exercised his authority.

After Bhagavan's *mahanirvana* in April 1950, Chinnaswami sorely missed his physical presence. His opponents became more and more hinderer, noisy and difficult to control. His health began to decline rather fast. He breathed his last in January 1953. His earthly remains were interred in front of the Mother's temple, for the construction of which he had laboured so hard and long. (Condensed from *In the Service of Bhagavan*, a publication of Ramanasramam.)

For wonderful reminiscences of this lady cook, see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 189-91.

**MEDITATE UNFLINCHINGLY:** Without yielding to the doubt ‘Is it possible, or not?’ one should persistently hold on to the meditation on the Self. Of course, everybody, every book says, ‘Be quiet or still’. But it is not easy. That is why all the effort is necessary. Even if one is a great sinner, one should not worry and weep ‘Oh! I am a sinner, how can I be saved?’ One should completely renounce the thought ‘I am a sinner’ and concentrate keenly on meditation on the Self; then one would surely succeed. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**I quit seeking/ I become still/ I turned within/ and there in me/ the light began to shine.** – *Anonymous*

**Nowhere can one find a quieter or more untroubled retreat than in his own soul.** – *Marcus Aurelius*

**Hands that serve are holier than the lips that pray.** – *Anonymous*

**The light of *chaitanya* courses through the body, like electricity which passes through the gross wire.** – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**MAY - 2010**

**HOW SRI RAMANA WROTE *NAVA MANI MALA***

By Suri Nagamma

**The Maharshi himself has narrated the following:**

A *dikshitar* (priest) residing in Chidambaram having heard of me came here. He used to talk about several things and end up with an exhortation that as the ether (*akasa*) *linga* is one of the hallowed *panch lingas*\* in the south, I should go over to Chidambaram and have a *darshan* of Lord Nataraja. In that connection I wrote a *padyam* as under:

*Achalane yayinum achavaithanni ...*, that is, ‘Father (Siva) though immovable danced in that *Sabha* (Chidambaram) before *Amba* (Mother). That is the dance of Siva. After that *Sakti* subsided, and became the flame at Arunachala.’ That means that the brilliant but immovable Arunachala is better than the moveable *Ambara*



*lingam*. After seeing that *padyam*, he stopped bothering me about visiting Chidambaram. That *padyam* afterwards became the first verse of *Nava Mani Mala*.

Once Ishwaraswami read out to me one of the *padyams* of Mahakavi Ottakuthur and insisted that I write one *padyam* in the same metre and with the same idea. And so I wrote a *padyam*, which is the second verse of *Nava Mani Mala*. The *padyam* was: *Bhuvikkutpongidum bhuvicchor pungavan...* that is, ‘A famous place and the place of Bhumintheswara Tiruchuli, born to the holy person by name Sundaramayyar and his Alagamma, I was taken in by Lord Arunachaleswar. With a heart full of mercy and with the mind glowing and overflowing with compassion, He kept out of the world’s troubles.’

The remaining seven *padyams* were written for some reason or other like this. –  
*Letters from and Recollections of Sri Ramanasramam*

\*These are: **Prithvi lingam** at Tiruvarur, **Appu lingam** at Jambukeswaram, **Tejo lingam** at ArunachalThesam, **Vayu lingam** at Sri Kalahasti and **Akasa lingam** at Chidambaram.

**THE BUDDHIST WAY OF MIND CONTROL:** Sit in a comfortable position in a quiet place, with spine erect, hands folded across your lap, with the bottom of your right palm resting on the left palm and the two thumbs touching each other. Eyes angled at the slant of the nose, shoulders thrown back, chin slightly tucked in and the tongue tip touching the palate of the slightly open mouth – the seven-point Vairacona posture. Steady the mind with slow and regular breaths. Focus on the breath till you sense reasonable steadiness of mind. Observe the mind carefully. What is happening within it? Quite likely there will be thoughts because such is its nature. Some thoughts come and go on their own; few others linger and retreat, while yet others are persistent...Be aware of what is going on around you, but not engage in it in any way. If we do not engage with arising thoughts or feelings, they will die or fade out of their own...At all times be vigilant of the manner in which the mind is processing every external stimulus. The mind is gullible and thoughts can deceive us easily. But if we are observant at every moment, we will be able to grasp the ‘slipping’ mind. Perfecting this state is central to the Nyingma tradition of Buddhism. – *Girish Deshpande*

**SIVA’S TRISHUL:** The trident that Lord Siva holds represents the three *gunas* – *Sattva* (creation), *Rajas* (preservation) and *Tamas* (destruction). The three *gunas* bind the soul to the body. Lord Siva destroys the *gunas* with the *trishul* to liberate the soul. – *Tattavaloka*, February, 2010.

**LISTENING TO SOUL:** This road has to be traversed alone. To enter into silence mode, you may sit in a quiet place or in a tranquil corner of your home. Begin by simply withdrawing yourself from the outside world and shut out the cacophony; start moving slowly towards silence. Be aware of the thoughts that cross your mind but make no effort to cling to them. Experience the ultimate reality of the present moment. You can hear the steps of God when silence reigns the mind. It is here that you become the witness of silence. It is this quietude – just simple, innocent silence – that leads you to Self-realisation. As you go deeper into it, there comes a moment when you reach the very pinnacle of your potentiality. – *V.N.Mittal*

### **How I Came to the Maharshi\***

By Dr. D.Samarender Reddy\*\*

I sought Truth even as a gangling youth,  
"Turn to the Gita and Upanishads –  
Here is what they say,"  
Postulated Swami Chinmayananda.

"Woman and Gold  
On the mind have a hold;  
Renounce them and God behold,"  
Said Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

"Betake yourself to no external authority,"  
Pleaded the anti-Guru Jiddu Krishnamurti,  
And I was at my wits' end  
Left thus to myself to fend.

When hope thus seemed to have flown,

"Know thy-Self and Truth will be known,"  
Said Sri Ramana Maharshi and said it best,  
And all doubts were set at rest.

\*This contribution is on our request as to how the author came to Bhagavan.

\*\*Dr. Reddy, MBBS, is also a post-graduate in economics. He works as an editor in Hyderabad. His two poetry books have been published by Writers Workshop, Kolkata. His e-mail is [samarender.reddy@yahoo.com](mailto:samarender.reddy@yahoo.com)

**JNANI AND AJNANI:** When Bhagavan was in the Jubilee Hall, a visitor from Andhra Desa, who was in great distress and mental agony, beseeched Bhagavan to give him *upadesa*, as he said he was an *ajnani*. Muruganar, who has sung copiously in praise of Bhagavan, was close by. Bhagavan asked the visitor as to why He should give him *upadesa*. The devotee cried out that he should be enlightened because he is an *ajnani*. Bhagavan replied that if He were also to feel that He is *jnani* and the visitor is an *ajnani*, He is in no way qualified to impart any *upadesa*. Muruganar exclaimed that the *upadesa* to the visitor was over! – *Anecdote as told to G. Sri Hari Rao by T.R. Kanakamal*

**MAHARSHI VASISTHA:** He is revered as *Brahma Rishi* and is among the *Sapta Rishis*. He was the son of Brahma created by the power of his mind (*Manasa putra*). He was the *Rajaguru* of the solar dynasty. Sri Rama and his brothers had their *gurukulam* under him. His wife Arundati, revered as a great *pativrata* (one deeply devoted to husband), is also in the form of a star in the galaxy. Vasistha is credited as the author of the seventh *mandala* of the *Rig Veda*. He is also the author of *Vasistha Samhita* and *Yoga Vasishtha*, comprising his teachings to Sri Rama. He was in possession of the divine cow Kamadhenu and her calf, Nandini. Once king of Kausika came to his *ashram* and wanted to take them away with him. Kamadhenu refused to go with the king, who used all his power of physical valour. He then understood that only the power of penance would enable him to possess Kamadhenu. He did deep penance and finally became a Maharshi and was called Vishvamitra. – *Condensed from Tattavaloka, Feb. 2010*

**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘I’ AND ‘i’** : For the world to exist there must be the perceiver, ego to experience the world and talk about it. The basic difference between the waking and dream states is that while in the former the perceiver experiences the physical world through the physical body, in the latter he experiences the subtle dream world through the astral [non-physical realm of existence] body. The common factor between the two, however, is that the perceiver is present in both. But in deep sleep state the perceiver is missing; therefore the world does not appear in that state...Statements like ‘I was in deep sleep; I am awake; I saw a frightful dream’ go to show that ‘I’ was present in all the three states. The Eternal ‘I’ was there then, it is here now, and will be there at all times irrespective of the three states that come and go...To gain access to the Eternal ‘I’, it is important to overcome the ego, the false ‘i’, by constantly reflecting on the question: Who am ‘I’? And once the ‘I-am-the-body’ thought is eliminated through *sustained inquiry* and *intense meditation*, what remains is the resplendent eternal Self. To a *jnani* who has transcended the ‘I-am-the-body’ thought, there is nothing to renounce, nothing to acquire, for he firmly and continually remains entrenched in natural *samadhi* wherein he realises that the endless diversities that occur in the waking and dream states are projections on his own Self. It is akin to the screen in a movie on which different types of colourful pictures alternately appear and disappear. Sometimes one sees a huge conflagration reducing skyscrapers to ashes; at other times one sees endless waves of a turbulent sea wreaking havoc, destroying crops and countless lives. But the screen remains totally unaffected. In the same way, the occurrences of the waking, dream, and deep sleep states do not impact the inner Self that has neither beginning nor end. Sri Ramana Maharshi said: “The mind turned outwards results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards it becomes itself the Self.” – *Anup Taneja*

**I quit seeking/ I become still/ I turned within/ and there in me/ the light began to shine.** – *Anonymous*

**We are not creatures of circumstance; we are creator of circumstance.** – *Benjamin Disraeli*

**Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life.** – *Beethoven*

**The greatest discovery of our generation is that by changing your thoughts you can alter your life. – Benjamin Franklin**

**We choose our joys and sorrows long before we experience them. – Kahlil Gibran**

**MIND MANAGEMENT:** There has to be no attempt to control the mind; the idea is to go beyond it. The mind is compared to a monkey drunk with wine of desire, stung by the scorpion of jealousy, and possessed with the demon of pride... There are techniques for concentration. Concentration is where one tries to control thoughts. When all thoughts are fixed on one object, it is concentration. Meditation has no technique. It involves your being an observer of the mind's happenings. It is a natural, non-doing state. No effort is required to watch. We have potential to look within directly as we all are blessed with the 'Third Eye'. Meditation is mind management. It is not forcing the mind to be quiet. It is to find the quiet that is already there. We just stay in our own source, in our true nature: All-bliss. – *Vishvas Foundation* Email <[vishvas@vishvas.org](mailto:vishvas@vishvas.org)>

## **ARUNACHALA PANCHARATNAM**

(Five verses in praise of Arunachala)

One day in 1917, Ganapati Muni asked Bhagavan to compose a poem in Sanskrit. Bhagavan smiled, stating that he had no knowledge of Sanskrit grammar or meter and therefore would be unable to do so. Then the Muni explained the essentials of prosody [the patterns of rhythm and sound used in poetry] and a Sanskrit meter called *arya*, and again repeated the request. By the evening, Bhagavan offered to the Muni, and to the world at large, the completed poem, an exquisite encapsulation of the essence of Advaita Vedanta. The following translation it is hoped would convey at least a portion of the joy of the incomparable original.

1. O! Ocean of nectar, full of compassion! Swallowing the entire universe with successive rays of light! O Arunachala, the supreme Self, be the Sun and cause my Heart-lotus to bloom.
2. In you Arunachala, all this picture of the universe has come into being, has been established and is dissolved. In the Heart you dance as 'I', as the Self. O! Heart is thy name, the wise ones say.

3. Searching with inward-turned and pure mind, as to where from this 'I' arises, he realises his own form, and become peaceful in Thee, like a river in the ocean.
4. Having abandoned external matters, with breath and mind restrained, meditating on you O Arunachala, the yogi seeks the Holy Light and finds his delight in thee!
5. With mind offered to you, seeing as your form always, loving no other, the yogi conquers, O Arunachala, and is immersed in Thy bliss.

The closing verse of the *Pancharatnam* is: This is Sri Ramana Maharshi's vision of Arunachala in the language of Gods. It is a jewel of five verses in Arya meter, and indeed contains the essence of the Upanishads. (*The Maharshi*, Feb. 2002)

## **SRI RAMANA'S CONSIDERATION FOR THE LOWLY – AN EPISODE**

By Professor K. Swaminathan\*

Once during a visit to the Ashram in the 1940s, I was sitting outside the Old Hall with many devotees facing Sri Bhagavan who was reclining on a couch. A group of learned pundits was discussing passages from the Upanishads with great enthusiasm and profundity. All, including Bhagavan, appeared to be attentively listening to the interesting discussion when, all of a sudden, Bhagavan rose from his couch, walked thirty meters to the north, and stood before a villager who was standing looking lowly with palms joined.

Immediately the discussion stopped and all eyes turned to Bhagavan and the villager at a distance. They appeared to be conversing, but at such a distance one could not tell about what. Soon Bhagavan returned to his couch and the discussion resumed..

I was curious about this villager and why Bhagavan had to go out of the way to meet him. So while the discussion continued, I slipped away from the discussion and caught up with the villager before he left the Ashram. I asked him what he and Bhagavan had talked about. He told me that Bhagavan was asking why he was standing so far away. "I told Bhagavan, 'I am only an ignorant, poor villager. How am I to approach you who are God incarnate?'"

"What did the Maharshi say then?" I asked.

“He asked my name, what village I was from, what work I did and how many children I had, etc.” “Did you ask him anything?”

“I asked him how I could be saved and how I could earn his blessings.”

“What did he tell you?”

“He asked me if there was a temple in my village. I told him there was. He wanted to know the name of the temple deity. I told him the name. He then said that I should go on repeating the name of that deity and I would receive all the blessings needed.”

I came back to Bhagavan’s presence, and sat among the devotees listening to the learned discussion, in which I had now lost all interest, realizing that the simple humility and devotion of this peasant had evoked a far greater response from our Master than any amount of learning. I then decided that, though a scholar by profession, I should always remain a humble, ignorant peasant at heart, and pray, like that villager, for Bhagavan’s grace and blessings.

\* Chief Editor of the monumental 100-vol. *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, was professor of English at the Presidency College, Madras. His reminiscences of Bhagavan are at pp. 117-22 of **Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi**.

**YANTRAS – THE SECRET BEHIND:** Yantras are energy diagrams representing various energy fields. Yantras can have lines moving upward, downward or curved lines. They signify the flow of energy and nodal points, of various energies. Yantras are normally represented in two dimensions, but they could be multidimensional...All matter is atom grouped together in specific patterns. They give rise to the many substances in creation. Every form or substance has atoms but the patterns are different. Similarly, yantras are different patterns of the same energy. These patterns can be recognised only with heightened awareness. As each human being is unique, seers dedicated certain models for certain kinds of people based on the extent of refinement of their nervous system. To know which one is for you requires the guidance of a Master...Yantras have a definite structure and organisation. The centre of the yantra is the *bindu*, the focal point of all energy, the

seat of Divinity. Movement from the *bindu* to the periphery is the journey from the subtle to the gross, from within to the external world. The movement from the periphery to the *bindu* is dissolution – the journey from the external world of sensory perceptions and objects to the infinite space within. – *Bhanumathi Narasimhan*

## FORTY VERSES IN PRAISE OF SRI RAMANA

By Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni

**The great devotion of the seer-poet Ganapati Muni to his Guru Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi is well-known. The genesis of the ‘Forty Verses’ described by K. Natesan in the *Mountain Path*, Jayanti 2000, shows how these were edited and compiled by the Maharshi himself. The verses entitled ‘Sri Ramana Chatvarimsat’, a heartfelt outpouring of devotion of the highest order from a disciple to his guru, are recited before Bhagavan’s Samadhi every day. The following literal translation is adapted from *The Maharshi*, journal of Ramana Maharshi Centre, New York.**

Invocatory verse: I bow to the lotus feet of the spiritual teacher, Rishi Sri Ramana, who showed me the Lord, shining, transcending darkness.

1. The story of his life removes impurities. He is an ocean of compassion, taking delight in the Arunachala.
2. He is the guru of an assembly of learned men, beginning with Ganapati. He is a great repository of a wealth of virtues. Just as the thousand-rayed sun is hidden by a cloud, his true greatness is hidden by the garb of the body.
3. Ingenious at defeating the roving senses, he is skillful in praising the merits of others. He delights in the peace of silence which is without deceit, and is the slayer of the strong, reviled, frightening passions.
4. He fills his stomach only at the proper time, undertakes inflexible vows, and lives on the slope of Arunachala. His heart is unable to be won over by the arrows of Cupid. He is leading his devotees, and giving them the method of *atma-vichara*.



5. He has crossed the fear-producing ocean of worldly life. He has hands as delicate as a lotus, which serve him as bowl. His own gaze is unsurpassed in calmness and brightness, and he removes the fear of those who resort to his lotus feet.

6. For adoring devotees, he is a storehouse of divine treasure. His presence destroys dense misery. He maintains the duties of the ascetic, and he is preventing darkness all around.

7. Flooded with virtues that only Sesha can describe, he speaks words that are pleasing beneficial and true. His happiness is not governed by respect and honour from others, nor does he have distress due to dishonour from others.

8. He is the Lord of ascetics. With his sharp and brilliant intellect, he has with firmness destroyed the ego. He is always bearing a wave of joy, and has killed the array of inner enemies – the six passions.

9. Having transcended all by his own merits, he wins the supreme feet of the Lord, which are not easily accessible to others. He is free from the feeling of ‘mine’ and is the friend of the virtuous.

10. Abandoning the lap of his mother Paravati, he dwells on the earth for the removal of darkness. He is Skanda, having the appearance of a man. This world has found a Lord in Ramana!

11. He is an ascetic, wearing only a white piece of cloth adorning his buttocks. He is the Supreme guru, he is the peacock-mounted Skanda, wearing the guise of a man. In him the world has a Master!

12. Prostrations to him who has transcended the multitude of *gunas* and is the perfect *brahamachari*! He is beyond *maya* and is the enemy of Taraka.

13. O Bhagavan, here there is no peacock for riding, nor a celestial river for bathing, no divine *vina*-playing attendants to sing to thee! How is it then that you make your dwelling upon Arunachala?

14. You have one face, you are separated from Mother Uma’s lap! You do not have a spear in your hand. You are mortal, and there is no flag-bearing armies of gods on either side! This disguise is enough to cover the eyes of those unwary ones who delight in the world, but how will you, O Skanda, escape the notice of your brother Ganapati?

15. Some know you as ‘the foremost of the knowers of yoga’, others as ‘jnani’, some others as ‘sadhu’, while some, thinking you as ‘guru’ worship your lotus feet. Ramana, born on earth for the peace of men, only two or three know you as Lord Skanda.

16. The meaning of OM was explained by you to Lord Brahma. Opening your mouth, you had undertaken to explain something to your father Siva. O Subramanya, even though you are the youngest, by your merits you have become greater than all! By the weight of your wisdom, you have obtained the state of guru to your elder brother Ganapati.

17. That Lion’s seat of honour which was previously mounted by the wise Vyasa, who saw the fullest extent of the Vedas, was afterwards occupied by fear-destroying Sankara, who with a single portion of his knowledge dispelled the darkness of ignorance. Now that throne of Acharya, awaits thee, O Lord Skanda, embodied as man.

18. When dharma has been destroyed, when the three worlds are bewildered by wrong doing, when scholars everywhere declare words as true knowledge, when the existence of the supreme Lord, the Father, is doubted, who but you is the refuge of the good, O Skanda, disguised as man?

19. Dispassion (*vairagyam*) may be your wealth, but how can you forsake compassion (*karunam*)? Desire may be prohibited by you, but is protection denied to your devotees? O Skanda, masked as man, do you wait for a proper opportunity?

20. O detraction, go far away! Bull of Dharma, henceforth you will not be lame! Leave the world, O confusion. May association with the virtuous increase everywhere! In association with his brother (Ganapathi), this world has obtained the chief of gurus (Ramana). He is the destroyer of the demon Sura and the amorous passions, Lord, son of the Divine Mother Parvati. (*To be continued*)

**VISHISHTADVAITA:** This doctrine propounded by Ramanuja (1017-1137) states that there are three distinct orders of Reality, namely, *Ishwara* (God, identified with Vishnu), *jiva* (soul) and *prakrity* (matter or world). They are all different and eternal. At the same time they are inseparable. Ramanuju says that the Absolute is qualified by the finite soul and the phenomenal world. According to him, individual souls are always separate from Brahman. They retain their separate individuality even after liberation. He also accords reality to the world. Sankara’s theory is that the *jiva* is

only Brahman, it is not a separate entity, and the world is an illusion, *mithya*... Sri Ramana Maharshi has resolved the incompatibility in the two approaches in a surprisingly simple manner. He said, “Just as the individual body comprises the soul, the ego and gross body, so also God comprises *Paramatma*, the world and the individuals.”(Talk no. 274) – Excerpted from the *Mountain Path*, June, 2000

**TEACHING OF THE Maharshi:** The steady impulse of your determination sets you on your feet again after every fall or breakdown. Gradually the obstacles disappear as your current gets stronger. Everything comes right at the end... Strenuous endeavour is necessary to know the Self. Develop the *antramukham* or introspective attitude. Constantly put before your mind the query “What am I?” and in time you will be able to see your Self. You can see what you have not seen before.

**SIVA LOSES TO WIN:** Siva and Parvati were playing dice. Each time Siva rolled the dice, Parvati’s supporters squealed with joy, while Siva’s companions cried in anguish. Parvati won and Siva lost. “Why do you always lose?” asked the supporters of Siva. They had implicit faith in his supremacy. Then how come he lost each time?... Siva lost to win. It takes some reflection for this to sink in. In the beginning, all was one, the undifferentiated, motionless One. When it separated into two, the *Purusha* and the *Prakriti*, there was Creation, there was activity... When Siva played with Parvati it is the play of *Purusha* with *Prakriti*, inactivity with activity. The wager was a hug. If Siva won, he would embrace Parvati. Beautiful as that sounds, people were worried because once again then Siva would envelop Parvati in himself and return to the motionless inactivity state of Ardhanareeswara. This would mean that all activity would come to a standstill. So it was crucial for Parvati to win, and for Siva to lose so that activity continues without a break. In Parvati’s victory, the pursuit of pleasure will continue... Siva would play another game and yet another game to win and embrace. But in losing the game he won the game of life, he preserved the creation. And Parvati would win again and so the cycle continues... In the Ardhanareeswara form, there was togetherness of a static kind, there seemed to be no purpose, no outcome. When they split to become two distinct entities, they could let their creations flourish. And yet they stayed together enjoying the game they played. This is togetherness; where ‘otherness’ enhances the togetherness. – *Sudhamahi Regunathan*

**JUNE 2010**

**SURYA TEMPLE AT ARASAVALLI (A. P.)**

By Y. V. Ramakotaiah\*

The temple dedicated to sun god near Srikakulam is said to have been constructed by a Kalinga king in seventh century. Legend has it that Indra once tried to enter the temple of Lord Siva (Koteeswara) at an untimely hour. Siva's mount Nandi, who kept a vigil over the shrine, stopped Indra. When he tried to force his way, Nandi kicked him hard, which made Indra fall far away in an unconscious state. He perceived Lord Surya, who made him feel the need to install the image of Surya at that place. Soon a big temple, designed by the divine architect, came up there. This is now known as Arasavalli temple.

The idol of Suryanarayana marvellously carved out of black granite, is five feet tall. It is holding lotus buds and is flanked by Usha, Padamani and Sanjna – his three consorts. The Sun god here is called 'Padma paani.' Pingala and Danda are placed on either side at the base as guards. Sanka and Sananda, the two divine saints are also present on either side holding *chamaras* (royal fan for idols). Lord Surya is shown as riding in a golden chariot drawn by seven horses, driven by Aruna, who is said to be the elder brother of Garuda, the mount of Lord Vishnu. The original temple which got time worn was reconstructed by Yalamanchili Pullaji Panthulu in 1778. Some minor deities were also installed there besides an image of Indra. (The temple can be reached from Srikakulam or Visakhapatnam.)

\* Abstracted from *Splendour*, January 2010.

**MANTRA JAPA:** 'Mantra' has two roots, namely, *manasa* or mind and *trana* or save. Mantra is something that saves, which uplifts. A mantra contains a string of syllables, set to a meter. The mantra is chanted in a certain set way to get results. Most Vedic mantras require specific intonation of specific syllables, which may not be easy to master correctly. Mantras can be repeated in three major ways, the most common with your oral speech or *vaikhari*. *Upamsu* or using your lips without producing sound is another method. Finally, comes the *manasika* method, that is, recitation of the mantra in the mind. This method is the best for achieving concentration and mental peace. – *Manish Pandit*

**LOOK WITHIN:** When a devotee asked Sri Ramana what is to be done by us for ameliorating the condition of the world, he answered – If you remain free from pain, there will be no pain anywhere. The trouble now is due to your seeing the world externally and also thinking that there is pain there. But both the world and the pain are within you. If you look within there will be no pain. – *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, Talk no. 272

**LIFE IS BEYOND OUR LOGIC:** Most of us unconsciously believe that life is filled with incidents that are under our control. Our logic gives us the feeling that our life is under the control of our logic. That is why when some incident happens that is beyond our logic, that is not under our control, we are totally shaken. We are not able to handle it. We don't know what to do. Either we fall into depression or just suffer...There is an important truth. Never think things are going smoothly because of you. In spite of us things are going smoothly. As long as we believe that it is because of us that things are going smoothly, we will be constantly suffering with ego...The genuine purpose of life cannot be understood without dropping our ego...Life itself is the path and the goal. When we have a goal, we will run: our feet will not touch the ground. **When we drop the goal, the emphasis will be on the path, which has to be followed and enjoyed.** – *Paramahansa Nithayananda*

**THE FOUR MAHA VAKYAS:** These are Great Truths or Utterances, one each from the four Vedas. The first *Maha Vakya* **Prajnanam Brahman**, that is, Supreme Knowledge is Brahman, is from Aiterya Upanishad, which belongs to the Rig Veda. Brahman indicates the immeasurably vast, indivisible absolute existence, which transcends sensory perception and mental conceptions, but is realizable within us, because it is Self-knowledge. The second mega statement from the Mandukya Upanishad, which belongs to the Atharva Veda, says, **Ayam Atma Brahman:** this Self is Brahman. That which is knowledge, that which is consciousness, that which is illimitable, is your very existence, and you are not otherwise. If it seems otherwise in your experience, then you ought to inquire and know your existence as it truly is, and then you find what all wise persons have found. This is realized by experiential knowledge, that is beyond sensation and conception. The experience has been described in the third *Maha Vakya* from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad belonging to the Yajur Veda, namely, **Aham Brahmasmi.** It indicates that it is not the thought I am Brahman but the realisation of your existence, directly experienced as it is, is Brahman. Start with your own self, your own existence, and enquire deep within yourself to know the existence as it is. It is not apart from you. The fourth *Maha*

*Vakya* from the Chandogya Upanishad, which belongs to the Sama Veda, **Tat Tvam Asi**, That you are, indicates the identity of you and yourself. You are not the limited embodied individual that you might image yourself to be. The Maharshi persistently wanted us to inquire about our real nature by asking the question, Who am I? Not so much in words, as by imbibing the meaning of it. – [www.satramana.org](http://www.satramana.org)

**THE HEALING TOUCH OF SPIRITUALITY:** It is easy to float through life when everything is going according to our wishes. It is tough to remain positive in a negative environment. To be positive at such times needs great effort and a strong will. This can be achieved by making spirituality an integral part of our daily lives. Spirituality means converting negative thoughts to positive one. It calms the mind and heart and connects us with the Almighty. This can only happen if we realise that we are all part of Brahman. The practice of spirituality entails constantly turning our minds towards that which is true and pure. An attitude of acceptance, that whatever is happening is with the will of God, helps restore our equilibrium. Only complete surrender to God can foster inner strength...Meditation is one way in which we can cultivate spirituality in our lives. – *Rashmi Singla*

**GENERATE ENERGY:** Thoughts create energy. If thoughts are negative, the energy is negative and that creates pain. A hurt body or mind looks at the world with pain...Look at unhappy people. They will convince you to be miserable...Just as the latent fire in the wood gets invoked through rubbing, we can awaken the physical body through exercise, yoga, a balance diet, etc. Keep the body alive and enthusiastic to kindle a happy energy through the body. Breathe deeply by doing *pranayama* and find a different kind of joy. Shallow breathing creates lower energy field while deep breathing enhances one's aliveness. – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

**UPPALURI GOPALA KRISHNAMURTI (UG) (1918-2007):** Born in Machilipatnam (A.P.), became a member of the Theosophical Society as a teenager. He left his studies at Madras University, as the academic courses could not answer his queries and concerns...In 1939, at the age of 21, he met Sri Ramana Maharshi and asked him if he could grant *moksha* to him. Amazed at his question, the Maharshi replied, "I can give it, but can you take it?" This answer completely altered UG's perceptions of spirituality. Later, he did not seek the counsel of any religious person. He separated himself from the family and spent his entire life giving non-message oriented lectures. True to his philosophy, he did not want to be remembered after his death. His teachings challenge the religious traditions all over the world.

When asked for a message on the Teacher's Day, he said, "It is the teacher who prevents you from touching your own potential. As long as you use a model or follow a teacher you will remain a second hand person. You must have the courage to walk alone." About the human suffering he said, "You are always suffering because you want to be other than what you are." – *UG's Gems of Wisdom*, published by Indus Source Book. [www.indusource.com](http://www.indusource.com)

**MANY DIMENSIONS OF SIVA:** Sankara means one who gives peace and does good – '*Sham*' means peace and good and '*kara*' means one who does that...The whole creation is the dance of Siva, dance of one consciousness, one seed, which manifested into a million species in the world. The whole world moving in an auspicious rhythm of innocence and intelligence is Siva, which is permanent and eternal source of energy – the one and only one eternal state of Being...Siva is associated with destruction; but transformation, new beginning for the better, can only happen when something is destroyed. Siva is the factor of transformation...Siva is the formless Being; Shakti is manifestation in the field. This is the recognition of the dual aspect of the matter and energy, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, the *dravya* and *guna* – substance and its qualities... *Samadhi* is also referred as *Siva sayuja*, the presence of Siva, a state of deep rest with alertness, which brings freedom from all identities. Kabir Das calls it *koti kalpa vishram* – a billion years of rest consolidated in a moment. When you come out of it, you perience certain pleasantness and reduced entrophy, which brings an unusual freshness to the mind and senses. – *Sri Sri Ravi Shankar*

## IN PRAISE OF ARUNACHALA SIVA

By Abhishiktananda\*

**He was a French Christian monk and also an Indian sannyasin. He met the Maharshi in 1948 and was greatly impressed by him. He lived for months in the caves of Arunachala and felt very much drawn to the hill. Below are some stanzas from his poem:**

I will sing a song for my Beloved Lord Arunachala

with the words that He Himself drew from my heart in his own heart.

I will thread a garland of flowers for my Beloved Siva Arunachala

with flowers that He Himself plucked in the garden of my heart in his own heart.

O my Beloved, I will sprinkle on Thy feet the lustral water from the spring that Thou Thyself has caused to well up in the very depth of my heart from thy own heart.

And I will burn myself like the incense that I offer before Thee

having come from Thee, having passed into Thee, nothing but Thyself alone, O Arunachala. (*The Maharshi*, Feb. 2002)

\*His reminiscences are in **Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi** at pp. 278-9.

## EXTRAORDINARY *SAMATVA* OF SRI RAMANA

By Chhaganlal V. Yogi\*

Once when Bhagavan got very weak, the doctors recommended that he takes some nourishing food. Some devotees earnestly begged him to take buttered bread, milk and orange juice. But to all of them he had only one answer: How can we afford a luxurious diet. For us there can only be the poor man's ration.

One devotee ventured to suggest that even Mahatma Gandhi takes a special diet and Sri Aurbindo takes the same, to keep up their health. "But do you know the cost of a glass of orange juice?" Asked Bhagavan. "Oh, only four annas" rejoined the devotee with a gleam in his eyes. "No, it would not be four annas. We require 50 glasses of juice. Do you want me alone to gulp down the drink with all of you watching without getting anything? Moreover, how can poor people like us afford 50 glasses of juice everyday?"

The answer checked the devotee's plea for a while, but he didn't lose hope and next day quietly brought hot *rotis* smeared with ghee, and one glass each of milk and orange juice. The devotee placed the tray before Bhagavan and begged to accept the offering. He refused point blank even to touch the food. Repeated appeals from the devotees were of no avail. Then in the heat of the moment a woman devotee burst out, "O, Bhagavan! Just as you were kind enough to agree to sit on the sofa – instead



of the floor like everyone of us – for our sake why not also favour us by taking this special diet?”

Hardly had she finished, when to the dismay of all devotees, Bhagavan got down from the sofa and squatted on the floor. The woman was horrified. She called out with anguish in her heart and tears in her eyes, “Bhagavan! No! Please don’t! What a stupid woman I am!” Then she got hysterical and started screaming. All others stood around aghast at what had happened. No amount of appeal or argument would move Bhagavan to change his decision. Eventually, a devotee, who had been associated with Bhagavan for over 35 years resolved to take a desperate step. Without any fuss he simply started lifting Bhagavan bodily. Seeing this, one or two other devotees joined him and together they succeeded in placing Bhagavan’s body back on the sofa. Fortunately, Bhagavan did not resist nor subsequently did he try to come down from the sofa. But the devotees were so upset by the incident that even after seeing Bhagavan sitting quietly on the sofa, they began to request him not to get down again. Thus, a loving attempt by devotees to make Bhagavan agree for a special diet came to a fruitless end.

\*Many enchanting reminiscences of Bhagavan as recorded by him are in **Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi**, at pp. 161-6.

## **FORTY VERSES IN PRAISE OF SRI RAMANA**

By Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni

**The following is in continuation of the 20 verses which appeared in the previous issue.**

21. He who has taken off all duality, and who having pervaded the world and all bodies, shines forth with his glory, oh men! Salute that one, in the form of Guru, the brother of Ganapati!

22. He who removes the darkness from within and without, having obtained that eternal state of light, who uproots the ignorance of his devotees, who, though seeing and sporting in this universe, is beyond the universe, to him, Sri Ramana, the Guru of the world and destroyer of sorrow, salutations!

23. O Ramana, now, by flowing forth of your splendid gaze, may I once be blessed!

24. O Ramana, you are the Guru of men. Infinite is your heart, in which there is no differentiation.
25. O Ramana, your words destroy the triad of – ‘world’, ‘I’ and ‘the Supreme’, and there remains one reality without differentiation.
26. O Ramana, your teaching helps in dissolving the difference between the reality and the ego.
27. O Ramana, if your grace extends to us, we could experience the Supreme Self in the pure heart, hidden within the ego.
28. O Lord of the wise! Compassion is not just a quality of yours. It is natural to you.
29. O spotless one, your body blazes like lightning and your look is bright and pervasive.
30. Your mind has been dissolved by the heart, Oh Lord! You are eternally shining with bliss.
32. Slaying the ego of the humans steeped in ignorance, you are the supreme Siva for them.
33. I bow to guru Bhagavan Ramana, who destroys the darkness prevailing in my heart, not only by his words, but by his sidelong glances of grace and compassion.
34. O Bhagavan Ramana, diving again and again into the ocean of the world, we are extremely tired. Now at this moment we approach the island of your lotus feet for refuge. You are the abode of virtues; please protect us with the grace that pours out of your eyes to your devotees.
35. If the mother will not give milk, alas, what will be the fate of the child? If the cowherd be angry, how will the cows be protected? If you, Teacher, do not dispel the doubts of those resorting to your feet, how will they cross over this worldly existence.
36. The peace reigns in your moon-like splendid smile. Your large broad eyes are steady and unequal in luster. You are eternally abiding in the lotus of the Heart with your splendour flowing outwardly. O Bhagavan Ramana! What sage on earth is possibly your equal?

37. In your eyes is the ignorance-destroying Devi Shakti. In your face of-a-thousand-expressions is Lakshmi, the wife of the lotus-eyed Vishnu. Concealed in your utterances is victory-causing Saraswati. O universal teacher Ramana! What an ordinary man can praise you?

38. Even though I am very far away from your holy feet, O Bhagavan Ramana, the knowledge that your power – blazing as the sun, is not remote from me, has caused the sorrow of my mind to vanish.

39. The good fortune acquired by Arunachala by the dwelling of many sages, is now unequalled because Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi has chosen this dwelling from among other holy places.

40. For his extraordinary peace, supreme power, most extraordinary dispassion, intense compassion, for knowledge that has banished hypocrisy, and for his sweet conduct, Ramana Maharshi is the ideal for mankind.

*Concluding verse:* Vaishista Ganapati, son of Narasimha, has praised in forty measured verses the Rishi Guru Ramana, the incarnation of Skanda.

**ADVICE TO THE SADHAKA:** That which is worth taking up is the self-enquiry that reveals the knowledge of the Self; that which is worth enjoying is the grandeur of the Self; that which is worth renouncing is the ego-mind; that which is worth taking refuge is one's own Heart; that which the mind should meditate upon is the feet of God; that which one should firmly depend upon is *satsang*. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

## HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By D. Chandra Prakash\*

I was attending, 1984 onwards, discourses of Swami Ranganathananda\*\* on Sunday evenings at Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad. Swamiji would mention about the greatness of Ramana Maharshi. Wanting to more about him, I borrowed from the Math's library *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*. The book greatly impressed me.

I started attending *satsangs* of the Kendram, 1990 onwards. These were held in Gandhi Centenary Hall at Andhra Mahila Sabha College, Osmania University campus. I was greatly impressed by the discourses of Dr. K.S., the founder of the Kendram. I learnt that he was in intimate contact with the Maharshi since his school days. This greatly attracted me to him. I also attended *satsangs* held at the residence of Dr. K.S. His discourses used to melt my heart. His affection and kindness also influenced my personal life. He was so simple and humble.

I along with other devotees visited Tiruvannamalai, when Dr. K.S. was also there. During my stay at the Ashram, when I was in the bookstall to buy books, Dr. K.S. with great affection presented to me, *Be As You Are* by David Godman and *Reminiscences of Bhagavan* by Devaraja Mudaliar.

In September 1996, a *yatra* was arranged to commemorate Bhagavan's arrival at Arunachala. I along with four other devotees from Hyderabad, participated in it. We took the same route as was tracked by Bhagavan after leaving Madurai in 1896, to reach Arunachala. It was indeed a thrilling experience, and it greatly consolidated my devotion to Bhagavan.

Since September, 1991, I am also attending *satsangs* at Mehdipatnam at the residence of Dr. A.V. Narasimha Rao. There I came in close contact with Medha Dakshinamuthy, who guided me in understanding Bhagavan's philosophy, thus greatly boosting my devotion to Bhagavan.

Bhagavan's grace has sustained me in difficulties and turbulences in my life.

\*An officer with the Board of Intermediate Education, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh, . He is presently Treasurer of the Kendram.

\*\* Reminiscences of Swami Ranganathananda are at pp. 209-11 of **Face to Face with Sri Maharshi**.

**FASTING:** It is a spiritual discipline. To fast is to abstain from something that gives us pleasure or enjoyment, in order that it may enhance our spiritual experience. It is not dieting or 'not eating'. It is a way to spiritual fitness. The Bible says, 'when you fast do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. They neglect their appearance so that they may appear to others as fasting.' One who fasts must avoid all sense of spiritual superiority and pride...In Sanskrit 'upa' means near and 'vaas' means to dwell. Thus

fasting means to live or remain closer to God. It is not a negative act of abstaining but a positive step of obtaining God's love... Fasting is fuel for the soul that ignites faith and greater intimacy with God and thereby makes our lives happier and more joyful. – *Thomos Chillikulam*

## Oh RAMANA

By K.R.K. Murty\*

Oh RAMANA! On this side and on that side numerous nets are spread, I somehow fell into your net unknowingly. How skillful you are, in catching hold of persons to protect them. Others catch to exploit and you, to save. If you had not graciously caught hold of me, I would have fallen in some net and suffered. Oh all-powerful Guru Deva! You are my All in this world and the next. Do not leave me alone even for a moment.

Oh RAMANA! You are my Father, Mother and God. You are my 'atma bandhu', who will never forsake me. You sit in my heart and direct my activities. Even if I forget you, you will never leave me. Though you were helping me so much, I was not able to understand all these days, due to my ignorance.

Oh RAMANA! Though you are advising from inside, I was so deaf that I could not hear you. Though I was seeing your powers, I was so ignorant that I could not understand. Though I was experiencing so many things, I was so dumb that I could not express. Oh, Bhagavan! Is it no your job to rid your child of all these ailments? I cannot suffer any more, cure all these diseases and bless me. (From the author's book **Sri Ramana Bhagavan**, published by him from 1-8-7/13, Sarvodaya Colony, Chikkadpalli, Hyderabad – 20.)

\* Was chief electrical engineer, with the A.P. government. His reminiscences of Bhagavan are at pp.323-6 of **Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi**.

**RECOGNISE YOUR REAL IDENTITY:** We sometimes ask questions like, Who am I? What is my duty? What is the purpose of my life? Etc. Let us take a commonly expressed doubt: Who am I, really? The immediate answer that comes to mind would be the name you have been given. When someone calls out your name, you respond. And that, over time, becomes your identity. There is nothing wrong in it. But on probing further, we would discover that the identity we think we have is

only a part of the story. If we were only the body then why when we are dead it is said that the person, say, Ram Krishen, has gone? Ram Krishen is very much lying before our eyes, his body fully intact. Yet we say ‘he is gone’. It means that the real Ram Krishen was something more the body. It was the *atman* within, which has left. Yet we, as well the whole world, continue to identify ourselves with the body. We need to remind ourselves of our real identity, and live with that consciousness. True, to reconcile the physical and the spiritual is not an easy thing to do. However, we can try to understand the import of the truth and practice it as much as we can. As the Gita says, “The more we are able to identify with the Self, the less will we be affected by pleasure and pain.” The main theme of Sri Ramana Maharshi’s message is that a constant and deep self-enquiry about our true nature will help us to realise the Self, and make us perpetually happy. – Adapted from ‘The Speaking Tree’, *Times of India*.

**I quit seeking/ I become still/ I turned within/ and there in me/ the light began to shine.** – *Anonymous*

**There are only two rules on the spiritual path: Begin and continue.** – *Sufi saying*

**We are so focused on complaining about things that we lose sight of things we have. There is a lot to be thankful for.** – *Anonymous*

**We are not creatures of circumstance; we are creator of circumstance.** – *Benjamin Disraeli*

**Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life.** – *Beethoven*

**HELP OTHERS AND GET REWARDED – AN ANECDOTE:** Fleming, a poor Scottish farmer, heard a cry for help. A boy mired to his waist in black muck was struggling to free himself. He saved the boy. Next day, a nobleman came to him and said, “You have saved my son, I want to reward you.” Fleming replied that he had only done his duty. The nobleman asked Fleming about his son, who was standing next to him and offered to educate him as a gesture of goodwill. Years passed. Fleming’s son became Sir Alexander Fleming, discoverer of penicillin. Years later, the nobleman’s son was stricken with pneumonia and was saved by penicillin. The name of the nobleman was Lord Randolph Churchill, father of Sir Winston Churchill. – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

## JULY 2010

**JNANA AND BHAKTI:** Whatever the means, the destruction of the sense 'I' and 'mine' is the goal, and as these are interdependent, the destruction of either of them causes the destruction of the other. Therefore, either the path of knowledge (*jnana*) which removes the sense of 'I' or the path of devotion (*bhakti*) which removes the sense of 'mine', will suffice. So there is no doubt that the end of the two paths is one and the same. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**KANCHI KAMAKSHI TEMPLE:** Kanchi, district headquarters of Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, situated on the banks of Palar river, is famous for silk sarees. It is said that Kamakshi offered worship to a sand Siva linga under a mango tree and won Siva's hand in marriage. Kamakshi Amman is seated in a majestic *padmasan* posture. She holds a sugarcane bow, and lotus and parrot in her two lower arms, and has two divine weapons *Pasa* and *Ankusha* in two . upper hands. The idol is embellished with exquisite jewels. It is popularly believed that Adi Sankara attained *samadhi* at Kanchipuram. Another school of thought is that his *samadhi* is located at Kedarnath in the Himalayas. – Excerpts from *Splendour*, March 2010

**DAKSHINAMURTI:** It is an aspect of Lord Siva as the Universal Guru. Facing south, the Lord sits under a banyan tree. He does not speak. He is surrounded by sages, who receive guidance through his silence. His left foot is folded on his lap. Under his right foot is demon Apasmara, personification of ignorance. Of his four hands, one of the upper arms holds a rosary or snake and the other a flame. The lower left hand holds *kusa* grass or scripture and the right hand is in *jnana mudra*, where thumb, denoting God, and the index finger, denoting man, are joined together. – Excerpts from *Tattvaloka*, March 2010

**PARA AND APARA VIDYA:** All knowledge can be divided into two categories: *para vidya* and *apara vidya*. Knowledge that leads to Self-realisation is called *para vidya* or divine knowledge. Everything else is called *apara vidya* or knowledge of the material world. – *Mundaka Upanishad*

## REMEMBERING T. R. KANAKAMMAL

**Kankammal\* (88 years) had come to Bhagavan in 1946 and lived near the Ashram thereafter. Her experiences at the Ashram are in *Cherished Memories* (original Tamil), a must read for Bhagavan’s devotees. The translation of the original is by Lalitha Krithivasan, wife of the Kendram’s former president V. Krithivasan. Following is a brief account of her passing away in Bhagavan’s Samadhi Hall.**

It was Bhagavan’s 130<sup>th</sup> *Jayanti* day as per Tamil calendar. It also happened to be New Year day, January 1, 2010. It became doubly auspicious as it was also the day of *Ardra* – when Siva rose as a column of light. Rarely do *Ardra* and *Punarvasu* (Bhagavan’s birth star) fall on the same day.

The *Jayanti* started like any other morning for Kanakammal. When her own hands, she served breakfast and coffee to the devotee who had come from Kodaikanal to take care of her.

That day the Samadhi Hall was full to capacity. The *Mahanyasa Rudra Japam* having just been completed, the *parayana* of the *Mahantarayana Upanishad* (This includes our familiar *Na Karmana*), was about to commence. Kanakammal just then entered the Hall through the entrance near the well, using her walking stick, escorted by her friend and attendant. She moved towards the stone railing to rest her hand and tried to hold it with her eyes directed at the lingam. As she tried to hold on to the pillar, her hands shook violently, her knees buckled and she fell on folded legs with both her arms outstretched. Her eyes closed for ever and her mouth fell open.

She was taken to her house outside the Ashram. Her body was carried by devotees led by the president of the Ashram, his wife and their son Dr. Anand. Her relatives from Chennai and Bangalore were informed. They arrived in the afternoon and the prescribed rituals commenced in all their solemnity. Her younger brother performed the rites. – Excerpted from *Mountain Path*, April-June, 2010

Kanakammal had a very unusual relationship with Bhagavan. She writes in her book “A few days before I finally came to Arunachala, I had a strange and wonderful experience. It was very early in the morning, and I was still asleep. I felt Bhagavan’s presence close to me. I felt that he was sitting beside me, caressing me from the neck to the heart. He smiled and said, ‘What is it that you gave me? Why is it that I love you so much?’ As he spoke he continued to stroke my neck and throat with an infinitely tender touch. I cannot say how long this experience lasted. I am sure it was just a dream. All my senses were aware of Bhagavan’s presence by my side...” (P. 57)



Two other examples of lady devotees who got united with the Supreme are: Andala getting absorbed in Lord Vishnu at Srirangam, Tamil Nadu, and Meera Bai getting merged with Krishna at Dwarkadheesh temple at Jamnagar, Gujarat.

\*One can hear her narrate her experiences in the video **Guru Ramana**, available at the Kendram. Her reminiscences are at pp. 289-91 of **Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi**.

**SPIRITUALITY ESSENTIAL TO SAVE CIVILISATION:** Material advancement has far outstripped the spiritual advancement and hence the imbalance. They are the two bullocks tied in a cart and should move with equal pace in the same direction to reach the destination safely. After thousands of years, men are the same old Adams, just changing their dress every now and then according to convenience. Humans have changed very little and their outlook changes very little. At the height of civilization, Germany waged two wars to which history has no parallel. Self-centered and self-willed creatures, as most of us are, we have failed to master the art of living with others in the family, in the community, in the society, in the nation and internationally. The place of truthfulness today is like a ship in a turbulent sea, tied with silken threads. – *Sir Richard Livingston, a British philosopher.*

**HOW I GOT INTRODUCED TO THE MAHARSHI:** In 1978, I read in a book by Arthur Osborne about Bhagavan's arrival at Tiruvannamalai, discarding all possessions, and surrendering fully to Lord Arunachaleshwara, and remaining there for 54 years, till his *mahanirvana* in 1950. While reading the book, I was virtually travelling to Tiruvannmalai, mentally walking behind Bhagavan. I was wondering how one in many, many crores attain such a state of mind – *Ekagra chittam*, with absolute surrender to the Lord. I am still in a wondering stage without an answer. Then I came in contact with Dr. K.S. [founder of our Kendram] at a public function and thus Ramana took me to His fold and showered His Grace through our *sadguru*, Dr. K.S., who often used to say, "It has to be experienced, it cannot be explained." *R. Rama Murthy, M.Com., AICWA, is a long standing devotee of our Kendram.*

**FIND THE SOURCE OF EGO:** Meditation is deliberating on the thought process and bringing it to a focal point. Give up the *bhavana* that you are the body related to name, profession, religion and other such acquired entities... The very purpose of self-enquiry is to focus the entire mind at its source. Until one realizes the state of pure being, the enquiry should continue. If you keep raising the enquiry 'who am I', many thought-waves will disappear with the enquiry. To gauge the progress on the journey of Self-realisation watch the degree of absence of thoughts. The obstacles are

thoughts. Progress is measured by the degree of removal of these thoughts. The journey is difficult; but it is achievable with sincerity, persistence and patience. Just meditate on the question: ‘Who am I?’ and you will find the answer. – *Shedon*

## RECOLLECTIONS OF SRI RAMANA

By V.S.V. Mani

**The following is based on Mani’s video interview. He passed away in 2009 at the age of 96. His wife was grand daughter of Lakshmi Ammal, who had played with Bhagavan during her childhood.**

I belong to Tiruvannamalai. I worked in a bank and retired as chairman of a bank. I have been visiting Bhagavan since my childhood, but was a regular visitor to the Ashram 1939 onwards.

As I wanted to see the place where the Karthigai Deepam is lit, I sought Bhagavan’s permission to go up the hill. He told me to go on the straight path and not to follow any short cuts. After passing Skandasram, we took a shorter cut and met monkeys and cobras on the way. We had to return and take the path as instructed by Bhagavan.

Our first child was unable to walk until the age of two. When we brought the child to the Ashram, Bhagavan stroked the child’s legs. On the third day she started walking and on the fourth day, she started running.

Somebody had presented a bull to the *gosala*. Being very strong and violent, it would break its chains and attack those who came near it. Hearing this, Bhagavan went to the bull and asked him to calm down. Due to Bhagavan’s sweet pleadings, the bull became normal.

When we invited Bhagavan for the *grahapravesham* of our house at Maduari, he told my wife that she would come if she brought Annamalai there. Bhagavan said, “Annamalai is static and so also I am static.”

When we had to leave the Ashram, I requested permission to depart. But Bhagavan told us to remain for two more days. It was unusual for Bhagavan to influence a person’s travel plans. It turned out that the next day there was a cyclone and heavy rain, all roads were obstructed, trains disrupted and nobody could travel. There was a

breach in the railway track beyond Villupuram. Only then did we understand why Bhagavan didn't permit us to leave.

Generally, when Bhagavan went on *giripradakshina*, most of the Ashram inmates went along with him, carrying food with them.

There was only one thatched guest house for men in the Ashram. I remember Ramaswamy Reddiar, later chief minister of Madras Presidency, Gopal Rao, chairman, Bank of Baroda and one Sastri, regional manager, Central Bank of India, staying with us. As there were no regular cooks we used to serve the food and clean vessels.

Once Bhagavan wrote a poem in Tamil and showed it to Muruganar, who pointed out some mistakes and corrected them. Bhagavan jokingly said that in olden days Nakkeeran had pointed out mistakes in Easwaran's (i.e. God's) poems. Similarly, Muruganar was the Kaliyuga Nakkeeran, correcting his poems.

In those days, the Ashram's office and bookstall stood in what is today Bhagavan's Samadhi hall. I would regularly help with the books in the stall. *Sarvadhikari* Chinnaswami commanded everyone in their jobs.

Bhagavan was fond of groundnuts. I used to peel off the shell and give them to him.

Bhagavan moved easily with everybody. When he sat in the hall, everyone silently observed him. It was a common phenomenon that whatever questions one wanted to ask Bhagavan, one would get answered before being put the questions to him.

Once Ganapati Muni enquired of Bhagavan how he was able to survive on the hill when he was observing *mouna* and how he got his food. Bhagavan told him that there were many shrubs on the hill and if he ate small fruits like *sundaikkai*, he did not feel hunger at all.

There was no water when the construction of Skandashram was contemplated. Bhagavan instructed us to dig for water at a particular spot, and soon we had copious flow of water. At night, wild animals would come to drink water. Bhagavan said that the *ashramites* should not drive them away as it was their place.

Bhagavan was *avatar* of Dakshinamurthi. In the hall he sat facing south and wherever else he sat, he faced south as well. His sofa, where he gave *darshan*, faced south.

Whenever Bhagavan's legs gave him pain, he himself applied oil and massaged them. He didn't ask help of anyone else to massage his legs.

During construction of Mother's temple, Bhagavan inspected the work daily and had discussions with the *sthapathi* at every stage of construction, which was to be strictly according to *Agama sastras*. However, Bhagavan never discussed financial aspects of construction of the temple. When the idol was to be placed facing east, Bhagavan marked the exact direction with his walking stick.

When I heard that Bhagavan was seriously ill, my wife and I came to the Ashram. His left arm was heavily bandaged. When my wife asked him if he had any pain, he replied, "The pain is only for the body and not for me. You should know this, as you are coming here for many years – that the pain is not for me. This is the teaching: that the body and the Self are different." This was two days before his *mahanirvana*.  
– *Condensed from Mountain Path, April-June 2010*

## **SADHANA NECESSARY TO LAUNDER THE SOUL**

By Sudhamahi Regunathan

The soul is essentially pure in nature. Our life and experiences we go through cling to the soul as polluting particles. If a ball were to fall into slush, we have to wash it to make it clean once again. Just as mud particles stick to the ball, so do our *karmas* cling to our soul sullying it. Our endeavour should be to get rid of them and return to the pure soul.

It is all about laundry even in the spiritual world! How does one wash the soul? The 'water' to wash off all karmic particles clinging to the soul is a combination of neutrality and detachment, just as hard to get a clean and reliable combination of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen.

When we experience emotions of attachment, hate and anger, we are adding on many more particles. If we are able to go through an experience without raging of passions, then no karmic particles are added on.

Jains have devised a technique that enables us to give the soul a 'bath'. It is called *kayotsarga*. *Kaya* means the body and *utsarga* means rise above it. Body and soul cannot be experienced at the same time. Either one or the other is experienced. When

we, living in the body, ‘discard’ it and begin experiencing the soul, then it is called *kayotsarga* – to experience the soul and stop experiencing the body. In this practice a gradual relaxation leads to detachment from the body and other worldly activities. This detachment frees the *jiva* from bondage. Drawing from this spiritual practice, Acharya Mahaprajna has devised a system of meditation called *Preksha dhyan*, where *kayotsarga* is the first and the last step. – *Times of India*

## **UMA SAHASRAM OF GANAPATI MUNI**

**The following verses chosen at random from the English translation of *Uma Sahasram* by S. Madan Mohan Sarma\* show the wide range, grand variety and large span of this great composition. It would be of interest to note Bhagavan’s role in getting written 300 out of 1000 verses contained in this magnum opus of the Muni.**

T.K. Sundaresa Iyer records in his *At the Feet of Bhagavan*: After Ganapati Muni had composed 700 out of 1000 verses of *Uma Sahasram* in praise of the Divine Mother, he announced that the complete work will be dedicated on a particular day in the Arunachaleswara Temple. On the evening of the dedication day he found that 300 verses were still to be composed. When the Maharshi asked the Muni whether he was getting the event postponed, the Muni assured him that the task would be completed here and now. The scene that followed was unbelievable. The Maharshi sat silent and in deep meditation. The eager disciples of the Muni watched in tense admiration the sweet flow of Sanskrit verses as they came from the lips of the Muni and wrote them down. The job over, Bhagavan opened his eyes and asked the Muni whether all that he said had been taken down. The Muni’s grateful response was, “All that Bhagavan inspired in me has been taken down.” It is noteworthy that whereas the Muni revised the first 700 verses of this monumental work some six times, he did not revise any of the last 300.

### **Theme of some of the verses from the book:**

1. May the Divine Mother Uma, be pleased to annihilate our ignorance and offer solace by showering mercy on us.
2. Divine Mother Kalika! If Isvara is called Bhava, Thou art Bhavani. However, if he is called Sat, Thou art Sati.

3. During the unmanifested state of the universe, Isvara and Thou were one. After the universe came into being, Thou art distinct from Iswara and sovereign by Thine own right.
4. Divine Mother! Consort of Mrutyunjaya, Thou manifested in humans as *Kundalini* lying dormant in the *Muladhara chakra*. In their hearts thou art consciousness and Thou art the thought process in the thousand petalled lotus in the head.
5. A sculptor par excellence, Siva, along with his beloved Uma is the source of all universal beings. It is as if Siva and Sakti took over the roles of male and female principles of living species for Their divine play.
6. Thine eyes assure us of the extraordinary power Thou wield. The whole universe is at Thy beck and call. A fact beyond belief.
7. Obeisance to the Divine Mother Chandika, who slayed the atrocious demon Mahishasura.
8. May the Divine Mother Parvati who welcomes the ash-smearred body of Iswara into Her embrace be pleased to grant me the growth of my intellect?
9. Thy conch-shaped neck, the home of vocal chords, is the source of sound in the universe.
10. Of the two *nadis* on either side of the central vertebral column – *Ida* and *Pingala* – the former leads to the divine and the latter is more earthly. The churning is the divine play and the nectar is symbolic of bliss.
11. Divine Mother! The consumption of intoxicants by seekers of *sattva guna* is reprehensible. Common folk taking this stuff ruin themselves in the long run.
12. The milk-filled breasts of the Divine Mother are enough to nourish the universe of living beings. While the shoulders of the Divine Mother are a source of pleasure to Her Lord Iswara, Her slim, tender hands in *Abhaya mudra* offer protection to mankind.
13. Hey, Divine Mother! Thy Lord Iswara sports a moon on His head and holds a skull in His hand, while Thine ornaments – a dazzling necklace or a garland of skulls – present an enigma to us.
14. Oh, Mother Divine! Thou fondly embrace and shower kisses on my younger brother Skanda incarnate Ramana and look with disapproval at me, Ganapati.

15. The story of sage Jamadagni's order to behead the Divine Mother out of rage; the obedient Parasurama's execution of command, and the re-entry of the Mother's life force into the life-extinct body of the Divine Mother Renuka's body is awe-inspiring indeed.

16. Oh, my friend! Renounce the short-lived, the world of phenomena and worship the Divine Mother Uma.

17. Hey, Divine Mother! I wish to know the right means to obtain Thy grace, whether by unceasing repetition of sacred syllables (mantra *japa*), meditation or self surrender.

18. Hey, Divine Mother! I perceive Thee in the form of *Naada*, as instructed by the great sage Ramana Maharshi and every moment I seek its source.

19. Divine Mother, consort of Iswara; I pray that my motherland, Bharatavarsa be free from slavery. I pray that the sage Ramana spread the light of knowledge.

20. One who worships the Divine Mother in Her manifestation Bhuvaneshvari or Kali adored by the sages of yore acquires mastery over the spoken word and attains the status of immortality.

21. May the delight of the Divine Mother, queen consort of the Lord of the Universe – Siva, Light of spirituality, bring solace to one and all?

\*The book is in the Kendram's library.

**AN ANECDOTE:** A person, who came for Bhagavan's *darshan*, took himself for Krishna, wearing clothes like Krishna. The Maharshi appeared to take him seriously, and treated him as Krishna himself. He even arranged for one of his attendants to give special treatment to him. The person was very pleased and went out. *Bhaktas* who were present in the hall, protested against Maharshi's treatment of pseudo-Krishna, saying that it was not proper for him to treat that man in this manner. The Maharshi silenced all by saying: "All of you are taking yourself for Mr. X or Mr. Y, so what is wrong for this one taking himself for Sri Krishna?" – [www.davidgodman.org](http://www.davidgodman.org)

**SATSANG:** It means association with *Sat* or Reality. Such association with *Sat* or one who knows *sat* is absolutely necessary for all. Adi Sankara says that in all the three worlds there is no boat like *satsang* to carry one safely across the ocean of births and deaths... The gaze of a *jnani* has a purifying effect for certain. However, just as a piece of coal takes a long time to be ignited, and a piece of charcoal takes a

shorter time, and gunpowder ignites instantly, so too with individuals who come into the presence of a *jnani*. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**Discover the treasure of happiness within. Life lived happily is the measure of a successful life.** – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

**You are not completely dressed, until your face wears a smile.** – *Mahatma Gandhi*

**Devoid of all thoughts, one enjoys imperishable bliss.** – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**What lies behind us and what lies before us are small matters compared to what lies within us.** – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

**Discipline is the bridge between goals and accomplishments.** – *Jim Rohn*

**The worst boss any one can have is a bad habit.** – *Anonymous*

### **SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI – THREE ANECDOTES**

Two years before Bhagavan's *mahanirvana*, one morning he was in the hall surrounded by devotees. It was time for lunch. Some were already in the dining hall waiting for Bhagavan to come. At that Bhagavan was suffering from rheumatism in the knees. He got up slowly after rubbing his knees and moved towards the hall. Suddenly he noticed a villager with a pot hanging on a strap from his shoulder. He stopped and exclaimed, "Look, is it not Chinnappaya?" "Yes, it is me Swami," the villager replied with great devotion and respect. Bhagavan asked him, "How are you? Are you well? You have come to see me. But what is in your pot? Have you brought some *koolu* (gruel)?" "Yes, Swami," replied the villager shyly. "Then come on let me have it." Bhagavan put away his stick, cupped his two hands together and bent forward to drink the gruel. The poor man's face was beaming with joy and Bhagavan was drinking steadily, as if it was nectar. People in the dining hall were getting restless. One of them came out to ascertain the cause of delay. When he saw the scene, he exclaimed, "How unfair, Bhagavan. We are all waiting for you and you are late for this peasant!" Bhagavan grew indignant. "What, do you all think that I am here for your sake only? Do I belong to you? Did you care for me when I was on the hill? Nobody wanted me then, only the shepherds would share their *koolu* with me." And he went into the dining hall followed by the villager and his pot.



2. On a moonlit night some devotees were going round the hill, chanting the Vedas. Suddenly they saw a leopard right in the middle of the road looking at them. They were paralysed with fear. The leopard looked at them for some time and then slowly crossed the road and disappeared into the jungle. The devotees thanked their stars, completed the *prikrama* and told the story to Bhagavan after they came back. Bhagavan who listened carefully, said, “There was no reason to fear. The leopard was a *jnani*, who had come down to listen to your chanting of the Vedas. He went away disappointed because out of fear you stopped singing. Why were you afraid?”

3. In the big hall in front of the Mother’s temple, a gorgeous sofa carved from a single block of black granite was placed for Bhagavan to sit. When all was ready he was requested to move from the old hall. But he refused. A stone statue of him was being carved, and he said, “The stone swami will sit on the stone sofa.” And it came true. Bhagavan used the stone sofa very little and only for the sake of the large gatherings which were brought by the news of his fatal illness. When he was no more in the body, the statue was enthroned in the new hall and there it is now.

(*Ramana Smrti* – Sri Ramana Maharshi birth centenary offering, 1980.)

## AUGUST- 2010

**RETREATING INTO THE SELF:** But you must be energetic when you take to meditation. It is definitely not a part-time occupation. Limit your interests and activities to what is needed for you and your dependents’ barest needs. Save all your energy and time for breaking the wall which your mind has built around you. Believe me you will not regret. – *Nisargdatta Maharaj*

## WHO WERE YOU SRI RAMANA?

Sri Ramana is believed to be an avatar of Subrahmanya, the second son of Siva. This was a widely-held view in Maharshi’s time, primarily because Ganapati Muni had repeatedly and confidently made this assertion in his works *Sri Ramana Gita*, *Chatvarmsat* and *Uma Shahasram*, and others. Krishna Bhikshu, Sri Ramana’s Telugu biographer, accepted this claim and devoted several pages of *Sri Ramana Leela* (chapter 49) to demonstrate that the claim was genuine.

## **Ganapati Muni's vision**

Ganapati Muni's conviction arose from an incident that occurred in March 1908, when he was with Bhagavan at Pachiamman Koil, a temple at the outskirts of Tiruvannamalai. Early one morning he saw a bright light appear and touch Bhagavan's forehead. The light enveloped Bhagavan, and within that glowing effulgence the Muni discerned six stars of different colours which eventually merged into a single light.

As the legend tells us, Subrahmanya was created from light that came out of Siva, who passed it on to Vayu, the god of wind. The power of the light was too much for Vayu, so he gave it to Agni, who could not bear its radiance for long. He cast it into river Ganga, causing its cool water to boil. The terrible heat so generated set fire to the reeds on the river bank. In that great blaze, Siva's energy transformed into a radiant child, a boy with six heads and twelve arms. When the fire died out six wandering nymphs called the Krittikas found the body beneath the embers and smouldering ash, within the petals of a splendid lotus. They nursed him and took him to Siva. Parvati joined the babies together in a form that had one trunk, twelve arms and six faces.

He was given many names in keeping with his status – **Skand**, the energetic emission; **Mahasena**, the great leader; **Guha**, the mysterious one; **Shanmukha**, the six-faced one; **Pavaki**, son of fire; **Sarabhu**, born amidst reeds, **Kumar**, the boy; and **Kartika**, son of Krittika maidens. The six visible stars of the Pleiades\* are known as 'Karttika'. When Ganapati Muni saw six stars merge into one in Ramana Maharshi's form, he came to the conclusion that Bhagavan was a manifestation or avatar of Subrahmanya.

Proponents of the avatar theory have drawn up long lists of facts and coincidences to demonstrate the validity of their belief. For example, Bhagavan's occasional references to Arunachala as his 'father' are taken to be proof that he must be one of Siva's sons. (Reference can be made to an article by Ra Ganapati that appeared in October 1984 issue of *The Mountain Path*, for a detailed account in this regard.)

### ***Jnanis'* power to grant visions – How it works?**

Since the original claim can be traced back to Ganapati Muni's vision, it may be noted that *jnanis* have power to grant vision in the form as desired by the devotee. The following experience as narrated K. Vithoba Kamath is relevant:

“I used to sit in the hall in the last row. One day an idea flashed that I should see Lord Krishna. I intently looked at Bhagavan and saw a dark cloud engulfing him and within that emerged the Lord. I was at my wit’s end. I thought it was a hallucination and a projection of my own mind. I wanted to try again. This time I thought of Gandhiji. Ramana was nowhere, but in his place there was Gandhiji. Being bewildered, I looked at Bhagavan. There! He was looking straight at me with a benign smile on his face. I felt highly blessed.” (*Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 390)

The desire for a vision need not be expressed. If there is a hidden desire for one, then that may be enough for Bhagavan to appear in a different form. The following comments by Papaji explain this quite well:

The enlightened man, the *jnani*, does not do anything. He just sits quietly, like a mountain. He does not respond to your requests by doing anything, but if you go near him with a desire in your mind, there will be an automatic response. If you throw a rubber ball at a wall, it will bounce back. The angle and speed of the ball off the wall will depend on the angle and speed at which you throw it. The wall does not have to decide how to respond to the incoming ball. When you go into the presence of a *jnani* with desires in your mind, the appropriate response comes back automatically. You don’t even have to talk about them. But if you go into the presence of a *jnani* without any thoughts or desires, what will be reflected back will be the state of thoughtlessness and desirelessness. In his presence you will be established in that state. This is the *sannidhi*, the presence of the *jnani*, at work. You don’t need to ask for anything. Just go near him. (*Nothing Ever Happened* by David Godman, volume three, pp. 335-6)

Possibly the vision which appeared to Ganapati Muni in 1908 was triggered by his latent desire to see Bhagavan in the form of Subrahmanya.

### **Role played by Bhagavan**

What did Bhagavan himself make of these claims? He neither denied nor confirmed them, as was usual with him. He seemed happy to have some of his devotees believe that he was Subrahmanya, if that was good for their level of devotion, but he never actually endorsed their belief. When he was living at Virupaksha Cave, he even composed a verse saying that he was Subrahmanya for the benefit of a devotee, Perumal Swami, who wanted to have a poem that expressed these sentiments. This incident resurfaced in the mid-1930s when Perumal Swami was suing the

Ramanasramam management over the ownership of its properties. The following exchange was recorded:

**Lawyer:** People say that you are the incarnation of Lord Subrahmanya.

**Bhagavan:** That and all gods are only me. [laughter]

**Lawyer:** Perumal Swami has written in his diary that you are an avatara of Lord Subrahmanya. [The lawyer then showed Bhagavan a verse in Perumal Swami's diary.] This verse says that you are Subrahmanya. Is the handwriting yours?

**Bhagavan:** The handwriting is mine but the idea was Perumal Swami's. (*Living by the Words of Bhagavan* by David Godman, p. 138)

In the verse composed by Bhagavan, he clearly identifies himself with Subrahmanya, but one should remember that verse was written to please Perumal Swami. The verse in effect says: The six-faced Lord who came on earth to remove the defects of his devotees by saying 'Fear not!', who bears twelve hands, who, having subdued the five senses, rides upon the peacock of the elevated mind-lotus, and who plays the game of throwing the spear which is the glance of *jnana*, is indeed the Lord who blissfully abides as Arunamalai-Ramana.

With Bhagavan showing a willingness to help devotees in this way, it is not surprising that the 'Subrahmanya-avatar' theory persists to this day.

### **Vishwanatha Swami's vision**

Vishwanatha Swami begins his *Ramana Ashtothra* by referring to Bhagavan as 'One who sprung from the resplendence of Mahasena. that is, Subrahmanya – *Om Mahasena mahomsena jataya namah*. His other references are: *Om Indumoulina pitrumate namah* – Son of crescent-crowned God. *Om Amita vikramaya namah* – Boundless victor, one of immeasurable heroism. *Om Sukumaraya namah* – The comely Son, ever fresh and ever young. *Om Guhaya namah* – Subrahmanya, dweller in the heart-cave. *Om Skandaya namah* – Kumara, as the earthly manifestation of Siva. *Om Senanye namah* – Commander of the army.

### **Did Virupaksh Deva/Guhai Namasivaya appear as Bhagavan?**

David Godman relates an interesting incident that took place at Virupaksha Cave. A visitor who was meditating there went into a kind of trance and passed out for some time. When he came round, he said that he had had some kind of vision in which he had been taken back in time to the days when Virupaksha Deva was there, and he found himself sitting with the saint. He said that Ramana Maharshi was also there,

and in that previous life both the man who had had the trance and Bhagavan seemed to be disciples of Virupaksha Deva.

Virupaksha Deva and Guhai Namasivaya came from Karnataka together about 450 years ago on the instructions of their guru. Little is known about Virupaksha Deva, but Guhai Namasivaya wrote thousands of Tamil *venba* verses that praised Arunachala. The *venba* metre was the one that Bhagavan most commonly used when he wrote Tamil verses. One could certainly list Guhai Namasivaya as a possible last-life candidate for Bhagavan. We can not also exclude Virupaksha Deva, even though he does not appear to have left any poetic record. The fact that Bhagavan was drawn to live both in Virupaksha Cave and Guhai Namasivaya Temple (where he composed *Who am I?*) might indicate that he had *samskaras* associated with both places. There is also the possibility that Bhagavan, as reported by the man who had the vision in the cave, was an unknown disciple of Virupaksha Deva.

(Based on David Godman's blog in [www.davidgodman.org](http://www.davidgodman.org) *Shiva – An Introduction* by Devadutt Pattanaik, and *The 108 Names of Sri Bhagavan* by Professor K. Swaminathan.)

\*Pleiades is an open star cluster in the constellation Taurus, consisting of several hundred stars of which six or seven are visible to the naked eye. It is also called the 'Seven Sisters.'

## THE MAHARSHI CONTINUES TO REMAIN AVAILABLE TO US

By Professor D. Gurumurti

**The professor had visited Bhagavan a few months before his *mahanirvana*.**

As devotees advanced to the presence of the Maharshi and bowed down in utter faith and fervent dedication, vibrations of power could be felt. At every bow a wave of devotion would flow towards the sage, and there would come a powerful flood of benediction from him to the devotees on the ground. A veritable miracle was being performed. An aged body bent down by terrific penances, exhausted and enfeebled by a mortal illness, and yet the immortal spirit of the emancipated sage triumphed over the weakness of the body, which was resplendent and shedding benign grace on the assembled devotees. Few among mankind have had the great privilege of participating in such a spiritual feast.

When I sat in the evening session of *darshan*, a question formed in my mind. What will happen to the hundreds that will be deprived of the spiritual nourishment? As I was mentally addressing this question to Sri Ramana, radiance was felt by me. His physical form before me gradually became shrunken, smaller and smaller and vanished into radiance. As the radiance grew deeper and more powerful, I felt I had the answer to my query: **Even though the body may disappear, concentration of spiritual power which was focused round it will continue to shed its influence. And as long as one can put oneself into attunement with that form and with that radiance, one would draw spiritual sustenance.** (*Arunachala's Ramana*, Vol. VIII)

### REMINISCENCES OF MAJOR CHADWICK\*

**Regarding the Major, Dr. Sarada was told by Swami Ramananda\*\*:** Major Chadwick would seat near the entrance of the Mother's temple. He conducted the daily *Veda parayana* in a meticulous manner. So perfect was his adherence to every aspect of the chanting and ritual that but for his white skin, none could have distinguished that he was a 'foreigner'. Being from the army, he was a strict disciplinarian and the *parayana* and worship was conducted perfectly to the last detail. It was indeed a joy to watch the scene. The Major writes:

Bhagavan was always scrupulously clean and his body gave off a faint perfume, though he never used any scented soap. At one time he used snuff but had given it up before I joined the Ashram. He used to chew betel regularly just after meals and before he went for his stroll on the hill; he would thoroughly wash out his mouth immediately afterwards. There was never any stain on his lips, and he chewed only for a few minutes, and then purely as a digestive.

One morning, Bhagavan was about to go out and was only waiting for the attendant to give the betel, which was always placed by his side when it was time for his walk. For some reason the attendant did not do it. Everybody in the Hall was waiting expectantly but could do nothing about it, as the management did not allow anybody to attend on Bhagavan except those who had been specially detailed. Eventually, Bhagavan got up and left the Hall without it. From that day on he never chewed again. He would not cause inconvenience to anybody, even to the attendant whose duty it was to look after such things, nor would he be bound by any habit. We were all sad at this mishap, as everybody felt that the betel did help the body to bear the pain. But what did the health of the body matter, he would say, "The body itself is the worst sickness."

Bhagavan never encouraged people who came and started to confess their sins. He would not allow them to continue but shut them up by telling them not to dwell on the past but to find out who they were now in the present. The point was not the act but attachment to it that mattered. Dwelling on it in retrospect was the worst thing they could possibly do; this itself was attachment.

Bhagavan was invariably kind to all animals. The squirrels used to run in and out of the Hall window, over his couch and even his body. He would feed them with nuts and stroke them; some of them even had names. Their chief ambition seemed to be to make nests behind his pillows so that they might bring up their families under his protection.

He seemed specially to love monkeys and often said that in many ways they were better than human beings. They lived from day to day not planning for the future and there was no premeditation in the mischief they performed. He would be very amused when some monkey would slip into the hall and snatch away plantains from the side of an unsuspecting devotee. He would often give directions that monkeys should be fed, and encouraged them in many ways much to the annoyance of the management to whom they were a great nuisance.

The Rani of Baroda presented to Bhagavan a white peacock and two white peahens to go with him. The male was especially devoted to Bhagavan and never wanted to leave his side. Bhagavan was then living in shed, which was constructed by the side of the old hall, owing to the increasing number of visitors. As the peacock had outgrown the cage, a perch was put up in the shed, by the side of Bhagavan's couch, where the peacock slept at night. People used to say that it was Madhav Swamy, Bhagavan's attendant, who had passed away sometime before. Bhagavan would nurse the peacock and pick lice off its body. He taught it not to eat caterpillars and other insects but to be strict vegetarian. On the night of Bhagavan's passing it stood on the roof of the room where Bhagavan was lying and screeched without intermission. – *Arunachala's Ramana*, Vol. IV

\* Major A.W. Chadwick, O.B.E. (1890-1962) was in British army serving in South America. After getting captivated by Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*, he resigned his post, came to Bhagavan in November 1935 and remained there for good. He became Sadhu Arunachala and lies buried in the Ashram campus. He rendered into English all the original works of Bhagavan, which were perused by Bhagavan himself. He authored *A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi* (1961). Many more enchanting reminiscences of the Major are in **Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi** at pp. 110-16.

\*\* *The Ramana Way*, February-March, 2010

## *MADHUR BHAVA IN AKSHARA MANA MALAI*

**In this great composition, Bhagavan has prepared a bridal garland of letter for his lover Arunachala, who drew him from Madurai to Tiruvannamalai. Some verses seeking union with the Lord are as follows:**

‘Azhagu’, which in Tamil means beauty and ‘Sundaram’ (names of Bhagavan’s mother and father) though belonging to two different languages, are united in their meaning, you and I might appear to be different, but are inseparably united, like my parents. (Verse 1)

Strip me, Arunachala! When I stand naked before you, clothe me in your Grace and take me into your embrace. (Verse 30)

Arunachala! All I have is yours. I belong to you, body and soul. Every cell of my being longs for union with you. If you do not make me yours, I cannot stand the pain of separation. I will melt away in tears, unless you take me into your embrace. Please grant me the joy of union with you. (Verse 34)

Please make me yours. Let there be no more separateness, as ‘you’ and ‘me.’ Let me experience the joy of everlasting union with you. (Verse 56)

I had no love for you to begin with. It was you who caused my mind to be filled with love for you. Now that I have finally come to you, you should not deceive me. (Verse 60)

Oh Arunachala! Within the room of the body, let us embrace upon the tender bed of flowers which is in the heart. (Verse 82)

Oh Divine Charmer, you are my true Love. Please do not get angry. Come to me and make me yours, Arunachala. (Verse 90)

Oh Arunachala! Let us both immerse ourselves in this vast everlasting happiness, in the limitless space of the heart, where there is neither day nor night. (Verse 91)

Oh Arunachala! You are my beloved; I am offering you this ever-fragrant garland of words. Please accept my offering, and garland me in your turn, with the beautiful garland of your grace. (Verse 108)

Source: *Arunachala Akshara Mana Malai* published by our Kendram, and *The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi*.



**EVERYTHING IS RELATIVE:** The earth, the solar system and the galaxy of which we are a part, all move at a tremendous speed. We are no longer where we were a moment ago. Yet relatively speaking, with reference to our own surroundings, we are in the same place. A person located in space might see us moving, but we ourselves do not see it... Things are as they are, but different viewers see them differently depending upon their own relative position. In other words, it depends on their perceptions... An atom and its subatomic particles all rotate on their own axis. The time taken by them in making one rotation on their axes is the fundamental unit of time. Every particle and all celestial bodies have their own time... *Maya* does not mean falsehood or non-existence; it is anything and everything that is constantly changing and therefore causing illusion. Since things keep on changing, they do not have permanence and hence they are called illusionary... The example of a fabric is apt to illustrate the nature of things. A piece of fabric is an arrangement of yarn. Yarn in turn is a combination of fibres and fibres are made of molecules and so on. At different stages they look different but their reality remains unchanged. It is the manifestation of the same fundamental existence in different forms that gives it different names and character, however, the viewers see them differently. All creatures see the whole of existence from their own perspective and gain different impressions of the same event or happening... When the feeling of duality ceases to exist, one sees the same Self that is present and acting in all living beings, which make the perceiver realise the truth. That is, it confers on him the ability to penetrate the veil of relativity. It then makes him content and peaceful. – *R.K. Gupta*

**JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI ASKS:** Have you ever sat very quietly with closed eyes and watched the movement of your own thinking? Have you watched your mind working? Or rather, has your mind watched itself in operation, just to see what your thoughts are, what your feelings are, how you look at the trees, at the flowers, at the birds, at people, how you respond to a suggestion or react to a new idea? Have you ever done this? – *Times of India*

**MEDITATION:** Meditation cannot be ‘done’, or for that matter done sporadically. It is not possible to stay calm during the practice of meditation and be volatile right through the day. You have to get so comfortable with meditation that it gets embedded in the system. It becomes something we can do anywhere, anytime and finally all the time! However to reach this level requires a whole lot of patience, practice and perseverance. There are countless ways to meditate, choose yours, and be **regular** and **sincere** with it. – *Girish Deshpande*

## HOW I CAME TO BHAGVAN

By V. Krithivasan\*

I must have been four or five years old when I first heard about Sri Bhagavan. My maternal uncle, who was visually impaired, had come to stay with us, in a small village in Tamil Nadu. He depended on my guidance for moving around. We used to take long walks and during those times he would tell me a lot of interesting stories from the *puranas*. He also related to me the story of Sri Bhagavan, how he left home, his intense absorption despite his young age, his total indifference to the surroundings and so on. What left an indelible impression on me at that time was how ants and insects ate into his body without affecting his absorption in any way. Mixed as it was with other stories from the *puranic* times, I thought at that time that this Maharshi also lived in the same age as Vasishtha, Viswamitra, Agasthya and others ! It was not until I was sixteen that I realized that Sri Ramana Maharshi belonged to our age. One of the greatest Rishis in a long, unbroken chain of sages which our land has produced, lived in the modern times, and through his extraordinary life proved to us again that what the ancient scriptures proclaimed is entirely true.

In the first year of my engineering course in Chennai, I came across Paul Brunton's *A Search in secret India*, which fascinated me and made me realize that Sri Bhagavan moved amongst us just a few years earlier. I kept reading more and more books like *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, etc. After my degree in engineering, I got a job in Hyderabad in 1971, where I happened to meet Sri Rajeswara Rao, one of the founding fathers of Sri our Kendram, through his son Sri Hari Rao, who happened to be my colleague. I borrowed some books on Sri Bhagavan from him also.

But conviction that Ramana is the way and the goal came about through a strange combination of events. I happened to visit the house of one of my wife's relatives in 1982, where I found two or three bags full of Sri Ramana literature. I was quite excited and asked him how he happened to have them. He said that a centre dedicated to Sri Ramana Maharshi functioned in Andhra Mahila Sabha and weekly meetings were held on Sunday mornings. This relative, who offered this most significant information, was J. Krishnamurthy, a former Secretary of our Kendram and a close associate of Dr. K.S., the founder of our Kendram.

After 3 or 4 months, I happened to see in Today's Engagements column of the Sunday issue of *The Hindu* about the weekly meeting of Sri Ramana Kendram, which I decided to attend. That was the first time I heard Dr. K.S. speak on Sri Bhagavan. I was spell bound. I felt as though I was transported to a new planet! There was no looking back after that. My goal in life became crystal clear. Dr. K.S. became a window to Sri Bhagavan. I was stopped in my tracks, so to say, and finally, Sri Bhagavan arrived in all his glory, in my life.

\* The writer who retired as a senior executive of ECIL, Hyderabad, is a former president of our Kendram.

**Realisation of the Soul cannot be attained by a man who has not got adequate mental strength and a vigilant spirit. It cannot be attained by austerities without devotion. – Mundakopanishad**

**Both at birth and death one is free. Maya comes in only in-between. – Swami Natyanada**

**Keep your mind empty and let joy find you. – Swami Sukhabodhananda**

**Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life. – Berthold Auerbach**

**We make a living out of what we get, but we make a life of what we give. – Winston Churchill**

**Success does not mean absence of failures; it means the attainment of ultimate objectives. It means winning the war not every battle. – Edwin C Bliss**

## SEPTEMBER 2010

**SIGNIFICANCE OF JAPA:** Patanjali says that *japa* must be done for a prolonged period, without interruption, with reverence and respect. *Japa* is the very form of the Lord. There is no point in being intelligent and careless about *japa*. The great seers have said that *japa* is the king of all *dharmas*; it is the highest and noblest, the sublimest of *dharama*. In *Gita*, the Lord says that, "Among the various *yajnas*, I am the *yajna* of *japa*." Lord's name should be repeated with utmost reverence, purity and faith. *Japa* is the very form, the very body of the Lord, and when your language

vibrates with *japa*, it receives the touch of the Lord. Whenever your mind remembers the Lord, whenever your heart vibrates with *japa*, it receives the Lord's touch, which is full of bliss. – *Swami Muktananda*

**SEEKING AND SEARCHING:** Seekers are those who have already set the path themselves. They may need support and encouragement to keep envisioning and acting upon their own chosen path, and there is a desire to stay with the quest even without too much 'hard evidence'. Searchers have to be supported to help find their goals in the first place. Not only they initially need more help and clarification, they can easily give up unless they see more concrete signs or results. Interestingly, once these things are identified, once some 'proof' is accepted, the searcher often becomes the seeker...In seeking you learn that there is no final knowing, only an ongoing learning and un-learning process; an unfolding and bringing together of what you discover along the way. The end of seeking is not so much about arriving or achieving, but it is about dwelling. – *Marquerite Theophil*

### **Increase in subscription rate of Sri Ramana Jyothi (SRJ)**

As a matter of policy, the subscription rate of SRJ, monthly journal of the Kendram, is kept low. However, to cover the increase in cost of paper and printing, we are forced to make a small increase in the annual subscription from Rs 40 to Rs 50, and life subscription (15 years) from Rs 400 to Rs 500, with immediate effect. – Editor

### **THOUGHTS AND HAPPINESS**

By A.R. Natarajan

Misery is only the presence of unwanted thoughts. In sleep we are happy for there are no thoughts to disturb our happiness. A weak mind is unable to push out the thoughts which haunt it and one is forced to stay with the thoughts that cause sorrow. We often find that when we want to move God-ward, our thoughts get countered by past experiences. The battle which follows may fill us with disgust and sorrow at our inability to make the required headway or even make full use of the time set apart for meditation, and we begin to ask whether it is at all possible to move towards lasting happiness with the mind's framework. Through association with the wise, complete surrender to the Supreme, breath control and other means, suited to

one's temperament, the mind, over a period of time, gets purified and strengthened. While a purified mind acquires the capacity to stay happy, this capacity is often brittle, uncertain and circumscribed by 'others' and 'events.'

Happiness lies within and not without. The search for happiness without is inevitable so long as there is wrong identification of oneself with one's body and mind. The obstruction being the veil of thoughts, the means should be such as would make the mind silent. Self-enquiry is the direct and simple means to arrive at the thought-free state. For, it quickly turns the mind inwards. Through constant vigilance against raiding thoughts, and through persistent enquiry about one's nature put through the question 'Who am I?' one pushes oneself within. As the taste of inner happiness is felt increasingly, the hankering after pleasures weakens, as we constantly refuse to identify oneself with the body, which we are not. – *The Ramana Way*, Feb.-March, 2010

**HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN:** In 1952 or 53, when I was 16 or 17 years old, I happened to see a photo of Bhagavan in a Hindi newspaper in Nagpur, where I was located at that time. I got captivated by the picture. I came to Hyderabad in 1955 to help my uncle in his business. In 1981 or 82, I came in contact with Sreenath Linga (an established devotee of Bhagavan at our Kendram). I read some books on Bhagavan given to me by him. I started visiting the *satsang*, which at that time was held at the Gandhi Centenary Hall, Osmania University Campus, from 1983 onwards. I would also visit the house of Dr. K.S. at the Central Institute of English, every week for *satsang*. I was greatly impressed by him. In 1997, I had to go for bypass surgery. This fact was mentioned to the devotees at the *satsang*, and this greatly worked in my favour, as my operation went on in a remarkably smooth way. It was nothing sort of a miracle which was due to Bhagavan and Dr. K.S.'s grace. Dr. K.S. gave me the book *Uniqueness of Bhagavan* written by him, which greatly helped me in my spiritual journey. – *Hariram Dholandas Narang*

**THERE ARE NO 'OTHERS':** Once Bhagavan, along with an American devotee, was walking towards Palakottu, the devotees' little colony adjoining the Ashram. Bhagavan was walking a few steps ahead of the devotee. The American asked Bhagavan, how about helping others when one gets *jnana*? Bhagavan turned back and said in English, "When you get *jnana*, there are no others." In *jnana* there is no ego, no other... When Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount and said, "Love thy

neighbour as thyself”, he was indirectly telling his simple-hearted disciples that the neighbour was not different from them...When the noble Buddha taught that there are three kinds of pride, namely, to feel that one is more than the other, less than the other, and equal to the other, he was really teaching that there is no other. – *V.S. Ramanan*

**ATTITUDE COUNTS:** During construction of a place of worship, three stone cutters were cutting stones to specified sizes and were giving shape to them. When asked what they were doing, the first one said, “Don’t you see I am cutting stones for the building? These are hard stones and my hands have become red. It is no joke to give shape them.” The second one said, “I am cutting stones here; that is my job. For eight hours I get paid Rs. 250. I have to support my family and make a living through my job.” When asked what was coming up behind him, he said, “It makes no difference to me, so long as I get paid.” The third one who was singing as he was sweating, said, “We are building a temple. There is no temple here and people have to trek a long distance to go to a temple. I feel blessed that I got this opportunity to serve the devotees.” While all the three were doing the same work, only one enjoyed it, working for the sheer joy of creating something. Thus, it is not the work that is good or bad, it is the attitude which we have towards it. – *Anonymous*

### **SRI RAMANA – THE ENIGMA**

Sri Bhagavan was a child among children; he played with them, celebrating dolls marriages, holding marble matches and bursting festive crackers. He was a perfect kitchen-mate to the uneducated women working in the kitchen; a villager among rustics; and a scholar par excellence amidst the learned. To monkeys, squirrels, cows, dogs and all animals he was a dear friend who belonged in their eyes, totally to them.

To those seeking liberation, he was the resplendent sun of knowledge. To the devotee, he was embodiment of the supreme. He belonged to wherever he was, to whomsoever he was with, yet no place could bind him. No one could claim him only for themselves. No emotion could govern him. Every experience found a place in him, but could not contain him. His love was boundless, yet he was attached to none. Though he had no attachment to things or people, yet he wept when Echamma came to him with the news of her daughter Chellamma’s death. Yet could one state that Bhagavan was grieved at Chellamma’s passing, that he suffered sorrow on account

of it? Not at all. This indeed is the enigma that is Bhagavan. He is so fully in everything, so naturally a part of all that happens in his presence, yet so totally apart.

He knows hunger but is indifferent to food. He experiences pain but is totally detached from it. He shivers in the cold but seeks not to possess a single garment. He brings perfection to all he does, yet he is not attached to either the process or product of perfection. He cares deeply about every little thing, yet is anxious about nothing. He pays loving attention to all who come to him, yet his attention is ever only on the Self.

Bhagavan has not just lived this miracle for all to see and wonder at. He repeatedly emphasized that it is not only possible but natural for each one of us to partake of this miracle, not merely as witness, but as our very own experience. The limitation of name and form is merely something we have superimposed on our true nature. – Excerpts from *The Ramana Way*, May 2010

**Paul Brunton describes the enigmatic Sri Ramana as follows:** He remains mysteriously aloof even when surrounded by his own devotees, men who have loved him and lived with him for years. Sometimes I catch myself wishing that he would be a little more human, a little more susceptible to what seems so much normal to us... One senses that the most wonderful part of this man is withheld. His deepest soul, which one instinctively recognizes as loaded with rich wisdom, eludes one... At times he remains curiously aloof... In the Maharshi I discovered the last remnants of that ‘Mystic East’ about which we often hear, but which few of us ever find... Face to face with the Maharshi, sometimes one felt in the presence of a visitor from another planet, at other times with a being of another species. – *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram, pp. 13-23

**CHERISH ‘ALONENESS’ :** Keep alive your aloneness. We come from One and we have to become One. One is alone; alone means One. The highest possibilities of life can come in aloneness... Two is a pastime. Only Divine is alone. He is not two... Only when we are alone, we are able to understand ourselves, know who we are, and become aware of ourselves. But we are always afraid of aloneness. Nobody wants to be alone. When we live with aloneness, and its seed gets established in us, a beautiful tree comes out. It gives us love, peace, harmony, joy and bliss. But we have to hold this aloneness with all the patience. Remember that we are blessed with divine grace if aloneness comes into our life. This world is so strange that it always keeps us involved, always busy. So it is necessary to keep alive our aloneness. – *Swami Brahmdev*

## **JNANA AND BHAKTI MARGA**

By T.P. Ramachandra Iyer<sup>1</sup>

One afternoon when I entered the Hall I sat down by the side of a well-built man wearing a lot of *vibhuti* and strings of *rudraksha mala*. Suddenly, Bhagavan turned to me and said, “Don’t you know him? He is Kannappa. He sings beautifully. You should hear him. He brings tears to one’s eyes.” Bhagavan went on praising Kannappa, which was something quite unusual, so a real urge to hear him sing came over me and I begged him to sing. He began to sing Tiruppugazh<sup>2</sup>. I have never heard such a vibrant voice. It even brought tears to my eyes. It was a really thrilling experience. For an hour and more we all listened spellbound. Then the gong went for lunch and we got up reluctantly.

I went out of the Hall behind Bhagavan and he suddenly turned round and said to me, “All this is unnecessary. If you give your mind to it, it will lead you astray – no use.” This was a shock to me, as he has been praising Kannappa sky high. I said nothing in reply but I took it to mean that he did not want me to follow this path.

On another occasion the famous singer Dilip Kumar Roy<sup>3</sup> was in the Hall and after prostrating a number of times before Bhagavan, he spoke as follows, “I know no meditation or *samadhi* and no *sadhana* to attain it. I follow the devotional approach of *bhakti*. I worship God through my songs. By crying to Him I seek to attain Him. Bhagavan, is this way right? Please guide me Master.”

Bhagavan looked graciously to him and said with immense love and compassion, “Yes, what you are doing is just what you have to do. Carry on and it would certainly lead you to your goal. Through devotion to God we discharge our emotions and this is a sure way to reach Him.” Dilip prostrated several times on hearing this.

Again I went out to lunch just behind Bhagavan and again he turned to me. This time he said, “Tell Dilip that our Tamil saints have said that *bhakti* is the mother of *jnana*. So *bhakti marg* is supreme. The essence of *bhakti* is merging with the Universal Being through emotional devotion.

I was perplexed. The other day he had praised the signing of Kannappa but then advised me not to follow that way; now again he was saying that the devotional and emotional way of *bhakti* was the supreme and almost the only way to reach God. I



pondered over it for a long time, and then it flashed to me that he praised this way to Kannappa who was already following it, but cautioned me against it and the caution applied to me personally. And he alone can judge what path is right for me. Now again he was commending the *bhakti* path because for Dilip it was supreme. (*Mountain Path*, Jan. 1968)

(One could always integrate the two paths. One can sing profusely in praise of Sri Ramana, worship his photo/idol as devoutly as possible and also follow his path of self enquiry. The confluence and convergence of the two routes is not only possible but necessary to achieve faster results. – Editor)

1. Iyer was a native of Tiruvannamalai and came to Bhagavan in the 1920s. Many of his other reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 159-61.

2. Songs written by Arunagirinatha (10-11 century) in praise of Lord Surbrhamanya.

3. Roy was a devotee of Sri Aurobindo, he later got attracted to Bhagavan. His reminiscences are also

in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 31-33.

**SUFFERING AND PAIN:** Suffering comes from your desire of absence of pain. Osho explains: watch, witness, and you will be surprised. You have a headache; the pain is there but suffering is not there. Suffering is a secondary phenomenon. Pain is primary. The headache is there, the pain is there; they are simply facts. There's no judgement about them – you don't call them good or bad or give them values...The Buddha taught his disciples that when you have a headache, simply say twice, 'headache, headache.' Take note, but don't evaluate. Don't say "Why? Why has this headache happened to me? It should not happen to me." The moment you say 'It should not', you are suffering in. Now suffering is created by you, not by the headache. – *Vithal Nadkarni*

**UNDERSTANDING THE MIND:** The mind is the creator of the world. Only that which is done by the mind is regarded as done, not that which is done by the body. The arm with which one embraces the wife is the very arm with which one embraces the daughter...The only god to be conquered is the mind. Its conquest leads to the attainment of everything...Association with the wise, self enquiry and control of breathings are important means of conquering the mind... There is nothing to equal the supreme joy felt by a person of pure mind. – *The Yoga Vasishtha*

**Realisation of the Soul cannot be attained by a man who has not strength and a vigilant spirit. It cannot be attained by austerities without devotion. –**

*Mundakopanishad*

**Recognise your limitations but focus on your strengths. – Anonymous**

**You may be disappointed if you fail, but you will be doomed if you don't try. –**

*Beverley Sills*

**Defeat is a detour, not a dead end. – Shiv Khera**

**Happiness that has a cause cannot last, we have to learn to connect to the ocean of happiness within us, something we have long forgotten. – The Mother**

## **REMINISCENCES OF SRI RAMANA'S CLASSMATE AT MADUARI**

**Vilacheri Ranga Iyer is remembered as Bhagavan's playmate at school. His other reminiscences are at pages 122-5 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.**

Once when I was visiting Bhagavan, a *bhakta* was copying out *slokas* from a notebook, sitting at a distance of about 100 feet from Bhagavan. Coming to a *sloka*, which he could not make out, he came to a halt. When Bhagavan gave out the *sloka* in question, the *bhakta* was greatly surprised and asked as to how Bhagavan could know which *sloka* he was trying to decipher. Someone in the *pandal* remarked that Bhagavan saw your pen stopped and guessed. Bhagavan said, "Yes."

In answer to my question whether *jnanis* have dreams, Bhagavan said, "In the same way in which they have the waking world, they have the dream world." Thereupon I asked Bhagavan what sort of dreams he gets, He said, "I dream about temples, sacred water, etc.!"

One day I noticed Bhagavan's gums had receded. I asked him, "You are younger than me. How is it your gums are already like this? He replied, "One person gave me poison to test me. I took it. It did not take away my life. But it ate up my gums."

Once Bhagavan said, “*Jnanis* are of two kinds *Siddha* and *Suddha*. The first will have *siddhis* or miraculous powers consciously, that is, they will be aware of the *siddhis*. In case of the second also, *siddhis* will exist, but they will not be aware of them.”

My wife occasionally used to assist Bhagavan and others in cooking. Once she was boiling gram in a large vessel. Bhagavan entered the kitchen and asked her, “What are you doing Chellamma?” Then he took an iron ladle and stirred the boiling gram. My wife involuntarily uttered, “If iron ladle is used, the gram will not boil properly.” Bhagavan merely said, “Oh, is that so? Only ladies know all these.” When the gram, which usually takes forty minutes to boil, took only ten minutes on that day, my wife was greatly surprised. Prostrating before Bhagavan, she begged for his forgiveness.

My eight year old daughter came to the Ashram and seeing Bhagavan mixing everything on the leaf into one ball and eating, asked Bhagavan, as to why he was mixing everything and eating? Bhagavan replied, “What we consume is digested together. Are they digested separately? Taste is only for the tongue.”

In the early days of Ramanasramam there were no thatched shed. People used to live under the trees. For me Bhagavan used to provide two bricks to be used as pillow and a towel to spread on the rock. As the rock was uneven, Bhagavan made it even by cementing it with bricks. For this he worked for four hours with the help of *sadhus* living close by.

I never saw Bhagavan either stretching himself or yawning. Murugannar said that Bhagavan never used to blink his eyes.

My wife was suffering from back pain and once she fainted because of it. Bhagavan enquired the following day, “How is Chellamma? Probably she will not get the pain again.” After that my wife never suffered from back pain in her life.

One evening my wife and another girl were sitting in front of Bhagavan. It was about to rain and my wife felt that she should leave so to reach home without getting drenched. Bhagavan that day strangely asked her to sing. When one song was over he asked her to sing another. The rain came in a downpour; the singing continued. When finally Bhagavan asked her to go, the rain had stopped. When she reached the town and stepped into the house, a big downpour came again, and continued throughout the night.

In 1933, my son Venkataramanan was bitten by a snake in my village. Everyone thought he would succumb to the bite. My wife put the child before Bhagavan's picture and applying *vibhuti* prayed to him, "O Bhagavan Ramana, my son is dying because of the snake bite. But after naming him after you if he dies people only will blame thee and our faith in you will be dented." At that instant she heard a voice from somewhere, 'I shall take the poison.' I too heard that voice. When a doctor was called he said that the boy would succumb to the bite. My son dreamt that Bhagavan was rubbing his legs and assuring him that he would be alright. He finally came round and narrated the dream. No need to say he was saved. – *Arunachala's Ramana*, Vol. III

**THE COMPANY OF SAINTS:** Saints are saviours of humanity. They are God-realised souls who are serene and always cheerful. They radiate joy and peace. A touch of grace from their compassionate hearts shall elevate men to their spiritual dignity. A person who stands before a flower feels the fragrance of that flower. A child who sits before one's mother feels the mother's love. Similarly, a person who sits before a saint with reverence and faith, would feel the radiation of Divine peace and bliss from the saint. One may be steeped in ignorance for a long period, but when the saint switches on the Divine light in the heart of the spiritual aspirant, the dark forces get banished... The company of saints is like entering a shop of sandalwood articles. One enjoys the sweet odour in the shop, even if one does not buy anything. Saints are always a source of inspiration and solace to the sorrow-ridden world. Saints may appear like very ordinary persons because of their utter humility and total self-effacement. – *Swami Sundara Chaitanyananda*

**POSITIVENESS PAYS:** Be grateful for even small mercies. Try to keep away from toxic thoughts. There is a growing body of evidence to show that people who regularly experience grateful thoughts or deliberately cultivate positive attitudes reap numerous benefits. Such individuals have closer and more life-giving relationships with those they love, and have fewer bouts of depression. They also heal faster when they are sick or hurt, and tend to live longer and healthier. What is more, they repeatedly experience success and exceed their natural abilities. – *Vithal C. Nadkarni*

**WHY DID SRI RAMANA NOT PREACH THE TRUTH TO THE PEOPLE AT LARGE?**

### **The Maharshi himself answers:**

How do you know I am not doing it? Does preaching consist in mounting on a platform and speaking forcefully to earn admiration of the people around? Preaching is simple communication of knowledge; it can really be done in silence only. What do you think of a man who listens to a sermon for an hour which does not bring any change in his life? Compare him with another who sits in a holy presence and goes away after sometime with his outlook on life changed. Which is better, to preach loudly without effect or to sit silently sending out inner peace?

Again, how does speech arise? There is abstract knowledge, whence arises the ego, which in turn gives rise to thought, and thought to the spoken word. So the word is the great-grandson of the original source. If the word can produce effect, judge for yourself, how much more powerful must be the preaching through silence! But people do not understand this simple, bare truth, the truth of their everyday, ever-present, eternal experience. This truth is that of the Self. Is there anyone unaware of the Self? But they do not like even to hear this truth, whereas they are eager to know what lies beyond, about heaven, hell and reincarnation.

Because they love mystery and not the truth, religions cater to them so as eventually to bring them round to the Self. Whatever be the means adopted, you must at last return to the Self: so why not abide in the Self here and now? – *Maharshi's Gospel*, Sri Ramanasramam

### **OCTOBER 2010**

**How Tirunelveli got its name:** Vedasanma was a staunch devotee of Lord Siva. He would bring paddy to the temple, husk it, cook it and offer the same to the Lord with great devotion, every day without fail, for years on end. There was a prolonged drought in the kingdom where he lived. He prayed to the Lord for rains. One day he brought the last stock of grain he had with him and kept it outside the temple. Before starting cooking the rice for the offering, he went to the river near the temple for his bath. While bathing, it started raining heavily. Vedasanma was very worried that the grain meant for the offering would be lost and he had nothing left with him. He prayed to the Lord fervently to protect the grain and hurried to the temple. When he reached the temple he was amazed to find that the patch of the ground where the grain was kept was absolutely dry, while rain water was running all around. It was as

though there was a fence (veli) around the paddy (nel) that he had kept. When the king was informed about the miracle, he came to the temple and was wonderstruck at the spectacle. He prostrated to the Lord and said: From this day onwards, let this place be known as ‘Tiru nel veli’\*, and let your name be ‘Nel veli natha’. – V. Krithivasan

\*This sixth largest city of Tamilnadu is situated at the bank of Thamiraparani. The temple where the event happened, called Sivasthalam, is one of most beautiful temples in India and is hailed as one of the *pancha sabhas* of Nataraja, housing Tamara Sabha (copper hall). The other four places of dance are at: Chidambaram, Maduari, Tiruvalankadu and Kutralem. Here Nataraja is worshipped during *Aruda Darsanam*. (Source: The Internet)

### IN PRAISE OF MOTHER UMA

**Ganapathi Muni’s bepraisement of the Mother in his *Uma Sahshram* is well-known. July 2010 issue of this magazine contains some select verses of *Uma sahshram*. The great Hindi poet Tusli Dasa has sung as follows, lauding Bhavani:**

O Daughter of the mountain-king! Glory to You, who gazes on the countenance of the great Lord Siva as Chakora bird on the moon. Glory to You, O Mother of the elephant-headed Ganesha and the six-faced Kartikeya and mother of the universe, with limbs shining as lightning. You have no beginning, middle or end; Your infinite glory is a mystery even to the Vedas. You are responsible for the birth, maintenance and destruction of the universe; You enchant the whole universe and carry on Your sports independently of others.

Of all good women who adore their husbands as a god, Mother, You rank foremost. Your immeasurable greatness is more than what a thousand Saradas and Sesas could tell.

The fourfold reward of life (viz., religious merit, worldly riches, sensuous enjoyment and liberation) are easily attainable through Your service, O bestower of boons, beloved of

Siva (the slayer of Tripura)! All who adore Your lotus-feet, O Shining One, attain happiness, be they god, men or sages. (*Ramacharita Manasa – Bala Kanda*)

**CONSCIOUS AND UNCONSCIOUS MIND:** The human mind is divided in two parts; conscious and unconscious. Numerous functions take place in the body like seeing, hearing, digestion and respiration which are governed by the unconscious mind, without any effort by the conscious mind. The conscious mind has unlimited capacity for thinking and analyzing facts. The Creator has made the conscious mind free to involve itself in great quest for truth. What is truth? It is up to us to discover it...Everyone is a seeker by birth, but everyone lives his/her life without knowing what the real purpose of life is. We want to enjoy life, but we do not know what real enjoyment is. It is a paradoxical situation and everyone is living in this state of self-contradiction. When the Creator has given you a mind and made you free to use it, you should make use of this opportunity. You have to discover the reality. If you want to save yourself from going astray, activate your thinking faculty. Think who you are and what your true nature is, and you will surely reach the gates of truth. – *www.cpsglobal.org*

**KINDNESS PAYS – AN ANECDOTE:** A poor boy named Howard was managing himself through school by selling goods from door to door. One day he had no money with him and was feeling extremely hungry. He decided to ask for a meal at the next house. However, he lost his nerve when a lovely young woman opened the door. Instead of meal he asked for a little water. She noticed that he was hungry and brought him a large glass of milk. The boy drank the milk and heartily thanked the lady. Many years later that woman became critically ill and was shifted to hospital in a big city where a famous physician treated her. He learnt about the name of the small town she came from and a strange light filled his eyes. He recognized her at once. After a long stay at the hospital as she was to be discharged, the doctor asked the business office to pass on the bill to him. He met the bill in full and wrote on it ‘Paid in full with one glass of milk.’ Dr. Howard Kelly. The lady expecting a huge bill was worried how she would pay it. When she opened the cover containing the bill, she was overwhelmed and tears came to her eyes. – Abstracted from *Tattvaloka*, July, 2010. [Dr. Howard Kelly (1858-1943), a distinguished physician, was one of the four founding doctors of Johns Hopkins, the first Medical Research University in U.S.]

**IMPORTANCE OF SILENCE:** The state which transcends speech and thought is *mauna*; it is meditation without mental activity. Silence is ever-speaking; it is the perennial flow of ‘language’. It is interrupted by speaking; for words obstruct this mute ‘language’. Lectures may entertain individuals for hours without improving

them. Silence on the other hand, is permanent and benefits the whole humanity. Silence is unceasing eloquence. It is the best language. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

## **SRI RAMANA GOES FOR *GIRI PRADAKSHINA***

**An account by Sri Ramana's first biographer B.V. Narasimha Swami.<sup>1</sup>**

Almost from the time the young Maharshi came to Tiruvannamalai and until 1926<sup>2</sup> he used to perform *pradakshina* of the hill several times a year.

When the Maharshi starts the entire Ashram starts with him, as every one is eager to accompany him. Sometimes they start at night-fall and return at dawn. Sometimes they start in the morning and take a day or days to return. One may wonder why so many hours or days are required to walk eight miles, which could be done in three hours. But the Maharshi goes on these circuits mainly to set an example to and benefit others. *Arunachala Purana* says that one must walk as slowly as a princess in the tenth month of her pregnancy, not even the foot-fall being heard. Again the Maharshi often moves in a state of *samadhi*: such an intense ecstasy implies slow and even breath, and absence of haste or exertion. So he moves at the rate of one mile per hour, and rests for some fifteen minutes or so in suitable places which are available at every mile or even half-mile. While engaged in this circuit he enjoys the bliss of the *Atman* and cares not for the sounds and sights. He is in the Universal centre, in the only Reality, in the Being of beings.

Some years back, on one of these occasions, the Maharshi composed his *Aksharamanamalai* of 108 stanzas, each stanza beginning with the successive letters of Tamil alphabet. On a later occasion, he composed *Arunachala Ashtakam* – eight stanzas on Arunachala.

The Maharshi's fame is so great and the merit of supplying food to him is so highly prized that as soon as the people hear of his starting on the circuit they prepare or obtain articles of food, wait at a number of wayside buildings and request him and his group to stop and partake their offerings. Sometimes they cook there and feed the whole group. Most of the followers are attracted by the religious merit of the circuit and the Maharshi's company. But even fools who come with grosser ends in view get some spiritual benefit by observing the noble and inspiring conduct of the Maharshi:



the impressions of the circuit seep unnoticed into their subconscious minds where they germinate, grow and fructify, and hasten to the awakening.

Let us see what the Maharshi's chief followers do and think on these occasions. They sink deep, deep within. Some address themselves to Lord Arunachala and according to their varying moods, praise and dance or pray and weep. One Gajanana, who stayed for some months with the Maharshi, was full of fervent faith in Sree Hari.<sup>3</sup> He would constantly sing songs from *Srimad Bhagavatam* and would dance in his joy most of the way around the hill. Others poured forth their soul in the language of *Sivananda Lahari*, *Tevaram*, *Tiruppugazh*, *Aksharamanamalai*, etc., aided by cymbals, *tambura*, drum (*mirdangam*) and fiddle. (*Self Realization*, chapter 23.)

1. The author was a reputed lawyer of Salem, and a well-known public figure of his time. When two of his children died accidentally by falling into a half dug well in their compound, he left home in 1925 and went to Sankaracharya of Sringeri who directed him to Tiruvannamalai. Being adept in gathering information and interpreting it, he assiduously collected all available facts about the Maharshi from the inmates of the Ashram and others, and brought out a book first published by Ramanashramam in 1931. (For more details about the author, see *Sri Ramana Jyothi* of August 2009.)

2. As going to *pradakshina* along with Bhagavan became highly coveted, duties at the Ashram got neglected. As Bhagavan would not discriminate and ask some persons to stay back, he decided to abandon the *pradakshina* itself.

3. One need not be surprised at the singing of Mahavishnu in this Sivakshetram, and when going round Siva. There is no intolerance or sharp difference between the two cults of Siva and Vishnu here. The temple and the hill were originally Mahavishnu's. Even now the Vaishnavites regard the hill as *Sudarsana* the sacred wheel (of Time perhaps) in the hands of God. And just behind the image of Siva in the big temple is the image of Sri Venugopala in whose name the temple site still stands registered.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBER '8' IN OUR SCRIPTURES

**Fifth sloka of *Upadesa Saram* by Sri Ramana, is as follows:**

*Jagata isadhi yukta sevann/ Ashtamoorti bhrit deva pujanam.* That is, the service of the world, with the attitude of worshipping the Lord is the worship of Him in His eight-fold manifestations. The following are some examples of eight-fold manifestations.

**The Giri Pradakshina at Tiruvannamalai includes *ashta linga darsanam*.** These *ashta dikpalas* are symmetrically placed in each of the eight directions of the hill. They are Indra Lingam (Lord of east), Varuna Lingam(Lord of west), Kubera Lingam (Lord of north), Yama Lingam (Lord of south), Agni Lingam (Lord of south-east), Niruruti Lingam ( Lord of south-west), Isana Lingam (Lord of north-east) and Vayu Lingam (Lord of north-west).

***Ashta Vinayak:*** These are – Maha Ganapati, VaradaVinayaka, Chintamani Vinayaka, Girijatmaja Vinayaka, Vighnesvara, Bala Vinayaka and Siddhi Vinayaka.

***Ashtalakshmi:*** These are – Dhanya Lashmi (grains), Dhairya Lakshmi (courage), Gaja Lakshmi (elephants), Santana Lakshmi (children), Vijaya Lakshmi (success), Vidya Lakshmi (knowledge) and Dhana Lakshmi (wealth).

**Eight *shaktis* of Vishnu associated with *Ashtalakshmi:*** Sridevi (money), Bhudevi (land), Sarasvati (knowledge), Priti (happiness), Kirti (fame), Shanti (peace), Tushti (satisfaction) and Pushti (health).

**Eight forms of Siva:** Saumya or Anugraha murti, Ugra, Rudra or Samhara murti, Nritha or Tandava murti, Dakshinamurti, Lingabhava murti, Bhikshatana murti, Haryardha murti, and Ardhanariswara murti.

**Eight attendants of Indra called *Vasus:*** Dhara (earth), Anala (fire), Apa (water), Anila (wind), Dhruva (north star), Soma (moon), Prabhasa (dawn), and Pratyusha (light).

(Excerpted from Padmini Natarajan's article in *Tattvaloka*, August, 2010)

**STORY OF MUSK DEER:** Once while roaming about and frolicking over hills and dales, the deer suddenly became aware of an exquisitely beautiful scent, the like of which it had never known. The scent stirred the inner depths of its soul so profoundly that it was determined to find the source. So keen was its longing that notwithstanding the severity of cold or the intensity of scorching heat, by day as well as by night, the deer carried on its desperate search for the source of the sweet scent. Undaunted it went on its elusive search, until at last, happening to lose its foothold on a cliff, it had a deep fall resulting in a fatal injury. While breathing its last, the deer found that the scent that had ravished its heart and inspired all these efforts came from its own navel...The *sadhana* of the aspirant is like the effort of the musk

deer. Eventually the wisdom dawns on the *sadhak* that the happiness and peace which he has been desperately searching every where, is within himself. Earlier it is realised, better it would be. – *Adapted from a discourse of Meher Baba*

**JUST FEEL – OSHO’S APPROACH:** Excessive dominance of the intellect has dulled people’s senses. When they view a beautiful tree they immediately start wondering about its name, or how old the tree may be, and so on... Come down from your head and enter every pore of your body. And you will ‘sense’ the world in a different way. For the first time you will feel that you are really alive...When you sleep just feel your bed, feel the pillow. Close your eyes and listen to the noise of the air conditioner, or of the traffic or of the clock or anything. Just listen. Don’t label, don’t say anything...In the morning, in the first moment of waking up, don’t start thinking. For a few minutes be as innocent as a child. A bird is singing and the wind is passing through the trees. With anything that happens, feel it. Be sensitive to it, be open to it... You can expand the dimension of feeling in whatever you do throughout the day, whether taking a shower, walking, looking or breathing. Soon you will be more alive, more sensitive and more young. – *Amrit Sadhana*

**THE DIRECT EXPERIENCE:** The Buddha held that Reality is beyond sense experience. Like colour, say red, it can only be experienced, not described. Likewise you know the nature of Reality by venturing into your inner self. Those who are anxious to learn must experiment and accept their own findings. They should not be guided by dogmas or creeds, or by doctrines and theories, no matter how profound they may be. They do not have to believe the experiences of others. To the Buddha, self-verification through self-experience is the way to peace of mind, to higher wisdom, to nirvana – which is not a after-life experience. It is here and now. – *Ashok Vohra*

**PITFALLS OF KNOWLEDGE:** Taking undue pride in knowledge could be disastrous. Pride of knowledge keeps us from realizing God. When we are overcome with pride in our knowledge, we are not prepared to listen to anyone. We think we are right and expect everyone else to think so too. We judge everything by the touchstone of our intellect and try to force our views and ideas on others. Pride of knowledge also deters us from our inner journey... When we meditate, if we block the door by standing in it, God cannot enter. The more we empty ourselves of our ego, the more God’s grace can enter us. – *Rajinder Singh Ji*

**JEWEL GARLAND OF ENQUIRY OF SRI RAMANA:** This is a compilation of the salient points extracted by the Maharshi from a large volume in Tamil known as

*Vichara Sagara* (Ocean of Enquiry), which itself was a translation from the original in Hindi by Mahatma Nischaldas. On being requested by a devotee, who complained that the volume in Tamil was too difficult to read and understand, the Maharshi graciously provided extracts there from known as *Vichara Mani Malai*. These are reproduced in *The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pp. 275-90.

**SELF-AWARENESS:** Progressing on the spiritual path is no easy task – a seeker faces unique challenges that only he can try to overcome. How you connect to the spiritual realm is something you as an individual seeker need to work out for yourself, through trial and error and with some guidance and soul-searching... The best way for awareness of Self to happen is slowly from within, like daybreak, when the brightness of the sun is experienced very gently, until it shines forth steadily... While we cannot come to grips with the core of spirituality through our mind and brain, we can subliminally sense it from the core of our being if our restless mind doesn't continue its incessant chatter... The soul already has a subliminal sensing of an abiding awareness. So, once it picks up the spiritual cue again, there will be an intense and soulful reconnect. When such a spiritual moment happens, you feel intensely alive and aware... If we consciously try to enhance our awareness of the here and now, and become as sensitive as a weathervane [A revolving pointer to show the direction of the wind] to the totality of existence at the present moment, the subconscious dependence of the soul on material objects would disappear. –

*S.H.Venkatramani*

**RIGOURS OF ADVAITA APPROACH:** The advaita tradition maintains that only certain people are qualified to take up the study of Advaita Vedanta. This is because the path of advaita is like walking a tightrope across a ravine. One who is not competent to do so would most certainly get injured. It is out of compassion and regard for such souls that some conditions exist. Adi Sankara presented four basic qualifications: 1. Those who have cleansed their minds by spiritual practices. 2. Those who have achieved a degree of mental calmness. 3. Those who have realised that the cravings of body are ephemeral. 4. Those who sincerely desire liberation or *moksha*. – [www.nonduality.com](http://www.nonduality.com)

**The most difficult things to open are a closed mind and heart. – Swami Sukhabodhananda**

**The purification process prepares the *sadhaka* to get ready to receive Divine Grace. Neither God nor Guru will wait a moment longer than you deserve. – Swami Virajeshwara**

**Nothing can replace persistence. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. – Calvin Coolidge**

**A man who fears suffering is already suffering from what he fears. – Anonymous**

**Think neither of the past, nor of the future. Live ever in the present with a cheerful heart. – Yoga Vasistha**

**The first thing to do in the *sadhana* is to get a settled peace and silence in the mind. – Sri Aurobindo**

**Real happiness lies in Self-knowledge alone. All else is fleeting. To know one's Self is to be blissful always. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**When you cannot find peace in yourself, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. – La Rochefoucauld**

## **HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN**

By CVK Murthy\*

In 1979, in our tour of South India, from Trivendram we came to Madurai and went up the Palani hill to worship Subrahmanya Swami. Returning to the hotel we were discussing about visiting Kodaikanal. Suddenly the waiter of the hotel came to me and said that as it would be raining at that place, it would be inconvenient for us. He suggested that we may visit Tiruvannamalai. We had never thought of Tiruvannamalai as a place of visit. What prompted him to suggest the visit, we could not guess at that time. Was it Subrahmanya Swami on the Palani hill, from where he had just returned, prompted us to visit Bhagavan, who was an incarnation of Lord Subrahmanya?

We accepted the suggestion, and reached Tiruvannamalai next day and got accommodation at the Ashram. The first two days passed without any incident. On the third day, an Ashram employee enquired about my native place, and place of work. On learning that I belonged to Nellore and work at Hyderabad, he asked whether I would be able to take two packages of books at these two places. Without any hesitation I told him that it is my good fortune to carry Bhagavan's books and hand them over to the person concerned at these places. The package at Hyderabad was to be handed over to Dr. K. Subrahmanian (Dr. K.S.)

After a stop over at Nellore, we returned to Hyderabad. My son was waiting to tell us that he secured first rank in his university examination and had thus become eligible for a gold medal. We felt that our visit to Bhagavan's place had got rewarded with this good news.

Dr. K.S. was working at Central Institute of English, now called English and Foreign Languages University. I thought he would be very formal, dressed in a suit, etc. When I went to the Institute, I was told that he was Head, Dept. of Distance Education. His steno directed me to his room. When I saw him I was dumb struck. He was very simply dressed, was warm and very affectionate. He was living in the quarters of the Institute and I went to his place as often as I could. He used talk about Bhagavan, his life and teachings, etc. Even as a school student and many time thereafter, he had met Bhagavan and was recipient of his Grace. For all of us, who have not seen Bhagavan in body, we were seeing him in Dr. K.S.

With a view to organizing Hyderabad devotees of Sri Ramana at one place, Dr. K.S. gave an advertisement in a local paper inviting them for a meeting, which was held on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1979, at Hindi Arts College, Osmania University Road. Dr. K.S. carried a photo of Bhagavan to the place of the meeting. The devotees assembled there decided to have *satsang* on every Sunday, thus laying the foundation of weekly *satsangs*. Thus the foundation of Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad, was laid on that day. It is Bhagavan's Grace that I was associated with that event.

\* Publisher of this magazine on behalf of our Kendram, retired as a senior scientist from Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad.

## **SRI RAMANA AT PACHAIAMMAN KOIL**

In 1905, when Tiruvannamalai town was ravaged with plague, it was put under quarantine. The Swami and his devotees were required to vacate the town just as others. However, the health officer of the town, a devotee of the Swami, ordered that there was no need to disturb him. So the Swami and others went to stay at Pachaiamman temple, situated at the north-east of Arunachala. The temple has blissful surroundings, with two tanks close by, and the hill forming the backdrop. It contains the images of goddess Pachaiamman, along with a number of other deities. Pachaiamman is a name of the mother Parvati. Pachai means emerald colour. When

the mother came to Gautam ashrama on the hill to perform austerities to appease her Lord, her form was of emerald colour and she had performed *tapas* at this place.

When Bhagavan was at this temple he had only one towel with him, which had got badly torn by constant use. He used to wash and dry it in a place between two rocks (which was never visited by any of the devotees who were with him at that time), and after drying it, hid it in a hole in the trunk of a tree within the temple precincts.

When his *koupinam* got torn he did not ask for another, as he usually did not ask anyone for anything. Privacy however was to be maintained. Where could he get the thread and a needle to mend the *koupinam*? At last he got hold of a prickly pear thorn for a needle, made a hole in it, took out a thread from the *koupinam* itself and mended the cloth. And to hide the place where it was mended, he used to fold it suitably before putting it on.

One day when Sri Ramana went out somewhere, Gambiran Seshaiyer and other devotees, while searching for something, happened to search that hole in the tree trunk. Seeing the condition of the towel they blamed themselves for the neglect and offered profuse apologies to Bhagavan, when he returned. The devotees wept as to how they allowed such a state of things to happen. They did not know how badly torn were the towel and the *koupinam*. They replaced the two items immediately. This incident has been described by Muruganar in his *Sannadhi Murai*.

The great philosophical work in Telugu *Sitaramanjaneyam* was read by Sri Ramana when he was staying in Panchaiamman Koil. Seshaiyer had brought it to him. – *Arunachala Ramana*, Vol. 1

**THE WORLD A DECEPTION:** Sri Ramana tells us that the entire world of experience is a mere shadowy illusion like a film projected on a white screen. Where are the characters of the movie before or after or even during the projection? On the screen? They simply are not. We know full well that the entire moving picture is a mere illusion. Sure, we are happily engaged with it and its characters and scenes. We cry with them and laugh with them. But most of us are content to leave them behind in the theatre and get back to our ‘real’ lives. Only few of us get so carried away by these fictional characters that we dream of them at night and, and may even long to meet them and interact with them again and again in ‘real’ life as well. – *Dr. Sarada*

**NOVEMBER 2010**

**A SAGE AND AN IGNORANT PERSON:** The ignorant person is distinguished by his attachment (*raga*); the sage by dispassion (*virakti*). Even if the ignorant person occasionally develops dispassion, it is likely to change since he has not got rid of the sense of reality in the objects. On the other hand, the dispassion of the sage, which has developed out of his sense of the unreality of objects, does not change at any time. – *Vichar Mani Malai* by Sri Ramana Maharshi

**CONSCIOUSNESS AS GUIDE:** Life is a journey to the infinite. You can never say that this is the end. It is always a beginning...If we want to get free from time, we must get free from past and future. We hold on and then we say we are not free. Learn to leave fast, never possess, and get free from past and future: time will be with you and you will be fully free...We are always absent from life. We are in the past or future, with memories of the past or fears and hopes of the future... Why do you invoke memories? Because you miss something and when you miss something you open the album. The power of now, of the present, is so great and full you won't miss anything... Spirituality means to live with that consciousness. Bring your Self to the front seat so that you direct your own movements. Life is movement and the movement needs a guide. Consciousness is the guide. – *Swami Brahmdev*

## **THE PRINCIPLE OF JAPA**

By Professor Eknath Easwaran

The repetition of the Holy Name or mantra, called *japa*, can bring us lasting benefits on the physical, mental and spiritual levels. The impact of mantra is based on the theory of vibrations. According to this theory, from the Great Silence there issued one Creative Word 'In the beginning was Brahman, with whom was the Word; and the Word was truly the supreme Brahman.' This verse from the Rig Veda has an almost exact parallel in the Gospel according to St. John: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.'

According to this theory, *shabda* or sound is the subtle stuff out of which the phenomenal world has emanated, and every object may therefore be looked upon as sound of a particular concentration. In other words, this world of name (name) and *rupa* (form) is *shabda* (sound) manifesting itself at varying levels of vibrations.



As contrasted with the words of language, Om or Aum is a ‘natural name’ in which there is an intrinsic and inherent connection between name and *rupa*, between the sound and substance, between the Word and the Reality it represents. To quote Vivekananda: The first letter of A is the root sound, the key pronounced without touching any part of the tongue or palate; M represents the last sound in the series, being pronounced by the closed lips, and U rolls from the very root to the end of the sounding board of the mouth. Thus Om or Aum represents the whole sound-producing phenomenon. According to the *Katha Upanishad*, Om is Brahman. It is the strongest support; it is the highest symbol. He who knows it is revered as a knower of Brahman.

Om Mani Padme Hum is a widely known Tibetan Buddhist mantra which, assiduously repeated, can enable one to find the Jewel hidden in lotus of one’s heart.

How can one make mantra an integral part of one’s consciousness? The mantra has to be repeated in the mind as often as we can – while walking, driving, while doing mechanical chores, etc. When we are angry, afraid or otherwise agitated let us go for brisk walk, repeating the mantra in the mind. Gradually, the rhythm of our step, the rhythm of our breath and the rhythm of the mantra will blend into a healing harmony to transform the negative emotion. The mantra acts as a tremendous transformer. At bedtime, after lying down, let us close our eyes and keep repeating the mantra until we fall asleep. This may be difficult at first, but we are likely to be pleasantly surprised at the ease with which we get good sleep as a consequence of this practice.

As the mantra sinks into the deeper levels of consciousness, a wave of bliss begins to rise up from the Sea of Bliss, that is the Atma. After years of patience and practice, we no longer have to perform japa consciously because the mantra has become an integral part of our consciousness. It is now ajapa japa (japa without japa) in which the mantra goes on repeating itself.

One in whom the mantra has become an integral part of consciousness carries God with him into all his work and into all places, and God alone does all his work. He seeks nothing but God, nothing seems good to him but God. He becomes one with God in every thought. – *Mountain Path*, January 1968.

## **STORY OF NANDANAR FROM *PERIA PURANAM***

Nandanar who belonged to the pariah caste, worked as a scavenger in Brahmin villages. He also worked in the fields as landless agricultural labourer. Pariahs were regarded as the lowest of low and being untouchables had to observe distance from all other castes.

Nandanar was an exceptional man, in that from childhood he was a devotee of Lord Siva. He would go from place to place visiting Siva temples and stand at a respectable distance from the entrance, far away from the sanctum sanctorum. He would sing in praise of Siva and dance in ecstasy. Once he visited the Siva temple in Tirupunkoor and stood in front of the entrance straining his neck and standing on his toes to have a glimpse of the Lord. The Nandi bull being right in front obstructed his view. He prayed that he should have a *darshan* of the Lord. Siva immediately caused Nandi to move sideways so as to allow Nandanar to have a good *darshan*. He got overwhelmed with devotion and tears of happiness streamed from his eyes. He danced in ecstasy. He visited many Siva temples and left his mark by rendering humble service of cleaning the premises around the temple.

He had a longing to visit Chidambaram. His desire was so intense that he would keep awake the whole night. Then the thought came to him that even if he were to go to Chidambaram he would not be able to have *darshan* as he was a pariah and could not enter the temple. He felt very sad, but consoled himself that it was God's will. But the deep yearning to go to Chidambaram never left him. Suddenly one day his landlord set for him an impossible task and said that if he could sow the seeds, irrigate the fields and harvest the crops within a limited period, he could go to Chidambaram. By Divine Grace the average fields of the landlord yielded a bumper harvest within a record time and Nandanar could go to have *darshan* of his beloved Siva.

It took him many days to reach his destination. He knew that the temple of Nataraja was inside the orthodox village of Chidambaram. He wondered how could he, an untouchable, enter the village. He cried in despair, "My caste stands in my way." With a heavy heart he lay down his weary body and slept on the outskirts of Chidambaram. Lord Nataraja appeared to him in a dream and told him, "You should purify by immersing yourself in the fire. You will then emerge unscathed as a Brahmin." That night the Lord also appeared in the dreams of all Brahmins and ordered them to make a big fire for his devotee Nandanar.

Next morning the Brahmins woke up and gathered in front of the temple. They said, "Let us do as the Lord has bidden us." They then went to Nandanar, who agreed to

obey the will of the Lord. The Brahmins dug a pit and made a fire in front of the temple. Nandanar came to the fire pit, his mind wholeheartedly concentrated on Lord Siva, stepped into the fire. The fire engulfed him but it suddenly went out. Nandanar emerged as Brahmin with sacred thread, long hair and a flowing beard. When the Brahmins saw the miracle they fell down and paid obeisance to him.

He was taken by the Brahmins in a stately procession into the temple. He went into the sanctum sanctorum. Reaching the Linga, he suddenly merged into it in a blaze of light. The Brahmins were amazed to find that he had disappeared from their sight. Seeing this wonderful miracle they sang in praise of the Lord and Nandanar, who enjoyed physical union with the Divine, a blessings which no high-born Brahmin had been able to secure. (Abridged from Sethu Ramaswamy's article in *Ramana Gyan – Direct Path*, July 2010)

**Impact of *Peria Puranam* on Bhagavan has been described vividly by Narasimha Swami in his authoritative biography *Self Realization*, as follows:**

“Some time after hearing the name Arunachala from one of his relations in November 1895, Sri Ramana found at home a copy of *Peria Puranam*, which his uncle had borrowed. This was the first religious book that he went through and it interested him greatly. It gave him a novel experience – like the first reading of Arabian Nights to many a youth. It transported him to a different world, unlike the dry, uninteresting world he had been accustomed to. [Reference here is to his school text books.] This book gives a moving account of the sudden accession of faith, deep love of God, utter self-sacrifice, and sublime communion with Him which marked the lives of the sixty-three Tamil saint. As he read on, surprise, admiration, awe, reverence, sympathy and emulation swept over his soul in succession, thus paying a momentary homage to the grand ideals and ideas that had charmed the hearts and engaged the minds of his countrymen for centuries.”

## **HOW I CAME INTO SRI RAMANA'S FOLD**

By N.S. Ramamohan<sup>1</sup>

In 1996, I happened to see Bhagavan's photo at my niece's marriage. I did not know him. I wondered why people in the marriage party were worshipping him like God. In the year 1999 or 2000, my father-in-law T. Chenna Kesava Rao presented to me a copy of *Self Realization* by B.V. Narasimha Swami. I read it with great interest. It

was a beautiful and inspiring biography. The teachings given to Humphreys and the experience of Paul Brunton quoted in the book made it riveting. The Maharshi's love for people and animals, His extraordinary answers to the questions of early devotees and His teachings, made me feel that He was truly Bhagavan. When I completed reading the book I was stunned into silence.

I felt that the path shown by the Maharshi is the only one worth treading in this life, and success is bound to follow if a genuine attempt is made. Paul Brunton, a foreigner to our culture and ways, was a grand example before me. I did not have the slightest feeling that Bhagavan was not present. I felt that the power of His presence is there to guide me. The book inspired me so much that I felt that I must at once start practicing Self enquiry. I obtained a copy of the book *Self Enquiry*.

At that time I was busy with a big project in the Middle East with a 12-hour daily work schedule. Yet I managed to practice Self enquiry earnestly with the firm faith that Bhagavan's grace and guidance will be with me. In a few months, the practice resulted in a three and half hour thought-free state, in which there was perfect awareness without even a single thought. In utter silence I sat down in my chair for a long time and moved a bit in between. The vision associated with Paul Brunton's experience<sup>2</sup> was not there, but it was a state of perfect awareness and utter peace.

I quit my job and returned to Hyderabad in 2001 at the age of 54, with the intention of putting to practice Bhagavan's teachings. I visited Ramanasramam in November 2001 for the first time and enjoyed the beautiful presence of Bhagavan. I felt grateful for the kindness of the President and the authorities of the Ashram bestowed on me.

1. A former president of the Kendram, was senior consulting engineer for Petrokemya, a big MNC.

2. For Brunton's experience see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, p. 19. Brunton could get the very rare experience as he was meditating in front of Bhagavan, whose grace was available to him in full measure.

**CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDE:** Once a person in Tibet would torment people with his black magic. He gained great 'respect' out of sheer fear. After sometime a personal tragedy shook him and he decided he would stop practicing his black magic. He approached the *lama* and said, "Master I have been a bad man. I need to redeem myself. Please help me." The *lama* said, "Just as you harmed others and derived pleasure, now do good to people and derive happiness," The magician got the message and went on to become one of the greatest masters of our time.\* We

always think as to how I derive the benefit out of my actions. The shift of attitude required is as to how others would benefit from my actions. Put in a verse form: All the joy the world contains/ Has come through wishing happiness of others/ All the misery the world contains/ Has come through wanting pleasure for oneself. – *Girish Deshpande*

\*He was Milarepa – The Yogi of Tibet. For details see *Sri Ramana Jyothi*, April, 2007.

## KATYA OSBORNE REMEMBERS BHAGAVAN

**Katya, daughter of Arthur Osborne\* (a very distinguished devotee of Bhagavan), came to the Ashram with her mother in 1941. Her father had to return back to Bangkok (where he was teaching) alone, as he could take his wife and three children with him due to war conditions. The family stayed back with Osborne's friend David MacIver, who resided in Tiruvannamalai.**

The first time I saw Bhagavan is as clear today as it was at that time. It must have been the day after we arrived, when my mother went to the ashram to have Bhagavan's *darshan*. Being the eldest child I was in charge of the tray of fruit we had brought for Bhagavan. We walked across the open space that was occupied by a few sleeping dogs and a peacock. The space is now a beautiful hall with a polished granite floor and Bhagavan's *samadhi* at one end, but was then just a bare ground inhabited by various animals. Then we entered the Old Hall, through the main entrance opposite the couch. It is now a window. Bhagavan seemed luminous and magical.

I saw the animals coming to visit him. The peacock would come through the door and right up to the couch, and it would dance. Bhagavan watched, we all watched, as though it was a formal programme, and when it was over Bhagavan gravely acknowledged the peacock's performance and it left. The squirrels came to the door and glanced around nervously, they dashed to the couch and up onto Bhagavan's hand or knee. He sometimes gave them puffed rice from a small tin kept for the purpose. Dogs came and prostrated themselves before the couch and monkeys chattered to him from outside the window. They were frequently chased away, but as frequently reappeared.

Once someone showed Bhagavan an announcement in a newspaper that vans were collecting monkeys for sale abroad for experiments. Bhagavan laughingly said to the king monkey who was clinging onto the bars of the window beside his couch, “Did you hear that? It is not safe for monkeys here right now, so you better take your tribe away.” When the vans came there was not a single monkey in sight. Later I heard someone comment that no monkey had been caught in the whole of Tiruvannamalai. There was, of course, Lakshmi the cow. She would wait for Bhagavan outside the backdoor or call for him out and then she would snuggle up to him and rub her head against him, or else Bhagavan would visit her in the cowshed and sit down beside her. They spoke together and it was obvious that she adored him.

Adam, Frania [younger brother and sister of Katya] and I would come to Bhagavan with our toys to show him, with our books and puzzles to share with him, and with our secrets to confide in him. He treated us children with same courtesy and gave us the same attention that he accorded to the adults with their problems. He also laughed with us.

I was in the hall when people sometimes came crying with inner pain. A look from him was often all it took to heal them. It was in the hall that I brought my new paper-folding book. One of the designs in it just would not work out. I tried it again in front of Bhagavan and of course this time it worked. I knew it would. I wrote to my mother from school and asked at the end of the letter to be remembered to Bhagavan. She showed him the letter and he said, “If Kitty will remember Bhagavan, then Bhagavan will remember Kitty.” It was the remark that gave me comfort over the years.

We all, humans and animals, came to Bhagavan to show him our triumphs and our troubles and we knew he would deal with it all and understand it all, often, in fact usually, without a word being spoken.

Although Bhagavan could be friendly and approachable, there were times, and usually one of them was when the Vedas were being chanted, when he would close his eyes and go away. To see him then was awe-inspiring. He looked exalted. At times like that one could hear a pin drop. No one even wanted to breathe too loud. It is strange to reflect on how many moods and faces Bhagavan could wear and belong to none of them. We children accepted it all without question. – Excerpted from *Mountain Path*, Jan.-Mar. 2003

\* She lives in Kodaikanal and visits Tiruvannamalai in the winter.

## SRI RAMANA GOES FOR *GIRI PRADAKSHINA* – TWO INCIDENTS

**This is in continuation of the article on *giri pradakshina* by Bhagavan, which appeared last month.**

### **1. The following was mentioned by Sri Ramana himself to Devaraja Mudaliar.**

One day when Bhagavan was at Skandasram, his stomach was out of order. So he decided to fast for the day. He thought that he could do this easily if he goes out on *pradakshina*. When he had gone a furlong or two, he met five or six women who looked like peasant women gathering fuel or leaves for making leaf plates. They had empty bags with them which created such an impression. They asked Bhagavan to direct them to some place where they could find water. As there was no water nearby, he took them some distance. When he was about to change his route and proceed on his *pradakshina*, one of the women asked him to be so kind as to partake a little of the food they were going to eat before leaving them. Bhagavan did not like to seem rude, so he consented. But what was his surprise when, after one woman had untied her bundle and given him some food out of it, each of the others also opened their bundles and said, “You must take a little of mine also.” Bhagavan was placed in such a delicate situation that he had to take something from each in order not to hurt any of them, with the result that he ate much more than he had bargained for.

Then Bhagavan continued on his way round the hill. But after he had gone some miles (Bhagavan used to walk round very slowly, sometimes taking even a whole day, and stopping here and there on the way), about midday the same women again met him. Bhagavan was surprised to see that they had not yet gathered any fuel or leaves in their bags. They approached him and said, “We are now going to have lunch. Swami must be graciously pleased to take something with us. So saying, each woman offered some food and Bhagavan was obliged to eat it .

When Bhagavan proceeded further on he was met by Manavasi Ramaswamy Iyer, with food and *rasam* which he has specially prepared for Bhagavan. He had also got a big mango that day which he thought if put into the *rasam* would make it palatable. Learning that Bhagavan had gone on *pradakshina* he decided to go round the hill in the opposite direction so that he could be sure of meeting him somewhere or other. He did in fact meet him at three in the afternoon. When Bhagavan heard all the trouble he had taken he felt that he could not possibly refuse to take the food thus

prepared and brought by him. Eventually Bhagavan reached the Ashram sometime in the evening, after having had sumptuous food three times in the course of the day.

## **2. Bhagavan befriends a poor farmer.**

A poor farmer would wait for Bhagavan and his party near Adi Annamalai Temple with some food whenever he came to know that the party was going round the hill. Noticing his absence on one of the circuits, Sri Ramana took a detour and found him sitting sadly under a tree with a small pot in his hand. After much cajoling by Bhagavan the farmer hesitatingly told him that he could get only a small quantity of cooked cold rice. How could he offer it to the party? Bhagavan exclaimed ‘Oh! Cooked food, is it? That is excellent. Why be ashamed? It will be very good, leave it to me’ So saying he took a vessel available with the party, added proportionate water, lime juice and made a large quantity of the liquid and spiced it with ginger and salt. Then he tasted it saying, “Oh! Delicious!” Everyone in the party enjoyed the drink. Chatting freely with the farmer he took a glass full and told him that it was like nectar. The farmer wiped his tears of joy and took leave of Bhagavan. – Excerpted from *The Ramana Way*, July, 2010

**PARADOX OF LIBERATION:** Liberation is believed to be the epitome of achievement of the human form. ‘Desire’ for liberation is contradictory in itself, because liberation is absence of all desires. Sage Ashtavakra said that liberation is merely a blink away. It need not involve any form of penance, effort or endeavour. The identity of self is totally a creation of the self and a figment of imagination. The name and the form, are merely projections of the mind. Liberation is instantaneously becoming aware of the absence of the subject-object dichotomy. Ashtavakara was a realised soul and his discourse to King Janaka forms the contents of *Ashtavakra Gita* that predates the *Bhagavat Gita*. The philosophy as enunciated by Ashtavakra and restated by Sri Ramana Maharshi challenges the basic premise that one has to make any effort to seek liberation – even *ashtanga* yoga as propounded by Patanjali. The true nature of the Self is beyond all identity and ego. It is plain consciousness. The ego is adulteration of this consciousness by total conviction in this fleeting illusory identity. And then the game of seeking begins, like the dog chasing its own tail. Holding on to the illusion of identity, one goes about seeking. The form can never ever seek the formless consciousness of which it is a manifestation. It can only merge and this merger can happen only when the form realises the futility of all efforts to be become formless. – *Deepak M. Ranade*



**SUBDUE EGO THROUGH ICHCHA SAKTI:** We cannot be successful in either the external world or in the internal world while we are tossed about by a powerful ego. What is required is a strong will or *ichcha sakti* which can take care of the ego. The power of will is like spring whose source is the Pure Being. It infuses mind and body with enthusiasm, courage and energy to act... Ego is characterized by stubbornness, selfishness, and unwillingness to compromise. The ego is like a little pool in which an egoistic person is crouching like a frog. From his perspective, only his own feelings and his own voice are meaningful. When we are egoistical we lose our composure the moment our feelings are slightly bruised. All problems are caused by colliding egos. A strong ego is as much of an obstacle in spiritual practice as it is in worldly matters. The solution is not to kill the ego but to do our best to purify, transform and guide it properly. This can be done by applying both our intelligence and power of discrimination. When we meditate, practice contemplation, pray, study the scriptures, serve others, and seek the company of the wise, we make our ego pure and less confined. The purified ego, accompanied by a sharpened intellect, gets a glimpse of the next level of awareness. As the ego of a dedicated seeker merges with the Infinite, the veil of duality lifts, and the purified ego sees the whole universe in itself and itself in the whole universe. – *www.HimalayanInstitute.in*

**To know and not to act on what you know is equal to not knowing.** – *Anonymous*

**The highest wisdom is never to worry about the future but to resign ourselves entirely to His Will.** – *Mahatma Gandhi*

**Meditation is pure space, undisturbed by knowledge.** – *Osho*

**Do not say, ‘It is morning,’ and dismiss it with a name of yesterday. See it for the first time as a newborn child that has no name.** – *Rabindranath Tagore*

**You may not be able to change the world the way you like, but you can certainly change yourself, change your outlook and learn to put up with and accept events as they come.** – *Swami Virajeshwara*

**They conquer who believe they can.** – *John Dryden*

**The man who cannot believe in himself cannot believe in anything else.** *Roy L. Smith*

**No one climbs a mountain just by gazing at it. – Anonymous**

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**MANTRA FOR HAPPY LIVING:** In any situation, do whatever you feel you should do, without any regrets about the past, without any complaints about the present, without any expectations for the future, and without blaming or condemning anyone for anything, neither yourself, nor the other. What actually happens has never been in anyone's control. Thus, you will always be free of guilt for yourself, and free of complaints towards others. This will mean happiness and peace of mind. –

*Ramesh S. Balsekar*

**MIND CONTROL – NEED FOR ABHYASA AND VAIRAGYA:** If the mental activity during meditation does not converge at a point and gets diverted into numerous thought channels, what should a *sadhaka* do? Sri Ramana says that the mind should be drawn from the non-self and an effort should be made to fix it in Self-enquiry. All extraneous thoughts would be effectively eliminated when you attune the entire mind to the one question: “Who is it that is making the enquiry?” If in spite of having come to the definite conclusion as a result of one's investigation that ‘I’ has no essential relation with the non-self, i.e., with the body, senses and the objects perceived by the senses, the mind persists in going after these very same things which constitute the non-self, the remedy is *abhyasa* and *vairagya*. When asked how to gain steadiness in practice, the Maharshi replied, “Only through more practice.” – *The Maharshi*, July-August, 2001

**DVAITA OF MADHAVACHARYA (1238-1317):** Madhava's philosophy of making a distinction between the Absolute and the individual soul also known as the *dvaita* school of Vedanta, proposes *bhakti* as an imperative, as the only means of merging with the Self. Sankara's *advaita* sees the external world as *maya* or illusion, *vyavaharika* or a sort of temporary reality, and Ramanuja's *vishishtadvaita* views the outer phenomenon and objects as a projection spark of the absolute. Madhava says that other realities exist simultaneously with the Self. He asserts that *jnana* or knowledge is not capable of giving liberation, as the empirical world and its bondage is willed by Brahman, whom Madhava identifies with Vishnu. In contrast with the Knowledge Principle of Sankara, Madhava says that *moksha* is possible only through

Grace of the Creator. He also says that knowledge of the Self experienced intuitively by the *sakshi* or witness, the energy or *atman*, does not imply the illusionary character of the physical world as Sankara held. The realisation of God as the Prime Mover, on the contrary, further establishes the *yathartha* or factual character of the world we live in... The notion of *bimba-pratibimbavada*, the source being Vishnu, and his reflections as all dependant beings – puts Madhava's *dvaita* school of thought as the philosophical foundation of later *Vaishnavite bhakti* traditions. For, *bhakti*, according to Madhavacharya, is one of the greatest spiritual values of the average person. – *Pranav Khullar*

**MEDITATION THROUGH AWARENESS:** An old lady approached the Buddha as to how she could meditate. He advised her that as she drew water from the well she should remain fully mindful and aware of every single movement of her hands. In this way she would soon find herself in a state of calm, and that is meditation... We can bring meditative awareness to washing dishes, eating, writing, walking and so on. We can let go of our usual excuse of 'no time' or 'wrong place'. – *Marquerite Theophil*

## **PRACTISING THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

By Swami Kiryananda

A person does not *have* life unless he has a personal relationship with God. I am talking about a life that is filled with divine consciousness, and its accompanying joy of living, the joy of the self within. Until you have at least something of God-awareness you don't really have life.

The spiritual path is like climbing a mountain, moving upward for a time, then descending into a depression, then upward to fresh heights. In our relationship with God, we rise consciously towards Him for a time, and then suddenly discover things coming from the subconscious that pull us down – hopefully, temporarily. When this happens, we find ourselves needing to work to get back. It may seem to us that we are going backwards. But if we are trying steadfastly and sincerely, this very dip of consciousness is a part of the overall climb towards Him. In this divine relationship, you find your inner joy ever increasing. The higher you climb up the mountain of spiritual attainment, the more you feel an underlying current of happiness in everything you do.

The more we feel God's presence, the more we find Him playing an active part in our lives. Things that we need are there when we need them. Right opportunities seem to materialize almost as if by magic.

Offer whatever you have to God; to try to serve Him in others – not thinking what you want from Him in return, or what others want from you, but rather what God wants from you. The essence of spirituality is impersonality – absence of ego-motivation. Cultivate a direct relationship with God.

Everything that you do, hold the thought that He is there, listening to you, guiding you. Share directly with Him everything that you do. This has been called 'practising the presence of God'. The more you continue this practice, the more it will become natural for you, and the most rewarding thing you can do in life. And you will see gradually, that is really very simple. – Excerpted from *Times of India*

**SUKRA:** He is the guru of *asuras* and is also called Sukracharya. His parents were Brihu Maharshi and Ushana. Sukra means pure, clear, white and bright. He is *rajas* in nature and represents passion, desire and material wealth. He is the deity of reproduction. His *vahanas* are the horse, crocodile and camel. His wife is Urjasvati. He had his *gurukula* under Maharshi Angiras in the beginning and later under Gautama. He did penance on Lord Siva and obtained the power of *sanjivini* mantra, a formula that revives the dead. As the guru of *asuras*, he helped them get victory over *devas*. In accordance with astronomy, Sukra is Venus, which is the Roman goddess of love and beauty. After the moon it is the brightest natural object in the sky. – Condensed from *Tattavalo*, September 2010

**PASSION AND COMPASSION:** Passion means a state of biological fever – it is hot. You are almost possessed by biological, unconscious energies. You are no longer your own master, you are just a slave. Compassion means you have transcended biology and physiology. You are not driven, pulled and pushed by unconscious forces. The same energy that becomes passion is transformed into compassion, which is love and sharing. Compassion respects the other as an end unto itself. Passion keeps you tethered to earth, to mud and you never become a lotus. Compassion makes you a lotus. You start rising above the muddy world of desires, greed and anger. Compassion is transformation of your energies. Meditation is the key to transform passion into compassion. – *Osho*

## SOME REMINISCENCES OF A DEVOTEE

**T.K. Ramana Kumar (a doctor), was son of T.N. Krishnaswami, a prolific photographer of Bhagavan.**

Bhagavan never made a systematic study of scriptures, but when his teachings were strongly reflected in the scriptures which were presented to him, he remarked, “Oh, yes, what I experienced personally is confirmed in the scriptures.”

Once my father expressed his desire to Bhagavan to have a piece of Arunachala to keep and cherish. Bhagavan gave him a small stone from the hillside, fulfilling his desire. But he added that it is Arunachala in its entirety that is sacred and there is little point in picking up just one small stone.

There is no instance to my knowledge of a major operation done without anaesthesia. At his request, Bhagavan was operated on without anaesthesia. He had totally disassociated himself from the body. – *Mountain Path*, July, 2010 (Tributes of T.N. Krishnaswami appear at pp. 256-8 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.)

**THE ROYAL PATH:** We become frustrated, disappointed and depressed because we identify ourselves with the small portion of ourselves that is visible. The failure to remain in the company of our best friend, the inner soul, creates a sense of loneliness and alienation. This is the source of our misery. *Raja yoga*, the royal path, gives us the tools to overcome our misery. Working with the mind is the core of *raja yoga*. The methods of concentration taught on the path of *raja yoga* helps us make the mind calm and one-pointed. As we practice *raja yoga*, our identification with the part of ourselves that is eternal and ever free deepens and solidifies. We find ourselves floating on the ocean of cosmic existence instead of being tossed about by the trials and challenges that are inescapable feature of the outer world. – *www.*

*HimalayanInstitute.in*

**INCREASE AWARENESS:** To become aware is not easy. That is why the Buddha says, “If you watch your breath for 60 minutes, without a moment's distraction, you are already enlightened.” Awareness begins by sitting quietly in one place and watching one's thoughts. As we watch our thoughts without getting attached to them or getting involved with them, thoughts tend to lose steam and disappear. It is attachment to thoughts that gives them energy to sustain and grow. Once we become aware of ourselves, our journey of Self-discovery, for truth, for God and bliss starts... Start with a three or five minute awareness exercise today and see how difficult it is. – *P. V. Vidyanathan*

**HOW BHAGAVAN ‘LEARNED’ MALAYALAM:** Palani Swami, Bhagavan’s first full-time attendant used to read *Adhyatma Ramayana* before he served food to Bhagavan. His reading was slow and halting. Sometimes, people who had come from outside had to wait for a long time to have their meal. Sri Bhagavan used to feel bad about keeping people waiting. One day he said to Palani Swami, “Do you want to read it yourself or is it enough if you hear it read by somebody.” He said, “It is enough if I hear it read.” Next day Bhagavan took the book and found that the Malayalam script was a combination of Tamil and Grantha scripts, both of which he knew. Then he started reading *Adhyatma Ramayana* in Malayalam. This is how he came to read and write Malayalam. – *Arunachala’s Ramana*, Vol. I.

### HOW I CAME INTO SRI RAMANA’S FOLD

By Dr. A.V. Narasimha Rao\*

I first heard about Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi in April 1961, while listening to a series of discourses by Swami Vimalananda Narasimha Bharati at Sankar Mutt, Hyderabad. He kindly presented to me his book *Advaita Vicharana*, which had few paras devoted to Bhagavan. But I did not pursue the theme further.

In 1972, I was introduced to K. Venkatarathnam, who had the privilege of being Bhagavan’s attendant from 1944 till his *mahasamadhi*, as an inpatient at Gandhi Hospital, Hyderabad, where I was working at that time, to attend on his eye problem. I was attracted by his divine and gracious looks. Without my knowledge he won me over. His soft and lucid talks about Bhagavan greatly impressed me. He invited me to spend my leisure time with him at his temporary residence at Chikkadpalli after he was discharged from the hospital, and I took advantage of the offer. Thereafter I frequently visited Ramanasramam, where he was staying permanently. Unfortunately for me, he passed away in February 1976. [Elevating reminiscences of Venkatarathnam are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, at pp. 368-70.]

During 1974-6, I had an offer to work in West Indies. Venkatarathnam was not in favour of accepting it; still I went ahead. It was only Bhagavan’s grace, perhaps operating through Venkatarathnam garu, that I could survive a well-planned murderous attempt on my life by a small group of local blacks, who were against foreigners getting assignments in their country.

I was introduced to Dr. K.S. (founder of our Kendram) during a *satsang* at Jeera, Secundrabad. Then onwards, I started attending Sri Ramana *satsangs* on Osmania University campus, regularly on Sundays, where Dr. K.S. spoke about Bhagavan. I was very much impressed by his lucid talks, his soft-spokenness and his humility. I came in close contact with him and attended *satsangs* at his residence on Fridays, without fail. On his suggestion I started *satsang* at my place in Mehdipatnam, which was inaugurated by him in February 1991, and which continues till today. At the time of this inauguration, Bhagavan's brother's grand daughter and her husband were also present. That is how Bhagavan came to us in all His glory.

After Dr. K.S.'s demise in 1998, we were very fortunate to have Medha Dakshina Murthy, a unique personality, a realised soul and an excellent guru, to lead us on Bhagavan's way through his regular presence and talks till date, at *satsangs* at my place in Mehdipatnam. Under the gracious guidance of Murthy *garu* we are conducting *satsang* everyday and have the privilege of listening to him on *atma vichara*, self surrender and *mouna*. He explains very emphatically that Self realisation means: Self realised by itself, for itself and to itself. In Self realisation there is pure 'I-Am awareness', transcending duality. The best way is 'TO BE' only.

I also listened to Swami Ekatmananda, Swami Tatvavidananta Saraswati and others for weeks and months together who came at the Mehdipatnam *satsang* centre. This further strengthened my mind towards Bhagavan's philosophy.

In my journey to Bhagavan I also had the opportunity to listen to Swami Ranganathananda at Ramakrishna Mutt premises, Hyderabad. In his discourses he used to make reference to Bhagavan and his philosophy. [His reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pp. 209-11.] I also had the opportunity of listening to discourses on Bhagavan's works from Swami Dayananda Sarasvathi of Chinmaya Mission and from Swami Sundra Chaitanya in their public lectures.

\*Retired as Professor and Head, Ophthal, Osmania Medical College, Hyderabad, and Ophthalmic Surgeon, Sarojini Devi Eye Hospital, Hyderabad. **Daily *satsangs* are held at his residence at 50, MIGH Colony, Mehdipatnam, Hyderabad, from 6.30 to 8.30, both mornings and evenings. All are welcome.** Email: [drnraoav@gmail.com](mailto:drnraoav@gmail.com) (Phone 23531651)

**SIGNIFICANCE OF RITUALS:** Many of us are not aware of how a mobile telephone functions but we are conversant with basic rituals like dialing a number, scrolling, typing a message, etc. Identical with this is relation between spirituality and religion. Religions are outward expressions of spirituality. While applying science to our lives we perform various rituals without questioning how it works. A

religion, too, prescribes rituals which are to be viewed in the same light. A religion adapts spirituality and enlists some easy steps for consumption and benefit of people. It is irrational to reject or run down any ritual because we have not understood it. Rituals have been evolved with a great deal of thought and experience. They have an underlying meaning and significance that might have been forgotten over time, leaving us with form but bereft of the essence. Their basic aim is to help us achieve true knowledge. Once true knowledge has been gained, rituals can be abandoned...While science aims to enhance the comfort of human life, spirituality teaches us how to be comfortable with what we have. – *Murali A. Raghavan*

**HOW ONENESS IS ATTAINED:** Duality divides; Oneness unites. When we think, we divide ourselves. Thought creates a duality or division – by a ‘mind-made-scale’ for measurement of good or bad, pain or pleasure, gain or loss, virtue or vice. Thought varies with time, space, individual and object. It creates diverse situations and options...Each person is often led to karma by invisible thought force that drops from the Universal Reservoir of Unknown or Universal Mind...Good thoughts or karmas, from spiritual point of view, take consciousness inward or upward. Negative thoughts or bad karmas have tendency to pull mind downward or outward. This is the broad distinction for determining what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’...Our own good karmas and Bhakti may create conditions for that Oneness. But, ‘primordial sin’ or separation is forgiven, when divine act of mercy takes place. Call it grace, *meher*, *kripa*, *rehmat*, *bakshish* or by any other name. It is then that ‘Karmic debits and credits’ are wiped out, relationship with the flesh finishes, duality dies and Oneness attained. – *Tejinder Narang*

## **SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI – SOME REFLECTIONS**

By Vimal Balasubrahmanyam\*

Reading narratives of so many devotees, I am again and again struck by the fact that those who came to Bhagavan were all so different from each other. Some wanted comfort and solace, some came out of curiosity, and some came seeking knowledge and instruction. The only common factor I find, which drew them to him or made them decide to live in his presence, was the fact that they felt loved and accepted. They experienced from him Pure Love, unconditional and equal to all. Something they had not ever experienced in any human relationship.



Bhagavan taught by word as well as by example. When we reflect on how he lived his life, we learn how to live our own lives.

Bhagavan was uncompromising in refusing special treatment. Everything was to be shared equally. No one was 'special', no one was 'lowly'.

Bhagavan brought perfection to every task he did, teaching us that no job is menial. If something needs to be done, it is worth doing skillfully, mindfully and wholeheartedly.

Bhagavan insisted on optimal, frugal and non-wasteful use of all resources. Asked why he was picking up rice, grain and mustard seeds, he said that everything belonged to God and has to be conserved for his children. 'No-waste' rule over rode all other rules. Previous night's sambhar would be reheated and served with the breakfast idlis, even though the orthodox felt very uncomfortable with this practice.

Bhagavan discouraged devotees bringing lavish food offerings with a lot of items. Too much variety distracts the mind. He taught that *sattvic* food in moderate quantities is an aid to meditation. Onion and garlic were items in Ashram food. Bhagavan acknowledged that these were non-*sattvic* but he said that rigid observance of food practices was not desirable and these practices should not be imposed as if they were religious laws.

Bhagavan's devotees have marveled at the way he always spoke of the good qualities in people. By setting this example he is teaching us how to erase our perennial fault-finding tendency. For, if our mind dwells on good qualities, hopefully such qualities will sprout and grow in us too.

Bhagavan always discouraged devotees when they came and complained about others, or about the running of the Ashram – even when he did not necessarily approve of whatever was being criticize. A devotee once asked Bhagavan why he did not correct people who were clearly doing things that Bhagavan himself disapprove of. His reply was 'correcting oneself is correcting the whole world. The sun is simply bright. It does not correct anyone. Because it shines the whole world is full of light. Transforming yourself is a means of giving light to the whole world.'

Bhagavan tells us that the haven of peace that we seek is within us. He expects us to do earnest sadhana in midst of all negativities around which have to be endured.

By reflecting constantly on Bhagavan's life and teachings we can imbibe and absorb his approach to various issues. This enables us to respond appropriately to different

situations. Bhagavan should not be ‘consulted’ like an encyclopedia, by ‘looking up’ the index of the book in a mechanical way. Learning from him is a continuous process of study and reflection.

\*She is a well-read devotee of our Kendram, now settled in Ahemdabad.

**Blame yourself if you have no branches or leaves; don’t accuse the sun of partiality.** – *Chinese proverb*

**Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.** – *Emerson*

**All times are beautiful for those who maintain joy within them; but there is no happiness or favourable time for those with disconsolate or orphaned souls.** – *Rosalia Castro*

**Relax your body and mind and let your Spirit soar high.** – *Remez Sasson*

**Tolling a bell in a temple is to awaken oneself to the God within, not to awaken the God outside.** – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

**Man is most uniquely human when he turns obstacles into opportunities.** – *Eric Hoffer*

**Prayer is when you talk to God; meditation is when you listen to God.** – *Diara Robinson*

**SCIENCE, RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY:** If there is one thing equally sought by all, it is happiness. Science, religion and spirituality all aim at making human beings happier. These three paths are complimentary, being the essential attributes of the three dimensions of the human existence, namely, body, mind and soul. Science presents us with various means of comfort for deriving happiness. But true happiness lies in the mind. A child derives immense pleasure from his toys, but as he grows older, he loses interest in them and seeks new means of pleasure. It is not the objects but the state of mind that gives us happiness. The purpose of all religions is to train the mind so as to remain unaffected by the transitory nature of things. Religion teaches us to rise above the pride and prejudices and to acquire equanimity so that we can understand and perceive things as they are. A stable mind, which has acquired equanimity, makes one happy in all circumstances. Spirituality means to dwell in the domain of truth – that is, to know the real nature of things

beyond their transitory nature. It leads to acquiring knowledge of the all-pervading Self, without resorting to rituals of any type. With Self-realisation one attains the highest knowledge that he himself is the source of all bliss. Thus concludes our search of happiness outside us. – *R.K. Gupta*

## THE HEART

**The following is from Devaraja Mudaliar's record of what he was told by Bhagavan.**

In the centre of the cavity of the heart [on the right side of the chest] Brahman shines by itself as the Atman (Self) in the feeling of 'I-I'. Reach the Heart by diving within yourself, either with control of breath, or with thought concentrated on the quest of the Self. You will thus get fixed in the Self.

I have been saying all along that the Heart Centre is on the right side, even when the learned men differed from me. I speak with experience. I knew it even in my home during trances. Again during the incident recorded in Self Realization [Bhagavan's biography by Narasimha Swami], I had a very clear vision and experience. All of a sudden a light came from one side erasing the world-vision. I felt that the heart on the left had stopped and the body became blue and inert. Vasudeva Sastri embraced the body and wept over my death, but I could not speak. All the time I was feeling that the Heart Centre on the right was working well as ever. This state lasted fifteen or twenty minutes. Then suddenly something shot out from the light to the left like a rocket bursting into the sky. The blood resumed circulation and the normal condition of the body was restored.

The entire universe is condensed in the body and the entire body in the heart. Thus the heart is the nucleus of the whole universe. This world is not other than the mind, the mind is not other than the Heart; that is the whole truth.

To Rama who questioned Vasistha, "Which is that big mirror in which all these are mere reflections? What is the heart of all souls or creatures in this universe?" Vasistha replied, "All creatures in the universe have two kinds of hearts – one to be ignored and the other to be taken note of. Hear their respective traits: the one to be ignored is the physical organ called the heart, which is situated in the chest. The one

to be taken note of is the Heart which is of the nature of consciousness. It is both inside and outside (us) and has neither an inside nor an outside.”

One can achieve the eradication of all desires and control of breath, by the practice of merging the mind in the Heart, which is pure consciousness. Concentrating on the Heart is the same as concentrating on the Self. The Heart is another name for the Self.

The Heart is Self-luminous. Light arises from the Heart and reaches the brain which is the seat of the mind. The world is seen with the mind, that is, by the reflected light of the Self. If the mind is turned inwards towards the source of light, objective knowledge ceases and the Self alone shines forth as the Heart.

The moon shines by the reflected light of the sun. When the sun has set, the moon is useful for revealing objects. When the sun has arisen, no one needs the moon, although the pale disc of the moon is still visible in the sky. So it is with the mind and the heart. – *Gems from Bhagavan*, Sri Ramanasramam.