

SRI RAMANA JYOTHI

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2013

JANUARY - 2013

UNCOVER THE FALSE APPEARANCE

Until the false appearance of the snake goes, the underlying truth, the rope, will not shine. Until the false world-appearance becomes non-existent, the underlying reality, the truth, the *swarupa*, will not reveal itself. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

THUMBING NOSE AT WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

By D. Samarender Reddy*

We are not creatures of flesh and bones
Moving around by choice or constraint
Nor are we thoughts of any kind
Streaming in some mental space.
Viewing ourselves to be so
No doubt sort of makes sense
When the sun is up and shining
But so do many bizarre things
When we shut our eyes and doze.
While a Plato or Derrida
May have some truths worth hearing
Their words are but visible thoughts
And thoughts however noble or ignoble
Always fall short of the Truth
Which is too vast to be so constrained
In the only form that the mind
Is capable of handling.
Were it that we seek
The Truth and nothing but the Truth
Unmire the mind from the bog
Of discursive thought
And sacrifice it humbly
At the altar of meditation.

*A medical doctor who works in Hyderabad. <samarender.reddy@yahoo.com>

THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE: Spiritual experiences cannot be had through our five senses. They are the kind that can be perceived directly from inside of one's consciousness. For this to be possible, **one has to have a really intense desire for it.** One has to switch the physical world off completely for as long as possible. Only then can one make oneself eligible for the spiritual experience. Many tend to argue that spirituality cannot be divorced from worldly living, as spirituality basically entails living normally, though with an attitude that I am something more than the physical body. While this may make sense to most spiritual seekers, there is danger that it will amount to nothing more than hypocrisy. One may continue to merrily indulge in worldly pursuits and may simply keep telling oneself now and then that there is soul beyond the body. That will be self-deception. It is unlikely to bring any spiritual experience to such a person. Many believe that spirituality means living in a noble way – practising honesty, integrity, charity, selflessness and other such noble qualities. These are, no doubt, an important preparation towards attaining the ultimate objective. However, this is not the be-all and end-all of spirituality for it would confuse means with the end. If one falls into that trap, it may amount to walking on treadmill when in fact, one wants to reach a destination! Yes, one will get the side benefit of shedding some fat; but one won't be progressing towards the ultimate goal. Without *vairagya*, it might not lead to the ultimate goal of Self-realisation. – *Kishor Kulkarni*

SURRENDER TO BHAGAVAN: In the word Bhagavan, 'Bhaga' means opulence and 'van' means the one who possesses. Bhagavan possesses all opulence, the totality of knowledge, wealth, power, and renunciation. Another meaning of Bhagavan is that 'Bhaga' signifies 'shakti' or potency. The interpretation of Bhagavan is '*Sarvashaktiman*' – one who possesses infinite abundance of everything. Bhagavan Sri Krishna openly invites us in *Gita*, to surrender unto Him, and that He will take care of everything. If we do not heed His message, He will lose nothing, but we would be deprived of being protected and maintained by Him. – *Nishkinchan Maharaj*

THE GREATEST WONDER: In *Mahabhart*a, while replying to Yaksha's question, "What is the greatest wonder of all?" Yudhishtira says, "Day after day countless persons are going to the abode of Yama, yet those who remain behind believe themselves to be immortal. What can be a greater wonder than this?" We believe that what happens to others will not happen to us. We apply different standards to evaluate our own behaviour and that of others in all fields of activity. Our attitude towards others is the result of ignorance of their ways of thinking and living. We can tame the beast in us by educating ourselves about our true nature. It can be

done by inner spiritual development. Then we see the whole of human family as one.
– *Ashok Vohra*

TRANSFORMATIONAL PROXIMITY OF SRI RAMANA

British journalist Paul Brunton* who first visited the Maharshi in 1930, records as follows, in his inimitable way.

Face to face with the Maharshi, I became aware of a mysterious change taking place with great rapidity in my heart and mind. The old motives which had lured me began to desert me. The urgent desires which had sent my feet hither and thither vanish with incredible swiftness. The dislikes, misunderstanding, coldness and selfishness which had marked my dealings with many of my fellows collapsed into abyss of nothingness. An untellable peace fell upon me and I knew that there was nothing further that I shall ask from life.

I became aware that he is definitely linking my own mind with his, that he is provoking my heart into that state of starry calm, which he seems perpetually to enjoy. In this extraordinary peace, I find a sense of exaltation and lightness. Time seems to stand still. My heart is released from its burden of care. Never again, I feel, shall the bitterness of anger and melancholy of unsatisfied desire afflict me. My mind is submerged in that of the Maharshi and wisdom is now at its perihelion. [The point in the orbit of a planet when it is closest to the sun.] A force greater than my rationalistic mind awes me until it ends by overwhelming me.

During daily meditation in the potent presence of the Sage, I learnt to carry my thoughts inwards to an ever-deepening point. Again and again I became conscious that he is drawing my mind into his own atmosphere during these periods. And it is at such times that I begin to understand why the silences of this man are more significant than his utterances.

There were moments when I felt his power so greatly that I knew that he has to only issue the most disturbing command and I will readily obey it. But the Maharshi is the last person in the world to place his followers in the chain of obedience. He allows everyone the utmost freedom of action. In this respect he is quite refreshingly different from most of the teachers and yogis I have met in India.

Again and again, I am aware that the Maharshi's mind is imparting something to my own, though no words may be passing between us. Spiritually my life is nearing its peak.

I enter the hall and straightaway assume my regular meditation posture. An intense interiorization of consciousness comes with the closing of eyes. The Maharshi's seated form floats in a vivid manner before my mind's eyes. Then the picture

disappears leaving me with nothing more than a strongly felt sense of his intimate presence.

I flash swiftly to a pin-pointed concentration. Some new and powerful force comes into dynamic action within my inner world and bears me inwards with resistless speed. In the next stage, I stand apart from the intellect, consciousness, that it, is thinking, and watch thoughts with a weird detachment. I feel like some Columbus about to land on an uncharted continent.

I remain perfectly calm and fully aware of who I am and what is occurring. Yet my sense of awareness had got drawn out of the narrow confines of separate personality; it had turned into something sublimely all embracing. Self was still there, but it had changed into a radiant self. With it arrived an amazingly new sense of absolute freedom, for thought is like a loom-shuttle which always goes to and fro, and to be freed from its tyrannical motion was to step out of prison into the open air. I was in the midst of an ocean of blazing light, which stretched away into untellable infinite space, incredibly *alive*. I attained a divine liberty and an incredible felicity [Bliss]. My arms embrace all creation with profound sympathy. My heart got remoulded in rapture.

In the presence of the Maharshi I felt security and inward peace. The spiritual radiations that emanated from him were all-penetrating. The subtle and silent flavour of spirituality which emanated from him can never be reported.

Face to face with the Maharshi, sometimes I 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, contains his enchanting reminiscences at pages 13-23. His classic *A Search in Secret India* made the Maharshi known the world over. The book is available at the sales counter of the Kendram.

SRI RAMANA'S ADVENT AT ARUNACHALA

Alighting at Tiruvannamalai station on the morning of 1st September, 1896, Venkataraman beheld his 'promised land' in the *gopurams* of Arunachaleswara temple. The very sight of the towers filled his soul with joy. With quick steps and a pounding heart, he proceeded straight to the great temple. The gates of the three high compound walls and all the inner doors were open. (M.G. Shanmukam* in his Tamil biography of Bhagavan (1937) states that as Venkataraman entered, the temple doors began to open automatically.) There was not a single soul beside him; and it looked as though the Father was thus preparing to welcome his beloved son who marched straight to the innermost shrine without any hindrance, and addressed Arunachaleswara (in the shape of Lingam) thus: 'Father, I have come according to

your bidding. I offer myself to you.’ Tears flowed down his cheeks. An overwhelming happiness drowned him. He stood a while there in ecstasy and then left the sanctuary. He had sealed his future and delivered it to God; and henceforth he was but a baby in the arms of his Father. For him, Arunachaleswara was the sole refuge. Never would he leave His lap. He had obtained That, having obtained which, there was nothing else to desire.

B.V.Narasimha Swami in his classic biography of Bhagavan – *Self Realization*, has quoted the following poem of Sankey, well-known gospel singer and composer of America (1840-1908), to convey the scene:

“ ’Tis done, the great transaction’s done. I am the Lord’s, and He is mine;
He drew me and I followed on, Charmed to confess the voice divine.”

“Perfect submission, perfect delight, Visions of rapture burst on his sight.
Perfect submission, all is rest. He rests in the Lord, ever happy and blest.”

Now that he had seen the stone Lingam, he felt that it was not any mere external physical object, but the Omnipresent, All pervading Spirit that had drawn him and was still drawing him from his old groove. Three years passed, before he again went to Arunachala at the temple. Constant visits to the shrine, he felt, were needless in the face of the constant presence that filled his heart, of the hourly protection that he received, and of the strengthening realization that he was the immortal spirit.

As Sri Ramana left the temple, someone accosted him and wished to know if he would like to have his hair cut. When he said ‘yes’, he was taken to Ayyankulam tank where one of the barbers completely shaved off his lovely locks of jetblack hair. This was symbolic of his renouncing the world. He then tore his cloth and wore only a *Koupina* made out of it. He threw away three rupees and half with him and removed his sacred thread. He was not going to touch and never after did touch money. The casting away of the sacred thread had its solemn significance. The young swami was realising his own nature, and discarding all that was not Self. The sacred thread reminded him of his claim to Brahmin descent. He was getting farther and farther away from such distinctions. He was inferior to none, superior to none.

After the shave, he did not bathe but addressed his body thus (mentally) – ‘Should this block be accorded the comfort of a bath?’ and passed on to the temple. However, on the way there was a heavy downpour of rain which soaked him from head to foot. So what he had thought to deny himself was granted to him by the Divine Protector at Whose shrine he was going to stay. He stayed outside the temple for a day before making the thousand pillared hall his abode.

While talking about the rain on the night of the Golden Jubilee of his arrival, Sri Ramana recalled, “I remember the same thing happened on the night of 1.9.1896,

when I arrived here. It seems they had no rains for a long time then. But on that night there was a heavy downpour. I was then staying at the *mantapam* in front of the Big Temple. Only that morning I had discarded all my clothes, except a cod-piece. On account of the rains beating in, and the cold winds blowing out, I found the cold unbearable; and so I ran from there and took shelter on the pial of the house nearby. About midnight some inmates of the house came out opening the street door and I ran into the Big Temple. For some days after that, too, it rained.”

The thousand-pillared hall served as the first residence for the young ‘Brahmana Swami’ – that is the name by which he was known to the people of Tiruvannamalai. How he got this name one cannot certainly say. Probably someone watching him casting off his sacred thread at the tank and removing his tuft must have later recognized him at the temple, for in those days the town was thinly populated, and coming to know that he must be a Brahmin (in Tamil Brahmanan) must have called him Brahmana Swami. He sat there during his period of Samadhi; and its cold slabs were his bed, without so much of a cloth, much less a mat; his arm his pillow; his palm his plate; and any rag found by the wayside was his dress. – Mostly based on *Arunachala’s Ramana*, Vol. I.

*For his reminiscence of Bhagavan see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram, pp. 362- 64.

ARUNACHALA BHAKTA BHAGAWAT

Bhagawat Prasad Singh, founder of Ramanasramas in USA and Canada, was born hundred years ago in 1912, in a very remote village in Bihar. He got a fellowship in USA and after his master’s degree got a job in Indian embassy in Washington in 1949. He got attracted to Bhagavan in 1941, after reading the book *Gupt Bharat Ki Khoj*, Hindi translation of Paul Brunton’s classic, *A Search in Secret India*. He writes, “From the moment the book landed in my hands I was glued to it, and finishing it, decided to go to South India to have *darshan* of Bhagavan Ramana.” But he could visit Tiruvannamalai only in 1960. He writes: “As soon as I caught the glimpse of Arunachala, I was swimming in the Bliss of Bhagavan. After 19 years, Bhagavan had brought me to His Lotus Feet. The greatest dream of my life was fulfilled.”

Dennis Hertal, president, Arunachala Ashrama, New York, writes: It was in Tiruvannamalai that Arthur Osborne, a staunch devotee and founder of the *Mountain Path* encouraged Bhagawat to start some regular meetings in USA, centered on the Maharshi when he returned. In 1966, the present ashrama at New York was incorporated and registered as a religious charity. Bhagawat’s dream of a country side residential ashrama was realised in 1972, when Nova Scotia, Canada, Arunachala Ashrama was founded at the foot of the hills of Annapolis Valley.

Hertal also says: “All along Bhagawat would emphasize to the visitors the need for spiritual practice. He would say: ‘This is Arunachala *Abhyasa* Ashrama. Pointing to Bhagavan’s photo we would often hear him repeat to visitors – He teaches and we practice. He made me His servant, His doorman and doormat.’ In Bhagawat we found a devotee on whom Sri Ramana had showered his grace in full measure. He experienced His living Presence both within and without. He provided us with a living example of how to gain the Master’s grace and attain the purpose of human existence in the light of the life and teachings of the Maharshi. During last ten years of his life we could realise his inner state. He would keep silent most of the time, inwardly absorbed. He would often tell us, ‘Watch wherefrom the breath rises; it is the Heart. Watch wherefrom the sound rises; it is the Heart. Watch wherefrom the ‘I’ rises; it is the Heart.’ – *The Maharshi*, bi-monthly newsletter of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Centre, New York, Nov.-Dec., 2012

WHO IS SRI RAMANA? One day a swami from a well-known mutt from Kerala came for Bhagavan’s *darshan*. He was sitting in front of Bhagavan having thought in mind whether He was Vishnu or Murgan or Siva. When Bhagavan went out, he wrote a lengthy verse in Malayalam, putting the query – “Who is this Arunachala Ramana? My heart is eager to know the greatness of my guru”, and kept it near Bhagavan’s seat. On His return, Bhagavan saw the poem and on the reverse of the paper wrote a reply in the same Malayalam meter, which meant that Hari who resides in the heart of all living beings is the same as Arunachala Ramana. – Adapted from *Ramana Gyan*, bi-monthly journal of Delhi Ramana Kendra, Sep.-Oct., 2012

A STANGE AND REMARKABLE INCIDENT IN THE LIFE OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

The following is given as Appendix to *Self Realization* by B.V. Narasimha Swami, an authoritative biography of Bhagavan

One morning about the year 1912 the Maharshi, Palaniswamy, and Vasudeva Sastri left the Virupaksha cave and proceeded together to Pachaiamman Koil taking oil and soap-nut powder for an oil-bath, as facilities for such a bath were ample at that place. Bath over, they started back. The sun was fairly hot and the climbing was an additional strain. Palaniswamy and Sastri had gone ahead. When the Maharshi was near Tortoise Rock he began to feel faint and what followed is best given in Maharshi’s own words.

“Suddenly the view of natural scenery in front of me disappeared and a bright white curtain was drawn across the line of my vision and shut out the view of nature. I could distinctly see the gradual process. It was just like drawing a slide across one’s view

in the stereoscope. On experiencing this, I stopped walking lest I should fall. When it cleared, I walked on. When darkness and faintness overtook me a second time, I leaned against a rock until it cleared. And again for the third time I felt it safe to sit, so I sat near the rock. Then a bright white curtain had completely shut out my vision, my head was swirling and my blood circulation and breathing stopped. The skin turned a livid blue. It was the regular death-like hue, and it got darker and darker. Vasudeva Sastri took me to be dead, held me in his embrace and began to weep aloud and lament my death. His body was shivering. I could at that time distinctly feel his clasp and his shivering, hear his lamentation and understand the meaning.”

“I also saw the discoloration of my skin and I felt the stoppage of my heart and respiration, and the increased chillness of the extremities of my body. Yet my usual current of ‘thought’ [*Sahajasamadhi*] was continuing as usual in that state also. I was not afraid in the least, nor felt sadness at the condition of my body. I had closed my eyes as soon as I sat near the rock in my usual posture but not leaning against it. The body which had no circulation nor respiration maintained that position still. This state continued for some ten to fifteen minutes. Then a shock suddenly passed through the body, circulation revived with enormous force, as also respiration; and there was perspiration all over the body at every pore. The colour of life reappeared on the skin. I then opened my eyes, got up and said, “Let us go.” We reached Virupaksha cave without further trouble. That was the only occasion on which both my blood circulation and respiration stopped.”

The Maharshi added, to correct some wrong account that had obtained currency about the incident, “I did not bring on the fit purposely, nor did I wish to see what this body would look like at death. Nor did I say that I will not leave this body without warning others. It was one of those fits that I used to get occasionally; only it became very serious in this instance.”

THE ORIGIN OF *UPADESA SARAM*

This is the only ‘piece’ in four languages, namely, Tamil, Sanskrit, Telugu and Malayalam written by Bhagavan Himself.

The Rishis living in Daruka forest performed several sacrifices and rites and believed that by means of these they would attain liberation. Their wives also thought that they were the best women in the world. Lord Siva wanted to divert the Rishis’ attention from action to *jnana*. He appeared among them as a wandering *sadhu*. With him came Vishnu in form of a beautiful woman. The Rishis fell madly in love with this woman and their wives fell in love with the *sadhu*. Enraged at their wives’ behaviour and determined to destroy the *sadhu*, the Rishis created an elephant and a tiger and set them against him. Siva killed both and used the elephant’s skin as his upper garment

and the tiger's skin as a wrap. They tried to harm Siva in several ways, but in vain. Then they realised that they were in the presence of a superior person and asked him to instruct them.

Muruganar¹ was writing this story in Tamil verse. When he came to the instruction part, he requested Bhagavan to write it. Bhagavan wrote it in thirty verses in Tamil. In this he has discussed *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jnana*. Impressed by the grandeur of the verses, Ganapati Muni² and Lakshman Sarma³ requested Bhagavan to render them into Sanskrit, and Bhagavan obliged them. Yogi Ramaiah [A great Telugu devotee who had the privilege of being a witness to Bhagavan's will executed in 1938.] requested Bhagavan to write *Upadesa Saram* in Telugu. Bhagavan wrote a prose version of it. But Telugu devotees were unhappy that it was in prose. Bhagavan asked Ganapati Muni about the characteristic feature of *dvipada* metre and he explained them. Bhagavan condensed his description of the metre in a *sutra* and the Muni was amazed at the precision and clarity of it. This is still in the Ashram. Then Bhagavan wrote *Upadesa Saram* in Telugu verse.⁴ Later, Malayalee devotees including Kunju Swami⁵ requested Bhagavan to write the same in Malayalam verse.⁶ He wrote in the style of a group song (*kummi*). We must be grateful to Muruganar who was responsible for getting the original *Upadesa Undiar* written in Tamil. – Source: *Reminiscences* by Kunju Swami, originally in Tamil and translated in English by Dr. K.S., founder of our Kendram.

1, 2, & 3. For some details about them, see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 154-5, 243 and 183, respectively.

4. Regarding the high quality of Telugu version, Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya, a Telugu scholar writes in his *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*: "I had been struck with wonder at the style of the Telugu *Upadesa Saram* which, in its simplicity, felicity and classic finish, could equal that of the greatest Telugu poet Tikkana. I felt convinced that a Tamalian who could compose such Telugu verse must be divinely inspired, and I wanted to see him."

5. He was an attendant of Bhagavan from 1920-32. His reminiscences are at pages 150-54 of *Face to Face*.

6. Kunju Swami says: "Bhagavan had fully mastered the language. I once took some of his verses to a well-known Malayalam professor for his opinion. The professor marvelled at the purity of diction achieved by a writer whose mother tongue was not Malayalam." – *The Power of the Presence* by David Godman, part two, p. 19.

Adversity makes men, and prosperity makes monsters. – Victor Hugo

The heights by great men/ reached and kept/ were not attained by sudden flight/ But they, while their companions slept/ were toiling upward in the night.
– *H.W. Longfellow*

Nobody can make you feel inferior without your consent. – Anonymous

The shining Self dwells hidden in the heart. He is the goal of life. Attain this goal! – Mundaka Upanishad

A wise man should draw his speech into this mind, his mind into his understanding, his understanding into the great soul and the great soul into the silent Self. – Kathopanishad

When you are in the light, everything follows you, but when you are in the dark, even your own shadow does not follow you. – Confucius

When the breath wanders the mind also is unsteady. But when the breath is calmed the mind too will be still. Therefore, one should learn to control breath. – Hatha Yoga Pradipika

FEBRUARY

SIVA AS MALLIKARJUNA AT SRI SAILAM

By Lalita Ramakrishna

Mallikarjuna temple, known as Kailasa of the South, is on the Srisailam hill of Kurnool District. The presiding deities are Mallikarjuna (Siva) and Bhramara-amba. Adi Sankara has extolled the greatness of this *kshetra* in his *Dvadasa linga stotra: Srisaila sringey vividha prasangey/ Seshadri sringey api sada vasantam/ Tam arjuna mallika-purvam/ Enam namami samsaara-samudrasetum*. (I bow to that Arjuna whose name carries Mallika as a prefix, who is my bridge across the ocean of life. Extolled in various ways, he dwells forever on the peak of Srisaila on the Sesha hills.)

The story of the temple carved out in stone inscriptions of the temple is as follows: Once when princess Chandravati went to Kadali Vana to do penance, she saw a *kapila* (black) cow come and stand everyday under a *bilva* tree, while its milk flowed into the ground. She dug up that area and saw a *svayambhu* Siva Linga. It was bright and shining like the sun's rays. She got built a huge Siva temple and worshipped the Lord with *malli* (jasmine) flowers. Under the *vata vriksha*, banyan tree, is a shrine with the original *linga*.

Mallika (jasmine) indicates the fragrance of Devi, while Arjuna is another name of Siva. 'Arjuna' means clear and glowing like a streak of lightning. The name is driven from *arjava* (straight forward, upright).

After Kartikeya got defeated by Ganesa, who won the race of going round the world, by just once going round Siva and Parvati, he felt cheated and left for Krouncha mountain. His distraught parents followed him. But Kartikeya moved away to Palani, near Madurai. Siva and Parvati decided to stay on at Srisailam. – Condensed from *Tattvaloka*, November, 2012

NEED FOR CONTENTMENT: All worldly pleasures are transient and temporary. Very often they result in sorrow and disappointment. We often experience loss, depression and confusion and have no contentment. Lack of contentment is the real loss (*Asanrupto nijo nashtah*). There is no end to desires for material things. If one really wants happiness, he has to turn his mind towards God. The purpose of human birth is to realise the inherent Divinity. That is the way to achieve contentment and lasting bliss. God alone is the source of enduring bliss. – *V. Narayanan*

TULSI: The word ‘tulsi’ in Sanskrit means ‘incomparable’. The tulsi plant with blackish leaves is referred to as Krishna or Shyama tulsi, and the one with green leaves is called Rama tulsi. Both are valued for their physical and spiritual properties. Tulsi is perceived as a plant with divine attributes. Tulsi appeared during the *samudra manthan*. Since Lakshmi, too, emerged from the ocean in the same way, tulsi is regarded as her younger sister. She also wanted to marry Vishnu but Lakshmi cursed her to become a plant. However, Vishnu fulfilled her desire to marry him, hence, the *Tulsi Vivaha*. When Vishnu along with other gods, wakes up after *chaturmas* (for months of monsoon) on *Devprabodhini Ekadashi* his marriage with tulsi is celebrated. – *Seema Burman*

ADDRESSING THE SILENCE

By Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya

Where the riotous senses rest and are lulled into soft slumber,
Where speech conceals into silence and thought flows back into its fountain head,
Where this gigantic ego drops to a point, vanishes and lo! emerges as the Infinite One,
Where the atom and the universe, the soul and the Oversoul unite in one eternal-
luminous-Being,
There, O Self of self, let me awake.

(Sent by Prof. N.A. Mohan Rao, an erudite devotee at Hyderabad, with a title and corrections. This poem was read out in the Old Hall in the presence of Bhagavan, who got it translated into Tamil.)

PRANAVA: Mantra *shakti* is inherent is the peculiar humming sound produced by the well-known syllable OM. A large part of *Mandukyopanishad* is a commentary on the

nature of *pranava*. It says that OM is the bow, the arrow the soul, and Brahman its aim. HE shall be pierced by him whose attention does not swerve. Then he will become one with HIM as the arrow becomes one with the aim when it has pierced it. *Japa* alone will do it. It must be accompanied by constant meditation. *Kathopanisad* says: OM is *Brahman*. IT is also *Parabrahman*. Whoever knows the reality behind this sound obtains whatever he wants. – *Editor*

A QUIET MIND IS ALL YOU NEED

By Nisargadatta Maharaj

When the mind is kept away from its preoccupations, it becomes quiet. If you do not disturb this quiet and stay in it, you find that it is permeated with a light and a love you have never known; and you recognise it at once as your own nature. Once you have passed through this experience, you will never be the same again. The unruly mind may break its peace and obliterate its vision; but it is bound to return, *provided the effort is sustained*; until all bonds are broken and the life becomes concentrated in the present.

The mind is changing anyhow all the time. Look at your mind dispassionately; this is enough to calm it. When it is quiet, you can go beyond it. Do not keep it busy all the time. Stop it -- and just *be*. If you give it rest, it will settle down and recover its purity and strength.

A quiet mind is all you need. All else will happen rightly, once your mind is quiet. In the light of calm and steady self-awareness inner energies wake up and work miracles without effort on your part. – *I Am That: Talks With Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj*, www.chetana.com/p.htm

TEACHER AND GURU

By K. Sriram*

1. A teacher takes responsibility of your growth. A Guru makes you responsible.
2. A teacher prepares you for the outer journey. A Guru prepares you for the inner journey.
3. A teacher explains the world and its nature to you. A Guru explains your nature to you.
4. A teacher gives you knowledge which boosts your ego. A Guru punctures your ego.
5. A teacher reaches your mind. A Guru touches your soul.
6. A teacher answers your questions. A Guru questions your answers.

7. A teacher is to pupil what a father is to son. A Guru is to pupil what a mother is to the child.
8. A teacher leads you by hand. A Guru leads you by example.
9. A teacher makes you understand how to move about the world. A Guru shows where you stand in relation to the world.
10. One can always find a teacher. But Guru has to find and accept you.
11. When a teacher finishes, you graduate. When a Guru finishes, you celebrate.

* President, Sri Ramana Bhakta Samajam, Chennai

FULL FAITH IN GOD TO REDEEM HELPLESSNESS: We can face situations where we feel terribly helpless, completely at wits' end. No amount of thinking or talking seems to bring any solution. We feel boxed from all sides, without any obvious escape or relief from the situation. Such situations are extremely frustrating and the pressures that build up within start damaging the body and the mind. Here the only option that can save us from deterioration is the path of total surrender. This can come only when we have complete and unequivocal faith in a higher power. We need unflinching faith that the Super Power is driver of our life's vehicle. Transformation from doer to non-doer, and becoming a witness, is often the only weapon we have against helpless situations. – *P.V. Vidyathan*

DON'T LOOK BACK: Only fools think of the past; only fools imagine about the future, because they don't have the courage to live in the present. Forget the past; forget the future, this moment is all. This moment has to become your prayer, your love, your life, your everything. This is it. – *Osho*

UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATIONAL PROXIMITY OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

The following is in continuation of the last issue. It is indeed uplifting, inspiring and exhilarating to read the experiences of devotees in the presence of the Maharshi.

Duncan Greenlees came to India in 1930's on a teaching assignment: I saw the Maharshi. It did not take long for me to be sure that I was in front of one who had, in that very body, solved life's problems for himself. The radiant peace around him proved it beyond all doubt. The calm, like that of the midnight sky, was something too real to

question for a moment. The part of my search thus was over, even at the first glimpse. In a flash I had seen a 'Master'. I knew he was what they call *jivan mukta*.

Please don't ask me how I knew, for I cannot answer that. It was just one knows that water is wet and the sky is blue. It could not be denied – self-evident is the word. I could not tear myself away from him and stayed on, delighted, enthralled and pacified. That stillness of eternal depths had seeped itself into my heart. I had met a Master who could quell the waves with a silent word, 'Peace, be still!' I knew myself to be absolutely one with that incarnate Peace on the sofa.

The peace that Bhagavan had put upon me remained in my heart, like a shining cloud of transparency for about three weeks. The mind was caught and held in that peace in a blissfulness it had never known before. It is a pity I cannot bring about this mood at my own will: it can come only from the touch of the real Teachers of souls, as I have found. Can I doubt that here indeed we have, if not God Himself – for He is omnipresent, at least Greatness incarnate, the majesty of the ancient hill, blending with the sweetness of the evening star. Sit before him, and we knew that we were not that foolish excited little persons sitting there, but the eternal Self.

I know of no other man whose mere presence has thus enabled me to make the personality drop down in the abyss of nothingness. I have found no other human being who so emanates his grace that can plunge the ordinary man deep in the ecstasy of timeless omnipresent Being. His very presence among us is a benediction (Blessing). His clear and un-flickering vision of the Self has raised the whole world nearer the truth. His words have been an ocean of comfort and inspiration to thousands.

Eleanor Pauline Noye of California visited the Ashram in 1940: As I entered the Hall, I felt the atmosphere filled with Sri Bhagavan's Purity and Blessedness. One feels a breath of the Divine in the Sage's presence. When He smiled it was as though the gates of Heaven were thrown open. I have never seen eyes more alight with Divine Illumination – they shine like stars. His look of Love and Compassion was a blessing that went straight to my heart. One feels such an uplifting influence in His saintly presence and cannot help but sense His extraordinary spirituality. I do not think there is another like Him on earth today. To see Him is to love Him. As I looked upon Sri Bhagavan's serene face and into His eyes which beamed with mercy, my soul was stirred. He looked straight into my heart. Everyone who comes to Him is blessed; the inner peace which is His is radiated to all.

I had no slept well for years, although I had been taking medicine. I said nothing to Sri Bhagavan about this. The amazing thing was that I slept soundly the first night and thereafter without taking any medicine. I had received the Medicine or all medicines. I thought I was born anew. Mere words can never express the peace and joy felt in His presence; it must be experienced. The most blessed experience of my life was my stay at the feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Dilip Kumar Roy of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, a well-known personality of his time,

has authored many books: I entered the hall of the great sage, where he has been living a singular (extraordinary) life, blessing all, but belonging to none, interested in everything but attached to nothing. What I saw impressed me deeply, though I find it far from easy to portray what I saw or rather experienced. Here was a man who lived like a god, supremely indifferent to all that we world-lings calmour for without cease. I touched his feet and then, without a word, sat down near him on the floor and meditated. My heart was heaving with a strange exaltation which deepened by and by into an ineffable (indescribable) peace and bliss which lasted for hours and hours. Words seen utterly pale and banal (Stale) the moment you want to describe an authentic spiritual experience, which is vivid, throbbing and intense.

The Maharshi's self-obliviousness was enchanting for me. Greatness sat easily on him as beauty on a sunset cloud, but with a devastating effect. I have never in my life of varied experience and wide travelling met a man so utterly indescribable and yet so profoundly moving. I cannot say why he moved me to my depths with eyes where no soft light of emotion presided, and yet it bathed me when I met his gaze, with a peace that I find as unaccountable as it was delectable (greatly pleasing). I realised for the first time what is really meant by the word 'sacred'.

Prof. Banning Richardson taught English literature at St. Stephens College, Delhi,

in 1930's: In the presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi I felt an inward joy, which suffused (to spread all over) my consciousness, and made thinking seem superfluous. I had come in touch with spiritualism of the finest type. When I was in the presence of the Master I was so filled with joy and peace that the desire to ask questions disappeared. This happened throughout the three days I stayed at Sri Ramanasramam. When one comes into the presence of a man who is 'good' not merely because he shuns 'evil' but because his love is universal and falls alike on just and unjust, then one experiences immediate recognition of a soul that is not great as the world values greatness, but great when

compared to an absolute standard of values – a precious stone, an emerald without flaw. It is a difference not merely of quality but of kind.

Sadhu Ekarasa (Dr. G.H.Mees), a Dutch scholar, came to the Maharshi in 1936: ‘One only needs to look at someone like him. There is no need of speaking. One must see a sage in order to experience him.’ It is for this reason that I find it ever difficult to speak or write about the Maharshi, as I am often asked to do. If someone asks me to speak or write about the Maharshi, I am inclined to answer that the questioner ought to visit the Maharshi and see for himself.

The Maharshi is above the spirit of time. His immortality stands out from his every word and look. It lives in the heart of all who have had the great privilege to come and sit in his presence. It is reflected only poorly in the books and articles that have been written about him. How could it be otherwise? No one can truly describe God or Truth. Even so, no one can truly describe a Son of God and an embodiment of Truth.

William Spalding of New York visited the Maharshi in 1930’s: As I sat in His presence for the first time, the most powerful impression was that of what I can only call an almost palpable (tangible) ‘golden radiance’, the visual effect of tremendous spiritual force. There was an intense and subtle radiation that seems to flow from him continuously – and once having sensed this, words, questions, techniques of meditation, etc. seemed to dissolve immediately. The Maharshi also possessed to a high degree of that quality which is described as ‘divine indifference’, attributed to certain saints of the Christian Church.

Grant Duff, a poet, critic and diplomat paid a visit to the Maharshi in 1930’s: I do not know what happened when I saw the Maharshi for the first time, but the moment he looked at me, I felt that he was the Truth and the Light. There could be no doubt about it, and all the doubts and speculations I had accumulated during the past many years disappeared in the Radiance of the Holy One. Though my visits to the Ashram were brief, I felt that every moment I was there I was building up within me what could never be destroyed. There it did not take me long to see that I was in direct contact with one who has passed beyond the boundaries of senses and was already merged in the Absolute of his true Self.

K.S. Venkataramani, adviser to the former Alwar State (Rajasthan): There is nothing like an immersion in Sri Bhagavan’s immediate presence. It kindles your

swanubhava and sets you on the immortal path of Self-enquiry. His silence ambushes your hundred doubts of the mind in his presence. The peace in his presence passes all comprehension. He greets you and clasps you not by the money-hand of the mind, but by the invisible divine feeler of his heart. He touches you by a fourth-dimensional touch: the touch of the Master that detaches the mind from the fetters of its own dear ego-world. There is an elemental sublimity about Sri Bhagavan like that of the winds and the waves, the sun and the stars.

Dr. Kunhan Raja, Director, Adyar Library, Theosophical Society, Madras: I sat in his presence for hours together both in the forenoon and in the afternoon. Though there was no actual talk between us, there was an unbroken communion. What produced on me a great impression is the freedom from anxiety and unruffled calmness that prevailed in the place as a result of the presence of the Maharshi. He seldom spoke. There was always a look of serene joy in his face; sometimes it glowed up into a luster of bliss; at times I noticed that he rose into a *samadhi* or trance. But the look of blissful peace was always there.

K.S. Ramaswami Sastri, Chief Justice, the former Pudukottah State (Tamil Nadu): When we sat before him, time rolled on while we were oblivious of its course. Each felt a sense of inner release and was happy as a bird sailing through the vast expanse of the blue sky. The inner Fullmoon of Divine Rapture rose in the sky of the hearts of all. Then came to my mind the great passage in Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis* about Christ: "Indeed that is the charm about Christ; when all is said, He is just like a work of art. He does not really teach one anything, but by being brought into His presence one becomes something." I felt that I was predestined to the Sage's presence and went into the stillness of the night, moving away from him physically but feeling drawn nearer to him in spirit like a steamer borne against the wind. – All abstracts are from *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram.

BHAGAVAN-RELATED ANECDOTS

These are from the book 'Reminiscences'* by Kunju Swami, who was in the service of Bhagavan for three decades.

1. On his way to Arunachala from his place in Kerala to have Bhagavan's *darshan*, about whom he had learnt a lot from his guru, who had met Bhagavan, he reached

Katpadi. But at the railway station, when he went to get a ticket for Tiruvannamalai, he found that he was falling short of the fare by four annas. He was very dejected and stood on the platform thinking of Bhagavan. There were just a few minutes for the train to arrive. Wonders of wonders! He saw a glittering four anna coin between the rails. He jumped and picked it up and bought the ticket.

2. Alamelu Ammal of Madurai was a great devotee of Lord Subrahmanya. When she came to Tiruvannamalai, her father was deputy collector, who invited her to see Bhagavan. She declined as she would not bow before anyone except Lord Subrahmanya. The same night she dreamt of Bhagavan. In the dream, he disappeared and in his place appeared Lord Subrahmanya. Next day she came to the Ashram to see Bhagavan. First she saw Bhagavan and even as she was looking at him, he changed into Lord Subrahmanya. Then she completely surrendered to him and became his devotee.

3. Once, when Bhagavan was going round the hill, he was reciting a particular portion of *Tirupugazh* where the stanzas ended in *kavalane*. Everyone repeated it. In jest, Bhagavan asked in Telugu, *Ememi kavalane?* (What things you want?) A *sadhu* replied, “*Iddli kavalane.*” (I want *iddli*). Soon in the middle of the jungle, someone brought hot coffee and *iddlies* and distributed them to all.

* The book published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, is a translation of the original in Tamil by Dr. K.S., founder of our Kendram.

HAPPINESS IS NATURAL TO US

The desire for happiness is proof of the ever-existing happiness of the Self. Everyone who has a headache tires to get rid of it, because he knows a time when he had no headache. We desire only that which is natural to us. So too we desire happiness because happiness is natural. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

Many of life’s failures are people who did not realise how close they were to success when they gave up. – Thomas Edison

Hold on to the idea, “I am not the mind, I see that I am thinking, I am watching my mind act,” and each day the identification of yourself with thoughts and feelings will grow less, until at last you can separate yourself from the mind and know it to be apart from yourself.” – Vivekananda

Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity; and I'm not sure about the universe. – Einstein

Peace is not attained. It is something that you grow into. It is something that is added to you. What already is, is revealed when you get the process of living your life right. As a by-product of right living you discover peace. – Frozen Thoughts

In a normal game there is a winner and a loser. We play against an opponent. In the game of life there is one opponent and it is us. We win or lose against ourselves. – Ramaratnam

All our disappointments are a result and effect of not having enough appointment with ourselves. – Deepak Shinde

Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of the faith is to see what you believe. – Saint Augustine

Until and unless we rid ourselves of the illusion that what is visible is the real, and become awakened to the fact that what is unseen is the great reality, our spiritual life will fall short of being genuine. – S. Sudharshan

The Kendram gratefully acknowledges the following donations from the devotees – April to December 2012.

Name	Purpose	Amount (Rs.)
Sri Kesava Reddi	Fund-Building	10,000
Sri V.Parabrahma Sastry	Fund-Building	5,000
Sri V.Parabrahma Sastry	Fund-Building	5,000
Sri B.P.R.Sarma	Fund-Poor Feeding	50,000
Sri Nanduri Ramamohan	Fund-Corpus	22,000
Smt. Padma Nanduri	Fund-Corpus	22,000
Sri S.Venugopala Rao	Fund-Building	10,000
Sri Harikrishna Reddi	Fund-Building	10,000

A Devotee	Fund-Building	5,000
Smt. L.Laxmi Kumari	Fund-Poor Feeding	5,000
Sri K.Bhanumurthi	Fund-Building	10,000
Sri K.Venkataiah	Fund-Building	6,000
Sri C.Subba Raman	Fund-General	10,000
Sri Linga Venkateswara Rao	Fund-General	10,000
Sri K.Bhanumurthi	Fund-Building	15,000
Sri B.S.Rama Prasad	Fund-Building	50,000
Sri V.Ramadas Murthy	Fund-Building	50,000
Sri K.Prafulla	Fund-Building	5,000
Sri B.Pandu Rangam	Fund-Building	5,000
Sri P.V.Lavanya Rao	Fund-Building	5,000
Sri P.V.K.Reddi	Fund-Corpus	1,00,000
Sri Nanduri Ramamohan	Fund-Corpus	10,000
Sri S.R.Rao	Fund-SRJ	10,000
A Devotee	Fund-Corpus	20,001
Sri Konduru Seshapani	Fund-Building	10,000
Sri V.Krithivasan	Fund-General	10,000
Sri E.Sanjeeva Kumar	Fund-General	5,000
Smt. Pemmaraju Radhakumari	Fund-Poor Feeding	5,000
Smt. K.Sarala	Fund-Poor Feeding	5,116

Note: This is the first time when the donors list is being published. Most probably, they would not have liked their names to be made public. Donations to the Kendram are exempt from Income Tax under section 80G – Editor

MARCH

SHIVA AND SHAKTI *TATTVA*: The former represents the principle of existence and being; the latter is primordial creative energy. Shiva *tattva* is the passive aspect of Pure Consciousness. It is everlasting, eternal, and despite appearing as space, time and form, it does not undergo any change. Shakti is the dynamic power that brings into being the names and the forms that are there in the universe. While Shiva represents the ‘chit’ aspect, Shakti represents the ‘anand’ aspect. She is regarded as the feminine aspect of nature, the Mother of the Universe – the kinetic (Relating to or produced by some motion or change) aspect of Pure Consciousness. – *Anup Taneja*

PANCHABHUTA STHALAS OF SIVA

By Bhagyalakshmi Krishnamurthy

It is interesting to note that Siva, the destroyer, also manifests himself in the *panchabhutas* or five elements – fire, water, space, earth and wind, without which creation and life are impossible.

At Tiruvannamalai, Siva is worshipped as fire. The legend tells that once a heated debate took place between Vishnu and Brahma as to who was superior. Siva appeared as a column of fire and a voice decreed that he who finds the beginning and the end of the fire is Supreme. Vishnu, as a boar, started digging into the earth to find the base of the fire, but could not succeed. He abandoned the search and realised that the column of fire was Siva himself. But Brahma wrongly claimed that he had found the crest of the fire. When proved wrong, a repentant Brahma and a sober Vishnu implored Siva to reside in the place. The huge column of fire, the form of Siva, eventually got frozen as Arunachala hill, and is worshipped as Siva *lingam*.

At Thiruvannaikaval, near Trichy, was once a *jambu* (Hindi: Jamun) forest. Here Siva embodies water. The story is: Siva banished Parvati to the earth for disturbing his meditation; she made a *lingam* from the waters of Cauvery river, placed it under the Jambu tree and prayed for forgiveness. Siva forgave her and taught her the *Siva Jnana*, merged with the water lingam and stayed under the Jambu tree. He came to be known as Jumbukeswara. Since it was Parvati who worshipped the Lord here, even today, the temple priest dresses up like a woman, when he performs the *puja* at noon.

At Chidambaram, Siva is *akasha* or space. Since space is essentially formless, the sanctum at the temple contains no idol. At regular intervals, the curtain is moved to provide devotees a glimpse of nothingness punctuated by a garland of golden *bilva* leaves hanging from the ceiling.

At Kanchipuram, Siva is Ekambareswara and embodies earth. Parvati is believed to have made a lingam out of sand which she worshipped under a mango tree on the banks of a river. This tree was believed to yield one fruit a year – Ekambara. In order to test her piety and devotion, Siva made the river swell, but Parvati clung to the earthen *lingam* in order to protect it. Pleased with her devotion, Siva came to rest in the *lingam* and stayed there as Ekambareswara.

At Srikalahasti, Siva resides as air in the *Vayu lingam*, believed to be *swayambhu* or self-manifested. Inside the sanctum, the flame of the lamp flickers constantly, even when there is no wind blowing, indicating the presence of Siva as air. The region gets

its name from three unusual devotees of Siva – a spider (*sri*), a serpent (*kala*), and an elephant (*hasti*), who worshipped the *lingam* in their own ways. Recognizing their intense devotion, Siva granted them *moksha*. – Excerpted from *Speaking Tree*, Nov. 4, 2012. Google provides pictures and many details of all the five places.

REALISE THE TRUTH: We are blinded by the objective world and believe the world worthy of pursuit. The cataract grows in the eye and robs it of its efficiency. Ignorance is the cataract of the inner eye. It hides the true vision and blinds the intellect not allowing us to see that Divinity is our real nature. Ignorance misleads us to believe that we are ordinary humans and we ignore our true Higher Self. We have to fix our urge on the Truth, Eternal, and the Real – the Divinity present within us. – *V. Narayanan*

HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By P. Satishkumar*

In 1990's I was a successful businessman at Hyderabad, having great devotion and faith in Lord Venkateswara. On my friends' advice, I joined yoga classes for two weeks to get some relief from my business tensions. Suddenly, in the last retreat classes at Chilukur, Lord Venkateswara appeared for me at noon when I performed his worship with continuous tears for an hour and then fell unconscious for an hour. I was very greatly overwhelmed with joy, which no pleasure or status can ever give.

After a year, I saw Bhagavan's photo in my yoga teacher's house, and suddenly I felt that He is my Guru. Later on, I came to know many details about Bhagavan from my business advocate Sri Hanumantha Rao, a former president of our Kendram. Then I began reading books about Bhagavan, and started attending *satsang* regularly at the Kendram. I also started visiting Tiruvannamalai very often and became very serious about Bhagavan's Self-enquiry. When this storm of Self-enquiry took me in its fold, I thought that Tiruvannamalai will be the best place for me to reside and practice Self-enquiry.

In this regard, all my family members and relatives helped me a lot to come and settle down at Tiruvannamalai. In due course, Bhagavan has helped me to fulfill my spiritual thirst.

With my 15 years of experience with Bhagavan, I understood that three things are

very essential on Bhagavan's path, namely, 1. Very sincere effort and intense liking for the path. 2. Support of our family members and fellow devotees. 3. Last but not the least, Bhagavan's abundant Grace. OM ARUNACHALA SIVA.

* A long-standing devotee of our Kendram, who in 2005, at the age of 35 years only, chose to leave his home at Hyderabad and stay at Tiruvannamalai, with his wife and children. The editor salutes to his unmoving faith and total devotion to Bhagavan. His e-mail: <polepalle_satish@yahoo.com>

SELF IMPROVEMENT IS THE PRIORITY

Correcting oneself is correcting the whole world. The sun is simply bright. It does not correct anyone. Because the sun shines, the whole world is full of light. Transforming yourself is a means of giving light to the world. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

THOUGHT AND FEELING

By Prof. N. A. Mohan Rao*

The difference between thought and feeling holds the key to the understanding of Self-enquiry. If we understand this difference, we will be able to see how to practise Self-enquiry. We can proceed with confidence that we are on the right track.

Let us suppose a Swamiji is giving a talk, and touches upon the topic of 'anger'. He could be describing the evil effects of anger and why we need to avoid anger as far as possible. During the talk, all those ideas of anger must have occurred in the Swamiji's mind as thoughts (of anger) which then issue out in the form of audible words. These words heard by us are then stored in our mind as our own thoughts about anger. From this example we can see what 'thought' of anger means.

During the course of the Swamiji's talk, neither he nor anybody in the audience may be actually feeling angry. It means no one there has any 'feeling' of anger, although everyone is possessed of thoughts of anger. We can thus see that the feeling of anger is quite different from the thought of anger. The thought is felt to be located in our mind only, whereas the feeling appears to be experienced 'all over' our personality.

We can, generally speaking, switch easily from one thought to another by our own will, but not so easily from one feeling to another.

Feeling always relates to the present moment. Thought need not. We might have been angry with a person yesterday. Later, we may have realized that we were mistaken about him, and so shed our anger. So, today, if we happen to remember that we were angry yesterday, we have only the thought of (yesterday's) anger, but not the feeling of anger. This is why we say that feeling always relates to the present – the 'now' of the moment.

In the course of our life, we experience many *feelings* like fear, pride, selfishness, kindness etc. Whenever we recollect those feelings, we have the corresponding *thoughts* – of fear, pride, selfishness, kindness etc. Thus, every feeling has a corresponding thought.

We have, similarly, the 'I-feeling' and 'I-thought'. The I-feeling means being aware of our own inner sense of 'I'. Like any other feeling (of anger, fear etc), the I-feeling also is experienced 'all over' our personality, and relates to the present moment. When we are in deep meditation or prayer, our sense of 'I' within us is felt distinctly. We do not however recognize it. So, although we experience our I-feeling on such occasions, we mistake that we do not know it. In our normal life, such moments of experience of I-feeling occur only rarely. So, we tend to think that there is only one way in which we cognize (i.e., know) our 'I', and that is as I-thought. We do not realize that on most those occasions, our I-thought is acting on behalf of our 'I'. This is the effect of Maya.

The I-thought is said to be identical with our ego. It operates mostly in the form 'I-am-the-body' or 'I-am-the-mind'. For example, when we say "I went to the office yesterday", we mean "I, identified with my *body*, went there". But when we say "I like science over arts", we are identifying ourselves with our *mind*.

The form 'I-am-the-body' is the more fundamental of the two forms of I-thought. So, let us limit our discussion to it. In this form, there is a sentient part and an insentient part. 'Sentient' means 'knowing or being aware of itself'. In the form 'I-am-the-body', 'I' is the sentient part, because 'I' knows itself. The 'body' is the insentient part, because it does not know itself.

In Self-enquiry, at first we try to curb all thoughts of the world, and limit ourselves to the I-thought. Then, we try to look for the sentient part 'I' in it. This step is often referred to as searching for the root of the I-thought (See verse 19 of *Upadesa Saram*). For this purpose, our intellect (or *buddhi*, which is supposed to conduct this search) goes inside that shell-like form 'I-am-the-body', and spots the 'I' occurring in

it. We then have a clear sense of our 'I', as an inner experience. It is like being *directly* aware that we 'are'. This experience is our I-feeling.

The turning of our mind to this realm I-feeling is called introversion, or *antar-mukhata*. The I-feeling is often referred to under several other names, like I-consciousness, I-awareness, self-awareness, self-consciousness, *sphurana*, I-am-feeling, I-am-ness etc.

Bhagavan has stressed that it is enough if we remain introverted – i.e., hold on to this I-feeling. It will take us gradually deeper and deeper into our real identity, till at some point we are suddenly carried to the Self-experience. We are then said to be in *nirvikalpa samadhi*. It is impermanent, and so passes off after a time. With continued practice, it becomes permanent. That is when we have our *sahaja-sthiti*, or *sahaja samadhi*.

Bhagavan had often declared that Self-enquiry is the most direct of all methods of Self-realization. But many people shirk from its actual practice, as they find it difficult to grasp the *intuitive* step of getting to the I-feeling. Anything that is intuitive cannot be completely explained in words. But if we bestow careful attention to what is expressed in words, we will be able to catch the intuitive idea behind those words. We can then succeed in attaining the I-feeling. If we try sincerely, Guru's grace enables us to succeed. For this, we need to have boundless faith in and devotion to our Guru.

*The author, an erudite scholar and Bhagavan's devotee at Hyderabad, says that this piece presents the essence of his five articles, on Self-enquiry published in *Mountain Path* during 2010-12.

DESIRE: Unbridled desire makes one unhappy. It puts one on a collision course with others who prevent one from fulfilling it. Desire can also force one to compromise one's values. The moment the desire is fulfilled, one's attention is shifted to something else one does not have. Thus one no longer enjoys what one has. The first step is to manage desire with intellect. If the intellect approves, go ahead and fulfill the desire without fear of guilt. The next step is desire reduction by upgrading desires. Pick up a higher desire, the lower one drops. Finally, when the lure of the Infinite grips one, all desires vanish. One is in Bliss. – *Jaya Row*

MISSING PORTRAITS: It is ironical that Siva, the hermit form of God, is often seen as part of a family photograph with his wife Parvati and two sons, Ganesha and

Kartikeya. But there are no images of Krishna with his children, and of Rama with his sons, both of whom are the householder form of God. – *Devdutt Pattanaik*

KUNJU SWAMI TALKS ABOUT BHAGAVAN

By Darlene Delisi

The following is from the notes of a foreign devotee of Bhagavan, who met Kunju Swami in 1978. She says that the guidance and inspiration from the Swami greatly helped to establish in her one-pointed life of devotion and dedication.

According to Kunju Swami Bhagavan's life at Arunachala can be broadly divided into three periods. **Part I** – 1896-1898: Life prior to Bhagavan's residence on the Arunachala Hill – Gurumurtham, Pachaimman koil etc. During this period he did not talk. His presence and *darshan* was all that was needed to give one complete spiritual fulfillment. **Part II** – 1899-1922: Bhagavan's life on the Arunachala Hill – at Virupaksha Cave, Skanda Ashram etc. He spoke sparingly, using very few words, and that too only in answer to questions put to him. His presence radiated peace and quietude. A few hours with Bhagavan were enough to give one spiritual fulfillment. **Part III** – 1922-1950: Bhagavan's life at Sri Ramanasramam. Bhagavan was extraordinarily brilliant and poured out his experiences and reminiscences. In his presence, the all-engrossing appearance of the world would cease to hold a position of importance.

All knew the fact that he loved the Hill dearly. He used to say that Kailas was undoubtedly the abode of Lord Siva but that the Hill was Lord Siva Himself. And for thousands of us he himself was the Hill. Even on the hottest days of the year he would go walking on it several times a day without any foot ware or covering.

Bhagavan never fully stretched himself on the bed like we do to sleep at night. It was a marvelous phenomenon that perhaps might not have been noticed by many. He used to have a few round pillows for his back to recline on, in which position he used to remain all night. Sometimes he used to support his head with the hand also, but always only in the reclining pose. We have never seen him sleeping on his back fully stretched or lying down full on his side!

Different Paths of Spiritual Evolution

Kunju Swami said: Though traditionally it is stated that worship, *japa*, *dhyana* and *samadhi* are the ascending order of spiritual evolution, and Bhagavan also has confirmed it in *Upadesa Saram*, Bhagavan has stressed that 'worship' was treating the universe as a manifestation of God. Such worship takes you directly to the goal (God, Self). *Japa* is to be done continuously inwardly like the flow of oil, as a perennial stream. *Dhyana* means 'absorption into the Source'. It is the final peace too.

Tapas is the realization of That (Ultimate Truth) which subsists when all trace of 'I' is gone.

When one is alone, either walking, sitting, etc. one should engage the mind in *stotras* or *japa* to prevent the mind from getting distracted. As far as possible one should see that the mind is kept introverted and for that *stotras* and *japa* are the best aids. Bhagavan's instruction was: "Go to sleep when the body requires it; when awake engage yourself in *sadhana*. Do not even think whether it is day or night. Do not doze-off pretending to do meditation.

Kunju Swami said: (i) The seeker should know what exactly his aim is, viz., the goal; (ii) Once convinced of the goal, he should seek the Guru, receive the teachings from him and diligently absorbed himself in them; and (iii) He should then constantly engage himself in self-analysis as to whether he is following the teachings imparted by the Guru, and whether he is progressing or not. **Constant vigilance is very essential for the progress of the seeker.** – Condensed from *The Maharshi*, Jan.-Feb., 2013

UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATIONAL PROXIMITY OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

The following is in continuation of the last two issues. It is indeed uplifting, inspiring and exhilarating to read the experiences of devotees in the presence of the Maharshi.

Viswanatha Swami, who authored the famous *Ramana Ashtotra*, was with the Maharshi from 1923 to 1950: In my first *darshan* of Bhagavan at Skandasram the very sight of him thrilled me. Something very subtle, seemingly with its centre in the body, shone forth, without limitation, engulfing everything else. I felt swallowed by it. His look and smile had remarkable spiritual charm. When he spoke, the words seem to come out of an abyss. I sensed something very lofty and sacred about him. In his vicinity, mind's distractions were overpowered by an austere and potent calmness. In his presence the unique bliss of peace was directly experienced. In the blissful atmosphere of Ramana, one loses one's sense of separate individuality and there remains something grand and all pervading, all devouring.

Swami Madhavatirtha, a Gujarati scholar, met Bhagavan in 1944: The mystical experience I had during my visit can be described with reference to an analogy from the *Bhagavatam*. Sometime before the birth of Lord Krishna, it is said, the Lord entered the heart of Vasudeva, who then shined like sun. Later, that light passed into

Devaki through a mere look of Vasudeva, after which she shined like a moon... On the very first day of my *darshan* of the Maharshi in the dining hall, I found in the look of the sage the dazzling brilliance of the sun. On a subsequent day, while in the presence of the Maharshi in the hall, I recognised the same brilliance in the look of the Sage. It seemed to pierce me to the core of my being, even as the light of the Lord passed into Devaki through the look of Vasudeva. My breath seems to stop for a while and my mind was elevated into some spiritual realm of unutterable peace and happiness.

Souris was daughter of the famous Telugu author Chalam: Ever since I read Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*, the desire to see Bhagavan became intense. I spent a whole year yearning to go to him before I could get a chance to see him. As soon as he saw me, Bhagavan smiled as if I were an old acquaintance. I went to see Bhagavan again in late 1930s. I was often in ecstasy in his presence. For me, being in Bhagavan's presence was like being in heaven. If I am to write how Bhagavan has impressed me, all the vocabulary I can command in the three languages I know would not suffice. When a word issued forth from his lips – generally he did not speak much at all – it was just as astonishing as it would be if words have come forth from an inanimate idol. Above all else, I noticed his sparkling eyes; even in the dark one could see them sparkle. And when he looked at us, his sight, like an arrow, pierced right into the deepest recesses of the heart.

T.P.R. Iyer, a native of Tiruvannamalai, met Bhagavan in 1920s: I entered Sri Bhagavan's hall and looked at him. I fell flat on my face in prostration to him with an experience as totally consuming as it was convincing. A discovery that 'He', whom I was hankering for all these years, who could sway my entire being and guide my energies, was here. He was so great yet so simple. I rose up. All the emotions, thoughts and surging doubts were nowhere! I felt I found my refuge, and the greatest fortune of my life.

Sivaprakasam Pillai, is best remembered for his role in getting the Maharshi write down his teachings, later published as Who am I? He met Bhagavan in 1902: The Supreme Lord has assumed a human body as an act of grace and resides at Arunachala under the name Ramana. All around him I saw an incomparable effulgence like the splendour of many moons. His body shone with the light of the sun, belittling the lustre of shining gold. His beautiful eyes were shedding divine grace. In him was the majesty of the Lord of Lords, along with the power of giving bountifully. A little later I saw his body smeared with white, bright, sacred ash. My stone-like heart melted and became like water. From that day I realised that he is my Lord, and all the dangers and difficulties I encountered disappeared by his grace like mist disappearing before the sun.

Prof. K. Swaminathan taught English at Presidency College, Madras: My first *darshan* of the Maharshi on September 29, 1940, was the most memorable event of my life. Repeated visits to the Ashram in later years kept me (as spells of sound sleep keep one) in health, happiness and taut efficiency. The pure happiness I enjoyed was that of a child when it sits securely in its mother's lap.

Arthur Osborne, an Oxford-educated Britisher, is author of many books on Bhagavan, whom he met in 1945: When near Bhagavan, for the first time in my life, I began to understand what the grace and blessings of a guru could mean. I went about with a tilt of happiness in my heart, feeling the blessing and mystery of the guru, repeating, like a love song, that he was the Guru, the link between heaven and earth, between God and me, between the Formless Being and my heart. I became aware of the enormous grace of his presence.

Suri Nagamma, famous for her 273 letters about Bhagavan in Telugu, met him in 1941: I entered the hall full of nervousness, bowed before Bhagavan and sat with bent head. After about ten minutes I lifted my head and found Bhagavan looking at me intensely. His compassionate look calmed my mind. Though for the next ten days Bhagavan had not spoken to me, as was deeply impressed by him. After I received his grace, like Ahalya getting rid of her past ignorance by the touch of the feet of Rama, the darkness got dispelled from my mind. Bhagavan's grace began to grow towards me steadily like water flowing through a parched field, making it blossom.

S.S. Cohen, an Iraqi Jew, made Ashram his home in 1936: Bhagavan was a beacon of light in an otherwise impenetrable darkness, and a haven of peace. Many of those who had the inestimable privilege of a stay with Bhagavan bear witness to the blessedness which his mere presence conferred upon them.

Maurice Frydman, a Polish Jew, a research engineer, met Bhagavan in 1935: I felt that there was something extraordinary in this man. I felt a strong affection for him, just as a dog would have towards his master. Just as the egg grows and hatches only with the aid of the warmth of the mother; I was getting into shape slowly and steadily in his presence. My mind became quieter than before. Previously it was unhappy and dissatisfied, now a kind of security and peace began to be felt spontaneously. In the Maharshi, the sublime majesty of the divine life stood and moved in all simplicity. The ultimate had revealed itself as the immediate, and the undreamt had become the actual. – All abstracts are from *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram.

A smile is a curve that sets everything straight. – *Phyllis Diller*

Whenever I climb, I am followed by a dog called ‘Ego’. – *Friedrich Nietzsche*

Make gratitude a part of your daily life and the universe will send you its blessings. – *Preeti Kopikar*

There is one divine force which act in the universe and in the individual and is also beyond the individual and the universe. – *Sri Aurobindo*

Be grateful for small mercies. Do your very best and remain content in the knowledge that things could have been stickier for you. In this deceitful *kalayuga* remain grateful to ‘negative mercies.’ It you woke up this morning hale and hearty, that alone is reason enough to be grateful. – *Vithal Nandkarni*

Truth can be lived or experienced; truth cannot be expressed in words. – *Osho*

This world is a comedy to those that think and a tragedy to those that feel. – *Horace Walpole*

The relationship between the physical and the spiritual is so close that it is impossible to enjoy one without the other. – *Amiya Roy Chowdhury*

APRIL

AIM AT ENDURING BLISS: All worldly pleasures are transient and temporary. Very often they result in sorrow and disappointment. You often experience loss, depression and confusion and have no contentment. The lack of contentment is the real loss (*Asanrupto nijo nashtah*). There is no limit to desires. One feels hungry, another is thirsty. If the thirsty man is offered water, he is not satisfied, he wants a cool drink. When he is given a cool drink, next he wants ice cream, and so on. Realize that there is no end to desires for material things in the world. To get rid of these desires, one must turn his mind towards God. The purpose of human birth is to realise the inherent Divinity. That is the way to achieve contentment and lasting bliss. God alone is the source of enduring bliss. – *V. Narayanan*

KNOWLEDGE IS NOT WISDOM: According to the Upanishads, accumulation of information is not knowledge. The wise man is one who knows himself, because one who knows himself, knows all. When you know the mysteries of the great life-force, you become free from grief and attachment. – *Osho*

THE IMPORTANCE OF GURU'S GRACE

By Prof. N. A. Mohan Rao*

No *sadhana* is possible in absence of a Guru. As Bhagavan says, it is only due to Guru's Grace that we are induced to turn our minds away from the world even for a while. Without his Grace, mere self-effort would only take us round in circles. In *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi (Talk 13)*, he says, "The Realization is the result of the Master's grace more than teachings, lectures, meditation, etc. They are only secondary aids, whereas the former is the primary and the essential cause."

Although rain falls equally everywhere, it is only the pot that is held with its mouth up that collects the rain-water. Similarly, although the Grace of Guru is shining equally everywhere, it is only the mind that is held out to him that receives his Grace, not the one that is turned away.

Sri Guru Gita, a part of *Skanda Purana*, helps a great deal in cultivating proper faith and attitude towards Guru, so that we remember him habitually during our *sadhana*. When we say 'Guru' here, we mean the '*Parama-guru*' or *Sadguru*, i.e., a *jnani*, one who has realized the Self.

Most of us may not be fortunate enough to come in direct contact with a *Sadguru* in his physical body. We shall have to rely on Bhagavan's assurance that the real Guru is not external, but inside our heart. "You [the Guru] ... shine within my Heart", says Bhagavan in *Ramana Puranam*. It is not at all easy to cultivate faith in the inner Guru as it is in an outer Guru, but if we try hard, we will find it possible to achieve it over a period of time.

Most of us visit temples and pray to God. While praying, we instinctively close our eyes. It is because we direct our prayer inwards where we feel his Presence intuitively. That 'place' where we feel his intuitive Presence within, is itself our spiritual 'heart'. Guru, who is none other than God in human form, is therefore to be found there.

Once we accept an inner Guru, we must remain faithful to him unfalteringly. As Bhagavan said, the outer Guru can be compassion-incarnate, and may forgive many of our faults, but not so the inner Guru. The latter can be ruthless, for our own good. We must not misconstrue him if we face hardships for our own misdoings. We must know that even apart from the context of Guru, we are always taught to be truthful in all our dealings – thought, word and deed – whether spiritual or non-spiritual. We must steadfastly stick to it in respect of the Guru.

A daily *puja* to the Guru, even if it be a short one, goes a long way in developing the requisite faith in him. While sitting for our daily *sadhana*, we would do well to do *pranam* to him at the start and towards the close. If we are sincere enough in such practices, we may, in course of time, be blessed with a *mantra* by him. It makes the going of our *sadhana* all the more smoother for us. This does not mean we would attain Realization just like that, but only that we get doubly re-assured of Guru's presence with us and we do not feel left fending for ourselves any more.

If an aircraft is held to the ground by a strong rope, it cannot take off. So also, if we are attached to the world, we cannot have a real take-off in our *sadhana*. If we are sincere to our *sadhana*, we must desist from praying for any worldly gains from the Guru (or God). We must be psychologically prepared to accept life as it comes, and leave the rest to God, who runs the world in accordance with the past *karma* of the individuals.

'Surrender on the worldly front, and self-effort in *sadhana* under the benevolent gaze of Guru' must be our motto. Not the other way round, as some people mistakenly think. By surrender, what we mean is surrender of the fruit of action, not action itself. Surrender of action comes much, much later of its own accord, when we advance far enough in our *sadhana*.

Many Salutations be to the *Sadguru*. May he shower his blessings for the success of our *sadhana* !

* An erudite scholar and Bhagavan's devotee at Hyderabad.

LIFE A DRAMA: The whole life is nothing but a play, and one should not take it seriously. The moment you take it seriously you get into trouble. The very attitude of seriousness is the root cause of all anxiety. Take it easy...take life as fun! Really, life is nothing but a drama. – *Osho*

MANTRA: It is a word or a set of words with a powerful vibration that was accessed intuitively by ancient saints, who were highly evolved beings and who meditated for years to gain access to powerful sounds that would enable aspirants to realise their highest potential. The *japa* or constant repetition has the effect of linking gross bodies with the spiritual, and this enables the physical to merge with the spiritual. The mantra becomes one's staff of life and carries one through every ordeal. Each repetition has a new meaning, carrying one nearer and nearer to God. – *The Internet*

WHY DO WE LOOK FOR ATTENTION? We are constantly begging for attention in so many different ways because we rely on others to build our image. The situation cannot change unless we discover our authentic self, which does not depend upon anybody's opinion, attention, indifference, etc. Because very few people have been able to discover their real Self, the whole world is full of beggars. Deep down we are trying to find attention; it is nourishment for our personality. Persons can do anything stupid to get attention. You are emperors, but you have to discover yourself. Your kingdom is within you. You have to just close your eyes and look inwards. And the wonder is that the day you don't need anybody's attention, people start giving attention to you. – *www.osho.com*

UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATIONAL PROXIMITY OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

The following is in continuation of the last three issues. It is indeed uplifting, inspiring and exhilarating to read the experiences of devotees in the presence of the Maharshi.

Wolter A. Keers, a Dutch writer, met the Maharshi in early 1950: The mere sight of him made me tremble all over because I had come face to face with the divine. This recognition affected me so much that my body shook involuntarily. As I gazed at Bhagavan, I felt I saw God himself sitting there. Here before me was a human form that seemed to be made of light itself. God became manifest before my eyes, announcing his presence to me by radiating a blazing penetrating light, a light that went right through me like x-rays.

There was a radiant power and energy in Bhagavan's presence that effortlessly swept through the mind and matter. His grace silenced my mind, it filled my heart, and it took me to realms that were beyond the phenomenal. The light radiating from Bhagavan filled my being, sweeping away all my darkness in one stroke. Effort seemed redundant when his presence alone was enough to evaporate the usual mental flow of thoughts, ideas and problems. Once, when his powerful look went straight into me, I felt the right-hand-side heart getting warmer. As he continued to look at me, I felt a hot fiery ball glowing inside me, which was being charged with some immensely powerful electricity and my heart-centre was some kind of spiritual dynamo emitting sparks of light and energy. I sat rigid and straight, my eyes glued to

his. Fire flowed from his glowing eyes and drilled the core of my being. I realised that my body could no longer stand the strain. The fire in my chest had expanded to the point where I felt that I was about to explode. Mentally, I asked Bhagavan to let me go.

Two months' stay with Bhagavan had turned me inside out and upside down. My mind and heart had been illuminated by his grace. Ramana the Maharshi is unimaginable and therefore indescribable. Who, for example, can really describe happiness? My experience of Bhagavan was pure happiness. The pure radiance of his real, egoless state is unimaginable, beyond any verbal description. He enabled me to realise the timeless, unimaginable, unthinkable 'I am'.

Whatever transformation took place in his presence happened of its own accord, not because he desired it or willed it. Darkness was exposed to light and ceased to be dark. Light did not orchestrate it in any way. It simply expressed its inherent nature. If you ask me how all this worked, my answer is, 'I don't know'.

Chhaganlal Yogi, a Gujarati businessman, visited Bhagavan in 1939: On my first visit to the Ashram, the Maharshi asked me to chant verses from Gujarati translation of *Upadesa Saaram* by Kishorelal Mashruwala. I could feel Bhagavan keenly observing me. It seemed that the light of his eyes was suffusing my consciousness. Even without my being aware of it, his silent gaze brought about a subtle and definite transformation in me. My erstwhile sadness completely disappeared, leaving in my heart an inexplicable emotion of joy. That evening I sat close to Bhagavan in the dining room. In my exalted state the food I ate seemed to have an unusual and unearthly taste. I quite literally felt that I was participating in some heavenly meal in the direct presence of God.

During the three days of my stay in the proximity of the Divine Master, I found my whole outlook entirely changed. After that period, I could find little evidence of my old self, a self that had been tied down with all sorts of preconceptions and prejudices. I felt that I lost the chains that bind the eyes of true vision. I became aware that the whole texture of my mind had undergone a change. The divine magician opened up for me a strange new world of illumination, hope and joy. I felt that his presence on earth alone constituted sufficient proof that humanity, suffering and wounded because of its obstinate ignorance, could be uplifted and saved. For the first time I fully understood the significance of *darshan*.

Mouni Sadhu, an Australian, lived in the Ashram for some months in 1949: All theories, all acquired knowledge, fall into dust when standing face to face with the

Maharshi. One gets peace which is beyond all human understanding. Moments of inner experience with the Maharshi are so fraught with consequences that they may influence not only one but many incarnations. Sometimes when I sat near him absorbing the invisible radiation of His light, I thought: “To whom and when can I repay this bliss? Who is it that is taking away the burdens and debts of my life?” In the presence of the Saint the mind gets turned to silence, and does not indulge in endless questioning that it used to do.

Light and life are constantly flowing through the eyes of the Maharshi with a majesty and intensity unimaginable to those who have not seen them. Being near the Maharshi one feels the presence of God as a matter of course – no arguments or proofs are necessary. The proximity of the Maharshi makes the effort of stilling the mind infinitely easier than it would be elsewhere. In the presence of the Maharshi we are able to find intuitively by ourselves the proper attitude.

Ethel Merston, a French lady, came to the Maharshi in 1939: Just to sit in Bhagavan’s presence was to realise or get a feeling of what true relaxation and a quiet mind mean. It did not mean shutting oneself away, isolating oneself, on the contrary, it means being with all, yet remaining within, being a part of the world and yet not of it... The Maharshi conveyed thoughts silently and so powerfully that the vibrations would sometime roll in waves down the hall almost hurting one by the force with which they impinge on the body, not only of the recipient, for whom the thought was meant, but on many of us sitting there.

M.A. Piggot, the first English lady, visited the Ashram in late 1930s: I sat crossed-legged on the floor. Suddenly I became conscious that the Maharshi’s eyes were fixed on me. Never before had I experienced anything so devastating – it was almost frightening. What I went through in that terrible half an hour, by way of self-condemnation and scorn for the pettiness of my own life, would be difficult to describe... When he turned his head and smiled, I felt as if all the flowers of the world had poured their fragrance into our midst... When we returned for the evening meditation, the hall was compellingly still. All my troubles seemed to smoothen out and difficulties, melted away. Nothing that we of the world call important mattered. Time was forgotten.

Swami Chinmayananda (Balakrishna Menon) came to the Ashram after his high school exams were over in 1930s: As I entered, I saw on the couch an elderly man in a loincloth, reclining against a bolster. I sat down at the very foot of the couch. The Maharshi suddenly opened his eyes and looked straight into mine: I looked into his. A mere look, that was all. I felt that the Maharshi was, in that split moment, looking deep into me – and I was sure that he saw all my shallowness, confusion, faithlessness,

imperfections and fears. I cannot explain what happened in that one split moment. I felt opened, cleaned, healed, and emptied. A whirl of confusions, my atheism dropped away. I got up and walked away. But the boy who left the hall was not the boy who had gone in some ten minutes before.

– All abstracts are from *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram.

BE AS YOU ARE

By D. Samarender Reddy*

What meets the eye
Biology belies;
What meets biology
Chemistry belies;
What meets chemistry
Physics belies;
What meets physics
Metaphysics belies;
What meets metaphysics
Silence belies;
If thou wouldst know Silence
Be silent.

* A medical doctor at Hyderabad and Bhagavan's devotee.

MOKSHA: 'Mo' indicates *Moha*, that is delusion, and 'ksha' stands for *Kshaya*, disappearance or decline. Thus to attain liberation one must keep the flights of the mind away from deluding attractions. – *The Internet*

Whenever I climb, I am followed by a dog called 'Ego'. – *Friedrich Nietzsche*

Make gratitude a part of your daily life and the universe will send you its blessings. – *Preeti Kopikar*

Do not wait for miracles to happen. The greatest miracle in life is life itself. – *Jaggi Vasudev*

That deep silence has a melody of its own, a sweetness unknown amid the harsh discords of the world's sound. – *Paul Brunton*

Experience is the name which wise men give to their mistakes. – *Oscar Wilde*

When the breath wanders, the mind also is unsteady. When the breath is calmed, the mind too will be still. Therefore one should learn to control the breath. – *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*

THIRUPPUGAZH

Thiruppugazh means glory to the Lord or Divine glory. It is a 15th century anthology of Tamil religious songs dedicated to Murugan, son of Lord Siva, written by the poet-saint Arunagirinathar. The anthology is considered one of the central works of medieval Tamil literature, both for its poetical and musical qualities, and for its religious, moral and philosophical content.

There are no historical records of the life of Arunagirinathar. What we know of the composition of the Tiruppugazh is largely derived from oral traditions and [legends](#) recorded in commentaries on the work. The majority of the songs are sung to Murugan, but there are also a few songs that sing of deeds of [Siva](#) or the [avatars](#) of [Vishnu](#), and of the power of [Parvati](#). Each song ends addressing Murugan as [Perumal](#), a term that traditionally had strong associations with Tamil [Vaishnavism](#).

The worship of [Murugan](#) has strong roots in [Tamil Nadu](#). According to [Tamil legends](#), Murugan was the brave warrior who defeated the powerful demon [Soorapadman](#), and was seen as being the epitome of youth, compassion and beauty. Arunagirinathar's songs build on this tradition, hailing Murugan as the source of all knowledge, who even gave saintly advice to his father, Lord Siva. Murugan is described as being full of love and [compassion](#). Arunagirinathar says that his songs will, by the grace of Murugan, convey the pearls of [devotion](#) and [wisdom](#). The songs contain philosophical musings on [God](#), expressed in simple terms, placing particular emphasis on the role of God's [grace](#) or [mercy](#) in helping the individual deal with the troubles and ills that afflict humanity. The songs also deal with issues of [morality](#) and living a [virtuous](#) life on earth, exhorting people to seek true happiness in God.

The Thiruppugazh makes extensive and deliberate use of the imagery associated with the [five landscapes](#) of classical *akam* poetry. The imagery used in the following verse is illustrative of this usage:

*I do not wish to dwell in this illusory body,
built of the sky, water, earth, air, fire and desires.
Enlighten me, that I may praise the glory of your holy name
in the wise, beautiful Tamil tongue,
O Lord of the celestial heavens
who protects the Kurava woman of the sweet, child-like words,
who wields the spear which destroyed the majestic hill
and wears a garland of scarlet flowers
where bees dance seeking honey. (Song 1304)*

Arunagiri's poems can be enjoyed for their literary value as well as for their devotional fervour. The poet has combined his poetic skill and his devotion towards Murugan with remarkable ease. Scholars hail Thiruppugazh both as a literary masterpiece and as a work of devotion.

Arunagiri has woven a beautiful garland, made not of fragrant flowers (Poomalai) but of beautiful verses of Tamil and has presented it to all so that they also could offer it to the Lord and derive immense inspiration, knowledge and blessings from Him. Thiruppugazh is an ideal form of prayer, a beautiful set of songs, a panacea for all ills and above all, a way of life. – *The Internet*

Sri V. Krithivasan, a scholar devotee at the Kendram, adds: Murugan in Tamil means 'one who is beautiful'. It is Tamil name of Lord Subrahmanya. Bhagavan used to refer to the fact that Murugan's first *upadesa* to Arunagirinathar was 'Summa Iru' (Be Still). This was Bhagavan's favourite *upadesa* too. He gives a reference to *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* by Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya, where Bhagavan recited a stanza from Thiruppugazh entitled *Kalyanapattu* (Wedding song) and said that it was a general belief that if a girl's parent should do *parayana* (repetition) of that stanza, her marriage would soon come off. Subbaramayya records, "I noted down the stanza and its Telugu translation about the end of September 1944, and my daughter's marriage took place in February 1945."

ARUNACHALA – THE DIVINE HILL

Sri Ramana Maharshi was drawn to Lord Arunachala, leaving his home as a teenager. Such was the intensity of his devotion to the Divine Hill that he never left its proximity. In *Arunachala Ashtakam* (verse 4), he says: To search for God ignoring You, who stand as Being and shine as Awareness, is like looking for

darkness with a lamp in hand. If people fail to see You, whose Being is Awareness, they are no better than the blind who do not see the sun. O mighty mountain Aruna, peerless Jewel, stand and shine, one without a second, the Self within my heart.

Bhagavan declared that the Hill is the heart of the earth, the spiritual centre of the world. Adi Sankra spoke of it as Mount Meru. The first record of the glory of Arunachala is in *Rig Veda*, which has a reference to the dispute between Brahma and Vishnu as to which of them is superior. Lord Siva, the Supreme Being, chose to appear as a column of *agni* or *jyotisthamba*, which had no dimension. Surrendering to this effulgence, Brahma and Vishnu prayed Lord Siva to become less brilliant so that mortals could behold His form. Thus it was Siva who took the form of Holy Hill of Arunachala. Bhagavan has cautioned his devotees that one should not consider even for a moment that Arunachala was merely a Hill of rocks and boulders. The Hill is the very essence of wisdom. Arunachala chose to appear as *jnana agni* to quell *avidya*. In Vedas, the most important place is assigned to *agni*. The very first word of *Rig Veda* is *agni*. *Yajur Veda* has a whole canto dedicated to *agni* called *Agnikanda*. The *Skanda Purana* declares: That is the holy place. Of all, Arunachala is the most sacred. It is the heart of the world. Know it to be the secret and sacred Heart-centre of Siva.

To earnest seekers of Truth, Arunachala drops its material nature. They live and breath Arunachala. They speak of Arunachala as a mother would of her child or a lover of his beloved, not in measured terms, but in awed tones and with overwhelmed sensitivity. The divine Arunachala is beyond thought. Touched by the magic of devotion, it becomes suffused with light of Knowledge and stands out as a symbol of the Supreme Lord of the Universe. It assumes a spiritual identity and guides the seeker as an inner Guru. When one goes round the Hill, especially at night, wonderful experiences unfold, which reinforce the Truth and Power of Arunachala.

Over the centuries, sages and saints have been attracted to visit Arunachala. These include great names like Manickavachikar, Appar, Jnanasambandar, Sundaramurthi Nayannar and Vageesa. Saints like Gurunamasivaya, Isanyadesika, Seshadriswamy and the most outstanding Ramana Maharshi, came from far off places, rejecting all spots on the way, chose to live and merge in Arunachala, the Primal Being. It is said, and confirmed by Bhagavan, that to this day *siddhas* dwell in its caves, whether with physical bodies or not, and some devotees have seen them as lights moving about the Hill at night.

Giri pradakshina or *Girivalam* (in Tamil) is the practice of circumambulation of the Holy Hill. One walks keeping the Hill on one's right. Millions of people have made and continue to make this activity a part of their *sadhana*. *Giri pradakshina*'s immense spiritual value has been emphasized by Bhagavan and many other sages. They have said that Arunachala is the physical embodiment of *sat* (the reality), and hence to have contact with Him in any manner is *satsang*. To think of Arunachala is *satsang*, and to live near Arunachala is *satsang*. But one very special way of

having *satsang* with Arunachala is *giri pradakshina*. Bhagavan said that *giri pradakshina* is also *atma pradakshina*. What is very important is that one goes round the Hill with a heart filled with devotion and thought entirely focused on Lord Arunachala. Bhagavan has said that one should go round either in *mouna*, *dhayana*, *japa* or *sankeertana* and thereby think of God all the time. One should walk slowly like a woman who is in the ninth month of pregnancy. Really, it is difficult to describe the pleasure and happiness one gets by *pradakshina*. The body get tired, the sense organs lose their strength, and all activities of the body become absorbed within. It is possible thus to forget oneself and get into a state of meditation. – Excerpted from the book *The Glory of Giri Pradakshina* by Mukhta Manu and Peter Berking, www.zenpublications.com

Dear devotees

Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad, has got exemption under 80G from the Income Tax Department vide their letter no DIT (E)/HYD/80G/22(11)/11-12 dated 18.5.2012. It means that you can now claim 50% rebate in tax on your income for donations made to the Kendram in cash.

ENQUIRY INTO CONSCIOUSNESS

Consciousness is freedom from attachment. Consciousness is intimacy with God; it is everything. To know the vast length and breadth of consciousness, the depth of its base and the height of its submit, is alone the attainment of tranquillity. Apart from consciousness there is no world. Knowing consciousness is indeed the supreme truth.
– *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

MAY

ATTAINING THE SELF

Just as one attains true waking when the false dream ends, the sun of the Self shines as the reality when the ego dies. One should therefore know that destruction of the ego, the obstruction, through the worthy *jnana-vichara* ‘Who am I?’ is the attainment of the Self. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATIONAL PROXIMITY OF SRI
RAMANA MAHARSHI**

The following is in continuation of the last four issues. It is indeed uplifting, inspiring and exhilarating to read the experiences of devotees in the presence of the Maharshi.

Pascaline Mallet, a French lady, visited Bhagavan in 1937: We slipped in quietly and seated ourselves on the ground amongst the crowd. The Maharshi's calm majesty, serene strength, and perfect poise filled the place with unutterable peace. It was for the first time I came to know the meaning of Eternity and to be caught up into bliss that passeth understanding. When the sun shines does one need to know why and how it shines? I opened my heart to the Spiritual Life which radiated so intensely in the silence of the Maharshi. I had the impression of being surrounded by a sea of fiery Power, welding all present into a great Flame rising Heavenwards. I had the feeling that the Maharshi lived in a state where time and space did not exist. Undoubtedly, merely to live in his presence is the greatest help that one could possibly receive.

Ramanadasa Sadananda, a high school teacher, met Bhagavan in 1915: I stood before Sri Ramana at the Virupaksha cave. Never having seen such a being of bliss before, I could not think, speak or do anything except to feel dumb-founded. I prostrated before him, drank with avidity the nectar of his gaze on me, felt myself freed from the pairs of opposites, and lifted above the never-ending din and misery of worldly existence. His mere proximity filled me with joy and peace. At another time when I prostrated with my eyes impressed on his lotus feet and begged him to save me from the crushing blow of cruel *maya*, his gracious words wrought a miracle. I was suddenly raised above the cloud of misery that had enveloped and distressed me till then. I felt as if I never knew sorrow or misery in any shape. My mind was sunk in a sea of joy. That divine magician's words had desirable balmy effect forthwith.

Hariwansh Lal Poonja, a retired army officer, met Bhagavan in 1944: As he looked at me and gazed into my eyes, my whole body began to tremble and shake. A thrill of nervous energy shot through my body. My nerve ends felt as if they were dancing and my hair stood on end. Within me, I was aware of the spiritual Heart. Within the Heart I felt something like a closed bud. It was very shining and bluish. With the Maharshi looking at me, and myself in a state of inner silence, I felt this bud open and bloom. I use the word bud, but this is not an exact description. It would be more correct to say that something that felt bud-like opened and bloomed in my Heart. It was an extraordinary experience. It totally surprised me when it happened.

F.H. Humphreys, a British police officer, met Bhagavan in 1911: On reaching the cave we sat at his feet and said nothing. I felt lifted out of myself. For half an hour I

looked into the Maharshi's eyes. I began to realise that his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost; I could only feel that his body was not the man; it was the instrument of God, merely sitting, motionless corpse from which God was radiating terrifically. My feelings were indescribable. He asked me a private question, only known to him and me. Everyone who comes to him is an open book, and a single glance suffices to reveal to him its contents.

Raghavachariar, superintendent public works, Tiruvannamalai, met Bhagavan at Skandasram: He was then sitting on a platform with a picture of Dakshinamurthi painted on the wall next to him. He silently gazed on as usual and I gazed into his eyes and said, "Just as Arjuna wished to see the form of Krishna and asked for *darshan*, I wish to have *darshan* of your real form." Then his body and the picture of Dakshinamurthi disappeared from my view. There was only empty space, without even a wall. Then followed a whitish cloud in the outline of the Maharshi and of Dakshinamurthi, before my eyes. Gradually, the eyes, nose, etc. and other details were outlined in lightning-like lines. These got broadened till the figure of the Swami and Dakshinamurthi became ablaze with very strong and unendurable light. I closed my eyes in consequence. I waited for a few minutes and when I opened my eyes I found the Maharshi and Dakshinamurthi in the same form as before. I prostrated and came away.

The impact of this experience was such that I did not dare go near the Maharshi almost for one month. Later when I went up the hill, I narrated the above experience and requested him to explain. After a pause, he said, "You wanted to see my form. You saw my disappearance. I am formless. Ganapati Muni had a similar experience and you may consult him." I did not consult the Muni.

Dr. Karamchandani, District Medical Officer, attended on Bhagavan from 1949 till the mahasamadhi: That wondrous gaze of Sri Ramana seemed to envelop me with an aura of bliss. So surcharged with spirituality was he that his spirituality wafted out to me, completely enveloping me. Serenity seeped into me. My mind attained a state of blissful, ecstatic meditation. He was a saint of colossal spiritual magnitude. Wonderful was the spiritual exhilaration which I experienced in his holy presence. The vibrations that emanated from him were celestial. When his gaze fell on me, my whole body vibrated with ecstasy. During my whole contact with the Maharshi, I did not speak a single word with him, but what wonderful grace he poured into me through his benign, benevolent gaze! A peerless spiritual experience indeed!

Mercedes de Acosta, an American, came to Bhagavan in 1938: When I entered the hall, I felt overcome by a strong power as if an invisible wind was pushing violently against me. For a moment I felt dizzy. As the Maharshi sat there he seemed like a statue, and yet something extraordinary emanated from him. I had a feeling that on some invisible level I was receiving spiritual shocks from him. When he moved his head and looked directly at me I felt my inner being raised to a new level – as if, suddenly, my state of consciousness was lifted to a much higher degree. Perhaps in that split second I was no longer my human self but the Self. Then Bhagavan smiled at me. It seemed to me that I had never before known what a smile was. To write about my experiences with Bhagavan would be trying to put the infinite into an egg cup.

Roda MacIver, a Parsee lady, met Bhagavan in 1942: When I arrived at the Ashram, the Maharshi had gone up the hill. I was told to wait. I was expecting a man walking down the hill. But when the Maharshi finally appeared, I couldn't believe that I was watching a glorious sunrise unfold: a distant glimmering of light that, as it approached, became more and more radiant until the blazing sun itself was standing next to me. I was overawed and humbled by this display of utter magnificence. Standing in the glow of that radiant presence, something shifted inside me, some new awareness manifested that I never had before. I was caught up by him and his love, and in that moment my soul became his. – All abstracts are from *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

IMPORTANCE OF PRACTICE: Practice is the real thing that matters in spirituality. Scholarship is a burden, many times a handicap even. Install God in your heart and you will feel light, burdenless and even strong. It is like a food basket – when carried you feel heavy. When you eat from the basket, you feel strong and joyful. Likewise, with the idea of God. Get absorbed in it. Practise to live in His Glory, in His Memory, in His contemplation, every single moment of your life. – *V. Narayanan*

DIVINE ONENESS OF ARUNACHALA AND SRI RAMANA

Bhagavan Ramana was Arunachala in human form, and Arunachala is Bhagavan Ramana in the form of Holy Hill. Introduction to vol. I of eight-volume *Arunachals's Ramana*, published by Sri Ramanasramam, has the following to say in this regard.

The mutual affinity between Ramana and Arunachala can be traced to his very early days at Tiruchuzhi. The fascination young Venkatramana had for Arunachala was dormant in him and just needed a spark which came through one of his relatives.

Bhagavan himself later referred to it as ‘*sphurana*’ (literally, throbbing), which he had experienced “since the days of my innocence”. It is beyond anybody’s power to understand the storm raised by the name Arunachala in the lad’s mind. It filled him with the ideas of eternal heaven where only the Supreme Power reigned, and which was, in fact, accessible on this very earth. Later, when Bhagavan came to Tiruvannamalai, he instinctively felt that he had come home. He himself says: ‘I came up here and saw, and found Thou stood as a hill, but who then is the seer...no seer then remained. No mind survived at all to say that I saw this, or even to say I didn’t.’ – *Arunachala Ashtakam*, v. 2.

The *Five Hymns on Arunachala* came gushing with a tearing force that completely engulfed Bhagavan. They were spontaneous outpourings of his deep love, springing from his intimacy and atonement with Arunachala who was mother, father, Guru and Beloved for Bhagavan. The composition of each hymn was mostly unpremeditated and spontaneous. When Bhagavan wrote *Aksharamanamalai*, he walked around the hill composing the couplets with tears flowing from his eyes. It is reported that when he composed the thirty-fourth verse (*If thou fail to unite with me, my whole frame will melt into tears and I shall be destroyed*), he wept and sobbed with his whole frame shaking.

The following excerpts are from the book *Worshipping the Divine Oneness of Arunachala-Ramana* by Muktha Manu and Peter Berking <www.zenpublications.com>

Bhagavan Ramana experienced no separate existence of His own from Arunachala. When He composed *Sri Arunachala Pancharatnam* (The Five Gems) in Sanskrit, the scholar devotee Daivarata (Gajanana) composed the concluding verse of this hymn, declaring that these five verses are the Upanishads revealed by ‘Srimad Ramana Maharshi’. Later, when Bhagavan translated this hymn into Tamil, He adapted the concluding verse composed by Daivarata and substituted the name ‘Arunagiri-Ramana’ for ‘Srimad Ramana Maharshi’, thereby indicating that it was Aunachala Himself in the form of Bhagavan Ramana who sang this hymn.

In *Sri Navamani Maalai* Bhagavan sings: As mother and father both, you gave me birth and tended me. And before I could fall into the deep sea called *jaganmaya* and get drowned in the illusion, you came to abide in my mind, you drew me to yourself, O Arunachala, you whose being is all Awareness. What a wonderful work of art your Grace has wrought, my Mother-Father-Lord! (Verse 9)

In verse 48 of *Aksharamanamalai* He refers to Arunachala as His God, and in verse 19 as His Guru. In verse five of *Atma Vidya Kirtanam*, He states, ‘Annamalai appears my own Self.’ This oneness of Bhagavan with Arunachala is emphasised in many hymns He offered to Arunachala.

Swami Shivananda of Divine Life Society, Rishikesh, in his foreword to *Arunachala Mahatmyam* says: Arunachala and Ramana were both aspects of the One. They were manifestations and visible symbols of Transcendental Reality. The Holy Hill was the ‘*Moola Vighraha*’ [Deity in the sanctum sanctorum] and Ramana Maharshi was ‘*Utsava-Murthi*’ [Deity taken in procession].

T.K. Sundaresa Iyer in his foreword to *Sri Ramana Stuti-Panchkam* says: Satyamangalam Venkataramier sang every day one of these five songs, which express so clearly the nature of Bhagavan, His being one with the Universal Heart, Arunachala, His all-filling transcendence, being beyond time-space causation, beyond the three states and three bodies. He says Ramana and Arunachala are identical. His words spoken as early as 1910-11, that is, ‘Him the devotees from all over the world seek.’ (Hymn IV), proved prophetic, as a host of persons from the world over sought and got solace in His presence at Sri Ramanasramam. Hymn V of the *Panchakam, Ramana Sat-Guru* is a favourite of Bhagavan’s devotees. Chanting of this hymn would bring before devotees’ heart Bhagavan as He is.

Lord Arunachala had come in the form of Guru Ramana to His devotees to give necessary spiritual direction in their *sadhana*. Like any human, the Guru has to shed his physical body, whereas the form of Arunachala is enduring. Bhagavan revealed that Arunachala is the Guru in the form of the Holy Hill, which will always be visible, and that one can always have *satsang* with it. The hymns He composed and offered to Arunachala are ultimate in *bhakti*.

ADVAITA: It simply means ‘no second’, it is ‘one without a second’ – unrivalled and hence Supreme. It is defined as *poornanda eka roopam – ananda* or bliss in total oneness. Only *ananda* exists, nothing else. It is Brahmn or Consciousness Infinite. Only a person fully immersed in Brahman can see and feel. A condition of *laya* is like a river getting dissolved in the vast ocean. – *G.V. Narayana*

DEATH: It is a universal occurrence; yet it is the least understood phenomenon. The *atman*, like energy, can neither be created nor destroyed. It is infinite, formless, attribute-less, all pervading, invisible, timeless and spaceless. *Atman* only migrates. It is the *atman* that enliven, galvanises, moves and directs the body, mind and senses.

Every *atman* is a circle without a circumference. The centre of the circle is the body. Death means change of this centre from body to body. – *Ashok Vohra*

ASPIRATION AND ACHIEVEMENT: Learn the joy of going beyond your limits so that you are not limited by your limitations. To make this happen you have to change your mind set. Achievers have a mindset that says, “I can make this happen.” Achievement comes when you seize the moment with zeal and clarity. People become achievers when they get things done and, as Ralph Emerson said, “they stick with it for ten minutes longer.” – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

GIVE THE HIGHER SELF A CHANCE: We all have a higher Self within; we were born with it. However, mostly, neither we are aware of it nor do we act from it. It remains dormant. The Self is a vast storehouse of positive energy within. Our social and professional demands keep our mind highly active, absorbing most of our attention. Cluttering of the mind obscures the higher Self. We have to learn to withdraw ourselves from overpowering mental activities and learn to enjoy aloneness at frequent intervals. Constant and sincere practice will help us to distance ourselves from mental chaos and create inner space for the Self to manifest. The more frequently we allow the Self to manifest, greater the possibility of it being active for longer durations. Over a period of time, which could be very long, the way is paved for the Self to become fully functional. – *Dhruva Bhargava*

COMPASSION OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI – SOME INCIDENTS

1. Princess Prabhavati Raje came to Bhagavan with her husband to seek His blessings after her marriage. She brought two beautiful rose garlands. Bhagavan as per the rule refused to be garlanded and asked her to place them in Mother’s shrine. Prabhavati was deeply disappointed, and before leaving she kept the garlands on the couch as she bent to prostrate. She got up, took the garlands and left the hall, bitterly crying. When she came out, Kunju Swami who had noticed all this, showed her from the window a remarkable sight. Bhagavan was picking up, one by one, the petals that had dropped from the garlands on the couch and was slowly putting them into his mouth one after the other. Kunju Swami told her, “How lucky you are! Your roses are serving as Bhagavan’s food. Is not this real acceptance?” The princess was immensely pleased and her tears of anguish turned into tears of joy!

2. During May-June the sun would be at its fiercest at Tiruvannamalai, the whole earth burned, as it were. Bhagavan never used footwear. After lunch he would walk up to Palakottu between 12 and 1.30. He would walk slowly, and tell the attendant following him, “Run, run and take shelter under that tree. Put your upper cloth under

your feet and stand on it for a while.” He would insist on the attendant doing so, while he would walk steadily, slowly.

3. One Nagasundaram who was entrusted with the duty of bring cooks on special occasions like *Jayanti* and *Mahapuja*, would work in the kitchen along with them. On one *Jayanti*, after having worked all night, utterly exhausted, he stretched himself near the kitchen under the open sky. Being December, it was quite cold. Bhagavan, who used to get up at 3 a.m., noticed him, and immediately asked an attendant to go and bring his own woolen shawl from the hall, and covered Nagasundaram.

4. One evening, Chellamma, wife of Ranga (Bhagavan’s classmate) and another girl were sitting in front of Bhagavan. It was about to rain and Chellamma was much worried that she should leave so as to reach home in the town, without being drenched. Bhagavan 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 allowed her to go, the rain had stopped. When she reached home, a big downpour came again, which continued throughout the night. When Chellamma met Bhagavan the following day, he asked with a smile, ‘Chellamma! You didn’t get drenched in the rain, did you? You were keen not to be caught in the rain!’ – *Moments Remembered* by V. Ganesan

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI’S WORDS OF WISDOM

The following is from the book *Conscious Immortality* by Paul Brunton and Mungala Venkataramiah

You yourself are the source of all your happiness. When you imagine that some external object has given you the happiness, you are mistaken. What really has happened is that unconsciously the object brought you back to your Self for an instant, borrowed the happiness, and thus, presented to you. The happiness came as a shadow to you. Nearly all human beings are more or less unhappy because they do not know the true Self. Real happiness abides in Self-knowledge alone. All else is fleeting. To know one’s Self is to be always blissful.

Lose the sense, ‘I am doing this.’ Get rid of egotism. Do not think you are the one to bring some reform. By getting rid of egoism, God may use you as an instrument to effect the change, but the difference is that you will not be conscious of achieving it; the Infinite will be working through you and there will be no self-worship to spoil the work. There should be no desire for name or fame while serving a cause. The difficulty is that people think they are the doer; it is a mistake. It is the higher power which does

everything and people are only a tool. If they accept that position, they will be free from troubles; otherwise they court them. Do your work without anticipating its fruits.

We must be inwardly quiet, not forgetting the Self, and then externally we go on doing all our activities. Does not a man acting on the stage get fully involved in what role he is playing? Yet, deep down his subconscious he is aware of his real entity. Similarly, we too must play our parts on the stage of life, without forgetting our real nature. When women walk with water pots on their heads, they are able to talk with their companions while all the time remaining intent on the water above. Similarly, with the mind abiding in Brahman, perform all your activities, they will not disturb you.

Solitude is in the mind. A person might be in the midst of the world and yet maintain serenity. Another may stay in a remote forest and still be unable to control his mind. Those attached to desire are unable to attain solitude wherever they are, whereas those who are detached are always in solitude, even if they are engaged in work. When work is performed with attachment it is a shackle. Solitude is not only found in forests, it can be had in the midst of worldly occupations.

Let activities go on. The difficulty is that people think they are the doer. This is a mistake. It is the higher power that does everything and people are only tools. If they accept that position they will be free from troubles. The sculptured figure on the temple tower shows great strain, but really, the tower rests on the ground, and that supports the figure. The figure is a part of the tower, but is made to look as if it is bearing the weight of the tower. It is the same with the person who takes on himself the sense of doing.

Have compassionate love for others but keep it secret; do not make a display of it or talk about it. If your desires are fulfilled, do not be elated, and if you are frustrated do not be disappointed. The elation may be deceptive, it should be checked, for initial joy may end in final grief.

Why should marriage interfere with spiritual progress? Unless bodily wants – such as hunger, thirst, and evacuation – are satisfied, meditation cannot progress. *Brahmacharya* means ‘living in Brahman’. It has no connection with celibacy as is commonly understood. The householder’s life is not a bar, but he must do his best to practice self-control. If a person has a strong desire for the higher life then sexual desire will drop away. Try to be the real Self, then there will be no trouble with sex.

Sannyasa is the giving up of the ego. Even though a person may be living as a householder, the various occurrences of the world will not affect him if his ego is surrendered. If you renounce the world, it will only substitute the thought ‘*sannyasi*’ for ‘householder’ and the environment of the forest for home. The mental obstacles will still be there. Changing environment will not help, for the mind must be overcome in both places. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home?

My own suspicion is that not only is the universe queerer than we suppose; but it is queerer than we *can* suppose! – J.B.S. Haldane

Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured. – Mark Twain

Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future. – Paul Boese

Meditation is pure gold; it has a perfection of its own. But if there is compassion then the gold has a fragrance too. – Buddha

Someday perhaps the inner light will shine forth from us, and then we'll need no other light. – Goethe

If only one prayer you said in your life was 'Thank you,' that would suffice. – Kamal Sharma

Focus on your troubles and they will multiply; count your blessings and your life will grow more and more joyous. – Anonymous

We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, but spiritual beings having human experience. – Rajiv Vij

THE OBJECTIVE SELF: There is a silent and watchful Self in us at all times taking stock of the way we interact with the world – what we think, speak or act, our likes and dislikes, and so on. The Self remains a passive witness. It does not do anything, but without it we cannot do anything. The Self's objectivity is similar to an actor on the stage who maintains his identity and remains unattached to the actions he performs with total involvement. – Swami Parthasarathi

JUNE

EXPERIENCING HAPPINESS

If you willingly and joyously offer yourself as a sacrifice through the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ to the divine feet of God, who shines as the *atma-swarupa* in the heart, your anxieties will end and you will attain the continuous experience of the Self whose nature is auspicious tranquillity.

– Sri Ramana Maharshi

KUNDALINI SHAKTI: According to Swami Vivekananda, ‘rousing of *kundalini* is the one and only way to attain divine wisdom, superconscious perception and realisation of the spirit.’ *Mahakundalini*, in Supreme form is at rest in the highest spiritual centre in the *sahasrara* or brain. The *shakti* also assumes static form at *muladhara* or root support. In this regard, the Swami refers to three *nadis* of prime importance, namely, *ida* (associated with moon) that ends up in the left nostril, *pingala* (associated with sun) that ends up in the right nostril, and *sushumna*, the hollow passage that runs through the spinal cord and ends in *brahmarandhra*, the tenth opening in the brain. The purpose of arousing the dormant *kundalini* is to get the *prana* out of *ida* and *pingala* and make it enter *sushumna*, the hollow passage. Through regular practice of meditation and *paranayama* and by leading a chaste life, the mass of energy stored in *muladhara* begins to travel along the *sushumna* with tremendous force. When the awakened *kundalini* unites with Consciousness at *sahasrara*, the summit, the seeker enters the sublime state of *nirvikalpa samadhi*, where he experiences infinite bliss and ‘the full blaze of illumination, the perception of the Self’. – Anup Taneja

WRITE YOUR DESTINY: We have such power that we can write or rewrite our destiny! All we need to know is what we want to do with our life. The soul has a power to do whatever we want. But when we are not aware, conscious, then negative forces make our fate. The first step is to build faith in yourself. Remember to say to yourself, ‘It can be done.’ When we realise that we are filled with immense potential, we will get the energy to move mountains. – Swami Brahmdev

HOW SRI RAMANA CAME TO THE RESCUE OF BALARAMA REDDY – TWO EPISODES

The following are from his book *My Reminiscences*:

1. Once I had to visit Kanyakumari. When I went for Bhagavan's permission, he told me that 'the Ashram management has written to an advocate-devotee of Nagerkoil to send three different-coloured sands that are available at that place. These are needed for the Kumbhabhishekam of the Matrubhuteswara Temple. So far he has not sent them.' Though Bhagavan did not say specifically that I should bring the sand, I naturally understood what was on his mind. In fact, he often employed this manner of speaking, asking us indirectly, when he wanted something done. Before leaving he also asked me to write and send him details of the pilgrimage.

When I arrived in Kanyakumari I discovered that the government had enforced a law prohibiting the removal of any sand from the beach, as uranium, used for making atomic bombs, had been found there. Nevertheless, I thought I should take my chance and stealthily proceeded to gather the three different sands. I filled three bags and concealed them in my bedroll. At the railway station I hired a man to carry my luggage to help me board the train to my destination. Before entering the platform, I saw the ticket collector and two policemen standing at the gate. The collector was checking the tickets and the policemen checking the baggage for illegal sand. I asked my man to stop, as I contemplated the situation.

Pondering over my next move, I mentally prayed to Bhagavan, 'You wanted me to bring this sand. Now look at this – police! What am I to do?' As soon as I had prayed thus, the policemen, for some unknown reason, turned and walked away from the gate. I immediately told my man, 'Let us go.' We passed through the gate and boarded the desired train.

When I returned to the Ashram and brought the bags to Bhagavan, he called everyone around to come and look. Later, the sand expected from the advocate arrived by post, but the bags had broken enroute and the three varieties of sand got mixed, making them useless. When Bhagavan heard that, he remarked, 'If Balarama Reddy had not brought the sands, how could we have got a fresh consignment in time for the consecration ceremony?'

2. One day I received a letter from my family informing me that they were travelling to Tirupati. They requested me to meet them there. When Bhagavan was returning from his walk and was near the well, I mentioned details of the letter to him. He made no reply. Now, how could I just leave? Normally he would indicate his approval by asking questions or commenting,

or in some manner making it clear that it was right to go ahead. In this instance, he said nothing and just kept walking. The very next day, I received another letter from my family informing me that the trip had been cancelled. How do we explain this? Was it a *siddhi*, a miracle or what? Everything happened naturally in Bhagavan's presence, and he was always so unassuming.

FIVE BENEFITS OF MANTRA JAPA: **1.** It confers peace of mind, calmness and freedom from needless tension and anxiety. **2.** It creates the feeling of connecting with a higher power. **3.** It gives the power to conquer negative thinking and lower sense-desires. **4.** It generates a new spiritual energy that defuses past *samskaras* and clears mind of accrued *vasanas*. **5.** The constant chanting takes us closer to our guru or *ishadevata*. – *Mantras for Peace of Mind* <gph@sadhuvaswani.org>

TWO BOOKS ON BHAGAVAN – REVIEW

By V.Krithivasan*

‘Worshipping the Divine Oneness of Arunachala Ramana’, and *‘The Glory of Giripradakshina’* by Muktha Manu and Peter Berking <www.zenpublications.com>

These are two new additions to the glorious collection of books on Bhagavan Ramana. What strikes one immediately on opening the books is the tasteful addition of a large number of photos of Bhagavan and the Arunachala Hill. The books have been well researched, with apt references to various books and articles on Bhagavan.

The first book essentially focuses on the oneness of the Truth manifesting as two seemingly different entities, namely, Arunachala and Bhagavan Ramana. Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, has been quoted to say that while Arunachala can be termed as the Moola Vigraham (the deity in the sanctum sanctorum), Bhagavan Ramana is the Utsava Murthy (the idol taken around in procession). In the words of the authors, *‘To know Arunachala is to know Bhagavan Ramana, and to know Them is to Be’*. Sri Ramana's early life, his spiritual awakening, which has no known parallel, his arrival at Arunachala Hill, the initial stay in and around the temple, life on the Hill, and how the present Ashram came up, etc. have all been covered beautifully. On the

subject of Bhagavan 's abundant Grace the authors state that his ultimate Grace manifests as 'making us think of him'. Quoting Dr. K. Subramanian, the founder President of our Kendram, they go on to say, " It is through his Grace that we think of him...Bhagavan himself has never said even once that *he* thought of Arunachala. He continually says that Arunachala made *him* think of Arunachala..."

Presenting some compelling arguments about the origin of Arunachala Hill and its divine significance, the authors conclude "...Hence the holy Hill of Arunachala is the oldest natural shrine in the world".

A number of anecdotes by devotees who share their experiences of Bhagavan are presented while dealing with various topics. An informative section is discussion about the spiritual axis of the Hill on the other side of the world. Bhagavan had felt that there exists a sacred place on the opposite side of the globe. Maha Krishna Swami in his book 'Years in the Presence of Ramana My Master' gives an account of this and how he felt compelled to visit Brazil, where he established 'Bhagavan Sri Ramanasram'. The authors however feel that Machu Picchu in South America may be the other pole of the spiritual axis of the world, with Arunachala Hill being the pole on this side. Going by the reverence the local people have for the sacred hill of Machu Picchu, the authors conclude that this may be the other pole that Bhagavan was referring to. An account of Muktha Manu's visit to Machu Picchu, 'the Lost city of the Incas' in Peru, South America, is given at the end of the book.

A significant feature of the book is the single-line essence of each chapter, beautifully formulated, at the end of the chapter.

The focus of **the second book** is on worshipping Arunachala through Giripradakshina. After the advent of Bhagavan to Arunachala, the glory of Arunachala got spread far and wide, attracting earnest seekers of Truth from all over the world. The authors make an interesting observation that the Vaishnavites worship Arunachala as Sudarshan Giri (the Disc of Lord Vishnu).

Starting from the earliest recorded story about Arunachala in the Rig Veda, which describes the appearance of the Supreme Being as the effulgent column of Light, the book takes us through the centuries following this event with various anecdotes connected with the holy Hill. Devotees of Bhagavan

are aware of the fact that if at all Bhagavan prescribed anything resembling a religious act to get rid of the false notion of being a Jiva, leading to Self-knowledge, it is of Giripradakshina of the holy Hill. Details regarding the Giripradakshina routes are well presented to serve as a practical guide to the devotees. The incidents connected with Bhagavan during his Giripradakshina days, the various miracles and blessings experienced by innumerable devotees who took up the sacred act of Giripradakshina are covered extensively, having been collected from various sources meticulously. An account of Dennis Hartel about Captain Narayana 'hoodwinking' a Giripradakshina party, makes an interesting reading! There is a separate chapter titled 'Delightful and interesting stories' which covers a wide range of aspects concerning Giripradakshina. The last section of the book is devoted to the festivals of the temple of Arunachala and the holy Hill. The authors have done full justice in presenting countless facets of the Worship of the sacred Hill through Giripradakshina.

In conclusion, one can say with great conviction that both these books are a must-read for the ardent devotees of Lord Arunachala and His human manifestation, Bhagavan Ramana. The authors could have usefully given a brief account about themselves, which is missing at present.

(The books are also available at online stores like flipcart.com, infibeam.com, uread.com and bookadda.com.)

* A senior learned devotee of our Kendram.

DEIVARATA'S ENCHNATING PEN PICTURE OF THE MAHARSHI*

I was fortunate to get Sri Ramana Maharshi's *darshan* through my guru Ganapati Muni in 1917. The impact was so powerful that I wrote '*Ramana Vibhakti Ashtaka*' where in I have drawn a picture of Sri Maharshi's state of *samadhi* and his real *swarupa*. By reading it one can have a real mental *darshan*, vision of the Maharshi's supreme state.

Sri Maharshi has reached a state beyond all the four *asramas* and therefore is called *Ativarnasrami*. He is firmly established in *sahaja samadhi*. He is free from all thoughts. Erudite scholars, great yogis and saints seek his company fascinated by his divine Self-knowledge.

The benefits derived from Sri Maharshi's *darshan* and his teachings are immense, wonderful and beyond description. This fact can be realised only by experience. His very sight removes all doubts from one's mind. His eyes always glitter in spotless light, full of peace and pure love. Like gods, his eyes are without constant action of opening and closing and are always open with no visible cause for doing so. Even though his eyes are wide open, they remain very steady and introverted, fixed in Self alone. In other words, he does not see external objects with a desire to get any impression from them. He is always absorbed in the Heart, in the state of silence. He is ever revelling in the spontaneous joy of the Heart. On account of his divine Self-knowledge and supreme peace, his lotus-like lips look pleasing to the eyes. Serenity is writ large on his face. The mere sight of it gives exceeding joy to everyone. His natural *samadhi* resembles the waking state but is itself sleep, for he is in the state of natural rest. To sit and gaze at his motionless, peaceful and pleasing countenance is itself an act of true worship. By getting his divine sight people forget the world itself. They do not feel the pangs of hunger and thirst. The feelings of anger, hatred etc., also subside. They get so engrossed in his sweet presence that they do not like to leave it. All efforts to get Sri Maharshi to look at us during his introverted state prove futile. Many persons try to catch his eye in various manners like prayer but Sri Maharshi's introversion never wavers even for a moment. It is evident that it is not an artificial state brought by *sadhana* or spiritual practice. It is a state arising from constant awareness of his true Being.

When he comes out of his inner state of his own accord, all questions put to him are answered. Sri Maharshi's voice is as melodious and soft as that of a child. It is exceedingly sweet and at times it is so low toned that it is not even heard clearly. It must be heard with full attention. When we hear his voice we feel as if we hear a divine and subtle voice coming across the firmament [heavenly vault].

Even in speech, behaviour, modes of eating etc., his state is like that of a child. While engaged in activities, his introverted state fixed on the Self remains steady. One never notices unsteadiness or defect in his speech, mind and body. Just as the lion, the king of the jungle, lives in his forest-abode, enjoying full freedom with fearlessness and at ease, in the same way Sri Maharshi is fearless and free from all restrictions because of his steady Self-knowledge and perfect peace.

* B.V. Narasimha Swami's papers, Sri Ramanasramam Library, as cited in *Timeless in Time* by A.R. Natarajan. There is also a picture of Deivarata standing before Bhagavan with great reverence.

WISE LIVING: 'Let go' means renouncing with determination things which are deterrents to a full, wholesome life. It is a slow and arduous process. Myriad desires continuously assail us. The beauty of life remains untapped in the mindless pursuit of desires. We do not have to abandon possessions. But they should be a means for life, not the life itself. We should also let go of our attachment to dear ones. Attachment is essentially selfish love. Replace it with love which is altruistic. Past is a graveyard, and the future, inscrutable. Abnegate them fully, and seize the opportunities of the present and move on in life. – *Geetika Jain*

BHAGAVAN FULFILLS DEVOTEE'S DESIRE FOR DIRECT UPADESA THROUGH A DREAM

The following is from *Day by Day with Bhagavan* dated 23rd August, 1945.

Mr. Kundanlal Mahatani* who has been staying here for about eight months, asked Bhagavan for direct *upadesa*, urging that all the books emphasise that nothing can be achieved by anybody except with the help of *upadesa* from a guru and that though he has read all the instructions given by Bhagavan for Self-enquiry and stillness of the mind where God can be realised as 'I', he still did not know what was the best method for him individually. This was not the first time he has made such a request. At least twice before, once in June and again in July, he had done so. Neither then nor now Bhagavan made any reply. The gentleman was very much dejected and was worried whether he was fit to receive any reply and whether he has committed any offence on account of which Bhagavan was not pleased to reply.

Later, in the evening, Bhagavan referred to a Tamil poem. To look at its translation, Mahatani borrowed my notebook. As often happens to devotees, who indirectly receive necessary instructions, Mahatani found in the notebook instructions which suited him. Next day, about 2 p.m., when he was having a nap, he had a vision in his dream in which Bhagavan appeared and quoted a Sanskrit *sloka* and interpreted as meaning: 'There is no better

karma or *bhakti* than enquiry into the Self'. He was greatly delighted, and later, in the same dream, another devotee put the same question to Bhagavan and Mahatani repeated the above answer to him and laughed heartily. All this was reported to Bhagavan on the same day by Mahatani.

* He came to the Ashram from Karachi (now in Pakistan) in 1944, after reading Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*, and charmed by Bhagavan, stayed at a stretch for 11 months. He says, "To me Bhagavan is more than all other gods or prophets so far incarnated on the earth. I have only read about them. On the other hand, I have seen Bhagavan and therefore have a very clear conception of an ideal to meditate upon. Bhagavan is a *jivanmukta*. He has actually demonstrated that state of being above body-consciousness." *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram, p. 317.

UNPRECEDENTED TRANSFORMATIONAL PROXIMITY OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

The following is the final installment in continuation of the last five issues. It is indeed uplifting, inspiring and exhilarating to read experiences of devotees in the presence of the Maharshi.

Santha Rangachary, a well-known journalist, was on the editorial board of *Mountain Path* for eight years, first met Bhagavan when only 12 years old: When I went to the Ashram with my family, I saw reclining on a sofa, a golden-brown figure with the most radiant countenance I had ever seen before or since and, as I stood riveted to the spot, the Maharshi looked at me. When I remember it even now, more than forty years later, tears come to eyes as they did then. I stood there, God knows how long, just looking at that face. Then, as in a trance, I moved forward deliberately towards him and touched his feet. Fighting my way through the disapproving glances that followed, as devotees were not allowed to touch Bhagavan, I made my way to a place near the window.

Once seated, I let my tears flow. I remember I spent a good part of that morning wiping my tears. Never before had I seen in a human countenance a more intense, inward life and yet one which remained so transparent and

child-like. There was about him an irresistible and indefinable spiritual power, which simply overwhelmed me...As I saw the Maharshi turn his eyes upon me with that impersonal yet arresting look of his, my heart soared and I thought: 'I want to be here for ever and ever.' In the presence of the Maharshi, speech seemed redundant. I was totally and blissfully satisfied just being in his presence.

Srimat Puragara Paramapanthi, a renowned swami of his time, met Bhagavan in 1949: I saw before me a yogi of the highest order – a mystic of supreme realisation, who radiated the living presence of divinity within and without. His spiritual presence was dynamic and clearly perceptible. It touched and inspired me and took me to the higher and rare sphere of spirituality. I felt suddenly the presence of a spiritual power, which was ambient and edifying. Our narrow understanding cannot fully comprehend him; his greatness is too vast – too immense to be captured within our mental orbit. Just a part of his spiritual self, a tiny fraction of it is visible to us, and we rejoice in the partial vision of him because we are in the dark and bound by the sad limitations of our senses.

N. Ponniah from Malaysia saw Bhagavan in 1938: I entered the hall. Bhagavan was reclining on the sofa, absorbed in the Self, silent and serene. Pin-drop silence prevailed. Nothing seemed more enjoyable in this blessed world than to sit in silence in that place in the holy presence of the Maharshi. *Darshan* of the Sage Ramana is a singular experience, which words can hardly describe. I can only say that I felt an unusual vibrating sensation, a sort of electric charge, which had transported me for a moment.

Ramakrishna Madhavpeddi, an attorney at Madras High Court, visited the Ashram in 1948: I was sitting in the hall with eyes closed. At one point I happen to open my eyes and saw the Maharshi looking at me intently. Suddenly, all thoughts vanished from my mind and I experienced a delightful blank or void. Then a resplendent light enveloped me fully. I was empty of thoughts but full of immense happiness. I was one with some indefinable peace and splendid glory. This experience made me believe in God for the first time. Those days with the Maharshi bring ecstasy to me even today.

B. C. Sengupta, principal of a college, came to Bhagavan in early 40s:

While sitting before the Maharshi, I felt a pull in the region of my heart. My mind was completely arrested – still, but I was wide awake. Suddenly, without break in my consciousness, the ‘I’ flashed forth! It was awareness pure and simple, steady, unbroken and intensely bright, but as much brighter than ordinary consciousness as is sunlight brighter than the dim light of a lamp. The world was not, neither the body nor the mind – no thought, no motion; time also ceased to exist. I alone existed and that I was consciousness itself, self-luminous and alone, without a second. Suddenly, without any break in my consciousness, I was brought back to my normal, ordinary consciousness. I opened my eyes and looked at the Maharshi, but he appeared to be quite unconcerned, as if nothing had happened. He was not even looking at me.

Atmakuri Govindacharyulu visited the Ashram in 1944-45: I sat down near the Sage’s feet and began to gaze at his countenance. Suddenly he turned his gaze upon me, which I could not stand. My hair stood on end and an unknown force began to rise throughout my frame. That smile, mingled with that look of grace, stirred me deeply, and made me tremble like one who has passed through a blazing fire. I could not bear the look at that face which was radiant like the sun. The Maharshi is an ocean of peace. Whoever gathers at his feet, he will not fail to shed on him at least a drop from his unfathomable ocean of tranquility.

Prof. D. Gurusurthi came the Ashram a few days before the *mahasamadhi*: His face shone radiant with peace. 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. Few among mankind have had the great privilege of participating in such a spiritual feast. I asked myself, ‘What would happen to the hundreds who will be deprived of this 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 around it will continue to shed its influence.

Shanti (pseudonym) visited Bhagavan in 1943: We entered the hall and sat facing him. For the first time in my life, I realised how dynamic *shanti* could be. Peace seemed to emerge from Bhagavan and fill the heart one and all. In his presence the mind became calm and tranquil of its own accord and consequently doubts and questions became few, and finally vanished. I was very happy. I felt *kritakritya* (one who has accomplished), and my heart softly whispered within me the words, '*dhanyoham, dhanyoham*' (I am blessed, I am blessed). – All abstracts are from *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of our Kendram.

Accommodation at Sri Ramanasramam

From now on the e-mail address for getting accommodation at the Ashram, Tiruvannamalai, would only be <stay@gururamana.org> The request should be sent at least a month in advance. Request at any other e-mail id. will not be honoured.

Consciousness is the screen on which the pictures come and go. The screen is real; the pictures are mere shadows on it. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future. – Paul Boese

You should live as islands unto yourselves, being your own refuge, with no one else your refuge. – The Buddha

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom. – Aristotle

Meditation is food for the soul. When we feel hungry, spontaneously we eat something. When thirsty we drink water. Similarly, soul yearns for meditation. It is just that we do not recognise it. – Sri Ravi Shankar

No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking. – Voltaire

Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavour. – Truman Capote

JULY

SUSHUPTI – DEEP SLEEP

***Sushupti* is the pure state. *Jagrat* (the waking state) is *ajana* (ignorance) and *sushupti prajnana* (wisdom). It is our experience that nothing in *jagrat* can compare with the bliss and well-being derived from deep sleep, when the mind and the senses are absent. It means that bliss comes only from inside ourselves and that it is most intense when we are free from thoughts and perceptions. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

THREE STEPS OF SELF-ENQUIRY

By N. A. Mohan Rao*

An elementary view of Self-enquiry is best obtained by considering it in three steps. We may describe them as follows.

Step-1: When we sit down to do Self-enquiry, we find our mind engaged in different thoughts occurring on their own. We have to eliminate these thoughts, since we need to use the mind for enquiry. But then, we cannot just wish these thoughts away. The mind will not keep quiet unless it has something to hang on to. So, instead of trying to remove *all* the thoughts, we try to limit their number to *one*. Bhagavan suggests the best option thus: Whatever thought comes to our mind, we should ask ourselves “To whom is this thought?” The answer suggests itself, “To me”. This brings us to the thought of ourselves as ‘I’, that is, to our ‘I’-thought. The earlier multiple thoughts thus give rise to this single ‘I’-thought.

Generally, we cannot make out clearly what our mind holds when we have our ‘I’-thought. This is because we are not acquainted enough with our ‘I’. So, the ‘I’-thought will ordinarily be an ever-changing mix of ideas, such as ‘I-am-the-body’, ‘I-am-a-householder’, ‘I-am-a-devotee’, ‘I-am-the-reader’, etc. This, however, is not a problem. It is enough for our purpose to have a vague idea of our ‘I’, without

bothering about its *exact* detail. Arriving at this 'I'-thought is the *first step* in Self-enquiry.

This step appears simple, but it usually takes us a long time to effectively practise it. As Bhagavan said, the mind tends to revolt when it senses that we are going to control it, and produces even more thoughts than in normal times. This makes our task hard, and may even drive us in desperation to drop our *sadhana*. Bhagavan assures us, however, that if only we keep to our practice, the thoughts will surely subside in due course.

We notice that in the different forms of 'I'-thought, the term 'I' is common; and it alone is the sentient (*chetan*) part. It identifies itself with various insentient (*jada*) 'objects' (or 'attributes'), such as the body, householder, devotee etc., which are temporary and shifting.

Step-2 This consists in ignoring whatever are the 'objects' of the 'I'-thought, and looking for its sentient (*chetan*) part, 'I'. For this, we ask ourselves, "Wherefrom does this 'I'-thought arise in me?" This is called 'searching for the source of the 'I'-thought'. It alone is, truly, 'Self-enquiry'.

The question we put above is a very peculiar one. It is not meant to be answered in words at all. In fact, there is really *no answer* to it in words. The real answer consists in reaching out to our inner sense of 'I', which alone is responsible for the sentience we feel in the 'I'-thought. This means we must attain our 'I'-feeling. As stated elsewhere,¹ the 'I'-feeling is an experience, in which we are *directly* aware that we 'are'. It is felt in the *eternal* 'now'.

A *sadhaka* who has been used to practices like *japa* or meditation prior to taking up Self-enquiry, will ordinarily be able to practise Self-enquiry as above, though with some initial struggle. If he cannot do so, he may undertake practice of *japa* (*Talks* 485) till he attains the requisite one-pointedness of mind. His intuitive capabilities would also have developed by then, and he will find Self-enquiry possible of practice.

The second step in Self-enquiry thus takes us from the realm of *thought* (of 'I') to that of *feeling* (of 'I'). It is brought about not by reasoning or analysis, but by an *intuitive* feel for our 'I'. This is the significance of Bhagavan's reference to *intuition* in *Talks* 28 and 128.

Some people are prone to think that the second step would take us to some hither-to unknown, super-normal spiritual state. Such notion is not correct. It takes us only to

our 'I'-feeling, which had even earlier been in our experience, but without our recognition. It is like thinking that we do not know, say, a person named Vijay Kumar, but realize when introduced, that he is the same one whom we had occasionally transacted with at an office.

Our job now consists in holding on to the 'I'-feeling as long as possible and as often. As and when we come out of the 'I'-feeling, we repeat steps 1 and 2 to re-gain it. With steady practice, we develop the ability to stay with the 'I'-feeling with fewer interruptions and for longer spells. Its intensity too grows

During 'I'-feeling, our *vasanas* get steadily eroded, and we reach *savikalpa samadhi*, which is experienced as an intense and uninterrupted I-feeling. With further sincere and prolonged practice, we are suddenly carried to an experience of the non-dual Self ('I-I' or *taan*) by *transcendence* of the remaining *vasanas*, securing *nirvikalpa samadhi*.

Step-3: Our effort in *sadhana* can go only up to this point of transcendence, and no further. As Bhagavan said, *sadhana* will still go on even without our further effort. What this really means is that *vasanas* will continue to be eliminated during *nirvikalpa samadhi*, and so we will progress further in our inner spiritual state.

Nirvikalpa samadhi lasts only for a limited time, since the *vasanas* that were dormant become active once again. It has to be practised till these remaining *vasanas* too are eliminated. The *samadhi* then becomes permanent, and there will be no more recurrence of waking, dream and deep sleep. It is then called *sahaja samadhi*.

With onset of *sahaja samadhi*, all our *karmas* are destroyed, and so we become 'liberated' from further births and deaths. Our *ajnana*, which has been the root cause of our sense of individuality (springing from 'I' or *naan*), is at an end, and we are said to have attained *jnana*. The ultimate objective of our *sadhana*, and life, would thus be fulfilled.

¹ See *Sri Ramana Jyothi*, March 2013; article entitled "Thought and Feeling", pp. 25-27.

*The author is an erudite scholar and Bhagavan's devotee at Hyderabad.

THE COCEPT OF *KAIVALYA*

By I.S. Madugula

The notion of *kaivalya* (perfection) in Pantanjali's *Yoga Sutras* is regarded as being the highest good of the yoga philosophy. The yogi's *kaivalya* is comparable to the advaitin's concept of *mukti* or *moksha* (liberation, enlightenment) in terms of meaning as well as methodology. These two states of self-realisation only denote a distinction, not a difference.

Kaivalya is a spiritual state in which the power of Universal Consciousness is established in itself (*svarupa pratishtha*). The aspirant, at this point, has cleansed himself or herself of all mental modifications by recognition and detachment from the unconscious identification with the *gunas*. Dictionary describes *kaivalya* as 'perfect isolation, soleness, exclusiveness; detachment of the soul from the matter, identification with the supreme spirit.' The noun form *kaivalya* derives from the adjective *kevala*, meaning 'alone, mere, sole, only, isolated'... The *svarupa* consciousness is above all pains. When a man is not in his own form (*svarupa*), he functions in the lower vehicles, whether it be *buddhic*, *ahamkaric* or *manasic* matters. With continued and unmitigated attention to union with *Purusha* (Ultimate Reality), the purified individual mind gravitates towards absolute independence (*kaivalya*), after the last lingering layer of residual mental impressions has been obliterated.

Pranayama (breath control) is really the process of regarding all mental states as nothing but Brahman. For example, exhalation is the negation of the phenomenal world, inhalation is the thought 'I am Brahman', and retention involves holding of that thought. To continuously dwell on the independence of the Self is *dhayana*. This thought, when it becomes steady and unchanging, results in Samadhi or pure awareness.

There are moments of utter solitude – however few and far between – when we are on the verge of realisation that we are our own selves. That sense of absolute freedom is *kaivalya*, and that state of pure awareness is *moksha*. The trick of course is to learn to persist and remain in that state.

The concept of *kaivalya* is a unique term denoting the highest stage of evolution which a human being can attain. It has an air of exclusivity to it, signifying our final destiny. – Excerpts from *Mountain Path*, Jan.-Mar., 2013

BLISS LIES WITHIN: It is always the mind that is the major hindrance for accessing the source of bliss. The very understanding that the source of happiness, joy and tranquillity opens up only when the mind is silent makes the individual work hard to find the source. Meditation creates a space for the individual to transcend the realm of thoughts and to merge with the source. Thoughts are the basic demons

behind the depletion of energy within our mind. Without the basic understanding that the bliss that one senses while meditating, is the outcome of the stillness in one's mind, one can never make progress in nullifying one's thoughts. Only when the mind has dropped all its whims and fancies, can there be true perception of bliss.

Meditation is the only way where the mind can be held in check so that it is in harmony with the present. – *Shree Prasannaji*

SOME INSPIRING AND THOUGHT-PROVOKING QUOTES FROM DR. K.S*

1. A great person has great concern for others.
2. True knowledge has to come from inside and not from outside.
3. Self like water is covered with moss; you can see it only when you remove infatuation with the world.
4. Grace is something you do not deserve. If you deserve, you need not ask for it. You ask for grace, as you do not deserve.
5. When we do not have hopes and expectations, there are no disappointments.
6. Mind cannot think of a state which is beyond the mind and That State is beyond the mind.
7. Advita is *annda* because no differentiation or quarrel is possible. If there are two the problem arises.
8. We do not understand the power of silence.
9. As you grow wiser, you feel that what you do not know is the only thing to know.
10. If you surrender you cannot demand any thing. Real surrender is when you do not ask for anything.
11. He will come to your rescue on His terms and not on your terms.
12. Even the feeling of lack of grace is because of His grace.
13. We prey upon God and not pray to God. We demand shamelessly.
14. Faith is higher than belief, and not necessarily based on reasoning.
15. In real meditation, the mind is totally merged with the self. You cannot communicate the experience because when it comes, the self is gone.

*Dr. K. Subrahmanian (1928-98), founder president our Kendram, was professor of English at the 'Central Institute of English', now 'English and Foreign Languages University', Hyderabad. The quotes are from his talks at the Kendram.

FINDING THE QUIET MIND

By Robert Ellwood*

It has been called the Monkey Mind. The play of Monkey Mind adds up to one thing: You are not in charge. You are not thinking. Your thoughts are thinking you. Sometimes the Monkey Mind may slow down, but may it be a lot worse. So much so that you deliberately try to stimulate the Monkey Mind into a frenetic pace to keep the Other Thing from having a chance to break in. That Other Thing, the Sloth Mind, is pervasive anxiety and depression. Finally, there is the Cow Mind. It just wants to chew its cud and not be bothered. You are neither too up nor too down. You do not expect much from life. You go through your work routinely, then eat, read newspaper and magazines, watch TV and go to bed. If you have a family, you may also spend some time with your family. You do not know why you are living, but you do not want to die.

Meditation:

One antidote of the situation is meditation. It is like learning a new skill. The first few tries will often be disappointing and the temptation to quit will push itself forward persistently. Meditation is an antidote, not a magic. What it can do is affect the way the mind works so that it responds to situations with more calmness than before, with greater access to reservoirs of inner joy and strength. Meditation can touch and tap a place accessible to the Quiet Mind, the mind just being itself. Like any great art, meditation is always a struggle, yet always rewarding. It seems sometimes hopelessly futile and sometimes so supremely worthwhile as to make everything in life seem futile by comparison. Meditation is a wholesome stopping of action, and is revitalizing. One thing you will find is that meditation will not have magical, instantaneous effects, but it will permeate through your attitudes and instinctive responses.

Technique: It is fairly important to mediate at about the same time everyday. This is part of the mild discipline good meditation requires. Start breathing slowly and deeply from the abdomen. Regular breathing has a calming effect; deep breathing increases oxidation and makes you quietly zestful and alert. The first method is counting breaths. Count your breaths – 1 on the inhalation, 2 on the exhalation and so forth – silently from 1 to 10, then start all over again. This may seem like an absurd thing to do, but you may be surprised at how nicely it shakes the mind down. For a while, it will probably teach you how little control you really have of your mind. You will lose count, and find even the amount of concentration that such a simple thing as

counting breaths requires is both stressful and boring. If you lose count, do not worry about it. Do not feel guilty, discouraged, or upset. Just go back to 1 again and start all over. There could be many variations – Count only inhalations. Count backwards from 10 to 1. Another method is that instead of counting just follow your breaths with your mind, in and out, in and out. Whatever you choose, try for five to ten minutes at a time and increase gradually as per your capacity. The use of a mantra can be useful, if said silently, in soft easy rhythm, just in mind or at most with the mouth moving slightly. Just keep the mantra moving in the mind. A very good way used by some Zen masters is to make the inquiry ‘Who am I?’ over and over, going deep within.

One should not get too concerned about the progress. Concern for ‘progress’ can easily become an obsession which gets in the way of meditation. Just meditate calmly, peacefully, for the good it does and the power it brings. If things go wrong in the way you are meditating, just brush them aside and keep on.

Some general observations: Meditation is a highly personal, individual act. It is your personal link with eternal, Ultimate Reality. When you are in meditation, you are just yourself, you are experiencing yourself, knowing yourself. You can arise from meditation with an inner joy, which no one can take away from you. Meditation is a radical practice in the sense that it operates at the roots of your being. It allows you to uncover and experience a new level of your being. *But do not forget the fact that results will flow only when you are eager for and prepared for meditation.*

* Excerpted from the above titled book published by The Theosophical Publishing House, Madras.

BHAGAVAN HELPS A DEVOTEE IN DISTRESS: M.S. Chandrashekar writes

– Ours is a very closely knit family, comprising myself, my wife and two daughters. My younger daughter is particularly attached to me. After her marriage to an army officer, her husband was posted to Bhutan. As she was missing us very much, we decided to go to Bhutan and spend some time with her. She had made all the necessary arrangements and was to meet us at the Gauhati airport, from where we had to proceed to Bhutan by road.

When we reached Calcutta airport, Indian Airlines had gone on strike and all aircrafts were grounded. Finally, after much begging by the passengers, it was agreed that there would be one flight that day to Gauhati, the only link with Bhutan. We wanted to go by that flight but there was no accommodation as it was a kind of priority flight for army personnel and VIPs. I literally fell at the feet of the duty officer and the staff and begged them to provide seats for us as my daughter would have come all the way from Bhutan in eager anticipation of our coming over. But this was of no avail.

Then I started praying intensely to Bhagavan Ramana. I was certain that nothing but his miracle could save the situation for us. I kept looking at the picture of Bhagavan at the dial of my watch and alternately looking pathetically at the booking clerk who could see my grief. This went on nearly for one hour. Finally, the flight was announced and the passengers who had been given seats were asked to board. We were desperate and gave one last mental cry of anguish and prayer to Sri Ramana. Immediately, to our surprise and unbelievable happiness, the counter clerk came to us and said, 'Here are two boarding passes. Please go in quickly. Do not ask any questions.' –in *The Continuing Story* by A.R. Natarajan, Ramana Maharshi Centre, Bangalore.

LIVE BY THE LIGHT WITHIN: Toyohiko Kagawan, known as Japanese Gandhi, when threatened with total blindness in his 40s, said, 'If I go blind, it is simply a matter of inventing inner light. Even though every outward thing is shrouded in darkness, in the inner chamber of my soul God's eternal light shines on. God will keep for me the little light forever burning. He Himself is my light, and as long as He shines within, I do not lament being compelled to sit out the long day in darkness. – *M.P. Kutty*

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI SPEAKS

The following excerpts are from *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

Q. We surrender; but still there is no help.

A. Yes. If you have surrendered, you must be able to abide by the will of God and not make a grievance of what may not please you. Things may turn out differently from what they look apparently.

Q We are worldly. There is the wife, there are

children, friends and relatives and we cannot ignore their existence and resign ourselves to divine will, without retaining some little of the personality in us.

A. That means you have not surrendered as proposed by you. You must only trust God.

Q. *Is solitude necessary for vichara?*

A. There is solitude everywhere. The individual is solitary always. His business is to find out within and not seek without.

Q. *The work-a-day world is distracting.*

A. Do not allow yourself to be distracted. Enquire for whom there is distraction. It will not afflict you after some practice.

Q. *Even the attempt is impossible.*

A. Make it, and it will be found to be not so difficult.

Q. *The path of realisation is difficult. Worldly matters are easy of understanding, whereas this is not.*

A. Yes. The mind always seeks to have external knowledge, leaving the knowledge that is intrinsic.

Q. *What is the Self?*

A. The self is being alone, not being this way or that way. It is simple being. Be and there is an end of the ignorance. Enquire for whom is the ignorance.

Realise your pure being. Let there be no confusion as regards self.

The body is the result of thoughts. The thoughts will play as usual but you will not be affected. You were not concerned with the body when asleep, thus you can always be.

Q. *How to reconcile spirituality with wage-earning, which is a necessity with worldly people.*

A. Actions are no cause of bondage. Bondage is only the false notion that I am acting. Leave off such thoughts, and let the body and senses play their roles unimpeded by your interference.

Q. *The 'I' is not perceptible however much one might struggle.*

A. Who is it that says that the 'I' is not perceptible?

Is there an 'I' ignorant, besides an 'I' that is elusive? Are there two 'I's in the same person? Ask yourself? Know the mind, you will find it to be a myth. King Janaka said: 'I have discovered the thief who had been ruining me so long. I will now deal with him summarily. Then I shall be happy.' Similarly, it will be with others.

Q. *How to know the 'I'?*

A. The 'I'-'I' is always there. There is no knowing

it. It is not a new knowledge acquired. What is new and what is not here and now will be transitory, fleeting only. The 'I' is always there. There is obstruction to its knowledge. Such obstruction is called ignorance. Remove the Ignorance, and knowledge shines. In fact, this ignorance or even knowledge is not for Atman. They are over-growths to be cleared. That is why Atman is said to be beyond knowledge and ignorance.

Q. There is no perceptible progress visible in spite of attempts.

A. Progress can be spoken of things to be obtained afresh. Whereas, it is the removal of ignorance here, and not acquisition of knowledge. What kind of progress can be expected in the quest for the Self?

Q. How to remove ignorance?

While lying in bed in Tiruvannamalai, you find yourself in another town. The scene is real to you. Your body is here and you are only on your bed in a room. Can a town enter your room, or could you have left this place and gone elsewhere, leaving the body here? Both are impossible. Therefore, your being here or seeing another town are both unreal. They appear real to the mind. The 'I' of the dream has vanished. Then another 'I' speaks of the dream. This 'I' was not in the dream. Both the 'I's are unreal. There is the substratum of the mind which continues all along, giving rise to so many scenes, with every thought rises the 'I' and with its disappearance that 'I' disappears too. So 'I's are born and die every moment. The subsisting mind is the real trouble.

FROM SWARA TO ISHWARA: 'Swa' is 'swara' meaning the 'Self' or 'Soul', and 'ra', meaning to 'proffer' or 'to hold out for acceptance'. The word 'acceptance' refers to the connectivity requested by a musician when his music is offered to the Lord. Each *swara* is potentially the gateway to a flood of infinite light. A great musician begins to have the experience of *samadhi* or meditation during the rendering of *ragas*. When all the *swaras* start merging and becoming One in a loving, ecstatic whole, it is 'Svara' to 'Ishwara'. – *Bindu Chawala*

Learn from yesterday, live for today, and hope for tomorrow. – Einstein

God is Unity, but always works in variety. – Emerson

There is an ocean inside you, and when you are ready, you will drink. – Kabir

INNER PEACE: The mind in chaos finds chaos all-round. He who has inner peace can abide in that state even in the midst of outer disorder. We have to keep a secret chamber of silence within ourselves, where we cannot let moods, trials or disharmony to enter. As soon as the mind becomes restless, give it a whack with your will and order it to be calm. Feel that you are not the body but the life which sustains the body. Try to remain for one minute at a time, fixing the mind on the peace within, especially if worried. Think of some happy incident, dwell on it and visualize it, until you forget your worries. The moment we are restless or disturbed, we should retire to silence and meditation, until calmness is restored. – *Siluveru Sudarshan*

ANTAHKARANA: This term is used in Vedanta to include – *Manas*, that aspect of mind which is constantly in doubt, unsure whether something should be done or not. *Buddhi* (intellect) is the determining faculty that sheds doubt and takes a firm decision one way or other. *Chitta* is that aspect of mind that does concentration and enquires into the nature of things. The function of memory falls in the domain of *chitta*. *Ahamkara* is the self-arrogating principle that performs the function of *abhimana* or egotism, and is the root cause of human suffering. – *Anup Taneja*

AUGUST

THE RIGHT PATH

Each should be allowed to go his own way; the way for which he may be suited. It will not do to convert him to another path. The guru will go with the disciple in his own path and then gradually turn him to the supreme way at the right time. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

DETERMINED EFFORT NECESSARY FOR SELF-REALISATION: During *sadhana*, some would be genuinely concerned about ‘downfalls’, about slipping back to old ways. One step forward seems to be negated by two steps backward, when one is inattentive or even in spite of oneself. Here Sri Ramana assures us that things would be alright at the end. What can failures do against ‘the steady impulse of determination?’ Will it not put one back on his feet? Then, as one keeps at it ‘success would beget success’. Sri Ramana would also

give the analogy of conquering a fort by laying siege of it, and destroying its man-power as they come out of it. Once the thinker is besieged, how long can distracting thoughts survive? Also, no effort is ever wasted, as Sri Ramana would say. What strength pours into us as we read his assertion that ‘even a single effort to still a single thought, even for a trice, goes a long way to reach the state of quiescence’!

Time and again, Sri Ramana would emphasise the need for faith, the need for confidence in our capacity to deal with the hordes of tendencies which press in when a mental vacuum is created. ‘Many have succeeded’ he would say, ‘because they believed they could.’ We can draw encouragement from a conversation which Sri Ramana had with Subba Rao who complained of the power of ‘*vasanas*’. Sri Ramana categorically told him, ‘Your repeated effort will erase them.’ – *Holistic Meditation* by A.R.Natarajan, Sri Ramana Centre, Bangalore.

FIRST PHOTOGRAPH OF BHAGAVAN

This photograph, which can be seen in the Kendram’s hall, was taken by Nalla Pillai, a professional photographer, in 1899. We see total detachment (*vairagya*) in the power and intensity of Bhagavan’s look. His slim, youthful body glows with an almost unearthly light. We begin to feel that we are in a presence that fills us with awe and respect.

The Nalla Pillai Studios was founded in 1878, and is still in existence at Mutt Street, Kumbhakonam, where it is now run by the fourth generation of the same family. Nalla Pillai was a great devotee of Kumbhakonam Mouna Swami, who was well-known at that time as a great *tapasvin*. Mouna Swami eventually attained *jiva samadhi* which means that on his own instructions, he was interred while physically alive, in the tradition of Raghavendra Swami of Mantralayam. Swami Vivekananda visited the Mouna Swami Mutt after he returned from his triumphant visit to the U.S. He did not enter the mutt. He later said that he felt the powerful vibrations even outside and that if he had gone in, he would never have been able to come back; he still had his work to accomplish. Vivekananda then made a speech to the hundreds of people gathered to have his *darshan*.

Nalla Pillai was a very devout person. He used to seek out saints and spiritual persons in order to record their images for posterity. He was commissioned by

the North Arcot collector to photograph prisoners in that district for the police files, possibly because he was the only Indian photographer in Madras Presidency in those days. Pillai always carried with him a picture of his guru – Mouna Swami. After finishing the work for the collectorate, he made enquiries about local swamis and in particular he wanted to know about Brahmana Swami, of whom he had already heard. The photographer was so impressed with Bhagavan that after taking his photo that he gave him a gift of a portrait of Mouna Swami, which was his own copy.

In those days, the studio itself travelled with the photographer in a bullock cart. After taking the picture, the negative would be processed to make the photograph ready. The glass negative of this first photograph is still available in the Ashram archives. – *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. I, pp. 167-8

SRI RAMANA REMINISCENCES – SOME AMAZING INCIDENTS

The following has been recorded by Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya in his above-titled book*:

1. On the eve of my departure from the Ashram I mentioned to Bhagavan the sufferings of my wife because of the sudden loss of our son. “Has she no male child afterwards?” Enquired Bhagavan. I replied “No”. Sri Bhagavan sighed and said, “Alas! What a pity!” This took place on October 18th, 1936. My wife delivered a male child on August 1st, 1937.

2. Once, when taking leave of Sri Bhagavan, the *Sarvadhikari* handed over to me three packets of Ashram's *Prasad*. I enquired for whom they were intended. Sri Bhagavan, who was then having his oil bath in the same room, (which in those days served as both the dining room and office and also Bhagavan's bathroom), replied, “One for your family, one for Narayanappa [Bhagavan's devotee and cousin of Subbaramayya], and one for your friend.” The friend's name was not specified nor did I ask for it. The next day, after I returned home, a letter redirected from the Ashram was delivered to me. It had been written by R.P. Reddy, a Zamindar, to my Ashram address, praying for Sri Bhagavan's Grace for his old grandmother who was then on the verge of collapse, having stopped taking food for some months. I at once understood whom Sri Bhagavan meant by ‘your friend’, and hastened to the Zamindar with the *Prasad*. A few days later, Reddy met me and reported that the *Prasad* proved the turning point for his grandmother. She was now taking food and was on the road to recovery.

She keenly desired to make some offering in token of her gratitude to Sri Bhagavan. My friend was not content with customary presents, but he knew that I was translating *Sri Ramana Gita* in Telugu, and insisted on printing the book in the finest get-up, and the Ashram, on behalf of Sri Bhagavan, accepted the offer.

3. One night in the dining hall Sri Bhagavan enquired whether there was country-orange pickle. The *Sarvadhikari* was annoyed to find that there was none. The next day afternoon, the outgoing Ashram mail, which was as usual submitted for Sri Bhagavan's perusal, contained a letter by the *Sarvadhikari* to a Madurai devotee asking for a basket of country oranges. Sri Bhagavan flared up on reading it, and remarked, "To these people salvation seems to lie in country oranges! Would they not come on their own accord, if destined to come?" Just as the letter was being withdrawn in trepidation [A state of alarm or dread], a railway contractor entered the hall with two sealed basket-parcels. Now Sri Bhagavan laughingly observed, "What! Are these parcels country oranges? Open and see." When they were opened, lo! They both were basketfuls of country oranges.

4. On October 31st, 1937, my two year old daughter suffered from fits and became unconscious. All vital organs stopped functioning and she seemed practically dead. The doctor declared his helplessness. At this hour of crisis, I sent an express telegram to the Ashram praying for Sri Bhagavan's Grace on the child. That night, sleeping beside the child, I had a marvellous dream that I was in Bhagavan's Hall. Sri Bhagavan was reclining on his couch as usual, and in front of him stood a dark, fierce-looking person of gigantic stature. Sri Bhagavan with his forefinger motioned to him three times to leave the Hall. Accordingly, the stranger left by the first entrance. Then Sri Bhagavan turned to me, called me near and enquired, "How is your child?" I replied, "Bhagavan, by Your Grace, she is better." Then Sri Bhagavan said, "She will be alright, don't fear," and put his hand on my back. At his touch I got thrilled and the dream ended. The next morning I received a reply from the Ashram stating, "Received your wire last night. It was perused by Sri Bhagavan. We assure you of Sri Bhagavan's blessings on the child. Pray, be not anxious." And the child did recover fully.

Later when I visited the Ashram, I asked Sri Bhagavan what he thought on reading my telegram. I persisted in asking, "Sri Bhagavan, did you not think that you must do something to save the child?" Straight came Sri Bhagavan's

reply, “Even the thought to save the child is a *sankalpa* (will), and one who has any *sankalpa* is not *Jnani*. In fact, such thinking is unnecessary. The moment the *Jnani*’s eyes falls upon a thing, there starts a ‘divine automatic action’ which itself leads to the highest good.” The conversation was all in Telugu except the words ‘divine automatic action’, which Sri Bhagavan himself uttered.

5. A *Jnani* could have no *sankalpa* of his own was repeated by Sri Bhagavan, when he once recalled the following occurrence, which he told us in the Hall: “Some time ago, a paralytic came in a conveyance and was brought into the Hall in the arms of some persons and placed before me. I was looking at him as usual. After about half an hour, the man, with some effort, got up by himself, prostrated, and rising came forward and handed me a notebook. I found it to be his horoscope wherein it was stated that he would be stricken with paralysis and just at that time he would have *darshan* of a Mahatma by whose grace he would be cured miraculously. The man, after expressing his fervent gratitude, walked by himself to his conveyance outside the Hall. All people present were struck with wonder which I also shared, because I had not consciously done anything for him.”

6. It was June 10, 1940, Sri Bhagavan, Narayana Iyer and myself were at work early morning in the kitchen. When the radio announced the fall of Paris to Germany, Narayana Iyer observed, “France, a first rate power, has fallen in three days. Then do you think our Britain could hold out longer than three weeks at the most?” Upon this, Sri Bhagavan observed, “Um! But Russia.” Abruptly, he cut short his speech and resumed silence. Neither of us had the courage to ask him what Russia was going to do, though it appeared strange that he should mention Russia who was at that time friendly to Germany. It will be remembered that war broke out between Germany and Russia only one year afterwards, and it was Germany’s attack on Russia that turned the tide of fortune in favour of the Allies. This incident affords a peep into the omniscience (all-knowing attribute) of Sri Bhagavan.

7. The day of my departure from the Ashram arrived. My son-in-law had been ailing badly and I had not heard from home for a fortnight. My mind was full of misgivings that his health must have deteriorated. As I went to take leave of Sri Bhagavan, I was seized with a dread of losing hold of my sole support and falling into an abyss. I wept and told Sri Bhagavan how I dreaded returning home. He gave me a long look of infinite compassion and said, “Don’t fear. Your people have not written to you expecting your arrival. You will find your

son-in-law much improved.” When I reached home, I rejoiced to find that Sri Bhagavan’s words were perfectly true in every respect.

8. The white peacock presented by the Maharani of Baroda, became the darling of Sri Bhagavan. He was wonderfully active and intelligent. He had his cage just beside Sri Bhagavan’s couch and was watched by Sri Bhagavan day and night. I composed eight Telugu verses on the peacock and presented them to Sri Bhagavan in the Jubilee *pandal*. He gave the paper to Lalita Venkataraman and suggested that she might sing them with her *vina*. Within half an hour, she brought her *vina* and got ready to sing. Just then the peacock was absent. Sri Bhagavan said, “But the hero must be present to hear his praises sung! Where are you, Madhava? ** Come.” Lo! At once he jumped down from the roof of the *pandal*; and while Lilita sang he spread out his tail feather and danced, as Sri Bhagavan sat and watched him with beaming eyes. When the singing was concluded, the peacock walked to the *vina* and pecked at its strings with his beak. Thereupon, Sri Bhagavan told the singer, “Madhava wants you to repeat the song.” So she sang once more, and the peacock danced again. It was a sight for gods to see.

*Originally written in Telugu as *Sri Ramana Smaranamrutam*, was translated by the author into English in 1967. Prof. Subbaramayya was a scholar of both Telugu and English. He was one of the privileged few who moved with Bhagavan with childlike familiarity and had his grace in full measure. For a number of his fascinating reminiscences refer *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, a publication of the Kendram, pp. 102 to 109. His photo is at the first floor of the Kendram.

**Bhagavan had once said that some people believe that the white peacock was the reincarnation of Madhavaswami, late attendant of Bhagavan, and ever afterwards he used to address him as ‘Madhava’.

ACTIVATE DIVINITY WITHIN: If we are holding the Divine in us, why not we activate our divinity? When we activate our divinity, we will be making effort in the right direction...the effort that would lead to clarity and an effortless life. Sincere and all-consuming effort is very important to reach a state of effortlessness. Always feel gratitude and open yourself to realise divinity within. It is a question of resolving to make the effort and then going about it methodically. – *Swami Brahmdev*

PERFECT BEING, IMPERFECT MIRROR: The world outside us is full of imperfections. Why be happy or unhappy by evaluating ourselves through the mirror of the world? Why not make an attempt to purify the mirror of our inner mind so that we can reflect the *sat-chit-anand atman*? Once you do this, bliss is yours. – *Hasmukh Adhia*

SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI SHOWS THE WAY TO MURUGANAR

In one of the most moving poems of *Sri Ramana Sannidhi Murai, Muruganar begs Bhagavan for advice on what to do to solve various problems and reach particular goals. In response to each plea Bhagavan tells him ‘Be still, be quiet’. Instead of advising him to ‘do’ something, Bhagavan tells him to abide as the Self and let all his actions be dictated by the grace of the Self:**

Whichever way I went, I heard your praise, O happy one, and to your feet surrendered my body wealth and life. I cried: ‘Ocean of virtue, mountain-high, show me the way to happiness!’ Ramana, just, majestic, said: ‘Stand still. Stay where you are.’

Digging and soaring, Vishnu and Brahma could not find you at all. And I, trudging, trudging, towards diverse goals was worn thin. I cried: ‘Tell me how to merge in the Feet, beyond the knowledge of life!’ Said Ramana, pure, secure: ‘Be still, rest as you are.’

Passing, passing through various births, Driven on and on through the force of deeds,
I cried: ‘Show me the way, my friend, my Master! Show me the way to reach you!’ Said Ramana, Lord of Wisdom and Welfare, ‘Be not angry, be not glad. Gather your mind to oneness and be guided by the grace of the Lord.’

Like a picture sprawling on paper, rootless I ramified and cried: ‘Tell me how to cut the surface!’ Ramana, Master of Wisdom, said: ‘Steady and bright, like the flame in a pitcher,
burn in the grace of the Lord. Be still! Fulfill His will.’

I cried: ‘Lord and Master, tell me how to make good deeds prevail against deluding evil deeds!’ My Father, dear, my Ramana said: ‘Undesiring, unabhorning, untroubled in the centre standing, move only as you may be moved by the grace of the Lord.’

I cried: ‘Mighty Father of Works, creating, preserving destroying, tell me the means of salvation!’ Ramana, wise and virtuous, said: ‘Watching word and thought, walk as you are guided by the grace of the Lord who dwells in the lotus of your heart.’

I cried: ‘Tell me how to end the strong inveterate deeds that torment and force me back into the torrid current of births!’ Said Ramana, best and brightest of Teachers: ‘Walking the straight path fixed of old, join and be enjoined by the grace of the Lord of Joyous Awareness.’

I cried: ‘O rain-cloud with compassion big! Teach me truly the trick of escaping alive from the flood of births!’ Said Ramana, Lord of Wisdom and Welfare: ‘Loathe not, like not true nor false. Stand in the centre and be impelled by the grace of the Lord.’

I cried: Best of Masters! Lay bare to me the secret of Self-knowledge.’ Said Ramana, my Father and King: ‘Be as you are, your Self.’ –
www.davidgodman.org

*The book is a collection of 1851 poems of Muruganar in praise of Bhagavan. In 50 years of his writings on Bhagavan, he composed more than 20,000 verses. For his reminiscences and that of his wife, refer *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 154-9 and pp. 304-5, respectively.

KINDLE THE FLAME OF KNOWLEDGE

By Pranav Kullar

The *Bramhmasutra Bhashya* of Sankara is an exposition of the advaitic thought, which is best summed up in a classic line from the *Bhashya*: *Brahmn satyam jagat mithya jivo Brahmaivah napara* – Brahmn lone is real, the world is illusionary; the individual and the universal soul are one.

In his *Atmabodha* of 68 verses, Sankara begins by explicitly stating that the *Atmabodha* will serve as an easy text for those who are desirous of understanding the notion of liberation and how to equip themselves with the tools of discrimination in the mind. The second verse gets to the heart of the matter bluntly. It declares that knowledge alone can be the cause of liberation, just as fire is the direct cause of cooking. This may include the requirement of water, pots and pans, but it is fire that makes cooking possible. Sankara declares that *karma* or action is powerless to destroy ignorance. The Self can be known only through knowledge, just as light alone can dispel darkness.

Sankara compares *jnana abhyasa* or the practice of knowledge which purifies by removing the ignorance, with the traditional method of purifying the muddy water with *kataka*-nut powder. Just as the powder sprinkled on the surface of the water forms a film and drags all the impurities to the bottom, leaving pure water on the surface, constant use and practice of knowledge removes the dirt of ignorance. And just as the *kataka*-nut powder dissolves in the water after doing its task, knowledge too disappears after the Self emerges. Sankara also talks about the illusion created by oyster shells scattered along the beach on a moonlit-night. We mistake them for silver, only till we recognise them as shells. Similarly, the world of names and forms exists only till Self-knowledge dawns. The phenomenal world exists in the mind of the perceiver alone, and names and forms exist like ornaments. Vishnu, the all pervading consciousness is like gold. Sankara invokes the spirit of the Upanishads by alluding to the well-known definition of Brahman as that which cannot be defined: *Neti, neti* – Not this, not this.

The story of Rama is allegorized as *Atmarama*, who derives satisfaction from the Self alone, having crossed the ocean of delusion to vanquish the mind-beast of ego, just as Rama crossed the ocean to kill Ravana.

In the concluding verses, Sankara alludes to the cosmological nature of Brahmn – “All things which can be perceived or heard are Brahmn itself and nothing else... and although *atma* is reality, it can be perceived only by one who has the eyes of wisdom.” Sankara asks us to undertake the true inner pilgrimage to “the shrine of *atma*”, which will bestow equanimity. – *The Speaking Tree*

HOW I CAME TO MY MASTER

Alan Jacobs*

My father had a strong religious faith. We were neo-orthodox Jews, and I took my Judaism very seriously. I had come to the conclusion that there must be something more to religion than Judaism, and started to search comparative religions. I felt strongly drawn to the *Sanatana Dharma*, and avidly read the background to this great religion. For some reason, on my own, I started *hatha* yoga practice, meditation and colouring a Sri Chakra Yantra, which attracted me enormously. I was very much intellectually impressed by Aldous Huxley's conversion to Hinduism through the Ramakrishna Vedanta movement. Aldous was a boyhood hero of mine.

Then one morning, after finishing a yoga practice and shoulder stand, I suddenly experienced a transcendental feeling of great strength. The silent sound, almost barely vocalized, of "Who Am I" enveloped me inwardly and outwardly for several minutes. It was tremendous and awe-inspiring. I was transfixed, almost bowled over. I wondered what had happened. I knew beyond doubt that this was a major religious experience. It seemed the answer to my prayer "to lead a truly religious life" – the search for Who Am I. I had never heard of Ramana at this time. Then a series of miraculous events happened, finally leading to my laying hand on *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* in Watkins bookshop.

In 1971, I came under the influence of J. Krishnamurti, and attended his talks in England and Switzerland, wherever possible. I read his books, practised his choiceless awareness and self observational approach. I had found a living Master and was deeply impressed by his life and spiritual stature. My wife agreed with my new direction, and also attended the talks.

I was still living in my head. My heart was closed for some reason. I became ill for the first time in my life, and on my sick bed my wife gave me a magazine *Yoga and Health*. In it was a photo of Ramana and an article on his teachings. I looked at the picture. It was full of love and compassion; it spoke the answer to my prayer, "Come to me, come to me, you are ready." I now fully recognised that he always had been my true master. I vowed to devote my whole life to Bhagavan and his teaching, to study it and practice it earnestly, surrender to him as best as I could. Around this time my wife died suddenly from an unexpected disease. I was devastated but surrendered in faith to Bhagavan and the Will of God.

Then I happen to meet Lucia Osborne [wife of Bhagavan's well-known devotee Arthur Osborne, who founded *Mountain Path*. She was also the

editor of *Mountain Path* after her husband's death.] at a meeting. I started a small Ramana Maharshi Study Group in London, and eventually visited the Ashram in 1984. With Jane Adams, the Ramana Foundation at UK and a further visit to the Ashram in 1995, I am fully devoted as an instrument in mind, body and spirit, full time to study and practice of Sri Bhagavan's teachings, in the grip of the Tiger, his continuous Grace never fails. – *Centenary Souvenir Commemorating the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Ramana at Arunachala*, Sri Ramanasramam, 1996.

*Poet and writer, President, the Ramana Foundation, UK, is a regular contributor to *Mountain Path*. One can see him speak on YouTube.

***Vairagya* is the first step on the path of spiritual evolution. As the seeker keeps fanning the spark by means of regular spiritual practice, the spark turns to fire and burns away worldly desires and attachments. – Kishor Kulkarni**

Most people have attained their greatest success just one step beyond their greatest failure. – Napoleon Hill

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail. – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Life unfolds in accordance with a divine plan. We are only actors in a play, and someone else is the scriptwriter. Put complete trust in a higher power. – P.V. Vaidyanathan

The secret of success lies in the total undivided attention given to the goal, whether spiritual or otherwise. – Jyotirmayananda

It is in the best interest of a man to be a Karma Yogi and work to the best of his abilities, without bothering about the results. – Sama Veda

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM GANDHIJI: The only way to cultivate faith in God is to recognise our nothingness and thus be humble as particles of dust. The best of us at his very best is a tiny little thing and utterly helpless. And yet, we are not so helpless the moment we know that we are sparks from the Divine which is within us.

Each repetition of God's name carries you nearer and nearer to Him. I may tell you that I am talking here not as a theorist but as one who has experienced what he says every minute of his life.

God is most elusive. He is nearest to us, if we would but know the fact. But He is farthest from us when we do not want to realise His Omnipresence. Reason is powerless to know Him. He is beyond the reach or grasp of reason. Faith is essential in this matter.

God is there in the tabernacle [cavity] of the human heart, nearer to us than the finger nails are to the fingers. But what is to be done with a man who wonders all over the wide world in search of treasure which, as a matter of fact, is buried under his very feet?

It is for the God to take our broken boat across the stream, but it is for us to put in our best efforts. It is for us to plug a hole in its bottom, or if the water gets into the boat, to throw it out. The man must make sincere endeavour; the result depends on His grace. – *From writings of Mahatma Gandhi*

SEPTEMBER

NEED TO BE POSITIVE

All such thought as 'attainment is hard' or 'Self-realisation is far for me' or 'I have to overcome many difficulties to overcome before I would know reality', must be given up as they are obstacles created by ego. They are untrue. Do not doubt your reality; live in that understanding. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

BE AN ACHIEVER: If you have unflagging determination to achieve your objective, you will certainly do so. Success is not a gift. It is the result of your striving with patience till the goal is achieved. Recognise your own capabilities and utilise them with sound planning. Finally, sincerely pray to God to give you strength to work towards your success. – *Anonymous*

SIVA RATRI: On the auspicious day of Siva Ratri we honour and glorify Supreme Consciousness Siva and its unlimited creative power – *Shakti*. One is not higher than the other, and one cannot exist without the other. Energy is represented by female divine power – *Shakti*. Consciousness is represented by the male divine power – Siva.

The marriage of Siva and Shakti is considered to be the divine union, which is celebrated as the festival of Siva *Ratri*. *Shakti* is to be awakened from her deep slumber, in the *mooladhara chakra*, which lies dormant. When she is aroused, she forces herself into *sushumna*. Like lightning, she rises up to unite with Siva, in the *sahasra ckakra*, where they become one. – *Chamunda Swamiji*

DETACHMENT: It is the state where whether you have something or not, does not have an effect on you. Even when it is with you, you are prepared that one day it has to go, that is, you understand that nothing is permanent in a temporary world. – *Yogi Ashwini*

NAMASANKIRTAN

Dr. K.S.* answers questions at the Kendram

God is formless, nameless. How can we realise Him through recitation of names?

Why? What is the difficulty? When you were born, you didn't come into the world with a name tag attached to you. You were given a name ten or fifteen days after your birth. You respond to it now. It is not the body that responds to your name, but the mind. If it were the body, it should respond even after death. It is true that we associate a name with a form. The world itself is a world of names and forms. Well, going back to your name, you respond to several names. You have a pet name; somebody calls you uncle, another calls you brother, a third a father, etc., depending on the relationship. You respond to all these. So also God responds to any name you choose. Most of us can go to the nameless only through a name. The name has to be recited with feeling. He responds to the name that you recite. That's why some recite 'Vishnu Sahasranama', Lalitha Sahasranama', etc. Towards the end of 'Lalitha Sahasranama', there is a *sloka* which says that she is 'namarupa vivarjitha', that is, she is without form and name. You recite her one thousand names to realise that she is formless and nameless.

Do we have to recite so many names?

You can do what you like. You can recite one or one thousand. What matters is the devotion behind the recitation. Mechanical recitation will not do. *Namasankirtan* should be done with the heart. God can be realised or experienced by those whose hearts melt at the mention of His name. *Nada* lulls the mind to sleep and soothes one into the state of *Samadhi*, says Bhagavan. During and after *namasankirtan*, you experience a peace that passeth understanding. It's the result of the mind merging in the Heart.

* Founder president of our Kendram, was professor at the Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, now called English and Foreign Languages University.

BHAGAVAN ATTENDS MUSIC PERFORMANCE

During Karthigai Deepam festival, Veerappa Chettiar, a hereditary trustee of Arunachala temple, Tiruvannamalai, for many years, and a devotee of Bhagavan, would bring a few musicians to the Ashram and ask them to sing in Bhagavan's presence. Once Ramanuja Iyengar sang before Bhagavan accompanied by Dakshinamurthy Pillai on the *ganjira* and Sundaram Iyengar on the *ghatam*. The concert lasted from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Bhagavan who usually went out at 5.30 never stirred that day. The performers and the listeners were enthralled by Bhagavan's presence.

After one of the music performances, a devotee said to Bhagavan, "The performance was superb, we completely forgot ourselves, how was it for Bhagavan." The reply was, "I know their coming, prostrating and the beginning of the performance. Then I was not aware of anything till they got up after the performance. The One within eats up everything; then what is there to listen?" – *Arunachala's Ramana*, Vol. II, p. 286

EXPLORE YOUR TRUE NATURE: The more you use the words like 'I, me and myself', the more further you go from truth. Try not to even think of these words. To forget yourself means to know Thyself. When expressions are full of 'I, me and myself', they refer to your mind, body and mind. The deeper you go inside, the more you get connected to your consciousness. So forget yourself to know Thyself. – *Swami Brahmdev*

THIS TOO SHALL PASS: On any given day, our emotional state changes many times. One moment, something good happens and we are joyful. The next moment we receive a bad news and we start feeling sad. Life is like a theatre. As the play progresses, there will be ups and downs in our role. We will have happy events and sad events. Instead of reacting to them, as the play unfolds, we can learn to remain calm. We can better handle the ups and downs of life by realising they will all pass. We should spend as much time as possible in meditation. In this way we can remain in a calm state. We have to constantly appreciate that whatever happens is but a passing cloud that will blow away leaving the sky clear once again. – *Sant Rajinder Singh*

HAPPINESS: Happiness depends upon our mental attitude. We have to have those thoughts which will bring us health and happiness. If we are determined to deny sorrow in our minds, it exists no longer. But if we do not choose to be happy, no one can make us happy. Eventually, it is we who make of life what it is. We have to awaken the victor in ourselves. We have to emphasise the positive approach: ‘See that which is good. Hear that which is good. Speak that which is good.’ Giving happiness to others greatly adds to our own happiness, and is a very satisfying experience. Search for happiness in worldly possessions is always temporary. We have to go within to be in the state of true happiness. – *Siluveru Sudarshan*

SIVA IS NADA INCARNATE: Vedanta refers to the Lord as *Nada-Brahmn*. He can be approached by *nada* because music is formed out of sound. Sound is that *tattva* that has access to both fields – the formless *Nirguna Parabrahma* field and the *Saguna* field of names and forms, in which all living beings exist. Siva is the master of *Laya* (rhythm). *Laya* is from the root ‘*li*’, which means ‘to get absorbed’, ‘to become one with’. *Nada* is a combination of tunes and rhythms; it is not possible to have melody without rhythm built into it. Rhythm brings sound into beautiful patterns. –*Lalita Ramakrishna*

CHERISHED MEMORIES OF BHAGAVAN

By T.R. Kanakammal*

1. Bhagavan’s teacher visits him: One day an old gentleman approached Bhagavan and said, “Swami! Please clear my doubts.” Bhagavan took one look at him and started acting like a school boy who had not done his home work. Everyone was puzzled by Bhagavan’s imitation of a trembling schoolboy. Bhagavan laughed and explained the situation to us. He said, “Do you know who this gentleman is? It is only because I could not answer his questions that I ran away from Madurai! I thought I have escaped from him, but he has followed me all the way and is asking questions again!” The old gentleman was none other than the teacher when Bhagavan was at school. Presumably, Bhagavan dread questions being asked in the class room; and here was the same person, once again posing questions! All of us, including Bhagavan’s former teacher, were very much amused by the irony of the situation.

2. Bhagavan puts *Namam*: Once Bhagavan was telling us some incidents which occurred before the ashram was built. He said, “Rangaswamy Iyengar, a Vaishnavite devotee had a peculiar desire. He wanted to see me wearing the *Namam*. He kept on

repeating that it would be good to see Bhagavan wearing a *Namam*. After a while, I said to him, ‘Alright! I will do it to please you, but on one condition. You must make Nayana (Ganapati Muni) wear a *Namam* first. If he does it, I will follow suit.’ The red and white chalk pieces were placed beside Nayana’s dinner plate that evening by Rangaswamy Iyengar. When Nayana sat down to eat, he became involved in an engrossing dialogue with me. Without even being conscious of doing so, he picked up the chinks and applied the *Namam* on his forehead! As soon as he did so, I too did the same. Shortly, Nayana noticed the *Namam* on my forehead and exclaimed, ‘What is this, Bhagavan! Since when did you start this practice?’ I replied, ‘I saw you wearing a *Namam* and felt that I too should have one.’ Nayana was totally taken aback. He said, ‘What me?’ and looked into the mirror. When he saw himself in the mirror, he was stunned.” Saying this, Bhagavan broke into laughter and we all joined him.

3. The girl to whom Bhagavan never got married: Once a group of people had come to the Ashram to see Bhagavan. Among them was a lady of about sixty. She was a widow. Bhagavan gave her a keen look and started laughing, at which the lady became slightly shy. “Oh, it is you!” he said and laughed again at her embarrassment. We were all puzzled. Bhagavan said, “Do you know who she is? When we were children, we used to live in adjacent portions of the same house. In those days, I used to help my mother in the kitchen, wearing only a loin-cloth for reasons of orthodoxy. People around used to say that I must marry the girl next door. The little girl’s mother would immediately retort, ‘Why should my daughter marry a boy who is not ashamed to work in the kitchen like a girl, and that too, wearing nothing more than a loin-cloth? She deserves someone better.’ Fortunately for me, I was not destined to get married at all. If things had been different, and I had married this lady, what would have happened to me!” Bhagavan stated this with a mischievous twinkle in his eye.

4. Bhagavan’s leaf-plate: There was a secret agreement among the Ashram attendants, according to which they took turns, eating from the leaf-plate Bhagavan had used during lunch and dinner. These arrangements were kept a closely guarded secret. Somehow, Muruganar came to know that such a thing was going on, and he developed the desire to enjoy this rare privilege at least once. Accordingly, he entered the dining hall one day, after Bhagavan had finished his lunch. He was hesitating at the entrance, wondering whom to approach and how to obtain Bhagavan’s leaf-plate. Then he saw the head cook Shanthammal in the dining room. They were from the same town Ramanathapuram, and had known each other from childhood. Muruganar thought that his task would now be easy. On hearing Muruganar’s wish, Shanthammal

told him that, in the daytime, only the attendants take away Bhagavan's leaf, and that Muruganar would have to wait till dinner time for his chance. This greatly disappointed Muruganar.

5. Preparation of herbal drugs – Bhagavan's role: In the early days, items of daily use, like tooth-powder and medicinal oils were prepared in the Ashram itself. Bhagavan used to play an active part in their preparation. He knew the recipes of all the preparations and had recorded them specifying the quantity of each ingredient to be used together with the method of preparation. Each time any such preparation was made in the Ashram, Bhagavan would personally supervise the operation, provide information, and guidance also. Once a particular oil was being prepared. The herbs were measured and mixed according to Bhagavan's instructions, and the mixture was placed on the stove to boil. When the process of preparation was nearing completion, Bhagavan was informed and requested to come and check on it. On his way to the cowshed, Bhagavan came to the kitchen. He found that the oil was ready to be removed from the fire and so he asked the attendants to place the container on the floor and allow the oil to cool. After a while, Bhagavan came back to the kitchen again to see proper filtration and storage of oil.

6. Effort to corner Bhagavan fails: Once, a young man came to the Ashram. He was about twenty years old. He stood before Bhagavan with folded hands and asked, "Bhagavan while one is engaged in *nama japa*, is it better to say 'Rama' or 'Krishna' or one could combine both, and say 'Rama-Krishna'?" Bhagavan replied, "Every name is equally potent. You can chant any name singly or in combination. What is important is the degree of mental concentration you are able to achieve and sustain." Next the youth asked, "Is it alright to do such *japam* in one's own house or go to an ashram or some secluded spot?" Bhagavan said, "There is no need to leave your house. Your house is as good a place as any other." Then he said, "If it is so, why did Bhagavan left Madurai and come to Tiruvannamalai? Bhagavan sat up straight and said, "So! That is what you have in mind? But you should note one thing. I did not go around asking people, 'Should I stay here or go somewhere else?' I did what I felt doing. If you have a strong feeling that you should leave home, why don't you do so? If your conviction is strong enough, you will not feel the need for other people's approval or support." The young man appeared to be at loss for words. He stood silently for a few moments and then left the hall.

7. Bhagavan was all knowing: Kulumani Sastri had written an abridged version of Valmiki's *Ramanyana* in English. He wanted to have the first reading of the completed work in Bhagavan's presence. Accordingly, he started up the Hill with his manuscript, and a big bunch of bananas as an offering to Bhagavan. On the way, he saw a Vinayaka temple and offered a few bananas from the bunch to the Lord. This was done mentally; he did not actually remove the bananas from the bunch and leave them in the temple. Sastri went up the Hill and prostrated before Bhagavan, and laid the banana bunch before him. The usual custom was for the attendant to put off offerings safely, until distributed to the devotees, at an appropriate time. When the attendant came to remove the bananas, Bhagavan stopped him, saying that the fruits offered to Lord Vinayaka were to be removed from the bunch. The attendant and other devotees were puzzled. Sastri was stunned! He told the gathering that it was indeed true that he had mentally offered a few fruits to Vinayaka on the way up the Hill, but had forgotten to separate them the bunch. Everybody was amazed at Bhagavan omniscience [all knowingness]. Further, before Sastri even mentioned the purpose of his visit, Bhagavan said, "Sastri, why don't you start reading the *Ramanyana*?" Sastri was even more amazed than before. It was as though Bhagavan had photographed Sastri's mind and could see every detail in it.

* Some of her other reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pp. 289-91. When 88 years old, she left her body in the Samadhi Hall of Bhagavan on his 130th Jayanti day and got merged in him, as detailed out in July 2010, issue of this journal at pp. 18-9. One can hear her speak in video *Guru Ramana*, available at the Kendram. Her photo is at the first floor of the Kendram.

BOTH THE YOUNG AND THE OLD FELT CONCERNED ABOUT SRI RAMANA AS YOUNG *SANNYASIN* – TWO INCIDENTS

The following interesting account is from Devaraja Mudaliar's *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, entry dated 5th June 1945.

Bhagavan narrated very dramatically, as is usual with him, an incident which occurred when he was about 22, living in Virupaksha cave. It seems he was sitting on a rock near the cave and a boy of about 8 or 10 years came there, looked at Bhagavan and, not being able to bear the sight of such a young and bright person taking to such a hard life of penance, was so moved to compassion that he started to sob and sobbed violently for some time. Bhagavan said, "Who could say what was the reason for his

sobbing and why tears flowed out of his eyes merely at seeing me?” Bhagavan continued in a reminiscent mood later in the day and added that another boy also about 8 or 10 years old, met Bhagavan another day during his Virupaksha cave days and took pity on him. The following conversation took place between them. Bhagavan was sitting on a rock near the cave, all alone, and the boy came and met him there.

Boy: “Why are you here all alone, like this?”

Bhagavan: “I had some trouble at home and so have come away like this.”

Boy: “Then how about your food?”

Bhagavan: “I eat, if anybody gives me to eat.”

Boy: “I have a good master. I shall take you to him. First, you may have to volunteer your services free. If he approves of your work, he will give you three pies a day and gradually he will increase it to six pies, and so on.”

Bhagavan: “Yes, please do so.”

Bhagavan added, “There was no doubt that the boy was very much concerned over what he considered my sad plight and that he was moved by great and genuine pity.”

Bhagavan recalled another incident in which an old Harijan woman, one day about noon time, accosted Bhagavan on one of his rambles on the rough jungle path down the hill and remarked, “A curse on you! Why can’t you stay quiet in a place?”

Bhagavan said, “Yes, this is a very good advice.” And also slapped his own cheeks, as if in punishment for not having known what the woman taught then.

WHY WORRY: There are many things one cannot change. What is the use of worrying about them? We have to accept them as given, and pray to God to give us strength to put up with them. There are many things which we can change. In respect of such things one has to act, rather worry. Worry should have no place in our life. – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

He who rejects change is the architect of decay. – *Harold Wilson*

The mind is like a naughty child within that quite often pushes us to the cookie jar to dip in just this one more time. It conjures all sorts of brilliant reasons and justifications for that moment’s indulgence. – *Deepak Ranade*

As rivers flow into the sea, losing their individuality, so the enlightened, no longer bound by name and form, merge with the infinite, the radiant Cosmic Being. – *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*

My religion consists of a humble admiration of the illimitable superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble mind. – Albert Einstein

One can be harmonious with another only when one is harmonious integrally in oneself. – J. Krishnamurti

**TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI – WHICH NEED TO
BE
ABSORBED INTO THE MIND**

1. One should persistently hold on to the meditation on the Self. There must be an untiring effort to go inward all the time until the Self is realised.
2. *Jnana* is true knowledge, the knowledge that one is the Self. It is given neither from outside nor from another person. It can be realised by each and every person in his own Heart [which is on the right side of the chest].
3. The mind should not be allowed to wander towards worldly objects, and what concerns other people.
4. As thoughts arise they should be destroyed then and there in the very place of their origin, through enquiry, ‘Who am I?’
5. Since the supreme power of God makes all things move, why should we, without fully submitting ourselves to It, worry as to what should be done, and how. The train carries all loads, so after getting in it why should we carry luggage on our head, instead of putting it down in the train, and feel at ease?
6. Self is like the pearl; to find it you must dive deep into the silence, deeper and deeper, until it is reached.
7. Happiness is the very nature of the Self; happiness and the Self are not different. There is no happiness in any object of the world. We imagine through our ignorance that we derive happiness from objects.
8. What is called the world is only thought. When the world disappears, that is, when there is no thought, the mind experiences happiness; and when the world appears, it goes through misery.
9. Examine your heart so that you do not get destroyed by getting trapped in the net of attachments.
10. Know that you are really the infinite being, the Self.

11. Divine Grace is essential for realisation. It is only given to those who strive hard and move ceaselessly on the path towards Self-enquiry.
12. Realisation is nothing new to be acquired. It is already there, but obstructed by the screen of thoughts. All our attempts should be for lifting this screen.
13. The thought that 'I am body', is ignorance. Direct your attention towards removing the ignorance.
14. Success in turning the mind inwards is achieved by practice and dispassion (*Vairagayam*).
15. The Self, which is consciousness, is alone real; nothing else is.
16. The bliss of the Self is always with you and you will find it yourself, if you seek it *earnestly*.
17. Happiness is our real nature. It does not depend upon our possessions or achievements.
18. It is false to speak of realisation. What is there to realise? The real is as it is, ever. We dig a pit; the space in the pit has not been created by us. The space was always there. We have just removed the earth which was filling the space. Once we throw out the mental tendencies, the Self will shine on its own.
19. The wrong knowledge consists in the false identification of the Self with the body, the mind, etc. This false identity must go and there remains the Self.
20. The world is really synonymous with the mind. The mind turned outwards, results in thoughts and objects. Turned inwards, it becomes Self.
21. The world does not exist apart from Brahman. Brahman or the Self is like the screen, and the world is like the pictures on it. The spectator pays attention to the pictures, which cannot exist apart from the screen. Self is the screen where the pictures and activities are going on. We are aware of the latter but not aware of the essential former.
22. Self-Enquiry, that is, Who am I? is possible only through intense introspection of the mind. In order to quieten the mind one has to enquire within oneself. There is no other adequate method for destroying the mind except Self-Enquiry.
23. It is possible to perform activities of life with detachment, without forgetting our real nature. An actor dresses and acts the part he is playing, but in his deep subconscious he is aware that he is not the character but someone else in real life. In the same way, why should the feeling – I am the body – disturb us, once we know for certain that we are not the body but the Self?

24. Surrender to God is killing the ego, which is not an easy thing. Surrender should not be verbal nor conditional. It comes only to those who have gone through the struggles and *sadhanas* preparatory to the extinction of the mind.
25. One-pointedness is the fruit of intensity of practice. One may get it quickly; another after a long time. Everything depends upon the intensity of practice.
26. The degree of freedom from unwanted thoughts and the degree of concentration on a single thought are the measures to gauge our progress.
27. The indicators of an earnest seeker are a deep longing for the removal of sorrow, and attainment of real joy; and an intense aversion for all types of worldly pleasures.
28. We should get rid of the thinking that happiness comes from the objects we go after them. Once we have understood that real happiness comes only from the Self, then we will make all efforts to abide in the Self.
29. Until the *jiva* knows that its own essential nature is matchless bliss, it will, like the musk deer,
be confused.
30. Unless the activity of the senses totally ceases, it will be extremely difficult to achieve union with the divine consciousness, which is the bliss of the Self.

SIVA: We have created many wonderful enigmatic forms of Siva. The auspicious Shambho; the disarmingly naïve Bhola; Dakshinamurthy, the great master and teacher of the Vedas, *shastras* and *tantras*; the easily forgiving Ashuthosh; Bhairava, the one tainted with the blood of the creator; absolute stillness, Achaleshwara; the most dynamic of dancers, Nataraja – as many aspects as there are to life, that many aspects we have offered to him. –
Sadhguru

OCTOBER

PRARABDHA (DESTINY)

When anything happens we are prone to attribute the same to something or someone else. Others are not responsible for what happens to us. They are only instruments for what would happen to us. Whatever happens, happens according to our *prarabdha*. Let it exhaust itself. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

BE YOURSELF: As long as you are in the mind, fears, anxieties and struggles are inevitable; that is the nature of the mind. Only when you go beyond the mind can you really be yourself. – *Sadhguru*

THREE GUNAS: *Guna* in Sanskrit means ‘rope’. Woven together, they bind us to the world. We have all the three *gunas*. It is the proportion that makes the difference. **Tamas** is the state of ignorance, inertia and carelessness. In *tamas*, we are oblivious of our potential, have no sense of purpose, and live a life of reckless abandon. A *tamasika* finds pleasure in sloth, indifference and aberrant behaviour. **Rajas** is restless activity fuelled by desire, selfishness and ego. *Rajasikas* are competitive and ambitious and are driven by one-upmanship. They imagine an antagonistic world of scarcity and peril. **Sattva** is the state of serenity and purity. *Sattvikas* are free from the obsession with self, they see abundance and are grateful for all what they have got. They are motivated by a higher goal, the highest being Self-realisation. The challenge lies in understanding three *gunas* and how they operate. Identify and cultivate the *sattva* in you. Refine *rajas* with a higher purpose, expanding the mind to accommodate the interests of others. Fight *tamas* with strict deadlines to overcome inertia. In the end, aspire to transcend the *gunas* and become one with the Spirit to be undisturbed and enjoy the dance of the *gunas* in the world. – *Jaya Row*

SIVA AS SOMASUNDRA: It means saha-Uma, with Parvati. Somaskandamurthi of the Lord is with consort Uma and son, Skanda. Somadundra thus shows Siva not as an ascetic, but as a *grahasta* with wife and son. – *Tattvaloka*, May, 2013

VISHISHTADAVAITA: According to Sankra there is only one ultimate reality, which is indescribable and attributeless. Sankar’s Brahmn is *nirguna*, the impersonal Absolute. Ramanuja, like Sankara upholds that God alone exists, but unlike Sankara argues that God has attributes. These attributes are not unreal and temporary as Sankara has argued, but are real and permanent. They are *prakaras*, accessories and controlled aspects of the one Brahmn. He propagates a *saguna*, personal God – Ishwara who has the qualities of omnipotence, omniscience and infinite love, manifested in a plurality of forms. According to Ramanuja, the world, with its variety of material forms of existence and individual souls, is not a product of *maya*, but a real part of Brahmn’s nature. It is the body of the Lord; matter is real. He says, souls and matter depend upon God for their very existence. There is organic unity between God on the one hand and the individual soul and matter on the other. However, the two retain their identities. They are interrelated and interconnected like

pearls and a necklace; the necklace representing Brahmn, and pearls representing the individual souls or matter. The pearls strung on a thread have unity; collectively they form an organic whole, still each of them has its own unique qualities. Likewise, spirit, matter, and God may be seen as one organic whole, still each of them has its unique qualities...The universe is not identical with Brahmn but is pervaded by Brahmn. From Brahmn the universe comes, by Brahmn it is sustained and into Brahmn it ultimately enters. The identity-in-difference is maintained even in the state of *moksha*. According to Ramanuja, *moksha* means permanent, undisturbed, personal bliss in God's presence. The liberated soul attains the nature of God; it never becomes identical with Him – *Ashok Vohra*

LOOKING WITHIN: Myths like 'I can't concentrate so I can't meditate' need to be discarded because meditating is way beyond concentrating. It is about witnessing your thoughts come and go. Willingness to change is most essential, especially the urge to relook and rework certain aspects of one's life. During meditation, the brain goes into a state of trance which is a heightened state of creative thinking. Meditation activates the hidden power of the brain. – *Reena Sharma*

RAMANA, WHO ARE YOU REALLY?

By A.R. Natarajan

The one constant note in Ramana's teaching; the basic note is that one should find out one's true identity by enquiring who one is. But even earnest seekers on this path not infrequently wish to know who Ramana really is. What is his identity? Who is it that keeps showering bounteous gifts both materially and spiritually, yet almost always keeps trying to hide his true glory? In one sense it does not seem to matter. For Ramana has made it clear that the Sadguru is not different from God, not different from the Self. Yet, how can one resist the temptation to conjecture the desire to know the one who, though apparently embodied like all of us, is so wholly detached from the body? What accounts for the atmosphere of bliss which envelops everyone in his presence? Is there an explanation for this 'Ramana Lahari'?

What do the blessed ones who were bestowed with the inner vision say? First, we have Satyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer, who spent a few rapturous days in Virupaksha cave enjoying Ramana as Arunachala Siva incarnate. In his *Ramana Stuti Panchakam*, Ramana is seen time and again as auspicious Siva. Then we have Ganapati Muni. He repeatedly had divine visions in which he saw Ramana as

Subrahmanya. In joyous exultation he proclaims: ‘Surely, he is ‘Senani’, the auspicious commander-in-chief of the celestial armies, who come to proclaim the truth. He is same Sanatkumara who taught Narada the truth about the Self; Kartikeya in comely human form. In this manner, he goes on at length in rapturous and mellifluous Sanskrit poetry in the eleventh and eighteenth chapters of *Ramana Gita*, to tell us who Ramana is.

Next, we have the words of Ramana’s divine cuckoo, Muruganar. Ramana had made him his own, by blazing, bright, unwinking eyes, at their first meeting itself. Thereafter, for Muruganar all gods were only Ramana, the God of Gods. It is such a feast to joyously bathe in the Ganges of inspired poetry of Muruganar on Siva Ramana. Thanks to it, we enjoy the beauty of Ramana as every one of the infinite variety of forms and names, and also the formless source of all.

We also have the sweet melody of Sadhu Om’s compositions with their constant reminder of Ramana’s role as the Sadguru guiding the world on the direct path of Self-enquiry. Ramana is the Aruna hill putting on the human garb to proclaim the truth and to save the seekers from their self-imposed delusions.

We have Lakshmana Sarma, Kapali Sastri, and Jagadeeswara Sastri trying to extol Ramana’s glory and ending up confessing the inadequacy of words to describe One who is the source of sound itself.

Only Ramana himself can tell us about himself. Fortunately, we have his direct reply to Amritananda Yogi in 1914. The Yogi had wished to know from Ramana whether he was Hari, Subrahmanya, or Siva. Ramana’s reply is most telling. He is the intelligence in the hearts of all beings, be it Hari, or the world of individuals. It is Ramana’s light which shines on the mankind making life possible. Having said this, he identifies himself as ‘Arunachala Ramana’, confirming that Arunachala and he are not different. Years later, while completing a verse in *Sannidhi Murai*, Ramana repeats the same words, ‘Arunachala Ramana’ underscoring once again his oneness with that blazing fire of knowledge – Arunachala. This verse was composed while describing the magic which Ramana had wrought on Muruganar as the in-dweller in his heart.

All this is a rich tapestry. But should one be content with seeing Ramana through others’ mind and ears? Should we not seek to know him directly, experientially? True, it is his grace that has made us turn to him even though we may not have the faintest idea as to who Ramana is. Some rare penance of the past has begun to bear fruit. But should we not sustain and strengthen this link by pursuing with vigour the

Ramana Way? For in it lies also the way to our opening ourselves to him. The inwardness, the passivity necessary for being drawn more fully by his magic pull, is fostered by Self-enquiry. As we keep consciously merging in the source, keep entering into our Heart we find there would be no need to ask who Ramana is. For we ourselves know the answer. – *The Ramana Way*, June, 2013

WHO AM I? This question of all questions acts like a spring board for the mind to jump high so as to dive deep into the waters of the Heart. It is a device, like a rocket-launcher, to shoot the mind high, beyond the gravitational pull of the ego, viz., ‘I am the body’ idea. The question lands us, as it were, on a vantage point and brings about a paradigm shift in the field of our vision, a shift from our earlier tunnel vision to an infinitely enlarged vision. There is a dramatic change in our entire outlook towards everyone and everything around us. – *Donepudi Venkayya*

BHAGAVAN AS AN EMOTIONAL BEING IN SOME SITUATIONS

The following is from *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana* by Devaraja Mudaliar*

To those who have only a very superficial knowledge of Sri Ramana, it might seem that he was a cold, relentlessly logical unemotional *jnani*. But to those who had any real experience of Bhagavan, it was clear that he was as much a *bhakta* as a *jnani*. On many occasions when touching songs were recited or read out before him, or when he himself was reading out to us poems or passages from the lives or works of famous saints, he would move to tears and find it impossible to restrain them. He would get so choked with emotion that he could not continue but would lay aside the book. Such a thing happened when he was explaining some incidents in Sundara Murthi Nayanar’s life and also when he was reading out Tayumanavar’s works and came to 24th verse, which meant: “Regarding earth and heavens as you, and drawing your portrait on the page of my thoughts, looking into that picture again and again, I cry out: ‘Oh, my Master and Beloved, won’t you come and embrace myself, considering myself as you?’ Unable to perceive anything further, my heart grieves like those who are afflicted, and tears gush forth from my eyes, and I stand like those lost in ecstasy”, Bhagavan’s eyes were so filled with tears and his throat so choked with emotion that he had to put aside the book and break off his discourse.

It was not only any moving song that had effect on him, but anything noble or generous also moved him. One day he was telling us about some incidents in the life of Kambar, the great Tamil poet of *Ramayana* fame. The poet left the court of the Chola king in a huff after some quarrel and as a parting shot told the king something to the following effect: ‘You imagine you are the only king and your country the only country, and that if a poet wants to thrive he must stay here and pay homage to you. You will soon see that I can get on very well without your favour and can get as valet [a male servant who performs personal services] a king at least as high as yourself.’

He afterwards went to the Pandya King, obtained his patronage, and became his best friend, besides being the court poet. After some time, he paid a visit to Chola King in pomp and splendour furnished by Pandya. On this trip, the Pandya went disguised as his valet. Kambar told Pandya of the vow or challenge he had uttered when he left Chola. Pandya in his magnanimity and friendship consented to act as his valet, so that the vow could be fulfilled. Accordingly, in Chola’s court, Pandya rolled up the betel leaves and respectfully offered them to Kambar. Kambar took them but did not put them into his mouth. He felt that though out of friendship and magnanimity Pandya did this menial service to him, it was not proper for him to accept such service from a great personage.

When Bhagavan narrated this, he was so moved by the magnanimity and noble conduct of both Kambar and Pandya, that tears welled up in his eyes and his throat was choked so that he could not proceed with the story for some time.

Bhagavan has also wept with his devotees on hearing their woes. The best known example of this is of Echammal, who first came to Bhagavan as a young widow whose two young children had died. She brought up her brother’s daughter hoping to forget her bereavement in the company of his child. This girl also died soon after giving birth to a son. Echammal was greatly overcome with grief, and bringing the child in her arms, fell at Bhagavan’s feet and cried. *Bhagavan could not help weeping with her.*

*The author of the classic *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, was a lawyer. He used to call himself as Ramana’s child – *Ramana sei*, and behaved like one. His photo is at the first floor of the Kendram. A number of his reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 72-4.

RAMANASHRAM AFTER THE *MAHANIRVANA*

Arthur Osborne*

There are many spiritual centres in India to which one could visit. First of all comes the question of the aim of a spiritual centre. There are places where people go to pray for a son or a job, to win a lawsuit, to pass an examination, to obtain release from sickness or misfortune, and so on. I do not say that such prayers are not answered at Ramanashram, but I do say that the Maharshi did not approve of such motives in those who came to him. Rather, he tried to awaken in them that they were not the suffering body but the eternally blissful Self and thereby to give them serenity even in misfortune. There are also places where people go in the hope of developing powers, obtaining visions of the deity, reading people's thoughts, curing sickness, and so forth. To all such aspirants, the Maharshi was even more discouraging. Not only do such powers not lead to Liberation, but they can actually be an impediment to it.

Ramanashram is not a place visited by large crowds in search of transient gains. Rather, it is for the serious aspirant who has understood that Liberation is the supreme goal and who seeks the grace and support of the Master to guide him on his way. Even if the goal is agreed upon, there are various paths for approaching it. The Maharshi taught the path of Self-enquiry – Who am I? This is seeking the Self underlying the mind. Therefore, he said: “There can be no answer to this question; whatever answer the mind gives must be wrong.” The answer comes as an awakening of pure consciousness, and a current of awareness in the heart.

The Maharshi also taught the path of *bhakti*. The Maharshi said that the two paths are not incompatible; and his devotees have found it so. Both the paths are direct inner disciplines, independent of rituals; so here we have another character of Ramanashram. There is minimum of ritual and organisation here. People go and sit in meditation before the Maharshi's shrine or in the hall where he sat for so many years. They walk on the sacred mountain, or sit in their rooms. There is scarcely any outer discipline.

The Maharshi's path contains a strong element of *karma marga* also. Time and again someone would ask his authorization to renounce the world, and he would not give it. “Why do you think you are a householder? The similar thought that you are a *sannyasin* will haunt you even if you go forth as one. Whether you continue in the house or renounce it, your mind haunts you. Change of environment is of no great

help. The obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or forest.”

How does this affect Ramanashram? In the first place, there are few *sannyasins* found here. Not many of the Maharshi’s devotees live here permanently. Most of them pursue their professional life, practising *sadhana* invisibly, without form or ritual, and only come to the Ashram from time to time, to recharge the batteries, so to speak. Thinking of them, a doctor, an engineer, a professor, a bank manager, a business man, and many others come to mind.

While this article was being written, it so happened that the Ashram received a letter from an American woman who never saw the Maharshi, and indeed has never been to India, containing the following message: “Great blessings and benediction was unexpectedly mine. At 7 a.m., just before waking, a vivid vision of Maharshi, potent and powerful, was vouchsafed briefly to me, in colour. Yes, I know visions are not our aim and goal. However, the depth of surrender, ecstasy, awe, wave after wave, deeper and deeper – wave after wave of Blissful joy – was overwhelming, wonderful and encouraging: almost all evidence of mind was gone. Of course, thankful, humble and grateful, my dedication deepens greatly after this. The import and impact of it is with me still.” Is it any wonder that people turn to the Maharshi from all parts of the world?

The Maharshi often reminded those who came to him that they were not the body. Now, there are those who presume that he was the body and, no longer seeing his body at Tiruvannamalai, take it that he is not there. A visitor once asked whether the contact with the Guru would continue after the dissolution of his physical body and the Maharshi replied, “The Guru is not the physical form, so contact will remain even after his physical form vanishes.” He himself told us that death makes no difference to the *jnani*. The invisible guidance also has an effect on the Ashram. It means that many of those who come to Ashram are new people, who never saw the Maharshi in his lifetime, but have been drawn to him in various ways.

The conclusion, then, is that if you are a ritualist or strict formalist, if you crave material boons, if you seek visions and powers, there are other places better suited to you than Ramanashram. But if you have understood the ultimate goal of liberation and seek guidance and grace on the path, you will find it at Ramanashram. – Excerpted from *Surpassing Love and Grace*, a publication of the Ashram.

*Osborne (1907-70), an Oxford-educated Britisher, was founder editor of *Mountain Path*. Before coming to the Maharshi he was professor of English at a university in

Bangkok. A reputed devotee, he is author of more than six books on Bhagavan. His photo is at the first floor of the Kendram. For some of his reminiscences, see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 94-101.

BHAGAVAN'S *VIBHUTI* SAVES A PERSON

In 1908, when Bhagavan was staying in Pachaiammam Temple, the municipal committee gave to the highest bidder the monopoly to collect tamarinds from the trees near about the temple. The person who won the bid, a Muslim, was guarding the trees from monkeys, and was driving them away by pelting stones from his sling. Once, a stone hit a monkey on its head so hard that it died on the spot. Immediately, a large number of monkeys came on the spot and began to wail and lament the death of their dear one. Then, by way of complaint, they took the dead monkey to Bhagavan, whom they considered their friend and well-wisher. As soon as they came near Bhagavan, they burst into bitter cries and tears. Bhagavan's heart, melted with pity, could not bear their soulful wailing; tears tricked down his cheeks. Gradually, his sympathy soothed the monkeys. Consoling them Bhagavan said, "For everyone who is born, death is inevitable. He at whose hands this monkey has died will certainly meet with death one day. So, you need not grieve." Thus pacified, the monkeys went away carrying the dead with them.

Within two or three days, the Muslim got bedridden with a serious malady. The story of the consolation given by Bhagavan to the aggrieved monkeys reached his home. His family members were convinced that his sudden illness was only due to the curse of the sage. They went to Bhagavan and pleaded for his pardon and beseeched him to be gracious enough to save him from death. They prayed Bhagavan for some *vibhuti* to apply to his body. Bhagavan told them, "I never curse or bless anyone. I never give *vibhuti* for cure to anyone." But the Muslims were so determined that they declared their resolve not to move without getting the *vibhuti*. So, just to free himself from them, Bhagavan gave them a pinch of *vibhuti* from the burning fire. On receiving it, their faces beamed with joy. They returned home after expressing their deep gratitude to the sage. And it came pass that after the *vibhuti* was applied, the sick person began to recover and he rose from the bed in a few days.
– *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. I

SIVA AS KAPALI: Here Siva is the supreme ascetic who smears ashes on his body as *vibhuti* (the real meaning of this word is 'splendour'). He wears a garland of

skulls, and his garments are skin of an elephant and tiger. His matted locks of hair hold the crescent moon, and river Ganga. He lives in cremation grounds and has Yama Dharmaraja (Lord of Death and Justice) under his control. Kapali's drum held in his right upper hand vibrates its rhythms throughout the cosmos. His left hand holds deer (*kurangam*), an emblem of our mind that is restless, swift and unsteady like a deer. Kapali's Eye of Fire that represents Wisdom (*jnana*) is above the eyes in the centre of the forehead. This third eye of Siva is situated at the pineal gland which controls all other glands. – *Lalita Ramakrishna*

Become less of a complainer and more of a thanks giver. Then your problems will get managed. – *Vincent Peale*

Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever. – *Mahatma Gandhi*

To succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. 'I will drink the ocean', 'at my will, mountains will crumble'. Have that sort of energy, that sort of will; and you will reach the goal. – *Swami Vivekananda*

Learn to work harder on yourself than you do on your job! – *Jim Rohn*

Faith and prayer are vitamins for the soul; we cannot live in health without them. – *M. Jackson*

UNDERSTANDING LIFE

By Annie Besant

Every failure brings success a little nearer, and the last failure is the threshold of success. The fall of today is the rising of tomorrow.

There is no enmity once reincarnation is thoroughly understood. Our own actions come up in a new incarnation. It is only bringing into equilibrium of an ancient wrong. People say: 'If only my circumstances were different I could lead a much more useful life.' Error! The circumstances around you are the very best. The peace which this knowledge brings to life is impossible to describe. All fretting vanishes; all worrying ceases. A complete content comes down upon the soul. A real understanding of reincarnation gives infinite tolerance; infinite patience.

Karma is often misunderstood. It is not something lying in wait for us; it is not a sword hanging over us that may drop on us at any moment. A real understanding of karma is a stimulus to exertion. Karma is always in the making. Whatever the condition, make the best of it for the moment, and if the scale against you is too heavy, never mind, you have done your best. Exertion is always wise. No matter if it seems hopeless. Every effort has its full result. If you cannot change your fate, change yourself. And you will go gliding away successfully where failure seemed inevitable. ‘Skill in action is yoga’, says the Gita. And that is one way in which the wise man rules his stars instead of being ruled by them. The things that are really inevitable, and which you cannot change – endure. They are very few.

The life must be the life of service. Service is the great illuminator.

When linked to Self, life becomes splendid, no matter what the outer circumstances may be. – Excerpts from *The Theosophic Life*

NOVEMBER

HUMILITY

A humble attitude of mind will give you redemption, transporting you to the world of the immortals. No one should be our inferior. One who has learned to be the inferior will become superior to all. Only a person who is nobody can abide in the Self. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

BHAGAVAN WAS AVERSE TO HIS TREATMENT

Devaraja Mudaliar’s* *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi* contains the following:

During his illness many devotees used to entreat Bhagavan either orally or by letter to cure himself and live for some more years for the benefit of his numerous devotees. Once, Muruganar wrote a poem to the same effect. When I read it, I was also moved to make an appeal to Bhagavan (original in Tamil):

“Our court poet has already appealed to you that you should not depart before you have perfected the protection of your subjects. I have to tell you another thing, in my humble way. What happens to me and several others like me, who like helpless children, have thrown themselves entirely at your feet and on whom you have showered your kindness, tenderness and solitude, irrespective of their merits and even ignoring their faults? Should you take leave of them thus? Surely you cannot find it in your heart to leave us stranded like this. So we live in the hope that you will preserve this body still for our benefit.”

Muruganar afterwards kept up an appeal to Bhagavan every day for eleven days, and all the eleven stanzas are in the Ashramam. But Bhagavan’s attitude was always the same, that we were not to attach so much importance to the body. Sometimes during his last illness Bhagavan would say: ‘They say I am going away, but where to?’

Jagadeeswara Sastri** who got literally pulled out of the jaws of death by Bhagavan’s grace, says: Hearing of Bhagavan’s condition I went to him a few days before his passing away and entreated him, ‘You gave me new lease of life, pulling me out of the very jaws of death. If only you will it, you can live sometime more for the benefit of all of us.’ Bhagavan replied, ‘This body is our burden. Who would be anxious to keep it on?’

All *jnanis*, like our Bhagavan regard the body only as a burden to be discarded. When he discussed this question with us, he said: ‘Suppose you go to a firewood depot, buy a bundle of firewood and engage a coolie to carry it to your house. As you walk along with him, he would be anxiously looking forward to his destination so that he can throw off his burden and be happy and relieved. In the same way, the *jnani* is anxious to throw off his body.’ He quoted a Tamil stanza which contains the above statement. And after explaining it he added: ‘The above exposition is all right as far as it goes. But strictly speaking even this is not quite accurate. The true *jnani* is not even anxious to shed his body. He is indifferent alike to the existence or non-existence of the body, being almost unaware of it. In illustration of this he quoted a Sanskrit stanza which meant: ‘As one intoxicated with drink is not aware his cloth is on his body or not, the self-realised man is not conscious of his body.’

Bhagavan was always averse to take medicine. But we in our ignorance used to pester him to take this medicine or that for various troubles of his. He would say to us, ‘This body is our greatest disease. Who would take medicine to see that the disease is

maintained?’ Nevertheless, in response to our insistent demand or requests, he would take the various drugs forced on him for some little time and then give them up.

*The author of the classic *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, was a lawyer. He used to call himself as Ramana’s child – Ramana sei, and behaved like one. His photo is at the first floor of the Kendram. A number of his reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 72-4.

** For his captivating reminiscences, see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 278-80.

THE SELF: Self-knowledge is not gained by explanations and descriptions, nor by the instructions of others – but by direct experience. It is the Self alone that exists everywhere at all times, but because of its extreme subtlety, is it not experienced. All activities take place in the light of the sun, but if the activities cease, the sun does not suffer loss: even so, it is on account of the Self that the body functions. If the body perishes, the Self does not suffer loss. The Self is not born, nor does it die; it is not bound, nor is it liberated. Those who have enquired into the nature of the mind and overcome all cravings will be able to know the Self. – *Swami Venkatesananda*

KARTAVYA: It denotes the idea that there are certain activities which have to be performed. *Kartavya* arises and co-exists with *kartrutva*, the feeling that one is the performer of the body’s actions. Bhagavan taught that both *kartrutva* and *kartavya* are impediments which are to be eliminated. In verse 1246 of *Guru Vachaka Kovai* Murugunar says: ‘I have no *kartavaya* – the feeling that there are duties that must be done. I have no *bhogtavya* – the feeling that I have to experience enjoyments.’ This is the state that Bhagavan encouraged all his devotees to aim for. He did not encourage them to embark on the crusade to change the world; instead he encouraged them to arrive at the state where they would understand that there was nothing that needed to be done or could be done. – *www. Davidgodman.com*

CHIDAMBARAM TEMPLE: It is located about 240 km. from Chennai. The temple complex is over 50 acres. In the word Chidambaram, *chit* means ‘consciousness’ and *ambaram* means ‘sky’. *Chidakasam* is the state of supreme bliss or *ananda* and Lord Nataraja is the symbolic representation of the supreme bliss or *ananda natanam*. The temple has a bejeweled icon of Nataraja in a beautiful dancing form. The temple houses the Lord in three forms: 1. As Lord Nataraja. 2. As a crystal *linga*, worshipped

as *Chandramoulisvara*. 3. As formless space, an empty space within the sanctum sanctorum, worshipped as *Chidambara Rahasyam*. – *Tattvaloka*, May, 2013

THE *JNANI* AND THE *SIDDHA*

Bhagavan narrated the following story from *Prabhulingalila*, a Tamil work by Sivaprakasa Swamigal.

Prabhulinga, the founder of the Lingayet sect was touring the land for the uplift of the spiritually minded. He met the famous yogi Gorakhnath. The yogi welcomed him respectfully. However he was proudly conscious of his own extraordinary powers over the elements. He expressed his pleasure at meeting him, and asked who he was. Prabhulinga replied that one who has destroyed his ego, root and branch, and who could know who he was, and wondered what he could say to a person who clung to his perishable body. Gorakhnath, who identified his body as himself, replied,

“That person who has gained the immortality of his body, by the favour of Siva and consumption of *gulikas* (medicinal herbs), will never die.”

Prabhulinga remarked that knowledge consists in realising one’s Self and not in immortalising the body and went on to explain at length that the body cannot be the real Self. But Gorakhnath could not be persuaded and would not budge an inch from his ground. He proudly challenged Prabhulinga to try cutting his body, giving him a long, bright and sharp sword. When the sword struck the body of Gorakhnath, it caused him no injury but was itself blunted. Prabhulinga feigned [pretended] surprise, and asked Gorakhnath to try to cut his body. At first, Gorakhnath hesitated to do so saying that Prabhulinga would die. But when Prabhulinga insisted, he took up the sword to cut his body. To the great surprise of Gorakhnath, the sword easily passed through the body of Prabhulinga without affecting it in any way. It was as if the sword was passing through empty space. Only then was Gorakhnath, the *Siddha*, ready to acknowledge the superiority of Prabhulinga, the *Jnani*, and prayed him to teach the truth. Prabhulinga then expounded *Brahma vidya* to him as follows: “Do not think your body to be your Self. Seek the In-dweller (the cave-dweller) and you will once for all rid yourself of the disease of birth and death. The cave is your heart only, the In-dweller thereof is called God and I am That.” – *Spiritual Stories as told by Ramana Maharshi*, Sri Ramanasramam

JNANA THROUGH SILENCE: When the mind is engaged in worldly thoughts one cannot think of anything beyond. Only when one silences his mind, he will be able to go beyond. Then revelations come that are already inside us. When we still our mind,

we are able to access our higher energies and revelations come to us. The knowledge that we get through books is not ours. We need to have our own experience of that knowledge, which is called *jnana*. – *Yogi Ashwani*

DETACHMENT FORM SUCCESS: There is nothing wrong in being successful but when success becomes an obsession danger creeps in. Being detached in no way means you should not pursue success. The real meaning of detachment is to realise that nothing is permanent. We need to work at loosening our hold on perceived achievements and possessions gradually, and try to become free of needless obsession. Detachment cannot be achieved in a day; it is lifelong, slow, steady, and conscious endeavour. – *Oswald Pereira*

PARAMESHWARA IYER REMEMBERS SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

I knew Sri Ramana when he was at the Scott Middle School. I remember very little of what he was then. My first contact with him was in 1922, when I came to Tiruvannamalai as agent of a Bombay-based company, and someone told me ‘A great soul is here.’ When I went to the Ashram to see Sri Ramana, I saw someone crying before him and praying for *upadesam*. (I had also gone to him with the same purpose.) The Maharshi replied in Tamil, which meant: ‘Who gets what? The one who gives *upadesa* or the one who gets *upadesa*? If one searches for the forgotten place everything could be got.’ I took it as an answer to my mental query; in fact it was an *upadesam* – though I had not got the full significance of the words at that time. The calmness in the Maharshi was what struck me and impressed me foremost, and I came out of the Ashram with the strong belief that such a soul’s help would be available to me in all my affairs.

Fifteen days later, I had to face a law suit against me for a sum of Rs. 25,000, arising from my earlier business venture. I was not worried as I thought I had the grace of this great soul. I had in my heart the calm, collected eyes of the Maharshi. The judge gave a decree of only Rs. 500. This strengthened my belief in the Maharshi’s greatness and I regarded him as nothing short of God, with *Anugraha Sakti*. Thereafter, I frequently visited him, but never for worldly ends. I got my spiritual doubts cleared and noted them in my diary. I had only to sit before him and at once my mind got rid of all thoughts and I could concentrate anyway I liked. Generally, I chose to concentrate on the Maharshi, and would get turned inwards at once.

Once I had a significant experience when I was concentrating on the Maharshi. Very soon the sense of my personality got dissolved. When I returned there was blinding darkness and I could see nothing. After a little concentration on that darkness it vanished and in its place there was effulgence. I felt giddy and reeling. I thought I could not stand or sit there any longer in that condition and so I came out. Later I went to the Maharshi when he was alone and told him about the experience of darkness followed very brilliant light, and wanted to know as to what it meant. He replied that it was a genuine and useful experience and quoted Tamil words, which meant: ‘In the darkness of *jadam* one has to seek for Iswara and find him as a light or *chaitanya*. – Excerpted from *Arunachala’s Ramana*, Vol. II, pp. 260-1.

SADHANA ESSENTIAL TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF LIFE

By J.P. Vaswani*

A simple input-output ratio operates in *sadhana*; you get as much out of it as you put in. Invest sincerity, dedication, commitment, faith and perseverance, and you will achieve your goal. The simplest *sadhana* is to remember Him, to live and move in His presence, and feel His energy flowing through you.

If you wish to dispel the darkness around you, you must kindle the light – the Light is within you. How long can we look to others for lighting our way? We have to take the responsibility. No pains, no gain is especially true in this case! Some things in life cannot be outsourced; the chief among these is our own salvation. We have to work for it – there are no short-cuts, no quick-fixes, and definitely no paid-service that can provide this facility.

We have accumulated the *vasanas* of evil thoughts, words and deeds. We are imprisoned by the karmic bonds of the previous births, and carry the yoke of negative karmas. To create your own destiny, you must be free of the burden of your past; erase the past through *sadhana*. You must create a new space within. You must learn to meditate, go into silence; you must chant His name within your heart. This will help you to tap your latent power, and you will rise above the restrictions of your external environment.

The first step on the spiritual path is awakening. The second is *sadhana* or self-discipline. When the awakening comes, the seeker desires to discipline himself both on the mental and physical planes. But excessive austerity and penance would lead to

emaciation and exhaustion and not to enlightenment, which is being sought by you. *Sadhana* is disciplining of senses and not denial of senses.

The life of Spirit is a battle with appetites and desires. It is a life of tremendous difficulties, pain and struggle. In the life of the Spirit, we struggle and fall; but, if we are sincere and devoted, we rise, again and again, until, at last, we touch the Divine. This is what *sadhana* is all about.

Silence: Silence helps us commune with the inner Self. When we sit in silence, we connect ourselves with the Source. Chanting your favourite *stotra* in silence or writing the word ‘Om’ silently are two ways to turn the mind inwards. Silence is the language of Self-realisation. Practise silence every day. Begin with 15 minutes, gradually increasing the period to at least one hour.

Prayer: God recognises devotion which comes from the heart. Prayer is turning to God. Prayer calls for a pure heart; a pure heart filled with love becomes a stream of tears. Prayer is reposing all your faith in God. One main reason we do not pray is because God has not become real to us. God does not dwell in the heavens above. The kingdom of God is within you.

When the mind becomes truly focused, we enter a new dimension of consciousness. Seeing Self by the self; we are satisfied in the Self alone. When our mind touches the Supreme, it kindles the inner flame and we become illumined souls. – Excerpted from the ‘*Goal of Life and How to Attain it*’, gph@sadhuvaswani.org

* His reminiscences of Bhagavan are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 221-23.

KRISHNA BHIKSHU* REMEMBERS BHAGAVAN’S LEELAS – THREE EPISODES

1. G. Satyanarayana Rao developed cancer along the inner wall of his alimentary canal, which made it difficult for him to even swallow water. No medicine could be administered either. His relatives mentioned this to Bhagavan who went to look him up. He patient sat up and seized Bhagavan’s hand and placed it on his heart. Bhagavan made him lie down and kept looking at him for about four minutes, and left. That night the patient vomited lumps of flesh and blood as if someone performed surgery inside. The next day he was able to take medicines as well as food.

2, A Hindi speaking person who had settled in Fiji visited Bhagavan and complained to him, “Bhagavan, your biography is available in several languages but not in Hindi.”

Bhagavan said, “The author of the Hindi biography is now coming with it.” At that time there was no inkling of the author, Venkateswara Sarma, coming there. But he did arrive with his translation within minutes of Bhagavan’s saying so.

3. Sankarananda, who was performing *tapas* at Haridwar told Amritanatha, a great devotee of Bhagavan, who happen to be in Haridwar, that after Vidyanana there were no more *siddhas* and *jnanis* in the country. The latter disagreed and mentioned the instance of Bhagavan as a complete *siddha* and *jnani*. But the former did not accept it. Thereupon, Amritanatha said, “You are a devotee of Kartikeya, and we think that Bhagavan is an *avatar* of Kartikeya. Here is a picture of Bhagavan. You may sit in front of it and perform Kartikeya *japa* for some time. If you do not experience Bhagavan’s grace by this, I would agree with you.

Taking up the challenge, Sankarananda performed Kartikeya *japa* for half an hour each day. Four days passed. On the fifth day, at dusk when Sankarananda was at his *japa*, a great light entered Bhagavan’s picture and said to him, “You are not performing the *japa* in a proper way. When Sankarananda asked about the proper way, Ramana’s picture told him, “You have to perform *pooja* and *dhyana* of the image in Kadhirkamam of Ceylon.” Sankarananda asked, “I have never been to Kadhirkamam, what does that image look like?” “Here it is,” said the picture and placed the image in front of Sankarananda, who then began watching the image with one eye and Ramana’s picture with the other. Suddenly, a lizard fell on his lap and he was distracted. When he turned to look at the image and Ramana, neither of them was there.

Sankaranada immediately set out for Arunachala, and after a long and eventful journey met Bhagavan at Skandasram. Immediately on seeing him, Bhagavan asked in Malayalam, “Aren’t you coming from Haridwar?” Sankarananda was stunned. The person he saw at Haridwar was Ramana. But everyone said – ‘Ramana never left this place.’ Sankarananda authored the *Ramanashtakam*, stayed at Parrot Cave for two months and served Bhagavan. As the climate of Arunachala did not suit him, he went back to Uttarkasi. – *Sri Ramana Leela*

*Oruganti Krishna Bhikshu’s *Sri Ramana Leela* in Telugu was first published in 1936. This is the only biography which was perused by Bhagavan himself. Its English translation by a devotee of our Kendram – P. Surya Sundaram, was published in 2004 by Sri Ramanasramam. Krishna Bhikshu’s photo is on the first floor of the Kendram.

LET EVERYTHING GO: When you sit down for meditation, you should be holding on to nothing. You have to be willing to let go of everything. The whole point is to have no attachment whatsoever to anything in the world. Spiritual freedom depends on how profound is your ability to let go of everything – and not just once, but over and over again. Total exclusion is essential for meditation. – *Andrew Cohen*

HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

Reminiscences of M.I. Sastri* – a founder devotee of our Kendram

After I joined Andhra University in June 1950, for my B.A. (Hons.) programme, one day I happen to hear a conversation between Dr. Oruganti Ramachandriah (Prof. of history) and his friend. It was about Bhagavan, who had passed on a couple of months before, and his unique stature in the world of spirituality. It struck a chord inside me.

Since childhood I had been interested in spiritual matters. I had read a book on the life of Swami Vivekananda. I was always drawn to holy people who did not proclaim their holiness or show it off. To me, a saint is humble, self-effacing, inviting, compassionate, and forgiving. From the brief remarks that I had overheard from Prof. Ramachandriah, I knew right there and then that Bhagavan was the saint I was looking for in my heart of hearts. And he had just passed on, much to my disappointment. I knew that such living gods were hard to come by. These thoughts and musings subsided within for quite a while, as I went through the university system, graduated, and started to teach.

Every summer vacation I would go to my village, where a small coterie of friends regularly got together and discussed Ramana philosophy. Listening to those discussions, the distance between me and Bhagavan gradually narrowed. During one such summer visit, one Gunturi Lakshmikantam happened to be visiting a relative of his in the village. He had just published his comprehensive Telugu biography of Ganapati Muni. The impoverished author was selling the 500-odd-page bound volumes for ten rupees each only, and there weren't too many buyers in the village. I reluctantly bought a copy just to help out the writer-turned-street-vendor. That was one of the few great buys I ever made, considering all the rich detail the book provided me about Bhagavan and his Ashram. My desire to learn about Bhagavan was rekindled.

In early 1970s, I had moved from USA to teach at the Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, where I met Dr. K. Subramanian. After we met only a few minutes, we realised that we had a lot in common, not the least of which was our interest in Bhagavan. When I found about his continuing contact with the Ashram and his writings for the *Mountain Path*, I suddenly felt an urge to visit the Ashram. He graciously gave me a letter of introduction to Viswanatha Swami, armed with which I made my maiden trip to Bhagavan's home. It was a pleasant trip and I was totally fascinated by the old-world tranquility that was everywhere. Subsequently, I took my wife and children, and I myself have been visiting it during every trip to India. In fact, I can say that a visit to the Ashram has always been a major incentive for me to visit India.

I returned to the Institute for a second term for three years, mostly at Dr. Subramanian's behest, and during this visit he and I thought about and established the Hyderabad Ramana Kendram, whose first meeting was attended by about ten persons in a room at the Hindi Arts College.

Writing now in 2013, I find Bhagavan's constant presence in daily life. In many ways the help came my way when I needed it, whether it was when my car stalled, when I fell and was unable to get up, when I was in dire straits, or simply when I needed direction in my life. Somehow, I never felt I was left alone or abandoned. Far from it: I could always count on his help whether my need was trivial or critical.

Some persons consider such unexpected help coming their way a miracle. But we are taught that there is no such thing as a miracle, only an occurrence that we cannot rationally explain. I have been shown direction in my life on a regular basis. Undoubtedly owing to Bhagavan's grace, I am now able to see life from a different perspective than before. My outlook on life, things, and people has changed. I tend to question the ultimate significance of what I see around me. Sure enough, there is plenty of glamour all around me, but I wonder how any of that matters. Beginnings and endings in mundane existence and the fervid pursuits in between seem so irrelevant in an ultimate sense. The mind is the culprit and needs to be eliminated from any valid understanding of the ultimate human goal. Hence the segregation of the mind, defined as bunch of thoughts, from the inner Self, which is their source.

Am I leading a double life, enjoying the show as it passes before my eyes, yet dwelling constantly only on the 'I' that Bhagavan taught us about? Who said you have to renounce the world to become a *sannyasin*? You surely can be in the world while remaining without, in your own Self.

I believe I can see the light at the end of the tunnel, because of Bhagavan's distinct presence by my side. I came to him decades ago, and he has been with me ever since.
– Excerpted from *Mountain Path*, July, 2013

*Now known as I.S. Madugula, lives in Austin, Texas, USA. He has taught in India and USA. email: sastri@madugula.com

THREE KINDS OF MINDS – A POEM: Minds are of kinds three/One which is full of thoughts/One which is thoughtful/One which is thought-free/Use the thoughtful mind/To rid the mind of thought/And thereby discover the truth/With a mind that is thought-free. – *Samarendra Reddy*

Meditation is the journey from movement to stillness, from sound to silence. – *Sri Sri Ravi Shankar*

When you take the perennial meditative journey to the depths of your own self, the question, who am I? is answered before it is asked. – *Andrew Cohen*

Empty yourself of everything. Let the mind rest at peace. Returning to the source is stillness. – *Lao Tzu*

Thou has power only to act, and not over the result thereof. Therefore act without prospect of the result and without succumbing to inaction. – *Gita*

DECEMBER

SURRENDER

Surrender appears easy because people imagine that, once they say with their lips 'I surrender' and put their burden on their Lord, they can be free and do what they like. But the fact is that you can have no likes or dislikes after you surrender... your will should become completely non-existent, the Lord's will taking its place. Such death of ego is nothing different from *jnana*. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

GLORY OF SATSANGA

Devaraja Mudaliar's* *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi* contains the following:

Quite early in my closer acquaintance with Bhagavan, say about 1935, I was sitting in the hall when one Venkatarama Iyer volunteered the following advice to me, “For people like us, the best thing is only this.” So saying he showed me five stanzas in *Supplement to Forty Verses*, which deal with the tremendous influence of *sat sanga*. I quite agreed with him, and even took it as Bhagavan’s guidance for me through that casual acquaintance. Since then, both from Bhagavan himself and from books and periodicals, some of them pointed out to me by Bhagavan, I have come to know a lot of the priceless and inestimable advantage of *sat sanga*. Bhagavan once drew my attention to the statement in *Yoga Vasista* that the place of *moksha* has four gatekeepers, that one of these is *sat sanga* and that if we make friends with any of the gatekeepers, we can easily secure entry. Bhagavan quoted to me on different occasions the following: ‘The imperfect will become perfect, inauspicious becomes auspicious with holy men. For those who have bathed in the Ganges of such company, *homam*, *yajnam*, penance, bathing in sacred rivers is all unnecessary.’

Various stories from the Puranas, illustrating the wonderful effects of *sat sanga* had come to my notice either through Bhagavan or through books and journals. And yet here I was, after having enjoyed *sat sanga* with Bhagavan for some years, with no visible improvement in my spiritual stature. So I once asked Bhagavan, “Whether all these things that are said about *sat sanga* literally true, or are they exaggerations which are quite common with our Tamil poets?” At that moment, I referred to one or two stanzas in *Supplement to Forty Verses*. Bhagavan smiled and said, “Don’t ask me. I just translated them as I found them.” And he gave me the story as to how he came to translate these five stanzas from the original Sanskrit.

It seems that, long ago, when Bhagavan was at Skandasramam, the late Echammal’s brother’s daughter Chellamma, who was quite young at that time, bought some sweets and discovered a song in praise of *sat sanga* on the paper that the shopkeeper had wrapped them in. She was so interested in the song that she got it by heart and sang it before Bhagavan, and told him as to how she came by it. When Bhagavan found the small girl so interested in the matter and was so earnest about it, he got moved to translate the five Sanskrit *slokas* (which he had already come across) into Tamil for her benefit, and these were afterwards incorporated into *Supplement to Forty Verses*.

The great Hindi poet Tulsidas in his celebrated *Ramacharitamanasa* glorifies *sat sanga* as follows:

The assemblage of holy men is moving Prayaga itself, a dip into which with extreme devotion would provide four rewards of human existence, namely, *dharma* (religious merit), *artha* (material riches), *kama* (sensuous enjoyment) and *moksa* (release from the bondage of the world). The result of immersion in the holy water of *sat sanga* is perceived instantly – crows turn into cuckoos, and herons into swans. Let no one will surprised to hear this because the great beneficial effects of *sat sanga* are no secret. Whoever has ever attained wisdom, salvation or welfare anywhere, knows it to be the result of association with holy men. Contact with noble souls is the root of joy and blessings. It constitutes the very fruit and fulfilment of all endeavours. Through *sat sanga* even the wicked get reformed, just as base metal is transmuted by the touch of the *paras mani* (philosopher's stone).

*The author of the classic *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, was a lawyer. He used to call himself as Ramana's child – *Ramana sei*, and behaved like one. His photo is at the first floor of the Kendram. A number of his reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 72-4.

EXPERIENCE JOY: There are two kinds of joy, outer joy and inner joy. We get real (inner) joy from silence and profound meditation. We may try to get joy by talking or mixing with others. But the inner joy is something different. It is illuminating and fulfilling. To have true joy we must be totally detached. If we do not expect anything from anyone we will have inner joy. – *Sri Chinmoy*

SIVA'S LEELAS OF STARK CONTRASTS

By Lalita Ramakrishna

Siva as Kalyana Sundara – the beauteous bridegroom of Meenakshi. Siva is always perceived as an ascetic, except when he was married to Parvati as Meenakshi, with all pomp and show of a handsome bridegroom (Lord Sundareswara) in gold-textured wedding attire. Their *Kalyanam* is celebrated annually at Madurai. Meenakshi and Sundara Pandya (Lord Siva) rule over the city of Madurai.

Siva as a Wild Hunter – Arjuna did intense meditation on Siva. To test Arjuna, Siva sent a huge pig to attack him, who pierced it with his arrow. The pig died. When Arjuna went to retrieve his arrow, Siva as *kirata* came to that place and claimed that the arrow belonged to him. A bitter fight ensued between the two. All the *astras* of Arjuna failed. Eventually, the *kirata* and Arjuna fought with their

fists. While wrestling, Siva jumped on him and Arjuna clinched his feet. Instantly, Siva revealed himself, hugged Arjuna and gave him the *Pasupata astra*.

Siva as a *Chandala*: Once, when Adi Sankara was returning from his bath at Kasi, a *chandala* blocked his way. When asked to clear the way, he asked Sankara, ‘When you say go to a distance, do you mean the body or the soul?’ If you say body, what is the basic difference between one physical body and the other. If you refer to *Atma*, is it not the same within everyone? How do you get the perception that you are a Brahmin and I am a *chandala*? Sankara was stunned by this profound retort and when he prostrated to *chandala*, he saw Lord Visvanatha before him. Sankara has written five verses of *Manisha Panchakam* with the refrain – He who perceives the eternal truth, whether he is a *chandala* or a Brahmin, is my guru (*Chandalostu dvijostu, sa tu guru iti esha manisha mama.*) – *Tattvaloka*, July, 2012

DISCOVER YOURSELF: When we are not interested in knowing our own selves, we waste time on many things. Engage your mind in finding answers to questions like – Who am I? Where did I come from? Why I am here for such a short period? When such questions are asked sincerely and diligently, answers will come and you will find clarity about your existence. – *Swami Brahmdev*

BUDDHA’S *DHAMMA PADA*: Adi Sankara called Buddha *Yoginam Chakravarti* (Emperor among yogis). *Dhamma pada* is a jewel in Buddhist philosophy and ethics. It provides a code of conduct. Some examples: (i) The men of true knowledge are not affected by praise or blame just as the mountain is not moved by the winds. (ii) Even angels respect the person who has mastered pride and passions, as the skilled rider disciplines the horse and holds the reins in his hand. (iii) The man who conquers himself is a more valiant hero than the warrior who defeats hundred people hundred times in battle. (iv) Very few get salvation like the bird escaping from the hunter’s net. (v) Motivate yourself, evaluate yourself. Self-assessment leads to self-protection and eventual happiness. – *I.V. Chalapati Rao*

A SWAMI FROM UTTARKASI EXPERIENCES THE ASHRAM

Swami Chaitanyananda, one of the foremost disciples of Swami Sivananda, who visited Sri Ramanashram in 1957, records as follows:

The Ashram was celebrating the annual *Aaraadhana* of the Maharshi. A thatched shed was put for visitors in which Swami Brahmananda and myself were accommodated. I had a strange experience there. During the waking hours, I was mostly sitting in my bed, and the enquiry ‘Who Am I?’ tightly gripped me. No other thought would intrude my mind. People talked of ‘Old Meditation Hall’, ‘New Meditation Room’, ‘Giri Pradikshina’, ‘Samadhi Mandir’ and so on; but I was not interested in any of these, nor in reading literature concerning Ramana. Next to my bed was the bed of a Tamalian devotee, who kept watching me. On the third day, he lost his patience and said in a sarcastic tone, “What are you trying to do, do you wish to become another Ramana Maharshi?” I was not in a mood to reply to him and continued with the enquiry. We stayed in the Ashram for five days; during that entire period, the Self enquiry held complete hold over me.

On our return visit from Kanya Kumari, we went round and saw the Halls, the Mother’s Temple and the Samadhi Mandir, and ate in the dining hall with devotees, Indian and foreign. I could feel the spiritual vibration and power of the Maharshi everywhere. When I fixed my gaze on the tranquil eyes of the Maharshi in his reclining pose, I almost forgot that I was in front of the photo. My eyes stopped blinking, and the inarticulate but vivid message from His eyes was, “The same Power is here is there as well.” It was an abiding and unforgettable experience. – Excerpts from *A Saga of Spiritual Unfoldment*, published by Sivananda Ashram, Uttarkasi – 249 193.

HAPPINESS: Bhagavan says, ‘To be happy is natural, all else is unnatural’. Happiness resides in us all the time; we need not look for it outside. According to dictionary, ‘happiness’ is ‘*ananda*’ and ‘*santoshah*’. *Ananda* implies bliss that is Brahman, and *santoshah* means contentment, which leads to great happiness. Bhagavan says that if a man thinks that his happiness is due to external causes and possessions, it must increase with increase of possessions and diminish in proportion to their diminution. In deep sleep, the man is devoid of possessions, including his own body. But instead of being unhappy, he is very happy. Thus, happiness is inherent in us and is not due to external causes. One must realise his Self in order to open the store of his unalloyed happiness. Happiness from worldly possessions, desire-fulfillment, achievements, and attainments is short-lived and shaky. However, most of us consider it to be permanent at least for the present and forget the future conveniently. Then, what do we do to have happiness which is stable. The answer is simple and direct: ‘Nothing! Be Still, Be Quiet.’ This was Bhagavan’s favourite instruction to his questioners. This objective is as simple to

state as it is difficult to attain. Constant, sincere, dedicated, devoted and an all out effort, with Guru's name constantly on the lips, is needed to achieve even a small measure of success in this respect. – *I.S.Madugula*

WHAT BHAGAVAN SAYS ABOUT MEDITATION AND SAMADHI

By S.S. Cohen*

Meditation strictly means the attempt to still the thinking faculty, the perpetual-surfing waves of the mind, in order that the calm ocean of pure awareness, from which they arise and on which they move, may be experienced. To beginners, the mind control appears to be a formidable feat, yet Bhagavan encourages them to go ahead and make a beginning. In Bhagavan's words: If concentration is made with the brain, sensations of heat and even headache ensues. Concentration has to be made in the heart, which is cool and refreshing. Relax and your meditation will be easy. Keep your mind steady by gently warding off all intruding thoughts, but without strain – soon you will succeed.

Meditation includes subtle watchfulness against intruding thoughts. In the beginning, efforts for control are greater than for actual meditation, but in due course, meditation wins and becomes effortless. Regarding the efficacy of *mantra japam* for meditation, Bhagavan said: The Self is the greatest of all mantras. If you are not aware of this internal mantra, you should do it consciously as *japam*, which is attended with effort to ward off all other thoughts. By constant attention to it, you will eventually become aware of the internal mantra, which is state of realisation and is effortless. Firmness in this awareness will keep you continually and effortlessly in the current, however much you may be engaged in other activities. Listening to Veda chanting and mantras has the same result as conscious repetitions of *japam* – its rhythm is the *japam*.

In answer to the question, 'You exhort us to go on enquiring "Who am I?" Where it will lead me?' Bhagavan said: It is not merely asking; *you must go into the meaning of it*. Many meditate on certain centres in the body till they merge in them, but sooner or later they will have to enquire into their own nature, which is unavoidable. Then why not straightaway concentrate on yourself till you merge in its source?

When a devotee asked whether there exists in the human body a hole as small as a pinpoint, from which consciousness always bubbles out to the body, and whether it is open or shut, Bhagavan replied: It is always shut, being the knot of ignorance which ties the body to consciousness. When the mind drops in the temporary *Kevala Nirvikalpa* it opens but shuts again. In *Sahaja* it remains always open.

With reference to the question, ‘Does the enquiry “Who am I?” lead to any spot in the body?’ Bhagavan said: Self-consciousness is in relation to the individual himself and therefore has to be experienced in his being, with a centre in the body as the centre of experience. It resembles the dynamo of a machine. It not only maintains the life of the body and the activities of all its parts and organs, conscious and unconscious, but also the relation between the physical and the subtler planes, on which the individual functions. Also, like the dynamo, it vibrates and can be felt by the calm mind that pays attention to it. It is known to *sadhakas* by the name of *sphurana*.

In reply to the question, ‘How to reach that Centre, where what you call the Ultimate Consciousness – the ‘I’-‘I’ – arises? Is it by simply thinking Who am I?’ Bhagavan said: Yes, it will take you up. You must do it with a calm mind – mental calmness is essential.

Explaining the difference between *Savikalpa* and *Nirvikalpa*, Bhagavan said: When Samadhi is with effort due to mental disturbances, it is *Savikalpa*. When the disturbances are absent, it is *Nirvikalpa*. Remaining permanently in the primal state without effort is *Sahaja*. In *Sahaja*, the mind, having sunk completely into the Self, like the bucket which has got drowned with its rope in the depth of the well, there remains nothing in it to be disturbed or pulled back to the world. In *Kevala Nirvikalpa* there is the mental bucket still in existence under the water of the well, which can be pulled out at any moment. *Sahaja* is like the river that has linked up with the ocean from which there is no return.

In reply to the question whether a person, who, once had the experience of *satchidananda* in meditation will identify himself with the body again when out of meditation, Bhagavan said: Yes, it is possible for a *sadhaka* who has experienced the Self to continue identifying himself with the body when out of meditation, but he gradually loses the identification in the course of his practice. – *Guru Ramana – Memories and Notes*, Sri Ramanasramam

*He was an Iraqi Jew who made Ramanasramam his home in 1936. He died in 1980, and lies buried in the Ashram campus. His photo is on the first floor of the Kendram. For his enchanting reminiscences, see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 78-84.

POSSESSIVENESS: It is a delusion. We accumulate things and relationships to fill the emptiness we feel inside. Non-possessiveness does not mean giving up outer things. It is not to have a sense of ownership. When the sense of ownership wanes, it results in non-possessiveness. When the Self is realised, inner wealth is attained. Then alone one understands how vain was the effort of collecting outer things. – *Gurudev Rakeshbhai*

UNIQUENESS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

Jayachamraja wodeyar, Maharaja of Mysore, has written as follows.

Like Nachiketa*, young Venkataraman desired the way to conquer death. The fear of death suddenly took possession of him and the lad decided to solve the riddle of life. He realised that it was the physical body that perished and the consciousness within the body survived. By an intuitive flash he became aware of the nature of the true Self. Thus, Sri Ramana came to know that the Self was entirely different from the body, the senses and the mind. He said, “I am not the physical body nor am I the five organs of sense perception: I am not the five organs of external activity, nor am I the five vital forces, nor am I the thinking mind. When all these are eliminated, that which remains separate and alone by itself, is *Sat-chit-anada*, Existence-consciousness-bliss, that am I.”

Having thus become the Realised Soul, the Maharshi lived the life of a *Sthithaprajna* or one of steadfast wisdom. He discarded all desires of the mind and felt satisfied in the Self through the joy of the Self. He was unattached to all things of the earth. Yet he took interest in the life around him. The Maharshi never kept himself aloof from the society, but was in it all the time. He was dwelling in the Self even when he was associated with worldly activities. The gates of the Ashram were open to all to come and find spiritual solace, and obtain solution of their moral problems.

Once, the Sage started reciting lines from Manikkavachagar and soon felt so moved emotionally that he shed a few tears. On another occasion, he corrected a devotee's mistake in reading a passage from *Ribhu Gita*, when those in the hall thought that he was in deep meditation. The love and tenderness of the Sage became proverbial; he won the confidence of even the animals of the Ashram.

Sri Ramana was most logical in his approach to the problem of Self-realization. He maintained that control of mind, curbing of desires and ethical ways of life were general aids for realization and emphasised meditation (*dhyana*) and enquiry (*vichara*) as the two essential ways of achieving the purpose. He taught that meditation or *dhyana* is regular battle, for it is an effort to keep hold of one thought to the exclusion of all else.

The life and teachings of the Maharshi rest firmly on the foundation of the early philosophic thought of India. The contribution of the Maharshi is unique in the sense that he approached the problem of Self-realisation from a new angle. He did not worry much to make the point that the soul and the Supreme are identical, though he had complete faith in the doctrine. He was more keen in drawing attention to the natural state of the soul.

The Sage said: "Consciousness is the Self of which everyone is aware. No one is ever away from his Self and therefore everyone is in fact Self-realised. Realisation consists in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realised. It is not anything new to be acquired. The Self is always there. You have only to remove the veil obstructing the revelation of the Self." In his theory, the Guru did not find an important place. He maintained that there was one Guru and that was one's own Self: "One must not look upon the Guru as a person; he is not anything other than the real Self of the disciple. When the Self is realised, then there is neither Guru nor disciple."

A remarkable feature for which the Sage of Arunachala became famous was the great silence he maintained. For a time after he obtained Realisation, he remained silent. It was only during the later part of his life that he broke his silence. The Maharshi made *mouna* his chief instrument for communicating his teaching, although it may look odd to say that he taught in silence. The Sage said: "That stage which transcends speech and thought is *mouna*; it is meditation without mental activity. Deep meditation is eternal speech. Silence is ever-speaking; it is

the perennial flow of language.” When visitors came to him and told their problems, he did not always answer but sometimes merely smiled at the devotees silently. And this conduct on the part of the Sage worked; for many a visitor has admitted that his problem was solved somehow.

Such was the unique personality of Sage Ramana. This Saint of modern times desired to help those who sought to progress on the path of spirituality. His objective was always to make a man better. It is with reference to such saints, the *Bhagavata* says: “Yoga or a study of Vedas or asceticism or renunciation do not captivate me. Neither vows, nor worship, nor holy places are able to captivate me. I can only be won by the fellowship of saints which brings to an end all attachment.” – Excerpted from *Mountain Path*, July, 1966

* Was taught Self-knowledge that the *atman* and the body are different, by Yama – god of death. Some details are available at Google.

SRI RAMANA’S CONCERN FOR THE DEVOTEES – SOME EPISODES

1. G. Satyanarayan Rao’s daughter Rukmini practically grew in the Ashram. She had heard from her father about the liberation of Palaniswami (in Virupaksha cave) and the mother Azhagammal (in Skandasram) at his sacred hands. One day, her father was lay dying. His breathing had become heavy and the end seemed near. Spontaneously, Rukmini ran to Bhagavan and reported the matter to him. Sri Ramana said in Telugu, ‘Nannu emi cheyamantavu?’ – What do you want me to do? Rukmini knew how tender Bhagavan’s heart was. She was not taken in by Sri Ramana’s seeming indifference. She picked up his stick and literally took him to her father’s death-bed. Bhagavan sat there for about fifteen minutes re-enacting the old scenes in the Virupaksha cave and Skandasram. He put his left hand on Rao’s head and the right hand on his heart till the life force was absorbed in the heart.

2. A woman in her eighth month of pregnancy came in deep distress to Sri Ramana. She had four abortions. She was in the grip of fear as to what would happen to her this time. Fortunately, her faith in Sri Ramana matched her fear. She stood before Bhagavan in sincere, prayerful surrender. At that time Sri Ramana was about to start on his Arunchala’s *pradakshina*. She expressed her ardent desire to join him. No thought crossed her mind of the consequences of circumambulation at such an

advance stage of pregnancy, that too with her medical history! For her sake Sri Ramana told everyone that they would cover the distance at the rate of a mile per hour. The mood was ecstatic; for Bhagavan's motherly care pervaded the atmosphere. A couple of months later a well-formed and beautiful baby was born to the lady.

3. Dandapani Swami (father-in-law of Muruganar) had been an inmate of the Ashram for many years, and its manager for a couple of years. He left for Haridwar due to differences with some residents of the Ashram. He kept longing for the day when he would be with Bhagavan again. He knew too well how impractical this wish was. He had no money of his own nor could he expect monetary help for the trip from anyone else in that new place. 'Penniless and helpless' he remained in the constant thought of how he would get back to Bhagavan. Suddenly, one day a group of well-to-do Kashmiri ladies surrounded him. Not only did they insist on giving him a 'biksha', they also provided him with the money to cover the train fare to Tiruvannamalai.

4. One day in 1916, at about 8 pm, a group about 30 devotees happen to come to Skandashram for Sri Ramana's *darshan*. They got stranded because of very heavy rain. Bhagavan noticed how hungry these devotees were. He asked one of his attendants to distribute the available food to all present. The food available would normally be sufficient only for two or three persons. Yet, wonder of wonders, all were fully satisfied and they felt that they had eaten to their full satisfaction. – Excerpted from *The Ramana Way*, July, 2013

(The mystery is all the more because Sri Ramana's mind was 'dead', and he did not have any specific *sankalpa* or wish . He would never take credit for any extraordinary happening, and if any such event was brought to his notice, he would explain it by using the phrase 'Divine automatic action', that is, he was not responsible for what has happened, God wanted it to happen that way.)

All powers are hidden within the Self and everything will manifest when you connect to your consciousness. – Sri Ravi Shankar

As we draw closer to God, we come to know that the soul is no different from It, the ultimate reality, Brahmn. – Swami Nirviseshananda

Much of our compulsive thinking is an addiction – because we have no choice to stop it. It seems stronger than us. – Eckhart Tolle

If you seek the grace of God with your whole heart, you may be assured that the grace of God is also seeking you. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

We see the world not as it is, but as we are. – Anonymous