

## SRI RAMANA JYOTHI

JANUARY- DECEMBER 2014

JANUARY

### THE DECEPTIVE *MAYA*

**For the sake of impermanent worldly prosperity, people will happily wander in vain. They have intense desire for dubious pleasures, for which they laboriously plough the sense objects. They will not desire the unlimited bliss that is produced by ploughing the Heart. What can one say about the wonder of *maya*? – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**SELFISHNESS:** Selfishness has veiled our vision. We see everything from the point of view of what we can get out of it. We are unable to think beyond our little world. Creation is not run on selfishness. The sun gives away heat and light, rivers distribute water, the earth bears plant and nurtures animals. Individuals, who go against Creation, leading their life self-centered in selfishness are bound to face problems. – *Yogi Ashwini*

**HINTS FOR HAPPY LIVING:** **1.** The more we complain, the more unhappy we get. Complaining and criticising can make life bitter. Some cannot stop complaining – The traffic is too bad; telephone lines are congested; weather is too hot or cold; servants are lazy and inefficient, and so on. All of us complain at one time or the other, but do not make complaining a habit, which one cannot get rid of. **2.** Gratitude is the foundation of a peaceful life. If only prayer you said in your life is ‘thank you’, that would suffice. **3.** In the mad race of wanting what we do not have, we overlook what we have to be thankful for. When you begin to count your blessings, you will be overwhelmed with gratitude for all that God has bestowed upon you. **4.** Your spouse, who is always there for you; your mother, who has a piping hot meal ready for you when you return home. Every day we witness acts of loving kindness offered to us. They deserve to be appreciated. **5.** The world we live in is far from perfect; we ourselves are not paragons of perfection; and the same goes for people around us. Let us look for merits and not defects. Finding fault is egoism, which must be overcome. **6.** Unless we learn to accept people as they are, we will lose all possibility of finding happiness in our relationships. Human relationships thrive on caring, sharing and mutual appreciation. **7.** If you want to be a winner in life, then choose to be positive. A positive person is happy under all circumstances. **8.** A man of contentment is always at peace with himself and the world. He does not blame others for his condition. **9.** Our attitude in life should be to accept God’s will for the events beyond control. **10.** When problems are beyond control, seek God’s help. You can get strength by appealing to the Supreme Power for redemption of your problems, and

finally accept His will as best suited to you. – Excerpted from J.P. Vaswani's book *Stop Complaining: Start Thanking*, e-mail – [gph@sadhuvaswani.org](mailto:gph@sadhuvaswani.org)

## SNAKES AND SCORPIONS FRIENDLY TO BHAGAVAN

**The following is from *Day by Day with Bhagavan* by Devaraja Mudaliar**

1. Dr. Srinivasa Rao told the Swami: "I have heard from someone, who said, he saw it, that when Bhagavan was at Skandasramam, a snake once crept over his body." Bhagavan said, "Snakes raise their hoods and look into our eyes, and they seem to know when they need not be afraid, and then they pass over us. The snake did not strike me, nor I did anything to it." (Entry dated: 22-11-45)

2. Vasudeva Sastri recounted the following incident in the hall: "One day, when we were at Skandasramam, I was aghast to find a scorpion climbing up over Bhagavan's body in the front, and another at the same time climbing down his back. I was terrified and wanted to do something. But Bhagavan remained calm, as if nothing happened, and the two scorpions, after crawling over his body as if over a wall, eventually left him. After they left, Bhagavan explained to us, 'They crawl over you just as they would crawl on the floor or a wall or tree. Do they crawl over these, stinging as they go? It is only because you fear them and do something that they fear you and do something in return'." (Entry dated: 5-10-1946)

## INTUITION OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI – TWO INCIDENTS

**B.V. Narasimha Swami\* has recorded the following incidents, which happened around 1910, when Bhagavan was in Virupaksha cave.**

1. Bhagavan happened to have constipation and would chew gallnuts (*kadukkai*) every evening. One day, the supply of gallnuts ran short. He told Palaniswami, his constant attendant, about it, when he was to go down to the town for *bhiksha*. Almost immediately, a group of devotees came up to the cave with a bag with some eatables. They presented them to the Swami and went down the hill. After some ten minutes, they came back with a bag of gallnuts and wanted to know if the Swami would take it. The Swami asked them how they got it. They said that they had found them spilt on the road (where they might have got dropped from carts with leaky bags of gallnuts), and they had picked them up. They said, "Would the Swami find any use for them and take them?" The Swami had spoken to Palaniswami about gallnuts only a short while earlier, so the latter was greatly surprised to see the article coming so soon.

2. G. Krishna Iyer, brother of Bhagavan's well-known devotee, Gambhiram Seshier, used to visit Bhagavan occasionally. On one occasion, the Maharshi was saying that if currants (seedless dried grapes) could be got, that would be a suitable corrective to constipation. Shortly thereafter, Krishna Iyer entered the cave with a large packet of currants. The reason for his bringing currants as an offering was that when he left Madras he found all the shops selling sweetmeats closed. He found only one shop open, and the shopkeeper when asked what he had, said, "Here are nice currants just received, please buy them." – Excerpted from *Arunchala's Ramana*, Vol II, pp. 239-40.

\*Author of the first authoritative English biography of Bhagavan entitled *Self Realization*, a must read for the devotees.

**KIRTANA:** To proclaim the glories of the Lord loudly for all to hear is called *kirtana*. It is not only song but it also includes instrumental music. It creates such an unblemished, heavenly environment that we completely forget ourselves. It is an urge to seek the subtle amidst the crude. This is the charm, the excellence of *kirtana*. – *Shri Anandamurti*

**SHUNYA:** In the ancient texts it is known as *pujyam* or 'worthy of being prayed to'. It is also another word for equilibrium, the state of equipoise, a state of 'yuja' or union. In classical music, it is symbolised by 'sa', the first *swara* or note, the root note where all notes rest, lying in dormancy. – *Bindu Chawla*

**RAISE YOUR SELF BY YOURSELF:** The path to success or achieving a goal is never easy. Every task or goal has its unique challenges and roadblocks. Everyone has his burden. What matters is how you carry it. Despite repeated failures and all sort of adversities, achievers never give up hope and continue to work hard with the 'never say die' spirit. Showing a positive attitude during stressful situations at any point of time, will make a big difference. A person's brain is full of cant's which have to be erased in order to be successful in life. You have within you the power to accomplish everything you want; that power lies in the will. Through regular and sincere practice of meditation one can neutralise the dictates of bad habits. Lots of patience is required to maintain positive attitudes. We must remember that we become whatever we think. We must do everything to prevent negative thoughts and replacing them by positive thoughts. – *Anup Taneja*

**AHAM SPHURANA:** *Aham* – I, refers to the Self, and *sphurana* is, flashing forth, to shine. It is a foretaste of Realisation. However, this spontaneous manifestation of *aham sphurna* contains the subtle dualistic feeling that there is an 'I', that is clinging to the Self. Bhagavan said that many individuals have this vision (though of short duration) during certain dramatic

moments in their lives. When an individual is ripe, qualified, this flashing forth will last for a longer period and eventually will become the permanent state of Self-realisation. – *John Grimes*

**PAYBACK TIME:** In life, many times things do not move the way we want. All our efforts appear to go in vain and progress seems completely stalled. We call it ‘bad times’. But things might be easier to handle if we relate the situation to our karmic debt, which we must be willing to pay gracefully, with His name on our lips. We should also remind ourselves what all He has given to us, and be grateful to Him for that. – *Rama Awasthi*

### **SRI RAMANA FLIES TO MADRAS TO BE WITH GANAPATI MUNI\***

In 1908, the Muni went to a Ganesha temple in Tiruvottiyur near Madras for *tapas*, observing a vow of silence for 18 days. On the 18<sup>th</sup> day, when the Muni was lying down, wide awake, he saw the figure of the Maharshi coming in and sitting next to him. He tried to get up, but the Maharshi pressed him down holding him by the head. This gave the Muni something like an electric shock.

Ever since the Maharshi went to Tiruvannamalai in 1896, he never left that place, and never in his life been to Tiruvottiyur. But as the Muni was narrating the above experience in the Hall on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1929, the Maharshi spoke as follows:

“One day, some years ago, I lay down. But I was not in Samadhi. I suddenly felt my body carried up higher and higher till all objects disappeared, and all round me was one vast mass of white light. Then, suddenly the body descended and objects began to appear. I said to myself, evidently this is how *siddhas* appear and disappear. The idea occurred to me that I was at Tiruvottiyur. I was on a high road and went along that road. One side of it, and some distance removed from it, was a Ganesha temple. I went in and talked. But what I said or did, I do not recollect. Suddenly, I woke up and found myself in a lying posture in the Virupaksha cave. I mentioned this immediately to Palaniswami, who was always with me.”

The Muni found that the Maharshi’s description of the place at Tiruvottiyur exactly tallied with the Ganesha temple at which he carried out his *tapas*. – *Arunachala’s Ramana*, vol. I, p. 225

\*In the beginning, Bhagavan used to address the Muni as ‘Ganapati Sastry Garu’, in view of his phenomenal learning and slight seniority in age. The Muni protested and begged Bhagavan a number of times not to do so, saying, ‘Am I not your disciple? You should call me by a

familiar name. This is very unfair.’ Eventually, Bhagavan started calling him ‘Nayana’, the term used by his disciples for addressing him. ‘Nayana’ which meant father, but could also mean ‘darling son’, like ‘Tata’ in Sanskrit. – *Ibid.*, pp. 194-5

## REMINISCENCES OF KUNJU SWAMI\*

**He was an attendant of Bhagavan for three decades.**

**1. Frugality of Bhagavan:** (a) We used to make tooth powder in the Ashram and put it in tiny packets, each containing a day’s supply. If Bhagavan found even a little more than what was needed for a day’s use, he would leave it in the packet and give it back to us, to be given to him the next day. If we forgot, he would gently chide us for our carelessness. (b) Once, when Ganapati Muni was staying in Palakottu, Bhagavan went to see him. The Muni had cut some sheets of paper for making a notebook and had thrown the unwanted bits on the floor. When Bhagavan saw them, he said that they could be made into a small notebook. Viswanatha Swami\*\*, who was there, took a hint from it and made a nice small notebook out of the bits and wrote some verses in it. Bhagavan was very happy when he saw the notebook and said, “You have done it the way I thought of doing.” The Lord of all, possessing nothing himself, taught us the importance of frugality.

**2. Bhagavan’s deep meditation:** At Skandasram, we would sit before Bhagavan every evening at 6.30 and recite *Aksharamanamalai*. Bhagavan used to close his eyes reclining on the pillow. We would finish the recitation at 7.30, when we generally had the supper. Once in two or three days, during the *parayana*, Bhagavan would go into deep meditation, and would not open his eyes at the end of the *parayana*. We used to call him gently, but he would be completely oblivious of his surroundings. To wake him up, Perumalswami, Akhandananda, Mastanswami and I would take out conches at the Ashram and blow them. The sound of the conch would bring him back to the external world slowly. On such days, we would eat at about 9 p.m.

**3. Continuous Giripradakshina:** Some devotees used to arrange *bhiksha* [Food] for the *ashramites*. In those days, Rs. 5/- were enough for a *bhiksha*, as there were very few *ashramites*. The person who offered the *bhiksha*, generally liked to go around the hill with Bhagavan the same evening. Bhagavan would do so, along with the person and other devotees. Sometimes, we would return early next morning. We never used to feel tired, because of Bhagavan’s company. Next day, we used to take a nap in the afternoon. But Bhagavan could not take any rest, as devotees would always be pouring in. If there was *bhiksha* that afternoon also, and if the person concerned requested Bhagavan to accompany him on his

*giripradakshina*, Bhagavan would oblige him, and ask us by gesture not to tell the person anything about his going round the hill the previous night. There were days when Bhagavan did not sleep for two or three days consecutively because of continuous *bhikshas*.

**4. Value of *giripradakshina*:** Bhagavan would say, ‘There is nothing better than *giripradakshina*. That alone is enough. If you do *japa* or meditation sitting in one place, the mind may wonder. But during *giripradakshina*, limbs move but the mind will be still. Doing *japa* or meditation without any other thought while walking is called *samadhi* in movement. As there are several medicinal herbs on the hill, their breeze will be good for health. There are several *siddhas* and sages on the hill even now, though we cannot see them. They also go round the hill unseen by us. When we go round the hill, we should walk on the left side of the road, otherwise we shall be obstructing their movement. We will have the benefit of walking around them. We will get their blessings also.’

**5. Bhagavan saw only good in all:** Generally, Bhagavan never talked about either the good or bad qualities of others. However, if he heard of the death of someone he knew, he would praise his good qualities. Kandaswami was a rich person who lived in Tiruvannamalai. His conduct was not particularly good and the local people detested him. He used to come and see Bhagavan occasionally. In his last days he suffered from poverty. Once, he wanted some special gruel and sent word through someone to the Ashram. Bhagavan arranged for gruel to be sent to him. This was sent on three successive days. On the fourth day, he passed away. We informed Bhagavan of this. We thought he would not say anything good about this man. What a surprise! Bhagavan said, ‘Nobody can keep his body and clothes as clean as Kandaswami. He would come to the tank at eight in the morning and start washing his *dhoti* and towel. By the time he finished his bath, it would be 12 noon. His hair and beard were spotlessly clean.’

**6. A devotee requests Bhagavan to write something for him:** Somasundaraswami was the first person to provide help in the book stall in 1925. He was well-read in Vedanta. Once he asked Bhagavan to write something, at least one letter for him. Bhagavan as usual was silent. However, he left his notebook in the book-shelf beside Bhagavan. Later that day, Bhagavan wrote in it, ‘There is one letter which forever shines within, but how can it be written?’

\*See *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* (pp.150-54), where Kunju Swami (1897-1992), tells how he came to Bhagavan and got his grace. His book entitled *Reminiscences*, from which the above has been excerpted, is a publication of Sri Ramanasramam. The original in Tamil was translated by Dr. K.S., founder of our Kendram.

\*\*He was close to Bhagavan. A write-up by him is elsewhere in this issue. He mentions one example how Bhagavan was against any sort of waste. In his words: ‘Bhagavan asked me one day ‘How do you light the fire in your charcoal stove?’ I told him that I use a bit of old rag rolled up, dipped into kerosene. Smiling, he

scolded me for wasting kerosene when the fire could be easily lit with some dry twigs and leaves around, or with bits of waste paper.” – *The Power of the Presence* by David Godman, part 2, p.237

## **BENEFITS OF THE COMPANY OF SELF-REALISED ONES**

By R. Narayana Iyer\*

One day, when I was sitting by the side of Bhagavan, I felt miserable and put the following question to him: "Is the *sankalpa* (wish) of the *jnani* not capable of warding off the destinies of the devotees?" Bhagavan smiled and said: "Does the *jnani* have a *sankalpa* at all? The *jivanmukta* can have no *sankalpas* whatsoever. It is just impossible." I continued: "Then, what is the fate of all of us who pray to you to have grace on us and save us? Will we not be benefited or saved by sitting in front of you or coming to you?"

Bhagavan turned graciously to me and said: "Just as an arrow (trouble) that comes to destroy the head goes away carrying with it only the turban, so a person's bad karma will be considerably reduced while he is in the presence of a *jnani*. A *jnani* has no *sankalpa*, but his *sannidhi* (presence) is the most powerful force. He need not have *sankalpa*, but his presiding presence, the most powerful force, can do wonders, save souls, give peace of mind, and even liberation to ripe souls. Your prayers are not answered by him but absorbed by his presence. His presence saves you, wards off the karma and gives you the boon, as the case may be, involuntarily. The *jnani* does save the devotees, but not by *sankalpa*, which is non-existent in him, but through his presiding presence, *sannidhi*." I was filled with joy. Even today his presence is the most powerful thing and that alone, I am confident, saves me! – *Mountain Path*, July, 1968.

\* He did personal service to Bhagavan. He wrote a number of articles in *Mountain Path* under the pen name Vishnu. For his absorbing reminiscences see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 258-62.

## **BHAGAVAN GOES FOR A WALK IN ARUNACHALA FOREST**

By Viswanatha Swami\*

One evening, Ganapati Muni [Nayana] asked Bhagavan about the forests which at that time existed on and around Arunachala, saying that he had been to forests in other parts of India but not here. Bhagavan, full of benevolence, at once offered to take him to see them.

He said with a radiant, almost boyish smile, ‘Nayana, there is not an inch of ground on Arunachala that has not been trodden by these feet during the time I was living on the hill. I have roamed about in the interior regions where no forest guard would dare to go.’

A few days later, as usual, I went to Bhagavan after lunch. He was sitting alone. As soon as he saw me, he asked ‘whether it would suit Nayana to go for a walk in the forest. Go and tell him and be ready. I will slip out of the Ashram unobserved, so as to avoid a crowd, and meet you near your room.’

Bhagavan joined us a few minutes later and the three of us wended our way towards the forest, led by Bhagavan. We entered the second forest path, cutting through the cattle-fair ground west of Palakottu. After passing the beautiful little temple of Draupadi, Bhagavan took us on to the third forest path. We passed through a dense forest where creepers entwined the trees and bushes. There were a few streams, some flowing and some dried up.

‘See Nayana’, Bhagavan said, ‘this is the tree known as *ingudi*, which is famous for its cooling shade and medicinal properties. It is described in *Sakuntala* and other famous Sanskrit works. We call it *nilai* in Tamil because its shade wards off the effects of the hot sun very quickly.’ And five minutes under the shade of the tree proved it to be so. Bhagavan then took us deeper into the forest. He found a very pleasant place for us to rest in the bed of a dried-up stream, shaded by a huge rock. We did not speak much. In such circumstances, one does not feel like disturbing the eloquent silence of Bhagavan by indiscreet talk or even thought. His silence was teaching, and we did not want to interrupt it.

Time passed unnoticed in the gripping presence of the Lord of Silence. Eventually, Nayana suggested that it was getting rather late for Bhagavan’s return to the Ashram. Bhagavan remarked that if we waited a little longer, we could take advantage of the afternoon breeze. He added that the breeze would make our return walk very pleasant. A few minutes later the breeze did indeed start.

We returned with Bhagavan to the Ashram, unaware of anything but Bhagavan’s grace, the only reality, which shines all forms and movements, and plays hid-and-peek with us all. – Excerpted from *The Power of the Presence* by David Godman, part two, pp. 238-41.

\* He fully surrendered himself to Bhagavan in 1923 and till 1950, spent most of his time either with the Maharshi or Ganapati Muni. He was a scholar of Tamil and Sanskrit and had edited *Mountain Path* for some time. He will always be remembered by the devotees for his



*Ramana Ashtotra* – 108 names of Bhagavan, which are recited by the devotees every day. Some of his fascinating reminiscence are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 171-73.

**YOU ARE *ATMAN*; NOT BODY-MIND-INTELLECT:** The world is like the powerful magnet that affects body, mind and intellect. It does not have the power to influence *atman*, the spirit in us. All problems arise from ignorance of our real Self, resulting in wrong identification with the body, mind and intellect. We are unable to distinguish between matter and spirit. Vast portions of our potential and magnificence are inaccessible to us. We are limited by physical boundaries, emotional baggage, and intellectual prejudices. The very search of our real identity is enchanting, invigorating and energising. Self-knowledge enables us to live life objectively. – *Jaya Row*

**DAKSHINAMURTI AND NATARAJA – A STUNNING CONTRAST:** As Dakshinamurti, the Lord teaches us utter stillness. He communicates and teaches through silence, by just sitting in deep meditation with eyes closed and totally still. As Nataraja, he shows us how to enjoy action by investing it with the qualities of vigorous rhythm, complex patterning, and harmony. Both these states describe *laya*. *Laya* contains two meanings that contradict each other. *Laya* is totally stillness, calmness and tranquility (from the root, *leenam*). *Laya* is also movement (from the root *layate* – to move). – *Lalita Ramakrishna*

**SARASVATI:** We give a form to the formless embodiment of knowledge and wisdom. We figure her in pure white sari with a *veena* in two of her hands signifying the arts, the Vedas in the third, representing learning, and lotus in the fourth, a symbol of true knowledge. Sarasvati, also known as *Vani*, is the presiding deity of speech. The *veena* may be taken to symbolise the arts, but in the hands of the Supreme One, the *nada* or sound of *veena* is creation itself. It is the vibration of that sound that is the *spandana* or vibration of creation. – *Sarala Panchapakesan*

**SILENT LANGUAGE:** Speech springs from silence and sinks into silence. Words are symbols and not things. One has to go beyond words to understand truth. Words are fingers that point to truth and not truth themselves. The English word ‘silence’ has negative connotations. It is considered the opposite of ‘sound’. ‘*Mouna*’ is a positive concept. The word is derived from *Muni*, as *Soukhya* is derived from *Sukha*. It is not physical silence that is referred to but mental silence. A *Muni* is one whose mind is merged in the Self. Speech is co-existent with the body. Silence is eternal. – *Dr. K.S.*, founder President of our Kendram

**Three Golden Rules to follow during meditation: (i) To be nothing. (ii) To want nothing, and (iii) To do nothing. – Sanjiv Kakar**

**Build your inner environment. Practice silence. Go back to your inner castle. This is the way to peace. – Paramahasa Yogananda**

**The grace of the guru is like an ocean. If one comes with a cup he will get only a cupful. The bigger the vessel the more one will be able to carry. It is no use complaining of the miserliness of the ocean. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**Guru means one who has gravitation, around whom you suddenly feel that you are being pulled. The guru is a tremendous magnet. – Osho**

**WHY CHANGE IS DIFFICULT?:** The first barrier to change is our tendency to downplay the problem. We refuse to convince ourselves that the problem has to go. The second barrier is lack of sincere and persistent effort. We shy away from making an attempt, or even the minor setbacks devastate us. The third is drift in focus of attention. We need to free our attention from unnecessary engagements and redirect ourselves appropriately than only we can proceed towards spirituality. No one can change us, only we can change ourselves. – Pulkit Sharma

## **FEBRUARY**

### **TRUE HAPPINESS IS WITHIN**

**When an external object is required for happiness, incompleteness is felt as soon as the external object gets removed. If you can dive into the *atman*, happiness would stay permanently. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**HAPPINESS:** Each of us wants some peace and happiness in life. Still, happiness often evades us. Happiness is a state of mind; it does not come from possessions alone. Objects of desire keep changing, and also our goals and posts. The chase continues, and every new possession brings its own burden. Again, objects make us depend upon them. For example, once we are used to a particular standard of living, we feel inconvenient by any deviation from it. The mind will be peaceful only if we are able to discriminate between what is absolutely necessary and what is unnecessary in our life. – Hasmukh Adhia

## **THE ART OF MEDITATION**

By Om Swami

Meditation is a state of perfect equipoise, mental balance and super awareness. Samadhi in mediation comes with intense practice; thereafter it becomes effortless. You will need to build the intensity of your practice to gain significant results. Meditation is a skill, it is an art. There is only one way to master this art, that is: intense practice, persistent intense practice at that.

Correct posture plays a significant part in meditation: (i) Sit in a comfortable posture. (ii) Keep the back and head straight. Neck slightly bent. (iii) Abandon all body movements. (iv) Maintain great mindfulness. Each time the mind wanders, bring it back to the point of focus.

The best way to overcome restlessness during meditation is to stop meditation at that moment. Just relax. Stop all efforts to meditate. If they fail to dissipate restlessness, just get up inhale some fresh air, drink a little bit of water, walk around a bit and then resume your session. Pacify your mind. Talk to your mind. Be patient. Calm it down. Restlessness is normal and pacification is an art, a skill.

The natural state of mind is like the quiet, expansive sea. Thoughts are like waves. They can be tidal at times. Just like sea is not sea without waves, mind is not mind without thoughts. Thoughts have no intrinsic value or power. For as long as you have awareness, you will have thoughts. With great practice, you will be able to replace all your thoughts with only one thought you are meditating on. You may well be meditating on no-thought, on emptiness. Do not react to any thought, just drop it and get back to your point of meditation. Only a vigilant mind can detect the emergence of a new thought. The key is to drop the thought as soon as it emerges. If you fail to check the very first thought, be prepared to be bogged down by thousand more. Once you start to experience a quiet mind, you will almost be addicted to meditation. – Excerpted from *Tattvaloka*, July, 2013

## **REMINISCENCES OF BHAGAVAN**

By Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya\*

In May 1950, I was in Visakhapatnam for a meeting of examiners. I was lodged in the staff-room of Mrs. A.V.N. College for the night. It was customary for me every morning to prostrate before a picture of Bhagavan immediately after waking. That morning I felt the absence of Bhagavan's portrait. I casually laid my hand upon a Bombay journal on the table in the staff-room, and opening it, Lo! What should I see but a picture of Bhagavan in his last illness with

an article paying homage to his glory. I felt as if Bhagavan Himself was telling me: “What little faith have you? Am I not here and everywhere, now and forever?”

One night in 1955, I had a marvellous dream. In a big choultry on a hill-top I saw Bhagavan along with Sankaracharya of Kanchi seated before me. My heart overflowed with joy to see the two great Souls together. Sankaracharya enquired how far I had advanced in my study of Sanskrit. Bhagavan replied to him saying that my Sanskrit knowledge was up to the mark. Thereupon Sankaracharya recited a *rik* from the Vedas and asked me to translate the *rik*. I did it to his satisfaction. Then *tirtham* (Holy water) was brought in a vessel. Bhagavan first took a spoonful and passed it to Sankaracharya, who also tasted another spoonful, and handed to me to distribute among the crowd of devotees that filled the hall. I went round, and as I served the last person, I found that the last drop of *tirtham* was gone. Then I brought back the vessel. Sankaracharya asked me whether I had taken the *tirtham* myself. I replied, “No.” Then Bhagavan observed, “It does not matter. Distribution to others is Prasad (Grace) to yourself.” Then the leaves were spread before all for serving *prasad*. As it was getting dark, I tried to switch on the electric lights. At first trial the lights did not burn. But as I turned the switch for the second time, all the lights flashed on, and I woke up. Bhagavan’s words that “Distribution to others is Prasad to yourself” were ringing in my ears. – *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* by Prof. Subbaramayya

\* He 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. A number of his fascinating reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, at pages 102-9. His photo is at the first floor of the Kendram.

## **HOW THE MAHARSHI HAPPEN TO WRITE *UPADESA SARAM* AND HIMSELF TRANSLATE IT IN THREE OTHER LANGUAGES**

Of the various works of Sri Ramana, ‘*Upadesa Undiyar*’ is considered a supreme legacy. There is a bit of history as to how Sri Ramana came about to write this text. It is said that the great Tamil poet, and an outstanding devotee of Bhagavan, Muruganar, was once composing a poem based upon an ancient legend about a group of ascetics who were performing various rites in the Daruka forest. These ascetics believed that Karma (path of action) is God itself. They believed that by performing ritual austerities, they could attain power and happiness. Karma alone was of foremost importance to them. They arrogantly believed that their efforts in performing Karma were bound to yield fruit and that even Gods could not prevent their fruition. It was Lord Siva who then appeared in the Daruka forest to deflate the pride of the

ascetics and to offer them the right instruction (*upadesa*), so that they could be liberated. As Muruganar came to the point where Lord Siva was about to give them spiritual teachings, his pen came to a halt. He realized that it would be wrong on his part to expound Siva's subtle knowledge and that only Sri Ramana, being Lord Siva himself, could do justice to it. Hence, Muruganar prayed to his Sadguru, Bhagavan Sri Ramana, urging him to reveal the essence of the teachings which he Himself, in the form of Lord Siva, had given to the ascetics of yore, who were blinded by their attachment to the path of ritualistic action. Thereupon, Ramana Maharshi composed thirty verses in Tamil, entitled '*Upadesa Undiyar*', expounding the various paths to liberation. – *Upadesa Saram at Google*

**In this regard, Suri Nagamma, says:** A devotee said to Bhagavan: “Bhagavan wrote *Upadesa Saram* when Muruganar wrote about the *lilas* of Lord Siva – isn't that so?” Bhagavan said: “Yes, what Muruganar wrote was not merely the story of Daruka Vana *tapsvins*; he thought of writing about all the *avatars* of the Lord, in 100 verses. He took up the folk song of '*Undeepara*' for the purpose and wrote up to 70 verses. Towards the end of those 70 verses he wrote about the story of *tapavins* of Daruka Vana and then requested me to write the remaining 30 verses as they pertained to *upadesa*.” Bhagavan told Muruganar, “You have done everything. What is there for me to do? You better write that also.” But he did not write them for a long time. He insisted on my writing them, saying that he did not know anything about the *upadesa* portion, Bhagavan alone could write them. What was I to do? I had no alternative but to write. After writing those 30 verses, we called them '*Upadesa Undiyar*'. When that was done, Yogi Ramiah said he did not know Tamil and pressed me to write them in Telugu; I wrote them in *dvipada*. After that, Ganapati Muni said, ‘What about Sanskrit?’ I agreed and wrote them in Sanskrit also. After I had written them in those three languages, Kunjuswami and others requested me to write them in Malayalam, and hence I wrote them in *Kummi Pattu* style in Malayalam.” – *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, letter dated 27-8-1946

**GET ORGANISED:** If there is no discipline in life, you recreate a hell. What is hell? Where nothing is disciplined. What is paradise? Where everything is beautiful because of an order. You need a disciplined and organised life. Never be a victim of laziness, inertia or negativity. – *Swami Brahmdev*

**SIVA AND SHAKTI:** Shakti, the all pervading primordial cosmic energy, is present even in human body, where it is referred to as the *kundalini*, dormant in the *muladhara chakra* situated in the subtle body. Siva resides in the *sahasrara chakra* at the top of the head. Until and unless a union takes place between the Shakti and Siva, human life would lack spiritual awakening. – *Gurumaa*

## ARUNACHALA RAMANA

By Arthur Osborne\*

There is an old saying that the sacred Hill is wish-fulfilling. I heard of it when as a newcomer I was making my first circuit of the Hill. A veteran devotee walking beside me said, 'You must not wish for anything while on the hill or walking around it, because Arunachala is wish-fulfilling.' Anywhere else the statement would have sounded absurd. One would have laughed and said, 'But surely that is just the reason why I should wish for something!'

Bhagavan sought, like Buddha, to free us not so much from our misfortunes as from the wishes and desires, the fears and attachments, which make misfortune possible. Therefore, to come to him or to Arunachala with a wish was to deny his teaching. It was the path of pure Advaita that he taught, the highest, the most serene. There was no compromise, no half measure. The illusionary ego-self had to be denied, so how could one ask for boons for it? This sounds a hard path and makes Bhagavan appear a hard Master, but he was all love. The depth of compassion in his eyes at any misfortune would heal the heart of the sufferer.

The old saying that it is sufficient to be born at Tiruvarur or die at Benares, or even think of Arunachala refers to the *mouna-diksha*, the silent transmission of Grace for which physical presence is not needed. But to 'think of Arunachala' means to turn to the Destroyer of desires and to renounce all petitions.

There is a legend that throughout the ages Dakshinamurthy has been sitting under a huge banyan tree on the north slope of Arunachala, in a spot inaccessible to climbers and that his silent *upadesa* would bring realisation to any who approached him. The direct path of Self-enquiry has been inaccessible to mankind and therefore Arunachala has been neglected and considered of less importance than centres of less direct theory and more practicable paths. Now, however, the direct path has been opened to us again by Siva in the form of Ramana; what was inaccessible has been made accessible, what was hidden high on the hillside has been brought down to the foot of the Hill, to the Ashram first, and now to the shrine where worshippers sit in silent meditation. This is why Bhagavan declared that Arunachala is the spiritual centre of the world, because the path it represents has again become the central mode of man's aspiration.

To suggest that Bhagavan chose Arunachala for his abode because it is the traditional centre of the direct path he was to teach, would not be correct. It would be more correct to say that Arunachala chose Ramana. Even in childhood the name fascinated him. When he left home, while still a youth of 17, it was in search of his Father Arunachala.

While he was still a youth in a cave on the Hill some devotees asked him for a devotional hymn to help them in their *sadhana*. He walked round the Hill with them and as he walked he composed the supreme hymn *Arunachala Aksharamanamala*, tears streaming from his eyes as sang it. That last evening, as he lay dying, devotees sat outside the little room singing *Arunachala Aksharamanamala*. He heard it just before breath left the body and two tears of bliss trickled down from the outer corners of his eyes. That night, while the body he had now relinquished was exposed to the view of the devotees in the great new hall of the Ashram, they spontaneously sang a Tamil verse he had made long ago, ‘Arunachala Ramana.’

The Grace of Bhagavan radiates from Arunachala and from his shrine there no less than it did from his bodily form. People are drawn there as they were to his bodily Presence. Often enough, the Grace poured out on them affects their circumstances in life also, and the inner harmony is reflected outwardly; but to go there for that purpose is to reject the greater good for the lesser. It is in that sense that Arunachala is wish-fulfilling and that it is better not to ask. – Excerpted from *Arunachala’s Ramana*, vol. viii, pp.497-501.

\*His reminiscences and some details about him are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 95-102.

**ARDHANAREESWARA:** It is one of the 64 manifestations of Siva. Mother Parvati once propitiated the Lord to be a part of him in body and mind. The Lord granted her wish. Siva then absorbed her in half of himself and thus was created the half-man half-woman aspect of Lord Siva, symbolizing the oneness of all beings. It is also a symbol of *Purusha* (the male energy) and *Prakriti* (the female energy) together making the cosmic energy. – *Google*

**LIFE – A GAME:** Seek a game worth playing. Having found the game, play it with intensity – play as if your life depends upon it. The life game reflects life’s aims. These can be ‘object games’ and ‘meta games’. The former are for material things, primarily for money and objects, which money can buy. Meta games are for knowledge and liberation of the soul. The Bible says: “What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?” – *Roberts Ropp*

**COMPASSION AND MEDITATION:** Compassion has to come only through meditation; there is no other way to it. Buddha has said that compassion is a by-product, a consequence. You cannot catch hold of the consequence directly, you have to move; you have to produce the cause, and the effect follows. So, if you really want to understand what compassion is, you have to understand what meditation is. Forget all about compassion; it comes on its own accord. – *Osho*

**RESTLESSNESS:** To overcome restlessness in meditation, we need to make a strong, conscious effort to focus our thoughts and actions. With persistent, single-pointed mental focus, comes deep calmness. In every project, as in meditation, there are three stages: the initial inspiration, followed by hard work of overcoming the problems involved, and finally, the joy of bringing the task to completion. The key to success in meditation is intensity and duration of effort. We must be prepared to put strong, deliberate effort that will bring us the reward of joy. – *Nayaswamis Jyotish*

**TRANSIT PASSENGER:** Why identify with the body that is transient? Identification with the body leads to illusion that power, pleasure and possessions can make us happy. But these keep us in bondage. The root of all evil is sense of identification with the body. This body is only a temporary address. Sooner or later, your address will change. The body is the dress you have worn. It is a boat, which you are rowing, to cross the *sansar sagar*. It is meant to help you to realise the Self, and reach the other shore. – *J.P. Vaswani*

**REALISE YOUR SMALLNESS:** In the universal context, what is your life? It is not even a drop in the ocean. Just open your eyes, and ask, “Who am I? Why am I on this planet? What is my life time?” As this awareness dawns, you will stop worrying about little things. When you review your life in a broader context, the quality of life improves. – *Sri Sri Ravi Shankar*

**LEARN TO BE SILENT:** To reconnect with who you really are and to come to know the glory that vests within you, you must find time to be silent on a regular basis. Experiencing solitude, for even a few minutes a day, will keep you centered on the highest priority of life. Saying that you don’t have enough time to be silent on a regular basis is like saying you are too busy driving to stop for petrol/diesel – eventually it will catch up with you. – *Robin Sharma*



## A VEDIC PRAYER

OM ...

With our ears may we hear what is good.

With our eyes may we behold thy righteousness.

Tranquil in body, may we who worship thee find rest.

OM ... Peace -- peace -- peace.

OM ... Hail to the supreme Self! – *Sent by Prof. Mohan Rao*

## SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI – TWO UNUSUAL INCIDENTS

### 1. The lawyer and the attendant who failed to recognise divinity of Sri Ramana:

One Perumalswami, an attendant of Bhagavan, who was manager of Skandasram, filed a suit in the court, after Sri Ramanasram got established at the foot of the hill, that he and not Chinnaswami be the manager of the Ashram. Bhagavan was asked to appear in court to answer the charges made by Perumalswami. Grant Duff, a British diplomat, who considered Bhagavan as divine (His heart-felt reminiscences are at pages 29-31 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*), persuaded British authorities to have Bhagavan's testimony in the Ashram itself. The lawyer appointed for this purpose (November, 1936), in his interrogation of Bhagavan, became unnecessarily disrespectful and argumentative. Within a few weeks, his son went mad and started wondering around the streets of Tiruvannamalai. Then, the lawyer himself went mad. Both he and his son died a short time later. Many devotees felt that this happened because he was so disrespectful towards Bhagavan.

Perumalswami lost the case, but continued his campaign against the Ashram. He published a booklet entitled *Ramana Maharshiyin Nija Swarupam*, accusing Bhagavan of misconduct with his female devotees and gave a list of his character defects. Chinnaswami wanted legal action against him, but Bhagavan dissuaded him from going ahead. Soon afterwards, Perumalswami's health began to deteriorate and he spent last twenty years of his life as a house-bound invalid. He died in 1950's, alone and uncared for, on a stone bench, somewhere in the town. Just about everyone came to the conclusion that his troubles came about as a result of the campaign against Bhagavan. For details, see, David Godman's *Living by the Words of Bhagavan*, pp. 126-143.

### 2. The landlord who went against Sri Ramana's wish:

Mudaliar Patti had served food to Bhagavan for 40 years, without missing a single day. Even when the Ashram was feeding

hundreds of devotees, she would contribute her mite, and Bhagavan always insisted on having some of her food on his leaf. When she died in 1949, Bhagavan asked about her place of burial. Bhagavan said it would not be the general burial ground, but the place where she died. Accordingly, a big pit was dug within the compound of her house, not far from the Ashram, and her body was made to sit cross-legged in *padmasana*, as customarily done for the bodies of *sannyasis*. It was then garlanded with flowers, sprinkled with sacred ash and camphor and finally buried. There is no other instance in which Bhagavan intervened in this way when one of his devotees died.

Several years after Bhagavan died, her house was purchased by someone who was not aware of the greatness of Bhagavan. He was advised that having a *samadhi* on the property would be inauspicious. He dug up Patti's body, cut up its remains and got them thrown at a long distance from his land. Several years later, as he was returning to Tiruvannamalai, he was killed in a train crash, and his body got cut into several pieces. – Excerpts from *The Power of the Presence* by David Godman, part three, pp. 56-64.

(It may be asked, how it could happen? Bhagavan was the last person to think ill of anybody under any circumstance, whatsoever. Bhagavan provided an explanation to such phenomena to Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya, who has recorded as follows in his book *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*:

Once, my two-year-old daughter became unconscious. All vital organs stopped functioning. The doctor declared his helplessness. At this hour of crisis, I sent an express telegram to the Ashram praying for Bhagavan's Grace on the child. The next morning I received a reply from the Ashram stating, "Received your wire last night. It was perused by Bhagavan. We assure you of Bhagavan's blessings on the child. Pray, be not anxious." And the child did recover fully.

Later, when I visited the Ashram, I asked Bhagavan what he thought on reading my telegram. When I persisted in asking, "Bhagavan, did you not think that you must do something to save the child?" Straight came 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. **It is all 'divine automatic action.'**" The conversation was all in Telugu except the words, '**divine automatic action**', which Bhagavan himself uttered.)

## **SRI RAMANA ANSWERS WHY HE DID NOT TRAVEL OUT OF TIRUVANNAMALAI**

**The following is from *Day by Day with Bhagavan* by Devaraja Mudaliar.**

1. Once a visitor asked whether Bhagavan ever thought of making a tour of India. In reply Bhagavan said: “I never had such an idea, though several devotees proposed it. Rajeswarananda\* once said he would arrange for a special train to take me all over India. But what is the use of my going anywhere? I am not able to see everything. (I took this to refer to Bhagavan’s seeing only the Self in everything.) They say I must go and give *darshan* to all people in those parts who may not be able to come here, but even if I went, who would take any notice of a beggar going about clad only in a loin-cloth? Or should I go with a label on my forehead or a card hung around my neck saying – ‘Here goes a Maharshi’? Or should I have to take a big retinue who would go about proclaiming – ‘Here comes our great Ramana Maharshi’. Besides, out of all the millions of people, to how many would I be able to give *darshan*?”

2. When Suri Nagamma’s young niece asked Bhagavan through Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya, as to why Bhagavan would not leave Tiruvannamalai and visit his devotees, Bhagavan said: “You wanted to see me, so you came here, and as I am always here you were able to see me; but if I kept moving about you might not find me here. Many people come here and if I was absent they would have to go away disappointed. And even if I left here, how do you know I would reach your house, when there are so many people in Tiruvannamalai and other towns on the way who invite me to their houses. If I agree to go to your house, I should have to agree to go to their houses too, and I might never reach yours. And besides, all this crowd of people you see here would go with me.” He added, jokingly, “I am kept in confinement. This is my jail.”

\*For his reminiscences of Bhagavan see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pages 252-3.

**If you are lonely when you are alone, you are in bad company. – Jean-Paul Sartre**

**Persistence is the recipe for success in life. Winners endure. – Anonymous**

**If your priorities don’t get scheduled into your planner, other people’s priorities will get put into your planner. – Robin Sharma**

**The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings. – Eric Hoffer**

**The word LISTEN contains the same letters as SILENT. Listen to God in the silence of your heart and you will know His plans for you. – R. Chandrasekaran**

**You can be free when you stop identifying yourself with your mind. – Eckhart Tolle**

## MARCH

### HOW TO CONDUCT IN THE WORLD

**Reach the heart by knowing your true nature and abide there, without slipping from the knowledge that you are the Self. Then, act according to the human role that you have assumed, outwardly behaving as if you are enjoying joy and misery, like all others in the world.** – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

### TIGER LISTENS TO SRI RAMANA

By Selvarajan Yesudian

One day Sri Ramana Maharshi was taking his wonted [Usual] walk of the holy mountain Arunachala. He was accompanied by Madame Flisabeth Ratonyhi, former president of the Theosophical Society in Hungary. Upon entering the wood they came face to face with a tiger which was evidently intent on prey. The sage stood still, while his foreign visitor stared speechless at the growling beast that was approaching them. The Maharshi then clasped her wrist, and Madame Ratonyhi suddenly felt all fear leave her. A wild animal sees a person's innermost feelings, and there is no means of concealing them. It is no use to smile when the heart is full of fear; the animal will sense the truth. Regaining her breath, the lady retired a few steps behind the sage and soon noticed that all sensation of fear had left her and that she had a feeling of absolute safety. She was aware of being in the presence of the Maharshi. The wise man, whose language was silence, rarely spoke ten sentences in a whole day, for he was convinced that silence is the most effective means of action, since it communicates feelings with the maximum of intensity. He now spoke in a kindly tone to the great cat before him: "Go away." The words were very soft, likely a friendly suggestion. The crouching animal rose to a standing posture at this command, and withdrew slowly the way the sage had pointed.

(Original source: *A Yoga Miscellany* by Selvarajan Yesudian published by George Allen and Unwin, London, quoted in *Ramana Manjari*, a souvenir produced by Ramana Kendra, Delhi in 1968, in aid of the building fund.)

**WHAT IS LIFE?** This question is likely to surface in everyone's life, at some point or another. For some, life is a bundle of activities; for others, it is a physical process that starts with birth and ends with death, and should be lived as fruitfully as possible... Everyone is constantly struggling to overcome hurdles and obstacles on life's path to achieve the goals set for the self. These hurdles could relate to health, wealth, education, social life, business or

profession and so on. The ultimate aim of everyone is happiness. But we are most likely to forget that happiness cannot be derived from material things. We will have to rise above worldly matters to have lasting peace. Only when we sit by ourselves with a sincere and firm resolve to dive deep within, and focus on the mind that control our daily life, we cannot get lasting peace. Keeping mind free from thoughts is not at all easy. But there is no other alternative to true happiness or *shanti*. – *Dhruvdutt Vyas*

**SIGNIFICANCE OF 108:** *Sri Ramana Ashtotra* has 108 names of Bhagavan. In a rosary (*mala*) we have 108 beads. (The larger bead (*meru*) is not part of the 108. It is not tied in the sequence of the other beads; it is the guiding bead, the one that marks the beginning and end of the *mala*.) **The Google** provides many interesting references to 108: The diameter of Sun is 108 times the diameter of Earth. The distance from Sun to Earth is 108 times the diameter of Sun. The average distance of Moon from Earth is 108 times the diameter of the Moon. In Ayurveda, there are 108 *marma* points that are vital for giving life to living beings. The powerful *Sri Chakra yantra* intersects in 54 points each with a masculine and feminine quality, totalling 108. In Indian astrology we have 12 houses and 9 planets. 12 times 9 equals to 108. The famous saint Bharata wrote *Natya Shastra* which has 108 *karanas* (Movement of hands and feet). In Japan, at the end of the year, a bell is chimed 108 times to finish the old year and welcome the new one. Each ring represents one of 108 earthly temptations a person must overcome to achieve *nirvana*.

### QUOTES FROM SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA\*

Let us refuse to be like driftwood floating at the mercy of the stream of life. Let us not live in the dungeons of our own making and then complain of darkness and gloom. Let us put out the noise of the ego to hear the voice of the divine.

Let there be a real demand in you for spiritual nourishment, for the refreshment of the soul. The problems of life have no solution in the discoveries of science.

Ego is mischievous, wicked and vulgar. Its voice is the noise of the world. The so called lettered people are deluded to believe more in noise than in silence and thereby miss the subtler and substantial aspect of life. When the ego is lost without a trace, you unlock the shrine of infinite bliss.

Enter the shrine of silence. The blessings of silence generally remain unknown. Silence is an unseen power, the magical key of life, the dynamics of soul and the fountain of bliss. Manifest that for ever and ever, no matter how terrific the distracting outward noise.

The quality of thought matters much. Watch carefully the type of thought you express. Shake off and unload the useless baggage of cumbersome thoughts. Censor every thought of faulty nature and avoid its reactions.

Meditation is the continuous flow of the thought towards the goal, the Self, without any break. Mind is a thoroughfare along which thoughts race or crawl or fly. Stand amid your thoughts and control and direct them to good ends.

Cheerfulness dispels friction, anxieties and bitter experiences. Learn to laugh in face of adversity. It takes courage to smile and win the life's greatest victories.\*\*

\* His reminiscences are at pages 252-3 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

\*\* These are from the first issue of *Call Divine*. A monthly journal dedicated to Sri Ramana Maharshi. The first issue, which came on September 1, 1952, began with a reproduction of a verse in Tamil in Bhagavan's own handwriting, which meant: "O! Vinayaka, who wrote on a scroll the words of the Great Sage Vyasa and presided at the victorious Arunachala, remove the disease of *maya* which is cause of repeated births, and protect the Nobile Faith (Upanishdic philosophy) which brims with the honey of the Self." Swami Rajeswarananda edited *Call Divine* for its first 12 years. The journal stopped publication in 1975.

## **SRI RAMANA'S FIRST FULL-TIME ATTENDANT**

By V. Ganesan\*

Palaniswami was a reclusive ascetic. He religiously worshipped a stone image of Ganesa. He ate a simple single meal of boiled rice without salt or side dishes. One day, one of his friends told him – What is the use of worshipping this stone image? This will not give you anything. There is God in flesh and blood. Like the five-year-old Dhruva, who did penance standing on one leg during ancient Puranic times, there is this young ascetic totally absorbed in *samadhi*. Go and serve him. Your life's purpose will be achieved. Palaniswami went to Gurumurtam. Young Bhagavan was totally immersed in *samadhi*. The very first look at him shook Palaniswami to his roots. From that *darshan* onward, for Palaniswami, there existed no world other than this supreme ascetic. Being an ascetic himself, he could perceive the boy saint's depth of spiritual surrender. He vowed to himself – Until death, I will serve this saint. He then

began to serve Bhagavan and saw to it that the insects did not bother his Master. While Bhagavan was immersed in *Nirvikalpa samadhi*, Palaniswami's duty was to protect his physical form and to ensure that his highest spiritual state remained undisturbed. He would feed Bhagavan one cup of whatever food was collected. This way, some food was offered regularly to Bhagavan. He even raised a fence around Bhagavan. Whenever Palaniswami needed to go outside, he would lock the door so that nobody would bother Bhagavan.

Sometime later, Bhagavan had to move out of Gurumurtam. In the next compound, there was a mango orchard. Its owner requested Bhagavan and Palaniswami to come and stay there. There was only a thatched hut made of coconut leaves. Palaniswami and Bhagavan stayed there for six months, undisturbed, because the owner of the orchard strictly prohibited visitors. This was the time when another facet of Bhagavan opened up. Palaniswami was thirty years older to Bhagavan, and held a fatherly affection for him. Like a caring father, he would go to the town library and get books for Bhagavan to read. Being a Malayali, the books he brought were in Malayalam. Bhagavan requested Palaniswami to teach him Malayalam; and within few days, he fully picked up the language. It was thus that Bhagavan first read *Kaivalya Navaneetam*, *Adyatma Ramayanam*, *Yoga Vashistam*, *Prabhulinga Lila*, and many other works. When reading some of these books, he recognized that what he had experienced at the age of sixteen until the present moment was being described in these books. This was where he learned words like *samadhi*, *atma*, *maya*, *darshan*, and *samsara*.

Sometime later, when the owner of the orchard wanted them to vacate the premises, they moved to the *Arunaigirinathar* temple. There, Bhagavan told Palaniswami – You go begging this way, and I will go begging the other way. Bhagavan himself has described all this. He would go and stand in front of a house, clap twice, and wait. If they gave something in his hands, he would eat it then and there. Without feeling the need to wash regularly, he would wipe his hand on his hair. Later, Bhagavan recalled – When I was doing that, I felt I was the single sovereign monarch of the world. That is why Bhagavan declares that true renunciation is not only to not embrace the notion of ownership, but also not to feel dependent on anyone or anything. In the *Arunaigirinathar* temple also, the crowd of people began to harass him. They could not understand why he was seated in *samadhi* all the time. When Palaniswami wasn't present, they would disturb him. Palaniswami noticed a small hillock called *Pavalakundru*, and moved Bhagavan there. Throughout, Palaniswami never interfered with activities of Bhagavan. He was always in the background; his duty was to preserve the physical vehicle of Bhagavan and to see that his deep *samadhi* state was not disturbed.

As the word about Bhagavan spread throughout the town, people started gathering at *Pavalakundru*, as well. Palaniswami went in search of another place and noticed Virupaksha cave on the hill. Bhagavan later on said – When we went to *Virupaksha* cave for the first time, there was nothing there except an earthen pot. A few years later, a few female devotees started serving food during daytime at the cave. Other attendants like Perumalswami, Ayyaswami and Kandaswami also joined him in due course, but Palaniswami always remained the primary attendant. One day, someone put a statue of Ganesa in a niche inside *Virupaksha* cave. Palaniswami was overwhelmed and requested Bhagavan – Why don't you make some offering to Lord Ganesa? Bhagavan's way of making an offering was not through food, garlands, or flowers, but through verse. This was the first composition by Bhagavan in Tamil: *Lord residing in the niche with a big and fat bell/ You who allowed your father to go around begging/ At least now shower your glance of grace on me/ Who too is the son of the Father.*

In the evenings, the people who served Bhagavan would beg in the streets to collect food. The traditional song sung to collect alms was one by Adi Sankara – *Samba Sadasiva, Samba Sadasiva, Samba Sadasiva, Samba Siva, Om.* On hearing this refrain, people knew that Bhagavan's attendants were coming, and they would be ready with food. Knowing this, some mischief maker began to go ahead of them and collect the food instead. So the attendants requested Bhagavan – Please compose a song, which we can sing exclusively to collect alms. Bhagavan, in his usual manner, did not respond. The very next day, when Bhagavan was going around the hill with the devotees, Palaniswami called Ayyaswami, the most literate among them, aside and said – Our Bhagavan is murmuring, so perhaps he is composing some verses. Take this paper and pencil. During that one circumambulation, one hundred and eight verses were recited by Bhagavan. These were faithfully taken down by Ayyaswami. Titled *Aksharamanamalai*, or *The Marital Garland of Letters*, is one of the most spiritually moving, devotional hymns ever written.

When Bhagavan moved to *Skandashram*, the higher cave, Palaniswami spent a few days there. But due to old age, he became weak and could not climb up to *Skandashram*. With Bhagavan's permission, he stayed on at *Virupaksha* cave. Every day, Bhagavan would spend time with him. One day, while in *Skandashram*, Bhagavan noticed a peacock flying up from *Virupaksha* cave, making abnormal noise. He immediately rushed, saying – This is the end of Palaniswami. When he reached the cave, Palaniswami was breathing very hard. Like a son, Bhagavan kept his head on his lap until he dropped the body. For years, Palaniswami had selflessly served his Master. Now it was time for him to return to *Arunachala*, the silent abode of God. – *The Internet* – Maharshi Talks to a Foreigner – Human Gospel of Ramana Maharshi



\* Ganesan's grandfather, *Sarvadhikari* of the Ashram, was younger brother of Bhagavan. Until the age of fourteen, he lived near Bhagavan. He holds a master's degree in philosophy. He was Managing Editor of *Mountain Path* for 25 years. He has authored many captivating books on Bhagavan.

## **SOME CAPTIVATING REMINISCENCES OF SUBBALAKSHMI AMMAL\***

### **A Brahmin widow from Nellore (A.P.), served as a cook at the Ashram for long.**

One morning I saw Bhagavan grinding black gram. We always felt ashamed when we saw him working, but whenever we offered to take over he would get angry and stop coming to the kitchen, which we felt was a great loss to us. That day I had the courage to ask him to let me grind the gram. To my astonishment, he got up and said, "Yes, finish it. I was waiting for you to come." When I had finished grinding and had gone back to the kitchen, I saw Bhagavan attending to curry over a big fire. The steam rising from the pot was very hot. Bhagavan was bathed in perspiration. It was to save me from this tiresome work that he had invited me to grind for him. How I regretted offering my help! I learnt my lesson about trying to relieve Bhagavan of work.

Everybody used to bring coffee to the Ashram and offer to Bhagavan. If he refused, others would feel guilty to take it themselves. Very few people knew that Bhagavan didn't like coffee at all. Using one pretext or another, he would manage to avoid coffee for weeks until; once again, he was compelled to take it by some misguided devotee. One day, Appu Sastri's wife came with a big pot of excellent coffee, but Bhagavan refused to have any. "Don't you know that I don't like coffee?" he asked. She fought back by asking, "What am I to do? I had a dream last night. I saw Parvati herself. She told me, 'My son is not taking coffee. Please prepare some good coffee and make him drink.' There you are Swami. It's your mother's orders!" Bhagavan got outraged: "She is always like this, interfering with my ways of living and frustrating my *tapas*. She did the same when I was living on the hill."

To serve Bhagavan at mealtimes was an adventure. Our womanly desire was to fill him to the brim. His rule was to clear his leaf no matter how much was served. Not a speck of food would be left uneaten. So we had to be watchful and serve much less than we would like to. It was not easy, and we would often fail. He would scold us bitterly or, what was infinitely worse, would fall ill and suffer. I cannot understand how he managed to produce an illness when a lesson was needed for us.

One evening, some village woman was passing through the Ashram with a bundle of wild and bitter herbs for her goats. She left it near the well and entered the hall to offer her devotion. Bhagavan saw the bundle and asked, 'Who has left that there? Better take it to the kitchen and make it into a paste with some coconuts.' Our hearts stopped beating. On that occasion our horror of what we might be made to eat was stronger than our devotion. We called the woman and begged her to disappear with her dangerous bundle.

Whenever a large quantity of butter was made, a lot of buttermilk became available, and it could not be consumed before it went sour. Once, while making butter, we made pots and pots of buttermilk, much more than we could all drink in a day or two. Bhagavan added salt and green chillies and said that it would keep well if it is stirred daily to beat air into it. He then gave detailed instructions on how the buttermilk should be used for cooking vegetables, until the supply was exhausted. We did this for four days but even then there was buttermilk to spare. So, in desperation, we made *rasam* with the remaining butter milk and gave it away to the Ashram workers. That day Bhagavan casually enquired, 'What happened to the buttermilk?' Nobody dared to tell him the truth. He knew everything, of course, but unless he was told, he would behave as if he knew nothing. He read our minds, but he kept it to himself. We could make out from his behaviour that he always knew what was going on.

Water running off the body of a temple deity is considered to be holy. Since Bhagavan was our God, all that touched his body was holy to us. The water with which he used to wash his hands, feet and body, the remnants of food, the very leaf on which he ate – all were sacred to us. After each meal Bhagavan would wash his hands over a brass cup and leave the leaf to be thrown out. Once a girl was found waiting at the door at food time. When Bhagavan asked her, 'What are you waiting for?' she innocently answered, 'Holy water'. When Bhagavan discovered that the water with which he washed hands was being taken to some home and treated as *tirtham*, he started picking up his own leaf, took it to the dustbin and washed his hands over the gutter.

Bhagavan would take any amount of trouble to teach us the virtues necessary for Self-discovery. Through the trifles of daily life, he taught us Vedanta both in theory and practice. We were changed to the very root of our being, not even knowing the depth and scope of his influence. Sri Krishna in his mercy became a cowherd to teach simple milkmaids the way to salvation. Similarly, Bhagavan, the same Supreme Being in another form, took to cooking in order to save a few ignorant women.

\*These are based on the book *Bhagavan Smritulu* (Telugu) by Venkatachalam, published by Aruna Publishing House, Vijayawada, 1999, as quoted by David Godman in his book *The Power of the Presence*, part three, pages 266-69.

## **BHAGAVAN DISAPPROVED ORTHODOXY – SOME EPISODES**

1. Traditionally, if any one dies in the family, we don't take food until the body is disposed of. When Bhagavan's mother died at Skandashram, he asked us to ignore this rule, saying, 'Mother is not dead, let us eat.'... When there is an eclipse, we are not supposed to eat or cook. On one such occasion Bhagavan said, 'Come on, let us take our food as usual. We don't have to worry about this eclipse.' – *Annamalai Swami: Final Talks* by David Godman

2. Once, on the day of his mother's anniversary, Muruganar came to the kitchen very early, washed his *dhoti* and hung it up to dry. With a wet towel around his waist, he set about getting the vegetables ready. Having understood the purpose of Muruganar being in the kitchen so early, Bhagavan, who happened to be in the kitchen, said, "It is your mother's annual ceremony today, who are the Brahmins? I could be one of the Brahmins." Hearing this, Muruganar felt so moved that he could hardly keep himself from breaking down completely. He felt that when Bhagavan tapped his chest and said, "I shall be one of the Brahmins for the ceremony," not only his parents but several generation of his ancestors would have attained liberation. Muruganar never felt it necessary to perform the annual ceremony of his parents.

Even belief in rituals can bind one, and Bhagavan was very particular about breaking every one of the ties, binding his disciples. – *Cherished Memories* by T.R. Kanakammal

3. Lokamma, a kitchen help, says: I used to assist in the kitchen. One day onions had to be cut and added to a dish. This could not be given to a kitchen-mate, as she had her monthly 'pollution'. So we were preparing another dish for her. Bhagavan said, "What is all this talk of pollution? Don't make such distinctions. Serve her the same preparation as for others." He enquired at night whether his instructions had been obeyed. When told about the objection from the Ashram manager, he said, "The Ashram gives food to all and makes no difference. There are no untouchables here. Those who don't like it, may eat elsewhere." – *Unforgettable Years* by T.R. Natarajan

4. Sundaram, a kitchen worker, says: The injunction against the leftover food from the previous day is very much respected in the higher castes in South India. But Bhagavan insisted that avoidance of waste overruled everything else. He would come to the kitchen in the early hours, see the leftovers from the night before, warm them up, and add some more ingredients to make them palatable... Bhagavan was neither a rebel nor a reformer. He did not discourage people from following their customs at home, but in the Ashram he would not take any custom for granted. – *The Power of the Presence* by David Godman, part three

5. Three instances of Bhagavan disapproving his mother's orthodoxy: (i) Akhilandamma, who served food to Bhagavan for decades, says: Once I went to Skandasram with fruits and milk. But Bhagavan's mother was unwilling to have the stuff brought by a non-Brahmin. Bhagavan who understood his mother's mind said to her, "All right, it is better that you go back to your house in Madurai." He then ate some of the offering and gave some to his attendant, who returned what remained to me as Bhagavan's *prasad*.(ii) Chalam writes: Bhagavan's mother was a very orthodox lady, full of caste prejudice and superstitions. Bhagavan did not tolerate any of her ideas. He criticised her many times and was quite ruthless in destroying all that stood in the way of her emancipation from ignorance and fear. When she refused to cook onions, which are taboo to a Brahmin widow, Bhagavan would show her one and say, "How mighty is this little bulb! It can stop my mother from going to heaven."(iii) Bhagavan himself narrated the following: "At Skandasram, she would not give food to the man who brought us firewood because she was afraid of pollution! She insisted that I must eat first, then she would eat and then the woodcutter could have the remnants left on the ground outside the Ashram. I refused to eat until the man had been decently fed. At first she would not yield and would suffer, weep, and even go without food. But I was adamant; and she had to reconcile to my standpoint. What is the difference between man and man? Is it not correct to see God in all?" – *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**No one can make you feel inferior without your consent.** – *Eleanor Roosevelt*

**Improvement always begins with 'I'.** – *Anonymous*

**An individual is nothing but the conglomeration, the kaleidoscopic display of the movement of the mind, at every moment, the various shades it adorns and the many disguises it puts on.** – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**The mind is like a wish-fulfilling jewel. It you know how to utilise, it can produce the most beneficial effects.** – *Karmapa Dorje*

**We have too many men of science, too few men of God. The world has achieved brilliance without wisdom, power without conscience.** – *O.S. Bradley*

**You cannot travel the path until you have become the path itself.** – *The Buddha*

## APRIL

### DIVE DEEP WITHIN

**The most valuable thing in the ocean lies deep in it. The pearl is so small, yet so valuable, and so difficult to procure. Similarly, the Self is like the pearl: to find it you must dive deep down into the silence, deeper and ever deeper, until it is reached. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**TWO QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED:** “Who am I?”, and “How long will I remain here?” All spiritual inquiry begins with these questions and attempts to find answers to them. To get the answers, practice spiritual discipline. Then, the answers become a part of your daily living experience. – V. Narayanan

**SPIRITUAL ORIENTATION:** The very nature of the mind is to fly and forget. We need to build in constant little reminders like *japa* and chanting. But the main antidote is introspection. We must also use the gift of memory to recall positive experiences, rather than negative ones, which often dominate. If on a downward slide, try to connect with higher level thoughts, to uplifting events, e.g., by viewing spiritual channels, or listening to pre-recorded chanting and *bhajans*, and so on. Also be careful about how much and what you eat. – Nayaswami Jyotish

### A GLIMPSE OF LIFE AT RAMANASRAM IN LATE 1930s

By Maha Krishna Swami

**He was close to Bhagavan during 1938-40. He established ‘Bhagavan Sri Ramanashram’ in Brazil, South America, which he says was due to inspiration of Bhagavan\*. The following is from his book, ‘Years in the Presence of Ramana My Master’ printed by Brazil Ashram, and reprinted by Bangalore Centre.**

The activities began around four in the morning. At five o’clock came the devotees who regularly meditated and then returned to their professional affairs. Innumerable tasks were divided among the disciples. Some took care of the flowers and garden, others helped in the kitchen, some dedicated themselves to the scriptures, and so on. There was no difference among the duties; all were considered equally important. Sri Ramana taught that the virtue of work must be acquired by all and he was the first to set an example. We learned much from him by the manner in which he behaved in the performance of daily tasks. When there were no visitors, and when he was not working on a book, he gave shape to a stick from the rough branch of a tree; he washed his own clothes, prepared leaves to be used as plates, bound books,

or accomplished other useful activities. He did all with perfection, zeal and love, no matter how trivial the task appeared.

Bhagavan's instruction was that nothing should be wasted. Nothing that could be useful in some form should be thrown away. In India, it is a custom to avoid the remaining food, a day after its preparation. In the Ashram the discipline was that no food that could be consumed should be rejected...The vegetable peels were not thrown away, but reserved for the cattle.

Bhagavan used to prepare various types of chutney. He was specialist in preparing delicious dishes with the most simple ingredients. When some different food was ready, he offered a little to all who were present in the kitchen to try. And all received it as *prasada* – food blessed by the Master. Once, someone complained that the food prepared was very pungent, and said: “If *sattvic* food is fundamental for spiritual practices, why is the food at the Ashram so spicy?” Sri Ramana explained that if the ingredients are pure, and if they are prepared correctly, in a clean place, the spice is a question of taste and habit and does not make the food less *sattvic*. “In some religions”, he added, “The people eat only milk and rice and still express ego in the most distorted manners. On the other hand, there exist persons who eat normal food, including strong spices, and are very tranquil and lovable. We must prepare food that is agreeable to all. Those who believe that it is too strong, can dilute it with rice or yogurt.”

There was the discipline that until the last meal was served and the kitchen cleared, the disciples should do their allotted tasks. To sit for meditation or to be in the company of the Master at unscheduled hours was strongly discouraged. When someone would pay attention to something that did not pertain to him, Bhagavan simply looked at the person saying: “You better go back to your work. Don't look for trouble.”

At night, after the last meal, we all reunited with the Master in the Ashram hall. The visitors had already retired, so we sat in front of him; he talked with us and also gave instructions for the following day. Sometimes the disciples would read from the scriptures. Each one of them read a paragraph aloud for the whole group. At certain points Sri Ramana translated a few words. For the teachings which appeared complex, he elucidated their meaning and application. The reading went on for approximately two hours.

On the days of *Maha Puja* and Bhagavan's *Jayanti*, the activities began early. Bhagavan supervised the work in the kitchen. And in the main hall, he received the devotees and gave each one the necessary attention. For those who came from far, he generally devoted a little more time. The atmosphere used to be of great joy.

With the passing of time, we became conscious that to work with the Master in the kitchen or in the garden, or in any other place, was not simply an activity, but a spiritual training. Even if

one knew a more appropriate form of doing things, all must be executed as desired by the Master. A Master never does anything wrong because he does not act by the ego, but rather by pure intuition, and the disciples must attend to this voice of pure intuition, without restrictions or doubts. It is fundamental that self-surrender to the Master be unrestricted, and the trust in him should be total.

\*In this regard he writes in his book as follows: “Sri Ramana used to gaze at Arunachala. He said that the mountain was an energy centre so powerful that there was certainly a corresponding place on the other side of the globe: the other extreme of the axis, capable of polarizing as much spiritual energy as Arunachala. So sure he was about this that he asked a disciple to find an atlas and verify his affirmation. In showing up a map with all countries, his finger landed on India, and with his other finger, he indicated a country on another continent. The form of the country indicated was similar to that of India, and one of the disciples read aloud – ‘Brazil.’ He remained pointing to Brazil. He stared at me fixedly. I felt perfectly the force of my Master. I was used to his gaze, but this time it was different. He faced me, looked once more to the map and affirmed that I would go to Brazil. His voice, which was so familiar to me, contained something new, something special, something strong. My Master had just pointed out my destiny. His voice resounded within me and the image of his finger pointing to a direction never left me. From that day on, a certainty was born in me: Bhagavan has prophesied my destiny. This would be fulfilled, inevitably. He ordered me to cross the seas. For me, very young at the time, all of this appeared mysterious, remote.”

**THE PARADOX OF OUR TIME:** We have bigger houses and smaller families. We have more experts, yet more problems. We have multiplied our possessions, but reduced our values. We have added years to life, not life to years. We have conquered outer space but not inner space. – *Dr. Bob Moorehead*

## **GET CONNECTED TO RAMANA – DIVINITY IN HUMAN FORM**

By A. R. Natarajan

Satyamangalam Venkatarama Iyer comes for a couple of days to Virupaksha cave. He sees before him Lord Siva incarnate. Inspired poetry flows freely and we taste its ever-increasing beauty as ‘Ramana Stuti Panchakam’. Ganapati Muni sees in Ramana, consciousness, vast and pervading like the great Lord Vishnu. He becomes his disciple, enjoying the greatly pleasing beauty of Ramana. One has only to turn to chapters 11 and 18 of ‘Ramana Gita’, ‘Chatvarimsat’ and ‘Epistles’ to see how deeply he was soaked in the enchantment of Ramana. Muruganar becomes Ramana’s ‘bonded slave’ at their very first meeting. He could never keep

away from Ramana's physical presence enjoying every second the glory radiating from Ramana's body. Thirty thousand verses were not enough for him to pour forth his love for the timeless and eternal one. Paul Brunton comes in spite of himself, only to become a powerful exponent of the Maharshi and his message. G.V. Subbaramayya, with his frequent visits becomes Ramana's 'chief guest', enjoying unrestrained freedom. The saintly Munagala Venkataramiah; the child-like Devaraja Mudaliar; the midnight chronicler Suri Nagamma; the diarist Cohen; the humble Vishwanatha Swami; the ever happy Kunju Swami; the gentle Swaminathan; the correct Chadwick; the inspired bard Sadhu Om; and the editor Osborne, all keep presenting before our mind's eye the atomic power and mind bewitching enchantment of Ramana. How completely they could be his! There was never a second thought. Hence, their blissful state.

If we do not enjoy Ramana's presence the way in which the vast galaxy of devotees had done during his life in the body, does not the fault clearly lie with us? If we do not fall head over heels in love with him, we have to find why. For one, we do not care enough for the inner life. The compulsive interest which many seekers had in the search for truth, in the strong urge to be free from the karmic cycle, seems to be absent in us. The deep motivation which used to spark the fire of renunciation is missing. We have to be careful and keep away from the vast number of allurements which modern technology is offering – T.V., the video, and so on.

So much has been dinned into us about the necessity for a living guru, meaning that the guru must be in flesh and blood, that we do not pause to consider the exact stature of Ramana. Is he not eternal? He continues to live physically in a very real sense. Is there any photograph of his which does not speak? Often one finds it impossible to turn away from those lustrous, serene and peaceful eyes. Can we help being captivated by the smile of his face? How can it mean so much to so many, unless the life force is present in the photograph in some mysterious way? When one is in the spiritual mood, there is nothing more alive, more deeply meaningful than Ramana's photograph, which compels attention and makes one feel that he is very much there, as if in flesh and blood. So why not let the photo do the work? **We have only to open the window of our mind and allow our hearts to be captive to the immense silence of Ramana.** – *The Ramana Way*, journal of Bangalore Centre, Nov. 2013

**MEDITATION TECHNIQUES:** 1. While meditating, the seeker should remain constantly aware of the fact that the Self or the Supreme Being dwells right within the innermost recesses of his being. The spiritual heart is on the right side of the chest on which one can meditate. 2. The right sitting posture is that in which the seeker can sit comfortably for a length of time. 3. The seeker should make sure that the spine is kept straight. 4. Listen to the sound of breath as



it comes and goes out. As we inhale, the sound ‘*So*’ is heard. As we exhale, the sound ‘*Hum*’ is heard. ‘*So hum*’ is thus a natural mantra which means ‘I am That’. It occurs spontaneously with every breath. – *Anup Taneja*

**DON’T EVER QUIT:** How badly you want your dreams to come true? Are you willing to do what it takes to achieve all that you want? Ask yourself this over and over again. It is much easier to quit than to work hard towards the goal. If you give up, you truly didn’t want it bad enough. If you really want it, you will figure out a way to work through the problem. Quitting is so much easier. People do not often realise how close they were to success when they gave up. Great people became great because they choose never to give up in the face of adversity. – *Tom Giaquinto*

**FAITH ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS:** Nothing in life that is worthy is never too hard to achieve provided you have the courage to try it, and have faith that you will succeed. Faith is a force that is greater than knowledge, or power, or skill. Faith is a mover of mountains. So, start today with faith in your heart, till your dream comes true. – *Helen Rice*

### **BHAGAVAN APPEARS AFTER HIS *MAHANIRVANA***

**Bhagavan’s compassion for his devotees was unlimited, as recorded below by two devotees.**

**1. Mrs. Firoza Taleyarkhan\*** writes: For a week after the *mahanirvana* I was quite desolate missing the physical presence of Bhagavan. I did not know what to do. Between tears, thoughts of ending the life often came to my mind. One afternoon as I lay asleep, I saw Bhagavan coming down Arunachala with his stick and enter my house. He asked me, “Why are you weeping?” and bade me wipe my tears, assuring me he was always with me here. Then he went out by the opposite door. This dream is yet vivid in my memory, and were I an artist I would have drawn a picture of the scene.

**2. Y.N. Athavale\*\*** writes: On receiving a telegram, I went to the Ashram on the day of his *mahasamadhi*. My emotions and feelings were checked somehow during the day he left the body. But next day, at night, I began to weep bitterly feeling very uneasy that I shall never henceforth see Bhagavan in an embodied form, and enjoy the bliss of his presence. All of a sudden, in the dead of night, some footsteps were heard and lo! There came Bhagavan with a lantern in his hand! He straightaway approached me, and said in a soft, gentle, loving voice, “Why do you weep? Did I not tell you that I am here?” I controlled myself and bowed down to

him. By the time I raised my head, he had disappeared, leaving me in utter surprise and desolation. My thousand *pranams* to Ramana Bhagavan.

\* A Parsi lady from Hyderabad. She is a very well-known devotee of Bhagavan. For her reminiscences, see, *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp. 364-6.

\*\*He was one of the few Maharashtra devotees, who would sing Marathi *bhajans* before Bhagavan in the hall. For his reminiscences, see, *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp.333-4.

## **DEVOTEE'S DESIRE TO OFFER FIGS TO BHAGAVAN GETS FULFILLED**

### **Suri Nagamma records:**

My sister-in-law at Madras sent to me some dry figs for Bhagavan as she knew Bhagavan liked figs very much. I could not give them to Bhagavan, as the Ashram authorities did not want devotees to give any eatables to him. In those days, Bhagavan was giving *darshan* between 8 to 10 a.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. in the verandah attached to the Nirvana room, where as I was also seated. One day, Mouni Srinivasa came at 4.30 p.m. and showed letters that were being sent out. On reading one of the letters, Bhagavan turned towards me and looked steadfastly. I could not understand why he did so. When he looked thus twice or thrice, then some devotees began discussing in whispers what it could be about. No sooner Mouni left taking back the letters, Bhagavan turned towards me and said, "Look. It seems the homoeopathic doctor has given me permission for takings figs, and other dry fruits. So these people are writing to your brother, D.S. Sastri in Madras, to send some. This is in the letter that was shown to me." I was surprised and summoning enough courage, I said: "Is that so? How strange! My sister-in-law has sent me dry figs with instructions to give them to you, but I have not brought them because I was afraid I would not be permitted to give them to you." Looking at me with compassion, Bhagavan said, "Is it so? They are in your house now?" I replied in the affirmative. When Bhagavan said, "Oho! I see. They are here itself in your house. Then why worry? Why have they written to Madras?" On hearing this, I could not sit there any longer and got up saying, "I would bring them immediately."

I went home and returned in about ten minutes with the jar filled with figs. Noticing my coming back, Bhagavan told his attendant, "There is Nagamma, bringing the fruit jar. Go and get it." Accordingly, he came to the edge of the verandah, and I gave the jar to him from below. Bhagavan took some figs from it, asked for a pen-knife and cut the fruit into small bits and began eating them. Handing back the jar to the attendant, Bhagavan asked him to preserve

them as otherwise they would write to all sorts of places for their supply. My joy knew no bounds at the graciousness extended towards me. My eyes were filled with tears of joy. Bhagavan looked at me, as if to say, “Is your desire now fulfilled?” It is no exaggeration to say that his eyes were shining bright like emeralds.

It was a great surprise to those who were present there that Bhagavan, who does not eat anything given to him by devotees without sharing the same with all those around him, did not do so on this occasion. As this is most unusual, my happiness was without bounds. I was reminded of Lord Rama and His acceptance with great relish of fruits given to Him by Sabari, which she had preserved awaiting the arrival of the Lord. – *Letters from and Recollections of Sri Ramanasramam*

**In this regard, V.Ganesan writes:** When Sri Ramana was travelling by train for the first and the last time, from Madurai to Tiruvannamalai, he bought two figs by paying a quarter of an *anna*, and his hunger was appeased...The ancient tradition holds that the fig contains a subtle essence which is capable of producing ‘spiritual quietude’. I had read in 1960s in *Sputnik* that Russian scientists had done research on figs and had discovered that it did contain a chemical which in the human system was found in between the eye-brows. And that, this fluid helped one to concentrate, with one-pointed attention. – *Direct Path*, journal of Delhi Kendra, Nov.-Dec., 2013

## THE LAST WORDS OF BHAGAVAN

**The following is from *The Maharshi*, newsletter of New York Ashram, Jan.-Feb. 2014.**

Ramanasramam’s manager, Mani (V.Subramanian), collected the following information in response to a question sent to him about Bhagavan’s last words. He writes: “Thank you for your kind letter dated 20<sup>th</sup> Sept. The following are our findings after referring to various recordings.”

“There were really no last words of Bhagavan, for Bhagavan can never be talked about in terms of the past. That is perhaps why none of the devotees who were with Bhagavan could pinpoint the last words of the Master. They talked about his words, his silence, his luminous look and sweet smile. Viswanatha Swami writes: On Friday morning Bhagavan said ‘Thanks’ to an attendant (Sivananda) who had just finished massaging his body. The attendant, who did not know English, blinked with surprise. So Bhagavan, smiling, explained to him the meaning of the English term. It is probable that, when about to leave the physical plane, Bhagavan

intended to express his thanks to all who had served him. Bhagavan translated ‘Thanks’ as ‘Santosham’ for the attendant. At about sunset, Bhagavan asked the attendants to raise him to a sitting position. They raised him up as comfortably as they could, one of them gently supporting his head. One of the doctors began to give him oxygen but Bhagavan motioned to them to stop with a wave of his right hand.

“It is not known whether Bhagavan spoke or made a sign at that time. In any case, it would be more appropriate to take ‘Thanks’ and ‘Santosham’, as the words which last fell from his lips. Precious as Bhagavan’s words are to all of us, equally precious are the moments when he spoke wordlessly through his compassionate look. I give below an extract from Suri Nagamma’s *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*:

“On the evening of 14/4/1950, at 6:30, I was in the queue arranged for *darshan* of Bhagavan. I stood with my sight concentrated on him and prayed mentally: ‘Oh *Prabho!* Won’t you for once, radiate on me your compassionate look?’ Bhagavan’s eyes slowly began to open and from those eyes a mild and compassionate look came on me. That was the last time I had the great fortune of his compassionate look.

“The white peacock was indeed crying his heart out on that day. I am unable to locate any reference to Bhagavan asking whether the bird had been fed except what is said in the well-known U.S. devotee Robert Adam’s writing published in the book *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* (Enchanting and Uplifting Reminiscences of 202 Persons), brought out by Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad. I give below the relevant extract:

“In April 1950, I was in Bangalore to see Papa Ramdas. When informed that Ramana had left his body, I went to Tiruvannamalai. The crowds had already started to come, thousands and thousands of people. So I climbed the hill and went into one of the caves and stayed there for five days. When I came down the crowd had disappeared. He had already been interred. I enquired of his devotee who had seen him last, ‘What were the last words he spoke?’ He said, ‘While he was leaving the body, a peacock flew on top of a wall and started screeching. Ramana asked his attendant ‘Has anyone fed the peacock yet?’ Those were his last words.

“We feel that it is very unlikely that these words were spoken by Bhagavan while he was leaving the body or at any time after the morning when he became too weak to speak. None of the dozen people who were in the Nirvana Room on 14th April 1950 has left a record of this fact, and none of us, including my father, making any mention of it. If these words were indeed spoken at or nearer that time, everybody in the hall would have referred to the ‘famous last words’, orally and/or in writing. Hence, we may conclude that ‘Thanks’ and Bhagavan’s

explanation of the word were his last pronouncements, and this was his testament of appreciation to countless devotees all over the world.

“That evening, there were about a dozen people, including doctors and attendants, in that small room, when Bhagavan’s condition was believed to be critical. There is no record of his having spoken to any of them except asking to be raised to a sitting position. It is likely that he did not ask but made a sign even as he ‘motioned’ to the doctor ‘to stop with a wave of his right hand’ the administration of oxygen.

“The thousands of devotees waiting around the Nirvana Room then started chanting Bhagavan’s ‘Arunachala Aksharamanamalai’. Viswanatha Swami writes: ‘Bhagavan’s eyes opened a little and flashed for a moment. From their outer edges tears of ecstasy rolled down.’ Last words, last look, last tears for the humanity. Bhagavan, as you know, is forever, the beginning less and endless.” – *The Maharshi* is available at [www.arunachala.org/newsletters](http://www.arunachala.org/newsletters)

**ETERNITY IS RADIANT:** Shelly, the English poet says: ‘And life like a dome of many-coloured glass/ Stains the white radiance of eternity’. These lines call the turbulence of life – all the drama and action in living situations – an ugly stain on the perfection and purity of Eternity (*Para Brahman*). – *Lalita Ramakrishnan*

**PRAYER:** What you cannot do, pray for it. When the obstacle is too much to handle, *deep* prayer can work miracles. Prayer is the cry of a soul. When you pray there should be *total* involvement. True prayer cannot happen without *deep* devotion and *complete* faith that the Supreme will come to your rescue. If your prayers are not answered, it is because you have not given quality time. – *Sri Sri Ravi Shankar*

**Travel light on your journey in life. Your desires and expectations are heavy baggage which slow you down and thwart your progress.** – *Chidanand Saraswati*

**Deeply question each and every thought, to break free of the imprisonment of the thoughts.** – *Byron Katie*

**When you cannot go out of your house, it is prison. If you cannot go out of your body-mind complex, you are your own prisoner.** – *Swami Ranganathananda*

**Correcting oneself is correcting the whole world.** – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**The word enlightenment throws up the idea of some superhuman accomplishment, but it is simply your natural state of felt oneness with Being.** – *Eckhart Tolle*

**Have a purpose in life. Life without purpose is drifting. A person who has no clear and strong purpose will not persevere, so essential to achieve something worthwhile. – Anonymous**

**IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE:** If we shape our thoughts, we will shape our destiny. Reduce the quantity of thoughts to improve their quality. Reduction in thought-traffic can be secured by watching the breath, regulating the breath through *pranayama*, chanting a mantra, focussing the mind on the chosen deity, and so on. Make sincere and persistent effort to withdraw the mind from the outside world, turn attention to the inner world, and *just observe* the parade of thoughts, without identifying with them. – *Infinithoughts*, November, 2013

**SELF INQUIRY:** The vision of God appears in mind only. In what form that God will come into sight depends on one's perception of mind. Anyhow, it is not the ultimate stage. In that state, still the duality is there. It is just like seeing God in dream. After the appearance of God, the inquiry starts within and it will lead to experiencing the power of true Self. The final destination is Self inquiry only. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

## MAY

### THE HEART AND THE MIND

**The Self is the heart [on the right side of the chest]. Light arises from the Heart and reaches the brain, which is sent to the mind. The world is seen with the mind, that is, by the reflected light of the Self. If the mind is turned towards the source of the light, objective knowledge ceases, and Self alone shines forth as the Heart. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**NEED FOR DETERMINATION:** Advance step by step in building a strong character. Be aware of the danger of slipping down two steps while ascending one. If you have the determination to climb and the yearning to rise, you can conquer your lower impulses and instincts. If you are sincere, the Grace of the Lord will smoothen your path. – *V. Narayanan*

### ROBBERY AT THE ASHRAM

Sri Ramana shifted to Mother's Samadhi in December 1922, after spending twenty-three years on the hill. On June 26, 1924, a robbery took place at the Ashram, full details of which are available in crime case no. 52/1924 in a Tiruvannamalai court.

It is difficult to understand why the robbers committed the offence. At that time there were only two huts at the Ashram; one in front of the Mother's Samadhi and the other to the north of it. There was hardly any sign of affluence. One guess is that even in those days the doors of the Ashram were open to everyone. If any visitors arrived at the meal time, they were sure to be fed. Besides, there was also the practice of feeding the poor. All this could have given the impression that the Ashram was wealthy. Moreover, the robbers might have felt that the inmates would be an easy prey. For these two huts were situated amidst thick green foliage. The Ashram was at an isolated place away from the town, and one could be sure that none would come for the rescue of the inmates, making it easy for the robbers to escape.

Three persons, all about 25 years of age, chose to strike at midnight, by breaking open the window of the Samadhi hut. Sri Ramana, Kunjuswami, Mastan, Thangavelu Pillai and Muniswami Iyer were sleeping there. In the other hut a few others were sleeping. While attempting to break the window, the robbers shouted various threats and burst crackers to give the impression that they had fire-arms. Robbers were asked to come by the door, which was opened for them, leaving the Samadhi hut free to the robbers. Sri Ramana ensured that the weak dog Karuppan, which was with them, would remain unhurt.

When Sri Ramana and others were coming out of the hut, one of the robbers beat each of them with his stick. When Sri Ramana received a blow on his left thigh he told the robber, 'if you are not satisfied, you may strike the other leg also', but no further injury was caused to him.

Having gained entry, the robbers ransacked everything, but could not find anything worthwhile. They asked for a hurricane lantern, which was provided. They broke open the almirah, where they could get a few strips of silver that adorned the images, a little rice, mangoes and about Rs. ten in cash, which belonged to a visitor. They continued their threats and wished to know where the money was hidden. Sri Ramana told them, 'We are poor *sadhus*, living on alms and never have cash.' They accepted the statement as the stark reality was before them.

Ramankrishna Swami saw the swollen thigh of Sri Ramana, who humourously remarked that he had received adequate 'poosai', which in Tamil means both 'beating' and 'worship.' Unable to bear the sight of the harm done to his guru, he seized an iron instrument nearby and sought permission to go after the robbers. Sri Ramana held him back advising, 'We are *sadhus*. We should not give up our *dharma*. They are misguided men.'

The following day, police officials came to enquire and recorded the details. Sri Ramana did not mention about his injury. Later the robbers were apprehended and tried for offences. The two were sentenced to one-year rigorous imprisonment, and the third to two years, as he had caused physical hurt as well.

At the request of the devotees, Sri Ramana would sometimes recall and explain in graphic details many incidents of this life; but we find no reference anywhere to this incident by him. – *Self Realization* by B.V. Narasimha Swami

## **FULL FAITH IN SRI RAMANA AND SINCERE EFFORT ESSENTIAL FOR SELF-REALISATION**

Many are called, but it is given to a few to persevere, to remain steadfast. A thousand distractions would set at naught our single-minded pursuit of Self-knowledge. Can there be a greater misfortune? Sri Ramana emphasised the great need for persistent effort. Effort to turn the mind inward through Self-enquiry is something as necessary as it is to breathe. So long as the sense of separate individuality lasts, effort for inwardness is a must. One cannot rest content with half-hearted, insipid, and weak effort to turn within, but should look within, ever seeking the Self with the inner eye. Ramana has said it clearly: **‘No one succeeds without effort. Mind control is not your birthright. Make effort to be without effort.’**

Steadfastness in Self-enquiry waxes and wanes like the moon, and flickers like the wick of the lamp exposed to wind. The ordour cools off, the passion wears off. Here one has to remember Ramana’s advice: ‘To place one’s burden at the feet of the Lord of Universe and to remain steadfast in the Heart.’ The total commitment to ‘That’ alone can make for unflagging interest in the effort necessary for it. *Sadhana*, the practice of Self-enquiry, is needed to break the ‘I’ thought’s unending association with other thoughts, and to expose it to the powerful current of Consciousness, within.

Why does our heart not remain always captive to the Ramana Way? It may be because we are unable to enjoy the fresh air of direct inner contact with Ramana, the Sadguru. Apparently, Ramana’s statement – ‘Where can I go, I am here’ has fallen on deaf ears. We cannot afford to forget the fact that he left the body only after ‘establishing the certainty of his existence’, of his eternal Presence transcending the passing off the body. **Ramana is as much a living guru now as when he walked on this earth. His guidance is still available to the same degree. At most faith in this regard is cardinal.**

A result-oriented mind is baffled by the seeming lack of rewards. But then one has to push within, without losing heart. Self-knowledge is discovered by the truly courageous, the brave ones, who are not deterred by the obstacles brought about by the play of karmic forces. Events – good, bad and indifferent, keep coming and going. Remain unaffected and have the limitless



joy of Self-abidance. – Edited version of a write-up by A.R. Natarajan, *The Ramana Way*, Jan. 2014

## A HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

Anonymous

Experiences of Bhagavan's Grace used to be recounted very often by my father, together with other incidents in his life. A boy of about twelve then, I used to listen avidly, and as a result, these narrations took a deep root in me, ripening into an incessant desire to have Bhagavan's *darshan*. During my daily prayers, my mind used to fix itself on the photograph of Bhagavan, appearing in his books, and I fervently ask for his *darshan*. Once or twice I ventured to ask my father about it, but he used to simply brush it aside with the remark, "If and when Bhagavan calls you, you will go."

One night in 1945, during sleep, I dreamt that I was sitting in the corner of a room, waiting for somebody. I then saw Bhagavan slowly enter the room. I rushed to Him and held Him around the waist with my hands, crying and making an earnest and humble petition. But Bhagavan simply passed on with apparent unconcern. I woke up and thought of it for a long time, and began to think of Him more and more. Yet again, for a long time nothing happened. Once more I was becoming desperate and losing hope. Then, one dark night, He appeared and initiated me out of His boundless love. This time it was more of a vision than a dream. I was half awake and felt myself rising from bed and walking into the courtyard of our house. I found myself standing still on a mound of sand. Slowly out of the darkness emerged the outline of a hill, shaped exactly like Arunachala. After a few minutes, a small flame leapt out of the apex of the hill. Its height touched the very heavens. Its splendour was beyond description. Its golden rays fell on my body. I was riveted to the spot and found that I could move neither hand nor foot. Then I became conscious of the scene, and felt that I was not alone in that spot. With an effort, I turned my face to the right and found Bhagavan standing there, looking at me. On his lips played the most bewitching smile, while his eyes poured out boundless compassion and love. He raised his forefinger and pointed at the Golden Flame and said: "Child, do you understand what the *Jyothi* is? This is the Karthigai Deepam." Suddenly, I was wide awake, ushered into the worry-ridden world.

In 1947, I was proceeding to Madras from Coimbatore. The train was speeding along some hills in the night, when a prayer to be allowed to visit the Ashram took shape in me. As I was accompanying my father, who did not entertain ideas from children, I did not talk of the prayer

to him. A few days later, when we were to return to Coimbatore, my father suddenly asked me whether I would like to go to Ramanasramam and have *darshan* of Bhagavan. I broke into tears on hearing this, as this was a prayer so graciously granted by Bhagavan. The next day, we were in Ramanasramam. As I entered the Divine Presence of Bhagavan, I felt that I was submerging in a sea, only this was a sea of bliss and tranquillity. We were there the whole of the forenoon and excepting for a swift, piercing look that Bhagavan blessed me with, nothing happened; nothing mattered any more.

When I heard later that Bhagavan had shed His mortal frame, a few tear-drops rolled down my cheeks, but my father sternly said, “You are a fool. Where can Bhagavan go?” Years have rolled by; still the torch burns on, gathering more and more brightness. It is the torch that He, out of His boundless Grace, lit in my heart. Now my children, in their turn, ask me: “Father, when will Bhagavan *Thatha* come to us?” I feel too full to reply to them, yet sometimes say: “All in good time, children. Learn to labour and to wait.” – *Mountain Path*, Jan., 1969

**LAUGHTER:** Laughter therapy has been used to cure illness. We don’t laugh because we are happy. We are happy because we laugh. Reconnect to your playful side and enjoy the wonders of a deep belly laugh. – *Robin Sharma*

**GRATITUDE:** Cultivating an attitude of gratitude is good for us. Experiments have found that people who are grateful are happier and healthier. They are less lonely, stressed or anxious. Gratitude helps people sleep better and wake up more refreshed. Like everything else, it takes practice. Start counting your blessings today and experience its benefits. – *Annu Matthai*

**YOU ARE UNIQUE:** Human beings are the most evolved form of life. You have unique power of making a difference in this world. What others have not done, you can do. It is the unique attribute within you that can help you to reinvent yourself. You have to discover yourself by going into yourself – discover your unlimited potential. – *Vir Singh*

**SOME ESSENTIAL TRUTHS:** It is relatively easy to acquire knowledge if one has good memory. It is entirely different to apply what we have learned. Bhagavan did not want us to memorise his teachings and parrot them. He wanted us to live in a dynamic and creative pursuit for the truth. Bhagavan’s gift may be tough but it is precious. It is also expensive – it will cost us all our delusions and preoccupations. To imbibe Bhagavan’s teachings, both self-effort and grace are needed. His grace is always blowing, like the wind over the sea. A sailor who unfurls the boat’s sail catches the wind and reaches the destination. Grace can be obtained

through prayer. It is an effort not of the intellect but of the heart. The communion may come soon or it may take years. It is enough if the effort is sincere and heart-felt. – *Mountain Path*, Jan.-Mar., 2014

### **THREE INSTANCES OF SRI RAMANA’S PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AWAY FROM THE ASHRAM**

1. Hariwansh Lal Poonja, a retired army officer, who was in search of spiritual advancement, met many *sadhus* and *siddhas* and asked only one question to all of them: “Have you seen God? Can you show me God?” and remained disillusioned and disappointed. One day, a *sadhu*, very much resembling Sri Ramana, appeared at his door asking for food, which was given to him. Then the *sadhu* was asked the pet question. Much to Poonja’s surprise, the *sadhu* said, “Yes, I know a person who can show you God. His name is Ramana Maharshi and he lives at Tiruvannamalai.” Poonja says: He gave me detailed instructions on how to reach there. I noted them down carefully. But I had spent all the money I had saved from my brief spell in the army on my unsuccessful pilgrimages. Through an amazing coincidence, I came across an advertisement offering job to an ex-army officer in Madras. After I got the job, my employer gave me money to get to Madras and told me that I need not report for duty for one month, thus giving me an opportunity to be in the Maharshi’s presence, before I reported for work. It was 1944, and I was thirty-four years of age.

As per *sadhu*’s instructions, I reached Ramanasram. Before entering the hall, I peeped through the window and saw, sitting on a sofa inside, the same man who had visited my house in the Punjab. I was disgusted. I said to myself: “This man is a fraud. He appears in my house in the Punjab, tells me to go to Tiruvannamalai, and then hops on the train so that he could get here before me.” I felt so annoyed that I decided to leave the Ashram. As I was preparing to do so, one of the residents asked, “Haven’t you just arrived?” I told him the story as to how I got cheated. The person said, “You are mistaken. He has not moved out of the town during the last 48 years. It is either a case of mistaken identity or somehow, through his power, he managed to manifest himself in the Punjab while his physical body was still here. Some girls from America came here once and told a similar story. These things do happen occasionally.” This aroused my curiosity, and I decided to stay. (*Nothing Ever Happened* by David Godman, vol. one, provides Poonja’s life history. See also *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* pages 235-43, in this regard.)

2. & 3. These episodes are from the autobiography of Berzin M. Lahevala\*, a Parsi, who got deeply attached to Bhagavan after reading *Sages, Saints and Arunachala Ramana* by Mrs.

Taleyarkhan\*\*, a Parsi lady, a very well-known devotee, who had made Tiruvannamalai her home. Lahevala says that during 1975-82, he visited the Ashram more than 100 times and met a large number of devotees. He records:

**(i)** An Australian lady at the Ashram told me the following story. She said that she lived in a remote part of her country. One evening while relaxing in an easy-chair in the porch of her house, an old man with a short silvery beard and hair appeared in front of her. He was brown-skinned, clad only in a loin-cloth. He was standing with the support of a staff. After a minute or two the figure abruptly disappeared. She was completely puzzled by the strange incident. The mystery got resolved a few days later when her friend gave her a book to read. As she turned over the title page she was astonished to see a photo which was the same figure which she had seen in flesh and blood a few days ago, and she felt compelled to visit the Ashram, and pay her respect to the great Saint.

**(ii)** Lahevala adds: When I put my usual question to an American – What made you come here? He gave me the following amazing account: “I was involved in a severe car crash and was rushed to hospital. After weeks of hospitalization, I got disgusted with life and wanted to die. As I was thinking like this, suddenly I saw a man standing beside my bed. He looked like an Indian and was clad only in a loin-cloth. His face was shining with an unearthly light. He gave me long compassionate look and softly said, ‘No, it’s still not the time for you to leave the world, I will show a reason for living.’ The next moment he vanished. I could not make head or tail of the extraordinary vision, but my condition improved dramatically after the old man’s visit. A week before my discharge, a friend gave me a book to read. As I unwrapped it, my breath simply stopped in shock to find the same smiling, compassionate face of the old man on the cover page. Then I read the book with great interest and anticipation. After that it was but natural that I couldn’t keep away and had to come here.”

*\*A Life of Endless Love-Grace, Marvellous Miracles, Bombay, 2003.*

\*\* This book of her was published by Orient Longman in 1970. As author, she calls herself ‘Bhagavan Priya Ma F. Taleyarkhan’.

## HOW SRI RAMANA LEARNT MALAYALAM, TELUGU AND NAGRI SCRIPT

**Suri Nagamma in her letter of 29<sup>th</sup> October, 1947, records:**

This afternoon, when Bhagavan was reading a Malayalam book, a devotee asked, ‘Did Bhagavan learnt Malayalam in his younger days?’ ‘No.’ Bhagavan replied, ‘While I was in Gurumurtam, Palaniswami had a copy of *Adhyatma Ramayana* and was often reading it aloud. I was at that time observing silence, and so I merely used to listen. After we shifted to Palmyra Grove, I took the book and found it to be in Malayalam script. Having already learnt that script, I easily learned to read and write.

‘When did you learn Telugu?’ asked someone. Bhagavan said, ‘When I was in Virupaksa Cave, Gambhiram Seshayya and others asked me to write some stanzas in Telugu and so I transcribed letter by letter from Sanskrit into Telugu script and practised them. Thus, I slowly learnt Telugu in 1900.’

I asked him when he had learnt the Nagari script? Bhagavan said, ‘That must also have been at the same time. Muthurama Dikshitar and others used to come frequently; as they had books in Nagari script, I used to copy the letters and in that way got used to them.’

Someone said, ‘We had heard that you learnt Telugu only after Nayana came to you.’ ‘No.’ said Bhagavan, ‘I learnt it much earlier, but I got used to speaking it freely only after he came.’ ‘We had heard’, said another, ‘that you learnt Telugu in your boyhood days.’ Bhagavan said, ‘I did not know how to write or read at that time. My grandfather’s younger brother knew Telugu; he used to keep me by his side on the cot and teach me Telugu alphabets. That was all. I learnt Telugu only while writing the stanzas. Subsequently, when I wrote *Upadesa Saram*, Ramaiya Yogi wanted it in Telugu, so I wrote it in couplets, closely following the Tamil metre. I then showed it to Nayana, who said, that it was not a correct Telugu couplet and he taught me the metres of the Telugu verses. I wrote them down in Tamil script and then made the required alterations. When I showed it to Nayana, he said it was correct and could be given to the printers. Later, when Balarama Reddi got me a copy of the *Sulakshana Saram*, I learnt the meters of the other verses, copied them on two pages and pasted them in our copy of the Telugu primer. That has been sufficient for my purposes. Now, if any one reads a verse, I can easily find out in what metre it is and what mistakes, if any, there are. I learnt one language after another in the same way. I did not purposely learn any language,’ said Bhagavan. – *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*

## **BHAKTA RUPA OF BHAGAVAN – SOME INSTANCES**

**1. *Conscious Immortality* by Paul Brunton and Munagala Venkataramiah, records as follows:** Swami Siddeswarananda of Ramakrishna Mission told me the following: ‘One morning when I was sitting in the hall, I asked the Maharshi about a certain verse by Nammalwar [One of the 12 Vaishnavite Tamil saints] embodying his vision of cosmic consciousness. The Maharshi replied, “I shall recite some similar verses from another poet of the Tamil language. Pay attention to my way of repeating the words and you will be able to understand, even though you are a Malayali.” The verse referred to divine love. He had read out barely two lines, when I noticed tears tricking down his face. Then he stopped speaking, as though he felt too keenly and emotionally the meanings of the words. There was an atmosphere of love around him. For very long time he remained silent, the rest of the poem unread, the book resting on his knees, his eyes open in a trance of divine emotion.’ The Swami had previously been under the impression that the Maharshi was a dry, cold, indifferent type. This experience showed how deeply the Maharshi could feel.

**2. T.K. Sundaresa Iyer in his *At the feet of Bhagavan* says:** When Bhagavan came to the story of how Kannappan was plucking out his second eye to heal the second eye of the Lord, and of how the Sivalinga extended a hand to stop him, saying, ‘Stop Kannappan’, Bhagavan’s voice got choked, his body perspired profusely, his hair stood on end, tears gushed out of his eyes, he could hardly utter a word, and there was pin-drop silence in the hall. All were dumbfounded that this great *jnani* could be so overpowered by emotion and ecstasy at the hunter’s devotion. After a while, Bhagavan quietly closed the book, dried the tears with the end of his towel and laid aside the book, saying, “No, I can’t go on any further.” (Kannappan’s story is at pages 412-3 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.)

**3. S.S. Cohen in his *Guru Ramana – Memories and Notes*, records:** On one occasion, Bhagavan recited from memory a poem of a Vaishnava saint, in which occurred the words ‘Fold me in thy embrace, O Lord’, when the arms of Bhagavan joined in a circle round the vacant air before him, his eyes shone with devotional ardour, while his voice shook with stifled sobs which did not escape our notice. It was fascinating to see him acting the parts he related, and be in such exhilarated moods as these.

**4. Subbalakshmi, wife of Krishnamurthi Iyer, first doctor of the Ashram dispensary, notes:** Once, Bhagavan was narrating the life of saint Tiruthondal Nayanar [One of the 63 Saivite Tamil saints]. His voice got choked with emotion and tears kept trickling from his eyes.

No doubt he was a *jnani* par-excellence, but what a heart he had! – *Unforgettable Years*, Ramana Centre, Bangalore

**BHAGAVAN’S SILENCE, SILENCES AN ARROGANT VISITOR:** A young, stylish, well-fed person, came to the Ashram, bowed, and sat before the Maharshi. He opened fire straightaway with the question in English, “You have realized God, I hope?” The Maharshi kept silent. The visitor waited and waited but got no answer. Unabashed by his failure, he cast a look on the tiger skin on which the Maharshi was sitting (and which had been probably accepted as a present from a disciple), and tried his second firework: “Is it sin, Swamiji, to kill tiger?” he asked. This also failed to explode. The Maharshi kept silent, noting that the visitor was anxious to draw him into a controversy and to put him on the horns of a dilemma. The visitor evidently sought to force the Maharshi to say that killing animals is no sin or to admit abetment of the sin. Someone present tried to explain to the visitor that blank general doctrines would not do, and the answer might depend upon the circumstances. But, before the explanation was fully offered, the visitor boldly remarked: “I did not question you, please, I want the Swami alone to answer.” So there was perfect silence for ten or fifteen minutes, after which the visitor left the hall. – *Self Realization* (1931) by B.V. Narasimha Swami

**People can accomplish what they desire; it is just that most people lack the will to accomplish it.** – *J.J. Adams*

**I do not have any animosity towards anybody, and I have friendship with all living beings.** – *Jain Sutras*

**Forget about making friends; just be ‘friendly’ with everyone you meet.** – *Osho*

**We look for happiness everywhere except within. *The Bible* says the Kingdom of Heaven is within.** – *Anonymous*

**The past is over and done. The future is yet to come and uncertain. What is real is the present moment. Let us make it beautiful.** – *J.P. Vaswani*

**The love for all living creatures is the most notable attribute of a man.** – *Charles Darwin*

**Every problem begins in the mind, and it is also in the mind where problems can be solved.** – *Anonymous*

**CONSTANT EFFORT NEEDED TO IMPROVE:** When we examine our failures, we know what we have to do to be better each day. Then, by making effort, we will have fewer failures than on the previous day. Over a period of time, through sincere and persistent effort, we

would ultimately reach a stage at which we have improved to the extent of reaching zero failure. – *Sant Rajinder Singh*

## JUNE

### NEED FOR A GURU

**Guru is necessary so long as we continue to be *laghu*. *Laghu* is due to the self-imposed but wrong limitation of the Self. God, on being worshipped, bestows steadiness in devotion which leads to surrender. After surrender by the devotee, God shows His mercy by manifesting as Guru. The Guru, otherwise God, guides the devotee, saying that God is in you and he is the Self. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi***

**HOW TO BE HAPPY:** Just like a fish, which lives happily in deep water, a person can live in true happiness only when immersed in *ananda* (bliss). The spring of *ananda* can be touched by constant meditation, *japa*, and also by dwelling on the glory of the Lord. Hold fast to the goal; the devotee should never turn back. *Never give way to doubt or despair.* – *V. Narayanan*

### MURUGANAR – DEVOTEE PAR EXCELLENCE

Born in 1890, he was named Subrahmanyam. Due to his love of Tamil, he changed it to Muruganar, corresponding to Subrahmanyam. A renowned Tamil teacher and scholar, he actively participated in a committee of Tamil scholars engaged in the tremendous task of preparing the first Tamil dictionary. He was deeply devoted to Lord Siva. Once, his father-in-law, Dandapani Swami, an ardent devotee of Ramana, gifted him two books – *Aksharamanamalai* and *Who am I?* The purpose of the gift was that Muruganar might flower as a poet by Ramana's grace, and he said so specifically. The two books immersed Muruganar in a passion for Ramana, and he intuitively felt that Ramana could only be the great God Siva.

He left for Tiruvannamalai in September, 1923, and before meeting Ramana, as *dakshina*, ten verses gushed forth, which he titled as 'Desika Ramana Maadeve' (Guru Ramana – God of gods). The first of these verses, reads: 'In days of yore you left Kailasa/ Agog with music of celestial beings/ And came to Perundurai/ To hear the words of Vachagar/ Now you have come again/ To holy Arunachala to hear my inept prattle.'

On reaching Ramanasram, he stood with lyrics in his hand, when Ramana was coming out to go towards the hill. He attempted to read his poems, but filled with emotion, could not do so.



Seeing this, Ramana took the verses from him and read them himself. Muruganar was lost in ecstatic joy.

Though he was wholly given to Ramana from the very beginning, he stayed at Madras, because of his deep love for his mother, till she passed away in 1926. During 1923 to 1926, he would avail every opportunity to be with Ramana. After coming to the Ashram, he would never leave Ramana's presence, and remained in the hall throughout the day, except when he had to go to beg for his food. An incident illustrates his one-pointedness. One day, while Muruganar was offering his prostrations, Ramana asked him something, to which he replied without getting up. When asked as to why he replied without getting up, he said, "What can I do? If Bhagavan asks me something I have to reply immediately. At that time I do not know whether I am prostrating, sitting or standing."

Ramana's presence inspired the poet in him. His 1851 verses published as 'Ramana Sannidhi Murai' (Homage to the Presence of Ramana), show his state of total immersion in his Lord. A token sample of his outpourings: 'No form or feature had he of his own/ Yet form and feature to all being he gives/ He brought me into being/ And he has left me wordless and deedless/ All in One and One in all/ True seer in whom all truth is seen/ Merciful, liberal giver of grace/ Miraculously strong to save/ Yes, He is Mother and Father too.'

His 'Guru Vachaka Kovai' (Garland of Guru's sayings) contains Ramana's replies to questions in 1254 verses. It is a classic on the core of Ramana's teachings. Ramana himself went through them, making changing and corrections and also composed 28 new verses, which were added at appropriate places.

Muruganar's poetry kept gushing forth from a perennial spring; the central and only figure being Ramana. His 'Ramana Deva Malai', 'Ramana Sarana Pallandu', 'Ramana Anubhuti Part-I and Part-II', covering in all about thirteen thousand verses, reveal his own exalted state of devotion and *jnana*.

Even after Ramana's *mahanirvana* in 1950, his poetry continued to flow unabated. He composed more than seventeen thousand verses till his death in 1973. These are contained in nine volumes titled 'Ramana Gyana Bodham'.

When he got merged with Arunachala, amidst the singing of *Aksharamanamalai*, he was interred with due honours within the Ashram compound. His samadhi has been a source of inspiration to seekers. – Excerpted from *Timeless in Time* by A.R. Natarajan.

**Note:** For some more details about this outstanding poet and devotee, see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, which also contains reminiscences of his wife, with whom he refused to live even after Bhagavan's intervention. See pages 154-59 and 304-5.

**WHO AM I?** Think about this question; let it trouble you. Let it make you uncertain about your identity. If others try to pull you back into mainstream dramas, refuse politely and persist. The unknown zone looks scary in the beginning, but if you can stay on and explore with dedication, you will be in for a surprise. – *Pulkit Sharma*

**CONNECT WITH YOUR BLISSFUL NATURE:** In everything you do, try to withdraw your mind within. Practise this regularly. To develop inwardness, you don't necessarily require a living guru. You can meditate on the eyes/smile/feet of the Master. Another good practice is to always do *japa* in the back of your mind. Try not to be with people/situations which take your mind outwards. Never allow yourself to think that you are a limited human being. You may have faults to overcome, but these are just weeds in your garden – they are not you. – *Swami Kriyananda*

**LIFE, THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH:** We must never lose our faith in the Divine Director of this Earth Drama, who will ensure that things go as planned. Things will not always be easy; but no one says that life is meant to be easy. We have to work hard to earn the Divine Oscar for our efforts. When tragedy strikes or hardships come, remember that greatest of heroes are not those who didn't face conflicts, but those who overcame them. Christ's promise to us is: "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more." – *Prashant Solmon*

**PEACE AND HAPPINESS:** We are in constant search for peace, which is our birth right. What comes in the way is the superhuman computer that resides in our skull – our brain, which has over 13 billion cells generating a constant, unending stream of thoughts. These cannot be conquered by direct confrontation. The way provided by Sri Ramana is to direct the mind to the inner 'Sruti' or divine tune, which is the only reality. Vigilance and prayer can help towards this. Just as we devote time to other activities, we need to find time for the inner journey. Slowly but surely, the path transversed by us within will make us happy and peaceful. – *Vijay Vancheswar*

**DISCOVERING SELF:** You are looking for what you have never lost. How can you attain what you already have? The Self is already working inside you. Through what action are you going to find it? We meditate only in order to make the intellect pure enough to reflect the effulgence of the Self. – *Swami Muktananda*

**THE MIND:** Mind is a product of habit and you become victim to the habit. Habit takes time to drop. Learn to say 'stop' to your clinging, and give power to that effort. Mind with its habits, errors, and delusions will interfere when you want it to change. Stopping it with effort,

with awareness, is a wise practice. Practice is the best part of spiritual discipline. Learn to say, “Stop!” – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

**ALWARS:** Tamil – *Azwars* means ‘those immersed in god’. These 12 Tamil poet-saints of 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> century espoused devotion to Vishnu-Krishna in their songs. Together with the contemporary 63 Saiva *Nayanars*, they are 75 apostles of *bhakti* in Tamil-Nadu, who helped to make the Tamil religious life independent of knowledge of Sanskrit. Andal was the only lady among 12 *Alwars*. She is famous for her *Tiruppavai*. *Pavai* in Tamil refers to a girl, *tiru* stands for respect. These 30 hymns give a call to girls to take bath early in the morning and pray to Krishna for his grace. Even today in the month of *Margazhi* (Dec-Jan.), a large number of girls, particularly in Tamil-Nadu, go to temples signing these hymns early in the morning. – *The Internet*

**DISCOVER YOUR DIVINITY:** Each human being is a combination of divine and demonic tendencies. Our success depends upon how well we are able to marginalise the latter ones. The doors to your soul are kept shut and you live and die without even a glimpse of your own power and magnificence. If you follow your divine nature, you do good to yourself and uplift others as well. – *Jaya Row*

## AMAZING GRACE ON A FOREIGN LADY

**Zulie Nakhooda writes:**

I came under the spell of Bhagavan through a photograph in *Mountain Path*. The serene benignity of the smile and the gracious and penetrating look exuded peace and joy that held me spell-bound. It was at a time of uncertainty and frustration when his grace entered my life, and I found my moorings. Surrender to his power, entity, force or whatever it may be called, changed my circumstances and created conditions leading to emotional stability and economic security. Since then, the pictorial representation of Grace incarnate, the photograph of Bhagavan, has been my beacon light bringing me relief in times of trouble and giving me refuge in days of anxiety and sorrow. It accompanies me wherever I go, as it did during my trip abroad, where an incident strengthened my faith, and made me aware of His constant and guiding presence.

I was in Vienna to see an old friend. She had a full programme for me during my stay. It was on the last day, perhaps the busiest, that I went for a shower in a decent private establishment,

where I was accommodated. As usual, there was running hot and cold water and the taps had to be adjusted according to the required temperature. Somehow, in my hurry to get out and be ready in time to keep my appointments, I turned on only the hot water tap, and before I could realise what was happening, steaming hot water was pouring all over me. I was scared and confused and could not even touch the tap to turn it off. Fortunately, I slipped and the fall threw me half out of shower. I pulled myself out, parts of my body already stinging with the scalding. The feeling of discomfort, the anxiety about how I shall be able to wear my clothes and go through the day's programme, even leave for my country, were weighing heavy on my mind and making me feel miserable.

And then I fell back on my last resource – praying fervently to Bhagavan and concentrating on the photograph. I let the healing influence of the glance of Grace from the photo over the affected parts for a few minutes. Soon, I started feeling better and gradually the burning sensation was gone. Within a quarter of an hour, I was able to dress and go out as scheduled. The injury of the fall in the shower was also forgotten. The tour of the city involved a lot of walking. It was only after reaching home that I felt pain and applied medicine to heal the injury. The bruise on the knee was quite severe. Under normal circumstances this would have made it impossible for me to walk, let alone go up and down, as I did that afternoon. – *Ramana Maharshi's Miracles* compiled by A.R. Natarajan

### ***GRANTHIBHEDA – SEVERANCE OF THE KNOT***

Chapter nine of *Sri Ramana Gita* titled 'On Cutting the Knot', deals with *chetan* (*atman*) getting entangled in the *jada* body, and how it could be released. The foremost Hindi poet Tulasidas\* deals with this subject in his celebrated *Rama charitra mansa*, as follows.

The soul is essentially Divinity – immortal, conscious, and blissful by nature. Such a soul when dominated by *maya* gets caught in its own trap like a parrot or a monkey.\*\*

Matter and Spirit have got bound together with a knot which, though imaginary, is difficult to untie. Once the soul becomes worldly, it can have no happiness till the knot is untied.

The Vedas and Puranas have suggested a number of ways for untying this knot. But the knot far from being resolved, goes on becoming harder and harder. As human beings, utterly clouded with the darkness of ignorance, we do not even perceive the knot, what to say of its getting untied. Only when the circumstances become favourable through God's Grace, the severance can be secured.

\*Story of Tulasidas, as given in ‘Maha Bhakta Vijayam’ of Nabaji Siddha, has been covered at great length in *Mountain Path* in as many as nine issues (2,3,4 of 2012; 1,2,3,4 of 2013; and 1 and 2 of 2014)

\*\*The reference here is to two popular modes of catching parrots and monkeys. A stick with a bait at the end and a string attached to it, is so set in the ground that it revolves from the weight of the parrot when it lands upon it. The bird confused by the motion, thinks that it is entangled, though it is really loose and can easily fly away, if it wants. For the monkey, a big pot with a narrow mouth is sunk in the ground full of grain. The monkey puts in his hand and clutches a handful; but being unable to draw out his closed fist, on account of the smallness of the jar’s mouth, imagines himself caught, though if he opens the palm he could extricate himself immediately. (We are all caught in the *maya* in our own imagination like parrot and monkey. If we apply our mind we can delink ourselves. But we fail to do so, because we are wrongly afraid as to what will happen to us if we disconnect ourselves from the worldly possessions.)

**ADHYATMA RAMAYANA:** This ancient Sanskrit work was one the earliest books read by Bhagavan. It comprises around 4200 double verses embedded in the latter portion of *Brahmanda Purna* and is believed to be authored by Vyasa. Taking the form of a dialogue between Siva and Parvati, it contains the ideal characteristics of Lord Rama, and the precepts related to devotion, knowledge, dispassion, adoration, and good conduct. It is also considered a treatise on Vedanta. It inspired the great Hindi poet Tulasidas in writing his *Rama chrit manas*, and other authors in Oriya, Bengali and Malayalam. It represents the story of Rama in a spiritual context. In this version, everything is preordained, and Rama being the Brahman himself, doesn’t kill or destroy, but rather offers salvation to those he kills. Thus, this act is called *uddhar*. The book is aimed to be used as a guide and a ready source of instruction for a spiritual seeker, as it presents the *Ramayana* as a divine allegory, where an exiled king gets beguiled by the lure of *maya – maya mrigya*, and hence loses his Beloved (Sita), to the demon or dark forces (Ravana). Later, when he repents and asks for divine grace, he is given the strength and friends (Hanuman and others) to help him reclaim his divinity (his Beloved). – *The Internet*

## BHAGAVAN TAKES CARE OF A CRACKED EGG

One early morning, Bhagavan after his bath, went to the farther end of the hall to take his towel, which was hanging on a horizontally suspended bamboo, at one end of which a sparrow had built her nest and laid therein some eggs.

In the process of taking the towel, Bhagavan's hand came in contact with the nest, and one of the eggs dropped down and cracked. Bhagavan was taken aback. He cried out to his attendant Madhavan, 'Look, what I have done.' So saying, he took egg in his hand and exclaimed: 'Oh, the poor mother will be so sorrow-stricken, perhaps angry with me also, for causing destruction of her expected little one! Can the cracked eggshell be pieced together again? Let us try!' So saying, he took a wet piece of cloth, wrapped it around the broken egg and put it back in the nest. Sometimes he would take out the cracked egg, remove the cloth, place the egg on his palm, and gaze it with his tender eyes for minutes together, and kept saying: 'Let the crack be healed!'

This anxious concern continued for about a week. On the seventh day, the Maharshi took out the egg, and, with the astonishment of a schoolboy, announced: 'Look, what a wonder! The crack has closed. My God has freed me from the sin of causing the loss of life. Let us wait patiently for the blessed young to come out.'

After a few days, Bhagavan found that the egg has been hatched, and the little bird came out. With gleeful smiling face, radiant with the usual light, he took it in his hand, caressed it with lips, stroking it with his soft hand, and passed it on for all bystanders to admire. (The great wonder is how the bird would sit on the egg, after it has been handled by someone.)

Ah, what concern for the meanest of creation! Could the milk of kindness ever be seen or conceived of sweeter than this? – Excerpted from *At the Feet of Bhagavan* by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer

**AKSHARAMANAMALAI:** This unique poem, which poured out from Bhagavan 100 years ago, expresses Sri Ramana's love, that is the Self embodied as Arunachala. The 108 couplets in simple sweet Tamil, flowing in the order of letters of the Tamil alphabets, are couched in the imagery of bridal mysticism, as the ego's destination is to be united and absorbed in the Self, as the bride in the bridegroom, the river in the sea. Composed as hymn to mark out Sri Ramana's devotees when they went begging for alms, it has become a signature tune among

Ramana devotees. Sri Ramana once remarked humorously, ‘*Aksharamanamalai* has fed us for many years.’ The hymn has the potent power to cure every malady and satisfy any hunger. – *The Ramana Way*, monthly journal of Ramana Centre, Bangalore.

## SELF REALISATION – SOME ESSENTIALS

By Paul Brunton\*

We are all victims of a machine which is producing thoughts continuously, and we have lost control of the machine. Meditation is a process to regain this control. The thoughts make a screen between you and your inner Self. All systems of yoga are devices to bring the mind into concentration, so that you are able to withdraw attention from the world outside and learn to listen within. When the mind is sufficiently quieted, then and only then can the higher part of your nature begin to make itself obvious to you. But it is necessary to state that meditation, because it offers so much in the end, also requires you to give so much. *What you have to give is time and practice, and even more than anything else, is patience.* Without patience, you cannot hope to learn meditation. There is no fixed time in which it can be learnt, because each of us is an individual, and with some, the pace is quicker, and with others it is slower. It is also a matter of the circumstances in which you happen to be placed. They will either hinder or help your learning meditation. But patience is needed, and many people, get discouraged in their earlier efforts because they do not see any progress coming. And that is a mistake, to give up prematurely. The patience will surely get rewarded in the end. Part of this reward is the new inspiration you will receive. Meditation is one of the ways of getting inspired.

Another topic which is constantly brought up is the necessity of a Guru. Of course, an instructor is a help to the students of that subject. But the fact remains that there are very few competent instructors in the pursuit of Truth, who have themselves realized the Truth. It is not hard to find those who have promoted movements, founded societies, created organizations, but their reliability and competence is another matter.

Finally, two other points. The first, *bring to this quest a feeling of worship.* There is something sacred and holy around the very concept and you must try to awaken this attitude – that it is like entering a church which you really respect. The second, world outside you and around you, the world of other people, is not much interested in the line you have taken and may even be hostile to it. They may try to discourage you or to oppose you. I suggest that *you should not try to make your pursuit of Truth a conspicuous affair.* After all, it is something

that does not really concern others except in its indirect consequences. It is something which concerns you only. *So don't make a public show of it, or any fuss about it, or make any mention of it.* Keep it to yourself. Only where someone else has strong doubts and is beginning to seek and approaches you, you can profitably discuss it, and even then, one should not discuss it more than necessary. The last words of the Buddha before he died were: "Be a lamp unto yourselves." – *The Maharshi*, Newsletter of Sri Ramana Ashram, New York

\*A British journalist, who first met Bhagavan in 1930. His book *A Search in Secret India*, published in London in 1934, made Bhagavan known the world over. His stirring reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 13-23.

**DIE TO THE WORLD WITHOUT DYING:** A conspicuous feature of this state is that even while performing the worldly duties, the seeker continues to remain established in the super conscious state of inner realisation. – *Anup Taneja*

**DEEP LOVE FOR GOD ESSENTIAL:** Although Self-realisation is the sole purpose of life and renunciation is the key to it, it cannot be adopted by the majority. The gravitational pull of diehard worldly attachments drags us down and blinds us to the true mission of life. Delusion is so blinding that we conveniently overlook impermanence of the worldly things. An antidote is love for God. The more we cling to Him, the more we get detached from worldly attachments. – *M.N. Kundu*

**When you doubt your power, you give power to your doubt.** – *Aristotle*

**Limitations live only in our mind. If we use our imagination, our possibilities become limitless.** – *Jamie Paolinetti*

**When we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves.** – *William Ward*

**Being ignorant is not so much a shame, as being unwilling to learn.** – *Benjamin Franklin*

**A superior man is modest in his speech, but excels in his actions.** – *Confucius*

**ANATOMY OF THOUGHTS:** Our thoughts, despite being intangible and subtle, have tangible effects that impact the gross body. Thoughts consume energy. The brain has the highest metabolic rate of all organs and has the highest blood supply in terms of cc per gram. Fleeting thoughts have their origins in the subconscious mind. They seem to appear on the



horizon of consciousness like clouds in a clear sky and they stream through. Conscious thought processes are more proactive and entirely in our control. Anxiety and apprehension are a pattern of negative thought processes. – *Deepak Ranade*

**HOW TO GET ATTACHED TO GOD:** When we sit in the silence of deep meditation, joy bubbles up from within, roused by no other stimulus. The problem is the net of delusion (*maya*) which entangles us in all types of mundane interests. We have to have a firm resolve to have our meditation first. The best prayer to God is: ‘Please tell me Thy will.’ He knows what we need. Have full trust in Him. We must also learn to lead a controlled existence – have simple *sattvic* diet, exercise the body, and meditate daily, no matter what happens. If we do not fill the minutes with His thoughts, years will slip by, and when we need Him most, we would be unable to feel His presence. The longing for Him should be intense and constant. Remain mentally united with Him while performing your duties. Whatever you are doing, say inwardly, ‘Lord, you are right here. You are in this room. You are in my heart.’ We have to have an ever-increasing desire for Him, day and night. – *Siluveru Sudarshan*

## JULY

### NATURE OF GURU’S HELP

**The Guru is a very powerful aid on the path of Self-realisation, but your effort is essential. It is you who see the sun – can your spectacles do it for you? You have to make all effort to ‘see’ your ‘True Nature’.** – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**SIVA’S THIRD EYE:** It is the eye of the fire of spiritual knowledge – *para vidya*. Siva is also known as *agninetra* because his third eye burnt up Kama, who as the symbol of gross physical and mental desires, tried to disturb Siva’s meditation. – *Lalita Ramakrishna*

**WELCOME TROUBLES:** It is only when you secure the prescribed marks and pass the examination, you are declared eligible to advance to the higher class. While preparing for the examination you have to face stress and difficulties, but how sweet the promotion is! So welcome troubles during *Sadhana*, as it is your preparation for something higher. – *V. Narayanan*

**JAPA:** It is constant recitation of a name of the Divine, or a mantra. Bhagavan would enjoin *atma-vichara*, but if the devotee was not ready, he would assent to *japa* to purify the mind. He said that ‘the mantra finally merges into the Self and shines forth as the Self.’ A mind that is immersed in the Divine’s name will eventually become Divine. The crux of the matter is practice. Practice, practice, and see what happens. – *John Grimes*

**WHO IS SPIRITUAL?** Spirituality involves our mind rather than our body. One way of pursuing a spiritual way of life is being aware that there is an invisible big picture of which our existence is only a very small part. Spiritual pursuit is essentially a sincere and durable recognition that there is an invisible spirit behind all physical creation, and our life in it. A spiritual person believes that whatever is happening must be a part of a big and long-term plan that we do not know of. – *Kishor Kulkarni*

**SILENCE:** Everything is born out of silence. Anything can be created from that state of silence. There is so much truth to the expression: ‘When a thought is released from the seat of silence, a mere wish becomes a command to the universe.’ – *Infinithoughts*, October, 2013

**BE CEO OF YOUR LIFE:** Begin to see yourself as the Chief Executive Officer of your destiny. ‘If it is going to be, it is up to me’, is what every CEO knows. Similarly, if you want something to be done, rather waiting for the luck to look your way, take steps to get it done. Remember, you can make excuses, or you can make progress, but you cannot do both. – *Robin Sharma*

### ***THE RIBHU GITA***

**It contains teachings of Lord Siva to his devotee Ribbu. It is a part of the Sanskrit work *Siva Rahasya*. The core essence of the teachings of this precious work, so often referred to by Sri Ramana, is:**

The Self is one and whole. There is nothing apart from the Self (*atman*), worthy of meditation.

Know: I am Being-Awareness-Bliss. I am without differentiation of caste, clan, birth and the like. I am the Divine Absolute shining eternally in all splendour as the All, the Full, spotless, intelligent, beyond the body, thought, intellect, mind and ego-sense; unattached to the five *kosa*; unaffected by the incident of birth and death.

The *maya* of the world is not for you. You are yourself the One Self, which cannot be experienced by mind or speech. Here, there, this, that, I, and he – all are in mind alone.

Here is the true form of worship: 1. I am the ocean of bliss that is ever full. 2. I am the unbounded expanse. 3. I am the Self. 4. I am the attributeless Paramasiva, the Supreme Lord. 5. I am the Supreme Knowledge determined by the scriptures. 6. I am the solid Bliss abiding as in the universal Great Silence.

‘I am the Divine (*Aham Brahmasmi*)’. Meditate on this, practice the wisdom of yoga, destroy all sense of difference, be free from the disease of mind, and come to realize the release from bondage. Abiding in the Self as ‘I am Divine’ is the real ablution (washing of the body).

Get rid of individuality and all concepts. Knowing, feeling, thinking, praying, determining, mingling, abiding, all these must be in the Self Itself. Meditate incessantly on ‘*Aham Brahmasmi*’ until it becomes permanent; later on, be free from even this thought, and be the Self Itself alone.

The thought-waves that arise in the mind are the cause of bondage. The conquest of the mind is the greatest of all conquests. Abidance in the Divine at all times and in all places will result in conquering the mind. ‘That am I’ is the surest way to conquer the mind. Be at peace by the feeling ‘That am I’. Cast off the idea that ‘I am the body’; be firm in the feeling ‘I am the Self.’

‘That am I (*Soham*)’; experience ‘I am Siva (*Sivoham*)’ and sing ‘*Sivoham. Sivoham, Sivoham!*’ – Excerpted from *At the Feet of Bhagavan* by T.K.Sundaresa Iyer

**DEATH IN SIKHISM:** It is not considered an occasion for grief, but a journey towards the final merger with the Supreme. Lamentation over death and any kind of boisterous expression of sorrow like wailing is strictly prohibited. The funeral service of Sikhs is called ‘Bhog’, which means ‘to conclude’, as well as ‘delight’ and ‘pleasure’. – *Kulbir Kaur*

## **SRI MAHARSHI OPERATES THROUGH DREAM VISIONS – SOME AMAZING EPISODES**

**1. Dr. Krishnamurthy Iyer, first doctor of the Ashram dispensary, which started in 1929, says:** Once continuous hiccups gripped Bhagavan. I was treating him. Days passed and I had tried all the medicines known to the profession; all in vain. I got thoroughly upset. I spoke no words to Him, but standing in His presence, I prayed mentally that He should show me a way to cure Him. I returned home grief-stricken and cried and cried like a child till I fell asleep. In the early hours of the morning, Bhagavan appeared in my dream and asked, “Why are you crying?” I replied sobbing, “Bhagavan, you know why. I don’t know how to save you from hiccups. What am I to do?” Bhagavan consoled me saying, “Don’t cry. In the courtyard of your house there is a plant of *Seenhikodi*. Pluck some leaves from it, fry them in ghee and then pound them along with dried ginger and jaggery, make balls of it and bring them to me. Don’t worry!” I woke up delighted. My wife and I went out with a hurricane lamp and searched for the herb in the courtyard. Except for a small strip, the courtyard was plastered in cement. In the small strip many bushes had grown. There among them, we did find the herb; prepared the medicine and almost ran to the Ashram. As we entered the hall very early in the morning, we found Sri Bhagavan on His couch. With a smiling face, He greeted us and extended His hand

with these words: “Give me what you have brought!” He swallowed a part of the medicine. When I spoke to Him about the dream He looked innocent as if He knew nothing about it! Needless to say, the hiccups stopped as expected, and He was restored to normal health. – *Moments Remembered* by V. Ganesan

**2. Chhaganlal V. Yogi, a businessman of Bombay, who authored *Ramana Mahima*, first visited Bhagavan in 1939. He writes:** In 1945, I decided to wind up my printing press in Bombay and settle down at Ramanasramam. I had no prearranged plan for closing down my business. I merely relied on Bhagavan. One day, in the early hours of the morning, while I was still in bed and only half awake, I saw a vision in which Bhagavan appeared before me. By his side stood a gentleman whom I recognised as a friend of mine. He had neither been to the Ashram nor had he ever exhibited any faith in Bhagavan. The following conversation took place between Bhagavan and me. *Bhagavan*: You want to sell your press, don't you? *Me*: Yes Bhagavan, but I must find a buyer. *Bhagavan*: Showing my friend standing by my side – ‘Here is the buyer. He will buy your press, so sell it to him.’ *Me*: Since Bhagavan has been kind enough to show me the buyer, may he also favour me by stating the price at which I should execute the sale? Bhagavan then showed me a five-digit figure on the opposite wall shining as a neon sign. The amount indicated was reasonable. Bhagavan and my friend then disappeared, and the vision ended. By itself the vision was astonishing enough, but there was more to come. When I entered the press that day at 11 a.m., my friend from the vision was waiting for me. Of course, he had come to see me about some other work and had no idea that he had been singled out as a prospective buyer. Feeling that Bhagavan had sent him to me, I told him about the vision I had a few hours before. He listened to me very attentively. When I had finished my tale, he simply commented, “I will buy your press at the price indicated by your guru.” There was no limit to my joy. My desire to sell was fulfilled by his grace and the sale was completed in less than a minute. – *The Power of the Presence* by David Godman, Part two

**3. K.K. Nambiar, Chief Engineer, Highways, Madras Presidency, writes:** On April 2, 1950, I dreamt Bhagavan lying on the bed in the *nirvana* room talking to two persons. He could see me standing outside and told those persons, “Nambiar is waiting outside, call him in.” On my entering the room, Bhagavan got down from the bed and leaning on a walking stick, walked outside, followed by three of us. He took us to a spot parallel to the Matrubhuteswara Shrine and drew a rectangle on the ground with his walking stick, as though to indicate the place of his *samadhi*. After Bhagavan's *mahanirvana* on the night of April 14, a large number of persons led by the *sarvadhikari* protested vehemently against the idea of locating Bhagavan's *samadhi* as a subsidiary to the Mother's shrine. They wanted a bigger shrine for Bhagavan. The *sarvadhikari* told me, “You please keep these dreams and visions to

yourself.” Only after much argument and under heavy pressure he had to give up. – *The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana* by K.K. Nambiar

**4. K.R.K. Murthi, Chief Electrical Engineer, Andhra Pradesh:** I got miraculously cured of the pain in my elbow, which was persisting in spite of all medical attention. One day, I dreamt Bhagavan taking meals at our house. After the meals I handed over a mug of water to him to wash hands. He took the mug, and before washing his hands, poured some water on my elbow. Next day onwards there was no pain in the elbow. If it had been a mere dream, could it have such an effect on the physical body? – *Sri Ramana Bhagavan* by K.R.K. Murthi

## RAMANA MAHARSHI – THE SAGE OF TIRUVANNAMALAI

By Dr. G. H. Mees, M.A., LL.D.(Cantab)

**He was a Dutch scholar who came to the Maharshi in 1936. For him it was a case of deep devotion from the very first meeting.\***

*During the four years that I have been travelling in India, I have visited many yogis and sadhus, in all parts of this vast continent. When I heard of some man who was considered to be holy or wise I always went to visit him, often to be disappointed, but not at all so in the case of the Maharshi. I suppose the Maharshi is the only one of the living maharshis who does not mind leading a public life.*

**His Daily Life:** After a sleep of some hours, which cannot be called sleep in the ordinary sense of the word, the Maharshi gets up, goes to the kitchen of the Ashram and occupies himself for some hours in cutting and preparing the vegetables for the meals of the community. In this work, he is helped by the others who happen to be awake at such an early hour. At half-past six, after his bath, breakfast is taken. After that, the Maharshi sits practically all day on his couch in the hall of the Ashram, to leave it only for meals at eleven and at eight o'clock, and for the small walks he takes on the slopes of the sacred hill.

At sunrise and at sunset, priests of the Vedic school come to recite hymns from the *Vedas*. More correctly, it may be described as a half-singing, half reciting of the sacred hymns. It is a most impressive and solemn procedure. All day, visitors come and go, greeting the Maharshi by prostrating on the floor at full length with hands folded above the head. These demonstrations of homage do not make any more impression on the sage than the ordinary

greetings of any other person. Visitors sit for hours at the feet of the Maharshi in the hall. They meditate, sing religious songs, very often hymns in glory of Arunachala Siva – and sometimes they ask the Maharshi questions concerning philosophical problems. As a rule, the Maharshi is silent, but sometimes he may give lengthy explanations, if he thinks that such might be of any use. And he is always ready to speak some pleasant words to visitors, especially to children who come to see him. He is always normal and natural in his attitude and behaviour. I may say without the slightest hesitation that he is the most natural and unconstrained person I have ever had the benefit to know. He completely lacks any pretense. To use a phrase of analytic psychology: he is a man without a person.

Because of his total absence of pretense, his personality, paradoxically, leaves an overwhelming impression. It is extremely difficult to describe the atmosphere that emanates from this extraordinary man. One is struck at once by his childlike simplicity and also his noble wisdom. Though the Maharshi spent a large part of his life in seclusion on the sacred hill of Arunachala, he has never said that seclusion is better than a life in the world, or that it is essential for obtaining enlightenment. One of his sayings runs: “Renunciation is not the discarding of externals, but the cancellation of the uprising of the ego. To the true *sannyasin* there is no difference between solitude and an active life.” In his own life, he gives a demonstration of this. One feels, one knows, that there is nothing that can touch him.

**Enlightenment:** There is much talk about *samadhi*. I have seen in several Indian sages such a state of spiritual abstraction or absorption, trance. In the Maharshi alone I see the highest state of absolute consciousness. The fascinating element in it is that while he is absorbed in a state of consciousness which defies description, he is conscious of the very ordinary things of daily life around him. The ‘highest’ and the ‘lowest’ are united for him. God and the world, and his deepest self are, to him, one.

**The Teachings:** In a few words, these are: In essence, the individual and the divine are one. This is the only truth and reality. The world is a changing dream, a world of appearance from the point of view of that Reality. To the man who lives in the world *maya* is not an ‘illusion’ but a state of affairs which has to be taken into account and from which one cannot run away. The reproach of many Western thinkers, based on this *maya* conception, is that Hinduism is averse to the world and negates it, but this is unfounded. Hinduism has a large measure of ‘practical sense’. *Maya* is the play of the Lord. One should accept it completely. Its acceptance is part of the spiritual path.

**The Master's Guidance:** The Maharshi is, as it were, a vast magnet for humanity – one that attracts not to bind men but to liberate them from the burdens and problems which they carry along with them. Other teachers often bind their visitors or disciples with new bonds. As regards the Maharshi, he does not want anything from them. They experience a sense of freedom in his presence. And moreover, they feel that the great experience of the presence of the Maharshi does not consist in the Maharshi's entering into their own soul, but that in their soul their own inner Maharshi is awakening. Though the Maharshi is a sage, a *jnani*, and not a *bhakta* like Sri Ramakrishna, yet he is full of warm human interest and advocates *bhakti*. His conception of religion and service in the world finds expression, for instance, in the following: "If we just but recognize this universe/ Of eight-fold form as form of God Himself/ And serve in adoration all the world/ This is, of God, most excellent worship." —*Upadesa Saram*, v.

Regarding meditation, he says: One's meditation should be so intense that it leaves no room for the conscious idea 'I am meditating.' He counsels anyone who comes to him with an open heart seeking his advice, but he does not allow people to call themselves his disciples or to set him up as their Guru. His relationship with people is an inner one, that is far too subtle and too sacred a subject for conversation. Very often the pith of his advice is to stimulate his visitors to search for their real 'I'. People have to discover that *jiva*, the individual 'I', and Siva are in essence one. It is not of much value to come to this conclusion through mere reasoning. — *The Maharshi*, Newsletter of Ramana Ashram, New York, March-April, 2014

\*His reminiscences, and excerpts from his poems in praise of the Maharshi, are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 24-6.

**WHAT IS KUNDALINI?** Maharshi's reply: "*Kundalini* is one name given by the yogic people for what may be called *atma sakti* inside the body. The *vichara* school calls it *jnana*. The *bhakta* calls it love or *bhakti*. The yogic school says that this power is dormant in *muladhara* at the base of the spinal cord and that it must be aroused and taken through the various *chakras* on to *sahasrara* at the top, in the brain, to attain *moksha*. The *jnani*s think this power is centered in the heart, and so on." *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, 11.11.1945

## SCHOOL DAYS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI

**The following account is as provided by his school friends.**

Recalling his happy past with Ramana, Abdul Wahab (Sab Jan)\* says: We were inseparable mates. Ramana was very learned in Tamil and stood first in the class. When the teacher wanted to refer some portion in the text book he used to ask Ramana to quote and he would do so with remarkable clarity. He was particularly well-versed in *Nannool Soothram* (Aphorisms of Tamil grammar). He was not very good in English, in the sense that he was not an expert in that subject. In other subjects he was above average. He was very fond of playing games and was an expert in football. He used to encourage me to join him in playing, saying that he would teach me how to play. Once, when playing football, he received a severe knock on his right leg, which got swollen. I carried him to a hospital and had some medicines applied. He was very happy and thanked me.

Among his other friends, who tell us about him, are: M.S.Venkataratnam, and Narayanasami. The first one says: The members of my family were co-tenants of the house of Ramana's uncle, where he stayed. Every night, when the whole house was silent in sleep, Ramana and his elder brother, Nagaswami, would go out of their beds (in a remote corner of the house) at about 11 p.m. and return very early in the morning. I would help them by closing the door of the house, and open it when they returned and went to their beds, without anyone knowing where they were during the night. One of their favourite games was *Silamban* in which a hard bamboo stick of about five feet is whirled so that the wielder can knock out any opponent who dares to come near. This game, which strengthened both the body and muscles, was played on the sandy river bed of Vaigai (A river near their house). Suppiah Thevar, another friend, an expert in this game, taught them how to have expertise in it. Ramana and his playmates had a hearty time playing games on the sandy bed of the river, or engaging in swimming contests in the Pillar Paliam Tank.

Narayanasami tells us: Usually, the terrace of the house and the small room in which Ramana studied (Where he got the death experience), were not visited by the families, who lived on the ground floor. Here he played games with other young friends. One of the games was called 'throwing ball'. Ramana would roll his body into something like a ball and the sturdy group of youngsters would throw him from one player to another. Sometimes, the human ball fell down when the player failed to catch it. The wonder of it was that for all this rough tossing and dropping, there was no muscular sprain or bone fracture! This friend adds: He would see Ramana sitting still for long stretches of time on the floor of his room. He asked Ramana



whether he also could do so. Ramana asked his friend to sit cross-legged on the floor and pressed a pencil midway between his eye brows. He says that he lost sense of body and world, and sat in trance for more than half an hour. When he came to himself he saw his friend sitting with his face wreathed in smiles. He adds, he failed when he tried to repeat the experience himself. – *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. I

\*For his interesting reminiscences see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* pages, 387-8.

## EGOLESS LIVING

Is such a thing possible at all? What does it mean? What is birth and death of ego? The rising of 'I' thought is ego's birth. All thoughts are its forms; seemingly infinite in their variety. What constitutes its death? Is it the silence of the mind, obtained through breath-control, or other mental practices which lull the mind? No, it is only a temporary spell. When it ends, the ego is strident again and is in full cry. Is there a sure way to bring about its death? Is there no escape from its suffocating grip? One can surely nail the coffin of the ego if one enquires *steadfastly and ceaselessly* as to where from it originates. Firm attention to the 'I' thought, as it rises each time, is very much needed. Repeated practice of self-enquiry would result in the mind staying ever merged at its source. *We should not forget that it is an extremely difficult task. We have to constantly practice and have a lot of patience.* Guru's name on our lips is essential for success in our effort. Only with very strong determination we can succeed to a reasonable extent in our endeavour. *It requires the utmost courage to take the plunge.*

When Paul Brunton asked Bhagavan as to what happens when ego comes to an end 'like a snuffed candle', he said, "It is only then that the door to limitless bliss opens." When Brunton asked whether an egoless person's actions would always be right, Bhagavan said, "They ought to be. However, such a person is not concerned with the right or wrong of actions."

The egoless persons having no feeling of a separate individuality, just float in the divine current for fulfilling its purpose. Since there are no 'others' for them, they are 'humbler than the humblest, and are overflowing with love. Their very presence is blessing to humanity. – Excerpts from an article by A.R. Natarajan in *The Ramana Way*, March 2014.

**GARBHA-GRIHA:** Or the sanctum sanctorum of temples in south India houses the deity's idol and we have the *darshan* of the deity only when a light is lit and waved before the idol. This indicates that we have to leave the external world outside, direct our minds inwards, light up the lamp of knowledge and behold the Lord within the sanctum of our hearts. – *Seema Burman*

**REAL SUCCESS:** It is what brings happiness instead of just excitement. To achieve it, one needs to turn within and introspect deeply. Avoid being a part of a socially and culturally constructed rat race. There is no escape from it until you consciously and courageously opt out. Once you take this crucial and difficult step, great new vistas will unfold. – *Pulkit Sharma*

**Only when chiselled, you become a statue, worthy of worship. If you refuse to be chiselled, you will remain flooring marble.** – *Mahatria Ra*

**People can accomplish what they desire; it is just that most people lack the will to accomplish it.** – *J.J. Adams*

**God chained is man; man unchained is God.** – *Swami Ranganathananda*

**From birth to death it is a long sleep, sometimes dreaming with eyes closed, sometimes dreaming with eyes open, but dreaming all the same all the time.** – *Osho*

**When it seems humanly impossible to do more in a difficult situation, surrender to the inner silence and wait for a sign of guidance.** – *Paul Brunton*

**KASHI:** Etymologically, the word is derived from the Sanskrit ‘kash’ – to shine – and this City of Light is metaphorically referred to by tradition, as that which lights up the inner desire to be free and liberated. The *Kashi-Rahasya*, part of *Brahmavaivarta Purana* and the five verses on Kashi, attributed to Sankra, extend this metaphor to internalise Kashi as Brahm itself, the city which best reflects the Self. – *Pranav Khullar*

**NIRLIPTATA:** The Gita (II. 47) advocates action without getting engrossed with the idea of what one gets in return to performed actions. This is based on the tested psychological principle, namely, thinking of result during the action dissipates attention of the performer, compromising quality of the outcome of the action. – *Siluveru Sudarshan*

## AUGUST

### WORLD IS TRANSIENT AS LIGHTNING FLASH

**The world of names and forms is as transient as a lightning flash. ‘I am the body’ is the deceptive device that makes us desire the world as if it were real, thereby entrapping us instantaneously in the powerful allurements of bondage.** – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**GOD:** When God solves your problems, you have faith in His abilities; when God doesn't solve your problems He has faith in your abilities. Life without God is like an un-sharpened pencil – it has no point. – *Anonymous*

**MAHARSHI ANSWERS A QUESTION:** “When I meditate, all sorts of thoughts arise and disturb me. The more I try, the more thoughts rise up. What should I do?” Reply: “Yes. It will be so. All that is inside will try to come out. There is no other way except to pull up the mind each time it wants to go astray and to fix it on the Self.” He quoted the verse in the *Gita* which says that as often as the wavering mind goes after anything, it should be drawn away and fixed in the Self. *Day by Day with Bhagavan*, 21.11.1945

## **THE PRINCELY BEGGAR**

By T.K.Sundaresa Iyer

In 1924, the old hall had not come into existence, Bhagavan sat in a thatched shed in front of Matrubhuteswara temple. A small elevated seat was made there for him, and he used to sit on it day and night. It was here that on a certain *Siva Ratri* Bhagavan kept the assembled devotees in perfect silence and stillness all night, to explain the real meaning of the Dakshinamurthi hymn.

One day, at about 10 a.m., a certain princely person appeared before Bhagavan. He had great love for saints, and having heard of Bhagavan’s greatness, he had long been eager to pay his respects to him.\* In his royal robes, he stood in the presence of Bhagavan; no body spoke to him or asked him to be seated. It seemed that he found pleasure in standing before Bhagavan. He stood like a statue. Bhagavan was equally still, his glorious eyes all the time being on that devout person, blessing him with his Grace. Bhagavan and he remained without a movement. There was perfect silence all around. It was wonderful sight to see the *Ekarat* (Emperor of saints) himself giving and the princely beggar receiving at his hands. After about half an hour, the prince devoutly prostrated before Bhagavan and left.

The funny side of the incident is that a *sadhu*, who accompanied the prince, returned with a few hundred rupee notes. He placed them at Bhagavan’s feet saying that the prince gave the money to help the *sadhus* here. The Master remarked: “Look at this! A prince finding no peace in his own environment, comes to beg of this pauper (*kaupina-dhari*), thinking that what is in us is the real thing that life needs, and you ran after him to beg that beggar!” – *At the Feet of Bhagavan*

\*The writer knew who the prince was, but has not recorded his details.

## HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By Sangit Kumar

**Kumar retired as ‘Principal Scientist’ from Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, in 2013. He says:**

In early 1990’s, I visited my native place in Purnea (Bihar) to spend time with my parents. My father, who was a leading lawyer, had many interests beside his profession. One day, while going through *Bhavan’s Journal* he got attracted to a full page coloured picture of Ramana Maharshi. I also had a look at the photograph and saw a man sitting only in *Kaupina*. It did not make much of an impression on me but the name Ramana Maharshi stuck in my memory. In 2004, when my father died at the age of 82, I had to rush to my native place to perform the last rites, and stayed there for 13 days, till all the rituals were completed. I had to sleep in my father’s bed room which housed his personal library. Being alone, to pass time, I would pick up books from the shelf. Once, I happen to read Brunton’s *A Search in Secret India*, where chapters relating to the Maharshi touched me deeply. The first thought which came to my mind was to visit the Ashram. The opportunity came in 2005, when I visited Mysore in connection with some official work.

Although I was completely new to Tiruvannamalai, I felt safe and comfortable. I located a hotel near the Ashram on the internet and booked a room for myself. Later, during the day, when I walked into the new hall of the Ashram, I found the atmosphere calm and serene. I felt at home. As I sat in the hall gazing at the large photo of Bhagavan, after a while, I felt that the stomach muscles in the photograph moved as in breathing. My first reaction was that the light filtering through the window was playing the trick. But again, the same movement was observed, which I dismissed as an illusion. After half an hour I came out of the hall and went to the book store, where I purchased *Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi – A pictorial biography*. While going through it in my room, tears started rolling down without any apparent reason. In the evening, while returning to Bangalore, when the bus was passing in front of the Ashram, I felt as if I was going away from Home. There was no apparent reason for these feelings and emotions.

Bhagavan’s grace and grip over the devotees has been described as a tiger’s jaw, which does not allow one to be extricated. I describe it as a spider’s web, where once caught, it is impossible to trace the steps. Somebody asked me how I benefited from my association with Ramana. My reply was – perhaps I am a better human being than what I used to be. Life has not been without its ups and downs, but the path has been cleared and made easier and the Grace has been pouring in to make things smoother and easier without any explanation. This is what I call ‘Ramana Magic’. I cannot explain it. I can only watch as it happens, and be in awe

of the power of that unseen Presence. I bow to that. Namō Rāmana! – Excerpted from *The Rāmana Way*, March 2014

**HEALTHY OPTION:** Our whole life is caught in the vicious cycle of fulfilling daily needs, and getting lost in the illusion of pleasure. A wise life or a spiritual life is the healthy option in which we can discover joy, happiness and even bliss. We are free to choose the healthy option. – *Swami Sukhabodhananda*

**NEED FOR STRONG DETERMINATION:** The external attachments with the lower self very often prove too strong to be overcome. Just as a man, when hungry, longs for food, similarly, the aspirant must have the desire to attain his goal. At proper time he may also get help from the Master to attain the goal. *Persistent effort is a must for Self-realisation.* – *Meher Baba*

**WE ARE NOT WEAK:** We think that we are weak. Thinking in this manner is a big mistake. We are not weak. There is no one as powerful as a human being. Despite being powerful, we are afraid of many things. This is due to an inherent mistake. That mistake is to think and act such that ‘we are the body’. We are not this body. Body, mind, senses and intelligence are instruments and we are the Master. Master your mind and become a mastermind – *V. Narayanan*

**WATCH YOUR THOUGHTS:** The power of thought is great. Every thought of yours has a literal value to you in every possible way. The best way to overcome gloomy thoughts and the consequent depression is to think of inspiring thoughts and inspiring things. – *Swami Sivananda*

## THE MAHARSHI PRAISES A FOREIGN DEVOTEE

The following is from *Talks* (entry dated 19.1.1935)

Mr. Douglas Ainslie (Mr. Grant Duff), an aristocratic English gentleman, 70 years old, nephew of a former Governor of Madras, an author and poet, had come to Madras as a guest of Government. He came to see Maharshi with a letter of introduction from Paul Brunton. Next day he returned and remained a little less than an hour in the hall. On both days practically no words were exchanged, only gaze meeting gaze. His habits are abstemious; he remains without food of any kind till 1 p.m. and then lunches; he is said to have coffee and biscuits in the evening and retires without any further food. He has been a bachelor all along, walks a few miles a day on an empty stomach, speaks little and is very graceful in his movements. His

voice is low and soft and his words appear to come from the heart. Tamil songs from Maharshi's 'Truth Revealed' were repeated in his presence. He considered the recitations magnificent. He came the next afternoon and to the wonder of others, had an experience on the previous night, which he repeated to Maharshi. It was that he had seen something like an electric light within himself in the heart centre on the right side. And he added further that he had seen the sun shining within. Maharshi smiled a little and then had a translation of '*Atma vidya*' (Self-Knowledge) read out to him wherein there is the cryptic saying that realisation consists in reaching the Atman (Self) which is the expanse of consciousness (*chidvyoman*) as distinguished from the mind, which is the expansion of *chittavyoman*. This explanation appealed to him.

*Speaking of him later, Maharshi remarked, "Just think of an old man of 70, not choosing to live peacefully in his own house on the income he had earned! How intense has been his earnestness that he has left his native land, dared a sea-voyage of 6,000 miles, and faced the hardships of long railway journeys in a foreign land, ignorant of the language, undergoing the vicissitudes of a lonely life, submitting to the inclemency of a hot climate, in surroundings uncongenial and unaccustomed to him. He could have been happy in his own house. It is his longing for internal peace that has brought him here."*

Duff (1865-1948), while recording his reminiscences in the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir* (1946) says: I do not know what happened when I saw the Maharshi for the first time, but the moment he looked at me, I felt he was the Truth and the Light. There could be no doubt about it, and all the doubts 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 the one who has passed beyond the boundaries of the senses and was indeed already merged in the Absolute of the true Self, though manifesting here for our benefit for a few brief years. [When asked how he got such an impression, he frankly confessed] I cannot reply; as I should to one who asked me how I saw the sun on looking out of the window, by saying that I did so by the use of eyes and incidentally of all other senses collaborating. I do not need any algebraic or other proof of the existence of the sun. I do not need any other proof of the divinity of Ramana Maharshi.

In his introduction to *Sri Ramana Gita* (Ashram publication), he wrote from London in 1935, "Never perhaps in the world's history was the supreme Truth-Reality, *Sat*, placed within such easy reach of so vast a multitude. Here and now, through no special merit of our own, we may approach Reality. Should those who have it in their power to visit the Asramam delay, they will only themselves to blame in future lives."

Prof. K. Swaminathan, in video *Guru Ramana* of the Ashram, says that he had heard about Bhagavan in 1927 and later also, but never visited him. “Then, when Grant Duff came to my college [Presidency College, Madras], I took him around. After I spent a week with him, he casually asked me, ‘Have you seen Ramana Maharshi?’ I said to myself, here is an Englishman steeped in Italian philosophy telling me about the Maharshi. I felt ashamed, and I was ashamed. All these events convinced the obstinate camel that the oasis he badly needed was near and easy to reach.”

Information about Duff at the Internet: He was a Scottish poet, translator, critic and diplomat. He met and befriended [Oscar Wilde](#) [Renowned British writer] at age twenty-one, while an undergraduate at [Oxford](#). The first translator of the Italian philosopher [Benedetto Croce](#) into English, he also lectured on [Hegel](#) [German philosopher]. He was identified as the "Dear Ainslie" recipient of twelve letters written by Arthur Conan Doyle [British writer, creator of Sherlock Holmes], which were auctioned by Christie's in 2004.

Duff continued to maintain his contact with Bhagavan. *Day by Day* dated 31.10.1945, refers to his letter from USA, in which he wrote that he was now nearing eighty, and prayed for Bhagavan’s grace for visiting the Ashram again.

**An extract from his poem – *With Sri Ramana of Arunachala*:** I’ve wandered far, Yes I have been/ From land to land to land/ Sages I’ve seen, great kings and queens/ The lovely, wise and grand/ But only there – at the Asramam/ By Arunachalam/ Have I known that joy without alloy/ I am! I am! I am!

**STILLING THE MIND:** The ever-active mind is never still. It is the monkey mind, hopping and jumping from one thought to another. In such an agitated state the mind is unable to communicate with the soul. We need a quiet mind. When we do not discipline the body, we falter; we might even fall ill. The mind also needs discipline. To achieve stillness of thought we have to regularly and sincerely practise meditation. Why be constantly in motion? We need to seek within. Where motion ceases, God begins. – *Shivani Lucki*

**RECEIVING DIVINE GRACE:** We say to God, ‘You are my master, but become my servant and do my bidding, to help me out of my problematic disease, or a serious problem in the office.’ Praying like this will be of no help. God’s grace does not descend without total annihilation of the ego. *Sadhana* is needed to receive His Grace. One has to purify the mind of *raga* and *dvesha*, and of all experiences which give pleasure or displeasure. This is demanded, not recommended. – *Niranjanananda Saraswati*

**HOW TO SECURE DETACHMENT:** When one feels a sense of attachment towards a person, object or situation, a portion of one’s energy is transferred to that person, object or

situation, which needs to be brought back. An exercise for this is – (i) Select the object, person or situation you want to detach. (ii) Close your eyes and intensely examine the feelings that you have for the object, person or situation. (iii) Keeping the eyes closed, imagine calling back all feelings, one by one, to yourself, saying to yourself that the energy is coming back to you. Repeat the process, if necessary. Open your eyes. You will feel relaxed and happy. Now recall the energies from the next object, person or situation you are attached to, till you feel relaxed.  
– *Hemu Karkera*

## ERADICATE EGO THROUGH SELF-ENQUIRY

By Anup Taneja

A typical feature of the ego is that it cannot remain independent of association with forms. Though itself devoid of form, the ego establishes its existence and flourishes by holding on to a form. In the process, the Self-luminous, eternal ‘I’ is obscured and the external universe appears to be an objective reality.

Sri Ramana Maharshi says that you cannot deny your existence in sleep; nor can you deny you were happy then. But in the waking state you express feelings of unhappiness. This happens because of the rise of ‘I’ in the waking state. How to get rid of the ego in order that the eternal ‘I’ is realised? According to the Maharshi, it is only by *atma-vichara* or Self-enquiry that you can realise the inner Self. Self-enquiry is not an exercise in concentration, nor does it aim at suppressing thoughts; it merely invokes awareness of the source from which the mind and the ego emanate. This involves constant reflection on the question, ‘Who am I’?

Self-enquiry, when carried out on *a regular basis over a period of time*, results in the mind becoming introverted, and deep-rooted cravings – that cause the ego to rise – become extinct. When the *vasanas* become extinct the mind also disappears, being absorbed in the light of the eternal Self.

The Maharshi says: ‘Search for the source of the ‘I’ thought. That is all that one has to do. The universe exists because of the ‘I’ thought. If that ends, there is an end of the misery also.’ – *The Speaking Tree, Times of India*



## LAST DAYS AND MAHA-NIRVANA OF THE MAHARSHI

At the end of 1948, a small growth was noticed on Bhagavan's left elbow. By February 1949, it had grown into a tumour, the size of a small lemon, which was removed surgically. Soon after the tumour returned, and surgeons suspecting it be malignant, again removed it in March 1949. As a fresh growth was observed while the wound was healing, the doctors suggested amputation of the arm above the affected part to save Bhagavan's precious life. Bhagavan smiled and said, "There is no need for alarm. The body is itself a disease. Let it have its natural end. Why mutilate it? Simple dressing of the affected part is enough." A third operation was carried out in August 1949, followed by radium treatment. But the tumour reappeared, necessitating a fourth operation in December.

Bhagavan allowed himself to be operated to satisfy his devotees. Major Chadwick writes in his *Reminiscences*: "The night before the last operation I went to see Bhagavan and on my knees begged him not to have it. It was obvious that it could do no good. Each time, the tumour had grown bigger and bigger. I prayed that this extra suffering was useless and that he would let us be spared of the strain. But he refused, for, as he said, the doctors had taken so much trouble, it would be shame to disappoint them now. Bhagavan's attitude had all along been to let everybody have a chance; no one should be disappointed."

At the end, homeopathy was tried for a few weeks but with no result. Two Ayurvedic physicians of repute tried their treatment but without success. The whole of the left upper arm had become one terrific swelling. Owing to constant oozing of blood through the tumour, Bhagavan's system turned anaemic. In December 1949, when the devotees were at a loss what to do, one of them approached Bhagavan and asked him, and he replied with a smile: "Have I ever asked for any treatment? As I have said from the very beginning, no treatment is necessary. Let things take their course." All the doctors attending upon Bhagavan were struck by his superhuman indifference to pain and his absolute unconcern even during and after operations.

When the devotees prayed to Bhagavan to set his health right by his own potent will, he replied: "Who is there to will this?" Bhagavan could not will or desire anything, having lost his sense of individuality in the Universal Consciousness. During the last months Bhagavan said to an anxious devotee: "When we have finished meal, do we not throw away the leaf on which we have eaten? The *jnani* rejoices to be relieved of the body, as a servant rejoices to lay down his burden at the place of delivery."

Even when Bhagavan was unable to leave his room, he continued to give *darsan* reclining on his bed. He would not consent to have the *darsan* cancelled even on days when his condition was critical, so it went on right up to the last evening. It was remarkable how Bhagavan kept perfect control of his faculties to the very end. He spoke clearly only a few minutes before his end.

On Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, 1950, morning, Bhagavan said ‘thanks’ to an attendant who had just finished massaging his body. The attendant, who did not know English, blinked with surprise, so Bhagavan, smiling, explained to him the meaning of the English term as ‘*santosham*’. At about sunset, Bhagavan asked his attendants to raise him to a sitting position. One of the doctors began to give him oxygen, but he motioned them to stop it with a wave of his right hand.

A group of devotees seated on the temple ramp opposite the little room began chanting Arunachala Siva. Bhagavan’s eyes opened a little and flashed for a moment. From their outer edges tears of ecstasy rolled down. The last breaths followed one another softly and smoothly. There was no struggle or spasm. Breathing stopped at 8.47 p.m. At that very moment a bright comet moved slowly across the sky. It was seen by many even at far off places. The super soul reached its source.

All that night a large number of devotees sat in the large hall. Some sang songs of praise and grief, while others sat silent. They remembered what Bhagavan had said during the last few days: “They say I am dying, but I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here.”

The body was interred next day with divine honours in the ground between the old hall, where Bhagavan had sat so many years, and the north wall of the Mother’s Samadhi. Even now, those who sit in the Samadhi hall find Bhagavan’s Grace as powerful and subtle as during his lifetime. – *The Last Days and Maha-Nirvana of Bhagavan Sri Ramana*, an Ashram publication.

**CALLING RAMANA:** Once, P. M. N. Swamy, a devotee and Secretary of Sri Ramana Mandali, Matunga, went to the Ashram with his wife and nine-month old child, Ramanan. After finishing their breakfast in the dining hall, they went to wash their hands at the tap outside, leaving the child in the hall. By the time they returned to the hall, the child had crawled away and could not be seen in the hall. The perturbed father called out to the child as ‘Ramana, Ramana’. Bhagavan, who was then passing on his way to the Meditation Hall,

immediately responded to the call and the child also was found near the well in the Ashram compound. The response from Bhagavan naturally created a puzzle in the father's mind because he thought that the call 'Ramana, Ramana' intended for his child might have been wrongly interpreted by Bhagavan. But Bhagavan was quick to read his mind and told him: "Why did you feel puzzled when I responded to the call? Is there any difference between this Ramana (meaning himself) and that Ramana (meaning the child)?" – *The Call Divine*, June 1960

**SOME LESSONS TO REMEMBER:** 1. Think and believe that 'Nothing is Impossible.' Build a moat all around yourself of unbridled faith and passion and commitment to make the seemingly impossible, possible. 2. Move out of your comfort zone. Keep moving forward, opening new doors. 3. Live in the moment. Treat each day as a new day and make most of it. 4. Constantly reinvent yourself. Reinvention is like continuous improvement. 5. Find meaning in your work; feel attached to it. – *Rajashree Birla*

**THE ULTIMATE – DO NOTHING:** Can you just sit doing nothing? If it is possible, this is the ultimate in meditation. If it is not possible, you have to use techniques to make it possible. A technique should only lead you to a point where you can drop it. The technique should not become so important that you may not be able to drop it. – *Osho*

**THE SILENCE:** After Buddha got enlightenment he maintained silence for a long time. When requested again and again to say something, he said, "Those who know, they know even without me saying it, and those who do not know, will not know, even if I say it. How can you convey something so intimate and personal? Words cannot convey it. Words end where truth begins. Silence is the source of life and is the cure of diseases. – *The Speaking Tree*

**DON'T FORGET THE INVISIBLE:** A tree, visible above the earth, is equally alive below the earth, where its roots and source lie. It is a composite whole. But we sense only a part and not the whole. Missing the invisible, beyond senses, presents a fractured reality. – *Dhruva Bhargava*

**WORLD – A DIVINE PLAYGROUND:** Only on this earth human beings can savour Divinity. The world is a manifestation of Supreme Energy. The strength to make progress on the path of emancipation and salvation, is given by Him. The mind gets fullness of right vision or enlightenment when it becomes conscious of Him. In that state, one loses the boastful 'I' sense in one's activities. – *Amiya Roy Chowdhury*

**Communication will win you the outer world. Silence will win you the inner world. – Mahatria Ra**

**All the hardships that come to you in life, all the things that you consider as punishments from God, are in reality like gifts. They are an opportunity to grow, which is the sole purpose of life. – Kubler Ross**

**Meditation will make you awake, because it will give you the first experience of yourself. – Osho**

**When we seek to discover the best in others, we somehow bring out the best in ourselves – Anonymous**

**Life is not just about getting / acquiring. It is about giving / sharing. – K. Sriram**

**Remember, there is nothing stable in human affairs; therefore avoid undue elation in prosperity, or undue depression in adversity. – Socrates**

## SEPTEMBER

### THE WORLD IS A REFLECTION IN THE MIND

**Just as the yellow turmeric powder loses its colour and looks white under sunlight, this wholly mental world perishes before the sunlight of the knowledge of reality. Like the many-hued eye of the peacock feather, this bright world is only a vast picture, a reflection seen in the darkened mirror of the impure mind. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

### HOW MUDALIAR GOT SRI RAMANA'S GRACE

In 1917, Natesa Mudaliar, a school teacher, happened to read in a Tamil book how Vivekananda got enlightenment by his guru's grace. Though only eighteen years at that time, he wished to give up his family life and find a guru who could instruct and inspire him like Ramakrishna. Several people told him that Sri Ramana of Tiruvannamalai is the person, but getting *upadesa* from him was a well-nigh hopeless task. Mudaliar being firm in his pursuit, went to the Maharshi in 1918 to get his grace. He sat in silence before him for long hours, but with no result. Finally, he returned dejected. He tried twice again, but these trips were also without result. In 1920, he wrote a long letter, requesting the Maharshi not to be selfishly

indifferent to the longing souls. When a month passed without a reply, he sent a registered letter, acknowledgement due, stating, “Whatever the number of rebirths I have to endure, I am determined to get *upadesa* from you and you alone.” A few days later, the Maharshi appeared to him in a dream, and said, “Do not constantly think of me: you have first to secure the favour of Maheswara, the Lord of the Bull. My help will follow.” Mudaliar meditated upon Maheswara riding on a bull. A few days later, he received a letter from Vasudeva Sastri, “Your two letters received. The Maharshi does not reply to letters. You can come and see him in person.”

Mudaliar went to Tiruvannamalai, reached the hill, and sat before the Maharshi. For five or six hours, no words passed between him and the Swami. Just as the Swami was about to leave the place, J.V. Subramanya told the Swami, “This is the person who wrote the letters.” The Maharshi carefully looked at Mudaliar twice and went away; Mudaliar also took leave and departed. He continued to visit the Maharshi off and on, but never opened his lips. A year later, he asked the Maharshi, “I wish to learn and experience what your *anugraham* or grace is, as people differ in their account of it.” The Maharshi replied, “I am always giving my *anugraham*. If you cannot apprehend it, what am I to do?” Mudaliar discovered thereby that his silent Samadhi was *anugraham*, which he and others should imitate and get into. Still the *mounam* state was not clear to him and he was troubled over it. Some days later, he dreamt the Maharshi telling him, “Let your vision be unified and withdrawn from objects external or internal.” Mudaliar followed this dream *upadesa* for some time. Then he had another dream in which the Maharshi drew him near, placed his palm over his head, and then on his right chest – pressing his finger over the nipple. It caused some pain, but he endured it quietly and woke up at once.

Sometime later, when he went to the Maharshi, some highly gifted persons were comparing notes with the Maharshi of their advance experiences in spiritual matters. He felt dejected that he was nowhere as compared to those persons. This caught the Maharshi’s eye, who later told him, “Why are you anxious? What you seek is that which is already at hand always. Why should you be downcast?” Immediately, peace entered Mudaliar’s soul.

In 1926, Mudaliar went to the Maharshi to seek permission to enter on *sannyasa*. The Maharshi tried to dissuade him and told him, “If one quitted home to escape a single hindrance, ten hindrances would beset him in the forest.” But Mudaliar persisted. The Maharshi noted his growing desire for *sarvasanga parityciga*, that is, leaving the family, profession, village and everything. Mudaliar’s father, elder brother and wife got repeated dreams in which the Maharshi appeared telling them that Mudaliar had got his grace and that they should help him in his endeavours. So they yielded to Mudaliar’s request to go to

Tiruvannamalai and don the *kaskayam* (ochre cloths). Thus he became Natanananda Swami in 1929\*. – Excerpted from *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol.I

\* His detailed, illuminating reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pages 128-134.

**PROBLEMS ARE CHALLENGES:** The formula for happiness is to manage problems rather than regret them. Problems are nothing but challenges. A problem creates a challenge; the challenge leads to a response, and an effective and well-thought out response results in success. One, who wants to escape from problems and struggles, cannot live in happiness, except for a temporary period. – *Wahiduddin Khan*

**THE VITAL QUESTION:** Of all thoughts that arise in the mind, the 'I' thought is the first. It is only after the rise of the 'I-thought' that other thoughts occur. When thoughts arise one should not pursue them but should diligently inquire: 'To whom do they occur?' The answer would be 'to me'. Thereupon if one inquires 'Who am I?' the mind will go back to its source, that is, the spiritual heart on the right side of the chest, and the thought that arose will subside. *Sriramanamaharshi.org/teachings*

**TIPS FOR HAPPINESS:** (i) There will never be another 'today', so make the most of it. (ii) Accept others as they are. (iii) Be friend to all. (iv) See your work as service and an opportunity given to you. (v) If you don't like what you see, try to change your angle. – *Findinghappiness.com*

**DROP NEGATIVITY:** When you are angry, you have four times more energy than you ordinarily have. In anger, in rage, you can throw a big rock. Ordinarily, you cannot even move it. So, whenever you are negative, you feel powerful. Drop your negativity. If you want to carry it, then don't go on saying that you would like to drop it. Don't play this game. Unless you feel real inner urge you can't get out of it. When the house is on fire, you jump out of the window; you run out of the back door. You find a way out yourself. – *Osho*

## **MEDITATION – A SOLITARY JOURNEY**

By Sensei Sandeep Desai

Meditation is an investigation into your life. Without being a light to oneself, it is impossible to undertake this inner journey. Meditation is not a part-time activity that one indulges in when one has had enough of this frenzied world. It is not something that you do for 15 or 20 minutes a day and then go back to your repetitive, unexamined way of working. Meditation is a

personal inward journey where you silently observe every act of yours. It is an educational process that enhances human life in multiple ways. To realise that you are never alone, and that there is always a driving force guiding you through life's most difficult paths, can be very invigorating. When your mind is calm, clear and meditative, you are never in a hurry to accomplish things. Such a mind leans towards the journey and not the goal.

Start by observing everything that you encounter: the smile on a child's face, the faltering steps of the elderly, people's reaction to different events, and so on. Then come to the inner self and observe your own reactions, your tendency to judge, and your self-centered activities. When you are lonely or sad, watch it as it is. Don't run away from there and start doing something else. The mere observation without any influence of the past can bring about a change.

To make the most of the teacher's teachings, it's absolutely critical that a student first does the necessary ground work. It is said, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." The emphasis is on the readiness of the student. If the student is not ready, even a teacher of the highest calibre can't transform him.

To embark on a journey of Self-discovery, start right where you are. Let your mind turn inward. Meditation can accelerate the healing process. It can free you from painful memories that you tend to replay in your mind, thus causing self-abuse. You can then be at peace with whatever situation that you find yourself in. – *The Speaking Tree*

**THE TRUE JNANI:** is not one who lives in solitude, totally disconnected from the world. He constantly remains absorbed in the bliss of *turiya*, the transcendental state of consciousness, even while carrying out his day-to-day activities in the world. Such an enlightened being continually remains established in absolute serenity not only in deep meditation but also while remaining engaged in the various activities of the waking state. He remains free of worries, always revelling in the bliss that surges from within. For such a *jnani* there is nothing to acquire and nothing to renounce. – *Anup Taneja* [The only example available here is of Sri Ramana Maharshi.]

## SECRET OF RIGHT ACTIVITY

By Swami Paramananda

We have within us a pent-up energy which is constantly finding its outlet through thought, words and actions. We can use this energy for our upliftment or we can misuse it and cause our own ruin. Our actions are nothing but the manifestation of our thoughts and therefore we must learn to think correctly. It is thought which moulds our character. Unless we pay proper attention to our thoughts, it is impossible to accomplish anything. The mind is the instrument by which we accomplish everything. We must not let it run wild. We must curb it and use discrimination. We are superior to animals in just this, that we have the power to discriminate. Our thought is the seed which determines the fruit of our action. If the seed is good, the fruit from it must be good.

Our present conditions and obligations are the result of our own past actions, we must meet them wisely. We must show ourselves worthy in our present position. As long as our interests remain confined within our little self, our struggle for higher attainment would be in vain. A person must feel imbued with the idea that he is a child of God; though he may have made mistakes, there is hope for him because he is a child of God. All blessings must come to us, if we prove ourselves true to our higher nature.

If we wish to advance on the spiritual path, we must practise non-attachment towards all worldly impressions, associations, and possessions to which we cling through sheer force of habit. We must withdraw ourselves from whatever retards our unfoldment; then create a strong new spiritual impression by turning our thoughts within. As our understanding unfolds, we would outgrow the little things of this world, just as children outgrow their toys. We should discriminate and try to see everything in its true light. As the mind gradually detaches itself from the old impressions and our heart becomes more and more liberated from the non-essential, we would find delight in God. Spiritual unfoldment would always take place gradually. We cannot force it. We must fight

against all forces which are trying to overthrow us. Again and again, desires arise like a storm and shake our whole being. Only when they are conquered, we can gain the state of meditation.

When we are able to make God a living presence in our life, His light will shed its radiance in the hours of darkness and sadness. Let us never forget that without His strength we are weak, and without His support we are sure to stumble. The sooner we are able to return to God, the better



it will be for us. He is the very essence of our being. When we realise this and completely surrender at His feet, then we will feel blessed and would make our life worth living. – Excerpts from the above titled book, which is available at: [mail@chennaiath.org](mailto:mail@chennaiath.org)

**MEANING OF LIFE:** Because of our deep involvement in the humdrum of life, we do not ponder over the question of the purpose of life. When faced with calamities, troubles and disappointments, we start thinking about the purpose of life. The key to the mystery of life lies in Self-knowledge or *atmabodha*. Change your mode of thinking. Instead of foolishly thinking ‘I am body’, think I am *atma*, all pervading; and you will get the bliss and peace you require. – *Swami Sivananda*

### **ROBERT ADAMS – A UNIQUE DEVOTEE**

**The following excerpts about this devotee, whom V. Ganesan met in USA in 1992, are from his book *Ramana Periya Puranam*, which is worth a visit at Google.**

Ganesan was informed by Robert that he was born in New York in 1928, and, since his very childhood, was regularly having glimpses of a man with white hair and a grey beard. Once he found himself melting into a radiant being of consciousness. This was a completely different experience. He realised that he was not his body. He became consciousness, and his individuality merged into pure and absolute bliss. He expanded and became the universe. The feeling was indescribable. After this experience, he could no longer carry on all his activities as usual. Being a teenager, he wanted someone to guide him. At that time, people regarded Joel Goldsmith as a true Christian mystic. As advised, he approached Joel, who suggested that he may go to Paramahansa Yogananda.\* He went to Yogananda in a state of excitement and ecstasy. But he refused to be his guru and directed him to Ramana Maharshi. Immediately thereafter, while browsing through a book, he happened to see a picture of the Maharshi. His hair stood on end, because this was the very person who used to appear before him. Thus, he reached Arunachala in 1947.

Robert arrived in Arunachala at the age of nineteen. He says, “ I took some flowers and fruits and offered them at the feet of the Maharshi, who looked at me and smiled; I returned the smile. The very first look of the Maharshi engulfed me in a flood of light, peace, quietude and bliss and it opened my inner eye, and I instantly recognized the meaning and purpose of all my experiences – that I was never the body, and that I was ever the unborn Self, the eternal silence.”

The next morning, when Robert went to the Old Hall, he saw attendant, Krishnaswami, approaching Bhagavan again and again to complain about some people. After some time, Bhagavan looked sternly at him and said, “Remember the purpose for which you have come here. Attend to it. Keep quiet!” Robert took this as his very first *upadesa*, from Bhagavan. He did not take it as an instruction given to Krishnaswami. From then on, every moment of the three years he stayed, he dived within, and remained in a state of silence. Inwardly, he was established in truth, and outwardly he was a recluse. There was no need for him to talk to anyone, not even to Bhagavan. This is why nobody knew Robert Adams, even though he stayed for three years in Arunachala. Later, when I went to verify, one or two old devotees said that there was a young fellow who was possibly mad.

His name was, perhaps, Robert Adams. They also said that he followed Bhagavan’s teachings and did not have anything to do with others. He never spoke, all the time he was doing *sadhana*, remaining in that state. Robert himself shared with me the fact that even Bhagavan dropping his body did not affect him because he saw Bhagavan only as the Self.

Robert wandered around India, meeting sages and saints. He did this for a few years. Then, Bhagavan appeared in his dream and said, “Go back to your country and spread the teaching of Self Enquiry, how to attain Self realization, and how to stay in the state of ‘I Am’, to seekers in America.” Robert went back. But in the absence of publicity, none, except a select few, knew about him. On reaching Hollywood, he was afflicted by Parkinson’s disease and was forced to remain there. A beautiful woman named Mary, along with her friends, attended on him. They also helped him disseminate the teachings of Bhagavan. He conducted *satsangs* and had small gatherings. His presence was very powerful. He would sit in the hall in silence for twenty minutes and everyone around him would become absolutely silent. Ultimately, after the period of silence, Robert would speak for a few minutes.

I met Roberts at a *satsang* in Mary’s house. Seventy people had gathered there. There was such a profound and serene silence! A special seat had been arranged for Robert since he had Parkinson’s. Behind him was a picture of Bhagavan. I too was given a special chair. After Robert sat down, he looked at everyone for about twenty minutes and in those twenty minutes he silenced everyone’s minds and put them in a state of *samadhi*. Afterwards, he took the mike and spoke. He announced, “I welcome my master Ramana Maharshi’s grand nephew, Ganesan, and his secretary, Anuradha. I would like Ganesan to speak.” I spoke for nearly half an hour, at the end of which he happily said, “I entirely agree with every word that Ganesan has spoken today.”

I would like to share an incident that took place when I was there. One John Wilkins, who had been Robert's friend for more than twenty years, asked, "Robert, I want you to tell me: what is the truth and what is untruth? What is reality and unreality? I do not want you to quote from the scriptures or use any philosophical jargon. You must make me experience these right now at your feet." I was thrilled because I wanted to know how Robert was going to answer these difficult questions.

Robert looked happy for some time and then became very serious. He looked at John and asked, "Who are you?" He replied, "I am John Wilkins." Robert gave him the most gracious smile that I have ever seen and said, "I AM is the truth and John Wilkins is the untruth. I AM is the reality, and John Wilkins is the unreality." Everyone sitting in the room went into a state of *samadhi*. This was not a mere answer; it was a statement that transported everyone into a state of silence and *samadhi*.

**Robert's poem: Who am I?** Feel your reality/ in the stillness/ in the quietness/ where there is no mind/ no thoughts, no words/ who are You then?/ You just are. I AM, I AM/ I am not this/ I am not that/ I AM/ I am that which has always been/ I am that which will always be/ I AM THAT I AM.

\*Yogananda's visit to the Maharshi in 1935 can be seen in picture no. 13 in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, which also records Robert's fascinating reminiscences at pages 358-60.

## SRI RAMANA SHOWERS GRACE ON MANAVASI RAMASWAMI IYER

During one of his visits to Tiruvannamalai as an officer of the Public Works Department, Ramaswami went to see Sri Ramana on the hill. For many years he has been suffering from severe stomach disorders, and could not sleep well too. He appealed to Bhagavan to cure him of his ailment. Bhagavan replied that he was neither a doctor nor could he perform miracles. Ramaswami felt deeply disappointed and openly expressed his anguish at not being able to secure Bhagavan's Grace. Bhagavan then looked at him most compassionately and said, "Whatever it may be, one must ask, to whom is the suffering, and who is it that is being affected." While saying this, Bhagavan waved his hand in a peculiar manner. Ramaswami could see a flash of light emanating from that divine hand. He felt peace flooding his heart, a peace that he had never experienced before.

That day being a festive occasion, devotees had brought delicacies. Bhagavan invited Ramaswami to partake in the feast. But he refused as he knew he would not be able to digest

such rich food. When Bhagavan insisted, he had to yield. He ate well and slept soundly at night. He later discovered that all his stomach problems had disappeared completely, never to recur.

Ramaswami had adequate knowledge of South Indian classical music. On one occasion in 1908, Bhagavan explained to him the rules of music and rhyme that characterise classical compositions. This was quite unexpected, for Ramaswami had until then never thought of composing songs. He however found, to his pleasant surprise, that he could effortlessly compose. Thus was born his first composition 'Deenarakshaka', the free translation of which is: There is no refuge, Arunachala Ramana, Oh protector of the weak/ You are surrounded by your devotees who are silent bees, intoxicated by tasting the nectar of your presence/ Totally scorched by the heat of my ego/ I have forgotten my true Self/ Your grace is the best medicine to rid the world of ignorance and suffering/ Oh embodiment of compassion/ Like the baby lion which out of ignorance/ Joined a herd of goats and had to be shown its true identity by its mother/ You have revealed to me my true nature, by granting your protection.

In 1914, when Ramaswami was living in Behrampur, he suffered from boils all over his legs. All systems of medicine were tried, but were of no avail. One early morning, there was a knock on the door by two visitors from Tiruvannamalai. They informed him that they were on a pilgrimage and Bhagavan had instructed them to meet Ramaswami on the way. They applied an indigenous medicine known to them. Boils completely disappeared in two or three days. Immediately after this, as an expression of his heartfelt gratitude, Ramaswami composed the song, 'Sarangati', the free translation of which is: I surrender unto thee/ There is no other refuge now/ Please protect me/ You are the Lord of Arunachala, who grants *mukti* even if merely thought of/ Oh Ramana, you are the embodiment and the rain cloud of compassion/ This is the moment to grant me the glance of your Grace/ If you delay, what am I to do?/ Please remove my sorrow and grant me Bliss/ I cannot bear your indifference any longer/ Oh Ramana, the embodiment of Brahman/ I surrender to You.

A few days before Bhagavan's *Maha Nirvana*, Ramaswami's wife was stung by a scorpion. Instead of calling a doctor or rushing her to a hospital, as members of his family were desperately wanted to, Ramaswami ran to Ramanasramam and informed Bhagavan about it from the window of the small Nirvana room. He did not even bother to notice whether Bhagavan had heard him or not. Bhagavan had been told, and He would take care. Without waiting for Bhagavan's reaction, he went home. His wife recovered within a few hours, without recourse to doctors and medicine.

During his career in P.W.D., one of his superiors once taunted him saying, that for the work he was doing, he did not deserve the salary, which was Rs. 150/- per month. When he told Bhagavan about it, He exclaimed, “Does he feel Rs. 150/- is too much. What would he say, if you got Rs. 200/-?” The next gazette announced a promotion and a salary increase to Rs. 200/- for Ramaswami. – *Centenary Souvenir, Commemorating the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Ramana at Arunachala, Ramanasramam, 1996*

**The thought ‘I am the body’ is the string/ On which are threaded diverse thought like beads/ On diving deep upon the quest/ ‘Who am I and from whence’ thoughts disappear/ And consciousness of Self then flashes forth/ As the ‘I-I’ within the cavity/ Of every seeker’s heart/ And this is Heaven – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**BE STILL – A POEM:** Be quiet, be still/ Exercising no will/And Truth will reveal itself/As your own real Self/ You need do nothing else/ Is what Ramana Maharshi tells/ For you to realize the Truth. – *D Samarender Reddy*

**ATMAN IS M.D.:** The lowest cadre of staff is equivalent to the physical body, the middle-level is like the mind, the intellect the executives, and Atman or Self is the managing director (M.D.). The body has limited powers. The mind is more powerful, the intellect provides sense of judgment for decision making. But all draw strength only from the Atman. – *Shivender Nagar*

**If you are not happy as you are, you will never be happy. – Swami Rama Tirtha**

**If you want to be happy, be. – Leo Tolstoy**

**Silence is the first door to spiritual eminence. – Adi Sankara**

**All that you accomplish or fail to accomplish in your life is the direct result of your thoughts. – James Allen**

**The Supreme Reality stands revealed in the consciousness of those who have overcome themselves. – The Gita**

**No one is free of negative attributes. But they do need constant monitoring. Separate yourself from the negative and observe it uninterruptedly, particularly when it spreads its wings to engulf your mental space. – Arup Mitra**

**CONTENTMENT:** The thought of acquiring is the source of discontentment. Contentment lies in celebrating what you have. Chasing what you do not possess, will keep you running around forever. Rejoice and value the life that you have. Be grateful for many things that you have taken for granted. Discontentment will not lead you anywhere. If you cultivate the feeling of gratitude, you will always remain content and happy. – *Rakeshbhai*

## OCTOBER

### WAKE UP INTO THE *MAYA*-FREE SELF

**The worldly life is a dream-like appearance. It functions through the mixture of the pairs of opposites such as desire and aversion. It appears real so long as one is under the spell of *maya*. It will end up as totally false when one wakes up into the *maya*-free Self. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**SPEAK CAREFULLY:** Do not indulge in arguments and disputations; one who clamours aloud has not grasped the Truth. Silence is the only language of the realised. Practice moderation in speech; that will help you in many ways. Most misunderstandings and problems arise out of carelessly spoken words. When the foot slips, the wound can be healed; but when the tongue slips, the wound it causes may fester for long. That is why silence (*mounam*) is prescribed for spiritual aspirants. – *V. Narayanan*

### WALK THE RAMANA PATH STEADFASTLY

The activity of the 'I', and the awareness of the Heart's sparkle cannot co-exist. One should push within fearlessly, to find new life, and not stop at the threshold. For this, we have to be on our guard, wary of the ego's ways which will wean us away from our right resolve, and deny us our moorings. Hundreds of thoughts are right there waiting for a chance to intrude, to take hold of us. These intrusions cannot be tackled effectively if we make any distinction between thoughts, being relaxed to the pleasant ones and battling against the unpleasant. When a distraught devotee, who was drowned in sorrow of his son's death, asked Ramana, 'Is sorrow a thought?', the answer was. 'All thoughts are sorrowful because they take one's attention away from the Self, which is undiluted happiness.' Anything which comes in the way of Self-attention has to be tackled, and for this, all thoughts are on par; they have to be discarded.

Someone asked, 'Has not Bhagavan said, 'Be quiet'? Does being still imply inactivity, a mere passivity? 'No.' Bhagavan added, 'Being still is not an effortless state of indolence. All worldly activities are performed with the aid of a portion of the mind and with frequent breaks.

But the act of communion with the Self, or remaining still inwardly, is intense activity which is performed with the entire mind and without a break.

Then there is the lure of scholarship, particularly for those who have a natural intellectual inclination. There is no end to the study of scriptures. The ego of scholarship, the ego 'I-know', would take a subtle hold. Once the path is comprehended, it would be a mere waste of time to endlessly delve into the meanings of words instead of practicing the path. *What matters is practice*. All else would lead to meaningless philosophical disputations.

Another mental clog is the feeling which creeps in, along the way, that we are not making any headway. Used as we are to tangible results, we feel lost. Here it is important to remember that right effort would never go waste. When, in what time, it would bear fruit cannot be postulated with any degree of certainty. For, one might be gun-powder ready to catch fire, or wet wood, which would light up extremely slowly and with struggle. Then, there is also the difference in the intensity of effort, in the passion for Self-knowledge, in total concern for it.

We do not know what has brought us to the Ramana Way. This rare good fortune is inexplicable. Having come, it would be a tragedy of tragedies to fitter away this opportunity. We have to continue to tread the Ramana path steadfastly and vigilantly. We may slip, become externalised, but this is of no consequence so long as Ramana and the Ramana Way remain as our pole-stars, our mariner's compass. – Excerpted from A. R. Natarajan's write-up in *The Ramana Way*, May 2014

**SPIRITUALITY:** Self-realisation and spiritual growth is a profound goal to pursue. Though spiritual progress offers pathways to heal our varied wounds, we need to work at resolving our emotional and mental baggage, that is, if we are leading a more meaningful life, we should avoid developing aversion for other life styles, and avoid becoming judgmental. Similarly, if we increasingly value a life of austerity, we run the risk of looking down on others who are different from us. We have to be careful that we don't become judgmental in our march towards spiritual living. – *Rajiv Vij*

**BARBER NATESAN:** Natesan served Bhagavan for 23 years. He was not absent even once during all those years. When he shaved Bhagavan the last time, he sensed that the end was near. He felt that he might not have the opportunity to serve him again. He prostrated before Bhagavan and said with great feeling, "Bhagavan! You must forgive my lapses." Bhagavan smiled and said, "Hm! Hm!" Till then he used to prostrate before Bhagavan only in the hall and not where he saved him. This was the last and the first time he prostrated at the place of work. – *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. viii

**BHAGAVAN READS THE LIPS OF HIS PARSEE DEVOTEE:** While on his visit to the Ashram, one day, in the first week of April, 1950, Dorabji Framji\* was chanting Surya mantras in his language, facing the sun, his son came to him and told that Bhagavan was not well and they must go and see him. As they went to the Nirvana Room, Framji prostrated before Bhagavan three times, repeating silently all the while his mantra which was: “We pay homage to Thee, the Rising Sun.” Bhagavan eyed him steadily and then said: “But what are you saying, Framji? Not rising sun, but setting sun,” and then laughed. Yet, all the while, Framji had not spoken a word aloud. He knew then that the end must be very close, and it came within a week. – *Arunachala’s Ramana*, vol. viii

\* A detailed account of this devotee is in *Ramana Periya Puranam*, pages at Google

## **RAMANATHA BRAHMACHARI – AN OUTSTANDING DEVOTEE**

By V. Ganesan

Bhagavan once said, “I am afraid of only two people. One is Ramanatha Brahmachari and the other is Mudaliar Paati.” He said this because these two ascetics served Bhagavan with utter, selfless devotion.

Ramanatha was a student of the *Veda pathashala* in Tiruvannamalai. When he met Bhagavan in 1912, his mind and heart opened up and he felt his whole being immersing in silence. Then and there, he decided to be with Bhagavan. Though the *pathashala* provided free food and lodging to its students, young Ramanatha preferred to stay with Bhagavan. He begged for food on the streets and took that food to Bhagavan in Virupaksha cave. Bhagavan’s mother allowed him to serve her because he was a Brahmin boy. Ramanatha would help her wash vessels, clothes, etc., and she would call out his name, “Ramanatha, Ramanatha,” for every errand. Hearing her, Bhagavan would humourously remark, “The *japa* of my mother has started again!”

One day, Bhagavan told Ramanatha that he had succeeded in realizing the Self. Ramanatha could not believe it. He sought confirmation from Bhagavan repeatedly. Bhagavan reassured him many times, “Ramanatha, you have realized the Self!” Nevertheless, he still refused to believe it. Bhagavan got up and rapped his head with his knuckles and repeated, “Yes, Ramanatha, you are realized.” He went into ecstasy and ran out of the room telling everyone he met, “This is the place where Bhagavan knuckled me!” He did not care that he had attained Self realization. Bhagavan’s knuckling him was greater than Self realization for him!



This innocent disciple also served the other devotees. When he started living at Palakottu, Kavyakantha, Muruganar, Paul Brunton, Cohen, Viswanatha Swami and Kunju Swami were some of its other residents. Their only purpose was to be with Bhagavan for as much time as possible. Every evening, of his own accord, Ramanatha would sweep their huts and clean their oil lamps with dedication. In the daytime, he would go to the town to obtain their simple requirements from the shops. Despite doing all this, he found enough time to come and sit in Bhagavan's presence. Bhagavan was his all. One day, Viswanatha Swami received a post card in which the post-script read: "Please convey my prostrations to the Palakottu *sarvadhikari*." Bhagavan gave a broad smile before handing over the letter to Viswanatha Swami and exclaimed, "Who is the Palakottu *sarvadhikari*?" Ramanatha who was seated in the corner of the hall, got up with folded hands and said, "Bhagavan! They call me Palakottu *sarvadhikari* since I do all their daily errands. They permit me to do this service to them and express their approval of it by calling me *sarvadhikari*!" Bhagavan looked very pleased and said, "A true *sarvadhikari* should be like this."

When a man arrived at the Ashram with a calf, which Bhagavan named Lakshmi, there was nobody to look after her. Since there was danger from panthers and tigers, Bhagavan remarked, "There is nobody to look after Lakshmi. Else, she could have been kept here." Then, the diminutive, four and a half feet high Ramanatha said, "Bhagavan, I will look after Lakshmi." This was the beginning of the Ramanasramam *goshala*.

One day, when Bhagavan was going around the hill with Ramanatha and other devotees, each one was asked to speak on a spiritual topic. Ramanatha, in an ecstatic state, compared Bhagavan with Lord Siva and his devotees with the *bhuta ganas*, i.e., Siva's attendants. Later, at the request of Bhagavan and the others, he wrote it down in Tamil verses. The song is as follows: "I have seen Tiruchuzhi nathan and unable to turn back, I stood there transfixed. He is the lord who dances in Chidambaram, who protects the helpless and is merciful to them. The same Tiruchuzhi nathan manifested himself as God in Virupaksha cave. *Jiva* was ruling unjustly in the town of Kayapuri (the body) with the *karanas* (the sense organs and the organs of action) as his subjects, and *ahankara* (the ego) as his minister. After some time, *jiva* took up the sword of God's grace and cut off the head of his minister, *ahankara*. Having so cut off the minister's head, *jiva* stood with God who was dancing all by himself in the cave called Daharalaya (the Heart's abode). He is this Tiruchuzhi nathan; I saw him and stayed there being unable to get away."

In 1946, he fell sick. He was taken to Madras for treatment where he passed away. When the news reached Bhagavan he observed total silence. Hundreds of people were around, but

Bhagavan was totally absorbed for a long period. – *Ramana Periya Puranam*, available at Google

## KARTHIKAI DEEPAM OR DEEPAM FESTIVAL

By Suri Nagamma

When a huge Deepam is lit on the top of Arunachala on the tenth day of the festival, it is a sight well-worth seeing. In the Ashram, in Bhagavan's presence, a big light is also simultaneously lit, *prasadam* is distributed, and 'Akshara Mana Mala' and other hymns are sung. The devotees made preparations for the festival. In the Jubilee hall, the floor was decorated with rice powder floral designs.

This evening, when Bhagavan went out to the cow-shed, the attendants placed his couch in the open space facing the hill, spreading the bedding on it. Opposite the couch, a large shallow iron pan was placed on a high stool, ghee poured into it and a wick placed in the centre. Flowers and garlands were strewn around it. As these preparations were nearing completion, Bhagavan arrived on the scene. Spontaneously, those gathered there rose. When Bhagavan sat on the couch, attendants gave him a binocular with which he was scanning the hill. While his gaze was concentrated on the summit, ours was concentrated on his Divine face, for it was just a reflection of Arunachala.

With the firing of crackers at the Temple, the light on the hill-top appeared. Immediately, the *akhanda jyothi* light, opposite Bhagavan, was lighted. The Brahmins rose and chanted the mantra, 'Nakarmana Prajaya Dhanena', and lit the camphor. *Kumkum* and *vibhuti* were distributed to all the devotees. After Bhagavan had partaken of a little fruit and some sweetmeats, the rest were distributed to the devotees. Immediately after that, the devotees divided themselves into two parties, one singing the hymns in 'Akshara Mana Mala' and the other taking up the refrain 'Arunachala Siva'. After that, the five stanzas beginning with 'Karuna Purna Sudhabhde' in Sanskrit and its equivalent in Tamil were recited.

Bhagavan sat resting his cheek on his hand, slightly reclining on the pillow – his characteristic pose. His face appeared as though mirroring his Self-illumination; with his silence and profound thought reflecting on it. The moon rose in the east and cast its light on him as though seeking its light from him. I sat there with my back against the almond tree. If I looked west, I had the light of Arunachala, if I looked ahead I had the bright light of the moon; and if I looked to the right, I had the glowing light emanating from Bhagavan's face. How lucky I felt that I

had the three-faced Light around me that night! I felt an inexplicable bliss, and involuntarily closed my eyes.

On hearing the sound of the dinner bell, I opened my eyes. Bhagavan was looking at me and that look was more than I could stand; involuntarily my head hung down. Bhagavan smiled and went towards the dining room, the devotees following him. – *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*, 29.11.1947

### **AN INSPRING POEM – ‘IF’**

By Rudyard Kipling

**Kipling (1865-1936), an English poet and writer, born in Bombay, was awarded Nobel Prize for literature (1907).**

If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
If you can wait and not be tired of waiting,  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat these two imposters just the same,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much,  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it.

### **SADHANA AND ACHIEVEMENT OF YOGI RAMIAH**

**This outstanding devotee, a rich Reddi landlord from Nellore district in A.P., had received hardly any education. He says:**

From boyhood I had great *bhakti* towards Rama Namam. I used to listen attentively to whenever elders recited religious stories. Once, when 19 years old, after hearing the story of Kabir (a great saint of north India), I became sorrowful that I had wasted this life till then. I got *vairagyam* and wanted to do *tapas* like Valmiki till his body got covered by ant hills. I then knew that *tapas* meant meditating on Rama Namam continuously like oil flow, and to be in *Samadhi*, forgetting the body. I started getting up at 3 a.m., bathe, sit in a secluded place, and

meditate till 8 a.m. From 8-11, I would read *Bhagavatam*. After meals, I would listen to *Bhagavatam* read by a Brahmin. In the evenings I would go outside the town and meditate alone. When Swami Brahmanantha Thirtha came to Nellore, I went to see him and prayed to him to give me *upadesa*, and teach me yoga, for conquering the mind. He gave me Rama *tarakam* and asked me to meditate on it. I was then meditating focusing attention towards the middle of the eyes. In a short time, *Chitkalas* began to appear in a variety of ways and they disappeared after some time. Thereafter, a flame-like sun began to appear when meditating with eyes closed. But there would be nothing on opening the eyes. I then got *vairagyam*, and left the house, without telling anyone.

I wanted to go to Dandaka Forest and do penance like Valmiki and other *rishis*. On my way to Bapatla(Guntur district), there was a guru. I went to see him. He asked me whether I had left the house informing my people. I told him the truth. He told me that you cannot stay in Dandaka and do penance. There are many difficulties. Have an *ashram* in your village and do penance. I will be going and seeing you occasionally. So saying he sent me back to my village. I started my own *ashram*. By constant meditation sitting on an *asana*, I used get fatigued. To get over it, I would do *pranayama*. While doing this and learning from the books such as *Jnana Vasishtam*, *Bhaghavad Gita*, *Bhagavatam*, etc., that yoga should be practised keeping the *lakshyam* at the tip of the nose, I began to do likewise. Practising this for some time and seeing nothing at the end of the nose I began to feel discouraged. Feeling reassured by the firm belief that what is said in *sastras*, will never be untrue, I gave up interest in food, in sleep and always devoted myself to *dhyana*, *dharana* and *pranayama*. Gradually, I achieved breath retention. Now and then I used to feel *sushumna*, subtle force, rise up. In some months, there was no body sense and the Self was all pervading. External visions decreased by constant concentration on the Self. I felt the need to go to some experienced guru to tell him about my experiences.

In my boyhood, when I had come on a pilgrimage to Tiruvannamalai, I had seen Ramana Maharshi. I used to think of him. Learning that he knows Telugu, I went to him. Being with the Maharshi, I came to the conclusion that he was my guru and that he had realised the truth. I felt immensely attracted to the Maharshi, and felt quite at home in Ramanasramam. Bhagavan was all love. Sitting in his presence gave peace. After some time with Bhagavan's permission, I went to my native place. I would come twice a year to see him.

Just as a father would bring up motherless children, Bhagavan was always filled with limitless kindness. I stayed in my cottage in Palakottu or with the Maharshi. As my speech may cause *chitta chalanam*, I observed *mounam*. One day I told the Maharshi that at the time of

meditation the whole thing would appear to be one, and then at other times the subject and object appear to be different. He told me that there was still *dehavasana*, i.e., attachment to body and asked me to carry on with meditation till it disappeared entirely. He added, when *dehavasana* goes, *ahamkara* vanishes and the Self alone remains... The Maharshi had composed *Upadesa Saram* in Tamil. I prayed he might translate it in Telugu. He rendered it in *dwipada*, couplet form in Telugu. – *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. ii

**Paul Brunton's account of the greatness of Yogi Ramiah in his *A Search in Secret India*:**

One afternoon, I noticed a new visitor walk with dignified step into the hall and take seat quite close to the Maharshi's couch. He is extremely dark-skinned, but otherwise his face is highly refined. He makes no attempt to speak, but the Maharshi immediately gives him a welcome smile. The man's personality makes a powerful impression upon me. He looks like a graven Buddha. An extraordinary tranquillity is deeply charactered on his face. My next contact with him comes the following day, in a totally unexpected manner. When I returned to my hut in Palakottu, unlocking the door, I saw a big deadly snake near my feet. I was struck with horror and was completely at loss what to do. When I manage to recover my senses and draw back with a rush, I saw the figure of Yogi Ramiah. He approached my hut and imperturbably began to enter the room. I shout a warning to him, but he takes no notice. He stands quite close to the snake, which bends his head before him, and then he gently strokes its tail! It slithers quickly out of the hut. I express my astonishment at the fearless way in which the Yogi handled the snake.

It is not possible to converse with the Yogi because he has imposed upon himself the discipline of strict silence, and because he speaks only Telugu, which I do not understand. The Yogi dislikes being interviewed, but I managed to elicit a few facts about him. He is on the right side of forty. He owns property in Nellore District, which is managed by his family members. He has a group of his own disciples in Nellore, but once every year he leaves them to visit the Maharshi, with whom he stays for two or three months at a time, bringing his personal servant with him.

During the weeks which succeeded my first meeting with Ramiah, I came to know him a little better. His large dark eyes possess a tranquillity which is singularly attractive. We strike a strange kind of silent friendship. From time to time, I accompany him on short walks through the jungle areas. Whenever we go he is always a serene dignified figure whose noble carriage I cannot help but admire.

One day, I received a letter bringing the extremely bad news that the source of funds is over, and I would have to leave India. I feel badly shaken, and I fling my weary body upon the blanket in my hut. A short time later, I hear a gentle tap on the door. To my surprise, Ramiah enters the hut. He looks at me with a questioning expression in the eyes. I am alone with a man whose tongue I cannot speak. I hint at the difficulties which have suddenly dropped out of the skies upon me, and supplement my speech with gestures of defeat and expressions of disgust. Ramiah listens quietly. When I finish, he nods his head gravely in sympathetic response. A little later he rises and, with signs and gestures, invites me to follow him outside. I continue to follow him for about half an hour, when we sat under a banyan tree. Half an hour passes, yet he still sits, very strange and very quiet, wrapped in introspective silence. His face now seems transfigured by a profounder peace than usual. I became acutely susceptible of the silence of our lonely surroundings and to the amazing calm of my companion. Little by little, with persistent gentleness, peace weaves itself into my soul. The mood of serene triumph over personal distresses, which I could not reach before, now comes to me easily. I cannot doubt that the Yogi is helping me in his own mysterious way. I wonder about the beneficent radiation which emanates from him. Thus, the burden which lay so heavy on my mind vanishes with this change of spiritual atmosphere. I resign myself to the protective aura of the Yogi, which I somehow feel is enfolding me... Somehow, in due course, my problem got solved.

**V. Ganesan writes:** After Bhagavan's passing away, Yogi Ramiah spent most of his time in *tapas*, yoga and *mounam* at his village. Finding peace in his presence, many people used to spend time in his proximity. Those who stuck around were invariably taught Self Enquiry and advised to follow the path of Bhagavan. His last days were very peaceful. He was fully conscious till the last moment. Those who were with him then, told me that his face was suffused with yogic brilliance. His lips were constantly uttering the name of Bhagavan Ramana till he breathed his last. A *samadhi* shrine was built where his body was interred. Since then, this shrine has become a place of worship. – *Ramana Periya Puranam* at Google

**Note:** For some illuminating questions by the Yogi, and their answers by the Maharshi, refer *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, entries dated Feb. 4, 1935 and 7<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1938.

**By becoming silent, thoughtless, alert and aware, you can bring in the light.** – *Osho*

**If you want to find God, you must spend a great deal of time alone.** – *Anonymous*

**Live in the world like a waterfowl. The water clings to the bird, but it shakes it off. Live in the world like a mudfish, whose skin is always bright and shiny.** – *Sri Ramakrishna*

**No one succeeds without effort. Those who succeed owe their success to perseverance. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**Do not wait until conditions are perfect to begin. Beginning makes the conditions perfect. – Alan Cohen**

**Life is like a ladder; one can use it to go down or climb. Learn to use your life. – Swami Sukhabodhananda**

**MUNDAKA UPANISHAD:** The concept of *jnana* is in the word *mundaka*, which etymologically refers to a person who has shaved the hair off his head. In the larger sense, it symbolises the shaving off of the layers of ignorance which cover us all, to enable us to see ourselves as one with the universal Self. – *Pranav Khullar*

**SECURITY:** We all are anxious to have all types of security for ourselves, unaware of the fact that our security becomes our prison. We are wasting our whole life in accumulating security bonds. – *Osho*

## NOVEMBER

### \ WORLD IS NOT SEPARATE FROM THE SELF

**The world that consists of diverse moving and unmoving objects is like the various ornaments that arise from gold and shine, taking gold as their basis. Just as the ornaments that shine as many, are in truth, only gold in essence, the world is not separate and distinct from the Self, consciousness. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

**LEARN TO WORK HARD AND WAIT:** The farmer works really long and hard. He has to plough the land, sow the seeds, water it regularly, use fertilizers, and remove the weeds. Only after all this, he be able to bring home the food grains. That is what we have to do with ourselves. We must cultivate our mind with utmost care and concern. Using the plough of enquiry, we must sow the seed of God, guard it vigilantly and protect it by being egoless. We must also engage in various spiritual practices before we get the result. – *V. Narayanan*

**MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE:** When you make a choice ask yourself, ‘What are the consequences of this choice?’ If the body sends a message of comfort, that is the right choice. If you feel uneasiness in the body, while asking the question to yourself, then it’s not the appropriate choice. – *Deepak Chopra*

**SILENCE:** If we can be inwardly quiet, we will become aware of a faint sound that can be heard deep inside the ears and head. This is a mystical sound. The more one listens to this sound, the louder it becomes. We have to be finely tuned to hear this subtle sound. It helps us to connect to our inner Self. – *Yash Anand*

**GURU POURNIMA:** Siva is the first guru, from whom the yogic sciences originated. Guru Pournima signifies one of the greatest moments in the life of humanity. This is the day on which Siva opened up the phenomenal possibility that a human being can evolve beyond all limitations set by his physical nature, if he is willing to strive. – *Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev*

## **BHAGAVAN RESTORES THE EYE SIGHT – A MIRACLE**

By Padma Sitapati

My mother Janaki Mata (See next write-up) had instilled in me deep love and reverence for Sri Ramana Maharshi. I would have visited the Ashram innumerable times from my childhood. I will narrate one instance of Bhagavan’s miracle.

In his third year, my son Janaki Ramanan developed high fever and lost his eyesight. It was a tragedy we could not bear. My mother came to my house and advised me, “Don’t be afraid. The Gods of Gods and protector of our family, Sri Ramana, will surely restore his eyesight. Give your heart to your prayers and see the results.” These soothing words did not sink in. ‘How can his eyesight come back?’ I thought. Yet out of regard for my mother, I wrote a letter to Bhagavan explaining my predicament and seeking his intervention to alter fate’s course. We received a favourable reply from the Ashram. On reading it, my mother reassured me that my son’s eyesight would be restored by Bhagavan.

My father, an experienced doctor, was with us treating my son in the best possible manner. As the months rolled by, our faith faltered in the face of the stark reality. We began to question my mother’s ‘blind faith’.



It was the day of Karthigai Deepam. My mother performed an elaborate worship. She came out of the *pooja* room and told me, “Padma, Ramana, our Ramana, has restored your son’s eyesight. Take him to the Siva temple this evening and he will be able to see again.” Half-heartedly we went to the temple. To our amazement and abundant joy, my son prattled, “Amma, I see Bhagavan before my eyes. I can see.” Tears of joy streamed down my cheeks.

My mother ordered us to go to Sri Ramanasramam and express our gratitude to Bhagavan. When we went to the hall, we saw Bhagavan seated on the sofa. He listened to the whole story as if he had no part at all in restoring my son’s eyesight. But then it was Bhagavan’s way. He would never take credit for his miracles.

In the evening I again went to the hall and sat near Bhagavan. As it became dark my son said, “Amma, I can see only Bhagavan’s body, not his face.” Bhagavan heard this and questioned me. I had to tell him that even though my son could now see clearly during the day, thanks to Bhagavan’s grace, he still suffered from partial night blindness. Bhagavan looked at my son and told him, “Ramanan, look at me properly. Can you see Bhagavan’s head?” By saying this, he completed the miracle wrought by him. My son could see Bhagavan fully, clearly and normally. His night blindness too had been cured. – *Unforgettable Years* by A.R. Natarajan

## **JANAKI MATA – A UNIQUE DEVOTEE**

By V. Ganesan

Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, a well known saint who received blessings from Bhagavan, extols Janaki Mata of Tanjore in his book *Women Saints from India*: “Janaki Mata is one ever living in the remembrance of her *satguru*, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.”

Janaki Mata came from an affluent family. One day, she saw an emaciated old *sadhu* outside her house, crying, “Child! I am very hungry. Will you please give me some food?” Her mother had once told her that until the daily *pooja* was over nothing should be touched. At that moment, *pooja* was not yet over. Undeterred, she went inside and brought out delicacies prepared as offerings to God. She was overjoyed to see the hungry *sadhu* eat them with relish. After he had eaten, the *sadhu* asked her to put out her tongue. Using his finger, he wrote some sacred letters on her tongue. It instantly sent Janaki into a state of sheer joy and ecstasy. This experience impacted her in two different ways. On the one hand she became psychic [One

having extra-sensory perception and telepathy], and on the other, she became more spiritually inclined. She was no longer interested in playing with other children. Instead, she longed to turn towards God.

Janaki belonged to a typical Hindu family where the priority of the parents was to get their daughter married at an early age. Much to their concern and displeasure, they found that their daughter was moving more and more towards the spiritual realm, rejecting outright, all marriage proposals. At this juncture, the wife of a doctor, with two children, that the family knew, suddenly passed away. When Janaki was approached for an alliance with the widower, she had no hesitation in saying 'yes'. When later asked what caused her to yield, she replied, "I loved the two children."

Dr. Ganapathi Iyer, Janaki's husband, was a doctor and much older than her. By providence, he was transferred in 1935 to Tiruvannamalai. Janaki was by now yearning for the physical presence of a guru. With *darshan* of Bhagavan Ramana, Janaki understood that she had found what she had been searching for. One morning, when Bhagavan was going for his morning walk, she followed him and spoke to him. She expressed her great inner anguish. Bhagavan looked at her with profound compassion and said, "You are a *grihasta*. Fulfill all your obligations as a wife, especially those towards your husband. Leave the task of your spiritual fulfillment to me. There is nothing wrong with the body; it is only the *dehatma buddhi*, the 'I-am-the-body notion', that has to be given up. You are ever the limitless Self. I am always with you." Feeling immensely gratified, she plunged fervently into a life of spiritual *sadhana*. She started delving deep into the Heart all the time. Soon, the time came for Janaki Mata's husband to be transferred again. She was loathe to part from Bhagavan and cried bitterly. Bhagavan looked at her compassionately and tenderly, and assured her, "I am always with you."

Repeated visits to Bhagavan accelerated her spiritual perfection. Janaki Mata herself shares why she always wanted to be in contact with Bhagavan: "Bhagavan's presence made me experience the super-conscious state wherein all the dualities welled up in the mind only to be absorbed in the great silence. The external world appeared to be a myth and an empty dream, the only reality being the silence within the all pervading Self." It was this inner silence that she was established in. She would be immersed in *samadhi* for three to four hours in the presence of Bhagavan.

She maintained constant contact with Bhagavan. On one occasion, she sent a special walking stick with a silver handle; next she sent a pair of wooden sandals dressed in silver, through her disciple Natarajan, who later became Sadhu Om. Bhagavan received both the articles. He held

them, inspected them, and then said, “Give them back. Let Janaki Mata keep them in her *pooja*.” Janaki Mata worshipped the two articles daily with limitless devotion.

In 1966, Osborne, the founder editor of *Mountain Path*, wanted to bring out a special *Jayanti* issue. One day, he called me and insisted that we include an article on Janaki Mata in that issue. I was taken aback because I was not even aware that he knew her at all. I was pleasantly surprised when he wrote an apt and revealing introduction to the article.

In 1967, Bhagavan’s shrine was consecrated. On this occasion, some eminent saint was to be invited to the ceremony to touch the shrine and sanctify it. The Ashram’s managing committee, of which my father was president, instructed me to request Janaki Mata to sanctify the *lingam* in Bhagavan’s shrine. As Janaki Mata touched the *lingam*, she became ecstatic. She called out aloud, “Jai Ramanesa! Ramana Guru! Guru Ramana! Ramana *appa!* Ramana *deva!*” The entire audience of several hundred devotees and guests became ecstatic, being transported to a different realm altogether! When I met her during the consecration celebrations, I placed my head on her feet praying, “Oh Mata! Please bless me; please guide me.” Her words of guidance are sacred to me. She advised, “Hold on to the holy twin feet of *satguru* Ramana, the saviour of all suffering souls, and put his teaching into practice. Putting his teaching into daily practice is truly his two sacred feet. They should forever be embedded in your Heart, your *hridaya*.” – Excerpted from *Ramana Periya Puranam* at Google

**THE MIND:** Just as a slave has to obey his master’s commands, the body too is subservient to the all powerful mind. An agitated and unhealthy mind lays the foundation of disease. When the mind is calm and balanced, even if the body is unwell, it might be able to heal itself. When the mind is trained to go inwards through dedicated practice of yoga, *pranayama*, and mantra chanting, it becomes our best friend. – *Gurumaa*

## **BHAGAVAN SHOWERS GRACE ON A SPIRITUALLY-INCLINED FOREIGN DEVOTEE –AN UNUSUAL ACCOUNT**

**Wolter Keers, a Dutch teacher and writer, was an unusual devotee of Bhagavan. Shortly before he passed away in 1980s, he invited his friends to attend a party in his house. At the end of the party, he informed his friends that he was going to give up his body. He prostrated to a large photo of Bhagavan that he had placed on the floor. Then he placed a cushion in front of the photo, lay down with his head on the cushion at Bhagavan’s feet, and passed away. He writes:**

I was born in a family of clergymen. My father and my grandfather held high ranks in the church. All interest in our household was focused on matters of religion. When five years old, I was playing in a grass field. Suddenly I felt that the entire world, myself included, was light. I fell into the state that I later learned was called *samadhi*. If this sounds like an impressive event to happen to a five-year-old boy, I have to say that at the time it felt like the most ordinary of ordinary things. It was normal and natural. I never talked to anyone about it till I was twenty years of age, when the same thing happened to me when I was sitting in the company of a friend. He was reading something regarding mystics of the East. Without warning, *samadhi* dissolved me into nothingness.

I couldn't get back into the *samadhi* state that had arrived spontaneously, and could not discover answers to my burning questions in any of the books that came my way. I fell into a deep depression as it gradually dawned on me that the solution to this problem was utterly beyond me. It was during this despairing phase of my life that I happen to lay my hand on *Jnana Yoga* by Swami Vivekananda. It was a relief to discover that my own problem and spiritual hunger had been shared by countless seekers down the ages. The book also convinced me that somewhere in India there would be a teacher who would be able to help me. Then I came across *The Secret Path* by Paul Brunton, where it was written that there was a living sage in India with whom one could talk. There was a photo of Bhagavan in the book. I used to focus on it during my meditation and I also began to concentrate on the heart-centre on the right side of the chest. It took a lot of effort and practice to become fully absorbed in meditation, but I persevered.

I have always had strong yogic *samskaras*. It seemed natural for me to be putting all my energy into focusing on a strategic point in the subtle body. I also meditated on Bhagavan's photo. As I became absorbed in the image, I began to feel his living presence. The grace and power that flowed from that picture convinced me that he was still alive. As the power flowed from those magnificent eyes, I knew that Bhagavan was supervising my progress, even though he was thousands of miles away. I concentrated on Bhagavan more and more. Sometimes I was almost fighting with him, begging him to help me in my efforts to come and see him. I know that it sounds absurd to make such a claim, but there came a point when I could confidently say 'I won'. One day, I looked at Bhagavan's photo and knew with a calm unshakable certainty that I would be travelling to India in the future. But it was not until the beginning of 1950 that I was finally able to make the trip to India.

I knew from friends that Bhagavan was seriously ill, and that he would not be in body much longer, but that did not worry me. I had come in time. As I turned into the Ashram gate there was a feeling of success, of accomplishment. Roda McIver\* took me to the hall and pointed out Bhagavan to me. The mere sight of Bhagavan made me tremble all over. It was not because of nervousness. It was because I had come face to face with the divine. This recognition affected me so much that my body shook involuntarily. I looked at the Maharshi who had been the focus of my dreams, hopes and expectations for so many years. As I gazed at Bhagavan, I felt I saw God himself sitting there. In that early morning meeting I saw a blazing light that had taken human form. It was more radiant than anything I had ever seen before. When I was very young, I had believed that God was something magnificent being, having a human form that radiated light and goodness. I had long since abandoned this childhood belief, believing it to be a fairy tale story that was told to credulous children. Now this childhood belief turned out to be true, because 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.

Bhagavan was behaving in a normal way. He looked around at various people who had come to see him. Occasionally, he would close his eyes for a minute. It looked to me as if he was having short naps, but soon I realised that he was fully aware of everything that was going on around him, even when his eyes were closed. When I had time to reflect on the first *darshan*, it seemed amazing that such an air of normality could prevail around someone who was radiating so much light and energy.

Bhagavan's immediate presence was overwhelmingly potent. However, after being in Bhagavan's presence for a couple of weeks, I began to notice that the exalted states I experience in his presence gradually wore off when I went back to my little room opposite the Ashram. Sitting in Bhagavan's presence I felt a quiet lucidity, which I could not secure sitting alone in my room. I felt I had to confront Bhagavan with this problem. I had not come to him for blissful experiences. I had come to him to seek a permanent end to my mind and all its problems. That day when I passed in front of him and greeted him, a quick smile passed over his face. I somehow felt that he knew what I had come for. I sat down among the crowded hall and waited to see what would happen. Bhagavan paid no attention to me at all. I began to bombard Bhagavan with thoughts. With all the mental energy I could summon up, I shot out my complaint at him: 'Bhagavan what use is all your radiance if I cannot solve my mental problems the moment I leave you?' This, with minor variations, I repeated again and again.

Bhagavan took no notice. He continued to go through his everyday routine, showing no indication that he had heard my mental complaint. Frustrated, I concentrated on him even more. I tried to shake his indifference with my thoughts. I felt I was shaking him the way I would shake a tree to get a fruit to fall off. The whole force of my will was focused on one thought: 'I must have an answer; I must have an answer.' Finally, my mental persistence paid off. He turned in my direction and looked at me with a smile of utter amazement on his face. 'What do you want?' said his smile. Then his expression changed, and its new configuration exclaimed, 'You are looking for your glasses, and they are on your nose!' No words passed his lips, but these messages came to me with unbelievable clarity. There was no doubt or conjecture or imagination. Bhagavan continued to gaze at me. Suddenly his eyes emitted light and spat fire at me. His powerful look went straight into me. I felt the right-hand-side heart centre begin to get warm. And it got warmer and warmer, as he continued to gaze at me. I felt as if Bhagavan was charging it with some immensely powerful spiritual electricity because, as he continued to look at me, I had the unmistakable feeling that my heart-centre was some kind of a spiritual dynamo that was emitting sparks of light and energy. I felt as if some enormously potent electric apparatus had been transplanted into my chest. I sat rigid and straight, my eyes glued to his. Fire flowed from his glowing eyes and drilled into the core of my being. How long this transmission lasted, I cannot say. There was a complete transformation, inside and out, and it all happened without a word being spoken.

Bhagavan had taken me to the limit of my readiness. When I felt I could not contain any more of his power, I withdrew from the encounter. I knew there was still work to do. I had received my parting gift from him, and I could not have asked for anything more. I stayed in Tiruvannamalai until a few days before Bhagavan's passing away. By that time there were at least a thousand people trying to see him every day, but we were only allowed to stand in front of his door for ten or twenty seconds and look at him, lying in his bed. Having received his blessings and initiation, I gave my place in the crowd to others to have his blessings.

Back in Bombay, where I stayed in a friend's flat, I was amazed to discover to what extent changes had occurred. My two months with Bhagavan had turned me inside out, upside down. My mind and heart had been illuminated by his grace, but I also knew that the time I spent with him had been too short to remove all obstacles. Being with Bhagavan had given me the unshakable conviction that he was looking after me. I knew that he was supervising my spiritual welfare. I knew that his guidance would not cease simply because he had shed his body. Three months after his physical departure I had a vision of Bhagavan that amply justified my faith that he would continue to guide me.

I used to imagine myself in the hall, speaking with him. During one of these imaginary exercises, I suddenly found myself transported to Ramanasramam, and once more I was sitting opposite him. I looked at him and remarked. ‘How wonderful it is to be alone with Bhagavan. He smiled at me. How can that smile ever be described? It contained the whole world. Very slowly, he said, ‘Are ...you...ever...not...alone?’ I immediately understood what he meant. I asked him what I should do about all mental problems. Instead of giving me a specific answer, he told me to go and spend time with another venerable teacher whose name I recognised when Bhagavan mentioned it me. I followed his advice and spent several years with this man [Nisargadatta Maharaj], remaining with him until I felt that all my problems had been overcome. – Excerpted from *The Power of the Presence* by David Godman, part three

\*Her reminiscences are at pages 301-4 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, available from Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, and also at Google. Many reminiscences of Wolter Keers are also in *Face to Face* at pages 196-201.

## HISTORY OF TIRUVANNAMALAI

Tiruvannamalai was earlier known as *Thiru Anna Nadu*, and the presiding deity was known as *Thiru Nattu Mahadevan*. This region was called *Thondai Mandalam*. Successive kings of south India – Pallavas, Rashtrakutas, Pandya, Hoysalas and Vijayanagar – have given great importance to Tiruvannamalai and the temple of Arunachala. Krishna Deva Raya of Vijayanagar constructed the hundred-pillared and thousand-pillared halls. He also built the eastern *Rajagopuram* with eleven storeys. Critics may take exception to the absence of harmony in the architectural style, but there is better and grander harmony, the harmony of devotion of the architects of the temple.

### THE TEMPLE

It has six enclosures. Their walls are about nine meters high. The walls join the four main *gopurams*. In the construction of the temple, Krishna Devaraya’s contribution is immense. In the sanctum sanctorum the Lord is enthroned on a circular *Aavudayaar* (platform). The bottom portion of the *Linga*, where it meets the *Aavudayaar*, is encircled by a gold band. With the centuries of *abhishekam* performed on the *Linga* and sandalwood paste smeared near the top of it, the *Linga* at this spot appears different from the other portions.

It is mistakenly believed by some that the sacred tree (*sthala vriksha*) assigned to Arunachala is *magizha* tree. Actually it is the banyan tree which is *sthala vriksha*.

There is a tunnel running right through the Hill from east to west. It opens at one end inside the temple’s strong room. The second end of the tunnel is in the Adi Annamalai temple premises.

The tunnel is said to provide access to the caves inside the Hill where *yogis* and *siddhas* are immersed in the bliss of union with Arunachala. Probably to stop the curious from entering the tunnel, Bhagavan advised that the opening from the Adi Annamalai temple side be closed. – *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. i

## ASPIRE FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

By Jaya Row

Everyone is chasing fulfillment, happiness and satisfaction. Some seek it in wealth, others in fitness and health, still others in relationships, and a few in intellectual pursuits. Yet nobody seems to have found any of these in the long run. It is the mind that plays tricks and misleads you and, in the end, destroys you. Consult your intellect, strengthen it and be guided by it. It is ignorance that creates the imaginary void. You do not need to seek fulfillment. You are already completely, utterly, totally fulfilled... Get inspired by a higher ideal. This need emerges from a deep sense of inadequacy. A *jnani* is acutely aware of his imprisonment in the body and mind complex, and is struggling for liberation. His focus is on the goal of Enlightenment. Nothing in the world distracts him from that ideal. All the heavenly wealth and enjoyments offered by Yama did not deter Nachiketa from his goal of realisation... The unintended side effect of spiritual pursuit is immense happiness and enjoyment. So aspire for Enlightenment. The world will be at your feet! – *The Speaking Tree*

**The real secret is knowing what things need to be left undone. Once you start spending time on activities that will advance your life's mission, everything will change.** – *Robin Sharma*

**Don't depend on your senses that are ever-changing. Depend on awareness behind them.** – *Osho*

**If our yearning is sincere, our prayers will be answered.** – *Sant Rajindra Singh*

**One can't have both, inner and other riches. Inner fullness far outweighs the outer.** – *J. Krishnamurthi*

**Things that are real, are given and received in silence.** – *Meher Baba*

**Solitude is an attitude. A man who adopts an attitude of detachment towards the external environment is always in solitude.** – *Anup Taneja*



**Being ignorant is not so much a shame, as being unwilling to learn. – Benjamin Franklin**

**Row your boat. Do not waste time in rowing others' boat. You have to execute your choices; you cannot expect others to do it for you. – Mahatria Ra**

## DECEMBER

**WORLD – A MERE APPEARANCE: All the differences that accumulate to form the world are in truth only the power of one consciousness. The *jnanis*, whose sole focus is the knowledge of the radiant reality, will never perceive the world of many differences except as a mere appearance. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

### PAUL BRUNTON – A *SADHAK*

**Brunton (1898-1981), whose *A Search in Secret India*, made the Maharshi famous the world over, was a British journalist. He once wrote: “Sri Ramana was a spiritual torch carried to the waiting souls in the West, I was only the unimportant ‘link-boy’, the humble carrier.” *Mountain Path* (July 2014) provides a new dimension of Brunton.**

When he was only sixteen, after six months of unwavering daily practice of meditation and eighteen months of burning aspiration for the Spiritual Self, he underwent a series of mystical ecstasies. After meeting the Maharshi he mastered the ‘Who am I’ meditation and thereby achieved a deepened degree of Self-awareness. In 1939, he wrote *The Inner Reality*, later named *Discover Yourself*, as a bridge between Eastern and Western faiths. At a certain point, Brunton withdrew from the world to fulfill his inward journey. This required his isolation from nearly all those who knew him, and he went to Australia and New Zealand for a few years. He achieved that extraordinary state called *sahaja*. As he himself put it, “the state of *sahaja* is not one of knowing reality, but one of being reality, in other words, of being realised.” He radiated a kind of benign peace that drew strangers to him. For example, when he was once in the hospital for a week, recovering from a minor surgery, each evening at sundown, the room would become packed with nurses, orderlies, and other hospital personnel who ‘just liked being around him’, as he sat in contemplation of the setting sun. His three books, *The Quest of the Overself*, *The Hidden Teaching* and *The Wisdom of the Overself*, cover mysticism and metaphysics and thus lay groundwork for one’s independent inner journey towards the Higher Self, which he calls ‘Overself’.

## Some thought-provoking and elevating excerpts from his book *The Inner Reality*

I should prefer to say all I have to say in a single page or better still, compress it into the single line of the Biblical Psalmist: “Be still and know that I am God.”...Those who can find no quiet amid the maddening strain of twentieth century existence, I can say confidently: There is a way of escape, but that way lies neither to the East nor to the West; it lies entirely inwards...Thoughts put a veil between us and God. When we can tear aside the veil, we can merge into God...The man seems shut off from the Presence of God because he has sunk so deeply into his body and intellect that he has lost the habit of remembering what he really is and where he really belongs. He has formed the habit of thinking of himself as body and intellect. You are a Ray of God. To know God is to be God, not to see God. To see implies duality, but ‘to be’ implies the fusion of ray with the Sun. This is the highest state of spiritual unity which one can attain...It is useless to use verbal prayer, excepting under stress of great emergency. Ordinarily, your worship must be conducted in silence...If you want divine power you must look for it. It may not always help you in your own way, but you may be sure of this – if you approach it rightly, without dictating, it will help you...Meditation is the process of withdrawal. It is an effort to untie ourselves. It is not necessary to draw from the world, but it is necessary to withdraw from the enslavement to the world. The kingdom of heaven is a state of inner being and one can find it within oneself...We are always aware of the body and we are generally aware of the intellect, but are not even momentarily aware of THAT which animates both.

The only right beginning in the spiritual life is to ‘see through’ the illusion of material life. Very few have the mature wisdom and ripe understanding and ready courage to face the hard truth that this world is only a camping ground...It will not be necessary to lose everything, if the loss has occurred deep within us...Yield yourself to that power that secretly governs the world, which holds this earth within its invisible grasp, prostrate yourself before it, and then there will be little on earth which it cannot do for you...We have much faith but little faithfulness. Many of us believe in an ideal, but few follow it to the far end. Achievement only follows struggle. How strong is your desire to know Truth? Truth is so subtle and elusive that unless you have that keen determination, that keen longing for it, which persists day after day, you will never find it...God is not so much denied as merely crowded out. The cure for outer noise is to find inner silence... Everybody has time for the things which one values most, and if you value mental quiet sufficiently you will find the time. There is really no restriction as to a suitable time or place to commence this practice. Begin it at once and try to dive deep into the Self.

**Note:** A detailed account of Brunton is at <[www.paulbrunton.org](http://www.paulbrunton.org)> A brief account is at *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pp.13-23, at Google. The hard copy of the book is available from the Ashram, Tiruvannamalai.

## THE MAHARSHI RELIEVES DISTRESS OF HIS DEVOTEES

By Rukmini Nilakanta Rao

My father Giddaluru Satyanarayana Rao, who working as a teacher at Vellore, visited Bhagavan towards the end of 1922. Since then he was regularly visiting the Ashram every week-end. His association and devotion to Bhagavan grew day by day. Bhagavan used to lay his arms on his shoulders and would walk.

I was born in 1924, and my attachment to Bhagavan practically began from my birth. I never treated him as a deity, but looked upon him as my grandfather, and used to take all sorts of liberties with him. In 1937, my father fell sick with cancer and was in the Ashram. Bhagavan used to visit him regularly and his endearing look would relieve my father's suffering greatly. In March, his condition became serious and once he began to struggle for breath. My paternal uncle asked me to go to Bhagavan and request him to come and see my father. When I went to the hall, Bhagavan was alone with his attendant. I begged him to come and see my father. He said, "What am I to do?" I picked up his walking stick and held his hand. He remarked, "This girl will not leave me. She is firm." Saying this, he came with me. He sat by the side of my father, put one hand on his head and the other on his chest, for a few minutes. Gradually, my father was relieved of his pain. Bhagavan laid his hands on him till the breathing ceased and the eyes closed peacefully. Then he left the room.

Because of the premature death of her son, my grandmother was very much distressed and could not become normal. She had the doubt that Bhagavan could have saved his life. Bhagavan appeared to her in dream and consoled her thus: "I have relieved him from his suffering and pain. What else can I do?" This assurance strengthened the faith of my grandmother.

In 1948, during the summer vacation, I stayed at the Ashram with my two children. One day, all of a sudden, my second son developed high fever and became unconscious. The whole night, Bhagavan's sister Alamelu and I attended on the child. Since there was no improvement, we took him to the Hall and waited for Bhagavan to return from his morning walk on the hill. Seeing us, he enquired, "What is the matter?" When we reported the same, he immediately remarked, "What can I do? Am I a doctor?" However, he could not refuse our insistent prayer. He slowly patted the boy on his hand and said, "What has happened to you? It is nothing." After this, the fever subsided slowly and the child became all right within a few hours. – *Ramana Maharshi Miracles* by A.R. Natarajan

## DR. HAFIZ SYED

By V. Ganesan

Head of Islamic Studies at Allahabad University, Dr. Syed was a staunch Muslim. Although he bore no hatred towards other religions, he was convinced that Islam was the greatest religion in the world. After reading Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*, he felt a strong desire to meet the Maharshi. He wondered how the sage would receive a Muslim. He happened to meet Maurice Frydman\* who encouraged him saying, "Yes, my *satguru* is Bhagavan Ramana. He is the ultimate truth. Go and meet him." At the Ashram he was received by none other than Brunton, who took him to Bhagavan. Dr. Syed had one look at Bhagavan and he experienced the truth. This short visit took place in 1935. Thereafter, he visited the Ashram, almost every year.

In 1943, he built a house near the Ashram. Bhagavan's presence meant everything to him. His wife was a devout Muslim lady in *purdah*. She meticulously followed all the dictates laid down by Islam. Like her husband, she too was drawn towards the Maharshi. She longed to see him, but she felt that her religion's dictates did not allow her to see any other man. So, she came to the Ashram and quietly sent word through her husband to Bhagavan. She would say, "Master, please come and see me." Bhagavan too obliged by going to where she was waiting and standing before her. She communicated with Bhagavan through her husband, as her religion came in her way to have direct communication with the opposite sex. Bhagavan blessed her. Slowly, she willed herself to come to the hall where Bhagavan was. Once Dr. Syed's wife was overwhelmed by a strong desire to invite Bhagavan to her house and feed him to her heart's content. [A fascinating account of how Bhagavan fulfilled her desire in this regard is at pages 181-2 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*. See also pages 47-49 for Dr. Syed's reminiscences.]

I once asked Dr. Syed what it was that attracted him so strongly towards Bhagavan. He replied, "Bhagavan's sense of humanity was as great as his sense of pure spirituality." Dr. Syed was convinced that the more spiritual a person was, the more humane he became. He also said, "The main teaching of Bhagavan, on which he laid much emphasis, was surrender to God or the guru because Bhagavan himself had surrendered to the divine and reaped its benefits. However, the dominant feature of Bhagavan's philosophy was the unity of life and the oneness of the divine essence. I have repeatedly heard Bhagavan say that there is the one who governs the world and that it is his task to look after the world. It is he who bears the burden of the world and not us. According to Bhagavan, devotion means turning the mind inwards to the Self." Dr. Syed had long and learned conversations with the Maharshi, recorded in *Talks with*

*Sri Ramana Maharshi, Day by Day with Bhagavan* and in *Letters from Ramanasramam*. – Excerpted from *Ramana Periya Puranam* at Google

\*Frydman was a great devotee. His reminiscences are pages 75-77 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

**THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE:** It is the ‘I’ notion: ‘I am’ unhappy, ‘I am’ in trouble’, and so on. Bondage is not the problem; ‘I am bound’ is the problem. As ‘I am’ the problem, the solution lies within me. I need to seek it within myself. – *Swami Dayananda Saraswati*

**THE SOUL:** The pristine nature of the soul is sullied and its inherent equanimity disturbed when it comes in contact with the body. To escape existential suffering, soul has to be brought back to its original unspoiled state of equanimity. Human *effort alone* can help us to regain the true nature of the soul. An individual needs to improve himself by patient training of the will and purification of feelings. This leads to inward illumination, the innate character of the soul. – *Ashok Vohra*

**LORD GANESHA:** His image is a kind of mythological puzzle created by our ancestors. Through him they are trying to communicate profound truths that enabled them to live a richer and fuller life. One can argue, why go through the trouble of creating a puzzle? Ancient Hindus believed that wisdom must never be given. It has to be taken. And so, the answers are right in front of us in the form of Ganesha, if we are willing to decode it. If we do not want to decode it, it is perfectly alright. The image will continue to enrich us, even without being intellectually analysed. [For understanding symbolism as conveyed by the image, see, ‘Lord Ganesha and his trunk – what is the symbolism’ at Google.] – *Devdutt Pattanaik*

**KNOW YOUR REAL SELF:** We don’t know where we came from, who we are, and where we are headed. The mind is scared of facing this nothingness. In order to escape from these feelings, we form an identity. This personality gives us a security that we belong to somewhere or to something. Not many realise that this personality confines and impedes our development. This binds our attention to a set of characteristics that do not represent our true Self. The real Self is beyond identity. – *Pulkit Sharma*

**THREE GUNAS:** All of us have *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. In *tamas*, the best qualities get shrouded and our inherent talent lies dormant. *Rajas* is incessant desire-driven activity and the resultant disturbance in the mind. *Sattva* is tranquillity of mind. Pure *sattava* catapults us to the state of Realisation. Life’s mission is to go beyond the three *gunas* and get liberated from the

cycle of birth, death, decay and sorrow. We are born in the world to attain Immortality. – *Jaya Row*

**THOUGHTLESS THOUGHTS:** Mind by nature, abhors a vacuum. In the absence of thoughtful thinking at the conscious level, thoughtless thoughts from the subconscious invade the mind. You are then caught unawares as such thoughts sneak in and unsettle the mind. Thoughts drift to past, they drift to future, and there are silent dialogues and monologues. One good way to break free from the clutches of thoughtless thoughts is by focussing on breath with awareness. Focus on your inhaling and exhaling with full awareness. Also think of all the positives in your life. While we take all the good things in life for granted, we fret about the little negatives. Let us try to think otherwise. – *Chander Gupta*

### ***GURU VACHAKA KOVAI***

**The following excerpts are from ‘*Sadhanas from Guru Vachaka Kovai*’ by Swami Shantananda Puri. This well-known poetical work is by Muruganar\*, a renowned devotee of Bhagavan.**

For those who have realised the pure undiluted Self, the entire world is just a mental image, an imagination projected by desire, but those who are ignorant of this, take the whole world as real. When this world of names and forms disappears as in sleep, the ultimate reality, Brahman (which is also Self), alone remains. Once we know our true identity and abide in the supreme Self alone, we will be able to play our role in the human drama by tasting every pain and pleasure, but not a bit being affected by it.

It is because of *maya* that the unreal seems to be real and the real seems to be unreal. Bondage, and liberation from the bondage resulting in *mukti*, are both illusions. Understanding correctly the nature of the Self, and renouncing the non-Self objects as non-existent and unreal is true wisdom. Like a man who runs out in the sun, sweats and pants, and comes again to the cool shade, the foolish *jiva* rushes out into the world of enjoyment and, growing tired, turns within the heart and finally find rest.

One who seeks to attain the Self while at the same time cherishing this perishable body, is like trying to cross a river, mistakenly considering a crocodile for a raft. This body-bound ego can be destroyed only by Self-inquiry “Who am I?” By asking continuously “Who am I?” the mind

will turn inward, towards the Self. Through persistent Self-inquiry, the mind sinks into its source, becomes pure and the quest becomes easy. When you begin to enquire who you are, you come to know that you are not the body. Thus, searching your identity, you should dive deep into your spiritual heart (on the right side of the chest), and stand established as that being.

We may give up all attachments and faults and practise austerities but we cannot gain ultimate bliss unless we get a guru and worship him. The guru prescribes no discipline but persuades the disciple to be in continuous quest of “Who am I?” The guru though seemingly a human being like us, is the ultimate awareness and hence he has no form. It is only the guru who can reveal the ultimate reality through his silence which is more eloquent than any speech. It is the Self which manifests in the human form as the guru.

If ever we hope to get liberation from this *samsara*, we have to completely surrender ourself to the grace of the Lord. We should seek his grace by praying to Him and meditating on Him. Mere study of various books, even if they contain the greatest of wisdom is of no use.

Firm abidance in the Self cannot come unless one is utterly without any desire. When desire ends, duality ends. Desires for sense pleasure cannot be quenched by fulfilling them. The more we indulge in sense pleasure, the more it will increase.

An earnest seeker should essentially have love for solitude. The *mouna* shining in the thought-free mind is the only entrance into the realm of *mukti*. – For information about the book, email <divinelove@swamishantanandapurimaharaj.org>

\*For many details about Muruganar refer pages 154-59 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, available from Sri Ramanasram, Tiruvannamalai, and also at Google

## LIGHT HEARTEDNESS OF SRI RAMANA

**A. Devaraja Mudaliar has recorded the following to illustrate the humourous dimension of Sri Ramana. He says that those who did not have the rare privilege of approaching Bhagavan personally can hardly associate humour with a Sage like him. Even in his last**

**days, in the grip of what the doctors said must be excruciating pain, he would even joke about the malignant growth on his arm calling it a *lingam* and so forth.**

1. While Bhagavan was not yet 20, and was maintaining silence and oblivious to outer things, his mother and others visited him and saw him inside a room in rapt meditation. They found the door locked from outside, and thought they had better go to the town to have meals. Bhagavan knew that the door could be lifted off its hinges and opened, while still bolted from outside. So he went out in this way. When the visitors returned and found the door locked from outside but the Swami missing, they thought it was due to his *siddhi*. Later, Bhagavan re-entered the room in the same way when the visitors were not there. When they returned and saw him inside the room they were still more confirmed in his powers as a *siddha*. They never asked him for any explanation of the incident, so he never gave them one. (Actually, he wanted to avoid the fuss of visitors.) But when he told the story later, his telling of it was so amusing that everyone was shaking with laughter.

2. Once, joking about the rheumatism in his legs, he turned to Dr. Srinivasa Rao, a devotee who was staying at the Ashram to treat him and said, laughing. “You see my legs are being gracious to you. They refuse to get better so that you will stay here.”

3. Whenever Bhagavan told a story, he was a complete actor and made it incredibly vivid. I cannot at all give the following story in the picturesque style in which we had it from him. I can only give the mere bones of it, but even from that one can see how funny it must have been. The Story: A man, who could not afford a servant was very vain and thought that people would not respect him unless he was accompanied by a servant. He happened to go to a neighbouring village and stay at night there. He took with him a small bundle of clothes etc. On seeing a house with a nice pial outside, he watched for a moment and when the occupants of the house were inside, threw his bundle on the pial and went away. After a little while he returned and asked, “Did my servant come and leave my bundle here? They said, “Yes, there is bundle. See, if this is yours?” The man said, “Yes. Is mine. This foolish servant has gone somewhere without telling, I don’t know when he will turn up.” The people of the house gave him what hospitality they could and he was allowed to sleep on the pial outside. When he had gone to bed and his hosts had closed the door, he began speaking in tones loud enough to be heard inside, as if the servant had returned and was massaging his limbs. He said: “You fool! Where have you been all this time? You always behave like this. Now massage my legs properly.” He kept on making such remarks as: “Now here, press a little more. Now like this.” Sometimes he would slap his body so that the people inside could have the impression that some servant was really massaging their visitor.



When this had gone for some time, one of the family members felt curious to have a look at this wonderful servant. He peeped through the window and discovered the hoax. But the family did not indicate to the poor fool that they had discovered his bluff. Next morning, after having something for breakfast, he took leave telling his hosts: “My servant will come in a few minutes and take my bundle. He left his bundle on the pial and after a few minutes, when all the family was inside, he returned hoping to take it away unnoticed, and leave on his hosts the impression that his servant had come and taken it. But the family, guessing his intention, hid the bundle. Not being able to find it, he had to ask them for it, and they told him: “Yes, your servant came for it soon after you left and took it away, as you said he would.” We could not contain our laughter when Bhagavan described how the man carried on the imaginary conversation with his non-existing servant and also kept massaging and slapping his body hard enough to be heard inside.

4. I remember a joke Bhagavan cracked at his own expense. In the last years he was suffering badly from rheumatism and could walk only with the aid of a stick. Whenever it was time for him to leave the hall, the attendant would get up and give him his stick. On one such occasion, while taking the stick and rising from the couch, he quoted the well-known Tamil saying: “The monkey will only perform when the master waves his stick.” – *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana*

**The surest way of weaning away from the world and its pleasure and turning to the path of self-realisation would be to convince by actual experience, for however brief a moment, that the bliss of Self is immeasurably superior to the most gratifying sense enjoyment.** – *Devaraja Mudaliar*

**When your mind doesn't stir inside, the world doesn't arise outside.** – *Bodhidharma*

**We need to get in the habit of taking things with gratitude, and not taking things for granted.** – *Chesterton*

**If you think your are bound, your are bound. In reality, you are always free.** – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

**There's a divinity that shapes our ends.** – *Shakespeare in Hamlet*

**The fragrance of flowers spreads only in the direction of the wind. But the goodness of a person spreads in all directions.** – *Chanakya*

**What we are, and what we have been, has no bearing on what we can be.** – *Anonymous*

**KEEP HIM AT THE SUBCONSCIOUS LEVEL:** Be like the village woman with pots over her head, one over the other, keeping balance even while talking and walking. It is the inner concentration that matters. – *Anonymous*

**MAYA:** Because of the impact of *maya* we are unable to perceive real values. Freedom from *maya* is the ability to penetrate the veil. Even after the illusion of the mirage in the desert is dissipated by scientific knowledge, the illusionary appearance remains, but it no longer leads us astray. We see the same appearance but give a different value to it. Similarly, once we clearly understand the nature of *maya*, we can get released from the ‘unreal values’. – *S. Radhakrishnan*

**CHALLENGES MAKE ONE AN ACHIEVER:** Not facility, not ease, but difficulty and effort makes a man. All those who have attained greatness were the products of difficulty and not of facility. They faced challenges and emerged as achievers. Why does difficulty have a greater role than facility? Our mind is the prime source of energy. If we choose to do an easy thing, then the mind releases a lesser amount of energy. The mind being like a great water reservoir, if one’s target is ordinary, then the mind will open the door of energy on a smaller scale. But if the target is a big one, the mind will open the gate of energy on a larger scale. It is this difference that decides the level of one’s achievements. – *Maulana Wahiduddin Khan*