

To remove the impurities of the mind the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ should be practised resolutely. By grinding the mind through repeatedly rubbing it against the grinding stone of ‘I am’, the light of the Self is kindled and flares up within. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

SECRET OF ENJOYMENT: Objectivity is the secret of enjoyment. You are able to enjoy tragedy and even horror on screen; because you know you are not apart from it. Similarly, you are an actor on the stage of life. Play your role to the best of your ability, wholeheartedly. Exit when the time comes. You are your Self. You have nothing to do with the roles you play. You seem to have lost your identity; understand who you are. ó *Jaya Row*

THE ULTIMATE HAPPINESS: Worldly objects provide short-term joy and happiness, for which our search continues till death. Only through *sadhana* and renunciation we can get joy of adequacy and fulfillment. The path though extremely difficult, is very much worth pursuing. ó *Osho*

POWER OF THOUGHTS: When you continuously and strongly think, your goal could become the reality. Thoughts are like seeds. Some seeds give fruit within a month, some after several years. Thoughts will take their own time to germinate, sprout, and produce fruit. So do not be impatient. *Persist with* the goal you have fixed in the mind to achieve. ó *Shivender Nagar*

UNDERTAKE LIFE’S JOURNEY WITH CONFIDENCE: As long as you are confident of your abilities to achieve what you wish in life, you are most likely to succeed. Remember the song: When the day is dark and dreary and the way is hard to find/ Don’t let your heart be weary, just keep this thought in mind / It is better to light one little candle, all you need is a little spark. Don’t be nervous or tense. Spark can be produced by many methods. We can use a lighter, match, flint; anything in this world can assist us in our resolve. Every circumstance, even if difficult, can help us to grow. *Have confidence.* ó *Swami Niranjanananda*

NIRVIKALPA SAMADHI: It is being completely absorbed in the Self without any variant thought. Sanskrit *nir* means without. *Vikalpa* means alternative, variant thought. *Samadhi* is from the root *dha* meaning to hold plus the prefixes *a* and *sa* meaning

MASSAGING BHAGAVAN'S LEGS

The following incidents are from *Day by Day with Bhagavan* by Devaraja Mudaliar:

1. Dr. Srinivasa Rao was massaging Bhagavan's legs which had some rheumatic trouble. Bhagavan humorously remarked, "Doctor is now giving *diksha* to me by touch." Earlier, Bhagavan had once stopped Dr. Rao by saying, "What you have done is enough. You may go and sit down. I shall do some massaging myself and get some *punya*. Why should you alone have all the *punya*?" and began massaging himself. (18.10.1945)
2. For some days now, Bhagavan's rheumatic troubles have been pretty bad and his legs are being massaged with some medicated oils. For about ten days, a swami is in the town. He professes to cure all kinds of diseases with his *vibhuti*. Most of the people from the villages who come to that swami also peep in at the Ashramam to see Bhagavan. So Bhagavan said, "If these people see I have physical ills myself, which need to be massaged, they will know I am no good and won't come here anymore. So this massaging is good in this way." (26.10.1945)
3. When Bhagavan returned from the walk, the attendant Sivananda offered to massage his legs. Bhagavan forbade him and said, "If I let them, they go on massaging for a long time. This morning too, they began with the *parayana* and did not stop till it was over, and sometimes I am unaware of it." [This shows Bhagavan's state of *sahaja samadhi*.] "So, now I am not going to let them. I will do it myself." So saying, Bhagavan took the liniment and rubbed it over his knees. (1.6.1946)

BHAGAVAN ANSWERS THE COURT COMMISSION

Perumal Swami, one of the attendants of Bhagavan, who was helping in the management of Skandasram, claimed that he was owner of the Ashram after Bhagavan came down the hill to stay at the present premises. Perumal Swami went to the court to enforce his claim. The court appointed a commission to have Bhagavan's testimony in this regard in November, 1936, some portions of which are as under.

Lawyer: Swami, what is your name?

Bhagavan: People have called me by different names. Which of them is to be called mine?

Lawyer: Nowadays people call you Ramana Maharshi. Is this not correct?

There are four *asramas*: *brahmacharya*, *grihastha*, *sannyasa*, and *atvashrama*. Which *asrama* are you in? *Atvashrama* transcends the other *asramas*.

Lawyer: If this is true, are there any rules for this *asrama*?

Bhagavan: The *atvashrama* is without any rules.

Lawyer: Do you have any desires for things in this world?

Bhagavan: There is no hatred for anything in the world. I have no desire to acquire properties, but properties come and I accept them. I admit that it is worldly to keep properties, but I do not hate the affairs of the world.

Lawyer: Each day many people come to see you. Why do they come?

Bhagavan: Each person has his own reason for coming. I do not tell them to come, to go away, or to stay.

Lawyer: Do you have any enemies?

Bhagavan: There are neither enemies nor friends for me.

Lawyer: Who is your Guru?

Bhagavan: There is neither Guru or disciple for me.

Lawyer: Can one achieve anything without a Guru?

Bhagavan: Indeed, one cannot.

Lawyer: Then, who is your Guru?

Bhagavan: For me Self is the Guru.

Lawyer: Do you handle money?

Bhagavan: No.

Lawyer: Do you have any special love for your brother?

Bhagavan: I love him in the same way as I love all people.

Lawyer: Who receives the donations that come to the Ashram?

Bhagavan: They are all given in my name but I am not alone in using them. All the people here share them.

Lawyer: If Perumal Swami wants to stay in the Ashram again, will you permit him to stay?

Bhagavan: If he undertakes to behave like all other devotees, he will be permitted to stay.

Lawyer: Was Perumal Swami the manager of Skandashram?

Bhagavan: He was managing while I was in Skandashram, but there also his conduct was not good. He squandered a lot of money.

(On the whole, the lawyer was unnecessarily argumentative and disrespectful. Within a few weeks, his son went mad and started wandering streets of Tiruvannamalai. Then, the lawyer himself went mad. Both of them died after a short time later. Perumal Swami lost the case, but continued to campaign against the Ashram. He died in the 1950s, uncared for, on a stone bench somewhere in the town.) ó *Living by the Words of Bhagavan* by David Godman

LEOPARD WITH ANIMALS – THREE EPISODES

By Suri Nagamma

1. When Bhagavan was living in Virupaksha cave, the roar of a leopard was heard from the place where drinking water was available nearby. By the time the scared devotees had gathered some plates and drums in order to make a noise and drive the leopard away, it had drunk the water and went away with one more roar. Bhagavan looked at the frightened devotees and said to them in an admonishing tone, "Why do you worry so much? The leopard intimated to me by the first roar that she was coming here. After drinking water she told me by another roar that she was going. She went her own way. She did not meddle into your affairs. Why are you so scared?" From that time onwards, the leopard used to come frequently to that place to drink water. Whenever the roar was heard, Bhagavan used to say, "There you are! The leopard is announcing her arrival." Then again he would say, "The leopard announces her departure." In this way he used to be quite at ease with the wild animals.

2. Jagadeswara Sastri's dog was very intelligent. Whenever he or his wife came into the hall, it used to come in and sit like a well-behaved child, and go out along with them. Once, the old couple entrusted it to somebody, when they went to Madras for 15 days. During the first four or five days, it used to search in the hall, and go at all the places which they used to frequent. Having got tired, perhaps disgusted, one morning it came near Bhagavan's sofa and stood there, staring at Bhagavan. At that time I was sitting in the front row. Bhagavan was reading the newspaper. Krishnaswami and others tried to send the dog away, but in vain. I too asked it to go out. No, it wouldn't move. Bhagavan's attention was diverted by this hubbub. He observed the look of the dog, and our excitement. He then put the paper aside and waved his hand towards the dog and said, "What is the matter? You are asking where your people have gone? Oh! I see, I understand. They have gone to Madras. They will be back in a week. Don't be afraid. Don't be worried. Be calm. Is it all right? Now, go." Hardly had Bhagavan completed his instruction, the dog turned and left the place. Once, Jagadeswara Sastri's wife punished the dog with a cane for something it had done, and locked it up in a room for half a day. After it was let out, it came straight to Bhagavan as if to complain against her and stayed at the Ashram without going to their house. Bhagavan arranged to feed the dog and admonished the lady thus: "What have you done to the dog? Why is it angry with you? It came and complained to me. Why? What have you done?" Finally, she admitted her fault in Bhagavan's presence and, with a good deal of cajoling, the dog went with her.

ly with Bhagavan. There used to one very active and when he came to have his feed, Bhagavan was otherwise food. That mischievous fellow would not eat anything mouth. Perhaps because of anger at the delay, he abruptly bit Bhagavan's finger. But Bhagavan still did not offer him food. Bhagavan was amused and said, "You are a naughty creature! You have bit my finger! I will no longer feed you. Go away." So saying, he stopped feeding the squirrel. The squirrel began begging Bhagavan for forgiveness by crawling hither and thither. Bhagavan put the nuts on the window sill and on the sofa and told him to help himself. But he would not even touch them. Bhagavan pretended to be indifferent and not to notice. But he would crawl up to Bhagavan's legs, jump on his body, climb on his shoulders and do so many things to attract attention. Then Bhagavan told us all, "Look this fellow is begging me to forgive him for his mischief in biting my finger and to give up my refusal to feed him with my own hands." He pushed the squirrel away, saying, "Naughty creature! Why did you bite my finger? I won't feed you now. That is your punishment. Look, the nuts are there. Eat them all." The squirrel would not also give up his obstinacy. Days passed. Bhagavan had to admit defeat because of his mercy towards devotees. It then occurred to me that it was only through holding extremely firmly to one's objective that a devotee can attain salvation. ó *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam* dated 1st, 2nd and 3rd January, 1946, respectively.

MAHARSHI – THE ETERNAL GURU

By A.R. Natarajan

We identify ourselves with our bodies, which we know are perishable. We transpose this idea on the Sadguru. We identify him with his body, and therefore treat him too as perishable. The Sadguru is always aware that he is the Self, which includes his body. He never limits himself by identifying himself with his body. Bhagavan exemplified his attitude to the disease-racking body, during his last illness. Cohen records in his book *Guru Ramana*, as follows: "A lady devotee wept much and went to Bhagavan in tears and said, "Bhagavan, you who are curing others must cure yourself and spare your life for us, your devotees." Once or twice he waved her off, but seeing her great concern, he said, "Why are you so much attached to this body? Let it go." Even more telling was his firm reply to the surgeons who wanted to amputate his left arm, to save his life, "Let the disease take its own course."

If one asserts the timeliness of Bhagavan Ramana and the availability of his continuous guidance to all true seekers even now, one is entitled to ask for proof ó evidence for such an assertion. Here one can look at the two-fold aspect of a *jnani*. One is his boon giving, wish fulfilling aspect. In *Ramana Gita*, Bhagavan declares that a *jnani* has the power to grant

the way as Iswara, God. This power was very much there
whatever be the matter, which was brought to his notice, be
of daughters, or jobs for relatives and so on, divine
which would result in the wish being satisfied.
Reminiscences of devotees like G.V. Subbaramayya¹ and A. Devaraja Mudaliar² mention
several such instances. The question would arise whether these powers of Bhagavan are still
operative even after his *mahanirvana* in 1950. Yes, they are very much operative even now.
The post nirvana miracles are just as many, and are multiplying day by day.³

The second aspect of a *jnani* is his timelessness in the role of a Sadguru. Here one should
examine the nature of the relationship between the Sadguru and his disciples. Quite
obviously, the spiritual evolution, the ripening of each individual varies. The Sadguru who
has a sure hand on the spiritual pulse of his disciples, never forces the pace. He is past-master
in the perfection of timing. Using Bhagavan's analogy, like a spider which draws the insect
into its web to feed at its own time, the Sadguru who destroys one's ego does so at the right
time, which might extend over lifetimes.

In considering whether there is the continued presence of Bhagavan as guru, one has to keep
in mind the role of guru. He pushes the disciple within by initiation which traditionally
takes one of the three forms by touch, by look, and by thought. While in the body,
Bhagavan Ramana used to initiate people through piercing look of grace. Louiz Hartz records
the experience he had when he visited the Ashram on his way to Siam. It reads, "Suddenly
the Maharshi looked at me with great intensity. His eyes took possession of me. I don't know
how long it lasted, but I felt happy. In the afternoon, I said, "Bhagavan, I want your
initiation." And he replied, "You have it already."

In the post-Nirvana years, initiation through eyes is being done by Bhagavan through his
photographs which communicate a world of meaning. One has to remember in this context
that the photographs of Bhagavan are not mere photographs but are full of life and capable of
transmitting the power of initiation by look. Once a little devotion is kindled in one's heart
for Bhagavan Ramana, it would work wonders. Sometimes stern, sometimes gentle,
sometimes smiling but always radiantly focussing the power of the Self, these "live"
photographs instantly draw one by their compelling attraction.

There is enough testimony for his guidance across the world through an inner voice. In 1975,
one Ursulla Muller recoded that when she was plagued by some thoughts, "Maharshi advised
me how to behave, and told me to simply drop all thinking. I succeeded in following his
advice and was surprised how marvellously it worked." While standing with Bhagavan's
picture in her hand, she heard him say in her heart, "All bondage is thought alone." A year

To drop concentration on the Anahata Chakra and go

and as the Guru, taking the disciples responsibility and leading them on to the wonderland of silence, with firm and timely guidance. Whatever be the reason as to how and why he enters one's life, once he does, all search ends. His grace envelops and fills every pore of one's being with bliss. The disciple is lost in the vastness called Ramana. The mind gets vibrantly silent, immersed steadily in the Self. ó *Centenary Souvenir ó Commemorating the Advent of Bhagavan Sri Ramana at Arunachala, Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamali.*

1. *Sri Ramana Reminiscences*
2. *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana*
3. *The Continuing Story – Post Nirvana Miracles of Sri Ramana Maharshi* by A.R. Natarajan,
Ramana Maharshi Centre, Bangalore

MASTAN

Mastan (1878-1931) was a Muslim weaver, who was highly spiritual. He came to Bhagavan in 1914.

Even as a child of eight years, Mastan would enter into *samadhi* without knowing what it was. He had the natural ability to be detached from people and things from childhood. The simple Tamil poems of the nineteenth century Sufi mystic Gunangudi Masthan, which are *vedantic* in nature, had a powerful influence on him.

Born in Desur, a small village about forty miles from Tiruvannamalai, he got drawn to Bhagavan by Akhilandamma of the same village, who made regular visits to Tiruvannamalai to see Bhagavan and cook for him. Mastan, describes his first *darshan* of Bhagavan: "He was seated like a rock. His unswerving gaze was filled with grace, compassion and steady wisdom. I stood by his side. After giving me a look, he opened the gate of my Heart and I was also established in his state in the very first encounter."

When he returned, Mastan experienced some conflict within himself. He was filled with Bhagavan's presence, but, as he was brought up in the Islamic tradition, he had this feeling: "Am I brushing aside my master Mohammed because he is no more in the body?" Fortunately, he was bold enough to go to Bhagavan and confess, "Bhagavan, this is my

looked at Mastan and showering his grace, replied, "Do you think the Prophet is dead? Then, is the Prophet not guiding hundreds of thousands of people even today? A living guru means the one living in one's Heart as a guru. The guru lives eternally in your Heart. Heart is Allah, Heart is Jesus Christ, Heart is Buddha and Heart is Bhagavan. Live in the Heart as the Heart by diving into the Heart."

Mastan began coming regularly to Bhagavan. He relinquished weaving as a profession and wove only to make loin cloth and towels for Bhagavan. Bhagavan once remarked, "Mastan's craft, though it did not give food either to him or his parents, gives me clothes." Being a true ascetic, he never married. He begged in the streets of his own village. At Arunachala too, he would go begging for alms.

Mastan once asked Bhagavan, "While I was meditating at night, I used to hear the sound of a bell ringing. Sometimes limitless effulgence would appear." Bhagavan advised him, "There is no need to feel concerned about such sounds or light. If you see from where it arises, it will be known that it arises on account of a desire [*sankalpa*] of the mind. Everything appears in oneself and subsides within oneself."

An interesting incident related by Mastan about Bhagavan: When Bhagavan lived at Skandasram, a large, golden coloured mongoose entered the Ashram and made straight for Bhagavan. It sat on his lap for a while. Then it wandered around and disappeared into the bushes on the hill. Sometime later, when Bhagavan's attendant Perumal came to the Ashram, I told him, "I was afraid that the mongoose might harm our peacocks, so I kept myself ready in case it made an attack." Perumal told him, "You should have caught it, we could have kept it as a pet." Bhagavan who was listening to the conversation, said, "Do you think you could have caught him? He was a sage of Arunachala who took on this form to visit me. How many times I told you that sages come to see me in various forms." In talk no. 84, dated 16th October 1935, Bhagavan himself mentioned this incident. He said, "When I was living at Skandashram, a mongoose, larger than the ordinary size, of golden hue (not grey as a mongoose is) with no black spot on its tail, moved about fearlessly. Everyone was struck by its attractive appearance and fearless movements. It came up to me, got on my lap and rested there for some time. It went round the whole place and I followed it lest it may be harmed by unwary visitors or by the peacocks. Finally it disappeared into the rocks near the Ashram."

Mastan was very humble. Bhagavan himself said that except for Kunju Swami and Viswanatha Swami, the other devotees never knew who Mastan was. He preferred to remain unobserved.

en for about a week. Akhilandamma who was taking
he would say, "There Nandi [Siva's bull] is descending.
y body. Look, Siva's *ganas* are dancing here. See! They
Look at those lotus ponds where celestial swans are
swimming. We thought that this was delirium. But on the last day he suddenly got up from
his bed and stood up, looking as if someone, face to face, was calling him. Then, in great
excitement, he exclaimed, "Mother Apeetakuchama [name of consort of Siva in
Arunachaleswara Temple], you have yourself come to escort me?" The next moment he fell
down dead.

Akhilandamma adds, "When Bhagavan learnt about Mastan's passing away, he sent Kunju
Swami to our village with full instructions on how to make *samadhi* for Mastan. He drew up
a plan of the dimensions of *samadhi* and sent it along with Kunju Swami. He also sent
enough *vibhuti* and camphor from the Ashram to take care of all the necessary rituals. The
funds for the *samadhi* were provided by Simhakutti Nayanar, a local Jain. A nearby Siva
temple lent its *chapram* so that the body could be taken in procession through the local
villages prior to its burial. (*Chapram* is a four-wheeled trolley that temples use to parade
deities through the streets.) At each place the *chapram* visited, people joined the funeral and
helped to push it. In the years that followed his *samadhi*, the family affairs and business of
people who had helped Mastan prospered. So, people started coming to his *samadhi* to ask
for blessings.

Sambandan, a disciple of Mastan, who wrote about 200 verses in praise of Bhagavan, also
wrote 11 verses praising both Bhagavan and Mastan. A brief summary of some of these is: 1.
Mastan, the liberated one, who shines in Desur! Divine one! Through grace you told me, a
sinner, to sing in the language of poets the divine glory of Ramana Guru, the much-famed
God who shines and abides at Arunachala. 2. Mastan, the liberated one, the precious gem
who obtained the cool grace of Sadguru Ramana, you renounced this worldly life, which is
like vomited food, and attained the life of true *jnana*. 3. Mastan, the liberated one, who
realised truth without any obstruction, and became that reality! You said, "If the *vishaya
vasanas* are destroyed, the mind will also be destroyed." 4. Mastan, the liberated one, who
travels on the path of renunciation, without ever forgetting the lotus feet of *jnani* Ramana,
declared, "Knowing consciousness is true knowledge." 5. Praise to the *jnana* Guru! Lord,
undo this misery-causing bond of *samsara*. Accept these poor words of this devotee-slave,
which are addressed to your beautiful divine feet. ó Excerpted from *The Power of the
Presence* by David Godman, part three; refer also Mastan in *Ramana Periya Puranam* at
Google

tion of higher dimensions of consciousness into our

undisciplined mind. Denied of comfort it will throw tantrums like a child. – Ramaratnam

Every man is a divinity in disguise, a god playing the fool. – Emerson

Don't underestimate the value of doing nothing. – A. Milne

Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting some on yourself. – Emerson

God grant me serenity to accept things I cannot change; courage to change things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. – Anonymous

He, who overcomes himself, will obtain happiness. – Mahavira

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MOVE TOWARDS HIM TO AVAIL HIS GRACE

If you, thinking of God, take one step towards Him, in response, He, who is more kind than a mother, thinking of you, takes nine steps, and accepts you. So great is His grace! – Sri Ramana Maharshi

AUDIBLE LIFE STREAM: It is a stream of life or energy that comes from the Divine, giving life and existence to the creation. This great power can be heard within oneself in mystic practice. It cannot be defined or explained in words. It is the living Melody which cannot be recorded on bars and spaces. Its notes are beyond the strings of any earthly instrument. When it is heard, the enchanted listener is silent, and filled with great joy; for there is nothing in the world to be compared with it. When it takes possession of the hearer, it recreates him. He is exalted. He lives anew. Many mystics use instruments like flute, *shahnai*, *sarangi*, *bheri*, *vina*, bell, harp, cymbals, sitar, *mridang*, and *singi* to get connected to this voice. ó *A Treasury of Mystic Terms* by John Davidson. This beautifully produced, six-volume book, is available at a very moderate price from Science of the Soul Research Centre, Radha Soami Satsang Beas, Guru Ravi Das Marg, Pusa Road, New Delhi ó 110005.

NEED TO CLEAN THE MIND: The power of the man is the power of his mind. The mind is stained with jealousy, anger, selfishness, vengeance, etc. All these require cleaning. Be watchful against negative thoughts and avoid them, just as we walk around the obstacle to avoid being hurt. Sitting in silence consistently, reading growth-oriented literature, being

faith, will surely help. Healthy thinking will not come
with good and rational thoughts. ó Babita Chopra

ALWAYS REMEMBER HIM: Without the name of the Lord on your lips, the mind will be running hither and thither. The mind is the birth place of unsteadiness. Hence even when engaged in action, concentrate your thoughts on God. ó V. Narayanan

AKSHARAMANAMALAI: The only Tamil word in the title is *manam*. The other words, *akshara* and *mala* are Sanskrit words. *Akshara* means 'indestructible' It also means 'letters' But the implied meaning is the 'Self' or 'Atman' *Manam* in Tamil is 'fragrance' and also 'marriage' *Mala* is garland. So the title is generally translated as 'A Marital Garland of Letters' but actually it is a garland made of the fragrance of *Atmanubhuti*. Fragrance is usually associated with flowers. Nothing is more fragrant than the Self-experience of Bhagavan. Many who met Bhagavan remarked that the sweet fragrance of Bhagavan's Self-experience permeated the whole Ashram. Satyamangalam Venkataramannayyer, a mystic who came for a few days during Bhagavan's stay at Virupaksha cave, sang thus: 'From a great distance I got the sweet fragrance of your experience of the Self ('*swaanubhoothi taraiyellaam manakka*') and seeking its source I found you!' So, Aksharamanamalai is not simply a song made in the conventional order of Tamil letters, it is a poetic expression of Bhagavan's inner experience of the Grace of Arunachala, which caught hold of him and bestowed the divine experience of the Self. ó *Mountain Path*, October, 2014

THE TEACHER AND THE GURU

- T. Clothes you and prepares you for the outer journey.
- G. Strips you naked and prepares you for the inner journey.
- T. Prepares you for the road to success.
- G. Takes you on the road to freedom.
- T. Gives you knowledge which boosts your ego.
- G. Takes away your knowledge; punctures your ego.
- T. Leads you by the hand.
- G. Leads you by example.
- T. Is to a pupil what a father is to a son.
- G. Is to a pupil what a mother is to the child.
- T. Sharpens your mind.
- G. Opens your mind.
- T. Gives you knowledge.

G. You are grateful to the guru. ó *The Speaking Tree*

VALUE THE SUFFERING: Without suffering most people would not give attention to the Lord. They would live and die without even thinking about God. Suffering makes us pray to God for help. Misfortunes only make us turn to a higher power for help. Sometimes when we become too complacent, God may shake things a bit to make us think of Him. ó *Sant Rajinder Singh*

A CURE FOR THE MONKEY MIND: Very often our mind is in more than one direction at a time. It is like an unchained monkey, rushing from place to place without any pause for peace. When too many distractions compete for our attention, the power of the mind gets dissipated. One of the ways to cure the monkey mind is to take a vow of silence, to begin with, for one hour a day. Don't speak at all during this silent time. Within a matter of days, you will sense the strength growing within you. ó *Robin Sharma*

THE SEARCH OF HAPPINESS

By Prof. K. Swaminathan

Everyone wants to be happy at all times and in all places. This quest for *ananda* is the universal human desire and the goal of all human endeavours. Most of us fail to distinguish between pleasure and happiness or *ananda*. We mistake pleasure or joy for happiness, and often end up in misery. Bhagavan brings out distinction between happiness, which is our inherent and permanent nature, and the pleasure which we derive from the satisfaction of our desires, physical or mental, healthy or unhealthy. Happiness or *ananda* is the very nature of the Self; happiness and the Self are not different. Through our ignorance we imagine that we derive happiness from objects. Permanent happiness does not reside in objects but in the *atman*.

The Maharshi says, if a man thinks his happiness is due to external causes and his possessions, it is reasonable to conclude that his happiness must increase with the increase in possessions, and diminish in proportion to their diminution. Therefore, if he is devoid of

nil. What is the real experience of man? In deep sleep a
cluding his own body. Instead of being unhappy, he is
p soundly. The conclusion is that happiness is inherent
causes. One must realise his Self in order to open the
store of unalloyed happiness.

As stated in *Yogavasishta*, Sri Rama's guru tells him that while absorbed in the bliss of awareness, do not get disinclined to act in the world of time and space. In his words, "Holding firmly at heart to the truth of being, play like a hero your part on the world-stage, inwardly calm and detached, but assuming zeal and joy, perform outward actions appropriate to your particular role in various situations." In other words, the quest for Self-realisation goes hand in hand with bold, heroic action. The call to such action by Sage Vasishta, addressed to Rama, is meant really for us.

In *Ramana Gita*, the paramount task of man is declared to be the discovery of the real human nature. This quest for our real nature, the withdrawing of thoughts from sense objects and steady Self-enquiry, is not to be postponed. Bhagavan's stress on the search for the Self, helps one to attain adult status and to assume full responsibility for oneself. Bhagavan is like a father who watches apparently unconcerned about the child learning to walk, stumbling and falling and picking itself up again, but refuses to pamper it and keep it dependent. Instead of complaining against one's circumstances, one derives inexhaustible strength from inner happiness.

Moksha cannot be realised by mere intellectual effort. It can only be experienced, and experienced as happiness. It is total freedom from nagging desires; it is pure awareness. Paul Brunton in his book *The Maharshi and His Message*, says:

Unless and until a man embarks upon the quest of the true Self, doubts and uncertainty will follow his footsteps. The greatest kings and statesmen try to rule others, when in their heart of hearts they know that they cannot rule themselves. Yet the greatest power is at the command of the man who has penetrated to his inmost depth. What is the use of knowing about everything else when you do not know who you are? Admittedly, the way to it may be harder for those engrossed in worldly life, but even then one must make a sincere attempt to conquer. The current induced during meditation can be kept up by habit, by practising to do so. If you meditate on the question, "Who am I?" if you begin to perceive that neither the body, nor the brain, nor the desires are really you, then the very attitude of enquiry will eventually draw the answer to you out of the depths of your own being. Know the real Self and then the truth will shine forth within your heart like sunshine. The mind will become

ood it, for happiness and the true Self are identical. ó

in the form of a mendicant, is known as *Bhikshatana*. *Bhiksha* denotes ÷begging for almsø and *atana* is ÷to wander aroundø. In this incarnation, Siva sought alms in Kasi from Mother Paravati, who is worshipped at this place as Annapurna, the Goddess of food and nourishment. ó *Lalita Ramakrishnan*

THE DIRECT PATH

By Mouni Sadhu (M.Sudouski)

The Great Rishi Ramana does not recommend yogic practices as a condition for the highest spiritual achievement called ÷Self-realizationø. The Direct Path to spiritual attainment as shown by the Maharshi does not require any body postures and mental practices of concentration. For years, I and some of my close occult friends practised many kinds of exercises, but without any results worthy of our efforts. Some of these exercises were good for our physical health, especially for stilling nerves, and so forth. No true and permanent peace of mind could be obtained although I had made intense use of *japa* (repetition) with the best of mantras.

The Master says that the control of mind achieved by any way except the *Vichara* (Self-inquiry) will be only temporary, for the mind will invariably return to its spontaneous activities. The Direct Path, the Maharshiø's way, is possible and is well suited for everyone who is ripe enough to enter on it. This Path can be followed secretly, so that the outer world will never know that a man is engaged in a deep and intensive search.

The Direct Path immediately gives us a clear view of our ultimate and only aim. It is only the Direct Path which tells us from the first step where we are going and why. Our renunciation of this unreal world, while not usually known to those around us, acquires a natural and reasonable character, and not that of imagination or of a hazy dream.

The Direct Path is fulfillment of the spiritual testament of Lord Buddha: ÷You cannot destroy your illusion by creating another in its place.ø The Master of the Direct Path, now sitting on his couch before me, is the greatest destroyer of all illusions. Under no circumstances can one who sought his light, continue to believe in the illusions of this unreal and manifested universe, which, as the Master says, exists only in our mind. When we realise that there exists an infallible path to the final goal, the joy of knowledge is overwhelming. This is the water

who seek shall find, but the search must be for the or less exalted illusions. The cardinal virtue of role in such seeking. When the Direct Path becomes they had never been sought.

Deep in our hearts there lies a source, so often spoken by the Master. It can be likened to the centre of a circle, from which we can see in all directions, and then from which no other position can give us such a vantage point. Now I fully realise why the path of the Maharshi is called the path of Inner Silence. To whom would the *only Seer* speak? Go directly to the source of all truth in your spiritual centre of silence, your heart; for the shortest distance between two points is a direct line, and a mystical truth lies behind this geometrical axiom. Accept it, and the Direct Path is already beneath your feet. There is no need to seek it elsewhere. "A single step begins the journey of a thousand miles" but if this "first step" is not taken, the traveller will remain at the starting point. Without the knowledge of "who we are" we remain spiritually immovable. Sooner or later we must come to the true beginning and lose all memory of our previous wanderings.

The Direct Path can be likened to a mighty river, quietly and majestically flowing to the infinite ocean of *Nirvana*, *Brahman*, the Kingdom of Heaven, no matter what we call the ultimate and unique aim of every being. Whoever knows of the hidden Direct Path will not waste time following lesser ways. All efforts will be concentrated on the one idea: "How to enter the great current which flows directly to the ocean?"

From time to time, a Master steers his vessel on the great river and he sees those who have finished travelling along the smaller streams and are awaiting the last journey. From them he selects those who are fit and his ship disappears on the waves of Eternity. The invisible ship is still sailing for us to "see" Its Master is willing to take us with Him. ó Excerpted from *In Days of Great Peace*, Sri Ramanasram, Tiruvannamalai

SWAMI MADHAVATIRTHA

By V. Ganesan

Swami Madhavatirtha (1895-1960) was a prolific writer on a wide variety of spiritual topics. He had studied Vedanta and found himself increasingly attracted to the teachings of Sri Aurobindo, which failed to satisfy him. His first visit to the Ashram for two weeks took place in 1944. In his book *The Life and Teachings of Ramana Maharshi* (original in Gujarati), he wrote that the visit substantially changed the course of his life.

ated Gujarati saint. From his childhood days, Motilal ponder deeply over the mystery of death. He pestered everyone he met, especially wandering *sadhus* and *sanyasins*, "Please explain to me the mystery called death." He learnt Sanskrit and studied a number of scriptural texts ó his favourite being *Srimad Bhagavatam*, to which he makes a reference to describe his first meeting with Bhagavan. In his words: "I would like to describe the mystical experience of my visit by borrowing an analogy from the *Bhagavatam*. Sometime before the birth of Lord Krishna, it is said, the Lord entered the heart of Vasudeva, who then shined like the sun. Later, that light passed into Devaki through a mere look of Vasudeva, after which she shined like the moon. On the very first day of my *darshan* of the Maharshi, I found in the look of the sage the dazzling brilliance of the sun. On a subsequent day, while in the presence of the Maharshi in the hall, I recognised the same brilliance in the look of the sage. It seemed to pierce me to the core of my being, even as the light of the Lord passed into Devaki through the look of Vasudeva. My breath seemed to stop for a while and my mind was elevated into some spiritual realm of unutterable peace and happiness."

Swami Madhavatirtha's quest for spiritual fulfillment drew him to Bhagavan in 1944. He stayed for fourteen days ó each day filled with study and experience. He writes: "While sitting in the hall, I observed the Maharshi silently resting on the couch, wholly unconcerned with what was taking place in his presence, and yet, I could easily discern in him, the attitude of oneness with all, *abhinna bhava*, through which he touched the inner being of the seeker who was thus able to feel within himself the presence of the Supreme transcending thoughts ó just by a silent look." He adds: "I would venture to suggest that the reciprocal relationship with the Maharshi in his *abhinna bhava* and the seeker sitting in his presence is analogous to that of a radio transmitter and a receiver. Maharshi's spiritual influence was transmitted unceasingly like the sun shining. But from the point of view of the seeker, such continued beneficial influence exercised by the sage would have no apparent effect until the seeker himself was prepared to receive it. The seeker's preparedness to receive it is called operation of grace. Bhagavan used to quite often say, "Grace is always there. Now receive it."

When Swami Madhavatirtha asked Bhagavan for personal advice, Bhagavan told him, "Reduce travelling and give talks." He obeyed it without question. He went back and founded the Vedanta Ashram on the banks of Sabarmati River in Gujarat. All of Gujarat's elite, scholars and saints, knew him well and came to him for spiritual solace. He would relentlessly advise all the serious seekers, "Go to Ramanasramam. Be with Ramana Maharshi. Spend some time in his presence. Whatever you think I have got, is given to me by

started coming to Ramanasramam because of Swami is, Ramanasramam was filled with Gujaratis.

to Ramanasramam with sixty devotees. He stayed for a few weeks in the Ashram, while his devotees stayed outside in the Ashram guest house. At that time, I was serving the Ashram as I had completed my degree course and was making efforts to get a job. As my father, the Ashram President, had to go out of station for a long time, I was entrusted with the management of the Ashram. Senior devotees, who were guiding me, advised me: "Swami Madhavatirtha had his Self realization in the presence of Bhagavan; spend some time with him." On the day the Swami was to leave along with his devotees, the duty of seeing them off fell on me. I arranged horse carts for them to reach the railway station. The horse cart for the Swami was waiting at the entrance of the Ashram.

When I entered his room, the Swami was in an ecstatic state with tears flowing from his eyes. His devotees handed over to him his sandals and an umbrella as it was raining heavily. I told him, "Swamiji, it is time for you to go to the station. All the horse carts have come. Your devotees are waiting. Please come." He followed me. But he refused to wear his sandals and also rejected the umbrella. Instead, he walked in the pouring rain unmindful that he was getting drenched. We reached Bhagavan's shrine which was a thatched shed at that time. For the first time in my life, I saw the thrilling sight of a radiant, six foot, elderly *sanyasin*, falling like a cut tree at the entrance to Bhagavan's shrine and crying like a baby. He uttered the following prayer to Bhagavan, "I am like a suckling baby, Bhagavan. I cannot leave you. Yet, I have to go." We had to literally pull him up and supportively drag him to the cart. He refused to get into his horse cart inside the premises of the Ashram. We had to walk with him outside, where all his devotees and other carts were waiting. All through, the Swami was crying in ecstasy, submerged as he was in the state of surrendered devotion to the Master. When the devotees were helping him to sit in the cart, an old devotee, B. M. S. Naidu, who was aware of the greatness of the Swami, advised me, "He is a saint. Place your head on his holy feet." I obeyed. The Swami put both his hands on my head and blessed me. I went into ecstasy! That was my very first spiritual experience of the experience of going beyond the limitations of one's body and mind! I felt blessed. It was Naidu who helped me commence my true spiritual journey, though at that time, I was not aware of its true significance. It is all Bhagavan's grace! Excerpted from *Ramana Peria Puranam* at Google. See also *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pages 146-150 for the Swami's reminiscences.

THE FIRST BATH AND THE FIRST SHAVE OF SRI RAMANA

Suri Nagamma has recorded the following in her letter of 12.4.1948:

mi sprinkled water on the rush [a type of grass which
at the back of Bhagavan's sofa. The spray from the
rubbed the body, saying, "See, they are consecrating
(*abhishekam*) me!" This seemed to have reminded him of something that had happened in the
past, for with smiles all over his face and with appropriate gestures, he told us the following
story:

"After I came to Tiruvannamalai, I had no bath for four months. One day, when I was in the
compound of Arunachala Temple, the wife of a devotee came unexpectedly, pulling me
along, made me sit, cleaned my head with soap-nut powder and gave me a bath. She had been
coming to the temple every now and then; so I had thought that she had come as usual, but
that day, she had come prepared! That was my first bath."

"Were you bathing regularly afterwards?" I asked.

"No, there was no question of a bath. Who was one to bathe? After that, a year or so passed
in the same way. I was in Gurumurtam for some time, and as not many people came there
every day, no one bothered me. Even so, a lady, by name Minakshi, who used to bring food
for me now and then, one day brought a large pot and began to boil water. Then, taking some
oil, soap-nut etc. from a basket, she said, "Swami, please come. When I did not move, she
pulled me by the arm, made me sit, smeared the oil all over my body and bathed me. The hair
on the head, which had got matted for want of care, now spread out and hung down like the
mane of a lion. That was my second bath. After that, Palaniswami [who was Bhagavan's
attendant for a long period] came and everything was adjusted into routine of daily bath."

Shaving was also like that. I had a shave on the day I came to Tiruvannamalai. The second
was after a year and a half. The hair had got matted and woven like a basket. Small stones
and dust had settled in it, and the head used to feel heavy. I also had long nails, and a frightful
appearance. So, people pressed me to have a shave, and I yielded. When my head was shaven
clean, I began to wonder whether I had a head or not, it felt so light. I shook my head this
way and that to assure myself that it was there." *ó Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*

***Carry Him with you in life, and He will carry you through life. – Mahatria Ra**

**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**



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Peace with your thoughts. – Khalil Gibran

For the things you have, you will not receive the things

Silence is the source of great strength. – Lao Tzu

**The more you become still, the more you can reflect on the qualities of your soul. –
Elieen Caddy**

The wisdom of this world is folly with God. – The Bible

**Ego is just like dust in the eye. Without cleaning the dust you cannot see anything
clearly.**

So clean the Ego and see the world. – Sri Ramana Maharishi

The measure of intelligence is the ability to change. – Einstein

THE NATURE OF MIND: Is mind a boon or bane? Is it a gift to us or a burden? What is considered to be a bane is the uncontrollable state of the mind and not the mind itself. What is sought after is a mind that is controlled, that would do one's bidding willingly. A mind that is under control is a boon, a wonderful friend on the journey of life and the mind that is uncontrolled is one's own enemy. In truth, our minds are mostly a matter of pride for us. We value our thoughts immensely, we value our ideas and ideologies, we value our knowledge of various things and we value the sum total of all this which we call "mind". On the one hand, we blame the mind for its waywardness and distracting nature, on the other hand, we wish to cling to it, believing that in it lies the very core of our being. From time immemorial it has been held that controlling the mind is far more difficult than controlling the wind. Hence we have to struggle much to reach the supreme goal of steady Self-abidance, and the chances of success are said to be rare indeed. Sri Ramana Maharshi says that all thoughts are sorrowful because they turn our attention away from our natural happiness and hook us on to the illusion that happiness is linked to objects and objective experiences. This understanding gives us the courage to turn attention away from every thought as it arises. ó Sarada Natarajan

MARCH – 2015

MAINTAIN EQUANIMITY

you and leaves you, in whatever quantities, it is distinct and detached from them, doing whatever is about like a straw in the wind. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SADHAK: As the seeker moves on the path of Self-realisation, there are periods when he feels utterly depressed and despondent. He feels that he belongs neither here nor there. It is as though he is passing through a parched desert. All of us pass through a period of loneliness and internal conflict before we enter into true awareness of the Self. Even the brave warrior Arjuna got confounded on the field at Kurukshetra. The battle here is not a fight between the armies, but a war where the chariot symbolises the body, in which the mind (Arjuna) is seated, along with Krishna, the Atman, Self. The horses represent the five senses that we need to control. The process of Self-realisation is not at all easy. We should never get disappointed in our struggle for the highest, but fight the battle with all energy and with the full hope that we will succeed in the long run. Patience and perseverance are essential inputs. ó *J.P. Vaswani*

BENEFITS OF PRAYER: Prayer is a mighty spiritual force. There is nothing so purifying as prayer. Prayer is a powerful spiritual current. Prayer must become habitual and give a feeling that you cannot live without it. Prayer elevates the mind. When you link yourself to the cosmic powerhouse you draw power, light and strength from Him. ó *Swami Sivananda*

CHOOSE YOUR COMPANY: If we wish to develop spiritually, we should keep the company of people who have developed themselves spiritually. If we spend time with someone who meditates, we would be more likely to meditate. Choosing our company wisely can help us progress further on the spiritual way. ó *Sant Rajinder Singh*

Sing to the Lord without any inhibitions; only then can you experience divine bliss. You do not need any musical instruments – it is enough if you call Him from the core of your heart. ó N. Narayanan

BHAGAVAN'S FOREIGN DEVOTEES

Suri Nagamma records as follows in her letter of 14.4.1948:

This afternoon I went to the Ashram at 2.30 p.m. On seeing me, Bhagavan's face lit up with a smile. I thought there was some good news for me. After a while, he began saying, "A letter and a photo have been received from South America. In that photo, a woman is seated with a photo of mine on her head. On either side, two men are seated and four men are standing. It seems they are members of an association known as Arunachala Sangam. The letter states: "Bhagavan, we cannot go over to your presence. We are sending from here our reverential

sings. They have sent a prepaid envelop also. Where is said Bhagavan.

ö I asked.

öThey do not seem to have come,ö replied Bhagavan. öHow they have heard about me, I do not know. They have written saying that they have read our books and started *Sadhana*. South America is the southern end of America. They have respect for me. Why that is so, I cannot say.ö*

öDevotion has no bounds of distance.ö I said.

öThat is so. That lady has kept my photo on her head. How could she have known me?ö Said Bhagavan.

Bhagavan mentioned another incident: öSeven or eight years back, a lady came from Europe to see me. As soon as she landed, she did not stop anywhere, but came straight here. After sitting in the hall for half an hour, she got up, prostrated before me, took leave, went around the Ashram, and left immediately. She went straight to Colombo and got into a steamer, from where, wrote to me a letter, ÑBhagavan, having heard about you, I had a desire to see you. My desire is fulfilled. I have no desire to see anyone else in this country. Hence I am taking this steamer. That was what she wrote. Rather strange,ö said Bhagavan.

I said to Bhagavan, öWith a desire to see the form of Brahman, and with the help of the divine sight given by Lord Krishna, Dhritarastra saw Brahman, and when the form disappeared, he told Krishna, ÑAfter seeing your sacred form, I do not wish to see any other. So please take away the sight you have given me. Just like that, this lady did not feel like seeing anything else in India after seeing you. For devotion there is no difference between men and women?ö

öNo, there is no difference,ö said Bhagavan. ó *Letters from Sri Ramanasramam*

*Maha Krishna Swami after spending three years, from 1938 to 1940, as an inmate of Ramanasramam, established ÑBhagavan Sri Ramanashramø in Brazil, which, he says, was as per the direction of his Master Ramana. His reminiscences entitled Ñ*Years in the presence of Ramana my Master*’ as published by the Brazil Ashram, have been reprinted by Ramana Maharshi Centre for Learning, Bangalore.

GET UNITED WITH GOD: Truth cannot be known by mere recitation of scriptures. A person can be said to be united with God who, with the aid of knowledge (spiritual awakening), feels God’s presence at every moment, everywhere, and all the time. Such a united person is always self-awakened with God’s pervasiveness firmly entrenched in his



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urge for the well-being of mankind. ó *Baba Hardev*

AN INSPIRING MESSAGE BY SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA

Swami Rajeswarananda^{*}, M.A., D.Litt., was the founder editor of *The Call Divine*, the first monthly journal devoted to Bhagavan, which began in 1952. He authored *Erase the Ego and Teachings*. He says:

All honour to those who drop the mask of learning, and practically live in God. All glory to those who spurn the lie of life and rightly ring in the rapturous hymn of Self realization. All bliss to those who solidly live in the Silence of the Self Supreme.

The world is working itself up to exhaustion under the mere spell of talk intoxication, as would characterize a debate among the boisterous boys in a classroom. Thus, the so-called lettered people are deluded to believe more in noise than in silence and they thereby miss the subtler, the finer and yet more substantial aspect of life. Silence is an unseen power and a miracle of life, whereas the noise of the world exhibits itself as some little play of the imagination, exalting the ego.

Drop the dirt of learning and fill the mind with God, the Truth, to the exclusion of all else, because never can you hear the voice of the soul, if your ears are filled with the loud noises of the world. Sing sweetly abounding with inward joy and thus be a metal that rings right with the voice of God in your life of Truth. In this way, let your life be a clarion call to make every one live on the plane of the Absolute, casting off the coils of the little self.

As long as there remains the body-consciousness, the world and its darkness also exist as its shadow; whereas God consciousness is the illumination showing the true Self, that sits self-resplendent in the human soul. Have your mind and heart, nay your whole being, focussed in absolute unison with the Self. Then high ideals arise within you and the things that belong to the lower levels touch you no more. Do not keep avoiding what is difficult, lest you shall not go one step forward. Continually and deliberately fight the little self, with its brood of petty desires and demands. Kill all lures of desires which are but gilded pills of poison. Be a worthy recipient of all bliss by living the life of Truth.



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realise Truth consciousness and you will be able to turn
block in the way, into a stepping stone, for a leap into
in the valley of the senses and mind, the delusion of
you expose yourself to its provocation. Hence turn
yourself to the full light that shines beyond this broken lamp of mind and cease to live in the
body-centre. Thus, regain the rapturous serene light of Self-realization by living beyond the
body.

Act without a motive for action. Set one desire to destroy another and finally use the light of
Self to dissolve even the last remnant of desire. Purify the mind and melt it away in the Great
Self. The mind is only that function of inner activity which correlates the doer with the thing
done, through the sense of egoism. So, dissolve the mind; lo, the condition of supreme bliss is
realised for all eternity.

Bhakti has its origin in the soul's quest after Infinity. It is not a life of sensations. The strength
of the *bhakta* lies in the pure and sincere tears one sheds. It is emotional response to Reality
revealing several truths unknown to intellect. When your eyes overflow with tears, your soul
is smitten for a leap into the Beyond.

You need not follow any ideal since you are an Ideal yourself and in yourself. Let all
condemnation of others be deemed your own. If you adjust the microcosm, the macrocosm
will adjust itself for you. You cannot see outside what you are not inside. Draw inspiration
from your utter-most depths. This universe or matter is only your externalised thought. Lose
the little self, put it out and there stands forth your True Self, in all Its unravelled mystery. ó
Excerpts from *The Call Divine*, September, 1953

*See *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* for his illuminating reminiscences of
Bhagavan, at
pages 252-3.

VAIRAGYA – A MUST FOR SADHANA

By Pranav Khullar

A central theme running through Patanjali's *Yoga Sutra* is that of *pratyahara*, that is,
withdrawal of the mind from its scattered externality to interiorising it and focusing it upon

Patanjali details several practical steps to initiate this *vairagya* and *satsang*, he emphasises the need for *vairagya* for *pratyahara*.

Vairagya is repeatedly emphasised in Vedanta. Even the enquiry into the Self will become redundant if the mind is not fully turned away from all externals. Many people go through a sort of momentary phase of dispassion arising out of personal disillusionment with a situation, but they are unable to sustain this attitude for long, especially when faced with charms of wealth, beauty, position and fame. Real *vairagya* can only arise when there is genuine inner discrimination developed through *vichara* to be able to distinguish between the outer glamorous drama that is transient, and the witness-Self, which is beckoning to a dimension beyond the transitory.

It is this real *vairagya* that Bhartihari alludes in his classic *Vairagya-Shatakam*, where he points out how despite the transitory nature of the world staring us in the face, we continue to desire and continue to want endlessly, trapping ourselves in a vicious cycle of pleasure and pain. Nothing seems to stop us desiring more, and this arises from our wrong notion of what is real and permanent.

In perceiving outer empirical reality as the only reality, and in perpetuating this notion, we keep desiring external enjoyments and become addict to them. Desire begets more desire and we become desperate to possess just that bit more, be it riches, fame or position. This play of the mind keeps defining an identity for us, which inevitably makes us dissatisfied and restless.

Vairagya does not mean abnegation of social responsibilities by running away on a whim. If the mind is not disciplined enough, the same desires will follow the mind even in the most secluded spots. The path of a Buddha must be taken only when the seeker has developed intense *vairagya*, a state of total disregard for all material things; not merely momentary disenchantment.

The mind itself must be used as an enquiring tool to probe deeper into the purpose of life. What is required is a discriminating mind that is able to distinguish between the essential and the perishable, even as one goes on one's duties in life. ó *The Speaking Tree*

MEDITATION: It is process of being and not doing. It helps us in making our minds pure. Just as we take care to remove the dirt from our body, we need to clean our minds on a daily basis. Happiness is the basic nature of Self or *atman*. But we do not feel bliss all the time because the bliss of *atman* is reflected through the mind, which is always wanting,

as the mind is not interfering, the reflection of *atman* even during waking state we have the option of making purpose of meditation is to reduce the quantum and order to exclude other thoughts we must focus on any

one thought, picture, sound or breath, whatever suits us better. ó *Hasmukh Adhia*

KARTHIKAI DEEPAM OR DEEPAM FESTIVAL

This grand festival, which falls during November-December each year, is attended by lakhs of people. The festival stretches over a period of ten days. On the tenth day of the festival, a huge Deepam (lamp) is lit at the top of the hill Arunachala. A large basin-like copper cauldron, kept on the summit of the hill, is filled with *ghee*. The light which is lit with great festivity at 6 p.m. is visible from a distance of almost 30 miles in all directions. In the early Tamil literature the phrase -like a beacon on the top of the hillø was used as an illustration of widespread fame. This shows that the practice must have been in vogue from time immemorial. The origin of this tradition can be traced back to the legend of Ardhanareeswara. According to the legend, the Divine Mother Parvati came to Tiruvannamalai and did penance to be united with Her Lord. Lord Siva was pleased with the penance, and appearing as a column of dazzling light took Her into Himself. This merging of Sakti into Siva is represented by the Ardhanareeswara (half woman and half man) form¹. This event occurred on the full moon day in the Tamil month of Karthikai, which generally runs from mid-November to mid-December. Ever since, it has been the practice to light a lamp at the top of Arunachala hill on this day every year, and worship the Lord. In the Arunachaleswara temple below the hill, a fire is lit on the very first day of the festival. On the tenth day, on a pole a big metal lamp is kept ready with wicks. Exactly at six in the evening, as the sun sets and the full moon rises, the lights are lit simultaneously on the top of the hill, on the metal lamp in the temple, and at Sri Ramanasramam, with chants and shouts of Arunachala Siva by the vast multitude of people.

According to another legend, the big cauldron is lit in commemoration of the episode of Lord Siva quelling the pride of Brahma and Vishnu. As per the *Sivapuramam*, once Brahma and Vishnu were arguing about their respective superiority. Suddenly they saw an endless column of fire beside them. They decided to find the limit of the column, agreeing that whoever reached the end of it would be superior to the other. Vishnu started to dig the earth to find the root, and Brahma flew in the sky to find the top. In due course of time, having failed in their mission, both returned to the earth. While Vishnu accepted his defeat, Brahma told a lie that he had reached the top and showed a flower, which he claimed he had got from Siva's head.

rebuked Brahma for telling a lie. The huge column of frozen as mountain, and became Arunachala ó *Face to Arunachala from Rig Veda to Ramana Maharshi.*

1. In this manifestation, the left half represents Sakti in the form of Parvati and the right half Siva. The image of Ardhanareeswara gives a mistaken impression that it represents a being, which is half female and half male. In reality there is no such being. The symbolic representation of Ardhanareeswara is to be seen as a metaphor, which represents a being the whole of which is Siva and the whole of which is Sakti at the same time. Siva and Sakti are two beings only by connotation. They in fact denote one and the same being Siva. It is only when Siva is united with Sakti that He acquires the capability of becoming the Lord of the Universe.

NIDIDHYASANAM: *Jnana yoga* comprises (i) *Sravanam* (ii) *Mananam* and (iii) *Nididhyasam*. *Sravanam* is systematic study of *vedantic* scriptures. *Mananam* is to dwell on the teaching by using logic so that all doubts are resolved about the validity of the teaching. *Nididhyasanam* is internalisation of the teaching by constantly dwelling on it. Its purpose is to assimilate the *vedantic* teaching revealed by the *mahavakyam* ‘*Tat Tvam Asi*’ ó You are That. Taking ourselves as the body is born out of ignorance. One has to meditate on one’s real nature as *Atma* and on the fact that one is ever liberated. *Nididhyasanam* is not to remove all thoughts and keeps the mind blank; it is to meditate on the fact that one is *nityamukta*. ó *Swami Paramarthananda*

AN APPROACH TO ‘SELF-ENQUIRY’

BY N.S. Ramamohan*

Sri Bhagavan says that thoughts arise from the Self and ‘I-thought’ (ego) is the first thought to emerge when one wakes up from sleep. When one seeks the source from whence ‘I-thought’ arises, the mind merges in it, establishing one in the Self. This is the essential teaching of Sri Bhagavan. Thus, ‘Seeking the source’ is the central theme of Self-enquiry. He teaches that ‘I-thought’ (*Chit shakthi*) and breath (*Kriya shakthi*) arise from and sink into the same source, the Self (*Upadesa Saram* Verse 12). Though breath too emanates from the Self, breath control is known to help quieten the mind and in itself does not lead to the goal of Self-realization. Also, other practices such as *japa*, *mantra*, are known to help in gaining one-pointedness of mind. They are construed to be aids for Self Realization. But Sri Bhagavan’s teaching of watching the source makes a leap from this limited perspective to a much wider horizon of seeking the Self while engaging in them.

antha Ganapathi Muni, "If a mantra is repeated, and where the mantra-sound is produced, the mind will be

Elsewhere He says, "Mechanical breath-control will not lead one to the goal. It is only an aid. While doing it, be careful to be alert in mind and remember the I -thought and seek its source. Then you will find that where breath sinks, there I -thought arises. They sink and rise together. The I -thought also will sink along with breath. Simultaneously, another luminous and infinite I will become manifest, which will be continuous and unbroken. That is the goal." (Talk195)

At times, when the mind is hard to quieten, the repeating of I mentally, and watching the source from whence the chant is rising with alertness, will lead to the same goal as traditional enquiry. After some time, when the mind has quietened, one may stop the recital and slip into the mode of Self-enquiry, intently keeping a watch on the source of thoughts. When a thought begins to arise one may carry on with the enquiry. Sri Bhagavan explains the sequence of occurrence of *japa* or *mantra* thus (Talk 285): Self--Ego/ I -thought-- thoughts -- words.

When we recite a *mantra*, the words are preceded by the thought of *mantra*, which itself arises from the Self. He says that our attention has to be on the source of thoughts and not on the words which emanate from the vocal organs. In the beginning of practice we may not, (and perhaps need not) know from where the thoughts arise. But the very act of intently watching the source dramatically paves the way to the silencing the mind. This silence (a state free of thoughts) is the pure I -thought or I feeling, whose source we are seeking. Sri Bhagavan says that when the source of thoughts, the I -thought, is watched, the thoughts recoil, meaning that, they retreat into their source and the seeker will know that they arise from the Self. (Talk 326)

One may ask, "How to pay attention to the source?" The Source or Self is also called *Hridayam*. Sri Bhagavan says, "The Heart of the Upanishads is construed as *Hridayam*, meaning: This (is) the centre. That is, it is where the mind rises and subsides. That is the seat of Realization. When I say that it is the Self the people imagine that it is within the body. When I ask where the Self remains in one's sleep they seem to think that it is within the body, but unaware of the body and its surroundings like a man confined in a dark room. To such people, it is necessary to say that the seat of Realization is somewhere within the body. The name of the center is the Heart; but it is confounded with the heart organ" (Talk 474). Thus, the location of the Source is not physical, and needs to be experienced as such. The only significant clue to us is that I -thought or ego and breath rise from and sink into the same

are required to watch the source of Æ-I-thoughtø and
tion of breath, which is our natural experience, happens.
t the breath gradually sinks.

It must be noted that the word watching means Æpaying attention toø the source. Paying attention to the source becomes really possible only in stillness. Attention is the key. This is what Sri Bhagavan calls turning the mind within. The stillness should not be disturbed by any mental activity, and watching does not imply any mental activity. Sri Bhagavan says, ÆThe mind is accustomed to stray outward by the force of the *vasanas* manifesting as thoughts. If one realizes that the thoughts arise from the Self and abide in their source, the mind will disappear. The method contains within it, though implicitly and not expressly, is the watching of the breath. When we watch where from the ÆIø-thought, the root of all thoughts, springs, we are necessarily watching the source of breath also.

At the beginning of *satsang* at the Kendram, we recite ÆArunachala Sivaø for some time. The recital is a great way to start ÆSelf-enquiryø. As Sri Bhagavan advises, watch the source from where these words arise with rapt attention, and experience the stillness (of mind). If the mind wanders during the recital, it is of no real value.

ÆSeeking the sourceø is the essence of Self-enquiry. It is also the single point of convergence that fulfills the aim of all Paths. (Talk nos. are from the book Æ*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*’.)

*A devotee of our Kendram. His book, *Pointers to Self Realization*, available at the Kendramø book store, can be read for further guidance.

Editor’s note: A very strong urge, continuous practice, patience and perseverance are a must for success on the path of Self-enquiry. Yet, by Sri Bhagavanø Grace, all these and much more help pours forth when one sincerely decides to trek this path. Sri Bhagavanø Grace and help are ÆHere and Nowø.

Silence is the way to avoid many problems. ó *Anonymous*

It is OK, if you fail. It is not OK, if you don’t try. It is OK, if you don’t succeed. It is not OK, if you give up. Those who want to run away from failure, actually run away from success. – *Infinithoughts*, March, 2014

No matter how little you have. You should be grateful for what you have. – *Mahatria Ra*

There is a Light which shines beyond all things on earth, beyond the highest heavens. This is the light that shines in our hearts. – *Chandogya Upanishad*

ally evolved and thereby discover the divine within

asures leads to bondage. Detachment from sense
pleasure leads to liberation. – Chanakya Niti

LEARN FROM LAWS OF PHYSICS: The second law of Thermodynamics says ó As temperature increases, chaos increases. Bring water to a boil; the water becomes visibly agitated. The third law says ó As temperature decreases, orderliness increases. Put the water in a deep freezer. All the molecules line up in perfect crystals. These laws of physics also apply to us. When we have too much activity, we feel worn out; we make bad decisions, say wrong things. When more settled and fresh inside, we are more perceptive and more effective. ó Lane Waggoner

APRIL – 2015

KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE UNATTACHED SELF

Despite remaining inside and outside, pervading all things, space exists without clinging even slightly to them. Unless you know yourself to be the unattached Self, which is like space, it will not be possible to avoid becoming a victim of delusion. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

THE MIND: The mind having no concrete form, it brings into being that which is non-existent. The perishable universe has no independent existence other than the mind. With the annihilation of the mind, the subjective universe too comes to an end. The purpose of meditation is not to battle with the mind and to eradicate thoughts by force; it is to witness the mind from a distance. If you succeed in doing so, your mind will become calm and you will be able to give it a new, inward direction. ó Anup Taneja

KNOW YOUR DIVINE NATURE: We are a combination of matter and spirit. But we fail to have even an inkling of the spirit in us. Yet, because Atman is our original nature, It makes Its presence felt. Lord Krishna urges us to free ourselves from the three gates of darkness ó desire, anger and greed. Everyone suffers from the disease of mora We fail to understand the devastating effects of desire, our greatest enemy. The doors of our soul are kept shut and we live and die without a glimpse of our power and magnificence. If we invoke our divine nature, we do good to ourselves, and uplift others as well. ó Jaya Row

MEENAKSHI TEMPLE, MADURAI: The temple, which occupies around 45 acres, is square-shaped, and is surrounded by concentric streets which are named after the Tamil months. It is said to have been constructed by Kulashekara Pandyan, a king of Pandya

as born out of holy fire in answer to prayers of King
nalai. Meenakshi married Lord Siva and both rule the
and Goddess Meenakshi. ó *Tattvaloka*

PERSONAL AUDIT: Each night you should review your actions for the day ó Was I
humble, patient, and generous? Was I proud and quarrelsome? In what other ways I went
wrong, etc. Such a review takes only few minutes. You are alone and forthright with yourself
and confess to yourself only. The exercise is a great self-purification and a spiritually
rewarding process. ó *The Speaking Tree*

TRANSCEND REJECTION: Life is a gamut of rejections of many kinds. You may not get
the invitation which you feel you deserved. You may be ignored when you thought that you
should have got attention. Rejections may result in our having low self-esteem, if we allow
them to bother us. They may become emotional wounds. We should not brood, and nurse
these wounds. But we have to see them in perspective. Learn the art of transcending rejection.
ó *Janina Gomes*

MEDITATION: Our spirits are renewed and rejuvenated when we meditate and tap into the
spiritual realm within. We are so filled with blissful radiation that we forget our problems for
a while. Each time we meditate on the inner light and sound, we will be connecting with the
renewing force that can turn the autumn of life into springtime. ó *Sant Rajinder Singh*

PALAKOTTU: (*Pala* is jackfruit; *Kothu* means orchard) is an ancient garden where flowers
were grown for the worship of Arunachaleswara. Its area is about ten acres. Bhagavan often
used to go there for a walk. Over a period of time, it evolved into a *sadhu's* colony.
Devotees, such as Muruganar, Ganapati Muni, Paul Brunton and S.S.Cohen, used to live
there. ó *Arunachala Ramana*, vol. ii

BEES AT SRI RAMANASRAMAM: Recognising that the overall health of the Ashram
botanical efforts could benefit from the pollination of bees, hives were placed in the Ashram
flower garden and *gosala* in 2001. A professional beekeeper-devotee is on hand at the
Ashram much of the year. A young Ashram priest, born into a beekeeping family, offers his
support and expertise. When plentiful, honey from Ashram hives is used in Bhagavan's *pujas*
and offered to devotees as *prasad*. ó *Sarnagathi*, May, 2014

SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NUMBER FIVE: **1.** The great *pancha-akshara* mantra
is five-syllabled ó *Na-Ma-Si-Va-Ya* (I bow to Siva). **2.** Creation evolved out of
panchabhutah ó *akasa* (space), *vayu* (air), *agni* (fire), *apa* (water) and *bhumi* (earth). **3.**
Panchamrita offered to the deity comprises, milk, butter, honey, jaggery and fruit. **4.** The
religious calendar called the *pancha angam* records five aspects of each day ó the position of

GIRI PRADAKSHINA

By A.R. Natarajan

It is called *Pradakshina* in Tamil. Sri Ramana once explained the implications of the word *Pradakshina* to his famous devotee Suri Nagamma, as follows. The syllable *pra* stands for removal of sins; *da* stands for fulfilling the desires; *kshi* stands for freedom from future births; *na* stands for giving deliverance through *jnana*. The expression *Valam* in Tamil means right side. In the circuit one has to keep the Hill to one's right.

The importance of *pradakshina* and the benefits which flow from it have been proclaimed by Lord Siva Himself. It is the effulgence, though it is in the form of a hill. Siva Himself is embodied for the sake of the welfare of the world. He is ever ready to grant the prayers of the devotees who go round the Hill remembering its nature and seeking its blessings. One may remember Mother Paravati herself becoming re-united with her Lord by worshipping the Aruna hill, embodiment of Lord Siva, and going round it.

If one has the right attitude of meditation on Lord Siva, then automatically one would not hurry through the circuit. It is advised that one should go round in the manner of a woman walking when delivery is imminent. The devotee is never alone because, at the same time, thousands of invisible *devas* and *siddhas* would be going round the hill. The *pradakshina* is to be done joyously chanting the names of Siva and singing his praise. One has to cover the 13 kilometer round the hill in a prayerful mood of surrender, contemplating on the glory of Lord Siva.

The circuit is always auspicious. There is only one single prohibition. It is that those who desire any kind of benefit should not use a vehicle, for it would be transgressing the basic rule that one should go round a Sivalinga only on foot.

Those starting from the town begin from the Arunachaleswara Temple. Their first halt would be the holiest of the holy Sri Ramanasramam. This is a must for everyone. Sri Ramana is regarded as the human embodiment of Arunachala. Sri Ramanasramam has grown around him.

In the circuit there are eight Siva lingas, one each for eight directions. The first lingam on the circuit is Agni lingam, just before Sri Ramanasramam and the last is Indra lingam in the town

tradition is that at these places, the presiding deities of worship to Lord Siva as Arunachaleswara.

lets to the ancient Adi-Annamalai temple. One is drawn heartward in its precincts. Little further along the way there is a culvert where Sri Ramana used to sit with his devotees while on the circuit. Here one can relax and take in the serenity and sanctity of the Hill.

Another arresting centre of attraction on the circuit is the place from which one gets a view of the five peaks of the Panchamukha hill. At this place the mind is spontaneously stilled. Then comes the Pacchiamman temple with its ancient background. Soon we are back at Arunachaleswara Temple, and the circuit is complete. ó *The Ramana Way*, Dec., 2014

THERE IS NOTHING WITHOUT – A STORY AS TOLD BY BHAGAVAN

Umadevi, a Polish devotee, had travelled in Kashmir and brought some photos which were being shown to all in the old hall. Bhagavan humorously remarked, “We have seen those places without the trouble of travelling.” A devotee thereby said, “I wish to go to Kailash”. Bhagavan said, “One can see these places only if destined. Not otherwise. After seeing all, there will still remain more – if not in this hemisphere, may be in the other. Knowledge implies ignorance of what lies beyond what is known. Knowledge is always limited.” After sometime, Bhagavan related the following story.

Appar [A great Siva devotee], though very weak and old, decided to travel to Kailas. Another old man appeared on the way and tried to dissuade him from the attempt, saying that it was too difficult to reach there. Appar was however inflexible and said that he would risk his life in the attempt. The stranger asked him to take a dip in the tank close by. Appar did so and found Kailas then and there. Where did it all happen? In Tiruvayyar, nine miles from Tanjore. Where is Kailas then? Is it within the mind or outside it? If Tiruvayyar be truly Kailas, it must appear to others as well. But Appar alone found it so.

Similarly, it is said of other places of pilgrimage in the South, that they are abodes of Siva, and devotees found them so. This was true from their standpoint. Everything is within. There is nothing without. ó *Spiritual Stories as told by Ramana Maharshi*, Sri Ramanasramam

SRI RAMANA’S KEEN INSIGHT ABOUT PLANTAIN FLOWERS

By T.R. Kanakammal

from the plantain flowers. As the outer skin of these inedible, it was removed and thrown into the waste-cowshed, saw the pile of the discarded part of plantain flowers. He remarked to the attendant accompanying him, "Look! They have thrown out the portion which is richest in nutritive content. What a waste!" Bhagavan's attendant, who was intrigued by these words, asked, "Bhagavan! What nutritive value can there be in the skin of plantain flowers?" Bhagavan replied, "The red outer covering of the plantain flower is rich in fat. See, how the inner side of the skin shines. As ascetics would not eat butter and ghee, they eat this skin so that their bodies get the fat required for proper nourishment. An additional advantage is that this fat helps in developing the capacity for controlling the senses." The attendant told this interesting conversation to the Ashram cooks. They were curious about the method of cooking the skin of plantain flowers.

By coincidence, within a few days, someone brought a large quantity of plantain flowers to the Ashram. The Ashram cooks requested Bhagavan to tell them how to cook the red outer skin covering of the flowers. Bhagavan told them, "Soak some red gram (thoor dhal) in water. Clean the skins and chop them finely. Grind the soaked gram, along with salt, red chillies and asafoetida. Add the chopped skin to this paste, and steam the mixture for a few minutes. When the mixture is cooked, remove it from the fire and allow it to cool. Then crumble it and roast the crumbled mixture in hot oil. Season it with mustard seeds, and the dish is ready. This preparation can be used as a side dish with rice."

The cooks prepared the dish as per Bhagavan's instructions. Everybody found the preparation very tasty, and many remarked about its subtle flavour. The cooks were very happy. However, the next time when plantain flowers were brought to the Ashram, the cooks felt reluctant to carry out the laborious process of preparation. So, they dig a pit and buried the plantain skins at a spot which they thought Bhagavan would not visit. The next morning when Bhagavan was returning from the cowshed, he saw a wounded dog by the side of the path. He approached the dog and attended to its wounds. After comforting the dog, Bhagavan was about to get back to the path, when he noticed the mound of earth. He poked at the mound with his walking stick and soon the plantain flowers lay exposed. How anything can be hidden from his all-seeing eyes! The kitchen workers waited apprehensively for Bhagavan's reprimand. But Bhagavan merely said, "If you felt that the preparation of these skins would be too difficult, you could have fed them to the cows. What a waste of good stuff! O.K. Do what you like, why should I bother?"

what to do. But he never forced us to follow his teachings and benefit from the lessons he taught us. amam

SRI RAMANA'S CONCERN FOR THE UNDERPRIVILEGED – SOME EPISODES

1. Prof. K. Swaminathan writes: Once in the 1940s, I was sitting outside the hall with many devotees. Bhagavan was reclining on a couch. A group of learned pandits was discussing passages from the Upanishads with great enthusiasm and profundity. All, including Bhagavan, appeared to be attentively listening to the interesting discussion when, all of a sudden, Bhagavan rose from the couch, walked some distance and stood before a villager who was standing looking lowly with palms joined. All eyes turned to Bhagavan and the villager who was standing at a distance. They appeared to be conversing. Soon Bhagavan returned to his couch and the discussion was resumed. Being curious to know why Bhagavan had to go out to meet a villager, I slipped away from the discussion and caught up with the villager before he left the Ashram. He told me that Bhagavan was asking why I was standing so far and also asked my name, about my village, what I did, and about my family etc. I enquired, "Did you ask him anything?" The villager replied, "When I asked him how I could earn his blessings, he asked whether there was a temple in my village and the name of the temple deity. When I told him the deity's name, he said, go on repeating the name of the deity and you would receive all the blessings needed." I came back to Bhagavan's presence, but lost all interest in the discussions. I felt that the simple humility and devotion of a peasant had evoked a far greater response from our Master than any amount of learning. I then decided that though a scholar by profession, I should always remain a humble, ignorant peasant at heart, and pray for Bhagavan's grace and blessings. ó *Sri Ramana – The Self Supreme*

2. Chalam (Gudipati Venkatachalam) writes: Bhagavan was a great champion of the oppressed, and had a natural tendency to side with the social underdog in any dispute. He insisted that he would not eat in the dining room until all the poor at the Ashram gate, awaiting food, had been fed. If the Ashram prepared diluted *sambhar* for the poor, Bhagavan would get angry and insist that he be fed with the same. Even when he was ill, he would insist that the fruit and milk that were given to him for medicinal reasons should be distributed among all those present in the hall.

Bhagavan frequently made it clear that he did not want devotees to be prevented from seeing him. In view of his declining health, Bhagavan needed rest. Guards were placed outside his room with strict instructions to avoid any disturbance from the visitors. A *sadhu* who happened to arrive at the Ashram, wanted to see Bhagavan. But the guards and the office staff

disappointed *sadhu* started walking sadly towards the and his request, for when the *sadhu* passed Bhagavanø Bhagavan standing outside, waiting for him. They gazed at went on his way and Bhagavan returned to his room. ó

The Power of the Presence by David Godman

3. J.P.Vaswani (Head, Sadhu Vaswani Mission, Pune) says: What wondrous love Sri Bhagavan had for the poor, forsaken and forlorn! When he was staying on the Hill, he once found that some low caste women returning from their work every day in the heat of the mid-day sun, with throats parched with thirst, wanted to drink water. But as they belonged to a low caste they were not allowed to draw water from the well. Sri Bhagavan himself ó Sri Bhagavan ó Sri Bhagavan ó what was his stature! But he himself would come out and wait for them. With his holy hands he drew water and when they said, õSamy, Samy, we are thirsty, give us a little waterö, he gave them the water. I sometimes feel that I am like those low caste women, and again and again turning to the gracious face of the Maharshi, I say to him õSamy, Samy, give me the water of life!öAnd he will give it to every aspiring heart. ó *Forever Is In The Now* by A.R. Natarajan

4. Ramanadasa Sadananda (Seshagiri Iyer) records: When Bhagavan was at the Skandasram, I was sitting on the steps leading up to the Ashram. A man came to the Ashram with his family and stopped at the gate. He asked whether they could have the Swamiø *darshan*, because untouchables could not think of entering the Ashram. I wanted to ask Bhagavan, but then I hesitated and allowed them to go inside. The whole party went in and prostrated before Bhagavan. I well remember how for about ten minutes Bhagavanø gracious look dwelt on that untouchable and his family; and how many rich and notable people have I seen falling at his feet without being vouchsafed such grace. ó *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*

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

When pain is gone, there will only be joy. We are not able to experience Grace all the time because of our desires and expectations. It can be experienced only when our desires cease. Grace is always there but it becomes manifest when the mind merges in the Self, either through surrender or through meditation.

God's very nature is Grace and this can be experienced at all times only when a person surrenders. A person who surrenders accepts everything as His will. He does not consider anything as good or bad, success or failure. After surrender, there is no individual will. In this state, which is the result of Grace, one feels Grace all the time.

Grace manifests itself when the quest for the Self begins. The quest itself is the result of Grace. There is not a single moment when Grace is not operating in us. Grace is beyond time and space. Grace is always there. It is the beginning, middle and end. Grace is the Self.

Just as the stems, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit of a tree will continue sprouting so long as its root survives, so our *vasanas*, desires and thoughts will continue rising and distracting us away from our self-attentiveness so long as their root, our mind, survives.

As long as *vasanas* exist in the mind, the investigation "who am I?" is necessary. As and when thoughts arise, then and there it is necessary for us to annihilate them by investigation, that is, self-investigation or keen and vigilant self-attentiveness in the very place from which they arise.

Until we achieve by persistent practice of self-investigation, self-scrutiny or self-attentiveness, sufficient maturity to be willing and able to direct our mind entirely in self-consciousness, we will continue to be distracted by our thoughts; and the struggle between to know our own real self and outward-going desires will continue in us until our mind is completely destroyed by the clear light of true self-knowledge.

Therefore, though we should always aim to maintain an unbroken continuity of self-attentiveness or self-remembrance, and thereby to sink deep into our own self-conscious being, "I am". Our attempts to do so will often fail, and we will repeatedly succumb to the powerful attraction of our desires and consequent thoughts. However, we should not be disheartened by repeated failures to be constantly self-attentive, but should just calmly persevere in our efforts to restore our self-attentiveness whenever we find that we have lost our hold on it.

This constant struggle between self-attentiveness and self-negligence or self-forgetfulness is



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patient and steady perseverance is required to win this
times and frequency of our fall from our natural state of
and rise again and again and try our best to stand firm in

In this long inner warfare we are never alone, because the grace of our *sadguru*, is always shining peacefully in our heart as Æ amø giving us all the subtle help and support that we need in our earnest efforts. ö *David Godman's Blog*

PRAPATTI ASHTAKAM*

Verses on Surrender to Bhagavan by Jagadisa Sastri

About 1945, Jagadisa Sastri, a great Sanskrit scholar and compiler of *Ramana Sahasranamam*, was seriously ill and bed-ridden. All had lost hope of his survival. Bhagavan's special intervention to save him was sought. Devaraja Mudaliar writes in *My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana*: öJagadisa Sastri, whom I used to call the Sanskrit Poet of Bhagavan's Court, wrote his final appeal in *Prapatti Ashtakam* declaring that he would not accept any plea by Bhagavan that *prarabdha* must follow its course, and that if only Bhagavan willed it, His Grace could cancel *prarabdha* and save him. Bhagavan took such compassion on him that he was pulled out of the jaws of death. These verses were translated into Tamil with the approval and encouragement of Bhagavan by T. K. Sunderesa Iyer.ö At the behest of Mudaliar, Bhagavan wrote the *Ashtakam* in his own hand which is available in the October, 1985 issue of *Mountain Path*. Needless to say, Bhagavan responded to the devotion of Jagadisa Sastri expressed in this composition, and he soon recovered to live a long life in the service of the Master.

The *Ashtakam* says: **1.** To Him born in Tiruchuli, I surrender; to Him who sported in Pandya country, I surrender; to the dweller on Arunachala slopes, I surrender; to the *bikshu* unaffected by the rigours of tapas, I surrender. **2.** To Him who is alike to all, from the Creator to the worm, I surrender; to the subduer of the six passions, I surrender; to the bearer of the essence of Knowledge, I surrender; to the store of unbounded mercy, I surrender. **3.** To Him who surpasses the universe, I surrender; to Him whom the Vedas say to be the universe and more, I surrender; to the chastiser of death in order to be rid of fear of the all-devouring alligator Time, I surrender. **4.** To the embodiment of Knowledge who has conquered the pain of sensual life, I surrender; to the enemy of Kama who came down to prevent the fever caused by proud Cupid, I surrender. **5.** To the strictly life-long celibate, I surrender; to the holder of *kamandalu* and staff, I surrender; to Him that rests in *dhyana* on *Brahmasana*, I

Brahman, I surrender. **6.** To Hara, I surrender; to the abode of independence, I surrender; to Him of the foremost of spotless knowers, I surrender. **7.** To the threefold ills, delusion and karma, I surrender; to Him of true resolve, no taint, perfect contentment and bliss, I surrender. **8.** To the face of gentle smile that brings peace to the devotees, I surrender; to Ramana, so named because removing all pain He brings joy, I surrender. **9.** To Siva, the bestower of bliss, the Master, the store of all virtues, I surrender; to the indweller of my heart lotus, I surrender; to the refuge and Lord, I surrender. **10.** May all others also wise surrender to Ramana in order to gain His qualities by His blessings. ó *The Maharshi*, Jan.-Feb., 2015

**Note:* This *ashtakam* does not conform exactly to the regular structure of an *ashtakam* (8 verses). This interesting discrepancy is seen in other noted *ashtakams* and compositions. For example, Bhagavan's divine composition *Arunachala Padikam* (*padikam*, meaning 10 verses) actually contains 11 verses.

We can do anything we want to do, if we stick to it long enough. – Helen Keller

Let us not mistake activity for productivity. – Mahatria Ra

A creative person is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others. – Ayn Rand

God gave us the gift of life; it is up to us to give ourselves the gift of living well. – Voltaire

If we did all the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves. – Thomas A. Edison

It is our nature to assume that we are important; we are at the centre of things. – A.B. Powell

You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. – Swami Vivekananda

The little space within the lotus of the heart is as great as this vast universe. – Chandogya Upanishad

MAY- 2015

BONDAGE AND FREEDOM



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t only as long as one imagines -I am bound. When one bound one? the Self, Eternal and ever free, reveals s and with it goes the thought of freedom too. ó Sri

Ramana Maharshi

THE WANDERING MIND: You are happy when your thoughts are aligned with your actions. You might be washing dishes or ironing clothes; if your mind is focused on what you are doing, it is a peaceful and relaxed activity. On the other hand, you might be flying first class to New York, or attending a dinner in a five-star hotel, if your mind wanders off, you become restless and mentally fatigued. Human mind is a wandering mind, and a wandering mind is an unhappy mind. ó *J.P. Vaswani*

DESIRES AND HAPPINESS: As you reduce desires, your happiness increases. Eradicate desires and you reach infinite happiness. The first step here is to examine with intellect ó Is it in your interest to pursue with a desire? Is the desire in line with your life's goal? If yes, fulfill the desire. If not, press the delete button. The next step is to upgrade the desire. When you are inspired by the spiritual goals, all desires fade. A spiritually-evolved person needs little from the world to be happy. ó *Jaya Row*

DEVELOP GOOD HABITS: The quality of your life will be determined in large measure by the nature of your habits. We first make habits and then our habits make us. So, ensure that your habits move you forward rather than hold you back. It takes about 21 days to develop a new habit. Yet, most people give up after only the first few days, when they experience the stress and pain that is always associated with replacing old behaviours with new ones. As we are programmed to resist change, we face much difficulty in adopting new habits and overcoming the gravitational forces which prevent us from moving towards higher levels of living. ó *Robin Sharma*

REPETITIVE COMPULSION: People keep on recreating the mistakes they did in the past rather than starting afresh in the present. We unconsciously prefer to stay with the familiar, even though it may be fraught with negativity. To put an end to the repetitive compulsion, we need to develop courage to face the unknown. We need to understand that our innate desire to be free is a spiritual need to get connected to the source, our *atman*. ó *Pulkit Sharma*

MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF LIFE: Life is continuous overcoming of problems ó physical or mental. No one is without problems. We created the cause of problem in the past and must have determination to uproot it now. We have to affirm to ourselves that God's

in His image, we too have the strength to overcome all

We go to a lab and carry out experiments. For a *sadhak*, the body is the lab in which he experiments to find his real self. Like our ears and eyes, the soul perceives through an inner eye and inner ear, which are attuned to spiritual frequencies. It is a matter of switching off from the outer world and tuning into the inner world. But like great discoveries by scientists, *it requires enormous perseverance and patience to get result in the realm of spirituality.* ó *Rajinder Singh*

NEED FOR STRONG DETERMINATION: In the absence of a firm determination, the external attachments connected with the lower self prove too strong to overcome. Just as a man, when he is hungry, constantly longs for food, similarly, *only when* the aspirant has a strong urge to experience ÆSelf, he can experience ÆSelf.ó *Meher Baba*

EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE SWALLOWS THE KNOWER: Vedanta concludes that actions cannot lead to *moksha*. One must necessarily resort to *vichara*. Bondage is experienced due to lack of enquiry and it can be removed only through self-enquiry. One has to silence the mind and listen. It is essential to drop all thoughts and pay attention to the soundless, pulsing current of Æ. Knowledge empowers the knower and enriches the personality. But the experience of Self-knowledge dissolves the very knower once for all. One whose intellect is dissolved in the bliss of Brahman becomes Brahman and cannot be called as a Æknower of Brahman, who stands apart from Brahman. ó *Swami Tanmayananda Sarasvati*

NEED FOR A QUEST: A quest is a mission; a goal which you choose to set yourself. Have a quest for an inward journey, which can give a new meaning, a new direction and a sense of fulfilment to your life. ó *Anonymous*

A MESSAGE FROM ARUNACHALA

By Paul Brunton

There is in the soul of every man something infinitely greater and grander than he knows, more than he ever dreamt of. We hold hard to the outer husk of body consciousness because we are ignorant of the divine kernel it contains. It is necessary that we explore ourselves. The real seeing agent is not the physical organ of the eye, but the mind that uses that organ. It is the brain that works the eye. We have yet to discover what is that which works the brain. And

contact with the real Self of the man, from which both the
ce and maintain themselves. We only know a fragment
of power and intelligence lie latent. The means used to
ought and feeling. We scatter our thoughts in a wholly
reckless manner and we let our emotions change every few minutes. Our minds are in a
continuous state of vibrations. The problem can be handled through a steady daily practice, a
little at a time, until one is able to drive away one's wandering thoughts for a time. Bhagavan
has suggested that meditation should be through the enquiry, Who am I? The mind must
centre upon this one single question, pressing deeply inward in the effort to discover the
elusive inhabitant of the body. *If the concentration is complete and persistence undiminished,
if the person is really sincere, then extraordinary results will be achieved.*

The Overself [the Atman] waits with open arms, but few care to give time and necessary
devotion to the Overself. Blessed is the man who has found his own self. It is a unique act of
discovery ó discover yourself. Man has largely withdrawn his faith from God, but he cannot
withdraw his faith from self. Nothing is more certain than the certainty of -I am. It is we who
have erected the screens that shut us out from the Overself and therefore it is we who must
pull down those screens. We do not realise what buried treasure lies within us. Those who
have come to know themselves are richly rewarded. Life refuses its most sublime secrets to
the lazy. If you want to find out the true meaning of life, then you must begin to look for it.
And the place is to look within. *We know ourselves as human beings; we have to know
ourselves as spiritual beings.*

Each man is his own God and his own teacher. Is it not comforting to know that amid all the
troubling passions, and ungovernable thoughts, there exists a central core of quiet? Is it not
worthwhile to make effort to find it? If the way is long and tortuous, the end is sure and
highly rewarding. ó Excerpts from Brunton's book *A Message from Arunachala*, first
published in 1936.

REMINISCENCES OF K.K.NAMBIAR

He was chief engineer, Highways, Madras Presidency. His book *The Guiding Presence of Sri Ramana*, is a valuable read for Sri Ramana devotees.

One evening in 1936, when I visited the Ashram, I wanted to ask Bhagavan a question. But
amidst the solemn hours of Veda *Parayana* in the evening and during meditation that
followed, I could not make up my mind to ask the question, and returned home somewhat
disappointed. Early next morning, when I was lying half awake, Bhagavan appeared before
me in a dream and answered the very question which I had failed to put to him. And before

I had a note-book. I said I had only one readily available said it was enough. I woke up with a pleasant pocket note-book and hurried to the as usual, I handed over the note-book to him. He received it smiling, and asked me why I took it to him. When I related my dream to him, he called his attendant, and said, "Did I not ask you last evening to fetch a good note-book to write down a Malayalam translation of the Sanskrit text of *Sri Ramana Gita*? You did not bring one. Here is Nambiar who has brought it for me. It seems he had a dream in which I asked him for the book, and he has brought it."

On another occasion, I dreamt of Maharshi as seated on his couch as usual, surrounded by a number of devotees on the floor, engaged in meditation. Among them I recognised a young devotee from Goa, seated in *padmasana* performing *pranayama*. While he was doing *pranayama*, I saw, in the dream, sparks of fire rising from the base of his vertebral column up to his head. Bhagavan, who was watching him, interjected, "There is no need for all this gymnastics with breath-control. It is easier and safer to follow the method of Self-enquiry as enunciated by me." Next day, when I went to the Ashram, I sought out this young Goanese. I had no previous acquaintance with him and no occasion even to speak to him. I gave him a description of the dream I had. He was visibly moved and, somewhat to my embarrassment, embraced me with delight in the North Indian fashion. He said, "Brother, I was all the while waiting for an opportunity to ask Bhagavan whether I should continue or give up this practice of *pranayama*, which I have been steadily carrying on for the past several years. Indeed, last night while sitting in the presence of Bhagavan I eagerly awaited an opportunity to put him the question but I could not find a suitable occasion for the purpose. Now, there is no need for me to ask him about it. Bhagavan answered it through you."

When in England, I went to see a venerable old lady, by name Mrs. Victoria Doe. She must be nearing 80 and lived in a quiet house in Surrey, with her daughter, Leena Doe. She had never come to India, never seen Bhagavan in flesh and blood. Yet, I was deeply moved by her devotion to him. She had read about him, prayed to him, meditated on him, and lived in him day in and day out. She showed me sheaves of letters she took from a corner of a shelf, and kissed them with great reverence before handing them to me. All the letters were from the Ashram and were meticulously preserved for the past several years. She had also with her all the English publications of Ramanasramam. She opened one of the books and, running her shaky finger along the writing on the first page, "With Gracious Blessings from Sri Bhagavan", burst into tears of joy and devotion. She said, "Mr. Nambiar, how lucky you are to have been able to be with him, to see him and hear him speak. Here, we treasure these books and letters as representing him. Now he has sent you here, I feel that he is with us



Sage, so tenderly expressed to me, a total stranger to depths of my being. ó *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*

BHAGAVAN SHOWERS GRACE ON PRABHAVATI RAJE

By V. Ganesan

Rajkumari Prabhavati Raje was from a royal family of Kerala. Her parents were deeply spiritual and as such she was drawn to spirituality from her young age. She was a scholar of many systems of philosophy and knew several languages. Her chosen God, Bhagavan, bestowed affectionate attention on her, when she stayed at the Ashram. Though initially she stoutly refused to get married, marriage was arranged for her by her people in another royal family.

Long before Prabhavati got married, she had presented Bhagavan with a pair of bookends, with a specific request that Bhagavan would use them and not give them to the office, or anyone else. There was a rotating book-shelf in the old hall, and Bhagavan often referred to the books kept there. Books were also heaped above it. Seeing this, Prabhavati brought the bookends and insisted that they should be used there. Years passed; she was married and had to live away from Bhagavan.

During last days of Bhagavan's bodily existence, Prabhavati came to offer homage to her Beloved Master. She joined the long queue and waited for the *darshan*. Bhagavan was very weak but He insisted on giving *darshan* to devotees in spite of the medial advice against it. Each devotee could have only a glimpse of Him before moving on to make room for the next. When Prabhavati stood transfixed, Bhagavan showered His gracious look on her, and simultaneously He directed the look towards the inside of the room. Since she did not understand His gesture, He took the trouble of raising His right hand and stretched it towards the book-shelf. The bookends presented by her were there put to good use by Him though many years had rolled by. She was thrilled. The incident assumes great importance when we take into account Bhagavan's bad state of health and the effort it would have cost Him to move and point to the bookends. Prabhavati burst into tears and sobbed. Bhagavan blessed her profusely through His gracious look! ó *Moments Remembered*

BHAGAVAN'S AMAZING LACK OF CONCERN FOR HIS HEALTH

Suri Nagamma's letter dated 12.5.1949, records as follows:

havi Amma, which had stated, "I hear that Bhagavan is
er is that you should take tomato juice or orange juice."
She is a rich lady. She can afford to take anything she
he not herself take all those drinks." The same evening,
Aurvedic doctor Ramachandra Rao came from Bangalore. Noticing his arrival, Bhagavan
said to people near him, "Look! Ramachandra Rao is coming in. He must have brought some
medicines with him. When I see him, I feel I am seeing the medicines themselves." Rao
came in and placed before Bhagavan a big bottle of medicine and prostrated. No sooner
he got up, then Bhagavan said with a laugh, "Did I not tell you that the medicine
itself has arrived?" With folded hands and in a prayerful attitude, Rao said, "It is
not a medicine, Bhagavan. It is an *Arishta* (a tonic). Bhagavan's body is very much
emaciated. If you take this tonic, it will give you strength. Please use it." Bhagavan
said, "That is all right. If by taking this, a person gets sturdy, why do you not try it
on yourself? See how lean and weak you are!" Turning towards us, he jocularly said,
"See, how he is! He is not able to improve his own health, and he says, he will
improve mine!" The doctor could not say anything. The next day Bhagavan arranged
to give an ounce of *Arishta* to each and every one sitting near him, taking one
ounce himself.

Four or five days later, one Sadagopa Naidu from Bangalore, brought some bottles of
sherbet and sent them to Bhagavan through one of his peoples, who usually sat near
Bhagavan, saying that *sherbet* should be given to Bhagavan every day in summer as
it would help in giving some strength to the body. Sadagopa comes to the Ashram,
stays for months together, spends thousands of rupees and contribute a lot of money
for the Ashram's working, but never comes into the presence of Bhagavan. If you
ask why it is so, there is nothing to say. This is one type of devotion.

As soon as Bhagavan saw the *sherbet* bottles, he laughed and said, "Ramachandra
Rao and he might have consulted each other. Why all these things for us? Please
tell him to keep these bottles in his room and take the *sherbet* himself every day."
When the devotee told Bhagavan that Rao had brought them for your use only,
Bhagavan said, "We shall then do one thing." So saying, he had a big vessel
brought, got it filled up with drinking water, poured all the *sherbet* into the
water and then asked that one glass full be given to everyone present in the
hall. He also directed that one extra glass full be given to Sadagopa so that he
could recover from exhaustion. The remaining *sherbet* was given to all the other
Asramites.

Khanna, a devotee from Kanpur, sent by post some tins containing *Chyavanaprasa*,
saying that it was prepared by himself especially for Bhagavan's use, and that
it would give some strength to Bhagavan's body. Saying that if it gave him
strength it should give strength to

to all people in the Ashram along with their breakfast
in the same quantity, and nothing more.

by others, such as *kanji* or cold rice, Bhagavan takes the
major portion of it himself. If it is a delicacy like sweetmeats, which everybody likes, he
gives away the major portion to others and takes a small portion himself. Who is there
comparable to him in this feeling of equality? He can be compared to himself only. ó *Letters
from Sri Ramanasramam*

SANKARA'S *ARDHA-NARISVARA STOTRA*

By Lalita Ramakrishna

This form combines Devi as the left half with Siva as the right half. The first line of each verse describes Devi and the second line is on Siva.

1. Left side ó golden, like the champaka flower, Right ó white like camphor crystals. 2. Left ó anointed with fragrant *kasturi* and red *kumkum*, Right ó smeared with ashes from the pyre. 3. She revives *smara* (Love), He is *vikrta smara* (destroys *smara* ó attachment). 4. She wears tinkling anklets, He wears snakes around his anklets. 5. She is adorned with gold ornaments, He wears deadly snakes. 6. Her look accepts and balances duality (*sama-ikshana*), His look is singular and special (*vishama-ikshana*). 7. She wears flower garlands, He wears a chain made of skulls. 8. She is dressed in exquisite garments (*divya ambara*), He is clothed in space (*digambara*). 9. She has glossy black tresses like a rain cloud, He has copper coloured knotted hair. 10. She is Devi who has no Power above her (*nirisvara*), He is omnipotent Lord of all (*nikhila-isvara*). 11. She dances the alluring rhythms of creation and nature (*prapancha srshti lasyaka*), He dances the rhythm of death (*samastha samhaara tandava*). 12. She wears the glowing gems as eardrops (*ratna ujjala kundala*), He wears snakes (*maha pannaga bhushana*). 13. She is the mother of Creation (*matru*), He is the father (*pitru*). 14. She nurtures all forms of life (*samvrtti*), He points to release and emancipation (*nirvtti*).

Ardha-narisvara shows the complementary nature of opposites in the world. The male and female of any species are required for life forms to survive. The creator of this verse directs our attention towards *moksha* ó ñfreedomñ from the shackles of the world of matter. The paradox is that that we can attain ñfreedomñ from matter only by ñlivingñ in this world of matter. The lotus needs to be born in dirt to blossom and reach out towards the sun's rays. ó *Tattavaloka*, March, 2015

AKHILANDAMMA

l to Bhagavan for forty years, without a break. She

chala, I saw many people walking towards a cave. One from the crowd told me, "There is a swami there. He is only a child but he sits motionless, without taking food or water." These words kindled in me a desire to see him. What a sight it was! For the first time I saw the magnetic Lord who draws towards him the minds of those who see him. Even though he was unwashed and covered with dust, his holy body glowed like gold. On seeing this *sannyasi*, with a frame so lean that it exposed his bones, my mind melted and tears welled up within me. The young Lord then opened his eyes and graciously directed them towards me. I approached him, placed the sugar candy, which I had taken with me for offering to him, and prostrated. After Bhagavan had taken a piece and eaten it, a *sadhu*, who was nearby, returned some of it to me as *prasad*.

After this visit, I returned to my village Desur (50 kms. from Tiruvannamalai). When I came for *darshan* again, Bhagavan was sitting inside Virupaksha cave. I slowly made my way inside the cave, placed some milk near Bhagavan, and came outside. On seeing Bhagavan again, my mind flowed towards him with uninterrupted boundless love. There was a gracious power that prevailed in that holy place. It numbed the mind so effectively that visitors were automatically silenced. There were no rules about silence, but in that holy presence, visitors who come for *darshan* automatically remained calm and quiet.

One day, I prepared some *murukkus* [a small crunchy deep-fried savoury made out of rice flour] for Bhagavan and took them to Skandashram. On the same day, some Chettiars had brought *murukkus* for Bhagavan. As they presented their offering, I noticed that their *murukkus* were beautifully shaped and had very good colour. I felt too embarrassed to give my offering at the same time, and decided to wait until theirs had been distributed. When the *murukkus* brought by the Chettiars were presented to Bhagavan, he broke only a small piece from one of them and the remainder were distributed to everyone. Then I took my *murukkus* and placed them before Bhagavan. He took a whole *murukku* and ate it all. His attendant then distributed the remainder. As the attendant was passing in front of Bhagavan, he leaned forward and took one more *murukku* from the plate. Who can understand the reasons behind Bhagavan's actions? Bhagavan has no *sankalpa*. He never decides how he speaks or what he should do. The speech and activities of Bhagavan are the automatic gracious *lilas* of the omnipresent Lord Himself. I learned from this incident that no one can discover or explain why Bhagavan's grace manifests in a particular way.

Many devotees adorned Bhagavan as Jnanasambandhar, who live around sixth century AD. This sage had also attained Self-realisation in his youth. Those who ponder over the two lives

between them. Bhagavan himself frequently praised the one who is related to the Lord through divine wisdom. He composed poems in praise of Siva. His verses praising Siva as the Supreme were widely sung all over Tamil Nadu.

In Bhagavan's last days, while staying at Desur, I was worrying about his health. I decided that I had to see him. When I reached the gate of the Ashram, I was prevented from entering. I was immediately struck with an unbearable grief because at that time my yearning to see Bhagavan was very great. Bhagavan's grace operated for me. An inmate, who knew me, informed Bhagavan that I had arrived. I was given the permission for his *darshan*. I tried to suppress my emotions, but the feeling that I would soon be losing my one and only God, completely destroyed my self-restraint. I cried out to him, "Bhagavan! Bhagavan has decided to give up his body. What can I do?" There were thousands of souls outside the room, who like me, had been waiting to have Bhagavan's *darshan*. Is it not the boundless grace of Bhagavan that I alone was admitted inside? After I had left the room, Bhagavan sent me the message via a devotee, "Why do you feel sorry for this mortal body?" It occurred to me that Bhagavan was consoling me by saying, "Don't feel sorry for this body. I am always your saviour!"

* For a detailed account of Akhilandamma, see, David Godman's *The Power of the Presence*, part one.

(www.davidgodman.org)

Blessed is he who acts as Columbus to his own soul. – Anonymous

The mind of the man is the man. Change the mind and you have changed the man. – Mahatria Ra

The consciousness is self-luminous, only revealing itself fully as limitless and blissful when stripped of all other limiting mental adjuncts. – Advaita Vedanta

Only when we kindle a keen desire to take charge of our life, we can sail towards our goal. – Santosh Joshi

The best relaxation for the body is quiet mind. – Anonymous

Worthless people live only to eat and drink; people of worth eat and drink only to live. – Socrates

Meditation provides the necessary strength to be with oneself. – Prasannaji



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oving towards a higher purpose and happiness will

JUNE – 2015

COMPLETE SURRENDER IS ESSENTIAL

Complete surrender to God means giving up all thoughts and concentrating the mind on Him. If we concentrate on Him, other thoughts disappear. If the actions of the mind, speech and body are merged with God, all burdens of our life will be on Him. ó Sri Ramana Maharshi

TRUE MEDITATION: It is not just sitting cross-legged with eyes closed. No doubt, this is needed; but true meditation lies in unifying the mind with God at all times. Perform all tasks with mind firmly fixed on God. You should have full-time devotion in order to attain grace in full measure. ó V. Narayanan

WHERE IS GOD? Like treasure hiding in the earth/ Like taste hiding in the fruit/ Like oil hiding in the sesame/ Like fire hiding in the wood/ The Brahman is hiding in the deep longing. ó Mountain Path, September, 2014.

NEED FOR BEING ALONE: Only when alone, the seeker gets beyond his ego. The *satguru* is in the heart. He speaks to us from there. But being trapped in the illusionary world of senses, we cannot hear the small, sweet voice because our heart is drowned in the trumpet-like blaring of the phenomenal world. ó J.P. Vaswani

HUMAN MIND – NO QUICK FIX POSSIBLE: Developing a mind takes time. Farming proceeds through various stages: preparing the soil, planting the seeds, removing the weeds, nourishing the plant with manure and water, protecting it, and waiting for the entire duration of the growth cycle of the plant. There is no way to cram this process, and so it is with human mind. With efficient methodologies, time factor can be shrunk, but never eliminated. There is no elevator to the top. You have got to take the steps. ó Mahatria Ra

LAO TZU: He lived in 4th century BC in China, and is regarded as founder of Taoism. Some of his quotes ó 1. The usefulness of a pot comes from its emptiness. 2. When I let go of what I am, I become what I might be. 3. Knowledge is a treasure, but the practice is the key to it. 4. If you overcome yourself, you have strength. 5. If you understand yourself, you are illuminated. ó *Infinithoughts*, October, 2014

TWO ATTENDANTS OF BHAGAVAN: Palaniswami: Bhagavan's first devotee found Bhagavan at Gurumurtham in February 1897 and took up loyal service to him as his *sadhana*

laniswami was living in Ayyankulam. He attended on to the adjacent mango grove. When Bhagavan thought attendant protested, "Where shall I go? You have the to Arunagiri temple, Pavalakunru, and finally to Virupaksha Cave where he remained until his final moments, where he passed away in Bhagavan's arms in 1918. **Ayyaswami:** He came to Bhagavan in 1911 at the age of 25. A skilled craftsman, resourceful and industrious, he made Bhagavan's *kamandalu* and cane, which now are in the Nirvana Room. Bhagavan marveled at his uncanny habit of bringing from town the very articles he and others were simultaneously talking about on the Hill. This happened repeatedly. When questioned about it, Ayyaswami simply said, "Swami, how should I know? It merely occurred to me that I should take a particular article. I brought it and that is all. Swami alone should know about such strange happenings." Bhagavan said, "Really, he used to keep his mind pure, and so whatever we thought about here used to mirror itself in his mind." *Saranagathi*, March, 2015

SRI RAMANA'S CONCERN FOR HIS DEVOTEES – FOUR EPISODES

Kunjuswami records: An old woman living near Arunachaleswara Temple and some other elderly people in the town had decided that they would eat morning food only after Bhagavan's *darshan* at the Skandasram. One day, the lady devotee could not come. Bhagavan asked her the next day as to why she had missed a day. She answered, "Realising my infirmity you gave *darshan* from near my house, while you were sitting on the rock near the ashram, brushing your teeth." She added, "I am not able to climb the hill every day, I would now have your *darshan* from my house." From that day onwards, even when the weather was bad, Bhagavan brushed his teeth sitting on that rock. This proved convenient to many other elderly devotees, who wanted to have his *darshan* but were unable to climb the hill.

Once it became necessary for me to go to my place in Kerala. I had just enough money to buy the train ticket and no extra money to buy food on the way. That afternoon a devotee unexpectedly brought a lot of *pooris* and served them to Bhagavan and others in the Ashram. We were surprised to see that Bhagavan, who normally did not take more than two *pooris*, happily accepted six from the devotee. When the serving was over, he ate only one of the six and neatly packed and tied the remaining five with his own hands and gave the packet to me. Everyone was deeply touched by Bhagavan's compassion.¹

Roberts Adam writes: I arrived at Bombay on my way to Tiruvannamalai, when I was 19 years old. I entered the hall at about 8.30 am. Sri Ramana was on his couch reading the

looked at me and smiled, and I smiled back. There were
Maharshi asked me if I had my breakfast. I said, "No." He
buck with two big leaves; one with fruits and one with
I assumed the food, I just lay down on the floor. I was very
tired.

The Maharshi had arthritis in the legs and could hardly walk at that time [1947]. His attendants helped him to get up, and he walked out of the room. When he came outside, he said something to his attendant who motioned me to come. The Maharshi guided me to a little shack that I might use while I was staying there. He came inside with me. I bet you think we spoke about profound subjects. On the contrary, he was a natural man. He asked how my trip was, where I was from, and what made me come here. Then he said I should rest. I lay myself down on the cot and he left. I was awakened at about five in the evening by Ramana himself, who had brought food for me. Can you imagine that? We spoke briefly. I ate and slept again.²

M.S. Nagarajan says: In 1932, I was in charge of the daily *puja* at the Mother's shrine. A devotee called P.W.D. Ramaswami Iyer arranged a special food offering of *sarkarai pongal* (a kind of rice pudding) and *vadai* (a small round cake of black gram fried in oil). I had many things to do and there was no one to help. So I got up very early, took my bath, removed old flowers from the shrine, swept and cleaned the floor and lit two fires, one for *pongai* and the other for *vadai*. I then sat down to grind the black gram which I had soaked the previous night. I had not prepared *vadai* previously any time. I took some dough and tried to spread it out on a leaf to form a round *vadai*, but it would not come out properly. I tried again and again without success. I got annoyed and disgusted. The next moment I noticed Bhagavan standing behind me and watching my effort to make *vadai*. He said quietly, "It doesn't matter. You have added too much water while grinding the gram. Now make round balls of the dough and fry them. They will be *bondas*."

When the *bondas* were served, Ramaswami Iyer said to me angrily, "Look here. Did I not ask you to prepare *vadai*?" I was afraid to say anything, and so merely looked at Bhagavan. He immediately turned to Iyer and said, "What does it matter? If the cakes are flat they are *vadais*, if spherical, *bondas*. The stuff is the same and the taste is the same. Only name and forms are different. Eat *prasadam* and do not make a fuss." Everyone was astonished at Bhagavan's apt reply. Later in the day, when Ramaswami saw me he remarked how lucky I was to get support from Bhagavan himself.³

Dr. M.R. Krishnamurthi narrates: In the later 1930s, continuous hiccups gripped Sri Bhagavan. I was treating him. Days passed and I had tried all the medicines known to the

I was very upset. I spoke no words to Him, but standing in His presence, He should show me a way to cure Him. I returned home to take a child, till I fell asleep. In the early hours of the night, I had a 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 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.⁴

1. His book titled *Reminiscence*. 2. His book titled *Silence of the Heart*. 3. *Arunchala's Ramana*, vol. I. 4. V. Ganesan's *Moments Remembered*.

CHINTA DIKSHITULU*

He is a well-known figure in Telugu literature. His son has found some manuscript of his father where he has recorded his dream experiences of Bhagavan. Some of these are:

1. On the morning of 16th October, 1948, I had a dream where Bhagavan gave *darshan* and said, "You would not see me anywhere else - search your *Hirdaya* (Heart) - I am always there." Then there was a green material book on a book, which evolved into the shape of a ball. I asked him "What is it?" He said it was "Aconite." That was the end of the dream. After one or two years, I became a patient of hyper-tension and suffered a lot. I found that "Aconite" was a homeopathic drug for hyper-tension.

2. On 30th July, 1949, I had a feeling that I was very close to him. I wanted to keep my head on his feet. It was my fond desire, and my friend communicated this to Bhagavan. He came near me. I tried several times to touch his feet with my head, but failed. With a gracious smile, Bhagavan lifted his leg and touched my head. It was a thrilling experience. I was happy and relieved. My life was filled with grace. Subsequently, I had three dreams. In one of

tion has no bearing on spiritual attainment. One has to
nø. It was a clean and straight message.

one. Bhagavan was not appearing as a tired old man. He
was looking luminous and child-like. He said, he was not tired but is in a spiritual realm. In
the February dream Bhagavan was on the hill top in the posture of *padmasana*. The
atmosphere was serene. Heaps of *vibhuti* was around him.

4. March 1950 dream: It was a big hall. I was sitting near him; he was talking in a manner
that was very free and friendly. He enquired of me, òDo you have an *advaita* scholar in your
town? I said òYes, not exactly aware of anybody, but had a lingering feeling that he was
hinting at some sort of happening in future. After the *mahanirvana* of Bhagavan, we used to
have regular classes on *advaita* in our house at Narasapur (West Godavari). Dr. Malladi
Ramamurthy Sastry was a profound Sanskrit scholar. Under his able guidance we studied
Gita, many upanishads, *Bhagavatam*, etc. My friends used to attend his discourses regularly.
I always connect these discourses to my dream. ó *The Ramana Way*, March, 2015

* Some of reminiscences of Chinta Dikshitulu of Bhagavan are in *Face to Face with Sri
Ramana Maharshi* at page 62.

REMINISCENCES OF M.G. SHANMUKHAM*

**Shanmukham's father, a police officer, along with Swami of Ishanya Mutt,
Tiruvannamalai, was instrumental in the construction of the old hall during 1926-7,
where the Maharshi lived for over two decades. He writes:**

I had the good fortune of being in contact of Bhagavan for 24 years from 1926 till his
mahanirvana. My father, K.Gopala Pillai, was a police-inspector and was very religious. I
had a religious turn of mind since my boyhood and used to sit before Swami Vivekananda's
picture in tears praying that I might be blessed to have *darshan* of a *jivanmukta*. My first guru
Murugappa Desikar initiated me into the meditation between the eyebrows. I practised it
three times a day, each time for one hour, besides my usual *pujas*. After practising this for
some time I developed a sort of brain exhaustion and a discomfort in the mind. At this time
Yogini Ammal, who had done penance for 12 years in the Himalayas, came to our house. My
father had some spiritual discussion with her. When alone, I narrated to her my experiences
and prayed for guidance. She said meditation must be practised in the heart. She initiated me
into the practice of *rupa dhayana* of Venkatachalapathi. My third guru was Mahanmiyamachi

avan. I was astonished and from then on the desire to go on. Tiruvannamalai as inspector of police in 1926, I also accompanied him. Soon after boarding the train, I felt half asleep and half awake. In that state I had a vision: I travel to Tiruvannamalai enquiring the way and came to a place where there was a hut. Inside the hut I saw a tall gentleman lying on a bench and before him was a *kamandalu*. As soon as I entered there was a blaze of *jyothi* in the *kamandalu*. I woke up. Soon after arriving at Tiruvannamalai, without informing anybody, I enquired the way to Ramanasramam and arrived there with some difficulty. When I entered the Ashram, to my astonishment, I saw the same hut, the same tall gentleman, except that he was sitting on a bench and there was a *kamandalu* in front of him as I had seen in the vision. I prostrated before him and he asked me, "When did you come?" and "How is your right hand?" Wonder of wonders! There was absolutely no chance of Bhagavan knowing about my fractured right hand. Further, the very first question put to me by Bhagavan shows that he knew of my coming. He asked me by a gesture to sit. I sat before His Holy Presence for one hour. This one-hour stay in His Holy Presence, gave me perfect calmness, peace of mind and coolness of nerves, while the body felt light as a straw. From that day onwards my contact with Him from 1926 to 1950 was continuous and He has done me a lot of good for my spiritual progress and completely changed my outlook on this world. By His grace I was able to practise *atma vichara*.

My whole family was devoted to Bhagavan. We had a lot of experiences and miracles. It is sufficient to mention two instances to show Bhagavan's greatness and omnipotence, though He moved among us as an ordinary man for all outward appearances. I think it was somewhere in 1935 or 1936, I put a question to Bhagavan in the early morning. "What is the nature and state of *nirvikalpa samadhi*?" He kept quiet. I wondered why I had put this question. In the evening I practised His method of self enquiry before His Presence very intensely. My mind slowly became thought-free by the incessant enquiry of "Who am I?" and slowly the mind began to meditate on the I thought alone. The plunge started, the mind became introspective going deeper and deeper meditating on the I thought. The heart was felt by a soft vibration and the breathing become very shallow. The mind tried to drag me outward, but at that moment suddenly some power pulled me inside completely and as a result of it the ego toppled down. At that very moment, the body and world consciousness disappeared totally and in their place there was an expansiveness with the deep I-I consciousness coupled with an indescribable bliss which cannot be expressed in words. I woke up from that supreme experience by the sound of Sri Bhagavan's cough. There was no one in the hall except Bhagavan massaging His knees. Bhagavan said "Come, we shall have our food". I felt supreme peace of mind. After the meal when we returned to the hall,

experience?ö I narrated my experience. Then Bhagavan by constant practise of *atma vichara* and after attaining it continuously till it becomes *sahaja*. He quoted from state.

Another instance is that of saving my sister, who was slowly sinking to her death due to congestion of the brain. She had become unconscious. Doctors tried their best and declared there was no chance of recovery and asked my father to inform all our relatives. My mother, who was very devoted to Bhagavan, shouted amidst her crying, òO Bhagavan, we have just left your Holy Presence, what a calamity! Save my daughter!ö Immediately my mother saw Bhagavan passing by the side of my sister with His *kamandalu*. At once my sister woke up as if from sleep and asked for water.

Bhagavan as an embodied soul moved with us as pure consciousness for 54 years and He is still living amongst us. His Presence is felt very much by all sincere devotees. This is a fact of experience. ó *Mountain Path*, Oct.-Dec., 2010

* Many more reminiscences of M.G. Shanmukham are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pages, 362-4.

HOW A STAUNCH *BHAKTI MARGI* SWAMI REALISED THE SELF BY SRI RAMANA'S GRACE.

Lucia Osborne* was told by Swami Ramdasas follows. The Swami is the founder of Anandashram, Kanhangad in Kerala.**

òOne day the kind *sadhuram* took Ramdas for *darshan* of a famous saint of Arunachala Hill, Tiruvannamalai, by name Sri Ramana Maharshi. His ashram was at the foot of Arunachala. It was a thatched shed. Both of us entered the ashram and prostrated at the holy feet of the saint. He was young but there was on his face a calmness, and in his large eyes a passionless look of tenderness, which cast a spell of peace and joy on all those who came to him. Ramdas was informed that the saint knew English, so he addressed him thus: òMaharaj, there stands before you a humble slave. Have pity on him. His only prayer to you is to give him your blessing.ö

The Maharshi turned his beautiful eyes towards Ramdas, and looked intensely for a few minutes into his eyes as though he was pouring into Ramdas his blessing, then nodded his head to say he had blessed. A thrill of inexpressible joy coursed through the frame of Ramdas, his whole body quivering like a leaf in the breeze. The Maharshi did not speak a word.

altitude. From there Ramdas went straight to Arunachala and remained there for twenty days, living on a meal of boiled rice as repeating *Ram*, without a break. After twenty days, when Ramdas came out of the cave, one morning he saw the light of God-Ram everywhere. The entire landscape changed; all was Ram, nothing but Rama. Everything was Rama ó vivid, rapturous, marvellous ó the trees, the shrubs, the ants, the cows, the cats, the dogs, even inanimate things pulsed with the marvellous presence of the one Rama. And Ramdas danced in joy....he rushed at a tree in front of him which he embraced because it was not a tree but Rama Himself. A man was passing by. Ramdas ran towards him and embraced him, calling out: òRama, O Rama.ö The man got scared and bolted, but Ramdas gave chase and dragged him back to his cave. The man noted that Ramdas had not a tooth in his mouth and so felt a little reassured; at least the senseless would not be able to bite him, Ramdas said laughing.

The bliss and joy became permanent. This experience is called *sahaja samadhi* in which you are one with all because you have perceived that all is He, the One-without-a-second. Many years later, Ramdas commented: òRamdas went to Ramana Maharshi in a state of complete detachment from the world. How intense was his longing.ö He felt thrills of ecstasy in his presence. **The Maharshi made the awakening permanent in Ramdas.** ó *Mountain Path*, Oct.- Dec., 2010

*She was wife to Arthur Osborne, founding editor of *Mountain Path*. She was also the editor of this journal, after her husband's death, from 1970 to 1973.

** *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pages 223-4, has some more experiences of the Swami.

SPIRITUAL STORIES AS TOLD BY BHAGAVAN: TARA'S GRIEF

Suri Nagamma tells that when Bhagavan came across poignant passages in a story, his eyes would sometimes fill with tears. One day she found him reading from the Malayalam Ramayana. As he narrated the story of Tara Vilasam and the grief of her loss, his voice choked as though the scene was vivid and real before his very eyes. Nagamma says, "It looked as though Bhagavan has been transformed into Tara". Bhagavan composed himself, and observed with a smile, "What to do? I identify myself with whosoever is before me. I have no separate identity." Nagamma commented in her account: "What a great truth there is in these words". – *My Life in Ramanasramam*.

course of his search for Sita and forged a friendship with Vishyamuka Mountain to save himself from the wrath of Vaali to kill him. Vaali had been cursed by Rishi Matanga that he would die on the Mountain. Frustrated and enraged, Vaali took away Sugreeva's wife, Ruma. Hanuman requested Sri Rama to help Sugreeva, kill Vaali, who in return would render all help in his search for Sita.

On Rama's instruction, Sugreeva challenged Vaali in battle. Vaali had received a boon by which he could drain his opponents of all their strength. Knowing this, Sri Rama hid himself behind a tree and from his concealed position, let fly the lethal arrow which brought Vaali down. As he lay in the throes of death, his followers gathered round to mourn his plight, among them, his wife Tara, who was inconsolable. With her vermilion mark in disarray and her hair disheveled, the consort of Vaali wailed in grief, she beseeched Raghava, who stood nearby.

“O son of Raghu, kill me with the same arrow you have used on my husband, whom I shall join in heaven. You came all the way in distress from the separation from your wife. How ironic that you would create just such a separation between me and my husband. How can I survive without him? Please hasten my end.” The large-hearted Rama consoled her, “Oh the best among chaste women, you grieve for that which is beyond grief. Who is your husband? Is it the body lying here? Or is it the consciousness that pervades it? Contemplate in peace the following: The body is made of the five elements which are inert. It was not there to begin with, and will vanish in the course of time. How can such a fleeting entity be real? But if you claim that your husband is the soul, then the soul is beyond life or death, independent and eternal. So, why do you grieve?”

Tara enquired, “Oh Lord! If the body is inert and the soul eternal, what is the source of happiness and grief?” Rama explained, “As long as there is attachment to the body, there is happiness and consequent grief. This is the bondage of the world. Others are not responsible for one's bondage. One's bondage is one's own responsibility. Once the identification with the body is annihilated, the knowledge that ‘I am Atman’ becomes luminous and self-fulgent. The cycle of birth and death recurs as long as the mind is alive. The moment it is annihilated, bondage vanishes, and freedom emerges.” Hearing these words of wisdom from Sri Rama, Tara attained a lasting state of equanimity. ó *Saranagathi*, April, 2015

Daily practice of silence and meditation is essential to keep the mind stable and focused.
– *J.P. Vaswani*

Heaven is not somewhere far above in the clouds. It is within you. You need to go to yourself. – *Osho*

Silence is the sleep that nourishes wisdom. – *Francis Bacon*

ments cling to us. – *Guru Arjan Dev's verse*

less judgmental, more forgiving and less of a

Life is as simple or as complex, as you make it. – *Anonymous*

You can't cross a river merely by standing and staring at the water. – *Rabindranath Tagore*

We cannot go back and make a fresh start. Draw a line to your past. Your yesterday was over yesterday. Your future begins today. – *Mahatria Ra*

JULY – 2015

GO BEYOND THOUGHTS

Just as the bright sun cannot be seen in a sky that is covered with a thick layer of cloud, it is impossible to see one's own *Swarupa* in the mind-space in which the darkness-inducing thought layers are thick. – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

JOY: It is difficult to define joy in words. Anything which stops the thinking of the mind, where the mind is not clamouring, waiting or hoping something to happen, where for a fleeting second there is fulfillment, that can be called joy. Joy is not outside us, but within, if we can make our mind calm and still. ó *Gurumaa*

SPRITUALITY: It is genuine effort to know our true Self. It begins with the realisation that we are not the bodies and that this material world cannot satisfy our deepest aspirations. The more we identify with the body, the more we want, the more we crave, the more we desire to possess, the more we get entangled in *maya*. Identification with the body leads to the illusion that power, pleasures and possessions can make us happy. You are the immortal soul, make all effort to realise your true Self. Do not become a slave of the body. ó *J.P. Vaswani*

HOPE: Life is very complex with its unexpected twists and turns. There will always be tensions and problems. Life is not always fair. Therefore one should not become depressed at the unexpected. One should always hope for the best and be prepared for the worst. It is said that there is no medicine like hope, no tonic so powerful. A hopeful man always sees success rather than failure. ó *Isaac Malekar*

WHY WE SUFFER? We have all kinds of desires and we long to fulfill them, and we fail. We attach too much value to the objective world. It is only when attachment increases that we suffer pain and grief. Close your external eyes and open your inner eyes. Enjoy that Reality, not the false picture of this world. – *V. Narayanan*

long term process. There is no short cut to practice.
practice. – Swami Nikhileswarananda

BHAGAVAN TEACHES IN SILENCE: It was a Sivaratri Day. The evening worships at the Mother's shrine were over. The devotees had their dinner with Bhagavan, who was now on His seat, the devotees sitting around Him. At 8 p.m., one of the Sadhus stood up, did *pranam*, and with folded hands prayed: "Today is the Sivaratri Day; we should be highly blessed by Bhagavan expounding to us the meaning of the Dakshinamurti Stotra." Bhagavan said: "Yes, sit down." The Sadhu sat, and all eagerly looked at Bhagavan, and He looked at them. Bhagavan sat and sat in His usual pose. No words, no movement, and all was stillness! He sat still, and all sat still, waiting. The clock went on striking, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, one, two and three. Bhagavan sat and they sat ó all still, calm and motionless. Eight hours passed in Peace, in Silence, in Being, as it is. Thus, the Divine Reality was taught through the speech of Silence by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Dakshinamurthi. At the stroke of 4 a.m., Bhagavan quietly said: "And now have you known the essence of the Dakshinamurthi Stotra." All the devotees stood and made *pranam* to the holy Form of the Guru. ó *At the Feet of Bhagavan* by T.K. Sundaresa Iyer

KARMA PHALA: Or bearing the consequences of one's actions, has been made a strict rule for the welfare of human beings. It is by means of this that God teaches us not to go the wrong way. But we out of ignorance, blame Him for inflicting pain and suffering, which the wise take as lessons through which the Benefactor teaches us to refrain from wrong deeds. ó *Shri Anandamurti*

VIVEKA CHUDAMANI

Bhagavan once selected the following ten important stanzas out of this immortal work of Adi Sankara. The number at the end refers to the verse number in the original.

1. The best discipline for attaining liberation is *bhakti* which has been defined as the constant recollection of one's real nature (31). 2. The Supreme Self is distinct from *prakriti*, as well as its modifications. It is the pure awareness. It clearly manifests itself in the form of I-I during waking and other states, i.e., dream and deep sleep. It is the witness of our faculty of understanding (*buddhi*) (135). 3. Realise your own Self directly as I am this with the help of a controlled mind and clear intellect, and crossing over the boundless seas of *samsara*, whose waves are births and deaths, abide as Brahman, the goal of your life attained (136). 4. The Self is constant awareness and bliss. Realise this within your Heart (217). 5. The Supreme Brahman, the sole Reality, cannot be described either as being or non-being. It exists in the cavity of the Heart. One who remains fixed in It, will not be born again (266).

transcends all concepts. It is constant and perfect bliss
7. It is very difficult to understand the nature of the
ed by the mind like other sense objects. It can be known
understanding is clear. They realise it in states of *samadhi*
when there are practically no mental concepts (360). 8. When in this manner through constant
practice, the mind becomes perfect and is merged in Brahman, *samadhi* becomes *nirvikalpa*,
entirely free from thoughts. In that state, one experiences the pure bliss of the non-dual
Brahman (362). 9. By practicing this kind of *samadhi* all desires come to an end and one's
actions leave no residue (363). 10. The Self luminous Being, the witness of all, shines
constantly in our intellect (*vijana maya kosa*). Make it your goal and realise it as your Self by
thinking of it incessantly (380). ó *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. I

BHIKSHA WHICH FED BHAGAVAN ON THE HILL

Bhagavan's attendant Palaniswami along with Ayyaswami and Kandaswami would go about
begging in the streets for food, and bring it up the Hill and everyone would share it.
Sometimes there used to be just rice, sometimes a mixture of everything from sweetmeats to
savouries, but the Swami used to make it so tasty that whatever they got, they used to be
extremely satisfied.

When leaving for begging, Palaniswami swami and Kandaswami would blow in concert a
long blast on their conches. This was an announcement to the town people that Swami's
party has left the cave on their begging mission. They would give another blast when they
reached the foot of the Hill. A third call would be sounded at the entrance of the street.
Residents of the street would be ready with their offerings and the party would march along
the street singing *Siva namavali* and collecting the offerings. *Aksharamanamalai* was
especially composed for use of the begging party. Bhagavan humorously used to say,
-Aksharamanamalai fed us for many years.ø

Regarding the *bhiksha*, the Swami later told the devotees, õWhen I was in Virupaksha cave,
someone got a leaf plate made of silver and requested me to eat from it. I sent it back saying
that I did not require it. When the food can be eaten out of hands, why silver and gold? For a
long time I did not eat food from a leaf. If anybody brought food, I used to stretch out the
palms of my hands, and when the food was put in them, I used to eat it. It is only of late that I
have begun eating food served on a leaf. After the *bhiksha* was collected from the town and
brought up the Hill, sometimes, the food obtained was limited. What to do? I used to mix it
into a paste and pour hot water over it to make it like gruel, and then give a glassful to each,
and take one myself. Sometimes, we all used to feel that it would be better if we had at least
some salt to mix with it. But where was the money to buy salt? We should have to ask
someone for it. If we begin to ask for the salt, we would feel like asking for *dhal*, and when
we ask for *dhal*, we would feel like asking for *payasam* and so on. So we felt that we should

the gruel as it was. We used to feel extremely happy
ic, without spices of any kind, and there was not even
this body, but there was also great peace of mind.ö ó

GUHAI NAMASIVAYA – A GREAT DEVOTEE OF ARUNACHALA

Born in Karnataka in 16th century, he belonged to Veerasaiva sect. While setting out in search of a guru he found him in Sivananda Desikar, at Srisailam. Once, he was commanded in a dream by the presiding deity of Srisailam to go to Arunachala and remain there. When he reported the dream to his guru, he blessed him and directed him to act according to Siva's will expressed in the dream. After reaching Tiruvannamalai, he would regularly circumambulate the Aruna Hill. However, he did not enter the Arunachaleswara temple because of certain traditional restrictions in Veerasaivism. Namasivaya considered the Hill as his guru. Though his mother tongue was Kannada, Tamil poetry flowed freely from his pen. It is said that he had composed thousands of poems with reference to the hill, only 136 of which have survived. Two of these are:

1. Lord Arunagiri! Form of true knowledge! / Guru to whom I call out -Om Namasivaya / Do not scorn me as one who is devoid of love for you; / Who is liar and without self-respect / Who is mentally immature and deficient in intelligence; / But take me to yourself and be my Lord!
2. All the worlds are His possessions; / That which moves all beings is His own movement; / He is father to all, and protector of all living beings; / The Red Mountain Lord; / For those who worship His beautiful feet; / The Red Mountain Lord, Bestower of Wisdom; / Will inspire devotion, impart true knowledge; / And confer final liberation.

After Namasivaya had lived for some time at the entrance of the Arunachaleswara temple, he was directed by Lord Siva in a dream to move to the lower slopes of the eastern side of Arunachala, which he did. The remaining years of his life he lived in the cave on the mountain, now known as Guhai Namasivaya. At the end of his life, he directed his disciples to prepare a *samadhi* pit. He composed the following verse: öWe have found refuge at the feet of our father, Lord Sonagiri! We have crossed the threefold waters of our final birth. Behold! No longer do we bow down to the lotus born Brahma, the Creator, nor to Yama (God of death), who rides the powerful buffalo,ö and then he descended into the *samadhi* pit, seated himself in the full lotus position. He gave up life by sending the life force in the body through a centre on the top of the head. His disciples erected a *linga*, which continues to be worshipped to the present day. A beautiful icon of Dakshinamurthy is also there in the cave. ó
The Ramana Way, April, 2015

RAMAKRISHNA'S SELF-REALISATION THROUGH INTENSE

his experience: "There was an unbearable pain in my heart, because I couldn't get a vision of Mother. Just as a man wrings out a towel with all his strength to get water out of it, so I felt as if my heart and mind were being wrung out. I began to think I should never see Mother. I was dying of despair. In my agony, I said to myself, "What is the use of living this life?" Suddenly my eyes fell on the sword that hangs in the temple. I decided to end my life with it, then and there. Like a madman, I ran to it and seized it. And then, I had a marvellous vision of the Mother, and fell down unconscious. It was as if houses, doors, temples and everything else vanished altogether; as if there was nothing anywhere! And what I saw was an infinite shoreless sea of light; a sea that was consciousness. However far, and in whatever direction I looked, I saw shining waves, one after another, coming towards me. They were raging and storming upon me with great speed. Very soon they were upon me; they made me sink down into unknown depths. I struggled and lost consciousness."

It is not quite clear from Ramakrishna's narrative whether or not he actually saw the form of Mother Kali in the midst of the vision of shining consciousness. But it would seem that he did; because the first words that he uttered on coming to himself were, "Mother, Mother." After this vision, Ramakrishna was so absorbed that he was often unable to perform the temple worship at all. His nephew, Hriday, had to do it for him. Hriday was so disturbed by the mental condition of his uncle that he called a doctor to treat him. Needless to say, the treatment was ineffectual. On the days when Ramakrishna was able to perform the worship, a strange phenomenon would occur. "No soon had I sat down to meditate," he later recalled, "than I heard clattering sounds in joints of my body and limbs. I had no power to move my body or change my posture, even slightly. I couldn't stop meditating, or go elsewhere, or do anything else I wanted. I was forced to, as it were, to sit in the same posture. During meditation, I sometime had a vision of particles of light like swarms of fireflies. Sometimes I saw masses of light covering everything on all sides like a mist; at other times, I saw everything was pervaded by bright waves of light like molten silver. I didn't understand what I saw, not did I know if it was good or bad to be having such visions. So, I prayed anxiously to Mother, "I don't understand what is happening to me. Please, teach me how to know you. Mother, if you won't teach me, who will?"

In such statements, we hear the artless accent of Ramakrishna, and they convey the personality he was – child of the Divine Mother. Childlike, he obeyed the will of the Mother in everything, no matter how trivial, and was utterly careless of what the world might think of his behaviour. And now he had begun to see the Mother frequently. He saw her within the temple and outside it, without any longer having to make an effort of will in his meditation.

ple, but the form of Mother herself. Later, he described
near her nostrils and felt that the Mother was actually
om how Mother ran upstairs, with her anklets jingling. I
one this, so I went outside. And there she was, standing
on the veranda of the second floor of the temple, with her hair flying. Sometimes, she looked
towards Calcutta and sometimes towards the Ganges. Excerpts from *Ramakrishna and his
Disciples* by Christopher Isherwood

VALUABLE QUOTES FROM THIRUKKURAL BY GREAT TAMIL POET THIRUYVALLUVAR: 1: Your real possession is self-motivation. If you are self-motivated, you possess everything. 2: You don't need to go after wealth. Wealth and prosperity will find their way to you if you are a person of tireless efforts and undaunted will. 3: The stalks of water-flowers are proportional to the depth of water; so is men's greatness proportional to their minds 4: Every obstacle can be overcome, and even unattainable results can be achieved by one's constant efforts. Be always willing to exert yourself. 5: A person without a strong desire can never achieve the required success. 6: Your strength lies in the keenness to exert yourself in pursuit of your goals. *The Internet*

BHAGAVAN SHOWERS GRACE ON HIS DEVOTEE IN USA

Gopal Melkote, son of Dr. G.S. Melkote, writes:

I and my wife Lalitha are living with our son and daughter in California, USA. We had our Green Card for a little over five years. My wife has a lung problem, and as senior citizens we are eligible for medical care in California, we applied for our citizenship and were called for an interview. For passing the interview, we have to be ready to answer questions on US history and geography, duties & rights of citizens, etc. We have to know the names of local senators and state representatives, and have other general information about US. After qualifying at the interview, one has to wait for 45 to 50 days for the oath ceremony, which is generally conducted in an auditorium, where about 4-5 hundred persons assemble, and the oath is administered to groups from different countries. After this, a certificate is issued, making one eligible to apply for a US passport, which takes about 30 to 40 days.

Our date of interview was 4th of April, 2015, in the afternoon. We were both well prepared, though anxious. Early morning on 4th April, as I woke up, I spontaneously prayed and thought of Sri Ramana. I had the good fortune of seeing Bhagavan and take His Blessings a number of times between 1942 and 1945. The last *darshan* was in 1949. With Sri Ramana's thought upper most in my mind, all my anxiety was gone, and I felt very confident about the interview. We were interviewed separately and passed the test with ease. At this stage, my

e. The officers asked us to wait and they conducted the only two of us exclusively, which is unusual. Within a few minutes we were citizens of US. We have now become fully in about a month's time we should be getting them. All I can say, in my humble way, that Bhagavan helped us to become US citizens, without any hassle.

Krishna Bhikshu, author of famous *Ramana Lila*, writes:

It is difficult to exaggerate the consideration of Bhagavan for the devotees. Dr. G. S. Melkote of Hyderabad was once treating Bhagavan for eczema but there was no improvement. The doctor had a sudden and urgent necessity to return home. He was filled with remorse at having to leave Bhagavan in that condition. I advised him to pray to Bhagavan to cure himself, which he did. From that night Bhagavan's eczema responded to treatment. The doctor literally wept at this miracle, which enabled him to leave without a sense of guilt.*

Krishna Bhikshu has put on record the following interesting story involving Dr. Melkote, who was a minister in the first popular government in Hyderabad, after the end of the Nizam's rule.

Prof. Syed** and his wife were great devotees of Bhagavan. They used to stay in a rented house outside the Ashram. One day, Mrs. Syed felt a strong desire to invite Bhagavan to their house for food. She nagged her husband but he did not have the courage to ask for something so unusual. The bold lady went on pressing her husband until he got more afraid of her than of the enormity of her request. When he told Bhagavan about his wife's desire, he merely smiled and kept quiet. But the wife would not give up. One day, while Bhagavan was going up the hill, the couple stood before him and Prof. Syed told him her desire. Bhagavan just laughed and went up the hill. When they returned home, there was quite a row in the house. The wife blamed the husband because she felt that he had not asked Bhagavan in the proper way. At last, when they had had enough of the quarrel, he told her, "How am I responsible? The truth of the matter is, your devotion is deficient." These words must have touched her deeply, for she sat in meditation throughout the night. She wanted by sheer intensity of her prayer to bring Bhagavan to dinner! During the early hours of the morning she must have dozed, for Bhagavan appeared to her in a dream or vision and told her, "Why are you so obstinate? How can I leave the Ashram and come to your house for food? I must dine along with the people there, otherwise they won't eat." In her vision she saw three devotees, who, Bhagavan said, were to be fed, and it will be the same as feeding me. These were: Dr. G. S. Melkote, a Kanarese and a well-known personality of Hyderabad, Swami Prabhuddhananda, a Bengali *sannyasi*, and myself, an Andhra bachelor.

Prof. Syed, who promptly invited all the three for food to the Ashram. Although we were delighted to represent Bhagavan at the dinner of the Ashram Brahmins. Dr. Melkote was in the guesthouse near the flower garden. I went to him and asked, "What are you thinking about?" He said, "I am still thinking about it. They are Muslims. If we go, we are bound to get into a lot of trouble. They may turn us out of the Ashram." I told Dr. Melkote, "I am going because I take it as Bhagavan's direct order. Otherwise how could Mrs. Syed pick us? How could she know our names and faces well enough to show to her husband?" Dr. Melkote replied, "Well, we are going, Bhagavan will attend to the risks."

In spite of these brave words, Dr. Melkote was perplexed. What do Muslims know about the Brahmin rules and habits of cleanliness? Why should we trust the vision of some Muslim lady? Could we really say that we were obeying Bhagavan's orders? Who would believe us? The next day, when the bell for dinner was rung, we three went before Bhagavan and bowed. Bhagavan did not ask us the reason. He merely looked at us. Instead of going to the dining hall with the others, we marched out of the Ashram, passing before the *sarvadhikari* who, wonder of wonders, did not ask us why we were going out without eating the food. After getting everything thoroughly cleaned, Mrs. Syed had lovingly prepared dish after dish. We found the food excellent. At the conclusion of the meal she offered us betel leaves with her own hands.

As we were walking back to the Ashram, Dr. Melkote had tears in his eyes. He said, "I come from Hyderabad, and I know well the Muslim ways and customs. A Muslim lady will give betel leaves with her own hands to nobody except her husband or a *fakir*. In her eyes we were *fakirs*, the forms Bhagavan took to go to her place." When we returned to the Ashram, we were astonished that nobody had enquired why we had not been present in the dining hall, or where we had gone. How wonderfully does Bhagavan protect those who obey him! (Source: *The Power of the Presence* by David Godman, part 3, pp. 65-103.)

* It is interesting to find that in 1936, when Dr. Melkote's disease became incurable, he was brought to

Bhagavan by his elder brother, who had learnt about Bhagavan's greatness in Bangalore from his friend.

Bhagavan blessed him and suggested some medicine, which cured him. Thereafter, Dr. Melkote

considered Bhagavan as his guru, to whom he ran for any problem.

rine, well outside Tiruvannamalai city limits, Bhagavan lived at least twice for prolonged period. On one occasion his celebrated devotee, Ganapati Muni, stayed with him for three months in 1908. ó *The Archival Films, 1935-50*, Sri Ramanasramam

When the goal can't be reached, don't adjust the goal, adjust the action steps. ó *Confucius*

As your desire is, so is your will. As your will is, so is your deed. As your deed is, so is your destiny. – *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*

Be faithful to that which exists within yourself. – *Andre Gide*

Without getting things within you right, nothing outside will become right. – *Mahatria Ra*

Health is the greatest gift, contentment the greatest wealth. – *Anonymous*

Oblivious to the presence of the Divine within, people embark on the quest for God. They are like a person who goes to borrow milk from the neighbour, forgetting the *Kamadhenu* in his backyard. ó *V. Narayanan*

EFFORT CAN TRIUMPH OVER DESTINY: Past *karmas* can definitely be outwitted by present action. We have to sincerely endeavour to defeat our past *karma*, which cause obstructions in our pursuits, with great diligence. If we fail in our endeavours, we should realise that our past *samskaras* are dominant, and whole-heartedly persist in our efforts till we overpower them, and achieve success. ó *V.S. Kanchi*

WHO IS WISE? Identifying with the body, mind and senses is ignorance as it takes away attention from soul and brings with it ego, desires, and mental weaknesses and ultimately our downfall. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, òRenouncing all actions in Me, with the mind centred in the Self, free from hope and egoism, and from (mental) fever, do your fight.ö (3.30). Wise is one who identifies himself with Atman. Unwise is one who imagines that he is doing the action. ó *Seema Burman*

YOGA: Twisting the body into various postures is not yoga. These are yogic practices that involve the body. Fundamentally, ÿyogaø means ÿunionø. It means you have begun to experience the universality of who you are. If you begin to experience everything as one, you

AUGUST- 2015

GURU'S GRACE

The grace of guru is like an ocean. If you go with a cup, you will only get a cupful. It is no use complaining of the stinginess of the ocean. The bigger the vessel the more you will be able to carry. It is entirely up to you. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

ORIGINATORS OF SAIVA SIDDHANTA: Jnanasambandhar, Appar, Sundaramurthi and Manikkavachagar, *acharyas* of the Saiva faith, are collectively known as the *ñalvarø* (the four). They each composed and sang devotional hymns in Tamil in praise of Siva. The songs of the first three are known as *ñTevaramsø* whereas, Manikkavachagar's outpourings are contained in works entitled *Tiruvachakam* and *Tirukkovaiyar*. Several centuries later, these primary texts were interpreted in a philosophical way, and the resulting philosophy became known as *Saiva Siddhanta*. Four teachers, known as the *Santana-acharyas*, were primarily responsible for this codification of the fundamental tenets of philosophical Saivism in South India. All of them belonged to one Guru-disciple lineage, the head and founder of which was Meykanda Sivam. He was followed by Arulnandi Sivam and Maraijnana Sambandha Sivam, who in turn was the Guru of Umapati Sivam, the last of these four *acharyas*. ó *Mountain Path*, October, 2010

BHAGAVAN AND DEVOTEES – THREE EPISODES

1. ABHISHEKAM TO BHAGAVAN: In Bhagavan's words: öWhile I was in Virupaksha Cave, some ladies from the north came. I was sitting on a platform under the tamarind tree with half-closed eyes, without particularly noticing their arrival. I thought they would go away after a while. Suddenly, there was a noise of something breaking. I opened my eyes and saw coconut water trickling down my head. One of those ladies had done that *abhisekham*. What am I to do? I was in *mouna* and could not talk. I had no towel even to wipe the water off, and so the water dried on my body as it was. Not only that, there used to be lighting of camphor, pouring of water on the head, *thirthas* (sacred waters), *prasad* and several such troublesome performances. It used to be quite a job, stopping such things.ö

2. VISIT OF SIVAGANGA MUTT'S HEAD: When Bhagavan was in Virupaksha cave, the head of Sivaganga Mutt, a branch of Sringeri Mutt, came there. He had no questions to ask Bhagavan, as he was a wise man and a great pandit. On seeing Bhagavan, it seems that he told one of those nearby, öIf there is anyone who is happy, it is Ramana.ö He came down with his disciples, took lodging in a *choultry*, and invited Bhagavan to that place. Bhagavan declined the offer. It is a custom for heads of a *mutt* to present learned people with money,

only he himself came to Bhagavan with his disciples, wearing a laced shawl and Rs. 116 in cash. While he was about to be returning to Virupaksha cave from Mulaipal where there was a tree. He placed the platter before Bhagavan, and requested him to accept the contents, but Bhagavan would not do so. At last, he took back the money, but saying that the shawl would be useful to Bhagavan during the winter, pressed Bhagavan to accept it. Bhagavan accepted the shawl, as an outright refusal would not have been quite proper. Subsequently, Bhagavan tore away the lace and used it for covering himself whenever necessary.

3. VISIT OF VEERASUBBIAHSWAMI: Bhagavan said, "Veerasubbiahswami is a great scholar. He translated the Hindi *Atmapurana* into Tamil. He has written a commentary on *Jnana Vasishtam*, and he is the head of all the *Vedantins* in Kovilur mutt." Bhagavan narrated an incident, "When I was in Virupaksha cave, he came to see me with heads of mutts. When they were all sitting quietly, some people gestured something to him. He said with great hesitation, "Swami, these people want to ask you questions and expect answers from you. I don't want to trouble you myself, but I hope you will fulfill the desire of these people." A question was asked about the spiritual exercises that would lead to *sahaja samadhi*. I explained the six different *samadhis*, and how through practice, one could experience *sahaja samadhi*. A man who has reached that stage is one who, seeing does not see, hearing does not hear, acting does not act." ó *Arunchala's Ramana*, vol. i

ARUNACHALA TEMPLE RENOVATION, 2015: Renovation is underway at Arunachala Temple where the thousand-pillar hall, temple *gopurams*, stonework, deities, paintings and ceremonial utensils will be refurbished, culminating in Mahakumbhabhishekam (rededication ceremony). The Ashram has proposed to take up repair of Pathalalingam Shrine and Pavazhakundru Shrine under the supervision of Madhu Sthapati, grandson of Vaidyanatha Sthapathi, the temple architect in charge of construction of the Mother's Shrine (1939-1949). The last Mahakumbhabhishekam at the Big Temple took place in June 2002, when hundreds of *Sivacharyas* and *purohits* performed *homams* at more than one hundred *agni kundams* in the *yaga sala*. Prior to 2002, Kumbhabhishekams of Arunachaleswara Temple took place in 1976, 1944 and 1918. ó *Saranagathi*, April, 2015

THE HIGHEST TEACHING

By Robert Adams*

The highest teaching in the world is Silence. There is nothing higher than this. A devotee who sits with a sage purifies his mind just by being with the sage. The mind automatically becomes purified. No words exchanged, no words said. Silence is the ultimate reality.

gh Silence. True silence really means going deep within
s happening, where you transcend time and space. You
hingness. That's where all the power is. That's your real
In deep Silence there is no good and bad, no one trying
to achieve anything. Just being, pure being. The only freedom you'll ever have is when you go
deep into Silence and you transcend, transmute the universe, your body and your affairs.

It is when you begin to feel in your heart that you are boundless space, that something begins
to happen. As you feel yourself as boundless space, all your stuff begins to drop away. Yet
you do not affirm to yourself that you are boundless space. You merely observe, you watch,
you become the witness. You look out at the world and you see that the trees, the mountains,
the planets, are all hanging in space. And you begin to consider that your body, what appears
to be your body, is like the trees, and the moon, and the sun. It seems to be a thing of itself,
and it is also hanging in boundless space. Because you are able to observe this and see this
and feel this, the realisation will come to you that you must be this boundless space. As you
begin to consider this, the mind becomes quieter and quieter and quieter, until the day comes
when it falls away completely.

You are real. What you appear to be is false. Identify with the real, not with the false. Do not
accept anything you see as reality. The only freedom you've got is to turn within. You are
absolute reality, ultimate oneness, *ananda*. That is your true nature. Why not abide in it and
be free? Empty your mind. Become still, and everything will happen of its own accord. There
is really nothing you have to do. Just be still. ó *Mountain Path*, Aradhana, 1993

* He was an American (1928-97). Once he had a vision of a small Indian figure at his
bedside. He consulted his guru Paramhansa Yogananda (who had come to Bhagavan in
1935), who showed him a picture of Bhagavan, which he recognised as the figure in the
dream. He visited Ramanasramam and was with Bhagavan for three years ó 1947-50. His
book *Silence of the Heart* contains a summary of *satsangs* he held in USA. His reminiscences
are pages 358-60 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

LAST DAYS OF BHAGAVAN

By G.V. Subbaramayya*

On 31st March, 1950, *The Hindu* reported that Bhagavan's condition was causing anxiety. I
reached Ashram the next morning and joined the queue. Bhagavan, reclined on the couch,
was facing us as we passed in a row. His face and eyes were beaming with Grace as usual,
and my brief look at him had a reassuring effect on my mind. Immediately afterwards, his
attendant Rangaswami met me and said,
Bhagavan has taken note of your presence in the queue and has told me: "See, our

st have seen report in yesterday's paper. Go and greet
I was moved me with emotion.

had enveloped the Ashram, and most people were
seized with fear that the worst would happen. For days, Bhagavan was not taking any food,
and his kidneys were hardly functioning. But most surprisingly, on 2nd April, at 9 a.m., we
were told that Bhagavan was having his shave as usual on the full-moon day. At that time, I
was valuing matriculation examination papers in which a question related to the life of
Buddha. Most candidates who attempted that question had written as follows: "That day,
being a full-moon day, the Lord had his shave and bath. He then called his disciples and told
them: When I am gone, Truth shall be your Master." As I read this over and over again, the
coincidence struck me as most significant and illuminating. After some time, his barber
Natesan came and told me how Bhagavan himself sent for him, sat up throughout the shave
and cut jokes with him. After the shave, Bhagavan had his usual bath. He looked quiet fresh
and cheerful.

That night, during the lunar eclipse, R. Narayana Iyer**and myself went round the Hill.
When the eclipse was at its climax, we saw two red lights moving near the top of the Hill,
which was inaccessible to human approach. Having heard that the *siddhas* who dwelt
invisibly in the Arunachala caves would manifest themselves on such special occasions, we
were awestruck at the sight.

The next morning, Maharaja of Bhavanagar, the then Governor of Madras, and the Maharani
came for Bhagavan's *darshan*. They had earlier presented a pair of white peacocks to the
Ashram. Their visit happened to coincide with the time when Bhagavan was to take his
meager diet. But Bhagavan put off that, saying, "Amidst so many urgent duties, the Maharaja
has come to see me, I must not keep him waiting here." Only after they left did Bhagavan
have his diet. When nine months later, the Maharaja unveiled Bhagavan's portrait at Nellore,
I told him this incidence, and he was deeply moved.

On the day of *mahanirvana*, that is, 4th April, 1950, a photograph of Bhagavan reclining on a
raised bed in his room was taken by a famous French photographer. In view of Bhagavan's
weak condition, *darshan* was restricted to the queues in the morning and the evening, and I
got deprived of his *darshan*. As I started back with a heavy heart, Jayadevalal, who was
guarding the gate, whispered to me, "Do you want to see Bhagavan?" I replied, "Yes," and he
pushed me in, out of turn. As soon as I got up from prostrating at the doorstep, Bhagavan
said, "Come in." As I went and stood before him, he asked me, "What do you want?" I said
with streaming eyes: "I want *Abhayam*." (Security from fear). He replied with overflowing
Grace: "Saree *Ichchanu*" (Yes, I have given it.) At once I felt as though a heavy load has been

his Lotus-Feet with my hands and head, a thrill of
I felt like being plunged in an ocean of Peace and
s gracious words have taken permanent abode in my
fe. ó *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. viii

*Prof. G.V. Subbaramayya who taught English at a college in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, was also a scholar of Telugu. He first met Bhagavan in 1933, and got convinced of his greatness, at first sight. He was one of the few who moved with Bhagavan with childlike familiarity. His book *Sri Ramana Reminiscences* was originally written in Telugu. He translated *Sri Ramana Gita* into Telugu. His worth-reading reminiscences are at pages 102-9 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

**A sub-registrar at Chetput, in 1929, a town 30 mile from Tiruvannamalai, was an out and out skeptic and considered *sadhus* and *swamis* as exploiters of the credulous, for personal ends. His first meeting with Bhagavan transformed him into a sincere devotee for all his life. He wrote a number of articles in *Mountain Path* under the pen name -Vishnuø His fascinating reminiscences are at pages 258-62 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

BHAGAVAN'S REPLIES TO 14 QUESTIONS OF SIVAPRAKASAM PILLAI

Pillai*came to Bhagavan in 1902. A government officer, he was a graduate in philosophy. He visited Bhagavan at Virupaksha cave, and by one glance of Grace, he was totally enthralled. He could see his God and guru in Bhagavan. He posed 14 questions to Bhagavan, who wrote the answers on a slate and on the sand, which got erased eventually. He wrote answers to his questions from memory. These, as summarized below, provide the central teaching of Bhagavan, that is, Self-enquiry.

1. **“How salvation can be attained?”**: By incessant inward enquiry, -Who am I?ø you will know yourself and thereby attain salvation.
2. **“Who am I?”**: The real -Iø or Self is not the body, neither the five senses, nor the sense objects, nor the organs of action, nor the *prana*, nor the mind.
3. **“If I am none of these, what else am I?”**: After rejecting each of these and saying, -This I am notø that which alone remains is the -Iø and, that is, consciousness.
4. **“What is the nature of that consciousness?”**: It is *sat-chit-ananda*, without the slightest trace of -Iø thought. This is also called *mouna* or *atma*.
5. **“How are we to realise that reality?”**: When things as seen disappear, the true nature of the Seer or Subject appears.

“While still seeing external things?”: No, because the appearance of a serpent therein. Until you get rid of the rope that what exists is only a rope.

“What happens when the mind vanishes?”: When the mind which is the object of all thoughts and activities vanishes, external objects will also vanish.

8. “What is the nature of the mind?”: The mind is only thoughts. It manifests itself as the world. When the mind sinks into the Self, then the Self is realised.

9. “How will the mind vanish?”: Only through the enquiry, “Who am I?” Though this enquiry also is a mental operation, it destroys all mental operations, including itself, just as the stick with which the funeral pyre is stirred is itself reduced to ashes after the pyre and corpse have been burnt. The ego and the *prana* have a common source. Whatever you do, do without egotism, without the feeling, “I am doing this.” True *bhakti* (devotion) is surrender of the ego to the Self.

10. “Are there no other ways of destroying the mind?”: There is no other adequate method except Self Enquiry. If the mind is lulled by other means it stays quiet for a little while, and then springs up again and resumes its former activities.

11. “When will all the instincts and tendencies (*vasanas*) be subdued in us?”: The more you draw into the Self, the more these tendencies wither, and finally stop.

12. “Is it possible to root out the tendencies which have been soaked into our mind through many births?”: Never give room in your mind for such doubts, but dive into the Self with firm resolve. If the mind is constantly directed to the Self by the enquiry “Who am I?” it gets eventually dissolved and transformed into the Self. When you feel any doubt, do not try to go into it; but try to know who it is to whom the doubt is occurring.

13. “How long should one go on with this enquiry?”: As long as there is the least trace of tendencies in your mind to cause thoughts. Each time a thought rears its head crush it with this enquiry. So, *vichara* (Self Enquiry) continues to be necessary until the Self is realised. What is required is *continuous and uninterrupted remembrance of the Self*.

14. “Is not this world and what takes place therein, the result of God’s will? And if so, why should God’s will be thus?”: God has no purpose. He is not bound by any action. Take the case of sun. It rises without desire, purpose or effort. But as soon as it rises, numerous activities take place on the earth. It is not affected by any such activity. It is only a witness. So it is with God. As the beings reap the fruits of their actions in accordance with His laws, the responsibility is theirs, not the God’s. ó *Ramana Gyan – Direct Path*, May-June, 2015

*His experiences and feelings about Bhagavan are in *Sri Ramana Charita Ahaval*, published in 1923. For his reminiscences see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pages 125-7.

most constantly, during the day time, for three days and seemed superfluous; and yet you have gone away with your heart and mind than those of persons you have known intimately for many years? Had someone asked me such a questions some time ago, I should have doubted his sincerity, or I should have considered that the enthusiasm of a disciple was leading to poetic exaggeration. And yet, I had just such an experience, and the spiritual influence of him who impressed me so deeply has increased with the passing of years, though I have communicated with him rarely, and then only by letter; and I have scarcely read his published works, because I felt no need to do so.

I was born in England and educated at Cambridge, in Canada and US. Ever since the age of nine or ten I had been deeply interested in religion. When through a series of accidents I got an offer to teach in India, I accepted it immediately. Before sailing, I was given a book or two to read on the voyage. These included *A Search in Secret India* by Paul Brunton. I was ravished by Brunton's description of the Sage of Tiruvannamalai; and inspite of my orthodox Christian religion I was determined to seek out this great teacher at the earliest possible date. The opportunity came in May, 1937, when I had to attend a religious conference in the South. My head was bursting with questions to ask the Maharshi. But they were never asked. The reason was that in the presence of the Master, I was so filled with joy and peace that the desire to ask questions disappeared. This happened throughout three brief days I stayed at the Ashram. When one comes into the presence of a person like the Maharshi, one experiences immediate recognition of a soul that is not great as the world values greatness, but great when compared to an absolute standard of values, a precious stone, an emerald without flaw. It is a difference not merely of quality, but of kind.

Man is at the cross-roads. He can choose the path of materialism, seeking only better economic conditions, or he can turn his face towards the old light rising anew in the East, which, while by no means scorn improved condition of life for the masses, seeks to direct man's inquisitive nature primarily towards the realisation of his own being. Its aim is the same as Christ's: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you," which has been read in countless churches every week for nineteen hundred years. But faithless, worldly-minded mankind has considered this to be merely a pleasant moral aphorism, not to be taken literally. Now, men must take it literally or be prepared for further destruction, and indefinite chaos.

Not everyone can make a pilgrimage to this spot, hallowed for all time by the life of Ramana Maharshi, but everyone can follow the Maharshi's precepts which are, in a strange way, ultra-modern in form. Even the Maharshi cannot convey permanent blessedness; that we

do. But he is a guide to be trusted absolutely. Whatever
we will find what we need. All essential questions are
the path of Razor's Edge, we are called to tread, but in
Who is light/ He is bound to reap the fruit/ Who is fixed in
the I-do-thought/ The sense of doership lost by the search in the heart/ Triple karma dies and
that is Liberation.ö ó *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. vi

*He was an orthodox Christian who came to teach at St. Stephen's College, Delhi.

RAMANA, THE SELF SUPREME – A POEM

By K. Swminathan*

You are the Perfect One praised of old/ The Gita's *Jnani*, the *Jivanmukta*/ Of öThe Crest
Jewel of Discriminationö/ Inactive doer of all deeds done/ Wishing no wish and taking no
side/ Contemplative witness of things that pass/ Steadily established in *Satchidananda*/ No
noise, no struggle and no change/ The pole-star, Truth for ever the same.

Steep uphill is the way You have taken/ To the shining mountain-top of truth/ Steep, yet short
and straight and clear/ Free from darkness confusion and peril.

Neither judgment nor love You teach/ For there is NO OTHER to judge or love/ No boon to
ask, no door to knock/ And all good things will come unsought/ Like leaves and flowers to
tree in spring/ When *Viveka* wide awake/ Turns inwards, enquiring öWho am I?ö/ And
undeluded by darkness and death/ Sees only the Bright, Immortal Self/ Whose nature is
Knowledge and Bliss.

Those who practise Your presence lose/ Their ephemeral ego and find/ In you the Goal and
the Way; and proceed/ Like trustful pilgrims on a train/ Of Your Forty Verses on Truth/
Unresting, unhasting, in calm content/ From partial life to Immortal Perfection/ From
samsara to *Sat-Chit- Ananda*.

O God Without, Guru of Grace/ Who guides us well to God within/ Blessed the eye, the
mind, the heart/ Surrendered to Your sovereign sway.

O meek and gentle Child beloved/ Ancient, immobile holy Mount/ Crowned with the cool,
red fire of Dawn/ O Babe of Love, O Hill of Hope/ Dwell in our hearts and make us whole.

Child of Charity, Holy Sage/ O Silence Presence on the
eyes/ You have sought us, and You have caught us/
nana of Aruna. ó *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. vi

* He taught English at the Presidency College, Madras. A scholarly devotee of Bhagavan, he translated into English verse Muruganar's 1282 stanzas of *Guruvachaka-Kovai* and 1851 verses of *Ramana Sannidhi Murai*. In his letters to the Ashram, he would address Sri Ramana as -Ammaiappa's ó one who combines the attributes of mother and father, and sign as -Ramana sei's ó Ramana's child. His reminiscences are at pages 117-22 of *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

SIVA AS TRIPURANTAKA: After destroying the three cities (Tripura), ruled by demons, Siva smeared his forehead with three horizontal strokes of ash to remind us that ash is the eventual state of everything in the world. Siva as Tripurantaka holds an axe and a deer in his upper pair of arms. In the lower pair of arms, he holds a bow and an arrow. ó *Lalita Ramakrishna*

CONTROL THE DIRECTION OF THOUGHTS: Whenever we go through tough times, we easily slip into negative thinking. Control the direction of your thinking and always have positive thoughts as most dominant thoughts, and see how you navigate through life. ó *Mahatria Ra*

PALAKOTTU: (*Pala* is jackfruit; *Kothu* means orchard) is an ancient garden where flowers were grown for the worship of Arunachaleswara. Its area is about ten acres. Bhagavan often used to go here for a walk. Over a period of time, it evolved into a *sadhu's* colony. Devotees, such as Muruganar, Ganapati Muni, Paul Brunton and S.S.Cohen, used to live there. ó *Arunachala Ramana*, vol. ii

The two words that imply bondage are 'I' and 'Mine', and the two words that imply liberation are 'Not I' and 'Not Mine'. – Vedavyasa

SEPTEMBER – 2015

HAPPINESS

Our search for happiness is an unconscious search for our true Self. We are unhappy because we are ignorant of our true Self. The happiness that does not come to an end is found when the true Self is realised. – Sri Ramana Maharshi

FAVOURITE STORIES OF BHAGAVAN: ARUNAGIRINATHAR

The *Tiruppugal* composed by the 15th-century poet-saint
amatic incidents from the saint's life, one of which is

Already as a baby, the boy lost his father. Later, when his mother lay on her death bed, she made her daughter promise to take care of her younger brother. She should give him whatever he wanted. The boy was Arunagirinathar. He grew up a sturdy youth in the care of his elder sister. But in his late teens, he went astray and embarked on an indulgent life, crossing all acceptable limits, even succumbing to pleasures of the flesh. He stole his sister's hard-earned money to enjoy himself in gambling halls and brothels and soon enough, the family home was in jeopardy of being forfeited in order to repay outstanding debts.

One day he pestered his sister for money with such vigour that the chaste girl broke down in tears. Seeing what had become of her baby brother caused her great anguish. But remembering the promise she had made to her dying mother, she offered to help him. Since there was no money left in the house, she offered herself to be sold in the streets for profit. At her words, his eyes were opened and, in a flash, as if waking from a bad dream, he realised what he had done and ran with all speed to Arunachala Temple. Having passed through the Eastern gate, he pounded his head on the columns within the temple and cried out in anguish for forgiveness. But in utter despair and seemingly beyond all help, he resorted to the one measure left to him. He climbed the temple *gopuram* and cursing the debauched life he had chosen, grieving his mistreatment of his innocent sister and acknowledging his betrayal of the family name, he peeped over the tower's apex to glimpse the living world one last time. Finally, rejoicing at making an end of his miserable existence, he stepped off the edge. But as he plunged from the heights downward toward the granite pavement below, something extraordinary happened: Lord Murugan appeared and extended His holy hand. Just as the body would meet the earth, he snatched the falling man midair, and protecting him from gravity's crushing blow, set him gently on the temple floor. With a mixture of grief, relief and astonishment, the bewildered youth could only look up and behold the shining eyes of the Lord who presented him with a rosary of Rudraksha beads. The Lord then initiated him by writing a secret script onto the prodigal youth's tongue: it was the mystic six-lettered invocation, *Saravanabhava*, one of the Lord's names.

Was he dreaming, should he not be in hell by now, he thought to himself? And yet, what he saw before him was plain as day. Against all odds, he had been saved, undeserving though he knew he was. Joy for the first time surged up from within him and song burst forth in effulgence from his lips. Sacred lines of devotion and praise cascaded from his throat as if he were possessed by an angel or a divine spirit. Indeed, the goddess of music had intervened and made his tongue the vehicle of divine composition. He sang thousands of lovely rhythmic

own accord, one after the other, exuberant and vivid, st for being spared death but for release from the living forgiveness of what he had done and for being ushered s heart not sing perpetual praises of the Lord? òI rely on none except you and will follow none except youö, the Saint sang. The shrine beneath the tower where this happened became known as *Gopura Subrahmanya Sannidhi*.

At the Lord's behest, Arunagirinathar travelled extensively singing the glory of Lord Murugan. Upon hearing Arunagirinathar's devotional songs, devotees sang them as far as Chidambaram and beyond. Prabhuda Deva Raya, king of the region, an avid devotee of Lord Subrahmanya, showered his affection upon the poet. But such kindnesses roused jealousy in the court and the court-poet Sambandha Andan tried to instigate distrust against Arunagirinathar. He said to the king, òIf he is such a great devotee, why is he keeping the king from having *darshan* of the Lord?ö When the king made a formal request that Arunagirinathar arrange a *darshan* with the Lord, Arunagirinathar appealed to Lord Murugan. The Lord appeared before him but gave a strong caution: òIf the king beholds my luminous form, his past misdeeds will cause him to go blind on the spotö. Nevertheless, the sovereign persisted in the request. Arunagirinathar invoked Lord Murugan through his prayers and devotion and the Lord appeared on the front pillar of the temple dancing hall. There was a momentary flickering of light in the eyes of Prabhuda Deva Raya, who rejoiced at the sight while the splendour of Arunagirinathar's devotion shone everywhere. But no sooner had the vision come than darkness overtook the king's sight and his eyes were closed.

The court-poet, however, did not give up. At his instigation, the blind king requested Arunagirinathar to fetch Parijata flowers from heaven, the juice of which was believed to restore sight. Due to his love for the king, Arunagirinathar used his occult powers to take leave of his body, assume the form of a parrot and fly to heaven where he obtained the desired flowers. But after delivering them to the royal court, he discovered the treachery of the court-poet. By stealth and cunning, Sambandha Andan had stolen Arunagirinathar's human body and cremated it. Left with no alternative, the saint continued his life as a parrot inhabiting the temple tower now called Kili Gopuram or *Tower of the Parrot*.ö
Saranagathi, June 2015

HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN

By P. Keshava Reddy*

As one deeply interested in *bhajans* since my boyhood, I used to go to the house of Sri Avadhutendra Saraswati Swamiji, in Himayat Nagar, Hyderabad, where his followers held *bhajan* recitation sessions, every Sunday from 6 to 8 p.m. This went on for over ten years. It

with a book entitled "Ramanashrayi", biography of Sri
the attendants of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

My name, I went to Hindi Arts College, Vidyanagar,
Hyderabad, where in 1979, Dr. K.S., founder of our Kendram, had started *satsang* on
Sundays. I was greatly impressed by the talks of Dr. K.S. and Sri Bhadriraju garu. My
relationship with Dr. K.S. gradually grew to a great extent and I felt that he was like a father
and a mother to me. He guided me through various aspects of life. His talks in *satsangs*
greatly influenced me to become a devotee of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. Thus, I have
been closely associated with the Kendram till date.

*A police officer, retired as Principal, Police Training College, Amberpet, Hyderabad. He has
been the president of the Kendram more than once.

INDESCRIBABLE EYES AND GAZE OF SRI RAMANA: EXPERIENCES OF DEVOTEES – Part 1

**What is recorded below proves beyond all doubt that no human being ever had such
powerful eyes as that of Sri Ramana Maharshi. (All references here are from *Face to
Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, available on line. Hard copies can be had from Sri
Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, or from Sri Ramana Kendram's book stall. Details
about the persons and their reminiscences are in the book in the same order.)**

1. Paul Brunton: His eyes shine with astonishing brilliance. Strange sensation begins to arise
in me. Those lustrous orbs seem to be peering into the inmost recesses of my soul. In a
peculiar way I feel aware of everything he can see in my heart. His mysterious glance
penetrates my thoughts, my emotions and my desires; I am helpless before it. At first, his
disconcerting gaze troubles me; I become vaguely uneasy. I feel he has perceived the pages
that belong to a past, which I have forgotten. He knows it all, I am certain. I am powerless to
escape; somehow, I do not want to, either.

The Maharshi turns and looks down into my face; I, in turn, gaze expectantly up at him. I
became aware of a mysterious change taking place with great rapidity in my heart and mind.
The old motives which have lured me on begin to desert. The urgent desires which have sent
my feet hither and thither vanish with incredible swiftness. The dislikes, misunderstandings,
coldness and selfishness which have marked my dealings with many of my fellows collapse
into the abyss of nothingness. An untellable peace falls upon me and I know there is nothing
further that I shall ask from life.

2. Justice N. Chandrasekhara Aiyar: I paid my homage to the sage only twice, and was
struck by his large luminous eyes, through which the very soul peeps into us, as it were.
When he fixes his keen gaze on us, it looks as though he is seeing the inner clockwork of a

and you get the feeling that a mild current of grace is

never seen eyes more alight with Divine Illumination ó they shine like stars. His look of Love and Compassion was a benediction that went straight into my heart. I was immediately drawn to Him. As I looked upon Sri Bhagavan's serene face and into His eyes which beamed with mercy, my soul was stirred. He knew how much I needed Him, while He looked straight into my heart. Everyone who comes to Him is blessed; the inner peace which is His is radiated to all.

4. Arthur Osborne: My wife entered the hall and sat down. Immediately, Bhagavan turned his luminous eyes on her in gaze so concentrated that there was a vibration she could actually hear. She returned the gaze, losing all sense of time, the mind stilled, feeling like a bird caught by a snake, yet glad to be caught! There were huge crowds for the festival and we were sitting in the courtyard outside the hall. Bhagavan was reclining on his couch and I was sitting in the front row. He sat up, facing me, and his narrowed eyes pierced into me with an intensity I cannot describe. It was as though they said, "You have been told; why have you not realised?" And then I felt quietness, a depth of peace, an indescribable lightness and happiness! The love that shone in his eyes, the luminous understanding, cannot be described. Someone had come to the Ashram broken down with hopeless grief of bereavement, and Bhagavan, after hearing the story, simply looked, no words spoken, and peace flooded the soul of the visitor.

5. G.V. Subbaramayya: As our eyes met, there was a miraculous effect on my mind. I felt as if I had plunged into a pool of peace, and with eyes shut, sat in a state of ecstasy for nearly an hour.

6. Souris: Above all else, I noticed his sparkling eyes; even in the dark one could see them sparkle. And when he looked at us, his sight, like an arrow, pierced right into the deepest recesses of the heart.

7. Swami Madhavatirtha: On the very first day of my *darshan* of the Maharshi in the dining hall, I found in the look of the sage the dazzling brilliance of the sun. On a subsequent day, while in the presence of the Maharshi in the hall, I recognised the same brilliance in the look of the sage. It seemed to pierce me to the core of my being. My breath seemed to stop for a while and my mind was elevated into some spiritual realm of unutterable peace and happiness.

8. Kunju Swami: As we sat silently, Bhagavan's gracious look was fixed on me. At that very moment all my confusions ceased and I experienced a peace and bliss I had never experienced before. While we were together, Bhagavan would often look at me; and as he did so, I became aware that his eyes had a strange brilliance and fascination in them. Whenever I

f time, I saw bright effulgence, and I used to get filled
for each experience I would come back to my normal
occurred each of the eighteen days I stayed with Bhagavan
someone intoxicated.

9. Chhaganlal V. Yogi: The Maharshi sent for a copy of the Gujarati translation of the *Upadesa Saaram* by Kishorelal Mashruwala, and asked me to chant verses from the book. While chanting, I could feel Bhagavan keenly observing me. It seemed that the light of his eyes was suffusing my consciousness. Even without my being aware of it, his silent gaze brought about a subtle but definite transformation in me. My erstwhile sadness completely disappeared leaving in my heart an explicable emotion of joy.

10. Wolter A. Keers: Suddenly his eyes emitted light and spat fire at me. I can think of no other way of describing that sudden explosion in his gaze. His powerful look went straight into me. I felt the right-hand-side heart getting warmer as he continued to gaze at me, until I felt it to be a hot, fiery ball glowing inside me. I felt as if he 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 spiritual dynamo that was emitting sparks of light and energy. I felt as if some enormously potent electrical apparatus has been suddenly 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. Time and space had no meaning in that never-ending moment when our eyes were locked together. At some point I realised that my body could no longer stand the strain. The fire in my chest had expanded to the point where I felt that I was about to explode. Mentally I asked Bhagavan to let me go. I had received what I had come for.

11. Mouni Sadhu (M. Sudouski): Light and life are constantly flowing through the eyes of the Maharshi with a majesty and intensity unimaginable to those who have not seen them. A stream of peace, powerful yet sweet, flows from his eyes. They glow with perfect understanding of all the weaknesses, defects and inner difficulties of those who looked into them. Whenever the Maharshi spoke to us his eyes had much sympathy, wisdom and understanding. An incredible loving kindness radiated from them. (Continued in the next issue.)

Take charge of your thinking. Be watchful of your beliefs and impulses. – Sharon Labell

By uninterrupted abidance in God, one is able to attain peace and bliss. – Ramthakur

Self introspection is necessary for growth. – Janina Gomes



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Be to yourself. Look not for refuge outside yourself. –

Offering unto God, then your life becomes a prayer

unto Him. – *Mahatria Ra*

The true yogi meditates, realizing I am a stranger to this world; there is no one with me.

– *Yoga Darshana Upanishad*

Learn to let go. – *Isha Upanishad*

DHARMA: It is of two types ó *naimittik* (temporary) and *nitya* (eternal). Water is liquid by nature. However, due to extreme cold, it takes the form of ice. Ice is its *naimittik* dharma, temporary nature; liquidity being its *nitya* dharma. Removal of cause (the chill) will bring the water to its own eternal nature. Likewise, we human beings, due to lack of understanding of our real Self, tend to accept this temporary body's activities as the main and only dharma. We have to follow the eternal dharma of the soul, which to establish affinity with the Super Soul.
ó *Nishkinchan Maharaj*

RARE AND DIFFICULT THREE: 1. Human birth. 2. A burning desire for liberation. 3. Association with Great Beings and Satgurus. ó *Vivekachudamani*

SOME FASCINATING REMINISCENCES OF BALARAMA REDDY

N. Balarama Reddy, M.A. (1908-95) came to Bhagavan in 1937, and remained with him till the *mahanirvana*. *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* contains many more of his reminiscences at pages 69-72.

Many learned scholars and *sannyasins* would often visit Bhagavan and ask questions. Bhagavan's response varied. To some people he would give much attention, either by talking to them or pouring out his grace through a silent look; others he would stoically [Indifferently] ignore. These variations were not governed by status, wealth, or fame. One morning a famous swami from Ahemdabad arrived at the Ashram. He entered the hall with me at 10 a.m. and I introduced him to Bhagavan. He inquired if he was allowed to ask a question. Consent was given and he asked Bhagavan, whether Ishwara, the personal God, actually existed. The Maharshi replied with one of his standard rejoinders: "We do not know about Ishwara, whether he exists or not. But we do know that we exist. Find out who that is that exists. The swami was not satisfied with the answer and continued to discuss the matter, quoting from various scriptures. Bhagavan then said, "If the scriptures say all this about it, why question me further?" This was not acceptable to the swami and he proceeded to

at him off by turning to us and saying, "Come on. Let us
swami was quite annoyed and soon left the hall.

A swami from Bombay was brought to the Ashram by Aravind Bose, who was a devotee of Bhagavan for many years during 1940s. This swami too was well-known, and had numerous disciples and was always given high honours wherever he went. In Bhagavan's presence he was treated just like anyone else and he sat on the floor with all others. When the swami asked his first question, Bhagavan remained silent for a long time. He must have wondered why there was no answer. Probably no one had ever, seemingly, ignored him like that before. The question was: "Which *avatar* [incarnation] are you?" After sometime, Mauni Srinivasa Rao came into the hall and Bhagavan said to him, "He wants to know which *avatar* I am. What can I say to him? Some people say I am this and some say I am that. I have nothing to say about it." This was followed by a barrage of questions from the swami, who asked about Bhagavan's state of realisation, about *samadhi*, the *bhakti* school, etc. Bhagavan answered him very patiently point by point. The swami listened. Whether or not he was satisfied is hard to say. Before leaving the hall, the swami touched Bhagavan's couch and joined his palms in salutation. Before the swami boarded the train, he told Bose, "I have truly gained something from this visit to the Maharshi."

One day, Bose came to the Ashram in deep despair. His only son, a bright boy of twenty, had just died. A private meeting with Bhagavan was arranged between 12 and 2 in the afternoon. At one point during the interview, in a desperate and somewhat challenging tone, Bose asked, "What is God?" For such a long-standing devotee a question like this was something strange. Bhagavan was silent for a while, and then gently replied, "Your question itself contains the answer: What is, (is) God." One should note that this was not merely a clever and well-thought-out answer. That may be the case with ordinary men. A *jnani's* utterances are free of the mind, which colours and often distorts the truth. Also, Bhagavan's silence before the question was evidently meant to prepare the questioner to receive the full impact of the answer.

Another incident comes to mind when a learned swami visited Bhagavan. He put questions in Sanskrit and Bhagavan patiently answered them in Malayalam, the swami's mother tongue. As the session continued, it became evident that the swami's sole intention was to defeat Bhagavan in argument. Eventually, Bhagavan said, "Will you be satisfied if I issue you a certificate stating you have defeated me in argument?" But even this did not silence the swami. Jagadish Sastri, a Sanskrit pundit, was quietly listening to the proceedings. When he saw that the swami was incorrigible, he blurted out in Sanskrit, "Hey, *dushta, bahir gachha,*" which means, "O wicked man, get out!" The swami got the message and left. Bhagavan had no desire to argue, or to prove anything, or force his views on anyone. He left people free to believe whatever they wanted. His response to visitors was never influenced by status, wealth

heart of the visitor reflected onto the clear mirror of

is difficult for us to comprehend. I remember he once told me, "You ask me questions and I reply and talk to you. If I do not speak or do anything, I am automatically drawn within, and where I am, I do not know." I once asked Bhagavan if there was ever any change in his realisation after his experience in Madurai. He said, "No, if there is change, it is not realisation." How he managed to remain in that state of universal awareness and still function in a limited, physical form remains a mystery. We cannot understand that state. In spite of his exalted state, he interacted with us at our level. He took interest in the functioning of the Ashram and the accommodation of visitors. ó *Arunachala's Ramana*, vol. iii

THE HEART – QUOTES FROM SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

1. The Sanskrit term for "Heart" is "Hridayam". It consists of two syllables, "Hrit" and "Ayam", which signify "I am the Heart". Heart is the very Core of your being; it is that with which you are really identical, whether you are awake, asleep or dreaming, whether you are engaged in work or immersed in *samadhi*.
2. That everyone points to the chest when referring to himself by gesture is sufficient proof that the Absolute resides as the Self in the Heart.
3. From the absolute standpoint, the Heart, Self or Consciousness, can have no particular place assigned to it. Because pure consciousness is indivisible; it is without parts. It has no form or shape, no "within" or "without". There is no "right" or "left" for it.
4. When the mind in the form of ego, which takes the body for the Self and strays out, is curbed in the Heart, the sense of "I" in the body relinquished, and enquiry made with a still mind in tune with the Self as to who it is that dwells in the body, a subtle Illumination will be experienced as "I-I" which is no other than the absolute, the Self seated in the lotus of the Heart, in the city of the body.
5. The Heart is pure consciousness which gives its Light to the mind, which then sees the world. When the mind abides in the Heart, the world disappears. The Heart is to be body as the sun is to the universe; the mind in the brain shines by the Light it receives from the Heart. The wise understands that *prajana* (consciousness) means really the Heart, and only apparently the mind. God is not other than the Heart.
6. The spiritual Heart-centre in the body is towards the right in the chest, two digits to the right from the median, and it is quite different from the blood-propelling, muscular organ known by the same name.

ed in the Heart of all. It is the Light unlimited and
as pure Consciousness, as the one without a second;
ne in all individuals. Heartø is merely another name for
I hearts.

8. In the interior cavity of the Heart the one Supreme Being alone shines as the ðI-Iö, verily the Atman. Entering into the Heart with one-pointed mind either through Self-enquiry or by diving within or by breath control, abide thou in *Atmanishta*. ó *The Ramana Way*, July, 2015

COW CULTURE: The cow is a natural industryø which converts what is non-milk into milk. This is a demonstration by nature to tell humans to adopt the cow culture by converting all negativity into positivity. ó *Maulana Wahiduddin Khan*

Listen to yourself and in that quietude you might hear the voice of God. – *Anonymous*

God is the friend of silence. See how nature – trees, flowers, grass – grows in silence. – *Mother Teresa*

Sky is the limit, if only you have the drive to succeed. – *Anonymous*

OCTOBER - 2015

SERVE HUMANITY

Till you reach the state of *jnana* and thus wake out of the *maya*, you must do social service by relieving suffering whenever you see it. But you must do it without *ahamkara*, with a feeling that ‘I am the Lord’s tool.’ – *Sri Ramana Maharshi*

BHAGAVAN’S EARLY DAYS IN TIRUVANNAMALAI

After a monthø stay at Arunagiri temple and a weekø stay in the towers of the big temple and the *alari* garden, the young Brahmana Swami and Palani Swami shifted to Pavala Kunru (Coral Hill) in an effort to find a quiet out-of-the-way place. The ancient site proved suitable in every way, shielding them from the constant influx of visitors. Lying up at some elevation on the eastern spur of the Holy Hill, the move marked the beginning of the Swamiø withdrawal from the town up onto the Hill, which would come to serve as his home for the next 23 years.

The inconvenience of the lengthy climb up to Pavala Kunru deterred any casual passersby. A bamboo-pole barrier was constructed to supplement Pavala Kunruø fortress-like compound

all of which served to discourage the more stout-hearted and provided the Swami with the protection he needed on. Indeed, the site had once served as a fort. In the late 17th century, the East India Company had once used Pavala Kunru as a fort, and installed a large cannon near it.

Parvati's Penance

But Pavala Kunru's history is greater than any story of kings and earthly battles, and indeed far more ancient. In antiquity, Gautama Rishi had established his hermitage just to the east of its foot. It was here that Goddess Parvati came clad in tree bark with matted tresses and smeared with sacred ash in order to do penance under the Rishi's supervision. It was also here that she took the form of Durga and fought the demon Mahishasura, and upon her victory, plunged her sword into the earth to form Khadka Tirtha, the tank known to have the purifying power to destroy the five great transgressions for those who bathed in it. Here she bathed to expiate the sin of having inadvertently slain one who worshipped the Lord though corrupt, Mahishasura had been a devotee of Lord Siva. The Goddess installed an image of the Lord on the Pavala hilltop. On Kartikai Deepam day, after she went for *giripradakshina*, the Lord appeared before her there and granted the cherished request that she merge with him and become half of his body.

In September 1898, Brahmana Swami and Palani Swami climbed the hillock and took up residence at Pavala Kunru's Iswara temple. Replete with caves and springs, the temple consisted of a Siva Linga (Pavalagiriswarar) and, at right angles, a separate Shrine for Goddess Muthambikai, and a beautiful icon of Ardhanariswara behind the Linga. During this period, the Swami begged for food in town to avoid, as he later said, "devotees bringing [him] special rich food". Going from door to door anonymously proved spiritually efficacious, he said, as "you [felt] yourself to be indifferent to everything worldly. It [had] a purifying effect on the mind."

On days when Palani Swami went to town to beg, the priest looking after Pavalagiriswarar sometimes locked the Swami within the shrine as he went away. Thus, any visitor venturing up the spur might find only locked doors and a pervasive silence with not a soul in sight. As months passed, the young Swami would have imagined that his family had accepted the reality of his renunciate life, content to leave him in peace.

Mother at last finds her lost son

peace in the heart of one mother. Only when she had persuaded him to come home would she find rest. After that, she packed her things and together with her eldest son, Anamalai, she left Madurai in December 1898. Once having arrived at Arunachala and learned of his whereabouts, the two climbed the spur to Pavala Kunru and the distressed mother saw her boy sitting on a rock before the holy shrine. Though changed in appearance with long hair and long nails, nothing could conceal his identity from her. She recognised her son at once and cried out in joy. The young Swami, however, simply gazed at her, showing no signs of emotion, and not even replying to her many questions.

Day after day, her continued petitions only met with the same detached silence. Even the tasty dishes she brought did not entice him. One day, she could bear it no longer and broke down in tears. The Swami made no visible response but stood up and walked away, no doubt keen to maintain his composure during his mother's moving display of affection. Finally, Alagammal appealed to devotees, pouring out her heart and begging them for assistance. Pachaiyappa Pillai said to the Swami, "Your mother is weeping and praying, why do you not at least give her an answer? Whether it is 'yes' or 'no', you can reply to her. Swami need not break his vow of silence. Here are pencil and paper. Swami can write down what he has to say." Taking the pencil and paper and in utterly impersonal language, the Swami wrote: "The Ordainer controls the fate of souls in accordance with their *prarabdha karma*. Whatever is destined not to happen will not happen, try as you may. Whatever is destined to happen will happen, do what you may to prevent it. This is certain. The best course, therefore, is to remain silent." These words effectively ended this round of encounters between the son and the mother. The latter returned, sore of heart, to Mana Madurai. But the love of a mother never dies and the mother eventually returned to his son in April 1915, when he was at Virupaksha cave and later shifted to Sakand Ashram*.

By the beginning of the following year, the young Swami together with Palani Swami left Pavala Kunru and made their way further up the hill, settling in the famed Virupaksha, the cave which would serve as their home for the next decade and a half. ó *Saranagathi*, June 2015

**Alagammal's Journey, A Sadhana Katha* by Geeta Bhatt, a publication of Sri Ramanasramam, provides an absorbing biography of Bhagavan's Mother.

INDESCRIBABLE EYES AND GAZE OF SRI RAMANA: EXPERIENCES OF DEVOTEES – Part 2

The following is in continuation of Part 1, which appeared in the last issue.

d on the floor, though a chair had been thoughtfully conscious that the Maharshi's eyes were fixed on me. Goals of fire piercing through me. Never before had I in that it was almost frightening. What I went through in that terrible half hour, by way of self-condemnation and scorn for the pettiness of my own life, would be difficult to describe. In the light of perfection, all imperfections were revealed.

13. Swami Chinmayananda (Balakrishna Menon): As I entered, I saw on the couch an elderly man, wearing but a loincloth, reclining against a round bolster. I sat down at the very foot of the couch. The Maharshi suddenly opened his eyes and looked straight into mine. I looked into his. A mere look that was all. I felt that the Maharshi was, in that split moment, looking deep into me and I was sure that he saw all my shallowness, confusions, faithlessness, imperfections and fears. I cannot explain what happened in that one split moment. I felt opened, clean, healed and emptied. A whirl of confusions and my atheism dropped away. I got up and walked away. [This happened when he had just passed his high school, and had gone to Tiruvannamalai for a visit.]

14. Papaji (Hariwansh Lal Poonja): On my first visit to him, as he looked at me and gazed into my eyes, my whole body began to tremble and shake. A thrill of nervous energy shot through my body. My nerve ends felt as if they were dancing and my hair stood on end. Within me I became aware of the spiritual heart. Within the Heart I saw or felt something like a closed bud. It was very shining and bluish. With the Maharshi looking at me, and myself in a state of silence, I felt this bud open and bloom. I use the word bud, but this is not an exact description. It would be more correct to say that something that felt bud-like opened and bloomed in my Heart. It was an extraordinary experience. It totally surprised me when it happened. On my second visit, when the Maharshi looked at me intently, I could feel that my whole body and mind were being washed away with waves of purity. His silent gaze was purifying them. Under that spellbinding gaze I felt every atom of my body was being purified. It was as if a new body was being created for me. A process of transformation was going on and the old body was dying atom by atom, and a new body was being created in its place. The silent gaze of the Maharshi established me in that primal state that was permanent. The ego which had for long been looking outside, perished in the direct knowledge and experience of the Self, which the Maharshi has revealed to me. I cannot describe what the experience was, but I knew that my spiritual quest had definitely ended.

15. P.V. Karamchandani: As District Medical Officer, I conducted my examination in a strictly professional manner. I carried no spiritual feelings for him. Nor did he speak a word with me. But he had directed a momentary gaze of grace at me, which kept stirring me deeply. Involuntarily I felt a new vista of spiritual consciousness open out before me. That wondrous gaze of Sri Ramana seemed to envelop me with an aura of bliss.

most remarkable feature of his face. They are the windows shining calm of God within their delicate shells, clear, yet deep, seeing into the Self within; innocent, yet not thoroughly weighing and understanding the play of life. At times, these eyes rest in mild scrutiny of the people around, singling out for a moment one or another of the crowd, then pass on with complete detachment, yet, with a gentle withdrawal, a wish to make others content.

17. Mercedes de Acosta: I moved near Bhagavan, sitting at his feet and facing him. Not long after this Bhagavan opened his eyes. He moved his head and looked directly down at me, his eyes looking into mine. It would be impossible to describe that moment and I am not going to attempt it. I can only say that at that time I felt my inner being raised to new level ó as if, suddenly, my state of consciousness was lifted to a much higher degree. Perhaps in that spilt second I was no longer my human being but the Self.

18. T.R. Kanakammal: Sometimes, I found Bhagavan directing his eyes at me. The intensity of his gaze was, at time, almost impossible to bear. My mind would get completely absorbed in the Self without any kind of effort on my part. The peace and joy of the experience used to linger on for a long time after leaving the hall. One day, after I prostrated and settled down in the hall, Bhagavan's eyes stayed on me. Bhagavan's gaze makes it impossible for you to keep your eyes open. The intensity of his direct look is too much for an ordinary human being to take. It is as though some invisible power has entered you and made its way to the very core of its being and there is nothing but the blissful awareness of the Self. When this happened for a short while, I would gaze at Bhagavan with my eyes open. But within a few seconds, my eyes would close on their own accord and I got totally immersed in a peace, which is beyond description. I do not know how long I would stay in that state of bliss. When I managed to open my eyes, I saw that Bhagavan's gaze was still upon me. Then I saw Bhagavan getting up and going out of the hall.

19. Roda MacIver (nee Kamdin): One day in 1944, when I went to the hall, Bhagavan was reading some papers. I sat down and looked at him. Suddenly, he put away the papers and turned his luminous eyes on me. I could not stand the gaze, so I closed my eyes, tears streaming down my face. When I opened my eyes he was still looking at me. My heart was filled with joy and inner calmness!

20. Ramakrishna Madhavpeddi: I was sitting in the hall with eyes closed. At one point I happened to open my eyes and saw the Maharshi looking at me intently. Suddenly, all thoughts vanished from my mind and I experienced a delightful blank or void. Then a resplendent light enveloped me fully. I was empty of thoughts but full of immense happiness. I was one with some indefinable peace and splendid glory. After sometime, I again became aware of my body. (Concluded)

transforms the state of an individual and creates positive
With repeated and sincere chanting you can break the
ou back. ó *Sheel Vardhan Singh*

DESIRES: You are what you desire. The soul might leave the body, but is still tied to its desires and karmas. You take with you your desires and karmas and they decide your next birth and body. You may continue going downwards or change your desires to elevate to a higher state. Learn to transcend your desires. ó *Yogi Ashwini*

ACQUIRE SPIRITUAL STRENGTH: It comes from communing inwardly with God. In meditation, after becoming calm, you need to offer your heart to God with the attitude that your life belongs to Him, that you want only Him and you want nothing for yourself. You need to say, òGod, you take charge of my life and work through me.ö You have to offer yourself repeatedly. When you get attuned to divine, you have the required strength and security. ó *Swami Kriyananda*

CONTENTMENT: A contented mind is a continual feast. Divine light can descend on an aspirant who is endowed with contentment. A contented man is one who does not long for what he does not possess: he enjoys what he has. Repeat mentally, ÷Aum contentmentø And you will soon feel contentment enveloping you. ó *Swami Sivananda*

MEDITATION: It provides the break that your mind needs and deserves and helps you cope with stressful lifestyles. When you meditate brain-wave activity slows down, and depending on the depth of your meditation, you can access more profound levels of creativity, healing and relaxation. ó *Rohini Singh*

BHAGAVAN AS ATIVARNASHRAMI

Perumal Swami, who was helping Sri Ramana in the management of Skandasram, claimed that he was the owner of the Ashram after the Maharshi came to stay in the present premises. He went to court to enforce his claim.* A Commission appointed by the court came to have Sri Ramana's testimony in this regard in November 1936. Among many-many questions answered by the Maharshi (See, *Talks* nos. 281 and 291), the following are relevant in our context.

Lawyer: According to Hindu *sastras* there are four *asramas* ó *brahmacharya, grihasta, vanaprastha, and sannyasa*. Which *asrama* are you in?

Maharshi: I am in *ativarnasrama*. This transcends the other *asramas*.

Q.: If this is true, are there any rules for this *asrama*?

A.: The *ativarnasrama* is without any rules.

Q.: Is there any authority for this? Is it mentioned anywhere?

Q.: There are Gurus for each *ashrama*. Is there a Guru for *atyasrama*?

A.: Yes.

Q.: But you do not admit a Guru.

A.: There is a Guru for everyone. I admit a Guru for me also.

Q.: Who is your Guru?

A.: The Self.

Q.: For whom?

A.: For myself. The Guru may be internal or external. He may reveal Himself internally or communicate externally.

Q.: Can the *atyasramis* own property?

A.: There is not restriction for them. They may do what they please. Suka is said to have married and begotten children also.

Q.: The *atyasrami* is like a householder in that case.

A.: I have already said that he is above the four recognised *asramas*.

Q.: If they can marry, own property, etc., they are only *grihastas*.

A.: That may be your view.

Q.: Can they own property and convey the same to others?

A.: They may or they may not.

Q.: Is there any Karma for them?

A.: Their conduct is not regulated according to any rules or code.**

*Many details about the dispute raised by Perumal Swami are in *Living by the Words of Bhagavan* by David Godman at pages 127-143.

***Mountain Path* (July 1984), records as follows: In *Suta Samhita*, Siva speaks to Vishnu: Like me, the *ativarnasrami* should not become the pupil of anyone. There is really none in this world equal or superior to him. He belongs to the order beyond *varna* and *asrama*. He has realised the Supreme Truth, which transcends the body and the senses. He knows his Self as God. An *ativarnasrami* is Guru's Guru and as such He is *Jagad Guru*.

HOW BHAGAVAN BLESSED ME

By S.V. Rajeswar*

Chennai, my father had gone to Tiruvannamalai and brought books to read them, but could not follow much. However, over the years, Bhagavan's teachings were in my life. In 1997, when we were living in Delhi, I read a book titled "The Collected Works of Sri Ramana Maharshi."

Again, it was sporadic enthusiasm as professional activities were still on priority. Over the next decade, as we went through our life, Bhagavan's teachings like "Ne nevaru" [Who are you] and "Ninnu nuvvu telusko" [You know about yourself] and words like *swapana* [Dream] and *sushupti* [Deep sleep], etc., had entered our vocabulary. My wife Uma and I had reached a stage when we were searching for a spiritual guru. At a college reunion in Chennai, one of the spiritual speakers had suggested we should avoid "living" gurus. It was strange that the concept of a non-living guru was difficult to contemplate.

Again and again we started thinking of Bhagavan. It was in one of the *pravachanams* that the speaker spoke about Ramana Maharshi. He was commenting with some sarcasm about an individual, who had expressed reservations about Bhagavan. He said, "I told myself, who are you, a half-litre chap, to criticise the endless ocean called Ramana Maharshi? You are an ignorant person and will stay that way." That sentence was the turning point. It was as though Bhagavan was telling me to stop chasing the mirages called "gurus" and move to him, the real guru. So Uma and I decided to make a pilgrimage to Tiruvannamalai. The website of the Ashram gave us contact details of Sri Ramana Kendram, Hyderabad. We spoke to the office and were told about Sunday *satsangs*. We came to the Kendram next Sunday, collected information and planned our trip to Arunachala.

A friend from Chennai joined us. Since we did not have accommodation at the Ashram, we stayed at Siva Sannidhi. My friend was better informed than I was. He told me that his mother saw the brilliant burst of light that moved across the sky on 14th April 1950, and always spoke about it. He asked me whether we were going for *Giri pradakshina*. When I feigned ignorance, he explained, "circumambulation of the holy hill, bare foot, all about 13 kms." After a brief discussion we decided to try, though we were not sure about our capacity to do so. When we mentioned about our dilemma to the supervisor of Siva Sannidhi, he told us gruffly, "Just get up at 2 am., take bath, go out, do *pranams* at the Ganapati temple on the road and turn left. Bhagavan will make you walk. HE it is, who will take you round. Leave it to Him." We set out at about 3 am. We did not realise it, but we completed the 13 kms. as though we were out for a moonlight walk. In fact, it was more like a stroll in the park rather than barefoot walk on the road. We returned at about 8 am. It was quite an upliftment. Absolutely no trace of fatigue or tiredness, about which we were worried. It was then that it hit us. Bhagavan has carried us around, we did not walk on our own.

and his desire to lead us from ignorance about the nature of knowledge of the Supreme Reality has been felt by us in directly in the benign gaze of Bhagavan. We realised we when and how to call us. He decided how to lead us from darkness in which we were wallowing unto the eternal light of knowledge of the Ultimate Reality of the Universe.

We need not be aware of Bhagavan. We need not look to him with folded hands. He will take care of us, whether we are aware of him or not, whether we recognise him or not. He is like a father who loves his child even if the child is errant or truant. He does not discriminate. He is all encompassing in his grace. He is truly the Universal Reality.

*A former President of our Kendram, is a senior management consultant.

Austerities done for honour, praise or reward are impure. – Gita

The door of salvation is narrower than the mustard seed. A man's ego is the size of an elephant. How can he pass through the gate? – Kabir

The riddle of Creation is solved when you know how the 'I' was created. So I say, find your Self. – Ramana Maharshi

If a man debates and quarrels about scriptures and doctrines, he has not tasted the nectar of true faith. – Ramakrishna Paramahansa

Pilgrims go to Mathura, Dwarka, Kashi and Haridwar. I journeyed deep into myself and found the Beloved there. – Ravi Dass

After abducting me if now Thou does not embrace me, where is Thy chivalry, Oh Arunachala? Enfold me body to body, limb to limb, or I am lost, Oh Arunachala! – Ramana Mahar

Go into your hearts, it is the greatest pilgrimage; better than a thousand Kaabas. – Rumi

AUM – THE CONSMIC VIBRATION BEHIND CREATION

By M.N. Kundu

The best way to pray or send our intention into the cosmos is through meditation on Aum mantra, the cosmic vibration behind every creation. Maharshi Patanjali held Aum as the

e, òIn the beginning was the word, and the word was
l things were through Him.ö It is the ÷Amenø In the
Brahman. At the very root of the universe is the creative
Aum. It is the sound symbol of the Absolute and it also
called *anahata*, which means a sound produced with the absence of friction. All other sounds
are produced only through friction.

In spiritual practice, the cosmic sound of Aum as the focal point of meditation tunes us with
the cosmic vibrations that are at the root of all created things, both mental and material.

Aum is a combination of four sounds and a continuous nasal humming sound of vibration.
Audible or mental chanting is good, but meditation on this sound is the best. Sit down,
keeping the spine erect. Take a few deep breaths. Slowly release tension from the entire
body, part by part. Feel the tension leaving your body with outgoing breath. Observe the
whole body down from the crown chakra as a lump of flesh bound by a chain in the crown.

With your attention fixed on the third eye and on the crown chakra, mentally listen to the
sound Aum, till it becomes constant. Just stay anchored and the right fortune will come to
you. ó *Speaking Tree*, August 2, 2015

SELF-ACCEPTANCE: It is being kinder towards our limitations and not blaming ourselves
for negative events of our life. As we pay attention to accepting ourselves the way we are ó
with all our limitations, it automatically raises our ability to accept others as they are. ó *Rajiv
Vij*

NOVEMBER – 2015

SURRENDER

**There is no destiny. Surrender, and all will be well. Throw all the responsibility on God.
Do not bear the burden yourself. What can destiny do then? Complete surrender is not
possible in the beginning. Partial surrender is possible for all. In course of time that
would lead to complete surrender. – Sri Ramana Maharshi**

WHAT IS IGNORANCE? It is the failure to discriminate between the permanent and the
impermanent, the Self and the non-Self. ó *Patanjali*

BHAGAVAN'S EARLY DAYS AT VIRUPAKSHA CAVE

Swami moved up onto the eastern slope of the Hill. They found the cave unoccupied. The Om-shaped cave had been the home of Virupaksha Deva, who attained *mahasamadhi* by turning to ash in the cave itself. When Bhagavan occupied the cave the *samadhi* of the saint in the form of a pile of ashes was still there, in the shape of a linga, at the centre of the cave, where it lies today.

When Brahmana Swami (Bhagavan's name at that time), and Palaniswami arrived at Virupaksha, administrative control of the cave was in dispute among members of the Viraasiva community. Since neither of the two disputing parties had a clear mandate to manage the premises, the cave was left unattended, which meant that it could be occupied without seeking anyone's permission. A couple of years later, when the court settled the matter, the victorious litigant assumed control of the cave and began charging a 3-paisa levy to each of the numerous visitors, who went there for Bhagavan's *darshan*. When the Swami got wind of this, he moved outside onto a level patch of ground that is now Virupaksha's veranda. When authorities persisted in their solicitations, the Swami moved down to Sadguruswami cave with pilgrims in tow, leaving Virupaksha completely abandoned. Soon, those having the right on the cave, recognised the futility of taxing sainthood and they invited the Swami back to Virupaksha to remain without intrusion from anyone.

After years of looking for isolated places in which to repose in silence, moving up onto the Hill meant that the Brahmana Swami was in the company of others seeking similar retreat from noise and distractions of the world. But while they all lived as hermits, they found that they had like interests and needs and thus gradually formed a loose-knit community. Soon, existing residents on the Hill began to appreciate the considerable spiritual attainment of the newcomer from Tiruchuli and began to turn to him for guidance.

The Beginning of an Ashram Kitchen

When visitors came to see Brahmana Swami, they had to drink water from an earthen mug. It was suggested to Palaniswami that he keeps a proper tumbler for the sake of those who did not like to drink from earthen mugs. But Palaniswami, in the spirit of maintaining a life of simplicity, ignored the suggestion, even refusing to accept offers of a tumbler.

For the first many years at Virupaksha, they had nothing to cook with apart from one or two mud pots. One day, a woman-devotee brought some eatables for Bhagavan in a small vessel, very old and battered and patched up in many places. When the old vessel was returned to her, she said: "It might be of some use here. Please keep it." Thus, the beginning of the

leaky, tattered metal vessel donated by one who had so
vessel after another found their way to the Ashram.

Brahmana Swami would not allow any discrimination in matters of food. No fixed time for meals was observed. Brahmana Swami and his followers sat down for food when it was available. The Swami felt that direct appeals for food should not be made. Offerings from devotees should be considered *prasad* and treated with respect and never wasted.

One festival day, Virupaksha residents were availing themselves of sweets brought by devotees, when an old widow known to Brahmana Swami came with boiled *ragi* (millet) and placed it before him. Since losing her husband, she regularly gave *kanji* (gruel) to the poor and to *sadhus*. Since the time Brahmana Swami told her that *ragi* caused chill in the body and should be mixed with some ground wheat like *suji*, she had prepared it accordingly. On this festival day, she prepared the food according to the Swami's suggestion, offered it to him and went away. Bhagavan told those serving that they might eat the *laddus*, *jalebis* and other sweets, while he began to eat the *ragi* with great relish. A devotee protested, "When there are such nice preparations available why are you filling your stomach with *ragi*?" The Swami said, "Like all the other items, this food has also been donated. What am I to do? Do you want me to throw it away?" The devotee replied, "If all of us eat a little, it will be finished. We can eat it in the afternoon." Bhagavan asked, "Will it not spoil by then? On the other hand, the sweets will not spoil if kept over and besides, people will eat them without needing any persuasion. When she has brought her offering with such devotion, can we waste it?"

Bhiksha from the Seven Virgins

The burden of "swamihood" was evident on various occasions, not least of all when food offerings came in excess. Bhagavan once told the following story: "One day I had overeaten as I had to eat what two or three devotees had brought. Planning to skip lunch, without telling anyone, I went through the jungle path toward Sona Tirtham when some women met me and asked, "Swami! Is there a tank here? Is there any water here?" I showed them Sona Tirtham and was about to leave when they said, "Swami! It is our good fortune to find you here. Please eat something." Each one put something on a leaf until it was full. I ate it all. Like the "Seven Virgins" they were also seven in number. Then I went into the forest and took rest. Between noon and 1p.m. I went on further around the Hill and stopped at a nearby tank to drink water where, to my surprise, I saw them again. Again they asked, "Swami! Can we get drinking water here?" I showed them the tank and was about to leave when they asked me to eat a little rice. They competed with each other to give me more and more rice. I thought it was a punishment for me. They said that they had come to the forest to collect leaves to

...s contained no leaves but only food. I left them and
...am. Around 5 p.m., I came out of the *mantapam* to go
...t I stepped out I saw Manavasi Ramaswami Iyer
...y at seeing me was unbounded. He had cooked fine
mangoes in *rasam*, as he thought I would like them, and had brought them to me. What could
I do? He had prepared something especially for me. So I ate two mangoes. It is like the story
of a man who fled the town of mice and found himself in the land of tigers! I reached
Virupaksha in evening after having had sumptuous food three times in the course of the day. I
thought I would go without food that day, but this is how it ended.ö ó *Saranagathi*, July 2015

PERSONAL ATTENDANTS IN BHAGAVAN'S HALL

**These included: Rangaswamy, Satyananda Swami, T.P.Ramachandra Iyer,
Venkataratnam, Ramakrishna Swami, Subrahmaniam and Sivananda Swami.**

Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* says, "Out of thousands, perhaps one strives for spiritual perfection. Out of those who strive, perhaps one knows me as I AM." There is also an ancient saying that goes: "Many are called, but only a few are chosen." The inner aspiration to seek the truth, or *mumukshutva*, is a very rare and extraordinary trait. One needs the grace of God to be a seeker. It is also said that it takes a great deal of struggle and many years of striving in order to arrive at the truth. But, for Bhagavan it was as easy as reading the letters of the alphabet. Why was this? It is because he was none other than Arunachala reincarnated.

Three kinds of people came to Bhagavan: (i) Seekers who came to meditate and contemplate before Bhagavan, focused on personal *sadhana*. To this set belonged Muruganar, MunagaVenkataramaiah, Viswanatha Swami and others. (ii) Those who came to serve at the ashram office. These people carried out their duty with the approval of Bhagavan. For instance, my grandfather, Niranjananda Swami was the *sarvadhikari*, the storekeeper and also held other responsibilities. (iii) Those who came to become personal attendants of Bhagavan. These were all men and they stayed within the ashram so that they could dedicate their entire time to the service of Bhagavan. Kunju Swami, himself a personal attendant of Bhagavan right from the days of Skandashram and later on at Ramanasramam, gave a beautiful account of the kind of interaction between Bhagavan and his personal attendants: "Bhagavan would sleep on the sofa in the hall; the other attendants and I would sleep near the sofa. It was Bhagavan's habit to get up at three-thirty and go out. As soon as he got up from the sofa, one of us would hand him the torchlight; not once was it necessary for him to call out to us by our name or wake us up for the torchlight. The minute he got up, we too seemed to get up automatically and without any effort on our part. Bhagavan's glance in our direction

and we would wake up at once. Bhagavan never gave us but being his attendants we would always anticipate his necessary.ö

Individuals were not doing just physical work; Bhagavan was also focussing on the improvement of their personal *sadhana*. About this, Kunju Swami said, öI once asked Bhagavan permission to stay outside the ashram so that I could devote all my time to spiritual *sadhana*. I told Bhagavan that just doing service did not give me complete satisfaction. Bhagavan commented, öReal service does not lie in washing my clothes, but in cleansing the mind.ö So far as spiritual practices were concerned, Bhagavan once remarked, öThe practice of Self Enquiry is mandatory. Everyone should practise contemplation or *dhyana* whenever there is time. If this is not possible, they could practise *japa* or the repetition of the sacred name. If even this is difficult, a person can always recite sacred verses from the scriptures or verses composed by sages and saints. A person should be engaged in practising one of these things.ö Once Kunju Swami started staying outside the ashram, other personal attendants came to serve Bhagavan. These attendants were blessed to the core because they served Bhagavan day and night. ó *Ramana Periya Puranam* by V. Ganesan, available on line.

FOREIGNERS AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AT THE ASHRAM

By Balarama Reddy

N. Balarama Reddy, M.A. (1908-95) came to Bhagavan in 1937, and remained with him till the *mahanirvana*. *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* contains many more of his reminiscences at pages 69-72.

I saw many Western visitors come to the Ashram after reading or hearing about the Maharshi. Of all these foreigners, none impressed me as much as Grant Duff. He was 70-year-old, tall, lean, graceful in his movements, and when he spoke his word were clear and soft, originating from a deep sincerity. On his first visit, I remember his asking if he could hear the Vedas recited. A chair was place opposite Bhagavan's couch for him, while the priests chanted. At the conclusion of the *parayana* he looked at Bhagavan and said with deep feeling, ÆMagnificent!ø Bhagavan also spoke of his virtues. Rarely did I hear Bhagavan speak about anyone like that¹. He studied Sanskrit for six months in Ootacamund. He loved the language

written in English in such high terms about Bhagavan as
to *Sri Ramana Gita*².

Duff, was another Englishman attracted to Bhagavan. He had an M.A. from Oxford University. Because of his many projects which he wanted to carry out in India, he was unable to stay with Bhagavan for any length of time.

Bhagavan was familiar with, and had respect for, the English classics. He read many English books and would daily read an English newspaper. Professor W.Y. Evans-Wentz gave copies of his books, and Bhagavan liked best *Tibet's Great Yogi, Milarepa*. He once asked me to read it.

Although Bhagavan read and understood English quite well, he rarely spoke in English. If people spoke English to him with clear diction and pronunciation, he would not have much trouble understanding them. Once he said to me, "I couldn't understand a word Chadwick said." [Major Chadwick, a great devotee, has authored *A Sadhu's Reminiscences of Ramana Maharshi* (1961).]

Bhagavan was once walking to Palakottu when the American engineer Guy Hague was standing directly in his path, apparently waiting to ask something. I was approaching from behind, but before I reached there, Hague had asked, "Can I help others after the attainment of Self-realisation?" Bhagavan replied in concise English. "After the realisation of the Self, there will be no others to help." ² *My Reminiscences*, a publication of the Ashram.

1. Refer entry no. 16 (19-1-1935) of *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, for what Bhagavan said about Duff, "Just think of an old man of 70 not choosing to live peacefully in his own house on the income he has 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. He could have been happy in his own house. It is his longing for internal peace that has brought him here."

2. The Preface to the first English translation of *Sri Ramana Gita* in 1935 by Munagala Venkataramiah (Author of "Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi") was written from London by Grant Duff, the last para of which was: "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. The sole difficulty is that of paying for the journey; there is no danger, and the reward is *Knowledge of the Self*. To say anything more would be absurd, because there is nothing beyond the Self." Page xv. (It is an Ashram publication.) For Duff's elevating reminiscences and poem on Bhagavan see *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, pages 29-30.

This poem on Bhagavan, see *Face to Face with Sri*

speaking devotees and how they interacted with Bhagavan are in the book *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, also available on line.

MEDITATION: One-pointed concentration on the inner Self to the exclusion of all other thoughts is the highest form of human activity and is the best method of get connected with the Supreme Spirit. But the power of *maya* or delusion is pulling us towards the glitter of the world. To avoid getting bogged down in *maya*, before starting meditation, chant the Divine Name with deep devotion. Cry sincerely to the Almighty with the words: "God I cannot live without you. You are the power behind my consciousness. I love you. Must you remain hidden? Reveal Yourself to me." *Anup Taneja*

VICHARA: From *vi*: "special" + *char*: "to move", "to roam", "to practise", "to conduct oneself" (lit) "the special or best way to engage oneself" *Vichara* means discrimination, deliberation, examination or investigation. Among the highest expressions of the spiritual search, *vichara* focuses on solving the problem of mistaking the Self for conditioned phenomena such as the body, the egoist mind. It consists in "turning the mind back on itself" using the mind to see through the mind's own self-delusion by returning to the source and dispensing with all that is "non-Self". Bhagavan says, "He who engages in investigation starts holding on to himself, asks "Who am I?" and the Self then becomes clear to him. Engage in Self-investigation, then the non-self will disappear. *Vichara* is the ultimate route." (See Talks §251, 172)

REMINESCENCES OF KITTY OSBORNE

She was daughter of a well-known devotee Arthur Osborne*. Born in 1936, she came to Tiruvannamalai in 1941. She stays in the house her parents built. She also owns a house in Kodaikanal, where she spends her summer. The article written by her for *Mountain Path* (July-Sep., 2015), is excerpted below.

When I was a little girl, our whole world centered around the old hall. The Samadhi hall of course had not been built yet! It was a dusty piece of ground with a few sleeping dogs and strutting peacocks. What is now a window opposite Bhagavan's couch was another door. We would all gather in the hall to be with Bhagavan. Often there were long periods of silence but often there was talk! just chat and lots of laughter. The thing I remember most vividly is how we all came to Bhagavan with our stories, our problems and our bits of gossips from

in Tamil which my brother and sister and I spoke pretty
children do, with ease and speed. As children, in spite of
we were not a bit conscious of being in any way different
of us were dust covered most of the time.

Everyone showed Bhagavan their letters, either from home about family or if they were of significance in any other way, and Bhagavan took a keen interest in them. He had a light voice, which was quite distinctive. Every morning he read the newspapers. At 9 or 10 o'clock he would go for a walk up the hill for about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour or so. Once, he and his attendant decided to walk on to Skandashram so they got late. The monkeys around the hall went crazy! There was screaming and anxiety and worry until he got back and they could relax. Bhagavan also went for a walk on the hill at about 3 or 4 in the afternoon. For the rest of the time he sat on his couch and the hall was either full of chat or filled with impenetrable special silence that could surround him and make him as aloof as the sun.

Bhagavan loved to hear the Vedas and when the *pujaris* came in and sat near his couch and started to sing, then he sat up straight and listened with immense concentration.

Although we felt he was our friend, indeed our best friend; yet there was a feeling of deepest respect and awe in his presence. Every word that he uttered, however lightly, was sacred and filled with meaning. Sometimes when he spoke to one person, someone else sitting in the hall and having no part in the conversation would hear the same words and sense a message in them for himself. His touch was so light and subtle that one person in a room full of people might get a message and know it was for him. I never heard him repeating advice or instructions. All of us whose lives revolved around Bhagavan knew that his least word was important and could be ignored only at peril.

We used to take leave of him before going anywhere and greeted him when we got back. To this day, I take leave of Bhagavan before going on a trip and try to go to the old hall first thing when I get back. Once a man came to tell Bhagavan he was going for a job interview to Trichy or somewhere. Bhagavan said "So far", but in a negative sort of way. The man went and found that the meeting has been changed to another town and when he got there it was cancelled. He came back and told Bhagavan and all of us all about it. Bhagavan didn't say anything, but everyone thought why hadn't the man listened to Bhagavan in the first place?

I have told this story before, but it seems appropriate to mention again: A bullock cart driver came to see Bhagavan when his wife died. It was the middle of the monsoon and every day the rain poured down. He could not afford to have her cremated under cover and was at a loss what to do. Bhagavan looked out of the window and said as anyone might, "It may clear up

lock cart driver, who went home and made preparations up. He cremated his wife and then the rain poured down

Even as children, without being told and without, as far as I remember, ever discussing it, we knew that one word from Bhagavan could change the worldí just as we knew he would never speak that word.

My brother and sister and I would show Bhagavan our toys and he would inspect them gravely, giving as much attention to a doll which could open its eyes, as he did to a question of deep philosophical meaning. But when the story and chat time was over we knew at once. Bhagavan would turn into himself, and an immediate quiet descended in the hall. When Bhagavan was quiet like that *no one* spoke.

We were not the only ones who loved to sit in the hall to be in Bhagavan's company. There were the animals as well, coming and going in between the people. The dusty dog came in and did *namskaram* before Bhagavan's couch. The monkeys rarely came inside, they mainly chattered to him through the window but the peacocks would come and dance for himí it was so beautiful. The squirrels would come to the door and look around nervously, then make a dash for his lap to get some puffed rice or peanuts. Lakshmi, the cow, came sometimes as Bhagavan was her special friend, but usually he went to visit her in the cowshed.

I never really learned to meditate properly although I deeply admire people who could do it. My parents could do it for hours. Nowadays what I tend to do is to go and sit in the hall and silently tell Bhagavan everything I think he would care to know. I tell him the news of my home and family and ask for his advice on various matters where I need help. Often the answers pop into my head as I sit there and I am so grateful for his wisdom and counsel. Of course, I could be deluding myself but, I truly hope and think, not.

*He was the founder-editor of *Mountain Path* from 1964 till his death in 1970, when his wife Lucia succeeded him as editor till the end of 1973. Some details about him and his reminiscences are in *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* at pages 94 to 101.

HOW BHAGAVAN HELPED THE NEEDY – AN ANECDOTE

On one occasion the Maharshi and Mudaliar Swami were walking together on a hill, a little above Virupaksha Cave, where there was a huge rock about 15 feet high and with a cleft at the top. A little shepherdess stood there crying. On the Maharshi's asking her the reason, she

ed into the cleft and she was unable to retrieve it. The cleft, took the sheep on his shoulders, climbed up and
mana Maharshi by K. Swaminathan

Know thyself. – *Socrates, Greek Philosopher (469-399 B.C.)*

A slave is one who waits for someone to come and free him. ó *Ezra Pound*

The quality of our lives depends more on what we are inside than outside. –
Sukhabodhananda

The power of silence makes the impossible achievable. – *Kavery*

Silence is a friend who will never betray. – *Coleridge*

Self knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. – *J. Krishnamurti*

Leap and the net will appear. – *Zen saying*

Within us are riches greater than any on earth. – *Rajinder Singh*

EGO: It is one of the subtlest and trickiest blockages to meditation. It manifests in many forms: pride of wealth, knowledge, beauty, power, and so on. The soul is the source of all bliss. But we remain bereft of the gift as we are filled with thoughts of our body and mind. Persistent efforts and His grace alone can help us to reduce, if not overcome, ego. ó *Sant Rajindra Singh*

THINK BIG: Man dared to think that he could reach moon, and he landed there. Nothing is impossible for the one who thinks big. Our thoughts alone bind us. Break the bondage of limiting thoughts , think big, act wisely, and get results. ó *Swami Tejomayananda*

LEAVE YOUR COMFORT ZONE: It is a situation in which you feel safe or at ease. It is a challenge-free. It is a beautiful name for a non-creative zone. It is a self-created world which you may not like to leave. But it cannot stimulate development. Living in it does not give you the ability to face challenges. You create this world under the influence of your emotions and not applying your rational faculty. ó *Maulana Wahiduddin Khan*

DECEMBER – 2015

DIVE DEEP DOWN INTO SILENCE

n lies on its floor. The pearl is so small a thing, yet so
imilarly, the Self is like the pearl: to find it you must
ana Maharshi

PLACES HALLOWED BY BHAGAVAN RAMANA'S PRESENCE

By A.R. Natarajan

In search of his Father and in obedience to His command, Sri Ramana left his uncle's home in Madurai on 29th August, 1896, and reached Arunachala on the early morning of 1st September, 1896. He straight went to Arunachaleswara temple and went to the sanctum sanctorum. It was as if the Lord was waiting to receive him. He said, "Father, I have come." More words were superfluous. That night he took shelter in a house nearby. At midnight, when some inmates of the house came out, he ran into the Arunachaleswara temple through the eastern entrance. Unbelievably, it was open at that time.

He stayed in the thousand pillared hall for some time. There his spontaneous penance was disturbed by urchins. He then moved into an underground vault called Patalalingam. It was dark like a dungeon, filled with ants, vermins and mosquitoes. Sri Ramana remained absorbed in the Heart, totally unconscious of the body and ravages to it by the insects. The divine rescue operation was done by Mahan Seshadri Swami. Sri Ramana was lifted from this pit and deposited in front of the shrine of Lord Subramanya nearby, where he stayed for a couple of months. Then he shifted to the garden in the outer portion of the temple. Sri Ramana then moved to -Vahana mandapa, a place for the temple's vehicles of gods.

During the Karthigai festival the special divine lustre of Sri Ramana was noticed by two persons: Uddandi Nayanar and Annamalai Thambiran. They both felt that Sri Ramana needed protection and this objective would be best achieved if he is taken to Gurumurtam near Tiruvannamalai, which was under Thambiran's custody; where he was moved sometime early in 1897. Here also Sri Ramana had no body consciousness most of the time. In his state of *Sahaja Samadhi* he sat for some weeks leaning against the wall on a floor infested by ants. A black imprint was left by his back on the wall.

From Gurumurtam Sri Ramana was shifted to the adjoining mango grove. The owner of the grove had made arrangements for Sri Ramana's food and also for his attendant Palaniswami. Here his uncle Nelliappa Iyer visited him and begged of him to return home.

In August/September 1898, Sri Ramana shifted to Arunagirinather temple. After a couple of months he shifted to Pavazhakundru, a small hillock adjoining the Hill. His mother met him here in December 1898, but failed to persuade him to return home. From the early months of 1899, Sri Ramana began to live on the lower slopes of Arunachala, mostly in Virupaksha

Namasivya Temple, Mango Tree Cave, and Sadaguru followed by Sri Ramana's presence in the early years was followed for six months in 1905, when plague was raging in Madras and returned there again for three months in 1908, with Ganapati Muni

who had a vision, described by him as follows: "One morning all of us were sitting in front of Guru Ramana. Suddenly a shining resplendent and pleasing ball of light appeared; it touched his forehead six times and receded. Everybody was amazed! I decided that this was a symbol indicating that Bhagavan Ramana was Lord Kartikeya. Enshrining the same idea I composed an *Ashtaka* (eight verses) and praised the Maharshi."

In 1916, Sri Ramana moved to Skandashram. He came down to live near his mother's *samadhi* down the hill in 1922, where the present Ashram is located. Here he lived till his *mahasamadhi* in April 1950. ó *The Ramana Way*, August 2015

A STORY FROM THE ARUNACHALA MAHATMYAM

Pangunni was both destitute and lame. With legs crippled since birth and no way to provide for his family, he became a burden to his parents. His situation was unbearable as he had to endure humiliation and insult even from his own relatives. One day, unable to endure it any longer, he secretly left home limping away on his crutches. Lacking purpose and direction, he decided to end his life in a remote area on the *pradakshina* path around Arunachala.

Limping along, his depression and gloom mounted as he searched for a suitable place to make an end of it all. Just then he encountered a *sadhu* who wore a disinterested and detached look. The *sadhu* passed by without seeming to notice Pangunni. But then suddenly he whirled around, snatched the crutches from Pangunni's hands and threw them forcefully to the ground, "Why do you need these ornaments?" the *sadhu* demanded. In this final humiliation, Pangunni lost his temper and lunged at the *sadhu*. But before he could get his hands on him, the mysterious *sadhu* vanished from sight. Not willing to let go of the opportunity to vent his frustration, Pangunni ran after him ó without crutches! In his anger, Pangunni had forgotten all about his lameness. When he came to his senses, he found himself walking normally, without any aid whatsoever. Delirious with joy, he ran in *pradakshina* around the Holy Hill, singing the Lord's praises. Healed in body, mind and spirit, Pangunni returned home where he was received with all affection and reverence by his family. Pangunni eventually found a place in folklore, a testimony to Lord Arunachala's boundless compassion. ó *Saranagathi*, August, 2015

TEACHINGS OF SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI

By K. Swaminathan

talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi by M. Venkataramayya
e Maharshi and answers elicited by various visitors
(ii) Suri Nagamma's letters written to her brother from
November 1945 to January 1950, entitled Letters from Sri Ramanasramam. (iii) Day by Day
with Bhagavan by Devaraja Mudaliar which contains a date-wise record of discussion by
persons who met Bhagavan during March 1945 to January 1947. We shall never be able to
repay the debt we owe to these three persons for the record of happenings in the Old Hall,
which are now available to us.

To all earnest seekers, regardless of caste, status or prior preparation, the Maharshi
recommended the method of self-enquiry for immediate adoption. The method is not an
intellectual exercise, but an integration of *karma* (work for others) as an ancillary discipline,
and *jnana* (work for oneself) as the main effort.

People often asked the Maharshi about the state of realisation attained by Buddha, Jesus,
Sankara or Ramakrishna. His usual answer was, "Why worry about others, realise your own
self." He discouraged curiosity about God. "Leave God alone," he would say. "What of
yourself? Leave *moksha* alone. Is there a bondage? Are you bound? Who is it that is bound?"
He said, "All men are realised. Everyone is already realised and ever-realised. One thinks one
is bound because one mistakes the body for the Self, which is infinite. Realisation is not
something to be got. It is only the elimination of ignorance, *avidyanasa*. The ego belongs
neither to the body nor the Self and vanishes when an earnest enquiry is made into its
identity, its origins and connections."

The Maharshi deprecates all talk of "bringing down divine consciousness from above." He
asks, "Is not the divine consciousness already in the heart? The Upanishad says: he who is in
the sun is also in this man. Jesus says: The kingdom of heaven is within you. All agree that
the reality is within. You don't bring space or sunshine into the room. You only remove the
lumber or open the windows." The Self is never bound and needs no release. It is the body-
bound ego which causes all the trouble, raises all the difficulties and then longs for release.
What is to be brought about is not self-realisation, but realisation of our mistake that we are
bodies. Realising the Self is only letting go the non-self. The Self is obvious and ever present.

Self-enquiry is inclusive of all methods like *bhakti*, yoga and intellectual discussion. But the
vasanas have to be eliminated before *jnana* dawns. "One must be ready to sacrifice
everything for the sake of truth. The degree of renunciation is the measure of one's progress.
Desires can- not be weakened by yielding to them, as fire cannot be put out by feeding with
ghee. Self-restraint is needed and it is strengthened by knowledge. Repeated attempts to

se, weaken the desires. Never forget your true nature as

and the emotional approach of *bhakti* have the same goal.

In both cases, I ceases to exist as separate entity. I disappears first in *bhakti*, I disappears first in *jnana*. One must learn to cling and not expect to be carried. God and guru may serve as aids, but they don't act. "Can spectacles see the sun for you?"

Instead of wasting time on where to begin and instead of waiting for a guru or an opportunity for *satsang*, begin somewhere and begin now. "The guru is not exterior. The seeker should not get stuck in *upasana*, devotion and meditation. He should ask the question "Who am I?" and start *sadhana*." Thinking and action are temporary; they are bubbles or waves in the ocean of Being. *Samadhi* is one's natural state, the undercurrent beneath the waking, sleeping and dream states. It is an effortless state reached through effort, the egoless of sleep enjoyed while awake. When thoughts cease, the I AM *sphurana* rises suddenly and continues as thought-free awareness. Man longs for perfection, infinitude, permanence of happiness, for that is his real nature, his true Self. Tired of seeking it without, he turns inward and finds it within.

The Maharshi says, one should intellectually understand the Truth, "Awareness-Bliss is the sole reality. With firm faith in this, one should persist in the quest and gain direct experience." One should understand that intellectual conviction is one thing, realisation is another.

"Everyday life is also part of the Sadhana. The spiritual and secular are not two different spheres. Considering them to be different is a great mistake and causes much difficulty." To a person who wanted to retire into a cave in order to practise meditation, the Maharshi said: "He who is active in the world and yet remain desireless and remembers his own essential nature is a better *sannyasi* than one who wears an ochre dress and says he has renounced the world."

When a Christian wondered whether he could follow the method of self-enquiry and still continue to be faithful to his mother religion, the Maharshi replied: "What I say is the essence of Christianity. The Kingdom of Heaven and this world are not two different regions. The Kingdom is within your grasp, in your midst. The wise man sees this world as the Kingdom of Heaven. Others see only "this world". The difference lies in the angle of vision."

The Maharshi, for whom the *vyavaharika* or the empirical world was itself conceptual rather than real, freely used the dynamic names and stories of Siva and Vishnu, knowing them to be

count to be despised or discarded. He like other Hindus, the eye of poetry and the eye of pragmatism. òSiva and and Vaikuntha, are as real as our bodies and the world the phenomenal world. Space is in you. The body is in space. You are not in space. The true Ganges is within you. Bathe in it. The power of Arunachala cannot be denied. At the same time, Arunachala is within and not without.ö ó *Ramana Maharshi* published by National Book Trust.

REMINISCENCES OF MADHAVI AMMAL

Madhavi Ammal, elder sister of a well-known devotee of Bhagavan, K. K. Nambiar, came to Bhagavan in 1933 when her husband was posted as Chief Medical Officer at the government hospital in Tiruvannamalai. From her first meeting with Bhagavan, she became a devotee. Her husband, Dr. P. C. Nambiar, however, had never been religiously inclined and even refused to pass through the front gate of the Ashram. As his wife's regular visits were made against his will, he sometimes expressed his disapproval by scattering the fruit, flowers and other offerings she had carefully prepared to take along for Bhagavan. But, one day Bhagavan intervened in a curious way. When Bhagavan suffered an abscessed tooth, the state doctor was sent for. He entered the hall clad in a suit and approached Bhagavan's sofa. Much to the amusement of devotees in the hall, the doctor merely said, "Bhagavan, Vaayai thora". Bhagavan then opened his mouth for the procedure and by this single act, the prodigal doctor's life was forever changed. He now no longer made objections to his wife's visits and even felt that the hand that had touched Bhagavan was now endowed with a special grace to carry out future surgeries. He now visited the Ashram along with his wife, prostrated before Bhagavan and meditated in the hall along with other devotees.

The following reminiscences are from the introduction to Sri Ramana Tiruvaimozhi Lekhavali, her Malayalam translation of selections from Suri Nagamma's Letters from Sri Ramanasramam. Published in Sept. 1961, this personal account never appeared in English.

I first saw Bhagavan in February 1933 in the old hall. I only stood at the door of the hall. The moment Bhagavan saw me, he smiled. The smile came in a way that made it seem as though he was re-establishing an old connection and it produced a divine joy in me. òMay I come in?ö I asked politely in Malayalam.

òOh, yes, come and sitö was the reply in Malayalam. Hearing colloquial Malayalam, so beautifully flowing, from interior Tamil Nadu, surprised me. However, after smiling and telling me to come inside, he gave no other sign of recognition but went back to his earlier state as though unaware of my arrival. As he had shown such familiarity, I was expecting he would ask some general questions about my background. But his state of intense silence dumbfounded me. After sitting silent

loser to him and said, "My husband is working in the meet Bhagavanö. But Bhagavan only nodded.

am regularly. When asking for *upadesa*, Bhagavan used to reply, "Who is the guru? Who is the disciple? Everything is within you. Everything is your creation. There is nothing to be obtained from another. Whatever is gotten from others is of no lasting use. If you want information, there are lots of books available. You may read them." Thus one year passed. An unspeakable sorrow entered my heart. On March 12, 1934, I went to the Ashram as usual, completely unaware of what Bhagavan had in store for me. Except Madhavaswami, the Malayali attendant, no one was there with Bhagavan. I felt an extraordinary freshness and courage and spoke freely: "O Bhagavan! I have been coming for the past one year." Bhagavan asked, "What happened, are you being transferred?" "No, not yet but some day we will have to leave. Please give me some *upadesa* so that I will not forget Bhagavan."

Bhagavan was reading a letter. I was afraid he might say what he often said, "What is there to advise?" But instead, he gave no reply to my query. After some time, I began singing with full devotion a Telugu translation of Bhagavan's *Aksharamanamalai*. When I had sung all the verses, Bhagavan looked at Madhavaswami and said smilingly, "Ammal has finished praising Arunachaleswaraö. Realising that Bhagavan had been listening; enthusiastically I started telling him about my life. But he showed no indication that he was listening. Disappointed, I asked again, "O Bhagavan! Am I asking for something for which I have no qualification? If I have no qualification, then please say so."

Just then Bhagavan turned to me with a smile and suddenly a brilliant light filled the hall. By its glare and splendour, I could see neither Bhagavan nor my surroundings. This vision lasted only a brief moment but it was a moment that made a world of difference, for the unceasing craving for *upadesa* left me. I stood up, prostrated to Bhagavan and stood with folded hands. Bhagavan slowly turned and looked at me as though asking, "Are you done with the craving for *upadesa* now?" Bhagavan then took out a pen and paper from the writing table next to him and wrote a sloka. Handing it to me, he said, "Use this for *dhyana*ö. Receiving the sloka I prostrated in full devotion and departed from the hall in astonishment, hardly believing what had just occurred. The sloka read: *I adore Guha, the dweller in the Cave of the Heart, the son of the protector of the universe, the pure light of awareness beyond thought, the wielder of the weapon of jnana sakti and the remover of ignorance of blemishless devotees.* My life was different from then on. And my relationship with Bhagavan deepened. ó *Saranagathi*, August and September, 2015

an: "Certain mystic says that he had Self-realisation on some occasions and its effects lasted sometime afterwards, only to be gradually lost. Whereas, *Sri Ramana Gita* says that *Granthi* snapped once is snapped forever." Bhagavan said, "Oh yes! It happens. The predispositions adhering a person from time immemorial will draw him out and so ignorance overtakes him. The obstacles to remain steady in unbroken Bliss are (i) Ignorance, that is, forgetting that one is pure being. (ii) Doubt, that is, wondering if even the experience was of the Real or of the unreal. (iii) Error, that is, "I-am-the-body" idea, and thinking that the world is real." He added, "These can be overcome by "hearing" the truth (*Sravana*), "reflection" on it (*Manana*), and one-pointedly concentrating on Truth or the Inner Silence, all the time (*Nididhyasana*). The ripe aspirant has to raise the question and find the answer in oneself and experience that the unbroken "I" or "I" is the Truth. That is the first stage. To be reflecting on this experience, is the second stage. To remain one-pointed in the Truth or the Inner Silence or is the third stage." or *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*, 13-11-1935.

*Major A.W. Chadwick was in the British army. After getting captivated by Brunton's *A Search in Secret India*, he resigned his post and came to Ramanasramam in November 1935, and remained there for good. He became Sadhu Arunachala and lies buried in the Ashram campus. *Face to Face with Sri Ramana Maharshi* contains his reminiscences at pages 110-116.

SHUNYATA: emptiness, void, vacuity, from *shunya* meaning "empty", "zero", "nothing", "still", "lonely" based on the root stem *svi* meaning "hollow". *Shunyata* appears in the Upanishads as one of the attributes of the Supreme, namely, attributelessness or formlessness. In the *Shunya Samhita* it is described this way: It has no shape, no colour, It is invisible and without name; This Brahman is called *Shunya Brahman*. *Atma Brahman* is the space in the heart of the lotus out of which the whole of the phenomenal world is born. But since Brahman is unchanging, the changing world cannot be Brahman and thus must be unreal (*Mandukya Karika*). *Devikalottara* v.14 says, "The Void (*shunyam*, *Tam.* or *mahashunya*) is the effulgence of pure wisdom completely devoid of visible phenomena. Consisting of the aspect "I" it is the seed of liberation, the experience of which impels one to start on the path of union with the Supreme". Bhagavan says, "Emptiness (*shunya*) is the pure "nirvanic" state of the Self or *Turiya*, where no object is observed [but] where there is only the subject aware of nothing but Itself" (*Guru Ramana*, p. 181). or *Saranagathi*, September, 2015

complaints about God also. When they are in difficult this situation?ø They never said -Why me?ø When they us

HOW BHAGAVAN'S DEVOTEE RAMANAGIRI PRACTISED 'WHO AM I?'

Our mind is the greatest cheater in the world. It will make thousands of different reasons to go its own way. There are three ways of handling this cheat, who is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. First, to treat him as a friend and give him full satisfaction. This is a very long and tiresome way because he is never satisfied. Second, to treat him as an enemy and with all force try to get rid of him. This is only possible by the grace of the Divine because the mind has got two very powerful weapons ó the discriminating intellect and the imaginative faculty. These two fellows can convince even God himself that black is white. What I do to tame the mind is as follows.

First, I slow down my breath as much as possible, but to the point where there is no discomfort. To me, two breaths per minute is the proper speed, but that may not be possible for you because I have practised for a long time to achieve this. You may be able to decrease your breathing to 8-10 breaths per minute in the beginning. Don't get to a level where you are uncomfortable, because this discomfort will give rise to thoughts.

When thoughts occur I ask myself, -To whom have all these thoughts come? Three times I slowly repeat the same question, along with the breaths. Then, in that same slow manner I answer, -To me, to me, to meø Then who am I? Then who am I? Then who am I? All questions and answers are repeated three times, very slowly.

When this exercise is over, I concentrate 100% on the sound caused by the palpitation of the heart, as if the sound would give the answer to my questions. This is nothing but the *pranava* itself. If, during this time, the *sakthi* which was static is converted to movements or become dynamic, trance will occur. If the primal energy reaches the space between the eyebrows, *savikalpa-samadhi* will occur. If the energy rises up to the top of the head, *nirvikalpa-samadhi* will occur, which is nothing but the Self itself.

At the beginning of *atma-vichara*, some thought may occur at the time of *dhayana*. And I continue the quest, -To whom the thought has come? To me, to me, to me.ø Then who am I? Then who am I? Then who am I?



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something about how I tried to establish myself in the
different from the Self itself. ó Abstracts from an article in
li Mohan in his booklet *Self Realization ó What is it*

BEFRIEND THYSELF: ‘Lonelinessø expresses the pain of being alone, and ÷solitudeø expresses the glory of being alone. Instead of berating yourself, resolutely turn yourself into your best friend ó he who becomes his own soul-brother ó *atmeva atmano bandhu* ó and you would never be lonely. ó *Vithal Nadkarni*

SAMSKARAS: They are imprints left on the unconscious mind (*chitta*) by experiences, desires and actions in this or former lives, forming oneø mental disposition. Memory is said to be nothing other than *samskaras* seeping up from the unconscious. Every person is born with the *samskaras* of past lives. The more desires are fulfilled, the deeper grow the *samskaras*. They must become weaker before they cease to assert themselves. *Samskaras* sink into the heart at death and do not perish. That is how *jivas* are reborn. ó *Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

BLISS: The need for more is relentless and unending. It has become the pivot around which life revolves. The sublimation of intellect lies in its ability to efface itself and analyse itself, analogous to the eye turning on itself to be able to see itself. The human brain is equipped with the capability of realising that it is a part of the whole and also the whole, simultaneously. Bliss is realisation of the underlying unity of subject and object. ó *Deepak Ranade*

Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them. – Einstein

All of us are a bundle of ‘memories’. Memory is what makes each one of us different from others. – Vaitheeswaran

When you gain the knowledge of your real worth, fluctuations of the world will no longer traumatise you. They will only amuse you. – Jaya Row

Success consists of getting up just one more time than you fall. – Oliver Goldsmith

Raise your words, not voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder. – Jalaludddin Rumi

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom. – Aristotle

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