

The Maharshi



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Major Chadwick and Sujata Sen

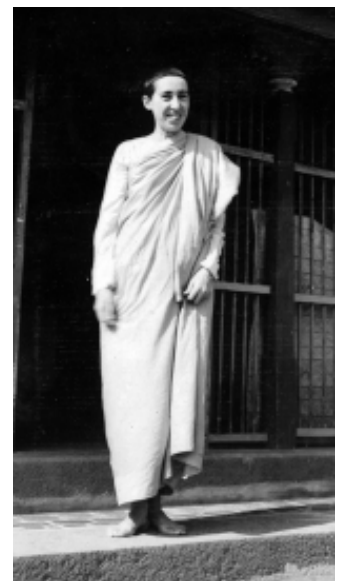
*From the unpublished **Chadwick's Bible**, Chapter 38, "Initiation," **Louis Buss** tells the story of Dr. Suzanne Sen, popularly known as Sujata Sen, and how Major Chadwick appears to have befriended her and helped her adjust to the ways of Bhagavan.*

IN SEPTEMBER 1940, a ship carrying troops and civilian passengers set sail from Liverpool. On board were a French woman called Jeanne Curtil and Monica, her half-Indian granddaughter. They had until now been living together in Brighton, where they may well have passed various members of the Chadwick family on the street without ever realising that they were distantly connected. Now Jeanne and Monica were on their way to start a new life in India, away from the growing dangers of the war. Having survived an air-raid on the eve of departure, the liner safely escaped English waters, though Monica was unable to comprehend why the captain kept zigzagging around instead of just going in a straight line. She was too young to be told that they were dodging German U-boats.

Eventually, having taken the long route around the Cape of Good Hope, Jeanne and her granddaughter docked in Bombay. There they were met by Suzanne Sen, who was Jeanne's daughter and Monica's mother. She was in a car which she had herself driven up from the south, covering a distance of some 750 miles. Even today, it would be an epic drive, and one which few Western women would consider undertaking alone. But Suzanne was a remarkable person, whose great qualities went far beyond her courage and spirit of adventure. She was

a gifted dancer, a medical doctor in an age when the profession was very much a male preserve, the first Theravadan Buddhist priestess in eight hundred years, a feminist firebrand and fierce antivivisectionist. In other words, like Chadwick, she was ahead of her time. Also like him, she was a pilgrim. After a spiritual journey no less tortuous and intense than Arthur Osborne's, she too had eventually wound her way to Arunachala and the feet of Ramana Maharshi.

Suzanne had naturally been apprehensive about her mother and daughter making the hazardous journey from England to India, but the Maharshi had personally assured her that they would be quite safe. Shortly afterwards, she'd had a dream in which she'd seen him sitting outside their house in Brighton with his hand raised in a gesture of protection. Now here they were, and soon three generations of the family were in the car together, bumping south towards Arunachala. The day after their arrival, young Monica stepped into



the Old Hall to behold the man about whom she'd already heard so much from her mother.

'At first,' she writes, 'I was a little afraid to come before her great Master about whom she had written so much to us. But when he looked at me I felt wonderfully safe and happy. He seemed to be infinitely wise and yet completely innocent, like a child. I saw in him great sweetness and gentleness; at the same time I felt his power.'

After a falling-out with the Theosophical Society, Monica's mother first went to the ashram in December 1936, just after the visit of Perumal Swami's lawyer. We are by now so familiar with the sofa and the revolving bookcase that it is perhaps difficult to imagine what sort of impact they must have made on a newcomer. But this strange hybrid place, half meditation hall and half suburban living-room, was perhaps the last thing one would expect to find in a jungle hermitage. Apart from the incense burner which smoked before the couch, there was nothing to suggest that you were in a religious institution at all. The Hall was a peculiar mixture of the public and the private, a home to which a theatre had been attached, where a man who had no personal life lived out his hours in public view. There sat the sole inhabitant behind his little fence, his loin-cloth jarringly at odds with his suburban setting, so that he looked like some wild man of the woods imprisoned in a Victorian drawing-room. For Ramana was one of the *rishis* of old, a relic from the age when giants walked the earth. He was a colossus in captivity, a caged tiger, its eyes shining like amber among the potted palms and plastic rocks.

Suzanne had by this time encountered her share of spiritual figures. But now she knew she had found her Master.

'He is an Adept of the highest order,' she was to write, 'a king of Yogis. The splendour of his Realisation radiates like the sun... Robed in ether his Yogic powers are unique, subtle and rare. He lifts you far above the world.' Already, she dreamed that she might one day be deemed worthy of acceptance as his disciple. For, as her talk of adepts and yogic powers perhaps suggests, Suzanne was still very much under the influence of the Theosophists, according to whom initiation by a true Master was the great prize without which no progress could ever be made.

Suzanne and Chadwick quickly became friends. Both came from Catholic backgrounds and both had undertaken a similar pilgrimage, and they must have had plenty to talk about. Yet Chadwick was the senior partner in every sense. Besides being the older of the two, he had come to Bhagavan first, and established himself at the heart of the ashram in a way no other Westerner could ever repeat. For Suzanne, as for many others, he was able to act as a mediator in this strange and sometimes inimical world. He was one of the few who had a relaxed relationship with Ramana and, almost as importantly, he would be able to put in a good word with Chinnaswami when needed. All in all, his cottage was like a foreign embassy, a little piece of Western territory right at the heart of the ashram. It must have been a comfort to Suzanne that he was so easy to make friends with, and so eager to help in any way he could.

Suzanne settled in Tiruvannamalai, where she was soon running a desperately needed medical practice in the town. She threw herself into this work with her usual energy and courage, dealing with all the horrors one might expect to come across in such a remote part of India, from the terrible effects of unchecked diseases to gruesome agricultural injuries and the results of botched medical procedures carried out by village healers. She was not just brave, but selfless, too, asking for payment only from those who could



Chadwick and Sujata Sen sitting on Bhagavan's left

afford it, with the result that she ended her long career slightly in debt. For all her remarkable qualities and for all her spiritual maturity, Suzanne still suffered the pangs of unrequited love. The more she came to recognize Ramana's uniqueness, the more she longed to receive initiation from him. Just as many women cannot believe they are really loved until they are officially married, so she could not accept that she was really a disciple until some formal ceremony had been performed. Failing that, she needed an explicit reassurance the initiation was not necessary, after all, and that Ramana was really her guru. Given the awe in which she held him, she was hardly likely to start badgering the Maharshi on the one topic he was so famously reluctant to discuss. So she put Chadwick up to it instead, making him promise never to let on that he was asking on her behalf.

So it was that in 1940, some five years after his arrival and long after he had given up the idea of receiving initiation himself, Chadwick mysteriously began pestering the Maharshi on that very subject.

'Bhagavan says that he has no disciples.'

The *Reminiscences* recount that as soon as he heard this opening question, Bhagavan gave Chadwick a suspicious look. Besides realising that another cross examination was about to start, he may already have guessed that this line of questioning couldn't have come from Chadwick himself.

Yes.

'But Bhagavan also says that for the majority of aspirants a Guru is necessary?'

Yes.

This, of course, was just the old inconsistency that had been pointed out by Perumal Swami's lawyer a few years before. Ramana Maharshi always insisted that a guru was necessary for everyone. Of course, that didn't include him, and he could never be cornered into admitting that he was a guru himself.

'What then must I do? Has my sitting here all these years been just a waste of time? Must I go and look for some Guru in order to receive initiation seeing that Bhagavan says he is not a Guru?'

Though the question might have been Suzanne's, the reply and its consolation applied equally to them both:

What do you think brought you here such a long

distance and made you remain so long? Why do you doubt? If there had been any need to seek a Guru elsewhere you would have gone away long ago.

He went on to say that from the *jnani's* point of view, there could be no difference between guru and disciple. This was why he could never be brought to admit that he was a guru, any more than he could be brought to sign his name on a document. Yet from the disciple's point of view, the relationship was real. There were three ways of initiation – by touch, by look and by silence. Ramana Maharshi's way was by silence.

'Then Bhagavan does have disciples!'

As I said, from Bhagavan's point of view there are no disciples; but from that of the disciple the Grace of the Guru is like an ocean. If he comes with a cup he will only get a cupful. It is no use complaining of the niggardliness of the ocean; the bigger the vessel the more he will be able to carry. It is entirely up to him.

Yet despite these tremendous and beautiful words, Chadwick went on pestering. In the end, Bhagavan humorously suggested that he should go to the ashram office and have them write him out a certificate, or even get them to put the office stamp on him. Perhaps that would satisfy him!

It was about as close as Ramana Maharshi ever came to admitting that he was a guru. Arthur Osborne, who like Suzanne had been tormented by the desire for initiation, found the conversation so interesting that he included a full account of it in his *Path of Self-Knowledge*. He ends up by saying that few were as persistent as Major Chadwick in their demand for an assurance, leaving us with the impression that he never realised Suzanne had been behind it all. Indeed, knowing Chadwick, he probably never let on, and was happy for everyone to go on thinking he had fallen prey to a sudden doubt. His own account in the *Reminiscences* ends with a little hint as to the truth, though it is as subtle as the hint he gives about the meditation belt: 'Anyhow, Bhagavan did clear the doubts of many by this conversation, in spite of which there are still some who say it was useless to go to Bhagavan because he gave no initiation and did not even recognise the relationship of Master and disciple.'

In the original manuscript of the book, the hint is just a little more open, though it still hardly risked

revealing Suzanne's secret: 'Of course, I had had no doubts, but I was interested to see how Bhagavan reconciled the two points of view.'

Yet none of this was enough for the woman who'd put him up to it. The more desperately she yearned for some sign of acceptance or love from Bhagavan, the more rocky and remote he seemed to become. Suzanne understood that, like Arunachala, he represented the ultimate absolute. Yet she needed something more human than a mountain, and some more concrete token than initiation by silence.

Eventually, in 1945, after ten years in Tiruvannamalai, Suzanne decided to leave. Her plan was to go to Swami Ramdas, another famous South Indian guru, who was himself an admirer of Ramana. Suzanne would not have been human if she hadn't seen this in some sense as a betrayal. The nature of her attachment to Bhagavan had always been deeply emotional. All in all, the pain of leaving Arunachala under these unhappy circumstances after all the joy she'd felt on arriving here must have been intense. A few days before Christmas, she went to tell Bhagavan of her decision

and to say goodbye. Even at this traumatic moment of parting, he did not say a single word to her. But as she watched, his appearance changed, until she realised that she was now staring at Dakshinamurti, the guru of all gurus, who had taught his disciples in silence. Then, although he still didn't speak, she heard him say: *There is no separation. All gurus are one. They are the indwelling self of everyone. I shall ever remain as the Jewel shining in the lotus of your heart.*

Suzanne was happy with Swami Ramdas. Almost as soon as she had arrived, he willingly gave her the initiation she had craved for so many years. All in all, the atmosphere was much warmer and friendlier here.

After breaking herself again and again against the unfeeling rock of Arunachala, Suzanne felt she'd been accepted into an extended family with Ramdas as its loving father. His spiritual children could sit and chat with him, or even touch him, with none of the formality and awe that surrounded the lofty, silent figure of Ramana Maharshi. Suzanne stayed for eighteen blissful months, as if taking a sort of spiritual rest cure. Then she returned to her rock.

Sri Ramana Retreat in Florida

Final Notice

AFTER a successful and inspiring retreat last year in Tampa, many have requested it be repeated again this year. So this year's three-day retreat will consist of periods of meditation, chanting, readings, presentations, satsang and quiet time for reflection, and will once again be held at the Franciscan Center of Tampa, Florida. The retreat will coincide with Bhagavan Ramana's 135th Jayanti and will take place from

Friday, December 26th to Sunday the 29th.

By the end of September we will send out registration forms to everyone who has contacted us, so please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested. Details related to the cost for lodging and food will be provided along with the forms. For more information, please contact:

rohithk vaidya@yahoo.com / (813) 766-0145 or dennis@arunachala.org / (718) 560-3196

The program will be held at:

The Franciscan Center, 3010 N. Perry Avenue, Tampa, Florida 33603

Website: <http://www.franciscancentertampa.org/>

The Franciscan Center was founded by the Franciscan Sisters of Allegany, New York. The center is located on eight acres of property overlooking the beautiful Hillsborough River in Riverside Heights, Tampa, Florida. It is 10 minutes east of the Tampa International Airport, 40 minutes east of the Gulf of Mexico (St. Pete and Clearwater Beaches) and 10 minutes from downtown Tampa. Photos and descriptions of the accommodations and facilities are available on the Franciscan Center's website.

Hridaya

By Patrick Roberts

In the inmost core, the Heart
Shines as Brahman alone
As 'I-I', the Self aware.
(*Ramana Gita, II,2*)

'The whole cosmos is contained in one pinhole in the Heart.' (*Talk No. 263*)

BHAGAVAN Sri Ramana Maharshi gave the world three major revelations: the practice of Self-enquiry, the knowledge that Arunachala Hill is the manifestation of Shiva, and the fact of the existence of the spiritual heart centre (for brevity hridaya, Sanskrit for 'the heart') on the right side of the chest. Perhaps the third one is the most amazing as, despite all its wonders, modern medical science is unaware of hridaya. It appears also to be unknown in other traditions and even a Twentieth Century Hindu sage like Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj said that he had no knowledge of its existence. This must mean that Self-realisation can occur without any experience of hridaya; strangely enough, it seems that only Ramana devotees can have knowledge of it.

Hridaya is two digits to the right of the centre of the chest, shaped like an inverted lily bud. It is not an organ of the body. It is the core of your being, your Heart and yet somehow we are ignorant of it. It is the seat of consciousness, where it rises and sets, as it were, and the source of the 'I'-thought. 'But as the 'I' rises from the Heart it must sink back and merge there for Self-realization.' (*Day by Day with Bhagavan, 16-6-46*)

Sri Ramana has compared hridaya to a dynamo and has described how the energy of consciousness flows through the sushumna channel (nadi) to the sahasrara (crown of the head chakra) and then spreads all over the body. 'Because consciousness pervades the entire body, one gets attached to the body, regards the body as the Self, and views the world as apart from oneself.' (*Ramana Gita, 9,11*)

Hridaya can be felt physically as a powerful revolving pulsation (sphurana) that eliminates thought. Sometimes Sri Ramana would allow privileged devotees to touch his chest and feel this pulsation. (*Talk No. 403*)

The primary meaning of sphurana is 'shining'. The spiritual illumination called 'atma sphurana' is an intermediate state when the Self has not been fully revealed since the ego is still present. Ramana declared that it is a foretaste of and a prelude to realisation.

When he had his second death experience at Tortoise Rock a devotee with him wept to see his body turn blue. Sri Ramana said that his physical heart had stopped yet the 'Heart centre on the right was working as well as ever. This state continued fifteen or twenty minutes. Then suddenly something shot out from the right to the left, resembling a rocket bursting in the air. The blood circulation was resumed and normal condition restored.' (*Talk No. 408*)

When Palani Swami was dying, Sri Ramana sat with one hand on his head and one on hridaya. Unfortunately, because he withdrew his hand from hridaya too soon, Palani was not liberated in his final moments and went to a higher world instead. Sri Ramana did not repeat that mistake at his mother's deathbed, thereby ensuring that she was absorbed in Arunachala. When Valli the deer was dying Bhagavan sat with her for an hour in the same way, but he said there was no need for it with Lakshmi the cow. She was already liberated.

When you fall asleep sitting up, your head falls forward, indicating that consciousness has left the brain and returned to the hridaya. Many clever neuroscientists imagine that consciousness is a sort of by-product of the electro-chemical activity of the brain and are then baffled as to how the material can produce that which is immaterial. In my opinion, consciousness is not the product of the brain; the brain is the product of consciousness, like everything else. If, when someone is waving to get your attention, you are unsure whether it is you who is meant, you intuitively point to the centre of your chest, yourself. How can anyone ignore or discount hridaya, let alone doubt its existence?

It goes without saying that from an absolute point of view the Self, pure consciousness, which is infinite and omnipresent, can have no location. Paradoxically, from a relative standpoint the Self can be said to be located in hridaya. Obviously, this does not mean that the Self is confined within the body. Sri Ramana subtly stated both positions to different people. Similarly,

Arunachala, which Sri Ramana worshipped as his guru, is the physical embodiment of Shiva, yet Shiva is not limited by or confined to this gracious appearance. Sri Ramana discouraged some people from 'meditating' on hridaya if he felt that they misunderstood Self-enquiry as a dualistic practice rather than one of extreme introversion.

The knot of ignorance (hridaya granthi) is the link formed by the ego ('I'-thought, mind or subtle body) between the Self and the insentient body. Awareness of the body arises because of this link. When this knot is cut, identification with the body ceases and Self-realisation occurs. In *Ramana Gita*, Chapter 9, "On Cutting the Knot", Sri Ramana has described the process of 'churning of the channels' brought about by intense Self-enquiry whereby the mind is withdrawn permanently from the other channels and stays in the supreme channel, the sushumna.

There are various references in the Upanishads to the 'heart cave' (hrt-guha). The following translations are by S. Radhakrishnan who usually calls guha the 'secret place'.

'He who knows that which is set in the secret place (of the heart), he, here on earth, O beloved, cuts asunder the knot of ignorance.' (*Mundaka Upanishad II.1.10*)

'Having meditated upon him who is the measure of a thumb within the span (of the heart) in the body, who is smaller than the small, then one goes to the supreme condition.' (*Maitri Upanishad VI.38*)

'He who knows Brahman as the real, as knowledge and as the infinite, placed in the secret place of the heart and in the highest heaven realises all desires along with Brahman, the intelligent.' (*Taittiriya Upanishad II.1.1*)

'Realising through self-contemplation that primal God, difficult to be seen, deeply hidden, set in the cave (of the heart), dwelling in the deep, the wise man leaves behind both joy and sorrow.' (*Katha Upanishad I.2.12*)

'The person of the size of a thumb resides in the middle of the body, like a flame without smoke. He is the lord of the past and the future. He is the same today and the same tomorrow. This, verily is that.' (*Katha Upanishad II.1.13*)

Finally, in my opinion, knowledge of hridaya is central to Ramana's teaching. He reiterated constantly that Self-enquiry consists in fixing the attention on

the unreal 'I'-thought and questioning it until it disappears, merging in its origin, hridaya. However, the practice of concentrating on the right side of the chest, as you would the space between the eyebrows, is not part of Self-enquiry.





The experience of atma sphurana may eventually arise as a result of Ramana's grace. He said, 'A tiny hole in the Heart remains always closed and is opened by vichara. The result is 'I-I' consciousness, the same as samadhi.' (*Conscious Immortality, 4th ed., p 36*)

'The illumination is experienced in the right side of the chest, in the Heart, when the Self is realised'. (*Ibid, p 27*)

2015 Calendars

are now available from Sri Ramanasramam, India, at their following website link:

http://worldstore.sriramanamaharshi.org/index.php?main_page=index&cPath=163

	Desk Calendar (Arunachala Hill Photo) 2014 Desk calendar with a photo of Sri Ramana Maharshi and a quotation from the Master.	\$3.00 Add: <input type="text" value="0"/>
	Desk Calendar (Bhagavan's Photo) 2014 Desk calendar with a photo of Sri Ramana Maharshi and a quotation from the Master..	\$3.00 Add: <input type="text" value="0"/>
	Diary 2015 Diary 2014 includes 12 photographs of Bhagavan, along with appropriate quotations for each day from...	\$5.00 Add: <input type="text" value="0"/>
	Wall Calendar Beautiful wall calendar with a photo of Bhagavan for every month with a quotation from the Master.	\$5.00 Add: <input type="text" value="0"/>

SIX MEOWS

(Six verses in praise of Bhagavan Sri Ramana)

By Kathy Smith

I thought I found you.
 I thought Abhishiktananda led me to you
 So long ago in his caves at Arunachala.
 I have come to realize
 That all along it was You — the Secret of Arunachala —
 who found me.

Long before, in a meadow, you found me
 And devastated me.
 I could not bear the knowing
 Of being so loved.

Since that moment — December 4, 1987 —
 I renounced all desires
 Save only the desire
 To realize Oneness.

You have led me and instructed me all these years
 On the path of vichara.
 Gradually, gently, by your silence, You have led me to know
 Who I Am.

Who I really am
 And Who You really are — hidden in that sweet, golden
 body of Ramana —

Is not two.
 I-I can never be apart, even for a moment,
 For there is no Other to be apart from.
 But this awareness is not yet unbroken.

Soon, when my journey across this ocean of samsara is
 completed,

I will shed this body
 And merge into your beautiful blue lotus feet.

I surrender all, Ardhanareeswara,
 O Arunachala Siva, Bhagavan Sri Ramana,
 My Rock, my only Refuge!

Om, shanti, shanti, shantihi.

Ramana Satsangs in the USA and Canada

Regular satsangs with recitations, songs, readings and meditation are conducted in or near large cities. Some of them are weekly. If you would like to attend any of these, please contact the individuals below for more information.

Atlanta Area — Mangalam Kalyanam (678-546-0378 / smoothcutter@hotmail.com)

Ann Arbor, MI — Nirupama & Ramesh (574-514-4766 / neeru_2@hotmail.com)

Birmingham, AL — Sai Kand (205-441-6859 / kandsai@yahoo.com)

Boston, MA — David & Anna (617-928-1487 / annaklegon@gmail.com)

Chicago Area — Jean-Luc & Rita (719-480-3530 / blueskyvalley@mac.com)

Connecticut Area — Aruna & Ram (860-284-0078 / rsankaran2000@yahoo.com)

Chapel Hill, NC — Ranjani Ramanan (919-338-2551 / ranjanil@yahoo.com)

Dublin, Ohio — Abilash & Madhavi (614-789-9058 / mungamuru@hotmail.com)

Ft. Lauderdale Area — David & Janet Robinson (954-755-4758 / arunahill@gmail.com)

Houston, TX — Kumar Saran (832-435-3761 / saran01@earthlink.net)

Los Angeles, CA — Natarajan & Indira Venkatesan (310-473-9441 / nvenky30@yahoo.com)

New Jersey, Pennington — Nandini (609-730-8447 / nandinikapadia@yahoo.com)

Ottawa, Canada — Anantha Padmanabhan (613-733-8250 / padmanabhan_ananth@hotmail.com)

Puerto Rico — Rosa & Scott Mathewson (787-531-5295 / rosilnm@hotmail.com)

San Francisco Area — Karthik & Sunita (510-656-2752 / sunita_parasuraman@yahoo.com)

San Francisco Area — Subadra & TKS (925-373-6909 / subadra2001@yahoo.com)

Seattle, WA area — Sunil Bala (425.996.4144 / sunil.n.bala@gmail.com)

Tampa, Florida — Rohit ((813-766-0145 / rohitkvaidya@yahoo.com)

Toronto, Canada — Thiru (416-876-1942 / thirusivasamy@hotmail.com)

Vancouver, Canada — Akash (778-321-4499 / eternalshiva@hotmail.com)

Washington, D.C. Area — Uma & Santosh (301-528-5526 / uma_santosh@hotmail.com)