

The Mountain Path



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HOW I CAME TO BHAGAVAN RAMANA

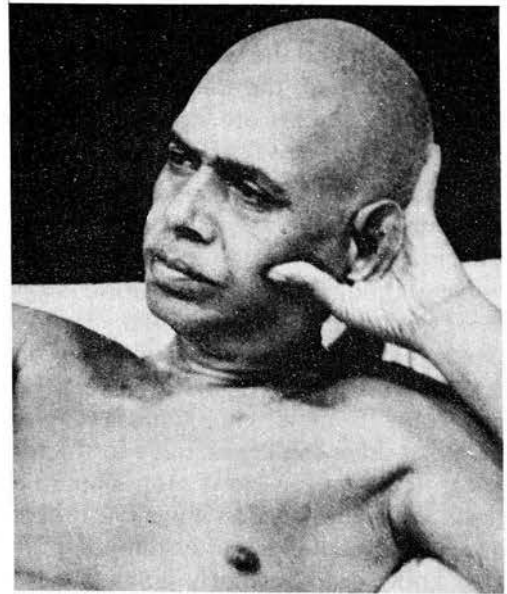
By B.V.L.N. Raju

I HAIL from Jinnuru, a village in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh and belong to a peasant community. During 1954, I accompanied my maternal grand mother in a pilgrimage to the Northern part of the country.

In 1957 I had a dream one night. An old man with a staff in his hand, raised me from the bed and kissed me hard on my cheeks. I was perplexed. I pleaded with him to leave me alone. The stranger paid no heed to my words. I had a feeling that he was invading my life. I was seized with fear and tried hard to wriggle out of his grip. While he was holding me in his embrace, my pillow fell on to the floor. He lifted it off the ground, adjusted it on my bed and gently laid me back on the cot. He looked at me compassionately and left me, as a doctor would leave a patient.

For six months I was struggling to know who this stranger could be. One day while reading *The Hindu* in our village Library, I saw an advertisement of *The Great Man of India* by Madras Book Publishing House. Going through the list of these great men, I felt a thrill when I read the seventh name as "Sri Ramana Maharshi". I felt here was the man who would draw me to the cave of my heart. I got the book on Sri Ramana Maharshi through post from the Madras Company. The book contained his portrait also and I recognised the person who had appeared before me in my dream six months earlier.

The divine person, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, lived in 'Arunachala' in Tamilnadu and was revered all over the world. His phy-



sical life ended on 14th April 1950, in his seventieth year.

He had no personal life of His own. His life was but the splendour of the Self. Equality was His life breath. Many blessed people achieved fulfilment in their lives by the mere *darshan* of the Maharshi. He was like a blazing sun in the spiritual firmament of India. The Chanting of His name is auspicious. He is the *Mahatma* of all *Mahatmas*.

I paid my first visit to Sri Ramanasramam in January, 1959. I have dedicated my life from then on till now to His service. It was not my choice that He came into my life. He took me into His fold and blessed me!

**Ere there was a garden and wine and grape in the world
Our soul was intoxicated with immortal wine.
In the Baghdad of Eternity we
proudly were proclaiming, "I am God".**

— Jalalud-din-Rumi from *Diwan*