

Paul Brunton - Architect of a 21st Century Philosophy

by Peter Holleran

Paul Brunton (1898-1981) was one of the first westerners to visit Sri Ramana Maharshi in the 1930's. He arrived at the sage's abode after a long search that led him to the feet of many faqirs, yogis, and saints. (1) His extensive journeys were chronicled in the books *A Search in Secret Egypt* and *A Search in Secret India*, where many westerners were introduced to the fascination and allure of the east and its teachings, and perhaps most importantly, that of Ramana Maharshi. In his later years "PB" went far beyond the scope of his early writings, rejuvenating the ancient meaning of the term "Philosophy" for the modern age. This article will briefly try to condense the major themes in PB's thought and offer a fresh appreciation.

Brunton wrote that he was no stranger to mystic rapture as a child. A burning desire for truth caused him to set aside his position as a journalist, while yet in his thirties, and travel the world in pursuit of the higher wisdom. His passion was intense, and he once even considered suicide. Lucky for us he did not go through with it, as he went on to write thirteen books between 1935 and 1952 converting a wealth of ancient doctrines into forms understandable by modern men and woman. His historical significance was that of being one of the original East-West bridges, putting traditional religious and philosophic teachings into a contemporary form consistent with science and a global world-view, and, in the opinion of many, for making a creative reinterpretation of the perennial wisdom teaching which had only existed in incomplete fragments in both the East and the West at the time.

Brunton's experiences with Ramana as detailed in *A Search in Secret India* culminated with an episode of mystical absorption under Maharshi's influence in which he was drawn into the heart and experienced an infinite expanse of supra-physical light. This appears to have been an exalted form of savikalpa samadhi, or transcendental consciousness where the subject-object distinction persists. (His experience was later clarified by Ramana who said

"Since the experience is through the mind only, it first appears as a blaze of light. The mental predispositions are not yet destroyed. The mind is, however, functioning in its infinite capacity in this experience...When you wake up from sleep a light appears, which is the light of the Self, passing through Mahatattva. It is called cosmic consciousness. That is arupa (formless). The light falls on the ego and is reflected therefrom." (2)

Brunton later went on to write about the further realization of the spiritual heart, the inner source of attention, in jnana or jnana-nirvikalpa samadhi (the transcendental subject, exclusive of body and world, which he termed the Overself), in *The Quest of the Overself* and supra-mystical realizations beyond that, in *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga*, but it was this first contact with Maharshi that revolutionized his quest. He acknowledged Ramana as the inspiration behind much of his early writing efforts, and

affirmed years later that his inner link with the sage had remained unbroken. While Ramana remained his "root" guru, he had many other teachers and influences who elaborated different aspects of the higher teachings to him and "filled in the gaps" or intellectual blind spots that his experience with Ramana did not provide. Among these were the sage Atmananda (Shree Krishna Menon), the Shankaracharya of Kanchipuram, and vedantist V.S. Iyer, the latter whom Brunton referred to as "my teacher" and said "made the scales fall from my eyes." Indeed, it is impossible to fully appreciate the writings of PB without studying those of Iyer, and the reader is heartily welcomed to delve into them. Iyer was both a scholar and realizer who was also influential in the lives of important Ramakrishna monks Nikhilinanda and Siddeswarananda who spread the teachings of vedanta to the United States and Europe, respectively. Iyer actually tried to get PB to stop meditating at one point, so he could move on to the more complete realization of Sahaj samadhi, wherein one "understands the world through the mind's intelligence," as Atmananda once said. For Iyer, meditation was only useful for two reasons: one, to gain the ability to concentrate, and two, for the attainment of rest or refreshment (i.e., Ramakrishna continued his trance states out of habit even after he had achieved gnan). To Iyer, one first had to observe the world and understand that it was an idea; this effectively dissolved it into the mind, leading to gnan nirvikalpa samadhi- which is distinct from yogic nirvikalpa or trance. Then one was fit to further realize that the world was Brahman, thus fulfilling the ancient formula of Sankara: "the world is an illusion (idea); Brahman is real; the world is Brahman."

Brunton once confessed that his stars were dark and brooding, and, much as he wished, he could not give up playing the wise old owl. The more mature form of his teaching did not begin to emerge until the release of *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga* and *The Wisdom of the Overself*. These monumental books introduced the philosophy of "mentalism", in which Brunton argued in great, even tedious, detail that all phenomena (thoughts as well as objects) are mental creations. By the term mentalism he meant that everything manifest arises in Consciousness or Mind. There are no objective entities at all, but only subjective perceptions or experience. To those who argue for the existence of material things Brunton's answer is that they are only guessing, for no one has ever actually experienced anything apart from their consciousness of it.

Therefore, similar to but not identical to Bishop Berkeley, Brunton proposed a subjective idealism in which a master world-image is projected or manifested by a World-Mind (i.e., God) and in which an infinite number of individual minds participate. It is not that a tree, for instance, ceases to exist because I do not see it (i.e., solipsism), for someone else may also be seeing it, because the World-Mind, a concept introduced by PB, is projecting the idea of that tree into all minds. Epistemologically, however, we do not know that for sure; all we can say is that the tree is never known other than as an idea (sensation, perception, or thought) in the mind. We cannot even know that there are many minds or just one, many selves or only one. The fundamental truth of our experience, on inquiry, is that it is conscious in nature and that at the heart of it lies a conscious Self which can be realized. The goal proposed in *The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga* was for the quester to realize this consciousness as the Overself in the heart. This established in many readers the idea that PB was advocating mysticism alone. Brunton then argued in

The Wisdom of the Overself, however, that one should carry this realization into the fully projected waking state and realize the heart without retreating into trance samadhi. He affirmed the superiority of such open-eyed awakening to the exclusiveness of interior yogic realization. Thus the philosophy of mentalism solved certain metaphysical problems not readily explainable by conventional mysticism or yoga: the world is not merely maya or illusion, or some kind of trap, but a manifestation of God and the divine Self. Nor is it something to be radically avoided or separated from in order to achieve liberation or enlightenment. Consciousness is not in the body, as lesser forms of yoga maintain, rather the body and world arise in consciousness. The sage knows his bodily identity just as the ordinary man, only in the case of the sage he is not exclusively identified with it, but sees all arising as non-separate from himself.

Brunton's mature philosophy, essentially non-dual, can be characterized perhaps as a form of vedanta known as Parinama-vada, which holds that the world(s) are a modification of Brahman projecting out as stadia or levels of being. As expressed in The Wisdom of the Overself, can be succinctly although inadequately stated as follows: Ultimate Reality is Mind. Mind's first expression is the Void. The Void's first expression is the World-Mind (God or Logos), then the World Idea, and finally, through a series of stepped-down emanations, the world itself. The individual can not know Mind, as such, but he can commune with the World-Mind through union with his individual Overself (Divine Soul). The Overself is individual, but not personal. It is the Conscious Self, beyond ego.

Brunton originally advised one to experience or realize the Overself, Soul, or Self-Consciousness, first in the heart (as jnana samadhi), and then to bring that into the waking state until a greater, intuitive realization, the "lightning flash" ("open eyes", "everyday mind", or sahaj samadhi) reveals or stabilizes itself. He later revised this to say that the initial experience of trance was not absolutely necessary in every case.

"..the Overself is with him here and now. It has never left him at any time. It sits everlastingly in the heart. It is indeed his innermost being, his truest self. Were it something different and apart from him, were it a thing to be gained and added to what he already is or has, he would stand the risk of losing it again. For whatever may be added to him may also be subtracted from. Therefore, the real task of this quest is less to seek anxiously to possess it than to become aware that it already and always possesses him."
(3)

Of the first stage of realization, the culmination of the mystic path, that of absorption or recognition of the divine Overself in the heart, the ultimate subject, prior to the world appearance, Brunton spoke in this manner:

"The actual experience alone can settle this argument. This is what I found: The ego vanished; the everyday "I" which the world knew and which knew the world, was no longer there. But a new and diviner individuality appeared in its place, a consciousness which could say "I AM" and which I recognized to have been my real self all along. It was not lost, merged, or dissolved: it was fully and vividly conscious that it was a point

in universal Mind and so not apart from that Mind itself. Only the lower self, the false self, was gone but that was a loss for which to be immeasurably grateful." (4)

Of the second and ultimate stage, that of sahaj samadhi, or realization of the oneness of the individual Overself with the Absolute Soul or World Mind, he wrote these beautiful lines:

"The Glimpse, even at its fullest extent, as in the Hindu nirvikalpa and the Japanese satori, is only intermittent. If it becomes continuous, an established fact during the working and resting states, both, only then is it completed...The awareness of truth is constant and perennial. It cannot be merely glimpsed; one must be born into it, in Jesus' words, again and again, and receive it permanently. One must be identified with it."

"It is easier to glimpse the truth than to stay in it. For the first, it is often enough to win a single battle; for the second, it is necessary to win a whole war."

"When you awaken to truth as it really is, you will have no occult vision, you will have no "astral" experience, no ravishing ecstasy. You will awaken to it in a state of utter stillness, and you will realize truth was always there within you and that reality was always there around you. Truth was not something which has grown and developed through your efforts. It is not something which has been achieved or attained by laboriously adding up those efforts. It is not something which has to be made more and more perfect each year. And once your mental eyes are opened to truth they can never be closed again."

"The discovery of his true being is not outwardly dramatic, and for a long time no one may know of it, except himself. The world may not honour him for it; he may die as obscure as he lived. But the purpose of his life has been fulfilled; and God's will has been done."

"No announcements tell the world that he has come into enlightenment. No herald blows the trumpets proclaiming man's greatest victory - over himself. This is in fact the quietest moment of his whole life."(5)

In his later writing Brunton clarified further that he did not claim that even sahaj yielded ultimate reality, but only that it represented the ultimate as far as man was concerned: namely, the realization of his Divine Overself, which could then intuit the presence or the existence of the World-Mind (source of the Universal World Image) and the Absolute Soul (source of individual Overselves or Divine Souls). The sage in union with his Overself (itself an eternal existant) could achieve further penetration of the Void and gain intuitive knowing or glimpses of its "priors", although he would eternally remain as Soul. Brunton was thus beginning to elaborate his teaching in light of the three Primal Hypostases of Plotinus (the One, Intellectual Principle, and Absolute Soul), although it was up to Anthony Damiani to use such language. Brunton rejected the straight merger theory of the yogins or apparent reductionism of Vedanta by positing the Overself or Divine Soul as an intermediary between man and ultimate God, the

unknowable Godhead or Mind, which one could never actually become but from the position of reunion with the Overself could know exists as the source of one's Being. This would explain how a non-dual realizer like Ramana Maharshi could exclaim in ecstasy "father, father", and also attest that only the sage in sahaj samadhi is a perfect devotee. From the point of view of the ego, the Overself, while Soul, for practical purposes can be considered as God, although metaphysical accuracy requires these further distinctions be made, which assume further importance once the Overself is realized and the Soul becomes, as it were, "rapt in robes of glory".

This being said, it is also true that the concept of the Overself is something many feel Brunton posed as an intelligible concept for westerners to grasp, but that it was not necessarily ultimate truth or his ultimate view. That is, Brunton, despite being described as a parinama-vada vedantist above, or vivarta-vada with his idea of the World-Mind producing a master image, never could entirely get away from the more strict ajata-vada doctrine of vedanta espoused by Iyer, which regards the world as an uncaused dream or illusion and essentially Mind itself, not a thought caused by Mind, with Iyer standing out from his contemporaries by using the word "idea" in place of that of a dream. To Iyer, ajata or non-causality is the central position of vedanta upon which its entire doctrine depends. He taught vivarta-vada (that the seer (Drk) produces the seen (Drysam) for those who could not grasp the concept of ajata. This air-tight epistemology was hard for PB to communicate to most people; indeed, Iyer stated:

"Epistemology is the enemy, the devil of yogis, mystics and religious teachers because it pries into the truth, the source and the validity of the knowledge they claim. Therefore it is the most difficult part of philosophy." (6)

This is part of the reason why in the Notebooks one will find contradictory paras in which the Overself will be described as individual, and then as only one and non-separate. I say part because PB said that he entered contradictory paras here and there to make people think and reason things out for themselves, and also because there is no ultimate point of view that will be entirely accurate, due to the constraints of language.

For the Drk-Drysam-Viveka of Iyer, there is only one Consciousness, and one Universal Mind, appearing as many. All other arguments fall flat when under the light of scrutiny. At best we can call it the "not-two", or that we just don't know. All is not a projection of Mind, it IS Mind. Brunton did later write of this ultimate oneness of substance. As Anthony Damiani quotes and comments on PB:

"His first mental act is to think himself into being. He is the maker of his own "I." This does not mean that the ego is his own personal invention alone. The whole world-process brings everything about, including the ego and the ego's own self-making." (PB V6, 8:2.15) That's mentalism in a nutshell. That's the whole mentalistic doctrine. The Soul has for its content the World-Idea, and it actualizes that or projects that World-Idea out from within itself. And included in that World-Idea is the ego and the process that it's going to go through." "His first mental act is to think himself into being. He is the maker of his own "I." This does not mean that the ego is his own personal invention

alone. The whole world-process brings everything about, including the ego and the ego's own self-making." (PB V6, 8:2.15) That's mentalism in a nutshell. That's the whole mentalistic doctrine. The Soul has for its content the World-Idea, and it actualizes that or projects that World-Idea out from within itself. And included in that World-Idea is the ego and the process that it's going to go through." (7)

Even our own image-making faculty, on this analysis, is really nothing other Brahman or Consciousness. There is only non-duality when the inquiry is taken all the way to the end. Iyer himself comments:

"My child, you are Pure Intelligence (consciousness) itself. This universe is nothing different from you."

"In whatever you perceive, you alone appear."

"Indian thought and language has the correct idea and terminology for Mind as an impersonal principle, that which is aware of this I, this ego...Mind is really one and universal for us."

"How do you know that God is imagining this world? It is only your imagination to say so."

"You do not perceive a second thing. This refutes the dualistic teaching that God puts the universe into your mind." (8)

The last quote thus refutes Bishop Berkeley's assumption that it is God that puts ideas into our mind (which Hume also argued against, God for him being just another idea). It also refutes PB's analysis of a World-Mind's overlaying a master-image on our individual mind. Thus, in the final analysis, PB seemed headed towards non-causality and non-dualism, as did Iyer and Ramana. With the abandonment of causality and duality, the notion of multiple Overselves necessarily collapses as well. PB said this in his Notebooks about the true status of the mind:

"We do not dream the waking world as we dream during sleep. For the latter is spun out of the individual mind alone, whereas the former is spun out of the cosmic mind and presented to the individual mind. However, ultimately, and on realization, both minds are found to be one and the same, just as a sun ray is found to be the same as the sun ultimately. The difference which exists is fleeting and really illusory but so long as there is bodily experience it is observable." (9)

The reader is directed to the excellent thesis by Annie Cahn at the end of this article for a discussion about PB's philosophical thoughts about the concept of the Overself and the World-Mind.

An example of there being one Universal Mind, rather than many personal ones, is illustrated in my own case by the following. Ever since I began writing articles of critical

analysis on the gnostic aspects of the path of Sant Mat, the current Master, Sant Rajinder Singh, has changed his teaching style quite dramatically from the traditional one. He now often writes or says that in meditation one is not really going 'in' and 'up', or 'leaving the body', that all the planes are concurrent, that there is no time, that everything is happening all at once, and so on. If there is no time, says PB and Iyer, there can be no space or causality as well, as the three go together. Following this line of thinking, one could then be led to question, "why meditate?", and wonder if Sant Mat is on the way to becoming non-duality before too long! At any rate, as I look at this coincidence I see not two minds influencing each other, as I take no credit for causing such a thing, but an example of one common Universal Mind manifesting ideas of a similar nature to apparently different individuals. As no one can see the mind of another, that is then just an assumption, as is a causal link between any two such apparent minds. There is simply no valid argument, that is, we can not know or prove, that there is more than one mind, says Iyer.

Brunton wrote for the masses, while fundamentalist Iyer wrote for the few; Brunton made concessions to human psychology while Iyer did not. Brunton felt a need in humanity for explanations of the concepts of a higher Self, grace, etc., while Iyer wrote from the loftiest vedantic position, a steep road for average minds to travel:

"If there is any law connected with grace, it is that as we give love to the Overself so do we get grace from it. But that love must be so intense, so great, that we willingly sacrifice time and thought to it in a measure which shows how much it means to us. In short, we must give more in order to receive more. And love is the best thing we can give." (10)

Iyer himself coached PB on his writings, giving him three of his own manuscripts before PB wrote *The Hidden Teaching*, and helped him during PB's transition from teaching about yoga to that of the higher philosophy. Iyer said:

"In the case of 99% of humanity, discipline is necessary; hence gnanis usually emerge from the state of yogic discipline. Only a rare few become gyanis without yoga, which is quite possible but infrequent." (11)

He also revealed, in correspondence to PB:

"Do not publish the fact that you are writing at my request because critics will then say that you are guided by others and have no judgement of your own." (12)

He advised PB not to abandon writing on mysticism entirely, acknowledging that it was an appropriate stage for many at the time:

"Only about 1/2% of students are ready to study Vedanta directly. So yoga must go on. Teach yoga but here and there throw in a few doubts, as also hints that it is not the end (Vedanta -end of scriptures) and that there is an ultimate truth to which you will be able to direct the student when he has qualified himself by yoga practice. Create a desire by these hints and doubts in the student's mind to seek Ultimate Truth and to want it; then

only when it has become a thirst should you show the delusion of yoga and teach vedanta." (13)

"If you get the feeling that you are hypocritical or deceiving by writing further mystic, literary or journalistic material, then you will fall into the same error as Swami Nikhilinanda, who wrote that he felt he was leading a double life. For the people who ask for such reading are mentally incapable of grasping higher philosophy, they are intellectual children, and so they need mystic writings and teachings; it helps them. Why then think you are doing wrong? The Vedantic Ideal is to give people what suits them; to do so is no error." (14)

While introducing meditation and yoga to the West, and offering practical advice on the same, Brunton was, therefore, very critical of mystical paths that claim liberation to consist of abstracted rapture alone. He called his teaching "philosophy", or the "yoga of the uncontradictable". The philosophic path is superior, says Brunton, as it combines mystical experience, metaphysical thinking, and enlightened activity. It realizes that which exists simultaneously with the world, but prior to it. Such liberation cannot be "contradicted" by life, death, waking, dreaming, sleeping, or any change of state. While the mystic knows the Self, the philosopher knows the Self, God and the World, as well as the true relationship between them.

Later in life PB came to change his idea regarding the attainment of sahaj. He came to prefer a far eastern version over the Hindu one, the latter believing that it is equivalent in some way to bringing nirvikalpa samadhi into the waking state at every moment. In the far eastern way, one keeps a natural abidance in the unborn mind, which is neither separate from nor dependent on the working of the senses. It is more aesthetic and natural, without the yogic rigors of attaining nirvikalpa samadhi. This also may have been the eventual fruition of the advice of Iyer, who had tried to get PB to stop meditating. As a vedantist Iyer adamantly maintained that yoga, once it has served its purpose - the sharpening of the mind - will not grant one liberation. The faculty of Buddhi then comes into play and reveals that the both self and the world are Brahman. As Ramana often quoted, "the Self is always shining in the Intellectual sheath."

With this shift in emphasis Brunton may also be said to have paved the way for the contemporary emerging teachers of non-duality, as he had previously done in advancing traditional mysticism and yoga towards philosophy. For few among modern teachers, many influenced by Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, maintain that achieving yogic nirvikalpa samadhi is a necessary stage, even if they point out that something like it, a gyanic experience of nirvikalpa or emptiness, if you will, may or may not precede full realization. Ramana, too, although even late in life expressing contradictory statements depending on who he was talking to, such as saying "realization is only for the fit, it requires an intensely introverted mind," etc., pointed towards what is becoming a new consensus:

"People read in the books, "hearing, reflection and one-pointedness are necessary." They think they must pass through savikalpa samadhi and nirvikalpa samadhi before

attaining realization. Hence all these questions. Why should they wander in that maze? What do they gain in the end? It is only the cessation of the trouble of seeking. They find that the Self is eternal and self-evident. Why should they not get that repose even this very moment?" (15)

Brunton spent the last twenty years of his life in Switzerland, writing daily. He maintained a mostly telepathic correspondence with students worldwide, receiving letters but not usually sending written replies. He did entertain visitors from time to time, however, and I knew several who spent time with him. Anthony Damiani (1922-1984), a longtime student and friend of Brunton and a man of realization himself, once remarked to his study group (Wisdom's Goldenrod in Valois, New York), "people look at P.B. (as Brunton referred to himself) and say, 'he seems like such a nice man' - but they don't know - they have no idea what goes on in his company, particularly at night!" He meant, of course, that in proximity to a free soul one's own spiritual processes are quickened, and such was his own experience. Timothy Smith wrote that his personal computer started to smoke and self-destruct in the presence of PB, who preferred to use a simple typewriter! Perhaps the most intimate and heartfelt account of time spent with P.B. in the last few months of his life is Reflections on Paul Brunton by Paul Cash. In particular, two incidences are worthy of note. Once PB asked Paul what his idea of what it is like being a sage. Paul answered that he thought one thing would be that one loves everybody. PB answered, "I'm not that advanced; I don't love everybody." Another time the question of omniscience came up:

One afternoon I asked him, "What exactly is it about a sage's mind that makes that mind so different from the rest of us?" It was one of many questions I asked that he didn't originally seem to intend to answer. But I persisted and finally he asked me, "Well what do you think it is?"

I said that I had never been able to believe that it could be omniscience in the sense of knowing everything at once; but I didn't think it unreasonable to conceive that when a sage wants or needs to know, he could turn his mind toward it in a certain way and that knowledge would just arise.

P.B. laughed heartily and answered, "It's not even that good!"

"Well, how good is it?"

"It has really nothing to do with knowledge, or continuity of intuition, or frequency of intuitions. It's that the mind has been made over into the Peace in an irreversible way. No form that the mind takes can alter the Peace."

[for Iyer, omniscience from the vedantic point of view means simply knowing everything as Brahman, not "knowing all there is."].

"You could say it's a kind of knowledge," he continued, "in this sense. If the mind takes the form of truth, the sage knows it's truth. If it doesn't, then he knows that it's not. He's

never in doubt about whether the mind has knowledge or not. But whether it does or not, his Peace is not disturbed."

I asked if that meant that someone could go to a sage for help and the sage would be unable to help them. He replied that sometimes the intuition comes, sometimes it doesn't; he explained that when it doesn't come, the sage knows he has nothing to do for that person. The continuity of frequency of the intuitions has to do with the sage's mission, not with what makes a sage a sage.

"You must understand," he said, "that there is no condition in which the Overself is at your beck and call. But there is a condition in which you are continuously at the Overself's beck and call. That's the condition to strive for."

As he spoke these words, he was the humblest man I had ever seen before or since. For all the extraordinary things about him, all the glamorous inner and outer experiences, all the remarkable effects his writings and example have had on others, that humility is what seems to be the most important fact about him."

In spite of all this Brunton vigorously denied being a guru, accepted no disciples, and did not even accept formal students. When questioned of his realization he would often demur, saying quietly, "I'm not a sage, just a writer." Yet those who heard him utter those words felt the power of the Self behind them. No common man could have penned his words, particularly the posthumous Notebooks series, with volume after volume of lucid and elegant writing with insight on innumerable aspects and subtleties of the path. See excerpts.

Brunton said that his special work was to research, condense, and present the highest truths of ancient teachings in a format suitable for the modern world: a new East-West philosophy plainly stating truth beyond the limitations of common religion and mysticism with their egoistic perspective and often world-negative views. Yet he predicted that

"Not one but several minds will be needed to labor at the metaphysical foundation of the twentieth century structure of philosophy. I can claim the merit only of being among the earliest of these pioneers. There are others yet to appear who will unquestionably do better and more valuable work." (16)

So far I have found few to compare with him. I admire and find Brunton reliable for the insightful and balanced nature of his teaching capability, which is so eloquently described, without personal reference to himself, in Volume 16 of his Notebooks:

"There are men of enlightenment who cannot throw down a bridge from where they are to where they once were, so that others too can cross over. They do not know or cannot describe in detail the way which others must follow to reach the goal. Such men are not the teaching masters, and should not be mistaken for them...The man of enlightenment who has never been a learner, who suddenly gained his state by the overwhelming good karma of previous lives, is less able to teach others than the one who slowly and

laboriously worked his way into the state - who remembers the trials, pitfalls, and difficulties he had to overcome." (17)

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For a definitive scholarly thesis on Brunton's life and thought see Part One and Part Two of "Paul Brunton: A Bridge Between India and the West" by Annie Cahn Fung. (from the Wisdom's Goldenrod website).

Also see Paul Brunton for links to several articles and first-person accounts of the sage.

(1) Here is an interesting little anecdote that I recently came across. While at Ramana's ashram Brunton was particularly attracted to one enigmatic character known as Yogi Ramiah, as was also Paramhansa Yogananda, the latter who said if he had spent one more hour in his company he would never have left India again. Yogananda was once there at the same time as Brunton, and later wrote that Brunton told him that he (PB) had a vision of Yogi Ramiah in which he was told to get a picture of Yogananda and take it to Maharshi's sitting room, and that it was still there at the time of Yogananda's writing. Maharshi also kept a photo of the great Sri Ramakrishna on display there. The interview between Yogananda and Maharshi was quiet, with little said between them, appearing as if both respected the other and did not wish to raise any doubts with their respective disciples who were present. Yogananda later implied that he felt that Yogi Ramiah had surpassed Ramana. V.S. Iyer, who later had an influence on PB, totally disagreed, even though he was of the opinion that Ramana was a pure yogi but not yet a sage. Here is a video clip of the three together.

(2) Talks with Ramana Maharshi (Carlsbad, California: Inner Directions Publishing, 2001), pp. 133, 425

(3) Paul Brunton, *The Wisdom of the Overself* (York Beach, Maine: Samuel Weiser, Inc., 1984), p.441

(4) *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*, Vol. 8, (Burdett, N.Y.: Larson Publications, 1987), 2:187

(5) *Ibid*, Vol. 16, Part 1, 2.28-29, 33, 77-78, 83

(6) V.S. Iyer, *Commentaries*, Vol 1 (ed. 1999 by Mark Scorelle), p. 32

(7) Anthony Damiani, *Standing in Your Own Way* (Burdett, New York: Larson Publications, 1993), p. 125)

(8) Iyer, *op. cit.*, *Ashtavakra Samhita*, and *Commentaries*, Vol. 1

(9) *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 13, Part Three, 5.92

(10) *The Notebooks of Paul Brunton*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 12, Part Two, 5.209

(11) Iyer, *Commentaries*, *op. cit.*, p. 56

(12) *Ibid*, p. 227

(13) *Ibid*, p. 220

(14) *Ibid*, p. 221

(15) Talks with Ramana Maharshi (Carlsbad, California: Inner Directions Foundation, 2001), p. 254

(16) source misplaced

(17) The Notebooks of Paul Brunton, Vol. 16, op. cit.
Ibid, 5.20-21