

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi
and Mount Arunachala

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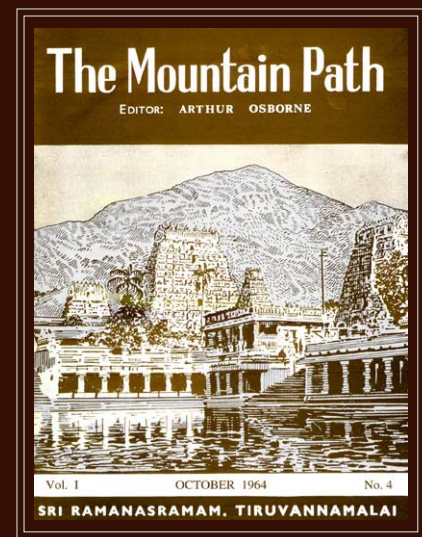
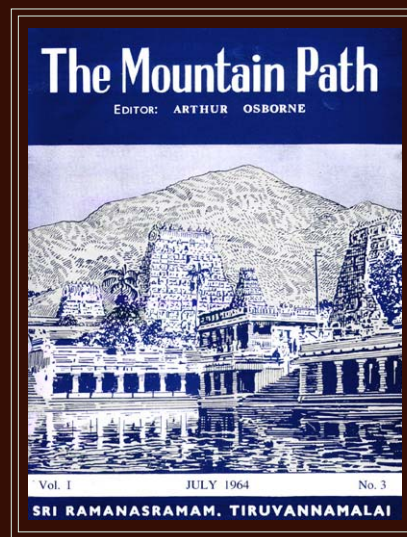
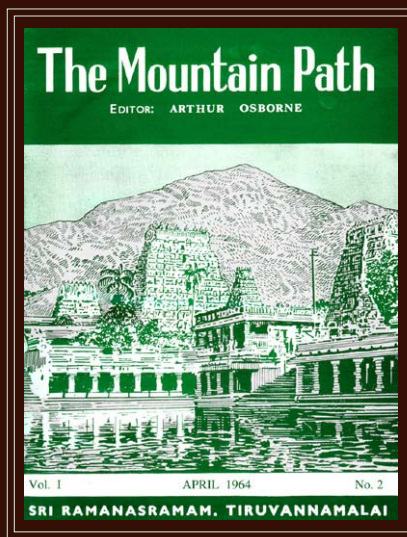
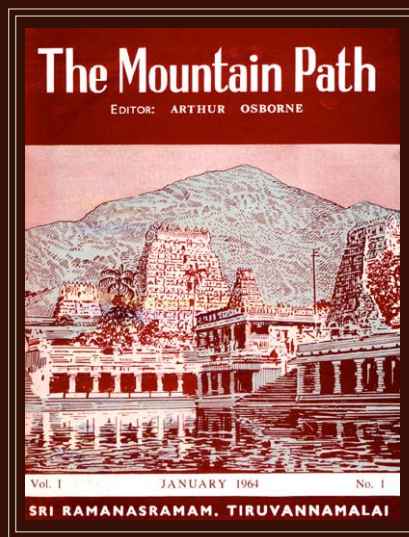
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The Mountain Path – 1964

The first four editions of the 'Mountain Path Journal', published by Sri Ramanasramam in 1964, are linked to the four cover designs above - please click on the relevant cover to go that edition. The contents have been reproduced as accurately as possible in both layout and format, but in places I have had to alter the layout by inserting extra pages to preserve readable font sizes. I apologise for the quality of most of the photographs on the pages, they had to be scanned from the original pages because all of the originals have been lost or were returned at the time of publishing to the owners.

The journals contain a lot of useful and otherwise unpublished material, but readers must bear in mind that any opinions expressed therein are not necessarily those of the ashram. The 'Mountain Path' is still produced today, but it is now a half-yearly instead of a quarterly journal.

Sri Ramanasramam is currently in the process of transferring all of the 'Mountain Path' editions from 1964 up to the present day to computer. We expect that they will be available on one CD within two years. The editions will be in PDF format, prepared as close to the original layout as possible, complete with photographs and drawings.

Purchasers will not only have the ability to print out entire editions or series of linked articles, but will also be able to electronically search for words and phrases throughout the entire CD. Please watch the Ramana Maharshi website for information on this project.

To access the other files on this CD, use the 'Home' key on your keypad, this will take you to go to the 'Universal Contents' page ... which is the first page of every file.

“Arunachala! Thou dost root
out the ego of those who
meditate on Thee in the
Heart, Oh Arunachala.”
- *The Marital Garland of
Letters*, Verse 1.

Publisher:
T. N. Venkataraman
Sri Ramanasramam
Tiruvannamalai

*

Editor:
Arthur Osborne
Sri Ramanasramam
Tiruvannamalai

*

Managing Editor:
V. Ganesan
Sri Ramanasramam
Tiruvannamalai

*

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

Vol.1	January 1964	No.1
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THE AIM OF THIS JOURNAL WILL BE TO SET FORTH THE TRADITIONAL WISDOM OF ALL RELIGIONS AND ALL AGES, ESPECIALLY AS TESTIFIED TO BY THEIR SAINTS AND MYSTICS, AND TO CLARIFY THE PATHS AVAILABLE TO SEEKERS IN THE CONDITIONS OF OUR MODERN WORLD.

Contributions for publication should be addressed to ‘The Editor, THE MOUNTAIN PATH, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State.’ Manuscripts not published will be returned on request.

Messages

HIS HOLINESS SRI JAGADGURU MAHASAMSTHANAM,
Sharada Peetham of Sringeri

His Holiness was very glad to know you are starting publication of a quarterly journal entitled “The Mountain Path” from January 1964 and that its aims are “to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and of all ages especially as testified to by their saints and mystics.”

His Holiness is pleased to convey His Blessings for success of your journal.

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DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN,
President, Indian Republic, Roshtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi-4.M

I am glad to receive your letter and know that from January 1964 you are starting a Quarterly Journal “The Mountain Path”.

I wish you success in your endeavour.

With best wishes.

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SRI BISNURAM MEDHI,
Governor of Madras, Raj Bhavan, Madras.

I thank you for your letter of the 15th October 1963. I am happy to know that under the auspices of Sri Ramanasramam, it is proposed to publish a quarterly journal called “The Mountain Path”. If it preaches the fundamental unity of all religions and the message of universal love to mankind, it will have served a useful purpose.

I wish the quarterly every success.

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SRI V. V. GIRI,
Governor of Kerala, Raj Bhavan, Trivandrum.

It is only in the fitness of things that Sri Ramanasramam has decided to bring out a quarterly publication “The Mountain Path” to impart the spiritual knowledge and age-old wisdom which the seekers and seers have been espousing in all countries and ages. Sri Ramana Maharshi, the Sage of Arunachala, taught the message of universal brotherhood and goodwill among all. The realisation of the ‘Brahman’ is not beyond us. An aspirant yearning to learn, understand and follow the great truth ‘Thou Art That’ becomes liberated. I am sure your journal will be doing a distinct service in propagating the need for inter-religious harmony and awakening the hidden treasures, of Godliness in every individual.

DR. C. P. RAMASWAMI AIYAR,
Vice-Chancellor, Annamalai University, Delisle Ootacamund.

Sri Ramana Maharshi was one of the authentic Seers that have appeared from time to time in India whose mission was to enable people to recover their mental poise and to give them guidance on the fundamental problems of existence.

I am very glad that a quarterly journal entitled “The Mountain Path” is about to be started and I wish it all success and prosperity.

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SRI C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN,
Union Deputy Minister, Labour & Employment and Planning, New Delhi.

I am glad that the Quarterly “Mountain Path” under the editorship of Sri Arthur Osborne, is being started. I wish the endeavour all success.

As eternal and ‘sanathan’ as our ancient Dharma, are the writings about Sri Ramana Maharshi because he was a realised soul. Everyone who comes across Ramana literature is bound to be happy and elevated.

May the journal grow from strength to strength and may it be given to you all to carry on your good work for many years to come.

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SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM,
Chief Minister, Government of Madras, Fort. St. George, Madras.

The teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi take their rank among the great scriptures which, embodying the Truth and the perceptions of seers, shed light on the path of earnest aspirants. The advent of a new journal shedding new light on the teachings of Sri Maharshi will be welcomed not merely by the devotees of Sri Bhagavan, but by every one who has faith in the spiritual traditions of India.,

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SRI L. N. BIRLA,
Birla House, New Delhi.

I am glad to know that you are shortly going to start a Quarterly journal.

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SRIC. RAJAGOPALACHARI,
T. Nagar, Madras.

I have read the aim of the journal that is being inaugurated. The aim deserves the cooperation of all good and wise men.

MATAJI (MOTHER KRISHNA BAI) OF ANANDASHRAM,
Kanhangad, South. Rty.

Pujya Mataji got your loving letter of the 15th instant and has noted that you are starting the publication of a quarterly journal "The Mountain Path" which will be edited by Sri Arthur Osborne.... She sends her good wishes and prays for the complete success of the journal.

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MOTHER RAMA DEVI (OF MANGALORE),
Camp: Bangalore.

It is heartening to observe that you have embarked upon the publication of a religious journal for the furtherance of the cause of spirituality. Dissemination of ancient wisdom through the medium of a journal is one of the easy and effective means of service available to doers of good. Association with elevating thoughts is the avenue to self-purification. It provides conditions congenial to the awakening of the hidden potentialities of the human mind. Let your journal serve as a path-finder for weary minds in the pilgrimage to the sacred shrine of supreme beatitude. Blessings and best wishes.

"THE MOUNTAIN PATH"

(A Quarterly, issued from Sri Ramanasramam)

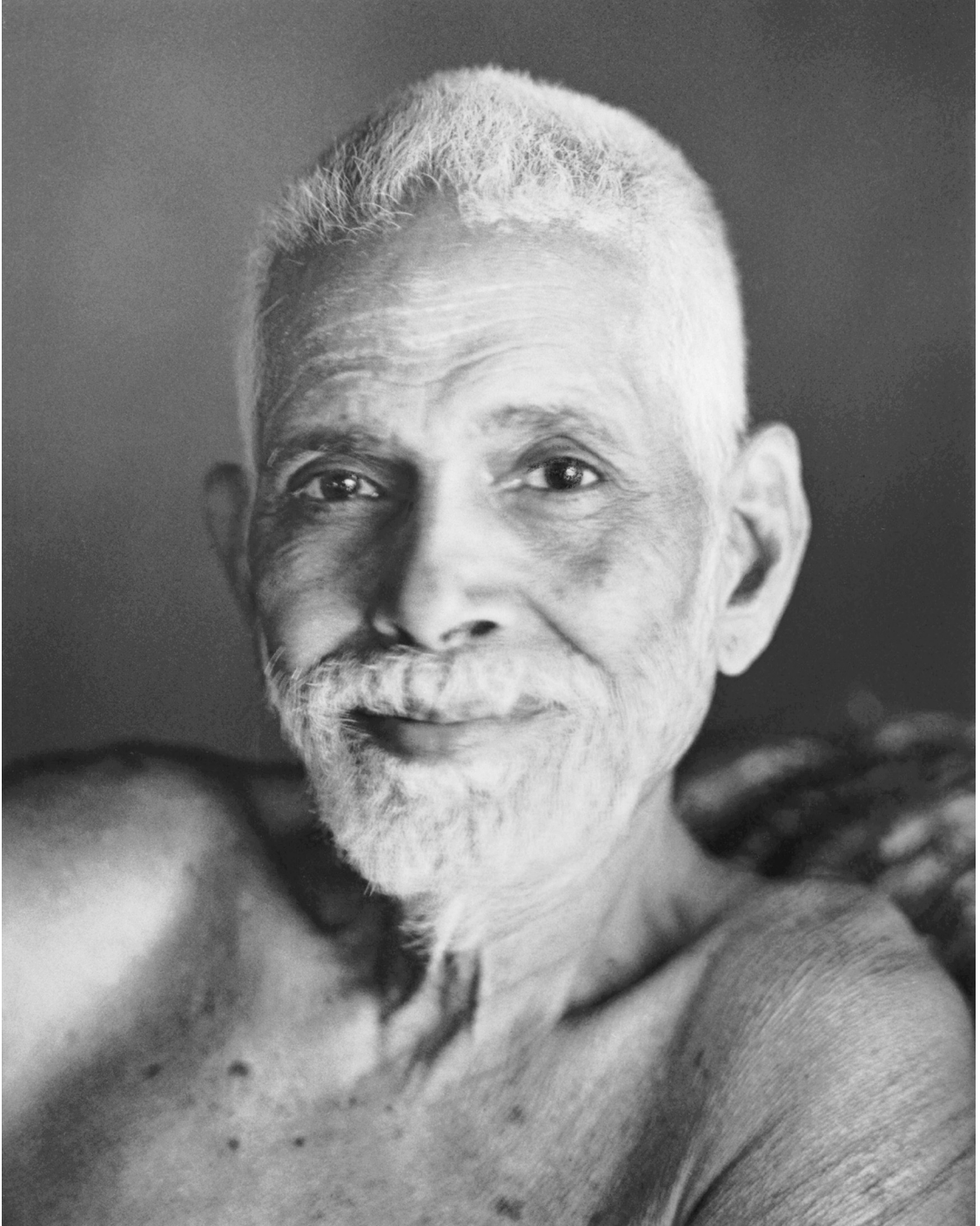
'The Mountain Path', a quarterly journal, is issued from this Ashram as one means of maintaining the high spiritual and intellectual level that Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi's teaching demands. The aim of this journal will be to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

We hope that devotees of Sri Maharshi and others also who are drawn to the perennial spiritual wisdom will lend us their support.

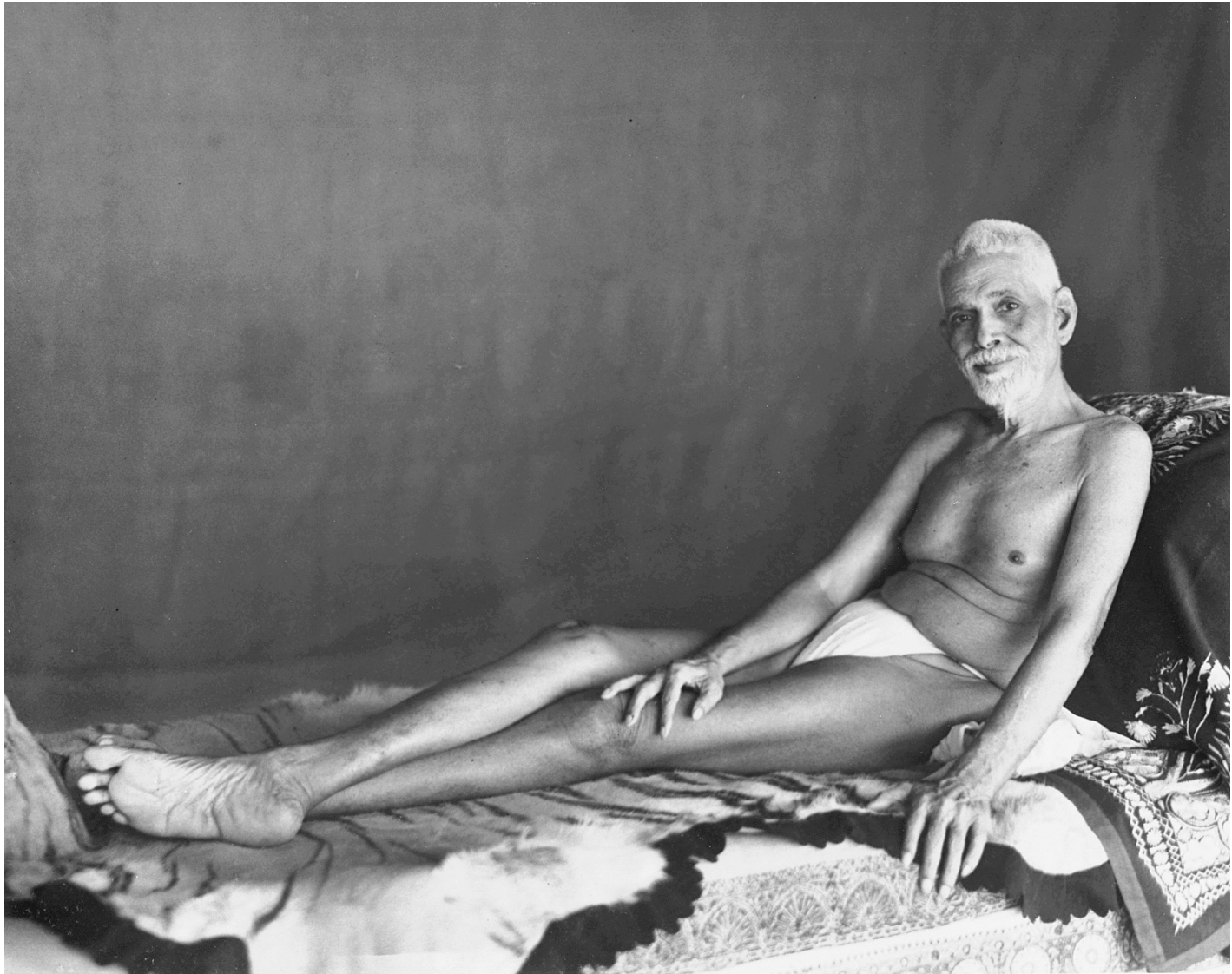
We also find that many devotees who are able to come to Tiruvannamalai only rarely or not at all, are eager for Ashram news. For their benefit we shall issue an Ashram news bulletin as a supplement to each issue. Usually this will be a small part of the journal ; however, in this issue, we wish to bring readers up-to-date with an account of the Maharshi's nirv4,dna and of Ashram developments since then.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
Publisher.

THE PEARL OF PURITY



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Master who quells the waves of the mind with a silent command, "Peace, Be Still."



The Mountain Path

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: Arthur Osborne

VOL. 1

JANUARY, 1964

No. 1

TO THOSE WITH LITTLE DUST

(EDITORIAL)

It is related (and the story is no less significant whether historically true or not) that after attaining Enlightenment the Buddha's first impulse was to abide in the effulgence of Bliss without turning back to convey the incommunicable to mankind. Then he reflected: "Some there are who are clear-sighted and do not need my teaching, and some whose eyes are clouded with dust who will not heed it though given, but between these two there are also some with but little dust in their eyes, who can be helped to see; and for the sake of these I will go back among mankind and teach." It is for those with little dust in their eyes that this journal is intended.

Its purpose is to show that there is a more satisfactory state than that of ignorant, confused, unguided, frustrated modern man, and a higher, more satisfying and more durable alternative for him than any provided by wealth or luxury, art or music, or the love between man and woman; that such a state can be attained in his lifetime, and that the purpose of all religions has been to lead men towards it, although in many different ways. I say 'towards' rather than 'to' because even though the supreme state may not be

attained in this lifetime, the mere approach to it can bring a peace of mind and sense of well being not otherwise attainable.

Mystics have often had unsought glimpses of a higher or the highest state; those who are psychic have out-of-the-body and other experiences closed to the ordinary man; but all this is of little importance in the quest for Realization. Such powers or experiences may be a help at certain stages of certain types of path, but they may also be a hindrance and distraction, like the sirens whom Odysseus heard but against whom he made his crew plug their ears. If the pleasures of the physical world are seductive, those of the subtle world are certainly no less so. Christ said that if a man attains the kingdom of heaven all else shall be added to him; but that is after attaining. If he seeks all else beforehand he is not likely to attain. It is safer to have one's ears plugged.

The quest is no shorter and no less arduous for those who have such powers and experiences than for those who have not. Realization is not something like music, for which some are by nature more gifted than others; it is fundamentally

different, since music requires the development of a faculty which is stronger in some and weaker in others, whereas Realization is the discovery of and identification with the Self that has the faculties.

It is very hard, perhaps impossible, to say who can and will understand. It has certainly nothing in common with intellectual ability as commonly understood. Indeed, the scriptures of the various religions agree in warning that neither intellect nor learning is any qualification. They also can be a hindrance. "It is rather the unlearned who are saved than those whose ego has not yet subsided in spite of their learning."¹ "The humble knowledge of oneself is a surer way to God than deep researches after science."² A scientist can fail to understand spiritual science, a philosopher be unreceptive to the Perennial Philosophy, a psychologist remain ignorant of what underlines the mind. On the other hand, a spiritual Master may or may not be an intellectual: Ramana Maharshi was, but Sri Ramakrishna was an ecstatic with the mind rather of a peasant than a philosopher, while St. Ignatius Loyola was temperamentally so averse to study that it required immense effort for him to gain the degree without which the Church would not allow

1 *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi, Supplementary Forty Verses*, v. 36. Riders and Sri Ramanasramam.

2 *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis.

him to teach, and he was middle-aged before he did so.

A Master may feel who are his people and draw them to him, but even that is no guarantee of a good outcome to the quest: Judas was among the closest followers of Christ and Devadatta among those of Buddha, while Mohammed is told in the Quran: "You cannot save those whom you will but those whom God wills."

What is required is rather willingness to open one's heart to the truth, to surrender oneself, give up one's ego, conceive of the possibility of its non-existence, give up one's life for Christ's sake. That is why the Quran speaks of unbelievers rather as perverse than ignorant, saying that even if an angel from heaven came down to explain to them they would not listen.

Theoretical understanding is not enough. Neither is belief in the sense of a conviction that this or that will happen after death. What is needed is to set one's hand to the plough, as Christ put it, to undertake the true alchemy, transmuting the dross in one's nature to gold. This is the quest of the Sangraal, the search for the elixir of life, the eternal youth of the Spirit. It is the pathway of the heroes, the way from trivialities to grandeur. Its consummation is like waking up from a dream into the ever-existent Reality.

All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God, but it is only the one Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say 'The three are really three' only as long as the ego lasts. Therefore to inhere in one's own Being, where the 'I' or ego is dead is the perfect state.

- Ramana Maharshi - *Forty Verses*, v. 2.

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The *Atman* (Self) is never born and never dies. It is beyond time, unborn, permanent and everlasting. It does not die when the body dies.

- *Kathopanishad*.

THE FEW

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

No argument can pierce the shuttered mind.
Let truth shine forth resplendent as the sun,
Still, crouched in their dark corner, will they find
Some guttering candle till life's day be done.
Even though we sang like angels in their ear
They would not hear.

Those only in whose heart some inkling dwells,
Grown over though it be, crushed down, denied,
Will greet the pealing of the golden bells
And welcome truth when all around deride.
Yet sight has laid a debt upon their will
Not all fulfil.

For even of those who see, only a few
Will have the intrepid wisdom to arise
And barter time's false values for the true,
Making their life a valiant enterprise
To vindicate their heritage long lost,
Nor count the cost.

And out of that so noble fellowship
Questing the Graal upon the mountain peaks,
Well is it if it meet the expectant lip
Of even one persistently who seeks.
Yet is this quest the glory and the goal
Of the awakened soul.

The entire world is God: This is the core of my teaching. First banish egoism; then you will come up to this test. Would you like to know the core of Divine Wisdom? This is my certain answer. Tuka says Rise above the mind to destroy the ego.

- Tukaram

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The result of Knowledge is identity with all; the result of ignorance is identity with the limited being of one's body.

- Shankara, *Commentary on the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad.*



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

By M. BHAKTAVATSALAM
(*Chief Minister of Madras*)

‘The Mountain Path’ that Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, are publishing deserves to be a great success, since the quarterly journal aims at setting forth and maintaining the high spiritual and intellectual level that Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi’s teaching demands.

It is evident that the ‘Mountain’ in the caption denotes ‘Arunachala’ and the ‘Path’ is the Ramana-Path, *i.e.* the Path of Self-Enquiry.

The Mountain Arunachala is the *achala tattwa*, commonly known as *nischala tattwa*, upon which, as the screen, runs the entire panorama of manifestation. Seeing the pictures, forgetting the screen, he who sees is in delusion. With the realisation that the screen alone *IS*, comes the Peace of Being, born out of the understanding of Truth. This realisation that the *nischala tattwa* alone is the ever-present Present, is screened off by *avidya* (ignorance). This *avidya*, the knot between *chit*, and *achit*, is cut asunder by the *smruthi* (recollection of the highest), also known as *druva smruthi*. This *smruthi* (remembrance) is Arunachala-*smruthi*, which made the boy Venkataraman into Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, who blessed us all with his benign Presence for over 50 years from Tiruvannamalai.

In his pure Transcendental Existence, he imparted to us the import of *nija mouna bhava* of Lord Dakshinamurthi. He was a living commentary on the Upanishadic Truth and with his plenary experience, he attracted the elite of all religions and creeds to him to confirm to them that in realisation of That, as it is, is the fulfilment of all religions and philosophies.

‘The Mountain Path’ will help us in this *druva smruthi*, perpetual recollection of the highest Truth. I trust in course of time it will become a monthly.

The management of Sri Ramanasramam deserves to be congratulated on launching this journal, as a means of fulfilling Sri Maharshi’s Will, of making Sri Ramanasramam a centre wherefrom will radiate the Light of Sri Maharshi’s teaching and also upon choosing as its Editor Mr. Arthur Osborne who really knows the Maharshi and his teachings and in addition has very good experience in the field of journalism.

REMAIN WHERE YOU ARE

By NAGAMMA

Nagamma is an Andhra lady who was living here in the lifetime of Bhagavan. Her brother also is a great devotee but could pay only occasional visits here, as he was the Manager of a Bank in Madras. Therefore Nagamma formed the habit of writing him reports of the doings and sayings of Bhagavan. Some of these letters have been put together as a book and published by the Ashram,¹ but what follows has not yet been published in English.

10th Sept. 1947

At a quarter to ten this morning, just as Bhagavan was getting up to go for his usual short mid-morning walk, an Andhra young man approached the couch and said: “Swami, I have come here because I want to perform tapas (austerities) and don’t know what would be a good place for it. I will go for the purpose wherever you tell me.”

Bhagavan did not answer. He was stooping down rubbing his legs and knees, as he often does before beginning to walk, on account of the rheumatism in them, and was smiling quietly to himself. We, of course, were waiting eagerly for what he, would say. A moment later he took the staff that he uses to steady himself in walking and, looking at the young man, said: “How can I tell you where to stay? It is best to stay where you are.” And with a smile he went out.

The young man was bewildered. “What is the meaning of this?” he exclaimed. “Being an elderly person I thought he would tell me some holy place where I could stay, but instead of that he tells me to stay where I am. I am now near this couch. Does that mean that I should stay here? Was it to receive such a reply that I approached him? Is this a matter for joking?”

One of the devotees took him out of the hall and explained: “Even when Bhagavan says

something in a light vein there is always some deep meaning in it. Where the feeling ‘I’ arises is one’s Self. Tapas means knowing where the Self is and abiding there. For that one has to know who one is ; and what then does it matter where one stays ? That is what he meant.” He thus pacified the young man and sent him away.

Similarly, someone asked yesterday Swami, how can we find the Atma ? “

“You are in the Atma, so how can there be any difficulty in finding it Bhagavan replied.

“You say that I am in the Atma, but where exactly is that Atma,” the questioner persisted.

“If you abide in the heart and search patiently you will find it.”

The questioner still seemed unsatisfied and made the rather curious objection that there was no room in his heart for him to stay in it.

Bhagavan turned to one of the devotees sitting there and said, smiling “Look how he worries about where Atma is! What can I tell him? What is Atma? It is all-pervading. When I tell him that it is called ‘Heart’ he says there is no room in it for him to stay. What can I do ? To say that there is no room in the heart after filling it full of vasanas (inherent tendencies and cravings) is like grumbling that there is no room to sit down in a house as big as Ceylon. If all

¹ See the Ashram Book list published in ‘Ashram Bulletin’, in this issue.

the junk is thrown out won't there be room? The body itself is junk. These people are like someone who fills all the rooms of his house chock full of junk which is not necessary for his body and then complains that there is no room for his body in it. In the same way they fill the mind with all sorts of vasanas and then say there is no room for the Self in it. If all the

vasanas are swept away and thrown out there will be plenty of room and it will all be Atma. Then there will be no such thing as a separate 'I', so what need then for room, or who would occupy the room? Instead of seeking the Self they say 'no room! no room!', just like shutting your eyes and saying there is no sun. What can be done?"

NOTE ON NAMES

The names 'Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi' and 'Arunachala' will occur frequently in this journal. We are therefore inserting a note on their meaning and pronunciation for those readers who are not familiar with them.

'Sri' pronounced 'Shree' is a Sanskrit honorific signifying 'blessed' or 'auspicious'. It has now lost much of its meaning and come to be used before names, much like 'Mr.' in English. Before the name of a Swami or holy place, however, it still has its original connotation.

'Ramana' is an abbreviation of the personal name Venkataramana. The accent is on the first syllable.

'Maharshi' is a contraction of 'MahaRishi', meaning the 'Great Rishi' or 'Great Sage'. The accent is on the second syllable.

'Bhagavan' is the word commonly used for 'God'. It is applied by common consent to one who is recognized as a Divine Incarnation and is the same as the appellation of the Buddha which is commonly rendered in English as 'The Blessed One'. It was usual to address the Maharshi in the third person as 'Bhagavan'. He accepted this usage and sometimes referred to himself so. The accent is on the first and last syllables, the second being slurred over.

Various meanings are assigned to 'Arunachala', the name of the sacred Hill. The third and last vowels are long, the accent being mainly on the third.

A remark may also be in place on the form 'Ramanasramam', which may confuse some readers. The word 'ashram' has found its way into English dictionaries and is therefore the correct English form, whether a correct transliteration of the Sanskrit or not, however, 'asramam' is the Tamil form, and this ashram is registered under that name, which is therefore used for its address.

OUTSIDE THE SCRIPTURES

By DR. T. N. KRISHNASWAMI

A special transmission outside the scriptures;
No dependence upon words or letters;
Direct pointing at the heart of man;
Seeing into one's own nature, and the attainment of Liberation

These are the reflections of a traveller on the Mountain Path laid down by the Maharshi. The Maharshi's wordless doctrine is unlike the usual traditional teachings. There are no creeds to be elaborated, so there is no need for preaching. There is nothing for the mind to theorise or philosophise about. What is needed is immediate, intuitive understanding of the heart. "The intricate maze of philosophy of the various schools is said to clarify matters and to reveal the Truth, but in fact it creates confusion where none need exist. To understand anything there must be the Self. The Self is obvious. So why not remain as the Self? What need to explain the non-self?"¹

What the seeker has to do is rather to unlearn and let go all his preconceived ideas about the Self. Indeed, the Maharshi has been known to say that in the end even the scriptures must be given up and unlearned. "All scriptures without exception proclaim that for attaining salvation the mind should be subdued. And once one knows that control of the mind is their final aim, it is futile to make an interminable study of them. What is required for such control is actual enquiry into oneself by self-interrogation: 'Who am I?' How can this enquiry in quest of the Self be made by means of a study of the scriptures?"²

This reminds one of Chuang Tsu's saying that if one gets rid of small wisdom great wisdom comes in.

1. *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 15, Rider's edition, p. 10, Sri Ramanasramam edition.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 63/75.

There are no precepts for special austerities, while at the same time indulgence is not condoned. The question always is: who is it that seeks all this. To refer a second time to a Taoist Sage, it is like Lee Tsu's story of the animal trainer who subdued his tigers (the *vasanas*) by treating them quite impersonally, neither gratifying their desires nor provoking their anger.

All thinking is out of place as a means of sadhana. It is not one's true nature. It creates all errors and, what is worst of all, creates, as the father of them a false entity, the ego or individual being. "Concentration is not thinking of one thing. On the contrary it is excluding all thoughts, since all thoughts obstruct the sense of one's true being. All efforts are to be directed simply to removing the veil of ignorance."³

The Maharshi says that the Self is not in books; if it were, anybody might become a Sage by study. Also it is not in any hermitage, and going to live in solitude will not help. "Why do you think you are a householder? The similar thought that you are a *sannyasin* will haunt you even if you go forth as one. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to live in the forest, your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world and makes you think of being a householder. If you renounce, it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of family, and the environment of the forest for

3. *Ibid.*, p. 127/160.

that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind and this must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? So why change the environment? Your efforts can be made even now, whatever be the environment.”⁴ Nor is the Self something to be attained at some future date. “No one is ever away from his Self, and therefore everyone is in fact Self-realized: only - and this is the great mystery - people do not know this and want to realize the Self. Realization consists only in getting rid of the false idea that one is not realized. It is not anything new to be acquired. It must already exist or it would not be eternal, and only what is eternal is worth striving for.”⁵

All doctrines are made by the ego and for the ego. The ego flourishes on them. But on the Maharshi's path the very existence of the ego is denied right from the start, both that of the teacher and that of the taught. “There is no ego. If there were you would have to admit of two selves in you. Therefore there is no ignorance. If you enquire into the Self, ignorance, which is already non-existent, will be found not to exist and you will say that it has fled.”⁶

Is there anything in the human body that can be called ‘I’? There are mental and vital processes but investigation reveals no person there to be designated as ‘I’.⁷

The negative process consists of intellectually eliminating the not-I so that one can see that he who eliminates everything else cannot eliminate himself. Such intellectual investigation may

prepare the way for Self-enquiry but is not the enquiry itself.

“*Visitor*: I begin with asking myself ‘Who am I?’ and eliminate the body as not-I, the breath as not-I, the mind as not-I, but then I am unable to proceed further.

“*Bhagavan*: Well, that is all right so far as the mind goes. Your process is only mental The Truth cannot be directly indicated; that is why this mental process is used. You see, he who eliminates all the not-I cannot eliminate the ‘I’. In order to be able to say ‘I am not this’ or ‘I am That’ there must be the ‘I’ to say it. This ‘I’ is only the ego or the ‘I-thought’. After the rising up of this ‘I-thought’ all other thoughts arise. The ‘I-thought’ is therefore the root thought. If the root is pulled out the rest is at the same time uprooted. Therefore seek the root ‘I’; question yourself: ‘Who am I?’ find out the source of the ‘I’. Then all these problems will vanish and the pure Self alone will remain.”⁸

Why was the Maharshi so against thought? Why was he not satisfied with mental investigation? Because it cannot see beyond itself. It is created by the ego and therefore cannot pierce to the Self underlying the ego. But will its renunciation not result in a mere blank? It can, that is what happens in deep sleep. But it can also result in awakening into pure *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, Being-Consciousness-Bliss. This is what is called Realization. “Absence of thought does not mean a blank. There must be someone to be aware of that blank. Knowledge and ignorance pertain only to the mind and are in duality, but the Self is beyond them both. It is pure Light. There is no need for one Self to see another. There are no two selves. What is not Self is mere non-Self and cannot see the Self. The Self has no sight or hearing; it lies beyond them, all alone, as pure Consciousness.”⁹

4. *Ibid.*, p. 78/94.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 23/21

6. *Ibid.*, p. 25/23

7. It will be observed that this is the same as the Buddhist doctrine of *anatta*. (Editor)

8. *Ibid.*, p. 117/146-7

Then does one who has realized the Self remain absorbed in pure, formless Consciousness, oblivious of any outer world? He can; that is the state of trance known as *nirvikalpa samadhi*. But he need not. Full and complete Realization involves return to formal consciousness also, with full perception of the outer world, not as a self-subsistent reality but as a manifestation of the Self. The mind and senses can still cognize; when one says that the mind is dead, that means only that it no longer presumes to imagine, create or originate, as it formerly did. This is the state the Maharshi was in. It is known as *sahaja samadhi*.

“To those who have not realized the Self, as well as to those who have, the word ‘I’ refers to the body, but with this difference, that, for those who have not realized, the ‘I’ is confined to the body, whereas, for those who have realized the Self within the body, the ‘I’ shines as the limitless Self.

“To those who have not realized as well as to those who have, the world is real. But to those who have not realized, Truth is adapted to the measure of the world, whereas to those who have, Truth shines as the Formless Perfection and as the Substratum of the world. This is all the difference between them.”¹⁰

Why is the Maharshi so insistent against the ego? Because the ego is the usurper that claims to be the Self, the mask that conceals the Reality. Its elimination is the only way to realization of the true Self that underlies It. The seeker has no alternative. There can be no chick unless the eggshell is broken. The true Self cannot be realized until the false is renounced. Therefore, the Maharshi says, since this is ultimately

necessary, why not start with it straight away; since you must finally remain as the Self, why not do so from the start; since other paths will lead you roundabout and finally face you with the alternative of Self or pseudo-self, why not go direct and face it here and now?” This is the direct method. All other methods are practised while retaining the ego and therefore many doubts arise and the ultimate question still remains to be tackled in the end. But in this method the final question is the only one and is raised from the very beginning.... Because every kind of path except Self-enquiry presupposes the retention of the mind as the instrument for following it, and cannot be followed without the mind. The ego may take different and more subtle forms at different stages of one’s practice but it is never destroyed. The attempt to destroy the ego or the mind by methods other than Self-enquiry is like a thief turning policeman to catch the thief that is himself. Self-enquiry alone can reveal the truth that neither the ego nor the mind really exists and enable one to realize the pure, undifferentiated Being of the Self or the Absolute.”¹¹

Many hesitate and find this method too harsh, because of all renunciations this seems to them the most severe, renouncing not merely enjoyment but him who desires and enjoys it. But this is a wrong idea. If it were true, a Self-realized man such as the Maharshi would be the most miserable of men, whereas in fact he is the most happy, in pure, unbroken, unalloyed happiness, regardless of whether outer circumstances seem favourable or unfavourable. This is because in renouncing the ego one really renounces nothing except a wrong conception of ‘I’, an error whose removal reveals the eternal Truth and unalloyed happiness that is one’s real nature.” The individual being which identifies its existence with that of the life in the physical

9. *Ibid.*, p. 25/23

10. *Forty Verses on Reality*, vv. 17-18, from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Riders, London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

11. *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His own Words*, p. 112/139-40

body as 'I' is called the ego. The Self, which is pure Consciousness, has no ego-sense about it. Neither can the physical body, which is inert in itself, have this ego-sense. Between the two, that is between the Self or Pure Consciousness and the inert physical body, there arises mysteriously the ego-sense or 'I-notion', the hybrid which is neither of them, and this flourishes as an individual being. The ego or individual being is at the root of all that is futile and undesirable in life. Therefore it is to be destroyed by any possible means; then That which ever is alone remains resplendent. This is Liberation or Enlightenment or Self-Realization."¹²

It is to remove this error that the Maharshi prescribes the enquiry 'Who am I?' from the very start. He had no graded methods. Nor did he grade his disciples according to seniority. Progress was an inner state which only he perceived. The aspirant is expected to understand that he does not know his self, to investigate into it in order to find out what it really is. He must see: "I am possessed of a wrong view of 'I'. I am a slave of a pseudo-I. I should not take him for the real 'I' or lend him that name. This tragedy of wrong thinking has brought on me the sickness of a wrong 'I'. The Maharshi has prescribed the right medicine to cure me. I am under the spell of the ego which has hypnotised and enslaved me. I myself gave it the power to do so by thoughtlessly bestowing my I-sense on it. By doing so I am helping it to rob me of my very Self." Indeed, the Maharshi often referred to the story of King Janaka who, on attaining Realization, exclaimed: "Now I have caught the thief who has been robbing me all these years!"

Why do I thus misplace my I-sense? Because I take sense-perceptions for true. I have to learn to realize the true 'I' which underlies mind and senses and the whole objective world.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 21/18

Man's mind and senses are used to cognize objective things, but this talent is of no use for knowing the Self, in which there is no trace of objectivity. One cannot have a vision of the Self or know the Self as one knows another, because that would imply two selves in you, one to know the other. "You speak of a vision of Siva, but a vision always presumes an object. That implies the existence of a subject. The value of the vision is the same as that of the seer. That is to say the nature of the vision is on the same plane as that of the seer."¹³ "A vision of God is only a vision of the Self objectified as the God of your particular faith.

What you have to do is to know the Self."¹⁴ And to know the Self is only to know, to be aware, to be.

Devotee: When I seek the 'I', I see nothing.

Bhagavan: You say that because you are accustomed to identify yourself with the body and sight with the eyes, but what is there to be seen? And by whom? And how? There is only one Consciousness and this, when it identifies itself with the body, projects itself through the eyes and sees the surrounding objects. The individual is limited to the waking state; he expects to see something different and accepts the authority of his senses. He will not admit that he who sees, the objects seen, and the act of seeing are all manifestations of the same Consciousness - the 'I-I'. Self-enquiry helps to overcome the illusion that the Self is something to see. How do you recognise yourself now? Do you have to hold a mirror up in front of yourself to recognise yourself? The awareness is itself the 'I'. Realize it and that is the truth."¹⁵

However the ego is engrossed with seeing, hearing, feeling and objective knowing. It values

13 *Ibid.*, p. 167/213

14 *Ibid.*, p. 168/215

these functions and considers them as belonging to the Self. Blinded by this view, one does not experience the brilliance of the true 'I'. One's attention is to be drawn away from such objective perceptions to That with respect to which there is unknowingness.¹⁶ If That were known and experienced as It is, It would be recognised as one's very Self, and then the false 'I' would fade out.

The outer man is unreal and should be made passive, a mere recipient of impressions. Self-enquiry helps to do this. The journey is inwards through territory unknown to the senses.

So long as life remains one should strive to reach one's source. This is the only worthy aim in life, the only goal worth seeking, the only use of life that can put an end to suffering and frustration, and reveal the pure Bliss, the radiant Consciousness, the unruffled Being that one really is. The weapon for doing this, on the Maharshi's path, is concentration on the 'I-sense'. This is

15 *Ibid.*, P. 24/22

16 This expression recalls the title of the 14th Century English mystic's guide to aspirants, *The Cloud of Unknowing* (Editor)

not like other thoughts that come and go and can be dismissed at will. One's attention must be constantly drawn to feeling of pure awareness, pure consciousness of 'I-am-ness'. At first this can be done only during concentrated sessions of Self-enquiry known loosely as 'meditation' but later the awareness of 'I-am-ness' becomes an undercurrent underlying all one's activities. This 'I-sense' is the scent, by tracing which to its source, one reaches the Self, as a dog tracks out its master.

Am I worse than a dog? Steadfastly will I
track Thee out and regain Thee,
Oh Arunachala.

(First of the *Five Hymns to Arunachala*, verse 39.)¹⁷

The Maharshi says that if one earnestly seeks the 'I', the false 'I' vanishes, leaving only the true to shine in all its pristine glory. His teaching is based on his own experience not on learning or reasoning, and nothing he says is for the sake of argument. What can be more heartening to the traveller on the Mountain Path?

17. *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Riders, London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

When the ego-sense of the individual me vanishes there springs up within me an endless current of 'I-I', conferring unique and transcendental bliss which engulfs all my knowledge and ends in Silence. How then can Silence be expressed?

- TAYUMANAVAR

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It is only because of ignorance that the Self appears to be finite. When ignorance is destroyed the Self which does not admit of any multiplicity whatsoever, truly reveals Itself by Itself, like the sun when the cloud is removed.

- SHANKARA

IS SUFISM ISLAMIC?

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

When a young Muslim seeks initiation into a Sufi order he will be shown the *silsilah*, that is the 'chain' or genealogical tree of the order, going back from sheikh to sheikh in unbroken line to the Prophet himself. True, many of these orders bear the names of the great Sufi saints of the 11th and 12th centuries of the Christian era - Abdu'l Qadir Jilani, Mulinuddin Chishti, Ibn Arabi and others; but although these great builders impressed their own character on them, they had themselves been initiated into them and were re-adapting them, not creating new ones.

If, however, he then takes a book on Islamic history and culture from the library he will probably read that Sufism is an adaptation of neo-Platonism and came into Islam several centuries after the Prophet. These two apparently contradictory statements may come as a great shock to him. Which is he to believe? The armchair historian, who probably has an anti-spiritual bias in any case, will see no problem; he will simply brush aside the testimony of the *silsilah* as forgery. But one who has felt the intense fervour of the Sufi quest for truth will not believe that it is based on falsehood; nor could he follow it if he did.

Actually the problem melts away as soon as one remembers that Sufism is not a philosophy but a path, which is something very different. A philosopher who studies neo-Platonic and Sufi philosophy does not thereby become a Sufi, is not even training to be a Sufi, does not think of himself as a Sufi, while on the other hand a Sufi *murid* or disciple is not called upon to study neo-Platonic or any other philosophy. He can if he has a bent that way, but there is no obligation. It

is important for him to understand the basic doctrine of *tawhid*, Oneness, which, as interpreted by the Sufis, is the same as Identity or Advaita, but that is all. After that it is practice not theory that is needed.

Even if philosophers had never formulated their theories at all, if there were no texts, no books, no theories, the basic meaning is contained in the *shahada* itself: 'There is no god but God', none worshipful but the One, no being but the Being, no self but the Self. It is the same as that tremendous sentence in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "There is no existence of the unreal and no non-existence of the Real,"¹ and according to Islamic tradition it has been used with full understanding as a weapon for fighting the 'greater holy war' from the beginning. Its implications were developed more specifically later - the burgeoning into voluptuous form of what was latent is a stage in the growth of every religion - philosophers were delighted to find its essential truths elaborated by the Greeks, poets began to write rapturously about it, it became widely known where at first it had eschewed publicity, but all this concerns the *salik* or spiritual wayfarer very little. His task is not to theorise about it but to use it.

From another angle also this question may be asked, whether Sufism is Islamic; for there are groups in the West today which propagate, under the name of Sufism, a sort of vague inter-religious mysticism. To call this Sufism is a simple misuse of language. The term 'Sufism' has always been used, and is therefore correctly used, to indicate '*tasawwuf*', the traditional esoteric aspect of Islam transmitted down the centuries in regular

1. Ch. II, v. 16

schools by direct descent from teacher to disciple. Some of the Sufi saints may have spoken or behaved in a way to shock the orthodox, but a saint often does feel that society is too smug and needs shock treatment. Some of the orthodox, from their side, may have been blind to the esoteric teachings of Islam and denied their orthodoxy, but that too is a phenomenon common to all religions. Plenty of Christians are blind to Christian mysticism, and there have been Hindu dualists who have rejected Advaita and attacked Shankaracharya; but that does not mean that the

via purgativa is not Christian or Vedanta not Hindu or Sufism not Islamic. They may all lead to the same goal, but they are separate paths till they get there.

A new path independent of the religions has indeed been laid down in our age, but it required Bhagavan, that is God Incarnate, to establish it. That does not mean that groups of men can produce a composite path; nor does it justify them in calling what they produce by an Islamic name and then denying that it is Islamic.

If it is said that Liberation is of three kinds, with form or without form or with and without form, then let me tell you that the extinction of the three forms of Liberation is. the only true Liberation.

- *Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 40, from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Riders and Sri Ramanasramam.

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Mind is the Buddha, while the cessation of conceptual thought is the Way. Once you stop arousing concepts and thinking in terms of existence and non-existence, long and short, other and self, active and passive, and suchlike, you will find that your mind is intrinsically the Buddha, that, the Buddha is intrinsically Mind, and that Mind resembles a Void.

- From *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po*, p. 67, translated by John Blofeld, Riders.

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Self-Realization does not depend on any kind of consciousness ; its very nature is Awareness or Consciousness.

Shankara, Introduction to *Commentary on Kena Vakya*.

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Tinier than the tiniest atom, Tuka is vast as the sky I swallowed and spat out the body - the very image of worldly delusion. I have abandoned the triplets (of knowledge, knower and known). The light is lit within the lamp. Tuka says : I now remain only for the service of all.

- TUKARAM

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All that has to be done is to disrealize unreality and Reality will remain

- *Ramana Maharshi*



AN AGGRESSIVE TEACHER

By SAGITTARIUS

Christ was an aggressive teacher. Verbally, he hit back hard when attacked. No “gentle Jesus meek and mild” about him. His method was always to counter-attack and put the attacker on the defensive.

When Buddha came to a rest-house with a few followers one night and heard a sadhu there holding forth against him and his teaching he neither intervened nor allowed his followers to. This magnanimity had such an effect that the attacker became a follower. When abused he answered mildly that since he refused to accept the abuse it must fall back on its utterer. When, on the other hand, to take one characteristic example among many, some Pharisees asked Jesus why his disciples ate without the prescribed ritualistic washing of hands, he rounded on them, calling them hypocrites, quoting Isaiah against them and adding: “You are so busy holding on to the traditions of men that you let go the Commandment of God.”¹ True, of course; but certainly the way to make enemies.²

Once when he was accusing some Pharisees of hypocrisy a doctor of law protested: “Master, when you say things like that you are insulting us as well.”

And he returned: “Yes and I do blame you experts in law! For you pile up backbreaking burdens for other men to bear, but you yourselves

will not raise a finger to lift them. Alas for you, for you build memorial tombs for the Prophets - the very men whom your fathers murdered. You show clearly enough how you approve of your father’s actions. They did the actual killing and you put up a memorial to it.”³

Many of the lawyers may have deserved rebuke for being formalists - many lawyers do in all ages; but they could hardly help being antagonised by such an onslaught. Many of the Pharisees may have been hypocrites, but we know from surviving Jewish accounts that some at least of them were men of integrity and devotion sincerely trying to perpetuate all that was best in the Jewish tradition.

Moreover, Christ’s saying that all who were not for him were against him implied that they were deliberately being treated as enemies. To, recognise the new teaching and Teacher must have required such integrity and understanding that there were bound to be quite a number who did not - priests, lawyers, ordinary people - and a wholesale denunciation of them seems unnecessarily aggressive to those steeped in any Eastern tradition. Buddha rejected the Brahmin monopoly of wisdom as firmly as Christ did that of the Pharisees, but he never denounced them; he simply accepted non-Brahmins into his Order on the same footing as Brahmins.

It was not only what Christ taught that was aggressive but the circumstances he chose for teaching it in. Buddha wandered quietly about the country, teaching those who would listen. The Maharshi did not even do that; he stayed at

1. In these articles my quotations from the Gospels will normally be taken from the translation of J. B. Phillips, *The Gospel in Modern English*, Fontana paperback, Collins, as the Authorised Version is so over-familiar and its wording so obscure to the ordinary reader that the sharp edge of the sayings is blunted.

2. St. Mark, ch. VII, v. 6-8

3. St. Luke, ch. XI, v. 46-48

his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai and if any came and asked questions he answered them. But Jesus went and taught in the great Temple of Jerusalem during the most crowded festival of the Jewish year and while doing so mingled his own teaching with violent attacks on the guardians of the Jewish tradition, warning the people not to imitate their way of living⁴ and telling them: “You are like white-washed tombs, which look fine on the outside but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all kinds of rotteness. For you appear like good men on the outside - but inside you are a mass of pretence and wickedness.”⁵ From the social point of view, the priests and lawyers (and they were the guardians of the social order - the more important since political power was in the hands of an alien conqueror) must have regarded much of this as rabblousing and the speaker as a dangerous revolutionary.

Another striking feature is that Jesus constantly demanded belief not only in his teaching but in himself, and denounced those who did not believe in him. “The difference between us is that you come from below and I am from above. You

belong to this world but I do not. That is why I told you, you will die in your sins. For unless you believe that I am Who I am you will die in your sins.”⁶ There is a similar emphasis in Islam; the Quran is full of assertions that Muhammad is a true Prophet and denunciations of those who do not recognise him as such. In both cases the assertion may have been true, the denunciation justified, but apart from the truth of a teaching there is the manner in which it is delivered to be considered. The former might be called ‘vertical’, the descent from Formless Truth to the forms of a human world, the latter ‘horizontal’, the permeation of the human world. Between the two is the impact, the striking of the vertical on the horizontal, and the nature of this can vary. How much more gracious it seems when Buddha says: “Don’t believe because I tell you or anyone else does. Try it out for yourselves and see whether it works, and only believe if you find it brings good results.”

But Christ’s was the aggressive way.

4. St. Matthew. ch. XXIII, v. 3

5. St. Matthew, ch. XXIII, v. 27-28

6. St. John, ch. VIII, v. 23-24

A BEACON STILL

By S. P. MUKHERJI

We have not seen you, Bhagavan;
 We have not approached your lotus-feet,
 Yet do we find
 The now and the then are the same for us,
 The body-presence, the presence in the heart,
 These are the same.
 One thing only do we know-
 That Ramanashram is a beacon still.

The author explains that ‘we’ is used instead of ‘I’ in order to include his wife, who settled down near Sri Ramanasramam with him after the death of the Maharshi. (Editor)

SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

By FATHER LAZARUS

The word Orthodoxy¹ comes from two Greek words meaning 'right glory'. So Orthodoxy means right worship, and that implies right belief and right thinking. We are reminded of what our Lord said to the Samaritan woman: "God is spirit, and His worshippers must worship Him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24).

People sometimes say, "It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you live a good life." That is a very unthinking remark. In fact, it isn't true. The truth is that it is of vital importance what we believe, because:

(i) "Without faith it is impossible to please God," still less to be saved (Heb. II: 6)

(ii) "The devils also believe, and tremble," i.e., they are terrified, having neither hope nor love, but believing that what we love and hope for will come true (Jas. 2:19)

(iii) If we do not believe in God we cannot receive His life and power to worship, love and glorify Him. Then, deprived of grace, we fall into idolatry and immorality (Rom. 1:20-32; Wisdom, chs. 13 & 14)

(iv) Our character and conduct depends on what we believe. Character is what we are. Conduct is what we do. What we are and what we do makes up the whole of our life. So our whole life depends on what we believe (Gal. 3:11)

1. The word 'Orthodoxy' is used in this article in a technical sense, as applying to the Greek Orthodox Church, just as members of the Church of Rome use 1 catholic' in a technical sense, as applying to their Church.- (Editor)

An illustration: A mother tells her child that fire hurts, but the child does not believe it. The mother goes away. Left to itself, the child crawls to the fire and puts its hand in. It screams, cries and changes its faith, and consequently changes its conduct.

The Orthodox Church is very rich in dogma, doctrine, dogmatic belief. Where does this revealed truth come from? Orthodox dogma comes from Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture, and is to be found largely in the Church Service books. I suppose the Orthodox Service books are the richest in the world, and these services are based primarily on the twin sources I have just mentioned. In a sense there is only one source, for Holy Scripture is really part of Holy Tradition. It is a form of written tradition. In the life of the Church, and in the life of the individual, tradition comes first. From Adam for many centuries there were no books. Religion was dependent on the traditions handed down from father to son. Even in New Testament times, our Lord wrote nothing. How did the Apostles and early Christians get their faith and knowledge. By tradition. handed on by word of mouth. It was not until 397 AD that the Canon of the New Testament was fixed as we have it today. And in the life of the individual each of us gets his first knowledge of life and religion normally from his parents. Long before we can read we learn from their lives and lips. So the Apostle Paul says: "Hold the traditions which you have been taught by word or letter" (2 Thess. 2:15 ; 1 Cor. II: 2).

Public worship holds a very large place in Orthodox life. The centre of Orthodox worship is the Holy Liturgy, or Holy Eucharist, or Holy

Sacrifice or Lord's Supper, the various names indicating different aspects of the service. Here we are reminded of the nature of the Gospel, of the heart of redemption. For in the Liturgy the whole of Christ's life and Passion is commemorated and re-enacted by word, symbol and action from His humble birth in the stable in Bethlehem to His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, and the sitting at the right hand of the Father. In addition to all the other aspects of the service, the Liturgy is a deep sermon in itself. That is why in the Orthodox Church it is not such a tragedy as it is with other Christians if the priest is a poor preacher or for some reason cannot preach, for the service in itself is a most profound and vivid sermon.

At a meeting of Presbyterian ministers, while discussing the Virgin birth of Christ one minister said, "There are many in this Presbytery who do not believe in that particular fable. I myself am one who does not accept it."

One of them asked, "Then how did you become a Presbyterian minister?"

He replied, "I did accept it when I was much younger. But I have since become educated and no longer hold my previous belief."

One asked, "Do you mind telling us just why you do not believe in the virgin birth?"

He said, "I don't believe in that doctrine because it is only found on two pages of the New Testament. Matthew and Luke are the only ones who ever mention it. In all the writings of Paul he never introduced the question of the virgin birth. Peter never mentions it in his writings, and Jesus was utterly ignorant of any such suggestion. You never find it in a single sentence or statement uttered by Jesus Himself."

"Then tell us," one minister asked, "What do

you teach and preach?" "The Sermon on the Mount," was his instant reply. "That is enough Gospel for anyone."

"Not for me," answered the other minister, "because I don't believe in the Sermon on the Mount!"

If a bomb had been dropped, it could not have created more excitement. Somewhat bewildered, the first minister asked, "What do you mean when you say that you don't believe in the Sermon on the Mount?"

The other replied, "I don't believe that Jesus ever uttered the words that you call the Sermon on the Mount."

Greatly astonished, he said, "Why ever not?"

"Because it only occurs on two pages of the New Testament. Matthew and Luke are the only men who ever mention it. Paul never talked of the Sermon on the Mount. Peter says nothing about it. James, John and Jude are equally ignorant of it. Now, following your line of reason, if Matthew and Luke lied about the Virgin Birth, why should I believe them concerning the Sermon on the Mount?"

Of course, it is not true that St. Paul knew nothing of the Virgin Birth, for he never once calls Jesus "Son of Man" but constantly calls Him the Son of God. And where did Matthew and Luke get the information they give us in the Gospels if not from Jesus and Mary? That, however, is not my subject for the moment. The point I wish to make is this. There are many people in the world today who think that the Sermon on the Mount is the essence and heart of the Gospel. "Give us more of the Sermon on the Mount and less theology," they say. Even such a great man as Mahatma Gandhi said: "The message of Jesus is contained in the Sermon on

the Mount, unadulterated and taken as a whole.” It is one of the popular heresies and it needs to be answered.

The Sermon on the Mount is not the Gospel that the early Church taught. When St. Paul wanted to recall the Corinthians to the fundamentals of Christianity, he did not say: “Blessed are the peacemakers. Do not resist an evil person. Love your enemies. Let tomorrow take care of itself. Do to others what you would like them to do to you. Be perfect.” Those are magnificent principles. They could be called good advice. They could not possibly be called good news. No, St. Paul wrote something quite different. Here are his words: “I delivered to you among the fundamentals what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve, then to more than 500 brothers at once, then to James, then to all the Apostles. Last of all He appeared to me” (1 Cor. 15:1-9).

And here is what St. Peter preached

The God of our fathers raised Jesus Whom you killed by hanging Him on a tree. It is this Jesus Whom God has exalted at His right hand to be our Leader and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit Whom God has given to those who obey Him” (Acts 5: 30-32).

In any case the original Gospel was not a sermon, and not just the Beatitudes. It was thrilling news, glad tidings of great joy for all the peoples of the world. It was Jesus Himself, the divine Saviour, His life, His death, His Cross, His Empty Tomb, His Kingdom, His love and forgiveness, His power and His glory. It is this great truth that our salvation depends on, the act

of God, on what God in His great love has done for us, that Orthodox Spirituality insists upon and emphasises in a remarkable way. In order to fix in the minds and hearts of the faithful what God has done for us, the Orthodox church, besides the Creed, has twelve great annual Feasts commemorating events in the drama of Redemption.

You may be surprised to learn that Easter is not one of the twelve. So great is the Resurrection in the mind of the Church that it is in a class by itself and is called “The Feast of Feasts and Triumph of Triumphs.” Easter is always celebrated at midnight and the service usually takes till about dawn. To attend an Orthodox Easter Service is an unforgettable experience. Many people, including Roman Catholic priests and monks, have told me that they have never seen any service to compare with it. The singing, especially as performed in the Russian Church, is uplifting in the extreme. One detail: at certain points in the service the priest greets the people in a loud voice with the words, “Christ is Risen,” and the congregation responds, “He is Risen indeed!” This is also how people greet one another at Easter time. Instead of saying Good Day or Namaskaram, one says “Christ is Risen” and the response is “He is Risen Indeed.” On Sundays and at Easter there is a rule that prostrations to the ground are not to be made, as the joy of the Resurrection overwhelms even the sense of penitence. Also at Easter the psalms are not used for a whole week, and there is no fasting.

No days are blank in the Orthodox calendar. Every day some saints are remembered. Saints are of various classes. The Greek word Martyr means a witness. The martyrs bore witness to Christ with their blood. It is possible to be a martyr in various ways. “Feel the tortures of conscience,” says St. Athanasius, “die to sin, amputate sinful desires, and you will be martyr

in will. The martyrs struggled with the torturers, kings and princes. You have a torturer, the devil; he is the king of sin. There are also prince-persecutors, namely demons. If you refrain from these passions and from sinful desires, it will mean that you have trampled on the idols and become a martyr.” So much for St. Athanasius.

Typical of Orthodoxy is the group of saints called ‘Fools for Christ’s sake’. These were men and women who, for the love of God and in response to a special call, pretended to be mad or mentally abnormal. I think the earliest was a nun of Tabenna in the Egyptian desert, St. Isidora (380). She was never known to eat proper food. She lived on the scraps the nuns left. It was a large community and she was mostly treated with disdain and abhorrence. But such was her humility that she never refused to serve and obey everyone in the lowliest tasks.

Another Fool was St. Basil of Moscow who died in 1552, aged 88. One of the most magnificent churches in the world was built in his honour and can be seen in Moscow today. Once the Russian Emperor was building a new palace on Sparrow Mountains. One day he went to church, but instead of praying he was thinking about beautifying the new palace. St. Basil went to the same church and stood in a corner unnoticed. But he saw what the Emperor was doing with his mind. After the Liturgy the Emperor went home and Basil followed him. The Emperor asked him, “Where have you been?” “There, where you were, at the Holy Liturgy.” “How was that? I didn’t see you.” “But I saw you and I saw where you really were.” “I was nowhere else, only in church,” said the Emperor. “Your words are not true, O Emperor, for I saw you in spirit on Sparrow Mountains building your palace.” Deeply moved, the Emperor said: “It is true, that is just what happened to me.” That is typical of the spiritual

insight to which the saints attained.

Here it may be good to mention that monasticism has always been highly regarded in the Orthodox Church. It is based on Christ’s words: “He who is able to receive it, let him receive it” (Mat. 19: 10-12). And “sell what you have and give to the poor, and come and follow Me” (Mat. 19:21). And the promises to those who renounce everything (Mat. 19:29). Monks are pledged to battle with evil. Monasticism is not an escape from service.

A great virtue in Orthodox Spirituality is dispassion (Gk. *Apatheia*), which is often misunderstood and mistranslated as “apathy”, “indifference,” or “insensibility” in a stoic sense. But true dispassion is freedom from passion through being filled with the spirit of God as a fruit of divine love. It is a state of soul in which a burning love for God and men leaves no room for selfish and human passions. How far it is from the cold stoic conception, we can see from the fact that St. Diadochus can speak of “the fire of dispassion.”¹

The thought of deification may seem strange,² yet that is a word constantly met with in Orthodox works. It is based on Holy Scripture, of course. St. Peter tells us that God has given us His “great and precious promises that through them we may be partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1: 4). And St. Athanasius explains that it is through the Incarnation that “the flesh has been deified.” This deification is worked out, according to St. Maximus the Confessor, by the identification of our human will with the divine will. That prevents all pantheism. It is union with the divine life and activity, not with the divine being and essence. Iron placed in a fire becomes

1. It corresponds to the Hindu ‘*vairagya*’ and could perhaps best be rendered as ‘non-attachment’ or ‘equal-mindedness’. (Editor).

2. It will not seem strange to Hindu readers. (Editor).

red hot and fiery, but it remains iron.

Everyone is hungry for life and happiness. That is just what Jesus Christ came to give. "I have come," He said, "that you may have life and may have it abundantly." There is nothing wrong in being hungry for life and happiness, because that is the way we are made. Yet it is one of life's paradoxes that the pursuit of happiness, like the pursuit of pleasure, defeats its own purpose. We find happiness only when we do not directly seek it. So God gave us the spiritual law: "Seek first the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 12:31). Then He promises that all our needs will be supplied. So Orthodox Christians have seasons of special seeking by penitence, prayer and abstinence that they may partake more fully of that life and happiness which constitutes the Kingdom of God. People think that wealth and honours mean happiness. But God tells us that a man's life and happiness does not consist in the abundance of his possessions (Lk. 12:15). In the Orthodox view, so great is the human heart that nothing less than God can satisfy it. And the truth is that God is man's happiness. So all men are really seeking God. But it is one thing to try to get happiness for yourself, and quite another to try to establish God's Kingdom of divine power and happiness in the hearts of all men everywhere.

When Our Lord began His public life, the gist of His message was: "The Kingdom Of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark. 1: 15). To repent means, according to the Greek, to change our mind, our outlook, and consequently our life. Instead of thinking thoughts of fear, revenge, anxiety, depression, acquisitiveness and sickness, it means to live and think in terms of the heavenly kingdom which is all around us, and in which we live and move and have our being. Man is a spirit, housed in a body. So he lives at once in Time and Eternity. Eternal life begins here and now. Our business

or church is heaven on earth. The ikons or pictures remind us of things not of this world. "Our life, our home is in Heaven" (Philip 3:20). We are surrounded by Saints and Angels and all the heavenly inhabitants. A prayer that occurs daily in Lent reads: "Standing in the temple of Thy glory, we think that we are standing in Heaven." "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you" (Lk. 17: 21), so unless you take Heaven with you in your heart, you will never go there.

God made the world of Time as a school for Eternity. During this brief spell on earth, we are meant to be schooling ourselves to live with God Our Father in perfect joy forever. But many people find this world so beautiful, so attractive, that they get attached to it and even do not want to leave it. So St. John says: "Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For the world passes away and the desire for it; but he, who does the will of God lives for ever." (1 John 2:15).

We are meant to find God in His creation, to pass through the visible to the invisible, to "look at the rainbow and praise Him Who made it" (Eccles. 43:12). In order to be attached to our Creator we must be detached from creatures. Detachment is a virtue which holds a high place in Orthodox thought. "A small hair disturbs the eye, and a small care prevents detachment," says St. John of the Ladder. To love creatures instead of the Creator is idolatry.

A remarkable feature in the Orthodox Church is what may be called her sacramentalism. In order to train her children and teach them to pass through the visible to the Invisible, she uses pictures, crosses, various symbols and sacraments. The Orthodox Church calls sacraments mysteries. A mystery is not something of which you can understand nothing, something which is all darkness; it is more like a circle of light surrounded by darkness.



The Holy Mysteries or Sacraments are neither the end nor the essence of the spiritual life. They are means of grace, and only means. But these means have a great importance in the life of the Church. Because God has clothed our spirits in material bodies, He binds Himself to use material things in communicating with us. And so His law and practice in nature and grace is to give us His Gifts through the hands of His creatures. In other words God works through agents. So our life comes through a human father and mother, light through the sun, breath through the air, food through the earth. It is the same with spiritual things. The science of the Sacraments is through the material to the spiritual, through the visible to the Invisible. They teach us to find God through His creatures, to find Life through matter. The wonderful works of creation all tell us of the divine Presence, Power, Beauty, and Love.

As man is soul and body, so Orthodox worship requires the homage of both, an Old Testament

ideal, of course: "That you may worship the Lord our God by everything that you do" (Josh. 4:24). Says St. Isaac the Syrian: "Every prayer in which the body does not participate and by which the heart is not affected is to be reckoned as an abortion without a soul." So in Orthodox worship we bow with our will and with our body as well, that is we make prostrations to the ground. Another feature is the sign of the cross. Just as the Name of Jesus is made by a movement of the tongue, so the sign of the cross is made by a movement of hand and arm. The cross is the sign of faith, hope and love; it is the Christian sign, which God wants us never to forget so He puts it everywhere. Every tree, every telegraph pole is a cross. What a book is to a literate person, a picture is to an illiterate. It brings him understanding.

And we believe in the Communion of the Saints, because there is now no death and all are alive to God. We ask the Saints to pray for us, and we pray for those who are not yet saints.

Your true nature is something never lost to you even in moments of delusion, nor is it gained at the moment of Enlightenment. In it is neither delusion nor right understanding. It fills the Void everywhere and is intrinsically of the substance of the One Mind.

- From *The Zen Teaching of Huang Po*, p. 93,
translated by John Blofeld, Rider.

I gave birth to myself! I was conceived within my own body. Now all vows are fulfilled; all desire is extinguished. I have become well and strong. I died away that time. I look on both sides. Tuka is what he is.

- TUKARAM.

The purpose of Atma Jnana (spiritual knowledge) is to remove the illusory self created by Avidya (ignorance). The attainment of Self by Divine Knowledge means only the removal of the illusory, self created by ignorance through the superimposition of the body as the self.

- Shankara, *Commentary on the Taittiriya Upanishad*.

A VISIT TO ANANDASHRAM IN THE LIFETIME OF SWAMI RAMDAS

By UNNAMULAI

Some friends were going to Anandashram by car and, having heard of Swam! Ramdas for years past but never yet visited him, I accepted their invitation to accompany them. In fact, he was the only living saint whom I had an inclination to see. As it turned out, it was very fortunate that I took this opportunity because only a few months later he died suddenly, quite unexpectedly.

While the car was approaching Anandashram after a long drive through undulating wooded country and was still about two miles away I suddenly had the extraordinary experience of hearing the invocation of Ram everywhere: the earth, the trees, the humming of the car, the sound of the wind, all were vibrating with the Name of Ram. This was all the more remarkable as I had never been drawn to this invocation and had never used it. Later I understood why it was so.

The first thing that struck me on beholding Swami Ramdas, affectionately called 'Papa' by everyone, was how much nicer he looked in real life than on photos. His face was beaming with joyfulness, goodness, liveliness; his smile was so childlike and spontaneous that one felt immediately drawn to him.

I found that the Ashram was being run by Mother Krishna Bai, known to everybody as 'Mataji'. When we went from the car straight to the Swami's room, tired and unwashed, she was there. I had met her once before briefly, years ago, when she was passing through Madras. She was young then and in good health, but somehow the meeting had left no impression, but now I saw before me a face ravished by sickness yet

incredibly beautiful, with a beauty not of this world. She is worshipped as a realized soul.

We were received very kindly and shown to our rooms, which were comfortable and airy. After washing and changing into a white sari I went back to Papa's room. A number of people were there, sitting on the floor, ladies against the wall and men at the other side, with Papa in his armchair, his feet resting on a footstool. People kept coming and prostrating before him and touching his feet. He explained that a current of power flows through a saint and that there is especial benefit from touching his feet. That is why so many of the sacred poems and songs refer to the lotus feet of the Guru. In his presence one felt enveloped in an atmosphere of love and joyfulness.

At half past seven the bell rang for the evening meal and we all went to an adjoining building in which were the dining hall and kitchen. Food was served on stainless steel plates on the floor, in two rows, one for women and one for men. While we waited to be served the dining hall was resounding with the chanting of Ram Nam. Outstanding was the soprano of a Norwegian trained opera singer, and the powerful deep voice of a German. The food was purely vegetarian, excellent in quality and with due consideration for those who could not eat spiced food. One could feel the loving care of Mataji behind it.

After the meal we assembled in the main hall where Papa was already seated. People asked questions and he not only gave replies and upadesa but launched into reminiscences of his

1. A sample of these talks is contained in his book, *God-Experience*, reviewed in this issue.



own sadhana during the years when he was a wandering sadhu.¹

Although most of these can be found in his books, it was quite a different experience to hear him telling them, sometimes poignant, sometimes full of laughter.

At 10 o'clock all took leave of Papa and Mataji and went to their rooms, except a few who just spread their bedding and lay down to sleep in the hall.

At 5 in the morning some of the devotees went to Papa's room and sat in silent meditation for about an hour, until 6, when he got up. This morning hour seems to have been the only time for silent meditation. During the day it was more talking and asking questions. The chanting of the mantra went on almost uninterruptedly in the big hall, except when Papa sat there with the devotees, as he usually did after lunch and dinner. As I said, the atmosphere was very lively when he began his expositions mingled with reminiscences. Once I was deeply moved when he told about his experience as a sadhu at a railway station, how cold it was, and a policeman came and told him to get up and go somewhere else, but at first he couldn't because his legs were numb and swollen from sitting in the cold. With a voice choked with emotion, I asked, "And then?". He immediately saw what I felt and said reassuringly. "It was all right afterwards. Ram took good care of Ramdas and some friends looked after him." He always did refer to himself in this way, in the third person, as 'Ramdas' (meaning 'slave of Ram').

There was the spontaneity of a child in him, a carefree, happy child. When the mail came in the afternoon he would read the letters out with childlike zest, even if they were private. It was *bhakti* at its purest, though at the same time he

sometimes spoke pure Advaita. Of course, ultimately *bhakti* and *jnana* merge; there can not be love without wisdom or wisdom without love.

When Papa laughed (which was very often) it used to bring on prolonged bouts of coughing ending in breathlessness. I was very concerned about this and had a strong foreboding. This proved only too justified a few months later when he suddenly expired in a fit of suffocation, as we were told by an eye-witness. How the devotees must have missed him! However, Mataji is still there. While I was there she was running the Ashram firmly but unobtrusively and with loving care. What struck me was her great modesty and genuine spirit of loving service, which she managed to instil into those around her. Ill as she was, one would see her folding the laundry of the visitors and doing endless jobs, big and small.

Finally something about Ram Nam, which was the very essence of the teaching of Ramdas. People were singing it, repeating it silently, writing it out, for hours together. Its purpose is to hold the mind to one thought so as to prevent it wandering. Mantras are not my way, but Papa explained that, even following some other way, the *mantra* can be used as a fan to make the flame burn brighter.

A strange thing happened in this connection. It must have been about the time that Swami Ramdas expired (about which we heard only several days later). I was making the pilgrimage round Arunachala. My mind was unsteady, so I remembered the *mantra* and what Papa had said about it and used it as a fan. At that moment it came to life for me. It was Papa himself merged in the *mantra*. There was that indescribable feeling of tenderness, nearness, all his goodness; he was there, all-pervading. Papa lives on in the *mantra*.

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND ART

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Despite the secular spirit which swept over Europe at the Renaissance and has spread to the rest of the world in the present century, it would still be true to say that the greater part of the world's art and poetry has been religious in inspiration and origin. Why?

It has been suggested that the reason is simply that in past ages the churches have been the principal or only patrons; that, however, is a shallow explanation, looking at the past through modern spectacles. It does not explain why Hindu life and literature were dominated for centuries by the great religious epics (and let us remember that the Greeks also considered the Homeric poems the basis of their religion, although they show little of the profundity of the Hindu epics). It does not fit the Taoist painters, who were largely amateurs in no need of a patron, or the sculptors and painters of Buddhist cave temples, at Ajanta and elsewhere, who were world-renouncers. It would be laughed at by the Persian poet-saints who scandalised the orthodox. It does not even apply to the great temples of Mediaeval India or the gothic cathedrals of Christendom, in complying with whose intricate symbolism and shaping whose exquisite figures the builders were hammering out the lineaments of their own true nature.

Nor were lay patrons lacking princes and feudal lords, not to mention royal courts, in India, in China, in Japan, in Christendom, in most parts of the world. Works of art were indeed created for them too and poems sung in their honour. To take but one example among many, there are the exquisite miniature-like paintings of Rajputana. But always the greatest output, greatest both in quality and quantity, was for religion. And indeed, how many of the Rajput paintings had the eternal symbolism of the love of Radha and Krishna for their theme!

Before attempting an answer, there is another question that interweaves with this. What is the attitude of religion to art? At their origin religions seem to agree in either ignoring or deprecating art. The Quran forbids representational art and speaks scornfully of poets. The Tao-Te-King declares that the five senses dull the mind and that the Sage, therefore, is not deluded by them but aims at what is of benefit. Both Christ and Buddha completely ignore art and poetry in their teaching, as do also their immediate followers. In fact all religions that have a known historical origin run the same course: from an austere, bare primitivism when art is deprecated or ignored to a gorgeous mediaevalism a few centuries later, when religion burgeons out into a luxurious glow of beauty, even though man's private life is still hard compared with the comforts and conveniences of our secular world.

Once again, the obvious answer - that the religions became untrue to their origins - is superficial and does not fit the case. The foremost purpose of a religion is to guide those who will adventure out of the apparent reality of this life to the clear-sighted bliss or ecstatic rapture of the Sage or Saint, through whom waves of Grace flow downwards and outwards to the less aspiring believers. So long as this continues to be done a religion is well rooted in its origins; so long as a tree bears good fruit it is a healthy tree. Religions which could produce a St. Francis and an Eckhart, an Abdul Qadir and an Ibn Arabi, a Shankara and a Ramanuja, an Ashvaghosha and a Hui Neng, were not untrue to their origins; the paths were still open and guides who had trodden them still available. Moreover, it was often the Masters themselves who created or encouraged art or poetry, a Dante and a Rumi, a Kabir and a Milarepa.

There is another explanation. In the incandescent white heat of the origin of a religion the energy of those who aspire, strengthened as by a springboard by their rejection of the degenerate world around them, shoots straight upwards. The *sattva guna*, the upward tendency, dominates. Directing the energy outwards to forms, even beautiful forms, would be a weakness, almost a betrayal, for however beautiful forms may be they limit and obscure the pure beauty of the formless. As a poet saw intuitively long after the certainty of religion had been lost, even though life be a dome of many-coloured glass, it still “Stains the white radiance of eternity.”

If you are climbing a mountain path and it is a matter of life and death to reach the summit, if all your alertness is needed to avoid pitfalls and dangers, all your strength to strive upwards, you do not stop to pick flowers by the wayside, however beautiful they may be. One who has reached safety can do that. Even after art and poetry began to be honoured, it was usually assumed in India (and to a large extent in Buddhism and Islam also) that it is those who have attained Realization who should write poems. Indeed, their greatest poets are those, like Tukaram in Marathi or Tayumanavar in Tamil, who wrote from the fullness of spiritual knowledge. The Maharshi himself, although he did not write much, composed in the ‘Forty Verses’ one of the most profound metaphysical statements and in the first of the ‘Five Hymns to Sri Arunachala’ one of the most glowing symbolical love poems of all religions and all ages.¹

To some extent this is anticipating. Coming now to the mediaeval epoch, we find that the incandescent white heat has cooled to a mellow golden glow. *Sattva* is combined now with *rajas*, the upward-tending with the outward-tending urge. Indirect paths to Realization begin to be

followed: Tantrism in Hindu and Buddhist India, Hermetism in Christendom and indeed, with surprising similarity, in China and Islam also. It is found necessary first to harmonise a man, redirecting his lower tendencies and developing his finer qualities, before launching him on the final quest. Such rectification no longer happens automatically, as a by-product of the quest, as in the earlier stage, but needs to be planned and organised. Art is now deliberately encouraged and developed, it is not merely allowed as a concession to those who are not one-pointed enough to strive without it, still less is it indulged in as a luxury; it is used as a technique of discipline and development. A poem acquires the qualities of a *mantra*, a sacred incantation whose vibrations harmonise the mind; a drawing or architectural plan becomes a development of a yantra or a mandala, a shape of inherent power.²

In mediaeval religious art, whether poetry or the plastic arts, whether in Japan or Europe or anywhere between, gorgeous exuberance is combined with strict discipline of form and precise symbolism. The adaptation of art to symbolism in order to use it as a mode of worship or a technique of training does not in any way impair its value as art. Rather it enhances it, for art is form-giving and, even though one had the expertise of a Swinburne, the form-giving will remain trivial if there is nothing great to give form to. Therefore what might be termed in a broad generic sense ‘mediaeval’ religious art is on the one hand rigorously formal and on the other superbly sumptuous.

Exact form does not destroy freedom in art; it gives it wings. Poetry being formal and disciplined language as compared with prose, which is comparatively informal and undisciplined, there is no sense in making it formless; if it is not going to conform to the rules of poetry let it be prose. So-called ‘free’ or formless poetry is in

1. See *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Riders, London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

2. See *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala* by Prof. Giuseppe Tucci, Riders, London.

fact half baked poetry. Either the impulse behind it had not a high enough temperature to melt the words and make them flow into its mould, or the creative power flagged when the work was half done - that is when the idea was half-baked into a poem.

I know this from experience and I consider it important enough to justify an autobiographical aside. As a young man I aspired to be a poet - in fact I believed I was one. However, nothing came of it. Then came the time when neither prose nor verse had any value except as a vehicle for spiritual wisdom and a signpost on the way (which, indeed, is what poetry should be). Then, quite suddenly, poems began to come almost ready-made.

SARAH

See how Grace is fallen on me!
The sudden beauty of my rhymes
A sign made plain for all to see;
As the Lord wrought in ancient times
With that gaunt patriarch's aged wife,
Sarah, who through all her life
Had been a barren tree.

Had this power come in youthful years,
A bastard brood my rhymes had been.
Begotten of desires and fears,
Or pompous words that little mean.
That shameful wandering denied,
I stayed perforce a faithful bride,
Whose bridegroom now appears.

To turn my rhymes to worldly things
Now would be a bitter shame,
Like a worthless wife who brings
Disgrace upon her husband's name.
There is not even the desire;
No lesser theme can him inspire
Who of the highest sings.

The first four poems were almost formless (actually, one was a lyric though with only vaguely

formed verses and one in blank verse, though I did not realize this at the time); it had not yet occurred to me that I was professional enough to attempt rhyme and metre. Then a poem came which, in intricacy and regularity of metre, was more like 17th than 20th Century verse, and I discovered that if the impulse is sufficient the words will flow to the pattern. If not, better keep quiet. This was the poem

CONSOLATION

Disconsolate, to Him in grief I cried,
And the Beloved
From my own heart replied.
No radiant form appeared;
The subtle mist that cleared
Nought new discovered,
No splendid bridegroom, no expectant bride.

All pageants pass; whatever comes must go.
Death hath a place
For all the mind can know.
Even the loftiest vision
Time holdeth in derision
Divine embrace
From vibrant joy to memory must grow.

He shed the jewelled robe for my delight,
And I beheld
A Void, no sound, no sight.
Only What IS shall be
Him-Me-Eternity,
All clouds dispelled,
Seer and seen grown one in radiant sight.

According to Hindu doctrine there are three *gunas*: *sattva*, the upward tendency whose colour is white, *rajas*, the outward, whose colour is red, and *tamas*, the downward, whose colour is black. All things are held in being by their combined stress. After the epoch of *rajas* in the relations between religion and art comes that of *tamas*. That is when art has broken away from

religion and sunk to utilitarian and ornamental patterns, worldly and human themes. Occasional flashes of intuition may still inspire the poet, but no steady glow of knowledge, no true understanding. Religion is again devoid of art and poetry, but below it now, not above it. Bad poetry wedded to bad music forms hymns that can have only a sentimental value. Holy pictures that cannot be dignified with the name of art are used to foster emotion. Except for rebels against the epoch, people no longer aspire. The paths are overgrown with weeds and blocked by rockfalls and there are no guides. The cycle comes round to where it started but in an inverted likeness. In the pure aspiration of the beginning men had no time for intricate techniques and paths; now again they have no time, but now because they have no aspiration at all.

Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

“Whenever harmony (*dharma*) is obscured and disharmony (*adharma*) triumphs, I appear” (Ch. IV, v. 7). Now, in this modern age, when circumstances make the elaborate disciplines of an indirect path once more unsuitable, if not

impossible, God has appeared on earth incarnate as Ramana Maharshi and opened once more a direct path which, by his Grace, is accessible to those who turn to him and on which art and poetry, yantra and *mantra*, are again unnecessary. He did not encourage those who trod the direct path under his guidance to divert their energies to poetry or any of the arts. “All this is only activity of the mind. The more you exercise the mind and the more success you have in composing verses, the less peace you have. And what use is it to acquire such accomplishments if you don’t acquire peace. But if you tell such people this it doesn’t appeal to them; they can’t keep quiet. They must be composing songs.”

It is significant that when someone asked him about a technique for developing the various virtues, and combating the vices in oneself he replied that such techniques may be useful on an indirect path but on the direct path of Self-enquiry all this happens automatically. The two go together: encouragement of art and indirect methods of training. Conditions in the world today are suitable for neither.

Although the scriptures proclaim ‘Thou art That’, it is only a sign of weakness of mind to meditate ‘I am That, not this’, because you are eternally That. What has to be done is to investigate what one really is and remain That.

- *Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 32, from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider and Sri Ramanasramam.

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The Vedantic texts teach that although Brahman is One he is regarded both as possessing attributes and as free from them. In the former sense He is the object of meditation, in the latter of Knowledge.

- Shankara, *Commentary on the Brahma Sutra*, 1-1-12.

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My death is dead-and gone! I have been made immortal. All sense of body is wiped out root and branch. The deluge came and went. I clung to life with courage. Tuka says: The foundations have been truly disclosed.

- Tukaram.

“I AM NOT, BUT THE UNIVERSE IS MY SELF”

(Shit-t'ou, 700-790)

LOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THIS INTUITION

By WEI WU WEI

Objects are only known as the result of reactions of the senses of sentient beings to a variety of stimuli.

These stimuli appear to derive from sources external to the reagent apparatus, but there is no evidence of this apart from the reagent apparatus itself.

Objects, therefore, are only a surmise, for they have no demonstrable existence apart from the subject that cognises them.

Since that subject itself is not sensorially cognisable except as an object, subject also is only a surmise.

Since the factual existence of neither subject nor object can be demonstrated, existence is no more than a conceptual assumption, which, metaphysically, is unacceptable.

There is, therefore, no valid evidence for the existence of a world external to the consciousness of sentient beings, which external world is therefore seen to be nothing but the cognisers of it, that is - sentient beings themselves.

But there can be no factual evidence for the existence of sentient beings, either as subject or as object, who therefore are merely a conceptual assumption on the part of the consciousness in which they are cognised.

It follows that 'consciousness' also can only be a conceptual assumption without demonstrable existence.

What, then, can this assumption of consciousness denote? This question can only be answered in metaphysical terms, according to which consciousness may be regarded as the manifested aspect of the unmanifested or non-manifestation, which is the nearest it seems possible to go towards expressing in a concept that which by definition is inconceivable.

Why should this be so? It must be so because

conceptuality cannot have conceptuality for source, but only the non-conceptual, because that which objectively conceives must necessarily spring from the objectively non-existent, the manifested from non-manifestation, for conceptuality cannot conceive or objectify itself - as an eye cannot see itself as an object.

Therefore consciousness can be described as pure non-conceptuality, which is 'pure' because unstained either by the conceptual or the non-conceptual, which implies that there is a total absence of both positive and negative conceptuality.

Not existing as an object, even conceptual, there can be no 'it', there is no 'thing' to bear a name, no subject is possible where no object is, and total absence of being is inevitably implied.

All we can say about this which we are, which to us must be objectified as 'it' in order that we may speak of it at all, is to regard 'it' as the noumenon of phenomena, but, since neither of these exists objectively, phenomenally regarded it may be understood as the ultimate absence from which all presence comes to appear.

But consciousness, or 'Mind', does not project the phenomenal universe: 'it' *IS* the phenomenal universe which is manifested as its self.

Metaphysics, relying on intuition or direct perception, says no more than this, and points out that no word, be it the Absolute, the Logos, God, or Tao, can be other than a concept which, as such, has no factual validity whatsoever.

This-Which-Is, then, which cannot be subject or object, which cannot be named or thought, and the realization of which is the ultimate awakening, can only be indicated in such a phrase as that quoted above:

"I am not, but the apparent universe is my Self."

BUCHMAN AND BHAGAVAN

By BUCHMANITE

How can there be anything in common between Frank Buchman, who has been referred to disparagingly as a 'mere moralist' and Ramana Maharshi, the Master of divine philosophy? I think there is, and I am glad of this opportunity to air my views on the subject.

Why did Frank Buchman launch Moral Rearmament? Because, as he put it, the fences were down and someone had to repair them. In former times only too many people broke through the moral fences and trespassed into fields where they had no right to be; but at least they knew they were trespassing. They knew that they had left the highroad and broken through a moral fence and had no right to be where they were. But now young people grow up recognising no fences, or considering that it is the fences that have no right to be where they are. Formerly if people went back on their word they knew it was wrong to do so; now, who cares? If they fornicated they knew that their religion forbade it; now religion does not come into the question and they can quote psychologists [who say] that it is the natural thing to do. If hatred and envy poison the air anyone who speaks against them is likely to be sneered at as a goody-goody. Above all, religion no longer means anything for the vast majority of people in Western countries. And the ease with which Communism supplanted it in China suggests that its roots may be withered in Eastern countries too, even though on the surface it still seems to flourish.

Frank Buchman steadfastly refused to found a new religion or sect. He held that there were too many religions and sects in the world already. A new one would soon grow a stiff epidermis, like all the others, and shut its followers off from theirs, whereas what he wanted was to build

bridges between men of good will in all religions. Himself, he was a devout Christian, but that did not mean that he wanted to make Indians and Japanese, Buddhists and Muslims Christians. He wanted them to become good men, sincere men, men one could trust - with one's money, with one's secrets, with one's daughter, men of good will, eager to help where help was needed, not bearing malice or spreading slander, not gloating over another's misfortune or resenting past injuries. In many, if not most cases, the best instrument for recalling a man to a life of right conduct is the religion he knew in childhood and still sees around him; therefore Moral Rearmament can generally achieve better results by strengthening a man in his own religion than by coaxing him to another. Its reluctance to proselytise does not mean that it is indifferent to religion; on the contrary, it values religious faith above all, but it sees that in the present urgent work of rebuilding the dykes and holding back the flood, all religions can help. After all, however great the differences between them, all religions do forbid falsehood and violent pursuit of one's own interests, hatred, envy and self-indulgence, and do sponsor a way of life that could be called moral, and that Moral Rearmament could approve of.

One of the criticisms levelled at MRA is that it is not intellectual, it has no philosophy. That is the whole paradox. It is the inevitable result of its refusal to become a sect or a religion. As soon as it draws up any philosophy or code of beliefs for itself, however broad and general, it becomes a creed and is walled off from other creeds, whereas its purpose is to build bridges not walls.

I very much doubt whether Guru Nanak, the

founder of Sikhism, ever intended to found a religion. The Granth Sahib, the holy book containing his songs, contains also a number that he selected from earlier poet-saints, some Hindu and others Muslim, and especially from Kabir, the great mystic who had both Hindu and Muslim disciples and refused to belong to either. What Nanak wanted was not to build a new enclosure between that of the Hindus and that of the Muslims, but to make a bridge between those two, showing that in essentials they agreed and that the accidentals were not worth fighting about. He sang

The Lord is the Truth Absolute,
True is His Name.
His language is love infinite
His creatures ever cry to Him
'Give us more, O Lord, give more'
The Bounteous One gives unwearyingly.

What then should we offer
That we might see His Kingdom?
With what language
Might we His love attain?

In the ambrosial hours of fragrant dawn
Think upon and glorify His Name and greatness.
Our own past actions
Have put this garment on us,
But salvation comes only through His Grace.

O Nanak, this alone need we know,
That God, being Truth, is the one Light of all.¹

There could hardly be a broader and more non-committal creed than that - that God is Truth and Love and bestows His Grace on us for our salvation; and yet Sikhism hardened into a religion. This serves to illustrate how careful MRA has to be to avoid doing so too. It has to

deny itself a philosophy and a creed, because they would immediately shut out all those who follow any different philosophy or creed. Therefore MRA has to be unintellectual - but that does not mean that those who follow and propagate it are necessarily unintellectual. What is required of them is that they should be men of good will and initiative, intelligent enough to see that today's situation is perilous and dedicated enough to work at mending the dykes before the flood sweeps in. If they are intellectual as well, so much the better, but it is good will and initiative that come first.

In restoring moral barriers philosophy is not very important. Religion is much more potent. Then why not leave it to religion? Simply because the religions today have become too enfeebled to do it. If they recovered sufficient vitality to leaven the lump and uphold a moral code not only among a few scattered adherents but in the community as a whole, thus making MRA unnecessary, that would be the sign that MRA had succeeded.

But ethical control, it may be said, is only one aspect of religion, and perhaps not the highest. Granted, but it is one, and it is not being done, or not at all adequately.

It could be said that religion has two functions or aspects, one horizontal and the other vertical. The word is said to derive from a Latin root meaning 'to bind'. Horizontally it binds men together in a way of living where each has his rights and duties, his functions and obligations - not only his rights, as so many modern idealists seem to suppose. Rights entail obligations. As one witty philosopher is said to have put it, your right of movement ends where my nose begins.

A fully living and flourishing religion - for instance Christianity before the Reformation (and before the corruption that called for the

1. No. 4 of the hymns of Nanak in *Selections from the Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, Allen and Unwin, UNESCO collection of representative works.

Reformation) - binds the whole of society together in a living harmony. It also organises each person's life in a pattern or harmony. A man grows up with the knowledge [of] what he can do and what he must not do. The pattern may not be perfect, there may be dark smudges in it, social injustices, but by and large it will be found that sins and uncharitable actions are listed among what a man must not do. There may be situations where he can do them and get away with it - every human pattern is stained by imperfections and I am far from wanting to idealise the past - but in general he is liable to the censure of his religion, and to a large extent this is effective, often bringing with it social ostracism or legal condemnation. But today there is no valid condemnation; the fences are down. Who cares?

The vertical aspect of religion is its binding men to God or, perhaps better, providing a lifeline by which a man can climb up to God. Horizontally a religion produces a harmonious way of life; vertically it produces saints. And the two dimensions constantly interweave, since the harmonious way of life facilitates a man's growth to sanctity, while the saints, by the radiation of their influence, harmonise the life of a community.

Sainthood doesn't just happen. A saint is no more a lucky freak than is a concert pianist or an Olympic athlete. There is doubtless a strong natural disposition in all three cases, but there is also hard work and arduous training. He is something more than a very good man. He is also something more than a mystic. Neither is enough alone. It might be said that he is a combination of the two. A mystic may receive spontaneous visions and experiences like unearned largesse; but so long as he is impure his egoism will cloud or distort his experiences, ultimately to frustrate them. Whole-hearted dedication and severe training are necessary.

There is power as well as goodness in a saint.

The training may take various forms. It may consist more of mortification or loving service of one's fellows or solitary prayer and meditation, but whatever its forms they have always been provided by religion. In Hinduism and Islam this is clear to see. Ample records remain of the gurus, their ashrams, their modes of training; and some of their successors still practise today, whether or not with the full potency that the great teachers of the past had. In Christianity it was the same, though more concealed. One anonymous 14th century classic, 'The Cloud of Unknowing', even describes its form of training in some detail. Characteristically, the author prefaces it with a stern warning to those who are not pledged to the training but merely inquisitive not to read it.

And today? Today the religions have grown ineffectual in their vertical training no less than in their horizontal. That is not to say that nobody ever obeys the moral injunctions of his religion or undergoes spiritual training, but by and large the hedges are down and the ladders broken. And just as Frank Buchman instituted a moral discipline independent of any religion on the horizontal plane, so did Ramana Maharshi a spiritual discipline on the vertical. He was well versed in Hindu philosophy, but in explaining to non-Hindus he used neither Sanskrit terminology nor Hindu philosophical concepts but simply told them to seek the essential Self of them; just as Buchman was a devout Christian but never tried to thrust his Christianity on others.

I have no doubt that if someone had come and told Frank Buchman: "I am following the moral injunctions of my religion and I feel that that is enough. I don't feel that I need Moral Rearmament," he would have replied: "Splendid! I wish more people could say that." Similarly, I have no doubt that if someone who was following a traditional discipline under a realized guru in his

own religion had told the Maharshi so, the Maharshi would have approved just as fully. But such cases must be very rare. What paths are still valid, and where are the guides? There are some who try to follow guides who are not realized men, but that can't take them far; it is not much better than play-acting. Swami Brahmananda (who was the principal successor to Sri Ramakrishna in the training of disciples, as Swami Vivekananda was in organisation and propaganda) has expressed this very clearly. "Ordinary people understand by the term 'Guru' a person who whispers some mantra into the ear of the disciple. They do not care whether he possesses all the qualifications of a true Master. But today such a conception is losing ground. It is now recognised that none but a realized soul is qualified to be a spiritual teacher. #He who does not know the path himself cannot show it to others."²

If, then, as this article contends, Frank Buchman and Ramana Maharshi were performing identical functions in providing a universal substitute for the fast-vanishing guidance formerly offered by the religions, the former on the horizontal plane and the latter on the vertical, would it be possible and advantageous for the two movements to combine? They cannot do so completely. In the first place, MRA is likely to appeal to far greater numbers, since more people are drawn by nature to outer activity than to inner effort. At the same time, it does seem that the Maharshi's path of Self-enquiry, being by nature independent of the creed and ritual of any religion, could supply

that intellectual element which is so conspicuously lacking in MRA, without the danger of tying it down to any one religion and thereby shutting it off from others. In doing so it would remove its greatest, though perhaps not most apparent, weakness and increase its power. It could not, of course, be made compulsory, any more than MRA itself can, for the Spirit bloweth where it listeth; but for those who did take it up it would supply what may be lacking now. This would imply no change in the injunctions given by the Maharshi, since he encouraged his followers to practise Self-enquiry in the life of the world and not in solitude and renunciation.

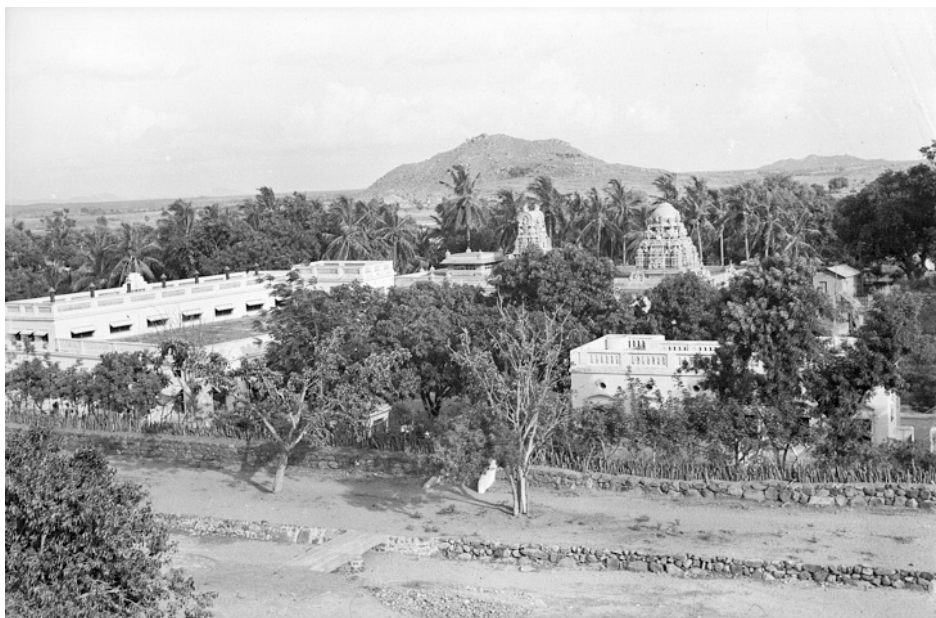
So far as the opposite influence is concerned, the Maharshi's training does naturally presume high moral standards. Being a war on the ego, it is ipso facto a war on egoism. Arthur Osborne explains that succinctly in *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*. "Sin and evil of every kind are the result of egoism unrestrained by consideration for the injury caused to others or the deleterious effect on the sinner's own character. Religions guard against them by moral and disciplinary codes and emotional appeals, seeking to keep the ego within bounds and prevent its trespassing into forbidden places. However, a spiritual path that is so radical and direct as to deny the ego itself does not need to attend specifically to the various excesses of egoism. All egoism has to be renounced. Therefore non-duality turns the attack on the ego itself, not on its specific manifestations."³

2. *Spiritual Instructions* by Swami Brahmananda, quoted in *Prabuddha Bharata*, Oct, 1963 issue.

3. Pp. 41-2 of the edition by Rider & Co., London; pp. 45-6 of the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

It is One without a second: it is not the object of perception; it is one's very Self. So one can that it is not to be expressed or described.

- Shankara, *Commentary on the Gita*, XIII, 2.



Ashram Bulletin

THE GREAT TRANSITION

On Friday the doctors and attendants knew it was the last day. In the morning he again bade them go and meditate. About noon, when liquid food was brought for him, he asked the time, punctual as ever, but then added, "But henceforth time doesn't matter."

Delicately expressing recognition of their long years of service, he said to the attendants, "The English have a word 'thanks' but we only say santosham (I am pleased)."

In the morning the long crowd filed past the open doorway silent with grief and apprehension, and again between four and five in the evening. The disease-racked body they saw there was shrunken, the ribs protruding, the skin blackened, it was a pitiable vestige of pain. And yet at some time during these last few days each devotee received a direct, luminous, penetrating look of

recognition which he felt as a parting infusion of Grace.

After darshan that evening the devotees did not disperse to their homes. Apprehension held them there. At about sunset Sri Bhagavan told the attendants to sit him up. They knew already that every movement, every touch was painful, but he told them not to worry about that. He sat with one of the attendants supporting his head. A doctor began to give him oxygen but with a wave of his right hand he motioned him away. There were about a dozen persons in the small room, doctors and attendants.

Two of the attendants were fanning him, and the devotees outside gazed spellbound at the moving fans through the window, a sign that there was still a living body to fan. A reporter of a large American magazine moved about restlessly, uneasy at having been impressed despite himself and determined not to write his story till he got

away from Tiruvannamalai to conditions that he considered normal. With him was a French press-photographer.

Unexpectedly, a group of devotees sitting on the veranda outside the hall began singing 'Arunachala-Siva'. On hearing it, Sri Bhagavan's eyes opened and shone. He gave a brief smile of indescribable tenderness. From the outer edges of his eyes tears of bliss rolled down. One more deep breath, and no more. There was no struggle, no spasm, no other sign of death: only that the next breath did not come.

For a few moments people stood bewildered. The singing continued. The French press-photographer came up to me and asked at what precise minute it had happened. Resenting it as journalistic callousness, I replied brusquely that I did not know, and then I suddenly recalled Sri Bhagavan's unfailing courtesy and answered precisely that it was 8.47. He said, and I could hear now that he was excited, that he had been pacing the road outside and at that very moment an enormous star had trailed slowly across the sky. Many had seen it, even as far away as Madras, and felt what it portended. It passed to the north-east towards the peak of Arunachala.

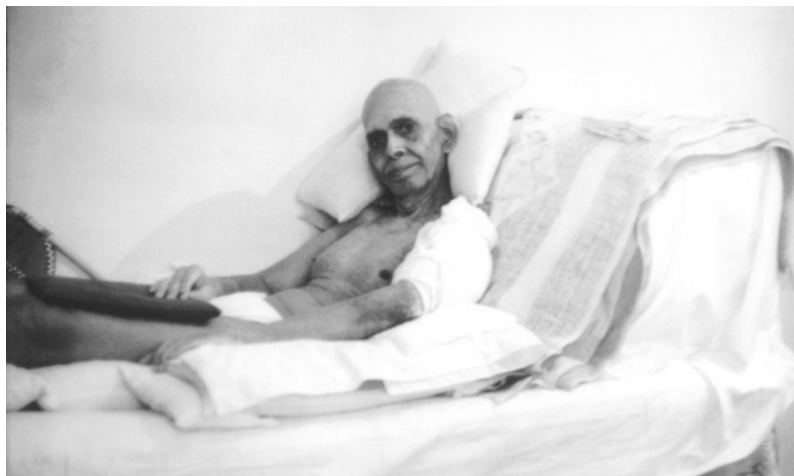
After the first numbness there was a wild burst of grief. The body was carried out on to the veranda in a sitting posture. Men and women crowded up to the veranda railing to see. A woman fainted. Others sobbed aloud.

The body was placed garlanded upon a couch in the hall and the devotees thronged there and sat around it. One had expected

the face to be rock-like in samadhi, but found it instead so marked by pain that it gripped one's heart. Only gradually during the night the air of mysterious composure returned to it.

All that night devotees sat in the large hall and townsfolk passed through in awed silence. Processions streamed from the town and back singing 'Arunachala-Siva'. Some of the devotees in the hall sang songs of praise and grief; others sat silent. What was most noticeable was not the grief but the calm beneath it, for they were men and women deprived of him whose Grace had been the very meaning of their life. Already that first night and much more during the days that followed, it became clear how vital had been his words: The word "I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here." The word 'here' does not imply any limitation but rather that the Self is, that there is no going, no changing, for That which is Universal. Nevertheless, as devotees felt the inner Presence of Bhagavan and as they felt the continued Divine Presence at Tiruvannamalai, they began to regard it as a promise full of love and solicitude.

During the night of vigil a decision had to be taken as to the burial. It had been thought that



The last photograph

the body might be interred in the new hall, but many devotees opposed the idea. They felt that the hall was, in a sense, an adjunct to the temple and would make the shrine of Sri Bhagavan seem subordinate to that of the Mother, reversing the true order of things. Next day, by general agreement, a pit was dug and the body interred with divine honours in the space between the old hall and the temple. The crowd, packed tight, looked on in silent grief. No more the beloved face, no more the sound of his voice; henceforth the lingam of polished black stone, the symbol of Siva, over the tomb was the outer sign, and inwardly his footprints in the heart.

CONTINUED PRESENCE

The crowds dispersed and the Ashram seemed an abandoned place, like a grate with the fire gone out. And yet there was not the wild grief and despair that has so often followed the departure of a Spiritual Master from earth. The normality that had been so pronounced still continued. It began to be apparent with what care and compassion Sri Bhagavan had prepared his devotees for this. Nevertheless, during those first days and weeks of bereavement few cared to remain at Tiruvannamalai, and some who would have cared to could not.

Many years previously a will had been drawn up stating how the Ashram was to be run when the Master was no longer bodily present. A group of devotees took this to Sri Bhagavan and he read it through very carefully and showed approval, after which they all signed as witnesses. Briefly, it stated that puja (ritualistic worship) should be performed at his tomb and that of the mother, that the family of Niranjanananda Swami's son should be supported, and that the spiritual centre of Tiruvannamalai should be kept alive.

Everywhere his Presence is felt, and yet there

AN APPEAL

The Managing Committee of SRI RAMANASRAMAM has now resolved to open a roll of Donors and Life Members, the contribution being Rs. 1,000/- and upwards for the former and Rs. 100/- and upwards for the latter (£100 & \$300 and £10 & \$30).

Such contributions will be deposited in a Bank and the interest realised thereon utilised for the upkeep of the Ashram and for providing facilities for its members and visitors.

The Members who so contribute will have the satisfaction of helping the Ashram build up a capital fund and also of forwarding its activities by enabling it to avail itself of the interest thereon.

The Management request you kindly to enrol yourself as a Donor or Life Member and also to recommend such of your friends to do so as may feel an urge.

May the Grace of Sri Maharshi be ever with you and yours.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN.

President.

B. S. RANGANATHAM

Secretary.

are differences of atmosphere. Morning and evening there is parayanam (chanting of the Vedas) before the tomb, as there used to be before his bodily presence, and at the same hours. As the devotees sit there in meditation it is the same as when they sat before him in the hall, the same power, the same subtlety of guidance. During parayanam, puja is performed at the tomb and the 108 names of Bhagavan are recited. But in the old hall is a softer, mellower atmosphere breathing the intimacy of his long abidance. Some months after the Mahasamadhi (leaving the body) this hall was damaged by a fire that broke out, but was fortunately not destroyed.

There is also the little room where the last days and hours were spent. A large portrait which hangs there seems to live and respond to devotion. Here are the various objects that Sri Bhagavan used or touched - his staff and water

vessel, a peacock fan, the revolving bookcase, many little objects. And the couch now forever empty. There is something infinitely poignant, inexpressibly gracious about the room.

In the new hall a statue of Sri Bhagavan has been installed. It was one of the terms of the will that a statue should be set up, but no sculptor has yet been found to make one adequate. He would have to feel the mystery of Sri Bhagavan, to be inspired by him, for it is not a question of rendering human features but the divine power and beauty that shone through them.

Not only the Ashram premises are hallowed but all the neighbourhood around. The peace that abides there encompasses and permeates: no passive peace but a vibrant exhilaration. The very air is redolent with his Presence.

True, his Presence is not confined to Tiruvannamalai. It never was. The devotees, wherever they may be, find his Grace and support, his inner Presence, not merely as potent but even more potent now than before. And yet, now as before, the solace of a visit to Tiruvannamalai sinks into the soul and residence there has a beauty hard to describe.

NO RETURN

There have been Saints who have promised to return to earth for the renewed guidance of their devotees in life after life, but Sri Bhagavan was the complete Jnani in whom there is not even that vestige of an ego that may indicate rebirth, and the devotees understood this. His promise was different. "I am not going away. Where could I go? I am here." Not even "I shall be here" but "I am here", for to the Gnani there is no change, no time, no difference of past and future, no going away, only the eternal 'Now' in which the whole of the time is poised, the universal, spaceless 'Here'. What he affirmed

was his continued, uninterrupted Presence, his continued guidance. Long ago he had told Sivaprakasam Pillai, "He who has won the Grace of the Guru shall undoubtedly be saved and never forsaken," and when devotees spoke during the last sickness as though he was forsaking them and pleaded their weakness and continued need of him he retorted, as already mentioned, "You attach too much importance to the body."

They quickly discovered how true this was. More than ever he has become the Inner Guru. Those who depended on him feel his guidance more actively, more potently now. Their thoughts are riveted on him more constantly. The vichara, leading to the Inner Guru, has grown easier and more accessible. Meditation brings a more immediate flow of Grace. The repercussion of actions, good and bad alike, is more swift and strong.

After the first shock of bereavement devotees began to be drawn back to Tiruvannamalai. The mystery of Arunachala Hill also has become more accessible. There were many formerly who felt nothing of its power, for whom it was just a hill of rock and earth and shrubs like any other. But from the time when the Spirit left the body and a bright star trailed towards the Hill devotees have felt more directly that it is holy ground; they have felt in it the mystery of Bhagavan.¹

SHRINE AND ASHRAM

'Naturally, there are not the same crowds at the Maharshi's Ashram at Tiruvannamalai that there were during his lifetime. Many of these were visitors eager to have a sight of the holy man. Many also, especially from Western countries, were intellectuals, students of philosophy or psychology, who came to pose

1. *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 185-192, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

academic questions. It is possible that a higher percentage of these who come now are genuine seekers or true devotees.

‘The tomb of the Maharshi was made just outside the old meditation hall where he sat with his devotees for so many years. The beginnings have been made of a shrine over it of beautiful polished black and grey stone from Arunachala, but funds are awaited to complete it.

‘There is no spiritual head of the Ashram in human form. The Presence of the Maharshi is so powerful and pervading that it would be a redundancy to have some person there as a guru. Instructions for meditation are given in his writings and sayings; spiritual support comes direct from him; all that is needed is practice.’²

MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION

During the lifetime of the Maharshi the Ashram



The Sarvadhikari

had been run by his younger brother Sri Niranjanananda Swami, known also as Chinnaswamy or ‘the Little Swami’ and entitled the Sarvadhikari or Governor. He took sannyasa after the early death of his wife, while the Maharshi was still living in a cave on Arunachala; and when the Maharshi came down to the foot of the hill after his mother’s death

and took up his abode there, it was he who organised the Ashram that we now know. After

the death of the Maharshi a Committee of devotees was formed to advise him but he continued the Ashram management.

The Sarvadhikari did not long outlive the Maharshi. He died on January 29, 1953. By the general wish of the devotees he was buried in the Ashram precincts and a small shrine erected where he lay. He was succeeded by his son, T. N. Venkataraman, who is the present President of the Ashram. Even before becoming the President, he had been serving in the Ashram from 1938. He is fondly addressed by fellow-devotees as ‘Venkatoo’.

The premises are kept clean and tidy, meals are served punctually, all are free to sit and meditate, and apart from that the Ashram management is of little concern to visitors. It is better however, to write to the President before coming because now also, as in the lifetime of the Maharshi, there is often difficulty in finding accommodation. As a reflection of the informality of the Maharshi’s teaching and method of training, the Ashram has never undertaken precise or ample arrangements for visitors. Even for those who stay in its guesthouse there is no tariff of charges. They are expected to make a donation when they leave, but it is up to them.

TIRUVANNAMALAI

‘It is no accident that the Maharshi made Tiruvannamalai and its sacred mountain of Arunachala his home. Each of the spiritual centres of India has its own character and its own line of tradition; and among them all it is Tiruvannamalai (or Arunachala) that represents the highest and most direct, the most formless and least ritualistic of paths, that is the path of Self-enquiry, the gateway to which is the silent initiation. This is expressed in the old Tamil saying: “To see Chidambaram, to be born at Tiruvarur, to die at Banaras or even to think of

2. Sri Ramanasramam, *Yesterday and Today*, pp. 5-6, Sri Ramanasramam.

Arunachala is to be assured of Liberation.” “Even to think of” because in the case of the direct path physical contact is not necessary.

‘Tiruvannamalai is a medium sized South Indian town, 120 miles south-west of Madras. There is railway connection but journey by bus is more direct and convenient, taking less than five hours. There are very good buses, including one State Government Express bus, plying between Madras and Tiruvannamalai. The prefix ‘Tiru’ means ‘blessed’ or ‘auspicious’, like the prefix ‘Sri’ in the names of North Indian towns. ‘Malai’ means ‘mountain’ and ‘Anna’ ‘supreme’, so that the name signifies, ‘The auspicious supreme mountain’. It is an ancient town with a large and splendid temple. There are certain yearly festivals when it is crowded with pilgrims from all over South India. Especially is this so at Karthigai (known also as Deepam), falling usually in November (it is impossible to give the exact date of an Indian festival, as they vary with the phases of the moon, like the Christian Easter). On this occasion a beacon of clarified butter contributed by devotees and pilgrims is lit at nightfall on the summit of the mountain and burns the whole night, often indeed the whole of the following day and night also. At the Ashram itself, of course, the greatest festivals are the anniversaries of the birth and death of the Maharshi (Jayanti and Aradhana), falling respectively at the winter solstice and the spring equinox.’³

PUBLICATIONS

During his lifetime the Maharshi showed great interest in Ashram publications and himself revised proofs and made revisions. One of the signs of the continued vitality of the Ashram since his death is the number of its books that have needed new editions and the number of new books it has published. Below is a complete list of books published by the Ashram.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 6-8.

ADVAITA BODHA DEEPIKA: Translated into English for the first time from an ancient classic at the instance of Sri Maharshi.

BHAGAVAN RAMANA: A Sketch of Maharshi’s Life-By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan.

CRUMBS FROM HIS TABLE: Teachings and Talks of Sri Maharshi - Reprinted after 20 years - Gives useful hints in understanding Maharshi’s teachings.

DAY BY DAY WITH BHAGAVAN: From the Diary of A. Devaraja Mudaliar - a recording of the enchanting talks by the Maharshi with numerous devotees from far and near, covering a period of two years (1945 & 1946), Vol. I, covering May to July 1946 - Volume II covering the rest of the above period, 1945-46. [Now in one volume]

FIVE HYMNS TO SRI ARUNACHALA: English translation of the five famous Hymns composed by the Maharshi, four in Tamil and one in Sanskrit.

GLIMPSES OF THE LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: By Frank H. Humphreys. The earliest European to meet Bhagavan, in 1911, now reprinted after 36 years.

GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR: Commemorating the 50th year of the Maharshi’s advent in Tiruvannamalai, in 1946. Contains 54 articles of permanent interest by eminent devotees and admirers, both Eastern and Western.

GURU-RAMANA-VACHANA-MALA: A necklet of sayings of Guru Ramana by “WHO”, the author of MAHA YOGA. Fit for study and meditation.

LETTERS FROM SRI RAMANASRAMAM: Translated from the Telugu original of Soori Nagamma, a lady devotee: Delightful pen pictures of day-to-day life of the Maharshi, bringing out His humour, humanity and Universal love.

MAHARSHI'S GOSPEL: Books I and II: Talks with the Maharshi by several disciples on many important problems of Sadhaks. Practical advice throughout.

MAHA YOGA: By "WHO": A treatise of supreme interest to every student of Advaita, lucidly explaining Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings in the light of Upanishadic lore.

MY RECOLLECTIONS OF BHAGAVAN: By the author of "Day by Day with Bhagavan". A delightful and instructive book describing the Magic of Bhagavan's Personality and Grace.

POEMS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: Rendered into English by Sadhu Arunachala (Maj. A. W. Chadwick).

RAMANA ARUNACHALA: By Arthur Osborne.

RAMANA MAHARSHI & HIS PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE:

By Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan: Translation with commentary on 'Ulladu Narpadu' (Reality in Forty Verses) and 'The Supplementary Forty Verses' with a sketch of Bhagavan's Life and Reflections of the Author.

REFLECTIONS ON "TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI": By S. S. Cohen, author of "GURU RAMANA". Elucidating various important points raised during the TALKS with the Maharshi. A helpful guide to Sadhaks.

A SADHU'S REMINISCENCES OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: By Sadhu Arunachala (Maj. A. W. Chadwick), who came to see Bhagavan in 1935 and never went back.

SAT DARSHANA BHASHYA: By "K" (T. V. Kapali Sastri): Sanskrit rendering of Maharshi's Tamil "Ulladu Narpadu" (Reality in Forty Verses) with English translation and commentary, a detailed introduction to the subject and also a record of Talks with the Maharshi.

SELF-ENQUIRY: Instructions given to Gambhiram Seshayya by the Maharshi in his days of Silence about the year 1901. Translated from the Tamil original.

SELF-REALISATION: or Life and Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi by B. V. Narasimha Swamy, with an epilogue by S. S. Cohen: Graphically describes the fascinating life of the Maharshi from his birth in 1879 to his Mahanirvana in April 1950.

SONG CELESTIAL: 42 Verses selected by the Maharshi from the Bhagavad Gita: Sanskrit text with English translation, with an Explanatory Note giving the significance of the verses in this selection.

SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTION: Being the Maharshi's teaching given to his disciple Natanananda. Published originally in Tamil with the title 'Upadesa Manjari' in the form of a dialogue. Revised translation.

SRI MAHARSHI: A brief Sketch of the Sage's life with 117 illustrations of the Master in different periods of life, various personalities who came into touch with him, the different spots he lived in etc. A valuable album to treasure.

SRI RAMANA, the SAGE OF ARUNAGIRI: A subjective study of the Maharshi's Life, by "Aksharajna" with a supplement containing valuable extracts from the Maharshi's teachings.

SRI RAMANA GITA: Containing the teachings of the Maharshi composed into 300 Sanskrit verses (18 Chapters) by Sri Kavyakanta Ganapati Muni with English translation by Prof. G. V. Subbaramayya. Contains very useful hints on Bhakti, Yoga and Jnana Margas with special stress on the Maharshi's unique method of 'Self-Enquiry'.

TALKS WITH SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI: A faithful record of talks with the Maharshi by numerous devotees, some of them from far-off lands, on their personal spiritual problems. The records cover a period of about four years, 1935 to 1939.

TECHNIQUE OF MAHA YOGA: A handy and practical guide to Sadhaks treading the Path of Self-Enquiry, written from the personal experience by N. R. Narayana Iyer.

THUS SPAKE RAMANA: Selected Gems from the sayings of Bhagavan. (Second Edition).

TRIPURA RAHASYA or THE MYSTERY BEYOND THE TRINITY: An ancient Sanskrit work translated into English at the instance of Bhagavan by the Recorder of “Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi” explaining the mystic Doctrine and Practice of Advaita Sadhana. Lucid, interesting and instructive.

TRUTH REVEALED: Translation of the Maharshi’s Forty Verses ‘Ulladu Narpadu’ and the Forty Supplementary Verses, and containing a Synopsis of the ‘Ulladu Narpadu’ and a preface by Grant Duff. The quintessence of Maharshi’s philosophy.

UPADESA SARAM: English translation of the Maharshi’s THIRTY VERSES, a detailed commentary and also a translation of the Thirty Verses in Sanskrit by the Maharshi himself, and in English by Major A. W. Chadwick.

WHO AM I?: Translation from the Tamil of the Maharshi’s teachings given in writing to one of his earliest disciples, Sivaprakasam Pillai, about the years 1901-1902. Contains the essence of the Maharshi’s teaching which is the path of Self-Enquiry.

Apart from our own publications, the following books also are available:

GURU RAMANA: By S. S. Cohen. Personal reminiscences and delightful notes of chats of Sri Bhagavan recorded by the writer on various dates from 1936 to 1950, and also excerpts from the author’s diary graphically describing the last two years of the Master’s life.

THE QUINTESENCE OF WISDOM: or The Thirty Verses of Sri Ramana: Freely rendered into English with an Introduction and Commentary by M. Anantanarayanan, I. C. S.,

and with a Foreword by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, President of India,

RAMANA MAHARSHI AND THE PATH OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE: By Arthur Osborne. (Rider & Co., London and Jaico Publishing House, Bombay).

COLLECTED WORKS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI: Edited by Arthur Osborne. (Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai).

TEACHINGS OF RAMANA MAHARSHI IN HIS OWN WORDS: Edited by Arthur Osborne. (Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai).

MILESTONES

Not only the Sarvadhikari but a number of other devotees also have been snatched away by death since the Maharshi left the Ramana body he had worn.

In particular we must mention Major Alan Chadwick, widely known as Sadhu Arunachala. He was not the first European to come here but he was the first to settle down and make the Ashram his home. He came as far back as 1935 and was here together with Paul Brunton. The difference was that he stayed on, obtaining permission from the Sarvadhikari to build himself a small house in the Ashram premises, incidentally the first private room to be built within the Ashram.

He became a familiar figure in the Ashram and a comfort to many, especially to visitors who had never seen Bhagavan in the body.

It seemed at first that the chanting of the Vedas which had been practised morning and evening in Bhagavan’s lifetime might come to an end simply because there was no one to carry it on. People regretted this, since it had been and still was a welcome occasion for meditation, the chanting itself helping to still the mind. It was



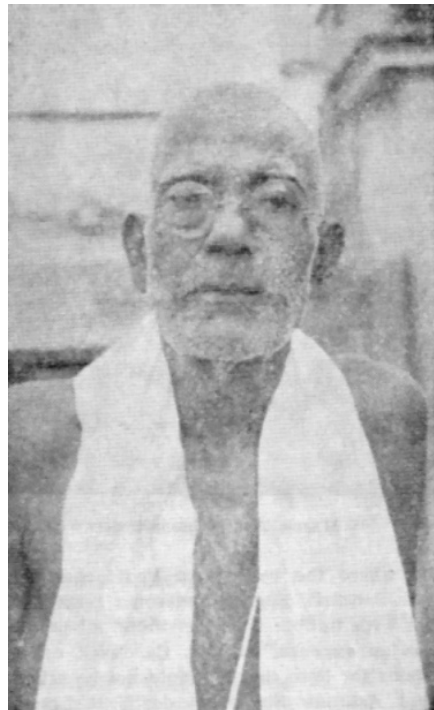
Major Alan Chadwick

Mr. Chadwick who averted the danger by organising a Patasala, that is a traditional boarding school where the boys learn Vedic chanting as well as Sanskrit, English and some general education, with tuition, board, clothing, all provided. It was an expense, but Mr. Chadwick collected donations for it so that it should not be a burden on the Ashram. Since his death it has been ably carried on by Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan. Donations for its upkeep are always welcome.

Remarkably enough, it was also Mr. Chadwick, a European, who started the Sri Chakra Poojas. These are beautiful and impressive services and are widely appreciated. They are held every Friday and full-moon day and on the 1st of every Tamil month. Devotees who wish a special prayer to be made on their behalf write to the President to be included in one of them, enclosing a fee of Rs.10.

Another prominent devotee who has left us is Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi. During Bhagavan's lifetime, it was he who, while still a householder under the name of Sri Munagala Venkataramiah, compiled the '*Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*', the largest record of Bhagavan's teachings. Since then also he has added several valuable titles, like, '*Tripura Rahasya*' and '*Advaita Bodha Deepika*', to our book list. His profound knowledge of scriptures and western philosophy and his austere life, and childlike ways made others revere him as a gem among the disciples of Bhagavan. His death caused, outwardly, a vacuum in the Asramam.

Gridalur Sambasiva Rao of Nellore, a lawyer, first came to Sri Maharshi as early as 1923, with his brother Sri Narayana Rao and his sister Smt. Lakshammal. The power and grace of Bhagavan's look overwhelmed him at one stroke, as it were. All his worries vanished and devotion surged up in him. He remained a staunch devotee till his last



Gridalur Sambasiva Rao

days. Not only that, but through him numerous families from Andhra Pradesh came to know of Sri Maharshi and received his blessings. He was a great support to the Ashram management in all its various activities. One particularly great honour was that when Sri Maharshi accepted the terms of a will drawn up for him in 1938, it was his privilege to sign on behalf of Sri Maharshi (actually Maharshi drew a line and Sambasiva Rao signed on his behalf, since Bhagavan had no name to sign). After the Mahanirvana of Sri Maharshi he was made secretary of the Ashram managing committee and he continued to serve the Ashram with the same whole-hearted zeal till his death on November 5th, 1962. The loss was a personal one to many of the inmates of the Ashram. His devotion to Sri Maharshi was complete. May he rest in peace at the feet of Bhagavan!

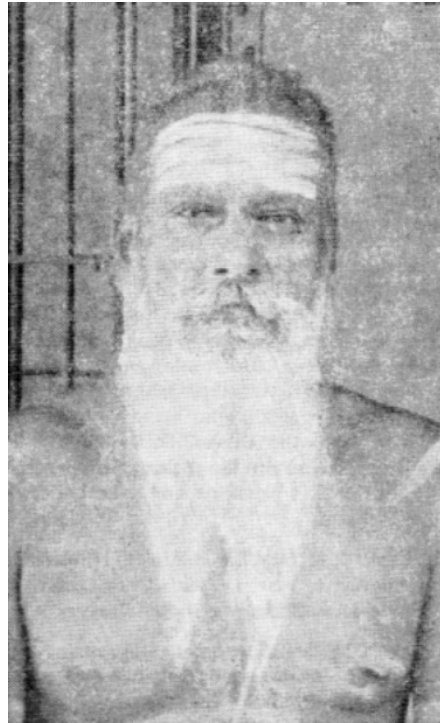
Sama Iyer was a deaf old man, who had served Bhagavan for a long time until, due to old age and physical debility, he asked Bhagavan to let him go, since he could no longer physically serve him. Bhagavan, laughing, said: "For such long service you deserve a pension which will be in the form of eating and keeping quiet." He also has passed away and our very old devotees still miss him in the Ashram.

V. Narayanaswami Iyer, popularly known as 'Chellam Iyer', the cashier of the Ashram (incidentally, he is also related to the Maharshi) who served the Ashram for 17 years, also passed away this year.

A number of new people have come and new houses been built to add to our small colony.

There is also a constant flow of visitors from India and abroad, the majority of whom nowadays are people who never saw Bhagavan in his lifetime.

Apart from private residences, two new guesthouses have also been put up, thanks to the donations of Sri K. Padmanabhan and Sri



V. Narayanaswami Iyer

H. C. Khanna. This is particularly useful for lady visitors, as they are not allowed to stay in the Ashram premises. For single-men a number of self-contained rooms have been built.

Work is proceeding with a shrine and meditation-hall over the Maharshi's Samadhi Shrine. The plan is ambitious but the work has to keep pace with available funds.

LIFE MEMBERS - SRI RAMANASRAMAM

H. C. Khanna, Kanpur.
D. Subbanna, Bangalore.
K. S. N. Rao, New Delhi.
M. Sadasiva Setty, Chikmagalur.
A. R. Narayana Rao, Madras.
V. Venkatakrishniah, Nellore.
C. Padmanabha Rao, Tirupathi.
G. Sesa Reddi, Nellore.
Y. Ramakrishna Prasad, Madras.
Narendra C. Amin, Mangalore.

A. R. Natarajan, Bangalore.
 Vegi Venkateswara Rao, Visakhapatnam.
 G. V. Subbaramayya, Nidubrolu.
 Penmachra Jegannatha Raju, Jinnur.
 A. K. Ramachandra Iyer, Madras.
 Bh. Venkata Lakshmi Narasimha Raju, Jinnur.
 Rayavarapu Sankarayya, Nellore.
 A. Dasaradha Rami Reddi, Nellore.
 M. Suryanarayana Iyer, Nellore.
 R. V. Raghavan, Calcutta.
 S. Krishnamurthy, Neyveli.
 T. R. G. Krishnan, Bangalore.
 Tupili Ramana Reddy, Nellore.
 Mr. & Mrs. Suresh Chandra Khanna, Kanpur,

THE JOURNAL, ITS BIRTH

A short note might be added on the genesis of 'The Mountain Path', since this also is Ashram news. It had been felt long back, even in the lifetime of Bhagavan, that there should be an Ashram journal. It was even suggested to him, but he did not respond; his face showed no interest, so the matter was allowed to drop. Bhagavan very seldom said no, but so tremendous was the power of his presence that if he did not show interest and encouragement none would presume to undertake a project.

After he left the body the idea was again considered but again came to nothing. It was mentioned to the present editor who replied, as he then felt, that he had neither the ability nor the interest to undertake such a task.

As late as September 1963 it occurred independently to both the editor and the managing editor that there should be an Ashram news bulletin published annually at the time of Sri Bhagavan's Jayanti (birth anniversary) and distributed free to devotees, as so many who were not able to come here liked to be kept in touch with developments. A preliminary draught of this was written and shown to a member of the Ashram managing committee, and he immediately suggested that it

should be not an annual but a quarterly and should contain articles also. That, of course, raised questions of writing, organization and finance.

In a clear intuition from Bhagavan it occurred to these concerned that this was the solution, that the time had now come and an Ashram journal was now appropriate, and before the end of September the project of 'The Mountain Path' was agreed upon. There are times when nothing goes right, the wheels are not greased, a project cannot move forward; this was just the opposite. From the very beginning every one co-operated, and gladly, not grudgingly. Blessings and messages of goodwill flowed in, the immediate financial problems were surmounted, the printer took the work up in a spirit of service to Bhagavan, with a short but impressive puja a newly constructed office was opened for the journal at the Ashram, people contributed articles, encouragement came from all sides, hundreds of people took out advance subscriptions, purely on trust, so that in December, a bare three months from its first conception, it is already a full grown reality. If we feel confidence now that it is due to come before the public, it is not confidence in our own work or powers but in the Grace of Bhagavan which we feel so strongly to be on this venture.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH LIFE SUBSCRIBERS

V. Subramanian, Durgapur.
 B. S. Ranganathan, Nellore.
 Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, Madras.
 Miss Elizabeth Merston, Sri Ramanagar,
 K. K. Nambiar, Bombay.
 Dwarakanatha Reddy, Chittoor.
 A. S. K. R. Trust, Madras.
 Satyanarayan Tandon, Kanpur.
 M. A. Chidambaram, Madras.
 M. M. Varma, Jaipur.
 S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, Tiruvannamalai.
 A. R. Narayana Rao, Madras.

D. S. Sastri, Madras.
Mukund M. Thakore, Ahmedabad.
N. Balarama Reddi, Vutukuru.
Ashok Pal Singh, Bombay.
Rani Padmawati Devi, Bhopal.
Miss Mahalakshmi, Madras.
K. Gopalrao, Bombay.
V. Seshadri, Calcutta.
Lieut. D. Subbanna, Bangalore.

Bhupen Champaklal, Bombay.
G. J. Yorke, Gloucester, England.
Mrs. Banoo J. H. Ruttonjee, Hong Kong.
Dinshaw S. Paowalla, Hong Kong.
Miss Gertrude Fugert, Munich, Germany.
Trudel Elasaesser, Waldhof, Germany.
Prof. Dr. Friedrich W. Funke, Seelscheid, Germany.
Louise Trachsler, Coppet, Switzerland.
Henri Hartung, Paris.

SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES

SRI RAMANASRAMAM TIRUVANNAMALAI

AN ANNOUNCEMENT

“SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES, TIRUVANNAMALAI” is a newly registered body under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 with the following objects:

1. To construct an Auditorium and Library and a Reading Room.
2. To hold discourses periodically, sometimes daily, on Indian Philosophy and Culture including those relating to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.
3. To be a centre for the diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge.
4. To house books and periodicals on Eastern and Western Philosophy and depicting different cultural aspects of life in India and other countries.
5. To run a school where the students are taught Sanskrit, English, Tamil, Vedas and Upanishads, and Mathematics etc. and lodging.
6. To run a dispensary where medical attention is given free of charge.

In carrying out the above objects of general public utility, the Association shall not undertake the carrying on of any activity for profit.

The benefits of the Association will be open to all without any disqualifications by reason only of religion, community, caste, creed, race or sex.

On this body being registered on 28-10-1963, the Central Board of Revenue, Government of India, New Delhi, in their Notification, F. No. 68/17/63-I.T. dated 19th November 1963, have decided that donations made to SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES, TIRUVANNAMALAI, MADRAS STATE, would be entitled to the benefit of the exemption under Sec. 88 of the Income-tax Act, 1961 in the hands of donors, subject to the limits specified therein and the donations will also be exempted from Gift Tax.

The Management of Sri Ramanasramam appeal to the public in general and to the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi to contribute liberally to the “SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES, TIRUVANNAMALAI” so as to enable them to carry on the objects specified above, particularly item (1), the construction of which is on hand.

It may please be noted that all remittances to Sri Ramanasramam Charities by Cheques, Drafts or Money Orders should be made payable to SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES only.

T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
President.

BOOK REVIEWS¹

GOD-EXPERIENCE: By Swami Ramdas (Bhavan's Book University, Chaupatty, Bombay. Rs. 2; 3s. 6d.; \$ 0.90.)

The late Swami Ramdas was that rare phenomenon of a bhakta or devotee who won through by sheer force of devotion to at least glimpses of Identity. There was a spirit of love and purity and an all-pervading happiness in his ashram. Fittingly was it called 'Anandashram'. Many appreciated particularly the evening hours when he would sit amid his disciples, talking to them (in English), laughing and joking, mingling reminiscence with upadesa (spiritual instruction).

Fortunately a disciple took down these talks over a period and made a book of them which was published under the name of God-Experience just about the time the Swami left us.

He taught a path of devotion expressed in invocation of the Divine Name, and into this he initiated aspirants, Hindu and Western alike, indifferent to the outer forms of orthodoxy. In reading his instructions, however, it must be remembered that he considered this initiation necessary and that without it the invocation has not the same potency that he gave it. And he did give potency. There was no doubting his power as a guru.

Sometimes he speaks as a pure bhakta: "Unless you have a burning aspiration for God, the mind cannot be fixed on Him. Where your love is, there your mind is. Just as a miser constantly thinks of money and money alone, so a devotee has exclusive devotion to God When you have intense love for God, everything else is forgotten. Then you will realise God."

Sometimes again he speaks from the point of view of Identity and shows how devotion can lead to it by its very intensity. "Your search for God is your search for the Atman or Self. At the end of your search you will realize that you are He. You start with duality and end in non-duality. Then you know that you have been seeking your own Self, thinking that the Self was different from you. Ultimately you know you are that Self itself. There ends your quest."

This is a book full of love and understanding, the outpourings of a true saint. Aspirants are recommended to keep it by them and dip into it again and again for solace in moods of depression and for invigoration when the way seems hard. There is very little in it that is technically Hindu, so Jewish, Christian and Muslim seekers will also find it helpful.

CRUMBS FROM HIS TABLE: By Ramanananda Swarnagiri. (Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai. Rs. 1.)

Crumbs from His Table is the first book of reminiscences about the Maharshi ever written. The author, who is now unfortunately no longer with us, came to him as early as 1934. In 1936 he published this record for free distribution to any of the then limited number of devotees who cared to ask for it. Next year a second free edition was issued and then it was allowed to go out of print. The Asramam is certainly well advised in reviving a little work which will have a strong appeal to devotees of Bhagavan and students of his teaching. It contains a number of characteristic incidents showing how Bhagavan's devotees were drawn to him and a number of useful expositions. In particular, there is a fuller and clearer exposition of the danger of manolaya

1. All unsigned Reviews are by the Editor.

than is to be found in any of the other books.

In editing the new edition, the Ashram has respected the author's aversion to the use of the first person singular pronoun, although at times it makes the style rather involved. It is not uncommon to meet an aspirant who refuses to refer to himself as 'I', but Bhagavan did not encourage any such eccentricity. It is also characteristic of him that he did not forbid it. He liked his devotees to be normal in speech, as in dress and behaviour, but the urge had to come from within; as a general rule he avoided giving orders. Actually, if there is no 'I' there can be no 'you' or 'he', so intercourse would be pretty difficult. One has to play the game of individual beings, so one might as well use its language.

THE WAY OF LIGHT: By T. V. Kapali Sastri.
(Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, Rs. 8.)

Kapali Sastri was a disciple of Ganapati Muni,² and both of them were devotees of Sri Ramana Maharshi. Ganapati Muni was responsible for Sri Ramana Gita, besides composing Sanskrit hymns to the Maharshi, while Kapali Sastri composed Sat Darshana Bhashya a commentary on the Maharshi's Forty Verses preceded by a very informative series of talks.

Both master and disciple, however, were interested rather in the Divine Mother and the intermediary worlds with the powers and experiences therein accessible than in the direct path of Advaita taught by the Maharshi. Kapali Sastri actually said of himself: "I am a Tantric through and through - to my marrow I was a Tantric I know the Tantra Sadhana in a very familiar way and can utilise my knowledge of the World-Power in an effective manner." It is natural, therefore, that on the death of Ganapati Muni he found the sadhana of Sri Aurobindo

and the Mother more congenial and transferred himself to their Ashram at Pondicherry. There he could hear statements such as: "By occult training one can enter the Psychic world and explore it as one does a country," instead of being told: "To have powers there must be others to whom to display them; therefore the wise man does not give them a thought," or: "Even if powers come spontaneously they should be rejected. They are like ropes to tether a beast; sooner or later they drag a man back from his pursuit of Moksha (Liberation)."

As he grew older and more mature, Kapali Sastri began to give advice and guidance to others, and notably to M. P. Pandit, the compiler and editor of this book, while at the same time himself remaining a devoted disciple. This book is made up of fragments of diary and correspondence, advice, obiter dicta and tributes to Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. There is much to be found in it that is interesting and significant.

DR. RANADE'S LIFE OF LIGHT: By M. S. Deshpande. (Bhavan's Book University, Chaupatty, Bombay-7. Rs. 2; 3s. 6d.; \$0.90.)

Dr. Rambhau Ranade's long life ended as recently as 1957. He was esteemed in the world of professional philosophers, being for a number of years head of the department of philosophy at Allahabad University. However, his books also appealed to a far wider public. In particular, many find interest in his 'Pathway to God' series (in Marathi literature, in Kannada literature and in Hindi literature, all three published in a uniform edition with this life of him) giving accounts of the lives, experiences and teachings of the saints.

More than all this, however, he was a lifelong sadhaka or seeker. He was a disciple of the eminent guru Sri Bhausaheb Maharaj, who prescribed the discipline of meditation on the Divine Name. Using this, he grew in sanctity

2. For whom see chapter X of my '*Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*,' Riders and Jaico.

and enjoyed many spiritual experiences. Indeed, he declared that in his 'Pathway to God' books he had described no experience of the saints which he himself had not known. In later years, after the death of Sri Maharaj and of the latter's immediate successor, he himself became a guru, prescribing the same path of meditation on the Divine Name.

It is on this last phase of his life that his disciple, M. S. Deshpande, most concentrates, referring to him reverentially as Gurudev.

There is no doubt about the saintliness of Dr. Ranade or about the beneficent influence he exerted on his disciples. Nevertheless, a follower of the direct path laid down by Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi cannot but wonder at this preoccupation with experiences. What do they matter? Whether physical experiences enjoyed through the senses or subtle ones coming independent of them, they are alike on the individual plane. There is still the trinity of seer-sight-seen. That is not the way to Liberation from form into the Reality of Oneness, the Supreme Identity.

LIFE AND TEACHING OF BRAMAGNA MA: By Swami Prabuddhananda. (Oxford Book Co., Park St., Calcutta-16. Rs. 5.50).

It is not the nature or destiny (the two are the same) of every saint to be well known. It may be that one less advanced is impelled to greater publicity. Bramagna Ma was a Bengali woman saint of the highest Realization, teaching pure Advaita (Identity). The instructions she gave were of the most profound, but she refused to accept more than about half a dozen disciples and would not let them write about her or make her known. That was not her destiny, she said.

After her death in 1935 her disciple and attendant, Swami Prabuddhnanda, came to live for some time at Sri Ramanasramam. Major

Chadwick was interested to learn about her life and teaching, so, as the Swami was at the time maintaining silence and could not give an oral account, he wrote one out. It is this which, preserved in typescript for many years, forms the nucleus of the present book. It has a quiet certitude and pure beauty which will captivate true seekers. So will the frontispiece photograph of Bramagna Ma.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: A Forgotten Chapter of His Life. By Beni Shanker Sharma. (Oxford Book Co., Park St., Calcutta-16. Rs. 10).

Even before setting forth for America and fame, Swami Vivekananda was already a dominating figure. He travelled, often on foot, the length and breadth of India, impressing high and low alike with his eloquence and magnetism. One of his first friends and staunchest disciples was the Raja of Khetri. Mr. Sharma has discovered and edited a considerable correspondence between them in the archives of the former princely state. This will be a welcome addition to the libraries of all students of the Swami.

ESSAYS IN PHILOSOPHY: Presented to Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan on his Fiftieth Birthday. (Ganesh, Madras. Rs. 25).

Prof. Mahadevan, Head of the Philosophy Department of Madras University, is an Advaitin among the philosophers and a philosopher among the Advaitins. While a profound student of Sanskrit and of classical Indian philosophy, he is also thoroughly at home with Western philosophy, with whose exponents he can argue on their own terms. He is, however, grounded in the Eastern concept that philosophy is to be not merely learned but lived. Therefore he is not only a professor of philosophy but also a devotee of Ramana Maharshi.

The 52 essays, contributed by as many writers, in this presentation volume fittingly therefore range over the field of Hindu, Western and Buddhist philosophy. They also branch out to cover a religious thinker such as Simone Weil, a social idealist such as Gandhi, and a mystic such as Tayumanavar.

L'ESOTERISME DE DANTE: fr. 200; **LE ROI DU MONDE:** fr. 350; **LA GRANDE TRIADE:** fr. 590: all three by Rene Guenon, Published by Gallimard, Paris.

It was a very different world into which Rene Guenon burst in the early decades of this century, a world which still believed in progress and where there seemed no escape from materialism and superficiality. With vast erudition, dazzling lucidity, ruthless logic and scathing sarcasm for any who differed, he challenged the whole edifice of modern civilisation. In book after book, article after article, he exposed the brittle shams of our world and in contrast pointed to the profound symbolism and traditional wisdom of the past and the East. For the individual also he showed how tawdry are all modern ideals compared with the traditional striving for Realization.

His campaign was not mere theory. If it had been it would have remained impotent. Central to it was the proclamation that Being is one; therefore you cannot be other than the One, because there is no other; therefore to realize your true Self is to realize the Supreme Identity; and this can be done. To many, including the writer of this review, he showed the possibility of escape from the suffocating frustrations of modern life to the deep inner contentment of the Spirit. He had his limitations and blind spots, none knows it better; but in spite of that it was through him that my feet were set on the

3. *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, P. 41, Sri Ramanasramam edition, p. 47 Rider's edition.

mountain path and that Grace became abundant.

If there are many in the West today, despite the still accelerating superficiality and materialism, who understand that there is a meaning and purpose to life and set forth upon its quest by one path or another, it is to a very large extent due to his influence, direct or indirect. Even the direct influence is still working, as we see here at Arunachala from the many who owe their first awakening to him out of those who turn to Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi. He himself, unfortunately, never understood that Bhagavan had opened a new path for mankind, free from the outer forms of orthodoxy, but remained to the end like those who failed to recognise Christ because he had not come in the form they expected.

Out of print for some years, his books are now being reprinted and new ones compiled from the articles he wrote. The first of those here under notice points out the esoteric symbolism of the West's greatest Mediaeval poet, showing his *Divine Comedy* to be an allegory of the indirect spiritual path of Hermetism, struggling upwards stage by stage.

The second tries to avoid being too explicit on a concealed topic: the secret spiritual guidance of the world. Those interested in cosmic and mundane organisation will find it fascinating. For those, however, who follow the Jnana-marga (Path of Knowledge), seeing the whole universe as a projection of the mind, the same applies that Bhagavan said about studying the subtle aspects of the individual: "Just as it is futile to examine the rubbish that has to be swept up only to be thrown away, so it is futile for him who seeks to know the Self to set to work enumerating the tattvas that envelop the Self and examining them instead of casting them away. He should consider the phenomenal world with reference to himself merely as a dream."³

The third is a compilation of articles on symbolism. It may be asked how reading about the symbolism of the spiral and the pyramid, the swastika and the three-dimensional cross, helps a man towards Liberation. The answer perhaps is that constant hammering away at the true meaning of symbolism and the symbolical nature of the universe gradually tears a man's mind away from the crude materialism to which it had been conditioned and orientates it to a true sense of values, thus enabling him eventually to rise beyond symbolism to That which is symbolised. Happy are those who need no such weaning.

ASK THE AWAKENED, THE NEGATIVE WAY: By Wei Wu Wei, (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30s.)

'Ask the Awakened' forms a trilogy with the author's previous two books, 'Fingers Pointing Towards the Moon' and 'Why Lazarus Laughed'. It is written in the same style, that is the ancient form of sutras rather than the modern form of logical deduction.

Examples: "Form is the seeing of form: it has no independent existence. Form as the object of seeing is inexistent. The thought itself of form is the seeing of form."

"Karma is an apparent cause that produces an apparent effect in the apparent world of samsara."

The book is based mainly on the Chinese Ch'an Masters from whom Japanese Zen derives. Also on the Maharshi. Really, like every book of intrinsic understanding, it is based on the author's own perception.

He calls it 'The Negative Way' because it proceeds not by asserting what is but what, including his phenomenal self that makes the assertion, is not. It is a way characterised by Hindu Sages as stripping an onion. Skin after

skin you peel off, to see what is in the centre, and when you get there, there is nothing.

What characterises the book is the author's ruthless, consistent refusal to make any compromise with duality, to accept anything at all apart from Advaita - which means anything at all, because Advaita is not anything. Constantly he comes back to the assertion that there is no objective reality: there just IS.

SOME CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS: By Elfrida Dupont. (Michael Joseph, 16S.)

How many Christians there are who no longer remember the traditional festivals of their Church! What, for instance, is Candlemas? And what Lammastide? What does Maundy Thursday commemorate? What is the feast of Michaelmas at the autumn equinox? Why are pancakes eaten on Shrove Tuesday? Who was Santa Claus and how did he become Father Christmas? Why does Whitsuntide bear its present name, and what was it formerly known as?

It is quite possible to strive in the way of Christ without knowing any of these things. Nevertheless, for a member of a Christian community they give a warmth and colour and sense of belonging. Contingent though they may be, they add a richness to the Christian way of life. They also carry echoes of earlier literature which are otherwise lost on modern readers - a ballad, for instance, beginning: "It fell about the Lammastide."

In this book the festivals are described in a pleasant style, informative but without unnecessary padding, and with a sense of reverence. The book has also a useful glossary of ritualistic and theological terminology now strange to many Christians. It is not confined to the viewpoint of any one church or sect.

- SAGITTARIUS

THE UPANISHADS: Translated by Swami Nikhilananda. (Allen and Unwin, 45s.).

The condensation of Swami Nikhilananda's four-volume annotated translation of the 11 principal Upanishads into the present single volume will probably increase its attraction for the Western general reader, for whom it is primarily intended. The translation is in clear, straightforward English, though it is a pity that the obsolete word 'verily' is dragged in, to give it a pseudo-biblical flavour. A number of technical Sanskrit terms which have no exact English equivalent are very wisely left in Sanskrit and explained in a glossary. A 50-page introduction gives a very good outline of Upanishadic teaching for the Western reader, without getting involved in the complexities of Sanskrit terminology and philosophical viewpoints.

ISLAM: By Alfred Guillaume. (Cassell, 15 s.)

It is surprising how much information about Islam the author manages to pack into this 200-page book, and without any sacrifice of clarity. No trace remains of the animosity common to Western writers on Islam of an earlier generation. On the contrary, the new tendency to inter-religious appreciation is well exemplified. The early chapters on Muhamad, the Quran, the foundation of Islam present a very fair picture which, indeed, makes it seem remarkable that the author continues to use the prejudicial and inaccurate terms 'Muhammadan' and 'Muhammadanism' instead of what he must know to be the correct designations: 'Muslim' and 'Islam'.

There is an appreciative survey of the great age of Islamic culture and civilisation and also a satisfactory chapter on Sufism,

As in most modern works on Islam, a great part of the book is devoted to the question of adaptation to modernism. In 'Buddhism and

Christianity in the Light of Hinduism', Arthur Osborne points out a very significant distinction between 'world-renouncing' and 'world-sanctifying' religions. Islam is an example of the latter type. It does not tell a man to give his property to the poor and become a religious mendicant but to do business honestly, how much to give in charity and who to, who to leave his property to when he dies, and a host of other matters which a world-renouncing religion at its origin, dismisses as 'the things that are Caesar's'. Therefore it set forth on its career with a divinely sponsored code of civil and criminal law. In some ways this may be an advantage, but it gravely complicates the question of adaptation to the changed circumstances of a new age. To mention only one point, a Buddhist or Christian may see no harm in taking interest on capital in modern financial conditions, but a Muslim is forbidden to do so by the Quran. As the present book shows, questions of law, faith, theology, the infallibility of the Quran, the status of the hadiths, are so interwoven that the question of degrees and modes of modernisation is almost insoluble. He also describes very sympathetically what is being done to solve it in various Islamic countries and by various Islamic writers today.

- ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN.

VALMIKI MAHA RAMAYANA OR YOGA VASISHTA: Translated by S. V. Ganapathi. Published by the translator at 9-D, Edward Elliotts Road, Madras-4.

This is the translator's second volume on Nirvana. The first volume was published in Tamil in 1948. Sage Vasishtha presents to Sri Rama the state of Nirvana through many illustrations and anecdotes. Typical of them is the following:

"There is no trace of the sprout in the seed. The essence of seed pervades the seed; likewise the world phenomena are not experienced in Brahman. Brahman is without substance, form

or activity. Hence the world cannot be derived from Brahman. Expecting to see the world in Brahman is like expecting Mount Meru within the Atom. The wise as well as the ignorant perceive the world phenomena. The wise know they are all subject to constant changes and dissolution. They are dependent upon our imagination and are mere percepts. Hence we cannot call them Real or unreal. They appear before us like dreams and disappear when wisdom dawns." "Discard all doubts and with a courage bordering on recklessness, be a Great Doer, a Great Enjoyer and a Great Renouncer. Then one is established in great Renunciation."

It may be a useful book for those on the Path of Knowledge as taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. The English is passable.

- T. K. S.

THE INCREDIBLE SAI BABA: By Arthur Osborne. (Orient Longmans, Calcutta, Rs. 5.00 and Riders, London, 12s. 6d.)

Sai Baba has become a legend. It is now nearly fifty years since he shed the physical sheath but his name and Samadhi continue to be an irresistible Power in the circle of his devotees. Many have claimed to be incarnations of Sai and developed rituals and practices which were unknown to the Baba of Shirdi. What was Baba really like? What was his teaching? What was his upasana, practice? These are some of the questions that have been answered in a satisfactory manner by Mr. Osborne in this interesting biography of the saint.

Apart from the many biographical details the author has assembled together from various accounts, this book gives an intimate glimpse into the saint's personality and the ways of working which were peculiarly his own. He used his supernatural powers in profusion and gave his devotees all they desired. He continues to do

so even now in a spectacular way. Learned men who shake their heads at these 'miracles' have something to ponder over in a remark of his on the matter: 'I give people what they want in the hope that they will begin to want what I want to give them.' (p. 100)

Sai Baba had no elaborate philosophy to teach, no intricate yogic discipline to prescribe. All that he asked for, as the author points out, was devotion to the Guru, self-surrender to the Guru who thereupon took charge of the aspirant and did what was needed to lend him to the Goal. In a brief analysis of the Teachings of three of the modern spiritual teachers, viz. Sri Ramakrishna, Sai Baba, Sri Ramana Maharshi, Mr. Osborne draws attention to certain common features which are significant: All three upheld the equal validity of all religions; provided for simple and direct paths that can be pursued in the conditions of modern life without formal renunciation of life in the world; and laid stress on utter devotion and surrender to the Guru as the main process. (pp. 92-93)

The book is both absorbing and instructive.

- M. P. PANDIT.

THE RHYTHM OF HISTORY: By Arthur Osborne. (Orient Longmans. Rs. 2.75)

In this revealing study of the rise and fall of civilisations during the last two millennia and a half, the author shows how there is a pattern in history on a global scale. Historians are not all agreed on the precise significance of this pattern and Mr. Osborne is content to note that it only 'Implies that there is a divine or cosmic harmony shaping the affairs of man and that the ambitions of the great and the bungling of the unwise are merely instrumental, not causal.' (P, 129)

Beginning his survey with the founders of great Religious Systems about the fifth century B.C., e.g. Buddha, Confucius, Pythagoras, he records

the rise of classical Empires all over Asia and Europe followed by their decline culminating in what is known as the Dark Age; another curve of rise of civilisations through the Ages of Medievalism and the Renaissance was again followed by a downward movement which may be said to have reached its apogee in the last century. What is the likely outcome of all this mighty effort of Nature? How far have the East and the West, which seemed to have diverged from each other at one stage, come closer? These are some of the questions that are taken up for discussion in these pages.

While it may not be possible to agree with the writer in all his conclusions, it is certainly true - as he says - that 'the present materialistic civilisation is not the final answer because it has no inherent stability,' it is plundering the earth's resources too recklessly to endure, and the current of history has already begun to swing away from it.' (p. 130) What then is to replace this civilisation? A New Order which has been foreseen in all the traditions of the world and whose advent is very close to our present age. An able work persuasively written.

- M. P. PANDIT.

THE GOLDEN MASTER

(Composed by the eminent poet Harindranath Chattopadhyaya in the Ashram Hall, crowded with devotees on the night when death had claimed the body of Sri Ramana.)

Grief bath grown silent with its own excess
And will not weep lest it betray his trust
Even in this dark hour of dire distress
He lights the flame of knowledge through our dust.

Illumining its blindness wide and far
He glitters from his heaven of deathless grace.
In every speck and stone, in every star
We see the lonely wonder of his Face.

Ignorance rumours that our King departs
Where can he go, O where? - the being moans,
He who has made rich kingdoms of our hearts
And of our thoughts his countless jewelled thrones?

May he forgive our wavering faith, forgive
The folly of our doubts whose eyes are dim
How dare we move or breathe except through him?
How could we live if he should cease to live?

“May Thou and I be one and inseperable like *Alagu* and *Sundara*, Oh Arunachala!”

- *The Marital Garland of Letters*, Verse 2.

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

“Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those who meditate on Thee in the Heart, Oh Arunachala.”

- *The Marital Garland of Letters*, Verse 1.

Vol.1

April 1964

No.2

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‘THE MOUNTAIN PATH’

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

Contributions for publication should be addressed to ‘The Editor, The Mountain Path, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State’. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

The editor is not responsible for statements and opinions contained in signed articles.

No payment is made for contributions published. Anything herein published may be reprinted elsewhere without fee provided due acknowledgement is made and the editor is previously notified.

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“SRI RAMANASRAMAM CHARITIES, TIRUVANNAMALAI” is a newly registered body under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 with the following objects:

1. To construct an Auditorium and Library and a Reading Room.
2. To hold discourses periodically, sometimes daily, on Indian Philosophy and Culture including those relating to Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.
3. To be a centre for the diffusion of Spiritual Knowledge.
4. To house books and periodicals on Eastern and Western Philosophy and depicting different cultural aspects of life in India and other countries.
5. To run a school where the students are taught Sanskrit, English, Tamil, Vedas and Upanishads, and Mathematics etc. and lodging.
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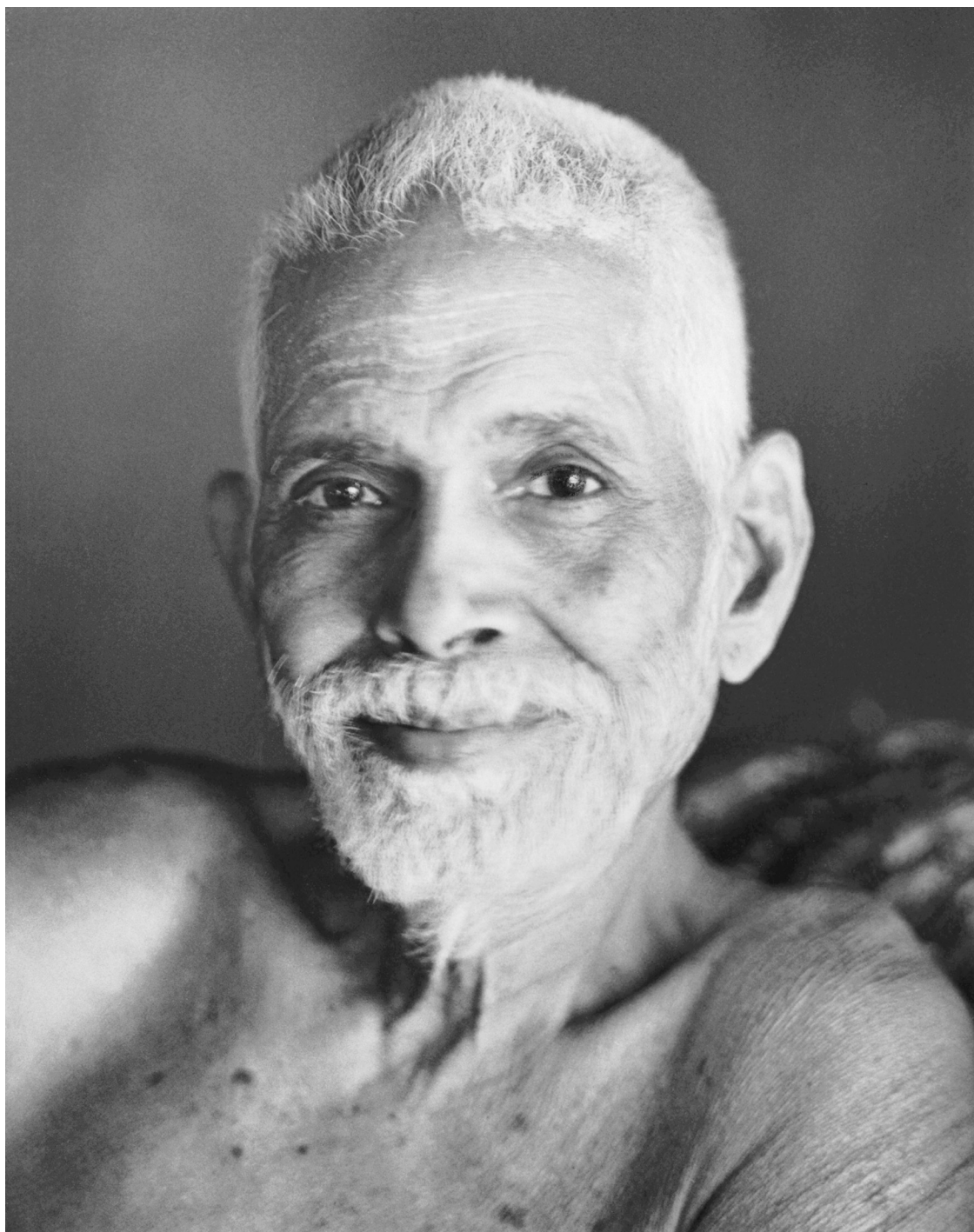
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T. N. VENKATARAMAN,
President.



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

Editor: Arthur Osborne

VOL. 1

APRIL, 1964

No. 2

WHERE CHARITY BEGINS

(EDITORIAL)

I said in my last editorial that the quest for Realization is the great enterprise, the true goal of life. Yet one often hears the objection: 'But isn't it more important to help others?' Although some who make this objection doubtless do so in good faith, it is at bottom a hypocritical attack on spirituality. It goes back to the 19th Century socialists who used to say: "First things first. Let us first remove the poverty of the people, then there will be time to consider their spiritual needs." Well, they succeeded in what they considered first. There is very little poverty left in North-Western Europe. And did they then turn to spiritual succour? Not at all. The anti-spiritual trend accelerated and became more unabashed. The workers who acquired leisure, security and a competence had less time, not more, to devote to their spiritual needs.

In fact it is not true that welfare facilitates religion, or poverty impedes it, or that material needs are the 'first things' to be attended to. Christ taught the exact opposite when the rich young man approached him and he told him to give his property away and become a mendicant. But then, of course, Christ and his followers

would be put in gaol in a Welfare State because begging is illegal. If poverty can be an impediment, so also can prosperity. Indeed, it might well be said that in a welfare state prosperity is the opiate of the people, lulling them into a false sense of security.

One sign of the animus behind the do-good objection is that it is only used against those who turn to a spiritual path. If a man declares that his absorbing interest in life is music or business or politics no such objection is made; only if it is religion that he turns to. And why should it be supposed that one who is striving to subjugate or destroy his ego is doing less to help others than one who allows it free play? Rather he is likely to do more. He may be more unobtrusive about it, simply helping those who come his way rather than engaging in organised charities, but there is likely to be less vanity and more genuine goodwill in what he does.

A touchstone that has been widely used in assessing moral behaviour is: 'What would happen if everyone did that?' If everyone lived as the Maharshi enjoined, in the world but not of it, fulfilling his professional and family

obligations with detachment, helping where he came upon the need for help, while striving on the path, the answer is that there would be no need for social service, since none would be exploited or impoverished for the benefit of others. There would be no destitute to help.

This touchstone also, however, has an anti-spiritual animus, being aimed in part against those who renounce the world to become monks or sadhus. It is in fact against those who renounce the world that the first objection mentioned, ‘but wouldn’t it be better to help others?’ is primarily aimed, although by extension it has come to be applied unthinkingly to all who follow a spiritual path. In fact it crystallises the Reformation revolt against traditional Christian monasticism. Indeed, even before the high tide of the Reformation, the anonymous 14th Century author of ‘The Cloud of Unknowing’ spoke regretfully of it in terms of Martha’s complaint against Mary. “‘Just as Martha complained then about Mary her sister, so do active persons complain about contemplatives unto this very day.’ In terms of the Gospel story, this attitude of mind means that Martha chose the better way. Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but is one who rejects the decision of Christ in favour of his own opinion entitled to call himself a Christian?”¹

‘What would happen if everyone did that?’ The first and most obvious answer is that it is an unreal question, since everyone will not do that: there are more Marthas than Marys in the world.

A deeper answer is that “man does not live by bread alone.” Everyone is a transmitting station of harmonious or destructive influences. The discordant, aggressive or corrupt tendencies in a man can be just as infectious as physical diseases, and that despite the fact that he may outwardly be doing social work. Conversely, the beneficent emanations of a spiritual person can have a harmonising effect on all around, even if they never

speak with him, never meet him face to face, even though he may be a recluse with no apparent contact with the world. If people can believe that a musician bestows something on the community, even though he does not supply food or clothing, it is but a step farther to understand that a spiritual man can too. Indeed, his benefaction is more powerful since, being independent of forms, it can penetrate the mind directly without the mediation of the senses. That is why the fellowship of saints has always been so sought after.

The influence may be almost too subtle to perceive, like a vague perfume of roses or it may be strong and tangible. “Great souls, wherever they are, create a spiritual zone around them: and anybody coming within that zone realizes something like an electric current passing into him. It is a very strange phenomenon, impossible to explain, unless one has experienced it oneself.”²

In the subtler sense of giving spiritual aid this error of turning outwards to the welfare of others instead of attending first to one’s own quest, goes right back to the foundation of Mahayana Buddhism some two thousand years ago. I do not question the spiritual potency of the Mahayana. The test of a tree is its fruit, and the great Sages the Mahayana has produced are proof enough that the way they trod was valid. That is all we need to know about a path - that it can take us to the Goal. Nevertheless, their criticism of the Hinayana and their substitution of the Bodhisattva ideal for that of the Arahata, as it stands and as it is to be read today, is the point of view of ignorance.

Briefly, it is that the Arahata seeks only his private, individual Realization or Nirvana, whereas the Bodhisattva pledges himself to seek the Realization of all mankind, and even holds back voluntarily from the final step of entering Nirvana until his self-imposed task of helping others has been accomplished.

1. *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*, p. 33, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co.

2. Spiritual Discourses of Swami Vijnananda from *Prabuddha Bharata*, Oct. 1963 issue.

Now, in the first place, there is no such thing as individual Realization. Realization means realization that there is no individual: that is to say it is realization of the basic Buddhist doctrine of *anatta*, no-ego. Nirvana is the state which remains when the individual ceases to exist. How then, can it be individual? To ask one who has awakened from the dream of individual be-ing into the reality of Nirvana whether others also have attained Realization would be, as the Maharshi expressed it, as senseless as asking someone who wakes up from a dream whether the other people in his dream have also woken up.³

This, of course, is fully understood by the Mahayana teachers, but not by all their followers. One of their basic scriptures expressly affirms that there are no others to help, as a safeguard after speaking of the boundless compassion of the Buddha. “The famous Diamond Sutra makes it quite clear that the doctrine of compassion is only a facade for the ignorant, since in reality there are no others to whom to be compassionate. ‘The Lord Buddha continued: Do not think, Subhuti, that the Tathagata would consider within himself: I will deliver human beings.’ That would be a degrading thought. Why? Because really there are no sentient beings to be delivered by the Tathagata. Should there be any sentient being to be delivered by the Tathagata, it would mean that the Tathagata was cherishing within his mind arbitrary conceptions of phenomena such as one’s own self, other selves, living beings and a universal self. Even when the Tathagata refers to himself, he is not holding within his mind any such arbitrary thought. Only terrestrial human beings think of selfhood as being a personal possession, Subhuti. Even the expression ‘terrestrial beings’ as used by the Tathagata

3. *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 92-93, Rider’s edition, p. 115, Sri Ramanashram edition.

does not mean that there are any such beings. It is only used as a figure of speech.”⁴

As long as there is the concept of an ‘I’ there is a concept of others; as long as there are others to help there is an I to help them and therefore no Self-Realization. The two go together; they cannot be separated.

OTHERS

What will they think of this?

What will they say to that?

So others arise.

When there are others there’s I.

In truth there just IS.

Isness alone is;

No others, no I, only a dance, a rhythm,

Only a being.

Of course, one has to, play the game of ‘I and others’, to act as though they existed. It is as if (as can sometimes happen) one had a dream and took part in its events while at the same time being awake enough to know that it was a dream.

What, then, is this vow to help others before seeking one’s own Realization? Nothing but a resolve to remain in a state of ignorance (*avidya*). And how will that help others? It means clinging to the ego one has sworn to dissolve, regarding it as supremely wise and beneficent! In the language of theism it is revealed as overweening arrogance, the decision to show God how to run His world or to run it for Him.

Whatever may have been the traditional Mahayana discipline (and a significant injunction by Milarepa, one of the great Mahayana saints, is quoted in a recent life of him: “One should not be over hasty in setting out to help others before one has realized the Truth; if one does it

4. *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*, p. 113-114, by Arthur Osborne, Rider, quoting *A Buddhist Bible*, p. 91-92, edited by Dwight Goddard, Harrap.

is a case of the blind leading the blind.”)⁵ this urge to help others by being a guru before one’s time is one of the greatest pitfalls for the aspirant today. There may be some compassion in it, but there is likely to be far more vanity and egoism. Few things so flatter the ego as the dream of being a guru surrounded by the adulation of disciples. Few things so impede an aspirant as turning his energy outwards to guide others when it should still be turned inwards to his own purification. In spiritual things it is true, as the 19th Century economists falsely asserted about material things, that you help others most by helping yourself. The Maharshi never indulged such people. He told them: “Help yourself first before you think of helping others.”

In any case, there is no need of any vow of compassion. The nearer a man comes to the truth of the Universal Self, the more his phenomenal, individual self will take its true form and, without any vows, without arrogating to himself the control of his own destiny, he will find himself acting as it is his nature to act, doing what it is his true function to do. It may not be his function to be a guru at all: if it is it will come about naturally and healthily when the time is ripe, without his trying to force it.

A few examples will illustrate this. Buddha was the only son of his father and the heir apparent

5. *The Life of Milarepa, Tibet’s Great Yogi*, -p. 157-8. By Lobzang Jivaka, John Murray.

to his father’s small kingdom. In what the unctuous do-gooders would call ‘selfish’ preoccupation with his own spiritual welfare, he abandoned wife and child, father and throne, and set forth alone as a sadhu to seek Enlightenment. And how many millions have since drawn sustenance from his renunciation! St. Francis of Assisi forsook the family business and alienated his father in order to embrace ‘the Lady Poverty’. And what spiritual wealth has flowed forth from his material destitution! Sri Ramakrishna was consumed with ecstatic craving for the Grace of the Divine Mother. Nothing else concerned him, neither helping himself nor others. It seemed he would go mad with longing and despair. Then, when he did at last attain, such power flowed through him as to launch the spiritual regeneration of Hinduism and its attraction for Western seekers. Realisation descended unsought on Ramana Maharshi when he was a schoolboy of 16. He left home, seeking only solitude, and remained immersed in the Bliss of Being: yet disciples gathered round and he became the *Jagat-Guru*, the World-Guru, of his time through whom a new path adapted to the conditions of our age was made accessible to those who seek.

All of which goes to show that the Universal Harmony does not require any man’s planning to give it shape; or, in theistic language, that God can do His job without our advice.

Many readers of ‘*The Mountain Path*’, especially among those who were not fortunate enough to come to Bhagavan in his lifetime, are avid for reminiscences about him. All devotees or former visitors who have any such that have not yet been published are requested to send them to the Editor who will give them his earnest consideration. In doing so they will be performing a real service to many of Bhagavan’s devotees and thereby indirectly to Bhagavan himself.

Persons who have received the blessings or guidance of Bhagavan in dream or vision whether before or after he shed the body, are also requested to write in their experiences.

TRUE SILENCE

By NAGAMMA¹

At three o'clock this afternoon I joined the company of devotees around Bhagavan. Reverting to what he had been saying earlier about Sri Sankara's '*Dakshinamurthi Ashtakam*',² Bhagavan said: "Sankara took it into his head to praise Dakshinamurthi, but how can one praise *Mowna*?³ So he described *srishti* (creation), *sthithi* (preservation) and *laya* (dissolution) and offered salutations to Dakshinamurthi, who is the embodiment of all three. In what other way could Silence be praised?"

Taking up the thread of the conversation, one devotee said: "Dandapani Swami told us that one *Sivarathri*⁴ day, many years back, all the devotees gathered around Bhagavan and sat down, saying: 'Today Bhagavan must explain to us the meaning of the *Dakshinamurthi Ashtakam*.' However, Bhagavan sat silent for a long while, smiling but not speaking. They then went away, feeling that Bhagavan, by his continued silence, had given them to understand that silence alone is the true meaning of the verses. Is that so?"

Bhagavan confirmed that it was so. I then added: "So that means that Bhagavan gave a silent commentary?" And Bhagavan confirmed this also.

Someone else said: "Then true Silence means abiding in the Self, doesn't it?"

Bhagavan: "Yes, of course. Without the Self how could it be Silence?"

Devotee: "That is just what I am asking. Would it be silence just to refrain from speaking without

abiding in the Self?"

Bhagavan: "How could it be? Some people talk of keeping silence when all the while they keep on writing messages on bits of paper or on a slate. Isn't that activity of the mind just the same?"

Another devotee intervened: "Then is there is no benefit at all from simply refraining from speech?"

Bhagavan: "A person may refrain from speech in order to avoid the obstructions of the outer world, but he should not suppose that that is an end in itself. True Silence is really endless speech. There is no such thing as attaining it, because it is always there. All you have to do is to remove the worldly concerns that cover it over; there is no question of attaining it."

In the meantime news came that some broadcasting society was thinking of recording Bhagavan's voice. Laughing, Bhagavan said "Oho is that so? But my voice is Silence, isn't it? How can they record Silence? That which is, is Silence. Who could record it?"

The devotees sat quiet, exchanging glances, and the hall became absolutely silent.⁵ Bhagavan, the embodiment of Dakshinamurthi, sat in the *mowna-mudra*, the posture of Silence, facing southwards.⁶ That living image, his body, was radiant with the light of Atma. What a good day it was today!

5. Silence in the presence of Bhagavan had no feeling of constraint about it. It was a living, vibrant silence. It was in silence that the power of his Presence and the emanation of his Grace was most keenly felt. The same is to be felt now also. (Editor)

6. One meaning of the name 'Dakshinamurthi' is 'The Southward-Facing'. The Guru is the spiritual north pole and therefore traditionally faces south.

1. For a note on Nagamma and her letters see our issue of January 1964.

2. *Eight Verses to Dakshinamurthi*. Dakshinamurthi is Siva incarnate as a youth teaching in silence. The Maharshi has been identified with Dakshinamurthi.

3. Silence.

4. The Night of Siva.

HOW I MET THE MAHARSHI

By LOUIS HARTZ

I met Arthur Osborne in an internment camp in Bangkok during the second world war. At first I had little contact with him because he was very reserved. After some time, however, I approached him. I had a craving to understand and asked him point blank what is Truth. What sticks in my memory is how, sitting beside his bed in the common dormitory, he said. "I will tell you one truth - Infinity minus X is a contradiction in terms because by the exclusion of X the first term ceases to be infinite. You grant that?" Yes, I granted that.

"Well, then," he said, "think of God as Infinity and yourself as X and try to work it out." When I asked for more explanation he just said: "Think this over and come tomorrow at this time and tell me what you make of it."

I returned to my place in the dormitory, which was only some eight or ten steps distant, and suddenly it flashed upon me that he was right, that you cannot take anything away from the Infinite, and that I was not apart from it, only I had not known.

The thought made me so happy that I could hardly wait to speak to him next day, but I did not like to disturb him earlier.

From that time onward he started to instruct me and after a few weeks he showed me a photograph of the Maharshi. There was an urgency in his voice as he spoke of him and he handled the photograph with reverence. I began to understand that there was only one 'I' and that it was in me and was everywhere.

The Maharshi grew so much in my heart that I felt him nearer to me than my parents or my wife. He lived more vividly in me than any person I had known. After some time we received permission to write a Red Cross letter to our families and I used mine to write to the Maharshi and ask him for guidance.

Then the war ended and I left camp. The desire to enjoy life sprang up in me again,

I was strongly drawn to the spiritual path but even more strongly for the time being to a worldly life. I wanted to make money, to have power and fine clothes, to be important. In camp I had eliminated daydreaming as far as possible. When I went to bed at night I slept straight away. But now my nights were often filled with planning and scheming.

A few years later, when I was in Europe and due to return to Siam on business, I wrote to Osborne, who was living at Tiruvannamalai, to suggest that I should break my journey in India and stay there for a few days. He at once wrote back arranging to meet me and conduct me there and inviting me to stay at his house.

In Madras we hired a car and drove to Tiruvannamalai. It was an old car and I felt that I was being slowly roasted in the midday heat. When I let my eyes rest on the sun-baked scenery or the country folk sheltering under the wayside trees I saw only the face of the Maharshi looming up before me. Nothing else registered.

I was terribly scared that the Maharshi would look in my eyes and see into me. I cursed myself for a fool for coming to this desolate place, with its heat and discomfort. I don't know what prevented me turning back; perhaps I was afraid to show Osborne what a coward I was. The nearer we approached the Ashram the more I shrank from meeting the Maharshi.

It was nearly dusk when we arrived and he had already retired, but Osborne went in to see him and asked whether he would see me for a few moments. I entered the hall and saw an elderly man reclining on a couch, who gave the impression of great reserve and a certain shyness. It was not the severe Master or the Guru with the burning eyes that I had expected. Osborne explained who I was, and his replies were, monosyllabic and sometimes in Tamil. With a slow movement of the head he turned to me and held my eyes for a

moment. His eyes were like empty, bottomless pools and at the same time they worked like magic mirrors, because suddenly I felt at peace as though I had come home after a long journey.

I can't recall where I slept that night, but I do remember that before going to bed I sat and talked with a number of people, Indians and foreigners, at Osborne's place. One of them was a diplomat from some European country, stationed in China. He talked about seeing spirits and even conversing with them, and it struck me as funny that anyone should be interested in such things at a place like this.

Sitting in the hall next day I saw that the Maharshi's smile was tender and gracious. I not only lost my fears but felt at ease. I had no questions to ask. Before coming I had prepared a number of questions that had been worrying me to ask the Maharshi, but now I couldn't remember them. My doubts had simply evaporated. Questions seemed unimportant.

I felt that there was nothing strange about the Maharshi. He was just a man who was himself, whereas all of us were growing away from ourselves. He was natural; it was we who were not. We call him a saint or sage, but I felt that to be like him is the inheritance of everybody; only we throw it away.

There were a lot of people in the hall Indians and foreigners, learned professors and simple country people. I reminded the Maharshi about the Red Cross letter I had sent him and he replied that he wanted me to come and I had come. There was something childlike about him: he was free and natural and could laugh with the spontaneity that only a child shows.

A discussion started in the hall and they appealed to the Maharshi to say who was right. Someone spoke about unity and I objected that the word implied two to be united and that a better word was Oneness; and the Maharshi confirmed this. He said that there is only One, and that One is indivisible. I felt that he meant that the divisions are all unreal, just as we say rain, ice, water,

coffee-water, washing water, but it is all water.

A group of devotees started singing and I asked the Maharshi what he felt about it. He laughed and replied that it pleased them to sing and made them feel peaceful.

Next morning again I sat in the hall. There was a yogi with matted hair. The diplomat was there, sitting in concentrated thought. I wondered whether I should imitate him, but I did not feel like meditating. 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 at ease and happy.

Afterwards a disciple who had been with him for twenty years told me that this was the silent initiation. I felt that it probably was, but I wanted to make sure, so in the hall that afternoon I said: "Bhagavan, I want your initiation.."

And he replied: "You have it already."¹

Knowing myself and feeling anxious about what would happen when I left his presence, I asked for some sort of reassurance from him, and he replied very firmly and decisively: "Even if you let go of Bhagavan, Bhagavan will never let go of you."

There was some whispering and exchange of glances when people heard that. The diplomat whispered to a Muslim professor who was sitting beside him and then the latter asked the Maharshi whether this guarantee applied only to me or to him also. The Maharshi did not look very pleased but replied briefly: "To all."

Nevertheless, I felt that there was something intensely personal in it, that it had been a confirmation of the initiation and a direct, personal guarantee of protection.

Certain it is that, whatever else may have happened, there has been no day since then when his face or his words have not influenced me.

1. This is the only occasion on which I have ever known the Maharshi give an express verbal confirmation of having given initiation to anyone. It will be noted that the request was phrased in such a way that the confirmation could be given without any statement implying duality. (Editor)

WANDERER OF THE DEEP

By HARIDRANATH CHATTOPADHYAYA

Not on the surface shall the truth be found
Nor in the mind with transient knowledge crowned
But in the deepest depths where, more and more,
Thy Beauty stands revealed. Of time unbound
And of the sense of distance, I explore
Layer upon layer of mysteries that lie
Down at the deep heart's core,
A rose-red fountain which forever plays
Its jetting music under a still sky
Echoing into the dawn-light of our days.
Deeper and deeper do I seek and find
Such glories as would blind
The body's eyes. The lonely archetype
Of each creation, young and ever-fresh,
Warms the enchanted self into a ripe
Sensation as of autumn in the flesh
Mellowing in lambent air
High-hung above the zone of spirit-mind
A loneliness, a naked space, a wide
Expectancy of Naught on every side
Brimful of unborn multitudes which seem
Wrought in the process of the Master's dream,
A floating breath of fragrance, sovereign lapse
Into remembering forgetfulness
Grown inarticulate. Faint mountain-caps
Engirt with distant snows austere rise
To meet the cool high-wandering state of eyes
Tingling out of the solitary stress
Of the creative sleep.
I move between two moments, winged and strong
And as a silence between song and song,
A wandering spirit wedded to the deep!

SELF-ENQUIRY: SOME OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

By D. E. HARDING

Our self-knowledge is our beauty: in self-ignorance we are ugly - PLOTINUS.

You know the value of everything-except yourself! - RUMI.

All Christian religion wholly consists in this, to learn to know ourselves, whence we come and what we are - BOEHME.

Who is it that repeats the Buddha's name ? We should try to find out where this 'Who' comes from and what it looks like - HSU YUN.

Forgetfulness of the Self is the source of all misery - RAMANA MAHARSHI.

How is it that we need all this prodding, all these warnings and earnest invitations and promises of immense rewards, to persuade us to fake a close look at ourselves? Why don't all intelligent and serious people make it their chief business in life - to find out what they really are?

Surely, if such comparatively, trivial questions as whether one is good-looking or not, popular or not, a success or not, excite the keenest interest in us, the rather more important questions whether one is mortal or immortal, a body or spirit, created or Creator, should be that much more fascinating. Or so one would have supposed. To exist at all, somehow to have arrived on the scene - what astounding luck! - an intelligent something-or-other, and yet to remain uninterested in the nature of that something-or-other! It's incredible. Letting slip such an opportunity, foregoing (whether out of fear, laziness, or just negligence) the supreme privilege of discovering oneself, is more than unenterprising: it's a kind of madness, and none the less pitiful for being almost universal.

Thoughtful people, when challenged on this subject, are apt to excuse themselves by raising a number of objections to this inward search: they aren't at all sure it's a good thing. Of course (all agree) we need a working knowledge of our nature in order to make the best of ourselves and get on with others, but the probing can thrust too deep and go on too long. 'Know thyself' is all right up to a point, but shouldn't become an obsession, an end in itself, and certainly not our life's work: such

introspection (they say) is likely to do more harm than good. And so: it's a selfish diversion of our energies from the service of others to preoccupation with ourselves; or it's a morbid introversion resulting in self-consciousness (in the bad sense), if not actually in mental illness; or it's time-consuming and impractical, unfitting us, for our jobs and even for family life; or it's depressing and dull, a dreadful bore, a dead-end terminating in a mental blank; or it kills spontaneity and all natural, gay, out-going enjoyment; or it's a wonderful excuse for idleness and sponging; or it's coldly indifferent to art and to nature, to the beauty and wonder of the universe and the rich variety of the human scene, or it's a stupefying drug which reduces words to gibberish, stops thought, numbs the mind itself, exchanging our most highly-evolved human function for the non-human or sub-human Inane. More briefly, it's suspected that habitual, looking within becomes selfish, unhealthy, futile, unnatural, idle, world-despising, retrogressive. In short, an escape. And the alternative? Apparently, it's that we should plunge right into the thick of things and find out what we are by living as fully as possible, becoming thoroughly involved in the turbulent and dangerous life-stream instead of sitting down quietly and letting it flow by.

Of course these doubts and criticisms aren't the whole story: underlying them lurk deeper fears and less conscious obstacles. All the same, there's something in them: they deserve to be taken seriously, and that is the purpose of this article. Its

aim is to show that, in fact, the seeming weaknesses of this prolonged looking at oneself are its strength, and so far from being a retreat from Reality it renounces that retreat. It's turning round and facing the central Fact at last instead of running in all directions away from it. Indeed it's the true Panacea, and ultimately the only way to full life, happiness, sanity, and even the effective service of others. Not that these statements are to be accepted on trust. The didactic tone of this article is merely for the sake of brevity: the fruits of true discovery are for tasting and not for dogmatising about. In this field, nothing's valid that we haven't tried out for ourselves.

First, then, take the accusation of selfishness. The typical Christian view is that we're not here to discover ourselves but to forget ourselves, concentrating on others and exchanging our natural self-centredness for the other-centredness of loving service.

But how can we really do very much good to others till we know ourselves profoundly? How much of our so-called help is in fact working off our guilt-feelings on the world, trying to resolve our conscious conflicts regardless of the real need and how often our short-term help ends in long-term hindrance. It's notorious that material and even psychological aid, in solving one problem, is apt to create two more. Only the highest spiritual aid, given by one who really knows himself, and others through himself, can be guaranteed altogether beneficent and free from those unfortunate side-effects which go on and on so incalculably; and then the gift is probably a secret one, unexpressed and inexpressible. The truth is that helping oneself (which means finding oneself) is helping others, though the influence may be altogether subterranean. It goes without saying that we must be as kind as we can, but until we see clearly Who is being kind we're working in the dark, with the hit-or-miss consequences that might be expected.

One of the troubles with this would-be forgetfulness of self in the service of others is that it's practically impossible: deliberate virtue rarely

forgets to pat itself on the back a little. Goodness aimed at directly cannot avoid self-congratulation, and then its odour becomes unpleasant. But if, on the other hand, it's a mere by-product, arising naturally out of true knowledge of oneself, then it's quite indifferent to itself and any incidental merit or demerit, and so continues to smell sweet. Unfortunately, wrong effort to become a saint, or even a Sage, is a self-defeating (or rather, Self-defeating) enterprise ending in its opposite - an inflated ego. Whenever it's not a question of discovering the present facts but of somehow altering them, of achieving something in the future, then the ego is at work. The ego can't be defeated on its own ground. The only way to get rid of it is to turn from the time-ridden, ever-changing outer scene where it thrives to the changeless Centre where it can never penetrate: in other words, the ego vanishes when one is oneself quite simply. Not only does the inward search promise to restrain or reduce our egotism: in the end, it's the only way of abolishing it. Truly speaking, there's nothing whatever to do -except clearly to realise that wonderful fact. All that's necessary is to examine the spot one occupies; here, always, lies Perfection. Here, the egoless, universal Self shines with utmost brilliance, alone. Only disinterested Self-enquiry succeeds, and then quite incidentally, in rectifying our attitude to others, because it alone unites us to them, demonstrating that in truth there are no others.

To call this enquiry selfish is to confuse the self or ego with our true Self. The genuine, liberating Self-enquiry is concerned with our essence, not our accidents or peculiarities. Unlike the ordinary man, the one who's engaged in this enquiry isn't at all interested in what marks him off from ether men (his personal characteristics, history, destiny, merits, faults) but only in what he shares with all. Therefore his researches can never be for himself as an individual human: they're a universal enterprise on behalf of all creatures. No-one and nothing's left out. This way works, but the merely human way of laboriously overcoming self-

centredness, by trying to centre oneself on other people (feeling for them, seeing things from their viewpoint, etc.) doesn't work in the end. The total and permanent cure is to find one's true Centre within, to become altogether present and Self-contained.

Can such an enquiry be morbid, nevertheless? What is mental illness, in the last resort, but alienation from others and therefore from oneself? It's the shame and misery of the part trying to be a whole (which it can never be) instead of the Whole (which it always is). We are all insane, more or less, till we find by Self-enquiry our absolute identity with everyone else.

Self-enquiry is also suspected of being, if not actually unhealthy, at least unpractical. Some colour is given to this objection by the fact (painfully evident to anyone who gets mixed up with religious movements) that 'spiritual' people are quite often cranks, misfits, or inclined to be neurotic. Actually, this isn't surprising. Contented (not to say self-satisfied) people, fairly 'normal' and well adjusted and good at being human, aren't driven to finding out what else they may be. It's those who need to find out Who they are, the fortunately desperate ones, who are at all likely to take up the enterprise of Self-discovery. A sound instinct tells them where their Cure lies, though few find it.

So it is that the worldling may appear (and often actually be) a far better man than the spiritually inclined. Looking within doesn't transform the personality overnight. All the same, it's a sign of success in this supreme enterprise that it altogether 'normalises' a man, fitting him at last for life and correcting awkwardnesses and weaknesses and uglinesses. Now he's truly adjusted: he knows how to live, prosper and be happy. Paradoxically, it's by discovering that he isn't a man at all that he becomes a wholly satisfactory man. Naturally so: once he sees Who he really is, his needs, and his demands on others, rapidly dwindle; his ability to concentrate on any chosen task is remarkable; his detachment provides the cool objectivity necessary for practical wisdom: for the first time he sees

people as they are; he takes in everything and is not himself taken in. At the start, Self-enquiry may not be the best recipe for making friends and influencing people, but in the end it's the only way to be at home in the world. Nothing else is quite practical. Sages are immensely effectual men, not a lot of dreamy incompetents.

Ah (say those who don't know), but their life is so dull, so monotonous. How is it, possible, attending for months and years on end to what is admittedly featureless, without any content whatever, mere Clarity, to avoid a terrible boredom? Discovering our North Pole may be fine, but do we then have to live there in the icy darkness where nothing ever happens?

Now the extraordinary truth is that, contrary to all expectation, this seemingly bleak and dreary Centre of our being is in fact endlessly satisfying, sheer joy, absolutely fascinating: there's not a dull moment here. It's our periphery, the world where things happen, which bores and depresses. Why should the colourless, shapeless, unchanging, empty, nameless Source prove (in actual practice not theory) so astonishingly interesting, while all its products, in spite of their inexhaustible richness, prove a great weariness in the end? Well, this curious fact just has to be accepted - thankfully. It can hardly be a matter of serious complaint that everything lets us down till we find out Who's being let down. If we would only allow them, all things push us Selfwards.

They do so naturally. In fact, the whole business of Self-discovery (though so rarely concluded) is our normal function, our natural development, failing which we remain stunted, if not perverse or freakish. Again, this is a surprising discovery. One would have imagined that any protracted inward gaze would have made a man rather less human, probably giving him a withdrawn look, an odd, self-occupied, and maybe forbidding manner. Actually, the reverse is true: only the Self-seeing man has the grace, and charm of one who is perfectly free. To find the Source is to tap it. Take the case of the man who is morbidly self-conscious:

there are two things he can do about it, the one a mere amelioration (if that) the other a true cure. The false cure for his shyness is to lose himself by moving out towards the world; the true cure is to find himself by moving in, till one day his self-consciousness becomes Self-consciousness, and therefore perfectly at ease everywhere. Nobody can, by any technique of self-forgetting, regain the naturalness, the simple spontaneity of the small child or the animal; but, by the opposite process of Self-recollection he can gain something like that blessed state, though at a much higher level. Then he will know, as if by superior instinct, what to do and how to do it; and, rather more often, what not to do. Short of this goal, we are all more or less awkward and artificial, more or less bogus.

Is this an easy way out - out of the hell of responsibility and involvement and constant danger into a safe and unstrenuous heaven? To look at the enquirer you might think so; but you couldn't be more mistaken. In a sense, admittedly, it's the easiest thing in the world to see what nobody else can see, namely what it's like to be oneself, what it's like here: the Light is blazingly obvious, the Clarity transparently clear and unmistakable. But in another sense, alas, it's the most difficult thing in the world to see this Spot from this Spot: this mysterious Place one occupies, where one supposed there was some solid thing, a body or a brain, and where in fact is only the Seer Himself, is too wide open to inspection, too plain to catch our attention. All our arrows of attention point outwards; and they might be made of steel, so hard it is to bend them round to point in to the Centre, and still harder to prevent them springing back again immediately. Of all ambitions this is the most far-reaching, and no other adventure is anything like so daring or so difficult. This task, though clear and simple and natural, is also the one that requires more courage and persistence than most men have any idea of. The Sage has taken on an immense job: alongside him, Napoleon is a weakling. And this work, which makes all other work seem like irresponsible pottering, is his perfect realisation that there's

nothing whatever to do!

Is the result worth the trouble? Is there nothing of value out there, nothing worthy of our attention and love? Turning our backs on a universe so magnificent and so teeming, and on all the treasures of art and of thought, and above all on our fellow beings, is surely a huge loss. The Sage - so it's reported - isn't interested in these matters: the world consists of things he doesn't wish to know: for him, knowledge of particular things is only ignorance. Is his achievement, after all, so difficult and so rare only because it's fundamentally wrong to despise the world?

Once more, the boot's on the other foot. Oddly enough, it's the man who attends only to the outer scene, ignoring what lies at its Centre, who's more or less blind to that scene. For the world is a curious phenomenon that, like a faint star, can be clearly observed only when it isn't directly looked at. It's an object that will not fully reveal itself till we look in the opposite direction, catching sight of it in the mirror of the Self. Like the Gorgons, it won't bear straight inspection. This isn't a dogma, but a startling practical fact. For example, though the world is sometimes beautiful when directly viewed as quite real and self-supporting, it's always beautiful when indirectly viewed as a product or accident of the Self. When you see Who's here you see what's there, as a sort of bonus. And this bonus is a delightful surprise: the universe is altogether transformed. Colours almost sing, so brilliant and glowing they are; shapes and planes and textures arrange themselves into charming compositions; nothing's repulsive or despicable or out of place. Every random patterning of objects - treetops and cloudbanks, leaves and stones on the ground, human figures and cars and shop windows, stains and tattered posters on old walls, litter of all kinds - each is seen to be inevitable and perfect in its own unique way. And this is the very opposite of human imagination: it's divine realism, the clearing of that imaginative, wordy smoke-screen which increasingly hides the world from us as we grow older and more knowing.

Indeed the path of Self-enquiry is no escape route: it's the shortest way in, our highroad to the keenest enjoyment of the world. Yet, seemingly, it's incompatible with any other serious creative endeavour, whether artistic or intellectual or practical. If so, this is surely a considerable drawback.

It's true that Self-enquiry will never succeed till we put our whole heart into it, and consequently the dedicated artist or philosopher or scientist is an unpromising subject. Actually this is not, however, because he's too devoted to his calling, but because he's not yet devoted enough, not yet absolutely serious about it: he needs to deepen and widen his field till it includes both himself and the whole world. For the only consistent genius, the only complete Artist Philosopher-Scientist, is the Sage, who is fully conscious of being the Painter of the entire World-picture, the Thinker of all thought, the Universe-inventor, Knowledge itself. This doesn't mean, of course, that he has all the details at his fingertips, but he does see what they all amount to in their innermost essence and outermost sum, namely his true Self. And whenever a question of detail does arise, his response is the correct one. His mindlessness is the indispensable basis of a smoothly functioning mind: his Self-information includes all the other information he needs. In short, he's sage, which means wise: not clever and learned and with a head full of ideas, but altogether simple and - literally - clear-headed.

Even in ordinary life we find hints of this vital connection between Self-awareness and creativity. Don't our very best moments always include a heightened consciousness of ourselves, so that we aren't really 'lost' in admiration or creative fervour or love, but newly found? At its finest, doesn't the opaque object over there point unmistakably back to the transparent Subject here? It may even happen that the transparency comes first: we attend, our idiotic inner chatter dies down, we consciously become nothing but an alert, expectant void - and presently the required tune or picture, the key

notion, the true answer, arrives ready made in that void, from that void. With luck (or grace) and some practice, we may occasionally and imperfectly enjoy this insight into the process of Creation itself. It is the life of the fully Self-aware.

The result of observing only the universe is that one ends as a kind of one-man Resistance Movement in it. Anxiety mounts to cosmic proportions. Only observing the Observer of the universe will finally put a stop to a man's worrying and fussing and scheming. When his interest is diverted inwards he naturally relaxes his hold - his stranglehold - on the outer world. Having withdrawn his capital and paid it into his own Central Bank (where it immediately appreciates to infinity) he has nothing to lose out there and no reason for interfering. He knows how to let things be, and work out in their own time. He's in no hurry. Knowing the Self, he can hardly fail to trust its products: whatever occurs is agreeable to him, because even if it weren't it could never touch his real Being. In Christian terms, he has no will but God's; what he wants is what happens, and what happens is what he wants. Paradoxically, his obedience to the nature of things is his rule over them: his weakness is all-powerful. And the secret of his power is that he isn't concerned with events at all. 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.' Seek ye first these things, and even they shall be taken away.

This perfect obedience isn't just lining oneself up with God's will, or imitating it, or even becoming part of it: it's that very will itself in full operation. If we wish to find out exactly what it's like to make the world, we have only to desire nothing and pay attention. But total acceptance is very hard. It's precisely the opposite of the lazy indifference that merely lets things slide. It springs from inner strength, not weakness, and is the result of concentration, not slackness. Why is the world so troublesome, so frightful? Is it like that by nature, or because we make it seem so by our negligence? Is it perhaps so terrible a place because we take the easy way of fighting it instead of the difficult way

of fitting in with it? We have to find out for ourselves the truth of the Sage's demonstration that even in the smallest things the way of non-interference, of giving up all self-will, of 'disappearing', is astonishingly practical, the wisdom that works. Not only in the long run, but from moment to moment, consciously getting out of the Light, giving place to whatever things present themselves in it, instantly puts them right. We do too much and therefore remain ineffectual; we talk far too much and therefore say nothing; we think far, far too much and therefore prevent the facts from speaking for themselves - so say those who know the power of Emptiness. It's for us to make our own tests, not - repeat not - by the direct method of trying to be inactive and quiet and mindless (it just won't work) but by the indirect method of seeing Who was trying to be like that. No man becomes Godlike except by seeing he isn't a man anyway.

His experience of deification has no content whatever, no details: it's not merely indescribable, but non-mental or non-psychological, and in the truest sense non-human. Thinking or talking about it destroys it at once, by complicating what is Simplicity and Obviousness itself. It's rather like tasting sugar or seeing green: the more you reflect on it the further you get from the actuality. But there the resemblance ends. Seeing green is an ineffable experience because it's a pre-human or infra-human one; seeing the Seer of green is an ineffable experience because it's a post-human or superhuman one. The Sage's rejection of the concept-ridden, word-clouded mind is poles apart

from the sensualist's or the beatnik's: Self-enquiry isn't retrogression, but the next evolutionary step beyond man, or rather the whole path from him to the Goal. And though the Goal is beyond thought, pure limpidity, void even of voidness, it's also nothing but the Honest Truth at last. For only the Self can be known: everything else is partly guesswork, partly false. Only Self-awareness is wide-awake and fully observant: all other awareness is mind-wandering. Total alertness is the Self.

And so, every fault we could find with Self-enquiry has turned out to be only a merit, disguised by its very perfection. Certainly there are kinds of introspection which are harmful, but they're concerned with the ego or empirical self and the very opposite of the true enquiry, which is pre-eminently healthy and sane, creative, natural, life-enhancing, intensely practical, and altruistic. Though obviously we're not all ready for it yet, and some of us have left it terribly late, it's what we're here for. To neglect it is in every sense a shame.

It would still be shameful neglect, unworthy of our energy and intelligence, even if Self-enquiry promised no pay-off at all. And in any case its benefits are purely coincidental; the only way to have them is to care nothing for them, but only for the unvarnished Truth about ourselves, no matter how unedifying it might prove. If all we want is to see Who we are, nothing can stop our doing so this very instant. But if our plan is to use that vision to buy happiness or Liberation or any other goods, we might as well abandon the very idea of Self-enquiry, Our Light is for lighting up itself alone.

SAMADHI

By N. R. KRISHNAMURTI

The enquiry 'Who am I?' plunges the mind into the Self. This is not the nescience of sleep. One can abide as the Self in Nirvikalpa Samadhi without the body-world dream or in Sahaja Samadhi with this dream simultaneously

witnessed. If the Lord Ramana-Dakshinamurti chose to declare the Supreme State by silence only, it is not for us to attempt a definition in words. It is the part of Wisdom to remain still, as our Lord Sri Ramana ordained.

SHIRK AND TAWHID

By ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

It says in the Quran that the one unforgivable sin is *shirk*. This means literally ‘association’; it implies the association of any other with Allah in one’s worship: and one who thus associates is termed a *mushrik*. Literally interpreted, a Christian is considered a *mushrik* because he associates Christ and Christ’s mother with God in his worship. For most Christians, of course, the Trinity is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; and in any case one who understands the doctrine of three Persons in One God is not a *mushrik*. The term might, however, fit educationally backward Catholics who pray to saints and the Virgin as well as to God.

Understood more profoundly, *shirk* is not necessarily the worship of any other god or person but of whatever one is devoted to - wealth or pleasure, political or financial power, social prestige, popularity or any other such intangible idol. Even love between man and woman can be *shirk* if the horizontal pull is strong enough to impede the vertical. The condemnation of *shirk* is equivalent to the Judaic statement that the Lord is a jealous God and to Christ’s saying that one cannot worship God and Mammon; but it is a point of doctrine which is more central to Islam than to the other two Semitic religions.

The Sufi goes still deeper. For him the ‘other’ that is associated with Allah is the ego, which is the basis of all sin. “A person grows up in a state of spiritual ignorance, turned towards the transient and incomplete satisfactions of this life and away from the radiance of Divine Bliss. Since this means turning away from God, Christianity calls it sin. ‘Sin is nought else, but that the creature turneth away from the unchangeable God and betaketh itself to the changeable; that is to say, that it turneth away from the Perfect to ‘that which is in part’ and imperfect, and most often to itself.’”¹ In this fullest and deepest meaning, so long as there is ego

there is *shirk*, and therefore ‘forgiveness’ in its fullest meaning of Realization is not possible. The *shahada*, that there is no god but God, has not been fully realized.

Hinduism teaches that a necessary precondition for Realization is *vairagya*, which means non-attachment, equal-mindedness. Father Lazarus, in his article on ‘The Spirituality of the Greek Orthodox Church’² speaks of the similar insistence by this Church on *apatheia*, which, he explains, is far from meaning ‘apathy’. Islam approaches the same point from the opposite end, saying that there cannot be Realization so long as there is *shirk*. One says that there must be non-attachment, the other that there must not be attachment. Because attachment to anything, and primarily to oneself, means giving it a share in the devotion that is due to God alone. Indeed, to combine the terminology of two traditions, one can say that *vairagya* means no *shirk*; *shirk* means no *vairagya*.

As Sufis sometimes express it, the great sin and obstacle to *fana* or Realization is ‘otherness’, the belief in a separate individual being apart from the One. And this is *shirk*. I remember attending a Sufi session at which a chant or incantation was used that would run in translation: “I ask pardon of God for what (in me) is not God; and all things say ‘God’.” The first half is a rejection of ‘otherness’ as sin and error; the second half an epiphany, representing the entire universe as a hymn of praise to God.

Tawhid is Oneness. It is understood by the exoteric Muslim as the Oneness of God, a doctrine

1. *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*, p. 119, quoting from the *Theologia Germanica*. By Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

2. *The Mountain Path*, Jan. 1964,

more rigorously insisted on in Islam than in any other religion, except perhaps Judaeism. But for the Sufi *tawhid* is the state of Oneness, or more correctly 'no-other-ness' that remains when the *shirk* of ego ends; and that is Advaita or Identity.

I say 'no-other-ness' rather than Oneness. It is not really correct to say 'I am He' in the sense of $A=B$, since that supposes a duality to be dissolved. The right formula is: "There is no I; He alone is." Nor is this mere verbal hair-splitting; it has grave practical implications, for the incantation 'I am He',

used alike in Sufism and Hinduism, carries within it the danger of secretly, even unwittingly, implying 'the ego is God', which is the uttermost error and supreme blasphemy. Therefore a Sufi will not say 'I am Allah', but he may say: 'I am not other-than-Allah', for otherness is the *shirk* of ego which he has sacrificed; and when all otherness disappears what remains is *tawhid*.

For the Muslim the *shahada*, 'there is no god but God' is the great weapon: the first part of it rejects *shirk*, the second part affirms *tawhid*.

AHAD

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

Before the beginning He was,
Beyond the ending He is,
Hidden in the heart of man,
Flared forth in a myriad stars and a bird's song.

Unchanged and unbegun,
Unfellowed, He, the One,
The All He is, the Alone,
Otherness but a dream gone on too long.

A RAGING FIRE

By "SEIN"

It is against the spirit of our age to flee *samsara* for solitude. Some even ridicule those who do.

Yet *samsara* is a raging fire and those who fall into it are destroyed. There is no merit in their destruction. It is not a sacrifice but the result of ignorance.

Some can remain near the fire without getting scorched, can even use it, but how few!

Whether we flee from it or not, the fact remains that it is a fire. How few can avoid its flames, how few can be like King Janaka!

To escape from it is absolutely necessary, yet in the present age Bhagavan has assured us that the escape may be an inward one. One way or the other, whether by inner aloofness or, by solitude, escape, we must!

TIBETAN BUDDHISM

By HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

We are very grateful to His Holiness for finding time to write this article for 'The Mountain Path' amidst his manifold other preoccupations. Many readers will be interested to see in it a categorical statement from the highest authority that there still are valid initiatic paths in Tibetan Buddhism and qualified gurus among the refugee Lamas able to impart guidance on them. (Editor)

According to Tibetan Buddhism, the Lord Gautama Buddha was one of the thousand Buddhas of this fortunate aeon or kalpa. For the realization of perfect Buddhahood he introduced two types of method, one gradual and the other sudden. These differences of method were required to suit the mental aptitudes of different followers; but no matter in how many ways he taught, the purpose was always the same: to enable people to attain the Buddha-state. Similarly there are countless streams and rivers flowing in every direction, but they all flow ultimately into the same ocean. There are valid reasons why Lord Buddha taught various ways of attaining the same goal. He was teaching with full knowledge of the past and future and knew that some had attained such a high state in their previous life that in this life they needed only to call upon the Name of Buddha to attain Buddhahood. He varied his teaching also to suit different people's attitude of mind and to open the minds of those who attached too much importance to ethical codes and doctrinal theory. In some cases also he taught the existence of individuality or form for the benefit of those who shrank back from recognising the truth of Egoless Being.

In an article of this length it is not possible to go into detail about absolute and relative truth; however the basis, the path and the result have to be considered. The basis from which to start is a clear understanding of both relative and absolute truth. The path demands the acquisition of understanding and the accumulation of merit. When understanding and merit or moral worth

have been brought to a sufficiently high level the Result is achieved. This is the spiritual and bodily form of a Buddha. The mind, which is the basic material for the attainment of Buddhahood, is as pure as gold. The mind of a Buddha is basically the same as that of any other human being, the only difference being that the mind of a Buddha is purified while that of an ordinary human being is coated with the dirt of sin. It is like two pieces of gold, one polished and shining, the other discoloured and dirty: in fact both alike are gold.

The common starting-point both in Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism is a feeling of repentance causing and caused by an aversion to worldly matters (*samsara*), just as we feel aversion to a nest of poisonous snakes or avoid stepping into a fire, or as a person sick from over-eating feels disgust for food. Starting from this aversion, one must observe all the moral laws and proceed with the constant feeling that Buddhahood is not being sought for one's own good but for that of others. Then one must meditate on the Egoless Existence of mind and body and follow the steps of Preparation, Application, Seeing, Practice and finally Fulfilment.

Though one may speak of 'Tibetan Buddhism', it is in fact no other than what Lord Gautama Buddha taught. The translations of his teachings from Sanskrit into Tibetan are most carefully perused and verified before being accepted as authentic and practised. The utmost care is devoted to checking every detail to verify whether such translations of teachings noted and handed down by great Indian pandits really are genuine, whether they have been practised by great Indian Sages with good results, and whether they have been generally accepted by learned Indian and Tibetan sages and saints as being beyond doubt Lord Buddha's true teaching and have been handed down to us without any breach of continuity from the time of Lord Buddha himself. Only after this

thorough checking and verification and the removal of all doubt is any teaching accepted and practised.

The way of practising these teachings is also very important. For those who seek to follow them in these later ages, after the death of Lord Buddha, it is essential to find a Lama or Guru capable of taking the place of Lord Buddha and imparting his teaching. The teaching should then be studied and practised in due order under the guidance of one's Lama or Guru. To those who ask whether valid paths are still open under the guidance of Lamas who have escaped from the Chinese it can be answered that there are such paths and there are Lamas capable of imparting guidance on them.

There are many varied paths, both of the Tantra and Sutra type. According to the Sutra school, human minds can be grouped into three different classes: those qualified to attain a state of paradise or beatitude, those qualified to attain Nirvana, and those qualified to attain Buddhahood. These must be studied in due sequence. An ordinary man in his natural state is generally below all three, his thoughts and actions being on too low a level to attain even the state of beatitude or paradise, that is to say to take rebirth in the realms of gods, demi-gods or men. Especially difficult is it to obtain rebirth in the world of men, and particularly in the form of a man endowed with the eighteen necessary mental and physical qualifications for spiritual progress. Rebirth in this human state is most rare, the very material for such an achievement being rare, as also the examples of it. One who has the great good fortune to be reborn as a human being with the eighteen necessary physical and mental qualifications for progress is most precious, powerful and beneficent. Such a person can attain once more the state of beatitude or even advance to Nirvana or Buddhahood. In order to do so, however, he must use his life to good purpose and not waste his precious endowments.

The teaching is most precious and one should put it into practice immediately and not postpone it to a later date, for everything in this world is transitory and nothing lasts. Every living being dies.

None has ever escaped death or ever will. In the whole universe there is nowhere one can go to escape from death, Nor can one measure out one's span of life. Rich or poor, mighty or weak, wise or foolish, when the time comes there is no way of escape. Neither medicines nor any other inventions will be able to save one at that time. And no man can say when death will come or what will be the cause of it. One may be healthy in the morning and that same evening be laid upon a sickbed; or one may go to bed feeling quite well and never rise in the morning. Death may call you while you are eating, walking, talking or doing anything at all or even while taking a medicine to cure yourself of sickness. Aged parents may bury their children; in fact such cases are to be seen everywhere and every day. No matter how wealthy you may be or how devoted to your parents, children or relatives, when the time of death comes nothing will help and nothing will go with you except your good and evil deeds. Religion is the only thing that can help at the time of death. Remembering this, one should follow religious teaching and practise it, looking upon every form of worldly enjoyment as a delusion.

When a man dies in his sins without having started to practise his religion it is not just like a flame being put out. It is worse than that, because he will not be able to escape rebirth; and it will not be a favourable rebirth. Man can be reborn either in a state of beatitude or in one of the three undesirable states to which a life of sin leads. These are: hell, the state known in Tibetan as 'Preta' and the animal state. In hell one suffers unquenchable fire and bitter cold, in Preta unappeasable hunger and thirst, and in the animal state from being treated as an animal. The only escape from these undesirable states is by seeking salvation through the Tri-Ratnas - Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. These are a sure refuge because they are above all these sufferings, their means of salvation is perfect and they are indiscriminately compassionate towards all alike. In order to attain salvation and avoid being reborn in any of the three evil states one has to shrink from such a birth and to have absolute faith in the

Tri-Ratnas as the sure means of salvation. This faith, however, should be based on reason and understanding; it is not blind faith that Lord Buddha asks for. With the help of enlightened faith, as Lord Buddha taught, one can resist evil and do good.

Something must be said here about actions, their causes and their fruit. There are four points to notice.

In the first place good actions performed for good motives will bear good fruit. Of that there is no doubt, just as one is sure to reap oranges when one sows an orange seed and to reap thorns when one plants thorns.

Secondly, whether one's actions are good or evil the fruit that results from them will be far in excess of them. If one sows a single small orange-seed or the seed of any other fruit tree it will grow into a tree bearing not merely one fruit but many.

Thirdly, we cannot reap what we have not sown, whether good or evil. For instance if a person undergoes a severe wound, or illness but does not die of it, that means that he has not committed any action which should result in death from a wound or illness at that time.

The fourth point is, that one cannot escape from reaping the fruit of one's actions, whether good or ill. In illustration of this there is a story that in the time of Lord Buddha a king by the name of Phakypo murdered 70,000 persons. Seeing this, Lord Buddha foresaw that he would be burnt to death in this lifetime as part of the fruit of his great crime. When the king heard this he set out to sea in a ship to escape the possibility of being burnt to death. However, the sun's rays, focused through a gem worn by one of his queens kindled a spark in his garments and this burst into flame and burnt him to death. The various kinds of death, good and evil, are grouped under the ten virtuous acts and the ten evil acts; and each of these twenty can be subdivided into various categories.

Those who simply do good and resist evil are still counted among the lower ranks, since the most they can attain is to avoid the three states of suffering and be born in one of the three states of

happiness. But these three states are themselves not free from suffering, and beside they carry with them the danger of being reborn in one of the three evil states. One who wishes to go beyond this and escape from the cycle of rebirth altogether must have firm faith in the Tri-Ratnas and practise the three dogmas. Only those who follow this path are counted among the higher ranks.

Having thus attained a high rank, one must conceive compassion for the suffering of all living beings, even though one has oneself escaped these sufferings and won free from the cycle of rebirth. Even here, however, one has still only the feeling of compassion for the sufferings of others and not yet the power to give them salvation. This is achieved only when one has attained the state of Buddhahood. Therefore, with the purpose of attaining Buddhahood for the salvation of every being, one must have faith in Buddha, Dharma and Sangha and conceive the feeling of perfect Spiritual Enlightenment, absolutely and relatively. One must then practise and live as a true and perfectly enlightened person. This is the path for those of the highest rank.

The above is a general summary of the practice of Buddhism.

There is another path, the shortest but very dangerous, quite different from those mentioned above. This is Tantrism. It enables one to attain Buddhahood in a very short period, even in this lifetime. On this path there are only two steps, but only persons of the highest aptitude and understanding can take them. For him who can learn, understand and practise them perfectly Buddhahood is attainable in this very lifetime.

To sum up

Lord Buddha cannot wash away your sins for you.

Lord Buddha cannot separate you from your sins.

Lord Buddha cannot exchange his place with yours.

But Lord Buddha has shown us the true path to salvation.

SONG OF MEDITATION

By HAKUIN

Hakuin, 1685-1768, was the most influential Rinzai Zen Master of recent times. His 'Song of Meditation' or *Zazen Wasan* is chanted before formal lectures in Zen monasteries. This translation of it was specifically made for The Mountain Path by the American poet Gary Snyder.

Living beings-Buddhas from the first.
Without beings, no Buddhas.
Not knowing how near, men seek it far off.
 - like living in water
 - and crying of thirst
 - like a rich man's child
lost in a poor town.
The karma of travelling the six realms
Is the dark road of your own ignorance.
Always walking the dark road
When will you leave samsara?

This samadhi of the Mahayana
Is great beyond praise.
The paramitas of morality and charity,
Nembutsu, repentance, and asceticism,
All sorts of good practice
Are contained within it.

A man who gains the merit of but one meditation
Destroys the gathered errors of a lifetime.
When the evil realms are homeless
The pure land can't be far.
How grateful is the man
Whose ear once hears the Law.

Praise and adoration
Gain great good fortune
But one who turns towards this
Proves his true self directly
True self is no-self
 - this is not idle talk
Cause and effect are one;
 - this opens the gate -
No twos or threes, the road is straight.

Form of the formless is the form.
To go or come - no different place
Thought of the thoughtless is the thought,
Song and dance the Dharma's voice.
Samadhi is an open sky,
Four Wisdoms moon is bright and clear -
What can there be left to seek
For total stillness has appeared
This very place is the Lotus Land
This very body
Buddha.

TO SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI*

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

A face that's still, like silent cloudless blue,
And eyes that even as stars drip holiness
Won from a source beyond our ken - a new
Messenger Thou, in this age, of a grace

Men ache for and, withal, are terrified
When it shines near - wan puppets of fool senses,
That would disown the soul's faith - even deride
The Peace they crave yet fear - for Life's false dances

And siren rhythms beguile the multitude!
And there they woo Time's whirls and wheels - for what?
At best a reeling moment-an interlude
Of half-lit laughter dogged by tears - of Fate

O Son of Dawn! who only knowest the Sun,
And through His eye of Light see'st all that lies
Revealed - a flawless plenitude which none
But Son's own children ever might surmise

For only the chosen few so far have won
The Truth that shines beyond world's wounds and cries
Who see Thee throned in high dominion
Of Self's invulnerable Verities.

* From the *Golden Jubilee Souvenir*, Sri Ramanasramam, 1946.

NON-VOLITIONAL LIVING

By WEI WU WEI

Some of our readers are interested to know who We Wu Wei is. All we are authorised to say is that he is widely known in spiritual circles as the author of the three books: *Fingers Pointing Towards the Moon*, *Why Lazarus Laughed* and *Ask the Awakened*,¹ the last of which is reviewed in our issue of January 1964, to which readers are referred.

We are taught that 'Enlightenment' is the true nature of all sentient beings, and most of those who read these words are hoping by some means to arrive at an Awakening to that state, some by understanding and practice, others by understanding only. In either case understanding is an essential factor, and no essential element of that should be overlooked or misunderstood. These few lines are to suggest that one such is in fact both misunderstood and overlooked. That to which I refer may be described as 'non-volitional living', which is the way of living of those who live in Enlightenment.

First let us ask what, is meant by 'volition'. I recollect Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi as having said that volition and an ego are one and the same manifestation. More analytically considered, perhaps we may say that volition is the functional aspect of an I-concept, an 'ego' appearing to function in phenomenal life, the 'ego' being the supposed entity and its functioning being cognised as volition. That, being so, it is evident that this apparent functioning can play no part in the enlightened state. It is evident also that as long as we continue to live volitionally we are unlikely to awaken to that state ourselves. Moreover it is volitional living alone that produces, indeed constitutes, what is called 'karma'.

Instead of repeating here what has already been suggested on this subject elsewhere, I propose to offer some brief citations from masters who spoke to us from the state of whole (undivided) mind, which is that of what is called 'Enlightenment'.

1. All three published by Messrs. Routledge and Kegan Paul.

First one may remember that non-volitional living is implicit in the teaching of the Lao-tze book, contemporary with the teaching of the Buddha but spatially separated from it by thousands of miles. It is explicit in the teaching of the most profound of Chinese philosophers, Chuang-tze, whose many references to the matter may be summed up in the devastating statement that "he who is not absolutely oblivious of his own existence can never be a ruler of men", for to be oblivious of one's own existence is to be cut off from the source of Volition.

Coming down to the third century of our era we find the great Tao-sheng (circa 360-434), founder of Ch'an Buddhism in China some three generations before the assumed dates of Bodhidharma, in a discussion of his teachings by Hui-yuan (334-416), founder of the Pure Land Sect, stating a doctrine succinctly described by Prof. Fung Yu-lan as follows:

"Here we find a combination of Taoist and Buddhist ideas. What we call retribution results from the activities of the mind. Our aim, therefore, should be to respond to external situations without interposing the mind, since such a course permits physical activity, yet involves no mental activation. This is the way to transcend the cycle of transmigration, so that our acts no longer entail any retribution."

'Retribution', of course, is what we know as 'karma'.

This is *spontaneous response without volitional activity*.

Let me now quote a little-known statement of the famous and fully-enlightened sage Huang-po

of the T'ang dynasty, died 850, who taught at the height of the great period of Ch'an Buddhism. His advice was:

“Simply void your entire mind: this is to have unpolluted wisdom (pure non-objective in-seeing or prajna). Daily go out, stay at home, sit or sleep, but in every word you say be not attached to the things of purposeful activity. Then, whatever you say or wherever you look, all will be unpolluted (undefiled by objects and karma-free).” (from the *Sayings of Ancient Worthies*).

That is *spontaneous non-volitional living*.

Is someone asking how this to be done? I wonder if such a question is in order. We may ask the Awakened. But if their answer implies aim, intention or practice, then some ingenuous translator has made himself responsible for that part of the answer, for would not that be looking for the moon in a puddle? The doing of it is non-doing, and volition cannot be abjured by an act of volition, or a thief caught by telling him to catch himself. Moreover it is not *an act* of non-doing either: it is neither doing nor non-doing, but the utter absence of both.

Let me recall Sri Bhagavan's statements on the subject, statements as categorical as any he ever made, his earliest statement made in writing to his mother, and one of his later statements made not very long before he died. It may be objected that he was specifically referring to the reputed incompatibility between free-will and determination, but that context is as good an example as any other, and where is there to be found an entity to have will, free or fettered, and what could a phenomenon do if it were not determined? I will not quote them here, for anyone

who does not remember them can readily find them, but by dealing with the question as he indicated and solving the specific problem he was referring to - a pseudo-problem, as all problems are - we will automatically solve the general problem which is the subject of this Note.

It is for those better qualified to comment on Bhagavan's teaching; so let me finish these suggestions by returning to the above quotation of a drill-sergeant commanding some voluntary action, but, Chinese characters being for the most part devoid of syntax and parts of speech, the statement may equally be rendered “The voiding of your entire mind is to have pure in-seeing, then your every action will be free of purposeful activity.” He quite certainly did not mean to imply that a purposeful act of voiding your mind would produce a state devoid of purposeful activity.

Somebody made a memorable remark when he stated that we only have one freedom, which is to affirm or deny our own existence just as Bhagavan used to say that our only freedom is to identify ourselves or not with the body whose destiny is already shaped by karma. But that is not even a freedom: at most it is a recognition, and the affirmation and denial are identical. Such a recognition is devoid of volitional interference, and it is the voiding of the mind.

In all forms of Buddhism, add indeed perhaps also in Vedanta, we are constantly urged to abjure all such activities as ‘attachment’, ‘discrimination,’ ‘clinging,’ *vikalpa*, *samskara*, and others. This, surely, is swallowing a bowl full of rice, grain by grain, for *all are just manifestations of volition*, that is living volitionally, and such diffusion is unending. The heads of a Hydra grow again; is it not simpler to seek the heart of the Hydra herself?

You are the pure immutable Essence, formless and deathless. How then can you say that you know this or do not know that about the Atma? — Avadhuta Gita, 1, 24.

You should always be engaged in worshipping Him. How can an alien thought then find a place in your mind? — Bhakta Mira.

THE INFINITE WAY ON LIFE

By JOEL S. GOLDSMITH

Joel Goldsmith of Honolulu, Hawaii, is widely known as one of the leading masters of spiritual healing in the world today. His book *The Art of Healing*¹ is a beautiful exposition of this art as a canalization of Divine Power, with the healer eliminating his own personality. Apart from this, he has a wide influence in many countries, through his books and his personal influence and as the leader of the 'Infinite Way' groups. As this article, written specially for '*The Mountain Path*' will show, the way he advocates is fundamentally the same as that of the Maharshi, since it consists in seeking Reality in oneself, not in any books or scriptures or other places or things.

It is very noticeable that far too many students do not know what makes The Infinite Way, or why there is an Infinite Way message. Because they do not catch this major point, they struggle for years - not knowing where they are going or why. That which started me on the spiritual path and which ultimately led to The Infinite Way, was the realization that there is no God in the human world or in any religious teaching as such. There is no God answering the prayers of people. For this reason and for this reason only, there can be a world filled with all the things you can think of which constitute horrible world conditions. None of this would be if there were a God in the world. In the presence of Light there is no darkness. You cannot have the Presence of the Christ and have a sin or a death or a lack or man's inhumanity to man.

Eventually it was revealed to me that you cannot reach God through the mind, and that is why prayers as such are worthless except as one's blind faith might make of them a little power - just as it is possible to give a little sugar pill and stop pain. In this realization you must remember that this makes any religion, or any religious teaching in and of itself nothing more not less than a philosophy. The only thing that can make a religion a Religion is something that brings the actual Presence and Power of God into concrete manifestation, and it is for this reason that we say The Infinite Way is not so much a teaching as an EXPERIENCE.

These are spiritual principles, but they do not constitute The Infinite Way. They are but stepping-

stones or bridges over which you walk. You have not reached the goal of The Infinite Way until you have the actual realized Presence of God or Activity of the Christ. It is for this reason that we cannot have outlined or formalised prayers. They are of no value except to quieten you. Your prayer is not going to help anyone until you reach that place of stillness where you receive a response from within. Therefore, the teaching of The Infinite Way is as valueless as any other teaching if it does not result in the actual Experience of the Presence of God - the FEEL of the Presence of God within you. You can study the Bible and quote it and 'fall right into the ditch', if it does not elevate you in consciousness to where the actual meeting with God takes place.

No human being knows how to heal. No human being has the power to heal. No human being either knows or receives the 'things of God'. Therefore, there can be no healing or real spiritual teaching until you are spiritually endowed - until the Presence announces Itself. Then you can sit back as a beholder and watch your life change. And, as you watch your life change you can say: "I did not do that". When you reach this place, you are then functioning in The infinite Way. Now The Infinite Way becomes an 'alive Religion', whereas before it was just a preparation.

People keep asking, "Why was this innocent child murdered or why was my dog run over when they did nothing wrong?" The world does not know the answer, but as students you should know that there is no God in the human world. Anything of that nature can and will happen -

1. Published by Allen and Unwin.

until the child or the dog or the business or the profession or anything else is brought into the presence of one who is spiritually endowed. Then you can trust your child or your dog or your business or your profession - because now the Grace of God is benefiting them. It is the Spirit of God Itself. Until this is understood, The Infinite Way can mean nothing to you except as another teaching or as something nice to read or listen to - and that is not its intent. The intent of its message is this: That every student shall reach that place in consciousness where "the Spirit of God is upon them" and they can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me", or "Whereas I was blind, now I see". Then you can sit back and say, "I can fulfil all obligations" - not as if you were doing it but as if you were being guided, strengthened and wisdomed from within - which you would be.

The principles of The Infinite Way, as they have been given to me, will definitely change your consciousness to the place where the spiritual endowment can take place. Let me explain: The moment you learn that God or Spirit is the only power and the only law, and you accept this even intellectually, you can at least meet a claim of bad weather by saying: "If God is the only law, weather cannot be law." Or, if you are faced with the threat of an atomic bomb you can say: "If it is true that Spirit is the only power, then I do not have to worry about bombs." Or, in the case of a disease on the way, such as a flu epidemic: "What is that to me, since the Spirit of God is the only power." Actually you may turn around and get the flu because intellectual acceptance is not the protection. However, if you persist in working with the principle of 'one power', eventually it will leave the mind and go down into the heart. And when this takes place, then you can say, "Now I see."

There is not a person on the face of the earth who does not have a problem of supply. Even the multimillionaire has a problem of supply, if it is only concern as to how to meet his income tax. But when you adopt into your consciousness: "Man does not live by bread alone;" or "Supply is not

something material because supply is of God, and therefore supply is spiritual" - the fear or hatred or love of money evaporates. Eventually, then, you do perceive that this is a spiritual universe. When you stop the attempt to GET material supply, it comes to you just by knowing that God is its Source and God is Spirit.

As you take one principle after another and lose your fear or hate or love of the outer, and can settle in meditation, you will find it much easier to say: "Speak Lord, thy servant heareth" and find yourself in a deep pool of contentment. When you are in this 'deep pool of contentment' - quiet peace - the Spirit moves and imparts Itself to you. It may be in words, or in a deep breath, or in FEELING - but when It does, God is on the scene.

This is the function of The Infinite Way, to bring you to the place where you live by God - by the Presence of God - not by statements of Truth. The one demonstration you can make in The Infinite Way is the demonstration of the Presence of God - that moment when YOU FEEL that "God is on the field". Then you are living by Grace. Then you will realize: "Thy Grace is my sufficiency in all things." Not that quotation, but the actual realized Grace or Presence is my sufficiency, and there is sufficient Grace present to meet the needs of THIS MOMENT. Everyone wants God 'ten years from now', but, just as nature provides enough air in your lungs for this second, so God is sufficient Grace for THIS SECOND. And, as God's Grace never stops, you always have enough Grace for this moment. There is no 'future heaven'; there is no 'heavenly heaven'; THIS MOMENT is the only heaven there is. The only heaven there is living in this moment, because only in this moment do you have sufficient Grace to provide you with the spiritual Bread, Meat, Wine, Water even Resurrection. There is enough Grace present in this moment to resurrect your body, your marriage, your fortune, your business - whatever the world says you have lost. And as you live in THIS MOMENT, that Grace becomes a continuing experience - bringing about the fulfilment.

Never ask this question: “Why am I in this trouble, or why did this happen to an innocent child?” You know the answer. There was no God in that picture or it would not have happened. Paul described it: “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit”, or from the Master: “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.” This is the man of earth. But the ‘man who has his being in Christ’ toils not, neither does he spin - yet none are arrayed as beautifully in all the world’s goods.

If you witness Infinite Way students going on year in and year out and not receiving fruitage or Grace, you can know that they are just ‘reading with the mind’ and remaining there. That is not reaching God. We are to live with a passage of Truth until it becomes ‘our own’, and here is an example: “Thy Grace is my sufficiency and there is a sufficiency of Thy Grace to meet this need.” You could then put away all of the books - until you could DEMONSTRATE that principle. Through the books we present Truth and, if you could take one statement of Truth and demonstrate it, then the books would have fulfilled their purpose.

I started this article by a reminder that there is no God in the human scene, that there is no way to reach God with the mind, and that harmony begins to come into your experience ONLY as you attain the actual realized Presence of God or Spirit of God. In many of the metaphysical approaches you hear it said that ‘evil is not power’ or ‘there is no evil’ or ‘error is not real’ or ‘evil is not of God’. But in The Infinite Way you must get out of that habit, because it is a habit which leaves you in the very error which you have been denying. There is error - there is evil - and that is why there is the search for God. Had there been no evils in the days of the Master, there would have been no Master on earth because there would have been no need of one.² In fact every religion had as its origin the fact that there were so many evils on earth that people thought a new religion was needed. The true statement should be: “Temporal

power is not power in the Presence of the Christ or Spirit,” which means that evil or error of any nature is not power in the realized Presence of God.

Let me prove this to you. Whenever you have been ill in your metaphysical life, the illness continued until you called your practitioner.³ The illness then either slowly or rapidly disappeared, indicating that there must have been Something in the life of the practitioner which acted upon the evil - the ill. When sin or disease or death came anywhere near the Master, it was dissolved. But, if he was not around, the error kept on just the same. Yes, there will be evil - but not in the realized Presence of God, the ONENESS with God. “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand but it shall not come nigh thee.”

You can sum up the evils of this world in the Words ‘temporal power’, which would mean power of germs, power of dictators, power of armies, power of bombs. All that can be summed up as temporal power and then you can realize that temporal power is not power when it is brought into contact with the Spirit of God. Then you will know that, whatever temporal power is tempting you, you must bring the actual Presence of God into the situation - whether you are so close to It that blinking your eyes does it, or whether you are so far away that you have to sit for days and nights until the Spirit breaks through. But if you are expecting any help until this happens, you are going to be sadly mistaken. Nothing happens to the errors that come into your experience until you have attained the realization of the Presence of God - then temporal power is dissolved as darkness is dissolved in the presence of light.

This should give you such an understanding of

2. This is in accordance with the promise of Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “Whenever righteousness is obscured and evil prevails, I manifest myself.” Ch. iv, v. 7. (Editor).

3. The author is referring here to a spiritual healing practitioner of the ‘Infinite Way’ group. (Editor).

the nature of the message of The Infinite Way that you will not trust or rely on any of its statements. Instead, you will know that they are to remind you to GO WITHIN and bring forth the Presence. You must actually experience God - then that Invisible goes before you to make the crooked places straight.

The statement I made above on Grace, "There is sufficient Grace present to meet the needs Of THIS MOMENT," brings up another subject. Let me illustrate. The question is asked, "What is Truth?" I will tell you that no one in the history of the world has ever known what Truth is because Truth is infinite. Never has there been a religion or a teaching that was Truth. But, like the Omnipresence of sufficient Grace to meet the need of the moment, as you turn within in your meditation - sufficient Truth reveals Itself for the immediate Now. The infinite nature of Truth means we can turn within and draw forth all the Truth we need for any moment. Do not label any teaching 'The Truth'. Truth has been revealing Itself through me all these years, yet; it would be a horrible thing to say, "The Infinite Way is the Truth". Truth must continue revealing Itself one hundred years from now, or a million.

When you are dealing with your daily experience, you are opening yourself to an inflow of Truth, but be careful not to depend on yesterday's manna. Go within for the inspiration of the moment - for this moment's manna - if not the Spirit of God does not work. A statement of Truth is not God. A statement of Truth is the reminder that sends you back inside for further impartations.

If you will live constantly and consciously aware that there is a sufficiency of Grace for THIS MOMENT, or if you will live consciously aware that "I have hidden manna" - and then go within for the flow - you will be living by Grace. But you must constantly know that you have this hidden manna - this 'Meat the world knows not of'. Do not depend on the statement - Go WITHIN. Even if nothing comes, the contact has been made.

Be sure you never forget that the function of this

message is to reveal to you that you do have an Inner Grace - a hidden manna - a 'Meat the world knows not of'. Go within for the flow; then go about your business and, whatever your need is, the solution will appear in its own way. This has really carried me from the beginning of my work. Once touched by the Spirit, I knew there was Something within me that did the work. Everything necessary to my experience always appeared, even in time to correct my mistakes. You cannot avoid making a mistake but, even if you do, this Inner Manna corrects it.

It is really very sad if an Infinite Way student does not catch this point, that there is an Inner Grace - a 'Meat the world knows not of' - a hidden manna. Knowing this, you can always go within, wait for the assurance and then go about your business, KNOWING that Something is "going before you to make the crooked places straight". It is sad if students do not catch this. Nobody in the world has ever been born without this hidden manna - NOBODY - because God incorporated Himself IN man AS man. Therefore, the only function of religion should be to acquaint you with that fact and to help you to raise up or release that Spirit. When this happens religion has accomplished its purpose. Then of course "Go and sin no more". After that there MUST be spiritual integrity or you have cut yourself off and human selfhood is the barrier.

Can you not see the sin of believing that anyone of us is different from another - except in the degree of realization? There should be spiritual leaders, because in their presence temporal power does not operate. They can help in the overcoming of discords but only to a certain point, because "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you". However, no matter how advanced we become, there are times when problems can become so hypnotic that we ourselves may not be able to bring release and so we turn to each other for temporary help - for a lift. The Master was not ashamed to say, "Stay awake and pray with me",

so there should be no hesitancy in turning to each other for help. I have no hesitancy whatsoever to do this when I need it - and I receive the help.

Religion is nothing to become sanctimonious about. Religion has to be recognition of an indwelling Presence, and then the ability to LET IT LOOSE. There is nothing more sacred in the entire world than the individual. That means every individual, for it is every individual's function to attain his individuality and not keep it in a herd or a mass.

In The Infinite Way our dependency is on a hidden manna, a 'Meat the world knows not of', a Presence you cannot define. You do not have a blind faith - you go within and bring it forth as Spirit. Then your religious life has been accomplished. Then forever after, you can say: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." But because of the mesmerism of the world, you must go within twenty to thirty times a day. In other words you must get back inside where you acknowledge, "I have a hidden manna" - and then LET IT OUT.

It will not be long until someone says to you, "What is it you have?" or "Can you help me?" No, it will not be long. Then you must remember to give milk to the babes. Do not give deep metaphysics at first. Give it gently - gently. And do not believe that you can lead anyone to this point in a year. Only a few are ready, because of previous incarnations, to catch this in a year or less. I can be very patient because I know that human wisdom cannot be replaced by spiritual discernment until onion skin after onion skin has been peeled away and they become transparencies. I can be patient with them until they have reached that place where 'self preservation' is no longer the first 'law' and the first need. I know it takes patience on my part - and I always hope they will have the courage to persist.

Miracles do happen, some far greater than you would believe if you heard of them. But they are not due to a 'miracle man' - they are due to consciousness and receptivity. Not even Jesus could perform miracles unless he was approached with receptivity. It really makes no difference what degree

of spiritual height I attain - it can affect you only by the measure of your receptivity. That is why no practitioner can ever guarantee the measure of your healing or how long it will take, because it depends on your receptivity. And no practitioner will ever heal everyone because there are those who cannot do anything but seek 'loaves and fishes' and this sets up a barrier. The higher the teacher goes in spiritual realization, the greater will be the works - but only in the presence of receptivity. There is only one reason why healings do not come through. There is a barrier a lack of receptivity - but be patient

I could ask you a question: "If you knew this minute that an enemy was going to throw an atomic bomb tonight, what would be your answer if the President should give you the choice of throwing the bomb first or waiting for the enemy to throw it?" Your answer to this question would determine where you stand spiritually because, if you would choose to throw it first, you are still in humanhood - wanting to spare your life. Spiritual development does not include saving your life at the expense of another. Spiritual development recognizes: "Temporal power is not power in the presence of the Christ but, if it takes my human sense of life, I am not going to take the life of someone else." Why might it not stop war if a group of people should say to the President, "Why should we save our lives?" As a matter of fact that is what would happen, should 'ten righteous men' declare "I am not taking someone else's life to save my own. I cannot see my life as being more precious in the sight of God than the life of the Russians or the Japanese or the Germans."

In your spiritual life you face this question to some degree every day. In other words you prepare to send your child to school - but have you thought about the child on the other side of the tracks and have you made any provision for him? If not, you are still in humanhood. You cannot live in family selfishness and still believe you are living spiritually. But these things resolve themselves when the Spirit

of God comes through, because then you cannot take any credit for being benevolent. You are not doing it - the Spirit is compelling you.

The Christians who were thrown to the lions were not courageous. It was the Spirit of God that did it, for no human being could be that brave or that courageous.

If any of you are satisfied with anything less than the Experience of God, you are satisfied with too little. NOTHING should satisfy you but the Experience Itself, and you can accomplish that by turning within. It will come. And, when it comes, it must be renewed. Because of the hypnotism of the world - it must be RENEWED.

THE GUIDE ON THE MOUNTAIN PATH

By PROFESSOR. K. R. R. SASTRY

For us who take the mountain path the Maharshi is the guide. He came to Arunachala as a boy ascetic in 1900 and for fifty years lived there among us, showing us the way and helping us along it. On April 14th. 1950, at 8-47 p.m. a meteor lit up the sky as his mortal remains returned to dust.

The living Sage of scintillating stillness no longer draws us with his luminous eyes. The hand which fed the cow, the squirrel, the monkey, the crow and the peacock is no more visible. Yet thousands who recall his soothing stillness and his heart glowing with merciful love for all still worship at his shrine, each at that level to which the Master has guided him.

No more need any doubt the presence of God, for hundreds, thousands, have been remoulded

by Him manifested on earth in the form of Maharshi Ramana. Others who never saw Him in this form feel no less His Presence as Ramana.

He recalled us to "that larger dimension of Reality to which we belong", as Dr. Radhakrishnan calls it. Many of us found, when his eyes pierced into ours, that all our doubts dissolved and disappeared. He still continues to appear to some of us in dreams and visions, and to some also who never saw him in the body.

Once when I was enjoying the hospitality of a friend in America I called on him: "Oh Master! Ramana! You who rescued me midway on life's course!" And suddenly, spontaneously, all the wisdom of the Upanishads rose up in me in Silence.

When a pot breaks, the space that was enclosed in it merges with universal space; similarly, when the mind becomes pure only the immaculate Atma remains. No differentiation whatever is then seen.

- Avadhuta Gita, 1, 30.

Human birth is a rare gift. It is difficult to obtain it over again.

- Bhakta Mira

This knowledge is direct: it is so very plain. God is in our grasp, but we have no experience.

- Tukaram

CAST NOT YOUR PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

By SAGITTARIUS

What are the pearls and who are the swine?

There can be no clearer statement in any religion that there are esoteric truths to be revealed only to genuine seekers and not to the public.

There is a modern tendency to demand that democracy should extend even to knowledge and secrets be thrown open to all; but do all want them? Einstein's relativity theory is open to all, but how many study it? It may be said that there is a difference, in that all could if they wanted, whereas Christ's injunction implies a deliberate restricting of knowledge; actually however, the difference is not great, since ability to understand and earnest desire to follow are the sole qualifications for explanation. Truth is withheld only from those who do not value it and would therefore misunderstand and misuse it if offered. But they may be the majority.

What Christ said was that to offer it to them would be not merely a useless but a dangerous activity - "Lest they turn again and rend you". Swine are not interested in things of beauty but only in roots and swill and what fills their belly. Materialists are not interested in things of the spirit. Moreover they are liable to be offended by the implied suggestion that your aspiration rises higher than theirs, that your understanding outstrips theirs, that any one can prefer a pearl to a root - and turn and rend you.

Then what has happened to the pearls? Have the churches still got them? It is known that there are modes of silent prayer and meditation and various spiritual exercises that are not publicly proclaimed. They may be open to the laity also, but only to such of them as show their fitness by going into retreat or seeking guidance for concentrated spiritual effort.

Indeed, to say that they are still guarded by the churches does not mean that every priest

and clergyman is a guardian of them. Some of the swine may be wearing clerical costume also. It seems a rude thing to say, but nowhere near as rude as the things Christ said about the clergy of his day.

There was a powerful tradition of spiritual guidance during the Middle Ages. Towards the end of that period surprisingly frank records of it or of the doctrine on which it was built were left. Perhaps the writers felt that the direct oral transmission was drying up and needed to be fortified by written accounts to tide over the dark age that was already threatening. 'The Cloud of Unknowing', an anonymous 14th Century English record, is almost entirely a manual for spiritual practice. Characteristically, it is prefaced by a short note warning off the swine, insisting that it should be read only by those who are genuinely seeking, not by the merely curious. The *Theologia Germanica* speaks even more openly of the possibility of Divine Union. Meister Eckhart was so outspoken about the Supreme Identity as to be accused of heresy. He denied the charge, insisting that his teaching was the true Catholic doctrine rightly understood, but after his death excommunication was pronounced against him. Jacob Boehme, a Protestant cobbler, expounded the less direct mysteries of symbolism and sacred cosmology. Cervantes had the wit to conceal the pearls in a zany.

Moreover, something of spiritual practice also seems to have survived through the dark ages of rationalism. When pioneers such as Evelyn Underhill sought to bring the mystics back in the present century there was more than antiquarianism in their work; the spiritual lifeblood of Christian tradition still flowed, though pulsing now rather feebly and needing to be invigorated. For a spiritual current can be invigorated, sometimes even through an infusion of new life from outside. It is not a fixed quantum but a living,

vibrating force, continually radiating with greater or less intensity, attaining an incandescent heat or cooling down and growing inert, according to the fervour and understanding of those within its orbit. And since every thought, every action, every aspiration, has its repercussions, those who draw sustenance from a spiritual body thereby also increase its potency, while the reverse is also true, that those who devote their lives to its service thereby draw sustenance.

The hidden pearls of esoteric wisdom need not be secret sayings such as the antiquarian or occultist loves to search for. They are far more likely to be profounder interpretations of sayings that everybody knows. The secret is not something that can be communicated but something that must be understood. A still truer description would be that they are wiser and more determined utilisations of interpretations that many people know.

The interpretations can be expounded in books and articles; their utilisation, which is what is of real value, can be taught only by a qualified guide to those who approach him directly.

But is it legitimate to expound even the interpretations openly, or would that come under Christ's ban on making hidden things known? I don't think it would, because this ban seems to be cancelled out by another cryptic saying of Christ's, that at the end all that was hidden shall be made known. This seems to be an age when, as at the end of the Middle Ages (though for different reasons) it is appropriate to disclose what can be disclosed. The real secret is ineffable. On all sides, from the viewpoints of all religions, one sees the hidden truths being expounded, so far as theoretical exposition is possible. Indeed, it may be that so little remains of the practical transmission that its theoretical wrappings no

longer need concealment. Or it may be that their display is necessary to help some of those who aspire but do not know where to seek, so that even in our age Christ's word may still be fulfilled, that those who seek shall find. To take only one instance among many: D. T. Suzuki quotes a Ch'an Master as saying, "Ask of your self, inquire into your self, pursue your self, investigate within your self, and never let others tell you what it is, nor let it be explained in words."¹ Not only don't seek for a theoretical explanation but don't accept one if offered, refuse to listen to one. And yet Dr. Suzuki himself, conforming to the needs of our age, has spent most of his life giving theoretical explanations in books, articles and lectures.

What is far more potent authorisation, however, is the action of Ramana Maharshi himself. The path of Self-enquiry, based on the doctrine of Advaita or Identity, was in ancient times taught only to the few, usually to the recluse who had renounced the world. Indeed, the Chandogya Upanishad shows the Sage Prajapati teaching first that the physical individual being is the Self and only going deeper for that pupil who refuses to accept the superficial teaching. But in our time the Maharshi has proclaimed it openly in speech and writing for all who can understand and follow. He wrote: "I have betrayed Thy secret workings. Be not offended! Show me Thy Grace now openly and save me, Oh Arunachala!"² Requiring no further authorisation, I shall try to display the hidden pearls.

1. *The Essentials of Zen Buddhism*, p. 320, Rider & Co., London.

2. *The Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala* v. 98, from *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai

My speech is silence: dying I live. Existing I do not exist among the people. In enjoyment is my renunciation, in association detachment. I have broken all bonds and ligatures. Tuka says: I am not what I appear to be. Ask Panduranga (God) if you have anything to ask.— TUKARAM.

THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA BIRTH CENTENARY

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

It is hard now to remember to what a low ebb Hinduism had fallen at the advent of Sri Ramakrishna. The Hindus, conquered by a Western country, recognising its more potent civilisation, adopting its education, began to feel dejected at home and despised abroad. Missionaries were not wanting to proclaim that the West's superiority was due to Christianity and India's backwardness to Hinduism. With the Brahmo-Samaj, a Christianised version of Hinduism was offered by Western influenced Hindus. The rigidly orthodox were already outside the current of history and the moderates were inclined to compromise.

Then the presence of Sri Ramakrishna electrified Bengal. Almost uneducated, writing no books, proclaiming no philosophy, by the sheer power of his presence he changed the whole tone of things. Those who were being swept on the current of reformism and agnosticism (like the young Narendra Datt himself) were arrested and shocked back into devotion. Nevertheless, it was still necessary to vocalise and spread this new influence, to create a respect for Hinduism in the West and a self-respect in India.

These were the two tasks into which Narendra, become now Swami Vivekananda, flung himself with his colossal energy, and by and large he succeeded. If some of his books for Westerners now seem elementary, if Hindus seem conscious enough of their great cultural heritage, that does not mean that his task was unnecessary; on the contrary it is a measure of his success, of the vast change that has come about since his work began.

There was no doubt about the Grace that flowed through him. At the famous Chicago 'Parliament of Religions' - famous now only because Vivekananda took part in it, it was not his arguments that impressed people so much as his presence. He had got no farther than "Sisters and brothers of America!" when the entire hall burst into a torrent of applause. From that point on, in speech after speech, contact after contact, people felt the power



and grace in him. A recently published book by some thirty odd disciples and admirers, Hindu and Western,¹ shows this over-powering impression he made on people and the support they derived from him. It shows too how he retained his simplicity and humour despite their adulation, never falling a victim to pride.

No wonder then that Vivekananda is honoured in India as a national no less than a religious hero. Indeed, India and Hinduism are traditionally so closely united that it is sometimes hard to separate the two.

In 1963 the Swami's birth centenary was being celebrated throughout India. Books were published on the occasion, lectures given, meetings held. The enthusiasm was enormous. The celebrations overflowed into 1964, culminating this year in Calcutta and Madras. They showed what a powerful hold the Swami still has on the imagination and loyalty of his compatriots.

1. Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta.

NAGA BABA

By S. P. MUKHERJEE

Naga Baba, who died only a few years ago, was a very aged Swami living in a small ashram on a low hill at Puri. None knew his name or provenance. He was referred to simply as 'Naga Baba', 'naga' meaning 'naked', since he wore not even a loincloth. People merely guessed his age, some of the guesses running into centuries. His manner was abrupt. He did not encourage people to visit him often or to stay long. Typically crabbed was his answer when some one asked him his age: "If you think I am fool enough to identify myself with this body, you are a fool to come here." When a visitor had been sitting in his presence for some twenty minutes or so he was quite likely to say: "Well, you have had darshan, you can go now." And yet people went to him. They felt a strange euphoria, even an exhilaration, in his presence and carried it away with them.

S. P. Mukherjee, who was an engineer in a large Calcutta firm, retired in 1960 (while Naga Baba was still living) and settled clown with his wife at Tiruvannamalai, building a house near the Ashram. Neither of them had ever seen the Maharshi, but they had immense devotion and felt his guidance. Mr. Mukherjee tells the following story.

In 1952 I visited Naga Baba with a whole group of my family and relations. We sat for some time in his presence, but he simply ignored us - did not even look at us.

We were staying at a large hotel in the town. That night I could not sleep. Towards morning I felt restless and went downstairs to the lounge. The air was hot and oppressive. Altogether I felt ill-at-ease. Suddenly had an impulse to go and see the Swami then and there. I found a rickshaw waiting outside the hotel and went.

When I arrived it was about four o'clock in the morning. I found the Swami sitting alone under a neem tree and had the impression that he was waiting for me. I sat down in front of him, feeling glad to be alone with him, not in a crowd. He smiled and spoke to me in a very friendly tone, saying: "So you have come back."

That showed that he had noticed me earlier in the day, though he seemed not to. I felt happy and at ease in his presence and asked him a few questions that were troubling me, beginning with some reference to the course of my life.

The first was: "When should I begin to lead a life of *sadhana* (quest)?"

He replied simply, "Now."

I explained to him that circumstances were very difficult at present - my daughter was not yet married, my contract with my firm was not renewed, I was engaged in litigation and had a variety

of worries. But he simply answered that that was the best time.

I next asked him whether I should retire in a few years before completing my service, and he said, "Yes."

Then, without mentioning Arunachala by name, I asked him whether I should settle down and make *sadhana* in an ashram at the foot of a hill, to which I was strongly drawn. He closed his eyes for a few moments and then opened them and said: "Yes, you will do that."

After that I asked him a more profound question: "How shall I get rid of my *ahankara* (ego-sense)?"

He said: "What ego-sense? What ego?"

I told him that it was nothing specific but everything I do. For instance, if I do something well I feel proud and have a sense of being a better person.

He said: "That is egoism of the mind, You will get rid of it if you control your mind and start recoiling it to its source. It is like a person flying a kite. As he recoils the thread the kite flies over a smaller and smaller range till at last it comes to rest and stops flying altogether."

After sitting silent for a few minutes, but with no sense of constraint, he spoke again, saying, but in a kind and gracious way: "Well, have you had enough now?"

So I took leave of him and went away, feeling peaceful and elated

VEGETARIANISM

By ARTHUR OSBORNE

The Bodhisattva desirous of cultivating the virtue of love, should not eat meat, lest he cause terror to living beings. When dogs see, even at a distance, an outcaste who likes eating meat, they are terrified and think: 'These are dealers of death and will kill us!' Even the minute beings living in earth, air and water have a very keen sense of smell and detect at a distance the odour of the demons in meat-eaters, and they flee as fast as they can from the death which threatens them.

- From the *Lankavatara Sutra*.

Is there any benefit from not eating meat? Or perhaps the question should be put the other way round: is there any harm in eating meat? I am not considering the question from a medical but purely from a spiritual point of view. One's body is not a mere tenement; so long as one remains an individual being it is a part of that being and, as De la Mare quaintly remarks

It's a very strange thing,
As strange as can be,
That whatever Miss T. eats
Turns into Miss T.

Various spiritual paths include physical as well as mental and emotional disciplines, aiming at a total harmonisation. On the one hand vibrations set up by a spiritual technique affect the body, while on the other hand the bodily state can facilitate or impede spiritual progress. Diet, therefore, cannot be a matter of indifference.

Considered theoretically, there is something to be said for eating meat; more to be said against it. In favour of it one can say that a sort of alchemy is carried on by the human body through which the lower orders of life are transmuted to the higher. But on the side of abstaining there is the consideration that the subtle essences of the food eaten are absorbed as well as the physical substance, and therefore one who eats meat is liable to strengthen his own animal tendencies. Apart from this, compassion forbids that I should expect other creatures to lose their lives in order to nourish mine. So does *vairagya*, the quality of equal-mindedness, which is so important in seeking Realization.

A factual survey of the religions shows no uniformity. The Jews can eat all meat except that of the pig and can drink alcohol. The Muslims are forbidden both pork and wine. Moreover the ban, though primarily on the pig, extends to all animals that do not chew the cud. Apart from this, however, the assertion in the *Quran* that God has created the animals as food for man seems to carry the implication that animal food is not merely permitted, but enjoined. A remark by St. Augustine shows that during the early centuries of Christianity the ban on non-ruminative animals was observed by Christians also. He justifies it symbolically by comparing such animals to people who gulp down information without 'ruminating' upon it, thereby implying that the subtle qualities of the animals eaten are absorbed. The Chinese, like Christians of later centuries, observe no ban. The Vedic Aryans, and indeed the Hindus down to the time of Buddha, ate meat, even beef, and drank alcohol. Today Brahmins (except so far as they are Westernised) are both vegetarians and teetotallers. So are certain other castes which seek to assimilate themselves to the Brahmins. The Kshatriyas and most of the low castes are meat-eaters. Even among the Brahmins vegetarianism can be variously interpreted: a Bengali Brahmin eats fish, whereas an orthodox South Indian Brahmin abstains even from eggs. Buddha, living in a meat-eating community, allowed his followers to eat meat provided it was not specially killed for them.

What this diversity amounts to is that in a physical matter such as the food eaten different trends of

spiritual influence require different modes of adaptation.

For practical purposes the important question is whether there is any regimen which is suitable for aspirants in general in the conditions of the world today, and if so what. Because rules governing action are not static and for all time. Changing conditions of life require new adaptations, as may be seen, for instance, in the gradual adoption of vegetarianism in Hinduism. To some extent different religions still carry their separate obligations, but there are various indications that for aspirants in general, and certainly for those who are not following the strict orthodoxy of any religion, vegetarianism is indicated. One quite often meets aspirants who find spontaneously that their path brings them to a point where they feel an inner aversion to meat or even a physical inability to take it. It so happens that I have just today, while writing this, received a letter mentioning such a case: "He himself had stopped eating animal food because his body suddenly refused to accept it and he at first could not understand and rebelled somewhat, until it gradually dawned on him that this might be a sign of spiritual development."

It is also noticeable that most Hindu ashrams, while indifferent to orthodoxy in general to an extent that would have been unthinkable in an earlier age, are very particular about vegetarianism. Outstanding examples of this are Sri Ramanasramam and Anandashram, the ashram of the late Swami Ramdas. Special food is provided for Western visitors, but even this is vegetarian.

But above all, the Maharshi. In general he refused

to give instructions for physical discipline. When asked about postures for sitting in meditation he replied simply: "One-pointedness of mind is the only good posture." When asked about celibacy he would not enjoin it but said that married persons also can attain Realization. But when asked about diet he quite emphatically prescribed vegetarianism: "Regulation of diet, restricting it to *sattvic* (i.e. pure and vegetarian) food taken in moderate quantities is the best of all rules of conduct and the most conducive to the development of *sattvic* qualities of mind. These in turn help one in the practice of Self-enquiry."¹ The passage quoted continues with a Western lady pleading that a concession should be made for Westerners and with Bhagavan refusing to do so. It should be added that in '*sattvic* food' he included milk, though an animal product, but not eggs, which are considered too stimulating or *rajasic*.

It was characteristic of Bhagavan that he would never enjoin vegetarianism on any devotee unless asked, but if asked he was quite categorical about it. It often happened in his lifetime, as it still does today, that even without asking, his devotees would develop that aversion to animal food which I have mentioned as a general feature in the aspirant in modern times.

In conclusion, it can be said quite definitely that vegetarianism is beneficial to those who follow a spiritual path in the conditions of the modern world, and especially to those who aspire to follow the path of the Maharshi.

1. *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His own Words*, p. 157 of the Rider & Co. edition, and p. 200 of the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

Neither those who seek Identity nor those who seek duality know the Immutable Essence which is free from both.

- AVADHUTA GITA, 1, 35.

For him who has himself become God all people are God.

- TUKARAM.

TAPAS AND SANNYAS¹

By SATYA MAYI

Apart from being an outstanding writer on spiritual topics, the author of this article is also the German translator of the *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi* and *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.

I have neither father nor mother, neither caste nor family, neither birth nor death; how, then, can I speak of attachment or non-attachment? I am by nature Eternal Freedom beyond all ills. - *Avadhuta Gita*, IV, 21.

Tapas is usually translated as ‘austerity’ or ‘penance’; *sannyas* is that form of *tapas* which consists in renouncing one’s home and property and going forth as a wandering mendicant, as Christ bade the rich young man and as Buddha bade his son Rahula. Materialistic young India has turned hostile to such *tapas* but many are still drawn to it.

What did the Maharshi say about it? On one occasion he said: “Take the flower of your heart and lay it at the Feet of the Lord and live at peace.” But does this surrender of the heart imply physical renunciation or not? Usually his replies were more definite, making it clear that it does not.

“Why do you think that you are a householder? The similar thought that you are a *sannyasi* will haunt you even if you go forth as one. Whether you continue in the household or renounce it and go to live in the forest your mind haunts you. The ego is the source of thought. It creates the body and the world and makes you think of being a householder. If you renounce, it will only substitute the thought of renunciation for that of the family and the environment of the forest for that of the household. But the mental obstacles are always there for you. They even increase greatly in the new surroundings. Change of environment is no help. The one obstacle is the mind, and this must be overcome whether in the home or in the forest. If you can do it in the forest, why not in the home? So why change the environment? Your efforts can

be made even now, whatever be the environment.”²

Sometimes also he has been known to reply: “If it were better for you to renounce the question would not arise.”

Let us consider the aim of *tapas* before going any further into the question. Its aim is to get rid of the individual I-sense in order to realize the universal Self. This I-sense is deeply rooted in the conditions of our everyday life. One has to work to support oneself and one’s family. The nature of the work is usually due more to circumstances and opportunity than to one’s own choice. The ego comes in only when the work is done with attachment or aversion; it is these that feed it, not the work itself. The work is neutral. That is why the *Gita* tells us to work without considering the rewards to be obtained and why Bhagavan told us to work impersonally, asking ourselves who it is that does the work. Desire and aversion are the two sides of the same medal, that is of the individual will, desire the positive side, and aversion the negative. If we could only get rid of these two the ego-sense would not last long.³

What we have to grasp is that everybody is

1. The correct transliteration would be ‘*tapasya*’ and ‘*sannyasa*’, but since this is a practical, not an academic journal, we Prefer to use the forms of current speech. (Editor)

2. *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 78 of the Rider & Co. edition, p. 94 of the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

3. Getting rid of desire and aversion means acquiring the quality of *vairagya* on which Hindu teaching lays such stress. See also the explanation by Father Lazarus, in his article published in our last issue, of the importance attached by the Greek Orthodox Church to the quality of *apatheia*, which is fundamentally the same. (Editor)

situated by his own *karma* in that environment which is most propitious for his own spiritual development - whether pleasant or not doesn't matter. Bhagavan said that our circumstances are not an accident; they are what our nature requires, aversion to our environment simply shows that we have not surrendered; and surrender is the one essential means of destroying the ego, whether we regard it as surrender to God or the Self or Guru or simply to the quest for Enlightenment.

The story of the Enlightenment of the Buddha Sakyamuni under the Bodhi-tree is that after seven years of terrific *tapas* which brought him to the very limits of endurance he suddenly stopped it and accepted a bowl of rice and milk from a young girl. He then took a bath, made himself a seat of grass and sat down in the shade of the Bodhi-tree. Then it is said that he screwed his will to the highest pitch of concentration, vowing that he would not rise again till he had attained Enlightenment.

There is another interpretation, however, which appeals to me more. After all, had he not sought Enlightenment all through these seven terrible years of fasting and mortification, and was not that a constant exercise of willpower? Willpower itself is an assertion of the ego, even the will to attain Enlightenment. The Buddha realized, he declared later, that his terrific *tapas* had been a mistake; and this must mean that his will or desire for Enlightenment had been powered by the ego. I believe that he attained Enlightenment at the very moment that he gave up craving for it, since this craving was his last wish and therefore the sole remaining obstacle on his path. By this final act of renunciation he acted according to the first injunction of Bhagavan that I quoted: "Take the flower of your heart and lay it at the Feet of the Lord and live in peace."

This is a very subtle and dangerous line of doctrine, where the division between truth and error is as fine as a razor's edge. Rightly understood, it means that one must totally renounce the idea of getting, even getting Enlightenment, and substitute

for it the idea of giving, even giving up the self who desires Enlightenment. Perhaps even more appropriate is the word 'accepting', accepting what is. And then there is no one to achieve; there just IS; and that is Enlightenment. But it is fatally easy to misunderstand it as accepting separate individual being as one's natural state and giving up the attempt to surrender it.

The five disciples who had been following Gautama before his Enlightenment must have thought that he had fallen into this error, because, seeing him begin to take normal food, they considered him a quitter and turned and left him.

It was perhaps to guard against this error that the Maharshi sometimes stressed the negative side of the quest, saying: "All that you have to do is to disrealize unreality and Reality remains."

Now let us turn to Bhagavan's cryptic saying: "If it were better for you to renounce you would not ask." There are people whose *karma* leads naturally to *sannyas* in this lifetime. Bhagavan himself was one such. In that case circumstances adapt themselves; the person falls away from social life like a ripe fruit from a tree. The question in fact does not arise; it just happens so. Bhagavan once expressed this by saying: "*Sannyas* comes of its own accord." This implies that a person's worldly *karma* stops when the time for *sannyas* has come. It may be, however, that in the conditions of the modern world even this final renunciation takes an inner form as a change of attitude towards unchanged outer conditions.

There is no doubt that *sannyas* in its traditional form, that is taking the ochre robe and adhering to certain vows, brings experiences peculiar to itself. That does not mean, however, that such experiences are necessary for everyone who takes a spiritual path. Life does not flow to a set pattern, but consists of countless individual dreams all awakening eventually into the One Consciousness. One of the ways will always be that of *sannyas*.

The Hindu *sannyasi*, the Muslim *fakir*, the Buddhist *bhikkhu*, the Christian monk, all have

the same attitude to the world, all alike renouncing worldly values. Also, all alike are regarded in the same way by society, revered by some, condemned by others.

It is fashionable nowadays to regard *tapas* as an unhealthy deviation from normal life and the ascetic as a psychological aberration and a parasite on productive society. A parasite is one who is supported by society without performing any corresponding services; and what service, it is asked, does the *sannyasi* perform? But the same question could be asked of many scientists. Millions are spent on scientific research which brings no practical benefits. And what about academic philosophers? They receive not merely maintenance from society but comfortable salaries; and are their theses and discussions of any more use to society than the *tapas* of a *sannyasi*? Far less, because they are merely mental, whereas from the latter a spiritual influence emanates. On this point Bhagavan often and quite firmly reassured those who doubted. For instance: "Realization of the Self is the best possible help that can be rendered to humanity. Therefore saints are said to be helpful even though they remain in the forests."⁴

Eastern peoples have always appreciated this, but now China has been captured by a materialist ideology, and even in India many have succumbed to the modern Western attitude and would like to do away with *sadhus* and *sannyasis*, driving them all into factories. The *sannyasi* is one who has given up the life of a householder for a much harder way in his quest of Realization. Is that only to benefit himself? He may think so, and indeed it can give a dangerous foothold to egoism to think of helping others spiritually before one has attained the goal oneself; but indirectly and invisibly his progress helps others, as the Maharshi assured us. And the renouncers are following the

great Masters - Jesus or Mohammad, Buddha or Sri Krishna - whose *tapas* has in fact poured out blessings on countless others.

By his very existence the *sannyasi* keeps people in mind of the great Masters. His voluntary poverty is a silent protest against man's slavery to possessions and craving for property. His inactivity is a rejection of the constant restlessness which rushes men from work to pleasure and back again to work ceaselessly, till they no longer experience peace of mind, that creative peace in the spiritual depths of the heart. He confronts the noisy creeds of 'having' and 'doing' with the eternal silent gospel of 'being'. His voluntary homelessness preaches silently the gospel of the spiritual home not to be found through attachment to any worldly abode. Thus, even apart from the influence which may radiate from him, his service to society consists in reminding it by his mere existence of the power and grace of another, greatly Reality.

The modern ideal is rather dedication of oneself to the physical well-being of others through social service. Can both ideals be right? The answer is that man's own nature, which is the fruit of his *karma*, drives him in one direction or the other, though he may think that it is he who decides. Both can be useful to those who follow them sincerely; both also can indirectly help others.

People cling to the ideas of what they call a 'normal life' on as high a level of material well-being as possible; but no such pattern has enduring reality. It is a dream sooner or later to be broken up by events. But in spite of events people do not learn.

The *sannyasi* points to the unreality of such goals by the mere fact of his seemingly abnormal life. There is a meaning and a reminder in his silent presence in the thick of modern civilisation. He is indeed a sign of continued spiritual life, for the ideal of renunciation cannot flourish in a completely materialistic society, whether it be primitive or mechanised.

4. *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own Words*, p. 92 in the Rider & Co. edition, p. 113 of the Sri Ramanasramam edition.

THE SECRETS OF ARUNACHALA

By T. K. S.

“That is the holy place! Of all Arunachala is the most sacred. It is the heart of the world. Know it to be the Secret and Sacred Heart Centre of Siva. In that place He always abides as the glorious Aruna Hill.” — Skanda Purana.

What is the Mountain Path? The mountain is Arunachala, and there are two paths, one to the summit and the other around the base.

Arunachala shines as Paramatma, the Supreme Self made manifest, the Self of all creatures, not only men but gods and heavenly beings. This same Self was Bhagavan Ramana who declared: “Annamalai¹ is my Self.” This implies that he, being the Self, is not any of the three bodies, gross, subtle or causal, pertaining to the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, but is the Self-aware Witness of all three. In that Supreme State he is the screen on which the cinema show of name and form is projected; he is also the light by which it is revealed and the person who sees it. He is Arunachala, the Self of all. We have seen Him here on earth as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the great Path-Maker.

In the days when he lived in a cave on the hill we used to climb only to where he was - Virupaksha Cave or the Mango-Grove or Skandashram, whichever it was - for he was both the path and the goal, and there was no other happiness comparable to being with him and absorbing the radiance of grace that flowed forth from him.

On the path to the summit, starting from the northern *gopuram* or tower of the great temple or from a small village opposite the hospital at the south-east of the hill, the first landmark is Guhai Namasivaya Cave, the abode of the famous Guru who had an even more famous disciple also called Namasivaya. This disciple he sent to Chidambaram

to found his own centre. There the disciple became known as Guru Namasivaya, while his Guru was called Guhai Namasivaya.

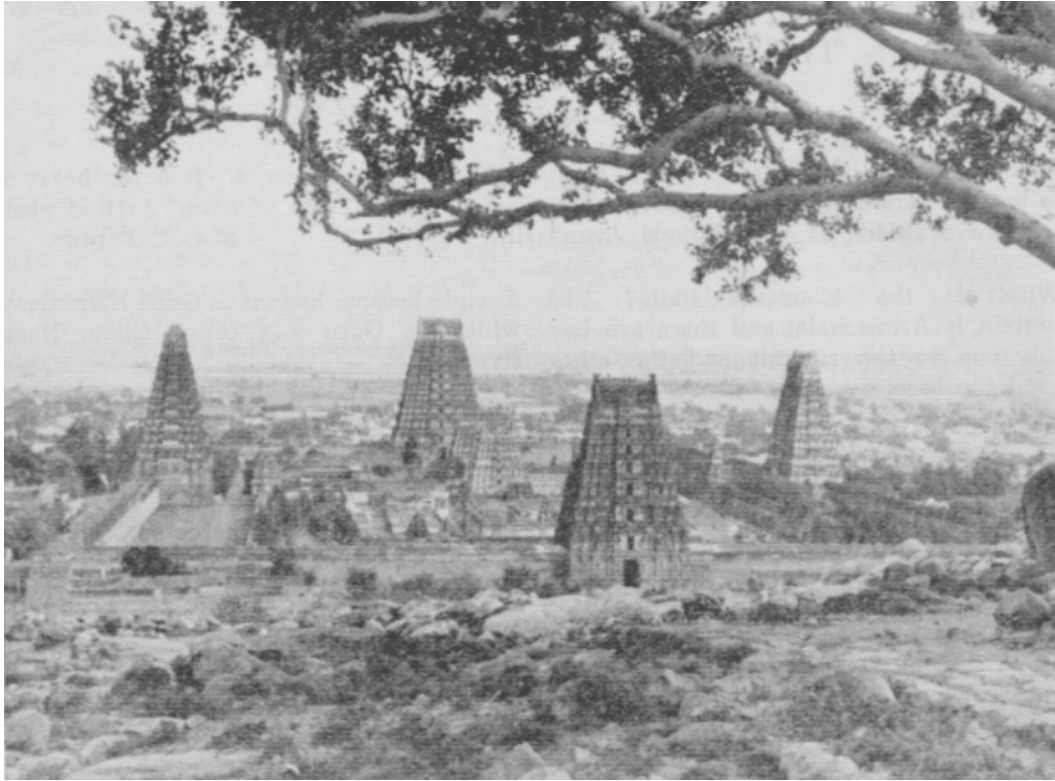
Proceeding further, we come to Virupaksha Cave, which was already famous before Sri Ramana sanctified it by his abode. It is named after the great Master Virupaksha who lived there and who is said, on death, to have converted his body into a Vibhuti Lingam, a *lingam* of sacred ashes. There is a small shrine to him there. The cave is said to be in the form of OM, and it is said that, sitting silent in it, one hears the sound of OM.

Just above Virupaksha Cave is Skandashram, a more spacious cave where Bhagavan moved after leaving Virupaksha. It was here that an ashram first grew up around him, with food being cooked and his mother presiding. The cave was built out



Virupaksha Cave

1. Annamalai is a name of Arunachala; it means literally ‘Supreme Mountain’.



The great temple in Tiruvannamalai seen from Arunachala Hill

to enlarge it, a spring was released which since then has proved a perennial supply of water, even a few trees were planted. The Ashram now maintains Skandashram and keeps a caretaker there, and it is one of the places that devotees must visit.

Higher up, the path curves round to the east slope and, directly below the main peak are the Seven Springs in small crevices of a huge rock with their perennial storage of cool water even in the hottest weather. Just above them is a mound of boulders at the entrance to a deep cool cave. Bhagavan often sat there with his devotees. Saints and rishis have lived there in the past.

From here up to the main peak is a steep climb and indeed may take as long as the whole climb from Virupaksha to the Seven Springs. At last we reach the summit, where is a large flat stone with enormous rock-cut feet on it. It is here that the

huge cauldron is placed every year at the festival of Kartikai (about which I will write in a later article) when a beacon of ghee (clarified butter) brought by devotees is lit, visible far around. What is the significance of the feet? Obviously they are the feet of Arunachala. You go to the top and you find there the feet: because in Arunachala, the Supreme, there is neither top nor bottom, there are no parts, there is just wholeness. Also because what is highest in principle is lowest in manifestation; the first is last and the last first.

On the northern slope, far from the path, is the place where Arunagiriswara, the great Siddhapurusha, the Spirit of Arunachala, abides under an enormous banyan tree. And it should be mentioned that it is this sage, "God in the form of Arunachala," who is worshipped in the great temple in Tiruvannamalai. There is an ancient legend that anyone who can find his way to this eternal Sage

or Spirit in his almost inaccessible abode will receive Realization. Only Sri Ramana succeeded in doing so, and he already had Realization. Can one see in it a symbol of the direct path of Self-enquiry, which had been withdrawn from use in our spiritually



Skandashram

dark age, and which Bhagavan Sri Ramana brought down from its inaccessible retreat to his Ashram at the foot of the Hill, making it accessible to all, so that none now need to seek the ancient Siddhapurusha?

Bhagavan used to say that there were many paths to the peak. Indeed, he would scramble up to it from Skandashram, often following no path at all, and be down again in less than an hour's time. He used to speak also of caves in the hill and of Siddhas or Sages with supernatural powers who live there. There are legends of cities and gardens within the hill and of great souls sitting in perpetual *tapas* seeking to attain the Conscious Identity with Lord Arunachala which is Bhagavan's natural and permanent state. When someone asked him once whether all that exists only in the mind, he waved his hand round to indicate the physical, phenomenal world of everyday existence and said: "So does this." Strangely enough, more emphasis is laid on the path around the hill. Bhagavan always took an

interest and looked pleased when devotees took this path, making *pradakshina*, as it is called. He would often ask what time they started, how long it took, at what places they rested by the way. Recently Major Taneja, a devotee from the Punjab who came here first in Bhagavan's lifetime, had been making *pradakshina* night after night and intended next day to climb to the peak, but that night he dreamed that he was standing facing the hill and a voice came forth from it saying: "Why should you go to the top? My fire is at the base."

The eight-mile walk around the hill, going from east to west, that is to say keeping the hill always on one's right, is a pilgrimage and is supposed to be made barefoot and at a slow pace, in a state of remembrance or meditation. It is said that whatever one wishes or prays for during the *pradakshina* is fulfilled, but it is also said that it is better not to wish, for this is a path to the desirelessness of the Self, and every wish or prayer, however noble it may seem to one, is an affirmation of the limited pseudo-self who wishes and thereby an obstacle to the realization of the desireless Self.

Pradakshina is often made at night, especially when the moon is full or nearly full, because, for a large part of the year, it is uncomfortably hot to go round by day. Most devotees start from the Ashram, nowadays, silently seeking Bhagavan's grace before starting. According to the old Brahmin tradition, however, a Brahmin would start out after bathing in the Indra Tirtha or tank on the eastern side of the town. From there he would proceed to the gates of the great temple, prostrate there, and walk slowly on, meditating on the Lord Arunachala. Starting from the Ashram also, one is expected to pass through the temple, from one great gate to another, but on the way back.

The eight directions of space on the way round are marked by a monolithic stylised sacred bull, a tank and a Siva Lingam. Sri Ramanashram is at the southernmost point beside the *mantapam* or diminutive chapel of Dakshinamurthi. In Hindu mythology Dakshinamurthi (and one interpretation

of the name is ‘The Southward Facing’) is Siva manifested as a youth surrounded by elderly disciples and teaching them in silence. The Guru is the North Pole and therefore traditionally faces south. Bhagavan was often equated with Dakshinamurthi.

Due west is the sacred tank and lingam of Unnamulai, that is to say of Uma, the Consort of Siva, who came down on earth to make *tapas* on Arunachala. The *tapas* was guided by the Rishi Gautama² whose Ashram is just beside her tank. The myth is that Uma, once in sport put her hands over the eyes of Siva, thus closing them, and this plunged the whole universe into unseasonable *pralaya* or dissolution, since all exists only in His sight. In penance for this she had to descend and undergo austerities on Arunachala before again being taken back as an integral part of Siva. These old myths are not always easy to interpret. According to Hindu teaching, a phase of manifestation of the universe is succeeded by a phase of dissolution when all is gathered back into undifferentiated uniformity. Uma, the Consort of Siva (knows also by other names such as Durga, Parvati or Kali according to the role she has to play) signifies the Divine Energy or Word. It is this which creates, but also, since all creation contains within itself the seed of destruction, all growth of decay, all birth of death, it is she also who destroys and brings on the *pralaya*. During the *pralaya* the Divine Energy is no longer manifest, no longer the Consort of Siva, but undergoing purification for a new cycle of manifestation.

After completing her *tapas*, it is said that Uma went round Arunachala on the full moon night of the month of Kartikai and was reassumed by Siva; and it is in commemoration of this that the beacon is now lit on the mountain peak every year at this date.

In the course of her *tapas*, Uma had to fight and slay the demon Mahishasura, who attacked her.

2. Not the same as the Buddha Gautama.



A stylised lion on the road round Arunachala

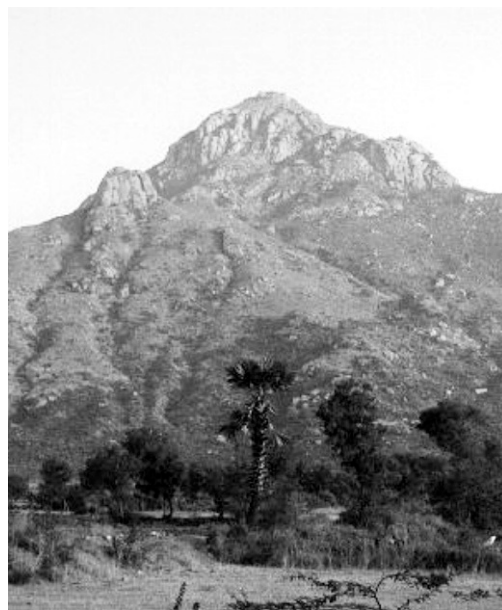
This she did in her aspect of Durga. This fight with the force of evil is commemorated by Khadga tank and Papanasa Lingam beside it, that is by the ‘*lingam* that destroys sins’. A figure of Mother Durga standing in victory over the head of the vanquished Mahishasura is to be seen in her temple next to Pavalakunru. This place is very popular among those who have boons to be granted. At this Pavalakunru also Bhagavan resided for a while as a young man, and there is a Sri Chakra in the Durga temple which he held in his hands during a consecration in the temple.

Further round the hill than Gautamashram and the tank of Mother Uma is the ancient village of Adiannamalai. Here is a beautiful and sacred old temple. People walking round the hill often go and worship there. Here is the temple of Sri Manickavachakar, author of the Tiruvachakam, one of the most ecstatic of the Tamil poet-saints.

Coming round to the east side of the hill, we come to the temple and shrine of a much more modern Swami, that is Isana Desika Swami who lived about the 18th Century. He was a saint of great power who is said to have had *ashtama siddhis* waiting to do his bidding. He is said to be very benevolent and to bestow his grace not only on Hindus but on Muslims and Westerners also who pray at his shrine.

The path round Arunachala is very sacred. As one sees the many varied aspects of the hill on going round, one finds that the hill itself is a Sri Chakra, a Sacred Wheel. There is scarcely a day or a night without someone going round. Some devotees go on a fixed day every week, some every full-moon day, some for a regular cycle of forty consecutive days, some indeed every day. Of course, there are particularly auspicious occasions for the *pradakshina*, the most outstanding of these being, Sivaratri, the Night of Siva, and Kartikai, the night when the beacon is lighted on top of the hill. Holy in itself; the path is made more holy still by all the great saints and Rishis who have trodden it, even by Mother Uma herself, and in recent times by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi who, as long as health and vigour lasted, often went around, sometimes alone, sometimes with a whole body of devotees. It is said that the pilgrim is accompanied by an invisible host of *devas* and Rishis.

This outwardly; inwardly the Mountain Path is



A view of Arunachala

the path laid down for us by Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, the path of Self-enquiry, the path leading to the experience 'I am the Atma, I am not the perishable body'. How is this experience to be come by? By the Grace of the Guru. So the Guru is both the way and the Goal. Arunachala is open to all on whom its Grace has descended and is the same as Ramanachala. May Sri Ramana Arunachala cut the knot of our primal ignorance and lead us by his path to our final Goal.

BHAGAVAN IN THE HEART

(From a record kept by Ethel Merston)

I was torn as to whether to return to Europe to see my friends and relatives after nine years of absence or whether to stay on with Bhagavan ... I could not make up my mind. In the end I put the question verbally to Bhagavan himself. I sought him out on the hill during his morning walk and he replied in English that destiny decides where the body shall go; I couldn't. But my real nature always stays everywhere with me wherever I am. "So be in it. Wherever you are, remember, Bhagavan is there in your heart watching over you."

Book Reviews¹

ON HAVING NO HEAD: A Contribution to Zen in the West. By D. E. Harding. (The Buddhist Society, 58 Eccleston Square, London, S. W. 1, Price 4s. 6d.)

Mr. Harding's little book begins by describing an undoubtedly genuine experience of Realization. The author then proceeds to discuss this in the epigrammatical and paradoxical vein beloved of Western followers of Zen. What is of practical importance is his statement of what, having had this experience, he considers it necessary to do in order to approach nearer to the state of mind which culminates in it and to secure its repetition and eventual stabilisation. The findings of one who has proceeded far along the path and been granted a large measure of success must always interest those who come after, even though, as in the present case, he has the wisdom and humility to see that his way may not be that of others.

In the first place, he warns that hard work and persistent effort will probably be necessary: "for myself and most others it is necessary to set off prepared for a very long and hard journey, as if only the most strenuous efforts could see us Home." Note the 'as if'. We may be already That, as the Maharshi sometimes reminded us, but since we do not realize this we have to strive as if there were a long and arduous journey to be made. He speaks of the importance of effortlessness but (and here again he might be quoting the Maharshi) reminds us that effort is needed to retain it: "If effort is needed, it is rather the effort to hold effortlessness." Again he is in line with the Maharshi's teaching in warning against renunciation: "withdrawal from ordinary life is no help: in fact it tends to hinder."

About his actual practice he has this to say: "Anyhow it is only of my own experience that I am qualified to write. I have already mentioned that my long labour of self-investigation involved

no meditation as such. And I still find (after having given systematic practice a fair trial) that my best course is to avoid set times and topics and postures of meditation, and indeed any deliberate spiritual discipline. For me it is enough to attend to the Void as it is given, as often and as long as happens to be convenient."

It is not quite clear what he means by 'self-investigation' and by 'meditation'. Certainly self-enquiry as the Maharshi taught it, is not meditation on any topic. In fact he explained that the difference between self-enquiry and meditation is that in meditation there are subject and object, whereas in self-enquiry there is only the subject.

Many people do find it helpful at first, and often for many years or even permanently, to observe regular hours of practice but, with the use of self-enquiry, a spontaneous and fairly continuous undercurrent to outer awareness is likely to arise. Then, as Mr. Harding says, "It is so natural that from outside it is unobservable and therefore can be enjoyed anytime and anywhere." He also adds, "Often it arrives uninvited." This also accords with the Maharshi's teaching that Self-enquiry should be carried on always, not only at fixed times and in set postures. One who finds himself in this state without a preliminary period of regular discipline is fortunate. One who finds the regular discipline helpful, however, should practice it.

It often happened that someone questioning the Maharshi would express the fear that a constant flow of 'remembering' or 'meditation' would render him unfit for practical life, and he always assured them that it was not so. This also Mr. Harding confirms from his own experience: "This does not mean that one is dangerously unconscious of what's going on. Quite the reverse: the chances of getting run over are lessened, because one's thoughts are no longer elsewhere."

Despite its cleverness, this is a book of solid value which many seekers will find helpful.

1. All unsigned reviews are by the editor.

HOLY MOTHER: Being the Life of Sri Sarada Devi, Wife of Sri Ramakrishna and Helpmate in his Mission. By Swami Nikhilananda (Allen and Unwin, 32s.)

Several of the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Initiated disciples after his death, but his foremost successor, recognised and revered by them all as such, was his wife, Sarada Devi, whom they referred to as the 'Holy Mother'. If she was little known publicly it was because her humility was as great as her power and she preferred to remain inconspicuous. An uneducated Bengali woman occupying herself with ordinary household tasks, she was at the same time a fount of love and source of power. She had many disciples. On initiating them she gave a mantra which varied according to her intuition of their needs and also bade them meditate on some Divine Form. It is interesting to note that this was not always the form of Ramakrishna, though it often was. She was also a great advocate of work. Apart from the time devoted to meditation, the waking hours were to be filled with useful work. Indeed, she held that idleness was one of the greatest obstacles to mind-control.

Swami Nikhilananda, himself a disciple of hers, writes with understanding and sensitivity. This makes it the more remarkable that he should keep up the childish pretence that no spiritual Master has appeared on earth since Ramakrishna. He even goes out of his way to assert this: "Sri Ramakrishna is recognised by his followers as the Divine Incarnation of modern times, embodying in himself the spiritual experience of past prophets and the truths of all religions ... He is the only Incarnation of God who has been photographed." Is it possible that he has never heard of the Maharshi? Or that he has not understood that the Maharshi is Bhagavan?

HONEST TO GOD: By John A. T. Robinson. (SCM Paperback, 5s.)

There is a core of truth in Bishop Robinson's much discussed book 'Honest to God'. That is that God is not a being somewhere in the universe or outside it,

the question of whose existence can be disputed, but ultimate reality, being itself, what Tillich calls 'the ground of our being'. What he fails to see, however, is that man also is not a being whose immortality can be disputed but being itself temporarily limited by form but returning ineluctably to its Source. "All religious postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God, but it is only the one Reality that manifests Itself as these three." (*Forty Verses on Reality*, v. 2)²

He also imparts a false simplicity into his argument by failing to see that insofar as a man regards his own individual being as a reality, just so far a personal God is also a reality for him. This makes the book not only shallow but positively harmful. There are many (corresponding with all who follow the path of *bhakti* in other religions) who, without being able to conceive of the Oneness of Being, still approach it by striving to submit their individual being to the Being of God from Whom (so far as beings exist) it springs and to Whom it returns. It is people such as this who need religious guidance, and for them this book will seem to be in the Liberal Protestant tradition of scuttling the ship for fear of storms, appeasing the enemy by surrendering even more than he demands.

In speaking of Christ, the author does come near to understanding the true nature of man when he says that God could act through Christ only because Christ made himself 'utterly transparent to him' by eliminating all self-will and being 'nothing in himself'. He immediately negates this intuition, however, by asserting with the smug assurance of the Christian monopolist that this has only happened in the case of Christ. How does he know? One is reminded of Sariputra's enthusiastic outburst that Gautama Buddha was the greatest Master the world had ever seen or ever would see, and Gautama's gently sarcastic reply: "I take it that you have known all the Masters the world has ever seen or ever will see?" Such a claim of unicity is particularly out of place in a book like this which is attempting to replace what the author calls the 'mythology' of divine beings and events by the universality of intellectual principles.

2. *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

MEETINGS WITH REMARKABLE MEN: By G. Gurdjieff. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30s.)

Gurdjieff's 'Meetings with Remarkable Men', now re-issued in a revised translation, is in fact a rambling but well written autobiography. It builds up the picture of a resourceful and versatile man completely without scruples in his ways of obtaining money and always prepared to hoodwink people and pass under false pretences, as for instance, when he masquerades as a Muslim Syed.

What is most important in view of the controversies that have grown up around him is that the book shows no sign at all of spiritual understanding. He speaks constantly of his interest in the occult and his search for forgotten secrets in ancient manuscripts and hidden centres, but there is nothing spiritual in all that. Truth is hidden only by men's obtuseness and is to be found not in old documents but in the heart. Typical is his saying that he penetrated to Mecca and Medina, masquerading as a Muslim, in his search for the essence of Islam and then learnt that it is preserved not there but in Bukhara. For one who can understand, it exists, independent of time and place, in the *shahada*: 'There is no god but God.'

He may have acquired psychic or hypnotic powers in the hidden centres he claims to have visited - and indeed, the extraordinary influence he later exerted makes it seem probable that he did - but there is nothing spiritual in that. The Maharshi said: "Truth is simple but people don't want Truth, they want mystery." For those who want mystery Gurdjieff's book may prove tantalising with its constant hinting at secret knowledge which, however, he is careful never to divulge. For those who seek Truth there is nothing in it.

THE ONE WORK: A Journey towards the Self, By Anne Gage. (Vincent Stuart, 21s.)

Miss Gage had a youthful experience which, although not a pre-glimpse of Realization, was at any rate powerful enough to create in her the urge to be numbered among those who seek and who expound. She travelled to India, where she admired the Ajanta

paintings; on to Siam, where she told a Buddhist priest that she wanted to hear the ultimate Truth, but quick because she had not much time; to Angkor, Bali, Japan. She is at her best in the intermediate world of traditional art and symbols, about which she really does write with feeling and understanding. Unfortunately, however, she aspires to make her visit to the sacred mountain Arunachala the climax of her book. There were people who could have explained the direct, simple teaching of the Maharshi to her if, as is evident, she had not understood it from reading; but instead she contacted some mysterious or fictional swami on the hill at twilight, in whose name she gives us a lecture on the difference between the individuality and the personality, reminiscent of Western Hermetism but poles apart from the Maharshi's teaching of the One Self.

THE SEARCH OF A YOGI: Himalayan Pilgrimage. By Dom Denys Rutledge. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 30s.)

Father Rutledge believes that there is no such thing as a Jivan Mukta or a miracle-working yogi. He does not seem to know the difference between the two. At any rate he uses the terms indiscriminately. He tells us that he had a few weeks time to fill in before taking his ship back to England, so, despite his disbelief in their existence, he travelled down the Ganges from Almora to Rishikesh looking for samples. He returned triumphantly unsuccessful. As well might one make a tour of the churches of Rome and end up with the triumphant conclusion: "I saw no miracles worked; therefore there is no such thing as a Catholic saint."

All this is rather ridiculous than sinister; what makes the book really pernicious is the author's avowed belief that Hinduism is satanic. It is a great pity that in an age when the forces of unbelief are so powerful one who has belief should display such fanatical ignorance and malice towards other forms of belief.

HUNTING THE GURU IN INDIA: By Anne Marshall (Gollancz, Pp. 205, Price 25s.)

Christ declared that he who seeks will find; but seeking implies an attitude of humility and this is just

what Miss Marshall lacks. She has not the deliberate hostility and determination not to find that Fr. Rutledge has; rather she interviews her gurus from a pedestal of superior cleverness, with a snigger seldom far removed. Typical is the comment on Swami Purushottamananda, a venerable recluse living in a cave in the Himalayas near Rishikesh. In reply to her request for a message he tells her: "Know yourself and be free." She comments: "Probably he felt he had to say something." The implication is that the message was inane; actually it is the comment that is inane.

The nearest she came to a spirit of reverence was at Tiruvannamalai, "...in view of my disappointment at Pondicherry, I very nearly left the Ramanashram of the Maharshi out of my itinerary. It would have been a pity if I had done so. After an all night train journey, I arrived at Tiruvannamalai just as the sun was clearing the horizon. The stars were fading out of the sky and the *gopurams* of the temple were silhouetted against the perfect cone of Arunachala Hill. It rose three thousand feet out of flat terrain and being so close it completely dominated the scene. The summit was at that moment hidden in a cloud which deepened to a crimson coronet as it caught the first rays of sunlight. Ten minutes later the display was over and the heat of the day began. I had seen the Taj Mahal by moonlight and the vast expanse of the snow-clad Himalayas stretching for a hundred miles, but in all India I never saw anything to equal this first glimpse of the holy hill, rose-crowned by the glory of the morning light. It so dominated my mental horizon that I felt unequal to the task of impartial judgement. To many, Arunachala is just an ordinary and rather uninteresting hill covered with rough grass and shale, but I always see it through the rosy glow of that cloud on the summit. Arunachala Hill is, according to local myth, the symbol of Spirit incarnate in Matter. The Tamils declare that it is the oldest hill in the world, the heart of the earth and its centre; Mount Meru in fact."

She was impressed too by the Maharshi. She says of devotees she visited: "Their house is adorned with many pictures of the sage, and I was at once

struck with their tremendous range of expression. In the later pictures especially, he wears a look of such unbelievable tenderness that involuntarily I exclaimed, 'What a beautiful face!' Always it was these late photographs that drew me and held my gaze over and over again. If he can impress like this from a mere photograph, how much greater must have been the impact of the living man." Yet even with the Maharshi she felt quite competent to offer her own superficial emendation to his teaching as contained in the Forty Verses on Reality.

What makes her attitude the less excusable is that (like Koestler, another supercilious sceptic) she has herself had experience of non-physical, supra-mental awareness, as she explains at the end of the book.

THE MEANING OF LIFE: By S. Subramanya Iyer. (Published by the author from 'Mysore Lodge', Madanapalli, A. P., Rs. 1.)

Sri Subramanya Iyer's little book on the meaning of life is composed in terse, sutra-like sentences, stating, not arguing.

The art of living consists in being in tune with nature, in tune with the law of life.

It starts with self-enquiry: 'Who am I? Whither do I come? What is the purpose and meaning of life?'

It is based on self-knowledge, the principles of *dharma* and the law of *karma*.

It will be seen that this is not the 'Who am I?' taught by the Maharshi, which is a quest of the 'I' that neither comes nor goes and has no purpose but just is. Nevertheless there is much in the author's reflections that readers may find interesting.

It is regrettable, however, that the first two items in the book are vitiated by the illusion so common in India that by cutting language up into lines beginning with capital letters you can make poetry of it.

ASHRAMS, LES YOGISE' T LES SAGES: By Arnaud Desjardins. (La Palatine, N. F. 12.60)

Arnaud Desjardins prepared a television roundup of the ashrams and sages of India today, and his delightfully written book comes as a further exposition

of this. Especially for those who have remained doubtful as to whether there really is a path or any Goal to seek, the sentence repeated almost as a refrain in the early part of the book: "But supposing it should be true," will strike a note.

The ashrams which he and his wife visited were, in this order, those of Swami Sivananda, Ananda Mayi Ma, Swami Ramdas and the Maharshi; and it should be added that Swami Sivananda and Swami Ramdas were still living at the time.

The first chapter is very skilfully written, bringing in much information about ashrams and swamis, paths and doctrines, so mingled with local colour and descriptions of people and events that it never becomes heavy or tedious. Throughout the chapter he adroitly avoids saying whether he is really convinced by the swami.

In the next chapter he is completely captivated by Ananda Mayi Ma, the Bengali woman saint. He mentions the hardship that a Western devotee faces in following her - no fixed abode, as she moves constantly from one ashram to another; no satisfactory provision for Westerners, as her immediate entourage are orthodox Brahmins; dependence on translators, as she speaks no Western language - but he considers it all well worthwhile for the benefit of her presence.

He and his wife were delighted also by the exuberant happiness and the atmosphere of purity and goodness emanating from Swami Ramdas at Anandashram, and by the strength and serenity that they felt in Mataji Krishna Bai. But there is not the same personal devotion as to Ananda Mayi Ma.

Only the chapter on the Maharshi is disappointing, perhaps because the author was too late to meet the Maharshi personally, perhaps also because he was less drawn to the path of pure Advaita. There are a few mistakes, as when he says that the Maharshi put *bhakti* first, calling it 'the Mother of *Jnana*' (and why does he give this supposed quotation in Hindi, when the Maharshi spoke Tamil?). Actually, the Maharshi did prescribe the path of *bhakti*, but only

as a second choice, for those who found *Jnana*, the path of Knowledge, too arduous. The principal fault, however, is one of atmosphere or emphasis: lacking the personal touch that lends such charm to the other chapters, his style becomes ponderous and he gives an impression of the Maharshi as a philosopher sitting on his couch lecturing on predestination. Actually the Maharshi avoided theorising as far as possible, always turning the questioner to practical considerations of *sadhana*; and his expositions, when he did give any, were always lively, often humorous.

It is unfortunate, but perhaps natural, that one who has visited gurus should feel the urge to claim that they are 'the same as the Maharshi'.

Swami Ramdas often used to say: "Ram told Ramdas to say so and so." ('Ram' is a name of God, and 'Ramdas' means 'slave of God'.) Someone once told Bhagavan this and asked him whether it was true. Waving his hand around, he said: "As true as all this." That is to say that it is part of the universal *Maya*. Ultimately there is neither Ram nor Ramdas; there just IS. And that is Bhagavan.

HOEHLLEN, KLOESTER, ASHRAMS: Edited by Ursula von Mangoldt. (Otto Wilhelm Barth Verlag, Weilheim/Oberbayern, West Germany, price not stated.)

A similar work has been published in Germany, only in this case it covers a wider ground and is a symposium, the different gurus and ashrams being described by different persons.

The editor herself writes on Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Arthur Osborne on the Maharshi and his Ashram and also on the Ashram of Sai Baba at Shirdi, K. Ramachandra on Swami Ramdas and Ananda Mayi Ma, Gebhard Frei on Swami Sivananda. Apart from this, Savitri Devi, a German lady turned *sannyasin*, has contributed a chapter on the Ramakrishna Mission, of which she is a great devotee, and one on 'Caves in the Himalayas', which she knows personally. Finally there are two chapters on Japanese Zen, one by Ernst Benz and the other by Takashi Hirata.

POET-PHILOSOPHERS OF THE RIG-VEDA:

By Dr. C. Kunhan Raja (Ganesh & Co. (Madras) Ltd., Madras-17. Pp. xxv and 330. Price Rs. 20.)

The late Dr. C. Kunhan Raja was an eminent Sanskrit scholar who chose Vedic literature as his special field of research. In the present book, he gives a lucid account of the philosophies of some of the Rig-Vedic poets, adding whatever information could be gathered about their lives and times. Dirghatmas, Brihaspati, Sunassepa, Yama, Manu and Angiras are the poets discussed in a sequence of six chapters. The reason for selecting these poets is that they were the founders of religion and philosophy, and each of them was a type by himself. For example, Yama was the first to find the Path, and Manu was the first to institute religious rituals. A few of the other teachers are mentioned in chapter seven. In the chapter that follows, the views regarding the formation of the world are analysed and explained. The final chapter entitled Samvanana (Integration) is a commentary on a small poem of four verses, pleading for the continuance of unity among the people. In the Appendix are given the poems themselves in Roman script and their English rendering.

The Introduction sets forth certain conclusions reached by the learned author regarding the nature of Vedic civilisation and poetry. He is convinced that the Vedic poets were not primitive people addressing their prayers to forces of nature personified in fear and dread. Vedic poetry is of a high grade. Vedic civilisation was an advanced civilisation which had been preceded by a long period of civilised existence. Again, Dr. Raja does not agree with the view that there is an evolution in the hymns from naturalistic polytheism to monotheism and monism. It is wrong, he believes, to regard certain *mandalas* of the Rig-Veda as later compositions on the ground that they contain 'evolved' thoughts. He sees in the philosophy of the hymns attempts at integration and harmony.

This book opens up many lines of inquiry into the contents of Vedic lore. This is a publication which those scholars who are interested in Vedic studies cannot afford to ignore.

- DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN.

RIGVEDA MANDALA VII:

By H. D. Velankar. (Bhavan's Book University, - Bombay-7, Pp. xxxii and 80 and 288, Price Rs. 20.)

This is a critical edition of the Seventh Mandala of the Rigveda with an introduction, English translation and critical notes. The learned editor, Professor Velankar, has to his credit long experience in teaching and research. He has taught the text to several generations of post-graduate students and knows what critical aids they require for understanding it. Although he has planned to publish an annotated translation of the entire Rigveda, he has selected the Seventh Mandala first because it 'has figured very prominently' among the prescribed texts for the M. A. Sanskrit course.

The text is printed in Devanagari, and is followed by an annotated translation which is clear and faithful. As appendices are given a select glossary of Sanskrit terms, a general index, an index of deities, and an index of metres. In the scholarly introduction, the editor discusses the contents of the Mandala under certain topics. In the section, on 'Vedic Word Deva and Idolatry', Professor Velankar lists what he calls the contrasts between the loyalties of the Vedic Aryans and their rivals, the non-Aryans. But there is room for doubt as to whether the terms 'Aryan' and 'non-Aryan' bear a racial significance.

- DR. T. M. P. MAHADEVAN.

SANKARA'S TEACHINGS IN HIS OWN WORDS:

By Swami Atmananda.

RAMANUJA'S TEACHINGS IN HIS OWN WORDS:

By M. Yamunacharya.

MADHVA'S TEACHINGS IN HIS OWN WORDS:

By B. N. K. Sharma.

(All three published by Bhavan's Book University, Chaupathy, Bombay-7, Rs. 2.50 each.)

The Hindu Religion has been described as the *sanatana dharma*, the eternal Law of life, because it has known no death, no irresistible decay. The truth of the Spirit that has actuated it from its dateless beginnings renews itself constantly in new and newer forms but always preserves its innate character. It has been a fundamental Truth of the Hindu religion

that the Divine is indeed One but it has several aspects or statuses in manifestation and the human soul can approach and realise the Divine in any of them. All are facts of spiritual and intimate experience; all are equally true. The three treatises before us are a worthy testimony to this spirit of the Indian tradition.

Spearheading the movement of revival of the ancient Hindu religion after a long period of stagnation, Acharya Sankara (8th century AD) reaffirmed the Vedantic Truth of the One Brahman without a second. The Reality is One, the Transcendent, the Absolute. The universe is only relatively true, a play of *Maya* on the Being of Brahman. The existence of man also has the same character. In his core, man is none other than Brahman. But he is involved in this play of *Maya*. His ultimate destiny is to realise this true nature of his being. The process thereto is one of mental understanding, preparation and inner purification for translating the knowledge so gained into terms of living, and finally one-pointed absorption in the *yoga-sadhana* to achieve liberation and union with the Divine.

Swami Atmananda gives a well phased exposition of Sankara's teachings on the subject, quoting from the original writings of the Acharya in profusion. The Shruti, Karma, Upasana, Jnana, are some of the headings of the sections in the book.

Some three centuries later rose another Acharya, also a figure of towering spiritual attainments, who gave expression to another possible realisation of the Divine. Brahman is One, he agreed but it is qualified by two attributes: matter and souls, the world and individual beings (*jivas*). Both the *jiva* and the world are creations of the Divine who is conceived as the Lord Vasudeva, and are dependent on Him. The Lord is eternally at play with his creations and it is the goal of man to divest himself of the folds of ignorance in which he is clothed and emerge into the august proximity of the Lord and participate in the Divine game or *Lila* consciously. There is a strong element of theism in this philosophy and Prof. Yamunacharya is lucid in his exposition, with apposite quotations of the path of surrender that man is called upon

to tread and of the importance of Grace in the deliverance of the human soul.

Madhavacharya (13th century), basing his philosophy on his own spiritual realisation, propounded the Doctrine of Dualism. There are, he said, three real entities: God, Soul and the Universe, the latter two being dependent on God. There can only be one relation between man and God, that of servant and Master. There can be no identity between either God and man or God and world. Dr. Sharma is to be congratulated on the classic quality of his work in which he not only gives the fundamentals of the Dvaita philosophy, but points out the special contribution made by the Acharya to the national heritage by his commentaries on portions of the Veda, the Upanishads, the epics etc.

All the three books are weighty. As Sri Diwakar observes in his Foreword to the second book, "the emphasis which all the three Acharyas have given to *Bhakti*, the prominence which they gave to daily discipline and the principle of dedication of every act to God have enriched truly religious life and made it easier for the common man to tread the Path of God."

- M. P. PANDIT.

BHAGAVAD GITA: By C. Rajagopalachari. (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7. Price Rs. 2.50).

The Gita represents a great effort at synthesis of the many lines of philosophy and practice of inner life that came to be developed by the Aryan genius in India. It serves as a link between the Vedic and Upanishadic past and the subsequent ages of the Darshanas. That is how it occupied a unique position in the scriptures of Hinduism and has been commented upon by practically all the leading Acharyas of the land.

The present book is intended to serve as a handbook for beginners who do not know much about this text. It gives a rapid idea of the contents *e.g.* Soul, Karma, Nature, Meditation, Austerities, Karma-Yoga etc. Select verses are

given under each head with translations and helpful notes. The compilation amply fulfills the intention of the author: it awakens the interest of the reader in the original and also induces a faith in the higher life possible for man.

- M. P. PANDIT.

IMMORTAL WORDS: An Anthology: (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7. Price Rs. 2.50).

Brought out on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Bhavan which has done such splendid work in the propagation of the higher values of Indian tradition, this volume consists of inspiring selections from the writings and utterances of the seers, sages and wise men of all lands, of all ages. They are arranged in twenty-four sections, *e.g.* Culture, Devotion, Faith, Life, Love, Work etc., and make for very instructive reading. The publication answers to the requirements of a good book as laid down by Louisa M. Alcott (and

quoted on page 110): "That is a good book, it seems to me, which is opened with expectation and closed with profit."

- M. P. PANDIT.

THE PSALMS FOR THE COMMON READER: By Mary Ellen Chase. (Michael Joseph, 21s)

The Book of Psalms is really five books put together, each one of them probably an anthology, Miss Chase explains. Writing lovingly of them, she describes how the scholars divide them into categories such as hymns, thanksgiving, laments, historical and so on. She also distinguishes between those meant as choral anthems and those that seem to be personal outpourings. Her appreciative exposition extends to the poetry as well as the religion of them.

In a lengthy supplement she gives a brief account of the long and tangled history of Israel so as to show the background from which they arose.

- SAGITTARIUS.

FIGHTING SLEEPINESS

By D

I was powerfully drawn to Bhagavan. His teaching, when I read about it, spoke direct to my heart and I felt that this was the only way for me. When I came to his Ashram at Tiruvannamalai I felt great peace there, not an idle, sleepy peace but vital peace with great beauty. Only one thing distressed me: that whenever I sat in 'meditation' as we call it, enquiring into the Reality of me, as Bhagavan taught, an overpowering wave of sleepiness came upon me. The annoying thing was that if I gave up meditation and started to do something else the sleepiness left me.

I asked one of the older devotees about it and he explained that this was just one of the ego's defences against meditation. What he said was:

"Normally when we stop thinking we go to sleep, but the sort of 'meditation' Bhagavan teaches involves suspending thought while still retaining consciousness. The ego fights against it in two ways - by introducing thoughts even though we decide to stop them or by giving up consciousness along with them, that is to say by going to sleep as soon as they stop. We simply have to persevere and resist both."

I took this advice and after some time the attacks of sleepiness ceased to trouble me and I found that it really was possible to remain awake but undisturbed by thought, if only for a short time. I am writing this now with the idea that it may be of help to other beginners who suffer from the same difficulty that I did.

Ashram Bulletin

Soon after our last bulletin went to the press we received a visit from the North Indian woman saint Godavari Mata accompanied by a group of her followers. All who came in contact with her felt her kindness and goodwill.

JAYANTI, Bhagavan's birth anniversary, fell on December 31st this year. It is always a festive occasion. There was a large gathering of devotees, old and new, representing not only India but Australia, England, Germany, France, Holland and Switzerland. The same outpouring of Grace was felt as used to be experienced in former years.

It was possible to remove the scaffolding for the occasion and reveal the beautiful new structure of Bhagavan's shrine (samadhi) made by a highly skilled group of hereditary stone-carvers out of stone from Aurunachala. This is a peculiar kind of stone which, when polished, goes jet black and as smooth as marble but when unpolished is light grey in colour, so that it is possible to obtain carving in two colours from the same stone. It will be some years yet before the hall which is to enclose the shrine is completed.

On the same date a Board of Trustees for the management of the Ashram was set up according to a scheme previously drawn up by the Madras Government, consisting of the Ashram President and four trustees. The Board consists of the following persons:

Sri T. N. Venkataraman - President.
Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami, Medical Practitioner,
Madras.
Mrs. F. Taleyarkhan, Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.
Sri S. S. V. S. Muthiah Chettiar, Banker,
Tiruvannamalai.
Sri K. Srinivasachariar, Advocate,
Tiruvannamalai.

The previous managing committee, which was registered in 1950 under the Societies Registration Act, was dissolved on January 1st, 1964. However, Ashram affairs will continue to be run as smoothly and efficiently as before and with no change of direction, especially as all but one of the new Board of Trustees were also members of the previous Committee.

Actually the ordinary devotee or visitor is very little affected by the Ashram management. Facilities are provided for his accommodation and meditation, the premises are kept clean and reasonably quiet, the meals and services are punctual, the library is available for use; and really that is all that concerns him.

The official publication ceremony of *The Mountain Path* was also held on *Jayanti*. Three months after the idea first descended upon its originators the copies were here, ready for distribution. That may seem ample time, but



The Publication ceremony of 'The Mountain Path' at Bombay, under the auspices of Sri Ramana Jayanthi Celebration Committee. Sri Homi J. H. Taleyarkhan, Minister for Civil Supplies and Housing, Maharashtra, is seen with the journal in his hand, announcing its publication. Sri S. K. Patil is in the chair presiding

actually there was a lot to be done - organisation, publicity, financial support, as well as mobilising a team of writers and obtaining the articles. The guest of honour and chief speaker for the occasion was Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, Head of the Philosophy Department of Madras University and a known devotee of Bhagavan and exponent of his teaching. Several other old devotees also spoke.

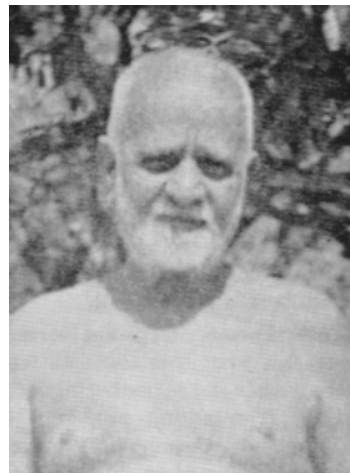
A little later an inaugural ceremony was also held in Bombay in the hall of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan (Bhavan's Book University), kindly lent for the occasion, by the Sri Ramana Jayanti Celebration Committee, Bombay, with Sri Homi Taleyarkhan, Minister for Civil Supplies and Housing, Government of Maharashtra, presiding. Bombay has always been a stronghold of Bhagavan's followers and there was considerable interest and a wide attendance.

The Ashram has usually managed to publish or republish some book on the occasion of Jayanti. This year it republished *Crumbs from his Table* by Ramananda Swarnagiri. This, as mentioned in the book review section of our previous issue, was the first book of reminiscences of Bhagavan ever written but had long been out of print.

There has been the usual flow of visitors from India and abroad. Outstanding perhaps among those who have come during this period (apart from Godavari Mata, already mentioned) were the concert pianists Jerry Stofsky of New York and Annie Alt of Switzerland. In the midst of a world tour of concerts they found time for ten quiet days at Tiruvannamalai. Annie Alt is an old devotee who had been waiting twenty years for the opportunity of coming here. It was she who made the German translation of The Maharshi's Gospel. Another distinguished visitor was Mr. Robert Linssen, an exponent of Zen Buddhism. He has also written a book on Zen.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMMODATION

The Ashram intends to build accommodation consisting of four single rooms with bathrooms



Swami Ramanananda Saraswathi, compiler of 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi', about whom we wrote in our January issue

attached outside the Ashram premises adjacent to the guest houses recently built for Smt. Padmanabhan and Sri Khanna. This is for the convenience of lady visitors, since ladies are not allowed to stay in the Ashram premises. It is hoped to complete the work this year.

RAMANA BHAKTA SABHA

The Ramana Bhakta Sabha of Alwarpet, Madras, has been absolutely regular in its weekly Sunday meetings ever since its foundation in 1950. Its *Jayanti* meeting on December 29th, 1963, was addressed by Mr. Justice M. Anantanarayanan who, elaborating on his preface to Part 1 of 'Ramana Anubhuti' quoted examples from Muruganar and other Tamil poets to show how poetry stands midway between the ever-fresh wonder of childhood and the still, wordless experience of Infinity-in-an-instant.

IN MEMORIAM

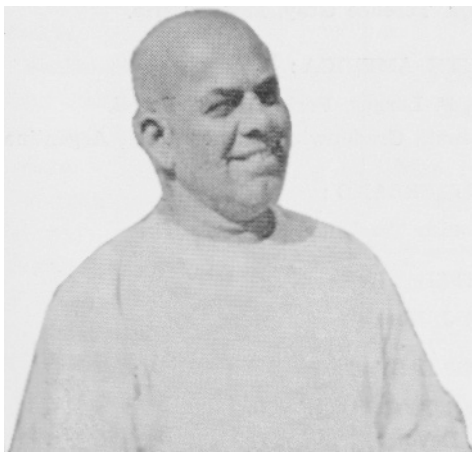
It seems appropriate to mention one or two old devotees who have passed away.

We still occasionally receive enquiries about YOGI RAMIAH on account of the high praise bestowed on him by Paul Brunton in *A Search in*

Secret India. He passed away in 1962. He came of a simple agricultural family in Andhra and had no higher education. He approached Bhagavan for spiritual guidance in the early twenties, before Bhagavan was widely known, and remained a staunch devotee ever after. He made considerable use of pranayama (breath control) which Bhagavan permitted in certain cases, although he did not actually prescribe it. It was for his benefit that Bhagavan translated his *Upadesa Saram* ('Thirty Verses') and *Ulladu Narpadu* ('Forty Verses on Reality') into Telugu, as Yogi Ramiah did not speak Tamil. A man of generous disposition, he gave freely to religious causes. He contributed liberally to the Ashram in its early days.

M. V. RAMASWAMI IYER was a retired engineer and a gifted musical composer who first came to Bhagavan as early as 1909 when Bhagavan was still living in Virupaksha Cave. He followed *bhakti-marga*, the path of devotion, worshipping Bhagavan as God. Some of his songs are very popular, especially the one called 'Saranagathi' (Surrender). He passed away two years back.

N. S. RANGANADIER of the Trichinopoly bar, who passed away a few years ago, was a diligent student of the *Bhagavad Gita* and its commentary



Swami Rajeswarananda

by Sri Sankara. His deep *advaitic* understanding drew him to the feet of the Maharshi, to whom he surrendered himself. He was of great help to the *Sarvadhikari* in the work of Ashram management and also in the founding of the Sundara Mandiram at Tiruchuzhi, the Maharshi's birthplace, and of the Sri Ramana Mandiram at Madurai, the town where Ramana was living when he attained Realization as a schoolboy of sixteen. He managed this latter institution until his death. His whole family are devoted to Bhagavan, who is for them the Supreme Lord.

RANGA RAO served Bhagavan for more than 30 years. He was a tireless worker in the Ashram kitchen during the thirties and forties. He also had knowledge of ayurvedic medicine. When he passed away a few months ago the Ashram lost a devoted and sincere worker.

SWAMI RAJESWARANANDA passed away quite suddenly and unexpectedly at Sri Ramanasramam on January 31st this year. He had been the editor of *The Call Divine* since its inception twelve years ago. For the past two years, although it continued to be published in Bombay, he had been resident here and edited it from here.

Born in Madras, he was early drawn to a religious life and approached the Ramakrishna Math and its President, Swami Sharvananda, inspired by contact with whom he took the name of Satchidananda. Later, however, while travelling in North India, he was initiated into formal *sannyas* by Swami Shivanandaji Maharaj, known widely as Mahapurusha Maharaj, who was then the President of the Ramakrishna Order, and was given the *sannyas* name of Rajeswarananda.

After becoming known as a writer, editor of periodicals and swami, he came to Tiruvannamalai to seek the Grace of Sri Bhagavan, whose devotee he remained thereafter.

Woo poverty. It is the great matchmaker between you and God. - BHAKTA MIRA

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Letters to the Editor

Having read your books, I am sure that your journal will be a great success. The title itself is most inspiring, and so are the contents of the first issue.

With my best wishes for the success of your journal.

Lama Anagarika Govinda,
Dinapani, Almora District

I offer my congratulations on the magazine may it fulfil its mission of being a help to all those who - East or West - seek some real teachings of the path that lies beyond all the conventional creeds... Long may it flourish.

Sri Krishna Prem,
Mirtola, Almora District

'The Mountain Path' is a very good beginning towards the radiation of Bhagavan's Atmic rays through the word. The get-up is excellent and the substance valuable. Let it be a legacy of spiritual treasure bequeathed to pilgrims of eternity.

Yogi Shuddananda
Bharati, Madras.

May we send you our congratulations and gratitude for the production of such a fine publication. It will enable us to feel more deeply in our hearts the ever living presence of our beloved Master and it will throw new vistas and light on the Path of Truth and Peace which he has traced for modern times.

Institut Universel Soufi,
Suresnes, France.

I think you have made a good job of 'The mountain Path'. It is full of variety and interest. I liked your own article on Religion and Art especially. It is very much how I look at it.

Dom Bede Griffiths, O.S.B.,
Kurizimala Ashram, Kerala.

Among so many quite excellent articles I have to give your own on 'The Relations between Religion and Art' the priority, but I was enchanted by two of the shorter ones, called 'Is Sufism Islamic?' by Abdullah Qutbuddin and 'A Visit to Anandashram' by Unnamulai. Dr. Krishnaswami's 'Outside the Scriptures' seems to me to be a truly remarkable intellectual achievement, bringing the outlook of Ch'an Buddhism into harmony with that of Vedanta, by means of Maharshi's words, with extraordinary success If you can maintain this standard the circulation can hardly fail to increase rapidly, and it will be recognised as the best quarterly in English dealing with the esoteric aspects of religion.

A real triumph is the English itself; to anyone used to suffering from the anglo-oriental language of, I think, all other such publications, *i.e.* from English as she is written in the East, its impeccable style is like balm to the suffering palate.

Terence Gray, Monte Carlo.

The article 'Outside the Scriptures' by Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami was interesting at the first reading, whereas on the second reading, after a month, it was lovely. I feel like expressing my appreciation to T. N. Krishnaswami direct, but for an inner warning that it would be rank impertinence on my part to do so.

K. G. Rathnam, Bombay.

Not at all. A writer always likes to know that his work is appreciated. — Editor

I congratulate you on a very good publication. I thought your own articles, especially the editorial, very good indeed; and the article about Moral Rearmament most illuminating.

Marie B. Byles,
Cheltenham, Australia.

Reading Wei Wu Wei's article in the first issue of 'The Mountain Path', I feel strongly that he can explain Sri Bhagavan's significant preaching through 'silence' in his cryptic style better than most people in long articles. I hope we shall have more contributions from him.

'Sein', Tiruvannamalai.

I have just read in 'The Mountain Path' Unnamulai's article about Anandashram. It culminates at the very end in the inexpressible experience that Papa and Ram-Nam are one. This experience of hers is mine also. The Being who was manifesting Itself through that vehicle called Papa is directly experienced within oneself as oneself by taking the Name. It is true to say that Papa or Ram and his Name are One. But we cannot comment on this most subtle awareness of the Oneness uniting our heart with all hearts or we should obscure this bright sky with dark clouds of concepts which mean division. It is a knowledge direct from heart to heart. I am very happy that Unnamulai hinted at it in what she wrote.

H. M., Anandashram,

I loved the leader in the first issue of 'The Mountain Path' and the poem 'The Few' that followed it. I had to read the poem aloud, it was so beautiful. I liked the two poems in the article on 'The Relations between Religion and Art' too, but not as much as 'The Few'. You were really inspired when you wrote that.

But I hope you won't take anything more from Sagittarius. 'An Aggressive Teacher' is such nonsense that it just made me laugh. I couldn't even take it seriously enough to criticise it.

Valerie Freeman, Melbourne, Australia,

Each reader will have his preference, but I was particularly impressed by the refreshing viewpoint and vigorous style of 'An Aggressive Teacher'. Only I could have wished that Sagittarius had lengthened it by pointing out that Christ was in the

aggressive tradition of the Hebrew Prophets, all of whom had denounced the vices of the people and the sins of their rulers, whereas Buddha was in the aloof tradition of the Hindu Rishis who retired to the forest and waited for disciples to come to them.

W. Mc. K. Aitken, Kausani, U. P.

Assuming, as Sagittarius apparently does, that Christ was a private individual expressing his personal opinions and uninvested with any divine authority, his teachings and actions were certainly arrogant. To the Jews they were more than arrogant and therefore they crucified him. For though it may be permissible in the Hindu tradition for a man to equate himself with God, to the strictly monotheistic Jew it could be no less Than blasphemy.

But for Christians he is the Son of God and for Muslims a Prophet of God. He was acting and teaching not of himself but simply as the agent and mouthpiece of the One who had sent him. Christ himself frequently insists on this point in the Gospels. Similarly we find the more arrogant of the earlier Hebrew prophets complaining bitterly of the dangerous and troublesome office that had been thrust upon them. They had been entrusted with a message and had to 'get it across' to a generation many of whom had more than a little dust in their eyes. In the context the complaint of arrogance is surely out of place.

Scorpio Nagore,

I am amused by Miss Freeman's amusement, I agree with Mr. Aitken that it would have been better to lengthen my article so as to link Christ up with the aggressive tradition of the Jewish Prophets and Buddha with aloof tradition of the Hindu Rishis. I would like to remind 'Scorpio' that I do not speak of Christ's manner as 'arrogant', a term which implies moral reprobation, but as 'aggressive', which it undoubtedly was. An aggressive manner may be demanded by circumstances, an arrogant manner never. I would also remind him that I distinguished between the 'vertical' and 'horizontal' aspects of

a divine message, that is between the message itself and the mode of delivery. The former is universal and divine - the latter specific and individual.— Sagittarius

I wish some pages could be set apart in 'The Mountain Path' in which devotees could describe their spiritual experiences and narrate incidents when Bhagavan's Grace has brought them solace or conferred some benefits on them.

G. R. Trivedi, Rajahmundry,

Any such accounts will be welcomed by the editor and carefully considered for publication either as items in the magazine or as letters to the editor — Editor.

Ramana Maharshi's books are certainly wonderful. They agree in entirety with Ch'an and Zen Masters, who speak or point at the pure and clean Self-nature.

Sri Ramana said again and again that the body is the main obstruction to the realisation of the Self, 'that man identifies his real Self with the mind and body and that that is the main, thing to go beyond. In other words the real Self is not the physical mind-body as everyone supposes. The Buddha would say that body and mind just don't exist in the Self-nature.

My question is why do you have so many pictures of Sri Ramana in all of the books and even on your letterhead? It would seem to me that this would be very misleading to devotees.

It looks like you are trying to eternalise the physical body rather than the pure spirit or as Sri Ramana would say Pure Consciousness.

Please don't for a minute think that I am being critical or disrespectful, it is that it seems so incongruous to see a physical body photographed so often when Sri Ramana's chief message was "you are not the body."

It would seem to misdirect devotees back to the body as against the Self or Pure Consciousness

that seems to me to have been Sri Ramana's chief message.

Sri Ramana said "a sage knows his bodiless existence just as an ordinary man knows his bodily existence."

J. G., Alabama.

It is true that you are not the body; but so long as you feel that you are you also feel that there are other bodies and you are influenced by them in various ways and to varying extent. The most powerful of all these influences is that of the Guru. It may happen that, just as an ordinary person's way of living and thinking shows in his face, so the grace and wisdom and power and beauty of a Guru do. This was so with Bhagavan. Many people were moved to the heart by just seeing him. Some people have been so powerfully moved by seeing a picture of him as to lose consciousness. One German devotee was awe-struck and taken immediately inward, when she saw a photo of Sri Bhagavan in a hut in the middle of a forest in Germany, after the second world war. She did not then know that it was Bhagavan. One Englishman who came here told us that he was the owner of an antique shop. One day a lady came in as a customer and as she opened her bag a picture of Bhagavan fell out. He fetched a chair and made her sit down and tell him about it, and from that day, his intuition told him that Bhagavan was his Guru.

Certainly Bhagavan said that the outer Guru serves only to awaken the inner Guru in the heart and ceases to be necessary when that has been done; but it may take some time to do that, and until it has been done the impact of grace from the outer Guru can be terrifically powerful. As long as, for instance, a man's wife or child or parents are real to him, the outer Guru is even more so. And as long as an evil contact can harm him, so long can a blessed contact help him.

The question is not whether a Sage knows his bodiless existence, but whether you do. Until you do, other bodies influence you, and the more

blessed that influence is the better it will be for you. — Editor.

Ever since I first read about the late Sri Ramana, I have been a great admirer of Him and His teachings, He is exactly the kind of master I would have liked to have known and followed.

What I would like to know is whether there exist here in the West, either in Canada or the U.S., any fellowships, societies etc. devoted to the study and application of his teachings. I do know of some other spiritual societies here but they have been founded by Yogis and Swamis of a different type than Sri Ramana. They follow mostly the *Bhakti* approach and I am more of the *Jnana* type. If no fellowships exist here, how would it be possible to come into contact with other people in the West who share my admiration for Sri Ramana?

I hope that you will be able to help me a little bit on the road to Self-realization. It becomes very lonesome at times when one's interests are so very different from those of one's neighbours.

J. Wispel WFY,
Kinistino, Saskatchewan, Canada,

The way to Realization is always a lonely road. It is a turning away from outer fellowship to the Self in the heart. In particular, the path shown by Sri Ramana is less dependent on groups and fellowship than most others, since it is a direct inward seeking free from outer activity.

Perhaps you will best be able to maintain communication with others on the path through this quarterly, and especially through the 'letters to the editor' column — Editor

For the last two years I have been searching for the Self. I attain stillness within three or four minutes but the voice of the 'I' is not yet found. Kindly help me and instruct me how to proceed further.

Vasu Bhatia, Lucknow,

Never mind about the voice of the 'I'. There are not two selves in you, for one to hear the other.

There is only one Self, and that is pure stillness, which is the same as pure consciousness or pure being. Try to hold on to that. Or rather, since 'holding' is an individual act, try just to let it be without interfering, without stopping it by thinking. — Editor

Satori seems to be a lower degree in comparison with the highest state of realization or *samadhi*. Am I correct? To describe satori as a pre-glimpse of the supreme state, as written by you, is rather cloudy.

Wei Wu Wei's writing on Zen with reference to Bhagavan's teaching and attempting to bring out a similarity is rather forced. I have not yet found any Zen book prescribing 'Who am I?' as a koan except in Wei Wu Wei's own writings. Have you heard it from any Zen or Ch'an Masters or met any such?

It is natural for a Realized Man to advise others to remain in *samsara* while following the quest, but is there any one who has realized his Self while simultaneously carrying on with all the responsibilities of *samsara*?

Doesn't the sense of 'non-doership' obstruct the whole-hearted attention of the actor to his actions? How can he work efficiently unless he considers himself the doer? On the other hand, can't a murderer defend himself on the plea that he is not the doer?

Latent tendencies, pure and impure, come out in me when I sit in meditation and impede my concentration or holding to one thought. What is still worse, they bring a sense of despair and helplessness and undermine my faith. My mind tells me: "What is the use of doing all this? You won't be able to reach the goal till the end of your life owing to your inherent weakness and faults." Please advise me what to do about this.

K. K. Ghosh, Calcutta.

The term 'satori' is used with different content according to the understanding of the writer, but in its true and highest meaning it is a pre-glimpse

of the Supreme State, as I said. There is nothing cloudy about that - it is just what it is.

There is also nothing forced in Wei Wu Wei's showing a similarity between Zen and Bhagavan's teaching. After all, the Goal is the same by whatever road you approach it; the ultimate experience is the same through whatever religion you try to indicate it.

So far as I remember, 'Ch'an and Zen Teaching' by Charles Luk (Rider) and 'The Practice of Zen' by Chang Chen-chi (Rider) both remark on the use of 'Who am I?' as a goan. I have also come across instances of it personally.

There have been saints in all religions who have carried on a normal life in the world. In India King Janaka is the classical example. It is not your work that binds you but your false idea that it is you who are doing it - as if the Brutus in Shakespeare's play were to forget that it is a play and think that he was really the enemy of the stage Caesar. If he did he would have the 'I-am-the-doer' illusion and would be shut up in a mad-house. And he would not act his part any more efficiently, rather less so, because his ego-illusion would break through. In the same way efficient action in your allotted role in life is not at all dependent on the false idea that you are the limited individual who acts. As to your example of a murderer claiming impunity on the plea that he is not the doer, why does he commit the murder? Necessary and harmonious actions can be performed without the intrusion of the ego, without any egoistic motive; but if a murderer has some ego-based motive or believes himself to be judging and deciding that the murder should be committed he also believes himself to be the doer.

Can you imagine somebody who is full of *vasanas* or latent tendencies attaining Realization? Of course not. Therefore it follows that in the course of practice they must be squeezed out. It is a good thing to see them; it enables you to recognise them and determine not to be influenced by them any more. In that way they are gradually cast out; but it often takes time and requires great perseverance.

One should never give way to despondency. It is one of the worst obstacles to progress and has to be fought. Religiously it is represented as a sin, a temptation of the devil, metaphysically it is an error. The whole purpose of the practice is to realize that you are not the individual self; so as long as you believe that you are and that this individual self is weak and sinful, how can you realize that you are not? — Editor

You stated in your books about Ramana Maharshi that he attained *sahaja samadhi* in his 17th year. Yet in his biography B. V. Narasimhaswami quotes Bhagavan on p. 94 of the 5th edition as saying: "One day some years ago I lay down but I was not in *samadhi*." How are the above statements reconciled?

T. R. Nicoll, London.

Bhagavan was in a permanent state of *samadhi* with simultaneous awareness of the outer world, that is to say '*sahaja samadhi*'. Sometimes, however, he sank into *samadhi* without this outer awareness and then we used to say, "He is in *samadhi*." He also sometimes used the expression in this way. In the sentence you quote he meant merely: "I was not unaware of what was happening." — Editor.

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“Entering (my) home and luring
me (to Thine) why didst Thou
keep me prisoner in Thy heart’s
cavern, Oh Arunachala?
-*The Marital Garland of
Letters, Verse 3.*

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Arthur Osborne
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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to-clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

Contributions for publication should be addressed to The Editor, The Mountain Path, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai 606-603, India. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

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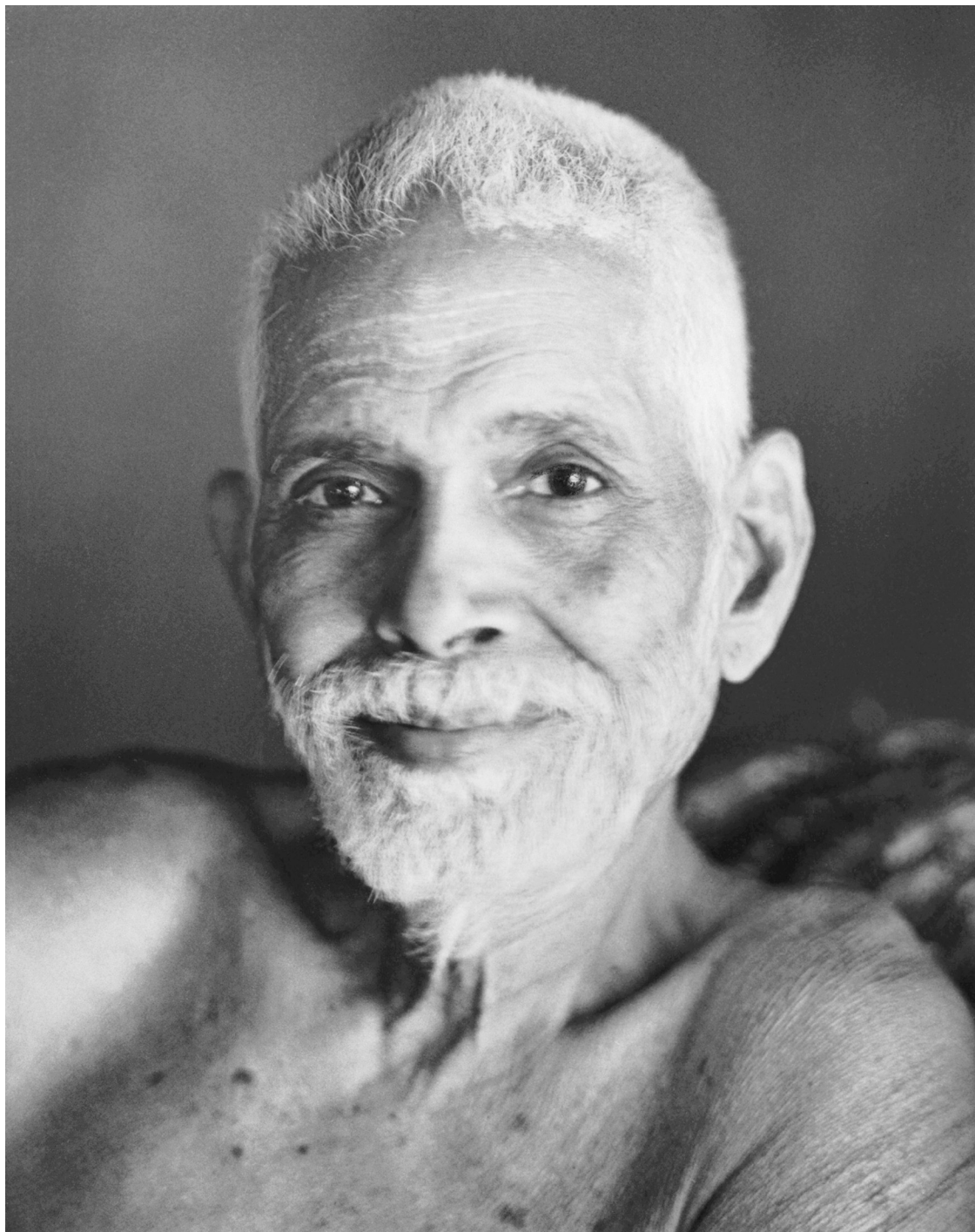
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President.



Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: Arthur Osborne

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A PATH AND A GUIDE

(EDITORIAL)

'Sri J. Krishnamurti in one of his radio talks has stated that the Saints have brought in all the miseries in this world. He asks us not to follow any pattern of life and says that we should live moment to moment. He also says that we should not have any desire or aspiration in life. I feel that his statements are all confusing and in short a dry philosophy. Can you kindly enlighten me on the subject?' - R. S. SHIVAKUMAR, Madras.

I quote this letter at the head of the Editorial instead of in the 'Letters to the Editor' section because it goes far to explain the need for this editorial. It is characteristic of appeals for explanation that one receives, either orally or in writing, from people who are confused at being told by one who is regarded as a spiritual teacher not to accept any spiritual teaching or teacher, but to follow no path, strive for no goal, entertain no aspiration.

If, as maintained in my two previous editorials, Realization is the purpose of life, it follows naturally that its quest is the first and greatest call upon a man's efforts. If life is a path to be trod "from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality", as said in the Upanishads, and if, as the Masters have warned, it leads through unknown terrain and past dangerous pitfalls, it also follows that a guide is necessary to show the way. Questions of the choice of path and reliability of the guide will be taken up in later issues; first it seems necessary to dwell on this seemingly so obvious point of the need for accepting a guide and following any path at all. For although more people today than ever before can read about the consummation attainable, not a few do so as dilettantes without any intention of making the effort

to attain.

Unfortunately this tendency, strong anyway owing to natural inertia, has been apparently sanctioned by the writings and speeches of J. Krishnamurti, who seems to have made it his life work to proclaim that no effort need be made and no guide followed. Some of his followers (how can there be followers if there is no guide?) do indeed explain that he does not really mean that no effort is needed, but that is the impression his books and speeches give, whether intended or not. If the impression is not intended it is a pity it is given; it is a pity it is given whether intended or not.

It is easy to see how someone could, come to this conclusion, erroneous though it is. Glimpses of higher perception, even of complete Self-realization,

glimpses called in Zen ‘*satori*’, do come to a person who is still on the path or even to one who has not consciously set foot on it and does not even know that there is a path. There are many instances of this. Whole collections of them have been published. A characteristic of them is that they occur spontaneously and most often at a time when one is not making conscious effort. On receiving such a glimpse a person unacquainted with the teaching of the Sages might say to himself: “So this is it! And no discipline was necessary, and no Master!”

However, such glimpses do not mean that one has attained Realization. The Maharshi was quite definite about this. “Can the ego, which is in bondage as the mind, become the Divine Self simply because it has once glimpsed that it is the Self? Is this not impossible without the destruction of the mind? Can a beggar become a king by simply visiting a king and declaring himself one?”¹ And again: “Realization takes time to steady itself. The Self is certainly within the experience of everyone but not in the way people imagine. One can only say that it is as it is Owing to the fluctuations of the *vasanas* (inherent qualities), Realization takes time to steady itself. Spasmodic Realization is not enough to prevent rebirth, but it cannot become permanent as long as there are *vasanas* But if this is to be established further effort is necessary.”²

The brief eternity of such a glimpse may fail to be understood and assimilated, fail to absorb the mind and dissolve the ego, and may thus leave a man unchanged so far as he or others can see. An example of this is Tennyson. He wrote in a letter to a friend: “.... a kind of waking trance I have frequently had, right up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me through repeating my own name two or three times to myself, silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade

away into boundless being: and this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clear, the surest of the sure, the weirdest of the weird, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction, but the only true life I am ashamed of my feeble description. Have I not said the state is utterly beyond words?” He further indicates a characteristic paradox of this experience in a pregnant line occurring in an otherwise drab passage of ‘The Princess’: “And all things were and were not.” And yet even though, as a poet, he must be supposed to have had more intuition than most people, he never understood it and it seems to have enlightened neither his life nor poetry. A man may even forget and deny it. Koestler describes in his early autobiography how such an experience of certitude came to him when he was a prisoner in the Spanish Civil War, expecting to be shot; and yet years later, in his superficial investigation into *samadhi* in ‘*The Yogi and the Robot*’ he showed himself sceptical of the very possibility of it. Only in very rare cases does such a pre-glimpse become permanent and stabilised. One such case was that of Ramana Maharshi³ and he was quite insistent that when it does not remain continued, persistent effort is needed.

It is said by Krishnamurti that one should abide in the true state of effortless, choiceless awareness and that effort only disturbs this. But can one? About this also the Maharshi was quite definite. “Effortless and choiceless awareness is our real nature. If we can attain that state and abide in it, that is all right. But one cannot reach it without effort, the effort of deliberate meditation. All the age-old *vasanas* (inherent tendencies) turn the mind outwards to external objects. All such thoughts have to be given up and the mind turned inwards and that, for most people, requires effort. Of course, every teacher and every book tells the aspirant to keep quiet, but it is not easy to do so.”⁴

1 *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, p. 177, Rider’s edition, 228, Sri Ramanasramam edition.

2 Ibid., pp. 178/228-9.

3 For an account of this see *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 18-19, Rider & Co., London.

If any one doubts this let him try for himself instead of weighing the statement of one teacher against that of another. Let him sit down and maintain effortless, choiceless awareness of being without allowing any distracting thoughts to come in and see whether he can keep it up for even thirty seconds. If not let him not speak of stillness as an alternative to effort. Stillness is only achieved through effort.

Another argument used is that one actually is the Self. Since there is no other, one must be. So why strive to be the Self? And, they add, the Maharshi himself said so. Certainly he did, but he also exhorted us to strive to realize this and not just understand it theoretically. Partly perhaps to guard against the Scylla and Charybdis on either side of the true path - on the one hand that no effort is needed and on the other that a man by his own effort can create or attain the true state - he sometimes represented the effort required as a negative process. "All you have to do is to disrealize unreality and Reality remains." This is a traditional explanation given by the Sages: if the clouds are removed the clear sky remains; if water-lilies have overgrown a pond they only have to be removed for the water to appear; it does not have to be created.

The attitude taken up by some Western exponents of Zen that all you have to do is to be spontaneous is another, more subtle example of the same error that no effort is needed, for spontaneity itself is not easy. Or rather there is a lower and a higher spontaneity. A child of three toddles into a room and bangs spontaneously on the piano and there is a hideous din; an expert pianist plays spontaneously and there is music; the difference between the two spontaneities is years of effort and discipline.

Much is made in Western Zen of sudden Enlightenment coming as a result of a blow or a cryptic saying. Enlightenment, of course does come suddenly in any religion, just as does the pre-glimpse I spoke of at the beginning of this article, but it

4 *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in his own words*, pp. 70/83.

only comes to one who has disrealized unreality to such an extent as to be receptive to it. One who has not may receive a hundred blows or have his nose tweaked daily without waking to Reality. As for spontaneity, a Master in any religion behaves with childlike spontaneity. As Christ put it, he is like a little child. The naturalness of Bhagavan was as striking as his grandeur. But to try to imitate this would only make one a poseur. Hanging apples on a tree does not make it an apple tree. What, is needed is to attain the inner state that manifests outwardly as true spontaneity; and this can only be done by persistent and disciplined effort.

But even if effort is needed, why a guru, some ask. Once one grants that the Sages knew what they were talking about when they said it was an arduous path beset with dangers, it should be obvious that it is safer to be guided on it by one who has gone before and knows the way. That is one explanation; another is that the guru is a man of power. Grace flows through him to strengthen and support his followers. If you are serious about assaying a tremendous task, why light-heartedly reject aid which has always been considered necessary in all but very exceptional cases? If it has been found that oxygen is needed to climb Everest, why set out to do it without? And this is more than Everest.

Intellectuals are apt to consider only the first of these two explanations and to think of the Guru as one who explains the hidden mysteries and removes their philosophical doubts; but the infusion of power and removal of impediments is an even more important function and indeed may in some cases suffice with no theoretical instruction at all. In illustration of this I will quote from a powerful but little known Guru of recent times, an almost illiterate Bengali woman who spoke no other language and yet had disciples who were not Bengalis and to whom she could not speak, that is Sri Sarada Devi, the widow of Sri Ramakrishna. "The power of the Guru enters into the disciple and the power of the disciple enters into the Guru. That is why when I initiate and accept the sins of the disciple I fall sick.

It is extremely difficult to be a Guru.” And on another occasion when someone protested against her allowing an unworthy person to touch her feet, since it would cause her pain, actual physical pain and burning, she said: “No, my child, we are born for this purpose. If we do not accept others’ sins and sorrows and do not digest them who else will? Who will bear the responsibilities of the wicked and the afflicted”⁵ In Christianity Christ is “He that taketh upon himself the sins of the world”; and in Hindu mythology Siva is represented as blue-throated from the poison of human iniquity that he swallowed.

5 *Holy Mother*, being the Life of Sri Sarada Devi, Wife of Sri Ramakrishna and Helpmate in his Mission, pp. 171 and 172, by Swami Nikhilananda, Allen and Unwin.

I have taken the liberty in quoting these sayings, translated as they are from the original Bengali, of substituting the word ‘guru’ for the author’s ‘teacher’, since the latter word would invite the very mistake against which I am protesting of equating the Guru with an instructor.

What then of the modern craving to be self-reliant? Who is the self on which you are to be reliant? That very ego, that very individual being, whom you believe to be a phantom and hope to dissolve into nothingness.

And who is the Guru? How can anyone outside you guide you to the Self of you? The Guru is not outside you. The essential Guru is the Self in your heart. The Maharshi often reminded his disciples that the outer Guru exists only to awaken the inner Guru in the heart. When that has been done he ceases to be necessary. Can one then not dispense with the outer Guru? So long as you feel that you exist in the body, so long will the Guru also exist outwardly and his Grace strengthen and refresh you in your efforts. When you feel (not merely recognise theoretically but feel constantly) that you are not the body and feel inner grace and awareness surge up from your own heart, the Guru also will not need to be manifested outwardly in a body. But as long as you live in fact on one plane it is no use arguing from another.

THE NEED FOR REMEMBRANCE

From JOEL GOLDSMITH

If truth is not actively maintained in consciousness, life becomes one of futility, a waiting for something to happen. The hoped-for and long-awaited spiritual awakening, which many people desire, but towards attainment of which they make no effort, does not happen except perhaps once in a hundred years, or possibly to one out of a million persons - and even then, as we know from the history of many to whom it has happened, it is of no value, because it came unexpectedly without understanding and without any idea or knowledge of how to recapture it

The degree in which truth is kept active in consciousness determines not only the degree

of our ultimate spiritual illumination, but the time of it. It could be tomorrow, next week, next month or next year; but that moment we determine by whether or not truth is kept active in our consciousness for an hour on Sunday, an hour every day, two or three minutes out of every hour in the day, or ultimately with almost every breath we breathe. It is possible to ‘pray without ceasing’ if we know the inspired passages of Scripture and those of mystical or metaphysical writings, if we are willing to remember to apply them, and, above all, if we are able to overcome the inertia of the human mind.

(*Our Spiritual Resources*, pp. 104-106,
Allen & Unwin.)

RAMANA SAD-GURU

By G. L. N.

Sri Bhagavan has said of Arunachala in his 'Padikam'¹: "My Lord! when anyone asks me of Your greatness You hold me motionless like a statue, with bowed head." Similarly do I find that my mind falls numb when I would write about Bhagavan Sri Ramana.

Who is our Arunachala Ramana? He himself gave the answer when he wrote: "In the recess of the lotus-heart of all, from Vishnu downwards, there shines as pure Consciousness the *Paramatman* who is the same as Arunachala or Ramana."²

Sri Bhagavan was gracious enough to refer to this once when I was taking leave of him to return to my native place. He said: "Have you seen this morning's mail? Someone has written that Arunachala Ramana is everywhere, so that whenever he has an urge to come here that feeling makes him postpone his visit."

Humbly I replied expressing my own point of view, which was quite different from that expressed in the letter: "Bhagavan, in this body I have realized you in your divine form as my Guru, my Bhagavan. Once having seen you, neither I nor any other can shake off the feeling of love for your divine form."

At that time I was attending to the Ashram correspondence. I drafted a reply to the letter in question, showed it to Bhagavan for his approval and sent it off³. His remark about this letter must

have been his parting message to me, as it turned out that this was to be the last time I ever saw him.

Sri Bhagavan also affirmed his universal nature in the following manner in his benedictory verse to 'Atma Sakshatkara', which he translated into Tamil: "Atma Sakshatkara, which was taught by Ishwara⁴, to his son Guha, is now propounded in Tamil by that same Lord, the Dweller within me, the Ancient, the Supreme."⁵

The power of Bhagavan is eternal and above all *siddhis* (supernatural powers). A *siddhi* is transient, but Bhagavan is a Healer whose cure is permanent. He kindles aspiration in the heart of those who come to him oblivious of their eternal nature, turns their mind inward with the enquiry 'Who am I?' and helps them to realize the Self for whom the word 'I' stands.

The main type of *upadesa* (instruction) used by Bhagavan is Silence, as it was with Dakshinamurti⁶ of old. Divine bliss permeated those who sat around him. In this silence the doubts of his devotees are cleared up and their questions are either answered or fade away and cease to appear necessary. This silence is a dynamic force, eternal and universal in nature.

Nevertheless, though universal, it is centred at the Ashram where he lived, at Tiruvannamalai, at Arunachala, the spiritual centre of the world. Here again there are the two points of view, both true although apparently contradictory.

Sri Ramana's Grace acts always, but, inscrutably and in diverse ways. We find his

1 'Eleven Verses on Sri Arunachala'.

2 *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, p. 98, Rider's edition, p. 110 in Sri Ramanasramam edition.

3 Bhagavan never wrote letters himself. All letters were answered punctually, the same day, the replies being drafted in the office and submitted to him for his approval or correction. (Editor).

4 The Personal God.

5 *The Collected Works*, pp. 106/121.

6 Siva manifested as a youthful Guru with elderly disciples whom he taught in Silence.

gracious and profound utterances in the small volume of his *Collected Works*, in collections of his reported sayings and in books about him. That is food for the mind, but when the mind is turned inwards by the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ he is there in the heart, ever watchful, ever helpful. He does not allow the soul to get drowned but draws it mercifully to his eternal abode⁷. Sometimes he appears in dreams and visions, blessing and encouraging his old devotees and others too who never saw him in the body.

In ‘*The Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala*’ he wrote: “Mere thought of Thee has drawn me to Thee, Oh Arunachala.”

7. An allusion to his ‘*Necklet of Nine Gems*’, verse 9.

Alluding to this once, I said, “Bhagavan, the thought of Arunachala drew you here, but is it not still more wonderful that you drew us here, who had never heard of you, and lopped off our ego?”

His answer was his usual gracious and benign smile.

Sri Ramana is an ocean of nectar teeming with kindness. He is gracious and forgiving. Were he to dwell on our slips and faults we would be lost, but, ignoring them, he still guides us. He instils hope when we are dejected and stretches out his supporting hand to lead us towards the goal. The only things required of us are perseverance and faith in him.

PATTINATHU SWAMI

By K. R. R. Sastry

He was a merchant prince living in Kaveripattinam in the 15th Century. His ships sailed to foreign lands. Suddenly he realized that “No wealth will follow you on your last journey” and gave it all up, setting forth as a wandering mendicant from the shrine of Tiruvottiyur.

Like our Maharshi, he taught the hard way of detachment. The world with its treasures has only a phenomenal reality and must be spurned in order to realize Paramatma, which alone is Real.

One of his Tamil poems runs:

When the last coma sets in, when the eyes shrink
And the senses fail,

When the body becomes as though unreal,
My last prayer to Thee,
Lord of Tiruvottiyur, is this
May I wear Thy holy ashes,
With hands outstretched above,
May I call Thy holy Name, Oh Siva!

And this one is his plea for Realization

Not running here and there,
Nor working on vain pursuits,
Unprejudiced,
Seeking the company of the holy,
Putting aside anger,
Clinging fast to virtue,
May I receive from Thee the Everlasting
Wealth,
Oh Lord of Chidambaram!

Beyond Psychology

By Prof. K. Subrahmanyam

In his ‘Sad Vidya’ or ‘Forty Verses on Reality’¹ Bhagavan indicates the Supreme Reality which can be approached only through the way of mysticism. Mystical experience can neither be gained nor explained by psychology, which is the study by the human intelligence of its own mental mechanism, its processes and products. This study is often held to postulate some urge behind the mechanism, but any such urge is very different from the Reality which is Knowledge free from thoughts. “There is, brethren, an unborn, a not-become, a not-made, a not-compounded. If there were not this unborn, not-become, not-made, not-compounded there could not be any escape from what is born, become, made and compounded.” Nirvana, thus referred to by the Buddha, is the same as what Bhagavan means by Reality. But psychology can only concern itself with “the born, become, made and compounded.”

According to Hindu philosophy, Being is enveloped in progressively finer *kosa* or sheaths. The most gross of these is brute, inert matter. This is, of course, insentient and is ignored by psychology. It is known as *annamaya kosa* or ‘the food sheath’, being food for all organisms. Next comes the *pranamaya kosa* or ‘breath sheath’, in which intelligence acts only as the vital, biological instinct. This, still below the level of psychology, reacts mechanically to stimuli for the purposes of self-preservation and procreative self-perpetuation. At the next higher level of *manomaya* or ‘mind sheath’, intelligence has created for itself a mental machine. Here is a more continuously purposive functioning, though the purposiveness is often unconscious. A ‘computer’ machine can perform some at least of the work of the mind at this level, but no machine can choose its own purpose, though

it can function efficiently once its purpose has been chosen for it and ‘the works’ set accordingly by its owner. It is only at the *vijnanamaya* or ‘intelligence’ level that the human intelligence chooses its purposes, judges its own functioning with reference to them and begins asking the question ‘what for?’, which was never raised in the lower sheaths. Now it delights in its own working and loves to know for the joy of knowing. The vital, biological, instinctive urge has been transcended as sole motive power. The science of psychology, like all other sciences, has its birth at this level.

But the sciences falter as they approach its upper frontiers, where it touches the fifth or *anandamaya kosa*, that is ‘the Sheath of Bliss’. The mind here begins to lose self-confidence. The instruments on which it has relied so far, the senses and reason, no longer seem authoritative in their reports and findings! Are space and time themselves, the framework within which reason operates, absolute entities? The concepts of ‘duration’ and ‘extension’ and the appearance of the ‘space-time continuum’ are portents threatening the rule of *vijnana*. Browning’s Abt Vogler declared that out of three sounds he framed, not a fourth (composite) sound, but a star. The rules of arithmetic were themselves in danger! Besides, the human intelligence began to recognise that reason was not the only power it could rely on. As Croce pointed out, we do not understand a sentence by sticking together the meanings of its words. At some early stage in the understanding of it - the more intelligent and seasoned the reader, the earlier the stage - the intelligence makes a leap and lands on the meaning of the whole sentence; and words, thereafter, have only a confirmatory function. This power, in use from day to day, is ‘intuition’, whether psychologists like it or not. Even the scientist can only heap up mounds of data and await the moment when he can leap to the top of them all with a victorious

1 See *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

hypothesis! Inventors have made similar admissions of a saltatory power, but for which they would have been helpless. Studies such as Aesthetics, Ethics and Metaphysics are founded on urges over which reason and mechanistic modes of thinking have never really had any valid jurisdiction. But their usurpation has been of long standing; and nineteenth century science, overflowing into the twentieth, has conferred its own worthless validating charter on the forces of the fourth *kosa* aggressing across the frontiers into the fifth. Psychology must be confronted, at least at this late stage, with a *quo warranto* writ, when it presumes to operate in the region of *Sad Vidya*, which I would translate as the 'Urge to Pure Being'. It is an urge, at once all-conquering and all-pervading; and reason, with all its presumption, has been only living, all along, on its leavings. *Vidya*, here, is not a 'science' or a 'lore'; it is the power of '*Sat*' (Being) bursting through the obscurations of the human mind. "How can the mind-moon measure the light of the Sun which is Reality? (Verse, 22)."

Spiritual life begins when the Sun of Reality sets the pace for the activities of mind and its retinue, reversing the usual process. President Radhakrishnan is fond of a story of a group of Hindu sages visiting ancient Athens and being proudly informed by the Athenian philosophers that they were seeking, with their investigations, to master all human phenomena. The Hindus asked; "But how can you master things human without first mastering the superhuman?" The *Gita* and *Upanishads* express this truth when they describe the Universe as an *aswatha*-tree with its roots above and branches below.

"From the Ultimate to the proximate" - this seems to be the law of progression in spiritual life. Bhagavan begins his teaching with the Being which is Knowing and then comes down to *Mahesa*, the personal God, and only then to ourselves and the world we cognise. No building up of Truth is possible with all our efforts, intellectual and moral. We can never earn Liberation. Love, whether from God or man, is a total act, without processes and

constituents. It cannot be built out of parts; it cannot be led up to; reason, marshalling inter-connected propositions, cannot scientifically construct or explain it. It is basic, primal to the universe; no otherwise can it exist. The Buddha speaks of Love that stands aloft, alone, looks out in all directions and radiates its power to all beings in the universe, seen and unseen, born and unborn! Love is so all-sufficient to itself that it does not need even beneficiaries! The transition is abrupt from all our efforts, merits and attainments to that which is Being-Knowing-Love. This abruptness is brought home to us by the *Upanishad* which even represents it as arbitrariness. "Brahman reveals Itself to him whom It chooses." At a more human level our teachers have emphasised the need for Grace and Love and framed the doctrine of prevenience. It is not our prayer that leads us to God. God first prays through us. "Thy cry, 'Allah, where art Thou?' was itself My answer 'here I am,'" says a Sufi. Unless the whole is known as the whole (and, therefore, the Alone), nothing is known. "The flight of the alone to the Alone" is not locomotion or a process. 'Science', which belongs to the fourth level, does not seem to have a place here.

Nevertheless, it is not at the *Anandamaya Kosa* level that the consummation takes place. The sages who called it a *kosa* made it evident that this *ananda* is less than the *Ananda*-aspect of the Supreme, *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. Bhagavan is firm that even this *kosa* is only a constituent of the body. He says so, almost in passing, in verse 5. Most of us are stationed at the meeting point of the fourth and fifth levels. We have to look below and above. At the level below, we find that the mind has throughout been acquisitive and domineering. It has added to its possessions and power by gathering knowledge (which itself requires a certain mode of strenuous discipline) and by imposing, order on what it has come to know. This order, which the mind calls 'the laws of nature', which it professes to have only discovered, is shaped by the mind's shape, though the mind does not know it. At the level above, as the mind enters into it, it

gains awareness of quite another kind. In place of the excitement of conquest, which it has experienced hitherto, it now knows the bliss of being conquered. We may call it a passive state if we please, because it is not induced by our desiring it and willing it. St. Gregory the Great distinguishes between the pleasures which we desire before we get them (and which are, after we have had them, productive of disgust) and the spiritual pleasures which we did not care for before we had them, but which we devotedly cherish when they have bestowed themselves on us. The *ananda* of the fifth level seems passive because it is of the latter kind. This is a creative passivity. Even as the mind is overwhelmed and subjugated, it delights in the mastering power holding it inescapably in its embrace and participates in its act, even to the point of abiding in energetic identification with this power. In such 'passive' moments the human intelligence grows in bliss and strength and gains the assurance that it is moving towards its own fulfilment. It has only to make itself receptive and Reality pours into it, exalting it. The seeming magnitude or triviality of the occasion (by any conventional, external standard) is irrelevant, because it is the welling up from the depth that matters, not the accidental opening of the surface soil by the pickaxe. Sri Ramakrishna mentions a recluse on a Himalayan slope who spent his life in front of a beautiful waterfall, ever murmuring "Thou hast done well, O Lord, Thou hast done very well indeed." A thing of beauty is a joy forever, not in the sense that the thing itself will endure for ever, but because the joy it provides is an emanation of the one source that endures. In this sense the 'thing' is an Epiphany. So are acts of genuine, pure ethical value, whether they be "little, nameless unremembered acts of kindness and of love" or astounding acts of martyrdom. The 'science' of Ethics will never explain the ethical, urge.

It, is good to dwell for a while on the level of the *anandamaya kosa*, for beyond this there is neither guide nor signpost such as can be provided by our

own experience! And yet there is a long way to go. This is the springboard from which one has to take the plunge like a diver who, with breath and speech controlled, seeks the treasure sunken in the stream (verse 28). *Odungutal* (the progressive subsidence of the self) and *onrutal* (one-ing) were favourite words with Bhagavan; the last *kosa* of all teaches us how in passivity of a certain kind is positive strength and how the intelligence must consent to be submerged in order that it may be exalted and fulfilled. Here is another mystery which is a challenge to reason - the unreality of our individual selves, our physical bodies and the material world. Commonsense refuses to admit that these are unreal and yet their unreality has been repeatedly proclaimed by the seers. Bhagavan explains how they are real only within the Real (Verse 8). That one is real in the measure in which one responds to the 'Reality of That Which Is' is illumined by the mystery of artistic creation. The emotions are like brick and mortar; they belong to the sphere of the mason. The tranquillity is the presiding power which belongs to the architect. The emotions and the tranquillity do not cancel each other out because they belong to different levels and spheres altogether. It is in this light that Verses 17 and 18 - on the reality of the physical body and the material world - are to be understood.

Evil and suffering are so real to the sufferer and are so poignant for one who witnesses them that it may be taken as sheer heartlessness for anyone to indulge in theorising about them. The theologies which offer glib solutions seem blasphemies. But the sense of exaltation which great tragedy produces (and which is among the highest human manifestations of *ananda*) provides an answer to the problem in the manner of experience, not explanation. "As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods, they kill us for their sport" is a statement at Lear's level of agony. "On such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense" is a statement at the *King Lear* level, the level of Shakespeare's imagination. The "tenth-man-fallacy" is frequently mentioned in our books of scriptural exegetics and there is no more necessary and useful pill in the kit

of the spiritual traveller. We are constantly tempted to consider ourselves spectators and judges of the universe, standing, so to speak, outside it, leaving out of account the truth that we should always be reminding ourselves that we are the Universe. Said Sri Ramakrishna: "Evil is in the universe as poison in the cobra" - the poison is not poisonous to him who secretes it. To grow into oneness with it (to be 'oned' as in Verse 8) is spiritual life.

Bhagavan mentions the tenth-man-fallacy in verse 37 (counting the nine men and mourning the passing away of the tenth member of the band, who is in fact the mourner who has done the counting but forgotten to count himself), but the whole of the 'Forty Verses' is an exposure of this fallacy. The 'nine men' and the 'tenth' form only an illustration and one has to pass on to the truth, for the illustration has necessarily to stop short of the truth. This truth is that the tenth man emerges out of the nine, having been successively the first man, the second, and so on, now being simultaneously all the ten! The *Taittiriya Upanishad*, which dwells on the expository method of the five sheaths, mentions each successive stage as being more satisfying, but never denies the previous ones. Not only is the Truth all the five sheaths but it is also the power which passes on from one sheath to another. It is indeed the upward urge on which the five sheaths have been strung, like pearls on a thread. The upward urge, the *tapas*, that will give us no rest at any level, but will push us beyond the five and make us recognise itself as the Highest is Brahman. The *anandamaya kosa* is only the irradiated mist that swathes the peak of the hill. At the foot of the hill, it was the blanketing fog, darkness visible. At the top it is thinnest and appears as visible light. The nature of light is, in itself, to be invisible; the nature of mist is to obscure. The *anandamaya kosa* is the mist, the bright cloud, impregnated by the glory of the light that it has received into its bosom. Beyond this *kosa* is the invisible light. The proof of this? To touch the Reality, all that is needed is to project further the line that has followed its own straight 'compulsive course' so far. That which was insentient, then

mere animal instinct, the vital urge, mechanical mentation, the self-regulative intelligence, intuition, inspiration and mysticism cannot be alien to us. "It is not the known, nor yet the unknown". The five sheaths have all of them to be transcended (Verse 5); the ultimate is beyond the *jnana* and the *ajnana*, the knowledge and the ignorance, of our intelligence. Faith is not uncritical credulity. It is to go further with one who has led us safely so very far, ourselves having suspiciously watched him all along.

Bhagavan and the Buddha are prophets for those who seek through pure intuitive understanding. Explaining the universe, its creation and dissolution, treating the relationships of a postulated 'soul' to a postulated 'God' is not their business. They begin with human awareness and lead up to pure Awareness.

That is the beginning and the end. The Buddha's eightfold path begins with 'right understanding' and culminates in 'right Awareness'. Bhagavan begins with our 'knowledge' that we are and ends with the Being that is Awareness. The individual entity finds itself, alas, involved in the whirling wheel of *samsara*. It can find its rest, not by moving out of the wheel, but only by moving to its centre; but it does not know this yet. Bhagavan sees *samsara* as the whole clutter of man's clumsy mental apparatuses with which he hopes to 'know' the wheel and even perhaps, to escape from it. The Buddha sees *samsara* as staying involved in a life of *dukkha* (suffering) constantly under the threat of disease, decrepitude and death, which only exemplify this *dukkha*. Both descriptions are fundamentally the same.

The *Upanishad* gives the answer to the question 11 what is *dukkha* (suffering)? By defining its antonym, *sukha* (bliss); "The Vast is bliss." It follows that the restricted is misery. Alas, it is not the privations of life that constitute misery for the illumined ones, but the nature of our satisfactions in life. It is our *jnana*, our petty, restricted 'knowledge' that Bhagavan would have us escape from. Is it not curious that Bhagavan never

mentions rebirth in the whole of the Forty Verses? We keep on solemnly busying ourselves with the whole caboodle of the mind, rushing about inside the cocoon of our own weaving. Bhagavan asks us to wing our way out of it. For the Buddha it is pathetic that we live involved in alternations of satisfaction and desire, both what come to us and

what we go on inducing in ourselves, only to end in the final frustration of old age and death. The life of most of us is a see-saw between aperitifs and emetics. It grieves the seers to see us, their fellow beings, as doddering imbeciles or as maudlin addicts. This is their 'compassion', as they appeal to us to be ourselves.

The Dark Night

By A. Rao

In the soul's dark night
I knew the taste of tears unshed,
The hopeless seeming fight,
Pain for my daily bread.

The hammer blows of God
Sculptured from the living flesh,
As from a lifeless clod,
The new man made a fresh.

The only one escape
Was such my mind could not come by,
Could not even shape -
To curse God and die.

Yet through it all I knew
The mind flagellant and a fake,
Clinging to the untrue.
Self-tortured for desire's sake.

The fake, the evil ghost, the impostor me,
The camel straining at the needle's eye,
Craving and he who craves, must cease to be -
Simply give up and, be content to die.
Since there's no other way, better cut quick,
Slay and have done, than make an endless tale,
Flogging then coddling, caring for when sick.
Then sentencing to hunger when he's hale.

Ruthless Compassion! Most compassionate
When most unmoved by anguish of the cry
Of that false self who stands within the gate
That shutters out the radiance of the sky.

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

II

By P. V. Sastri

Which is the greater miracle, to change, the date on a tombstone or to change a man's heart?

In May 1945 my eldest son, who was 23 years old, married, devout and a very promising young man, passed away. The event was so terrible and caused such grief that it was thought I would not survive it. I neglected practically all my worldly duties for some time. Later I was somehow attracted to Sri Ramanasramam and went there with the whole of my family. Ordinarily people, under such circumstances, would go to obtain peace and get rid of their sorrow. But that was not the idea of myself and my wife. Having read about Sri Krishna's bringing Sandipani's son back to life, we were so mad as to think of getting our son restored to life by the grace of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. We were prepared to sacrifice our all for that.

We left for Tiruvannamalai and, reaching the Ashram at 11 a.m. entered the hall where Bhagavan used to sit. Our one idea was to beseech him to bring our son back to life; but despite our intense desire we found that we could not open our mouths to speak. We simply sat silent till Bhagavan rose for dinner and everyone went out. Then we too went back to where we lodged. We went again in the afternoon, when devotees assembled in the hall, with the same purpose but with the same result. In that way eight days passed. Each morning and afternoon we wanted to implore Bhagavan to bring our son back to life but we could not utter a word in his presence. On the eighth evening we talked it over together on coming out of the hall and decided that it was no use staying any longer since our purpose had not been fulfilled. So we decided to leave next morning.

At that moment a gentleman of the name of Subbarao met us. He was formerly a pleader, I

think at Nellore, and had come to Tiruvannamalai and settled down as one of the resident devotees. We had made friends, perhaps because I also am a pleader. He asked me what we were talking about, so I told him our whole story. I admitted that we felt peace in Bhagavan's presence, but the moment we left the hall our grief burst out again like a volcanic eruption; and yet, we were unable to speak out and put our desire before Bhagavan.

Mr. Subbarao promised to take us to Sri Bhagavan next day and introduce us to him. We agreed and next day, on being introduced, told Bhagavan about our grief and in a general way asked for his help. Sri Bhagavan nodded, his head and said "*Seri, Seri*" (All right, All right). But we still found ourselves unable to talk any more, still less to tell him what it was that we really wanted. Again we felt constrained to sit there speechless. That evening we decided to leave, since even the intervention of Mr. Subbarao had not helped us. But Ramana would not let us go. The thought occurred to me that I should buy some books published by the Ashram, so I went to the bookstall. The gentleman in charge was in meditation, but he opened his eyes immediately and asked us to come in. On being questioned by him I repeated our whole story. He said that the Maharshi was capable of bringing the boy back to life, but since the boy was a highly religious and really devout young man he would have gone to better regions and would not like to come back to us. I assured him that he loved us so much and we loved him so much that he would really come back if it were possible. The gentleman then put me another question. Suppose Bhagavan

brings him back to you and then both of you die, what will the position be then? This question dispelled the thick cloud of illusion that had enveloped us and at last we saw that our attempt to get our son back was sheer madness. I felt at the time and still feel now that it was not the bookseller that was talking to me like that but really Bhagavan speaking through him.

We abandoned the hope of getting our son back to life and also our plan of leaving immediately. We stayed for about twelve more days, until our monetary resources were exhausted. The rest of our stay at the Ashram was only for the purpose of obtaining peace. Sri Ramana's "all right" had been meant to help

us in the only way in which a realized Guru will help. His grace was bestowed on us and he began to work silently in our hearts to remove the thick clouds of sorrow and end the volcanic outbursts of grief. He began to instil peace and develop real knowledge in us. Silently and slowly the grace is still working in that direction. What we wanted to have we were actually prevented from asking for. We were also not allowed to go away in a mood of despair. We were blessed with his grace and uplifted in the right way.

Because this is an experience of an extraordinary type I feel that it is appropriate to make it known to all the devotees of Bhagavan.

III

By D.

I first learnt of Sri Ramana Maharshi when I came across the book 'A Search in Secret India' by Paul Brunton in 1943 or 1944. It made a tremendous impression on me and I must have read it three or four times; but somehow it did not occur to me that I could go to Tiruvannamalai and meet Bhagavan in actual flesh and blood. Apparently I was not destined to; maybe because I was not mature enough. Next I remember hearing about his *Mahasamadhi* (leaving the body) in April 1950 when it was broadcast all over India. I felt very very sorry that I had missed having his *darshan*.

One day in 1961 I happened to visit a friend who had a very pious and devout lady staying with him. There was a small gathering there, of people who had come to hear her talk on the spiritual life. I also stayed to listen. The words that stuck in my mind were: "Don't delay any longer. The time to begin your *sadhana* is here and now. It will be too late when you get old; either you will not have the energy or ill health will prevent it. Don't put it off on the excuse

that you are still working professionally or in business or that you still have to arrange your daughters' marriages and get your sons fixed up in life before you can attend to anything else."

I returned home in a very thoughtful mood. *Sadhana* meant for me Bhagavan. Fortunately I had one or two books about him and his teaching written by some of his old and devoted followers. I read and reread them, and was completely overcome. The direct method of Self-enquiry as explained in them simply captivated me and would not leave me. I got all the books I could and went through them; and then the idea of visiting Sri Ramanasramam arose in me. An article that appeared in a weekly paper about the continued spiritual life there converted the idea into a firm decision. I arrived there for the first time at the end of 1961, just after Bhagavan's *Jayanti* (birth anniversary).

Although it is said that Bhagavan's teachings are crystal clear and do not require any explanations, I would nevertheless submit that

for a new *sadhaka* (aspirant), especially a dunce like me, and one who has not sat at his lotus feet, books written by his old disciples are a great help in understanding his terse and incisive writings and sayings at least in the early stages.

Sri Ramanasramam today has a very calm and peaceful atmosphere and yet vibrant with power. I have found it more conducive to meditation than any other place I know. The presence of Bhagavan is felt everywhere and more strongly than I can say. In fact I can fully endorse the poem by S. P. Mukherjee in the first issue of 'The Mountain Path' and should like to quote it here as saying what I want to say.

A BEACON STILL

We have not seen you, Bhagavan;
We have not approached your lotus-feet
Yet do we find
The now and the then are the same for us,
The body-presence, the presence in the heart,

These are the same.

One thing only do we know -
Ramanashram is a beacon still.¹

I was delighted to find that one is at perfect liberty to do what one likes there and not do what one does not like. No compulsory ritual or discipline. There are certain rituals and *pujas*, but you are at liberty to attend them or not, as you please. In fact you are left alone to follow your own path. That does not mean that no one is helpful. On the contrary, I found that the inmates and devotees are always willing to help when help is needed; only they do not interfere when interference is not needed.

There is a mysterious power that draws you to the Ashram again and again. It is like a magnet. Each year now I come back for as much time as my work will allow.

¹ This is the correct form. The 'That' which crept in at the beginning of the last line in our January issue was unauthorised. (Editor).

SATORI

By F. O.

Some years after Bhagavan left the body his Jayanti (birth anniversary) was being celebrated on a roof terrace in Calcutta in the cool of the evening. Among the devotees present was a teenage girl on whose face, as she sat in meditation, an expression of radiant serenity was seen. Later she put her experience in words, so far as is possible. The following is what she wrote.

I am not the mind nor the body - found myself in the heart; that me that lives after death. There was breathtaking joy in the feeling 'I am', the greatest possible earthly joy, the full enjoyment of existence. No way to describe it - the difference between this joy and complete happiness of the mind is greater than between the blackest misery and the fullest elation of the mind. Gradually -

rapidly - my body seemed to be expanding from the heart. It engulfed the whole universe. It didn't feel any more. The only real thing was God (Bhagavan, Arunachala). I couldn't identify myself as any speck in that vastness - nor other people - there was only God, nothing but God. The word 'I' had no meaning any more; it meant the whole universe - everything is God, the only Reality.

THE MYTHOLOGY OF ARUNACHALA

By T. K. S.

A venerable Brahmin, steeped in ancient lore, one of the senior-most of the Maharshi's devotees, tells these stories of the symbolism and mythology of Arunachala. It will be seen that apparently fantastic stories have a precise symbolical meaning,

Sri Arunagiri Yogi¹ ever shines as the Supreme Lord with the three lines of sacred ash and the *tilak* spot on his brow, a lustrous garland about his neck, the king of serpents twined round his head and the crescent moon on his head, all signs of supremacy.

We shall relate how the Self-effulgent Siva, Arunadri², appeared on earth and how the story was told by Siva Himself to Gnana Sambanda, the great Tamil poet-saint.

Singing the praise of Arunachala, the One Being, accompanied by Unnamulai³, her of the unsullied breast, called also Uma, Gnana Sambanda, the child Saint, beheld a venerable old Brahmin gathering flowers by the roadside. Gnana Sambanda asked him courteously where he had come from and what he was doing there.

The old Brahmin, who was none other than Arunachala Siva Himself, replied: "I come from Arunachala. That is my home. I come to gather flowers to be used in the worship of the Lord."

Gnana Sambanda thereupon asked how far away it was and in what direction. The old Brahmin replied: "It cannot be far away since, old, as I am, I come here every day to gather flowers for worship there. I will put you on a good path to arrive there."

In this we see the allegory of the Guru, the manifestation of the Self, showing the path to the aspirant and declaring that the Goal is "not far away".

Gnana Sambanda asked for further information about Arunagiri² and was told the following stories.

1 A Personification of Arunachala.

2 A name for Arunachala

3 Siva's Spouse or Shakti.



II

The Column of Fire

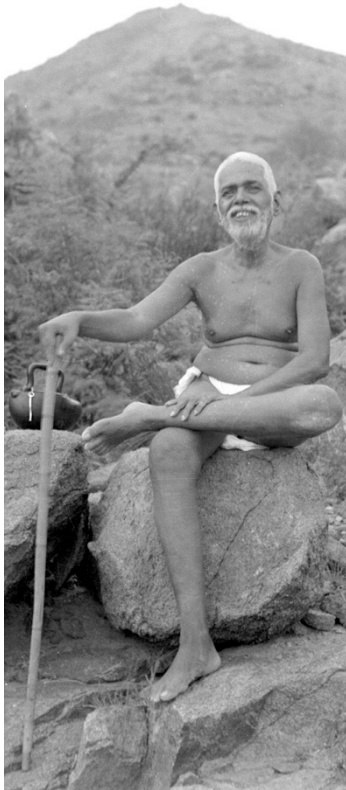
Arunachala is the essential basis of all this universe. He is a manifestation of Sambhu⁴ who in ancient times appeared as a column of fire to settle a dispute that had arisen between four-faced Brahma and Vishnu of the four arms.

Both of them were manifested forth from Sadasiva⁴, whose will it was to appear as many.⁵ In both the ego-sense arose, each deeming himself greater than the other, and the struggle between them raged until the universe was in

4 A name for Siva

danger of destruction from it. Then Lord Chandrasekara⁶ decided that He should assert His supremacy for the salvation of the universe. He thereupon appeared as a vast column of fire between the two struggling gods.

The two gods were perplexed at seeing this column of fire transcending the ends of the universe.



They agreed that whichever of them could discover either end of it was the greater. Vishnu took the form of the boar Varaha and began digging down through the nether worlds. Brahma took the form of a swan and soared upwards to find the summit. Even though Vishnu descended to the fourth lower world he could not find the end but returned acknowledging defeat. Brahma also failed to reach

5 This recalls the *hadith* by which the creation of the universe is explained in Islam: "I was a hidden treasure and longed to be known," (Editor)

6 Lord of the Crescent Moon, a name for Siva.

the summit, but in flight he caught a flower falling from paradise and, taking it back with him, claimed to have reached the summit and found it there.

In this myth Siva, the Destroyer, is the Self or Enlightenment, destroyer of the illusion of a separate individual being; Vishnu, the Preserver, is the ego-sense, preserver of the apparent individual being, stringing all its moments together into an apparent entity. He delves down into himself, seeking in vain for the truth of Being. Brahma, the Creator, is the mind which falsely assumes the creative function, soars aloft into ideas and theories, even receives an intuition fallen from paradise and claims wrongly that it is Enlightenment.

Appearing before them, the Supreme Lord blessed Vishnu for his truth and devotion, but Brahma he cursed, saying that for this offence no temples should be dedicated to him. And indeed, to this day temples are raised to Siva and Vishnu but not to Brahma. At that time Brahma had a fifth head rising above the four faces with which he is now depicted, but Siva in his anger struck it off.

The fifth head of Brahma is the quintessence beyond the four elements, the centre above the directions of space, the pure knowledge above the earthly knowledge of mind and senses. It is equivalent to the third eye of Siva, the unitary knowledge beyond duality. Its being struck off is equivalent to the 'fall of man' in the Christian tradition: man or mind being deprived of the direct intuition of paradise and reduced to the world of opposites, the world of good and evil and the strife between them.

Then, it is said, Vishnu intervened with a prayer to the Lord, reminding Him that, Brahma is the Lord of the four Vedas, to which his four faces correspond, and that the Vedas are not mere meaning but the primal basic sound by which the universe is created and held in being, and if the Lord of the Vedas was destroyed the universe would crumble into ruin. To this Sambhu⁴ replied that Brahma was still the Lord of the Vedas and that whatever place the Vedas were chanted would

be his temple. And so it has been and is.

Then the two gods prayed to Sankara⁴ to withdraw His effulgence and let the column of fire assume the appearance of an inert hill that the world might be blessed and not destroyed by it. Graciously hearing their prayers, the Lord withdrew the effulgence into himself and remained in the form of a hill with the name of ARUNACHALA, that those who come to it or even turn to it in their heart may be blessed in this life and ultimately attain Liberation. Every year at the festival of Kartikai⁷ a beacon of *ghee* donated by devotees is lighted on the summit of Arunachala in reminder of its real nature as a column of fire.

III

Uma's Tapas

In my article entitled 'The Secrets of Arunachala'⁸ I told how Uma, the Spouse of Siva, known also as Gowri and as Parvati, playfully closed the eyes of the Lord with her hands and thereby brought about the dissolution of the universe, which exists only in the sight of Siva. I indicated also the symbolism of this myth.

Sambhu⁴ remained unaffected. It is the same to him whether there is *kalpa* or *pralaya*, manifestation or dissolution. Uma, however, His *Shakti* or 'Energy' had to do penance in order to be reunited with the Lord. For this purpose she went to Kanchipuram where, taking up her abode beneath a never-aging mango-tree beside the Kampa tank, she performed all the prescribed duties and penance. She made a Siva-*lingam* of clay, consecrated it and worshipped it with great fervour. To test her constancy Siva set the Kampa river in flood; but the goddess thought only of saving the *lingam*, which she clasped to her bosom, so that the form

7 Falling at full moon in October or November by the Western calendar.

8 In our issue of April 1964. (Editor).

of her body was imprinted on the wet clay.

Then the voice of the Lord was heard:

"Let this *lingam* remain sacred in the world, perpetuating the imprint of *Shakti* upon Siva. I Myself am manifested in the world as Arunachala, the boon-conferring *Lingam* of Light. Go there and do penance at the Ashram of Rishi Gautama⁹, under his guidance, and there I will reveal My radiant form to you."

Here Uma is the great prowess of Siva, inseparable from Him sent forth into manifestation in order to find her way back to union with the Lord who is her Beloved and the very Self of her.



Gautama Ashram

First she does penance under the ageless tree of revealed *dharma*, fulfilling all the obligations of the law. Then, by making and worshipping the *lingam* of clay, she adds devotion to duty. When the river of fate floods she clings only to the *lingam*, showing that devotion is her sole treasure. Only then is she directed to the Hill of Enlightenment where her Guru awaits her.

9 Another Gautama, not the Buddha.

IV

Rishi Gautama

Receiving the Devi at his Ashram, Rishi Gautama bowed down to her and said: “I perceive that you are here at the behest of Lord Siva. Arunachala is His most sacred place. Here the Lord revealed Himself to Brahma and Vishnu and assumed the form of the Hill that is called Arunagiri.”²

The attitude of the Guru to his disciple is indeed one of reverence, since he sees in him the beloved of the Lord. When our Bhagavan was asked once about people prostrating before him he said “Before they bow down to me I have already bowed down in my heart to the Siva in them.”

Gautama then gave Uma instruction in the form of stories about Arunachala. He told her how Brahma once created a beautiful maiden to distract the yogis from their penance, but so enchanting was she that Brahma himself fell in love with her and pursued her. She changed into a deer to escape him and he gave chase as a stag. Then she changed into a bird and he into the male bird. As a bird she flew here and cried out: “Arunachala, I submit to Thee!” Immediately a hunter emerged from the hill to protect her. Brahma was freed from the illusion of desire and prayed for forgiveness. Siva said: “You are cleansed of your sins by the mere sight of Arunachala. I am the effulgence of Arunagiri², the Supreme Whole. Go round Arunachala silently a hundred times and you will be purified.” Brahma did so and became Lord of the paradise of *Satyalo*ka.

The beauty of *Maya* is such that Being itself becomes enamoured of it. The allure of the mind’s fabrications is such that the mind itself pursues them. Only on receiving an intuition of the Self is it freed from the snare of delusion. Then it is bidden to revolve constantly around the Heart in silence, that is in stillness of mind.

The next story Gautama told concerns Vishnu. Hari¹⁰ is the substratum of the universe. At the

beginning of each *kalpa*¹¹ Brahma issues forth from him to perform the task of creation. Once, however, Hari slept untimely and Siva had to undertake the work for him.

Just as the universe goes through alternate phases of manifestation and dissolution, so does the *sadhaka* through phases of expansion and contraction. He may, however, fall into a state of *laya* or yogic sleep, pleasant but infructuous, and cease from inner strife. He must shake himself out of this and turn to Arunachala, to the heart, for renewed guidance.

On waking, Hari said: “This is the work of *Maya*. What shall I do to expunge this sin? I shall take refuge at the feet of Sankara.”¹⁴ At this very thought, Sambhu stood before him and said: “I am Arunachala, by merely looking at which darkness is destroyed. Though outwardly a hill of earth and stone, I am fire inwardly. The rains that are absorbed in Arunachala do not flow out. Anything sought there is obtained. Worship Arunachala and take up your work again.”

The rain of Grace that falls upon the heart does not flow forth in waste but remains there to fertilise it.

In *Satya-yuga* Arunachala was visible fire (the radiance of Truth naked and visible); in the second age it was a mound of gems (the inexhaustible treasures of spiritual powers and experiences were apparent to all); in the third it was of gold and now, in this *kali-yuga*, it is a hill of earth and stone, its radiance concealed.

At all times, but especially on auspicious occasion such as *Sivaratri* (the Night of Siva) and *Kartikai*, when a beacon is lit on the summit, Gods and invisible *Rishis* go round Arunachala, blessing the humans who go round and fulfilling their wishes. There is no spot more sacred. Mount Kailas is the abode of Siva but Arunachala is Siva Himself.

All this Rishi Gautama explained to Parvati¹², whereupon she decided to do penance here and requested him to give her a hut to live in, which he gladly did. Though seemingly young, her devotion

10 A name for Vishnu.

11 Cycle of manifestation,

12 A name for Uma.

and detachment were great. Her frail body shone like a golden creeper, full of lustre.

V

Mahishasura

After spending some time at the Ashram of Rishi Gautama, Uma established herself in a *tapovanam*, a place of austerities, at Pavalakunru on a spur of Arunachala. She put aside her jewellery, let her hair grow unkempt and matted, clad herself in the bark of a tree and smeared her body with sacred ash. She now lived a life of severe *tapas*.

At this time the demon Mahishasura created such havoc that not only was the whole earth disturbed but the heavens also. Fearing for their safety, the Devas appealed to Uma for protection. The demon attacked her *tapovanam* and fierce battle raged between his forces and her attendants. The latter were driven back, and finally Uma herself assumed her terrible form as Durga, her of the sixteen arms, and sallied forth against him, a weapon in every hand. Long and fierce was the battle between them, but in the end Durga overthrew the *asura*, trod

him underfoot and pierced him with her trident. Then she cut off his head and danced in triumph on it. The Devas rained flowers upon her and sang her praises. There was divine music in the heavens. All the directions of space were brightened.

Finally, as this myth indicates, the ego of the *sadhaka* rises up in revolt and must be destroyed. Until this is done the higher, heavenly faculties are disturbed as well as the purely human, the gods as well as men. There is disturbance everywhere and danger of total ruin. But the demon can be destroyed only by the *sadhaka* himself. Neither God nor Guru can do it for him. When he achieves victory there is rejoicing in heaven and earth.

In the neck of the slain *asura* Durga beheld a *Siva-lingam*. She touched it and it adhered to her hand and would not come off. This made her fear that the demon had been a *Siva-bhakta*, a devotee of the Lord, and that she had committed a sin in slaying him. Rishi Gautama reassured her but she was not convinced. Then came the voice of Siva instructing her how to make ablution in the sacred waters, and after due ablution the *lingam* came



Pavalakunru

away. It was consecrated and worshipped on earth under the name of *papanasa lingam*, the ‘sin-destroying *lingam*,’ and the sacred waters as ‘*khadga tirtha*.’

VI

The Consummation

Surrounded with the fires of *tapas* on all four sides and with her eyes raised towards the sun, Ambika¹², the Divine Mother, shone like a jewel. At sunset on the evening of *Kartikai* the full moon rose above the horizon to gaze upon her splendour. A radiant light burst forth on the crest of Sonagiri². Vishnu and Brahma appeared. Uma slowly walked around Arunachala, singing praises to the Lord. Suddenly He stood motionless before her, glorious in His own radiance. She stood with downcast eyes before Him.

“Oh Devi!”, He said, “Why should you suffer? Are you not One with Me and worshipful in all the worlds? Are we not One, like the moon and its rays? Are we not united beyond time and

13 Vishnu’s Spouse or Shakti.

14 Brahma’s Spouse or Shakti.

space? I am Narayana¹⁰ and you are Lakshmi¹³. I am Brahma and you Saraswati¹⁴. I am the Ocean and you the Ganges. I am *ahankara*¹⁵ and you the intellect. I am *Purusha*¹⁶ and you are *Prakriti*¹⁷. You are that *Shakti* which brings about creation, preservation and destruction. Imagining yourself to have a separate existence from me has brought all this suffering upon you. Awake now from this delusion.”

So saying, Lord Parameswara¹⁸ lifted her up and she was absorbed into his being. Merging, they became one androgynous whole, the right side red and the left white, the right side male and the left female. Thus was the Mystic Union achieved as human and Divine became one whole. Thenceforth was she Unnamulai¹² and He Annamalai². Here at the place of their union, at this Arunachala, Grace is abundant and *sadhakas* are blessed in their efforts. This is the heart-centre this is the Holy Hill.

15 The I-sense.

16 The Spirit.

17 Universal, Primordial Substance.

18 The Supreme God.

STILLNESS

By N. R. Krishnamurti

In stillness the mind-body-world complex dissolves. The ego has to be created, maintained and then dissolved. And yet there is no ego to be dissolved. It does not exist. Neither do its shadows — mind, body, world. This is the ultimate truth revealed by the enquiry ‘Who am I?’ Who would kick a shadow? It is said that the light and heat of *Atma* playing on the desert of *Maya* generates the mirage of the mind-body-world complex.

Who is it that asks ‘Who am I?’ Ask this and the ego is nowhere at all. All that is is pure Being-Awareness-Bliss — I AM — I AM — without beginning or end; and this forever IS this Arunachala-Ramana-Siva-Santham, the One without a second. Thought is no more, even enquiry has exhausted itself and one is still and abides as one is, the core of existence, the Heart.

Om Tat Sat.

THE HERITAGE OF SRI MAHARSHI

By Mouni Sadhu

Mouni Sadhu is well known to many of our readers through his book 'In Days of Great Peace' (Allen & Unwin) in which he describes his stay at Tiruvannamalai during the lifetime of the Maharshi and the enormous influence that the Maharshi had on him.

More than sixty years ago, Swami Vivekananda expressed a far-reaching truth: "A good thought, even when generated in a secluded cave, will invariably have its repercussion throughout the whole world." In other words, spiritual energy like its junior sister material energy, does not go astray or perish.

At that time, the penetration of Eastern, especially Vedantic, philosophy into the Western world was only just starting. Vivekananda, with his world-wide travelling and lecturing about Yoga, was one of its ablest exponents in his own day.

Almost at the same time, in the silent caves of the holy mountain of Arunachala, a young ascetic - Venkataraman, the future Great Rishi of India, whom we know as Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi, started, his spiritual work for humanity.

The potent current of meditation born from his state of true *Samadhi*, has since enveloped our globe. If a single thought leaves its impression on the mental aura of a planet, we can hardly imagine the actual results of a constant stream of spiritual energy such as that which for more than fifty years radiated from Sri Maharshi.

In the early part of this century the central Vedantic teaching of Self-Realization as a goal of man's attainment was little known in the West, although it had continued in an unbroken stream in India as well as through the Sufi saints of Islamic countries and the Buddhist Masters of various schools. It was Sri Maharshi who made it known throughout the world in the form of the quest for the Self.

Acting for our present epoch as a supreme messenger of Truth, Sri Maharshi gave new life to

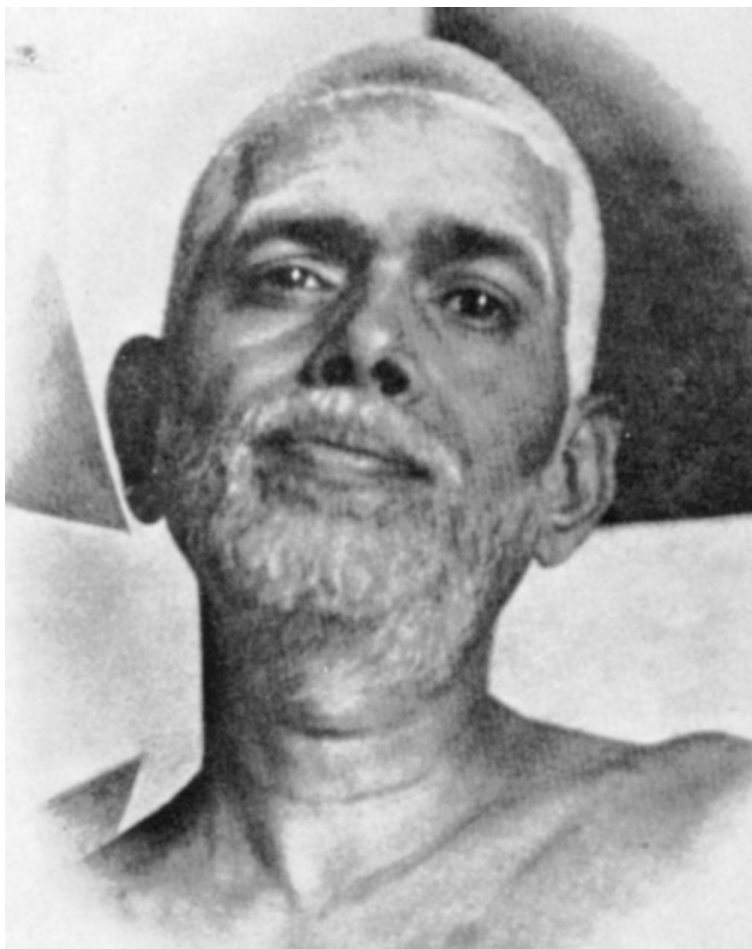
the ancient teaching, and by his own example showed to us that Realization is possible here and now.

Books giving the Master's teachings and commenting upon them, are now spreading over the world. Little wonder then, that those who are ripe for it and whose destiny draws them to the quest of Realization, respond and accept the teaching given for this epoch. Thus they gradually become able to perceive the inner Light, the 'inner Guru' spoken of by the Maharshi.

Very striking is another phenomenon: in letters from all parts of the world, I can see that people have found the teachings of the Great Rishi and the idea of using the *Vichara* to be something they already knew in their own depths. They often say that, after reading a few pages, development and understanding flow as if through a riverbed prepared long ago. And they find that the teaching belongs to them. Truth is not discovered but recognised.

There are also those who have not yet encountered any of the Maharshi's teachings or read anything about him, and yet of themselves seek to penetrate into their own mysterious inner realm, in which to find the final enlightenment. They seek their Self. We know that there is no such thing as a result without a cause. A potent Cause must be behind the new trend in man's eternal Search. To me it is utterly clear: it is the spiritual inheritance from one of the perfected, from a life manifesting Truth, a life which some of us were privileged to witness with our mortal eyes.

The "I-current", to which the Maharshi's teaching turns us, works beyond the veil of religion. It reaches men of different denominations and



speaks equally well to the Rishi's own countrymen, to Christians, Buddhists, Muslims and others.

Here we see another characteristic of the Master's inheritance: Sri Maharshi neither created nor propagated any new religion or philosophy. He did much more, giving us the key with which to open the hidden treasure of all true religions, to understand and then to practise them with inner enlightenment, and not with gloomy indecision,

doubt and lack of faith as some may have done before.

The Master ever abides with us in his spiritual energy, permeating this world of relativity, as he told us before he left his body.

The immense spiritual accumulator he charged during his visit to our planet as a living man, assists and inspires seekers who are ripe enough to realize his teaching and message.

That method by which a man makes spiritual progress is the best for him. He should not change it for another which may not seem right to him or please him or be useful to him.

- Yoga Vasishtha.

THE LESSER AND GREATER JIHAD

By Abdullah Qutbuddin

“Believers! Make war on the infidels who dwell around you and be severe with them. Know that Allah is with the vigilant.”¹ War is under no stigma in Islam. Indeed, it is enjoined in the Qur’an in a number of places. Nor is it necessarily defensive. The small Muslim community of Medina was naturally on the defensive at first, but after overcoming the Meccan idolaters, the Muslims, still in the lifetime of Mohammad and in obedience to him, proceeded to subjugate the rest of Arabia and to equip an expedition for the invasion of Syria. Indeed, fighting was an obligation and those who shrank from it were rebuked as sternly as Arjuna was by Krishna: “If you do not go to battle He will punish you severely and will replace you by others.”² Those who died in battle acquired the proud title of *shaheed*. This is translated as ‘martyr’, but it is from the same root as *shahada*, the ‘testimony’ or ‘witness’ that there is no god but God and that Mohammad is his Prophet. It implies that they died as witnesses to the truth of Islam and earned paradise by so doing.

This militancy can be explained in terms of the distinction that Arthur Osborne has shrewdly pointed out in his *Buddhism and Christianity in the Light of Hinduism*³ between a world-renouncing and a world-sanctifying religion. Since Christians were enjoined to renounce the world and render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar’s, they could live as well in a pagan as a Christian country. Indeed, the persecution or at least discrimination that they were likely to suffer would serve to keep their faith screwed up to pitch and weed out the smug, the worldly and the weaklings. Islam, on the other hand, was not only a faith but a way of life with its code of civil and criminal law and its injunctions governing trade, marriage,

inheritance, etc. Muslims were not enjoined to renounce the world but to mould it to a harmonious and divinely sanctioned pattern of life. And this could only be done if they were the rulers.

This does not mean that no other religion was to be tolerated. There is a cryptic saying in the Qur’an: “No compulsion in religion” - cryptic because it can be taken as a statement to mean that compulsion is impossible in matters of faith or as an injunction to mean that no compulsion is to be used. The latter seems the more plausible reading. Other monotheists, such as Jews and Christians, termed ‘People of the Book’ since they also had a revealed scripture, were not to be exterminated, or forcibly converted, but after conquest, to be taxed and protected. “Out of those who have been given a Book, make war on such as do not believe in Allah and the last day and forbid what Allah and His Prophet have forbidden and follow the religion of truth, (and do so) until they are subjugated and pay taxes and recognise your supremacy.”⁴ Muslims did not always keep to this. For instance, on the conquest of Persia Zoroastrianism was practically extirpated, although a monotheistic religion, surviving only among those few of its followers who escaped to the hospitable shores of India to found the Parsi community. But then, in what religion have men lived up to their scriptures? And what rulers of subject peoples have resisted the intoxicating presumption of superiority?

For idolatry toleration was not obligatory, since Mohammad himself set the example of smashing the idols at Mecca and banning their worship. Perhaps that accounts for the savage persecution that so many Muslim rulers indulged in India. Sufis may have perceived the beauty and profundity behind the idol-worship, a Kabir or a Nanak may have proclaimed that one could call alike on Ram

1 Qur’an, IX, 123.

2 Qur’an, IX, 39.

3Published by Rider & Co., London.

4 Qur’an, IX, 29. 1

or Rahim, even a Mogul prince like Dara Shikoh may have welcomed 'The Meeting of the Two Seas' - and been put to death for it by his fanatical brother Aurangzebe; but in general Muslim ruling classes lacked the will to understand.

Islam, then, does not condemn war; but does any religion? Christ declared that he was come to bring not peace but a sword and that even members of the same family would take up arms against each other for his sake. And so it has been. His prediction has been simply fulfilled. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Arjuna falls into a pacifist mood and is convinced by Krishna that he should do his duty as a Kshatriya by fighting.

What then of the *ahimsa* that Gandhi proclaimed and that is so widely honoured, at least in theory, today? In ancient India *ahimsa*, non-violence, was an obligation upon the *sadhu*, the world-renouncer. Having renounced worldly ends, he naturally had to renounce worldly means also. But it was never expected that a ruler should abjure warfare and none of the scriptures enjoin *ahimsa* as a general obligation; it would be a denial of the very conception of a Kshatriya caste to do so. Whether Gandhi himself meant *ahimsa* to imply renunciation of war by sovereign states is hard to say, because the one statement he held to quite consistently was the statement of his own inconsistency. Certain it is that he encouraged Indians to join the British army in the first world war and that at the very end of his life he did nothing to dissuade the government of independent India from sending troops to defend Kashmir.

War is a horrible thing and always has been, but the feeling of revulsion against it is quite recent. In fact it dates from the time when total nuclear destruction became a danger to be reckoned with. Fear of such destruction is sensible and well grounded and efforts should certainly be made to prevent at least major wars from breaking out; but these efforts should be recognised for what they are - the outcome of fear - and not dressed up in idealistic phraseology to make it appear that man has suddenly become better than he ever was

before: because that is hypocrisy. One thing is definite in Gandhi's teaching; that is that he distinguished between *ahimsa* based on idealism and non-violence based on fear and hated to see the latter parading as the former.

Although war is horrible in itself, it has an important symbolism. There is an inner as well as an outer war. It is recorded that when Mohammad returned to Medina with his followers after one of their battles he said: "Now we have come back from the lesser *jihad* to the greater" - from the war against outer enemies to each man's war against the enemies within himself. Islam is by no means alone in stressing this symbolism: the *Bhagavad Gita* is interpreted by many commentators as implying the need for inner strife, while the Christian Church on earth is entitled the 'Church Militant'.

Outer pacifism is as admirable as war is horrible unless it means putting up with what the Hindus call *adharma* - disharmony, wrong, injustice - out of fear, for then it is craven. But in modern times there is an inner pacifism also, and this is wholly to be condemned. Among the ever growing groups and circles of people who understand that there is a higher reality, are many who hold that it is sufficient to understand mentally or to believe in the divine verities without making effort, without taking up arms against the forces of obstruction in oneself. Such people shirk what Mohammad called 'the greater holy war'. They are like the 'hypocrites' of whom the Qur'an speaks, who professed verbal sympathy with the striving Muslims but were not prepared to face danger or make any sacrifice in the cause. "The day will surely come when you will see the true believers, men and women, with their light shining before them and on their right hand and a voice singing to them: 'Rejoice this day. You shall enter gardens watered by running streams in which you shall abide forever.' That is the supreme achievement. On that day the hypocrites, both men and women, will say to the true believers: 'Wait for us so that we can borrow some of your light.' They will be answered:

‘Go back and yourselves seek a light.’ Then a wall with a gate in it shall be established between them, on the inside of which shall be mercy but on the outside punishment. They will call out: ‘Were we not on your side?’ But the answer will be: ‘Yes, but you fell into temptation and wavered, you doubted and were deluded by your own desires till the Divine pronouncement came and the Dissembler deceived you about Allah. Today no ransom shall be accepted from you or from the unbelievers; the fire is your abode and protector: an evil end!’”⁵

The term for Realization in Islam is *Fana*, a word remarkably similar to *Nirvana* since its literal meaning is ‘extinction’. It has a certain similarity to the Hindu *nirvikalpa samadhi*, meaning ‘Realization in a state of trance’. To be perfected it must be followed by *Baqa* or ‘stabilization’, in which there is a full return to outer awareness simultaneously with inner Realization. This is the Hindu *sahaja samadhi*. It is the state which Western Zen writers love to refer to when, as they put it, “a tree is again a tree and a mountain a mountain.”

The question which agitates seekers throughout the world today, in fact the only question of importance, is what should be done to attain Realization and what path or methods to follow. The ‘inner pacifists’, the ‘hypocrites’ as the Qur’an calls them, are those who hold that nothing need be done, no effort made, no enemy fought: “just carry on quietly and it will all come to you.”

The error of this attitude can be exposed by putting the question from the opposite end: not ‘what must be done to attain Realization?’ but ‘what prevents Realization?’ The word *sahaja* means ‘natural’; *sahaja samadhi*, therefore, is ‘natural *samadhi*’. And the Maharshi never tired of reminding us that Realization is natural to us, that it is our natural state. Then what withholds us from it? The answer is fairly obvious: the ego with all its tangled roots. Can one imagine a state of permanent, natural Realization dawning on a person who is

5 Qur’an, LVII, 12-15.

jealous lest some one else attain it before him, distracted by the thought of a beautiful woman, irritable when people disagree with him, hungry for adulation, concerned about the impression he makes? Obviously not. That means that before the ground can be cleared for Realization a whole jungle of tangled impulses and desires has to be cleared out. And how do the ‘inner pacifists’ propose to do that? Do they hold that it is a simple thing to do and requires no effort or technique? Spiritual Masters in all ages have warned that it is not and today psychiatrists confirm the warning. The patient won’t get back to human normality without admitting the existence of complexities and need for effort; and the inner peace, the stillness, the calm expanse of mind that the spiritual aspirant must achieve in order to make the dawning of Realization possible goes far beyond anything the psychiatrist conceives of. How then can it be attained without effort?

It may be objected that the types of effort prescribed on a spiritual path are not in fact techniques for eliminating the egoistic impulses which obstruct Realization, that calling on the Name of God or being mindful of one’s breathing or looking inwards to experience the reality of oneself cannot remove rancour or pride or other manifestations of egoism. But who is qualified to say that? The psychiatrist’s technique also is not a direct head-on attack on complexes, and yet experts with learning and experience say that it works. And the spiritual techniques enjoined by the Masters are based on deeper learning and more profound experience going back for centuries; and many have found that they worked. Today also those who use them energetically under proper guidance as weapons in the greater holy war find them efficacious. It is the ‘hypocrites’, those who prefer not to fight, who complain that they would be ineffective anyway.

Soon after a person sets forth on the great enterprise it sometimes happens that an experience of overwhelming beauty comes to him, a perception of a truer, higher Reality. that he will

never be able to forget till the end of his life. This is an encouragement to persevere, a foretaste of what is to be achieved. It carries its own credentials and is beyond the possibility of doubt. It can be explained as the Grace of God or Guru on the young aspirant. Or it can be explained as the newly awakened aspiration momentarily tearing aside the veil of the ego which it is not yet powerful enough to destroy forever. It will not last, and the aspirant may be dejected, feeling that he has slipped back instead of making progress; however, its memory will hold him to the quest and draw him onwards

until, perhaps after long striving, it begins to be accessible to him again.

But suppose he should sit down and say “It came to me spontaneously so I will wait for it to come again spontaneously. Why should I make any effort to retrieve it?” He will be remaining inactive with all the twisted complexities and hidden or open impurities inside him which render its stabilisation impossible. He will be like the ‘hypocrites’ of the Qur’an who sympathised verbally but would not fight. His fate will be the same.

THE FUTILITY OF ARGUMENT

Verses 196 to 803 of the Paramatthaka Sutta

Translated by Frank Allen

The person who is prejudiced in favour of one particular philosophical system is prejudiced against other systems. Such a person disputes and does not overcome the habit of disputing.

He seizes upon anything that seems ‘good’, that looks ‘good’, sounds ‘good’, on particular actions that appear to him to be ‘good’, upon anything he thinks is ‘good’ - and in so doing he labels other things ‘bad’.

Experts are agreed that the man who labels things ‘bad’ is thereby making it impossible for himself to see them as they really are. Therefore the disciplined one should not colour what he sees and hears nor pin his faith on virtue and achievement.

He should not found or favour any organised system of philosophy either by word or deed. He should not consider himself ‘better’ or ‘worse’ than another, nor ‘equal’.

Being without prejudices and favour, uninfluenced by convention, he does not associate himself with any formal religion or sect; he is not bound by any set rules.

For him there is no need to strive to become this or that, in this world or the next. And he has ceased to study the philosophies for he no longer requires the solace that philosophy offers.

As regards things seen and heard he remains unswayed by prejudice: such a Brahmin is not to be misled.

He accepts nothing, prefers nothing, takes to no particular philosophy. Not on account of his virtues and achievements does the (true) Brahmin fare to the Further Shore, never more to return

ZEN TRAINING IN JAPAN

By Marie B. Byles

In Journey into Burmese Silence¹ Miss Byles gives a delightful and attractive account of meditational practices in a Buddhist centre open to the laity in Burma. In the present article, which is to form part of a book under the title Paths to Inner Calm, she describes what she has seen and experienced at Zen meditation centres in Japan.

Miss Byles is also author of Footprints of Gautama the Buddha², a fictionalised biography and The Lotus and the Spinning Wheel, a book of reflections on the life and teachings of Buddha and Gandhi.

For two months I lived in a Zen temple in the Daitokuji compound on the outskirts of Kyoto, the chief centre of Buddhist learning in Japan. Every evening I meditated at the zendo or meditation hall established especially for Europeans and conducted on almost identical lines with that of the zendo of the monastery a few minutes away.

From the scenic flagged roadway the monastery looked like any other of the beautiful temples in Daitokuji, except for the pillars on either side of the gateway announcing it to be a centre for Zen training. There are two training periods, one from the beginning of May to the end of July and the other from the beginning of November to the end of January. At other times most of the monks go home.

Before the commencement of the summer training period, the roshi, or spiritual teacher, delivered an informal sermon which lay people might attend. About eight or nine lay people came; we sat on the tatami mats with seven monks dressed in dark blue cotton gowns in front of us. The smiling roshi entered dressed in dark brown with a small curved stick and a rosary over his wrist. He, too, sat on the floor. In front of him was a reading desk exactly the right height to hide his lips and he spoke in a very low voice. I should not think anyone heard and I was told that this sermon is generally regarded as an opportunity to make up for arrears of sleep. Two of the monks were availing themselves of this. From the end of March, monks in residence had been arising at 3

a.m. and meditating previously during a portion of the night.

To understand the nature of a Zen monastery today, it must be borne in mind that it resembles a theological training college rather than a Catholic monastery. Nearly all the young men who come, are there to be trained as temple priests. Perhaps they have inherited a temple. The monastery teaches both the art of meditation and of temple management.

The method of meditation varies according to the sect. In the Rinzai sect it commences with concentration on the long outgoing breath and then allowing the in-going breath to flow in naturally; the breaths are counted up to ten. When proficiency has been obtained in this breathing method, a koan is given as the subject for meditation. This is a question like a riddle and nonsensical on the face of it. There are said to be seventeen-hundred koans. The correct answers must be found intuitively. One of the first is, "What was your original face before you were born?" (This is more or less the same as Ramana Maharshi's question, "Who are you?") The meditation is broken at the end of every half hour when stiff limbs may be stretched. As well it may be broken by the monk or priest in charge who strides silently round the zendo with a wooden baton known as Manjusri's sword, which he uses to strike over the shoulder (twice on each shoulder in summer and four times in winter) any meditator who appears sleepy or who for some other reason he thinks would benefit by being whacked.

Zazen or meditation is considered the essence

1 Allen and Unwin.

2 Rider & Co.

of Zen training, but in practice temple-management plays nearly as great a part. This requires proficiency in many varied matters - book-keeping, repair-work, care of priceless picture-scrolls, cleaning, cooking, growing vegetables, caring for the exquisite gardens with their moss-lawns, shaped azalea bushes and espaliered pines. Most of these temples in Kyoto are "national treasures" and the Government pays 70% of the cost of repairs. But other than this they have had no regular income since the Meiji Restoration took away their lands and revenues. They must therefore depend upon donations and in Kyoto mostly from tourists. By and large the temples are not wealthy and the priest and his wife, for he is usually married, must be able to do most of the work themselves without paid labour.

The religious side of the training includes meditation, but also the conduct of the various ceremonies principally in honour of the Founders and departed spirits; and sutra-chanting is an art all to itself.

It is obvious that not all who inherit a temple, or for some other reason need to train as Zen priests, are suited to the training, and whether suited or not, nothing is made easy for them. The monk's life is austere and without intentional friendliness. Its object is to turn them out "tough as nails", I read somewhere. They must be prepared for the bitter cold of winter without artificial heating and with open windows and snow blowing on shaven heads, scanty clothing and prohibition of overcoats and socks indoors. The food is strictly vegetarian and poor vegetarian at that, and the hours of sleep are deliberately curtailed. Japanese life is harder than ours, but at the monastery it is made harder than it need be. And the method of training in meditation and Zazen interviews with the roshi aim at creating fear and tension - "You must be cruel to be kind," I was told.

Unless a man has a definite vocation he must face the ordeal as he would an operation without

an anaesthetic, knowing that at the end of four years he will be free. But even then it is not an easy life he faces. Now that there are many and varied avenues of employment open to promising young men, fewer and fewer resort to the Zen monastery for training. The priest at the temple where I stayed, told me that at the monastery where he trained there used to be forty-six monks and that now there were only sixteen. At Daitokuji the numbers had fallen to seven. He foresaw the time when temples would be cared for by those who were not Zen-trained. "Like caretakers' of a museum," I suggested and he agreed.

Most Europeans who have been at Zen monasteries have been there only as guests for a limited period. But one evening the European lady who established the European Zendo, herself a Zen priest, Mrs. Ruth Sasaki, told us of an American who had been accepted at one of the most austere monasteries. He would be there for perhaps ten years, and at least for sixteen months. He had a wife and two small boys. His wife had given her consent, and still wished to help Zennists.

As is required by this monastery, the young man had crouched with his head on the ground before the gate for three days seeking admission. This is never granted easily. By the third day he had worn a mark on his forehead and up till the very last he was afraid he might be refused. He was accepted, but not into the bosom of a friendly family. Monastery life is always hard and cold and this more-so than most.

I met his wife before I left Kyoto. She was planning to let her house and return to America for a year.

"Only for a year?" asked one of the Zen members. "Why come back at all when you can't see your husband?"

"But I have seen him," she said. "He had a free day and came home recently, he would hardly leave the larder, he was so hungry. They get only three hours sleep a night. At the end of a year he will decide whether to stay for only sixteen months

or for an indefinite period. That is why I shall come back then.”

People who wish to train as Zen priests must put up with this austerity, but why should a European who has no need to? I came to the conclusion that this was like the question, “Why do people climb Mount Everest?” and the reply, “Because it’s there.” Whether it be a mountain or a monastery, it is a challenge and some will always be ready to take it up, no matter what the physical and mental suffering entailed, and no matter what the risk to health and even life.

Zen training “turns them out tough as nails”. A picture rose to mind of the Samurai warriors who were calm, serene and also tough as nails, and not afraid to kill themselves if honour demanded it. Zen and the military had worked together, and the spirit of the soldier still runs through Zen training. But what I queried was whether the world today needs the Samurai. I suggest that the future is rather with the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi, and loving kindness and non-violence.

* * *

I visited the monastery three other times. The first was for a very elaborate ceremony at the commencement of the summer training period. All the Daitokuji priests came dressed in their splendid robes, and a few lay people as well as the monks. The roshi preached a sermon to the shrine, not to the audience ranged on each side, and once again several bent over books, and appeared to be taking the opportunity to make up for arrears of sleep! It was a very beautiful ceremony in the midst of austere beautiful surroundings.

The second time was for meditation in the shrine room, for lay people are not allowed to meditate with the monks in the zendo. I was a trifle nervous because I had been warned that the monk who wielded “Manjusri’s sword” to whack the meditators, had a very heavy hand, and when over the age of sixty one’s bones become brittle! The stick is not used in the European Zendo, though why I do not know for it is used in all Zen

monasteries of all Zen sects. “You have to be cruel to be kind,” I was again told. The monks sit lotus style on the high wooden platforms on either side of the zendo, and I could hear them being whacked. Carrying the sword of Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of wisdom, the monk in charge cannot err. And the whacking is carried out with proper bowing and ritual. All the same I was glad he did not come to the shrine room while I was there!

Part way through the meditation session, the bell rang for Sanzen, and monks and lay European trainees lined up for interview with the roshi. On three occasions there was what seemed to be a frantic stampede among the monks. It was occasioned by a young monk being told to return to the roshi’s room, and being terrified to do so. Blows and angry words were rained upon him to force him in, and one of the monks had to be taken by his leg and shoulders and thrust in.

* * *

The last occasion I visited the monastery was to interview the roshi. It took me seven weeks of persistency before I was at length granted an appointment.

I asked him, “Why are your disciples so afraid of you. You look, smiling and gentle enough now.”

“Ah,” he replied, “a teacher has to have two faces. You see my visitor’s face. But my disciples see my teacher’s face. I have to be stern to them. That is the only way they can learn.”

And so, in addition to the physical austerity, the monk must expect to meet mental and emotional cruelty deliberately inflicted. You and I can never see the roshi’s other face except in pictures. There was an especially striking picture on the wall screen of one of the Daitokuji temples. It showed a stern faced roshi with a sinister glint in his sideways-looking eyes, and his stick uplifted; slinking in at the back was a pale shrunken and terrified monk. Even the convinced European trainee must expect for at least a year to feel his knees trembling each time he goes into the roshi’s small room. How much more the young Japanese who must train only so as to become a temple priest!

And then at the end of it all, will you have found enlightenment? None of the Zen priests I met appeared to have outward signs of any deeper enlightenment than the average of one's well-intentioned friends at home. I often used to think of simple-minded Brother Lawrence, a cook in a Christian monastery, who merely practised the presence of God; it seemed to me he probably knew more about satori, enlightenment and his "original face" than Zen masters who found the answers to the seventeen hundred koans.

* * *

But what about the idea of the Western exponents of Zen, who say all you have to do is to be spontaneous, and then one day the roshi twists your nose, and you have Realization?

Well, that is just a Western idea. Westerners import some things that are not there.

* * *

And now, leaving aside Zen training, let us turn to its poetry and art and some of its pithy stories. I do not think Zen has anything to add to Mahayana Buddhism, Shintoism and Taoism. But it has gathered wisdom from all these, and long after its training has been forgotten, some of its stories, its poetry and art will live.

Here is a story that might have come from the Buddha himself. It is of a nun going on pilgrimage who came to a village at sunset and none would offer her a night's lodging. She went into the fields and lay at the foot of a cherry tree. At midnight she woke and saw the cherry blossoms laughing to the misty moon. Overcome with the beauty,

she rose and bowed towards the village saying:

**Through their kindness in refusing me
lodging,
I found myself beneath the blossoms on
the night of the misty moon.**

And listen to some of the profound truth as well as beauty in verses like these

**You remain silent and it speaks.
You speak and it is silent.**

**When you are not in antagonism to it,
It turns out to be the same as complete
awakening.**

**The wild geese do not intend to cast their
reflections.**

**The water has no mind to receive their
image.**

The same applies to Zen art and the ability of the artist to identify 'himself with nature. And then there is the superb symbolism of the ox-herding pictures. The man catches sight of the tail of the ox, his own self; this is satori; he follows it, tames it, rides it, loses both himself and the ox, and then returns to ordinary life spreading a beneficence.

We can learn from Zen poetry and art, as we can learn from Catholic mystics. To do this there is no need to become a Zennist or a Roman Catholic, nor to undertake practices alien to our thought and temperament — nor to expect that Zen or Roman Catholicism will bring us enlightenment any better than other religions and ways of training.

You Must Cling Too

By A. Devaraja Mudaliar

In India we compare the aspirant who strives to the child of the monkey that clings to its mother as she jumps from tree to tree and the devotee who relies completely on the grace of the Guru to that of the cat that is quite helpless and is therefore picked up by its mother

and carried in her mouth. Alluding to this, I said once that I was like the kitten and had cast the whole responsibility on Bhagavan. He laughed but would not agree. He said "Both are necessary; I will hold you but you must cling too."

SEEING IT SIMPLY

By Wei Wu Wei¹

It is surely axiomatic that a phenomenon (an appearance, an object) cannot perform any action whatever on its own initiative, as an independent entity. In China this was illustrated by Chuangtze in his story of the sow who died while suckling her piglets: the little pigs just left her because their mother was no longer there. In Europe, even at that early date, the same understanding is expressed by the word 'animus' which 'animates' the phenomenal aspect of sentient beings, and this forms the basis of most religious beliefs. But whereas in the West the 'animus' was regarded as personal to each phenomenal object, being the sentience of it, in the East the 'animus' was called 'heart' or 'mind' or 'consciousness', and in Buddhism and Vedanta was regarded as impersonal and universal, 'Buddhamind', 'Prajna', 'Atman', etc.

When this impersonal 'mind' comes into manifestation by objectifying itself as subject and object it becomes identified with each sentient object, and the concept of 'I' thereby arises in human beings, whereby the phenomenal world as we know it and live it, appears to be what we call 'real'. That, incidentally, is the only 'reality' (thingness) we can ever know, and to use the term 'real' (a thing) for what is not such, for the purely subjective, is an abuse of language.

In this process of personalising 'mind' and thinking of it as 'I', we thereby make it, which is subject, into an object, whereas 'I' in fact can never be such, for there is nothing objective in 'I', which is essentially a direct expression of subjectivity. This objectivising of pure subjectivity, calling it 'me' or calling it 'mind', is precisely what constitutes 'bondage'. It is this concept, termed the Iconcept or ego or self, which

is the supposed bondage from which we all suffer and from which we seek 'liberation'.

It should be evident, as the Buddha and a hundred other awakened sages have sought to enable us to understand, that what we are is this 'animating' mind as such, which is *noumenon*, and not the phenomenal object to which it gives sentience. This does not mean, however, that the phenomenal object has no kind of existence whatever, but that its existence is merely apparent, which is the meaning of the term 'phenomenon', that is to say that it is only an appearance in consciousness, an objectivisation, without any nature of its own, being entirely dependent on the mind that objectivises it, which mind is its only nature, very much as in the case of any dreamed creature, as the Buddha in the *Diamond Sutra*, and many others after him have so patiently explained to us.

This impersonal, universal mind or consciousness, is our true nature, our only nature, all, absolutely all, that we are, and it is completely devoid of Iness.

This is easy enough to understand, and it would be simple indeed if it were the ultimate truth, but it is not, for the obvious reason that no such thing as an objective 'mind' could exist, any more than an 'I' or any other object, as a thing in itself. What it is, however, is totally devoid of any objective quality, and so cannot be visualised, conceptualised, or in any way referred to, for any such process would automatically render it an object of a subject which by definition it can never be. That is because the 'mind' in question is the unmanifested source of manifestation, the process of which is its division into subject and object; and antecedent to such division there can be no subject to perceive an object, and no object to be perceived by a subject. Indeed, and as revealed by sages such as Padma Sambhava,

¹ For a note on Wei Wu Wei see our issue of April 1964. See also the review of his latest work in this issue.

that which is seeking to conceive and to name this unmanifested source of manifestation is precisely this 'whole mind' that is the 'animating' or *prajñatic* functioning which itself is the seeking, so that the sought is the seeker thereof. Profoundly to understand this is Awakening to what is called 'enlightenment'.

This reasoned visualisation, therefore, like all doctrine, is merely conceptual, devoid of factuality, a structure of theoretical imagination, a symbolical diagram devised in order to enable us to understand something immediate that can never become knowledge. Yet that ultimate 'something', which is no 'thing', is nevertheless what the universe is, and all that we are.

The psychological 'Iconcept' has no nature of its own, is no 'thing' and could not possibly create genuine 'bondage'. There cannot be any such thing as bondage at all, but only the idea of such. There is no liberation, for there is no 'thing' from which to be freed. If the whole conceptual structure is seen as what it is, it must necessarily collapse, and the bondageenlightenment nonsense with it. That is called Awakening, awakening to the natural state which is that of every sentient being. Sri Ramana Maharshi taught just that when he said that 'enlightenment' is only being rid of the notion that one is not 'enlightened', and Maharshi might have been quoting the T'ang dynasty Chinese sage Huihai, known as the Great Pearl, when he stated that Liberation is liberation from the notion of 'liberation'. He might also have been quoting Huangpo (d. 850), of whom he is unlikely ever to have heard, when they both used the same words, full of humour, to someone asking about 'his' mind: each sage asked in reply, "How many minds have you?"

How many minds had they, those two young

men? Why, none at all. Not only not two, but not one. Nor were they themselves a 'mind', for there could not be such a thing as a 'mind' for them to be. Neither 'they' nor 'mind' ever had, or ever could have, any objective being whatever, for never has any kind of objective being been, nor will such ever be. All that, and every 'that' that ever was thought up and 'that' is the most purely objective of pronouns is the essence of the gigantic phantasmagoria of objectivity, which we spend our lives building up, and in which we search desperately for some 'truth' that could not possibly be there. The whole vast construction is a fantasy, a dream, as the Buddha (or whoever wrote it in his name) told us in the *Diamond Sutra*, and the truth that a dream represents or misrepresents, of which it is a reflection or a deflection, is the dreaming source of it which is all that it is. That source can never have a name, because a name denotes a phenomenon and there is no phenomenal dreamer, but a functioning that is called dreaming. Sri Bhagavan called it 'II': if it must be called anything, no nominal form could ever come nearer, or be less misleading as an indication, than his term.

All objectivisation is conceptual, all conceptuality is inference, and all inference is as empty of truth as a vacuum is empty of air. Moreover there is no truth, never has been and never could be; there is no thusness, suchness, isness, nor anything positive or negative whatever. There is just absolute absence of the cognisable, which is absolute presence of the unthinkable and the unknowable which neither is nor is not. Inferentially this is said to be an immense and radiant splendour untrammelled by notions of time and space, and utterly beyond the dim, reflected sentience of temporal and finite imagination.

He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh is set free from a multitude of opinions.

- *The Imitation of Christ*

THE VIRTUOUS WAY OF LIFE

By HH Sri Jaya Chamaraja Wadiyar

In the days when titles were still used in India, the Maharaja of Mysore, now Governor of Madras State, was already an outstanding exponent of Hindu culture. Since then he has become widely known as a cultural and intellectual ambassador abroad and an upholder of dharma at home. Most prominent of his books is 'Dattatreya, The Way and the Goal'¹, containing an annotated translation of that purest of Advaitic texts the Avadhuta Gita. A thought-provoking little study of the Bhagavad Gita published recently, is reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

The Maharaja's predecessor had a private interview with Bhagavan, and he himself is a known visitor at this Ashram. We are glad to be able to publish this article by him.

Ancient Indian literature is full of references to the advantage and necessity of leading an ethical way of life. In the earliest literary record of India, the *Rig Veda*, one finds appreciative statements made of the righteous way of life which a man is called upon to adopt. God Varuna, the presiding deity of the moral order of the universe, is often invoked in very humble terms to come to the aid of man and to help him in leading a sincere life characterised by the cultivation of truth and goodness. The Vedic seers are never tired of requesting the gods to bless them with fortitude which was so essential to them in order to lead the right kind of life. The same theme is continued in the philosophic treatises called *Upanisads* where it is pointed out that the ethical way of life alone can bring to man much coveted prize of Liberation. The greatness and the glory of following the virtuous way of life is also the subject matter for treatment in the succeeding stages of Indian literature, science and art. A thoughtful observation made in the mighty Indian Epic, the *Mahabharata*, on the nobility of a righteous life merits our earnest attention and reflection. Yudhisthira, the eldest of the Pandava brothers and the hero of the epic poem, was once confronted by a *Yaksa* or celestial being near a lake to which Yudhisthira went in order to drink water. The latter did not allow Yudhisthira to partake of the waters of the lake until he answered convincingly certain

¹Published by Allen and Unwin.



questions. And one important question that was addressed to Yudhisthira related to the virtuous way of life. The celestial being asked him: "What exactly constitutes 'the way'" (*Ka dik*) and Yudhisthira answered: "The good is 'the way'" (*Santah Dik*)¹. By this answer, he was indicating

to the questioner that man fulfils himself only by leading a good and virtuous life.

In order to understand the full content of the expression “good way of life” it is well to bestow attention on an episode mentioned in the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*². According to it, once the gods, men and demons were residing with their Father, Brahma, learning the sacred scriptures. The period of their studentship was over and the gods requested their Father kindly to give them his final instructions. The Father consented to do so and cryptically uttered the single syllable “Da”. The gods said that they understood the instruction and it was that they should control themselves (*Damayata*). And Brahma confirmed their understanding.. It was now the turn of the men to get instruction and when they sought for it Brahma repeated the syllable “Da”. The men claimed that they too understood him and said that the instruction in their case was that they must practise charity (*Dana*). And Brahma agreed with their interpretation also. Next came the turn of the demons. Much to their surprise they found their Father pronouncing for the third time the syllable “Da”. The demons were quick to follow him and replied that they also understood his advice and it was that they should practice compassion (*Dayaddhavam*). And the Father agreed with this interpretation too. We also learn from the *Upanisad* that when it thunders, the sounds of ‘Da’ are heard announcing the instruction of Brahma that everyone in the universe should practise the virtues of control, charity and compassion. These virtues constituted the very texture of man’s good life and it was therefore man’s duty to cultivate these in his own interest.

Annotated thus, the meaning of the expression “the good way” becomes clear. It is the assiduous attention to be bestowed by all men of wisdom on the three principal virtues of controlling the

senses, of practising alms-giving and of cultivating a compassionate attitude towards all beings. Sri Sankaracharya makes these concepts clearer in his commentary on the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*. When the Father of the universe was instructing the gods, he knew that there was the danger of the gods becoming unruly because they could have everything they wanted on account of their acquired merit. Therefore, he was cautioning them against committing such an offence and advised them to practise control of the senses³. Sankara points out the reason why *Prajapati* or the Father of the universe asked men to practise charity. It was because there was the likelihood of men becoming greedy and cheating their fellow-beings of their rightful share. Hence the advice that they should cultivate the habit of giving gifts to others⁴. Then again the Father realised that there was always a chance of the demons misusing their natural strength and therefore called upon them to cultivate the virtue of ‘compassion’⁵.

These three main ethical principles receive much attention at the hands of Indian thinkers and preceptors of law. Sage Yajnavalkya recommends control of the senses, alms-giving and mercy as good qualities which are to be practised by all human beings⁶. The *Bhagavad Gita* insists that a man aspiring to the highest spiritual value should cultivate these principles⁷. Vyasa, the revered author of the epic *Mahabharata* desires that human beings should dedicate themselves to the performance of *tapas*

3 *Adanta yuyam svabhavatah
ato danta bhavata iti* —

Sankara’s Commentary: V. 21.

4 ‘*Svabhavato lubdha yuyam
ato yatha saktya samvibhajata*’ — Ibid: V. 2.2

5 ‘*Krura yuyam himsadirarah,
ato dayaddhyam pranisu
dayam kurwata iti*’. — Ibid: V. 2.3

6 *Yajnavalkya smrti*: 1.4.122.

7 XVI. 1.

8 *Mahabharata*. 3.297-39.

1 *Mahabharata*: Aranyaparva: 297.60-61.

2 *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*: V. 2.1.

or austerity and that this is well done by the faithful observance of self-control, charity and compassion. He is firmly of the view that *tapas* or austerity of this nature will make a man great. (*Tapasa vindate mahat*)⁸. A man of charitable disposition is bound to become famous too and such is the opinion of Yudhisthira, an exemplar of Indian virtue⁹. (*Danamekapadam yasah*). Sage Vyasa is no less enthusiastic about the practice of compassion. He is of the view that it is the highest of all virtues (*Anrsamsyam paro dharmah*)¹⁰. Not less is his admiration for the principle of *Dama* or control of the mind¹¹.

These virtues were practised by famous men of India and their activities are recorded in the legendary lore and literary texts. One remembers often the name of Jimutavahana, the great Vidyadhara prince, who offered himself as food for Garuda the leader of the birds and thus saved the lives of many serpents which otherwise would have become victims of the greedy birds' wrath¹². The unparalleled example of a person who practised charity of an extraordinary kind is described in the poem Raghuvamsa¹³. He was Raghu, son of Dilipa. He did many glorious deeds, conducted wars and achieved notable victories. Having gained universal sovereignty, he performed a great sacrifice called 'Visvajit' in which he gave away all the wealth he had. Indeed he became so poor that when a young sage called Kautsa came and requested of him a gift of money, the king had hardly any with him to give, and so had to go to war with Kubera, the God of Wealth. Amongst those who practised the control of the senses to the full may be mentioned the great Bhishmacarya of the *Mahabharata*. He was the son of King Santanu and Ganga, the river goddess. When Santanu, father of Bhishma was old he desired to marry

again. Bhishma found a beautiful damsel for him. But the parents of the bride desired that the son to be born to their daughter should occupy the throne after Santanu instead of Bhishma. The great Bhishma readily consented and not only renounced the throne for himself but also remained a bachelor until his death.

There are also instances recorded in ancient Indian religious and secular texts of people suffering a fall on account of their non-adherence to these important principles of virtue. The life of the sage Visvamitra is a case in point. He was born a Kshatriya but by intense austerities he wanted to become a great *Rishi* or seer. Unfortunately he developed a liking for Menaka, a celestial beauty. This moved him away from his intended goal and he had to toil hard to come back to his original ways. If the case of Visvamitra illustrates the ruin resulting from uncontrolled passion that of Duryodhana, the wicked opponent of the Pandavas, illustrates the evil effects of greed. He disregarded the truth that the *Isavasya Upanisad* teaches us, that one should not covet another's property (*Ma gradhah kasya sviddhanam*) and ruined himself. To take another example, Ravana the cruel opponent of Rama shows by his behaviour that power in the hands of an evil-minded person leads to suffering and sin. The following story about Ravana illustrates how 'pride goeth before a fall'. Once he was travelling in his aerial chariot and came to mount Kailas, the abode of Siva. There Nandiswara, the great devotee of Siva, asked the king to go back and not to fly over the holy mountain. Ravana became angry at this challenge to his power, and in his inordinate pride dug his mighty arms deep under the mountain and began to shake it. This disturbed Siva and his consort Parvati. Siva understood the cause for the shaking of the mountain and gently pressed down his toe; and Ravana's arms were caught tightly. After vain attempts to free himself, he began to wail and thus came to be called Ravana (the Wailer). This story of Ravana and his pride is of topical

9 *Ibid*: 3.297-49,

10 *Ibid*: 3.297-55.

11 *Ibid*: 3.297.

12 *Vide* 'Nagananda' -- a drama of Sriharsa,

13 *Raghuvamsa*. Canto IV and V.

interest and indicates the dangers of the knowledge of nuclear Science in the hands of an unscrupulous man or government. The lesson to be drawn is that those who possess the strength of a giant should use it in a virtuous way and for the good of mankind.

The Bhagavad Gita takes cognisance of the role of the good life in the progress of an individual. It mentions steadfastness, sacrifice, study, peacefulness and modesty as general characteristics of the good way of life. It speaks of two types of quality, the divine and the demoniac and points out that fortitude, purity, vigour and forgiveness are qualities which belong to the 'divine' while arrogance and unwisdom belong to the demoniac. The chief purpose of this teaching is to call the good to the divine way of life and make them discard the demoniac¹⁴.

14 *Isavasya Upanisad*: 1.

In other words, it calls upon people not to combine power with pride but with God. The result is very like the combination of Siva, the God, and Sakti, his consort, which brings happiness to the *sakta* or devotee.

What is the ultimate goal of the 'good way of life'? The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* which speaks of the episode of Brahma and his repetition of the syllable 'Da' thrice, gives also the answer to this question. The *Upanishad* analyses the word "Sat ya" or Truth into three syllables, *Sa ti* and *yam* and identifies the first and the last syllables with Truth. It finally points out by implication that the person who practises the good way of life characterised by the three Da's *Dama*, *Dana* and *Daya* will know and realise Truth or Brahman¹⁵, and this realisation is the ultimate goal of the good way of life.

15 *Brihadaranyaka*: V. 51.

All the various doctrines and paths originating at different times and in different countries lead ultimately to the same Supreme Truth, like the many different paths leading travellers from different places to the same city. It is ignorance of the Absolute Truth and misunderstanding of the different doctrines that causes their followers to quarrel in bitter animosity with one another. They consider their own particular dogmas and paths to be the best, as every traveller may think though wrongly, his own to be the only or the best path.

Yoga Vasishtha.

He who sees all beings in the same Self and the same Self in all beings does not hate anybody. When a man knows that all beings are ultimately the Self and realizes this unity in experience there remains no delusion or grief for him.

Isha Upanishad.

I, Lalla, wandered far in search of Siva, the omnipresent Lord. After much wandering, I found Him at last within myself, abiding in His own home.

Lalla, a Kashmiri woman saint.

Many are the means of crossing the ocean of reincarnation of which the pure words of the Vedas speak; but Tulasi says 'Real peace of heart' cannot be attained without giving up the notions of 'I' and 'mine'.

Tulasidas.

THE CANDLE OF THE LORD

By Professor Eknath Easwaran

A few years ago I was taken by a friend to visit the Truman Museum in Independence, Missouri, and among the exhibits I saw there nothing impressed me more deeply than a little clay lamp presented to President Truman by the Jewish community of Boston. This lamp is said to belong to the days of King David of the Old Testament. At its base was an inscription which may be translated: *The Spirit of Man is the Candle of the Lord.* (Proverbs 20: 27).

How this candle is to be lit has been revealed by founders of every religion, by Krishna and Christ, by the Buddha and Mohamad, by Zoroaster and Lao-Tzu. If I may put in a nutshell the principles that govern all major religions, it would be very simply: (1) that all life, the entire phenomenal world, has as its basis something that is completely divine; (2) that it is possible for everyone to know this divine ground of all existence; (3) that life has only one purpose - not to make money, nor to enjoy pleasure, nor to achieve success, nor to attain fame - but to know and be united with the divine ground of our existence.

I have very little interest in theology, in metaphysics or even in philosophy. My approach to the scriptures is entirely on the basis that they are practical manuals to the art of living, and the truths in them are verifiable by anyone prepared to undergo a certain ethical and mental discipline.

The Bhagavad Gita, says Aldous Huxley, "is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the Perennial Philosophy." Scholars say that it was composed about 2500 years ago, but I, who am no scholar in this field, would unhesitatingly declare that the Gita is timeless. It is based upon the Upanishads which have been called by Schopenhauer the most noble, most exalted study of all mankind. There is a very simple Sanskrit verse about the *Gita*: all the *Upanishads* are cows. The man who milks the cows is Krishna. The calf

is Arjuna, and you and I are the drinkers of the milk, the immortal elixir that comes from the *Upanishads*.

In the *Upanishads* there is a heart-breaking cry that has been echoing down through the ages: "From the unreal lead me to the Real. From darkness lead me to Light. From death lead me to Immortality."

In one of the most profound of the *Upanishads*, the *Katha Upanishad*, there is a significant dialogue between Yama, the King of Death, and the boy Nachiketa, which may be interpreted in this way. Nachiketa asks: "Is there no way to conquer death?" The King of Death, after testing him as a worthy disciple, declares this greatest of secrets that has come down through all religions. "As long as you identify yourself with the body, which is subject to change, so long will you be subject to the greatest of changes which is called death. If by some means you could break through this identification with the changing body and learn to identify yourself instead with the changeless *Atman*, the Lord seated within the Lotus of your Heart, then you would transcend death here and now." Nachiketa then asks the King of Death: "Please tell me how I can transcend death here and now." To this the King of Death replies: "In order to attain this immortal state you must learn to bring the mind under complete control through one-pointed meditation on God. He who reaches this level of consciousness becomes united with God through His infinite grace and is freed from the cycle of birth and death."

It is said in the Psalm: "Be still and know that I am God." To know God, to know the divine ground of our existence, we have to go far beyond the senses, the intellect and the mind, which are but finite instruments; and logic tells us that a finite instrument cannot be used for fathoming the infinite. The precious experiences of mystics all over the world bear witness to this transcendental

mode of knowing. The natural senses cannot possess God or unite thee to Him; nay, thy inward faculties of understanding, will and memory can only reach after God, but cannot be the place of His habitation in thee. But there is a root or depth of thee from whence all these faculties come forth, as lines from a centre, or as branches from the body of the tree. This depth is the unity, the eternity - I had almost said the infinity - of thy soul; for it is so infinite that nothing can satisfy it or give it rest but the infinity of God." This is the testimony of William Law, a British mystic of the eighteenth century.

In the *Gita* Lord Krishna - who is the very understanding Teacher in the heart of everyone gives Arjuna a practical lesson in meditation: "Repose your mind, concentrate your mind, still your mind completely in Me. Then you will be united with me in this very life, here and now." Arjuna points out: "It is easier to control the wind than the mind." Krishna says: "Arjuna, I know it is very difficult to control the mind, but there is a very simple secret: regular, systematic, steadfast practice."

As our meditation deepens, we are rather taken aback to discover that we have seldom been able to exercise control over our mind. We do not live intentionally. As we learn, through meditation, to exercise control over the deeper levels of consciousness, we begin to get over this obsessive identification with the body and are able to use the body. We are able to get over this oppressive identification with the mind and are able to use the mind. In order to use these instruments for fulfilling the supreme purpose of life, we have to become detached in a great measure from them, and this is what meditation enables us to do as soon as it begins to deepen. Good health, peace of mind, a capacity to face adequately the storm and stress of life, and integration of character which takes place when all desires are subordinated to this supreme desire: these are the marks of the man who is making progress on the path of meditation.

St. Francis of Assisi refers to the body as Brother

Ass. He says: This is Brother Ass, and I am the rider. As long as I consider myself part of Brother Ass, I have neither liberty nor the capacity to live intentionally.

When we look around us we make the discovery that we are more the slaves of our possessions than the masters. Gandhiji's campaign against compulsive possessiveness has its inspiration from the mystics of all ages who warn us: If you want to be free, don't be attached. This is no plea for poverty, but for detachment. It is possible for a labourer in his cottage to be attached to his few coppers and clay pots, as it is possible for a king in his palace to be detached and free.

Ramakrishna has summed up the whole teaching of the *Gita* in one word. The word *gita* in Sanskrit reversed becomes *tyagi*, which means renunciation. This does not mean poverty, nor monotony but a dynamic, creative quality which enables you to live as the master and not as the victim of life.

The *Gita* lays down three paths to the supreme goal of life: karma yoga or the path of action, *jnana* yoga or the path of knowledge, *bhakti* yoga or the path of devotion.

(1) Karma yoga means the path of work or action as an offering to God. Every act must be performed as an offering to God, and there must be no craving after the fruits of action, which is very, very difficult.

(2) *Jnana* yoga is usually understood in the West as the path of the intellect. It is more correctly the path of gnosis in the Greek sense of the word, a transcendental, super-conscious mode of knowing.

(3) *Bhakti* yoga is the path of devotion. When we are able to tap the vein of devotion inherent in all of us, this path becomes a swift, safe and sweet one.

I believe that all three - action, knowledge and devotion - have a legitimate place in our daily life, but they must be based on the regular and systematic practice of meditation.

The climax of meditation is called in Sanskrit *samadhi*, *sam* meaning *with*, and *adhi* meaning

Lord. It is a sound educational axiom that knowing is a function of being, and we come to know God because in His infinite grace He allows us to join Him by “actual participation” as one of the Catholic mystics calls it. When *samadhi* or becoming united with God has become permanent it is called *Moksha* by the Hindus and *Nirvana* by the Buddhists. The man who has attained union with God has come to learn for himself who he is and after that he has only one purpose or ostensible purpose in life, that is to remind others who they are.

Meditation develops the most precious capacity that man can have, the capacity to turn anger into compassion, fear into fearlessness and hatred into love. I am never tired of repeating that this is the greatest miracle of meditation, not seeing visions, not hearing voices but the capacity to purify the heart of all that is selfish and degrading. “Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.”

The *Gita* gives a perfect picture of the man who has become one with God. Krishna says: There is no one so dear to my heart as he who with love for everyone - friend and foe, for those who attack him, vilify him, torture him - will have only kindness and compassion. As Jesus says: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you.”

In life all of us need happiness, but all of us need sorrow too. Sorrow can enable us to grow spiritually, and I doubt if there has been any mystic whose heart has not been broken many times before attaining union with God. Therefore, when sorrow is necessary for his spiritual growth, the man of God will welcome it with open arms. Put him amidst poverty, amidst wealth. Make him healthy, make him sick. Make him famous, make him infamous. He will still be content; he will still be the same because he has identified himself with that which does not change. Why should he be affected by changes outside when he knows who dwells in his consciousness?

Every moment in life we have this choice to make: Shall I identify myself with my *atman*, my

soul, with the Christ within, the Krishna enthroned in my heart, or shall I identify myself with the body that is subject to change? Krishna says: You can never afford to lose your vigilance because you have to be constantly and ceaselessly striving. Your will has to be so resolute that you will not allow anything to make you swerve from the Goal. All mystics, all saints, are agreed this is the highest destiny to which all mankind moves. The poet, the musician, the painter, the sculptor, yes, many are artistic, but only a small segment of their personality contains beauty. The man of God is completely aflame with God; not just one narrow sector, but every cell of his consciousness is filled with this beauty, this glory, this effulgence.

When Dr. Oppenheimer, the distinguished American atomic scientist, witnessed the experimental explosion of the atomic bomb on the desert of New Mexico he recalls that what immediately flashed into his mind was the terrible line from the *Gita*: “I am come as Time, the waster of the people, ready for the hour that ripens to their doom.” On this subject Meister Eckhart says: “Time is what keeps the light from reaching us. There is no greater obstacle to God than time. And not only time but temporalities, not only temporal things but temporal affections; not only temporal affections but the very taint and smell of time.”

When we practice meditation, we are being delivered out of time, which means that we are being delivered out of the Jaws of the King of Death. In one of the deeply moving devotional hymns of Sankara, we are told: Don’t be proud of your youth, your wealth, your name. Time will steal these from you in the twinkling of an eye. Therefore, take shelter at the feet of the Lord.

To repeat what I said earlier, death is a great change in which these chemical constituents of the body are resolved into another state. You are subject to death only when you identify yourself with your body which is in a state of chemical flux. Krishna says: through meditation on the Lord, by identifying yourself with the Lord, you can break through once and for all this primal compulsion,

this age-old fallacy that you are the body. As Jesus says to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he be always alive." Krishna says again: Learn to focus all your consciousness on Me, and it is

my responsibility to release you, to rescue you from this cycle of birth and death that is called life.

"For Thou Wilt Light My Candle: The Lord My God will Enlighten My Darkness." (Psalm 18: 28).

THE TEARING OF THE MASK

By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya

There comes a time - but do not ask
When - since I know not This I know and this
Only-that unto each one comes nemesis,
A sparkling night naked with an excess
Of splendour troubling hearts with loneliness;
The jet-black diamond hour which tears the mask
Nature hath wrought with cunning,
Most intricate of masks, both you and me,
Self-evaders who keep running
After brief thrills of time from dusk till morning,
From morn to dusk-tide, scorning
The tactiturn rapture of Eternity....
That instant of unmasking is divine
And hence, a seal of everlastingness,
Torture-packed instant on which angels press
Their heavenly weight so man's dividing line
Between himself and him be cancelled quite,
Unmasking in sheer process of the Light
Demanding sacrificial torture. Lo!
The butcher dooms the animal at one blow,
Marking an act of mercy - while, though odd
It might appear, the hammer-strokes of God
Are never-ending since, when they began
To strike at the nailed mask unnailing each
With sheerest smashing, until the nails spin
Scattering around and whirling beyond reach
Of that same mask or even the face which wore it:
I had a mask once - Love, you came and tore it
To shreds, sweet heaven's representative!
That I might cease to perish, start to live
A new life-lease lent to me by such grief
As hath a deep contempt for beauty that is brief

MANY ARE CALLED BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN

By Sagittarius

Is there any way of recognising the pearls of esoteric truth about which I spoke in my previous article? No infallible way, but a good general rule is that they will be found to be those sayings of Christ's which modern Christians ignore. For instance, have you ever heard a sermon preached on the text that many are called but few are chosen? Or read an exposition of it by a theologian or apologist? Perhaps by the fire-eating predestinationists of the early Calvinist Church, but not since then. Today we pass it over in uneasy silence.

Called to what? Chosen for what?

For membership of the Christian Church? Or any of them? Can one imagine a board of missionaries screening applicants for conversion (or, in Christian countries, for baptism or confirmation) and accepting about one in ten?

Then to heaven? That would carry the rather grim corollary that most people go to hell. And indeed, Christ's teaching does sound grievously like that when he warns that: "wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in threat: because strait is the gate and narrow the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."¹

But isn't it possible just to be neutral? It would be generally agreed that few people are striving in a Christian way, making their life a pathway to salvation, finding the strait gate and following the narrow way, but that few also are actively vicious or destructive. Most people are just making what they can of their life, not exerting themselves to raise it to a godlike level but also not sinking to a bestial or diabolical level. Can't they avoid both Christ's ways and just make life a camping ground to be enjoyed while it lasts, with no thought of where it may lead to? That is not what Christ taught. He mentioned no third possibility; only

the two roads - up or down. And he said that most follow the latter. There is a saying ascribed to him in Islamic countries which, although not contained in the gospels, fits in well with his teaching; that is: "The world is a bridge; pass over but do not build a house on it." What is reported in the gospels is that Christ specifically repudiated neutrality by saying that those who were not with him were against him. Christianity is not a comfortable religion - not for those who take it seriously, not for those who heed Christ's warnings. It was not comfortable for his contemporaries. I said that in the first of this series of articles, and some readers took offence, thinking that I was attributing the blame for it to Christ. The blame was on those who needed aggressive handling; the blame is on those today who refuse to heed the warning, clear though it is.

Religious injunctions reflect spiritual laws which are as natural and universal on their level as physical laws are on theirs. Despite appearances, a tree cannot cease to grow or decay and just stand still, remaining as it is. Nor can a human body. Up to a certain age the process of growth takes place in it. From an even earlier age, perhaps from birth, processes of decay are also active in it. Why should we suppose that the human soul is exempt from this law, that it can stand aside from change and shirk its destiny, taking neither the narrow nor the broad way but just camping out and having a good time? Note that I say 'soul' and not 'spirit'. The Mediaeval schoolmen distinguished between '*animus*' and '*spiritus*'. The Spirit is indeed changeless, birthless, deathless, One with the Father;² perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect;³ but the Spirit is above the laws of change, just IS; and to realize its identity with the Spirit is just the task which the soul has to take up.

² St. John, X, 30.

³ St. Matthew, V, 48,

¹ St. Matthew, VII, 13-14.

Philosophical technicalities apart, it is clear to all that man as he is on earth is not changeless or perfect. Therefore he cannot abjure the need for effort which his humanhood lays upon him. Even to human observation it is clear that he who does not improve deteriorates, that sitting out from the dance of nature, or trying to, means losing one's place in it and falling back. But it is not left to human observation, it is determined by Christ; and he leaves no camping ground between the two ways. By not taking the arduous one people are *ipso facto* following that which, he says, leads to destruction. That they are the vast majority is an appalling thought; but that does not make it any the less a fact.

The narrow path Christ spoke of is the path leading to salvation or realization. The two are the same. The exaggerated importance ascribed to death leads people to distinguish between after-death salvation and realization achieved in this life, but really there is no difference. Neither is attained without effort. The effort must be continuous. Even of those who find the 'strait gate' few follow the 'narrow path' to the end. This is stated even more explicitly in the *Bhagavad Gita*, which reminds us that even those who are called are few compared with the many not called, that even those find the 'strait gate' are few, let alone those who follow the 'narrow path' to the end. "Among thousands perhaps one strives for Realization; among thousands who strive for Realization perhaps one knows Me as I am."⁴

One who takes the narrow path needs no scripture to tell him this. He sees all the company of his friends or former friends, all the society in which he used to move, occupied with their worldly aims and frustrations, satisfied or dissatisfied, but in neither case willing to turn away from it all and seek true happiness. How Christ's heart must have ached when he spoke of the broad path and the many who tread it! Even after setting forth, a man may look around at his companions or former companions in the quest and see this one fallen back into academic scholarship, that

one following a false trail, another claiming to be what he is not, and be hard put to it to count two or three who are still striving in a good way. And even of those, how many will attain?

Read with understanding, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* is a very sad story. The whole noble company of knights were gathered together at King Arthur's court for the feast of Pentecost, and while they were seated at the Round Table the Sangraal passed through the hall on a beam of light, but veiled so that none actually saw it. They were asked who would undertake its quest and all alike pledged themselves and rode forth with courage and high hopes. Some, however, soon turned back, finding the tug of the world too strong; some perished by the way; some were daunted or overthrown by the dragons of the ego; some bewitched or cast into dungeons by enchanters, the false guides who beset the path; some turned aside to lesser quests or settled down in castles along the way; some attained a single vision of the Sangraal and recognised that, for them, that was sufficient achievement for this lifetime; and out of all that noble company only three pursued the quest to its end.

For the many who have been called but will not be chosen, who have found the 'strait gate' but do not tread the 'narrow path' to the end, the *Bhagavad Gita* does indeed offer a consolation, one that is at the same time compassionate and logical. Arjuna asks Krishna about those who strive but fail to achieve and is assured that no effort is wasted. Even those who fail to bring the quest to a good end, to the ultimate Goal, in this lifetime retain what progress they have made and will be so circumstanced in their next birth as to enable them to take up again from where they stopped and to press on further. Which also explains the phenomenon of those who, like the Maharshi attain the Goal with the very little effort made in this lifetime.

But what is a clear message apparent to all seekers from the viewpoint of the quest is meaningless in any other context. When will Christians wake up to the heritage Christ left them and the warnings he gave?

4 Ibid., VII, 3.

TRIBUTE TO SAI BABA

By Paidi Venkateswarlu

The author of this article gives little factual information about Sai Baba. In India he is so well known that it is not necessary. Foreign readers are referred to 'The Incredible Sai Baba' Briefly: he was a great saint living at the turn of the century - died in 1918. He had both Hindu and Muslim disciples, refusing to say that he belonged to either religion. He wrote nothing (which is perhaps why he is so little known outside India) but worked an extraordinary profusion of miracles. Like the Maharshi, he appointed no successor but remained himself the guru after death. He still appears in dreams and visions to those who turn to him with true devotion, answers their prayers, cures sickness, grants boons, removes obstacles. This explains why, with no organised propaganda and no institution in his name, his devotees are far more numerous now than in his lifetime.*

Man is in quest of God and God is in search of man from all eternity. The quest for God differs from man to man. The highest function of every religion is to provide a path leading back to our original Home from which we have strayed away. Indeed, each religion has various paths, those in one being similar to those in another. Whatever the path may be, the goal or destination is the same for all; God-realization or Self-realization.

Self-realization or *Moksha* or Salvation¹ or *Fana* or *Nirvana* are different names of the identical state ultimately to be reached. It is very difficult to reach this goal without a guide. As the *Kathopanishad* puts it:

"O Ignorant Men! Awake! Arise! Approach a Supreme Guru who will dispel your darkness! The path is as hard and sharp as a razor's edge. And never stop till the goal is reached."

The great saint, Kabir, also says "Who but a Guru will rescue you?" Jalaluddin Rumi, a great Persian Sufi saint says "This path can be trodden only through an intermediary, the guru. But he alone is a guru who is dead to self and is established in



Identity. He is one who is above the *shariyat* (formal religious obligations). He can help in the path of *fariquat* (experiences leading to realization of God). So, seek such a one, that you may attain union with the Lord."

Kabir again says, "I was floating along the current of the World and its traditions. On the way, I met the true Guru who showed me the path to Light." "The Body is a poisonous creeper, the Guru is a

* *The Incredible Sai Baba* by Arthur Osborne, published by Orient Longmans, Calcutta, and Rider & Co., London.

¹ Eastern writers are apt to presume this, but actually 'salvation' is used by Christian writers to indicate a state short of *Nirvana*, where the separate individual being still exists, although beatified. (Editor.)

storehouse of nectar; even though a Guru could be found only at the cost of your head, you should consider the bargain cheap.” “The true Guru is a valiant knight. He shoots with full force and strikes from navel to crown; the wound is not visible outwardly, but the inside is shattered to bits.”

The *Guru Gita* declares: “Difficult it is to renounce sense-objects, difficult is the vision of Truth, difficult is the attainment of Self-realization, without the grace of the Guru.”

There are gurus and gurus these days. Every man who can perform miracles or has attained some powers or who can gather a group of disciples calls himself a Guru. How can one who has not himself realized, enable others to realise the Self? Says the *Guru Gita* again: “The Guru who has no knowledge, who is a liar and a hypocrite should be shunned. He does not know how to bring peace to himself. How can he bring it to others?” It is like the blind leading the blind which ultimately results in both of them falling into a ditch of darkness.

That is why the scriptures have laid down the qualities needed for a Guru. They are (1) he must be very able and discriminating (2) he must be full of spiritual wisdom (3) he must be pure and clear-sighted; (4) he must always be imperturbable and good-natured; (5) he must speak little and be free from the six enemies: lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and jealousy; (6) his conduct must be upright, free from lust and acquisitiveness and, most important of all (7) he must be self-controlled and in fact, Self-realized, so that he can show God to others who seek Him.

First and foremost, a Guru must be Self-realized. The *Upanishads* say that one who knows the Brahman becomes the Brahman. There are degrees of realization. These are said to be Gurus, Sat-Gurus and Samartha Sat-Gurus. There are also Swamijis, Saints and Sages. Gurus are on the fourth plane; Sat-Gurus on the fifth and sixth; and Samartha Sat-Gurus on the seventh plane and beyond². This last category are as rare as the flowering of an aloe. Sri Sai Baba, Bhagavan

Ramana and Sri Ramakrishna are recent examples of this class.

Sri Sai Baba has really no name. Many such surprises occur in his life. He declared: “They call me Sai Baba. My father’s name is also Sai Baba. My Guru is Venkusa. My religion is Kabir. My caste is Parvardhitar (God).” He meant to say that He is nameless and that all names belong to Him. He is birthless and deathless and hence fatherless: He is above all religions, hence all religions belong to Him; and He is above the castes.

The word ‘Sai’ is Persian and means a saint or a fakir, and the word ‘Baba’ is the Hindi for father, so that the whole name means ‘the Saintly Father’. It was simply a term of endearment and respect.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says, “‘Sai’ is the name given to a person who has reached the highest stage of ‘Paramahansa’ of our Scriptures.” A *Paramahansa* is none other than the *Avadhuta* whose characteristics are delineated in detail in the *Avadhuta Gita*.

So the *Avadhuta* is the embodiment of the Brahman. He walks amidst us as Brahman and his precepts are meant to guide us in our day-to-day life.

Sri Sai Baba Himself declared outright: “The Guru is all the Gods. Trust in the Guru fully. That is the only *sadhana*.”

“Listen mother,” he said to a lady devotee who asked him for initiation into a mantra: “my Guru never taught me any mantras, so how shall I blow any into your ears? Just remember that the Guru’s tortoise-like³ loving glance brings happiness. Do not try to get a mantra or instruction from anybody. Make me the sole object of your thoughts and action, and you will certainly attain *Paramartha*

2 This is a far from simple question. It will be taken up in a later issue of *The Mountain Path*. For the time being the author’s statements are merely recorded.

3 For an elucidation of this strange expression see below the description of the three types of initiation. (Editor).

(the spiritual goal of life). Look at me whole-heartedly and I in turn will look at you whole-heartedly; sitting in this mosque, I speak the pure truth. Neither practice nor scripture is necessary. Have faith and confidence in your Guru. Believe fully that the Guru is the sole actor or doer. Blessed is he who knows the greatness, grandeur and glory of his Guru and thinks him to be Siva, Vishnu, and Brahma (the *Trimurthi*) and Parabrahman Incarnate.”

Again he said: “Keep straight on your own course. The World maintains a wall of differentiation between oneself and others, between you and me. Destroy this wall. God is the Supreme Lord. Precious and enduring are His works. Your object will be fulfilled in, due course.”

Guru’s grace is your only *sadhana*. *Jnana* (spiritual knowledge) comes in its wake.”

“There are plenty of paths to the Goal from each place. But the way is rugged and beset with tigers and bears. If one has a guide with him there is no difficulty. The tigers and bears move aside. If there is no guide, there is a deep yawning pit on the way and there is the danger of falling into it.”

“Stick to your own Guru with unabated faith whatever the merits of other Gurus and however little the merits of your own.”

“We must not give up attachment to our own Guru, but firmly rely on him and him alone.”

On one occasion, in order to stress the value of faith, he said: “It is not the Guru who makes himself your Guru, but you who regard him as your Guru by having faith in him. Take a bit of broken pot and regard it as your Guru and see whether your goal or aim is reached or not.”

On another occasion, however, stressing the power of the Guru, he said: “I know who are my people and I draw them to me even if they are a thousand miles away, like a bird with a string tied to its foot.”

One of the many peculiarities of Sai Baba was his habit of asking for money, often specific

amounts, sometimes quite small coins. In general no Guru will do this. Sri Ramakrishna could not even touch money; he felt an actual burning from it. Sai Baba’s demands for money were usually symbolical.

“Baba wants two ha’pence, faith and patience.”

If an aspirant had absolute, undivided faith in him and intense love, regarding him as the sole Actor or Doer in this world, and this world as belonging to him, and if he bore pain and pleasure with equanimity, Sai Baba would be highly pleased with him and bless him.

Nishta is absolute faith in the Guru, complete surrender to the Guru of the whole body, mind, soul and possessions. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says, “He who has supreme devotion to God and to the Guru as to God - to that blessed soul these truths reveal themselves.”

Sai Baba says, “The Guru is all the Gods. Trust in the Guru fully. That is the only *sadhana*.”

An aspirant should remember his Guru as a lover remembers his beloved who is never out of his mind for a moment.

An aspirant should fix his mind on the Guru as a cow does on its calf while grazing in the forest, not forgetting it even for a moment.

An aspirant should think of his Guru as a beggar thinks of the few coins he has scraped together, which he counts every now and then and does not forget even for a moment.

An aspirant should be attracted to the Guru as a moth is to a flame.

An aspirant should be immersed in love for the Guru like a fish in the water which it cannot leave without dying.

Therefore, faith is nothing but self-effacement which says that:

“So long as I existed in me, the Guru did not;

Now the Guru exists, the ‘I’ is gone

Narrow is the lane of love, it cannot hold both the ego and the Lord.”

Sai Baba says that patience is courage.. It ferries you across to the far shore. It gives manliness, eradicates sin and dejection and overcomes all fear.

An aspirant Who has patience bears all the assaults of fate. He endures with equanimity joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, in fact all the pairs of opposites.

As a matter of fact, all joys and sorrows are due to past karma. One has to reap what one has sown. There is no escape from this, but one can accept it with a calm and quiet mind.

Sai Baba said that worldly joy and sorrow are a mere delusion. A worldly man is forcibly drawn to joy as he believes it to be true happiness, but it is not. It is in accordance with his self-made karma that one man gets delicacies and another stale, left-over food. The latter fancies himself unhappy at that and the former happy; but the result in either case is merely the satisfaction of hunger. Some cover themselves with lace shawls and others with rags; both alike serve merely to cover the body. The pairs of opposites such as joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, are only due to thought. Whenever any idea of joy or sorrow, pain or pleasure, happiness or unhappiness arises in our mind, we must firmly resist it and not give room to it, because it is only a trick played by the mind.

The six enemies: lust, anger, covetousness, delusion, pride and jealousy, are equally delusive. They make the unreal appear real. One must conquer them. Then waves of passion will not rise up. Otherwise, they will enslave and destroy us. If they are eliminated and discrimination put in charge, then delusive pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows, gains and losses will no longer affect us.

The aspirant should have patience at all times, even when everything that he loves or values is lost. The Lord says in *Srimad Bhagavatam* that “if the Lord wants to bless His devotee with His grace and pour His choicest blessings upon him, He will take everything away from him, so that nothing should stand as an obstacle to the blessed union between the devotee and the Lord. A

devotee feels the throb of the Lord in good and bad fortune, in pleasant and unpleasant fate, in gain and loss, life and death, and in fact, in everything. That is true patience. That is manliness.”

Faith and patience are the manifestations of the grace of the Guru. The more they are developed in the devotee, the more blessed he is, as he silently and surely reaches the abode of the beloved.

There is a common belief that without initiation, there can be no spiritual progress. But this initiation can be either formal or invisible.

Diksha or initiation is the opening of the heart to Divine Consciousness. It can be of three types: (1) By touch, which is compared to a bird sitting on its eggs to hatch them; (2) By sight, which is compared to a fish, merely keeping its eggs in sight; (3) By thought, which is compared to the tortoise, which buries its eggs and merely thinks of them.

The last two methods are those of Sri Sai Baba⁴. ‘Look at me whole-heartedly and I will look at you’ refers to the second. If an aspirant even thinks of Sai Baba with intense love, Baba turns to him in response; and his response is powerful enough to nurture and guide the aspirant⁵. Baba enters his being and takes charge of his *sadhana* by pushing him from outside and pulling him from within. This descent of the conscious power of the Guru or of God is essential without it there is no fulfilment.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna says:

“Oh Arjuna! Howsoever men approach me, even so do I seek them; all men follow my path from all sides.”

Similarly, each devotee saw the deity of his worship in Sri Sai Baba. To some devotees of Lord Rama, he appeared in the physical form of Rama; to Krishna worshippers He showed himself as Lord Krishna; to devotees of Datta He appeared as Lord

4 Also of Sri Ramana Maharshi. (Editor).

5 The present tense is used because this still remains true. (Editor).

Dattatreya; to some Christians, like Captain Hate, he appeared as Christ, while some Vittal worshippers saw Lord Pandurang in him and some Siva worshippers Lord Siva. Some devotees he welcomed in the form of their own Gurus.

Just as different rivers, taking their rise in different places, flow from the East, the West, the South and the North to mingle with the same ocean, so devotees of God in various forms found in Sri Sai Baba, an incarnation of Para-Brahman who includes Brahma (the Creator), Vishnu (the Protector) and Siva (the Destroyer).

Sai Baba insisted on the essential unity underlying the varied forms of religion ; and it was the essence that he was concerned with. He declared, “All Gods are One. There is no difference between the Hindu ‘Ram’ and the Muslim ‘Rahim’ . The mosque and the temple are the same. Be wise and united. God will protect you.” The great Saint, Kabir, also says: “Hari is in the East, Allah is in the West, Look into your heart,. for there you will find both Rahim and Ram.”

“All the men and women of the world are His living forms,” said Sai Baba. “Kabir is the child of Allah and of Ram; He is my Guru, He is my Pir.”⁶

To establish brotherhood among his Hindu and Muslim followers, Sri Sai Baba arranged a ‘Sandal Procession’ on the birth anniversary of Sri Rama. Shakkar Dalal, a Muslim of Korahli, was in charge of it. A similar procession is taken out in honour of great Muslim saints. Sandal paste, etc., was put in the flat metal dishes and carried with burning incense in procession to the accompaniment of music

⁶ Pronounced ‘Peer’; a name used by Indian Muslims for ‘guru’.

through the village, and then, after returning to the mosque in which Sai Baba lived, the contents of the dishes were thrown on the Nimbar and walls. So, on the same day, the procession of the Muslim flags by the Hindus and that of the Hindu Sandal by the Muslims were performed simultaneously. This still continues without any obstruction or objection.

Even in his mosque, Sai Baba allowed the Hindus to worship him in their own way. Some Muslim fanatics tried to persuade him to ban the Hindu practice of worshipping a Guru, but he flatly refused. Once a Maulvi pleaded to be allowed to cut the throats of the Hindu worshippers, but Baba told him: “First cut mine and then the others, because it is on account of me and in accordance with my will that they are coming here and worshipping me.”

Seeing this firm attitude of Baba’s, they gave up their objection.

The Perfect Master not only becomes God but, after achieving God-realization, comes down to the ordinary mortal consciousness of man. Thus he possesses simultaneously God-consciousness and mental-subtle-gross-consciousness. The world is never without such God-men. Such Supreme Sages of this age have been Bhagavan Ramana, Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Sai Baba.

Lord Krishna declared in the *Bhagavatam*: “The *Sadhus* are my heart, as I am theirs. They know only Me and I know only them.”

Who is nobler, happier or more blessed than those who bear this relationship with Him, who have fastened Him to the door of their heart with the cord of Love?

Being under the spell of Thy *Maya*, none knows that Thou art the soul. Thou art the heart of all beings. Blind to this truth, they search for Thee outside themselves. Thou art the sole Truth; all else is illusory. The wise know this and meditate on Thee in their hearts.

- Shankara

ABOVE THE THREE STATES

By Nagamma¹

6th September, 1947.

Last month, while my sister-in-law was staying here, the proof of the Telugu version of 'Vichara Mani Mala' was received from the printer. In the afternoon Bhagavan corrected it and then passed it on to me. On reading it, my sister-in-law asked me the meaning of *swapnathantha nivritthi*. I wasn't quite sure myself so I said something or other but she was not quite satisfied. Bhagavan noticed and said: "What is the matter? Is there some mistake?"

"No," I replied; "she is asking the meaning of *swapnathantha nivritthi*."

"It means absolutely dreamless sleep," Bhagavan said kindly.

"Would it be true," I asked, "to say that a *Jnani* does not have dreams at all?"

"He has no dream-state," Bhagavan replied².

My sister-in-law was still not satisfied, but as people began to talk about other things we had to leave the matter there. Only at night she said to me: "It is said in *Vasishta* that the *Jnani* only appears to perform actions but they do not affect him at all. We ought to have asked Bhagavan the real meaning of this."

"You know how compassionate Bhagavan is,"

1 For a note on Nagamma's letters see our issue of January 1964.

2 Taken as it stands, this cryptic reply could be misleading. Actually, the *Jnani* experiences the dream-state as much as, but no more than, the other two states of waking and deep sleep. Bhagavan did sometimes have dreams and he might relate one to devotees, just as he might speak about some waking action, but his Real State, as is explained lower down in this letter, was beyond both. The state of the *Jnani* is referred to as *Turiya* the 'Fourth' being beyond the three states commonly experienced. (Editor).

I replied. "He will find some occasion to remove your doubts."

When we went to the Ashram at 8 o'clock next morning it so happened that Bhagavan was just explaining this very point to Sundaresha Iyer. Eagerly availing herself of the opportunity, my sister-in-law again took up the subject. "It is not only the dream state but all three states that are unreal to the *Jnani*," Bhagavan told her. "The real state of the *Jnani* is where none of these three states exist."

"The waking state also is equivalent to a dream, isn't it?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied. "Whereas a dream lasts for a short time, this lasts longer. That is the only difference."

"Then is sleep also a dream?" I asked.

"No," he replied, "sleep is an actuality. How can it be a dream when there is no mental activity? However, since it is a state of mental vacuum, it is *avidya* (nescience) and therefore must be rejected."³

"But is sleep also said to be a dream-state?" I persisted.

"Some may have said so for the sake of terminology," Bhagavan admitted, "but really there is nothing separate. Short and long duration apply only to the dream and waking states. Someone may say we have lived so long and these houses and belongings are so clearly evident to us that it surely cannot be all a dream; but we

3 When thought ceases it can be superseded either by a blank, as in sleep, or by pure Awareness, as in *samadhi* or *Turiya*. Sleep is, therefore, a sort of dark counterpart of the luminous state of undifferentiated Being-Awareness. That is why Bhagavan says it must be rejected as not being the true alternative to multiplicity but only a simulacrum of it. (Editor).

have to remember that even dreams seem long while they last. It is only when you wake up that you realise it only lasted a short time. In the same way, when one attains *Jnana* (Realization) this life is seen to be momentary. Dreamless sleep means nescience; therefore it is to be rejected in favour of the state of pure Awareness.”

My sister-in-law then interposed: “It is said that the bliss that occurs in deep sleep is experienced in *samadhi* as well, but how is that to be reconciled with the statement that sleep is a state of nescience?”

“That is why sleep also is to be rejected,” Bhagavan replied. “It is true that there is bliss in sleep but one is not aware of it. One only knows about it afterwards when one wakes up and says that one slept well. *Samadhi* means experiencing this bliss while remaining awake.”

“So it means waking or conscious sleep? I asked.”

“Yes, that is so,” he said.

My sister-in-law then brought up the other cognate question that had worried her. “It is said in *Vasishta* that a *Jnani* seems to others to be engaged in various activities, but actually he is not affected by them at all. Is it because of their

different outlook that it seems so to others, or is he really unaffected?”

“He is really unaffected,” Bhagavan replied.

“People speak of favourable visions both in dream and while awake; what are they?” she asked.

“To a *Jnani* they all seem the same,” he replied.

However she persisted: “It is stated in Bhagavan’s biography⁴ that Ganapati Muni had a vision of Bhagavan when he was at Tiruvottiyur and Bhagavan at Tiruvannamalai and that at the very same time Bhagavan had a feeling of accepting homage. How can such things be described?”

Bhagavan answered cryptically: “I have already stated that such things are what are known as divine visions.” He then assumed silence, indicating that he was not willing to continue the talk.⁵

4 See *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, p. 96, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co. (Editor.)

5 See the footnote on ‘Silence’, in Nagamma’s previous letter in *The Mountain Path* of April, 1964. (Editor.)

AWAKENING

(From a record kept by Ethel Merston)

One day, as we were sitting quietly in the hall, Bhagavan silent, a fine old man at the back, blind, half paralysed and seemingly half mad, suddenly jumped up, his face radiant, laughed loudly and bowed to Bhagavan first and then to all of us repeatedly. He looked so happy and Bhagavan smiled, so radiantly at him, with such love in his eyes, that I wept with emotion. Later the old man told us that at that moment he had got Realization of the Self, for which he had been searching for the last fifty years. His face was so simple and child-like.

BRIEF ETERNITY

By A Devotee

Suddenly I was not. Seeing remained,
Not any one who saw. Thoughts still appeared.
No one to think. And all this was not new,
No change of state, for I not only was not
But never had been; only through some spell—
Ignorance—suffering—sin—what name you will¹
Imagined that I was.

Or just as well
It could be said that suddenly I was,
For Being, Self, whatever name you give,
Just was, and I was That, no other self.

It is a simple thing—no mystery
The wisdom of the Sages all comes down
To simple being.

Again this state was lost.
Sisyphus-like, the heavy stone rolled down.
Again was need to tear my love from others
Alone through the night, with much toil to strive
To the lost homeland, to the Self I am.

Though a world appear, yet will I not cling to it;
Though thoughts arise, yet will I cherish them not.
More deep the mischief of the imposter me
That sees himself and them—or thinks he sees,
He who complains he has not yet achieved.
Who is it that achieves? Or who aspires?
What is there to achieve, when being is
And nothing else beside, no second self?

1. Ignorance in the Hindu interpretation, suffering in the Buddhist, original sin in the Christian.

Book Reviews

JOEL GOLDSMITH*

When Joel Goldsmith heard of the founding of *The Mountain Path* he immediately sent us his good wishes and took out a life subscription. Our readers will recall the article on 'The Infinite Way in Life' that he wrote for our April issue. He also sent us copies of all his books (about a dozen mostly published by Allen and Unwin in England and Harper and Row in America). This was a valuable acquisition. There is a deceptive simplicity about them. They display no knowledge of Eastern doctrines, employ no philosophical terminology, scarcely ever quote from or even refer to any book except the Bible, and yet they are pure advaitic teaching, the pure doctrine of Identity.

"Your Selfhood is the unconditioned Selfhood. So is my Selfhood. It is wholly spiritual: It is, in fact, Spirit Itself, which has no race, nationality or religion. This Selfhood of you and of me co-exists with God, has co-existed with God in the Is-ness which God is - without beginning and without ending - and this Selfhood has known individual expression throughout all time.

"You are this Selfhood and I am this Self-hood, living as one of God's incarnations; and that Selfhood remains eternal in the heavens, untouched and unaffected by the surroundings in which we find ourselves. With birth, however, there has sprung up around the one Self a sense of human identity, and from the moment of conception this begins to be identified with its surroundings....

"To accept intellectually the truth that we are

that unconditioned Self is one thing, but to experience It in a measure is another thing, and to experience It in Its completeness is quite another." ('A Parenthesis in Eternity', p. 138-9). Never has advaitic teaching been so simply expressed and widely distributed for ordinary people of goodwill in the Christian world. Moreover, this teaching has not gathered dust on the bookshelves; it has led to the founding of the Infinite Way groups throughout the countries of the world.

Although the teaching given to the Infinite Way groups through the books of Joel Goldsmith accords with that of the Maharshi, the path followed is different. It is not Self-enquiry but dwelling on a number of pregnant biblical texts such as: "I and my Father are One ... Be still and know that I am God." "The kingdom of heaven is within you." It will be observed that this has great affinity with the use of Mahavakyas, which was one of the methods recommended by Sankaracharya.

Another difference is that the Infinite Way technique includes the practice of spiritual healing (which has been an important element in the Christian tradition from the beginning) whereas the Maharshi deprecated any use of powers. However, Joel Goldsmith insists again and again that healing must never be the goal to be aimed at. It must be viewed as no more than a by-product of spiritual progress. "The object of the Infinite Way is to develop spiritual progress, not primarily to produce health out of sickness or wealth out of lack." (Ibid., p. 121). Moreover, as he explains in 'The Art of Spiritual Healing', the method of healing taught is not to concentrate on either the patient or the disease or to make any conscious attempt to heal. Having taken cognisance of the patient's needs, the healer is

*** While going to Press we have just heard of his unexpected demise (18.6.64) and sympathise deeply with his many followers and friends.**

simply to turn his mind to God, still thoughts, stop interfering, and allow the Divine Grace to flow through him. He is not to attempt to use God but to allow God to use him. "If we were asked to give spiritual help to someone who needed physical healing, mental stability or moral regeneration, our only possibility of success would be in proportion to our ability to be still, to refrain from using spiritual power, and let spiritual power flow through us." ('A Parenthesis in Eternity', p. 127).

All the books say the same, and yet they are never stale, there is no dull repetition. They remain vital and urgent from beginning to end. Spiritually there is not much to say - that Being IS - that you are That, that the One appears in many forms. But the mind constantly forgets, asserts itself and needs reminding. One can distinguish the reminders that stem from illumination and those of the theorist who repeats what he has learnt. Joel Goldsmith's are of the former category.

WORLD INVISIBLE, A Study in Sages, Saints and Saviours. By Prynce Hopkins. (Traversity Press, Penobscot, Maine, U.S.A., pp. 165, Price not mentioned.)

Dr. Hopkins prefaces his quest with the following statement. "The peregrinations among sages, saints and saviours herein described who, within various traditions - Hindu, Muslim, Christian - seek to penetrate to some reality beyond the visible world were undertaken by me in the spirit of scientific enquiry. From the time I entered the Scientific School at Yale and followed, elsewhere, with study for advanced degrees in psychology, I have been trained to apply the scientific attitude, and, so far as possible, scientific techniques to all problems. I was taught to renounce the hope of absolute certainty but to be content with the formulations which held the greatest probability of accounting for all facts known at the time." This means that his

quest was foredoomed to failure because the approach was wrong. He was trying to assess the higher or spiritual knowledge, which is absolute certainty, by the lower or rational, which can only estimate probabilities, whereas it is only by letting go the lower that the higher can be attained. As Chuang Tzu said: "If you get rid of small wisdom great wisdom will come in." The prudent rationalist like Dr. Hopkins wants to investigate the great wisdom by the light of the small before opening the door to it, and of course never discovers it.

Personally he was impressed by the Maharshi who, he says "had achieved *jivanmukti* if ever man did." "Among all whom I met in India, Maharshi remains to me the truest figure of the sage." Nevertheless, he believed that he was discussing with the Maharshi as one philosopher with another and never understood that the Maharshi had transcendental knowledge, absolute certainty, and was trying to show him the way to it.

This limitation is only too common among scholars. As Christ said: I thank Thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto 'babes'. What is not, or should not be, is the extraordinary inaccuracy which makes even the superficial information given by Dr. Hopkins unreliable. He tells us, for instance (on page 20) that he met the leader of the Egyptian Sufis and adds: "Because of their greater liberality, the Shi'ahs have been especially hospitable to this famous order of Muslim mystics (the Sufis) who have, therefore, flourished in Persia and given to this country much of its greatest poetry." There is no such thing as Egyptian Sufism, any more than there is Spanish monasticism, nor is there an order called Sufism any more than there is a Christian order called monasticism. There are a number of Sufi orders, each with its own head and all of them international. Furthermore, all of them are

Sunni and none Shi'ah. The great Persian poet-saints were all Sunnis; it is only in more recent centuries that Shi'ism has overspread Persia.

The information given about the Maharshi is also misinformation. We are told that he ran away from home in order to have leisure to think out the answer to the question 'Who am I?' Actually he left home after having already realized the Self and passed beyond the need for thinking out. We are also told that the disciples who gathered round him were simple peasants. They were anything but.

Contrary to the introductory paragraph quoted above, the book is mainly about Buddhist teachings and practices and scarcely mentions Islamic. The occasional expositions of doctrine, Hindu or Buddhist, partake of both the author's faults: the lack of understanding common to rationalists and the inaccuracy peculiar to the author.

HOW GOD CAME INTO MY LIFE: Series I and II. (Bhavan's Book University, Bombay-7, pp. 46 and 53, Rs. 1 each.)

Tales of Divine Intervention in physical form were much commoner in ages of faith than they are now. Even in recent times they are not altogether unknown. Perhaps the best known modern or fairly modern instance is the appearance of Mother Kali to Sri Ramakrishna when his longing and desperation had reached the point of his seizing a sword to put an end to his life. There was one that Ramana Maharshi told about an engine driver who neglected his work to attend a *bhajan*, a session of religious singing. He was threatened with dismissal if it happened again. Nevertheless when he next heard the *bhajan* he was drawn to it so irresistibly that he could not refrain. Next day he went sadly to report his fault but was met with incredulity: "What do you mean? You turned up on duty as usual. You signed the attendance book as usual." He had been impersonated. W. B. Yeats wrote a

poem about a similar instance happening in Ireland. There are other cases. It they are less common than in ages of faith it is perhaps because faith itself provides an atmosphere for the materialisation of non-material forces, while materialism impedes it.

The first of these two little volumes records nine very varied cases of Divine Impersonation for the benefit of Indian saints or devotees in earlier centuries - the trusting child from whose hands a statue took food, the dutiful wife who was impersonated so that she could attend *bhajan*, the poet-saint for whom God worked as a servant, and others.

The second volume is modern but not well chosen. Instead of seeking out genuine cases among the humble, the editor has compiled a list of famous persons some of whom qualify only vaguely, if at all, for inclusion - for instance Devendranath Tagore's dream of his dead wife and Annie Besant's conversion to occultism. Except insofar as they quote the originals, the stories are not well told.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A YOGI: By Paramahansa Yogananda. (Jaico, Bombay, pp. 510, price Rs. 5).

Paramahansa Yogananda is one of those Swamis who is better known in the West than in India. Even after his death his Self-Realization Fellowship continues to flourish in many countries. His autobiography, now republished in a paperback edition for sale in India, was certainly one of the influences that carried him to fame. Many will find it fascinating reading. These who follow the path of Advaita or Identity, however, may be put off by just that feature which attracts another class of reader: that is by the undue prominence of the miraculous powers he ascribes to various Masters and, to a lesser extent, claims for himself, and the supernatural events he describes. Such powers are an *ignis fatuus* which can well lure the wayfarer aside from the path; and followers of a Swami who

describes them with such relish are particularly liable to this danger, even though the Swami himself may warn against it.

- Arthur Osborne

THE GITA AND INDIAN CULTURE: By H.H. Sri Jaya Chamaraia Wadiyar. (Orient Longmans Ltd. Pp. 68. Price Rs. 3).

In giving the main characteristics of Indian culture, the author of this weighty little work underlines its spiritual fundamentals and chooses the *Bhagavad Gita* as best illustrating this tradition. The *Gita* represents a synthesis of the diverse lines of spiritual effort down the ages in India and its message is of perennial import.

The writer dwells upon what he considers to be the crux of the teaching in this scripture, the separation of the self from the non-self, the 'field' from the 'knower of the field', and deepening of this awareness of the Inner Person till its identity with the Supreme Self is realised. He mainly follows Acharya Sankara in his interpretations, which are remarkably catholic.

The author is convincing in his appraisal of the *Gita* as primarily a spiritual rather than an ethical or social guidebook. He keeps close to the tradition of *Upasana* in dwelling upon the proper mode of studying this scripture.

UPANISHADS: By C. Rajagopalachari. (Bhavan's Book University, Chowpatty, Bombay-7. Pp. 67. Price Rs. 1).

In introducing his selections from the Upanishads, Sri C. Rajagopalachariar points out, rightly, that these texts are not meant to replace the Teacher, but are more in the nature of notes of lessons imparted by the sages to their disciples. Though the object of all the Upanishads is one, i.e., Knowledge of Reality, the standpoints are different, the routes taken are many and consequently the lines of exposition are varied. The author takes up a few of these Upanishads, viz. Katha, Isha, Kena, Svetasvatara,

Chhandogya, Taittiriya and Mundaka, introduces their subject matter in his own words and then proceeds to give some portions of the original with renderings in English, and a connecting and running commentary. In places he differs from the current interpretations and gives his own explanations, which, however, are not always acceptable. The renderings also have, at times (Katha II-23-24), a tendency to move away from the text.

REMINISCENCES OF A JURIST: By Prof. K. R. R. Sastry. (Pub. Author. 29 Dwarka Colony, Edward Elliotts Road, Madras4. Pp. 96. Price Rs. 4)

The author of this book is evidently fortunate in being able to look back upon his career of 65 years with an amount of satisfaction that is not given to most. He speaks of his varied innings as an educationist, a lawyer, a jurist, a palm-reader on the sly, a journalist and finally a confident seeker after Realisation, in a racy style and lets the reader have a peep into this bright progression through the diary notes, fragments of correspondence and autobiographical reminiscences brought together in this miscellany.

Prof. Sastry has met a number of spiritual figures and has been, so to say, a theosophist on the fringe. But the Master who has given him real solace of the spirit is the Maharshi. "This sage of Arunagiri, Maharishi Ramana, stilled all my debts [doubts?]. My morning begins with his memory, as I go to sleep with the never ending quest over the Self within the right side of my heart. I feel the strength of a lion when I take refuge in him. My Master has saved me from many a slippery situation in London, New York In his life of steadfast wisdom we found the Muni; in his eyes projected towards the Ever-distant we got the Diksha of initiation."

Interesting though sketchy.

- M. P. Pandit.

THE BUDDHA'S ANCIENT PATH: By Piyadassi Thera. (Rider. Pp. 239. Price 30 s.)

Some thirty-five years ago, when my interest in Buddhism was first aroused, the literature on the subject available in English was already quite extensive. Theosophists, agnostics, sympathetic up-to-a-point missionaries and orientalist, each of these last intent on proving a thesis and disproving that of his immediate predecessor, offered the innocent enquirer a rich and bewildering choice of fare. One learned that Buddhism was something excitingly esoteric; it was not esoteric at all but a charter for rather outmoded rationalists; it was a solar myth; it-agreed-with-modern-science; it was a providential soil for the sowing of the gospel; and to add to the confusion, or perhaps to dispel it, there were those recently published essays of Dr. D. T. Suzuki.

True, there were the excellent translations of the Pali Text Society, but these stately volumes were obviously not for beginners. The London Buddhist Society, then in its infancy, was making noble efforts to sort things out, but with so many Right Views in the arena it had its work cut out maintaining peace and endeavouring to offer a fair forum to all protagonists.

Happily all component things are subject to change, and the Buddha's unchanging dhamma is now in the hands of more reliable exponents. In recent years there has been an ample flow of authoritative presentations of the dhamma, both Hina and Mahayana, from scholarly Buddhists who are also living the life and practising its discipline.

The Venerable Piyadassi Thera, revered and erudite pupil of a revered and erudite teacher, the Venerable Vajjanana Sangha Nayaka of Colombo, is the latest in the field and we can only regret that he was not there earlier. Valuable as his 'Buddha's Ancient Path' is today, it would have been even more so thirty years ago.

The Venerable Piyadassi speaks from the heart

of the Theravada Establishment and he makes no bones about it. He simply hands on to us the tradition as it was handed on to him, clearly, authoritatively, and, by means of lucid and comprehensive expositions of the key concepts, makes quite sure that we understand what he is talking about.

Any student aspiring to come to grips with an ancient tradition must at least acquire a working knowledge of its vocabulary, for which there is rarely an exact equivalent in the modern languages of the West. Here again our author serves us well. His thoughtful translations of the many words involved are always followed by their Pali original.

After clarifying the basic concepts of *dukkha* and *nibbana*, he leads us with scholarly precision through the threefold division of the Noble Eightfold Path, *sila*, *samadhi* and *panna*, morality, concentration and wisdom. Morality, with its emphasis on loving-kindness and compassion, engages the heart, concentration the will, and wisdom the intellect. Here we have a truly integral yoga.

In the section on concentration it is pointed out that *jhana* or *samadhi*, however lofty, is never an end in itself but simply serves the purpose of purifying the mind and fitting it for the one all-important task, insight into the doctrine and its eventual realization.

The Theravada, ruthlessly pragmatic and frankly dualistic, offers little solace to the metaphysically inclined. *Samsara* is no *Maya* but terribly real. Herein perhaps lies its attraction and value for the modern West. There is no reliance on an external God, so difficult apparently even for an Anglican bishop to believe in, no reliance on a guru, so difficult nowadays to find.

Theravada Buddhism dispenses not only with the need for God but even with the need for a human guru. 'The doctrine and discipline which I have set forth and laid down for you, let them be your teacher after I have gone ...' This may

have been a necessary warning against false and authoritarian teachers so prevalent in any age, but anyone who has attempted to practise the Way of Mindfulness or the various exercises in concentration described in the Sutta Pitaka and Visuddhi Magga soon finds himself in need of a wise and reliable guide not only to clarify the text, but also to save him from the many delusions, excesses and shortcomings to which every psycho-physical complex is prone.

The venerable author offers us the Buddha Dhamma as the solution to our ills. In such a practical book it would have been encouraging if he had told us something of the fruits the Buddha Dhamma is bearing in this twentieth century world. Is the Noble Eightfold Path still producing Arahats, Anagami and Sakadagami? Are there Stream-Winners in the Buddhist lands today?

ALL ELSE IS BONDAGE,

NON-VOLITIONAL LIVING: By Wei Wu Wei. (Hong Kong University Press. Pp. 55. Price H.K. \$ 5. 00).

To a generation no longer content with the bland agnosticism of its grandparents and in open revolt against the sophisticated indifference of the inter-war years, Advaita-Tao-Zen is beginning to look suspiciously like the perfect answer. The difficulty is that the answer turns out to be a no-answer. There is simply the realization that there is no questioner and no question. A doctrine whose ultimate ideal is Silence and which demands the abandonment of all points of view is hardly one to write about. A few stray words of Ramana Maharshi or a Zen Master may put one on the right track, but if the unwary enquirer goes on to read a dozen or so books 'about' Zen or Advaita he is likely to find himself back in the quagmire.

Wei Wu Wei is one of the very few exponents who seem aware of this difficulty. Confining himself to short dialogues and aphoristic meditations, he drives home what has to be driven

home and scrupulously avoids all side issues. After all, the doctrine has not so very much to say - only the basic truths which are repeated and repeated until they perhaps do their work and conceptual split-mind realizes itself as whole-mind.

Wei Wu Wei's repetitions are never monotonous. His masterly manipulation of the English language and the feeling he gives us of being not so much his 'public' as privileged participants in his own forthright efforts to understand make him an ever stimulating companion on the way. His books are not to be read through but worked with. He may be the star pupil, but we are all in the class together, and it's an exciting class.

When the doctrine went East with Bodhidharma it quickly shed its Indian decor and most of its Aryan metaphysics. The pragmatic but endless sculptures of the Mahayana were reduced to brief questions and answers about everyday things and a providential whack on the head. The question inevitably rises what happens now that the doctrine is taking a bold leap West. Its first heralds, finding the Oxford dictionary inadequate, were forced to teach us a little classical Sanskrit and Chinese. But language is largely the expression of national psyche and it is not the ultimate goal of the doctrine to make Western minds oriental. In a short foreword Wei Wu Wei discusses the problem he is himself boldly tackling: "It may be doubted whether an entirely modern presentation of oriental or perennial metaphysics would be followed or accepted as trustworthy at present. Probably an intermediate stage is necessary, during which the method should be a presentation in modern idiom supported by the authority of the great Masters, with whose thoughts and technical terms most interested people are at least generally familiar."

His latest attempt to do this is very much as before. It is much shorter than his previous books and perhaps on that account even more potent.

- R. F. Rose

THE GOD-POSSESSED: By Jaques Lacarriere. (Allen and Unwin. Pp. 237. Price 35 s.)

No one has done a greater disservice to Christianity than the Emperor Constantine. Previous to his time it was a persecuted religion, so that the mere fact of accepting it meant rejection of 'this world'. When 'this world' became nominally Christian it suddenly became possible to accept both. A new mode of rejection was needed. In Egypt this took the form of anchorites going out into the desert, living lives of almost incredible hardship; and from this Christian monasticism took its origin.

'The God-Possessed', translated into English by Roy Monkcon, gives a scholarly but vivid account of these Desert Fathers, of the later rise of corporate monasticism among them, and of the spread of both movements into the Syrian and Judaeian deserts. The author is inclined, after the style of modern scholarship, to give a psychological explanation of the forces of good and evil that were evoked by this austere life in the harsh and weird conditions of the desert. However, he gives the accounts faithfully and with scholarly criticism and is not altogether blind to the powerful forces that were engendered.

One of the things that gives credence to the accounts is that by no means all the ascetics were revered as saints or credited with supernatural powers. That some attained powers and were stabilised in a spiritual state there can be no doubt. What is most interesting (and the author recognises this) is that some advanced beyond powers and visions back to an apparent normality. He quotes from the 'Treatise of Prayer' of Evagrius Ponticus, a 4th century Egyptian ascetic: "When you pray do not picture the Godhead within yourself, do not let your intelligence receive the impression of any shape at all; remain in an insubstantial state in the presence of the Insubstantial." Even visions of Christ and his angels were to be rejected.

As the final consummation he mentions that

transcendence of the ordinary laws of good and evil which the Old Testament indicates by saying that a man has become 'a law unto himself', and which modern Christians protest so piously against when they see it alluded to in Eastern religions: "Man had reached the supreme state of asceticism where his inner cleansing was so thorough that he could, in the words of Diadochus of Photike, 'without sin and even without risk, give himself up to good living and licentiousness, since he was no longer subject to passion and so could indulge in forbidden pursuits.'" It should be added, however, that one sign of this is that he would not want to.

BATTER MY HEART: By Donald Hayne. (Hutchinson. Pp. 303. Price 30s.)

Faith is not the same as intellectual conviction. It is an inner certitude experienced emotionally and felt physically as a vibrant current. It infused the mind and by the mind is directed to the particular dogmas of whatever religion one may follow, but its foundations lie much deeper. Father Hayne does not seem to have understood this. He was a Catholic priest and a lecturer on religion at a university when he found his intellectual conviction waning. At the same time he began to feel emotional stress from enforced celibacy. Genuine faith could have withstood this twofold attack intellectual conviction could not: and the result was stomach ulcers and other psychosomatic illness which pursued him till he left the priesthood.

He tells us then of the vicissitudes of a life no longer sheltered, struggling for means of subsistence, which he found at length in Hollywood. Also of his religious quest. Although put off by the extreme Protestants, he was strongly attracted to the Anglicans. He appreciated the intellectual eminence, the sincerity and the graciousness that he found among them, but was eventually repelled by that lack of fire from which he himself (though he does not seem aware of it) suffered so badly. He meditated for a while with

the Californian Vedanta Society under Swami Prabhavananda and made some progress but not enough to satisfy him. He also tried marriage but (whether due to this same lack of fire he does not tell us) lapsed into wedded celibacy after four years and into divorce after ten.

The book ends rather unsatisfactorily, leaving him reconciled with the Church but as yet only as a layman. A sequel is promised; but unless a real fire is kindled within him it seems unlikely to lead to a satisfactory outcome whether in the Church or outside it.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT,

ACCORDING TO VEDANTA: By Swami Prabhavananda, being No. 165-166 of 'Vedanta and the West'. (Vedanta Press, Hollywood, pp. 113, - price \$1.50.)

'To me the Sermon on the Mount represents the essence of Christ's Gospel,' Swami Prabhavananda declares. Those who read the article on 'Spiritual Traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church' by Father Lazarus in our issue of January 1964 will remember that he denounces this as a modern heresy. The essence of Christianity, he claims, is the good news of the incarnation, death and resurrection of Christ. Certain it is that Christian mysticism has been inspired rather by this good news and its symbolism in the aspirant's own being, while those who are satisfied with the leavings of religion after mysticism has been lost, that is with ethics and devotion, cling rather to the Sermon on the Mount.

Swami Prabhavananda does not go very deep in his interpretation. What distinguishes it is the way he draws parallels to Christ's teachings at every point from Vedanta or from the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. He has some pleasant stories to tell about Sri Ramakrishna and his immediate followers, especially Swami Brahmananda who was Swami Prabhavananda's own guru.

- Sagittarius

A MOSLEM SAINT OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, SHAIKH AHMAD AL-'ALAWI:

By Martin Lings. (Allen and Unwin, pp. 224, price 28s.)

Although Shaikh Ahmad Al-'Alawi died as recently as 1934, the title chosen by Mr. Lings for this study of him is misleading, since he was a conservative turned towards the heritage of the past and took no cognisance of twentieth century trends except to oppose them.

The book begins with an attractive account of the Shaikh by a French doctor who, while remaining an agnostic, developed affection and respect for him. It then continues with autobiographical notes left behind by the Shaikh himself. This makes it rather scrappy.

Mr. Lings is obviously on more congenial ground when he comes to doctrine. He gives an excellent exposition of the Sufi doctrine of *wahdatu'l wujud*, 'Oneness of Being', which he shows to be the same as Advaita or Identity. In subsequent chapters he shows how Shaikh Ahmad himself, following the grand Sufi tradition, also taught this supreme doctrine couched in Sufi terminology and based on the symbolical interpretation of certain Quranic verses.

This leads him into the curious mistake of classing Sufism, and indeed Islam itself, rather on the side of *jnana-marga* than *bhakti-marga*. Actually, a *marga* is a path, not an outlook. There is no reason why a *bhakta* should not understand Advaita. Many of the great Hindu *bhaktas* have. What makes them *bhaktas* is that they follow a path of *bhakti*, that is of love, worship, devotion, submission, using techniques such as ritualistic worship and invocation of the Divine Name. This implies that Sufism is a characteristically *bhakti* tradition and Shaikh Ahmad was a true *bhakta*.

Certainly the Shaikh's poems, with extracts from which the book ends, show rare understanding and ecstatic exaltation. Unfortunately the awkward translation makes them far from easy to read.

Most people who write about a saint nowadays seem to feel the need to equate him with the Maharshi. It is a pity that Mr. Lings thus lifts out of context a saint who, even if not Bhagavan, was gracious and powerful in his own right and stands in no need of comparisons to establish his greatness.

- Abdullah Qutbuddin

SOURCES OF INDIAN TRADITION:

Compiled by William Theodore de Bary and others. Published in India by Motilal Banarsidass. (Delhi-6, Varanasi-1, Patna-4.) By arrangement with Columbia University Press, New York. Pp. XXVII and 959. Price Rs, 18.

This compilation is a masterpiece of editorial ability. It brings together extracts illustrative of Indian wisdom and thought, both spiritual and secular, through the ages, from the Vedas down to Vinobha Bhave. Scholars from the U.S.A., England, India and Pakistan have made contributions conforming to the pattern set by the general editor and his team.

Assisted by Dr. R. Wellen of Columbia (who has written the introduction to the section on Brahmanism, *i.e.* Vedic Hinduism including the Upanishads) and Dr. S. N. Hay of the University of Chicago (who was in charge of the section on Modern India and Pakistan) the Editor compiled this volume as part of the Columbia University programme of general education. The introduction to the section on (later) Hinduism is by A. Yarrow, who was the original editor of the scheme, when it first came up. From London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, A. L. Basham is responsible for the section on Jainism and Buddhism, and J. B. Harrison for Sikhism. I. H. Qureshi of the Centre for Pakistan Studies at Columbia was in charge of the account of the Muslim revival in India from the 19th Century onwards. R. N. Dandekar of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute and Prof. Raghavan of Madras University were in charge of sections on Hinduism.

Others too numerous to mention have contributed to the volume, but it is its planning and arrangement in sections that gives it its peculiar merit. It is so compiled as to give a bird's-eye view of a vast region of wisdom and thought. Readers particularly interested in any area of this region may find this a valuable point of departure from which to launch out into wider study. Those who have already covered the ground in a general way will be interested to find such a wealth of documents and quotations illustrating it. It might be possible to cavil at some items of inclusion or omission, but that is inevitable in a book of this scope. The extracts for quotation are chosen in an objective spirit and with sympathetic discernment, the editors keeping themselves well in the background and their introductions being short, though useful.

The bibliography is particularly valuable; in fact it is a compendious guide to further studies. But it would be even more useful if it were arranged according to subjects and not alphabetically.

IN THE VISION OF GOD, Parts I and II:

By Swami Ramdas. (Pub. for Anandashram by Bhavan's Book University, Chaupatty, Bombay-7, pp. 270 & 264, price Rs.2.50 each part.)

Swami Ramdas of Anandashram was both an advaitin and a *bhakta*. He said: "Ramdas is like the river Ganges which, having reached the ocean and become one with it, still continues running towards it." He found life more zestful because he had found its culmination. Realization did not deaden life for him but lighted it up. An aura of cheerfulness was always about him and nothing of that gloomy austerity which is sometimes supposed to be an accompaniment of holiness. When he talked he bubbled with joy.

The Swami is a good raconteur with an impish sense of fun. He describes, for instance, a jostling *kumbha mela* crowd wherein a fat lady standing on the prostrate form of a *sadhu* preaches patience to him.

But all this was only the soft green lichen

covering the hard rock of his realization won by austerities deliberately practised and hardships accepted. Miracles sometimes issued from him, rousing the wonder of his devotees but almost apologetically slurred over by the Swami himself. His life and teachings are inseparable, and his autobiographical account is filled with references to his invocation of the Name and complete reliance on it. 'In Quest of God' tells the story of his early wanderings before he attained illumination. The present work, now republished, continues the story up to his settling down at Anandashram where so many thousands of people came to know and love him.

THE DIVINE MESSAGE: By V. Kameswara Rao.

Of the core-scriptures of the Hindus, the *prastana traya*, the *Bhagavad Gita* has been the most widely read and interpreted, not only by great *acharyas* but by men of action also. This is as it should be, for in spiritual life each aspirant follows his own path.

The present book is a consecutive statement of the truths of the *Gita*, which the author regards as an allegory of the soul fighting for *dharma* against desire. There is no very penetrating personal insight, but such unpretentious studies are a stimulus for each one of us to go afresh to the fountainhead.

- Prof. K. Subrahmanyam

SANKARA'S HYMN TO SIVA:

(Sivanandalahari) Translated with commentary by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan. (Ganesh, Madras. Pp. 132. Price Rs. 4.)

Adi Shankara sang hundreds of soul-thrilling hymns to the Supreme Self conceived in many forms. None of these are more inspiring than Sivananda Lahari, a song of the Inner Light, of the fervent heart in communion with Siva. Its flowing cadences and mellifluous style create waves of spiritual emotion in the heart of singer and listener alike. Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan, a lifelong champion of Sri Shankara's absolute monism, has given us in this book an able translation and thoughtful commentary on this memorable hymn to Siva.

GITA: By K. Padmanabhan, with an introduction by Swami Rajeswarananda. (Ambika Publishing House, Bangalore-4. Pp. 46. Price Re. 1.00).

In a simple style, K. Padmanabhan has given his own exposition of the yogas of action, love and knowledge contained in the *Gita*. In his rapid survey he also considers the commentaries on this universal scripture by great teachers of various schools, notably Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva.

Swami Rajeswarananda's introduction enhances the value of the book.

- Yogi Shuddhananda Bharati

THE BLIND SEER

Lines from the Ramana Deva Malai (Tamil) of Muruganar

Like the sun which, never resting,
Seeks and seeks but finds no trace
Of darkness,
So our Master cannot see
Our foe, delusion;
Cannot see,
So blind is he.

Ashram Bulletin

The hot season in Tiruvannamalai is from the middle of March to the middle of June, so this is not usually a time for visitors. In the middle of June the monsoon begins, and although this does not always mean rain - or not before August - it means cool winds and cloudy skies, so that from then on the weather is agreeable.

* * * *

When Morarji Desai, former Chief Minister of Bombay State, former Finance Minister of the Central Government, paid us a visit we were surprised to hear that he came here first as early as 1935 when Bhagavan was not yet widely known and few of the present Ashram buildings had yet been erected. He later sent us a letter confirming this:

“I stayed in the Ashram for a day and was in the presence of Sri Ramana Maharshi for an hour or more, when I felt complete peace within and had no questions to ask. It was an unforgettable experience of life. When I took leave of him he asked me to leave only after taking lunch, which I had the privilege of having with him. Seeing him convinced me that he was a realized soul and affected me considerably.”

Another friendly visitor who had first come in 1935 (though too young then to understand much that was said) was the Yuvaraja of Travancore. We were delighted to find that he was already a subscriber to *The Mountain Path*. He was accompanied by the Yuvarani.

Sri Sayaji Laxman Silam, Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry, also came on a visit here with his family.

* * * *

SRI VIDYA HAVAN

This annual function came off on 20th March, 1964.

The devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana

Maharshi know that at the time of the Kumbhabhishekam of Sri Mathrubutheswara shrine, Bhagavan consecrated by His touch the Meru Chakra that was made specially for the shrine. A meru in granite is a rare production and rarely comes off all right, and in this case it is undoubtedly due to the Grace of Sri Bhagavan working through the architect Sri Vaidyanatha Stapathi's skilful fingers. When the Meru was fitted in its niche, a few of those present saw Bhagavan sitting in the inner shrine and guiding Sri Vaidyanatha Stapathi in his work. At the conclusion of it all Bhagavan placed his hands on the Meru as well as the Mathrubhutheswara Lingam.

After the Brahmanirvana of Bhagavan, when the devotees were feeling that some tangible activity was needed to restore the spiritual atmosphere of the Ashram, it came intuitively to Sadhu Arunachala (Major Chadwick)¹ that neglect of the Meru at the shrine of the Mother was a great indiscretion, if not a crime against the divinity. So he took it upon himself to organise the worship of the meru and the then management readily agreed with him. And so the Puja started in earnest.

The regular saparya paddathi was followed for the Sri Chakra Puja, with its argala stotras, Chathushshashti upacharas and sahasranama (1,000 names) and thrisathi (300 names). Our thrisathi is unique in that every 20 names of the Mother is preceded by one of the 15 mantras of the Sri Suktha. The thrisathi by itself is sarvartha purthi as said by Acharya Sankara in his commentary on the same. The addition of the Sri Suktha mantras adds greater efficacy to the thrisathi archana. In the usual course comes the ashtothra also (108 names of the Mother). Then comes the solemn offering of sthothras.

1 For a note on whom see our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964.

These pujas, lasting about 3½ hours, go on right through the year on Fridays, full Moon days and the first day of the Tamil month, *i.e.* the day the sun moves into a new sign of the Zodiac. Anybody sending ten rupees can participate in one of these pujas; they should also send their names, nakshatras and gotras.

When one year of the puja was completed Sadhu Arunachala felt that the anniversary of the commencement of the puja should be celebrated and consulted others as to how best this could be done. It was unanimously agreed that the best would be a havan which is a costly affair. The havan is a whole day ceremony lasting from early morning till late in the evening with several oblations. When the offerings in the havan have cooled down, after several days, the sacred ashes are taken out and distributed as prasada to devotees. Contributions to the conduct of this annual function are always welcome.

* * * *

On April 17th we assembled at the grave of Alan Chadwick, who was for many years prominent here, to celebrate the second anniversary of his passing away. Devaraja Mudaliar presided and Venkatakrishnayya made a speech in his honour, both of them devotees of long standing who had known Major Chadwick well.

During the celebration an unobtrusive little man dressed only in a white dhoti and with a green shawl over his shoulders slipped in and sat on the floor among the others. We found out later that he was Basheer Baba of Chennur, a follower of the great Sai Baba, about whom we have an article in this issue. Like his great master, he observes neither Hindu nor Muslim orthodoxy. Like him also, he is credited with miraculous powers. He displayed none here, though on his arrival at the gate of the Ashram, when told that his driver had

2 The President went on a pilgrimage to North India and so was away from the Ashram for two months and returned in time only for Aradhana (9-5-64).

a letter for the Ashram President, he rightly remarked, with no previous information to that effect, that the President was away.² He was strongly impressed by the Presence of Bhagavan and the atmosphere of peace at the Ashram.

* * * *

Mr. Bela Haran of Melbourne, Australia, brought us news of the Arunachala Group which meets every second week under the direction of Mouni Sadhu at 423 Middleborough Road, Box Hill, Victoria, just outside Melbourne.

ARADHANA

Aradhana, the 14th anniversary of Bhagavan's leaving the body, fell as late as May 9th this year. There was such an influx of visitors that even the office of *The Mountain Path* had to be taken over as a temporary camping ground.

The function started at five in the morning with the singing of 'Arunachala Stuti' and 'Ramana Sad-Guru'. The actual puja started at 8 a.m. with the chanting of the Taittiriya and Mahanarayana Upanishads and Sri Rudra Chamaka, Purushasuktha, etc. Ekadasa Rudra Mahanaysa Abishekam was performed. During the arthi after the Sahasranamam (that is during the burning of camphor that marks the end of the puja, after the chanting of the thousand names of Bhagavan), the grace of Bhagavan's Presence was very powerfully felt.

Tiruchuzhi T. V. Natarajan and his party of instrumentalists played Nadaswaram on and off throughout the day, adding greatly to the attraction.

The many guests were entertained to lunch by the Ashram, apart from which there was large-scale feeding of the poor.

In the afternoon Om Sadhu gave a recital of Ramana bhajan.

In the evening Brahma Sri Bangalore Krishna Bhagavathar gave a harikatha on Purandaradasar.

By nightfall most of the guests had departed though a few were making a longer stay.

RAMANA MANTAP

We referred in our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964 to the edifice that is under construction for the shrine of the Maharshi and the meditation hall in front of it. Progress has been rather slow owing both to the problem of funds and to the extremely skilled nature of the work. The superstructure for the shrine has now been completed out of grey stone from nearabouts of Arunachala, which goes black like marble when polished suitably.



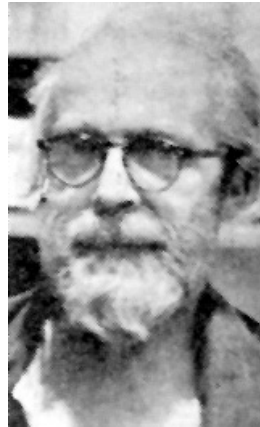
The Pillar

This is only the first stage of what is being undertaken, but the two photographs will show that something beautiful has already been achieved.

A RESIDENTIAL ASHRAM

One significant change that has come over Sri Ramanasramam is that it is beginning to be more of a residential ashram than it was formerly. During the lifetime of Sri Bhagavan, as will be explained in our editorial of January 1965, devotees were not encouraged to make a long stay here. Recently the tendency to lengthier visits and to settling down here has increased and it has begun to be felt in the Ashram that the growth of a residential colony of devotees and aspirants has now become appropriate. Indeed, the Ashram has constructed far more living accommodation since the Maharshi left the body than before and still has an extensive building programme on hand. The immense magnetism of Bhagavan's Presence draws people here, young and old, men and women, Indian and foreign, and it is not always easy to accommodate all who come. A few recent residents tell here how they came.

RONALD ROSE is an asset not only to the Ashram but to *The Mountain Path*, as those who read his book reviews in this issue will appreciate. Before his vessel came to anchor here it had looked in at various ports of call, including a Theravada monastery in Ceylon.



"I think I can claim that I was one of the most reluctant and unhopeful pilgrims ever to make the journey to Ramanasramam. I had already been wandering around in the East for several years and the prospect of visiting one more fashionable ashram with many

Western devotees did not fill me with enthusiasm. I had long ago read Brunton's book and forgotten all about it. And in any case, Maharshi was no longer alive.

"The thing that immediately impressed me about Bhagavan's ashram was the remarkable spirit of freedom that pervades it. I did not then realise that this was a heritage from Bhagavan himself. The President and devotees were kind and helpful but no one started preaching at me or trying to make me a devotee. Sensing my reclusive nature, they tactfully left me much to myself.

"To me this spirit of freedom is still the great feature of our ashram. Bhagavan has drawn his devotees from every nationality, creed, caste and temperament. Yet we are all living happily together, each getting on with his own work and no one interfering with another or laying down the law. We are not making self-conscious efforts to practise brotherly love or charity. It just happens, and to my mind only Bhagavan's living presence among us can account for it.

"Being an insatiable reader, I went first to the

bookshop and, on the advice of the attendant, bought *Self-Realization* and *Who am I?*. I had read many better written and more exciting lives of saints, but inexplicably *Self-Realization* spoke



Ramana Mantap

straight to my heart. After I had spent a few days around the samadhi (shrine) Bhagavan became more real to me than any teacher I had met in the flesh. I felt, and I still feel, no regret that I never actually saw him sitting on the couch in the little hall. How can we regret when he is so gracious to those of us to whom, for one reason or another, he did not choose to manifest his physical presence?

“Like many pragmatic Westerners I was at once taken by the simplicity and directness of Bhagavan’s message, which seemed to epitomise all I had learned from other teachings while discarding all that was unduly complicated and superfluous. As a matter of fact, *Who am I?* was at first a little too simple and direct for me. It was only after reading the *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi* and other records of Bhagavan’s message that I discovered this little

pamphlet actually contains everything the aspirant needs.”

* * * *

In contrast to him, HUGO MAIER heard of Bhagavan and his teaching while still in Germany and, knowing immediately that self-enquiry was his method and Bhagavan his Guru, came direct from Germany to our Ashram some years ago and has now settled down here.

“I came to know of Bhagavan through my teacher Heinrich Juergens, with whom I was practising healing. He conducted yoga classes for many years and even concluded them with prayers to Christ, Ramakrishna and Bhagavan. After spending some months in London, I came to the Ashram in 1959 and the moment I entered it I spontaneously felt I was not coming to a new place but to my own home. It is my spiritual home. I have never felt so much at home anywhere, even in Germany. First I was put up in the common dormitory and then in a room outside the Ashram. Then the Ashram President was kind enough to invite me to stay in the Ashram, giving me a well furnished room where I am now living comfortably. Living here at the foot of Arunachala is both sadhana and siddhi, just as the Mountain and the path leading to its summit are inseparable and the same. Here the experience of peace which I already had is deepened and prolonged. What more do I want?”

* * * *

ROBIN NORMAN of Perth, Australia, first came here alone in 1961 and next year returned with her mother. Last year she again came alone, and now she regards herself as a resident, not a visitor. She has been accommodated in a small Ashram guest-house.

“I had been interested in spiritual matters even before I heard about Bhagavan. I read a few books on Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism. But at the age of 20 I had the intense and genuine

urge to have a Guru and something told me that I would find him in England! Immediately I sailed for England, and there, in a bookshop, the picture of Bhagavan on the dust-jacket of *In Days of Great Peace* attracted me so deeply that I stood motionless for some time before it. I knew spontaneously that he was my Guru. When I learned about him and his Ashram the urge to come here grew in me and within a year I was here. I left after a short visit but came again next year with my mother. I returned to Australia with her and took up a job, but the pull of Arunachala and Bhagavan were so strong that I gave up my job and came back to the Ashram, which is now my home. I experience the dynamic presence of Bhagavan, my Guru, and he guides me every moment.”

* * * *

In connection with his poem ‘A Beacon Still’ in our January issue and his short note on ‘Naga Baba’ in our April issue, I mentioned how S. P. MUKHERJEE, a retired engineer from Calcutta, built a house and settled down here with his wife.



The above is their house, which they have named ‘Upasana’.

“People often ask me why I left my home and settled down here at the foot of Arunachala. What answer can I give?

“If a moth on a dark night suddenly comes

across a dazzling brilliant light, he will jubilantly get caught in its rays. Will he care if any one reminds him that the light is neither in his home town nor even in his province and so he should leave it alone? The discovery of the light is the crowning achievement of his life and also perhaps its sole purpose!



S. P. Mukherjee

“My story is short. Ever since my first visit to Ramanasramam in 1951 it was my single-pointed prayer to Bhagavan to keep me here permanently and in order to strengthen my prayer I brought my wife here the following year and she not only prayed fervently but endorsed all my plans for achieving my heart’s desire.



Smt. Mukherjee

Once it was the dream in my life to build a small cottage at the foot of the radiant Hill, beside Sri Ramanasramam; today it is a reality. All our prayers have been answered and everything we asked for granted.

“Contented and happy as we are, we sing: ‘O Bhagavan! Keep us here for ever!’

“Here we stay and here we wish to die like the moth who buzzes round the light till the dawn breaks!

“One thing only do we know - Ramanasramam Is a beacon still.”

* * * *

Ramana Bhakta Sabha

The Ramana Bhakta Sabha of Madras celebrated its annual Guru Puja on April 26th, There was chanting of the Vedas followed by a musical rendering of 'Sri Ramana Gitam' conducted by its composer, Om Sadhu of Tiruvannamalai. Om Sadhu has by now quite a reputation both for composing tunes and leading choral music. Sri M. P. Periasami Thocran expressed grateful appreciation on behalf of the audience.



Om Sadhu

The Sabha meets at 5 p.m. every Sunday at 94, Mowbray's Road, Alwarpet, Madras.

PREM SANGH

The Prem Sangh was founded by Dr. R. Padmanabhan, M.B.B.S., Palghat, a very ardent devotee of Sri Bhagavan on 28-7-47. It is at present composed of twelve families following various avocations. One is a Major in the army, another a teacher while others are businessmen, engineers, etc. Some live in Palghat, others in Calcutta, Bombay, Hyderabad, Madras, Trivandrum, Coimbatore, etc.

The institution has the blessings of Sri Bhagavan, who was informed about its foundation in 1949 and with benign grace nodded His approval

Aims and Objects

The members are to strictly follow Sri Bhagavan's method of Sadhana and spread His message by practice even more than by precept. The families should demonstrate that it is possible to follow the spiritual path while leading a life in the world. This is strictly according to Sri Bhagavan's advice. Members are to perform regular puja to Sri Bhagavan daily, read His

works and books about Him and His teachings and meet in any religious centre once a year. The Prem Sangh has conducted annual camps at Palani, Chidambaram, Tirupati, Tiruchendur, Cape Comorin, Palghat, Dakshineswar (Calcutta), etc. The members had also the good fortune to visit the blessed chamber in Madurai where our Master had His illumination and also His sacred birth place in Tiruchuzhi.

During the camp, which normally lasts five to seven days, the members go through a very strict discipline of spiritual practice. There are various programmes such as Probhat Pheri (morning bhajan), Suryanamaskar, Asanas, Puja to Sri Bhagavan, With chanting from the Upanishads, Gita Parayanam, discourses, discussions, bhajan, etc. One day is devoted to silent contemplation. No opportunity is missed to meet and mix with the wise and grwat and benefit by their advice.

Rules of conduct for members

1. All members should consider themselves the children of Sri Bhagavan and hence there should be mutual regard and respect.
2. Tobacco in any form and alcohol are forbidden.
3. Members should take only vegetarian food.
4. They should perform meditation early in the morning, then puja to Sri Bhagavan and again meditation before going to bed at night.
5. In order to develop a good understanding among members, they should correspond regularly.
6. Since health is very vital for sadhana, members should take proper care of the body.
7. No time should be wasted on unnecessary discussions on politics or other non-spiritual matters.

The motto of the Prem Sangh is indicated by the letters PREM as follows:-

P: *stands for Purity of Thought*

R: *for Righteousness of Action*

E: *means that the Members should be ever 'Energetic'*

M: *that their goal is Mukthi*

The members experience the benign Grace of the Lord and have conducted their last two camps in the Ashram. They are thrilled to feel the Presence of Sri Bhagavan and His guiding hand in their day to day life.

This year they camped at our Ashram from 18th to 22nd May. During their stay they

delighted the Ashramites with their bhajans, etc. They also arranged for a visit from Sri Anna Subramania Iyer, head of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Madras. He delivered a lecture in the Ashram hall in English and Tamil on 'Swami Vivekananda on the Upanishads'. the wise and great and benefit by their advice.

Sri Ramanasramam — Life Members

(In continuation of the list already published in our April issue.)

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Peter Greider, Zurich.

Letters to the Editor

I have followed your name for many years and given lengthy notices to Ramana Maharshi's books, which are my treasures. Among all the Masters he is the only one whose presence is often vivid and alive to me, as now when writing to you. It is like a blessing.

We have waited for such a journal for years, and I am sure it is winning acclaim the world over. How necessary is the subject matter of your own (second) editorial, especially to Christians owing to their erroneous teaching. And that is a magnificent article by D. E. Harding, author of 'On Having No Head'.

In connection with my work I am obliged to glance at countless numbers of magazines, but yours is the only one that I read from cover to cover. It is a joy and a challenge.

Clare Cameron, Editor, 'Science of Thought Review'.

* * * *

Many congratulations on the second number of 'The Mountain Path'. How good Douglas Harding was! ... My only quarrel with him is that he will call his way of doing the *vichara* 'Zen'. The discipline or technique is quite different in Zen, though the question asked is the same. The *koan* which is equivalent to 'Who am I?' is 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?' or who is doing whatever one is doing at the moment? The stress is on the 'who?' and not on the Buddha's name. Then there is: 'What is my face before I was born?', which is, to me, really the same as 'Who am I?'. This answers K. K. Ghosh's letter. Both *koans* are found in Ch'an and Zen.

G. J. Yorke, Gloucester.

* * * *

Liking very much the poem 'Ahad' by Arthur Osborne, may I ask you to explain in one of your next issues the meaning of the title, Ahad? The poem wanted me to translate it into German and I

enclose herewith a copy of my translation. Maybe you have use for it.

Ursula Mumler, Lugano.

The poem 'Ahad' is based closely on certain lines from the Qur'an and the title is the Arabic word for 'One'. Thank you for the German translation but too few of our readers speak German to justify our publishing it. — Editor.

* * * *

The reproduction of the Maharshi's photograph is excellent. The living, enlightened eyes and the benevolent smile are most encouraging for one seeking to make better and more constant efforts to realize the Self.

In the April issue a correspondent from Alabama objected to these pictures, but his objections were suitably answered by the Editor. Even an unlettered person can derive inspiration from such a picture - one who lives by intuition and not by intellect.

D. F. Panday, Bombay.

* * * *

A publication like this is sorely needed worldwide. Others in its general area - like 'The Middle Way' or the East-West philosophical journals - are excellent, but they do impose limits, either of one religious outlook, however broad, or of speculative rather than intuitional approach. Those of us at the bottom of the Path, but seeking light from whatever source is today shedding it, need such a journal as yours. Its regular - but too rare (may it one day be monthly) - advent can provide a seasonal quickening that purblind and halting spirits require.

Le Roy A. Born, New York.

* * * *

The second number leaves the first far behind. Even Sagittarius is getting more mellow! All the articles are excellent, each in its own way.

In the reviews I admire your deftness in meeting claims of unicity (whether for Ramakrishna or Jesus) without questioning attainment. Buddha's banter of Sariputra is an excellent stick with which to beat all such dogmatists.

The Letters to the Editor and the comments they elicit provide a very lively and informal conversation, reminiscent of old days in the Hall. Apart from your reply to the gentleman from Alabama, the cover picture of the temple tank in front of the mountain and the advertisement of the Sri Chakra Puja show that Bhagavan rejected nothing, not even ritual.

Prof. K. Swaminathan, New Delhi.

* * * *

(*To the Publisher*) We received the sample copies you sent us and our people were delighted with them. They found the magazine instructive, helpful and inspiring. We could have sold more copies....

Will you kindly send us 10 copies of the present (No. 2) issue and 10 copies of each issue thereafter until further notice....

May I congratulate you as the publisher and Mr. Osborne as the editor upon very successful launching of this outstanding new magazine. It will bring Bhagavan's Grace to many thousands who are hungrily reaching for peace and enlightenment.

Church of Spiritual Philosophy and Vedanta
Center, St. Petersburg, Florida, U.S.A.

* * * *

(*To the Managing Editor*) The second issue also has come out in a grand manner and the illustrations add to it. The variety of articles will just suit the different types of devotees. I realise the great responsibility you have undertaken and the hard work you have. I hope Sri Bhagavan's Grace will work through you in making devotees appreciate the high quality of future issues also. I shall do my best to support the journal from here.

P. V. Somasundaram, Bombay.

* * * *

Please accept my congratulations on the fine job that you and Sri Ganesan have made of '*The Mountain Path*'. It is an excellent production. Long may it prosper as a worthy vehicle of the Grace of beloved Bhagavan.

As one for whom four months' practice of Bhagavan's 'Who am I?' at Sri Ramanasramam brought greater understanding and contentment than did four years cogitation on Anatta in Buddhist monasteries, I found the '*Ashram Bulletin*' particularly inspiring. Very moving was your description of Bhagavan's last hours in the body.

I have often wondered just how Bhagavan's teenage experience of bodily death was instrumental in his realization of Enlightenment. Recently I came across the following words on page 20 of Sri Krishna Prem's '*Yoga of the Kathopanishad*': "The mystic death which played an essential part in all the ancient rites of initiation is in fact the gate through which must pass all who seek the light of wisdom. Psychologists will explain it in terms of introversion and ethical writers in those of self-abnegation and what they write will all be quite true. It is these things but it is also much more, for here, as always, the ancient symbols have a wealth of content to which it is impossible to do full justice with our modern conceptual thought. The Mystic Death is a real death and, like all that is real, it has its dangers... It has also been said that 'he who would cross the threshold of any world must leave fear behind him.'"

Does this not relate directly to the answer that He, as a fearless schoolboy, gave to the personal query 'Who am I?'?

F. Allen, London.

In most cases, of course, the initiatic death is a symbol of the real spiritual death and rebirth; in Bhagavan's case it was the real thing — Editor.

* * * *

The magazine is very fine and indeed worthy of its source. I was particularly interested in the news

of the Ashram, and I am glad that it has decided to establish Sri Ramanasramam Charities, which must certainly help to maintain the Ashram in its place of eminence.

Rex Uhl, Berkeley, California, U.S.A.

* * * *

The 'Ashram Bulletin' brings one into closer relationship with Sri Ramanasramam and other devotees. This is something that I have felt the need of, this contact with other devotees. It helps a person (weak like myself) on the path. I feel that it is what is required by many like myself who never saw the Master in his physical body. Even though his presence is felt in one's own being, a contact on this physical plane with those who knew the Master in the flesh is often longed for; also to know of others' who have found their way to the Master after his *Mahasamadhi* (physical death) must be a great help to all.

Fred Wilson, Scarborough.

* * * *

I went through it from cover to cover and enjoyed it thoroughly, particularly the Ashram Bulletin and book reviews. The only suggestion I have is that you should try and include articles on the lives and teachings of saints and mystics.

Miss Sarah Farrand, London.

Up to now each issue of 'The Mountain Path' has carried an article on some saint or mystic. We hope to continue the series and invite readers to send in such articles. — Editor.

* * * *

Kindly continue with the wonderful photos of Sri Bhagavan. My sincere wishes for a glorious success for 'The Mountain Path'.

Hale Sherland, Vancouver.

* * * *

Please continue your delightful articles on Lord

Arunachala. It was a joy to read the article in the April issue.

N. R. K., Madurai.

* * * *

After reading the article on Arunachala I realised why Bhagavan called Arunachala '*Hridaya*' (the Heart). I felt a spiritual exhilaration beyond description.

G. R. Trivedi, Rajahmundry.

* * * *

T. K. S. seems to have tripped up in doing his *Pradakshina* around the Hill. Dakshinamurti is not the North Pole nor the Southward-Facing (p. 108). He is the Regent of the South, even the South itself. Therefore he would *ipso facto* face the North. Even T. K. S. says on pp. 106-7 (and this is a tradition of the Hill) that this *Siddha Purusha*, who is Siva, dwells on the northern slope, so he would be sitting facing the north.

N. C. Vakil, Bombay.

* * * *

Mr. Vakil takes objection to the statement that the Guru is the North Pole and traditionally faces South. 'North Pole' is used here in the sense that it is the Dhruva, the Supreme, to which our attention is always riveted. We always cling to the Supreme Guru, that is Lord Siva, who is Dakshinamurti.

A careful reading of the lines objected to will show that 'southward-facing' is given only as "one meaning" of Dakshinamurti. It is the meaning that is according to the Puranic traditions. But having lived at the Blessed Feet of Bhagavan Sri Ramana I have heard from him that Dakshinamurti is Dakshina + Amurti: 'Dakshina' being 'All Prowess', the power to hold *Maya* under his control, and 'Amurti!' meaning 'Formless'. So Dakshinamurti-Ramana, though appearing to have a form, was and is always formless *Arupa Atma*, yet with absolute control and sway over *Maya*. That is why Dakshinamurti is described in the

Dakshinamurti Stotra as: “*mayaviva vijrumbhayath yapi maha yogiva yassvachchaya thasmai sree gurunurthaye nama idam Sri Dakshinamurtaye.*” — “To Him who like a magician or even like a yogi, displays by His own will this universe created by *Maya*, to Him who is incarnate as the Guru, to Him in the Effulgent Form facing South, to Him be this prostration.”

T. K. S.

* * * *

I was delighted with Joel Goldsmith’s article ‘The Infinite Way of Life’. He is a true Advaitin and his teachings are having a wide effect in the world. I sincerely hope ‘*The Mountain Path*’ will encourage such contributions which are not merely intellectual but are based on true God-experience.

T. S., Tiruvannamalai.

* * * *

‘*The Mountain Path*’ is a lovely journal, just suited to Sri Ramana.

Lalita Kumari Devi, Dowager Maharani of
Vizianagaram, Banaras.

* * * *

I am delighted to have ‘*The Mountain Path*’ and am enjoying reading it and finding it most helpful and instructive.

Kay White, Farnham, Surrey.

* * * *

I have gone through the articles and find them of substantial value for those who like to probe into the hidden values of life in its relationship to what we call spirituality.

Dr. W. Noelle, Embassy of West Germany, New
Delhi.

* * * *

I read all the fine articles with interest. I am sure your magazine will be a success with all the thousands of devotees all over the world. May

Bhagavan bless all your undertakings. May he bless each one that has a part in it.

Eleanor Pauline Noye, Hollywood,

* * * *

Your request to write in experiences of the blessings and guidance of Sri Bhagavan will inspire many devotees, and for my part I give below my own experience, as follows.

Ramkrishna G. Kulkarni, Ujjain

Your contribution is very welcome and will certainly be published. It will probably appear in our issue of January 1965 — Editor.

* * * *

I would like to say how much I enjoyed reading the first issue of ‘*The Mountain Path*’ and look forward to the next issue which, I believe, will reach me any day now.

I cannot help but feel that to the Realized Man the phenomenal world must also be a different place. Would you agree that, the source of all being perfect order and harmony, the realized man would express that order and harmony through his consciousness and thus find the same order and harmony in every aspect of this phenomenal world - that is apart from certain operations of karma? Would you agree that all such phenomena are but a deformation of Pure Consciousness operating as lesser powers?

The Maharshi said that concentration was holding to one thought but even that thought must go before Realization. Did he mean by this realization of the Self, or the realization of that last and single thought, which would appear to be in accord with psychological teaching?

Dr. A. Colin Corah, Keswick, England

Certainly a realized man, having perfect order and harmony in consciousness, finds order and harmony reflected in the phenomenal world also - not even excluding the operations of karma. Many saints have undergone sickness, poverty or

imprisonment, but has any one ever heard of a saint complaining of them or calling them a disharmony?

All powers and phenomena are, of course, particularisations or deformations of Pure Consciousness. What else is there?

Concentration, according to the path of Self-enquiry which the Maharshi taught, does not mean holding to one thought but eliminating all thoughts. He did, however, sometimes refer to other less direct paths in which the mind is trained to hold to one thought in order to keep it still and keep other thoughts out. In either case the state to be aimed at is pure thought-free Consciousness, and this is the Self — Editor.

* * * *

My first question is: Who am I? This question has been eluding me for many years past, as I am sure it has quite a few others. My problem consists of this, that having used that question as a starting point according to the instructions of Bhagavan, the question recedes into a feeling (as maybe inner quests must of necessity) or sensation moving around a vacuum-like centre. Presuming that this is not too stupid a procedure (if we can call “setting the dogs on the scent” a procedure), I am struck by the phenomenon that when the monkey-mind returns to the scene he does so with a slight but, for me, striking variation of the question from ‘Who am I?’ to ‘What is I?’ (never ‘Who is I?’ or ‘What am I?’) To me the sound of ‘Who am I?’,

pronouncing it inwardly and waiting in the stillness that surrounds the questioner, seems just a tinge too logical and grammatically correct, whereas its sense is, of course, neither.

And, coming out of the stillness, the monkey experiences greater peace and satisfaction and the dogs seem to sniff more intensely with that variation ‘What is I?’ in the air.

In short, if it weren’t preposterous to think so, I would feel that variation to be an improvement - for myself. Since I understand that Bhagavan on numerous occasions expressed himself in English, giving instructions for the use of the query ‘Who am I?’, curiosity has been aroused as to the Tamil and Sanskrit forms of the question as compared with the variant ‘What is I?’. Are they, either grammatically or otherwise, near to each other in either language?

J. De Reede, Elba.

It is often helpful to vary the words of a formula, as they may become a fetish. In this case, however neither the question nor the answer is really verbal. The question is a turning inwards to the reality of oneself and may or may not be accompanied by a form of words; the answer is an indefinable consciousness of I-ness. The expression “a sensation moving around a vacuum-like centre” shows that the writer is certainly on the track of it.

As a point of fact, the Tamil would be ‘Nan yar’, literally “I-who?” — Editor.

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Was it for Thy pleasure or for
my sake Thou didst win me?
If now Thou turn me away, the
world will blame Thee,
Oh Arunachala! “
*The Marital Garland of
Letters, Verse 4.*



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

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October 1964

No.4

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Tiruvannamalai

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Editor:
Arthur Osborne
Sri Ramanasramam
Tiruvannamalai

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V. Ganesan
Sri Ramanasramam
Tiruvannamalai

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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

The aim of this journal is to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics, and to clarify the paths available to seekers in the conditions of our modern world.

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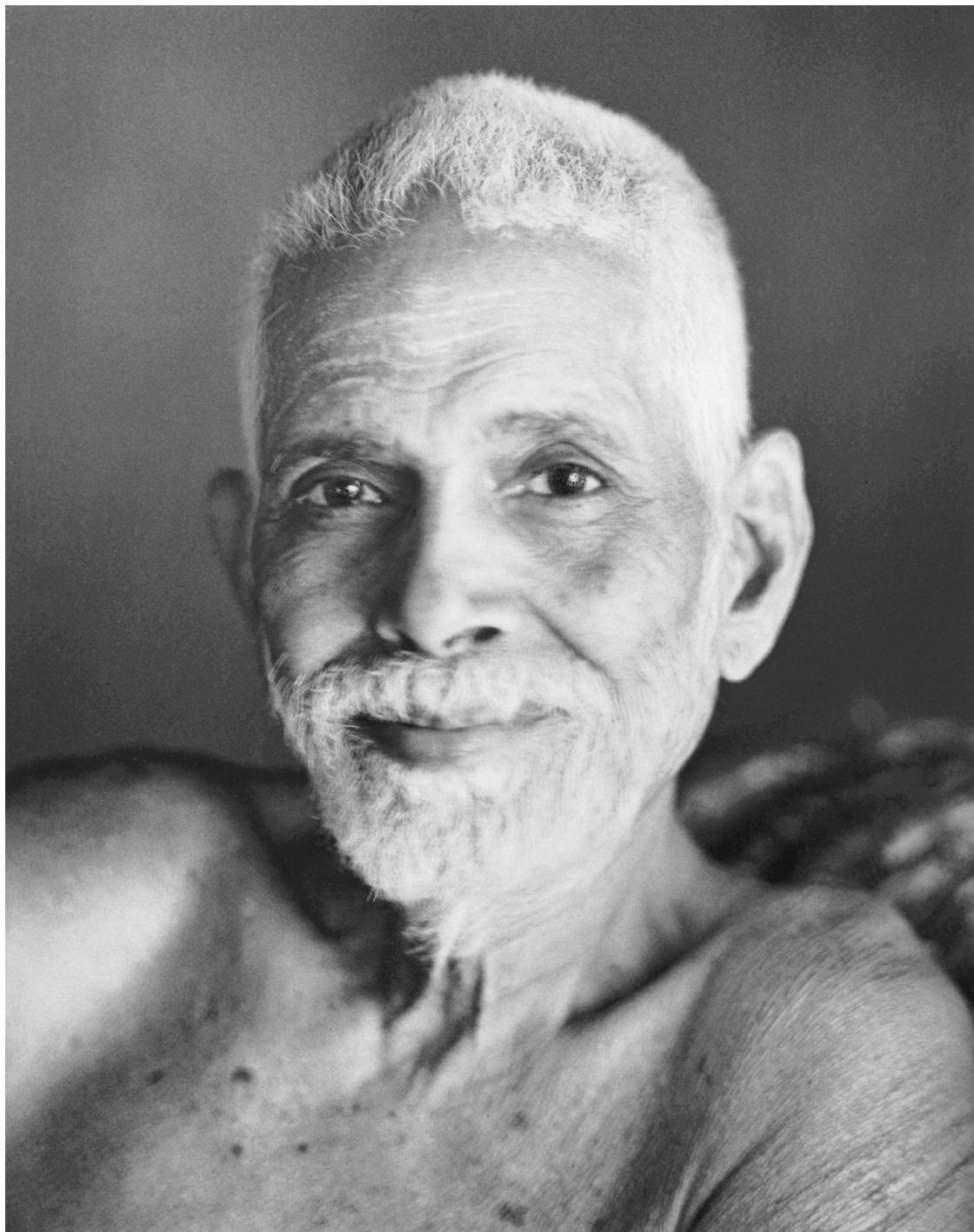
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Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi



The Mountain Path

(QUARTERLY)

Editor: Arthur Osborne

VOL. 1

OCTOBER, 1964

No. 4

THE TWO PATHS

(EDITORIAL)

Granted that a path is necessary, the next question is: what path? It is held in India that there are three types of path: *jnana marga*, *bhakti marga* and *karma marga*, the paths of knowledge, devotion and action. Not completely conforming to any of these, there are also the technically intricate types of path of yoga and *tantra*. These last are difficult to follow in the conditions of our time. They are not considered here but are left to be dealt with later.

Karma marga, the path of action, is also left for later treatment. For the moment, let us consider the two great paths of knowledge and devotion, being and worship, the one aiming at Identity and the other at the union of two, to one or the other of which an aspirant is apt to be drawn by his own temperament. They are not in fact mutually exclusive, although they may seem to be so in theory. "The four *margas*, *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jnana*, are not exclusive of one another. Each is, however, described separately in classical works only to convey an idea of the appropriate aspect of God to appeal readily to the aspirant according to his predisposition."¹ Nevertheless, aspirants do, in the main, follow either the path of knowledge or that of devotion,

often with a certain admixture of the other and of the path of action.

Starting with the path of knowledge: 'knowledge' in this sense does not imply learning, theory or philosophy but intuitive understanding. Indeed, it is the indirect paths that require elaborate theory. Only the bare minimum of theory is needed for the path of knowledge:

Simply that Being is, and you are That
Therefore to know the essential Self of you
Is to know all. But not by gazing at,
As one can know another, for not two
The Ultimate. Knowledge in that high sense
Is simple Being, Being alone is true.

This was the path that Bhagavan taught (although, as will appear later, he allowed for *bhakti marga* also). The method by which it is to be followed is Self-enquiry, the constant probing into the reality of one's Self. "Self-enquiry leads directly to Self-realization by removing the obstacles which make you think

1 - The Maharshi's Commentary on his 'Five Stanzas to Sri Arunachala', *Collected Works*, Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

that the Self is not already realized.”² It is not the same as meditation, although sometimes loosely so called. “Meditation requires an object to meditate on, whereas in Self-enquiry there is only the subject and no object. That is the difference between them.”³ “Concentration is not thinking of one thing. On the contrary it is excluding all thoughts, since all thoughts obstruct the sense of one’s true being.”⁴ “The effort must be made to suspend thought while retaining consciousness. Usually when thought ceases one goes to sleep; what one must do is to remain awake and conscious and concentrate on the pure sense of being, of ‘I am’, that remains when thought subsides. It is not easy at first, but with effort and practice it can be done.

Who am I? “Any answer the mind can give must be wrong,” Bhagavan said. In fact the very attempt to give a verbal answer shows that the question has been wrongly considered a philosophical conundrum, when in fact it is a spiritual exercise. The answer begins to come as a current of awareness “body-sensed, mind-known, and yet from both apart.”

It is no use thinking that the mind is going to absorb or possess the new knowledge; on the contrary, it must let go and consent to be absorbed by it.

*I sought to devour Thee;
Come now and devour me,
Then there will be peace, Arunachala*

The devotee or *bhakta*, on the other hand, does not go so far as to conceive of the non-existence of the ego. Therefore he can also not conceive of the non-existence of the world outside the

2 - *The Teachings of Ramana Maharshi in His Own Words*, p. 112, Rider & Co., London, p. 139, Sri Ramanasramam edition.

3 - *Ibid.*, p. 112/139.

4 - *Ibid.*, p. 127/160,

ego or the God above it. The three go together; if one of them exists all three do. “All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul and God; but it is only the one Reality that manifests itself as these three. One can say ‘the three are really three’ only so long as the ego lasts.”⁵

Therefore the *bhakta*, instead of recognising ‘That which is’ as the very Self of him, the sole survivor after the dissolution of the illusory ego or individual being, regards It as the Creator and Sustainer of the individual being, the God to Whom the individual submits, the Lover whom he seeks, the Home to which he returns.

THE TWO PATHS

Don’t ask if I believe in God
Not that the query,
But whether I believe in ‘me,
In life and theory.
If I am then the world is, and above
A God that made me, God whose living love
Still draws me back to Him, until I yearn
For that last ineluctable return
To Oneness with Him, otherness burnt out
In fires of love — and find out thus I am not.
As though in dream through distant lands to roam,
Then wake where down you lay: that too a way,
And therefore good; for every way leads home,
Though roundabout.
For those who go direct
There is an austere, high mountain path to be
A haven to yourself, a lamp to yourself,
Knowing there is no separate you to pray
To be united with a separate God
Outside of you, knowing that there just IS.
Let scholars argue this or that is right
And follow neither; whichever way you choose
For you is right.

5 - *Forty Verses*, v. 2. *Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., London, and Sri Ramanasramam. Tiruvannamalai.

Bhakti marga is in general the path trodden by Christian and Muslim seekers (and indeed, the very word 'Islam' means 'submission'). The path of knowledge, on the other hand, is in keeping with the original genius of Buddhism and Taoism, although both found themselves obliged later to provide devotional paths for the many who could not aspire so high. Both paths exist side by side in Hinduism. Indeed, some of the greatest saints have been *bhaktas*. Sri Ramakrishna said "I don't want to become the honey but to remain separate so as to taste the honey." The great Marathi poet-saint Tukaram spoke sometimes from the viewpoint of Identity but was primarily a *bhakta*. He wrote: "I do not seek God-Consciousness (*Brahma-Jnana*). I shall always desire dual consciousness — Thou shalt ever remain my Lord and I Thy devotee."

In Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam, although not in Christianity, the most widely used *bhakti* technique is invocation of the name of God. "The simplest method is chanting the Name and freeing the mind from restlessness," said Swami Ramdas, a great modern *bhakta*.⁶

The Maharshi also offered his devotees the path of devotion as an alternative to Self-enquiry. He always prescribed Self-enquiry in the first place, but if devotees complained that they found this too difficult he would often add: "There are two ways: ask yourself 'Who am I?' or submit." And indeed,

6 - For an article on whom see our issue of January 1964.

many of his devotees did, and still do, follow him by the path of love, surrender, devotion. Even in this case, however, he did not give an invocation but only prescribed (as did Sai Baba also)⁷ complete surrender to the Guru. He has been known to make the tremendous statement: "Submit to me and I will strike down the mind." Or: "Only be still and I will do the rest."

It is not an easy thing to keep the mind still, without thoughts, or to submit as Bhagavan understood submission. When one does, the barrier to Truth is weakened and God, Self, Bhagavan does indeed break through and strike down the impostor ego. But what an assurance to receive! And what power in him who can give it!

The surrender has to be complete: not only surrender of all the ego's desires but of the ego that has the desires, until in the end it turns out to be an illusory thing, and *bhakti* becomes *jnana*.

Whichever path one follows, the thing is to follow it, not to argue about it. A Christian priest once told Bhagavan that he considered the goal of mystic union envisaged by Christians to be different from the Hindu goal of *Moksha* and superior to it, and Bhagavan replied: "All right, attain that first and then see whether you still find any difference or anything to criticise." That was always his reply — to turn the critic from theory to practice. Argument did not interest him, only understanding and sincere effort.

7 - For an article on whom see our Issue of July 1964.

RESURRECTION

Lines from the *Guru Vachaka Kovai* (Tamil) of Muruganar

Tortured on body's cross, the Jesus-self
Suffers and dies.
The Passion ended, see the Christ-self rise,
Immortal Spirit,
God beyond the skies!

THE MAHARSHI AND THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

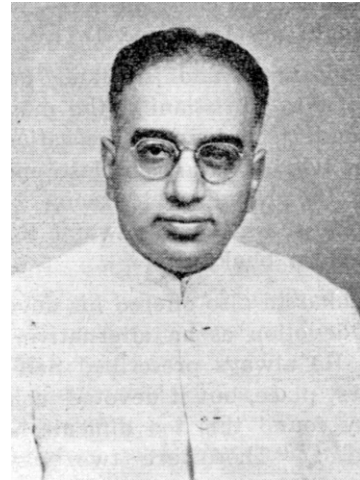
By T. M. P. Mahadevan

Prof. T. M. P. Mahadevan, head of the philosophy department of Madras University, is known not only in India but in academic circles throughout the world as one of the leading exponents of Advaita. He has presented the truth of its doctrines in books and articles and at the many international philosophical conferences he has attended. Best known, perhaps, of his books are Gaudapada, A Study in Early Advaita (published by the University of Madras) and Philosophy of Advaita (published by Ganesh & Co., Madras). What is perhaps not so well known is that, behind the defensive armaments of philosophy, Prof. Mahadevan is heart and soul a devotee of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi.

Prof. Mahadevan has the ability, so rare among professional philosophers, to express himself in case of need in direct language free from academic terminology. Knowing 'The Mountain Path' to circulate far beyond academic circles, he has written this article for us in language that all can follow, without sacrificing anything in profundity or exactitude.

Jnana or Knowledge, according to Advaita, is the sole direct means to Liberation. *Jnana* may mean Self-Knowledge or knowledge as a path to Self-realization. The former, *svarupa-jnana*, is the Self as pure Consciousness, the latter is the process culminating in *akhandakara-vritti*, that is the mode of mind whose content is the impartite Self. Advaitic teaching is that knowledge is the path one should follow in order to gain Self-Knowledge, which is the same as Liberation or *Moksha*.

The reason why knowledge is considered the direct means to Liberation is to be found in the conception of Liberation itself. Liberation means release from the cycle of birth-and-death. It is the psycho-physical organism that is involved in this cycle. However, there is no real involvement because the psycho-physical organism and the world in which it is apparently involved are only projections of nescience (*avidya*) and not real entities. Again due to nescience, the Self is wrongly identified with the psychophysical organism and is thought to be born and to die. This is the metaphysical error that is at the root of all evil. The confusion between the Self and the not-self and the erroneous mingling of their characteristics constitutes nescience. Each earlier appearance in the world of the apparent self is



the cause of the next subsequent appearance, so that in this sense nescience is said to be beginningless. Nevertheless it is not eternal but can be destroyed. But only by true knowledge. When knowledge dawns nescience is destroyed and it is realized that the Self was never bound but is ever free. This is Liberation.

Action cannot effect Liberation because action is not opposed to bondage and to its cause, nescience. When one says this one does not mean by 'action' simple movement of the body but movement with a sense of agency. 'I act' in this sense implies the identification of the Self with

the ego as agent. It is this conceit of agency that constitutes the spring of action. The wrong identification and the consequent conceit are caused by nescience. Oblivion to the true nature of the Self as pure Consciousness is thus what gives rise to action; therefore action cannot destroy nescience but only confirm bondage to it.

Action is said to produce any of four results: origination (*utpatti*), attainment (*prapti*), modification (*vikara*) and purification (*samskara*). Action of various kinds is required for, say, producing a pot out of clay (origination), arriving at a destination (attainment), making curds out of milk (modification), and cleaning a dusty mirror (purification). Liberation, which is the eternal nature of the Self, belongs to none of these four categories. The Self is eternal, so not to be originated; it is all-pervading, being non-dual, so not to be attained; it is uncompounded, being infinite, so not to be modified; it is blemishless, being of the sole consistency of Consciousness, so not to be purified. Therefore action can do nothing to occasion Liberation.

In fact Liberation is not to be occasioned at all. It is true that Liberation is said to be 'attained' when nescience is 'destroyed' by knowledge; but the terms 'attainment' and 'destruction' have to be understood here in a figurative sense. There are two kinds of attainment and two of destruction: attainment of the unattained and apparent attainment of the already attained; destruction of the undestroyed and apparent destruction of the non-existent. For the first kind action is needed, for the second knowledge. For instance, for getting an ornament made out of gold action is needed. But suppose a person thinks he has lost his gold chain when in fact he is wearing it round his neck, all the time only knowledge is needed. Someone points out to him that he is wearing it and it is as though he had found it. Similarly, for destroying a real snake action is needed, but for destroying a snake imagined in what is really a piece of rope all that is needed is enough light to see that there is no

snake. The attainment of Liberation and destruction of bondage are of the second kind, since Liberation is eternal and therefore ever attained. It only seems to be unattained on account of nescience, and on the dawn of knowledge its eternal nature is revealed. Similarly, bondage is unreal, being caused by nescience. At the dawn of knowledge it seems to be removed, but it was never there. It follows, then, that knowledge and not action is the means of gaining Liberation and destroying bondage.

Action, however, is not without its use. Disinterested and dedicated action (*nishkama karma*, *karma-yoga*) serves to purify the mind and thus prepare it for the path of knowledge. Although knowledge itself is not an act, it is the mind that has to seek and gain it. A mind that is impure and filled with passions and selfish desires cannot even turn in the direction of Self-knowledge. It is only the mind that has been rendered pure by the elimination of passions that will be inclined to pursue the path of knowledge. The discipline by which the passions may be eliminated is the performance of one's duties without caring for rewards. Craving for possessions and thirst for sense-enjoyments are what defile the mind and make it unfit for higher pursuits. Therefore the mind must first, as a preliminary, be freed from defilements, and this can be done through action not motivated by finite ends.

Bhakti yoga (the path of devotion) and *raja-yoga* (the path of mind control) can also find a place in the Advaitic scheme, as subordinates to the path of knowledge. Their purpose is to make the mind one-pointed and inward-turned. Attraction to false values, distraction and disintegration are the characteristics of the tainted mind. The tendency of the mind to flow outward towards finite objects of enjoyment should be arrested, and it should be orientated towards God, the highest value. This is the purpose of *bhakti-yoga*.

It is the nature of the mind to be inconstant, darting from object to object, turbulent, obstinate

and wayward. The function of *raja-yoga* is to discipline it and render it one-pointed. Constant and sustained practice of concentration (*abhyasa*) together with breath-control (*pranayama*) and other practices and cultivation of an attitude of detachment (*vairagya*) help to subdue and purify the mind and thus make it eligible to follow the path of knowledge.¹

Liberation is not necessarily a posthumous achievement, since it is the eternal nature of the Self. Even while in the body one can realize the Truth. This is known as *jivanmukti*. It is sometimes asked why the body should still continue in the case of one who has attained Liberation; but the question does not arise for the Liberated himself, since for him there is no body. It is the unrealized who see him with a body and ask the question. As a reply it is said that the body lasts as long as the *prarabdha* (that part of the karma which is to fructify in this lifetime), and that after that there is *videhamukti* (Liberation without a body). In truth, however, there is no distinction in *Moksha*.

Thus Advaitic teaching is that knowledge is the sole direct way to Liberation and that Liberation is the eternal nature of the Self.

The teaching of Sri Ramana Maharshi is in perfect accord with this. It is of unique value as an independent confirmation of the truth of Advaita, since he did not formulate a theory after formal study of Vedanta but discovered the path and its Goal afresh, gaining plenary experience through a single brief act of Self-enquiry. And later, when the texts were read out to him, he recognised that they were speaking the same heart-

language that he knew, the language of Advaita.²

The Maharshi was no writer in the usual sense of the word. Sometimes he put in writing his occasional oral instructions and expositions. Some of these stray writings are in prose, some in verse, mostly in Tamil but some in Sanskrit and a few in Malayalam and Telugu. They constitute what may rightly be called the 'Ramanopanishad', since we have in them authentic instruction in the doctrine and path of Advaita.³

Their central teaching is that the path of Self-enquiry is the direct way to Self-realization. The sense of 'I' is natural and common to all, but few care to enquire into the actual nature of this 'I'. We take it for granted and employ such empirical phrases as 'I came', 'I went', 'I did' or 'I was'. What is this 'I'? What am I? It is not difficult to see that the body is not 'I'. It did not exist before birth and will not survive death. In deep sleep there is no body-consciousness. Even while waking I am aware that I have the body and therefore I cannot be the body. What is more difficult is to see that the mind or ego is not 'I'. It springs from ignorance, being a superimposition on the Self. The I-thought is the first thought to arise, and the mind is the same as the ego. Ordinarily it goes out through the sense-channels and apprehends and enjoys external objects, but it must be made to turn inwards and enquire into the nature and source of itself. This can only be done with a still mind. This enquiry "is the only method of putting an end to all misery and ushering in supreme Beatitude. Whatever may be said and however phrased, this is the whole truth in a nutshell."⁴

Explaining the technique of Self-enquiry, the Maharshi says: "By steady and continuous investigation into the nature of the mind, the mind is transformed into that to which the 'I' refers;

1 - These preliminary exercises of *karma yoga*, *bhakti yoga* and *raja yoga* are helpful but not essential; the Maharshi was quite definite that the path of Self-enquiry as taught by him was all-sufficient and would accomplish also the tasks here assigned to preliminary yogas. (Editor).

2 - For an account of this see *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, Ch, 2, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

3 - They are all contained in *The Collected Works of Rarnana Maharshi* published in London by Messrs. Rider & Co., and at Tiruvannamalai by Sri Ramanasramam.

4 - From *Self-Enquiry*, in *The Collected Works*.

and that is in fact the Self.”⁵ He also instructed people to probe and find out where the I-thought arises. When the enquiry is persisted in it transpires that the ego dissolves in the Self which is the Heart (*hridayam*). It is true that the mind often gets distracted on the way and strays outwards, but every time this happens it must be brought back to the enquiry into its nature. This process has to continue till it subsides into its Source, the Self. For this there is no other means so effective as Self-enquiry. Other means such as breath-control and meditation for mind-control may lead to a temporary subsidence of the mind but not to final Liberation. It will rise up again.

On the path of Self-enquiry it is admittedly the mind that investigates, but this self-investigation annihilates it and finally it gets destroyed, just as the stick used to stir a funeral pyre is itself finally burnt. This is the state of Liberation in which it is realized that there is no mind at all. What appeared to be the mind is really the Self the Self manifest as ‘I-I’. This is *aham sphurana*, *prajnana*, self-manifestation, wisdom.

The Maharshi’s most compact and compendious, and indeed scriptural, exposition of the path of knowledge and the truth of Advaita is his *Forty Verses on Reality*, *Ulladu Narpadu*. It explains that the mind consists of thoughts, of which the first to arise is ‘I’. The discipline prescribed is to enquire with a keen mind whence this ‘I’ arises (verse 23). To say that the ‘I’ arises means that the Self and the not-self are fastened in a knot which is called technically ‘superimposition’ or ‘nescience’. Bondage, soul, subtle body, egoity, transmigration, mind, all mean the same (24) They are the I-thought or ego functioning in various ways. So long as it dwells in the body it acts, experiences and enjoys; on leaving the body it finds another. But when its nature is investigated it takes to flight and turns out to be devoid of substance (25), The ego is the prop of all appearances. If the ego is all else

is; if the ego is not nothing else is. The ego is all. So when the ego is investigated and its unreality perceived all phenomena are given up (26). When, through enquiry, the state where the ego does not rise up is reached, there is the non-dual Self. When the ego is lost the Self is gained (27). One should dive into oneself, with senses and mind controlled, and find the place whence the ‘I’ rises in order to recover the Self, as one would dive into water to get back some precious jewel that had fallen into it (28). Verbal repetition of the word ‘I’ is not the enquiry, nor is meditation ‘I am not this, I am that’; this may help but the actual enquiry is the direct path. It is to be done with the mind turned inwards (29). Through the enquiry the mind reaches the Heart, which is only another name for the Self, and there the pseudo-I sinks crestfallen and the real ‘I’, the Self, shines of its own accord. This real I is not an object to be seen or realized; it is the plenary Reality (30). The destruction of the ego through Self-enquiry and the gaining of Self-awareness is the only achievement; there is nothing else to be accomplished. Pure Self-awareness is perfection (31). This is the realization that one always is and was the Self and that there is no other Reality (32).

It is useless to indulge in metaphysical speculation about Reality. “Does anything exist or not? Has Reality form or is it formless? Is it one, two or neither? These are questions engendered by ignorance” (34). Similarly philosophical questions about time and space, the world and God, free will and predestination, are powerless to lead us out of our state of ignorance. When such questions occur the enquirer should turn to the basic question: to whom do they occur? One must question the questioner. When the questioner is known there will be no questions left to ask or answer.

To seek the eternally achieved Self and abide in it is the true achievement. Delusion and the misery born of it disappear once one is established

in the natural state of the Self. The Self is not something to be newly realized; in fact the very expression 'Realization' is inapt, for the real does not need to be 'realized'. The term 'Realization' has to be understood in a figurative sense only. The truth is that there is no plurality at all: from the standpoint of the Absolute there is neither bondage nor release; there is no one bound and no one to be released. All that is is the non-dual Self.

This is the theme of *Ulladu Narpadu*, a tremendous poem proclaiming the Ultimate Reality and the path to its Realization.

In the later years at Sri Ramanasramam there used to be a daily stream of visitors and spiritual aspirants seeking to have their doubts clarified and difficulties removed by putting questions to Sri Ramana Maharshi. Some of the talks that ensued were recorded by competent resident devotees. The largest such compendium which has been preserved and published is *Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi*.⁶ Questions about the path and the goal come up constantly and the Master's answers are always from the standpoint of Advaita-experience.

Again and again he stresses (like Gaudapada and Shankara and other ancient Masters) that Perfection, *Moksha*, is not anything new to be acquired. "Realization is our nature. It is not anything new to be gained. What is new cannot be eternal" (p. 455). "You do not acquire happiness; your very nature is happiness. Bliss is not newly earned. All that is to be done is to remove unhappiness" (302).

Ajnana (ignorance) is the cause of bondage; and *ajnana* is unreal. The world of duality is an illusory projection of *ajnana*. When the unreality of *ajnana* is realized the eternal *Jnana*, Knowledge, shines of itself. "To know that there never was ignorance is the goal of all spiritual teachings. Ignorance must be of one who is aware. Awareness is *jnana* and *jnana* is eternal and

natural. So *ajnana* is unnatural and unreal" (298).

A mental support to Self-enquiry, though it cannot be the enquiry itself, is to analyse the three states of experience: waking, dream and deep sleep. This is also referred to in the *Mandukya Upanishad* and by Gaudapada in his *Karika*. The Maharshi explains that there is no real difference between the waking and dream states and that both are unreal from the standpoint of the Absolute. The state of deep sleep shows that 'I' and the world are not real (in the sense of permanent) since they appear only in the waking and dream states. "How does sleep differ from the other two states? In sleep there are no thoughts, whereas in the other two states there are. Therefore thoughts must be the origin of 'I' and the world. What are they? They cannot be natural (in the sense of permanent) or they could not appear at one moment and disappear at another. Where do they come from? They must be admitted to have an ever-present and invariable source. It must be the eternal state ... that from which all beings come forth, that in which they remain and that into which they resolve" (726).

The accepted rule is: that which is constant in variable things is real, that which is inconstant is unreal. 'I' and the world are inconstant; the Self alone is constant. In the waking and dream states our bodies attach themselves to us and we are afflicted by the I-am-the-body idea. "Because the body exists you say that it was born and will die, and then you transfer the idea to the Self, saying that you are born and will die. In fact you remain without the body in sleep, but now you remain with it. The Self can remain without the body but the body cannot exist apart from the Self. The 'I-am-the-body' thought is ignorance; that the body does not exist apart from the Self is knowledge ... So long as there is the sense of separation there will be afflicting thoughts. If the original source is regained and the sense of separation put an end to, there is peace" (439).

5 - *Ibid*.

6 - Published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

THE FORTY VERSES ON REALITY

Advaita, non-duality, Identity, is the supreme doctrine. *Jnana marga*, the path of knowledge, is the approach to it: Self-enquiry, 'Who am I?', is the technique Bhagavan taught for this path. There is no more profound and comprehensive statement of it than his 'Forty Verses on Reality' which are here given.

INVOCATORY

i. If Reality did not exist, could there be any knowledge of existence? Free from all thoughts, Reality abides in the Heart, the Source of all thoughts. It is, therefore, called the Heart. How then is one to contemplate it? To be as it is in the Heart, is Its contemplation.

ii. Those who know intense fear of death seek refuge only at the feet of the Lord Who has neither death nor birth. Dead to themselves and their possessions, can the thought of death occur to them again? Deathless are they.

* * * *

1. From our perception of the world there follows acceptance of a unique First Principle possessing various powers. Pictures of name and form, the person who sees, the screen on which he sees, and the light by which he sees: he himself is all of these.

2. All religions postulate the three fundamentals, the world, the soul, and God, but it is only the one Reality that manifests Itself as these three. One can say, 'The three are really three' only so long as the ego lasts. Therefore, to inhere in one's own Being, where the 'I', or ego, is dead, is the perfect State.

3. 'The world is real.' 'No, it, is a mere illusory appearance.' 'The world is conscious.' 'No.' 'The world is happiness.' 'No.' What use is it to argue thus? That State is agreeable to all, wherein, having given up the objective outlook, one knows one's Self and loses all notions either of unity or duality, of oneself and the ego.

4. If one has form oneself, the world and God also will appear to have form, but if one is formless, who is it that sees those forms, and how? Without the eye can any object be seen? The seeing Self is

the Eye, and that Eye is the Eye of Infinity.

5. The body is a form composed of the five-fold sheath; therefore, all the five sheaths are implied in the term, body. Apart from the body does the world exist? Has anyone seen the world without the body?

6. The world is nothing more than an embodiment of the objects perceived by the five sense-organs. Since, through these five sense-organs, a single mind perceives the world, the world is nothing but the mind. Apart from the mind can there be a world?

7. Although the world and knowledge thereof rise and set together it is by knowledge alone that the world is made apparent. That Perfection wherein the world and knowledge thereof rise and set, and which shines without rising and setting, is alone the Reality.

8. Under whatever name and form one may worship the Absolute Reality, it is only a means for realizing It without name and form. That alone is true realization, wherein one knows oneself in relation to that Reality, attains peace and realizes one's identity with it.

9. The duality of subject and object and trinity of seer, sight, and seen can exist only if supported by the One. If one turns inward in search of that One Reality they fall away. Those who see this are those who see Wisdom. They are never in doubt.

10. Ordinary knowledge is always accompanied by ignorance, and ignorance by knowledge; the only true Knowledge is that by which one knows the Self through enquiring whose is the knowledge and ignorance.

11. Is it not, rather, ignorance to know all else without knowing oneself, the knower? As soon as one knows the Self, which is the substratum of knowledge and ignorance, knowledge and ignorance perish.

12. That alone is true Knowledge which is neither knowledge nor ignorance. What is known is not true Knowledge. Since the Self shines with nothing else to know or to make known, It alone is Knowledge. It is not a void.

13. The Self, which is Knowledge, is the only Reality. Knowledge of multiplicity is false knowledge. This false knowledge, which is really ignorance, cannot exist apart from the Self, which is Knowledge-Reality. The variety of gold ornaments is unreal, since none of them can exist without the gold of which they are all made.

14. If the first person, I, exists, then the second and third persons, you and he, will also exist. By enquiring into the nature of the I, the I perishes. With it 'you' and 'he' also perish. The resultant state, which shines as Absolute Being, is one's own natural state, the Self.

15. Only with reference to the present can the past and the future exist. They too, while current, are the present. To try to determine the nature of the past and the future while ignoring the present is like trying to count without the unit.

16. Apart, from us where is time and where is space? If we are bodies, we are involved in time and space, but are we? We are one and identical now, then, and forever, here, and everywhere. Therefore we, timeless, and spaceless Being, alone are.

17. To those who have not realized the Self, as well as to those who have, the word 'I' refers to the body, but with this difference, that for those who have not realized, the 'I' is confined to the body whereas for those who have realized the Self within the body the 'I' shines as the limitless Self.

18. To those who have not realized (the Self) as well as to those who have the world is real. But to those who have not realized, Truth is adapted to the measure of the world, whereas to those that have, Truth shines as the Formless Perfection, and as the Substratum of the world. This is all the difference between them.

19. Only those who have no knowledge of the Source of destiny and free-will dispute as to which of them prevails. They that know the Self as the one Source of destiny and free-will are free from both. Will they again get entangled in them?

20. He who sees God without seeing the Self sees only a mental image. They say that he who sees the Self sees God. He who, having completely lost the ego, sees the Self, has found God, because the Self does not exist apart from God.

21. What is the Truth of the scriptures which declare that if one sees the Self one sees God? How can one see one's Self? If, since one is a single being, one cannot see one's Self, how can one see God? Only by becoming a prey to Him.

22. The Divine gives light to the mind and shines within it. Except by turning the mind inward and fixing it in the Divine, there is no other way to know Him through the mind.

23. The body does not say 'I'. No one will argue that even in deep sleep the 'I' ceases to exist. Once the 'I' emerges, all else emerges. With a keen mind enquire whence this 'I' emerges.

24. This inert body does not say 'I'. Reality-Consciousness does not emerge. Between the two, and limited to the measure of the body, something emerges as 'I'. It is this that is known as *Chit-jada-granthi* (the knot between the Conscious and the inert), and also as bondage, soul, subtle-body, ego, *samsara*, mind, and so forth.

25. It comes into being equipped with a form, and as long as it retains a form it endures. Having a form, it feeds and grows big. But if you investigate it this evil spirit, which has no form of its own, relinquishes its grip on form and takes to flight.

26. If the ego is, everything else also is. If the ego is not, nothing else is. Indeed, the ego is all. Therefore the enquiry as to what this ego is, is the only way of giving up everything.

27. The State of non-emergence of 'I' is the state of being THAT. Without questing for that State of the non-emergence of 'I' and attaining It, how can

one accomplish one's own extinction, from which the 'I' does not revive? Without that attainment how is it possible to abide in one's true State, where one is THAT?

28. Just as a man would dive in order to get something that had fallen into the water, so one should dive into oneself, with a keen one-pointed mind, controlling speech and breath, and find the place whence the 'I' originates.

29. The only enquiry leading to Self-realization is seeking the Source of the 'I' with in-turned mind and without uttering the word 'I'. Meditation on 'I am not this; I am That' may be an aid to the enquiry but it cannot be the enquiry.

30. If one enquires 'Who am I?' within the mind, the individual 'I' falls down abashed as soon as one reaches the Heart and immediately Reality manifests itself spontaneously as 'I-I'. Although it reveals itself as 'I', it is not the ego but the Perfect Being, the Absolute Self.

31. For Him who is immersed in the bliss of the Self, arising from the extinction of the ego, what remains to be accomplished? He is not aware of anything (as) other than the Self. Who can apprehend his State?

32. Although the scriptures proclaim 'Thou art That', it is only a sign of weakness of mind to meditate 'I am That, not this', because you are eternally That. What has to be done is to investigate what one really is and remain That.

33. It is ridiculous to say either 'I have not realized the Self' or 'I have realized the Self'; are there two selves, for one to be the object of the other's realization? It is a truth within the experience of everyone that there is only one Self.

34. It is due to illusion born of ignorance that men fail to recognise That which is always and for everybody the inherent Reality dwelling in its natural Heart-centre and to abide in it, and that instead they argue that it exists or does not exist, that it has form or has not form, or is non-dual or dual.

35. To seek and abide in the Reality that is always

attained, is the only Attainment. All other attainments (*siddhis*) are such as are acquired in dreams. Can they appear real to someone who has woken up from sleep? Can they that are established in the Reality and are free from *maya*, be deluded by them?

36. Only if the thought 'I am the body' occurs will the meditation 'I am not this, I am That', help one to abide as That. Why should we for ever be thinking, 'I am That'? Is it necessary for man to go on thinking 'I am a man'? Are we not always That?

37. The contention, 'Dualism during practice, non-dualism on Attainment', is also false. While one is anxiously searching, as well as when one has found one's Self, who else is one but the tenth man?¹

38. As long as a man is the doer, he also reaps the fruit of his deeds, but, as soon as he realizes the Self through enquiry as to who is the doer his sense of being the doer falls away and the triple karma² is ended. This is the state of eternal Liberation.

39. Only so long as one considers oneself bound, do thoughts of bondage and Liberation continue. When one enquires who is bound the Self is realized, eternally attained, and eternally free. When thought of bondage comes to an end, can thought of Liberation survive?

40. If it is said, that Liberation is of three kinds, with form or without form or with and without form, then let me tell you that the extinction of three forms of Liberation is the only true Liberation.

1 - This refers to a traditional story of a party of ten fools who were travelling together. They had to cross a river and on reaching the other shore wanted to check up whether all of them had got safely across. Each one counted in turn, but each one counted the nine others and forgot himself. So they thought the tenth man had been drowned and began to mourn him. Just then a traveller came past and asked them what was the matter. He at once saw the cause of their mistake and in order to convince them he made them walk past him one by one, giving each one a blow as he passed and telling them to count the strokes.

2 - *Sanchita*, *Agami* and *Prarabdha*.

THE MAHARSHI AND THE PATH OF DEVOTION¹

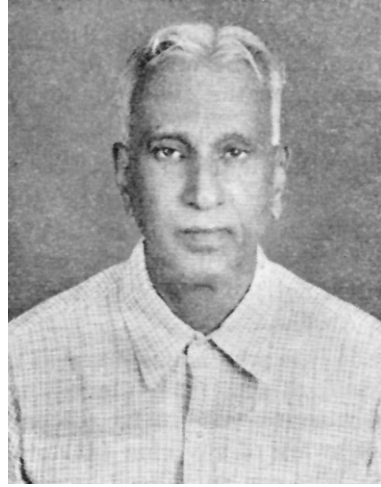
By A. Devaraja Mudaliar

Devaraja Mudaliar is one of the senior-most of Bhagavan's devotees. A lawyer by profession, he is precise in observation and clear in expression and was therefore often called upon by Bhagavan to act as interpreter in answering the questions of Western visitors. For some years he kept an Ashram diary which has been published in two volumes under the title 'Day by Day with Bhagavan'. He has also written 'My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana'. Both books are published by the Ashram. The above account might make him appear an intellectual, but he is at heart a pure bhakta, as the following article shows.

Not only in India but in all religions the path of devotion or surrender has been prized as a method for attaining to God or winning Liberation. The four main paths recommended in Hinduism are *karma*, *bhakti*, *yoga* and *jnana* — action, devotion, yogic development and knowledge; and it is held that man's business in life is to try to reach God by one or more of them. The above four include many varied techniques which different people practise in the hope of evolving spiritually and attaining perfection. Bhagavan Ramana has often said that all of them are good and all are difficult, only according to the temperament and ability of an aspirant one or another may appeal to him most and look easiest. He also said that whatever method one may practise one must eventually attain to *Jnana*, that is to Divine Knowledge of the Self, the Absolute.

It is well known that Bhagavan taught that the shortest and most direct way to attain Self-realization is to enquire who this 'I' or ego to which we refer at every turn, as 'I think', 'I want', 'I do', etc., really is and whence it arises. This 'I' is another name for the mind, which again is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. He taught that if, without allowing the mind to go outwards and indulge in thoughts of the world, we continuously and resolutely turn it back on itself to find the source whence it springs it will take us to the Self. This method is known as *vichara* or enquiry and comes under the heading of *jnana marga*.

It is not so well known, however, that Bhagavan was himself as much a *bhakta* as a *jnani*, a man of



devotion as of knowledge. I could write at length on this subject, but it is hardly necessary. A perusal of his 'Five Hymns to Arunachala'² is enough to prove what a sincere and ardent devotee he was. What I wish to bring out here is that, when commending Self-enquiry and telling his questioner to ask himself 'Who am I?', Bhagavan often ended by saying: "If you say you have not the strength to do this, throw yourself on the one great Power which looks after all." I have heard him say this not once but a number of times. Even in his earliest book, that great little work 'Who am I?', he says: "God is prepared to take up all burdens, however heavy. Why not throw all your burdens also on

1 - *Bhakti marga* is known variously as the path of devotion, submission or surrender.

2 - See *The Collected Works of Ramana Maharshi*, Rider & Co., London and Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai.

Him and be free? Don't be foolish like the passenger in a railway train who carries his bag on his lap or shoulders instead of putting it on the rack." I have never heard him commend in this way, of his own accord, either *karma marga* or yoga.

In this connection, I would like to quote a stanza from a Tamil poem by the late Sivaprakasam Pillai,³ one of Bhagavan's oldest devotees and one whose authority to speak on Bhagavan's teachings it would be hard to dispute. "To all you give only the instruction: 'Ponder and find out who you are'. If, after that, anyone still submissively asks for more you say as your final advice: 'There is a power (*shakti*) which moves you and me and all; surrender your ego at the feet of that Mother.'"

Not only many ancient saints of our land, but even recent ones, such as Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Ramdas, to mention only two, have recommended the *bhakti* path of surrender. The *Puranas* have even gone further and laid down that for this spiritually dark age, the *kali yuga*, the path of *bhakti* is the best suited and the easiest to practise. Leave everything to God, throw yourself at His feet and just keep calling on His Name always. You need not do anything else. You will be saved. That is what they say.

But whatever any one may say, however easy at first sight the method may seem, once you begin to practise it earnestly you will find surrender, real and complete surrender, surrender without any mental reservations whatsoever, surrender to accept with joy, as coming from God, everything that befalls you, good, bad and indifferent, is a very hard thing indeed. But we are told that surrender will not work unless it is complete. There are two stories, one from the great epic, the *Mahabharata*, and the other told by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, that illustrate

3 - For whom see *Ramana Maharshi and the Path of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 85-90, by Arthur Osborne, Rider & Co., London.

this. The first is that when Draupadi was left defenceless, her mighty husbands having by then lost their freedom, and the evil Duryodhana and his friends tried to disrobe her in court, she prayed to Sri Krishna as her last and only refuge; but help did not come from him until she had given up the natural and almost involuntary effort to hold on to her sari and prevent it from being removed from her waist. So long as she struggled to help herself, Divine Grace could not flow to help her. The story told by Ramakrishna is even more forceful. Someone picked a quarrel with a laundryman when he was washing clothes and began to beat him. The laundryman cried out to Vishnu for help. Vishnu was at that time disporting himself in paradise with his consort Lakshmi. On hearing the piteous cry of the laundryman he rose and started running towards the earth. A moment later, however, Lakshmi saw him strolling back in a leisurely way. "What is the matter?" she asked. "Why did you rush off so suddenly? And why do you now come back in no hurry?"

The Lord thereupon explained: "A devotee was beaten and prayed to me for help and protection, so I had to run to his rescue. But before I got there he took up a stick to defend himself, so why should I bother?"

This is what Bhagavan taught, that surrender must be complete or it will not be effective. It is clearly taught in our religious literature that before you can expect any progress in your spiritual state you must sacrifice or offer all you have, body, possessions and soul, to the Guru. We must also remember that God, Guru and Self are equated. Such surrender has been taught as a sure and sufficient means for the attainment of our spiritual goal, call it *Mukti*, *Moksha*, *Nirvana*, Liberation or what you will. Submission to the will of Allah is the basic command of Islam. Jesus said: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Krishna said: "Abandon all your duties and take

refuge in Me alone. I will free you from all sins. Do not grieve.”

Sri Krishna definitely affirmed that if a man takes refuge at His feet and surrenders completely he need not do anything else, he need not bother about any other duties. This path of utter devotion and self-surrender has been proclaimed and followed by many a *bhakta* throughout India, especially by the great Saivite and Vaishnavite poet-saints of the Tamil land, by Tukaram, Eknath, Namdev and others in Maharashtra, and Chaitanya in Bengal. The Vaishnavites in particular have attached great importance to the path of surrender as taught in the ‘Charana sloka’, as it is called, of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which I have already quoted. They call this surrender ‘*Prapathi*’ and have developed its doctrine in great detail, showing how far-reaching its ramifications can be.

I shall refer only to one or two aspects of this ‘*Prapathi*’ path which especially appeal to me. They say, for instance, that while in other paths God is the Goal and various other things are used as means, on the path of surrender both the means and the end are God. Another thing they say is that whereas on any other path more than one means may be employed and may even be necessary, on the path of surrender no other means are necessary or even admissible, for that would imply that your faith in surrender was not complete, and therefore your surrender itself was not. One illustration they quote for this argument is that in the *Ramayana* Indrajit used a powerful weapon called ‘*Brahma Asthra*’ with whose divine power he bound Hanuman hand and foot. The Rakshasas, however, seeking to make doubly sure, began to bind him also with ropes and chains, whereupon the divine weapon ceased to act owing to their lack of faith in it. To throw oneself completely on God, secure in His love and mercy and power, and not to dream of being able to do anything except by His Grace and Will is the *Prapathi* method taught by the

Vaishnavites, and it has great value for the really ardent devotee.

Even recent saints have, in their great mercy, told some lucky disciples that if they surrendered completely to the Guru they need not do anything else. Once when Girish Chandra Ghosh wept before Ramakrishna and declared that he could not follow any discipline, however simple or short, Ramakrishna was pleased to tell him: “Then give me power of attorney”, meaning: ‘Surrender and I will do the rest!’

I once told Bhagavan: “I am another Girish. You must save me yourself. Every saint must have a Girish.”

Bhagavan replied But *he* gave power of attorney.”

“I too have surrendered to the extent that I am capable of,” I said: “What more can I do?”

Bhagavan said nothing.

It was not Bhagavan’s way to say, “Surrender and I will look after you.” However, the following incident is significant in that regard. About a year before Bhagavan left the body I said to him one afternoon: “I am going to sing Bhagavan three stanzas from a poem by Sivaprakasam Pillai because they express what I want to say better than I could.” I then sang them. Their meaning is: “I have not followed your teaching or instructions; but is it proper for a Guru to get disgusted with his devotee as an incorrigible beast and to give him up? If you let me go my own way like this, what is to happen to me? I shall not reform and you will not correct or change me. Have I any other help in this or the other world except you, my Lord? What, then, is your idea” Is this right behaviour for you?”

Bhagavan did not immediately reply, which caused me some disappointment. After a minute or two he said: “Whether I do anything or not, your business is only to surrender and keep still.”

Some friends have told me that I may take this to mean: “Don’t worry; I know what to do

and will do it.” On the other hand, it may only mean: “If you really surrender you have no right to complain; so if a devotee complains it is a sign that he has not surrendered.” In any case, I prefer to be an optimist and believe that, however incomplete my surrender may be, so long as his Grace is complete he will look after me all right.

I recently read in ‘*Bhavan’s Journal*’ some of the teachings of Swami Nityananda who lived in Vajreswari for about thirty years and died a few years ago. A disciple asked him: “What should I do?” and he replied: “You need not do anything.” I take that to mean anything except surrender and leave everything to the Guru.

Intellectuals may feel tempted to look down on the path of *bhakti*, but I think I have written enough to show that such an attitude is not justified. I will finish with one more story to illustrate this. Tota Puri was an Advaitin whom Ramakrishna took as his guru, having already had a *tantric* guru. He had no patience with people worshipping a Personal God and used to

make fun of Ramakrishna for constantly speaking of Kali and worshipping her and calling her ‘Mother’. He had never previously known ill health, when he was suddenly attacked by a severe and painful form of dysentery. It was so bad that after some days he decided to drown himself in the Ganges. He entered the river and walked towards the opposite bank, perhaps half a mile or so, only to find that the water never got more than knee-deep. Finally Kali, Ramakrishna’s ‘Mother’, appeared before him and thus miraculously converted him.

Let no humble devotee, therefore, feel discouraged if some philosopher or even saint condemns the path of surrender. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. It has worked and produced results all over the world, not only with *bhaktas* in India, but with Sufis in Persia and mystics both in the East and West. Above all, Sri Krishna has held out the promise that He will save all who come to Him and take refuge at His feet. Let us not doubt, but let us surrender and achieve eternal Peace and Bliss.

THE WORLD

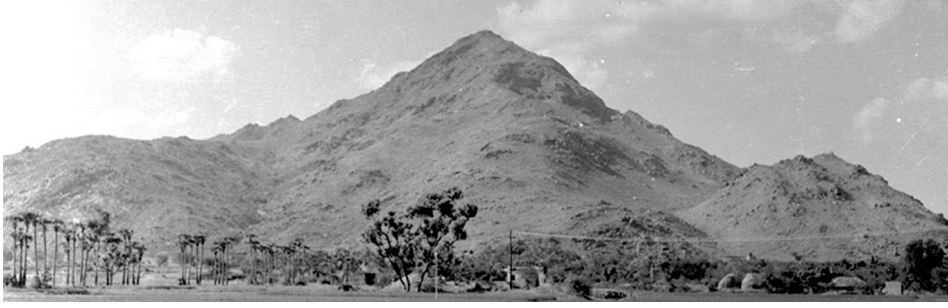
By A. Rao

The world’s an extension of you
Nothing outside.
Let what will betide
Only ensue
The inner self of you,
For this is true.

For a day you wear
The garb of earth and air,
Knowledge confined
To mortal mind:
Only a spell to break,
A dream from which to wake.

So long it lasts,
Don’t think you originate
The play of fate
Its shadow casts.
Be a glass polished bright
To reflect the Light.

But Hui Neng said
There is no glass.
Let the ego-self be dead,
This will come to pass.
Then all fate’s teeth are drawn
In that glad dawn.



THE MARITAL GARLAND OF LETTERS

There could be no better proof that the path of devotion is compatible with Knowledge than Bhagavan's 'Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala'. He composed it while he was still a young man living in a cave on Arunachala before his Ashram was founded. Some of his disciples used to go into town daily to beg their food and asked him for a song to sing as they went. He replied at first that there were plenty of songs left by the classical Tamil poet-saints that could be used, but they persisted. Some days later he walked round Arunachala, composing the 'Marital Garland' as he went. It is said that tears of ecstatic ardour streamed down his face as he composed it. Certainly it is one of the supreme symbolical love poems of all ages and all religions. It has always remained the emotional treasure of his devotees. as the 'Forty Verses' is their doctrinal foundation. Spontaneously they burst into the singing of it at the last moment when breath was leaving his body, so that it was the last earthly sound he heard.

INVOCATION

Gracious Ganapati!¹ with Thy (loving) hand
bless me, that I may make this a marital garland
of letters worthy of Sri Arunachala, the
Bridegroom!

REFRAIN

Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala Shiva!
Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala!
Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala Shiva!
Arunachala Shiva! Arunachala!

1. Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of
those who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh
Arunachala!

2. May Thou and I be one and inseparable like
Alagu and *Sundara*,² Oh Arunachala!

3. Entering (my) home and luring me (to Thine)
why didst Thou keep me prisoner in Thy heart's

1 - Another name for Lord Ganesha.

2 - The Tamil word *alagu* and Sanskrit word *sundara*
have the same meaning: 'beauty'. *Alagu* and
Sundara were also the names of Sri Ramana's
mother and father.

cavern. Oh Arunachala?

4. Was it for Thy pleasure or for my sake Thou
didst win me? If now Thou turn me away, the
world will blame Thee, Oh Arunachala!

5. Escape this blame! Why didst Thou then recall
Thyself to me? How can I leave Thee now, Oh
Arunachala!

6. Kinder far art Thou than one's own mother.
Is this then Thy all-kindness, Oh Arunachala?

7. Sit firmly in my mind lest it elude Thee, Oh
Arunachala!

8. Display Thy beauty, for the fickle mind to
see Thee for ever and to rest (in peace), Oh
Arunachala!

9. After abducting me if now Thou dost not
embrace me, where is Thy chivalry, Oh
Arunachala?

10. Does it become Thee thus to sleep when I
am outraged by others, Oh Arunachala?

11. Even when the thieves of the five senses
break in upon me, art Thou not still in my heart,
Oh Arunachala!

12. One art Thou without a second; who then could dare elude Thee and come in? This is only Thy jugglery, Oh Arunachala!

13. Significance of OM unrivalled — unsurpassed! Who can comprehend Thee, Oh Arunachala?

14. As (Universal) Mother, it is Thy duty to dispense Thy Grace and save me, Oh Arunachala!

15. Who can ever find Thee? The Eye of the eye art Thou, and without eyes Thou seest, Oh Arunachala!

16. As a lode-stone attracts iron, magnetising it and holding it fast, so do Thou to me, Oh Arunachala!

17. (Unmoving) Hill, melting into a Sea of Grace, have mercy (on me) I pray, Oh Arunachala!

18. Fiery Gem, shining in all directions, do Thou burn up my dross, Oh Arunachala!

19. Shine as my Guru, making me free from faults and worthy of Thy Grace, Oh Arunachala!

20. Save me from the cruel snares of fascinating women and honour me with union with Thyself, Oh Arunachala!

21. Though I beg, Thou art callous and dost not condescend. I pray Thee! say to me 'Fear not' Oh Arunachala!

22. Unasked Thou givest; this is Thy imperishable fame. Do not belie Thy name, Oh Arunachala!

23. Sweet fruit within my hands, let me be mad with ecstasy, drunk with the Bliss of Thy Essence, Oh Arunachala!

24. Blazoned as the Devourer of Thy votaries, how can I survive who have embraced Thee, Oh Arunachala?

25. Thou, unruffled by anger! What crime has marked me off (for Thy wrath); Oh Arunachala?

26. Glorious Mountain of Love, celebrated by Gautama³, rule me with Thy gracious glance, Oh Arunachala!

27. Dazzling Sun that swallowest up all the universe in Thy rays, by Thy Light open the lotus of my heart I pray, Oh Arunachala!

28. I came to feed on Thee, but Thou hast fed on me; now there is Peace, Oh Arunachala!

29. O Moon of Grace, with Thy (cool) rays as hands, open (within me) the ambrosial orifice and let my heart rejoice, Oh Arunachala!

30. Tear off these robes, expose me naked, then robe me with Thy Love, Oh Arunachala!

31. There (in the heart) rest quiet! Let the sea of joy surge, speech and feeling cease, Oh Arunachala!

32. Do not continue to deceive and prove me; disclose instead Thy Transcendental Self, Oh Arunachala!

33. Vouchsafe the knowledge of Eternal Life that I may learn the glorious Primal Wisdom, and shun the delusion of this world, Oh Arunachala!

34. Unless Thou embrace me, I shall melt away in tears of anguish, Oh Arunachala!

35. If spurned by Thee, alas! what rests for me but the torment of my *prarabdha*?⁴ What hope is left for me, Oh Arunachala?

36. In silence Thou saidst, 'Stay silent!' and Thyself stood silent, O Arunachala!⁵

37. Happiness lies in peaceful repose enjoyed when resting in the Self. Beyond speech indeed is Thy prowess resting in the Self. Beyond speech indeed is This my State, Oh Arunachala!

38. Sun! Thou didst sally forth and illusion was

3 - The Gautama here referred to is not the Buddha but a Hindu Sage of that name who dwelt at Arunachala, for mention of whom see 'The Mythology of Arunachala' by T. K. S. in our issue of July 1964. P. 143.

4 - *Prarabdha* is the part of destiny due to past actions (karmas) which bears fruit in the present birth.

5 - Silence is the highest and most perfect form of instruction which the Guru can give, for by its nature it is closest to the essential object of such instruction, which is the realization by the disciple of the incommunicable and inexpressible Absolute.

ended. Then didst Thou shine motionless (alone),
Oh Arunachala!

39. (A dog can scent out its master), am I then
worse than a dog? Steadfastly will I seek Thee
and regain Thee, Oh Arunachala!

40. Grant me wisdom, I beseech Thee, so that I
may not pine for love of Thee in ignorance, Oh
Arunachala!

41. (In sunlight the lotus blossoms), how then
couldst Thou, the Sun of suns, hover before me
like a flower bee, saying 'Thou are not yet in
blossom,' Oh Arunachala?

42. 'Thou hast realized the Self even without
knowing that it was the Truth. It is the Truth Itself!'
Speak (thus if it be so), Oh Arunachala!

43. Reveal Thyself! Thou only art Reality, Oh
Arunachala!

44. 'Look within, ever seeking the Self with the
inner eye, then will, (It) be found.' Thus didst
Thou direct me, beloved Arunachala!

45. Weak though my effort was, by Thy Grace
I gained the Self, Oh Arunachala!

46. What value has this birth without Knowledge
born of realization? It is not even worth speaking
about, Oh Arunachala!

47. I, by Thy Grace, am sunk in Thy Self,
wherein merge only those divested of their minds
and thus made pure, Oh Arunachala!

48. When I took shelter under Thee as my One
God, Thou didst destroy me altogether, Oh
Arunachala!

49. Treasure of benign and holy Grace found
without seeking, steady my wandering mind, Oh
Arunachala!

50. On seeking Thy Real Self with courage, my
raft capsized and the waters came over me. Have
mercy on me Arunachala!

51. Enfold me body to body, limb to limb, or I
am lost, Oh Arunachala!

52. Oh Undefined, abide Thou in my heart so
that there may be everlasting joy, Arunachala!

53. Mock me not, who seek Thy protection!
Adorn me with Thy Grace and then regard me,
Oh Arunachala!

54. Does it not shame Thee to stand there like a
post, (leaving me) to find Thee by myself, Oh
Arunachala?

55. Rain Thy Mercy on me ere Thy Knowledge
burn me to ashes, Oh Arunachala!

56. Unite with me to destroy (our separate
identities as) Thou and me, and bless me with the
state of ever-vibrant joy, Oh Arunachala!

57. When will waves of thought cease to rise?
When shall I reach Thee, subtler than the subtle
ether, Oh Arunachala!

58. I am a simpleton devoid of learning. Do Thou
dispel illusion, Oh Arunachala!

59. When I melted away and entered Thee, my
Refuge, (I found) Thee standing naked, Oh
Arunachala!

60. In my unloving self Thou didst create a
passion for Thee, therefore forsake me not, Oh
Arunachala!

61. Fruit shrivelled and spoilt is worthless, take
and enjoy it ripe, Oh Arunachala!

62. Hast Thou not bartered cunningly Thyself
for me? Oh, Thou art death to me, Arunachala!

63. Regard me! Take thought of me, Touch me!⁶
Mature me! Make me one with Thee, Oh
Arunachala!

64. Grant me Thy Grace ere the poison of
delusion grips me and, rising to my head, kills
me, Oh Arunachala!

65. Thyself regard me and dispel illusion! Unless
Thou do so who can intercede with Grace Itself
made manifest Oh Arunachala!

66. With madness for Thee hast Thou freed me
of madness (for the world); grant me now the
cure of all madness, Oh Arunachala!

6 - Regard me! Take thought of me! Touch me! refer
respectively to the three modes of initiation, by look,
by thought, and by touch.

67. Fearless I seek Thee, Fearlessness Itself!
How canst Thou fear to take me, Oh Arunachala!

68. Where is (my) ignorance or (Thy) Wisdom,
if I am blessed with union to Thee, Oh Arunachala!

69. Espouse me, I beseech Thee, and let this
mind, now wedded to the world, be wedded to
Perfection, Oh Arunachala!

70. Mere thought of Thee has drawn me to Thee,
and who can gauge Thy Glory (in Itself), Oh,
Arunachala?

71. Thou hast possessed me, unexorcizable
Spirit! and made me mad (for Thee), that I may
cease to be a ghost (wandering the world), Oh
Arunachala!

72. Be Thou my stay and my support lest I droop
helpless like a tender creeper, Oh Arunachala!

73. Thou didst benumb (my faculties) with
stupefying powder,⁷ then rob me of my
understanding and reveal the Knowledge of Thy
Self, Oh Arunachala!

74. Show me the warfare of Thy Grace, in the
Open Field where there is no coming and going,
Oh Arunachala!

75. Unattached to the physical frame composed
of the (five) elements, let me for ever repose happy
in the sight of Thy Splendour, Oh Arunachala!

76. Thou hast administered the medicine of
confusion to me, so must I be confounded! Shine
Thou as Grace, the cure of all confusion, Oh
Arunachala!

77. Shine Thou selfless, sapping the pride of
those who boast of their free-will, Oh Arunachala!

78. I am a fool who prays only when
overwhelmed (by misery), yet disappoint me not,
Oh Arunachala!

79. Guard me lest I flounder storm-tossed like a
ship without helmsman, Oh Arunachala!

80. Thou hast cut the knot which bid the vision

7 - This verse alludes to the wandering ascetics who
spirit away children for disciples, stupefying them
with a pinch of powder, such as sacred ashes.

of Thy Head and Foot (the limitless Self). Mother-
like, shouldst Thou not complete Thy task, Oh
Arunachala!⁸

81. Be not (like) a mirror held to a noseless
man, but raise me (from my lowness) and embrace
me, Oh Arunachala!

82. Let us embrace upon the bed of tender
flowers, which is the mind, within the room of
the body (or the Ultimate Truth), Oh Arunachala!

83. How is it that Thou hast become famous
from Thy constant union with the poor and
humble, Oh Arunachala?

84. Thou hast removed the blindness of
ignorance with the unguent of Thy Grace, and
made me truly Thine, Oh Arunachala!

85. Thou didst shave clean my head (and I was
lost to the world),⁹ then Thou didst (show Thyself)
dancing in Transcendent Space, Oh Arunachala!

86. Though Thou hast loosed me from the mists
of error and made me mad for Thee, why hast
Thou not yet freed me from illusion; Oh
Arunachala!

87. Is it true Silence to rest like a stone, inert
and unexpansive, Oh Arunachala?

88. Who was it that threw mud to me for food¹⁰
and robbed me of my livelihood, Oh Arunachala?

89. Unknown to all, stupefying me, Who was it
that ravished my soul, Oh Arunachala?

90. I spoke thus to Thee, because Thou art my

8 - The cutting of the knot which binds man to illusion
implies the attainment of *nirvikalpa samadhi*;
completion of the task refers to the state of *sahaja
samadhi*.

9 - The parenthesis is not a mere addition to explain
the implication of shaving the head, for by an
alternative reading, involving the change of a single
letter, these words become explicit in the text.

10 - Literally, 'Threw mud in my mouth', an
expression meaning 'caused my ruin'. The deeper
meaning of this verse is: 'Who was it that
individualized me and robbed me of my Perfect
Being?'

Lord; be not offended but come and give me happiness, Oh Arunachala!

91. Let us enjoy one another in the House of Open Space, where there is neither night nor day, Oh Arunachala!¹¹

92. Thou didst take aim (at me) with darts of Love and then devoured me alive, Oh Arunachala!

93. Thou art the Primal Being, whereas I count not in this nor the other world. What didst Thou gain thus by my worthless self, Oh Arunachala!

94. Dost Thou not call me in? I have come in. Now measure out for me, (my maintenance is now Thy burden). Hard is Thy lot, Oh Arunachala!

95. The moment Thou didst welcome me, didst enter into me and grant me Thy divine life, I lost my individuality, Oh Arunachala!

96. Bless me that I may die without losing hold of Thee, or miserable is (my fate), Oh Arunachala!

97. From my home Thou didst entice me, then stealing into my heart didst draw me gently into Thine, (such is) Thy Grace, Oh Arunachala!

98. I have betrayed Thy (secret) workings. Be not offended! Show me Thy Grace now openly and save me, Oh Arunachala!

99. Grant me the essence of the Vedas, which shine in the Vedanta, One without a second, Oh

11 - The allusion is to the 'cavity of the Heart' which is beyond time and space.

Arunachala!

100. Even my slanders, treat as praise and guard me for ever as Thine own, I pray, Oh Arunachala!

101. As snow in water, let me melt, as Love in Thee, Who art Love itself, Oh Arunachala!

102. I had but thought of Thee as Aruna, and lo! I was caught in the trap of Thy Grace! Can the net of Thy Grace ever fail, Oh Arunachala!

103. Watching like a spider to trap (me in the web of Thy) Grace, Thou didst entwine me and when imprisoned feed upon me, Oh Arunachala!

104. Let me be the votary of the votaries of those who hear Thy name with love, Oh Arunachala!

105. Shine Thou for ever as the loving Saviour of helpless suppliants like myself, Oh Arunachala!

106. Familiar to Thine ears are the sweet songs of votaries who melt to the very bones with love for Thee, yet let my poor strains also be acceptable, Oh Arunachala!

107. Hill of Patience, bear with my foolish words, (regarding them) as hymns of joy or as Thou please, Oh Arunachala!

108. Oh Arunachala! my Loving Lord, Throw Thy garland (about my shoulders) wearing Thyself this one (strung) by me, Arunachala!

Blessed be Arunachala! blessed be His devotees! Blessed be this Marital Garland of Letters!

LIVING PHILOSOPHY

In India there is no such thing as armchair philosophy. Philosophy is not only a way of thought but also a way of life in this country. It is not born of idle curiosity, nor is it a mere intellectual game. Every philosophy here is a religion, and every religion has its philosophy. The philosopher here was not a tall and spectacled professor dictating his notes to the class or weaving cobwebs of theory in his study, but one who

was moved by a deep inner urge to know the secrets of life, who lived laborious days of spiritual discipline and who saw the light by the transformation of his life.

From Sri Jaideva Singh's introduction to his text and English translation of the Pratyabhijnahridayam, published by Messrs. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi-6.

BHAKTI MARGA IN BUDDHISM

The Meaning and Importance of Prayer

By LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA

Acharya, Arya Maitreya Mandala

The Buddhist tradition inclines more to *jnana marga* and the Christian to *bhakti marga*. Nevertheless, every complete religion contains elements of both and provides scope for both types of approach. In this article the venerable author shows the very important place that prayer, a *bhakti* technique, can hold in Buddhism. It is a resume of talks delivered by him during the international religious conference of 1960 at Venice, convoked by the Cultural Centre of the Foundation Giorgio Cini, Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore. The subject of the Conference, to which representatives of the main religions of the world were invited, was 'The Experience of Prayer'.

Lama Govinda is already known to many of our readers as author of the important study '*Foundations of Tibetan Mysticism*'. (Rider & Co., London.)

Every religion recognises a highest value, a *summum bonum*; theistic religions call it 'God', non-theistic religions call it Tao, Nirvana, Sammasambodhi (Perfect Enlightenment), etc. If in theistic religions prayer has been defined as a communion or a dialogue with God, in non-theistic religions it could be defined as intense longing for the highest state of perfection or completeness, the realization of perfect Enlightenment.

Prayer in its widest sense is "a direction of the heart" (Rilke) and presupposes a mental or spiritual polarity: either between man and God, or between the finite and infinite, the individual and the universal, the imperfect and the perfect, etc. In Christianity, Judaism and Islam the individual human pole is conceived as the soul, the divine pole as the Creator; in Hinduism as *Jivatma* and *Paramatma* (or Brahman), in Buddhism as the limited, mundane individual consciousness and the potential universal consciousness which is latent in every sentient being and can be experienced and realized in its totality in the state of Enlightenment.

Prayer thus arises from a state of creative tension between the human and the divine, the consciousness of incompleteness (or imperfection) and the ideal of completeness (or perfection), between the present state of ignorance or delusion and the longed-for, future state of liberation: the awakening from the illusion of separateness to the wholeness of life.

What here appears to us as 'future' however, is something that is ever-existing, ever-present in our universal depth-consciousness (*alaya-vijnana*), which modern psychology has now at last rediscovered though greatly misunderstood, by conceiving it as an enemy of reason and the source of uncontrollable drives and emotions and calling it "the Unconscious"¹ — in order to subordinate it all the more to the limited surface-

1 - "It has long ceased to be a secret that the venerable root-concept of modern psychology 'the Unconscious' is a rather uncritical and obscure concept", says Medard Boss in his *Indienfahrt eines Psychiaters* (p. 19).

"Present-day psychological terminology which postulates an 'unconscious' in contrast to consciousness, becomes thereby guilty of a falsification of fundamental psychosomatic facts. This terminology and the subsequently wrongly structured phenomena are a typical example of the faulty conclusions which arise from a radically applied dualism." (Jean Bebser: *Ursprung und Gegenwart*, Vol. I, p. 327).

"The modern mind suffers from the odd prejudice that consciousness is a purely superficial outgrowth of reality, and that the more fundamental the power, principle or substance becomes, the more blind and unconscious it must be." (Alan W. Watts: *The Supreme Identity*, p. 56)

"In Freud's view the unconscious is essentially the seat of irrationality. In Jung's thinking the meaning seems to be almost reversed; the unconscious is essentially the seat of the deepest sources of wisdom, while the conscious is the intellectual part of the personality. (Erich Fromm in *Zen Buddhism & Psychoanalysis*, P. 96).

consciousness, which identifies itself with the ephemeral interests of its momentary individual existence, thus losing the connection with its origin, the living source of creative power.

In prayer, however, we turn back to that source, we re-establish its connection with the individual, focalised surface-consciousness, so that the tension between surface and depth, like that of a string, produces a pure sound, a higher vibration of the Spirit. It is not the object of prayer to eliminate this tension, but, to transform it into a creative force by establishing a meaningful, harmonious co-operation between the two apparently contradictory, but in reality complementary, poles. Thus prayer becomes a source of strength and certainty, and not merely a sedative or a tranquilliser. The inner peace that comes from it is due to the establishment of a balance between the forces of our individual consciousness and the vast potentialities of our depth-consciousness, in which the experiences of a beginningless past are stored and through which we participate in that greater life that encompasses the universe and connects us with every living being.

Prayer — and in a still higher degree, meditation (of which prayer is only the first step) — is the consciously directed approach towards this vast storehouse of experience, which modern psychology merely observes in its passively accepted, functional effects on our subconscious mind (as in dreams and archetypal symbols) as if it were driven by irresistible forces. “Common experience looks on the idea that we are pushed about by such inner drives as unreal and artificial. What meaning can it have, we say, for men whose lives are dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge or the creation of beauty or the service of their fellows? What place in it is there for devotion and sacrifice and that endless striving for truth and human betterment which ever has distinguished man at his best? ... Men seem not to be pushed into the finest things they do but to follow the urgent call of something that draws them on through hardship

and uncertainty and discouragement to the attainment of a high desire.”² “This conception has the advantage over present psychological orthodoxy in that its attitude is forward, toward a goal to be reached, and not back to the push and drive of circumstance, and is thus in harmony with the common verdict of experience.”³

Prayer— being a “direction of the heart (*i.e.*, of the inner centre of a human being, which participates equally in his individual consciousness and in his super-individual depth-consciousness) and thus of his intuition, and not merely of his surface-consciousness — is, therefore a positive and active approach to the hidden treasury of universal experience. It does not blindly take hold of experience-contents that happen to well up - but have no bearing on its intuited aim, like a man who descends without a light into a dark storeroom in the cellar of his house, aimlessly taking hold of whatever comes into his hands.

Prayer is indeed the lamp that enables us to discover in the vastness of the treasure-house those very items, that are useful or essential on our spiritual way towards completeness. Instead of dragging fragmentary glimpses of contents of the depth-consciousness into the glaring light of the intellect and submitting them to a deadly analysis, prayer turns our conscious mind inwards and transforms the potential forces of the depth into active ones, because “making the unconscious conscious transforms the mere idea of the universality of man into the living experience of this universality.”⁴ In other words: instead of raising the archetypal symbols and visions of the depth to the surface and subordinating them to conceptual thought and the trivialities of temporal aims and purposes, the focus of our individualised mind should turn inwards in order to become aware of its universal

2 - *The Biology of the Spirit* by, Edmund W. Simmoss, p. 88.

3 - *Ibid.*, p. 90.

4 - Erich Fromm, *op. cit.* p. 107,

source and make use of its immense potentialities in the pursuance of ultimate completeness and perfect enlightenment.

Prayer as a means towards this aim would defeat its own purpose if it was the expression of selfish desires or exclusively concerned with our own individual welfare. Moreover the Buddhist neither believes in separate ego-hood (or an unchangeable individual soul that has to be 'saved' and preserved for eternity) nor looks upon the Buddha as a God, who fulfils his wishes. To him the Buddha is the model of the complete or perfect man, who has become conscious of his universality, realized the divine within himself and thus become a light to others.

If, therefore, the Buddhist bows down before the image of the Buddha, he does not ask anything of him, he does not pray to him, but gives vent to his feelings of veneration in the same way in which he would show his respect and love to his living religious teacher or Guru, in whose footsteps he is determined to follow in order to make his teachings a living reality within himself. The formula, which he utters during the act of veneration before the image or symbol of the Enlightened One (such as a statue, a *stupa*, a reliquary, the Bodhi-tree, or whatever helps him to bring the noble figure of the Buddha before his mind), consists of the words:

"I take refuge in the Enlightened One;"

"I take refuge in the Teaching" (the Sacred Law, taught by all Enlightened Ones);

"I take refuge in the Community (of those who have realized the teaching)."

In Tibet this formula is preceded by the words: "I take refuge in the Guru"; because the Guru is the living representative, the mouthpiece, of the Buddha, the transmitter and embodiment of the Buddha's Teaching, who kindles the flame of faith in the disciple and inspires him to follow in the footsteps of those who have realized the Sacred Teaching (*dharma*), and become members of the Community of Saints (*Sangha*).

The first step of devotion and prayer in Buddhism, therefore, consists in the expression of veneration, loyalty and gratitude towards the Teacher, the living Guru, as well as the Buddha who speaks through him. And just as the person of the Guru is conceived as a link in the continuity of spiritual transmission of Buddha Sakyamuni's teaching, in the same way Buddha Sakyamuni is only one link in the infinite chain of Enlightened Ones. Thus the term 'Guru' comprises the complete chain of spiritual teachers who have passed on the living tradition through millenniums from generation to generation: and similarly the term 'Buddha' includes the totality of all the Enlightened Ones who preceded him or may follow him.

Thus, in Mahayana tradition, the historical personality of Sakyamuni-Buddha recedes behind the universal figure of the Perfect Enlightened One, the symbol of the Complete Man who has realized his divine nature. Instead of worshipping a God beyond all human conception, enthroned in a realm of metaphysical abstractions and generalisations, the Buddhist strives after the realization of those divine properties which have been demonstrated by innumerable saints and Enlightened Ones. He tries to realize them in his own heart, in his own mind and in his own life.

The thought that a god should have created the world with all its evil, its suffering, its imperfection, stupidity and cruelty, appears to him a kind of blasphemy of the very idea of God as the embodiment of perfection. For him it is not a god who is responsible for the evil and imperfection of the world, because the world that we experience is the creation of our own ignorance, our own cravings and passions. That imperfection should come out of perfection and completeness seems to contradict all reason, while the opposite appears more likely to the Buddhist. The experiences of life and the example of those who have attained enlightenment, has taught him that from a state

of imperfection perfection can be achieved and that the sufferings resulting from our passions, are the very forces that lead towards liberation.

But while the Buddhist rejects the idea of a Creator-God, he believes in the divine principle in man, the inborn spark of light (*bodhi-citta*) embodied in his consciousness as a yearning towards perfection, towards completeness, towards Enlightenment. To put it paradoxically: it is not God who creates man, but man who creates God in his image, *i.e.* the idea of the divine aim within himself, which he realizes in the fires of suffering, from which compassion, understanding, love and wisdom are born.

The unfoldment of individual life in the universe has no other aim apparently but becoming conscious of its own divine essence, and since this process goes on continuously, it represents a perpetual birth of God or, to put it into Buddhist terminology: the continuous arising of enlightened beings, in each of whom the totality of the universe becomes conscious.

These Enlightened Ones are what the Mahayana calls “the infinite number of Buddhas” or — insofar as they are experienced as actively influencing the development of humanity — “the infinite number of Bodhisattvas”. The latter represent the active forces emanating from those who have attained the highest state of consciousness, inspiring and furthering all those who are striving for liberation. This is represented pictorially by the aura of the meditating Buddha, which is filled with small replicas of the Buddha, symbolising the infinite number of Bodhisattvas who in myriad forms appear for the welfare of all living and suffering beings. Though they manifest themselves in innumerable individual forms, they are one in spirit.

I have described the first step of Buddhist prayer as an expression of veneration and gratitude towards the great Enlightened Ones, who taught the way of liberation to humanity by word and deed. As an example of the profound

devotion which fills the Buddhist *sadhaka*, I may quote here some passages from Santideva’s *Bodhicaryavatara*, which describes the awakening of the inner light, or the practice of the Bodhisattvas on the way towards Enlightenment.

“In order to take possession of the pearl of Enlightenment, I worship the Tathagatas and also the faultless jewel of the doctrine, as well as the spiritual sons of the Enlightened Ones, the oceans of virtue.

Whatever may be found in this world; flowers, fruits, vegetables and life-giving waters; mountains of precious stone, forest-solitudes for meditation, creepers adorned with beautiful, radiant blossoms, trees whose boughs are bent under the burden of delicious fruit, perfumes and scents from the world of gods, miraculous trees, jewel-trees, lovely ponds of lotus-flowers reverberating with the sweet song of swans, wild plants as well as those of the fields: everything that is suitable as an offering and all that is contained in the infinity of space and does not belong to anybody; I collect all this in my mind and offer it to the Perfect Ones and their spiritual sons (the Bodhisattvas).”

“I am without merits and, therefore, very poor. I have nothing else for their worship. May, therefore, the Perfect Ones, who have no thought but the welfare of others, accept this for my sake.”

The next step is the complete self-surrender and change of heart in awareness of our faults and weaknesses.

“Wholly and without reserve I dedicate myself to the Enlightened Ones and their spiritual sons: take possession of me, exalted beings! Filled with humility I offer myself as your servant. Having become your property, I have nothing more to fear in this world. I will do only what is helpful to other beings. I will give up my former wrongdoing and not commit further misdeeds. Due to hatred and infatuation I have committed many wrong deeds. I did not realize that I am only a traveller, passing through this world. Day and night,

without cessation vitality decreases and death approaches. This very day, therefore, I will take refuge in the great and powerful protectors of the world. From the bottom of my heart I take refuge in the doctrine and likewise in the multitude of Bodhisattvas. With folded hands I implore the Perfect Enlightened Ones in all the regions of the universe: may they kindle the light of truth for all those who on account of their delusion would otherwise fall into the abyss of misery.”

After the devotee has thus opened himself to the Enlightened Ones and offered himself to them ‘an instrument of their peace’ (in the words of the beautiful and universal prayer of St. Francis of Assisi, which could have been spoken by Santideva or any devout Buddhist)⁵ he renounces the fruit of his good deeds and instead of being concerned for his “own salvation”, he vows to dedicate himself to the welfare of all living beings. In other words: he will rather share the sufferings of his fellow-beings, in order to inspire and assist them on their way towards Liberation, than rest blissfully on the pedestal of his virtues, enjoying for himself the fruits of his good deeds.

It is in this spirit that he utters the vow: Whatever merit I may have obtained, may I become thereby the soother of every pain for all living beings. The merits which I have acquired in all my rebirths

5 - “Lord, Make me an instrument of Thy Peace,
That where there is hatred, I may bring love;
That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness;
That where there is error, I may bring truth
That where there is doubt, I may bring faith;
That where there is despair, I may bring hope;
And where there are shadows, I may bring Thy light;
That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.
Lord, Grant that I may seek, rather to comfort than to be comforted,
To understand than to be understood: to love than to be loved;
For it is by giving that one receiveth.
It is by self-forgetting that one finds,
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven;
It is by dying, that one awakens to eternal life.”

through thought, word and deed, all this I give away without regard to myself, in order to realize the salvation of all living beings. *Nirvana* means to give up everything; and my heart desires *Nirvana*. If I must give up everything, is it not better to give everything to living beings? I have dedicated myself to the welfare of all living beings; may they beat me and abuse me and cover me with dust. May they play with my body and make me an object of their ridicule. I have abandoned my body to them; why should I worry about it? Those who abuse me, those who treat me badly, those who jeer at me, may they all attain enlightenment.”

Who would not be reminded here of Christ’s words: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you”? Every true Buddhist who hears these words, will be convinced that he who spoke them, was one of the great, Bodhisattvas, one of the enlightened helpers of mankind, to whom he pays respect in his daily devotions, when he remembers the Enlightened Ones of the past, the present and the future.⁶

The cultivation of an attitude of loving kindness and the conscious penetration of the world with compassionate thoughts and a loving heart — “like a mother who protects her child with her own life” — has been called by the Buddha a “divine state” literally a “dwelling in God” (*Brahma-vihara*). Herewith he has at the same time given a perfect definition of what he considers ‘divine’. The love of which he speaks here is far more than humanitarian goodwill, into which some Western interpreters have tried to dilute the *maitri* (Pali: *metta*) of the Buddha,

6 - “*Ye ca buddhd atita ca
ye ca buddha anagata,
paccuppanna ca ye buddha
aham vandami sabbada.*” — (Pali)

“The Enlightened Ones of the past,
the Enlightened ones of the future,
the Enlightened Ones of the present
I worship them at all time.”

though the above-mentioned quotation, which defines *maitri* as the spontaneous and selfless love of a mother, should have taught them a deeper understanding.

The other constituents of this 'divine state', constituents which naturally flow from this boundless love (and which, on account of their boundlessness, are also called 'illimitables'), are compassion (*karuna*) and sympathetic joy (*mudita*), i.e. the sharing of others' sorrow and joy, and finally that state of equanimity (*upeksa*) which is unaffected by one's own sufferings or successes.

One of the greatest misunderstandings concerning the spiritual and emotional attitude of Buddhism is due to the wrong interpretation of the term *upeksa* (Pali: *upekkha*). A purely negative rendering of this important term as 'indifference' has repeatedly led to the opinion (especially from the side of Christian theologians) that love, compassion and the sharing of happiness with others are only preparatory steps to the attainment of complete indifference, which would thus seem to be the highest aim and the culmination of Buddhist ethics. The fact that *upeksa* is placed at the end of these 'divine states' has led to the conclusion that to the Buddhist love and compassion are only convenient means for his own salvation and that therefore they are not the outcome of true altruism or of equal value with the similar qualities in Christianity.

In reality the opposite is true: just as love is not negated by compassion or by the capacity to share the joy of others but actually finds its fulfilment in these qualities, so also *upeksa* does not extinguish the preceding attitudes. In fact only a man who is not shaken by enmity or favours, who is indifferent towards his own gain or loss (but not towards that of others) is capable of showing equal sympathy to all beings. Not only do love and compassion and rejoicing in the happiness of other beings find their ultimate perfection in *upeksa*, but we can even say that

upeksa is the very foundation of these qualities which the Enlightened Ones and those who follow in their footsteps cultivate and offer to the world, as the sun shines for sinners and saints alike.⁷

Thus *upeksa*, in its highest aspect, is that unshakeable steadfastness, that perfect mental and spiritual balance and equanimity in which neither indifference nor lukewarm emotions find a place and in which the difference between one's own self and that of others has disappeared. This has been beautifully expressed by Santideva in the first *Karika* of his *Sikṣasamuccaya*:

"Yada mama paresam ca bhayam duḥkham ca na priyam

Tadamanah ko viśeso yat tam raksami netaram?"

"If my neighbour, like myself, hates fear and pain,

in what way, then, do I distinguish myself from others,

that I should seek protection for myself and not for others?"

Here we come to the heart of the problem and to the chief motive of Buddhist prayer: it is love and compassion based on profound understanding of the essential unity of life and the mutual relationship of all sentient beings. Just as the selfless love of a mother is not the outcome of any ethical demand or categorical imperative but rests on her knowledge of the essential oneness of mother and child, so also the Buddhist's attitude towards his fellow-beings is the natural result of his innermost conviction.

This conviction is nurtured by experiences of meditation, of which prayer is the first step. In this sense we may call prayer a preliminary form of meditation. It uses words to guide the mind in

7 - It will be remarked by Hindu readers that *upeksa* is equivalent to the Hindu *vairagya*. Those who read the article by Father Lazarus on the 'Spiritual Traditions of the Greek Orthodox Church' in our issue of January 1964 will also note its equivalence with the equality of *apatheia* which he there describes, (Editor)

a certain direction, and the further it proceeds the less words it needs. Finally prayer becomes mantra, creative speech or word of power, that awakens the dormant forces of our soul — until the mind of the devotee dives into the ocean of his depth consciousness (*alaya-vijnana*), where the reality of a greater life, that connects him with all living beings and the very spirit of the Enlightened Ones, reveals itself through direct experience, beyond words and concepts.

Thus prayer in Buddhism is the path of devotion (*bhakti-marga*) — first to the Guru and the Enlightened Ones (through *saranagamana*, *vandana* and *puja*), then to all living and suffering beings (*maitri-bhavana*) through the Bodhisattva-vows of perfect self-dedication (*pranidhana*) — that ends in the light of knowledge. For he who wants to partake of the light must first open himself. Prayer is an act of opening heart and mind; and while we open ourselves we not only allow the light to enter, but we make the first breach in the walls of our self-created prison which separates us from our fellow-beings. Thus, in the same measure in which the light streams in and makes us recognise our true universal nature that connects us with all that exists in the infinity of space and time, our love and compassion for all living and suffering beings wells up and streams out from us like a mighty current that embraces the whole world. In this way prayer becomes an act of devotion in a twofold way: to the forces of the light (*bodhi*) as well as to our fellow-beings (*maitri*, *karuna*). The forces of the light, however, are not an abstract ideal but a living reality, embodied in those great teachers of humanity, whom we venerate as the Enlightened Ones.

The more intensely we can put ourselves into their presence, the more alive they become in our consciousness, the deeper we feel for them in response to their love, in admiration of their deeds and in gratitude for their teachings, the greater is their power to act upon us. But in order to experience their presence, we require visible symbols in which the highest qualities of the enlightened mind are expressed and through which

at the same time our deepest feelings are aroused.

Such symbols are the various representations of the Buddha-figure, which not merely depict a particular historical personality, but are the outcome of the integrated religious experience of innumerable generations of devotees. Thus the image is not an object of veneration (*i.e.*, the Buddhist does not pray to the image) but a means to experience the presence of the Enlightened Ones. Instead of merely worshipping our ideal or praying to the Enlightened Ones - as if they were something outside ourselves - we must ourselves become our ideal, identify ourselves with it, in order to be able to live it also in our outward activities and in our daily life. An ideal becomes an effective or active force only when it is felt and experienced as an ever-present reality, as is the case in the higher states of meditative experience (*dhyana*) or inner vision. Thus the outer, material image and likewise the *puja*-ritual and the liturgy in congregational worship, in which prayer becomes an act of joint devotion and self-dedication, is only the beginning and the preparation for the unfoldment of inner vision in meditation, in which the devotee becomes one with his ideal. In the gestures (*mudra*) and actions (such as bowing down, offering lights, water and flowers, etc.) of ritual worship (*puja*) our thoughts and emotions are made visible as a means of guiding and concentrating the mind upon the sacred path. We may call it a dramatised form of meditation: meditation put into action and rendered visible and audible. Through the parallelism of body, mind and speech, the co-ordination of movement, thought and word, the harmony of feeling, creative imagination, visualisation and verbal expression, we achieve a unity of all the functions of our conscious being, which affects not only the surface of our personality, namely our senses and intellect, but equally the deeper regions of our mind. In the regular performance of such ritual worship the very foundations of our being are slowly but certainly transformed and made receptive for the inner light.

JNANA AND BHAKTI

By Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami

Jnana and *Bhakti* are like two sweets made out of the same sugar, of which you can choose whichever you like. Giving up 'mine' is *Bhakti*; giving up 'I' is *Jnana*. The former gives up all his possessions; the latter gives up the very possessor of the possessions.

Bhakti is turning the mind towards God. Self-enquiry, the path of *Jnana*, turns the mind to its own inner essence, which is the Self. In Self-enquiry the subject sets out in search of himself. He who seeks must exist. This existence is itself the Self. In *Bhakti* one is disgusted with one's individual self and feels one's nothingness or unimportance and fixes one's mind on the Higher Power. When the mind at last becomes fully aware of the Higher Power it is awed by it and absorbed into it. This is total surrender of the ego. The man no longer is; God alone is.

The Cloud of Unknowing, a 14th Century Christian work in which the soul is oned with God, says that all creatures have in them two powers, one a knowing power, the other a loving power. To the first, God, the Maker of both powers, is eternally incomprehensible; to the second He is comprehensible. This is the wonderful miracle of love. "He may well be loved but not thought. Love may reach God in this life but not 'knowing'." So far is *Bhakti*, but the book continues: "And therefore swink and sweat in all

that thou canst and mayest for to get thee a true knowing and a feeling of thyself as thou art. And then I trou thou shalt have a true knowing and a feeling of God as He is." This is *Jnana*. He who does not know his Self cannot know and much less love God.

Here is what the Maharshi says on the subject: "To long for happiness is *Bhakti*. To long for the Self is *Jnana*."

It is *Jnana* to know that the Master is within you, but to commune with him is *Bhakti*. When the love of God or Self is manifest it is *Bhakti*; when it is in secret it is *Jnana*.

To know the Self as bliss is *Jnana*; efforts to uncover this natural bliss are *Bhakti*. A *bhakta* makes no plans, trusting that God who sent us here has his own scheme, which alone will work. He claims nothing. He has surrendered his personality, so that his actions and their results are due to the Higher Power. He accepts whatever befalls with equanimity. He has learnt from the *Gita* that actions go on of themselves, without an actor. A cyclone causes havoc but there is no actor responsible for it. God has created actions but no actor at all.

One-pointed thought of God is *Bhakti*; one-pointed experience of Self is *Jnana*. When 'other' arises there is fear. There should be one alone, whether we call it God or Self.

SILENT TEACHING

(From a record kept by Ethel Merston)

At first, like everyone else, I used to ask questions, but after a time found this to be quite unnecessary. If I were really stuck over some problem, Bhagavan would seem to know it, and I would get the answer silently projected into my consciousness by him ... Or, as it once happened, as I sat before him in the hall, mulling over a problem that had been

worrying me for three days, without finding a solution, Bhagavan suddenly asked his attendant to hand him a book on the *Puranas*; he turned the pages until he found the passage he wanted, then passed the book to a devotee and, pointing to me, told him to read the passage aloud. It was a complete answer to my problem.

JNANA MARGA IN CHRISTIANITY

Contemplative Meditation with Scripture

By Joel Goldsmith

Christianity has developed almost entirely as *bhakti-marga*, a religion of dualistic worship and devotion. The teaching of Joel Goldsmith is a remarkable reminder of the possibility of *jnana-marga* that it contains. It is an illustration also of the truth that *jnana-marga*, the ‘path of knowledge’, does not imply philosophy or erudition but is as simple as it is profound. If any followers of the Maharshi, trained to equate *jnana-marga* with Self-enquiry, find Joel Goldsmith’s method of concentrating on biblical texts strange, they should recall that it is very close to the use of *Mahavakyas* recommended by Shankaracharya. This article is specially written for *The Mountain Path*. Shortly before his sad demise in June this year, mentioned briefly in our July issue, Joel Goldsmith had sent us a series of articles for publication in *The Mountain Path*, starting with this one. These will be published as previously arranged. We take the opportunity to declare our deep appreciation for this great Christian mystic who expressed his profound understanding in simple language that all could follow.

Contemplative meditation is the preparatory step before pure meditation without words or thoughts, and its main purposes is to keep the mind stayed on God - to acknowledge Him in all our ways - so that in quietness and in confidence we may “be still, and know that I am God.”¹

We know that “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”² Therefore, only in contemplative meditation, conscious of scriptural Truth, can we prepare ourselves to attain to our divine Sonship or the Buddha mind. It is promised: “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”³ In other words, if we abide in the Word and if we let the Word abide in us, we will bear fruit richly.

Thus contemplating Truth, we attain the gift of discernment through which we attain Truth-which the “natural man” cannot know. This is affirmed in the *Bhagavad Gita*. “With mortal eyes thou canst not see me. I give thee therefore divine sight. Behold now My glory.”⁴

To meditate properly - to develop the ability to practice meditation - it is necessary to understand certain spiritual principles of life. Unless a meditation has in it a conscious awareness of a spiritual principle, it will not be beneficial. It can in fact lead to just a mental stillness in which there is no spiritual fruitage or “signs following.” Therefore, you must not only know why you are meditating, but you must know specific principles to take into your meditation.

Let us take the major principle of life upon which a harmonious existence can be experienced: I am I. Declare this to yourself, because it is indisputable. You are not someone else - you are yourself! “I am I.” In the great lesson on supply taught in Hebrew Scripture, the Master asks this question of the poor widow who was looking for supply, “What have you in your house?” He did not inquire of her what she wanted or how much she wanted. What do you already have in your house?

Let us see how this can be applied in practical experience. We are many people gathered together in reading and, as you can easily feel, there is a peace among us. There is quietness and confidence, and certainly there is an absence of hate, bigotry, bias, of jealousy. Let us now ask ourselves this question: “How did this peace get here and how was bias, bigotry, and hatred

1 - Psalm 46: 10,

2 - 1 Corinthians 2:14.

3 - John 15: 7

4 - Ch. XI, v. 8.

eliminated?" The answer is clear. You brought into this atmosphere the peace that is here. Whatever stillness and confidence is present - whatever love is with us - you brought it. Whatever of hatred, jealousy or discord is not here, you did not bring into our presence.

What have you in your house? What have you in your consciousness? You have love, you have life, you have co-operativeness and you have peace. What did you bring into this temple? This temple is the temple of God, but what made it so? Your being here in an atmosphere of love and mutuality. Then it is not that this Path is the temple of God, it is that *you* are the temple of God!" Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?"⁵ Ye are the temple of God *if* so be you left your personal feelings outside, *if* so be you left human limitations of anger, fear, and jealousy outside, *if* so be you brought in your consciousness the love and the peace we feel here. Because we *do* feel it and because we are cognisant of the peace that is in our midst, we know beyond measure that you brought it. In other words the degree of peace, love, and joy we feel - the degree of healing consciousness that is with us - is the degree that you brought here in your consciousness.

There can be no greater degree of healing consciousness than that which you brought with you; there can be no greater degree of health than that which you brought with you; there can be no greater degree of supply than what you brought with you - and how much you brought, with you depends on namely, (1) how much Truth you know about your consciousness, (2) what constitutes your consciousness, (3) who you are and what your true identity is.

The Master Christ Jesus asks "Who do men say that I am?" If the men are just human beings with no spiritual discernment, they will say that he is a Hebrew prophet, or a resurrected Hebrew prophet, or someone brought down from the human past. But "Whom do ye say that I am?"

5 - 1 Corinthians 3: 16

and Peter replied: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."⁶ When Peter answered the Master, he was revealing your true identity and mine, and when Christ Jesus said, "Call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven,"⁷ he was referring to your consciousness and my consciousness. As a matter of fact his entire ministry was a revelation of man's spiritual Sonship. Therefore, you can bring infinite peace, infinite harmony, infinite healing consciousness, and infinite supply into this group of readers, but you can accomplish this in only one way, by knowing that "I and my Father are one,"⁸ and "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."⁹

Think what would happen if you set aside ten minutes every morning to be separate and apart from the outside world - for the purpose of contemplating God and the things of God. Think what would happen should you set aside ten minutes for spiritual realization! Only those who have been touched in some measure by the Spirit of God would have the capacity to sit for ten minutes in contemplative meditation. Think!

I and my Father are one. The Father has said to me, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." Therefore, I have all that God has; all that God has is mine. "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."¹⁰ Of my own self I am nothing but, in this oneness with my Father, all that the Father hath is mine. "My peace I give unto you."¹¹ There is no limitation to the amount of peace that I have, because I have been given the Christ peace, the My peace. The Christ peace has been given unto me.

Therefore, when the question is asked, "What have you in your house?" you can reply: I have the full measure of Christ peace. I have all that

6 - Matthew 16:16,

7 - Matthew 23.9.

8 - John 10.30.

9 - Luke 15.31.

10 - Psalm 24: 1,

11 - John 14:27.

the Father hath, for the Father has given His allness unto me. God has even breathed into me His life, so I have in my consciousness life eternal. The Christ has come that I might have life, and that I might have it abundantly. Therefore, I have in my house - in my consciousness - abundant life, infinite life, eternal life. because this Christ has said, "I am eternal life." Therefore, I have eternal life in my consciousness as the gift of God. I have an infinity of supply because the Christ reveals: "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things,"¹² and "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."¹³ Therefore, I have the kingdom of God within me, which is the kingdom of all that I shall ever need. I have in my consciousness eternal life, infinite supply, divine peace. The peace which passeth understanding I have.

As you contemplate these principles for five or ten minutes each day, you carry into your world the awareness of the presence of all that God is and all that God has - as a gift that has been bestowed upon you by the Grace of God.

Your having contemplated these truths is the reason there is peace in our midst. You have brought "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."¹⁴ If there is love here with us, you have brought the love that is without limit. If there is supply in this *Mountain Path*, you have brought God's storehouse. All that the Father hath is yours, and you have brought it here. Remember this: what you have brought here to make of this Path a temple of God, you also bring to your business or to your home by your morning contemplation of this Truth. You thereby make of your home a temple of God. You do not find love in your home; you bring love to your home, because love is found only where you express it. In other words if your family is to find love they will find it because you, who are attuned to God,

12 - Matthew 6:32.

13 - Luke 12: 32.

14 - Philipians 4:7

bring it there. You who have been led to a spiritual teaching have been given the Grace to know this Truth, whereas members of your family and your business associates who are represented by "the natural man who receiveth not the things of God," cannot bring peace and harmony into their relationships.

Only those who have the Spirit of God indwelling are children of God. Only those who have the Spirit of God indwelling have been given the "peace which passeth understanding." Therefore, remember: What you discover here at this moment you have brought. Likewise, what you find in your home, in your business, in the world, is what you bring to your home, to your business, or to the world.

What have you in your consciousness? This is the password for meditation What have I in my consciousness?"

Of myself I have nothing, but by the Grace of God "all things that the Father hath are mine."¹⁵ "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."¹⁶ Therefore, I have been given My peace, the Christ peace. I have been given all these added things because my heavenly Father knoweth that I have need of them and it is His good pleasure to fulfil me. I am filled full of the Grace of God and, by the Grace of God, all that the Father hath is mine.

If you ask Me, I can give you bread: eating it, you will never hunger. I can give you living waters; drinking, you will never thirst.

This is what you are saying in your household, in your business, in the world - only you are saying it silently and secretly. You never voice it openly because the command of the Master is that we do our praying in secret, where no man can hear us or see us. If your praying is done in the inner sanctuary of your consciousness, what the Father seeth or heareth in secret is shouted from the housetops. "Thy Father which seeth in secret

15 - John 16:15.

16 - Psalm 24: 1.

himself shall reward thee openly.”¹⁷ Silently and sacredly ask yourself What have I in the house?”

I have the Grace of God. All that the Father hath is mine. I have been given quietness and confidence and stillness; I have been given My peace. The Father hath breathed His life into me, therefore I have God’s life which is eternal and immortal.

I have that mind in me which was also in Christ Jesus and so I have no human desires and I seek nothing of any man. “I and my Father are one” and I receive all that I require because my Father knoweth my needs and it is His good pleasure to give the kingdom. Because I already have all, I pray only for the opportunity to share that which the Father hath given to me.

Note what transpires in your home, in your business, and in the world as you silently, sacredly, and secretly remind yourself:

Thank God I ask nothing of any man except that we love one another. I ask only the privilege of sharing God’s Allness which is already mine. Why should I look to “man, whose breath is in his nostrils,”¹⁸ when by right of divine Sonship I am heir to all of the heavenly riches?

Do you not see why there is an atmosphere of peace among us? We came here for the purpose of abiding in the presence of God and to tabernacle with the Spirit of God which is within you and within me. We are gathered together to share the spiritual Grace of God, the spiritual Presence of God and that spiritual Love of God. That is why there is peace with us; there can be no such peace where people come to get something. When you sit down to meditate, turn quietly within and realize:

As the branch is one with the tree, as the wave is one with the ocean, so am I one with God. The allness of infinity is pouring Itself forth into expression as my individual being, as my individual consciousness, as my individual life. Having

received the allness of God, I want only to share it.

As you resume your outer activity, you remember to have a ten-second meditation as often as possible, in which to remind yourself:

The Grace of God is upon me. I have spiritual meat and spiritual bread to share with all who are here, and those who accept It will never hunger. I can give to the world spiritual water, and those who accept this living water will never thirst. “I and my Father are one,” and the Father is pouring Its Allness through me, to you, and to this world.

A contemplative meditation has in it something of a back-and-forth nature. You are virtually saying to the Father:

Thank you, Father, that Your Grace is upon me. Thank you, Father, that You have given me Your peace. If I have any hope, or faith, or confidence, Thou hast given it to me. Of my own self I am nothing, so whatever measure of peace, hope, faith and confidence I have is the gift of the Father within me. Thank Thee, for Thy grace, Thy peace, Thy abundance.

You then pause, as if the still small voice were about to speak to you. It is an attitude of “Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth.”¹⁹ If you persist in this way of life, eventually you will discover that the Father will speak to you, and usually in this manner:

Son, I have been with you since before Abraham was. Know you not that “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world”?²⁰ Know you not that “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee”?²¹ If you mount up to heaven, I will be there with you. Turn and recognise Me. Acknowledge Me and you will find Me, even there in hell. If you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not leave you.

Turn within and seek Me. Acknowledge Me in the midst, of you and I will change death into life, age into youth, lack into abundance. Only abide

17 - Matthew 6:4.

18 - Isaiah 2:22.

19 - 1 Samuel 3:9

20 - Matthew 28:20.

21 - Hebrews 13:5.

in this Word and consciously let Me abide in you, Whither do you think you can flee from My Spirit?

Open your consciousness and feel the peace which passeth understanding - here where we are.

My peace give I unto you - My peace. My kingdom, the kingdom of Allness, is established within you. Abide in this Truth and let this Truth abide in you. Consciously remember that the Son of God indwells you and that It is closer to you than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."²² ... I live yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."²³ Let Me, this indwelling Son of God, abide in you.

If you have been led to a spiritual way of life, you will not have the capacity to forget your ten-second meditations and your ten-minute contemplative meditations. If the Spirit of God dwells in you, you will be as unable to go through the hours of the day and night without the conscious remembrance of the presence of God as you would be unable to go without food. As food is necessary to the 'natural man', so the conscious awareness of the presence of God is vital to the spiritual man. Spiritual food is essential to the Son of God.

Silently and secretly make this acknowledgement to your family, to your business acquaintances, and to your neighbours: "I can give you living waters." Witness to what degree this changes the trend of your thought from being the "man of earth" who is always seeking to get something - to being the spiritual Son of God who is motivated by the desire to give and to share. "Ask of Me and I can give you the peace that passeth understanding. I can share with you the indwelling Christ-peace which the Father hath given me."

Witness how this reverses the trend of your life. Whereas the natural man receives not the

22 - Philippians 4:13

23 - Galatians 2:20

things of God because he is too busy receiving the baubles of "this world," the spiritual man is not only always receiving but he is sharing. He is able to discern that these spiritual treasures cannot be hoarded; they must always be expressed and allowed to flow from the within to the without. And so you secretly and sacredly carry them into your home and into your business, and then you take the next step and let them flow to your enemy.

"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."²⁴ If you ask Me, I will give you living waters and you will never thirst again. I will give you meat and you will never again hunger. I am come that you might have life, and that you might have it more abundantly.

As you practice contemplative meditation, think what is pouring through you to this world to help establish peace on earth. There has not been peace on earth because so many individuals have been seeking to get it, and few there are who have sought to bring it, to express it, to share it. If there is to be peace on earth, the Master clearly reveals that I must bring it - and this I is the I of you, the divine Son of you. If there is to be peace in the world, *you* must bring it - just as you brought it here and as you are learning to carry it into your home and into your business activity. Peace is not here until you bring it. What have you in your consciousness?

I have the peace that passeth understanding, and I can carry it wherever I will, wherever I am, because in My presence there is fulfilment. The place whereon I stand is holy ground because Christ dwelleth in me. The indwelling Christ is the fulfilment, and where the Christ is there is peace. Therefore I bring peace to my body, I bring peace and quiet to my mind, and I bring peace, quiet, love, and abundance to you, whoever the "you" may be. I bring to you the Grace of God. Go thou and do likewise!

24 - Luke 23:34.

JNANA AND BHAKTI IN CHRISTIANITY

By Sagittarius

I have been asked to write about *jnana* and *bhakti* in Christianity. The enemy is the ego or self-will; about that all agree. The really sensible thing, therefore, would be to stop writing articles and comparing religions and get down to the practical work of killing it, no matter by what *marga* or through what religion.

Whatever method may be used, in whatever religion, it is fundamentally a method of conquering the ego. That is what should be borne in mind always.

Basically there are two ways of doing this: either to break the ego in so completely that it will run to harness and never again dare to kick its heels up or to take the bit between its teeth and bolt, or to destroy it altogether. The former way is called *bhakti marga* in Hinduism, the latter *jnana marga*. Christ taught both.

He taught *bhakti marga* when he told us to say "Thy will be done." There is still a 'me' and it still has a will, but its will is to be subordinate always and in all things to God's will. This is the way most Christians follow - most Christians who are Christians. In Hinduism it is the way of Ramakrishna, who said: "I don't want to be the honey but to taste the honey" - that is to remain apart from Divine Being in order to enjoy It; of Tukaram, who said "I shall ever desire dual consciousness. Thou shalt ever remain my Lord and I Thy worshipper."

Christ taught *jnana marga* when he said: "The man who wants to save his life will lose it, but the man who loses his life for my sake will find it." There is no question this time of keeping a 'my will' which has to be subordinated to 'Thy

will'. If the life which has the will is to be given up, how can any will remain?

It doesn't really matter which path you follow. Both lead to the same goal. Only arguing which of them is better leads to no goal at all. The path of *bhakti* may lead to the 'mystic union', the uniting of two who still are two, like human lovers; but that doesn't matter, because from there the process will take its own course through its own continued momentum, with no further need for discipline and theory, until he can say with the Christian mystic Jacob Boehme: "God has become that which I am and has made me that which He is."

You can look at it from another angle too and say that *bhakti marga* is the Path of Love and *jnana marga* the Path of Knowledge. The lover remains separate from the Beloved for the joy of loving. That is the attitude of Ramakrishna, of all the great *bhaktas*. Knowledge means the realization that there is no one to remain separate: there just IS.

Christ taught *bhakti marga* when he said that the greatest of the laws of Moses is to love God with all your heart and all your mind and all your soul and all your strength.

He taught *jnana marga* when he said: "You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall liberate you."¹ But the Jews he said it to couldn't take it - 'What truth? What can you liberate us from? Aren't we free already? Don't we follow the orthodox rules of our religion and scripture?' Christians say pretty much the same thing today too. There are not many who can take it.

1 - St. John, VIII, 32

THE SUFI PATH OF LOVE

By Abdullah Qutbuddin

Years ago, when I still occasionally went to a cinema, I saw a Hollywood version of a Mediaeval Islamic town. Suitably repulsive looking beggars were crouching outside a palace wall, crying: “Alms for the love of Allah!” This was a characteristic inaccuracy. In the first place the Name was mispronounced, the first syllable being accentuated instead of the second, and in the second place ‘for the love of Allah’ is not an Islamic phrase. ‘In the name of Allah’ yes, but not ‘for the love of Allah.’

Also the phrase so common to Christian writers that ‘God is love’ is not Islamic. The quality that is equated with God in Islam is rather Truth. Indeed, in the well known story of the Sufi Al Hallaj who was crucified for proclaiming the Supreme Identity while in a state of ecstasy, his actual words were ‘Ana’l Haqq’, meaning “I am the Truth”.

This perhaps reflects the fact that, despite the rigid dualism of exoteric Islam, Advaita is far more widely recognised by the Sufis than by any but the very greatest Christian mystics. Both religions are essentially *bhakti-marga*. Indeed, Indian Sufis, with their methods of ecstatic devotion and invocation of the Divine Name, are practically indistinguishable from Hindu *bhaktas* pining for Krishna, the Divine Lover. The very word ‘Islam’ means ‘submission’. Many Sufi saints, however, comparable in that to Hindu *bhaktas* such as Tukaram or the recent Swami Ramdas, have perceived the truth of Advaita and used its language, although not developing the technique of *jnana-marga*.

Despite theoretical recognition of Advaita, it is the path of love that runs through Sufism, as through Christianity, and the symbolism of lover and Beloved is constantly in use. This does not imply that the quest is a sort of less real reflection

of the physical reality of love. In fact, that would be an inversion of truth. There are, indeed, correspondences between different levels of reality, but it is the higher that is more real and is reflected and symbolised by the lower, not the other way round. If the Divine Ray pierces into the dark and secret place of the soul, creating there the germ of new life which grows unseen amid pain and discomfort until the ‘new man’ springs to life, that is a reality symbolised by, not symbolising, the physical laws of sex.

According to the symbolism used, the human lover seeking the Divine Beloved can appear either as man or woman. Indeed, the two forms of symbolism may be used indiscriminately, since both are true. In Christianity the human soul is traditionally represented, as is the Church itself, as the bride of Christ. There is also, however, the symbolism of the seeker aspiring to be guided and blessed by the Divine Grace symbolised as his Beloved - Dante by Beatrice or the troubadour by his lady who traditionally had to be unattained and unattainable. Parallel to this in Islam is the story of Majnun who goes mad with longing for the dark beauty of Laila, whose name in fact means ‘night’ and who symbolises the dark mystery, the Cloud of Unknowing. More frequently, however, the human soul is represented as female and as pining for the Divine Lover, just as Hindu *bhaktas* are *gopis* seeking the love of Krishna, the Divine cowherd, the flute-player. Also it will be seen that in the Maharshi’s *Marital Garland of Letters to Sri Arunachala* symbolism which might be considered male or female is used indiscriminately. It must be remembered that this was written for the guidance and inspiration of the *bhaktas* among his followers.

The theme of quest for the Divine Lover is far

more widely used in Islamic esoterism than in Christian and is much better attested in literature. Is this partly because few Christian saints and seekers seem to have been poets? In the great ages of Islam the poets were saints and the saints poets. Among the Persians, Hafiz is the greatest lyric poet, perhaps what Shelley or Swinburne is in English, but with the difference that, where in them only an occasional intuition makes some poem of lasting value among much verbal banality, his poems are often of substance which the West, lacking the fire of Divine Love, would consider appropriate rather to the philosopher than the poet,

In Eternity without beginning the radiancy of
Thy beauty glorified in its own splendour;
Love was revealed and its fire set the world
aflame.

Reason desired to kindle its lamp from that
flame of Thy love,
The lightning of jealousy flashed, and the world
was thrown into confusion.

Others staked their fortune on ease and would
riot take up the burden of Love;

We, Thy lovers, were the ones whose hearts,
experienced in grief, staked all on grief and
took up the burden of Love.

Renunciation of the ego is the whole secret,
by whatever path it may be accomplished; and
who should know this better than the lover?
Ansari of Herat writes:

Know that when thou learnest to lose thy self
Thou wilt reach the Beloved.

There is no other secret to be revealed,
And more than this is not known to me.

For the Sufi, love is all-sufficient, as Umar
Khayyam writes:

Although the creeds number some seventy-
three,

I hold with none but that of love of Thee
What matter faith, unfaith, obedience, sin
Thou'rt all in all, the rest is vanity.

From love to Union, from Union to Identity.

The following poem by Shabistari, prosy though it may sound in translation, is removed only by the thinnest of verbal veils from the true and ultimate doctrine of Advaita or Identity.

Union with 'The Truth' is separation for the
creature state,

Friendship with Him is estrangement from self,
When the contingent wipes off the dust of
contingency,

Nothing remains save Necessary Being.

The existence of the two worlds is as a dream,
In the moment of eternity they become naught.
Absolute Being by its own perfection is
pervading all,

Phenomenal objects are mere imaginary things;
Imaginary things are not really existent,
Though the numbers are many, only One is
counted.

In a moment, this world passes away,
None remains in the world save 'The Truth',
At that moment you attain proximity,
You, stripped of self, are 'united' to the
Beloved.¹

The Judaic injunction to love, which Christ reiterated, had two aspects, not only to love God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength, but also to love your neighbour as yourself. On the whole, the God-intoxicated wayfarer has tended to neglect the second of these. Naturally, one who loves God will be filled with goodwill towards all His creatures, but this does not necessarily transform itself into action or constitute an active and prominent part of his *suluk* or path. The ecstatic is not normally a philanthropist, even though he is not an egoist. In Christianity he has often been a monk secluded from society. There is no monasticism in Islam, but the Muslim ecstatic also has seldom been actively preoccupied with human welfare.

Today there is a general tendency to stress the love of one's fellows. In Hinduism it would be

1 - The above quotations are taken from *The Sufi Path of Love, An Anthology of Sufism* compiled by Margaret Smith, Luzac.

called combining the path of *bhakti* with that of *karma*. A striking modern exemplar of this was the recent Hindu saint, Swami Ramdas. During the years of his training, before he became a saint, he wandered about the country with the Name of God always on his lips, but also seeing God manifested in everybody he met, not only those who helped him and were friendly but also in the ticket-collector who ejected him from a train and the bullying policeman who warned him on the icy platform. When a *sadhu* gave him a drinking vessel and another stole it, he cheerfully remarked that Ram in one form had given it and in another had taken it away again.²

I instance this case because of the common objection that the Muslim could not see things this way on account of the strict Islamic doctrine of the impassable gulf between the Creator and

2 - See the two volumes of his early autobiography: *In Quest of God* and *In the Vision of God*, both published by Bhavan's Book University, Bombay.

His creatures. Maybe, but the Sufi, without worrying his head over philosophy or theology, can recall the Quranic saying: "Whichever way you turn, there is the Face of God!" With this saying in his heart he can see Divine Being manifested before him in the cloud-capped mountain, the tall trees and brilliant flowers, but also in the dingy streets, the jostling crowd, the mongrel slinking by. He can see Allah looking at him through the eyes of his beloved, and also try to see him through those of the colleague he was jealous of, the boss he resented, the friend he felt rancour towards. He experiences an outflow of love in which there is no sentiment, no distinction between the worthy and the unworthy. He accepts his environment, pleasant or unpleasant, as God-given, as that which is needful for him, and his fellows, helpful or irksome, as objects for love and commiseration. With this remembrance in his mind and love of God in his heart, what more does he need?

FROM TAYUMANAVAR

By Prof. K. R. R. Sastry

Though living as late as the 18th Century, Tayumanavar was one of the greatest of all the Tamil poet-saints. Bhagavan often used to quote him. He wrote pure Advaita. The following lines show how it could be combined with a spirit of *bhakti*.

I cannot worship at Thy shrine
Or to Thy holy symbols bow;
I cannot pluck the flowers for offering
When in each flower's heart, art Thou.
How can I press my palms together,
My body bent to worship Thee,
How my imperfect service offer.

When Thou indwellest, Lord, in me?

Thou art the vastness of the Void,
The elements, the primal sound,
The Vedas and the quest they bring,
The Goal beyond all seeking found.
Thou art the quest and Thou the finding,
Thou of all seeing art the Sight,
Of knowing, Thou alone the Knowledge,
Of mind and eye the inner Light,
The outer word and inner meaning,
The vocal and the silent Call.
Oh Source of Grace in joy past thinking,
Lone cosmic Dancer in High Wisdom's hall!

THE ESSENTIAL IDENTITY

I

By Wei Wu Wei

“By jointly discussing noumenon and phenomenon, one reaches the highest consciousness and creates right understanding among sentient beings.” (Fa-tsang, 642-712, founder of the Hua-yen Sect of Buddhism, based on the Avatamsaka Sutra).

‘Positive’ is not positive without ‘negative’, and ‘negative’ is not negative without ‘positive’. Therefore they can only be two halves of one whole, two conceptual aspects of one whole that as a whole, cannot be conceived - precisely because it is this which seeks to conceive.

‘Being’ cannot be without ‘non-being’, and ‘non-being’ cannot not be without ‘being’. Therefore they can only be two conceptual aspects of one whole that as such cannot be conceived - in which there is neither being nor non-being as objective existences.

‘Appearance’ (form) cannot appear without ‘void’ (voidness of appearance), and ‘void’ cannot be voidness of appearance without ‘appearance’. Therefore they must be two conceptual aspects of what is objectively inconceivable - as which their identity is absolute in non-objectivity.

‘Subject’ has no conceptual existence apart from ‘object’ nor ‘object’ apart from ‘subject’. They, too, are twin spinning aspects of the inconceivable in which they are inevitably reunited.

Where there is neither positive nor negative, being nor non-being, appearance nor void, subject nor object, there must be identity. But identity cannot perceive itself, and that is what we are. That is why only he who does not know can speak, and why he who knows cannot speak — for what-he-is cannot be an object of what-he-is, and so cannot be perceived or described.

Positive and negative, being and non-being,

appearance and void, subject and object, can be conceived by us because as ‘us’ mind is divided into subject-conceiving and object-conceived but, re-identified with what they are, we are their total objective absence - which is thought of as pure undivided mind.

“That alone is true Knowledge which is neither knowledge nor ignorance. What is known is not true Knowledge. Since the Self shines with nothing else to know or to make known, It, alone is Knowledge. It is not a void.”*

‘Space’ is a static three-dimensional concept, of which ‘time’ is the active counterpart, whose functioning constitutes a further direction of measurement. Space cannot be conceived without time (duration), nor time without space (extension). Two conceptual aspects of a unity that is inconceivable; given the name of ‘space-time’, their identity is absolute in non-conceptuality. Unaccompanied by them, phenomena cannot be extended in appearance, and only as their noumenal source can be assumed to be.

‘Phenomena’ cannot be such without ‘noumenon’ nor ‘noumenon’ without ‘phenomena’. Therefore conceptually they also are two aspects of non-conceptuality. Phenomena, being no things in themselves (devoid of self-nature) yet are everything, and noumenon, being the source of everything, yet is no thing. Everything, then, is both, and neither is any thing: eternally separate as concepts, they

* Ramana Maharshi’s *Forty Verses* - V 12.

are forever inseparable unconceived, and that identity is the essential understanding.

That is what the universe is in so far as its nature can be suggested in words. The universe

is inconceivable because what it is, is what we are, and what we are is what the universe is—and that is total absence cognitively which, uncognised, necessarily subsists as total presence.

II

“If it is said, that Liberation is of three kinds, with form or without form or with and without form, then let me tell you that the extinction of the three forms of Liberation is the only true Liberation.”

Ramana Maharshi's *Forty Verses* - V. 40.

We cannot use mind to transcend mind: therefore noumenon (which is the abstract of mind) represents the limit of possible cognition.

‘Noumenon’ necessarily is total potentiality. If it functions, in functioning it must be subjective, and thereby inevitably objective also. That is to say, subject objectivises itself and so becomes apparent to itself as object, manifesting phenomenally ‘within’ itself. It looks at itself and perceives the universe - which is then apparently outside itself, since objectivisation is a process of apparent exteriorisation.

Therefore the phenomenal universe is the objective aspect of noumenon.

This process comports the appearance of space and duration, without which objects could not have the necessary extension - and without their extension there could be no cognition.

Phenomena, therefore, are not something projected by noumenon: *they are the appearance of noumenon* - or noumenon rendered objective and apparent.

This functioning is what sentient beings are, and *that* extension in space-time is what we know as manifestation. In *that* appearance - like all phenomena, of which our appearance is an aspect we have no nature of our own, but in *this* functioning (which is our nature) *noumenality and*

phenomenality are identical.

This is why, thus manifested, *we are not* as such (phenomenally), and why *we are as* phenomenal noumenality (or noumenal phenomenality). Thus there is no duality in what we are, but only an apparent autonomous functioning which is the manifesting of non-manifestation.

No entity is involved in what we are, for ‘entity’ is a phenomenal concept - and every object, material or conceptual, that is phenomenal, is devoid of nature (*is not*). When the autonomous functioning, which is all that we are in manifestation, no longer functions, *i.e.*, when it no longer extends itself in an apparent space-time continuum, this-which-we-are remains totally integrated in noumenality.

Noumenality as such cannot be recorded. What ‘noumenality’ represents neither is nor is not. It is necessarily incognisable, because totally devoid of objective quality, as mirrorness is, and because it is precisely what we are, and absolutely all that we are, whether non-manifested or in apparent manifestation.

Yet the final word be with Huang-Po:

“There is no difference between sentient beings and Buddhas, or between *Samsara* and *Nirvana* or between delusion and *bodhi*. When all such forms are abandoned there is the Buddha.”

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

IV

By Dilip Kumar Roy

Dilip Kumar Roy is known throughout India as a famous singer, apart from which he himself composes songs and writes poems, especially devotional songs and poems to Sri Krishna. For many years he was an inmate of Sri Aurobindo Ashram at Pondicherry. Now he is the head of the Hari Krishna Mandir at Poona where, aided by his foremost disciple, Indira Devi, he acts as guru to the many Krishna bhaktas who come. This account of his visit to the Maharshi is taken on his own invitation, from his book The Flute Calls Still, reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

It happened in 1945, I think. I was still living as an inmate of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, even though I had come to feel a growing sense of isolation and begun to surmise that I was a misfit there. My sadness and sense of dereliction only deepened with time till what little peace I had left me completely and I felt all but stranded. But I need not go into the why and wherefore of it all; I would plunge straight into what keeps me company as one of the most unforgettable experiences I have ever had. It does, as it was a landmark in my life.

After having been for weeks in the grip of a deep gloom, I... wrote straight to Sri Aurobindo. He wrote back at once giving me the needed permission, which I deeply appreciated.

I took the train to Tiruvannamalai where Ramana Maharshi lived. But as the train rolled on I felt a deep and growing malaise ... How could I win the needed peace at the feet of one who was not my Guru when I could not attain it at the feet of my revered Guru, Sri Aurobindo, whose wisdom and greatness my heart had never once questioned.

Well, I alighted at the station in a mixed frame of mind...

But it was too late then, for I was already at the gates of Ramanashram. How could I return now, after having crossed the Rubicon? Besides, I was driven by an irresistible urge to meet in the flesh the great Yogi who - unlike my own preceptor,



Sri Aurobindo - was available to all at all hours. And, to crown all, I wanted to test the Maharshi for myself and see whether he, with his magic compassion, could lift me out of the deep slough I had landed in.

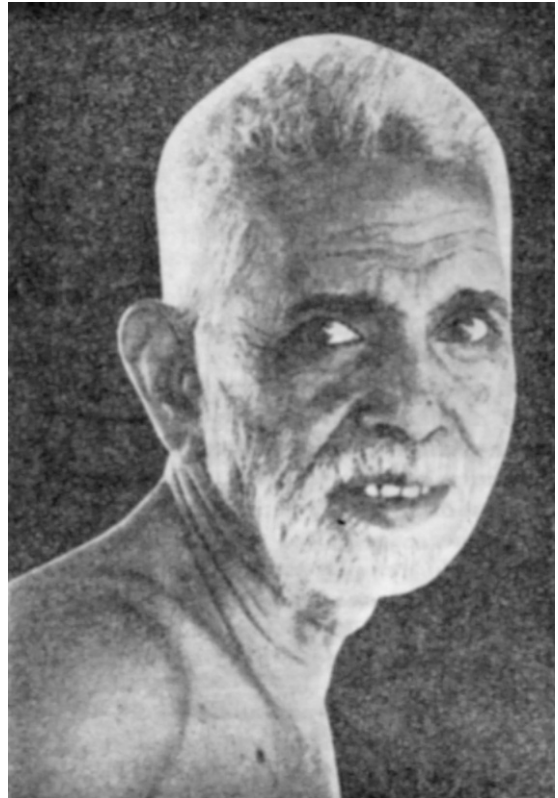
But he did, and against my worst prognostications at that, so that I could not possibly explain it away as a figment of autosuggestion. I mean - if there were any autosuggestion here it could only be against and not in favour of my receiving the goods. But, as the Lord's ways are not ours, I won an experience I could never even have dreamed of. So listen with bated breath.

I can still recapture the thrill of the apocalyptic experience that came to me to charm away as it

were the obstinate gloom which had settled on my chest like an incubus. But, alas, words seem so utterly pale and banal the moment you want to describe an authentic spiritual experience which is vivid, throbbing and intense. Still I must try.

I entered a trifle diffidently a big, bare hall where the Maharshi reclined morning and evening among his devotees and the visitors who happened to call. Accessible to all, the great saint sat on a divan looking straight in front at nothing at all. I was told he lived thus all the time, in *sahaja samadhi*, that is a constant super-conscious state. I was indeed fascinated by what I saw, but I will not even attempt to portray with words how overwhelmed I was (and why) by what met my eyes. For what is it after all that I saw? Just a thin, half-naked man, sitting silently, gazing with glazed eyes at the window. Yet there was something in him that spoke to me - an indefinable beauty of poise and a plenitude that cannot be limned with words. I wrote afterwards a poem¹ on him that may give a better idea, but I must not get ahead of my story.

I touched his feet and then, without a word, sat down near him on the floor and meditated, my heart aheave with a strange exaltation which deepened by and by into an ineffable peace which beggars description. My month-old gloom and misgivings, doubts and questionings, melted away like mist before sunrise, till I felt I was being cradled on the crest of a flawless peace in a vast ocean of felicity and light. I have to use superlatives here as I am trying to describe as best I can my experience of an ineffable bliss and peace which lasted for hours and hours. I can well remember how deep was the gratefulness I felt towards the



Maharshi on that sleepless and restful night as I reclined, bathed in peace, in an easy chair under the stars at which I gazed and gazed in an ecstasy of tears. And I recalled a pregnant saying of his: "Just be. All is in you. Only a veil stands between. You have only to rend the veil and then, well, just be."

I had found this favourite remark of his rather cryptic heretofore. But in that moment I understood for the first time and wrote a poem in homage to the Maharshi.¹

¹ - This poem has already been published in *The Mountain Path* of April 1964, p, 87.

THE NAME

In most religions (though not in Christianity) invocation of the Divine Name is one of the most important techniques of bhakti marga, that is of the path of devotion and submission. The following passage in praise of it is taken from Namdev, one of the great Maratha poet-saints of the 13th and 14th Centuries, In his youth he was a bandit and murderer. One day he came upon a young mother comforting her fatherless child and with sudden horror it flashed on him that it was he who had slain the father. In violent remorse he rushed to the nearby temple and tried to commit suicide, but he was prevented. He then vowed the rest of his life to penance and worship. He became an ecstatic bhakta and a saint.

All-pervading

The Name permeates everywhere from the heavens to the lowest regions of the entire universe. Who can tell to what depths in the nether regions and to what height in the heavens it extends? The ignorant undergo endless types of rebirth without knowing the Essence. The Name is immortal, says Namdev. Forms are innumerable but the Name is all.

The Name itself is form, and form is the Name. There is no distinction between Name and form. Becoming manifest, God assumed Name and form. Thus the Name and the *Vedas* were established. Remember that there is no *mantra* beyond the Name. Those who say otherwise are ignorant. The Name is God Himself says Namdev. This is known only to loving devotees of the Lord.

The all-pervading nature of the Name can be understood only when one realizes his Self. As long as one's own name is unrecognised it is impossible to grasp the all-pervading Name. When one knows one's Self one finds the Name everywhere. To consider the Name different from the Named creates illusion. Ask the Saints, says Namdev.

None can realize the Name by the practice of Knowledge (*Jnana*), meditation or austerity (*tapas*), Surrender yourself first at the feet of the Guru and learn to know that the 'I' itself is the Name. After finding the source of that 'I', merge your individuality in that Oneness which is Self-existent and devoid of all duality, that which pervades beyond all duality. The Name has come into the three worlds. It is Parabrahman Itself, where there is no action arising out of duality.

Namdev's Enlightenment

This was read out before Bhagavan, in the hall and he said: "Namdev must have written this after he had obtained full Realization on touching the feet of Vishobakesar." The point of this remark is that for a long time Namdev, although a saint and an ecstatic, was not fully realized. He worshipped God under the name, of Vithoba (as is common in Maharashtra), and so intense was his devotion that the image of God in the temple used to come to life for him and speak to him as a friend. This sort of manifestation is apt to occur for the ecstatic bhakta. A modern example, is Sri Ramakrishna, for whom the image of the Mother, Kali, came alive.

Bhagavan continued with the following story of Namdev's final Enlightenment.

Gora, another saint, who was a potter by trade, held a feast to which he invited the saints, including Namdev and Jnanadev. In the hope of enlightening Namdev, Jnanadev said to Gora: "Your job is making pots. You daily test them to see which are properly baked and which are not. There sitting in front of you are the pots of God, so test them to see which are sound." Gora, who had been told privately of the purpose of the test, agreed and, taking up the stick with which he used to test his pots, went round among his guests, tapping each one on the head. They all submitted meekly till he came to Namdev, who cried out indignantly "What do you mean, potter by coming to tap me with your stick?" Gora thereupon replied to Jnanadev: "All the other pots are properly baked; only this one is not yet baked."

At this everyone burst out laughing, Namdev

was so humiliated that he got up and rushed out of the house straight to the temple of Vithoba where he complained bitterly, crying out: “Am I not your child and your closest friend? How could you let such a humiliation befall me?”

Vithoba appeared before him as usual and seemed to sympathise, but then said Why could you not sit quiet and submit to the tapping, like all the others? Then there would have been no trouble.”

At this Namdev became still more upset and cried: “You too want to humiliate me! Why should I submit? Am I not your child?”

Vithoba then said: “You have not yet understood and even if I tell you you won’t. But go to such and such a ruined temple in the forest and there you will find a saint who will be able to give you Enlightenment.”

Namdev went to the forest, as he was told, and when he reached the ruined temple he found a simple old man lying asleep there with his feet resting on a Siva-lingam. He could hardly believe that this was the man from whom he, the chosen friend of Vithoba, was to obtain Enlightenment. However, as there was no one else there, he went up to him and clapped his hands to wake him. The old man woke with a start and, seeing him, said: “Oh, so you are the Namdev whom Vithoba has sent here.”

At this Namdev was taken aback and began to think that this must be a man of power to know his name and why he had come. Still, man of power or not, he had no right to rest his feet on a *lingam*, he thought; and he told the old man so.

“Oh, are my feet on a *lingam*?” the old man said; “All right, put them somewhere else.”

So Namdev, out of reverence for the *lingam*, moved them to another spot. There too a Siva-lingam sprang up, and so in one place after another, whatever place he put them. Finally he sat down and took them in his lap, and he himself became a Siva-lingam. And at that moment Enlightenment dawned on him.

After this Namdev returned home. For some

days he did not go to the temple at all, although it had been his habit to go there daily and spend most of the day there with Vithoba. After a few days Vithoba appeared before him in his house and asked, apparently guileless, why he had forgotten to visit him.

“No more fooling me now,” Namdev replied. “I know now. Is there any place where You are not? Do I need to go to the temple to be with You? Do I exist apart from You?”

“Yes, now you understand,” Vithoba said.

Commenting on this story, Bhagavan said: “It is to be noted that it was only when he surrendered and touched the feet of the Guru that he obtained Enlightenment.”

Verily, the Name is God Himself.

In modern times Swami Ramdas also, like most bhaktas, prescribed the invocation of the Name. The following is an article about it that he distributed privately among his disciples. It is printed here with the kind permission of Mataji.

God and His Name are not distinct from one another. Name is God Himself. The moment we think of the Name our mind is filled with the presence of God. There is no easier way of focussing thought upon God than taking constantly His Name. When we repeat the Name aloud, we feel our heart is flooded with the ecstasy of love, because the sound of the Divine Name awakens the heart to the bliss and love of God.

Although mental repetition of the Name is held to be far more efficacious than the verbal repetition, still the rare experience of sweetness and joy derived by uttering the Name aloud is incomparable. When the entire being of the devotee thrills with rapture to the music of the Name he realizes that the Name is Brahman.

God is both manifest and unmanifest. The Name stands for such a God. Here the unmanifest is the all-pervading, infinite, immutable, tranquil and static spirit of God. The manifest is the entire universe of name, form and movement with all its beings, creatures and things. The Name stands

for this all-inclusive and all-transcendent Godhead, who is both personal and impersonal.

The Divine Name is thus the beginningless source of all creation and the creation itself. God, the absolute, is the nameless Name.

The Name can free the soul from bondage. The Name can take it to the highest consummation of spiritual life. The Name can grant a blind soul Divine sight. The Name can bless an individual with a universal vision full of sublimity. The Name can lift the soul to inconceivable heights of God-realization.

Love, Light, Power and Joy

The power of the Name is invincible. A mind which is considered to be unconquerable, by the soothing influence of the Name becomes docile, yielding and submissive. The mind itself is transformed into God by the power of the Name. He who takes refuge in the Name can work wonders. Death itself will stand in awe of him. He can command all the forces of nature and direct them to bring about a spiritual awakening in the hearts of men. The Name can make a human being an embodiment of eternal love and joy. The Name can convert an individual into a Cosmic Reality - an ignorant soul into a very God.

Where the Name of God is sung, the atmosphere is permeated with purity, peace and bliss; for the symphony of the Name spreads everywhere the splendour of love.

The Name is all-sufficient. The utterance of it is itself meditation. The ecstasy born of it is itself *Samadhi*. The Name is love, light, power and joy.

The writer can vouch for it from his own experience that the Name by itself without any other *sadhana* can grant one the fullest vision of God everywhere and may merge him in an ocean of never-ending love and joy.

There is no *sadhana* which can be so universally adopted by all people and is at the same time so simple for realizing God as the Divine Name. It is perfectly true, in the words of a saint, that he who has God's Name, always on his tongue is a *Jivanmukta*, or a liberated soul.

So, dear friends, to whatever race, caste, creed or colour you may belong, take up the Name of God, and feel the sweet communion with it, and you may depend upon it, your souls through constant bathing in the nectar of the Name will not only be purified but will also be illumined with the omnipresent and omniscient light and love of God. This practice of taking the Name will lead the unyielding spirit of man to complete surrender to the omnipotent power and will of God. In the earlier stages when the Name is repeated with earnestness, faith and concentration, the face and the body of the devotee will shine with a peculiar lustre, his mind will be filled with wisdom and heart with love. This is due to predominance of *Satva Guna* in the devotee. Later when the repetition is continued with the same zeal, he will behold the universe before him as the very expression of God. Becoming one with God, he will have the vision of God everywhere.

Cure for desires

In Islam, as one would expect from a religion whose very name denotes 'submission' no technique is more prized than invocation of the Divine Name.

"The food and drink of the saint is remembrance of the Name of the Lord," said Abu'l Hasan.

Al-Ghazali, the great theologian, said: "What the slave of God derives from His Name is deification, by which I mean that his heart and purpose are drowned in God and he sees none other."

"Recital of the Name is a certain cure for all desires," said Dhu'n Nun Misri; "Whoever hears it faithfully finds the way to God."

Bestows Divine Wisdom

For the Sikhs also there is no more potent technique than invocation of the Divine Name, as the following hymn from the Granth Sahib shows.

Hearkening to the Name bestows
Truth, divine wisdom, contentment.
To bathe in the joy of the Name

Is to bathe in the holy places.
 By hearing the Name and reading it
 A man attains to honour.
 By hearkening the mind may reach
 The highest blissful poise
 Of meditation on God.
 Saith Nanak, the saints are always happy
 By hearkening to the Name
 Sorrow and sin are destroyed.¹

Buddhism is the most impersonal of religions. Its essential and original teaching seems to have no place for a Path of devotion or for personal worship. In the Pure Land School, however, in

*China and Japan, Mahayana Buddhism has developed such a Path for those who need it. A passage in Zendo's Commentary on the Pure Land Sutras runs as follows: "Only repeat the name of Amitabha with all your heart, whether walking or standing, sitting or lying; never cease the practice of it for a moment. This is the work which unfailingly issues in salvation, for it is in accordance with the original vow of Amida Buddha." It was on the basis of this instruction Honen founded the Japanese School of Jodo.*²

1- *The Sacred Writings of the Sikhs*, p. 34, Allen & Unwin.

2 - *Buddhism*. 162. by Christmas Humphreys. Cassell.

LETTERS TO A BROTHER—IV

SAMADHI

By Nagamma

This morning a European who was sitting in front of Bhagavan said through an interpreter: "It is stated in the *Mandukyopanishad* that there can be no *Moksha* (Liberation), however much *dhyana* (meditation) or *tapas* (austerity) is performed, unless *samadhi* also is experienced. Is that so?"

Bhagavan replied: "Rightly understood, they are the same thing. It makes no difference whether you call it *dhyana* or *tapas* or *samadhi* or anything else. That which is steady and continuous like the flow of oil is *tapas* and *dhyana* and *samadhi*. To be one's own Self is *samadhi*."

Questioner: But it is said in the *Mandukya* that *samadhi* must necessarily be experienced before attaining *Moksha*.

Bhagavan: "And who says it 'is not so'? It is stated - not only in the *Mandukya* but all the books. But it is true *samadhi* only if you know yourself. What is the use of sitting still for some time like a lifeless object? Suppose you get a boil on your hand and have it operated under chloroform: you don't feel any pain at the time, but does that mean that you are in *samadhi*? It is the same with this too. One has to know what *samadhi* is. And how can you know *samadhi* without knowing your Self? If the Self is known, *samadhi* will be known automatically.

Meanwhile¹ a Tamil devotee opened the *Tiruvachakam* and began singing the 'Ten Songs on Pursuit'. Towards the end comes the passage: "Oh Ishvara,³ You are trying to flee but I am holding You fast. So where can You go and how can You escape from me?" Bhagavan commented with a smile: "So it seems that He is trying to flee and they are holding Him fast! Where could He flee to? Where is He not present? Who is He? All this is nothing but a pageant. There is another sequence of ten songs in the same book, one of which goes: 'Oh my God! You have made my mind Your abode. You have given Yourself up to me and in return have taken me into You. Lord, which of us is the cleverer? If You are given up to me I enjoy endless bliss, but what use am I to you, even though You take me? My Father and God, what have I to give You when You have made my body Your temple in Your boundless mercy to me?' This means that there is no such thing as 'I'. See the beauty of it. Where there is no such thing as 'I' who is the doer and what is done, whether it be devotion or Self-enquiry or *samadhi*?"

2 - There was an informal atmosphere in the hall and it might well happen that someone would start to sing while someone else was talking. (Editor).

3 - Ishvara signifies the Personal God. (Editor).

CH'AN MASTER HSU YUN (1840-1959)

By Upasaka Lu K'uan Yu

(Charles Luk)

Each issue of 'The Mountain Path' up to now has carried an article on some saint or guru. The previous two have been Hindu saints. With the abrupt manner one associates with a Zen Master this time we present a Zen (or in Chinese, Ch'an) Master with the combined strength and gentleness one often finds in a Hindu Swami. The author of this article, Lu K'uan Yu to give him his Chinese name, is well known to students of Zen for his three-volume work 'Ch'an and Zen Teaching' and his more recent 'The Secrets of Chinese Meditation' reviewed in this issue (both published by Rider & Co. London). Himself a disciple of Hsu Yun, he is well qualified to write about him.

Ch'an Master Hsu Yun was born on 26th April 1840 at Chuanchowfu in Fukien province. His father was an official of the prefecture and his mother died immediately after giving birth to him. His uncle was childless and adopted him as his heir; so his grandmother decided that he should take two wives to continue both families.

When he was 11, his grandmother died and monks were invited to perform Buddhist rites. This was the first time he saw monks or sacred objects and it made him very happy. After this he read the *sutras* which deeply impressed him. When his uncle took him on pilgrimage to Nanyo, he became so attached to the holy place that he was reluctant to return home. When he was 14, his father discovered that he wanted to renounce the world and, in order to keep him, engaged a Taoist to teach him meditation. After practising Taoism for three years, he decided that its teaching failed to reach the ultimate goal. One day he fled to Nanyo but was soon found and brought home. Some time later his father sent for the two girls and celebrated Hsu Yun's marriage. Although the latter lived with his two wives, he had no intercourse with them but taught them the *Dharma*, which they understood.



to Kushan monastery at Fuchow where his head was shaved, and here he followed the Master Miao Lien and received full ordination. After being ordained, his cousin left in search of enlightened masters but was never heard of again. Hearing that his father had sent servants to look for him, Hsu Yun hid in a grotto behind the monastery where he practised austerities for the next three years. At 25 he learned that his father had died in Hunan province and that his stepmother with his two wives had entered a nunnery.

At 19, together with his cousin Fu Kuo, he fled

During these years in the grotto, he made

very good progress and had most interesting experiences. He says in his autobiography: "I was able to make my heart content and became free to go anywhere I wanted. As there were mountains to stay on and herbs to eat, I started wandering from place to place." At 31, he went to Wenchow where he met a monk who urged him to call on the old master Yung Ching who was well-versed in both teaching and Ch'an transmission. This master urged him to resume eating rice and to use the Kung An (*koan*) "Who is dragging this corpse of mine?" and ordered him to study the Ch'an rules, the Lotus teaching and other important *sutras*. From 36 to 43 he went on a pilgrimage to P'u T'o island off Ningpo, which was the *bodhimandala* of Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, thence to the monastery of King Asoka at Ningpo and to many other holy places where he called on well-known masters and made good progress in his Ch'an practice.

At 43, he took stock of his achievements which were not complete and remembering how he had sacrificed his love for his parents in order to join the *Sangha*, he was ashamed that he had attained so little. In order to repay his debt of gratitude to them, he decided on a long pilgrimage from P'u T'o to the Five-Peaked Mountain (the *bodhimandala* of Manjusri) in the North-west to pray for their rebirth in the Pure Land. From the thatched temple of Fa Hua on P'u T'o island, he set out with incense sticks in his hands, prostrating himself every three paces until he reached his destination.

In his long walk with prostration at every third step and concentration on repeating Manjusri's name, he succeeded in realizing singleness of thought which was the key to his subsequent success in Ch'an training. Twice he was in danger of death and twice he

was saved by Manjusri who appeared as a beggar called Wen Chi to hide his identity, instead of Wen Shu as he was called in China. The first time he had been caught in a heavy snowstorm and was very hungry, tired and exhausted for several days after which he was given some yellow rice gruel which brought him back to life. Later he caught malaria and dysentery and was dying in a deserted temple on the top of a mountain when the beggar appeared again to give him the hot water and medicine that saved him. Chi asked several questions which Hsu Yun did not understand and could not answer because he was still unenlightened and did not understand the living meaning of Ch'an dialogue (Japanese, *mondo*). Although he was told by the beggar that the latter was known in every monastery on the Five-Peaked Mountain, when he arrived there and asked the monks about Wen Chi no one knew him. Later he mentioned the incident to an elderly abbot who brought his palms together and said: "That beggar was the transformation body of Manjusri Bodhisattva." Only then did the master realize that he had actually met the Bodhisattva who had saved him twice on the long journey.

After sitting in meditation, he paid reverence to the Bodhisattva on the Five-Peaked Mountain, thus fulfilling his vow taken three years before to pray for the liberation of his parents. During this long journey, which took three years, he succeeded in realizing singleness of mind (*i.e.*, the pure and undisturbed mind) even in the midst of hardship, adversity, illness and danger. On the mountain he saw, as many other pilgrims including devotees from foreign countries have done, balls of light dancing from one peak to another.

The master then went west and south,

passing through many holy places where he paid reverence and sat in meditation until he reached the holy site of Samantabhadra Bodhisattva on mount O Mei in West Szechwan. There he saw at night countless Buddha-lights, like a constellation of bright stars in the sky. He continued his westward journey and entered Tibet where he visited the Potala, the seat of the Dalai Lama, and that of the Panchen Lama at Tashi Lunpo monastery. He then left Tibet to visit the holy sites of India, after which he crossed to sea to Ceylon, and thence to Burma. He then returned to China where he first visited the Cock's Foot Mountain in Yunnan which was the *bodhimandala* of Mahakasyapa, and then passed through the provinces of Kweichow, Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsi and Anhwei. In his autobiography the master wrote of these two years of travel: "The scenery changed every day but my pure mind was like a bright moon hanging solitarily in the sky. My health grew more robust and my steps were rapid."

In his 54th and 55th years, the master stayed on a mountain to read the *tripitaka*. At 56, he was invited to the famous monastery of Gao Ming at Yangehow to assist its abbot in supervising the twelve weeks of Ch'an meditation. On his way to Yangehow, he slipped and fell into a rising river and was caught in a fisherman's net. He was carried to a nearby temple where he was revived. He was very ill but went on to Kao Ming monastery where he was asked to help at the forthcoming meditation weeks. Without disclosing his illness, he politely declined the abbot's request, asking only to be allowed to attend the meditation meetings. His refusal was regarded as an affront to the whole community and, according to Kao Ming's rules of discipline, he was punished by being beaten

with a wooden ruler. As the master was practising the relinquishment of attachment to ego, ksanti-paramita and virya-paramita, he willingly accepted this punishment which aggravated his illness. In order to cure it, he sat firmly in the meditation hall day and night with increasing zeal. He said in his autobiography: "In the purity of my singleness of mind, I forgot all about my body. Twenty days later my illness vanished completely. From that moment, with all my thoughts entirely wiped out, my practice took effect throughout the day and night. My steps were as swift as if I was flying in the air. One evening, after meditation, I opened my eyes and suddenly saw I was in brightness similar to broad daylight in which I could see everything within and without the monastery ..." Knowing that he had only achieved an advanced but not the final stage, he refused to cling to it, resolving to wipe out the final hindrance caused by his last subtle attachment to ego and *Dharma*. One night when the meditation ended after six successive incense sticks had been burned, a monk came to fill his cup of tea. As the boiling water splashed over his hand, he dropped the cup, which fell to the ground and broke with a sound which was heard by his pure mind¹ that was now able to perform its non-discriminating function of perceiving externals. Instantly he cut off his last link with *samsara* and rejoiced at his realization of the Absolute. He wrote in his autobiography: "I was like someone awaking from a dream" which meant that he had leaped over the worldly stream to the other shore of Bodhi. He then chanted the following two *gathas*:

1

A cup fell to the ground
With a sound clearly heard.
As space was pulverised,
The mad mind came to a stop.

1 - 'Pure mind' is a technical term for the innate primordial intellect.

When the hand released its hold, the cup fell
and was shattered,
'Tis hard to talk when the family breaks up or
someone dies.
Spring comes with fragrant flowers exuberating
everywhere;
Mountains, rivers and the great earth are only
the Tathagata.

After his own enlightenment, the master immediately began his Bodhisattva work of guiding others out of the sea of suffering. His first act was to pray to the Buddha for the liberation of his mother whom he had never seen. Previously he had taken the vow to go to the monastery of King Asoka at Ningpo to pay reverence to the Buddha's relics and to burn off there one of his fingers as his offering to the Buddha for her liberation. Each day he prostrated three thousand times and increased the number until he ached all over and was seriously ill. He became so weak that the chief monk did not approve of his burning a finger on account of the risk involved. The master burst into a flood of tears and finally the superintendent of the monastery and another monk agreed to assist him in fulfilling his vow. He was helped to the main hall where together with the assembly, he paid reverence to the Buddha, performed the ritual and recited the text of the rules of repentance and reform. He wrote later: "With singleness of mind, I repeated the Buddha's name and prayed Him to liberate my affectionate mother. At the beginning I felt pain, but as gradually my mind became pure, my awakening wisdom manifested clearly ... When my finger had burned off, I arose to bow down before the

Buddha. I did not need others to support me and entirely forgot my illness. After walking unaided to present my thanks to the assembly, I returned to the sick bay. Everyone present was surprised at my transformation, and I moved out of the hut for sick monks."

From then until his death, the master performed his Bodhisattva work by expounding *sutras*, transmitting the precepts, reconstructing many temples that had fallen in ruins, building new ones and starting seminaries for novices, Buddhist associations for lay men and free Buddhist schools for children. His field of activities was not confined to China but also included Burma, Thailand, Malaya, Singapore and Hong Kong where the number of his disciples could not be counted.

In the course of this Bodhisattva work, the master survived dangers, illnesses, poisoning, beating, torture and persecution. A translation of his autobiography is being published by instalments in *World Buddhism*, a monthly journal published in Dehiwela, Ceylon. Before passing away on 13th October 1959, the master said to his attendant: "After my death and cremation, please mix my ashes with sugar, flour and oil, knead all this into nine balls and throw them into the river as an offering to living beings in the water. If you help me to fulfil my vow, I shall thank you for ever."

Hsu Yun in his extreme old age had chosen hardship and suffering to protect the Buddha *Dharma* in his country instead of seeking safety across the water in Hong Kong.

INTRODUCING MURUGANAR

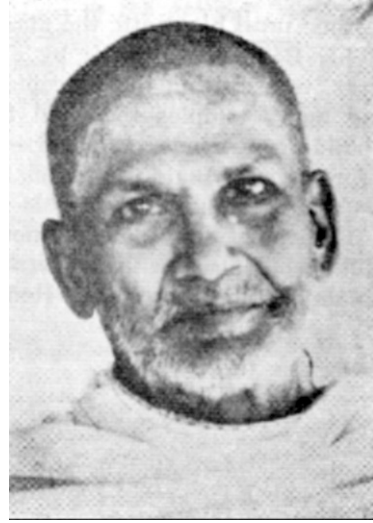
We have decided in each issue of The Mountain Path to introduce one or more of Bhagavan's devotees to our readers, so as to increase the feeling of personal fellowship between those who approach from a distance and those who, whether resident here or not, are known devotees of Bhagavan. To start the series we are here giving an account of the austere devotee and eminent Tamil poet Muruganar.

Among the devotees of Bhagavan, Muruganar, the poet, holds a specially honoured place. In Tamil Nadu the connection between poetry and sanctity has been close and continuous down the centuries. *Periapuranam*, the story in verse of the sixty-three Saivite Saints - many of them poets - was a favourite of Bhagavan's in his boyhood; and in drawing Muruganar to himself the seer was only helping to preserve an ancient tradition.

Born in 1895, Sri C. K. Subrahmanyam grew up in an atmosphere of Tamil learning and became in due course a teacher of Tamil in a High School. His first collection of poems, *Swatantra-Gitam*, owed much to his ardent admiration of Gandhiji and, like the early work of his elder contemporary, Subrahmanya Bharati, formed a distinct contribution to the national movement.

But when he came to Bhagavan and fell under his spell, he renounced all other interests, completely effaced his personality and turned into "a shadow of Bhagavan." And he has lived ever since in a state of stark simplicity, utterly poor and obscure. In thus losing the world to find Bhagavan, he has found a joy to utter and a voice to utter it which have given him a high and assured place among the immortal singer-saints of Tamil Nadu. This sudden and complete change in the poems and in the manner of his utterance, the marvellously sustained and infinitely varied beauty of the enormous bulk of his verse on a single theme, constitutes an undoubted 'miracle' wrought by Bhagavan, permanently there for all eyes to behold.

Muruganar was content with composing his



poems and having them read by Bhagavan. For him there was no 'wider public' to whose notice they should be brought. Thus it fell to an admirer, Sri Ramana Padananda, to arrange for the printing and publication of six volumes of Muruganar's poems.

The status of Muruganar as a poet is as yet known only to a small circle. It is given to few to appreciate the architectonics, the prosodic virtuosity and the wealth of mythological and metaphysical suggestion in the songs of this most scholarly poet; and it is given to fewer still to recognise in them the modulated echoes of the Master's vibrant silence. But discerning critics like Sri V. S. Chengalvaroya Pillai and Mr. Justice M. Ananthanarayanan have not hesitated to compare him with St. Manikkavachagar.

In practising the Presence of Bhagavan under the terms of Muruganar's images and rhythms,

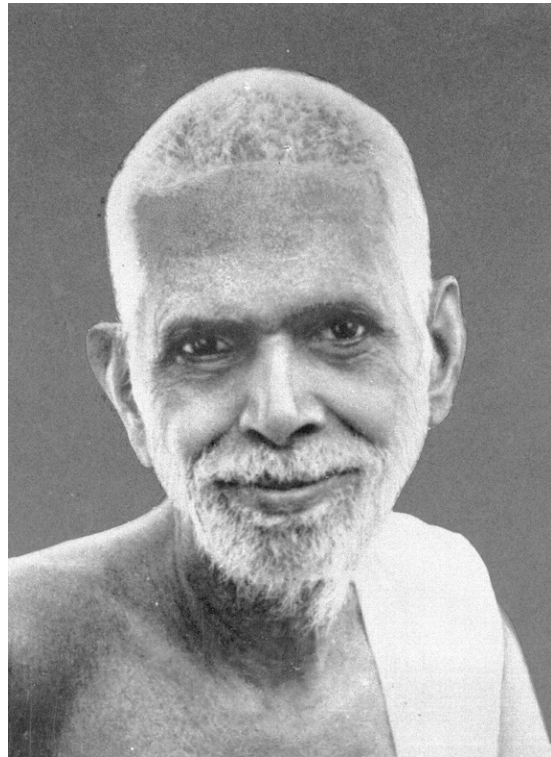
one enters into intensely felt relations with the Guru who figures in various roles of Siva or Subrahmanya, as father, mother or lover, as master, king or commander, as beggar or betrayer. Each of the 850 stanzas in *Guru-Vachaka-Kovai*¹ is a little golden casket wrought with loving care to enshrine and set off a gem fallen from the Master's lips.

The stream of Muruganar's inspiration has continued running fresh and strong even after the passing of Bhagavan. If it has lost some of the old briskness and brightness, it has acquired a new serenity.

Leaving aside Muruganar's own copious outpourings, his success in evoking so much of the little that Bhagavan himself wrote is something to be grateful for. It is to Muruganar that we owe the existence and poetic pattern of *Upadesa Saram*, (*Instruction in Thirty Verses*) the living quintessence of *advaitic* thought and a brief but sufficient *vade-mecum* of Bhagavan's own practical guidance. Muruganar composed a long narrative poem telling how the *rishis* who trusted too much to their rituals were taught a lesson. At the crucial moment, when Siva had to deliver His teaching, Muruganar left it to Bhagavan to provide the *ipissima verba* of divine revelation.

Many of the *Forty Verses on Reality* owe their final form and the exposition its logical arrangement to Muruganar's efforts. And this game of collaboration reached its climax in the composition of *Atma Vidya*, which fills a musical mould of Gopalakrishna Bharati with a new, profound meaning. Beginning "Easy is Self-knowledge", it raises only to reject the image of "the berry in the palm of one's hand"; so evident is this perception that it needs neither perceiver nor thing perceived. Having proceeded

1 - An English translation of a part of which is published by Sri Ramanasramam under the title. *Guru Ramana Vachana Mala*.



thus far, Muruganar had to leave off where the *poet qua poet* could only say or imply, "The rest is silence". But Bhagavan, speaking with an authority higher than any poet's, continued the argument, explained the *sadhana* and the grace and ended with a hint, that Annamalai, the Inner Eye, the One Alone, is the author.

With Muruganar one finds oneself taking part in a strenuous game where transcendental experience is created and caught. in words, coloured or common as he chooses. The universal teacher who teaches through silence is made to manifest in a thousand sounds and sweet airs, each uniquely appropriate to a role and a mood. Thrice blessed is the ear trained to hear the secret that only Muruganar can utter. For in his garden of delight, one sports with God in a riot of rhymes and eats forever the ever fresh fruit of the tree of the knowledge that home is heaven and heaven is home.

Book Reviews

THE SPIRITUAL DIALOGUE OF EAST AND WEST: By Jacques-Albert Cuttat. (Max Mueller Bhavan Publications, Pp, 50, price not stated.)

This address given by the Swiss Ambassador in India was received here with particular interest, since it seems at first sight to be the same sort of activity that *The Mountain Path* is engaged in and particularly to be akin to the present issue with its theme of the two paths of *jnana* and *bhakti*. Really, however, there is a wide difference. The purpose of *The Mountain Path* is “to set forth the traditional wisdom of all religions and all ages, especially as testified to by their saints and mystics,” but not in the framework of any supposed contrast between Eastern truth and Western truth. What is true is true and transcends all such contingent differences.

But there may be different levels of truth. So long as the ego or individual being is felt to be real, so long will the Self or Universal Being be felt to be other than it, in fact to be the God who created it and to whom it must return. This is obvious, because the ego can never claim to be eternal, infinite and omnipotent. Only when and in the measure to which a man, whether eastern or western, whether Hindu or Christian, can conceive of his own individual unreality can he conceive of Universal Being as the true Self of him.

Therefore what Dr. Cuttat calls the dialogue between East and West might equally well be called a dialogue between Advaitins and dualists in India. But it is unattainable, because the Advaitin knows that dualistic worship represents one stage of truth (truth as it must appear so long as the reality of the individual being is believed in) not only in theory but in its power to carry the worshipper to true mystic experience. Therefore on the one hand he cannot denounce dualism as doctrinally wrong or spiritually impotent, which he knows it is not, nor on the other hand can he recognise it as equivalent

to Advaita and on the same level, which it also is not. In fact he is already situated at the outcome of the dialogue and therefore does not need to engage in it.

But for the dualist to recognise this hierarchical distinction would require an extraordinary degree of humility. It is remarkable how many Hindu *bhaktas* do in fact evince this humility; but one feels that it is the one outcome to the ‘dialogue’ which its Western proponents are determined to reject; and since it is the one true outcome the whole idea of a dialogue becomes superfluous. Only two other hypothetical outcomes might be envisaged: one that there are two different versions of ultimate truth, and the other that the East (or Advaita) is wrong and the West (or dualism) is right; the Western proponents of ‘dialogue’ always avoid saying which they favour, but it is not hard to guess. A point which makes one doubt whether they are really open to dialogue is their misuse of the term ‘syncretism’. Rightly used, this means a patchwork religion made up of bits and pieces of existing religions and would apply to a movement such as Theosophism. Dr. Cuttat, however, uses it to include such an uncompromising opponent of syncretism as Rene Guenon. Guenon’s standpoint was that each religion is an organic whole-doctrine, ritual and ethics - and must be followed strictly in itself as such, but that there is a universal truth underlying all religions. If the advocates of ‘dialogue’ deny this we are brought back once again to the question what purpose the dialogue can serve - what purpose other than proselytism. Perhaps they should examine their own minds more clearly first and decide whether they really are looking for a universal truth underlying the different doctrinal forms or whether their secret aim is not to convert Easterners to their doctrine. The only third alternative would be that they are agnostics.

A HISTORY OF ZEN BUDDHISM: By Heinrich Dumoulin, S. J. (Faber, Pp. 335. Price 42s.)

Zen is so much to the fore nowadays that many readers will be glad of a history of it. That of Father Dumoulin, S. J., is both erudite and well written. In fact an attractive book. Unfortunately he slips in occasional passages of egregious nonsense misinterpreting and denigrating Zen in particular and Buddhism is general, whether from unwillingness or inability to understand it is not for this reviewer to suggest. Without going far to seek, there is this one near the beginning of the book: "If, then, this historical setting gives rise to the conjecture that in the exercises of Hinayana Buddhism we are dealing chiefly with psychic techniques, so in the stages and systems of meditation we can readily recognise descriptions of mental states. Nowhere does a way open into transcendence." Actually it is impossible to read the poems of the early Arahats or the descriptions of them without seeing that they reflect the supreme transcendence. "He whose outflows are extinguished and who is independent of basis (for rebirth), whose pasture is emptiness, the signless and freedom - his track is as difficult to know as that of birds in the sky." (Dhammapada, 93, quoted from *Buddhist Texts Through the Ages*, Pp. 45, edited by E. Conze and others, pub. Bruno Cassierer).

To the above misrepresentation or misunderstanding, whichever it may be, Fr. Dumoulin S. J., adds for good measure: "Hinayana Buddhism achieves a spiritualising of Yoga by uniting its psychic exercises to a moral and religious quest for salvation, but it is unable to introduce any element of metaphysical knowledge." How any system can be 'spiritualised' without 'metaphysical knowledge' let the good father explain. Moreover one who considers himself competent to write on Buddhism should know that the 'quest for salvation' exists only in dualistic religions which stop short of the pure transcendence of Nirvana

and therefore believe in an individual soul to be saved. And what leads him to suppose that Hindu Yoga stands in any need of 'spiritualising' by Buddhism or anything, else?

Whether ignorant or malicious, such a book is deeply to be deplored.

ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES: By Paul Reps. (Charles E. Tuttle, Pp. 211. Price \$ 3.25.)

The flavour of Zen is to be found far more in cryptic stories and dialogue than in expositions of doctrine. Nearly all writers on Zen sprinkle a few of these through their books. The first section of *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, of which the seventh imprint is just out, consists of 101 stories, many of which breathe the spirit of Zen.

The second section is a no less fascinating collection of koans with the commentary of Ekai, known also as Mumon, a great Zen Master of the 12th to 13th Century. In the introduction to this section Paul Reps rightly warns against regarding koans as conundrums and trying to find answers to them. "What is the right answer to a koan? There are many right answers and there are also none For the koan itself is the answer, and by the time there is a right answer to it Zen is dead." One is reminded of the Maharshi's saying of 'Who am I?': "No answer that the mind can give is right."

The third section consists of the famous Zen 'Ox-Herding' parable of the quest for the Self. It is set forth in ten admirable episodes illustrated by delightful woodcuts by the modern artist Tomikichiro Tokuriki.

It is rather surprising to find, as the fourth and last section of this book, a Kashmiri tantric text listing 112 techniques of *sadhana*. It records a highly interesting tradition but one quite different from what is known as 'Zen'.

FOCUS ON TUKARAM FROM A FRESH ANGLE. By S. R. Sharma. (Popular Book Depot, Lamington Road, Bombay-7. Rs. 4.50)

Tukaram, who lived in the first half of the 17th

Century, was one of the last and greatest of the Marathi poet-saints of India. An ecstatic and a *bhakta*, he received initiation in a dream from his Guru and later himself appeared to his disciples in the same way to initiate them. He loved singing the songs of saints; and his own poems (like all traditional religious poems) are made to be sung and remain widely popular to this day. Such gatherings for *kirtan* often carried the participants away into a state of ecstasy. It is said that at the end of his life his body simply disappeared, reabsorbed into Spirit.

He was one of those who won through to *Jnana* by sheer force of *bhakti*. He refused to be confined in either category. Sometimes he would definitely proclaim himself a *bhakta*: “I do not seek God-Knowledge. I shall ever desire dual consciousness. Thou shalt ever remain my Lord and I Thy worshipper.” However, the following stanza shows how this duality was in fact the permanent Mystic Union.

“Between you and me there is no difference I was only joking about duality. You are my own form, I am Yourself in all certainty. I am within You and You take my service. I am immovable within You, and You are the power within me. You speak through my mouth and I feel bliss within You. Tuka says: names are very misleading.”

ery interesting is his explanation of this. “The glory of the *bhaktas* is known to them only. It is hard for others to comprehend ... In order to increase the happiness of love in this world, they display duality without actually dividing. Tuka says: this is understood by those only who have experienced the Unity of Faith.”

This is a queer, jumbled little book about the great poet-saint. Scraps of information and views of Tukaram and his great predecessors mingle with quotations and parallels with other saints, Sufi and Christian as well as Hindu. However, the sayings of Tukaram quoted in it are a rare treasure amply atoning for such faults.

GURU’S GRACE, AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MOTHER KRISHNABAI: Translated by Swami Ramdas. (Anandashram, Kanhangad, Pp. 255. Price Rs. 2.50)

In her very emotional autobiography Krishnabai, the ‘Mother’ of Anandashram, apostrophises ‘Papa’ at the opening of almost every paragraph: “Oh all-pervading Papa!”, “Papa, protector of the humble!”, and so forth. She also says that she has realized her identity with Universal Being, so this ‘Papa’ must be identical with herself. When she says that ‘Papa’ in the form of certain troublesome visitors it the Ashram rejected the guidance of ‘Papa’ and that all this was only ‘Papa’s’ *lila* or game, it is clear that by ‘Papa’ she means at the same time God Almighty and Swami Ramdas.

However, doctrinal considerations are far from being in the forefront with her. The book primarily tells the story of her tempestuous *sadhana* and her assaults on the ego and struggle for purity. It shows quite unintentionally what beauty and grace she brought to Anandashram and how she found her path in service to all who came there and taught others also to strive through service. But service did not mean submissiveness. We read how constantly she opposed the suggestions of ‘Papa’ (meaning here, of course, the human Ramdas) on questions of Ashram life and management. And it often turned out that she was right. Yet through it all one sees a loving and loveable disposition.

It would be interesting to have a sequel to this volume, describing developments in Anandashram and in Mataji’s own life and outlook since the passing of Swami Ramdas.

SRI RAMADASA GITA: By M. R. Bhat (Anandashram, Pp. 160, Price Rs. 2.)

Prof. M. Ramakrishna Bhat has made a Sanskrit Gita of the teachings of Swami Ramdas in fourteen chapters, each chapter comprising the answer to a doctrinal question. This is here printed with an English verse by verse translation. It is orthodox and inspiring *upadesa*. It is doubtless in full

agreement with the teaching of Swami Ramdas, although the emphasis is far more on metaphysical exposition and less on pure *bhakti* than was usual in the actual talks of the Swami.

THE FLUTE CALLS STILL: By Dilip Kumar Roy and Indira Devi (Indira Niloy, Hari Krishna Mandir, Poona-16, Price Rs. 6.50.)

The first part of *The Flute Calls Still* comprises a series of letters in which Indira Devi tells of her *sadhana* as a disciple of Dilip Kumar Roy and incidentally describes the growth of the Hari Krishna Mandir over which they jointly preside. The second part is also composed of letters but this time by Dilip Kumar Roy. Their main theme is Indira's ecstatic trances and visions of Sri Krishna. In these she often becomes identified with Mira Bai who sings through her ecstatic songs of love for Krishna. Many of these are rendered into English verse by Dilip Kumar Roy.

An air of love and purity pervades the book. One feels that Hari Krishna Mandir must be a very joyful place. And there is an atmosphere of uncompromising integrity. In nothing does this show more clearly than in the refusal of the joint gurus of the institution to claim Realization, despite trances, visions and miracles. In view of all the dubious claims that are made these days, such abstention shows true nobility.

Indira Devi, it should be said, is reluctant to speak about her visions and experiences and does so only on the insistence of her guru, Dilip. Her reluctance seems praiseworthy.

- Arthur Osborne.

TOLERANCE, A STUDY FROM BUDDHIST SOURCES: By Phra Khantipalo. (Rider, Pp. 191, Price 25s.)

It is a surprising fact that tolerance, handmaid of coexistence, extolled by so many of our present-day secular leaders as the supreme virtue, is a word completely unknown to the ethical systems of the world's great religions.

Phra Khantipalo, a young English *bhikkhu* resident in Thailand, admits at the beginning of his

introduction that there is no exact equivalent for the world in the early Pali scriptures. The nearest we get to it is 'patience'. Had he exercised a little more patience he might have written a less intolerant book. Had he taken the trouble to study a little more deeply, to reflect a little more thoughtfully on the great traditions of antiquity which he condemns so glibly, he might (who knows?) at least have learnt to tolerate them.

Everybody admires the remarkable record of non-violence which has characterised the propagation of Buddha Dhamma down the ages. It has had its doctrinal battles, internal and external, and today, alas, is being exploited like other religions for political and nationalistic ends, but even those who cannot subscribe to the author's intolerant assertion that it is the sole repository of doctrinal truth will readily admit that with regard to actual violence its hands are cleaner than those of any of its competitors in the field. We can only regret that Phra Khantipalo, whose book reminds us painfully of certain nineteenth century Christian missionaries, has performed such a singular disservice to the dhamma he aspires to serve.

Like many a good missionary before him, Phra Khantipalo has cast a broad glance at the religious customs and beliefs of those outside the fold for the sole purpose, it seems, of holding them up to ridicule and contempt. Nothing has escaped his zealous eye, from beef-eating and wine-bibbing in the Vedas to the persecution of Christian mystics by the Church hierarchy. Like many a good missionary before him, he has torn three quotations from the Holy Qur'an out of their context to support the popular Western image of Islam - sword in one hand, Qur'an in the other.

Part of the author's difficulty seems to arise from a fear that any recognition of another's point of view must inevitably result in a woolly syncretism. One cannot help suspecting that as a Buddhist missionary, he must, like his Christian rivals, have run up against the Neo-Hindu claim that all religions are one and found it a particularly tiresome nut to crack. We sympathise with him here, but surely it

is not necessary to be a syncretist in order to recognise the essential validity of all ancient traditions, taking into due consideration their historical and geographical contexts. We still remain free to regard our own particular orthodoxy as the best - at least for us. It does, however, require more sympathetic understanding and reflective study than the author seems prepared to give to the subject.

As Phra Khantipalo cannot bear to tolerate those whom he considers less tolerant than himself, it seems a pity that he did not maintain a noble Aryan silence. Might we suggest that he re-read Appendix 11 of his book, entitled *The Compassionate Character of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Disciples* in which he has assembled a number of pertinent and memorable texts we would all do well to ponder. Or again, there is the quotation from the *Upasaka Sila Sutra* with which he opens his introduction:

When you see men in disharmony try to create harmony.

Speak good of others and never of their faults,

Cherish a good mind even for your enemy.

Hold to the mind of compassion and regard all beings as your parents.

Is this really what he is trying to do?

LAST DAYS OF THE BUDDHA: A Translation of the Maha Parinibbana Sutta by Sister Vajira and Francis Story. (Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, Ceylon, Pp. 100, Price not stated.)

Students of Buddha Dhamma have long been in need of cheap reliable translations from the Pali Canon and will welcome the present series, in pamphlet form, made by such recognised scholars as the Theras Nyanaponika, Narada, Soma and Nyanamoli.

The translation of a sacred text into dignified contemporary prose always presents difficulties, and the Pali Canon with its rigid structure, abundance of technical terms, stock phrases and paragraphs and addiction to the passive voice is no exception.

What to do with such phrases as 'Four constituents

of psychic power' which, unexplained, is as meaningless in English as in the original? Or with such oft-repeated phrases as "choice food, hard and soft," which sounds singularly unappetising to the modern Western ear.

Sister Vajira, a German lady who, as her introduction shows, is not altogether at home in the English language, can hardly be blamed for doing nothing about them at all. She shows a strong preference for the language of the King James Bible, but not consistently. In any case it seems rather odd that while the Churches are busy trying to escape from the Authorised Version modern Buddhists should be still in its thrall.

The designation of Ambapali, the Buddha's courtesan disciple, as "the mango lass" inevitably sets us wondering what Bobbie Burns would have made of this remarkable lady. An interesting speculation but hardly conducive to our concentration on the text.

But let us not be ungrateful. Sister Vajira has obviously been at pains to give us a reliable, reverent rendering of this important sutta and on the whole it reads quite well.

- R. F. Rose.

MYSTICISM IN WORLD RELIGION: By Sidney Spencer. (Pelican Books Pp. 363, Price 7s 6d. Madras Agent: Orient Longmans)

Pelican Books obviously knew their man when they invited the Reverend Sidney Spencer to tackle the formidable task of surveying the whole field of mystical experience in historical religions in a paperback volume of little more than 350 pages.

The author, one time principal of Manchester College, Oxford, and now a Unitarian Minister, has a formidable knowledge of his subject, ranging from the numinous experiences of so-called primitive peoples to the exalted testimonies of the great masters - Hindu, Buddhist, Chinese, Greek, Jewish, Christian and Muslim. Avoiding all generalisations and apparently free from all personal bias, he is at great pains to present us with all the facts and let them speak for themselves. The fifty pages devoted

to Hinduism, for instance, embrace the *Upanishads*, *Gita*, Vedanta (Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva) the *bhakti* cult of Vaishnavism, Kashmiri Shaivism and Shaiva Siddhanta. His treatment of other religious traditions is equally comprehensive.

Inevitably a book of this kind has rather the character of an encyclopaedia, but the warm sympathy the author feels for his subject raises it above the level of a simple book of reference. It is refreshing to find such scholarly accuracy going hand in hand with an open-minded freedom from prejudice and special pleading. His method may not please certain pandits and theologians who are loath to allow salvation to those outside the fold, but even they will be hard put to it to find fault with his presentation of the data.

Somebody once said: "The study of comparative religion has left me only comparatively religious." The Reverend Sidney Spencer has clearly not suffered from this occupational hazard. Nor, we feel confident, will his readers.

AT HOLY MOTHER'S FEET: (Teachings of Shri Sarada Devi), By her direct disciples. Translated from the Bengali, with an introduction by Swami Nikhilananda. (Advaita Ashram, Almora, Pp. 383, Price Rs. 5.)

Sarada Devi emerges from these reminiscences of her disciples in all her simplicity and greatness. She stayed very much in the background during Sri Ramakrishna's lifetime, considering it a great privilege to be able to serve him and his disciples and content with a life of hard work and worship. However, after his death she was recognised as a guru and blossomed out as the Holy Mother, even though, on her own admission, her remembrance of her true nature was spasmodic, not constant.

What strikes one is the great love that she showed to all who came to her for help, the human, sensible and truly spiritual approach to their problems and her great forbearance in the face of personal trials. When her mother had reproached Sri Ramakrishna, saying that, by celibacy, he was depriving her of the sweet sound of being called 'mother', he had

replied that she would have so many sons that her ears would tingle with the sound of 'mother'; and so it was.

There is no doubt that real power flowed through her as a guru. Simple and unlettered as she was, speaking no language but Bengali, she became a teacher and mother to learned and ignorant alike, not only Hindus but foreigners. To all of them she gave real affection and solace. Her path combined *karma marga* and *bhakti*. When her disciples were not performing ritual worship or saying invocations she liked them to be working. She did not approve of idleness or even of long hours of meditation. At one with Sri Ramakrishna, she was at the same time his greatest *bhakta*.

Parts of these reminiscences have appeared from time to time in the periodical 'Prabuddha Bharata', but it is good to have them gathered together into a single book. An excellent biographical introduction by Swami Nikhilananda increases its appeal.

- Unnamulai

THE TEMPLE AND THE HOUSE: By Lord Raglan. (Routledge and Kegan Paul, Pp. 218. Price: 30s.)

The author of this stimulating book provides a new approach to the question of the progress of societies in general and of the origin of houses in particular. Examining the currently accepted theories on the subject, Lord Raglan proves, with the help of a large mass of data assembled in the course of his purposive career, that houses did not start with primitive constructions for shelter as usually propagated, but represent modified editions of the original temples and palaces, 'Cosmic buildings' as he terms them - which were designed according to the then prevailing conceptions of the Cosmos. The shape of the houses changed from round to square with the change of ideas about the shape of the universe. These buildings were erected as dwelling places of the Gods, with due architectural provision for their functional activities. They were guarded from external pollution and visitations of evil spirits through various rituals.

The kings as earthly representatives of the Gods fashioned the palaces on those models and in due course the institution of the dwelling place spread downwards in society, and outwards (from the Capital) in the provinces, keeping intact most of the features of the temple.

The author surveys the customs obtaining in a large number of societies, all over the world, especially relating to marriage, the hearth-fire, births and deaths in the house etc., and presents a thesis which should go a long way in modifying and revising many of the long-held notions in the matter.

Lord Raglan's corrective conclusions on the theories of progress are welcome. History is not all progress, all the time (P. 197). Some of his statements, however, are open to question, *e.g.*, "There is nothing natural in human culture in any of its manifestations ... Nobody supposes languages to be natural." We do. Linguistic studies do point to an intimate relation between human feelings, emotions, states of mind and the sounds and vocables from which the original languages came to evolve.

THE BHAGAVADGITA: By R. D. Ranade. (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chaupatty. Bornbay-7, Pp. 321, Price Rs. 10.)

Books on the Gita continue to multiply but few among them have the maturity of thought and unity of vision that underlie Dr. Ranade's exposition. A philosopher himself, trained in the ways of the logical intellect, the author weighs the contributions and the shortcomings of every notable theory advanced by scholars on the Gita and offers his own study of the scriptures in terms of God-realisation.

The work is divided into five parts and deals with the subject in a historical survey. Dr. Ranade first studies the relation of the Gita to the Upanishads, the Sankhya and the Brahma Sutras; he examines the different meanings given to the same terms and the varying connotations of certain key conceptions, such as *Avyakta*, *Kaivalya*, *Asvaththa*, in the Gita *vis-a-vis* the other ancient texts.

He then proceeds to expound the viewpoints of the Acharyas Shankara, Ramanuja and Madhva and others. He pays special attention to Jnaneshwara, particularly to what he calls his doctrine of "asymptotic approximation to Reality" which holds that there can never be complete identity of status between the seeker and God.

The third and fourth parts cover the various theories of modern scholars - Western and Eastern - and the author's own interpretation, in terms of modern thought, showing how the Gita leads the being through a mental and moral discipline towards the Gates of the Spirit opening on a supreme Beatitude.

A most useful addition to Gita literature.

CONQUEST OF THE SERPENT: By C. J. Van Vliet. (Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad-14. Pp. 179, Price Rs. 3.00)

The legend of the serpent standing guard at the door of a priceless treasure is to be found in almost all the traditions of the world. The precise meaning given to the symbol, however, varies from place to place; our author interprets it as the serpent of sexuality standing in the way of the wealth of spiritual consciousness. Leaving aside for the moment a deeper perception which identifies the treasure with Immortality, as also the question whether it is not ego in general rather than sex in particular which is the hurdle met by the seeker in his quest for the spiritual goal, we are at one with the writer in his analysis of the role of sex in evolution, the necessity of continence, his rebuttal of the superficial arguments by a section of medical opinion against celibacy and the innumerable ways in which sexual purification contributes to the higher development of man.

The ancients of India were never tired of advocating the ideal of *Brahmacharya* for those who sought a life higher than that of the senses. *Retas*, when conserved, changes automatically into *ojas*; that part of the life-force which formulates itself into reproductive energy and normally goes out of the system converts itself, if restrained, into a life-building dynamism and, at its highest, feeds

the brain in the form of a radiant energism. That is how sex-conservation results in the heightening of the life-potential which can be developed by spiritual pressure into a power which can hold its own against the onslaughts of disease, disintegration and eventually even death. The author's remarks on the necessity of complete control over sex in practices based on the awakening of *Kundalini* or when one enters into the occult spheres of life are based on irrefutable yogic experience and deserve to be pondered over by all practitioners of this line of yoga.

The book is rational, persuasive, balanced.

SADASIVA BRAHMAN and VOICE OF TAYUMANAVAR: both by Shuddhananda Bharati: THE YOGI AND HIS WORDS: Compiled by Swami Satyananda and others. (Shuddhananda Library. Yoga Samaj, Adyar. Madras-20.)

Sadasiva Brahman was a most remarkable Avadhuta of the South in the 18th century. He was deeply learned in the ancient lore and his works in Sanskrit, notably the *Atma Vidya Vilasa*, are gems of spiritual wisdom. Saint Tayumanavar, another luminary in the religious firmament of Tamil Nadu, was his contemporary and he received from Sadasiva Brahman the potent message of Silence.

Sri Shuddhananda Bharati writes in these booklets briefly but passionately about the lives and teachings of the two saints.

The third book issued by the Shuddhananda Library, contains, besides a life-sketch of Sri Shuddhananda Bharati, compilations from the lavish tributes paid to him by various friends and admirers and extracts from his talks on all subjects.

SADHANA FOR SELF-REALIZATION: By Swami Pratyagatmananda Saraswati and Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon) (Ganesh, Madras, Pp, 127, Price Rs. 6.)

Professor Pramatha Natha Mukhopadhyaya - as he was known in his *purvasrama* - was one of the stalwarts in the early years of the present century who spearheaded the cultural and religious

renaissance of the nation. He was among the first - along with Sri Aurobindo and other eminent figures - to join the National Council of Education which was founded to reorientate education on lines suited to the genius and needs of the country. He wrote at length on Vedanta, interpreting its profound thought in terms of modern science, and projected this ancient knowledge on the pragmatic mind of the day. He did Yeoman service by guiding and collaborating with scholars like Sir John Woodroffe and Indian colleagues in the resuscitation of the Tantric tradition of this land, till then thoroughly discredited for a variety of reasons.

That is not all. He not merely wrote and taught, but also lived what he believed. In his own life he took steps to give a practical shape to the high knowledge that was given to him and built up an inner edifice that is now happily casting its glow of Light, Power and Joy on all who come in its environs.

Sadhana for Self-realization is a fine summary of his efforts in the sphere of *sadhana* to bring home to the world of seekers the practical bearings of the Tantra, especially the Shakta Tantra. The bulk of this volume is from the pen of Swamiji. Only a small section (on Mantras) is from Sir John Woodroffe.

It is a selective compilation from his writings pertaining to *sadhana*, spread over a number of decades. Though he says that the book is not new, still the long Introduction he has written to preface the selections sets a new key and opens out new vistas in the appreciation and utilisation of Tantra, Mantra, Yantra, Kundalini - subjects that have received more than adequate treatment in his pages.

- M. P. Pandit

THE SECRET OF CHINESE MEDITATION: By Charles Luk (Rider & Co., London, Price 35s.)

Upasaka Lu K'uan-yu (Charles Luk) has given us another valuable book to add to our gratitude for the three volumes of "Ch'an and Zen Teaching," and in many ways it presents an increased maturity and clarity of expression. Its title "Meditation" and

the Table of Contents listing six methods of “Self-cultivation” will sufficiently warn those who follow the great Masters for whom such an approach was diametrically opposed to the direct awakening which they represented, but the book must be appraised for what it teaches and should not incur reproach for what it does not.

This teaching represents Ch’an as generally found in the East today, and I think in many respects also the Zen of Japan, for there is a general abandonment of the direct approach and a tacit acceptance of the long way round, via a supposed “self”, for those who regard themselves as unfitted to undertake an immediate displacement. They choose to assume that we in the West are in the same condition and Mr. Luk repeats here what I have heard from the mouths of so many, but there are those among us who think differently and who maintain that we are as fresh to this inspiration, and as ready to tackle the vertical ascent, as they themselves were a thousand years ago.

Mr. Luk gives us a portion of the famous Surangama Sutra, which we so lamentably lack, dealing with twenty-five approaches to “enlightenment”, discussed in the presence of the Buddha by the most eminent Bodhisattvas. This probably rather late Sutra is highly regarded in China, and this important section is a valuable acquisition which serious Buddhists will greatly enjoy.

Thereafter he gives us extracts, lucidly commented by himself, on the ‘methods’ employed in Ch’an as described by well-known Masters - all, of course, of the later periods - followed by those employed by the admirable Pure Land school, by the scholarly T’ien T’ai (Tendai) school, and by the later Taoists, with a description of authentic experiments, and a chapter on Chinese yoga which he himself generously demonstrates to some of his friends.

To those who fight shy of it, not wishing to be distracted from their practice of non-practice or direct seeing, one may say that they will miss much valuable and interesting information; one may ask them who there could be to be distracted, and

assure them that they too may benefit by this work.

In view of the modest dimensions of the volume the publishers may be taken to task for printing so many extracts in painfully small print, excessively trying to the eyes and detrimental to appreciation. Another inadequacy, for which also Mr. Luk is certainly not responsible, is the description of the frontispiece as “The embalmed body of Ch’an Master Wen Yen.” The Chinese Masters were never embalmed, and are not now. In extremely rare cases, their funerary jar being opened after three or five years, the body has been found to be intact. It is then lacquered or gilded and preserved in the posture in which the Master died. Such bodies do not at all resemble mummies or the embalmed. Such gratuitous interpretations surely should not occur in print?

Readers’ grievances should be voiced in notices of books, and those who have reacted against Mr. Luk’s constant reiteration of the redundant expression “pure and clean” will again suffer, though perhaps less often. The Chinese word means “pure”, pure means “unmixed”, and when - as nearly always - it is applied to Mind it merely implies “devoid of objects”. Another grievance of which one has heard a good deal is the introduction of the prefix “self”. Such a careful and conscientious translator as Mr. Luk, and he is that above all else, must be convinced that self is implied, but readers no doubt find it difficult to forget that in the Diamond Sutra the Buddha is said to have stated - fifteen times - I think - that there is no such thing. To Mr. Luk the prefix probably refers to the nature of the noun to which it is attached, as for instance, “self-nature” meaning the self or nature of nature rather than the self of the object, but it may be wondered whether ingenuous readers realise that? “Merits” and “vows” are other awkward words - absurd when applied to Bodhisattvas who by definition are rid of self, and “passions” for *Klesha* merely raises a smile in people who do not spend their lives alternating between towering rages and unappeasable lust, or on the other hand may lead them to think that they must be on the verge of

“enlightenment”. In pointing out the above cases I am not in fact singling out Mr. Luk, as might appear to be the case. No doubt he would reply that it is not for him, a foreigner, to invent new technical terms in English. Personally he is to be absolved from all reproach, but it is time that English translators supplied him with a rational list of technical terms, and ceased apparently to consider that it is the business of a translator to demonstrate his own pedantry rather than to reveal what his author was seeking to make clear. The abolition of jargon is urgently needed if Buddhist teaching is to develop in the West, for it misleads students reading from the ‘guest’ position, confuses them, and delays their comprehension indefinitely. When the meaning of technical terms is far removed from the implications concerned, even reading from the “host” position, which Mr. Luk so admirably recommends, will not always prevent a reader from being misled.

There are too many stimulating statements in this book for quotation to cover them, but readers will be struck by such lines as Han Shan’s (1546-1623) “Ordinary people mistake Ch’an for a doctrine, without knowing that Ch’an is but the self-mind which is beyond birth and death”. (p. 56). And Tsu Pai’s (1543-1604) “The secret of Ch’an training lies in your mind’s ability to realise the oneness of all contraries such as adversity and prosperity, etc., and if you can achieve this your awakening will be imminent”. (p. 62).

Anyone carefully reading the later detailed descriptions of the effects of some of the so-called “meditation” techniques is likely to realise what an impassable gulf separates all this from the pure and inspiring revelation of a Shen Hui, a Huang Po, or a Hui Hai. Perhaps the most extraordinary feature in this book is the Taoist chapter in which, after a brief but brilliant analysis of the opening verses of the Tao Teh Ching, probably the clearest exposition that exists in English, Mr. Luk passes without comment to quoting a modern dissertation on Taoist “meditation” that is as far from his introductory exposition as chiropody is from the Beatitudes.

With each new volume we are more deeply indebted to Mr. Luk, who was the first, after John Blofeld, to bring Ch’an to us. It has been a revelation to many, and he has many friends among us in consequence. The field is large, and much more awaits us, the choice among which, we may hope, will fall now to the early and most authentic Masters whose spoken doctrine is what we need - whatever we may imagine that we want, and we may now be confident that he can do it, for his scholarship and the profundity of his understanding have clearly been demonstrated.

- T. S. G.

COSMIC THEOLOGY: The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy of Pseudo-Denys: An Introduction. By Dom Denys Rutledge. (Routledge & Kegan Paul, Pp. 212. Price 32s.)

The Pseudo-Dionysius (or -Denys), writing as though a disciple of St. Paul’s but thought to have lived actually in the fourth or fifth century, has been one of the most influential of all Christian mystics. Most widely known, because most universal, is his Mystical Theology. The far less known Ecclesiastical Hierarchy is, however, also of immense value to members of the Catholic and Greek Orthodox Churches (it was written before the schism between them), and of theoretical interest to others, since its purpose is to point out the wealth of symbolism in the Church hierarchy and sacraments. This is shown as a system through which the Divine Light is canalised down to men and, in a simultaneous reverse movement, men are brought back to the Source of Light. In an age when ritual is apt to be ignorantly decried there can be few books which will so demonstrate its potential profundity.

A review of an earlier book by Dom Rutledge in *The Mountain Path* remarks on his absurdly vituperative attitude towards Hinduism.¹ It must be said that the present book, dealing with Christian mysteries only, is sober and profound. Even here, however, one wild statement creeps in. That is his

1 - *The Search of a Yogi*, reviewed in *The Mountain Path* of April 1964.

suggestion (on page 26) that a Catholic liturgical renewal may be the bond of reunion between East and West. What can that mean except that Protestants in the West and Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims and others in the East are all expected to become Catholics? This looks like the day-dreaming of a monastic recluse.

THE GENTLEMAN SAINT, ST. FRANCIS DE SALES AND HIS TIMES: 1567-1633: By Margaret Trouncer. (Hutchinson, Pp. 2401 Price 21s.)

This life of St. Francis de Sales is tailored to suit pious Catholics and they will love it. Others also will find much worth reading in it if they can persevere beyond the Little Lord Fauntleroy impression of the early chapters. His most characteristic work seems to have been the perilous one of giving spiritual direction to high-souled ladies. A man must indeed be a saint to avoid falling into at least one crevasse on such a path. There is great beauty and nobility in his life as indeed in these ladies also. For them he founded the Order of the Visitation, intended for ladies who were not robust enough to endure the rigours of the older contemplative orders - though in the early days their life seems to have been rigorous enough.

He was above all a saint of love, directing souls through loving sympathy. His books were expositions of the mysteries of Divine Love, the author tells us. She is very careful not to get out of her depth in speaking of them. His letters were exuberant with love. The scripture which particularly endeared itself to him was the Song of Solomon.

Yet he was virile and intrepid at the same time. To slip into Calvinist Geneva in disguise, as he did in his youth, in the hope of converting one of its great men to Catholicism was something like slipping into Stalin's Moscow to convert a member of the Politbiuro to democracy. He was unsparing, towards himself. To his charges also his love never made him soft or lenient.

- Sagittarius.

IHYA 'ULUMUD-DIN: The Revival of Religious Sciences: By Al-Ghazali. Translated by Bankey Behari. (Mata Krishna Satsang, Vrindaban, Pp. Ll and 432, Price Rs. ic.)

The customary reference to Al-Ghazali as the St. Thomas Aquinas of Islam hardly does him justice, for he did far more than stabilise Islamic theology: he made Sufism respectable in the eyes of the orthodox. No one has ever performed this service in Christianity, with the result that Christian mysticism and esoterism have never been accepted fully and without reservation by the guardians of the letter of the doctrine.

It is interesting to see what a pervading influence Christianity had on Sufism and on Al-Ghazali in particular. The doctrine is, of course impeccable, but the general tone, deprecating marriage in favour of celibacy and property in favour of mendicancy and claiming to be a miserable sinner is far less Quranic than Christian.

Not the least interesting feature about this abridged translation is that it is by a Hindu Sadhu and published by the Mata Krishna Satsang at Vrindaban. The English of it is far from perfect, but it is a labour of love and that it has been done at all is laudable.

- Abdullah Qutbuddin

(1) JAPJI; (2) ESSAY ON JAPJI: Both by Pritamdas Karamchandani, Pp. 110 and 345, Price Rs. 2.50 and Rs. 6. Available at Manjhad Darbar, 3rd Road, Khar, Bombay.

The Japji of Guru Nanak is a song of remembrance and self-consecration, *sumiran* and *saran*. It is the Gita of the Sikhs, the central hymn of the Granth Sahib, which is the sacred scripture of the followers of Nanak and Govinda Singh. In 38 Pauris or steps it brings out the disciplines of *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana margas* which lead the devotee to a life of purity, unity and divinity. It turns the soul Godward and its repetition cleans the mirror of the mind.

Lt. Colonel Karamchandani has done a great service in compiling the above two volumes of

commentaries and explanations on these sacred verses. The first is a clear annotation of the text and the second an elaborate treatise on it, containing references to the *Gita* and the Qur'an and to Western thinkers such as Spinoza, Kant, Schopenhauer, Jung, James, etc., as well as to Shankara and Ramana Maharshi. The greater part of it is composed of Vedantic discussions with Dharmadas, under whom he studied.

The author argues convincingly that the phenomenal world is illusion, the soul or Self the unique Reality, and God the pure Self of all. Liberation comes by love, prayer, *japa*, dedicated service or Vedantic *sadhana* of discrimination.

The first of the two books gives us the original text of the Japji in *devanagari* script as well as the translation. The second gives gem-like translations from Guru Granth, Kabir, Ravidas and the *Gita*. It is a pleasure to study them and to contemplate the sacred Japji which says: "Chant God's Name in the ambrosial pre-dawn: the bud of your soul shall open petal by petal into a fragrant flower. Conquer mind and you will conquer the world."

- Yogi Suddhananda Bharati

JOURNALS

We have received copies of the inaugural issue (January /February, 1964) of a bimonthly cyclo-styled newsletter entitled *The Path Divine* published

by 'The Universal Self-Realization Centre' of Durban, South Africa. This refers to *The Mountain Path* and *The Call Divine* and is devoted mainly to the teaching of Ramana Maharshi.

We have also received the July Issue of the small monthly newspaper *Christian Yoga World* from San Francisco, California. This is the organ of a group run by Father Subramuniam. The issue received contains an article on Ramana Maharshi. In general the paper explains the truths of Hindu teaching and the underlying unanimity of the religions.

We have received the first issue of *Guru Vani*, the annual journal of Shree Gurudev Ashram. Gavdevi-Ganeshpuri, P.C. Vajreshwari. Dist. Thana, Maharashtra State. This ashram, about 55 miles outside Bombay, perpetuates the influence of the late Swami Nityananda through the person of his successor, Swami Muktananda. Impressions of both are here given from a wide range of devotees, including persons eminent in politics, law and other fields of activity, mostly in English, some also in Hindi and Marathi. They are on a remarkably high level and of real spiritual interest. The English in which they are written is also on a high level. The general getup and appearance of the annual are admirable. The editors are to be congratulated on launching this fine new annual.

THE MOUNTAIN PATH - LIFE SUBSCRIBERS

(In continuation of the list already published in our July issue)

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Ashram Bulletin

The arrival of a bimonthly newsletter from South Africa and a monthly paper from California, both noticed in our book review section, were two more signs how widespread is the influence of the Maharshi and the knowledge of his Ashram.

Another was a letter from Helsinki asking permission to translate some of the Maharshi's writings and sayings into Finnish.

It has been a legitimate grievance of visitors here that Ashram library books have been shut away in old cupboards and not always easy to trace. The infant MOUNTAIN PATH library is now being combined with the more readable part of the Ashram library and put on display in show cases in THE MOUNTAIN PATH office and properly card indexed. When our building schemes are completed, the entire library will be on display and card indexed.

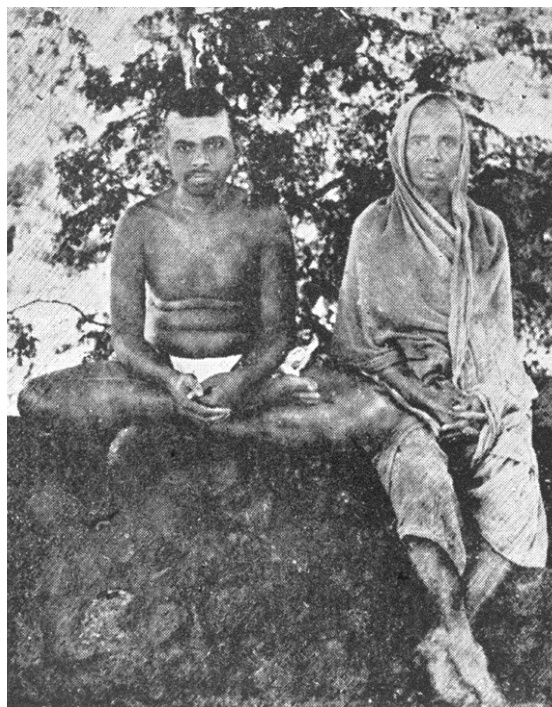
THE MOTHER'S DAY

Sri Ramanasramam never had an 'Ashram Mother' as so many ashrams do. Bhagavan was so universal that it was unnecessary. Besides, the direct path of Knowledge or Advaita that he taught does not involve worship of the *Shakti* or Mother. However, the *Shakti* influence may be helpful and was not neglected by Bhagavan, nor is it now by his Ashram. It came, very fittingly, through his own mother. When he was living at Skandashram on the Hill she came to live there and look after the small group of devotees who had gathered round him. A simple, unlettered woman, she lived a life of service and devotion. She died in 1922. The whole day Bhagavan sat beside her and through his concentration, aided by her own efforts, was able to quell the thought-waves so that at death she passed to Liberation.

She was buried at the southern foot of Arunachala where a number of graves, forming a sort of scattered cemetery, already existed. Bhagavan used to come down from Skandashram (less than half an hour's walk away) and sit there for a while daily. Then, after some time, he stayed. A thatched

shed was put up for him and that was how the present Ashram started. Gradually the extensive ashram buildings were erected, and the process still continues. Through the perseverance of the *Sarvadhikari*¹ and the generosity of the devotees, a temple in traditional South Indian style was built over the shrine. It is there the SRI CHAKRA PUJA described in our April 1964 Ashram Bulletin is held. The anniversary of her death and Nirvana is celebrated annually. It fell this year on June 4.

A manuscript left by Alan Chadwick¹ records the extraordinary interest that the Maharshi took in the erection of his mother's shrine.

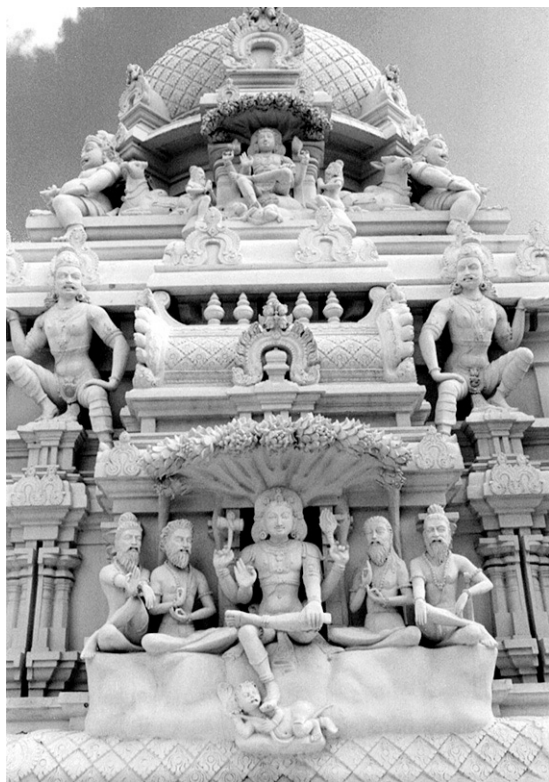


The Mother with the Maharshi

"Bhagavan was deeply interested in the construction of the shrine built over his mother's tomb. He attended every function in connection with it, placing his hands in blessing on the various objects that were to be enclosed in the walls. At

1 - For whom see our Ashram Bulletin of January 1964.

night when no one was about he would walk round and round the construction, consecrating it. That he should take such a demonstrative interest in anything was extremely rare and has been doubted



Tower over Mother's Shrine

by many, but I myself was an eye-witness to these things and can vouch for their truth.”

SAINT'S DAY CELEBRATED

August 15th is India's Independence Day and therefore a public holiday. For the last ten years it has also been observed as the anniversary celebration of Arunagirinathar, a great Tamil poet-saint of Tiruvannamalai. He lived about five centuries ago. His mother died when he was a boy and left him in the care of his elder sister, charging her to refuse him nothing that he asked for. As he grew up he fell into a life of debauchery, constantly coming to his sister for the money it required. The climax came one day when he wanted money for the usual purpose and she told him she had no more and said: "If you must have a woman take me." This provoked one of those sudden reversals

which sometimes turn a sinner into a saint. Overcome with shame and self-loathing, he rushed to the great temple (of which there is a photograph on page 106 in our issue of April 1964), climbed one of the *gopurams* or towers and, considering himself unfit to live, cast himself down. However, the intensity of his repentance awakened Divine compassion and he was borne up and came to the ground gently without harm. He became a great saint and poet. Some fifteen hundred of his poems still survive and are widely sung, although this is only a small portion of what he is reputed to have composed. Bhagavan often quoted them or referred to them.

There was a large gathering for the occasion this year, both at the Ashram and in the town. People came from all parts of the Tamil country and music, *bhajans*, lectures and processions were arranged for them.

PERSONAL NOTES

Early in August, a group of about 20 Americans with their Indian guides came to see the Ashram from Madras. They were told about the Maharshi, after which a number of them walked round Arunachala barefoot at night. They left the next day.

Miss Ethel Merston has returned from a medical check-up in Madras as lively and alert as ever but no longer able to venture out - severe *tapas* for one who has been a great mover and traveller all her life.

A severe *tapas* has been imposed by destiny on Ronald Rose also, in that, prodigious reader as he has always been, he is suffering from eyestrain and has had to give up reading. Fortunately we already had our quota of book reviews in hand from him before this restriction overtook him.

Mrs. Taleyarkhan has returned from several weeks' recuperation in Bombay looking much better again and with her exuberant vitality restored.

Sri Kuppuswami Aiyar who was formerly a visitor here has returned now as a resident in one of the small Ashram cottages and is a valued office worker.

MY REAL HOME

Following the *Mahasamadhi* of Swami Ramdas in July 1963, one American lady and two French came here. The American, Theodora (Teddy) Schleicher, known as INDIRA, seemed inclined to settle down here permanently but, after a stay of many months, has now returned to her home in California on the request of her parents.

“I was first led to India and to my personal guide, Swami Ramdas, by Joel Goldsmith. My path was one of simple *bhakti*. Gradually, however, I was introduced to Bhagavan’s teaching and Self-enquiry deepened my understanding of *bhakti*. For I realised that *Jnana* and *bhakti* were inseparable since *Jnana* led me to the real love of Self, which is not dependent on external support.

“Bhagavan to me is the highest Godhead. I cannot think of Him as a personality. He is the very personification of Pure Being, not restricted to the limited body. Bhagavan is an accumulation of dynamic energy which, like a magnet, pulls one into its very Being or God-Centre.”

“I feel that this dynamic Power, call it Arunachala or Bhagavan, has led me to my real home, the home within.”

BRIGETTE SUNDIN stayed for a long time as a guest of Mrs. Taleyarkhan, but she also has now left.

MARYAM HIRN is still here, staying in a rented house, outside the Ashram, and shows no inclination to leave.

We have also had a long-term visitor from Denmark and one from Germany.

JORGEN CHRISTOPHERSON of Copenhagen had seen *The Mountain Path* and corresponded with us before coming. He came here straight from Denmark in July. Before the end of August he too had to return and he went straight back, wasting

no time on tourism.

FRITZ KREIE came here direct from Germany in January, 1964, says: “I was deeply impressed and felt at home from the first moment. After a few months I left on a tour that had already been arranged, of some of the other reputed holy places of India, but it was not difficult for me to recognise, that at Sri Ramanasramam alone could I find what I was seeking, so I was soon back here and stayed till I was due to return to Germany at the end of August.”



R. V. RACHAVAN, a retired sub-inspector of police, was a long-standing devotee. He had been resident at the Ashram for some years past and had taken on the duty of guiding visitors round. He passed away suddenly and quite unexpectedly on the morning of September 2nd.

FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

1. NAVARATHRI CELEBRATIONS: From 6.10.1964 to 15.10.1964: (Laksharchana, with Mahanyasa Rudrabhishekam and *parayana* of sacred works such as Devi Mahathmyam is performed. Sri Yogambika, the deity, is decorated and worshipped in the different aspects of the Divine Mother.)
2. KARTHIGAI DEEPAM: 19.11.1964 (The famous Deepam Day when a big cauldron is lit on top of the Mountain Arunachala. The Festival proper commences from the 11.11.64, lasting for ten days.)
3. SRI BHAGAVAN’S JAYANTHI: 21.12.1964, (The 85th birthday of the Maharshi).

So long as you have the ego-sense you have to struggle. At the end of the struggle you come to know that you have not achieved anything. You feel that you are helpless. Then God comes to your help. But as long as you think you can help yourself you must struggle. Struggle ceases in surrender. Thereafter you say, ‘Oh God, You do everything.’ Now you find everything is done by His will and power. Surrender gives you this knowledge. The ego-sense is wiped out not only in the inner silence but also in all your active life. — Swami Ramdas.

Letters to the Editor

Your journal is indeed fine. I have always thought that a journal from Tiruvannamalai should be published to propagate Bhagavan's teaching. In my 'The Flute Calls Still'* there is a letter on Bhagavan. I wonder if you would care to print it in your quarterly?*** I will write to you later on about your fine (July issue) editorial, which Indira Devi too has liked - she says, she has a very good 'feel' about your journal.

- Dilip Kumar Roy,
Hari Krishna Mandir, Poona.

'The Mountain Path' is indeed a very instructive and inspiring journal. The first issue was good, the second issue better, and the third still better. It contains very good articles by many devotees who have had some experiences by contact with Bhagavan. The articles intensify the aspirants' devotion for Bhagavan and thus give them an impetus in their efforts to attain the goal Bhagavan has shown. They also whet the appetite of earnest seekers to absorb more the teachings of Bhagavan and realise His eternal Presence. The journal is surely serving its purpose.

- Satchidananda, Secretary of
Anandashram, Kanhangad,

Thoughtfully written, your article on 'Vegetarianism' which appeared in the issue of 'The Mountain Path' of April 1964 is thought-provoking and bears the touch of wisdom.

It is a great pity that even in our predominantly Hindu India those who use the flesh of dead animals for food still predominate.

I whole-heartedly welcome your quarterly which is full of interesting and instructive articles. May it grow in usefulness and wide circulation.

- Krishnanand, Shanti Ashram,
Bhadran, Gujerat.

* - Reviewed elsewhere in this issue - Editor.

** Published under 'How I came to the Maharshi.'
- Editor.

Your editorials are charming, instructive and revealing. Lord Radha Krishna's grace and blessings be on you.

- Bankey Behari, Mata Krishna Satsang,
Vrindaban,

Allow me to congratulate you on your noble presentation of Self-wisdom in *The Mountain Path*. With the grace of a rare Guru behind you and that essential background of wisdom traditions which are found in such perfection in South India, your journal is almost alone in the midst of so much trashy literature that all lovers of *brahma-vidya* must rejoice at its appearance.

Since it is in English and therefore intended not only for Indian readers but for a world audience, this is a further encouraging feature; for I believe there are thousands of sincere seekers in the West who need *The Mountain Path* and the truth it represents. So many silly books have been written about yogis and swamis, and so many impostors and adventurers have exploited the subject, that it is most encouraging to have something honest and sincere, with a genuine Teacher in the forefront, to set aright this tragic state of affairs.

Only those like myself who have been trying to do the same thing - and needless to say welcome this strong support in the common aim - know how hard the editorial job must be, and how well you are succeeding.

Your editorials are most refreshing. The July one where you deal with Krishnamurti says things that needed saying about that paradoxical personality who for fifty years has been overcompensating himself for his early conditioning by Leadbeater and others.

- John Spiers, Editor, Values.

Congratulations on your last editorial. It made very clear something which few people on the spiritual path seem to get straight: the difference between a glimpse of higher consciousness and permanent realization.

- Marguerite Lidchi, Editor,
World Union-Goodwill, Pondicherry,

I should like to tell you what pleasure I have got from reading the first three issues of your magazine *The Mountain Path*. Everything in it is of high quality. It is a fine tribute to the unforgettable Ramana Maharshi.

Your editorial 'Where Charity Begins' in the second issue particularly impressed me. It is completely in the spirit of the Master, a spirit which I am trying to assimilate as well as I can.

- Professor Andrieu,
Lyon, France,

This quarterly journal is magnificent and I regret not to know enough English to express my admiration and satisfaction.* With regard to the pictures of Sri Ramana, of the Mountain and of devotees, I agree completely with what the Editor says in reply to the letter from J.G. of Alabama (see Letters to the editor in the April 1964 edition). We are very happy to see, among worldly sights, the serene face of one who is established in the true vision and can help us to attain it also. It is indeed a blessed contact. Altogether I appreciate the Editor's answers to the letters. They seem expressed in the spirit of the Maharshi. And I love the editorials. If I start to mention all the things I like it would be too long, I love very much the quotations and poems here and there, permitting us to meet with friends by turning the pages (Tukaram, Shankara, Hui-Neng, Milarepa) - blessed meetings! Also the Ashram Bulletin.

- 'Krishna' Paris

* From here on the English has been edited, -Editor.

I am a subscriber to your quarterly *The Mountain Path* and would like to say what a tremendous help it has been to me. In fact it has become a sort of 'daily bread' for me, in spite of the fact that the very high spiritual level of this path is far far above my inner comprehension. The 'hypnotism of the world' (as Joel Goldsmith so aptly names it in your issue of April 1964) still drags me down too much. It is so difficult to remember all the time that the difficulties and problems are of the relative plane or *Maya*; and even when we do remember what a terrible challenge it presents! I was particularly interested in Goldsmith's 'Infinite Way of Life' as I too have felt that, since God is One, all is One Perfect, Infinite Being, and disease and sorrow and sin have no place in it, that we see them as such

through some error of ours or that the idea of Oneness in all and One Perfect Being is just nonsense - but the second proposition just doesn't hold water - it reduces all life, all being, everything, to utter chaos.

I can imagine Bhagavan Sri Ramana nodding approvingly at Goldsmith with his wonderfully kind and understanding smile. You can imagine how bitterly I regret not to have sat at the great Sage's feet in his lifetime! I envy those happy souls whom he initiated by a look, allowing them to have a flash of realization of the Truth through his Grace and blessing.

- Mary N. Kanny, Bombay

Yes, it was a tremendous experience; but remember that the Grace and the blessing are still the same. As S. P. Mukherjee wrote in his poem in our January 1964 issue "The body-presence, the presence in the heart. These are the same." - Editor.

May I send you my deep appreciation for *The Mountain Path*. I have read the copies several times. I am especially grateful for the picture of Ramana Maharshi. Such a serene and beautiful face. Sometimes looking at it I have to cry. Again I want to touch it. I can't seem to look at it enough. If only I could have seen him, been in his presence, received his initiation!

Articles that I keep re-reading are: 'Self-Enquiry' by D. E. Harding, 'Outside the Scriptures' by Dr. Krishnaswami, 'Living the Infinite Way' by Joel Goldsmith and your editorials and book reviews. And thank you for the article on Vegetarianism.

- Mrs. H. L. Cavanagh, California.

Don't be grieved. His initiation still comes to those who turn to him - Editor.

To write in a matter-of-fact way about my impressions after going through the various articles, poems and pictures of *The Mountain Path* seems to me out of place. I simply feel that the journal is just as it ought to be and as I would wish it to be. In it heart speaks to heart and therefore every seeker on the lonely road to Realization and all devotees of Sri Bhagavan will feel the divine message conveyed through it.

May the Grace of Sri Bhagavan which I feel so

abundantly flowing through *The Mountain Path* be with the journal constantly and bring peace and bliss not only to all readers but equally to the publisher, the editors and the entire staff!

- R. Fuchsberger, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia.

The first three copies of *The Mountain Path* have proved a source of real help, comfort and inspiration and will continue to bring a constant supply of spiritual nourishment from the Ashram. It is with much admiration for the worthy efforts of all concerned in making the journal such a beacon light in these times that I should be most happy to take out a life subscription to *The Mountain Path*.

- Peter Bright, Paignton, Devon,

Wei Wu Wei's articles hit off and release and elucidate my own position better than anything I've ever come across - he speaks exactly my own language, only so very much better than I ever could.

The Hindu '3' with a squiggle at its back - what does it mean?

- E. Grace Blanchard, Shrewsbury.

The symbol printed at the head of our 'contents' page and at the head of the editorial is OM, the first and greatest of the mantras - Editor.

(To S. P. Mukherji) I read your life in the 'Ashram Bulletin' of *The Mountain Path* of July 1964. I have no words to express my feelings about our Gurudev Sri Bhagavan Ramana for having granted Your Prayer, I have been praying for the same thing for the last

ten years. Let Bhagavan take his own time to bless me. Really you are very near to his *Chidananda Rupa*. I can therefore only request you to bless your brother.

- C. N. Shastry, Saidapur, Dharwar.

Sweet to the thought, sweet to the ear, sweet to the mouth, is *The Mountain Path*. It will bring Bhagavan's Grace to many thousands who are hungrily reaching out for peace and enlightenment.

- M. Thangavel, Pondicherry,

When I go on asking myself (of course, not verbally) who I am I become silent and enter the state of not-knowing. I do not know anything. And I don't go further. May I ask you whether there is any further step. After a time I become normal and my ordinary mind starts functioning.

- Raja of Bhor, Poona.

Surely this not knowing anything does not mean becoming unconscious like a block of wood? The 'I' which knows things objectively as separate from itself may cease to function, but in its place a state of pure awareness arises - or you could call it pure being, pure conscious being. This is normal. To lose it again is abnormal, even though usual. It can be retained side by side with, or rather underlying, what we call 'normal' consciousness of an apparently objective world. That is what we aim at. It is to be accomplished by persistent steady effort and while retaining consciousness. - Editor.

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