

*Arunachala! Thou dost root out the ego of those
who meditate on Thee in the heart, Oh Arunachala!*

The Mountain Path

Vol. IV

OCTOBER 1967

No. 4

SRI RAMANASRAMAM, TIRUVANNAMALAI

“As a lode-stone attracts iron, magnetizing it and holding it fast, so do Thou to me, Oh Arunachala!”

— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 16.

Publisher :

T. N. Venkataraman,
President, Board of Trustees,
Sri Ramanasramam,
Tiruvannamalai.

*

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Tiruvannamalai.

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Tiruvannamalai.

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Annual Subscription :

INDIA .. Rs. 5.
FOREIGN .. 10 sh. \$ 1.50

Life Subscription :

Rs. 100; £ 10; \$ 30.

Single Copy :

Rs. 1.50; 3 sh.; \$ 0.45



THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(A QUARTERLY)

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— *The Marital Garland of Letters*, verse 1.

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The Mountain Path

(A QUARTERLY)

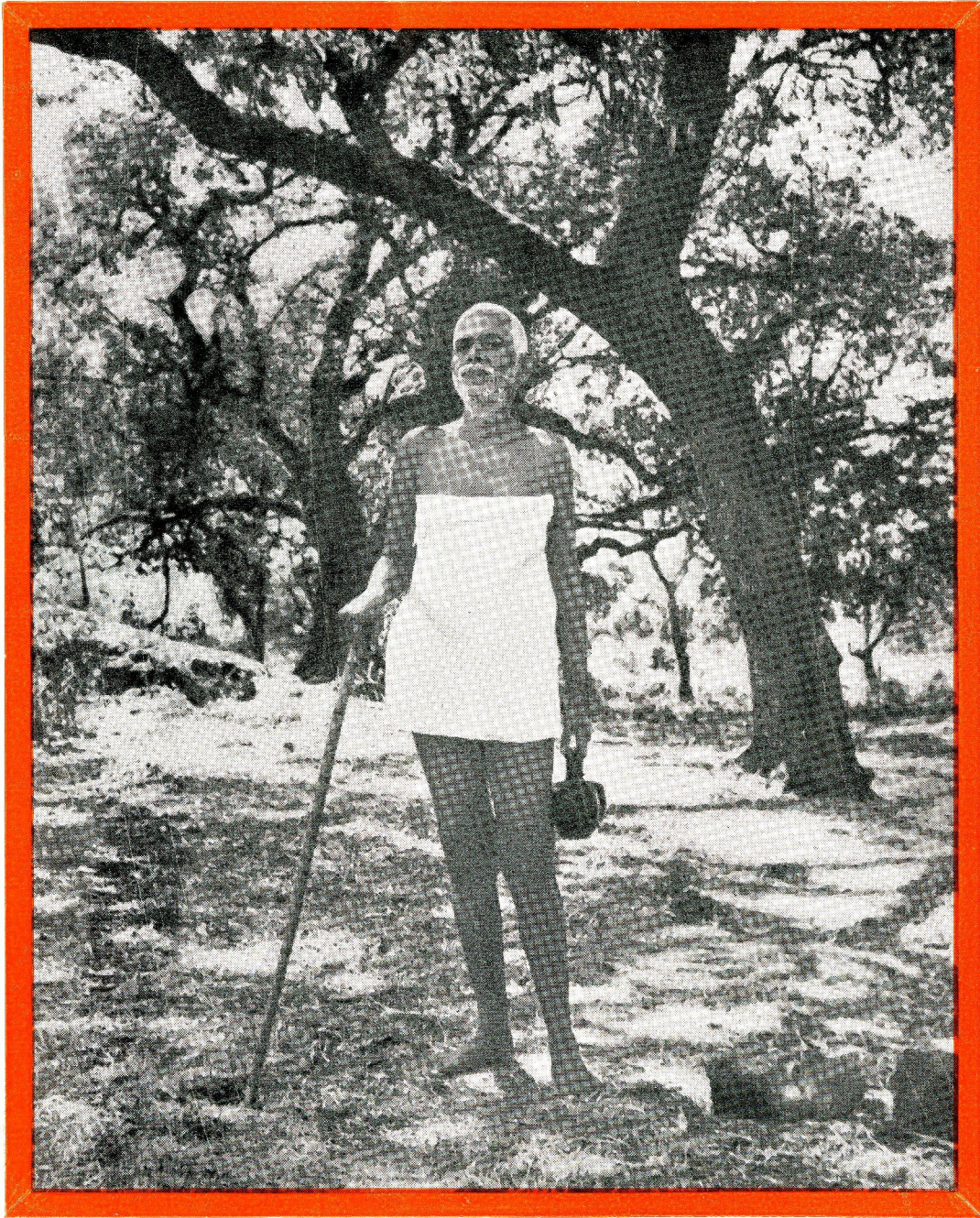
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Contributions for publication should be addressed to 'The Editor, *The Mountain Path*, Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State'. They should be in English and typed with double spacing. Contributions not published will be returned on request.

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QUEST AND EGOISM

IT is tremendously exhilarating to learn for the first time the truth of the One Self and the possibility of Self-Realization. At last life has a meaning and a purpose! All previous desires and ambitions fade into insignificance; they were mere re-arrangements in the pattern of the mirage, whereas this is penetrating beyond the mirage to Reality. So one vows oneself to the great quest and, most often, is drawn into some group following some path or discipline. One looks with awed reverence upon the senior members, those already advanced on the way. But it is not long before one discovers that by no means all of them merit this respect. A few seem earnest in their efforts and helpful towards others; and these it is who are on a good way, but with a shock of disillusionment the new recruit discovers many to be very imperfect people. Not only have they failed to eradicate their faults, but he may find less simple goodness among them than among his associates or

another and find more than among worldly some are grasping, assertive and self-control; some with a string of chattering standing has realisation the newcomer and what he always knew he knew, nothing in doubt — nothing a doubt — nevertheless ment and many lack explanation.

One explanation of sadhana squeezes a person and brings the process of psycho-analysis is a healing process but convenience to those who have t

was trying to meditate and Bhagavan said : "That's all right. Everything that's in the mind has to be brought out. How can they be cast out if they are not brought to the surface?" On another occasion a complaint was made to him of the arrogant behaviour of one of the senior devotees and he said : "That is only his vasanās (inherent tendencies) coming out".

Sometimes it happens that a person's first perception of Truth has a transforming effect, bringing out all that is beautiful in him, so that his friends wonder, finding him a new and delightful person. But that is only temporary. It may be followed by a surfacing of his worst tendencies, so that those who wondered at his improvement begin to find him worse than before and question whether it would not have been better if he had never put his hand to the plough. Only then, when both armies have been mustered, is the battle joined ; and it may be a lifelong one.

This, however, still leaves unexplained the many cases of aspirants who were outstanding egoists before they took to the path and seem to remain so afterwards, and of good, kind-hearted people who do not take any path. When Christ was asked why he associated with riff-raff he answered that it is those who are sick and need the doctor, not those who are in good health. There may have been some sarcasm in this, since one can hardly imagine those who thus challenged Christ to have been in a good state of spiritual health ; nevertheless it does point to the fact that it is those who recognize themselves to be sick that seek treatment. That explains why it is so often misfits and outsiders who become aspirants.

An American woman once asked Bhagavan why we should seek Realization and he answered : "Who asks you to if you are satisfied with life as it is?" But, he went on to explain, people often become dissatisfied with life and then they turn to God and seek guidance. That explains why the good, comfortable, kind-hearted people so seldom become seekers. They lack the spur

of initial discontent to start them off. Christ said that he who seeks shall find, but before one even knows that there is anything to seek the first stage of seeking may have to take the form of rejecting the sham satisfaction provided by a worldly life. This may be provoked by tragic events, but it is a state of mind and assails the prosperous no less than the indigent, the successful as well as the failures. It can be the result of boredom as well as of tragedy.

There is also another, more psychological explanation why many egoists take the path (and it is only a matter of degree, because we are all egoists, more or less, until the ego is burnt out at the end of the path). It is because the ego has much to expect from it, more indeed than from any worldly attainment, even though vowed to immolation. There have been mystery religions in which some one has been treated like a king or a god for a year, only to be sacrificed at the year's end. That is a symbol of the ego ; except that on the path the term is not fixed and can be postponed indefinitely. And after all, even if the ego were not to make this hazardous choice, the life of the world also faces it with the ultimate extinction of death.

I mentioned in a previous editorial how the path or quest goes in alternate waves of expansion and contraction symbolised by Jupiter and Saturn. This can be explained quite simply. All that one has to do is to keep one's mind still, take cognizance of outer happenings, concentrate on the mere fact of being, and remain poised and alert for promptings from within. It is as simple as that. But, although simple, few people find it easy. There is the temptation, while shaving or while stirring the porridge, to let the mind ramble on incessantly over what I said to Aunt Emma yesterday, what to write to Joseph today, what I will say to George in the office, and so on. These ramblings have two features in common : one is that they centre round a character called 'I' by whose interests the good and evil, advantage and disadvantage of all events are measured and whom the Sages declare to be fictitious ;

and the other is that they add nothing to the success of that presumptive character but merely mull over what has already been decided or will have to be decided in due course. They have the disastrous effect of deafening the mind to the still small voice of the Self and preventing the spiritual intuition or awareness of Self from flowing in, so that the presumptive 'I', like an evil ghost, seems to usurp the place of the Self.

This helps to explain the paradox of saying that the mind of the realized man is dead. It is quite alive for receiving impressions — inwardly: awareness and intuitions of the Self; outwardly: from things and events of which it takes cognizance; it is only dead to its usurped role of creator, creating an imaginary world for an illusory being. And it is much more efficient for being set free from this.

THE EVIL GHOST

In the heart — pure being :
 "Isness alone is."
 Outwardly — flow of events :
 "A dance, a rhythm."
 Between — an evil ghost :
 "The impostor me,"
 Who seems the very hub and
 first of things,
 But, scrutinized, dissolves and is not there.
 Pure being in the heart —
 be this, be still ;
 Flow of events without — cognize, accept ;
 The evil ghost — be vigilant, expel ;
 This is the path and all the wisdom of it.

Most people find it rather difficult just to hold to pure awareness of being and stop the mind rambling, so the paths laid down in the various religions offer them crutches to help them do it — asking yourself 'Who am I?', or being mindful of your actions, or watching your breathing, or repeating a mantra, or concentrating on a scriptural text, or puzzling over an insoluble problem — all just ways of stilling and controlling the mind, if you can't do it without them.

As the mind begins to be stilled to a greater or lesser degree and for longer or

shorter periods, the barrier against spiritual knowledge is breached and it begins to flood in, sometimes pure and formless, sometimes garbed in bliss or ecstasy or healing grace or innate vigour or prevision or supernatural powers, according to the individual nature, just as wine takes the form of the receptacle it flows into. In some people, the temporary stilling of the mind occurs with no striving or effort and the barrier to experiences and powers is thus removed without their understanding what is happening or why. They come to be known as natural mystics.

From this explanation of the process that takes place we can come back to the question of egoism and the alternate phases of expansion and contraction experienced during the quest. Each time the barrier is breached the Water of Life flows through, even though it be only a slight trickle or a fitful jet; a feeling of expansion, Grace, well-being results, whether or not accompanied by any of the powers or experiences referred to above. But the lurking ego is not slow to pounce upon the new supply and use it for its own ends, for enjoyment or boasting or glorification or whatever it may be, thereby closing the barrier again and preparing a new period of contraction and aridity, of which it will soon complain. And so the wheel goes round. It is necessary to be ever on the alert and when Grace comes, to avoid stealing it or impeding its flow. When King Janaka attained realization he said: "At last I have caught the thief who has been robbing me all these years."

Thus the ego has plenty of rewards to look forward to on the quest, and of a rarer and more exotic kind than it would find in the crude life of the world. There are ancient myths where the hero had to pass by trees laden with jewels or rare fruits, but woe betide him if he stopped to gather them. Or where lotus-eaters can dissolve his initiative or a Circe turn him into a swine. The warnings of dangers on the path are not fanciful; they are sober realities. Indeed, when the flow of Grace is bounteous but the resistance of the ego tenacious it may well

happen that the resultant stress will over-balance the mind. I have seen not a few such cases.

The most pernicious egoism is that of the person who has already advanced far enough on the path to obtain certain experiences. The Realized Man is set free from ordinary rules of conduct. He no longer needs them. As is said in the Old Testament, he is a "law unto himself". Having direct apprehension of the Divine Harmony and no egoistic impulses to put him in opposition to it, he needs no outer directives. This has been recognized in the various religions. For instance, the 4th Century Christian Desert Fathers, than whom none could be more extreme in austerity, declared that one who had attained the goal could return to the cities of the world and live there unrecognized. As explained in 'Above Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy' in 'The Mountain Path' of October 1965, Ramana Maharshi followed only such aspects of orthodoxy as seemed fitting to him.

But this truth gives rise to a pernicious heresy. It may happen that some corrupted individual claims on the basis of real or alleged experiences to be above good and evil and free to indulge in various kinds of licentiousness. Such a man is likely to corrupt himself and others, especially as he is only too apt to set himself up as a guru. That is a form of indulgence the ego loves. No such claim is valid. A conclusive answer to all such claims is that only he in whom the ego has dissolved really is above the law; and he in whom the ego has dissolved will have no incentive to indulge in licentious behaviour. Therefore the very fact that a man does so is proof that the ego in him still exists and that he is not authorised to but is deluding others and possibly himself also.

One conclusion is definite; that whatever method or path an aspirant may follow, in

whatever religion, it is a method or path towards the liquidation of the ego, and therefore whoever retains a strong egoism, whether it manifests as arrogance, jealousy, licentiousness, avarice or whatever else, is very far from the goal, no matter what experiences he may enjoy. Whatever technique of inner purification may be followed, the gross outer work of moral purification must be done. There may be possibilities on some paths of obtaining occult powers while still weighed down by moral impurities, that is by egoism, but never of attaining spiritual realization. There are paths where specific exercises are given for cultivating the several virtues and eradicating their opposite vices. In yoga, as traditionally taught, the first two steps, before asanas or postures are even attempted, are yama and niyama, the acquisition of moral control, without which a practiser may master endless stunts but will never attain the goal. On some other paths the moral discipline is less formal, comes more from within. These are questions of technique; what is definite is that liquidation of the ego is the goal and it can never be attained on any path while harbouring egoism.

But why so many words? Living on the supposition of an individual self alienates one from the Universal Self or God and brings frustration. Believing in the co-existence of a Universal Self and an individual helps a little but not much (and how could it be Universal if an individual existed outside it?) Intellectual argument that there is no individual self helps still less. To believe in the existence of a Supreme Self or God and consistently subordinate the interests of the presumptive individual self to the Supreme helps very much; but the only way to complete fulfilment is to live on the constant assumption that, as said in Chapter II, verse 16 of the Bhagavad Gita:

"There is no existence of the unreal and no non-existence of the Real"; as a Muslim would say: to live the Shahada.

FROM DHARMA TO MOKSHA

By
BHAGAVAN DAS

IN my article relating karma to dharma published in this April's *The Mountain Path*, I spoke of 'purushartha' or 'individual effort'. The word 'purushartha' also has the meaning 'goal in life'. In this sense there are traditionally four purusharthas: dharma, artha, kama and moksha — integrity, prosperity, pleasure and Liberation.

This is apt to come as a surprise to Christians and Buddhists who think of religion as world-renouncing, but the 'Sanatana Dharma', the 'Eternal Law' which is spoken of nowadays as 'Hinduism' is world and life affirming. It does not reject life but affirms and then transcends it. There is indeed the possibility of renunciation (being the universal religion it has to contain all possibilities) but that is not the main current. The broad plan is that life should be governed by the four purusharthas: dharma regulates it, artha and kama fulfil it, and moksha transcends it.

There is a certain parallel between the four purusharthas and the four ashrams or traditional stages of life. Dharma applies to the stage of the brahmachari or celibate student, artha and kama to the stage of the grihastha or householder, and moksha to the last two stages, first of retirement and then of renunciation. However, this parallel must not be exaggerated: dharma remains the firm foundation of all four stages and moksha their ultimate goal, although it may not be the proximate goal of the first two.

Let us first consider dharma. 'Integrity' is a very inadequate translation for it, but there is no English word that does cover its full implications of law, religion, honour, justice. Derived from a root meaning to 'support' or 'control', it means the religious, ethical and social law or tradition of a community. It can also (as I mentioned in my article on its relation to karma) refer

to the type of fulfilment natural to any particular person, that is his 'swadharma'. Furthermore, it is widely used, for instance in the epics, to imply honourable conduct or what would nowadays be called 'fair play'.

According to the ancient traditional pattern of life, the celibate student went to live at the school of his teacher or guru, which was apt to be in a forest clearing away from towns. The instruction was both in theory and practice. For instance, with young Kshatriyas such as Krishna or the Pandava brothers, it consisted largely of training in the art of war and the use of weapons. But it included philosophy and the scriptures also, and running through it like a golden thread was constant instruction in the theory and practice of dharma. However wealthy or high ranking a student might be, he lived a simple, austere life at the gurukula. All alike performed services to the guru and engaged in the necessary work for the running of the ashram.

But when the youth's education was finished a marriage was arranged for him and he was expected to go forth into the world and win fame and prosperity. One of the titles of Arjuna was 'wealth-winner', conferred on him because of the amount of tribute he brought back from his expedition preparing the way for Yuddhishtira's horse-sacrifice. This was a Kshatriya's way of gaining wealth; a craftsman or merchant or agriculturist would have other ways. But the important point is that, whatever caste a man might belong to, his striving after artha did not mean that the epoch of dharma was closed in his life. As a student he was learning dharma; as a householder he was living, practising and exemplifying it. Throughout the epics every action is measured by the yardstick of dharma.

interested activity man attains the Supreme."¹ It is noteworthy that Sri Ramana Maharshi also discouraged his followers from renouncing their worldly status and told them rather to seek Moksha in the life of the world. This does not necessarily, as we see from the life of Arjuna, involve either physical poverty or celibacy. The goal of Moksha transcends those of artha and kama rather than conflicting with them.

What, then, of the relation between dharma and Moksha? Here there can be no conflict, because the disinterested activity which Sri Krishna constantly enjoins as the means to Moksha is itself dharma. It is the removal of adharma, that is of disharmony or wrong-doing, that is necessary for the establishment of dharma, and this is at the same time the pathway to Moksha.

It is obvious, then, that the four purusharthas are not of equal importance. A man's life *must* be regulated by dharma, *can* lead through artha and kama, and *should* culminate in Moksha. Artha and kama can be by-passed, but dharma remains the framework of life whichever pattern is followed.

Dharma is incumbent on all, whereas Moksha is only for those who choose it, or (if one only knew) whom it chooses. Being

incumbent on all, dharma bears partly, though by no means exclusively, the appearance of a social pattern; being the goal for the solitary, Moksha appears a lone path; but dharma leads to Moksha through the removal of adharma.

One who has attained Moksha, which is the final flowering of dharma, no longer needs the outer law of dharma, being henceforth incapable of adharma. He may continue to conform to it, having no motive for not doing so, or he may ignore or disregard it. There is a parallel recognition of this in another tradition, the Hebraic, where it is said of one who has attained Wisdom that henceforth "He was a law unto himself." Such a one is beyond the Sastras. "No more use than a well in flooded land are the Vedas for an enlightened Brahmin."² As Buddha put it: having reached the further shore, he no longer needs the raft on which he crossed over. For him, the race has been run, the mountain peak attained; there is nothing more to be done.

He may or may not still perform a function on earth. His function may or may not accord with the letter of the law. In any case he will be a living embodiment of dharma.

¹ *The Bhagavad Gita*, II, 18.

² *Ibid.*, II, 46.

Who am I?

.....
Translated by Dr. Saher from the German novel *Das Grune Gesicht* (*The Green Face*) by the late Gustav Meyrink, first published in 1916, republished in 1963 by Bauer Verlag, Freiburg.

Life is benevolent. Every moment offers us a new beginning. At every second we are required to put the question: Who am I?

But we do not ask this question and therefore do not find our beginning.

Were we to ask this question earnestly the day would dawn on which thoughts would die—thoughts which have usurped the throne and broken in on the banquet of the soul, which they enjoy like parasites.

ARJUNA'S DILEMMA

By

Prof. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER

THE description of Arjuna's state of mind in the opening chapter of *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* furnishes an excellent example of a moral problem. When the Pandava and Kaurava armies were ranged on opposite sides and only awaited the signal for the attack, Arjuna asked Lord Krishna, his Divine Charioteer, to drive his chariot to a vantage ground wherefrom he could command a good view of the eminent warriors arrayed on either side. When this was done, he saw, in his own words, not great fighters but, "fathers and grandfathers, teachers, uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons and comrades; also fathers-in-law and close friends in both the armies."¹ Overwhelmed by the sight, he said: "When I see them, my kinsmen, drawn up and eager to fight, O Krishna, my limbs give way, my mouth is parched, my body trembles and my hair stands on end. (The bow) Gandiva slips from my hand and my skin burns all over. I am unable to stand. My mind is reeling."² Particularly is he affected by the sight of his former teachers: "How can I attack Bhishma and Drona in battle with my arrows? Worthy are they of my veneration." "My heart is stricken with the weakness of compassion, my mind is confused about my duty."³

Though Arjuna knows well enough that his caste duty, as a Kshatriya, is to take an active part in a righteous war, he feels unnerved by the thought of having to slay his own kinsfolk. He shrank from this most distasteful task and therefore "said he would not fight and remained silent."⁴

The reason for his refusal to fight is, as he himself says, his feeling for his kinsfolk. The word *swajanam* occurs four times in his speech and its equivalent *swabandhavan* once. Obviously it is the sight of his close relatives that awakens compassion in him.

But this compassion has invaded his mind at an inopportune moment and therefore the Lord characterises it as a weakness: "Whence has this loathsome feeling come upon you in this crisis? It is ignoble. It is disgraceful. It debars you from heaven. Do not yield to this weakness. Shake off this base faint-heartedness and arise!"⁵

Compassion is a noble sentiment no doubt, but it should be exercised at the right time and in the right way. Its expression becomes ignoble if it is at the wrong time and in the wrong way, so as to cloud a man's judgment and prevent him from discharging his duty. And in fact clearer scrutiny shows that it was not true compassion that withheld Arjuna from doing what had to be done but reluctance to undertake an unpleasant task. The Lord, being the searcher of hearts, had no difficulty in exposing this. The words "You speak words that seem to be wise,"⁶ tears aside the cloak. We can well suspect compassion in a soldier or any other, if it is expressed at a moment when he is called upon to perform an unpleasant task. We have a parallel in the excuses that Hamlet invented, though he had proof enough that his uncle Claudius was guilty of foul play against his father. As a loyal son of a King, it was his duty to avenge his father's death, but he kept on postponing taking action. This was due to temperamental weakness, but he deceived himself at first into thinking that it was because the evidence was inadequate. Then, when the play scene furnished him with clear proof,

¹ *The Bhagavad Gita*, 1, 26-27.

² *Ibid.*, 1, 28-30.

³ *Ibid.*, 11, 4 and 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 11, 9.

⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 2-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, II, 11.

the reason he gave himself was that by killing his uncle when the latter was at prayer he would be sending him straight to heaven.

It is again a case of self-deception when Arjuna declares: "It would be better indeed to live as a beggar in this world without slaying these venerable teachers."⁷ Rather than slay his kinsfolk and teachers and wade to the throne through blood he would throw away the kingdom, even if the alternative was begging his bread. This is very brave talk and might have deceived an ordinary person, though not the Lord. It seems to have deceived Arjuna himself into thinking that he was making a heavy sacrifice for the sake of his convictions. We can see, however, that it was not genuine renunciation but only a cloak for his feelings if we compare his case with that of a magistrate who offers to resign his post just when he is called upon to pronounce sentence on his own son or near relative for some capital offence. Would clear-thinking people be taken in by such an ostensible spirit of sacrifice? Sri Shankara makes it clear in his commentary on the opening verses of the second chapter of the Gita that Arjuna's offer to throw away the kingdom was not prompted by a genuine spirit of renunciation but by a false feeling of Vairagya which is apt to come over people when faced with an unpleasant obligation.

The Lord had first to tear aside these two cloaks, one of compassion and the other of renunciation, before he could make Arjuna see that what withheld him from doing his duty was really its unpleasant nature. Few people like killing others, but duty is a hard taskmaster. It is no respecter of persons and its voice is imperious. Its path is more often strewn with brambles than with roses. It may or may not lead to success; or it may lead to death. In any case, there is no running away from it. This is the central theme of Lord Krishna's discourse to Arjuna, and through him to mankind as a whole. The instruction is not meant for Arjuna alone, nor is it confined to a particular time or place. It is truly universal.

To establish men firmly in a sense of their duty something more is needed than just to say "you ought to do it". The 'ought' has, of course, a necessary place in life. Its purpose is to make a man do something, which left to himself, he might not do. There is no need, for instance, to tell a man that he ought to eat and drink, because he will do that in any case. But if we want him to refrain from eating and drinking on particular occasions, then the word 'ought' comes into use. But a 'moral ought' is not a secure enough foundation to make a man realise that he should remain true to his station in life and discharge the duties attached to it. For this he needs to go beyond morality to metaphysics, to appreciate the order of the universe and the fundamental principles on which it is based. Therefore the Lord vouchsafed Arjuna the vision of His Cosmic Form (Viswarupa Darshana) and gave him Divine sight wherewith to appreciate its significance. Then Arjuna perceived that the Lord in His Cosmic Form embraced the whole universe, that He pervaded it and ordered it on a basis of law, of which He Himself was the upholder. As such He punished the wrongdoers, and the sons of Dhritarashtra together with Bhishma, Drona and Karna were even now rushing into His fearful jaws and would thus be despatched even without Arjuna's help. Arjuna was simply to be an instrument for achieving the pre-ordained in the hands of the Mighty, All-Devouring Lord. This vision took away the conceit from Arjuna, making him realize that by doing his duty he would really be only an instrument in accomplishing the cosmic purpose. Pride and the sense of self-importance have to be removed before the individual can become spiritually regenerate. In the case of Arjuna this was effected by his vision of the cosmic form of the Lord.

The individual has not only to be set free from pride and self-importance, but also from the multifarious desires which pull him in different directions. They must be re-

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 5.

placed by the single desire to do the will of God, realizing that God is not only the Supreme Reality but also the Supreme Value. When this is fully grasped he will experience no further conflict but, in an effortless manner, will do the right thing at the right moment in the right manner. Thus moral life has God as its Source and Guarantor, and ethics derives from metaphysics.

A GARLAND OF WITNESS

By

I. G. SCHULTZ

ONLY the mystics see life as it is, as a garland woven upon the thread of the Eternal. And the mystics of East and West bear the same witness. I have woven together a few flowers here that I have gathered from them.

St. Augustine, a 4th Century Christian, said in his 'Confessions': "I turned inwards and saw the eternal, unchangeable Light of God. Truth is the eternal Light that illuminates me. My soul is safe only in Thee. Thou leadest my soul to an Ocean of unspeakable bliss, surpassing all happiness of earthly life."

In the 12th Century St. Francis of Assisi said: "If you are unhappy put on the garment of prayer and stay before the radiant Face of God till your heart is glad again."

In the same century Hildegard, Abbess of Bingen, told her friends that she often saw a radiant light glittering like a cloud in the sun and once heard a voice from it saying: "I am the radiant light shining in the darkness."

Thomas a Kempis, 14th Century author of 'The Imitation of Christ', bade us: "Leave behind you all that is perishable. Seek nothing but the Eternal." And he added, "It is only God Who can calm man's soul, freeing it from evil and filling it with the Divine. I will turn inwards in silence,

seeking salvation only in Thee, O Lord! Give me Thyself and my soul has everything."

Meister Eckhart, great Dominican preacher and mystic, said: "God is nearer to me than I am to myself. Let me be silent, allowing God to speak and act through me."

"Nearer to me? The same is said in the Quran: "We are nearer to man than his jugular vein."

Jeanne Guyon, 17th Century Christian mystic, declared: "Do not seek God outside but only in yourself."

And Rabia, a Muslim woman saint, hearing a devotee calling, calling upon God, said: "What are you calling for? He is here."

In the same sense, Angelus Silesius, another 17th Century Christian mystic, said: "Where are you going? Heaven is within you. If you seek Him elsewhere you will always miss your Goal."

The German Buddhist Dr. Feddersen, reminds us: "We must shut our eyes if we would see. We must become empty to attain. Only when our senses are silent are the gates of Eternity opened."

Therefore the modern American mystic, Joel Goldsmith, declared: "Your entire attention should be given to the realization of God, always bearing in mind that the kingdom of heaven is within you."

KRISHNA, TEACHER OF DHARMA

By
ARTHUR OSBORNE

IN the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna taught Arjuna the rules of Dharma, that is of right conduct. However, it has been said that on other occasions he himself did not observe them. The Gita, it will be remembered, is a dialogue enshrined in the vast epic poem, the *Mahābhārata*, an epic dealing mainly with the feud between the Pandavas and their cousins the Kauravas, which culminated in the great eighteen-day battle of Kurukshetra. It has been asserted that Krishna repeatedly used dishonourable tactics during this battle and was anything but an exemplar of dharma. This accusation has also been taken up by certain representatives of another religion who have tried to make out that Krishna was an incarnation not of God but the devil, which is perhaps not in very good taste.

The two lines of defence usually put forward are not convincing. One is that the Krishna of the Gita is not the same person as the Krishna of the epic. This is quite untenable, for the divine status and power of Krishna is referred to continually throughout the epic by friend and foe alike. The other is even worse. It is that Krishna, being divine, was not bound by human laws of honour—as though Divinity meant merely power and not purity or goodness.

Let us first see where this accusation originated and then examine the evidence for it. It was voiced in the *Mahābhārata* itself by Duryodhana, the arch-villain of the epic, the great exemplar of adharma or dishonour, as he lay dying. That alone should make it suspect; for a valid accusation would hardly flow from such a tainted source.

Since the accusation and Krishna's reply to it are bound up with the particular issues at stake, it will be better to sketch these in a general outline first.

Pandu and Dhritarashtra were brothers. Dhritarashtra, being the elder, was crowned king, but he was blind and therefore had to delegate most of the work of government. Pandu died while the five sons born by his two wives were still growing boys. These five, as the Pandavas, were therefore brought up together with their cousins, Dhritarashtra's many sons, known as the Kauravas. Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, being elder than any of the Kauravas, was proclaimed Yuvaraja or heir-apparent. However, Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, was jealous and resentful and would not let the kingdom slip out of his grasp. The Pandavas were in all ways superior, and this only increased his jealousy. While still a boy he had already tried to murder Bhima, the second of the Pandavas, who was like a young giant. The blind king, perhaps not unnaturally, favoured his own son, and after some years Duryodhana succeeded in persuading him to exile the Pandavas to a country house away from the capital. He then set fire to the house hoping to kill them.

This plot failed, however. The Pandavas escaped and became the sons-in-law of King Drupada and had to be received back. Then, in a division of property, they were given a waste, undeveloped part of the kingdom; but in a few years they built it up into a finer kingdom than the part retained by Duryodhana. Once more the latter was tormented by jealousy. This time he challenged Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas, to a dicing match. It was a point of honour for a Kshatriya never to refuse a challenge either to combat or dicing, so Yudhishtira had to accept, even though he knew well that he was going to be cheated out of his rights. And indeed, the other side did cheat and fleeced him of all his property, then of his own freedom and that of

his brothers and finally of their wife Draupadi. Draupadi was dragged into the Court and insulted and would have been worse humiliated but for her own spirited defiance and the invisible help of Krishna. The Pandavas looked on helplessly, feeling bound by the code of honour not to intervene. At this point the elders, realizing too late how serious the matter had become, arranged a compromise. The Pandavas and Draupadi were restored to freedom but were to live in exile in the forest for twelve years and then unrecognized among people for another year. All this they did and then both sides began canvassing allies for war. Even then Yudhishtira offered to maintain peace if Duryodhana would give them just five villages to rule over, but he refused even that. War had become inevitable.

Now the position of Krishna. Humanly, he was the ruler of a neighbouring state and a noncombatant ally of the Pandavas, going into battle as Arjuna's unarmed charioteer; so he had nothing personally to gain by the victory of the Pandavas or to lose by their defeat. Spiritually he was the Divine Avatara who declared to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "Whenever dharma decays and adharma prevails I manifest Myself."¹ The verse which follows this is particularly important for our purpose: "For the protection of the good, for the destruction of the evil and for the establishment of dharma I take birth from age to age."² That is to say that his function was not only to proclaim a gospel. He did that in the *Bhagavad Gita*; but he also had to protect the righteous, establish dharma and destroy evil and the evil-doers. This he did in and through the battle of Kurukshetra.

With this background we can come to a general review of the actions of Krishna, which we will examine in more detail later. The battle of Kurukshetra was the transition from the Dwapara Yuga or the third age to the Kali Yuga or spiritually dark age in which we now live. Krishna was the Avatara presiding over the transition and it was essential to him that it should take place through the victory of dharma, not of

adharma, that is to say of the Pandavas and not the Kauravas. According to the doctrine of the yugas, there are four ages of successively lower spiritual level within the complete manvantara or cycle. The course of each age shows a spiritual decline but the inauguration of the next age is marked by a new stabilisation, although on a lower level. The Dwapara yuga was characterised by a rigorous code of honour and chivalry, but this had become inwardly corrupt, so that it could be used by scoundrels to ruin honest men. It was, in fact, adherence to the letter that kills instead of the Spirit which vivifies. A characteristic example was the infamous dicing match. Yudhishtira and his brothers knew that they were being wronged, but bound by the letter of the law, did not feel free to resist even when the noble and beloved Draupadi was threatened with humiliation. But Krishna did. In the *Bhagavad Gita* he constantly stresses the need for inner, not outer, renunciation. "He it is who is a sannyasi, he it is who is a yogi, who performs his duty without regard to profit, not he who renounces the sacred fire and activity (of a householder)."³ Similarly in fighting evil in the world he taught that an upright man, a champion of dharma, cannot let his hands be tied by adherence to formal rules of honour twisted to evil purposes by unscrupulous adversaries. The state at the beginning of the Dwapara yuga where rules of honour were honourably observed was doubtless higher, but that which Krishna was abolishing where formal rules of honour were twisted into instruments of villainy was far worse. This means that Krishna, by his example as well as his teaching, was establishing dharma for the new age that was dawning and that his actions are not merely excusable but models to be followed.

With this in mind, let us examine in detail the accusations and Krishna's rejoinder. Duryodhana is lying mortally wounded on the ground. "Duryodhana had been listening to the words of all of them. He rose

¹ Ch. IV, v. 7.

² Ch. IV, v. 8.

³ Ch. VI, v. 1.

to his waist like a wounded cobra that is not yet dead. He was suffering intense pain from his attempts to raise his body, but he did not worry about that. He said: 'Stop these words, Krishna!.....You have no shame. I have been killed most unfairly and you are gloating over my fall. You were responsible for this act of Bhima's. I don't blame him at all. In fairness to Bhima I must say that he had forgotten his oath and was fighting a fair fight. It was you who brought the talk round to unfair fighting when you were talking to Arjuna. You spoke loud deliberately so that Bhima would hear you. Arjuna then slapped his thigh (to make Bhima remember). You have caused many kings to be killed by unfair means and you dare to call me sinful! I know all your evil deeds, Krishna. You were the cause of this great war and of the slaughter of so many men. You stationed Shikandi in front of the chariot of our grandfather and thus enabled Arjuna to kill him. Do you think I did not mark it? You caused the elephant called Aswatthama to be killed, and it was you who made Drishtadyumna kill Drona. Do you think I did not mark it? It was you who made Ghatotkacha face Radheya, so that Radheya's Shakti was wasted on that beast. Do you think I did not mark it? It was you who made Arjuna kill Radheya when his chariot wheel was sunk in the mire. Do you think I did not mark it? If the Pandavas had fought with Bhishma and Drona and Radheya by fair means they would never have won the war. It is you, Krishna, who are the greatest sinner here, and not I who have been killed by unfair means.'

" Krishna turned on him with angry eyes. He said: 'Listen to me Duryodhana. You have been killed because of your adharma. You have killed all your friends and all your dependents by your unrighteousness. Bhishma and Drona and Radheya were killed because they took up your cause against that of the Pandavas. Bhishma should not have sided with you. Drona could have left Hastinapura and gone away to the forest.⁴ Radheya was bent on pleasing you. He knew that you were in the wrong and

yet he fought for you. It is because of you and your evil deeds that they have been killed. You say that I am the cause of this war. Have you so soon forgotten my coming to Hastinapura (to plead for peace)? Have you forgotten the trouble I took to convince you that the war should not be fought? You would not let the world out of your grasp. Your avarice was the cause of this war and of the death of all these heroes. Your wickedness goes back to the time when you were just a young boy. The young plant of jealousy was encouraged to grow by your father and your uncle Sakuni. It is the fruit of that tree that you are tasting now. Even for the death of Abhimanyu alone you will have to be killed again and again. You do not deserve any one's sympathy and I have no regret for you."⁵

I will elucidate these various allusions later, but it can be seen here already that while Duryodhana speaks of technicalities Krishna is concerned with wrong motives and evil policy. The lesson has to be pressed home on the Pandavas also, who had suffered so much by letting themselves be enslaved by the letter of the law when true righteousness or dharma pointed the other way; and therefore Krishna now rounds on them with his counter-charge.

" Krishna turned on all of them his angry eyes. He thundered at them in his beautiful resonant voice: 'Of course they were all slain by unfair means! They were all the very flowers of Kshatriya prowess. If you had fought by fair means they could never have been defeated, let alone killed. Not all your skill with the bow and arrow and your divine astras⁶ could have given you victory over those heroes. This Duryodhana could never have been killed in fair fight. Look at me and listen to me care-

⁴ The point of this is that Drona was a Brahmin, not a Kshatriya; the significance is explained later.

⁵ *Mahabharata* page 674. All the quotations from the *Mahabharata* in this article are taken, with slight verbal changes, from the abridged translation by Kamala Subramaniam published by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay.

⁶ Occult weapons.

fully. Long ago in the Kamyaka forest I wiped the tears from the eyes of my dear Draupadi and promised her to bring about the death of all who had made her weep.⁷ Yudhishtira, you did not care about the insult to her in the Court at Hastinapura; you were concerned only with the right or wrong of it. You allowed your wife to be insulted by these beasts and stood silent because you thought it was not dharma to interfere. You stopped Bhima from doing what he should have done. But I could not let Draupadi weep. When she was in the Court no one came to her help. The great Bhishma and Drona and all the others never helped her. I swore to kill every one of them; yes, every one of them. I killed the great Bhishma because he had not the courage to interfere when the beasts of the Court were harassing Draupadi. I killed Drona for the same reason. He also was indifferent on the day when the game of dice was played. He had no right to take part in the war or to fight on the side of Duryodhana when he knew that the Pandavas were in the right. He loved this evildoer and so, with Bhishma, Drona too had to die. I am bent on one thing only: the righting of a wrong done to good people. I have achieved it and I have no regrets. As for the sin of all this unfair fighting, let it fall on my head; I am prepared to bear that too for the sake of the Pandavas."⁸

That is to say that Krishna admitted to using unfair means in order to bring about the triumph of right over wrong, of dharma over adharma.

Having reviewed the picture as a whole, let us now examine each separate item of it to see how this key fits in.

First is the slaying of Bhishma. Partisans of Duryodhana say simply that Krishna got a woman to stand between Bhishma and Arjuna with the result that Bhishma, out of chivalry, laid down his bow, but Arjuna, under Krishna's urging, used his and was able to kill Bhishma. The only excuse for such a travesty (if it is an excuse) would be ignorance. The truth is far more complex and requires an outline of Bhishma's story.

He was a lonely and desolate old man waiting for death to claim him but a terrible fighter and, according to Kshatriya dharma, he fought to the utmost when he did fight. He had joined the side which had a technical claim on his loyalty, although he knew that it was in the wrong, and it was for this that Krishna condemned him, just as a modern war crimes court condemned Hitler's generals for obeying immoral orders. Bhishma was revered by both sides as their 'grandfather', but in fact he was step-brother of their grand-father; he himself was a celibate and had no children. When he was a young man his father remarried. The new step-mother and her father feared that Bhishma's descendants would disinherit hers, so he took a vow never to marry. Enormous weight was attached to a vow and later, when circumstances became such that Bhishma's step-mother herself wished him to have offspring, he refused to break his vow. On one occasion Bhishma abducted a princess named Amba, with her two sisters, for his step-mother. Amba, to cut a long story short, was brought to the point, where she declared that, since Bhishma had abducted her, it was his duty to marry her according to the Kshatriya code of honour. Bound by his vow, Bhishma rejected her. Amba's love turned to hatred. She immolated herself, vowing to be reborn a man with the sole purpose of bringing about Bhishma's death. She was reborn as Shikandi, a girl who changed sex and was already a man at the time of the Battle of Kurukshetra. Owing to the force of concentration behind the vow, he remembered his previous life and his enmity to Bhishma. Bhishma also recognised Amba in him and therefore laid down his arms on his approach.

Bhishma was the commander of the Kaurava army. Yudhishtira, the saintly eldest brother of the Pandavas, was caught in the dilemma, that, by the law of dharma, his side ought to win but that it seemed impossible so long as the terrible old man was opposing them. Therefore he went with

⁷ Draupadi was dear to Krishna as his devotee; there was no personal link between them.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 675.

his four brothers and Krishna to Bhishma's tent in the enemy camp at night, barefoot and unarmed, and put the problem to him himself. Bhishma approved, expressed his weariness with life, but declared that, while fighting, he had to do his utmost. He added that there were only two who could kill him, Krishna and Arjuna. Since Krishna had taken a vow not to fight in the battle, that left only Arjuna. Even Arjuna could only kill him if he co-operated by laying down his arms, since he had received a divine boon that he could only die or be killed when he consented to. This he would do, he said whenever Shikandi, whom he recognized as Amba, was stationed before him. That was the time when Arjuna was to kill him. There is no doubt that it was a clever scheme and Krishna was the brains behind it, but was there anything dishonourable in it? From a long range viewpoint, Bhishma had to be punished for giving his allegiance for merely technical reasons, to a cause that he knew to be wrong but even from a short range viewpoint there seems to have been nothing in it contrary to dharma.

The next episode is the killing of Drona. Once again a whole story is involved. Drona succeeded Bhishma as commander of the Kaurava army. He also was revered by both parties, having been the archery instructor of both Pandava and Kaurava princes. He was guilty of a twofold adharma. Like Bhishma, he was fighting for 'the establishment', the side to which he owed technical loyalty, against the side which he knew to be in the right. Also he was a Brahmin and had no right to be fighting at all. This is what Krishna was alluding to in the passage quoted above when he said that Drona could have left the Court at Hastinapura and gone to the forest: It was his dharma to be a sage or hermit, not a warrior.⁹ Apart from being a superb archer, Drona was also a great master of occult powers through which he wrought terrible destruction on the common troops who had no defence against them. This was felt to be a great adharma. And, in parenthesis, it is natural to suppose that people of those days should have been as far beyond

us in their mastery of occult powers as we are beyond them in our mastery of physical powers. The situation was equivalent to that in modern warfare of an enemy using poison gas. Krishna decided that in such a case it is legitimate to tell a lie. Would any modern moralist decide otherwise?

Drona's insensate ambition was mainly for the sake of his son Aswatthama and if he believed that Aswatthama had been killed he would give it up. Krishna ordered the Pandavas to tell him so. Even the forthright Bhima quailed from telling a direct lie. He prevaricated. He killed an elephant with that name (which is what Duryodhana refers to in his accusation) and then called out: "Aswatthama is dead!" Drona turned to Yudhishtira for confirmation, believing him to be too saintly to tell a lie, but he also repeated it. Drona was heart-broken and lost interest in the battle. Further urged by Bhima to return to his true dharma as a Brahmin, he laid down his arms and sat in meditation; and in that state he was killed.

That the lie was wrong in itself is clearly admitted in the *Mahābhārata*. In fact it is stated that Yudhishtira was so saintly that he, together with the chariot in which he drove, was normally in a state of levitation, some inches above the ground, but that after he had uttered this lie his chariot came down to earth. What Krishna was teaching was that there may be a situation where a lesser wrong, such as a lie, is justified and even necessitated to eliminate a greater one. Would any modern moralist deny this? The question was debated among the Pandavas themselves. Arjuna, who is the Hamlet of the *Mahābhārata*, forever doubting, hesitating and regretting, condemns the lie in retrospect. The forthright Bhima staunchly defends it. The final verdict is given by the eldest brother, the saintly Yudhishtira.

⁹ See the *Bhagavad Gīta*, III. 35; Better one's own dharma, however imperfect, than that of another, though well performed. Better even to die following one's own dharma for that of another is perilous.

"I was told by Krishna that it was for the good of the Army that I should tell that lie. I have always hated lying but I did tell a lie.....I consider Krishna my guru and I am proud to have obeyed him. I told a lie and I am proud to have told it. It has saved the lives of many people and thus I have been able to do much good. So I am proud of my lie. Do you hear that? I am proud of it! I don't care if I do go to hell for this lie, as you have predicted. I have lived an upright life to the best of my ability. I have never had a single evil thought. I have always tried to tread the path of Truth. This lie of mine seems to be without sin. If I feel that something is not sinful then it is really not sinful."¹⁰ Here Yudhishtira proclaims the inner law of dharma that Krishna was trying to establish in place of the brittle outer conventions.

The next item enumerated by Duryodhana is a clever stratagem but not unfair. Radheya, who took over the command of the Kaurava army after Drona had been killed, had an *astra* or occult weapon which was fatal but which he could use only once. He was reserving it for Arjuna, but Krishna manoeuvred him into a duel with another champion who pressed him so hard that he had to use it.

It is different, however, with the death of Radheya himself. He was fighting a duel with Arjuna when his chariot began tilting over, its left wheel sinking in the mud. He appealed to Arjuna to observe the laws of chivalry by refraining from attacking him while he righted it, but Krishna refused to allow this. "So you want fair treatment from Arjuna now! Tell me truly, Radheya, whether you yourself have always adhered to dharma. You have been a party to Duryodhana's plots against the Pandavas. You were there when their queen Draupadi was dragged into the Court by Dussasana. You gloated over her helplessness more than the others. You never thought of dharma when the game of dice was being played. But why talk of what happened long ago? Let me remind you of what happened only four days back when you all killed Abhi-

manyu.' Krishna's eyes were red. His face was terrible to look at. It was twisted with anger and grief at the thought of Abhimanyu. He continued: 'Yes, Abhimanyu. Six heroes murdered him. He wanted a fair chance. He did not have a single weapon. With the wheel of his chariot in his hand he called on you all to fight him one by one. Did you think of the rules of fair fighting then? Who was it who cut Abhimanyu's bowstring from behind when he was unaware of it? Was there a hero who knew the dharma of fair fighting? You disgust me with your demand for fair fighting. How dare you expect it when you paid no attention to it then?'"¹¹

This is the point on which Krishna keeps insisting. Rules of honour cannot be allowed to become a weapon in the hands of the dishonourable who ignore them when it suits their convenience but claim their protection when convenient. The Abhimanyu whom he mentions was Arjuna's son, a gallant youth of sixteen whom a group of experienced warriors did to death. While others were attacking him in front, Radheya had cut his bowstring from behind, leaving him defenceless.

The only remaining accusation is the killing of Duryodhana himself by unfair means. When his army was defeated and all its great warriors slain he fled and concealed himself in a lake. The Pandavas discovered him and called to him to come out. Yudhishtira then challenged him to mortal combat with any one of them he might choose and with any weapon he might choose, with the kingdom at stake. Krishna was furious. Once again there was the quixotic folly of binding oneself by rigid laws. After all the sacrifice and suffering of the battle and after at last obtaining victory, here was Yudhishtira putting it all in jeopardy again and risking a return of the forces of adharma by staking the outcome on a single combat!

Duryodhana chose to fight Bhima with a mace. He was soon seen to be getting the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 608.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 641.

better of it. And it must be said here that this was so intrinsically improbable that it would seem to have been told with the deliberate purpose of bringing in another lesson in dharma. Bhima has throughout been the mighty warrior of almost superhuman strength, while Duryodhana has been an arrogant but clumsy and rather pathetic figure on the battle-field. Several combats of his with one or another of the brothers have been recorded during the battle, and in each case he has been worsted and saved himself by flight. And now he is made superior to the mighty Bhima! The point is that after the infamous dicing match, when Draupadi was declared forfeit, Duryodhana had bared one thigh and called her to come and sit on it. Bhima, in a rage, could hardly be restrained from rushing upon him then and there (and, it will be remembered, Krishna said that he should have done so). He vowed that when the inevitable war came he would break both Duryodhana's thighs with his face. To strike below the waist was a foul, but when he made his vow nobody remarked on this. Now, when the combat he had been waiting for all these years at last came, Bhima, we are told, forgot about his vow and Krishna had to prompt Arjuna to remind him of it. He thereupon swung his mace low and caught the unsuspecting Duryodhana on the thighs, thereby breaking them and winning the combat. To focus still more attention on this technically dishonourable way of avenging injustice, Krishna's brother Balaram had to come by at that moment, making it necessary for Krishna to justify the act. Balaram was rather like Bhima in his simplicity of mind and tremendous strength of body and was prepared to attack the Pandavas on account of this foul blow. Krishna, however, pacified him and justified the deed. In doing so he specifically referred to the opening of the Kali yuga and the need from now on to use a small misdeed to destroy a greater one: "Remember that the fourth quarter of time, Kali, has now stepped in. We cannot find unsullied dharma from now on."¹²

This was a case of a particular formal obligation (a vow) overriding a general one (a rule of fair fighting), and it is interesting to note that there is a similar case in the other great epic, the *Rāmāyana*, when Rama, who is considered the very personification of dharma, used what were considered dishonourable tactics in fulfilment of a vow, and without the personal justification that Bhima had. The two brothers Vali and Sugriva were fighting. Rama had an alliance with Sugriva and had vowed to come to his aid if ever he was in danger. Vali was getting the better of it, and the gods had granted him the boon that he could never be killed by any one he could see, so Rama hid in the bushes and shot him from behind. Vali, while dying, bitterly accused Rama of adharma but was convinced by him that his oath justified his deed.

However, Krishna's teaching went farther than this. It was that the spirit of dharma was to override the letter. A scoundrel was not to be allowed to tie the hands of the righteous by technical rules of dharma in order to establish adharma. So hard do people find to understand this, to put the spirit above the letter, that even now, after all these centuries, there are still some who put themselves on the side of Duryodhana, accusing Krishna of violating dharma. Actually, in the Gita no less than in practical examples, he denounced fixation on the letter of the law.

"The ignorant, being attached to the letter of the Vedas, declare in flowery language that there is nothing beyond."¹³

"No more use than a well in flooded land are the Vedas for an enlightened Brahmin."¹⁴

It was always the Essence, the Spirit of Truth for which Krishna bade his disciple Arjuna strive.

The verdict of the *Mahābhārata* itself is quite unequivocal. On one occasion, before the battle of Kurukshetra, Dharma personi-

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 672.

¹³ Ch. II, v. 42.

¹⁴ Ch. II, v. 46.

fied, a god and the father of Yudhishtira, appeared to the Brothers and declared: "I am on your side. Where dharma is there will victory be. Where Krishna is there will dharma always be."

One further consideration needs to be developed before leaving this subject. That is that Krishna's attitude looks superficially like the discredited theory that the end justifies the means and there are probably critics who would love to pin this theory on to him. Actually it is not the case. This theory means that if I believe something is for the general good — my own religious sect or Communism or Nazism or whatever else — I am justified in committing sinful and criminal actions in order to bring it about. Krishna's teaching was that the spirit of Dharma (that is of right dealing or justice or uprightness) should override the letter. It is not a case of envisaging some consummation and then committing crimes to bring it about, but of preferring real to formal justice in any situation. If the real corresponds with the formal justice, so much the better; but in Kali Yuga there will be many cases where it does not, and in such cases real justice is to be preferred.

It is not a case of envisaging any end at all, because the only end to strive for is dharma outwardly and moksha inwardly, but of assessing the obstacles to dharma and moksha and taking action against the more powerful whenever the two are mutually opposed. To disobey orders is adharma, to slaughter innocent victims of concentration camps is a greater adharma; therefore Krishna would say, like a war crimes tribunal, that such an order should be disobeyed. But what about Krishna's convictions in the passage already quoted, that the Pandavas should win the war, and his admission to the use of unfair means to bring this about? Is that not a case of the end justifying the means? Here again, it appears so only superficially. If these so-called unfair means could be justified only by the need for winning the war, that would be a case of end justifying the means but, as I have shown, each one of these incidents

is inherently justified as an act of dharma. Not for a single one of them is it necessary to appeal for justification to the general need to win a righteous war.

I do not say that in such a case the end never can justify the means, for instance that the Tibetans defending their religion and tradition, their country and way of life against a more powerful foe who is trying to destroy it all never would be justified in using inherently dishonourable means. What I say is that that was not what Krishna was teaching. What He was teaching was that a man should estimate in what direction the true spirit of dharma points and have the courage to follow it, even if it is contrary to formal obligations. That might in some cases cover an example such as the Tibetan resistance. It may be a question of degree — and in fact it often is — how important is the end and how wrong the means. If it is, for instance, a question of destroying a rat's fleas to prevent an outbreak of bubonic plague few would declare it unjustified. It is not always easy to decide in what direction the path of true dharma lies. It requires both integrity and intelligence. Making the right decision is half the battle; carrying it out is the other half. Both are necessary. And I am reminded here that when a follower of the Maharshi was faced with a choice of actions and asked him which course to take, he would very seldom answer. More often he would sit silent, leaving the burden of decision with the questioner.

In this issue we are publishing a portion of the *Yaksha Prashna*, a sort of catechism of dharma which occurs in the *Mahābhārata*. When asked in it what is the greatest corruption or dereliction of dharma for a Kshatriya, Yudhishtira answers that it is desertion of the helpless in their time of need. And yet it needed Krishna to point to him, in the passage already quoted, that he himself had been guilty of this when he left Draupadi exposed to insult and humiliation from Duryodhana and his friends, feeling himself bound by the letter of dharma

to connive at the transgression of the spirit of dharma. This, in fact, can be taken as a test case ; was Yudhishtira right in standing aside and leaving Draupadi defenceless against the insults and humiliations of

Duryodhana and his cronies because he had been trapped into forfeiting her or Krishna in saying that his duty of protecting the innocent and resisting evil override technicalities ?

Find Out

.....

By
G. N. Daley

EGO-CONSCIOUSNESS is the point where the visible world arises together with the function of thought. It is at this point, the point of ego-consciousness, that the sensations of touch, taste, smell, sight and hearing originate and are presented by the mind to ego-consciousness as the tangible reality which we say we perceive and on which perceptions we base our proof of the existence of a space-time universe. Mind is the sole authority for this conclusion. Here too, at this point, ego-consciousness endeavours to break through its self-erected and self-perpetuating barrier by trying to think its way through thought to the Self. However, whether in fact space-time extension is, or is not, the reality which the mind assures us that it is, is of secondary importance. It is after all only a point of view. The main consideration is to discover who *we* are ; then all the other things will be known for what *they* are and will no longer be problems for speculation.

Source of Light — SELF
Light — A — Awareness.
Prism — B — Ego-consciousness.
Colours — C — Things perceived.

By observation it is seen that on passing through a prism light streaming from its

source emerges as seven separate colours. It is apparent that these seven separate colours are in reality the undifferentiated light which is caused by the function of the prism, at point B, to become differentiated. The same light viewed from point B appears on the one hand as seven colours and on the other hand as pure light. What you see depends on which side of point B you choose to put your attention.

Similarly, conscious mind at point B may look outwards to point C and see the world of objects and things, or it may look inwards towards the source of the Light and by so doing it knows that the objects and things are in reality the One Self, differentiated by the function of mind, the centrifugal force of a spinning nothingness. But again, what mind is and objects are is of secondary importance —

Find out
Where these and those
Arose
And I and thou —
How NOW
Becomes a strip of time —
Find out
And BE the Bliss Sublime.

THE YAKSHA PRASHNA

From THE MAHABHARATA

Based largely on the annotated translation by K. Balasubramania Iyer published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, with grateful acknowledgement to the translator and publisher.

ON one occasion during the exile of the Pandava brothers in the forest, the *Mahābhārata* tells, they gave chase to a stag which had disturbed the hermitage of a Brahmin. They failed to catch up with it and were left hot and thirsty in the forest. From the top of a tree they espied some way off a clear lake, and Yudhishtira sent Nakula, the youngest, to get water from it. When he reached the lake, Nakula heard a voice forbidding him to drink. The speaker claimed to be a Yaksha and the owner of the lake and forbade Nakula to touch it until he had answered certain questions. If he disobeyed, he was told, he would die.

Nakula ignores him, drinks the water and drops down dead. When he does not return, Sahadeva is sent to see what has happened, then Arjuna, then Bhima, and the same fate overtakes each one of them. Finally Yudhishtira goes himself. Unlike his brothers, he admits the right of the owner of the lake to set a condition for taking water from it and undertakes to answer the questions. He does so satisfactorily and the Yaksha thereupon restores his brothers to life. Finally it transpires that the supposed Yaksha is really Dharma personified as a god.

Dharma is Yudhishtira's father, so a happy re-union takes place. He confirms that the expected war will be fought after their exile is over and that they will be victorious, especially as Krishna is on their side, adding significantly: 'Where dharma is there will victory be; where Krishna is there will dharma be'.

Weary with hunting ever elusive happiness through the forest of life, a man seeks the waters of tranquillity, but here too he

meets a rebuff, being told that he must first understand the meaning and values of life. To defy this warning is fatal. If he meets it he finds that it is Dharma, the law of righteousness that is challenging him and that this law is his father and protector. It guarantees his victory through divine Guidance in the war with the forces of evil which he still has to wage.

The questions are put in groups of four. Some of the answers seem clear; others need a commentary. Many are symbolical. They are concerned with the vital subject of dharma. Indeed, the whole vast *Mahābhārata* can be regarded as a text book on dharma. Skill in recognizing it is needed as well as integrity in following it, and Yudhishtira usually has both.

* * *

Yaksha

1. What makes the sun shine?
2. What attendants surround him?
3. Who makes him set?
4. In what is he firmly established?

Yudhishtira

1. Brahma makes the sun shine.
2. The Devas are his attendants.
3. Dharma makes him set.
4. He is firmly established in Truth.

The sun here means Atma, Brahma (sometimes taken to mean 'the Veda') enables the Atma to shine without being overclouded by the senses. The divine qualities attend on it. Dharma is the law or path by which it moves and sets. And it is established in the Truth beyond the three gunas.

Yaksha

5. By what does one become learned?
6. By what does one attain greatness?

7. By what does one acquire a second to oneself ?

8. O King, by what means does one become wise ?

Yudhishtira

5. One becomes learned by Vedic study.

6. One attains greatness by tapas.

7. One acquires a second by steadfastness.

8. One becomes wise by the service of elders.

The terms 'srotriya' and 'sruti' here used show that it is not ordinary book-learning that is meant but Vedic knowledge.

Tapas is not mere austerity, the main features are concentration and self-control. It is defined in a later answer (to question No. 82) as adherence to one's own dharma.

It is by steadfastness that a person gains control of himself and can use himself as a 'second', a servant of the Atma.

By service of the elders is meant primarily devotion to the guru, since this is essential for attaining wisdom.

Yaksha

9. What is the divine attribute in Brahmins ?

10. What is their characteristic virtue ?

11. What is characteristically human about them ?

12. What is the corruption of their nature ?

Yudhishtira

9. Knowledge of the Vedas is their divine attribute.

10. Tapas is their characteristic virtue.

11. Liability to death is characteristically human in them.

12. Arrogance is the corruption of their nature.

It is to be remembered that the Vedas were not written down but transmitted orally by Brahmin teachers.

The word translated 'arrogance' could imply also 'contempt for others' or 'defamatory speech'.

Yaksha

13. What is the divine attribute of Kshatriyas ?

14. What is their characteristic virtue ?

15. What is characteristically human about them ?

16. What is the corruption of their nature ?

Yudhishtira

13. Arrows and other weapons are the divine attribute of Kshatriyas.

14. Yajnas (ritualistic sacrifices) are their characteristic virtue.

15. Fear is characteristically human in them.

16. Desertion (of those in distress) is their corruption.¹

(The translation of this dialogue will be continued in our next issue.)

¹As shown in another article in this issue ('Krishna, teacher of Dharma') Yudhishtira and his brothers had themselves been guilty of this fault when they left Draupadi defenceless in her humiliation, sacrificing the spirit of dharma for the letter. It needed Krishna to tell them so.

All this is he — what has been and what shall be.
 He is the lord of immortality.
 Though he has become all this, in reality he is
 not all this :
 For verily is he transcendental.
 The whole series of universes — past, present,
 and future — express his glory and power :
 But he transcends his own glory.

— Rig Veda.

MOTHER RAMA DEVI

By

P. C. GOPALAKRISHNAN

IT was 6-30 p.m. The golden rays of the setting sun had spread an enchanting crimson hued carpet on the western horizon. The atmosphere was calm, capable of inducing pious minds to moods of absorbing contemplation of the Infinite. Nature seemed to have engaged herself in her divine tapasya. The precincts of Sree Ramā Devi Mandir, Trivandrum, a shrine of worship dedicated to Mother Ramā Devi, were filled with holy vibrations. Devotees in hundreds stood with folded palms in a hushed silence of wonderment, fixing their gaze upon the motionless figure of holiness rooted in front of the shrine.

Evidently, Mother Ramā Devi was in mystic communion with God. With eyeballs fixed in heavenward gaze, hands wielding postures of blessings, the Mother's effulgent form stood in absolute stillness of samadhi like the figure of a goddess carved out of marble. The beatific smile that played on her lips dispelled the gloom of the afflicted hearts. Probably Mother was delivering an eloquent sermon of silence.

The Mother stood immersed in that super-natural silence of the Eternal for over an hour oblivious of herself and the surrounding world, receiving the silent homage of devotion from the assembled crowd. Then with a slight jerk, the eyeballs resumed their normal position and Mother descended from that state of Self-absorption into the consciousness of the outer world. Then began a ceaseless flow of words, the words of divine fire, communicating to the listeners' minds the sublime truths of vedas — the immortality of the soul, the unity of existence, the mercy of God, the method of meditation, the worship of silence, the renunciation of ego in home-life, and the yoga of self-surrender. The spontaneous gush of words evidently emanated from the source, from a myste-



Mother Rama Devi

rious depth of the divine mind, which had become one with Supreme Consciousness.

Mother lapsed again into the abyss of silence. In the familiar cross-legged posture of the Indian sage, as tranquillity personified, Mother sat alone in the majestic aloofness of Siva in concentration. Upon her serene face was reflected the immensity of a spiritual solitude, a fathomless silence, an effulgent peace that reminded one of the Buddha in meditation. Hours passed, the devotees all the while enjoying the deep peace that prevailed in the Mother's holy presence. Mother opened her eyes and stood up addressing the devotees as children, in her sweet and sonorous voice. The sense of aloofness vanished; the unapproachable

majesty of silence was found mysteriously replaced by sweetness of tender motherhood. Mother was now an embodiment of divine love, the most precious thing which every human soul seeks after. Her glance and gesture, speech and silence all now manifested one aspect of her personality, namely love. All felt transported into the region of joy. Life became divested of its monotony and burden. Striking a note of her characteristic humour, Mother said: "The face of the child will have a resemblance to its mother, will it not? Are you not My children, the children of immortality? Should not your faces shine with the radiance of peace and sweetness of joy? Seeing your cheerful faces, the world should marvel whose children you are." What a sweet divine intimacy all experienced in that moment when these words came from the Holy Mother, the embodiment of divine Motherhood!

Mother was evidently exhorting her spiritual children to discover the supreme peace of God in their own hearts and to experience the bliss of God-communion. Yes, peace is the object of everybody's quest in this universe. Where can we get our peace, except in our Higher Self, the Supreme Godhead in us!

Born in a middle class Gowda Saraswath Brahmin family to a pious couple in the town of Mangalore, South Kanara, the Mother developed her spiritual personality even from her early childhood. Supreme devotion to God and frequent entry into Self-absorption were her outstanding characteristics. She could sense the all-inclusive reality of God by a high order of mystical intuition and secure the vision of God in several forms and aspects from an early age.

Following divine guidance, the Mother was given in marriage at the age of 14 according to the custom of the community. In her marvellous presence, imbued with holiness, the husband could only experience the quality of motherhood in her. Living in the atmosphere of private domesticity along

with her husband, the Mother demonstrated the triumph of a pure life of unbroken continence, given wholly to service and God-communion. Her home-life was distinguished by dedication and self-consecration, revealing the sanctity of the Indian puranic ideal of wifehood. She took delight in self-sacrificing devotion to her husband and steadfastness to her wifely duties and glorified the exalted state of "Pathivrathia Dharma" through identification with the will of her husband. Abiding in her own real Self, she could play the role of a busy housewife engaged in the multifarious duties of home.

Her intense quest of the Absolute began immediately after her marriage. During respite from household duties, she would plunge into the depths of meditative absorption. Her nights were exclusively devoted to God-communion. With amazing skill and superhuman efficiency, Mother reconciled worldly duties with her other-worldly aspiration. Even in the intense madness of self-forgetting divine ecstasy, Mother managed to harness her mind to meticulous performance of her household duties.

Exalted visions and mystic experiences attended her during this twelve year long rigorous sadhana. She was familiar with the secret of divine intervention, in confronting the problems of her extraordinary life. She had visions of the divine Incarnations and Prophets of various religions. In the circumstances of luxurious life, she exemplified the ideal of utter renunciation, purity of divine aspiration and glory of self-abnegating tapas. Home became a hall of sacrifice for her.

Thus at the end of the twelfth year of sadhana, in that privacy of home, through the ordeal of the tests and trials of marital life, Mother Ramā Devi ascended the summit of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the supreme state of absorption in the Absolute, recorded in our sastras. Acharya Shankara Bhagavadpada says in his illustrious book *Vivekachudamani*: "By the experience of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the truth of the Absolute is

clearly and definitely realised and not otherwise, for then the mind, being fleeting in its nature, is apt to be associated with other perceptions."

Emerging from the deep absorption of samadhi, Mother Ramā Devi beheld, with her eyes wide open, the enchanting form of her chosen deity, the glorious Lord of Ayodhya, Sri Ramachandra, bathed in divine radiance and bearing in His hand the matchless bow. After reminding her of the Mission which she had to fulfil on earth and uttering some words which have not yet been divulged by Mother, the Lord changed into a mass of light and mysteriously entered into Mother's body.

Sri Krishna was a constant companion of Mother even during her sadhana period. Of the vision of Sri Krishna, let Mother herself speak: 'Mother preferred the service of her husband and the worship of dharma even to the ecstasy of God-vision and the peace of samadhi. Do you know what was the result? He for whose ecstatic vision of Beauty even knowers of Brahman like Suka Muni entertained a longing, for whose vision even Cosmic gods crave, He for whose grace the all-renouncing ascetics engage themselves in constant tapas, that great Lord of Love, Sri Krishna, the ocean of supreme Beauty, the beloved of the queen of purity, Radhika of Brindavan, gave Mother not only the soul-entrancing vision of the Divine Form, but the indescribable bliss of constant fellowship during her sadhana. Verily God seeks the company of the worshippers of dharma. This is, my children, the glory of wifely dharma.'

The realization of Nirvikalpa Samadhi was followed by another mystic experience, the self-identified vision of Lalita Devi, the Divine Mother, by which Mother realized her identity with the Divine Mother of the universe. This uncommon experience in the spiritual realm raised her personal self into the status of Cosmic Motherhood and invested her with the attribute of motherly compassion and love. In Mother Ramā Devi, one finds today the highest expression of the Motherhood of God.

Apart from the subjective transformation which was brought about by these mystical experiences, these three visions of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna and Divine Mother Lalita Devi, were of great significance in Mother's life. Each represents a distinct phase of Mother's spiritual personality and the message she delivers to the world. Sri Rama signifies the ideal of loyalty to dharma to which Mother strictly adhered throughout her life at home. Sri Krishna symbolizes the supreme experience of universal love and sympathy, which is the outstanding characteristic of Mother's personality. The vision of Mother Lalita Devi signifies the expression of Cosmic Motherhood in her, opening out before mankind the easiest path of approach to the Supreme Being. It is the overpowering motherly love that attracts thousands of seekers to her presence and guidance.

Another important trait to be noticed in Mother's life is that even after realization of the Absolute, various mystical experiences of supreme love in various forms which the Vaishnavas adopt in their dualistic approach to the Supreme, used to come upon Mother spontaneously without the least effort of will or direction of thought. Thus she experienced the perfected moods of higher devotion — Sakhya, Vātsalya, Śānta, and Madhura bhavas — and realized that all these modes of devotion in their state of perfection culminated in union with the Supreme. Not only did these realizations come upon Her unsolicited, but also she experienced all these moods in her relationship with her husband. Even before spiritual attainment, Mother had a vision which resolved once for all the conflict between the unmanifested Supreme and the manifested divine, her husband. The vision of the immanent Godhead had brushed aside the human aspect of her husband's personality so completely from her consciousness that she could identify her husband with the Rama of her heart's devotion.

Referring to her spiritual personality, the elderly philosopher, Sri K. S. Ramaswami Sastrigal, writes: "Mother Ramā Devi has the gift of integral inner vision and com-

municates the gift to others as well. In her we see the self-expression of the great spiritual truth revealed in the first verse of the *Isavasya Upanisad* viz : 'Know that God is immanent in all the beings that move on earth. Live a life of renunciation. Do not selfishly seek what others have.' Mother Ramā Devi teaches not only through words but also through mental and spiritual communion which enables the devotees to attain perfection swiftly and surely. She teaches them how to combine and unify self-surrender with Self-knowledge and self-reverence with self-control."

Though well established in the constant consciousness of non-dual Brahman, the highest ecstasy of God-love finds expression in Mother. A mere utterance of the holy Name of God is enough to throw Mother into samadhi. This spontaneous entry into mystic absorption in God carries conviction in the minds of even sceptics about the truth of religious experience. Those who are blessed to see the exalted ecstasy of Mother feel inwardly uplifted. At times, during her discourses and kirtans, she suddenly plunges into a higher transcendent consciousness, like the famous saint Sri Krishna Chaitanya of Bengal and receives the worship of her bhaktas, blessing them through compassionate glances, imparting to them holy emotions and divine ecstasies and voicing profound spiritual truths. But on returning to normal consciousness she is again her normal self, sweetness incarnate, the compassionate Mother, a picture of simplicity, divine humility, tender motherly love and infinite mercy. The vision of her smiling countenance makes all forgetful of the worries of this mundane world.

Mother Ramā Devi's teachings embody the loftiest thoughts of the Upanisads. They open out before the man of the world a way of synthesis — a combination of the knowledge of non-duality with the sweet ecstasy of a dualistic approach to the Personal God. Mother writes : "Transcendence of the ego is what is to be attained by faith, devotion, wisdom and self-resignation. You should forget your lower self and then alone can

the Higher Self manifest itself. When the meditator forgets himself in the intensity of profound concentration, the perfection in meditation is achieved. Action becomes perfect when the actor disappears in the ecstasy of action. Devotion finds its fulfilment when the devotee merges in the love of God. That knowledge alone is perfect, where the knower becomes identical with Knowledge." Like Shankara, Mother wants her disciples to realize their undifferentiated identity with the Absolute, for according to her, Knowledge of Brahman alone is the gateway to freedom. Like Ramanuja, she emphasises the necessity of self-surrender. Like Chaitanya Deva, she sings in glorification of the Divine Name, and asks all to develop pure love to God. Like Sri Ramakrishna, she teaches the unique importance of the worship of God in His Motherhood aspect. She is the great advocate of meditation. She teaches us to discover solitude in the silence of the inner soul.

The Mother's concept of home-life is of a hermitage of peace dedicated to the service of mankind and pursuit of perfection. Grihasthashrama according to her, should represent the distilled essence of asceticism and dynamic spirit of non-attached actions. She advises householders to transmute their earthly connections to a divine relationship of the Soul. With the vision of Self achieved at home through the discipline of meditation and yoga under the able guidance of a realized Master, the householder can achieve self-purification, transcend the privacy of home by the magnanimity of knowledge and blossom out into universal existence through supreme love of God. This gospel of love is what the world requires today as the only solution to the hatred and fear that exist in the human mind.

Like her predecessor, Sri Ramakrishna, the Mother has established the incomparable supremacy of divine wisdom over the scholastic attainments. Though educated only up to the fifth class of a primary school, though a stranger to the world of scripture, her discourses cover all facets of spirituality and give intimate knowledge of hidden

truths. She has contacted the supreme wisdom direct without the help of scriptural knowledge.

Mother makes extensive tours to various spiritual centres to bless her disciples and devotees, whom she calls her children, and to give them the benefit of closer contact, which is essential for their spiritual development. From the midst of such occupations, she invariably withdraws herself into

a session of silence. It is during such silence that Mother transmits her spiritual force to all seekers. Her pen moves when she is in a divinely exalted mood. Her writings deal with practical spirituality and not with mere theological or metaphysical discussions. Her assuring message, which is but a commentary on her own ideal life, is an unflinching source of inspiration and guidance to all weary pilgrims to the Eternal.

The Voice of the Ego

By
Arthur Osborne

Let me dream and scheme of my desires —
Or let me fume and champ on those gone by,
Lost, not to be fulfilled.

No ?

Right, then, let that go. Let me brood instead
On former days and friends of long ago.
That out too? Mere fantasy? Right, then, I'll grieve
About my children, worry how they are,
Why they've not written, what has come to them.
What? Worry can't mend? Is that out too?
Then let me wallow in imaginings
Of high ideals for the good of man
And spread of truth; let me have noble thoughts
Of how to serve and teach and help — no matter what
So long I hold the stage.
Let me be hero, villain or buffoon,
Or each in turn, but let me be mid-stage.

The Heart's Reply

One thing only is required of you :
Just to be still ; nothing to say or do.

PATHWAY TO PERFECTION

By
Sri RAMĀ DEVI

THE unfoldment of spiritual personality calls for resignation to the Supreme and worship of Perfection.

Resignation means identification with the spiritual core of your true being, which presupposes the negation of everything that does not stand the test of reality. It is the extrication of self from all its limitations.

Liberated from limitations, the human personality becomes the emblem of Infinite Perfection, 'Poornam'.

Worship, that is, 'Aradhana' signifies the yearning to become identified with the ideal of adoration. The highest ideal which fascinates the human soul is Perfection or attainment of the Absolute.

The attributeless Absolute cannot, in reality, become an object of your adoration, though It is your ultimate goal. The mind can adore only its own projected picture of Perfection, interpreted in terms of auspicious attributes.

There are two types of knowledge — knowledge by Mind and knowledge by Supermind. Knowledge by Mind is Vritti Jnana, cognitive knowledge, whereas, Knowledge by Supermind is 'Sphuranatmaka Jnana', intuitive wisdom.

Brahman, though unknowable by Mind is yet possible of intuitive realization through the wisdom of the Supermind. In profound concentration and deep devotion, the soul transcends the triad of higher perception and becomes one with the Absolute. Returning back to consciousness from deep absorption in Brahman, the enlightened one is blessed with strong, uninterrupted intuition of Brahman. This intuitive wisdom, Sphuranatmaka Jnana, alone is perfect knowledge.

A perfected mind of highest realization is endowed with the supremely exalted vision

of divine equality, 'Samabhavana'. Samabhavana is not a mere vision of oneness in multiplicity, not the knowledge of the substratum behind the world of appearance. To realize the absolute non-difference between the attributeless Absolute (Nirguna Brahman) and the manifested Divine (Saguna Brahman), the unconditioned Existence (Paramartham) and the projected universe (Prapancham), is Samabhavana. The vision of divine equality transcends the relative concepts of the real and the unreal, the being and the becoming, the one and the many, the Infinite and the finite.

The sublimated Mind-stuff, 'Chitta' intuitively perceives the Saguna as the Nirguna. The conditioning adjunct, the ego-principle, 'Ahankara' confines the Nirguna in the concept of Saguna. Expanded vision is the attribute of the Chitta; contracted perception is the characteristic of Ahankara.

The Supreme Reality, Brahman, shines in its own region of all-transcendence beyond the mind-conceived notions of the Saguna and the Nirguna. Or, in other words, both attributes and the attributelessness inhere in It. The realization of the Cosmic Spectator, Sarvasakshi, embodies the integral awareness of these both aspects of the Ultimate Reality.

All that is perceived with the eye of wisdom, all that is apprehended through the Mind, is the Saguna aspect of Reality only. The Absolute is beyond the planes of both ignorance and knowledge.

To abide as the Infinite in the supreme poise of Self in perfect identity with the Absolute Knowledge Itself, is the natural state, 'Sahaja Sthiti'. It is not a state actually, or a condition of consciousness indicated by the popular term 'Samadhi'. It simply is.

This identity with pure Being, the attainment of one's natural state, is the consummation of human aspirations. It is the end of evolutionary process imagined by the soul. It is the peak of perfection ascendable in embodied existence.

To embrace the Totality in an extended vision of consciousness, establishing oneself at the same time in the perfect sense of individuality, is liberation in embodiment, 'Jivanmukti'.

To attain one's selfhood in Brahman while in the body is to discover and maintain one's true individuality. When the self sheds its attributes, the individual shines with the stamp of supra-cosmic reality behind him.

Knowledge destroys the ego-sense, the sense of separate selfhood, but it does not destroy the spiritual which is the sense of ultimate reality in a human personality.

Oblation of the ego-sense to the sacrificial fire of Divine knowledge constitutes the real renunciation. Renunciation is the sign and symbol of a life dedicated at the altar of spirituality.

Consecrate your personal lives by self-abnegating actions. To erase the self, contemplate always on the infinitude of your being. Subject your mental emotions to the sweep of overmastering devotion to Reality.

From the process of ritualism and forms of conventional piety, advance to the universality of vision through the avenues of love and self-dedication. Adore every living spark of divinity and establish your relationship with all on the foundation of Soul-Consciousness. Let every moment of your purposeful life be a perpetual communion with the Infinite. Abandon the pride of holiness and vanity of learning. Enter the sanctified abode of your childlike innocence.

The criterion of progress in your evolution to Purity is the profundity of compassion towards all living beings. The compassionate heart seeks no refuge in the isolation of being and finds no contentment in a world-

denying doctrine. Devoid of compassion, spirituality will degenerate into a selfish search after an illusory personal happiness in the dream of emancipation.

He who forgets his personal self in the ecstasy of universal compassion, is already emancipated.

To curb egoity, which is the enemy of compassion, betake yourselves to the worship of Virtue. Cultivate courage, patience, cleanliness, fortitude, single-mindedness, restraint of senses, subtle intelligence, right insight and truthfulness.

As distinguished from occasional display of mental boldness, courage, that is, Dhairyam, is an abiding virtue of the enlightened mind. It is a faculty of discernment by which you can isolate the ego-mode. It is the capacity for fighting the onrush of hidden samskaras of the mind.

Patience is the ornament of the strong. Liberation is for him only who is endowed with the virtue of infinite patience.

Cleanliness is not a state of mere external purity alone, neither is it a temporary condition of mental serenity. It signifies the absence of self-asserting egoism. To impute finiteness and mortality to that which is infinite and immortal, is the worst form of impurity.

Single-mindedness is that particular condition of the luminous Mind, where the non-dual Self alone is perceived everywhere, is everyone, at all times.

Subtle intelligence is that power of vision by which buddhi, that is intellect, is seen as distinguished from bodha that is pure intelligence.

That alone is right insight or 'Sadvidya' which leads to the direct experience of the Absolute Existence as one's inmost reality.

To remain in undivided loyalty to Truth in thought, speech and action constitutes what is called 'Sathyanishtha' and not mere verbal expression of facts. This loyalty to

Truth is the basic virtue which keeps an aspirant after Perfection on the path of Righteousness, Dharma.

That state in which the senses cease to take delight in the pursuit of sense-objects, is called the restraint of senses. It is conducive to supreme serenity of the mind.

'Nirvikarata', the state of absolute freedom from passion, is to be achieved through incessant effort before you expect the vision

of the Absolute to dawn on you. In your pilgrimage to Perfection, keep company with the sattwic virtues enumerated above. Perfect non-attachment to all that is ephemeral, equanimity in all the conflicting circumstances, same-sightedness, a benevolent disposition that takes delight in doing good to others — this is the nature of the sattwic mind disposed to spiritual purity. A perfected mind alone can have the vision of the supreme splendour of divine perfection.

Not Good, Not Bad

By
'Alone'

WE will now talk a little more on
EXISTENCE.

As NOTHINGNESS is without any attributes, so EXISTENCE is (also) without any attributes bad or even good!

It is *only* EXISTENCE — pure, naive, denuded.....

It is easy to conceive of NOTHINGNESS without *any* quality — without any attributes——, but it is difficult to grasp: 'EXISTENCE without any attributes'.

We have referred to the stage of NOTHINGNESS..... and instant-entrance there only to proceed to EXISTENCE:

We know that we have not to stop at NOTHINGNESS..... but hurriedly to go to EXISTENCE.

Now:

Not bringing-in 'the mind', i.e. not bringing-in 'an idea'..... while grasping the Truth——is the most essential thing! (—— while understanding the Truth—— while understanding as it is ——!)

[This is clumsily expressed, but please 'grasp' it!]

When we go into —— or walk along the 'journey' —— with this precaution, with this carefulness——

While in understanding —— in going into the issue of 'EXISTENCE'..... we will not go astray: that means form any 'idea' about the thing. That is, 'the mind' may not (now) form any notion as such about 'EXISTENCE' according to its (i.e. the mind's) background! —— we will *directly* go to the thing itself (when, *from the beginning*, the mind is not intervening)!

This may be a way to go to EXISTENCE without the middle-step or stage of NOTHINGNESS [which we called before 'the dark night of the soul'].

Right from the very beginning, when we do not bring-in 'the mind' into play, I mean, in our 'journey' —— we can go straight to EXISTENCE!!

IGNORANCE AND SIN

By
BODHICHITTA

ONE fundamental point on which all religions agree is that egoism must be restrained and ultimately the ego itself surrendered. Furthermore, they all warn that indulging the ego, though productive of immediate satisfaction, will lead ultimately to frustration and misery, while rejecting it, although hard at first, will lead to a beatific state. Buddhism is the most simple and direct about it, since it states outright that there is no ego to renounce; all you have to give up is a fantasy, a daydream, an illusion of an ego. However, even that does not make it an easy task in practice. Even though the ego doesn't exist, its clamouring for the adulation of other egos and for the good things of life can be insistent enough.

This agreement on what has to be done is a very striking thing, to my mind the most striking thing in the whole realm of comparative religion; because it suggests a submerged unanimity beneath the contradictory forms. If they differed as to what has to be done that would make them really incompatible, but since they only disagree about why and how, it means that they are really sponsoring the same programme.

Am I suggesting, then, that there may be a certain validity in the theistic religions? Yes, I am. It just doesn't make sense to me that large sections of mankind should have been misled throughout the ages and that noble-minded teachers like Moses and Christ and Mohammed should have been deluded. Far more likely that they were Bodhisattvas adapting Dharma to the minds and characters of their followers and expounding it in a form that these could follow. After all, religion is primarily an enterprise, not a philosophy. It is primarily an enterprise for killing the ego or realizing that there isn't one. That, behind all the mountains of doctrine, is the one essential.

Basically there are two ways of conducting the attack on the ego or egoism. The Eastern religions characterise it as ignorance and the Semitic (Judaism, Christianity and Islam) as sin. The practical result is the same. The doctrine of sin teaches that God will punish vice and reward virtue, while the doctrine of ignorance teaches that wrong living will cause suffering, just as eating wrong food causes sickness, while right living will produce happiness, just as a right diet does physical health, and ultimately awakening from ignorance will remove suffering altogether as awakening from a bad dream removes the terror of it. What has to be done is the same; it is only the explanation why that differs.

The doctrine of sin is the more emotional. In its crude form it is hardly convincing, but neither, as I shall show later, is that of ignorance. In its crude form, the doctrine of sin looks as though God creates man with a headstrong ego and an attraction towards the things of the world and then punishes him for indulging it. But one has to look deeper. Man is capable of turning two ways: outwards to the reflected beauty of the material world, as reported by his senses, or inwards to the true Beauty that can be called Suchness or Nirvana or just what is, and that he calls God. If he chooses the former his love of things will put him in bondage to them and turn him away from the true Beauty of timeless Eternity. He may seem to be exiled from God, but really it is he who exiles himself. He may seem to be punished by God, but really it is he who punishes himself. It may be said that God has turned away from him, but really it is he who has turned away from God, from Truth, from real happiness. There is no caprice in it, nothing that could even remotely be called unjust. But until he discovers this from experience he has to take

it on faith, so the beginning is hard: it means sacrificing happiness that he knows to be real (or thinks he does) for happiness that may turn out to be real. Faith, rightly understood, does not mean believing that such and such historical events are as reported or that such and such things will happen after death; it means faith in the inner truth, inner being, the Dharma-Kaya, as yet only dimly apprehended. Sacrificing the clearly apprehended outer pleasures for this inner truth is bound to bring peace and happiness, not really as an act of reward or judgment but naturally, because it means turning away from the apparently real shadow to the apparently shadowy substance.

Similarly, egoism in the sense of craving for power over others or popularity with them means turning away from God as the Ordainer and Background Reality to a belief in oneself, in one's individual phantom of a self; and this can only lead to disaster. That is why all religions lay such stress on humility. Rightly understood, humility is not comparative. It does not mean comparing oneself unfavourably with others (in which there can be a good dose of hypocrisy) but seeking to submit the illusory ego-self to universal Truth and Being.

Seen in this way, the gulf between the doctrine of sin and that of ignorance is not really so wide as might appear. According to the doctrine of ignorance, one grows up under the illusion that one is a real person in a real world of good things to enjoy and bad things to shun when in reality one is only a *per-sona* (*per* meaning 'through' and *sona* 'sound', the mask through which a Greek actor spoke) through which life is experienced. So long as one lives in the ignorance of this illusion, one is subject to frustration as pleasant experiences prove ephemeral or disappointing and painful ones unavoidable. Here also true humility is needed to recognize the ego that seems to inhabit or be the person to be a fraud and to perceive that the person really is a *per-sona*, a mere mask.

This doctrine also can appear crude when presented in a crude form. It can be made to appear that merely mental ignorance is implied and that learning theory from a book is supposed to be a passport to beatitude. Actually, of course, one has to look deeper. Right understanding is only the first step of the Buddhist Noble Eightfold Way, the preliminary. By ignorance is meant the wrong identification of oneself with the body-mind complex; Enlightenment or Awakening or Liberation means the real, effective awakening from this ignorance into experienced Truth, like a man waking up from a dream.

This doctrine also foretells beatitude for him who strives and torment for him who yields to the ego, though not through the judgement of any God but simply through karma, which means the law of cause and effect. He who strives skilfully and persistently awakens from the illusion of individual being, that is from the state of ignorance, into the realization of being-as-it-is, whose characteristic, so far as one can speak of such a thing, is pure felicity, pure rightness. He who clings to the ego-illusion, on the other hand, makes himself subject to desires and fears, anger and resentment, jealousy and regret, which build a hell in his subconscious, posthumously to be manifested in the bodiless state.

Of course, it is not to be supposed that only these two extremes are possible. There are also those who purify the ego without waking from the illusion of its existence. They are equivalent to those in the Semitic religions who lead an upright life without attaining to the Mystic Union. For both a heavenly future is foretold, as the inner beauty of the soul or subconscious takes objective form for them in the subtle world. There is also the vast army of mediocrities who neither degrade themselves to a despicable state nor develop their better possibilities. Their own craving for a renewed formal life draws them back to rebirth with no need for any divine intervention. However this is leading us beyond the confines of the present article.

Just as true humility is needed on this path also, so is true faith. It is often said that Buddha did not demand faith, since he exhorted his followers to examine everything for themselves and not accept anything just because some one had said it ; but that is using the word 'faith' in its lower sense of simply believing something to be true. In its true sense, as defined above in speaking of the doctrine of sin, it is the vitally necessary quality of *shraddha* : clinging to the dimly perceived truth of Nirvana and aspiring to awaken fully to it when the mind and senses report the apparent reality of the world of sense perceptions.

The truth is that whichever of the two kinds of doctrine one may follow one does in fact grow up finding the things of the senses attractive and wanting one's ego to dominate over other egos or to be liked and admired by them. And in either case there is likely to be a more or less lengthy period when this outward pull seems more real and

desirable than the inward pull to what one may call Truth or Reality or God or Self. Therefore there has to be a wrench. By not making it one becomes more and more weak and distracted and subject to outer influences ; by making it one becomes more and more happy, strong and radiant and, as a by-product, better able to help others. But with most people it is not merely one sharp wrench but a fairly long period of being pulled both ways ; and throughout this period it will seem like sacrificing real for presumptive happiness. The purpose of religion is to encourage one to make this wrench, this transition ; and whether it tells us that it is sinful not to or stupid not to is perhaps not so important. Whether it tells us that God will reward us for making the right choice or that we shall awake to the beatitude that is our real nature, the goal is the same. The important thing is to attain it, to barter the substantial-seeming shadow for the shadowy-seeming substance of felicity.

Bhagavan's Father

By

T. P. R.

BHAGAVAN rarely spoke about his father. But what little he told me about him is worth recording. He said that his father was a courageous and generous man. All day and night, his house would be filled with guests, poor and needy. He was never tired of feeding people. In his office he commanded very great respect and as a lawyer he had to move about places and conduct his cases. The magistrates, wherever he went, paid him very great respect. His fame was so great and he was so much renowned for his upright character that both

the parties, the accused and those who accuse, would come to him with a request to represent them. On several occasions what he told them was law and both the parties reconciled with equal happiness. Once Bhagavan went with his father to face a camera in a group photo ; but unfortunately when they took the shot a fly crossed over his eyes and in effort to drive it out he waved his hand and so he could not be seen in that photo. I made frantic effort to get that photo but it could not be got anywhere.

THE IDEA OF NEW ENERGIES IN BUDDHISM

By
MARK WILDING

IT is sometimes forgotten that all religions emphasise the need for a 'turning round', or a metanoia or change of outlook, or in the case of Sri Ramana Maharshi's teachings, the need for Self-enquiry. All the religions emphasise the need for this change of direction, first in one's thinking, and then in the feeling of 'I'. And all come to the same stumbling block in the fact that as we are now we have not sufficient energy of quite a new type or level to carry this new direction very far. We are bound to 'ourselves'. We may be told day after day for half a century that "the Self" is other than ourself, our everyday mentality. Being told this we perceive as through a glass darkly, perhaps for a moment or two, perhaps a minute or two, perhaps for an hour, that we have communication with a reality that is in the world but is something quite new for us. Every man or woman who has seen or found this pearl of great price comes back to tell us that it is a peace that comes in the midst of events.

Now this 'peace' is fragmentary except for the very pure in heart. And this 'purity' is not of morality only, but of a different quality of energy available to us, but not usually known to be available, and more or less atrophied. It is this energy that I would like to discuss, for it is most important that we should all know that, as Ramana Maharshi says, a beggar who goes to see a King cannot by mere wishing also *BE* a King. This simple but profound remark shows quite clearly why many are called but few are chosen. Wishing will not change our state. Wishing will not give us energies of a higher quality necessary for a total immersion in the Self.

Buddha saw this also. His eightfold path, known to so many millions through this

world, can be read as a series of instructions as to how to stop the drain of energies from our feeling of 'I', and then later, instructions as to how we can begin to save energy for a purpose that is not strictly 'knowable' it being an act, something one does.

The eightfold path, the eight steps, are usually translated as, right understanding, right mindedness, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right attentiveness, right concentration or if not by those exact words then by something very similar in meaning. These definitions are perfectly adequate but they hide the reason for their order. It is this order of the steps that is all important, for they are not supposed to be simultaneous, but sequentially inclusive. That is to say when step number one is answered satisfactorily then step number two is started, while still including step number one. In the same way, step number three includes steps numbers one and two. The order is therefore all important in practice. Let me emphasize 'in practice'. For this has little to do with written articles or verbal gymnastics so beloved of our Western intellectuals. The whole emphasis must be on a new kind of looking, a new kind of tranquillity in each moment. The point again and again is in the words . . . 'a new kind' . . . This newness is shown so clearly in the eight steps that Buddha taught, so that I would like to now give those steps in their usual order handed down through millenia, but with an unusual reading of them showing their inevitable arrangement so that the stages leading to the final one can be seen to follow one another without a shadow of a doubt.

To begin with Buddha did not use the word 'right', as in right understanding etc. He used the word for 'perfect'. We Euro-

peans live in a world governed by a climate of thought that is essentially dualistic. There is Good and Bad. There is Right and Wrong, God and the Devil. This simply will not do for Buddhism. Buddha was brought up a Hindu. Call God by whatever name you like in that religion, He can be given whatever attributes are necessary for the temperament of the seeker. God is more like a target to be aimed at, a target that is not known to us in our present state of everyday life with its identification and instability.

Let us not therefore talk of right understanding. Buddha used the word meaning whole, perfect. From our point of view perhaps the words, 'the best possible' translate his idea as well as any.

Here are the eight steps that lead to the extinction of suffering-of-change.

1. The best possible understanding of the ideas that Buddha taught but never wrote down, the ideas of the reality of suffering-of-change, the origin of this suffering-of-change, the extinction of this suffering-of-change, and, thus, the path that leads to the ending of the suffering-of-change. Books have been written about these four truths, and each one of us understands as well as he or she is able. From this comprehension follows logically the second step :
 2. The best possible aim for our effort as we begin to realize our position in relation to dukkha, or the suffering-of-change. Now this aim is all important. Much more important than at first seems apparent to the casual reader. There is a path leading to the snuffing out of change, or Nirvana. Buddha found it.
 3. 4. 5. The best possible speech, action and living after the comprehension of the whole, or perfect aim. At once we see that the whole emphasis of Buddha's teaching is entirely practical. First of all there is the mental act of understanding. Then the act of effort spread-
- ing through speech, everything that we do, and all living. From a dispersal of forces that is natural in man, we are gradually weaned towards a *rearranging* of forces and then a new *accumulation*. The understanding of this is vital to a complete or whole comprehension of the very basis of Buddhism. As we are, we are quite literally lived by life. Events drag us along. Nothing is our own. Because we identify the feeling of 'I' with each event, we are literally fragmented. This is Dukkha, the suffering-of-change.
- Gradually, however, a new direction is intended so that the feeling of 'I' is now not lost entirely into everything that we do. Something inside stays awake, a candle is guarded, (for its light is small), and the winds can blow it out all too easily . . . And this is the very beginning of a new man being born within the lived man, the dead man, which is sucked along by the world. And this is the very basis of new speech, new action, new living, for the external part is now seen to be subservient to the internal new 'I' now awake, now quickened.
6. Buddha's next step follows as part of what has been said above, perfect effort. This effort is now seen as having something to do with new energies being formed by the new man within us. To give him life, to give him new feeling of 'I' life no matter what happens to us during the day, requires new foods, new energies if you like. Here too the withdrawal of lost energies is the basis of these 'new' energies that are found to be required, and found only if balanced or perfect effort is obtained. The bicycle has to be balanced if you want to ride it. This exactly describes the middle way, the balance between the opposites. This balance is the central core of the next step No. 7, usually called right attentiveness.

THE SHAKTI IN ZEN AND VICHARA

(From a speech delivered to the Bombay 'Fireflies')

By
GERALD YORKE

IT cannot be stressed too strongly that Zen is not a parlour game at which one learns to give slick answers to question like 'What is Buddha?' or 'What was your original face before your parents were born?' From first to last it has been and still is rooted in meditation, dhyana. But that dhyana is not an end in itself. It is a technique, an expedient and effective means to an end — and a beginning: that is all. It can be compared to a dynamo, for the current or shakti that is generated can be used to kill a pig or charge a battery.

If you practise what the Japanese call zazen, that is to say if you meditate in the Zen way, you will sometimes find yourself filled with a nervous energy or life force which, if it is not rightly directed, instead of killing the pig which is your ego, merely charges the battery of that pig. Before you know where you are you have become a dharma-monger, a lecturer on Zen or the vichara with an inflated ego. Then you are headed straight for the Avici hell. You find that all your weaknesses, your faults, your little acts of selfishness, have become magnified out of all recognition, so that you are worse off than when you started to meditate. The whole thing has gone sour on you without your knowing it. Wrong meditation leads straight to the deeper hells.

To avoid this one has to develop or nurture something that is difficult to put into words because it is the key to true meditation, to truly spiritual life. Without it I do not think one can ever make real progress. It is a basic attitude to life involving four types of faith: in the Buddha-nature, in the inner Guru, in the outer human guru, and in the Lord. Although it is not easy to express, those who have it know what it is and can recognize

it in others. With it goes compassion — the ability to accept others as they are, to understand and to help them. It implies the capacity to bow down in veneration; also the ability to give thanks, to express gratitude for every little thing and in particular for one's good fortune in having been born a human being with the opportunity of realising one's intrinsic Enlightenment here and now.

Some people find that a short daily ritual helps them to nurture this basic attitude, the increasing lack of which is a symptom of our living at the end of the kali-yuga, in what the Buddhists call 'this Dharma-ending age'. In Buddhism as in Christianity, this basic attitude to life is inherent in monastic life, but many of us are not intending to enter a monastery or ashram. For those who are not and who approach from a Zen Buddhist standpoint, I will make the following suggestions, which appeal to me personally. This does not, however, necessarily mean that they are appropriate to others who read this.

The first step of devotion in Buddhism consists in expressing veneration, loyalty and thanks to the Buddha, the Enlightened One. So one can start one's day by bowing down before an image of the Buddha. By starting the day's meditation without such an act of obeisance and heartfelt thanks there is danger of strengthening instead of weakening the ego.

Next, I suggest that, as in a Zen monastery, one can twice a day take the Four Vows. They are:

Sentient beings are numberless: I vow to save them.

The deluding passions are inexhaustible: I vow to destroy them.

The gates of Dharma are manifold : I
vow to enter them.

Supreme is the Buddha-way : I vow
to complete it.

These four vows epitomise the Zen atti-
tude to life.

Then there is value (just as there is in the
Christian tradition of grace before meals) in
making from the heart the general confes-
sion which is made daily before meals in a
Zen monastery :

All the evil I have done.
Through greed, anger and folly.
I confess in full.

It should never be forgotten that Zen is a
branch of Mahayana Buddhism. Although it
is a 'Transmission outside the Scriptures',
its practice is nevertheless based on a firm
knowledge of those scriptures ; and without
that knowledge one is unlikely to attain
Enlightenment through Zen. So I also re-
commend the Chinese Ch'an practice of
meditating daily on the short 'Heart Sutra',
one sentence at a time. One can begin with:
"Form does not differ from the Void ; the
Void does not differ from form." Then the
second line the next day and so on until one
has completed the sutra, and then start
again from the beginning. In many Japa-
nese Zen monasteries this short sutra is
recited daily.

Finally, before a meditation session it is
usual to offer to all sentient beings any
merit that the practice may bring. If this
is done from the heart the meditation is less
likely to boost one's ego.

Through some such daily ritual one can
develop and nurture the basic attitude of
veneration and compassion without which
meditation is apt to go wrong and true spiri-
tual life is impossible. Naturally, such hints
are only for one who has not got a guru or
roshi ; one who has follows his instructions.

Of course, it is possible to attain Enlighten-
ment by a Christian, Islamic or Hindu path
as well as a Buddhist. If on a Hindu path,
the vichara or Self-enquiry as taught by the

Maharshi is the closest to Zen. However
this type of path is not suitable for every
one, least of all for those who are by tempe-
rament bhaktas. Each person should fol-
low the type of path that suits his nature,
not try to force himself into one that
doesn't. In any case, some kind of path
must be followed ; effort must be made. It
does not come to one without effort. Bha-
gavan put it this way : "Effortless, choice-
less 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 medita-
tion.....That meditation can take what-
ever form most appeals to you. See what
helps you to keep out all other thoughts
and adopt that for your meditation."

Zazen (which is the Japanese term for
Zen meditation) is, like vichara, so simple,
that it is hard to believe at first sight that it
can be effective. In zazen you do not try
to unite with or become anything ; you just
dwell constantly on a given theme.

We now come to the main theme of this
article, which is not so much the meditation
or the final outcome as what may happen
to one on the way. A tremendous neutral
power or shakti lies dormant in nature, and
when stirred by the technique of a spiritual
path it begins to manifest, but whether in
a creative or destructive manner depends on
how one stirs it up. That is why I call it
neutral. It is the power or shakti of thunder
in thunder, of stone in stone, of a cow in a
cow and a tiger in a tiger. In a human being
it is the Serpent Power that the Tantrics
call Kundalini. In a whole or integrated
human being it becomes wholly beneficent
and biddable. Prior to that, until we can
accept it, know it, master it through know-
ledge, and remove impurities from its path,
we shall feel the power of its stirrings but
mingled with trouble, danger and klesha,
defilement. Courage, skill and purity are
needed to tame the serpent or ride the
dragon ; and then it can carry us onwards
to Realization. That is why Buddhists say
that klesha and bodhi are one.

GOOD AND EVIL

By
SAGITTARIUS

CHRIST said that evil must needs come. Why? Christ was God Incarnate and God is Omnipotent. Then why *must* evil come? Couldn't God will it not to come?

Christ did not stop there. He added: "But woe unto him through whom it cometh." Again, why? If evil must come why should the person who is instrumental in bringing it be condemned? Isn't it unjust?

There is a deceptive simplicity in these sayings. We must probe deeper. In order to do so we must also ask why Adam and Eve were free from a knowledge of good and evil in their Edenic state and why its acquisition caused their exile from paradise and fall into a state of toil and suffering.

The whole universe is a going out from the pure, formless Being of God into more and more condensed form and then a return through ever rarified spheres to Union with the Formless.¹ Physically, the undifferentiated basic substance or energy coalesces into atoms, each atom a miniature solar system, these into molecules, into substances, into primitive organisms, and gradually into more and more elaborate beings. Spiritually, consciousness is encased in mental and sense perceptions. Is the creation of Adam and his union with Eve the point at which the devolving human consciousness meets and fuses with a physical body evolved to the point of being a fitting vehicle for a soul? Does Eve symbolise the physical form that, from one point of view, completes man, from another limits him?

Suppose man, at this point of fusion of soul and body, lived in a state of harmony without self-will, without egoism, without denial of his true nature or assertion of

independence from God, without introducing corruption into nature or himself, in the pristine beauty of the world. That would indeed be paradise. He would be in what the anthropologists call the 'food-gathering stage'; but what they do not reckon with is that the world reflects man, the outer the inner, and therefore the world would be more bounteous, the earth more fertile, the weather more clement. The so-called 'primitive' tribes who scrape a precarious existence to-day as food-gatherers no more compare with this happy childhood of man than a Mongoloid idiot does with the happiness of real childhood.

In such a paradise there would be no 'good' because there would be no 'evil' yet to compare it with. Everything would be good in a different sense, in the sense of being right, as it should be, true to its own nature. "And God saw everything that he had made and behold it was very good." Good in that sense.

Man's perceptions get knotted together into a self-will which regards itself as a separate being independent of the universal Being of God. This is the serpent, the ego, the adversary. It tempts him through the body, that is through Eve. Some things seem desirable or 'good' to him, others undesirable or 'evil'. This brings the fall into craving and fear which exiles him from the paradise of his spontaneous, carefree state. It subjects him to death, because the pure consciousness of man does not die; it returns to Union with God; only the ego, the self-will has to die. Under the lash of fear and desire life becomes hazardous, needs increase,

¹ But these two processes are not only successive; they are also simultaneous and complementary.

demanding toil and accumulation; enmity arises. Henceforth, although mankind pursues its outward course into ever greater spiritual darkness and alienation, the life of each intelligent man is, or should be, a struggle to return to the lost paradise. This brings about a reversal of the poles by which he begins to call what he found desirable 'evil', since it leads him outwards from God into ego-assertion, and what he found undesirable 'good', since it leads him back by mortification (that is ego-deadening) to God. Life is a war between good and evil and he has to range himself on one side or the other.

What light does this throw on Christ's saying that evil must needs come? Creation is not an act that happened once and for all; it is continuous. Strange that even physical scientists should have come to an understanding of this! The outgoing from Oneness into form and the return from diversity to Union is the nature of continuous creation. One might even say that it is a definition of creation. Therefore so long as there is creation, so long as there is a universe, it must continue. For it to stop would be for the universe to stop. But on the human plane the outgoing is an alienation from God into ego-assertion and is therefore 'evil', while the in-coming is a return to conscious Union with God and is therefore 'good'. In other words, out-going into form is one half or aspect of the process of continuous creation, and out-going into self-will or ego-assertion is one half or aspect of the process of human creation. There could be no out-going only on condition that there were no return, that is to say no creation, no universe; for to say that there could be a coming back without a going out is nonsense. Applied to the human level, this means that there could be no alienation from God on condition that there were no return to God, no evil on condition that there were no good; but then there would be no mankind.

Theologians of an earlier day asserted that mankind had to fall through Adam in order

that they could be redeemed by Christ. Some modern critics have derided this and called it crude. It is their understanding of it that is crude. Rightly understood, it is profound. There must be an outgoing before there can be a conscious return. In the life of each separate individual also, the self-will, the life of the ego, must be developed before it can be laid down for Christ's sake, so that there can be return through Grace to Union.

Then what about the second part of Christ's saying: "But woe unto him through whom it cometh"? There is nothing arbitrary or unjust about that. It is a statement of a natural law. Rightly understood, theological truths are natural laws. In all except the perfect saint who has laid down his life for Christ's sake and can say with St. Paul, "I live, yet not I but Christ in me", the tendencies to alienation and return both exist. In all except the pure saint or complete villain both are actually working, however feeble and fitful one of them may be. In all men and at different stages in the life of each man they are differently balanced. That is what gives its infinite variety to life. The alienating tendency puts a man in the grip of disruptive forces in himself. Taking the form of grasping, cruelty, arrogance and other destructive forces, it spreads evil in the world but also, in doing so, creates an attraction towards evil in the mind of the person himself and leaves him defenceless against these very forces. Christ's saying is not a threat that some one or other will punish the evil-doer (though the chain reaction he sets up may well result in that) but an observation that he is putting himself at the mercy of destructive forces. A man does not sin without an incentive. Ultimately the incentive is a false sense of values which makes things appear desirable which would not be so to a truly harmonious mind and thereby prompts to inharmonious activity. Such activity is not without an effect on a man's character and thereby on his destiny.

SHARI'AT AND TARIQAT

By
ABDULLAH QUTBUDDIN

IN epochs when men attached too great importance to formal orthodoxy (as to-day they attach too little) cases were known of Sufis deliberately flouting the shari'at, the law of Islam, in order to shock people. There were even cases of their pretending to do so, as in the story of the Sufi who went for a picnic on the river bank carrying a wine-jar and accompanied by a woman; but when some orthodox busybodies solemnly went to investigate they found the woman to be his mother and the wine-jar full of water. Real or pretended, such violations of the law served the useful purpose of shocking the literalists out of their idolatrous worship of formalities. As a general rule, however, and apart from some exceptions, Sufis have been fully orthodox and have expected their disciples to follow the shari'at or outer law as the basis for their tariqat or spiritual path. Antinomianism is not recognized in Islam. The higher obligation does not exempt from the more elementary but rather insists on it. The law and traditions establish a way of life that is mandatory for all Muslims.

The law is flexible enough to distinguish between obligatory duties and additional, voluntary ones. For instance, the five ritualistic daily prayers are obligatory, whether said in congregation or privately; but a sixth to be said between midnight and dawn is voluntary. The Sufi aspirant is far more likely to say the voluntary also than to neglect the obligatory.

In prohibitions also there is a similar distinction between what is absolutely forbidden and what is disapproved of but allowed. There is a hadith that of all things permitted divorce is the most displeasing in the sight of God. If one were to ask why

then it is permitted at all the answer might be that the evil of enforced lifelong partnership of unwilling partners is even greater. On the other hand, it is said in the Qur'an that the evil of drinking alcohol is greater than the advantages, and therefore that is absolutely forbidden.

Despite this prohibition, wine and intoxication feature largely in Sufi poetry, an example widely known to readers of English being the Rubaiyat of Umar Khayyam. There is no doubt that wine was sometimes drunk; nevertheless these poems are universally understood by Sufi readers to be symbolical, as when Jalaluddin Rumi writes in his Diwan:

*Drunk is the Man of God, drunk
without wine.*

Wine is the Divine Grace, intoxication is a state of ecstasy, the taveran is the world, and the inn-keeper is the *murshid* or guru. And when a Sufi master declares that sobriety is better than inebriety his meaning is that it is better to contain the Divine Grace without disturbing one's normal conduct of life than to fall into trances and states of ecstasy.

The Islamic pattern of life, for the Sufi as for the ordinary believer, covers not only law and ritual but what might be called social conventions. Indeed, *adab* is a code of courtesy or right behaviour. A Muslim will say "It's not *adab*" in the same way that an Englishman says: "It's not done"; and the expression is just as conclusive. Only there is no element of snobbism in *adab*, as there can be in Western social codes: being based on the traditions and observances of the Prophet, it is accessible to the humble as well as the mighty and helps to fashion the peculiar social democracy of Islamic

communities. It may in some cases differ remarkably from Western rules of courtesy and give rise to amusing misunderstandings, but that is to be expected between two different civilizations. For instance, to refrain from belching after a meal shows little appreciation of the host's food. Also, it is *adab* for a guest to get up and go as soon as he finishes a meal. Therefore a courteous host will prolong his guest's visit by delaying the meal, whereas one gets rid of boring guests by serving food to them.

The actual shari'at is the foundation of life. It is the part of the *salik* or spiritual wayfarer to go beyond it. Never could he arrogate to himself the right to fall short of it. There is no faith without works in Islam. Again and again it is repeated in the Qur'an that Allah loves those who believe and do good. The word for 'good' in this phrase is a plural implying 'good works' not any vague general goodness; and the Qur'an is specific enough about the good works that are required.

Garland of Guru's Sayings

Translated by Prof. K. SWAMINATHAN
from the Tamil of Sri MURUGANAR

37. Some assert, "This world before our eyes
Lacks permanence, but it is real
enough."
We deny it, saying :
Permanence is the mark of reality.
38. Some argue, "Though divided,
How could it be unreal
This world we know so well ?"
We refute them, saying :
Wholeness is the mark of reality.
39. The universe dismembered by
Time's wheel
The wise can nohow deem a real thing.
Whole, absolute, eternal being
Transcending time as well as space,
Such is the nature of reality.
40. Whatever is perceived
By the false body's senses
Can nothing be but false.
Search hard henceforth and find,
Weigh well and speak the Truth,
O mind of mine,
Wearied and worn out
By the world's ways.
41. How pitious is the spectacle
Of people roaming merrily
In the world's ways.
Wagging aimless, frisky
Like a goat's beard,
Chafing at the discipline that leads
To perfect freedom in the Self.
42. One wonders why they plough with
thought
And toil so hard to cultivate
The treacherous field of sense and
hanker after
A tiny grain of pleasure, while
neglecting
The heart's rich garden ready to reward
With golden fruit a little labour of love.
43. For the lady Mind, the wedded wife
Of the radiant Sun-god Self,
To forsake the joys of light
And go astray seeking
The deer darkness of the world,
What is it but the frenzied folly
of infidelity ?
44. Unless the world's allurements
disappears
The real bliss of *mukti* cannot come.
To try to thrust reality
Into the world-appearance
Is like an infatuate lover foisting
Chastity upon a prostitute.

MORAL PHILOSOPHY

By
H. SEBASTIAN GUBBINS

THE decline in religion which has been going on for a long time now, in all religions, has naturally led to a fall in moral standards as well. Religious injunctions cover all departments of life, spiritual, moral and social. Suppose people are told that they must not eat meat on Friday, must go to confession and take communion at stated intervals, must dress decently and must not steal. Intellectuals begin deriding religious authority and telling them that its injunctions can be ignored; and ordinary people do not distinguish too clearly between disciplinary injunctions such as not eating meat on Friday and moral injunctions such as not stealing. Both rested on the same authority and if this authority is no longer valid both can be ignored. That is what is happening. The intellectuals, who are themselves responsible for this, have become alarmed by it and try to rectify it by creating a so-called 'moral philosophy' or 'science of ethics'.

This is an attempt to prove that right action has intrinsically nothing to do with religion but is a matter of social convention to which religion has merely added its sanction. Actions, it holds, are not inherently right or wrong but only in accord or discord with social conventions; and these are based on considerations of social security. For instance, I cannot expect society to safeguard my property unless I respect the property rights of others; therefore theft is outlawed and is considered wrong and immoral. Most modern philosophers and psychologists accept this modern synthetic ethics, and therefore they do not speak of 'sin' or even 'crime' but only of 'socially unacceptable actions'. In support of their outlook they point out that different actions are unacceptable in different civilizations and have been in different epochs in the same civilization.

Superficially there is something to be said for this. For instance, a Muslim is not infringing his moral code by having two wives at the same time, whereas a Christian is; a Christian is not infringing his by gambling, whereas a Muslim is. In an age when duelling was an accepted mode of settling disputes between gentlemen a man who killed a private enemy in that way was not guilty of murder, whereas to-day he would be.

This is superficial outlook, however, because it ignores the effect of a man's actions on himself. Primarily it is himself and his own inner development or deterioration that a man is responsible for; it is his own heaven or hell that he creates. Modern intellectuals have decried this teaching as superstitious sanctions to enforce moral laws by hope or fear of what comes after death. They are woefully mistaken. Heaven and hell can be real enough in this present life without waiting for after death — not that that means that they are not real after death also. It is easy to deride what one has not understood. If death tears away the mental veil which has hidden the subconscious from view, at least the psychologist ought to be able to imagine the heaven or hell that would result. He at least is interested in the state of a man in himself, whereas the so-called moral philosopher goes no deeper than his relations with others, and even that not individually but only with 'society' as a group or concept.

Because of its superficiality, social security ethics is quite impotent to stem the general moral decline. It has no emotional force; it makes no appeal to a man's conscience, his sense of right and wrong. It even sets him free from it, and the social sense that it offers instead is a very weak substitute. It leaves the door wide open to the sort

of self-indulgence such as greed, pride, laziness, which religions used to condemn as sinful but which can be argued to have no clearly demonstrable social consequences. It even invites casuistry with regard to actions such as dishonesty and sexual irregularities which may affect society; there are many ways of justifying an action and arguing that society is not harmed by it.

Moreover, the very conception of 'socially unacceptable action' is misleading, since such action is not necessarily below the norms accepted by society; it may be above them. It may be society that is in the wrong, not the misfit. It is customary to think of the criminal as socially maladjusted, but the reformer is too. He would have no urge to reform if he were not. If we were to accept social acceptability as the norm for right action, what should we do with some one who challenged that acceptability itself? Crusify him? Give him hemlock?

Actually, morality is an essential part of religion. Religion has two modalities, horizontal and vertical. Horizontally it is a discipline binding its followers together in a harmonious pattern of life in which the physical is subordinated to the spiritual and a high moral standard is upheld. Vertically it is a way of ascent from the human to the divine. Horizontally its yoke is upon all its followers, vertically only on those who undertake the quest.

The harmonious pattern of life sponsored by a religion covers every aspect of life, both private and public, individual and social. It establishes modes and times of worship, regulates personal relationships, lays down a disciplinary code, including positive acts such as alms-giving and acts of abnegation such as fasting. It demands the rejection of vices and cultivation of their opposite virtues. It is a glib misreading of history to assert that its dietary regulations are for reasons of hygiene or its demand for honesty for reasons of social security. There is no

evidence whatever for this in any religion. In the scriptures of every religion it is the spiritual welfare of the person himself that is the prime consideration.

In most religions the horizontal modality of religion is almost dead to-day. Very little worship remains. The regulation of human relationships and education of the young have been taken out of the hands of religion. The conception of sin has been replaced by that of social acceptability. What remains — vague piety and a belief that such and such will happen when one dies — is scarcely worth the name of religion. And as a result morality has declined and there is incipient social anarchy.

What concerns *The Mountain Path* readers more is the vertical modality of religion, the way of ascent from the human to the Divine. In reaction against the soullessness of the modern world, more and more people — isolated individuals or scattered groups — are being driven to seek some such way. Those who do are little concerned with social acceptability — if at all only so as to be left undisturbed in their quest. Their norms are not outer but inner. It is not what society approves of that concerns them but what advances their inner development. Even the injunctions of the horizontal modality of religion concern them little.

And here lies the danger. They are apt to feel themselves privileged to ignore these injunctions, when actually they should exceed them, at least those of them that refer to moral purity. The horizontal injunction may be to stone an adulteress; the vertical may be more gracious in bidding her 'Go and sin no more', but it is also more severe in equating lewd thoughts with adultery. Religion in its horizontal modality aims at disciplining the individual and society, in its vertical at transcending the individuality altogether. Moral philosophy aims only at enabling the multitudinous individuals to co-exist without too much friction. It does not even consider the inner state of man.

A MENTAL THERAPY BY NATURAL MEANS

By
MARIE B. BYLES

IN a previous article¹ we examined the Morita Mental Therapy practised in Japan and saw in it an exception to the generalization that the East tends to regard man as wholly spirit and to neglect his body, and that the West tends to treat man as wholly body and mind and neglect his spiritual essence.

In this article we shall examine a similar exception from the West, from Australia, where Dr. Kyneur, a psychiatrist and Matron Lane, a psychiatric nurse, have discovered for themselves the importance of relaxation and hold that instead of trying to *banish* the symptoms of neurotics, the object should be to lead them towards *acceptance* of their symptoms and surrender to the healing power of natural law.

Dr. Kyneur's methods are both less austere and less regimented than those of the Morita hospital I visited in Japan, probably because of the difference between Japanese and Australian conditioning. Dr. J. C. Clark in his *Understanding the Japanese Mind* remarks on the astonishing docility of the Japanese mental patient, and the absence of violence in psychotic cases. The Japanese have been accustomed to obedience from babyhood and this would appear to make them take more happily to the strict rules of the Morita hospital I visited without the tension that would result in Australia from such discipline. Whether this docility will continue in the post-war, post-American-occupation Japan, is another matter. Little children are now cherished with the extreme of affection and indulgence. I observed them being allowed to run up and down the aisles and steps of a theatre during the performance in a manner that would not be tolerated even in Australia. It is from such as these that the next generation of mental patients will come, and it may

be that Morita doctors will be glad to learn from Dr. Kyneur the means whereby tension may be relaxed to allow the same basic underlying principles to be followed.

At all costs nothing must be allowed in Matron Lane's hospital to put any tension or strain on the patient. The same applies to patients who do not need hospitalization and 95% can be treated without it.

As soon as the door of the hospital opened I felt an extraordinary difference; a wave of peacefulness seemed to sweep out as swept out from the entrance of some of the meditation centres in Burma. The hospital is on a side street of the suburb, but plenty of through traffic passes along it. None the less the outside noises did not seem to disturb the peace. "One harsh word to a patient," said Matron Lane, "upsets the others and puts back the patient's progress by weeks."

Smoking, transistors, talking, reading, and, during the first period of complete bed-rest, all visitors, are taboo. But sooner than cause tension nothing will be forcefully removed. We went into the room of a young man whose transistor was playing softly; the doctor unobtrusively switched it off. If the patient has a very fond spouse, a visit will be discouraged but not strictly forbidden. Distractions from outside will delay with healing which must come from within. But tension and strain will delay it even more.

The need to dissipate tension and enable the patient to open himself up, as it were, had led Dr. Kyneur to make far more extensive use of drugs including sleeping tablets, than Morita doctors, especially during the first two days when the patient should sleep the round of the clock. Even shock treatment is resorted to in certain circumstances.

¹The Mountain Path, January 1967, p. 32.

But he has no illusions that drugs themselves can heal. They can only prepare the ground for the healing that the patient himself, with the doctor's helping hand, must allow natural law to bring about, a healing that comes of its own accord when he accepts his suffering and yields to the very nature of things as they are.

During the first week or more of complete bedrest, the matron makes her rounds several times a day and each time reminds the unrelaxed patient of the need to tell the body inch by inch from the toes upwards to relax, give in, think looseness. During this period she prefers the patients not to take a bath or a shower, but be content with a daily sponge by the nurse. If even this seems to them to require too much effort she lets them remain dirty. If they insist upon a bath or a shower they may take it, but only under supervision, for it has been found that they have an irresistible urge to turn on the hot tap only!

The doctor visits them three times a week and talks to each from ten minutes to an hour, gently leading them towards relaxation and acceptance of their ills, acceptance from the very depth of their being. The idea of acceptance can often be understood intellectually, but real surrender must come from deeper levels. Intellectual acceptance can at most predispose a patient to listen with greater faith to the doctor's lead, or make it easier to be honest and truthful with himself. But that is all. It cannot bring about the real plunge into the icy brook of helplessness born of humility and surrender of self or ego.

If the patient has any religious faith the doctor uses this to lead him. But he can succeed without it. Even the atheist can appreciate the fact that it is not the sticking plaster that heals the cut finger, but the healing power inherent in the human body. Sometimes it helps the non-religious patient if he contemplates Beauty or Truth. Surrender to whatever the patient believes in is all that is required. But he must reach the very depth of helplessness before he can truly

surrender and the healing commence. While I was talking with a Catholic patient I was reminded of Francis Thompson and *The Hound of Heaven*:

Naked I wait Thy love's uplifted stroke!
My harness piece by piece Thou hast
hewn from me
And smitten me to my knees.
I am defenceless utterly.

This is directly the opposite of the mottoes the patient has probably tried to follow all his life, "If at first you don't succeed, try try again," or "There is no such word as can't." Adages like this only increase the tensions that have brought about his troubles. He must now learn to do exactly the opposite. He must train himself to be deliberately lazy, learn how to BE instead of to DO, a very difficult matter in an age which suffers from activity mania. One recalls Tagore's remark to Charles Andrews, Gandhi's well known Christian disciple, "Charlie, why must you always be *doing* something? Isn't it enough just to be?" The only thing the patient must try over and over again, is not to try to do anything, but leave matters to the working of God or natural law.

This surrender and giving in is also the opposite of following the urges that spring from aversions and desires—desire for pleasure, desire to get rid of pain. There can be true surrender only when the patient has accepted suffering as a fact and given up his longing for health and strength. There can also be true surrender only when he has accepted himself with all his physical, moral and mental weaknesses. To forgive ourselves for our failures is far more difficult than to forgive others for theirs, for it can be done only by letting go of our sense of "I" or ego to which we cling as desperately as to life itself. Finally true surrender can come only when the fear of death has died. Until the patient has accepted suffering, failure and death he will continue to suffer. This is one of many of the paradoxes that life presents. Accept suffering, and suffering ends. Plunge into

the icy brook of humility, and find it is warm and pleasant.

When the patient has reached the end of his tether, and admitted his weakness and failure, the painful symptoms begin to slip away of their own accord. If they return he will not now rush to the medicine bottle to relieve them but will welcome them as friendly signals to let go of ego, relax and let nature take her way. Any symptoms may always recur for the ego never wholly dies. When it is slain on one level of consciousness it will come to life on another, and pride in one's successful self-surrender is the most insidious of its resurrections. Indeed the whole of life is ceaseless training in surrender of the sense of "I" and "mine" and "me", and answering the question, "Who are you?" which Maharshi asked. Those that develop neuroses may well be those who have the most insistent inner need to find the answer, and their illness is therefore their greatest help.

Hospital patients are usually well on the road to recovery after about three weeks, and then automatically begin helping with small jobs about the hospital and its garden. In a further week to three weeks they are generally ready to return home. After that they visit the doctor either in his rooms in the city, or in the hospital (which has become their second home) at four to six week intervals for another six to twelve months. Occasionally, a patient might remain in hospital for two to three months but this is very unusual. If a patient leaves before the cure is completed, Dr. Kyneur does not tell him, as did the Morita Doctor I visited, that he may never come back. On the contrary, Dr. Kyneur says, "Perhaps a little later on you may be ready to return." Those that leave too soon are generally very ill, but will not give in. Dr. Kyneur and Matron Lane accept far more serious cases than those treated at Morita hospitals. On occasion they will take psychotic as well as neurotic cases, but not of course if they are chronic. (In case any reader is as ignorant as I used to be, the broad distinction between neurotic and psychotic is that the neurotic knows he is ill, the psychotic does not.)

As I have said, about 95% of Dr. Kyneur's patients do not need hospitalization. They see him in his rooms in the city for half an hour only for the time allotted obviously cannot be as flexible as in a small hospital. But the method employed is the same, and also the same is the loving understanding born of his own knowledge of suffering, and ability to put himself in the patient's place and feel what he is feeling.

I was introduced to three of the patients in hospital. The first was a tired housewife, desperately weary and terrified of contracting cerebral haemorrhage or some such. At last she was able to let go and trust God — her prayer book lay on the table beside her. Behind her tears and laughter I could feel her tense nerves uncoiling as it were, feel her infinite gratitude that she had no longer to make her tired body move chairs or sweep under the table, nor even make the effort of getting out of bed to visit the toilet. When you are so weary you feel you can never get up again, you are truly relaxed, and I knew she was already on the road to recovery. The second was a young man who had attempted suicide because his girl had been taken from him, and it was he who had the transistor. He was still very securely held in the octopus clutches of the disintegrating power of self pity, and had not started to relax. "But you believe in the Hereafter?" questioned the doctor handing him the one staff that at the moment he felt disposed to lean upon. The third had been a Fransiscan friar, who had found the inflexible ritual and rule of his Order brought overpowering tension. He showed his inner development by means of exquisite diagrams he drew and the doctor and he examined them together. They took the place of the Morita diary.

As with Morita patients those of Dr. Kyneur leave him better able than the ordinary person to live their lives amid the stresses and strains around them. They have accepted their suffering and learned the lesson the laws of life meant them to learn, and their gratitude is shown in the Christmas Cards that arrive year after year. Most people thrust suffering aside and do not learn

from it. If a person has been healed without learning to be a better man or woman — and healing seldom accomplishes this — the suffering has been in vain, and the healer's energies have been wasted.

Dr. Kyneur had recently resigned from the position of Honorary Psychiatrist at one of the leading teaching hospitals, because he felt he could no longer teach the students what they required to know for their examinations but what he did not find true to facts as revealed by his own practice. The University required its students to subscribe to the Freudian hypothesis concerning the human mind. Among other things this hypothesis assumes that the cause of mental disease is to be found in past happenings which have been repressed by the patient because they were very distressing and therefore better forgotten. Freud aimed at bringing them up into consciousness again. Dr. Kyneur (and also Dr. Morita and Dr. Carl Jung) have found that what happened in the past does not help the cure very much. It is the present that matters, and the patient himself as he is now, not as he was when a small child. People differ vastly in temperament. Those that fall victims to neuroses are generally more aware of their weaknesses and strive more earnestly after perfection. Digging out their forgotten childhood may only add to their distress and increase the strain and tension which have produced the neuroses. It seems strange to find that Freud is now taken so seriously that to deny his hypothesis means failure in the student's examination. In my own university days, forty-five years ago, Freud was rather a joke. There was a jingle about those who have toyed:—

To their added prestige and eclat
 With the Gospel according to Freud —
 If it's known that your dreams are
 alloyed
 With every unpleasant faux pas
 That virtue would sooner avoid —
 Don't argue and don't get annoyed;
 They are there for your certain
 damnation,
 All classified, charted and buoyed,
 And goodbye to the best reputation!

Ridicule usually kills. But Freud seems to have hypnotized instead.

If the University altered its curriculum to permit a diversity of teaching and practice, this would allow at least some of the coming generation of psychiatrists to learn Dr. Kyneur's methods. But ability to answer examination questions would not by itself show the students how to apply these methods successfully, for a student might gain first class honours without himself having learned how to relax and surrender. Unless he himself had given in utterly, he could not show others how to do so.

Surrender to what? If one can answer, "To God, or Christ," or in Buddhism, "the Dhamma or the Buddha Essence"! well and good. But to the Western psychiatrist none of these terms are acceptable. We might say, "To the Universe," perhaps, and recall the novelist who publicly announced that she had decided "to accept the universe" and George Bernard Shaw's comment, "Begad she'd better!" If one could really accept the universe, things as they are, including one's own failure and weaknesses, all problems would be solved. But who can? Certainly not the ordinary medical student or psychiatrist, for this acceptance means a spiritual reorientation, a turning away from the sense of "I" and "mine" and "me", and accepting all that comes graciously and lovingly, and no academic qualifications can bring this about. Furthermore — it means acceptance with the whole being, with the abdomen, says the Easterner, instead of the intellect. One can hear the hushed embarrassment in medical circles — or the relieved ridicule — if anyone expressed this in public.

However, that is no reason why the few doctors who have found these truths and successfully applied them should not be able to teach their method. And perhaps something of their experience might be absorbed by their students "through their abdomens", for people learn by example far more than by precept.

THE INFLOW OF LIFE

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By
CORNELIA BAGAROTTI

LIFE forces are within and around all men but they live unaware of the ocean of creative force from which they draw every fresh inflow of energy, inspiration, renewal, or well-being. If man could be compared to a fish one might say he like the fish lives in an element of which he is totally unknowing. Yet ignorant as he may be of how to connect with or to recognise that which sustains him and renews him he is quickly cognisant of the immediate effects of breaking contact. At the moment that he centers himself in his own affairs, his ego and lower personality or ceases to open himself in universal love to all that lies around him the process of death spiritually has begun. Tiredness, depression, joylessness, and illness follow. In terms of medicine one can call it psychosomatic but in terms of esoteric truth the inflow of life has ceased.

A quality of faith and trust are constantly needed before this theoretical knowing of wherefrom we draw life forces becomes second nature. Constant realization of the Divine reservoir of life gives Man endless resources upon which to draw not only for recharging, healing and renewal but for sharing and giving to others. One who is vibrant with Divine life carries such an abundance or radiating love that his very presence is a source of life to others. The aura may be invisible to those without sight but the effect of the aura is immediately tangible. Those who drain others, who are unseen vampires or leeches do so because their self-centered egoism and lack of love not only drain them but others.

Thus we bear the Spiritual responsibility not only for our own well-being but for what our inability to contact the Divine inflow creates in those who must live in our environment. Man is not an island unto himself. He is part of the entire fabric of

humanity and earth life. What he projects affects the whole and after death he will be aware of his responsibility for his inner as well as his outer life. From this it can clearly be understood why those who selflessly hold constructive, loving, positive attitudes find the fountain of youth at their disposal and are able to achieve so much work effortlessly. Divine life is the reservoir not only of health and energy but of inspiration and genius. At each moment man bears the opportunity within to allow this tremendous inflow of life to enter. All he is asked to do is to step aside in humility, in self obliteration of his selfishly centered ego and to love in an all inclusive sense. This is the true, reverent, living cognizing of God. From it all life flows.

A great unseen mystery surrounds man. He lives in a world created in Light whose brilliance and beauty permeate all things. Its source is infinite Love. It is the origin of all life and the sustainer of all life. It is Spirit and it is God. In the first chapter of St. John's Gospel this mystery is revealed in the following words: "In Him was life; and that life was the Light of Men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Christ said of himself: "I am the Light of the world". St. John speaks further of Him saying: "That was the true Light which lighteth everyman that cometh into the world".

Another unknown mystery is that when the Christ is recognised and the lower self of man dies and his Higher Self "The Divine Indwelling", the Christ, is born, then he too becomes radiant and a source of light. Like a pure crystal he enters the sea of light around him both transmitting its glory and containing it within himself.

Saints and great illumined Souls radiate light to such a degree that their very being

becomes a blaze of blinding, scintillating, pulsating and dazzling glory which carries into the darkness of earth the living essence of God. These are not words of symbolism but of literal exactitude. One such being can radiate light to a whole city¹ and carry it to the hearts of those he touches. What the Christ did on a great, a divine scale those who live in divine love do for him in a lesser way. The more the heart grows in Love and the more one's life is infused with the essence of Love, the more the inner radiance grows. Finally it can even become visible as it often has in the Saints. Their skin emits a translucent glow, or the halo can be seen not only around their heads but around their bodies. Angels or Spiritual beings are composed of radiating light and their healing is in streams of light. Even the Devas and nature beings are essentially light. Man alone is enfolded in the darkness of his ego. That ego which holds itself apart from God and thus does not live in or share that light until he has made the great alliance with Love. In St. John, chapter 13, verses 34 and 35 Christ says: "A new commandment I give you. That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."

The wisdom of the world and the great teachings of the world are all emissaries of that light sent here to earth to convey to men a part of that Divine universal love and light. Slowly as men evolve and this light begins to awaken within themselves they will be able to absorb more concerning the teaching of Love. Before the whole blaze of light can enter a man he must have so purified himself in love that his body can withstand the blaze of eternity. That of the Christ endured three years. St. Francis taught for 12 years. In earth-years these lives of supreme ministry seem but short but the presence of light in them brought to earth something men do not possess for themselves without the sacrifice of Divine Love.

In the heavens the Sun is the external symbol of Spiritual Light—on earth the heart and its love are the external symbol of spiritual love. Hold the heart in the eternal light and unite with it in sublime Love. May the body become the inner chalice of light. Know that there is union on all planes with all light in its infinite forms and that those who live in love live in that light and become light.

¹Or to the whole world. (*Editor*)

Remove our evil dream of duality.
Wipe out all sins that obstruct the path to
right knowledge.
Grant us that knowledge of the Truth which
is beyond all doubts and misconceptions.

— *Yajur Veda.*

HOW I CAME TO THE MAHARSHI

By
S. V. D.

IN my college days at Madras I was already a seeker after Truth. I used to sit for long hours on the beach with two other friends reading and discussing Tamil philosophical works and the sayings of the Saints. We visited the sadhus and swamis in the neighbourhood and talked with them but we got no great satisfaction out of this. One of my friends used to go to Tiruvannamalai frequently and he suggested that we should all go and meet the Maharshi, who was still a young Swami living in a cave on Arunachala and not yet the world famous figure he later became. Accordingly we went to Tiruvannamalai in the third week of December, 1922, and climbed up to Skandashram, the cave-ashram where he was living with a small group of followers. I was strongly attracted and we decided to stay there at least a week, taking our midday meal with him. There was a little spring waterfall just beside the cave with beautiful cool water where we took our bath. The Maharshi was almost a Mouni at that time, rarely speaking to visitors; however he made an exception in our case, especially with me as I spent all my time on the hill, never going down into town.

At midday each day a sufficient amount of cooked food would be brought up the hill by devotees, with no caste distinction, and served to the Maharshi and those with him. He insisted on equal treatment with the others. When all were served he would first give some food to the waiting birds and monkeys and then start eating, which would be a signal for all the others to start too.

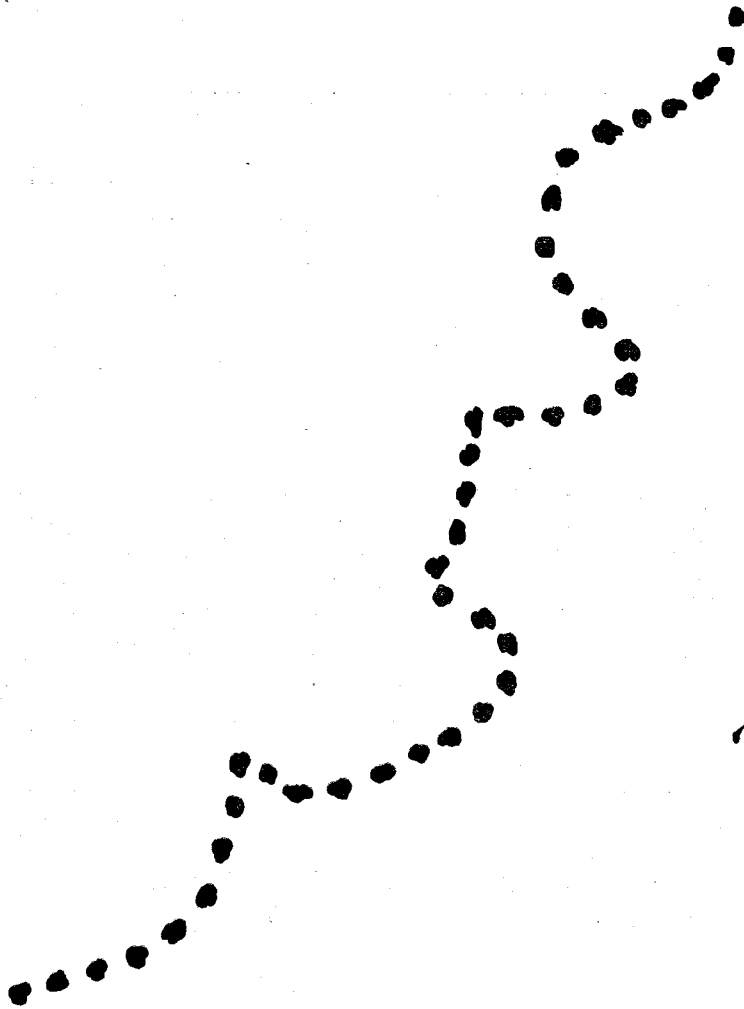
One day that week, at the Maharshi's suggestion, we set out on a whole day walking trip round the Hill, stopping at a number of

places on the way and singing spiritual songs as we went. There were about fifty people in the party, including many women. At noon lunch was provided on a lavish scale in a beautiful spot under the shade of trees. It was an occasion not to be forgotten.

During that week I sat long hours at the feet of the Maharshi, trying to imitate his unwinking gaze which radiated peace all around. I felt contented and happy and had the conviction that this week's stay with the Maharshi was ordained of God and that my future life was being shaped by the blessing of the Maharshi. So it has been and I am fully conscious of it.

Since that time I have always remembered the 'Hill of the Holy Beacon' with a thrill. However I did not make any arrangements to return there, being confident that it was in His hands to bring me back to Him if my spiritual development required it. It was not until 1948 that, having occasion to go to Tiruvannamalai on official business, I again spent a day there. To my surprise, it was the very day when the Maharaja of Bhavanagar, who was then Governor of Madras, was visiting the Ashram. This was another unforgettable experience for me.

The next time I was 'taken', as it were, to Tiruvannamalai was early in 1949; my third trip and the last before the Maharshi left the body. I sat silently before him, wondering whether he had any message to transmit to me. And I did indeed receive one. When I rose to go it seemed to me that his message was that I should live and work in the world, as he did in the Ashram. This is indeed a universal message and I have been trying to keep to it all this time.



ants
how THANKFUL
I am with
no thing
to be THANKFUL
FOR

Ants in a nest,
cells in a body —
intelligence?
But not thought.
Intelling before thought.
Certainly before thought.

repz



The Bhagavad Gita

CHAPTER TEN

Translated by
Prof. G. V. KULKARNI and ARTHUR OSBORNE

1

Again, O Mighty-Armed, hear My supreme word, which I will pronounce for your welfare since you love me.

2

Neither the hosts of the gods (devas) nor the Great Sages (maharshis) know My origin, for I am in all ways the source of the gods and the Great Sages.

3

He who knows Me as unborn, beginningless and Supreme Lord of the worlds is undeluded among mortals and free from all sins.

4-5

Intelligence (buddhi) and knowledge (jnana), freedom from illusion, forgiveness, truth, self-restraint, serenity, happiness and

unhappiness, being and ceasing to be, fear and its absence, harmlessness, equal-mindedness and contentment, austerity and generosity, good and ill-fame, all these varied states (bhavah) arise from Me alone.

6

The Seven Great Rishis (Maharshis) and the Four ancient Manus are of My nature (bhavah) emanated from My mind; and from them are these creatures of the world.

According to the doctrine of the yugas referred to especially in Chapters IV and VIII, there are successive ages of mankind, each running its own course. The Maharshis are those who enunciate the Eternal Doctrine for a new age, the Manus those who establish its social order.

The word 'ancient' may be taken to apply to either the Maharshis or the Manus.

The Seven Maharshis are usually taken to be: Brighu, Marichi, Atri, Pulastya, Pulah, Krathu and Vasishtha. The Four Manus are Swayambhuva, Swarochisha, Uttama, Raivata.

However, this doctrine goes far beyond the domain of history. The 'Seven Rishis' are incarnations of Cosmic Being and therefore 'of My nature'. They are said to represent the seven planes of consciousness, while the 'Four Manus' are guardians of cosmic order and stability.

7

He who truly knows these manifestations (vibhuti) of Me and My Power (Yoga) is established unshakeably in yoga; of this there is no doubt.

8

Knowing Me to be the Source of all and all to emanate from Me, the wise worship Me with understanding.

9

With mind and life-breath turned to me, they instruct one another about me and, speaking constantly of Me, they are contented and rejoice.

10

To them, ever steadfast in loving worship, I give the yoga of understanding by which they attain to Me.

11

Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in their heart, destroy the darkness born of ignorance with the effulgent light of knowledge.

The words rendered "dwelling in their heart" could also mean "abiding in My true state."

12

Arjuna said:

You are the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Abode, the Supreme Purifier, the Eternal, Divine Purusha, the Primeval God, Unborn and All-pervading.

13

All the sages have acclaimed you, as also the Divine Sage (Deva Rishi) Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa have too, and now You Yourself declare it to me.

Narada was a Sage among the gods and is regarded as the author of the "Bhakti-Sutras", Vyasa is the compiler of the Vedas and the author of the Mahabharata, the Brahma-Sutras and the Puranas. All that Arjuna has heard and believed by hearsay he now finds confirmed by Krishna himself.

14

I hold all this true that you say to me O Kesava, Neither the gods nor the demons know your manifestation, Bhagavan.

The microcosmic interpretation also is to be kept in mind—that neither the higher nor the lower tendencies in a man have knowledge of his true Self.

15

You alone know Yourself through Yourself, O Supreme Being, Creator and Lord of Beings, God of gods, Ruler of the world.

'Purusha' means 'the Spirit' or 'male person'. 'Purushottama' here translated 'Supreme Being', could therefore be understood also as 'Divine Spirit' or 'Supreme Person'.

16

Describe to me fully, I pray, Your divine glories, by which You pervade these worlds while remaining (as You are).

17

How may I know You O Yogi, ceaselessly meditating on You? In what aspects may you be conceived by me, Bhagavan?

18

Tell me again in detail Your Power (yoga) and Glories (vibhuti) O Janardana. I can never have enough of listening to your life-giving words.

19

Sri Bhagavan said :

Certainly I will tell you, O Prince of the Kurus, but not in full, for there is no end to it, only the most outstanding of divine glories.

20

I am the Self, O Gudakesa, dwelling in the hearts of all beings. I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all beings.

The Maharshi indicated this verse as the central and most important one in the entire Gita. Sri Shankara also said that the Atma dwelling in the heart is the first and foremost Aspect of God to be meditated on.

The following verses indicate that the most essential or characteristic of each species is to be regarded as the expression of divinity in it. If, for instance, flowers manifest a certain mode of God, the lotus in the East and the rose in the West epitomises this manifestation.

21

Of the Adityas I am Vishnu, of the luminaries I am the radiant Sun, of the winds (Maruts) I am Marichi, of the stellar forms I am the Moon.

The Sun personified as a God is called Aditya. Aditya is given twelve names, one for each of the solar months. Vishnu is the name for the January sun coming after the winter solstice, when the days begin to lengthen and the sun takes its course towards summer.

22

Among the Vedas I am the Sama, among the Devas Vasava, of the faculties I am the mind, and in beings I am consciousness.

The Samaveda repeats hymns from the Rigveda, but with an added musical beauty. It is for this that it is singled out.

Vasava is another name for Indra, the king of the devas or gods.

23

Of the Rudras I am Shankara, of the yakshas and rakshasas Vitesha, of the Vasus Pavaka, and among mountains I am Mt. Meru.

Rudras are celestials whose function is to turn man Godward through grief and frustration. They are held to be eleven in number, one of them being Shankara. Both 'Rudra' and 'Shankara' are regarded as names for Siva.

Yakshas are intermediary and rakshasas infernal beings. Vitesha is the same as Kubera, the custodian of wealth.

The Vasus are eight in number, the five traditional elements plus sun, moon and stars thus constituting the structure of the physical universe. Pavaka is a name for Agni or fire.

Mt. Meru is the mythological mountain which is the centre and axis of the world.

24

Among priests know Me to be Brihaspati, the chief of them, O Son of Prithu, among generals Skanda and among waters the ocean.

Brihaspati is the priest of the devas. He is identified with the planet Jupiter and regarded as the arche-type of the Guru. Skanda (Subrahmanya) is the younger of the two sons of Siva and is represented in mythology as the commander-in-chief of the devas in their war with the demons or asuras (microcosmically, of the good with the evil tendencies in man). Many regarded the Maharshi as an incarnation of Skanda.

25

Of the Maha-Rishis I am Brighu, of utterances I am the monosyllable (OM), among sacrifices I am the sacrifice of Japa, of immovable things I am the Himalaya.

26

Out of all trees I am the Asvattha, of heavenly Rishis Narada, of the Gandharvas Chitraratha and of the Perfected (Siddhas) I am the Sage (Muni) Kapila.

The Asvattha, a species of wild fig tree, of the same family as the banyan tree, is sacred. It is the same as the bodhi-tree under which Buddha attained Enlightenment. If its seed falls in the dust in the fork of another tree it strikes its root down into the trunk of the other tree and grows and swells until it splits the host tree asunder and takes its place, in which it is compared to the seed of knowledge falling into the heart of a worldling.

For Narada see v. 13.

The Gandharvas were the celestial musicians. Among the six Hindu 'darshanas' or 'views' of doctrine, Kapila was the expounder of the Sankhya.

27

Of horses, know that I am Uchchaisravas born of ambrosia and of lordly elephants Airavata, while among men I am the king.

The white horse Uchchaisravas and the lordly elephant Airavata were two of the marvels that emerged at the churning of the ocean by the rotation of Mt. Meru in it by devas and asuras. They both became the mounts of Indra. The churning of the ocean is the churning of a man's nature in the quest and the marvels symbolise the various powers that accrue.

28

Of weapons I am the thunderbolt, of cows Kamadhuk, of progenitors Kandarpa, of serpents Vasuki.

The vajra or thunderbolt is the weapon of Indra, the King of the gods, manufactured from the bones of a Sage who was willing to give his body for the purpose. All this is to be understood symbolically.

Kamadhuk, also called Kamadhenu, is the wish-fulfilling cow who was another of the wonders produced at the churning of the ocean. Kandarpa is another name for Kama, the God of Love.

Vasuki, the Shakti or 'Serpent-Power', the Kundalini, is the serpent who served as a rope for rotating Mt. Meru in the ocean, to churn it up.

29

Of the hooded serpents I am Ananta, of the water-lords Varuna, of the ancestors Aryama, of the controllers Yama.

Ananta is an appellation of the serpent Sesha. The Lord reposes on him and therefore he represents 'Prakriti'. This is indicated by the name

Ananta, which means literally 'endless', also by his having a thousand heads.

Varuna (akin to the Greek Ouranos) represents the heavens. He is also Lord of the Waters.

Aryama is said to have been the first of the ancestors to have known death and therefore to be the chief of them.

Yama is the God of Death.

30

And among the Titans I am Prahlada, of reckoners I am Time, of beasts I am the lord of beasts and of birds Vinuta's son.

Among the Hindus, as among the Greeks and the Arabs and other peoples, there were legends of a race of great power and arrogance who defied the gods. It is to be presumed that their powers were of a subtle nature, not like the physical powers of modern scientists; but the arrogance and defiance were the same. Prahlada was the son of one of their kings and from childhood was a devotee of the Lord, for which he endured torture.

The lord of the beasts is the lion.

Vinuta's son is the Garuda, the mythological bird that serves as the mount of Vishnu.

31

Of purifiers I am the wind, of warriors Rama, of fishes the alligator, of rivers the Ganges.

All the five elements, ether, fire, water, air and earth, are regarded as purifiers, but among them the wind is all-pervading.

It is not so much for his prowess as for his dharma that Rama is regarded as the perfect warrior. Also, since he too, like Krishna, was an Avatar of Vishnu, they can be said to be identical.

The word 'makara' is variously translated as 'shark' and alligator.

Jahnvi is a mythological name for the Ganges.

32

I am the beginning, the end and the middle of created things, Arjuna; among sciences I am the science of the Self, of debators I am the logic.

33

Of the letters I am A and of compounds the dual; inexhaustible Time I am. I am the Sustainer who faces all ways.

A, the first letter, is also the first phase of the monosyllable OM and is equated with the Purusha entering into Prakriti, the consonants. Every consonant is presumed to carry the vowel 'A' unless otherwise marked, even though it is not written; that is why one can say either 'Ram' or 'Rama'.

In Sanskrit a compound of two words each retaining its equal importance, such as 'Rama-krishna' is termed a dual.

God is spoken of as Mahakala, or Great Time, beginningless and endless.

34

I am Death that devours all. I am the prosperity of those who are to prosper. I am the goddesses presiding over the qualities of fame, fortune, speech, memory, intelligence, constancy, forbearance.

35

Among the Sama hymns I am Brihatsama. I am the Gayathri among metres; of months I am Margashirsha, and of the seasons I am spring.

36

I am the gambling of the fraudulent, the lustre of the illustrious; I am victory, I am effort, I am sattva in the sattvic.

There is no question of moral or immoral here but of the essential energy or type or representative. If the Lord is the sattva of the sattvic, He is equally the rajas of the rajasic (therefore 'victory') and the tamas of the tamasic (therefore 'gambling').

37

Of the Vrishnis I am Vasudeva, of the Pandavas the Wealth-winner, of Sages Vyasa and of poets Ushanas.

The Vrishnis are Krishna's own tribe and Vasudeva is his human name. Similarly 'the

Wealth-Winner' is an epithet of Arjuna among the Pandavas.

The word used for 'Sage' here is 'Muni', the epithet applied to Kapila in v. 26. Vyasa is the author of the Mahabharata in which the Bhagavad Gita occurs.

38

Of those who chastise I am the rod, of those who seek Victory the statesmanship, of hidden things I am the silence, of those who know I am the knowledge.

39

Whatever, Arjuna, is the seed of all beings, that I am, nor can any being, whether moving or unmoving, exist without Me.

40

There is indeed no end to My Divine Manifestations, O Conqueror of the Foe. This is but a brief account I have given of the extent of My glories.

41

Whatever there is glorious, pure, prosperous or powerful, know that it springs from a fragment of My Splendour.

42

But what need have you Arjuna, to know all this? It is enough to know that, supporting this whole creation with a fragment of Myself, I remain as I am.

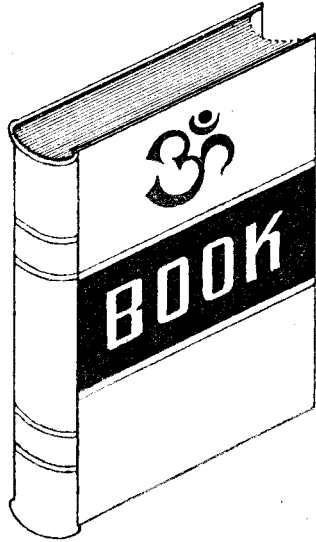
This list of the Lord's glories or manifestations is in answer to Arjuna's request in v. 16. It is fitting therefore that it should end with a reminder that there is no need to know all this.

Here ends the tenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, entitled 'The Yoga of Manifestations'.

HE IS ONE

What is within us is also without. What is without is also within. He who sees difference between what is within and what is without goes evermore from death to death.

— *Katha Upanishad*.



REVIEWS

SHINTO, AT THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF JAPAN: By Jean Herbert. (Allen and Unwin, Pp. 622, price 70s.)

When Western studies of Eastern religions began it was from either a rationalist or a missionary viewpoint, and both misrepresented them. Gradually studies from within began to appear by writers who understood and revered what they were writing about. That Shinto has had to wait long for such rehabilitation is not surprising, since it is so bound up with the life of the Japanese people that there is no compelling reason why others should study it. Only that this is an age when what was hidden is being made known.

Now that it has been done, the famous French Orientalist Jean Herbert has made a thorough job of it, and there is little doubt that his book will remain the standard work on the subject. He spent a lot of time in Japan and collected information and opinions from a wide range of authorities, both in temple and university. Where opinions differ, whether on fact or interpretation, he has given both.

He shows Shinto to be a religion with a highly developed ritual of life and worship, but lacking in philosophy or theology. In this (although he does not remark on the fact) it shows a striking resemblance to pre-Christian Judaism. Shinto has, however, a highly developed mythology, which he relates at some length, making interesting conjectures, as to its meaning. Indeed, a good deal of the missing doctrine, especially the cosmogony, may be preserved in the mythology.

In any religion it is the ethical training and spiritual discipline that are most important, and about these the author says a good deal. The following passage shows that the spiritual training goes the whole way up to the Supreme consummation of identification. "According to certain mystic schools, personal *mitame-shizume* (purification) may be said to have been successful . . . when all distinction between oneself and others disappears, when other men, family, Society, the State, Nature, the whole Universe, become identical with oneself." (p. 90).

NILAKANTHA BRAHMACHARI KULADANANDA. (Pp. 360, price Rs. 8).

GOSPEL FROM SRI SRI SADGURU SANGA. (Pp. 90, price Rs. 2). By Brahmachari Gangananda (Both available from Das Gupta & Co., 54/3, College St., Calcutta-12).

Brahmachari Kuladananda, whose centenary volume this is, was a powerful upholder of devotional and ritualistic Hinduism in Bengal in the first three decades of this century. He had not always been that way orientated. In his youth, like so many Western educated Bengalis of his time, he turned to the watered down 'Protestantised' Hinduism of the Brahma Samaj. While many were reclaimed from this by the influence of Ramakrishna, he was by his own guru, Sri Vijayakrishna Goswami Prabhu, who had also begun as a Brahma. The strong spiritual influence of both Vijayakrishna and Kuladananda is well brought out in this book. The author's access to a very frank diary that Kuladananda

Brahmachari used to keep has enabled him also to record the fierce battles for self-mastery that the Brahmachari had to fight before becoming stabilised in sanctity.

The second of the two books consists of extracts from this diary. It shows the power and wisdom of Sri Goswami and the unbounded faith his followers had in him. The discipline he enjoined was mainly based on the invocation of the Divine Name; however his wise guidance comes out more in the frame of mind and mode of conduct that he considers necessary for a Sadhaka. Such an intimate record is a rare and remarkable book. It is to be hoped that more of it will be rendered into English.

SANITY, UNHEARD OF: By Hugh Woodworth. (Sumas, Victoria, B. C., Canada. Pp. 109. Price \$3.00).

Mr. Woodworth argues cogently that mankind is insane and that the basis of the insanity is fear. And he does this without even a reference to the atom bomb. He is concerned with more fundamental modes of fear: — material insecurity, social insecurity and emotional insecurity. He traces this right back to the origin of man's concept-ridden life based on the root-concept of an ego remembering past adversities and fearing future ones. At the same time he reminds us of the rare possibility of spontaneous, joyful, sane life and action by the ego-free, concept-free self.

Unfortunately Mr. Woodworth spoils a good case by over-stating it. It is not true, as he tries to make out, that cleanliness, politeness and punctuality are necessarily based on fear or that indiscipline and rejection of authority are necessarily good things; they are far more likely to be manifestations of that very ego whom he rightly wishes to displace.

He is not the first to declare war on the ego. Christ, for instance, said that "he who lays down his life for my sake shall find it, but he who seeks to save it shall lose it". However, Christ had the humility to admit that he came only to confirm the prophets, whereas Mr. Woodworth seems unaware that he has had any predecessors in the field.

Another grave fault is that he allows the use of the word 'effort' only for the drab, ego-inspired efforts of those he dubs 'insane.' He seems to think that recognition of the possibility of the spontaneous life of Self is all that is required. If he had had the humility to study the trails blazed by those who went before him he would have found them all in agreement that

persistent effort is needed to remove the obstructions the ego has built up. As the Maharshi declared when asked about it, "effortless awareness is our natural state, but effort is needed in order to attain it".

If this review seems to dwell overly on the faults of a sane book in an insane world, it is because the basic idea of the book is of such rare sanity that it is a great disappointment to see it vitiated by certain weaknesses which are themselves characteristic of the specific form of insanity of our times.

EDGAR CAYCE, THE SLEEPING PROPHET: By Jess Stearn. (Doubleday, New York. Pp. 280).

An American reader has sent us this new study of a very remarkable soothsayer who died in America some twenty years ago. That seems to be the best name for him. He can hardly be called a mystic, since he seems to have had no conception of the Unity of Being, but in a trance or light sleep into which he could put himself at will his mind apparently had access to universal informatory knowledge.

He would visit in the subtle body any person whose name and address was given to him while in such sleep, diagnose their ailment and prescribe treatment. Although almost illiterate in his waking life and totally without medical training, his diagnoses were couched in the most technical medical terminology. His prescriptions were often very detailed and ranged all the way from ancient herbal remedies, through exercises and massage, to the most modern treatment of his day. They had the one common feature of success — so much so that now, twenty years after his death, his records are being studied and used by a number of doctors more than ever.

Apart from medical treatment, Cayce also, when asked, predicted the future course of events both for individuals and mankind and gave advice on future action; and in this also he proved surprisingly accurate. He sometimes described also the previous incarnations of petitioners. He predicted the great Wall Street slump of 1929 and the beginning of recovery in 1933, the second world war and its outcome and the date of its end. He foresaw an independent India, "unloved because unloving". We have still to see whether his predictions will come true that Russia will give up Communism, become strongly religious and ally with America. It seems less incredible than when the prediction was made. But that China will become Christian and democratic?

Before the end of the century he foresaw violent geological changes preparatory to or dependent on the reversal of the earth's axis, but not a nuclear war. The upheavals are to involve earthquakes around the Mediterranean, also on both the east and west coast of America, ruining New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, the subsidence of parts of Japan and North Europe into the sea and the re-emergence of Atlantis. He gave a timetable, though not a very clear or detailed one, and the author of the book claims that up to date it is working out.

RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD: By S. Radhakrishnan. (Allen and Unwin, Pp. 186. Price 25s.)

Even before Dr. Radhakrishnan laid down his onerous task as President of India he had already returned to his craft of writing. This book shows his immense learning. He quotes freely from all schools of modern thought, those that reject religion as well as those that accept it; also from ancient philosophy and from the scripture of various religions. In fact, so fair is he to whatever school he is presenting that the incautious reader may at times be in doubt as to his own opinions. However in the last of the book's eight chapters he shows that what primarily concerns him is the possibility of survival of our civilization. He is optimistic about this but insists that it is dependent on international goodwill and calm, clear understanding such as an intelligent, non-dogmatic religious faith can give.

MYSTERIES OF LIFE AND DEATH: By Chaman Lal (Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay-7. Pp. 257. Price Rs. 20).

Bhikku Chaman Lal's mysteries are an anthology of quotations, mainly from the Hindu and Buddhist scriptures, the Yoga Vasishtha and Bhagavad Gita preponderating. A limited range of modern books are also drawn upon but are hardly worthy of their exalted company. Unlike many such anthologies, this one includes longish passages, not merely cryptic sentences. It is a most rewarding meadow to browse in. What is regrettable, however, is that it is not always made clear where a passage comes from, and there is no index; two very unfortunate lapses.

ARTHUR OSBORNE.

PROCHRONISMS - ANACHRONISMS: By Joslin Deeks. (Philosophical Library, New York, Pp. 196. Price \$4.00).

Who is Mr. Deeks? The blurb tells us that he is a 'discerning educator' but a man needs to

be a good deal more than that to justify making a book of his views and aphorisms. One way to sample such a new Solomon would be to pick out some subject that interests one in the index and follow it through, but this book has no index.

Mr. Deeks equates religion with Christianity and affirms that it is dead. No intelligent person believes in it any longer, he thinks. By intelligent persons he seems to mean those who agree with Mr. Deeks.

H. SEBASTIAN GUBBINS.

REALS IN THE JAINA METAPHYSICS: By Hari Satya Bhattacharya. (Distributors: Motilal Banarsidass, Bungalow Road, Delhi-7. Pp. 412. Price Rs. 15).

Giving the outline of his approach to the subject of his thesis, the author observes: 'Buddhist philosophy is earlier than the Buddha and the Jaina philosophy is earlier than the Jina Mahavira.' Very true. And that is true of most of the systems of Indian philosophy and yoga known by certain names, e.g., Patanjali, Kapila, etc. The thought and practices constituting these traditions took a long time growing till they were systematised and given a concrete shape later on. Dr. Bhattacharya studies the philosophy of Jainism as a living interpretation of Reality and its manifestations, free from dogma.

Space, Time, Matter, Rest, Soul, these are the main Reals of the Jaina metaphysics that are considered. The most interesting part of the treatment is that the author discusses what every other philosophical system in India and in the West has to say on each of these topics and then notes the Jaina objection to those views. The chapters on the nature of the soul, the steps of liberation, the meaning of release while in body, etc., are highly informative. The system does not recognise God, it is true, but it provides the scheme whereby each man can develop into a godly perfection.

The book is a product of well organised scholarship.

PHILOSOPHY OF SIKHISM: By Dr. Sher Singh. (Sterling Publishers, Delhi-6. Pp. 316, Rs. 20).

After a few initial chapters on the extant literature on the Sikh Movement and the environment that threw up the original founders of that religion, the author discusses the possible sources of the philosophy that underlies the life of this militant sect. In the opinion of Dr. Singh, it derives not only from the various sects of Hinduism — Saivism, Vaishnavism,

Vedantism, etc., but also from Islam, Christianity and Judaism.

What is the main philosophy of the Sikh Faith and what is its inner discipline? According to the author, it is *Wismad Marga*, the Path of Wonder which teaches one to perceive the Divine as the Lord of Beauty and to serve Him in all walks of life with a constant remembrance of his Name and Grace. The writer describes this path as unique, free from the 'shortcomings' of the traditional Paths of Knowledge, Devotion and Consecration. One would like to learn more of this Way of 'aesthetic communion' but the writing, broken on every page by distracting quotations and observations, leaves the reader in despair.

DISCOURSES ON HINDU SPIRITUAL CULTURE: By A. K. Banerjee. (S. Chand, Ramnagar, New Delhi-1, pp. 289, price Rs. 15).

Dr. Banerjee was a typical product of the best in Hindu culture, combining in himself as he did the mellowed wisdom of decades of philosophical thinking and a strenuous discipline for the realisation of the verities of the Spirit. His writings are not many but the few that have appeared in print are authentic with the light of the Soul illumining his expositions whether they are of the *Natha* traditions or — as in the present book — the fundamentals of the spiritual culture of Hinduism.

In this work of eighteen discourses delivered by the author, there is a thorough examination of the meaning, history, content and significance of what is known as Hinduism. Dr. Banerjee takes pains to point out that Hinduism is not a religion founded by a prophet with a set teaching; it is not a system of thought and worship. It is a way of life based upon certain eternal truths of creation, of Nature, Man and God, perceived by a long line of Seers and reinforced by the inspirations of several God-men and Yogins that have appeared from time to time. In this scheme the whole of life is looked upon as a vast progression, through spiritual evolution, towards a self-perfection which consists in the realisation of one's own divine nature. The creation, says the author, is a manifestation of Divine Truth and Right, *satyam*, *ritam*, and every field of life is in labour for the working out of this impelling Truth in its own characteristic terms.

Throughout the writing, the author takes a very broad and elevated view of the destiny of man and reconciles the conflicting claims of the various systems of philosophy in a total view of the Transcendent Reality of which the Individual

and the Universal are significant aspects. His explanations of the truth of Gods and Goddesses, Asuras, planes of existence and the degrees of knowledge and delight proper to them are rational to the core.

A book that does justice to the spirit and the form of Hinduism.

M. P. PANDIT.

STUDIES IN THE METAPHYSICS OF BRADLEY: By Sushil Kumar Saxena. (Allen and Unwin, London, Pp. 276, Price 45s.).

Professor A. J. Ayer once asked me: "Is Bradley still read in India?" I replied: "Oxford produces philosophers and Indians read them!" F. H. Bradley is a great British philosopher but a forgotten one. Indian universities are still old-fashioned enough to be interested in Idealism, and it is good that a systematic study of the metaphysics of Bradley is made by a contemporary young Indian philosopher. The book is a modification of the Ph.D. thesis submitted by the author to Delhi University. Dr. Saxena seems to be a "Bradleyan"; he accepts Bradley's defence of metaphysics, and the criterion of truth and reality. The book expounds the major doctrines of Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*. But even Dr. Saxena is not always forthright in his defence of Bradley. Nowadays, there is growing up in contemporary European philosophy a metaphysic which denies metaphysics. Bradley had said that he who says metaphysics is impossible is a brother metaphysician. Dr. Saxena's study is a lucid exposition of Bradley's doctrines such as immediate experience, relational form, the relation of thought to reality, the Absolute and its appearances. But I wish he had devoted more attention to Bradley's discussion of the General Nature of Reality. It is not the case that Bradley's doctrine of non-contradiction is meaningless without the positive aspect of Coherence and Comprehension. In his exposition, Dr. Saxena surveys the contemporary metaphysical scene and justifies Bradley's metaphysics. Students of philosophy in Indian Universities where F. H. Bradley continues to be a subject of study will profit by Dr. Saxena's systematic and lucid study.

CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY AND ITS ORIGINS: TEXT AND READINGS: By Sheldon P. Peterfreund and Theodore Denise (D. Van Nostrand Co. Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, Pp. 326, Price \$6.95).

This volume is intended for one-semester undergraduate courses in Contemporary Philosophy at American Universities. If so, the study of philosophy in undergraduate courses at Ame-

rican institutions is indeed of a high order. The book deals with five major trends; realism, idealism, pragmatism, existentialism and analysis. Each school of thought is introduced with a historical introduction, followed by significant readings from contemporary European and American philosophers. There is a guide to further readings at the end of each chapter. The authors think that the context within which a philosopher develops his views is a function of his times, and have attempted to connect contemporary (Western) philosophy with the history of Western Philosophy.

TOWARD A NEW MORALITY: By Gershon G. Rosenstock. (Philosophical Library, New York, Pp. 110. Price \$3.95).

The author's main thesis is that the Atomic Age and to-day's dominant society both demand a new ethics, rather, an "ethical man". The man of science ought to become a man of "conscience", and the autonomous individual needs to be rescued from to-day's dominant society with its mass democratization, its corporate bigness, and its creeping impersonalization. The author does well in saying that ethics must emerge from its pre-occupation (as in Western Philosophy) with the logical analysis of the language of morals. The book concludes with reflections on the nature of the "ethical man". What the author means by the "ethical man" may be better expressed in the language of the Gita: "*uddharet atmana atmanam, na atmanam avasadayet*: (He) who saves himself by himself, and does not destroy himself". For unless man becomes ethical, he is going to destroy himself; that is why he needs a "new morality".

PROF. N. A. NIKAM.

OF HUMAN FREEDOM: By Jean Paul Sartre: Edited by Wade Baskin. (Philosophical Library, New York. Price \$4.75).

The writings of Jean Paul Sartre are so varied, difficult and influential that Wade Baskin has done a real service by compiling this anthology of significant passages from the great artist-philosopher. The book opens with the crucial passage in *Nausea* where the reader is made to live through the absurdity and meaninglessness of objective existence. It includes illuminating extracts from "*Being and Nothingness*" which expounds Sartre's central doctrine of man's utter aloneness and his dreadful freedom. In the last extract from "*Search for a Method*" existentialism merges in a comprehensive Marxism rediscovering man in his human relations and following him in his praxis.

Sartre is a modern Stoic whose tough and resilient thinking is marked by a revolutionary wholeness which transforms every man into a hero; for the agonizing predicament of every man is the co-existence in him of a Sisyphus condemned to perpetual failure and a Prometheus fetching daily fire from heaven.

The universe in which man finds himself is not governed by purpose and not amenable to explanation, but a brute fact confronting him as he participates "in the universal contingency of being". The laws of science fail to satisfy because they leave out human subjectivity which is the determining factor in perception. The world is revealed according to the end chosen, "the intention illuminates the world in terms of an end not existing", and the intention is the result of a choice. It is because the worker has formed the project of changing the situation that he finds it intolerable. Even the lover is himself responsible for his grand passion. He chooses it. This matter of choice, or freedom, is the dominant theme of Sartre's writings. Freedom then is the curse of man's condition. To be free means to choose. Man is responsible for himself and the world. Hence the anguish.

This wholly mundane world-view where the mind starting with man, ends with man is indeed "manly" and appeals especially to the young and daring. It has been presented vividly enough before, for example by Mark Twain in the cheap tract "What is Man?" and by Bertrand Russell with exhilarating rhetoric in "A Free Man's Worship", where the aesthetic experience of tragedy is man's highest achievement. What distinguishes Sartre's play with this godless philosophy is his ruthless moral earnestness, his insistence on individual responsibility, on the role of man as doer and sufferer. Heroism begins with the recognition that "the future is open". Man is free. If only he has the strength to see it, he is not a cog in a machine, a creature of circumstances or destiny. He is what he makes of Himself. From this it is but one step to reach our common human responsibility, our identity with great saints as well as great "sinners".

K. S.

COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA Volumes I and II: (Published by Swami Prajnananda, Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, 19-B, Raja Rajkrishna Street, Calcutta. Pp. viii+499 and 445. Price Rs. 10 each).

Swami Abhedananda was one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. For a quarter of a century (1896 to 1921) the Swami

toured America and Europe and delivered hundreds of lectures bearing on the religion and philosophy of the vedanta. Some of them were published in America while many still remain unpublished. This year, being his birth centenary year, the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta, have decided to publish all his writings in ten uniform volumes of which the books under review are Numbers I and II.

Volume I consists of seven parts entitled respectively 'Spiritual Unfoldment', 'Self-knowledge', 'Reincarnation', 'Doctrine of Karma', 'Path of realisation', 'Divine Inheritance of Man', and 'Human affection and Divine Love'. Under each part there are several chapters. In all, the book comprises thirty-nine chapters. All of them make excellent reading and some are particularly well written. The exposition of the fundamental ideas of Vedanta is clear and cogent. The comparisons which the author institutes with allied doctrines in European philosophy and Hebrew, Christian and Islamic theologies, are very illuminating. Part III of the book, dealing with the doctrine of karma, reincarnation, resurrection and the law of compensation, is full of such comparative estimates.

On one point, however, we have to join issue with the learned Swamiji. Speaking of reincarnation, he takes the view that after coming to the human plane there is no descent to the animal plane in subsequent reincarnations. A human being, he adds, can never be reborn as an animal. "After reaching the human organism why should the soul *choose* to go back to the lesser and more imperfect organism of the animal? How is it possible for a lesser manifestation to hold a greater one?"

The question is not one of conscious choice, but of moral necessity. The sole purpose of reincarnation is to work out karma. If an animal body will furnish the most suitable environment for this purpose, the inexorable law of karma will prevail and there is no question of conscious choice.

Volume II is divided into seven parts comprising twenty-six chapters in all. The first part deals with India and her people, the second with Ideals of Education, the third with Christian Science and Vedanta, the fourth with Vedanta Philosophy and so forth. Most of the chapters included under these seven parts give the substance of the lectures delivered by the Swami from various platforms in America. They are all eminently readable and quite instructive. The accounts given of the six systems of Indian Philosophy, for example, in the first chapter of the

first part is not only interesting to read but also exhibits much insight into the heart of each of them. Similarly the description of the basic tenets of the Hindu religion given in the second chapter brings out clearly its wide catholicism, its belief that God, though ultimately One, can assume many forms to suit the diverse tastes and temperaments of devotees and that it has the unique distinction of presenting the Supreme Being as the Mother of the Universe.

In both volumes there are many misprints. There are also grammatical lapses and ill-constructed sentences. These could have been eliminated by more careful editing. Both volumes lack an index. But otherwise they are very readable.

PROF. M. K. VENKATARAMA IYER.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE EPICS:

By Shakambari Jayal. (Messrs. Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi-7. Pp. 335. Rs. 25).

The present work is based on a dissertation approved by the Banaras Hindu University for the degree of Ph.D. and its publication deserves to be welcomed. It is an intensive and well-documented study throwing light on various aspects of the position of women in ancient India as revealed by the study of the great epics. Although the material used by the author is generally well known, she does succeed in weaving it into an interesting fabric. This she is able to do by raising many new questions of detail and seeking to answer them within the context of the epics. She is able to show that women in the epics enjoyed considerable freedom, both before and after wedding, and were accorded a status of respect and honour. Girls were sought to be given a good education but how exactly this task was managed is not clear. Considerable personal choice entered into marriage, as is evidenced by examples of *Svayamvara* and *Gandharva*. The wife was held to be a moral companion (*sahadharmini*) which implied an equality of moral status with the husband. This was the older position but gradually the concept of the *pativrata* developed and made the husband a veritable God for the wife. Both the concepts can be seen within the epics at their two ends and indicate the evolution of ideas in the interval between their composition. The position of the widow again reflects a gradual change for the worse. There is evidence of considerable laxity in the relations between the sexes and the recognition of diverse forms of marriage and sonship was an effort to regulate the state of affairs. The author quotes with

approval the suggestion that the polyandry of the Pandavas may have been derived from the Himalayan region of *Satasringa* which might have included the areas of Kinnaur and Jaunsar Bawar where polyandry is still traceable.

The principal weakness of the work is its failure to contribute to the discussion of the stratification or chronology of the epics. This makes it difficult to place the epic date in any clear historical perspective. The author almost assumes that there is a distinct Epic Age between 400 B.C. and A.D. 400! There are also avoidable slips of language, orthography and diacritical markings.

INDIA IN THE RAMAYANA AGE: By S. N. Vyas. (Atma Ram & Sons, Delhi. Pp. 358. Rs. 35).

This work also is based on a dissertation approved by the Agra University for its Ph.D. degree. It is useful inasmuch as it presents a detailed and systematic account of cultural conditions gleaned from Valmiki's Ramayana. The style is easy and lucid and the interest of the work is heightened by the numerous illustrative sketches which have been included. The work is largely descriptive and even seeks popularity. It is, therefore, somewhat brief, on critical questions. The author has, for example, nothing new to say about the dating and composition of the Ramayana. His treatment of the *Vanaras* and *Rakshasas* as simply non-aryan tribes is naive. There are, however, interesting and informative chapters on science, on art and aesthetics and on food and drink, dress and decoration. In the author's Hindi book on the subject a more helpful system of documentation has been followed by adducing Sanskrit extracts in the original. The same system could have been profitably followed in the present work at least occasionally. On the whole, the work should prove useful.

PROF. G. C. PANDE.

THEOLOGIA GERMANICA: Translated by Susanna Winkworth. (Stuart and Watkins. Pp. 134. 21s).

The *Theologia Germanica* is a 14th century treatise on the spiritual life which has great ecumenical interest. It was written by a German Catholic, probably a priest, who belonged to a group of people who called themselves the 'Friends of God', and attained great popularity among Protestants, partly because of the veneration in which it was held by Luther, who regarded it as second only to the Bible and St. Augustine as a guide to the Spiritual life.

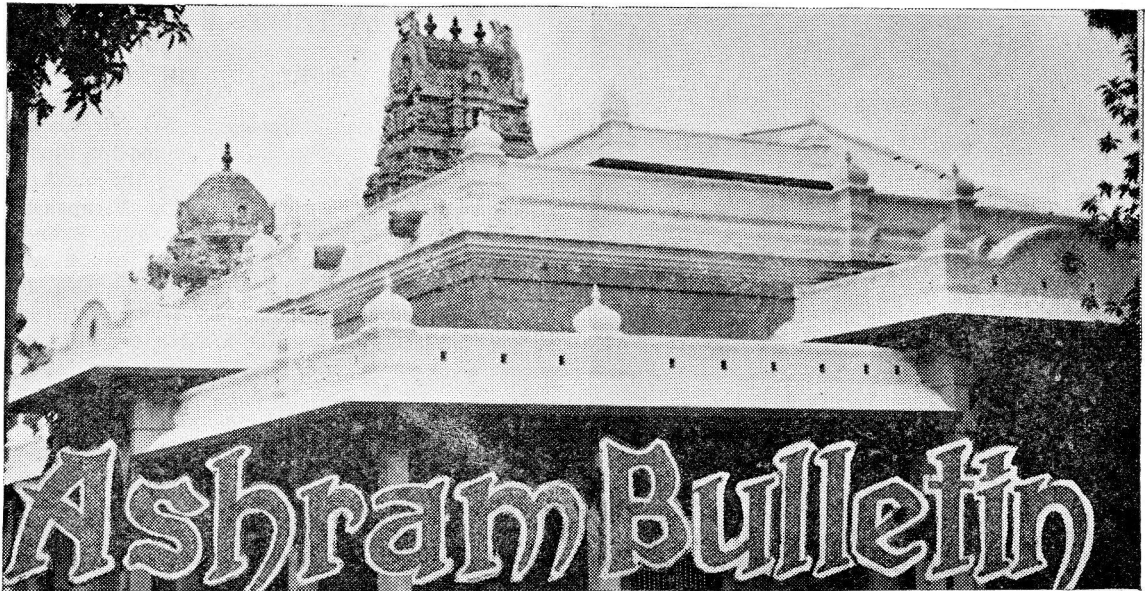
It thus has an appeal to Protestants and Catholics alike, but it should also prove attractive to Hindus and to people of other religions, because of the universality of its doctrine.

The friends of God were a group of devout Christians who derived their inspiration from the great tradition of German medieval mystics, of whom the most eminent were Eckhart and Tauler. In their doctrine Christian mysticism comes as near as possible to the Hindu conception of God and the soul and the relation between them. Thus the author of this treatise describes God as the 'perfect Being', who 'comprehended and included all things in Himself and His own substance, and without whom and beside whom there is no true substance, and in whom all things have their substance'. The soul on the other hand is described as "that which says 'I' and 'myself'", and sin said to be nothing but 'setting up a claim of an I and Me and Mine'. The author adds humorously: 'It is said, that it was because Adam ate the apple that he was lost and fell. I say that it was because of his claiming something for his own and because of his I, Mine and Me and the like.'

The life of the spirit consists naturally in the surrender of this I and Me and Mine to God, so that the man lives no longer from himself but from the life of the spirit, or the life of Christ, within him. In one chapter (xxiv) the author seems to go so far as to say that the man in whom God dwells in this way becomes God, but generally speaking, he uses the traditional Christian terminology, which speaks of such a man as being a 'partaker of the divine nature'. Such a one, he says, is a 'truly Godlike man.' Such a man remains a creature, but 'such a creature does nothing for its own sake, or in its own name, for it has quitted self and Me and Mine and We and Ours, and the like, and these are departed'. The ultimate aim is to reach the state where there is neither 'this nor that, Me or Thee, or the like, but only the One, who is neither I nor Thou, nor this nor that; but is above all I and Thou, this and that; and in him all goodness is loved as One Good, according to the saying: All in One as One, and One in All as All, and One and All Good, is loved through the One in One and for the sake of the One, for the love that man hath to the One'. This might well be a formula for a Christian *advaita*.

Instead of sponsoring yet another translation of this perennial classic, the publisher has revived an able nineteenth century one, long out of print.

DOM BEDE GRIFFITHS.



SHRINE FOR A KARMA YOGI

THE simple, but artistic and beautiful Mantap over the Samadhi of Sri Niranjanananda Swami, the *Sarvadhikari*, was taken up and completed in quick time, after the Kumbhabhishekam to Sri Bhagavan's Shrine of Grace. The Ashtabandhana and kumbhabhisheka ceremony at the samadhi of Sri Niranjanananda Swami was celebrated on September 8, amidst a large gathering of the devotees of Sri Bhagavan.

Born in 1885 at Tiruchuzhi, he joined his divine brother, Sri Bhagavan, in the latter's abode up the Hill, where he took the vow of sannyasa in 1917. He acted as the *Sarvadhikari* of the Ashram from 1930 till the Mahanirvana of the Master in 1950 and subsequently as the President of the Ashram, till his samadhi in 1953.

Sri Swami was well known for his untiring service for over three decades. His one ideal in life was to serve Bhagavan and to glorify the Mother who gave birth to his Master, Lord Ramana. He also knew too well that Sri Bhagavan needed nobody's services and rather that Sri Bhagavan served his devotees. His idea of service to Sri Bhagavan was service to His devotees. To him the devotees were Sri Bhagavan's children. Of Swami's understanding and sadhana of Sri Bhagavan's philosophy, those that

were closely acquainted with him know that he had a good grasp of Sri Bhagavan's teachings. He played the role of a Karma Yogi in the presence of the Great Jnanamurthi.

A Tribute-I

By G. L. N.

The kumbhabhishekam performed to the samadhi of Sri Niranjanananda Swami on 8-9-1967 is but a tribute paid to him, befitting the devotees of Bhagavan Sri Ramana. Sri Niranjanananda Swami alias Chinna Swami is the younger brother of Sri Ramana. He served Bhagavan not as a brother but as the devotee of His devotees. His mind was always centred on the hospitable reception of bhaktas and seeing to their comforts and needs. His reverence for Bhagavan was such that he would never talk with Bhagavan face to face but get Ashram problems solved through devotees who would act as his messengers or mediators. The Mother's temple, the dining hall and the expansion of the Ashram are all the result of his selfless and strenuous effort and devotion to Sri Bhagavan. His impartiality can best be seen in that he treated even his only son (i.e., now, the President) as



Sri Niranjanananda Swami

one of the ashramites only and showed him no special privileges or concessions. I happened to serve under Sri Chinna Swami from 1930 to 1933 and I am grateful, for I am sure, that it took me near the gracious precincts of Sri Bhagavan. Sri Chinna Swami was the key to Sri Bhagavan's Grace but it was a rough-hewn key. For perceiving the gem like Grace of Sri Bhagavan, he was the grinding stone. Pranams to him!

A Tribute-II

By N. R. KRISHNAMURTHI IYER

Nagasundaram, later known as Sri Niranjanananda Swami or Chinna Swami joined his illustrious brother a year or two after the mother, Alagammal joined Sri Bhagavan in Virupakshi Cave, when Sri Bhagavan was living in Skandashram on the Hill. Mother's failing health and her own express wish were instrumental in compelling Nagasundaram, then a widower, to go over and stay in the Ashram, leaving his only child, Venkato, under the care of his sister, Alamelu Ammal. Nagasundaram nursed his mother during her illness and he received initiation of *maha vakya* from her and then later took sannyasa and was called henceforth Sri Niranjanananda Swami. Mother requested Bhagavan as a dying wish: "Don't abandon him" and Sri Bhagavan, as the world knows, fulfilled that dying wish.

For Niranjanananda Swami, Sri Ramana was Guru, God and life's breath itself. He worked all the hours of his waking time giving close personal attention to every little detail. Sometimes he appeared to be harsh and uncompromising towards his associates who showed lack of devotion to hard work or to the Maharshi's person. He will ever be remembered as the great architect of Sri Ramanasramam. May he bless us all!

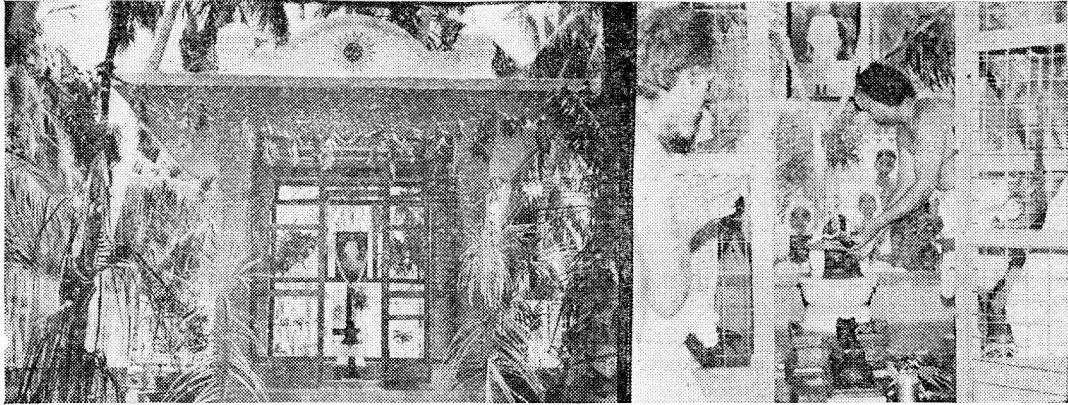
A Tribute-III

By LAKSHMI RANGANADHAM

As suited to the circumstances, when succouring the stricken he showed the love of the mother for its own; when providing the desired comforts he was the father leading one to a height; when teaching the pure habits he showed the affection of the Guru; but when any one showed pride he showed the roused, fearful face! He protected and nourished the devotees who took shelter at Sri Bhagavan's Feet. He was ever full of kindness in the service of Sri Bhagavan. Prostrations to Sri Chinna Swami's feet!

Nataraja, at the Ashram

Within the Mathrubhuteswara temple are housed almost all the deities, gods and goddesses. But devotees felt that the presence of Lord Nataraja was missing. Their longing was logical, since Sri Bhagavan was born on Arudhra

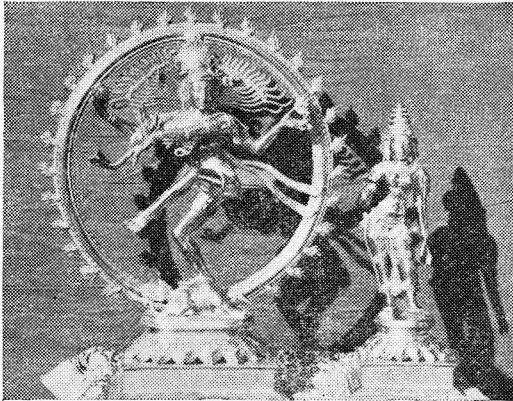


Samadhi of Sri Niranjanananda Swami

Pooja to its shrine

darshan night, when ages back Lord Nataraja gave darshan to His chosen disciples. The trustees in compliance with the devotees' request had arranged for making a bronze statue of Sri Nataraja at Swamimalai, in the far south. The

shrine. This formed part of the concluding portion of the Kumbhabhishekam itself. On the final day, August 4, a big homa was conducted and the Mandalabhishekam was concluded. The Kumbhabhishekam in all its ritualistic phases was thus completed only on that day. Devotees of Sri Bhagavan from various parts of India attended the function and partook of the Grace of Sri Bhagavan.



Lord Nataraja with His consort

statues of Lord Nataraja and His consort, Sri Sivakamasundari, were accordingly specially made for us. They are most beautiful. The consecration of them inside the temple at the northern side was done on Sept. 8, along with the Kumbhabhishekam to Sri Niranjanananda Swami's shrine.

The Mandalabhishekam

After the Kumbhabhishekam to the Shrine of Grace of Sri Ramaneswara Maha Lingam on June 18, for 48 days continuously special rituals with elaborate pujas were conducted on the

Lines from *The Divine Life*

In our account of the Kumbhabhishekam to Sri Ramaneswara Mahalingam in our last issue we mentioned the participation of Sri Swami Chidanandaji, President, The Divine Life Society. The following is his description of it in the July issue of *The Divine Life*:

"The solemn ceremony of Kumbhabhishekam to the new Mandapam raised over Sri Bhagavan's Samadhi took place on the 18th of June and the Sevak was present there at the loving invitation of Sri T. N. Venkataraman, the present head of the Ramanashramam. It was really a grand and an inspiring event and during the three days I was there, the blessed Presence of Sri Bhagavan Ramana was felt as a tangible inner experience at once purifying, sanctifying and spiritually elevating. I recalled the visit of Sri Gurudev to this holy Ashramam during his youthful and vigorous Parivrajaka days. I had the unique good fortune of meeting people like revered Sri Muruganar, Sri Arthur Osborne, Sri Nagamma and Sri Venkataratnam and such others, all of whom had the supreme blessedness of close contact with Sri Bhagavan during his life-time. Also, I had the privilege of getting the Darshan, of bowing before holy

Sri Janakibai Mata, the God-intoxicated devotee of Sri Ramana Bhagavan, I was happy to be there and to meet them all and also revered Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan and to listen to his beautiful speech in Tamil. The entire Kumbhabhishekam ceremony conducted by a select group of a large number of learned Vedapathis and Shastries with meticulous care according to strict Vedic ritual was most befittingly conducted and it was a great success. My warmest congratulations to the Trustees of the Ashram for raising this worthy memorial over the Divine resting place of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi. His Presence and Power indeed radiate from this vibrant Shrine."

* * * *

August, 15

The Arunagirinathar Festival, perpetuating the memory of the illustrious mystic-poet of the Tamil country, Sri Arunagirinathar, was conducted on August 14, 15 and 16. Thousands of bhaktas assembled in the town and it resounded with kirtans and bhajans. Many bhajana parties paid homage to Sri Rameswara Maha Lingam and did bhajan almost throughout the day on August, 15. It was a soul-stirring festival indeed!

* * * *

A Big Well

The small well inside the Ashram has its own story to tell, for with the touch of Sri Bhagavan the spring in it was born! The Ashram now makes use of its water exclusively for puja purposes. Though the Ashram has its water supply granted by the local municipality, it felt a need for a big well and the trustees ventured on digging one. The well has been successfully dug and to our surprise there was no rock found while digging, which is a rare event in this area, and water was struck at the expected level and in plenty. A proper overhead tank and a motor have to be erected soon.

* * * *

Visitors

During the later years of Sri Ramana Maharshi's life on earth, one of the prominent families here were the Shroffs, Parsis from Bombay with three children, two girls and a boy. The parents are no longer living, but it was a pleasant surprise to receive a visit from the son,

D. P. Shroff, now a married man and a prosperous industrialist—still more so to find him an enthusiastic devotee of Bhagavan. He has also become a Life Subscriber to *The Mountain Path*.

* * * *

We received a visit from *Prof. Bishop*, Professor of Philosophy at Washington State University, and found him deeply interested not only in Bhagavan's teaching but in Hindu doctrine generally.

* * * *

Mrs. deLancey Kapleau, whose husband has become famous as the author of *'The Three Pillars of Zen'*, paid us a second visit recently and writes:

Seven years ago, I am ashamed to say, I did not really know why I was making the pradakshina of Arunachala. I knew only that I very much wanted to — in fact that I had to. And so I did. In the light of this rational vagueness, it came as a great surprise to me



Mrs. Kapleau

then, that Mrs. Osborne should be so certain in her assurances that I would return one day. But return I did, this past summer in July, not with my husband this time, but with our almost 7 year-old daughter, Ramana, en route to a family vacation in Crete.

The ashram was back to its normal peaceful self after the extensive dedication ceremonies of the permanent samadhi of Bhagavan, and we had ten days of contentment and joy

with Mr. and Mrs. Osborne in their home, from which, by the way, one has a superb view of Arunachala. Ramana busied herself with all the available animal life, from the Osbornes' cows, dogs and kitten, to the ashram's monkeys which



Ramana

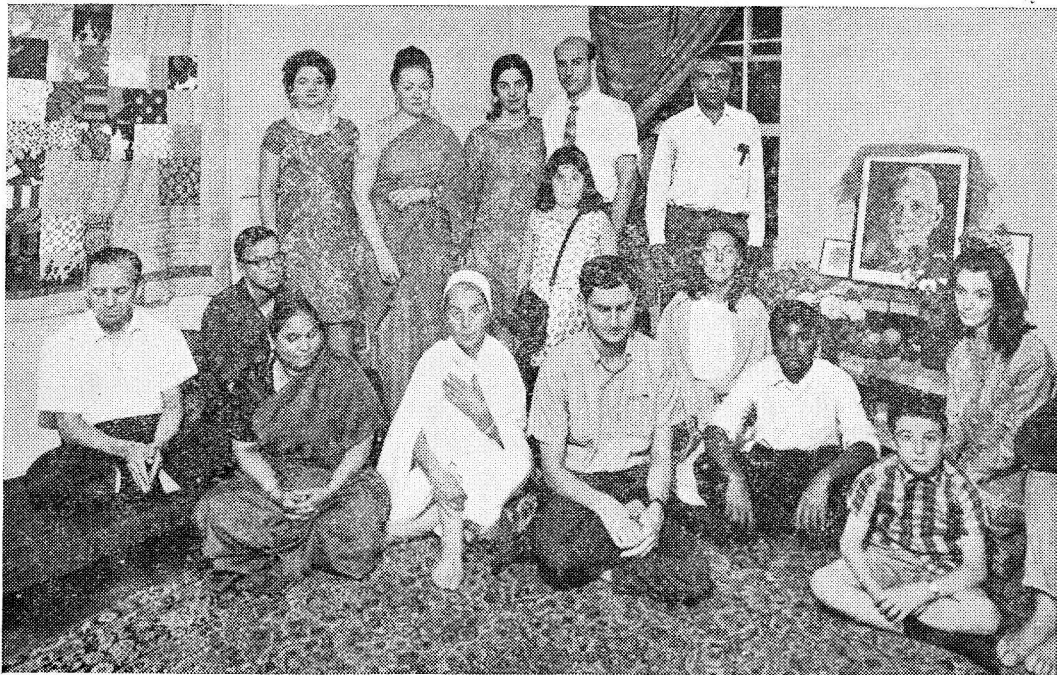
she was perpetually stalking to feed, its peacocks, and Arunachala's goat herds which stepped so elegantly across the mountain, and finally the cool night's frogs and baby lizards, the crowning acquaintance being the black elephant from the temple of Arunachala which she was allowed to mount.

For her mother, the several years of Zen training in Japan had made possible a real rapport with the Hill, which was not really awake at the time of the first visit. To go purposefully to Arunachala is to make a pilgrimage. Pilgrimages are not just the most comfortable excursions in the world. And so to step into the uncanny silence of the meditation hall after the 5-hour rattling bus ride from Madras, is truly an experience. It is often empty. It is silent because there is no talking there even with people gathered. But this is the least reason for its silence. It is only its outer garment so to say. Its true silence is a dynamic stillness which speaks to one's deepest parts with a precision and succinctness not possible in the language of

words. This same still-dynamism can be felt like a surging echo on the hill, and sensed like a consuming fire in the inner nature of the hard rock upon which one treads. When one steps into Skandashram it seems to hover there in an invisible cloud of concentration. It is no less so in Virupakshi cave. In fact it is no exaggeration to say that it takes one up like a palpable being. Prostrating and seating oneself one does not so much meditate, as let the dynamic-stillness take one out of one's self into the intenseness and simplicity of only "being". Timeless, one sits in all-time. Spaceless, one knows oneself as the centre.... the Centre. To be able to move, even once in one's lifetime, within the ambiance of such spiritual concentration, to sit within the perimeter of the Grace of the Guru is a gift without price. Even now as I write these words I can again feel the intense silence.

The pradakshina I made alone one evening, taking leave at the meditation hall, as was the custom during Bhagavan's life, at 6:30 p.m.,

RAMANA CENTRE, NEW YORK CITY



FROM L TO R.

Front Sitting — Mr. Isaac Sutel, Mr. Robert Hanlon, Yogamaya, Mrs. Jeanne Marie Marly, Don, Mrs. Eva B. Blake, Bhaskar, Michael Good and Mrs. Helena Schleiniger.

Standing behind — Mrs. Lee Good, Mrs. Louis Guha, Mrs. Gloria Rananda and her husband Joe Leslie Rananda and Bhagawat.

after the sun's heat had subsided. It is a strange countryside. At times quite uncanny and almost allegorical. The golden light of the sinking sun brings out a special luminosity from the green gorse which covers the undulating sides of most of the mountain. The country itself partakes of a special silence not possible except far away from city life. Much of the road is a beautiful rose-red which glows wonderfully in the setting sun. I walked slowly, resting briefly in the prescribed spots, until I finally came, in full darkness to the great temple of Sri Arunachala in the village of Tiruvannamalai. Here I slumped, very tired indeed, to the stone temple courtyard after dipping my feet in the huge stone tank. It was past 10:30 when Mrs. Osborne heard the dogs welcome me back, and after a cold bath we had a late supper together, and talked most of the rest of the night about the Mountain, and some of her singular experiences in her years living at its foot—a fitting climax to the day.

The following morning when I awakened, the inner meaning of the pradakshina and why I had made it a second time was no longer the least bit vague to me—on the contrary, it was crystal clear.

I am inexpressibly grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Osborne for their invitation to stay with them, for their gentle hospitality and lively companionship, not the least of which were the hours of invaluable conversation. I am not less grateful to my husband, who, while unable to accompany us, alone made it possible.

* * *

To Arunachala

In our last issue we published a poem called 'To Arunachala' which J. J. de Reede discovered unsigned among the papers of the late Dr. Mees (Sadhu Ekarasa). On publication it was recognised as being by our occasional contributor 'Unnamulai'. Actually, our editor himself had seen it years back but forgotten about it.

* * *

The Mountain Path Library

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The Wisdom of Unity (Manisha Panchakam of Sri Sankaracharya): Tr. by Dr. T. M. P. Mahadevan

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FORTHCOMING FESTIVALS

NAVARATHRI FESTIVAL (commences on)	..	Wednesday	4-10-1967
SARASWATHI POOJA	.. ..	Wednesday	11-10-1967
VIJAYADASAMI	.. ..	Thursday	12-10-1967
DEEPAVALI	.. ..	Wednesday	1-11-1967
SKANDASHASTI	.. ..	Tuesday	7-11-1967
KARTHIGAI FESTIVAL (commences on)	.. ..	Tuesday	5-12-1967
KARTHIGAI DEEPAM	.. ..	Thursday	14-12-1967
JAYANTHI OF SRI MAHARSHI (88th Birthday)	.. ..	Tuesday	19-12-1967
PONGAL	.. ..	Monday	15- 1-1968
CHINNASWAMI ARADHANA	.. ..	Monday	15- 1-1968
MAHA SIVARATHRI	.. ..	Monday	26- 2-1968
SRI VIDYA HAVAN	Friday	15- 3-1968
TELUGU NEW YEAR DAY	Friday	29- 3-1968
TAMIL NEW YEAR DAY	Saturday	13- 4-1968

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V. GANESAN,
Managing Editor.

INTRODUCING.....

KITCHEN ASSISTANTS

THERE were a group of devotees assisting in the Ashram who were even more inconspicuous than Bhagavan's attendants. These were the women who did the ashram cooking.

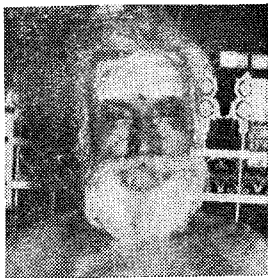
It was Bhagavan's Mother who started cooking at the Ashram (Skandashram) and he himself showed a considerable interest in it and often helped in the kitchen. There is an amusing symbolical verse which he once wrote describing the various processes of making *poppadam*, a South Indian delicacy. It is significant that even in such an occupation spiritual teaching was always in the forefront.

Through the years there has been a long succession of Ashram cooks. Many of them had the great privilege and blessing of having Bhagavan work with them. In fact as we wrote, a large part of his life he used to spend the early morning hours working in the kitchen. A number of interesting reminiscences were published in this bulletin from time to time. Two of the old devotees are still rendering such service. They are Natesa Iyer and Sampooramma. Subbalakshamma and Lokamma recorded here have become too old to do any service.

* * *

NATESA IYER

Among the devotees of Bhagavan who have rendered service in the Ashram kitchen and are still rendering such service may be mentioned *Natesa Iyer*. He had first seen Bhagavan once in 1922 in the Skandashram days. In 1934, when he was employed as the archaka of a chatram (choultry) in Tiruvannamalai Town, he used to come daily to the Ashram and take part in the morning and evening chanting of Vedas. From 1935, at the instance of the Sarvadhikari, he began to stay permanently in the Ashram and to render some service or other in the kitchen.



Natesa Iyer



He held Bhagavan in such great veneration and awe that he would not of his own accord enter into conversation with him. However he had some peculiar experiences which he associated with Bhagavan. Once while he was serving breakfast to Bhagavan he noted an unusual glow on Bhagavan's face which reminded him of *Brahma Varchas* (glow of Brahman) about which he had heard. On another occasion when he went to take leave of Bhagavan before going to see his relations on the occasion of his sister's death in a village seven miles away, he felt suddenly an oppressive pain in the chest which he could not account for. Later on the bus in which he was travelling the sorrow which he was feeling for the loss of his sister was suddenly turned to joy. He could not account for this also. Once Bhagavan drew him into a conversation of his own accord (a very rare occurrence with him). To some casual question of Bhagavan he had replied that he did not know. Upon this Bhagavan asked him how he could say that he did not know if he had previously known. That non-knowing always depended upon knowing was what was meant by Bhagavan, but it took a great deal of explanation on Bhagavan's part before poor Natesa Iyer could understand this. He was overwhelmed with joy

at this mark of Bhagavan's regard for him. He still serves in the kitchen and is liked by everybody as he is an extremely simple and inoffensive man, who would not hurt a fly. He attends Vedaparayanam regularly, does not touch money and has very few wants. A rare devotee of Bhagavan!

* * *

SAMPOORNAMMA

Another devotee who has been rendering service in the Ashram kitchen is *Sampoornamma*,



Sampoornamma

a childless widow who lost her husband early. She saw Bhagavan first in 1928 and began to live more or less permanently in the Ashram from 1930. It was Bhagavan who taught her to cook. He would show how to do things and work along with her. He used to talk freely to

her about his life from the days of his childhood while the food was cooking. Everything that was prepared in the kitchen had to be approved by Bhagavan who used even to taste the dishes to see whether they had been properly cooked and seasoned. Sometimes she had to come from the town very early in the morning in order to attend to some special preparation. She would be a little nervous while coming alone, but Bhagavan used to reassure her by saying that he would be with her and that she need not be afraid. Sometimes he asked her to accompany Thenammal, another devotee. Whenever Sampoornamma was in the Ashram it was her function to serve Bhagavan's food. In the night when she had to go to the town someone else used to serve it.

She did not have any unusual experiences while she was living in the Ashram except once when she saw early one day Arunachala in a blaze of light and Bhagavan sitting in the middle of it. She was at that time thinking of going to Gingee to see the old historical forts. So perhaps Bhagavan wanted to show her that while he was here as Arunachala it was unnecessary for her to go to other places. She had two other peculiar experiences before she came to Bhagavan. One day a wandering sadhu came to her house begging. When she went to give him food he had disappeared. On another occasion another sadhu appeared before her and begged

her to give him some food. She was at that time praying in a temple and was wearing her wet clothes, being on her way from her bath in the river. She therefore bade him go with her to her home, but this sadhu also disappeared mysteriously.

Bhagavan imparted no particular *Upadesa* to her but once gave her a copy of Ribhu Gita and asked her to read it. When she said that she would not be able to understand anything, Bhagavan told her merely to read. She is an active and cheerful person, very likeable.

* * *

SUBBALAKSHMAMMA

Another devotee who has rendered useful service in the Ashram kitchen is *Subbalakshamma*.

She had darshan of Bhagavan on the hill when she was about sixteen years old. Bhagavan did not say anything to her on that occasion, but she noticed an extraordinary splendour in Bhagavan's face and eyes. She returned for another darshan some years later and, after seeing



Subbalakshamma

Bhagavan, was going back to her village near Nellore with the object of going to Kasi (Benares) and settling there once for all. Lord Viswanath, the god worshipped at Kasi, had always been her favourite deity and she wanted to spend the rest of her life on the bank of the Ganges near Him. But when she reached Kalahasthi she had a dream in which Lord Viswanath asked her to return to Tiruvannamalai saying that Sri Ramana Bhagavan was the embodiment of Rama, Krishna, Siva and all other gods. So she returned to Tiruvannamalai. She used to stay in the town and come for darshan both morning and evening. Later on she was asked to do some service in the kitchen. She was at first unwilling to be diverted from dhyana which she was practising almost uninterruptedly. But she agreed to render service in the kitchen when she found that if she did not do so Bhagavan himself would have to do several items of work like grinding rice for the iddli. There were very few persons in the Ashram in those days. Bhagavan made her feel absolutely at home in the kitchen. He would talk to her very freely while the food was being cooked. She also felt free to talk to him when required. She used to

spend all the spare time in the hall in front of Bhagavan meditating. Bhagavan gave her some of the Vedantic books like Ribhu Gita written by him in Telugu script. She had one unusual experience. This was a vision of Bhagavan in which, while the body was that of Bhagavan, the face was that of Vishnu and had a crown on the head. She learnt afterwards that it was the face of the god worshipped at Badrinath. Bhagavan once told her while she was meditating, to find out the person who was meditating. This she has treated as *upadesa*. For some years she used to go to her village now and then to attend to her affairs, but later on she began to live near the Ashram permanently. Though old and some what infirm now she continues to come to the Ashram daily and to spend all her spare time in meditation and acts of devotion.

* * *

LOKAMMA

Another devotee who should be mentioned in this connection is *Lokamma*. Having become a



Lokamma

widow even when she was very young, her one aim in life was to meet saintly persons and to cross *samsara* with their help. An uncle of hers who was noted for his *tapas* initiated her into *Panchakshara Japa* and she used to do *japa* of this mantra thousands of times. This sometimes brought on a burning sensation all over the body.

She first heard of Bhagavan and saw a photograph of him when she went to see a pious lady who was living at Tirumangalam near Madurai. The latter was in the habit of visiting Tiruvannamalai frequently, but Lokamma was not permitted by her relations to go with her. Shortly afterwards when she was on a visit to a friend's house at Tenkasi someone casually remarked that

the Swami at Tiruvannamalai had expired. Upon this she uttered a loud cry in great distress, but the next moment she had a vision of Bhagavan standing with his walking stick in one hand and his water pot in the other. The vision was so real to her that she turned round to the person who had said that the Swami had expired and asked her how she could say so when Bhagavan was actually standing before them. Later on somebody assured her that the Swami who had passed away was Seshadri Swami. Sometime after this she and her family left for Rameswaram and were staying there when she felt that life was insupportable and had the idea of putting an end to it by jumping into the sea. She had almost made up her mind to do this when she was told that she was to go to Tiruvannamalai in the company of some pilgrims going to Tirupati. She accordingly came to the Ashram and sat in front of Bhagavan. The latter looked at her unwinkingly for about ten minutes. There was such a splendour in his look that she had repeatedly to close her eyes. She rendered some service in the kitchen on this occasion. When it was time for her to return to her place Bhagavan gave her a copy of *Upadesa Manjari* (Spiritual Instruction). Thereafter she used to visit Bhagavan now and then and to stay sometimes for some months. On these visits Bhagavan used to teach her spiritual subjects. Her work in the kitchen, especially her cooking, was greatly appreciated by Bhagavan. She would also sing in the hall numerous songs as she had a natural gift for singing. Bhagavan would frequently ask her to sing particular songs. If she had forgotten a word or a verse Bhagavan would assist her. Once some visitors had been discussing with Bhagavan the nature of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. She did not know this but came into the hall and burst out into a song beginning with *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. Bhagavan pointed out the coincidence to the others. For the last twenty-five years or more she has been living in a small house near the Ashram. She is now too old to render any service, but comes to the Ashram regularly. She considers herself to have been very fortunate inasmuch as she had the privilege of living in daily and friendly contact with Bhagavan for so many years.

You are not the body, nor is the body yours. Neither are you the doer or the enjoyer. You are Intelligence itself, the eternal Witness, and are free. Go about happily.

— *Ashtavakra Gita*.



to the

EFFORT, GRACE AND DESTINY

I thank you for your very clear analysis in your April article under this title of the knotty problem often raised in the minds of sadhakas. But in the penultimate sentence of the last paragraph would it not be more appropriate to say "The Spirit is seen in the vaccuum....." rather than "The Spirit flows into the vaccuum?"

T. A. KRISHNAMURTHY,
Palghat.

No, because that implies some one to see, which is still duality.

EDITOR.

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THE THOUGHT-FREE DESTINY

While thanking you immensely for the comment you made in your issue of January this year on a dream I had, I wish to describe a strange phenomenon that occurred on June 3rd

incident I am conscious, but effortlessly, a few words about the

Not much to say. Only you should not have thoughts on yourself if they came; just consciousness and to perceive. . . .

*

PLANNED REINCARNATION

I have recently come across an issue of July 1966 and am aware of the question of reincarnation. This is one question which I do not find dealt with. One can deliberately

whom he had so hated in his previous birth as Amba, the hatred was no longer there and he did it rather as one fulfilling his destiny than with any personal animus.

In any case, to die preoccupied with some mundane wish or ambition is a regrettable summation.

EDITOR.

* * *

TERMINOLOGY

Don't you think it well to use a minimum of Eastern terms in English articles and translations? The important thing is not to teach Westerners Sanskrit or Pali or Japanese but to communicate the supreme doctrine as well as it can be expressed in ordinary human language of the common people. The transition from dualistic thinking to Oneness is a big enough step without any unnecessary hurdles to jump. However, I am enough of a linguist to know that some terms cannot be translated literally or with enough fulness into a foreign language.

DEAN WINTER,
El Paso, Texas, U.S.A.

That is just our dilemma. We do try to keep the technical terminology down to a minimum in THE MOUNTAIN PATH. Such words as are necessary — karma, dharma, guru, samadhi, and so on — are easy to learn and have mostly found their way into English dictionaries by now. To translate 'Samadhi' by the English word 'trance', for instance, would be quite misleading.

EDITOR.

* * *

THE SHRINE

It is wonderful that the shrine (samadhi) over Bhagavan's tomb is now completed. Surely the love of many devotees must garland the ever-living, dwelling there with fragrant beauty. How serene and peaceful are the eyes of the Lord of Arunachala! Whenever I gaze into them disquietude leaves me and I am filled with love for the Master of Life.

GLADYS DE MEUTER,
Johannesburg.

* * *

KARMIC DEBT

The person to whom Bhagavan gave abhaya by nodding graciously to his petition, "Bhagavan, save me!", as described on page four of the Ramana Pictorial Souvenir was known to me.

I also know what a pitiable end he had. He had lent money to a number of people locally and they refused to honour his bills, leaving him destitute when he had been prosperous. Added to that, his only daughter, a girl of about 13, appeared before him deranged after giving birth to a dead illegitimate child. He himself died out of his mind, destitute and miserable. How do you account for the difference between Bhagavan's expression of Grace and the actuality?

'G',

Ramanagar.

The answer is indicated in a little story told by 'Sein' on page 121 of our April issue this year, 'Boons yearned for and earned'. Every one has a karmic debt to work off in life and we do not know in each case how great it is. If it is not worked off it will be carried forward to the next lifetime, further increased by the new debt that has been accumulated in this lifetime. True Grace, therefore, does not consist in enabling a person to avoid payment of it by living an untroubled life but in enabling him to meet it and pay it off. It often happens that when a person takes up the quest misfortunes beset him.

EDITOR.

* * *

LOVE ON THE PATH OF ENQUIRY

Divine Love has been held by all Masters on all paths, including our Maharshi, to be an essential condition for spiritual progress. But what sort of love can one have in the path of Self-enquiry, when one conceives of no God external to one's own Self? I ask this from the point of view of the sadhaka who is told to forget all about God and concentrate only on the quest of his Self, whose true nature cannot immediately be known to him.

C. SRIDHARA RAO,
Secunderabad.

As you say, the true nature of the Self is at first unknown to the seeker. Whether that Unknown eventually turns out to be the true Self of him or a God separate from him, It is certainly other than the individual self who starts the quest. The individual self must be drawn to It by so strong an attraction that he is willing to be swallowed up by It. What else is this than Love?

The enquiry is not merely mental, not just theorising; it means suspending thought while

turning inward to the heart, to that Unknown, so as to be absorbed in It.

EDITOR.

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INITIATION BY BHAGAVAN

In the April 1966 number of *The Mountain Path* you stated that the editorials of the first nine issues form a connected series on the general theme of quest and guidance. Since the first eight of these issues are now out of print, the reproduction of the editorials in book form would be a boon to earnest seekers who may be struggling on the Path without personal guidance from a competent guide.

How can one know *now* whether one has received initiation from Bhagavan or not, unless it be through a dream? You said in the editorial of Jan. 1966: "In the Maharshi's lifetime, as now, his initiation came without ritual, whether through a potent, intense look or in a dream or some other way." What are the other ways in which one can get initiation *now*?

How can one know for certain that one is taken up by Maharshi if one has not had the good fortune of coming in contact with him during his lifetime?

AMARENDRA VIJAYAJI,

Dharmaj, Kaira Dt.

Most of the early issues are now available if you write to the Managing Editor. The editorials will probably be published in book form some time but not yet.

Even in Bhagavan's lifetime his initiation was secret and many who came failed to receive it or even to understand that it existed. It was an 'open secret' which required understanding

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Your letter raise
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influence is the Maharshi or the Hill; but it is also true that people do fall ill here and suffer from long and painful illnesses, and that they do die here.

EDITOR.

* * *

THE MAHARSHI AND KRISHNAMURTHI (continued)

In answer to a letter on this subject on page 258 of your July issue, you say: "Krishnamurti tells you to follow no path and no guru but just to be in a state of effortless, choiceless awareness. Well, try that first. If you can do it, well and good. You need nothing else; but I have never yet met any one who could. If not, then the Maharshi tells you either to practise Self-enquiry or to submit to God or Guru, so try that." Now, in order to be fair, you should also say whether you have met any one who could do that, that is to say who has attained Realization through following the instructions of the Maharshi.

GORDON GREEN,
Los Angeles.

It will be easier to answer this question if I take a parallel from Zen. Followers of Zen speak of attaining satori, which in its highest and purest interpretation, means attaining a pre-glimpse of Realization, what, on more than one occasion, has been called in THE MOUNTAIN PATH a 'brief eternity'. This is considered a measure of success. Its afterglow is a perpetual wealth. It gives a sense of certainty which, properly tended, lasts for life. Moreover, it shows that the goal is natural and attainable and predisposes the seeker to continued, unremitting effort. But to be established in a permanent, uninterrupted state of satori is a very rare thing.

The same applies to the teaching of the Maharshi. He taught (as recorded especially in 'Self-Enquiry') that a single pre-glimpse of Realization does not make one a Realized Man but that one must persevere until such glimpses, from being more and more frequent, finally become permanent. Doing so also sheds a radiance on one's life and gives an increasing buoyancy and sometimes power during the intervals between the 'brief eternities'.

Having thus described the situation, I can now answer the question. I know of nobody in the world-today, whether a follower of the Maharshi or not, of whom I could confidently assert that

he is in a state of permanent, unbroken Self-Realization, as the Maharshi was, although I could also not confidently assert that there is nobody; however there are followers of the Maharshi who have had pre-glimpses of Realization and whose lives between the pre-glimpses may be to a greater or less degree irradiated by them.

Even apart from the technical question of Self-Realization, there are many cases of enlightenment and felicity bestowed by the Grace of Bhagavan, some of which come to our notice only casually and years later. One such, which occurred in his life-time, is recorded on page 236 of our last issue, another, which occurred long after he had left the body, is on page 57 of our January issue of this year. But however gratuitous the Grace might be he expected effort from the recipient.

EDITOR.

* * *

THE GRACE OF BHAGAVAN

(1)

It is now ten years since I stepped in at the Ashram on my way down from Calcutta and spent a few happy hours in Sri Bhagavan's hallowed hall. I felt once again the dynamic Grace almost overpowering me, as during the days and nights I spent at his blessed feet. So often in those days I would be awakened by him at night and told some remarkable incident from his life or some spiritual truth of deep significance. His sayings are still ringing in my ears, stirring me as then. His paternal love and attention to my personal needs has no parallel and has enthralled me. Once when I took leave of him he said: "You think you go here and there of your own accord but all your movements are only here (pointing to his chest) just as the pictures in a cinema are only on the screen." Since then I have always felt his statement to be literally true. I have never been able to get away from him. In your wonderful book on him you say, referring to me: "Indeed, the thought or remembrance of Bhagavan began to accompany him everywhere, to be inseparable from him," but now I feel him always and wholly in me, as enjoined by him. I can never think of anything else, wherever I may be. Just this morning, while reading about Sri Bhagavan's unique love in the inspiring pages of the special Jayanthi number of *The Mountain Path* (January 1966), tears came to my eyes. Sri Bhagavan's dynamic grace courses through this journal like

a torrent. It is certain to flood the world with the peace and happiness which is so urgently needed.

V. VENKATARAMAN,
Nagercoil.

Please share more of your reminiscences with our readers. Many are avid for them.

EDITOR.

* * *

(2)

I and my wife visited the Ashram in 1955 and again in 1957. When we were there we experienced that Peace which passeth understanding, and though the years have rolled on we still have the impression of that Great Experience. How deeply we crave that we may always remain aware of that Great Peace. That will be possible only if Sri Bhagavan sends his Grace.

M. E. AMROLIA,
Devlali.

Bhagavan used to say that the Grace is always there; it is you who have to make yourself receptive to it.

EDITOR.

* * *

(3)

On the evening of 28th June I dreamed of Sri Bhagavan. On waking I wrote down the dream as follows. I was in Tiruvannamalai and saw Sri Ramana approaching on foot from a considerable distance. He slowly descended some steps and walked towards where I was standing. There were others with me. He came very close, but although I looked at him intently he did not seem to look directly at me. I was aware that some of those in the group were trying to make arrangements with the man in charge that they would sit where Sri Bhagavan would see them and perhaps talk to them directly. I was not involved in all this. Then a voice said to me: "Why all this? You know the path—follow it!". Then I awoke.

If in your opinion there is any hidden meaning in this I would be very glad of your interpretation. The dream was exceptionally vivid and even now I can recall it very clearly.

C. SIVAKUMAR,
Berkeley, California.

How could there be any hidden meaning in it? It is so clear and outspoken:—"You know the path—follow it!" Just as Bhagavan might have spoken in his lifetime.

Perhaps you were a little despondent, thinking that others received his guidance directly while to you it came only indirectly, and that was the reply.

EDITOR.

* * *

(4)

Bhagavan's picture goes with me everywhere and I have such implicit faith in Him that I know His Grace guides me in my work and in my free moments. All I desire is to visit you and Arunachala. I wish you could send me something of His or a bit of stone or earth from the summit of Arunachala to help this contact I yearn for. I shall be eternally grateful to you. When He wills it I will write to you how the Maharshi came my way. I often think of the strangeness of it all.

I cannot help showing his picture to the specialists and doctors and staff where I work. Really He has totally captured me.

Quotations from Him that I read in *The Mountain Path* seem to be especially spoken for me. He is so real to me that it is hard to believe that he is not embodied. I go on hoping that one day He will appear to me and show me what I sincerely do not know.

RAJI WILSON.

* * *

(5)

About five days before I first came to the Ashrama here in New York City (Arunachala Ashrama, Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Center, Inc., 78, St. Marks Place, New York City, N.Y. 10003), I was given a picture of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi by a friend. The picture interested me because of its lifelike nature, especially the eyes, which appeared to be looking at and seeing me.

I placed the picture on a low table top with an electric candle and a few sticks of incense which I kept burning there. Every morning and evening for about fifteen minutes I sat cross-legged before it, feeling that there was much I could learn from this silent photograph of the man with the beautiful face. One day as I sat thus it came to me that behind the picture and behind or inside myself and all living beings is the same thing.

MISS GAYLE CRONE,
New York.

* * *

(6)

With Sri Bhagavan's Grace and Blessings *The Mountain Path* has already become one of the most important quarterlies in its own field. Who-soever reads *The Mountain Path* finds it so deeply inspiring and enlightening that he becomes a friend of the magazine. In the *Ashram Bulletin* and *Letters to the Editor* there flows so much of Bhagavan's Grace that I myself first go through these departments before reading anything else. Sometimes we feel the need of getting full mailing address along with their experiences. That is for you to decide and if it has not been done so far, there must have been valid reason for omitting it. Personally for me it never occurs to me that Bhagavan is not in body. The magazine transmits so much of Bhagavan's ever-shining life and teaching to all of us that Bhagavan's Grace and Blessings change our mundane life to that of a spiritual one.

ARUNACHALA BHAKTA BHAGAWAT,
Arunachala Ashrama,
Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi Centre, Inc.,
78, St. Marks Place, New York City,
N.Y. 10003.

We are very glad to hear of the enthusiasm shown by the devotees of the Arunachala Ashrama in New York City. We are certainly willing to give the full mailing addresses of authors of letters but we do not do so unless specifically asked us. Some of them prefer not to be known.

EDITOR.

* * *

RITUAL (continued)

I am unhappy about your note under 'Ritual—I' on page 259 of the last issue. This reflects the shadow cast rather than the light shed by the lamp: in other words, the ashram rather than Bhagavan. There was no difference between Brahmins and non-Brahmins in the pre-ashram days. After the Ashram came into being and got organized, orthodox Brahmins sat separately at meals—and Bhagavan did not object. Others, including well known Brahmins, sat nearer Bhagavan in the general and larger section. To this too Bhagavan did not object. Your statement "Bhagavan expected each person to live according to the conventions of his family, social and religious background, unless they took sannyas, which he did not encourage people to do" is a grossly misleading formulation of Bhagavan's attitude to both varna and ashrama. Followers of the Kanchi Acharya (who would welcome this formulation) and followers of

Mahatma Gandhi (whose 'social background' demanded disregard of caste differences)—both groups 'were perfectly at home in Bhagavan's presence. On scores of occasions I sat at meals in the general section (it is wrong to call it the non-Brahmin Section), where several Brahmins joined us for the opportunity they thus enjoyed of partaking of the food served by the Mudaliar lady! That Bhagavan 'expected' anything or in anybody is simply not true.

Again, though it is true that, unlike Swami Vivekananda, Bhagavan 'did not encourage people to take sannyas' in any formal sense he did encourage people developing detachment and renunciation, as when caste differences slipped off and there was no arrogant claim that one was a reformer. What or in what company one ate did not matter to Bhagavan.

PROF. K. SWAMINATHAN,
New Delhi.

First the general question whether Bhagavan 'expected' anything of anyone. There certainly was a general impression of aloofness, but when one saw the disapproval he showed at any improper conduct and the gracious encouragement he gave to meditation it became evident that in fact he 'expected' the very highest of us. His silent disapproval could be terrible and his smile of approval brought sheer joy to the fortunate recipient. Then that he 'expected each person to live according to the conventions of his family, social and religious background': the fact that the followers of the Kanchi Acharya (with an orthodox background) and those of Gandhi (with an unorthodox background) both felt at home in his presence, far from contradicting this, exemplifies it. In individual cases, the fact that Bhagavan rebuked a young Brahmin of an orthodox family who wanted to sit among the non-Brahmins at meals (as related in the article 'Above Orthodoxy and Unorthodoxy' by Krishna Bikshu in our issue of October 1965) and yet said nothing to Prof. Swaminathan when he sat among the non-Brahmins exemplifies it. Also the present Ashram policy, far from clashing with Bhagavan's attitude, continues it. Brahmins who wish to eat separately are allowed to do so but, for instance, S. P. Mukherji, a Brahmin whose photograph appears in our 'Ashram Bulletin' of July 1964, regularly eats among the non-Brahmins when he takes his meals at the Ashram. So does our occasional contributor and former trustee, Dr. T. N. Krishnaswami (introduced in January 1965).

Bhagavan would formulate no general rule either for or against orthodoxy. Once an Arya

Samajist, an ardent social reformer, tried persistently to get Bhagavan to condemn caste distinctions but Bhagavan (as reported in 'Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi' pp. 592 to 596) held firmly to the spiritual view of reality and refused to be drawn into making any social or political statement. Similarly, when an enthusiast for Harijan uplift told Bhagavan (as reported by Devaraja Mudaliar, in 'Day by day with Bhagavan', Vol. II, p. 143-4) that Mahatma Gandhi had expressed approval of marriages between Harijan girls and higher caste bridegrooms and asked Bhagavan to add his approval, Bhagavan refused, saying that it was not his dharma to interfere in such matters.

Coming to the last paragraph of the letter: it is of course true that Bhagavan encouraged detachment and renunciation, but it does not necessarily follow that renouncing caste discipline is a sign of inner renunciation. It may be, but there may be other motivations also. And, as stated above, Bhagavan did not encourage people to renounce their caste discipline.

It is not true to say that "What or in what company one ate did not matter to Bhagavan." When any one asked him he declared quite definitely that a vegetarian diet was more conducive to spiritual progress, as reported at various places in the 'Talks'. Devaraja Mudaliar was one who asked him and received this assurance, as he relates in his book 'My Recollections of Bhagavan Sri Ramana'. It was characteristic of Bhagavan, however, that he did not make a general rule that his followers should be vegetarians. He did come very near to it when he wrote as the conclusion to 'Self Enquiry': 'It is within our power to adopt a sattvic diet and, with earnest and incessant endeavour, to eradicate the ego, the cause of all misery . . .' (He normally used the expression 'a sattvic diet' to mean vegetarianism).

EDITOR.

HELLUCINOGENIC DRUGS (continued)

(1)

Our psycho-somatic vehicles are progressing through effort and experience to the point when there will be no barrier to the natural state of Realization. A drug may be capable of blasting a way through the barrier so that a glimpse of Self may be obtained, but in doing so it will damage the vehicle. The sight will necessarily cease when the means to it is withdrawn and it will be necessary to make a new start on the path with a damaged vehicle plus karmic diffi-

culties. You cannot carry water in a leaky bucket.

Even the sight of the Self which is obtained by means of drugs is not a true but an ersatz sighting. This may sound contradictory but it is true. The Guru's Grace is the only true means to spiritual sight.

G. N. DALEY,
Haworth, Yorkshire.

True, but Bhagavan did not even grant requests that were made to give a pre-glimpse through Grace. He was training his disciples in the more important though less spectacular task of making the vehicle capable of sustaining the experience when it is attained.

EDITOR.

(2)

I see from *The Middle Way* that the 'London Buddhist Society' refuses admission to its meditation classes to any one who takes psychedelic drugs. What is your reaction to that?

JOHN HOLT,
Bristol.

They are to be congratulated on their firm stand.
EDITOR.

CONTRADICTORY?

In writing the editorial 'Total Therapy' in the July 1967 issue of *The Mountain Path* the editor has overlooked verse 13 of the *Supplementary Forty Verses of Bhagavan* (Verses 14 and 15 may also be referred to in this connection, as also *Upadesa Saram*, v. 10). Also the statement in the same editorial, p. 182, col. 1: ".....but they (powers) will not be deliberately acquired...." would seem to contradict Bhagavan's reference to Chudala (cf. *Tripura Rahasya*) acquiring powers (siddhi) deliberately in order to convince her husband, the prince, after she herself became (excuse the word) Self-realized.

Also in connection with the editorial reply to a letter on p. 258, col. 2, in the same issue, kindly see *Ramana Nool Thirattu* (*Collected works in Tamil*) bottom (3) and the following page, as also *Upadesa Saram*, v. 4.

'K',
Madras.

'K' seems to object to two statements:
1. that powers are not to be deliberately acquired or to be valued if they come;

2. that "the Maharshi seldom if ever actually recommended it (japa), but when asked he gave permission to use it."

On both counts he is wrong.

The Maharshi consistently deprecated the desire for powers. His attitude was, as in vv 66-67 of his translation of DEVIKALOTTARA: "Let him not accept thaumaturgic powers... even when directly offered to him. For all these are like ropes to tether a beast and they will certainly drag him downward. Supreme Liberation does not lie that way; it is not found elsewhere than in Infinite Consciousness."

With regard to japa, it has never been stated in THE MOUNTAIN PATH that the Maharshi did not approve of japa or that he denied its validity; only it has been stated, and rightly, that he did not prescribe it in the first place but only to

those who asked his authorisation to use it. Even one of the quotations which 'K' gives (Upadesa Saram, v. 4) supports this statement by showing how the Maharshi classed japa (incantation) as less value than meditation (Self-enquiry). The verse runs: "This is certain: worship, bhinctions and meditation are performed respected with the body, the voice and the mind and in this ascending order of value."

None, of the other verses he refers to support his objections. In fact v. 14 of the 'Supplementary Forty Verses' asserts that Self-enquiry is the essence of all paths, while v. 15 decisively compares a man who values powers to a lame man who boasts that he can dispose of the enemy if only some one will hold him up on his feet. Both tell against his objections.

EDITOR.

RAMANA



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THE MOUNTAIN PATH

(QUARTERLY)

VOLUME IV - 1967

EDITOR :

ARTHUR OSBORNE

MANAGING EDITOR :

V. GANESAN

PUBLISHER :

T. N. VENKATARAMAN

(President, Board of Trustees)

SRI RAMANASRAMAM

TIRUVANNAMALAI (S. India)

THE MOUNTAIN PATH

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